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Understanding the electoral breakthrough of Golden Dawn in Greece A demand and supply perspective

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Abstract

In the June 2012 Greek national election, the right-wing extremist party known as Golden Dawn (*Chrysi Avgi*) gained 6.92% of the vote, thus entering the Hellenic Parliament for the first time with 18 seats. Given that its share of the vote was as low as 0.29% in the 2009 parliamentary elections, this was a remarkable success for the party.

This paper uses a demand and supply framework to explain the electoral breakthrough of what is one of the most racist and extreme right institutionalised parties in Europe. While Golden Dawn has been exceptionally violent and activist in comparison to its Western European counterparts, this paper contends that at their core they are in fact very similar. It argues that four factors in particular are crucial to an understanding of the party's breakthrough. These include unemployment and economic discontent; immigration and asylum; Greek conceptions of citizenship and nationhood; and the conduciveness of the political space. While there is no doubt that demand-side factors such as the economic crisis and the subsequent bailout have had massive social consequences that have been favourable to Golden Dawn, it is the latter two supply-side factors – the model of citizenship and the political space – that have allowed the party to truly capitalise on social discontent.

Keywords: Golden Dawn; Chrysi Avgi; Greece; right-wing extremism; political parties

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Note: This paper is up to date until May 2013. In September 2013, following the murder of Greek singer Pavlos Fyssas by a party member, the Greek government proceeded to arrest Golden Dawn's leader and several others 'on charges of forming a criminal organisation'. In addition, several police officers have been suspended following an investigation into the party's ties to the police force (BBC 2013).

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List of Abbreviations

ANEL	Independent Greeks (<i>Anexartitoi Ellines</i>)
FRP	Far right party
GD	The People's Association- Golden Dawn (<i>Chrysi Avgi</i>)
LAOS	Popular Orthodox Rally (<i>Laikos Orthodoxos Synagermos</i>)
ND	New Democracy (<i>Nea Dimokratia</i>)
PASOK	Panhellenic Socialist Movement (<i>Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima</i>)
SYRIZA	Coalition of the Radical Left (<i>Sinaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras</i>)

1 Introduction

In the June 2012 Greek national election, the right-wing extremist party known as Golden Dawn (*Chrysi Avgi*) gained 6.92% of the vote. It thus made its debut in the Hellenic Parliament with 18 seats. In May 2013, an opinion poll by polling company Public Issue showed support for Golden Dawn (GD) had increased to 11.5%,¹ making it the third most popular party after ruling New Democracy (ND) and SYRIZA (the Coalition of the Radical Left) (Public Issue 2013a). The figures are remarkable, not least because GD's share of the vote had been as low as 0.29% in the 2009 parliamentary elections. This paper aims to develop a systematic explanation of the electoral breakthrough of what is one of the most racist and extreme right institutionalised elements in Europe.² Looking at Golden Dawn as a 'new successful product in the electoral market' (Muis 2012: 29), what are the factors that contributed to its ascent at that particular point in time?

In many ways, GD's vote share itself is not particularly astounding. It is not the far right that emerged the greatest winner in the 2012 Greek elections, but the radical left, in the form of SYRIZA, which gained 26.9% of the vote. What *is* notable is the suddenness of its breakthrough, and the fact that it has continued its ascent in opinion polls since the election, indicating that its success cannot be explained simply as a one-off protest vote. More importantly, the 2012 elections mark a qualitative change in the nature of the far right in Greece. In contrast to its lesser-known predecessor, the Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS), GD has become notorious for its violent tactics, particularly against immigrants.

Reports of a 'flare up of anti-immigrant violence' in the country explicitly link such violence to Golden Dawn (Human Rights Watch 2012: 4). Between January and September 2012, the Racist Violence Recording Network, which consists of various human rights bodies and NGOs, was approached by 87 victims of xenophobic violence, most of who had suffered severe bodily injury (Racist Violence Recording Network 2012: 1ff). Testimonies by the victims in many cases directly identify the perpetrators as being members of GD (ibid: 1-2). It is safe to assume that these attacks reflect only a minute fraction of all xenophobic violence in Greece, given that most incidents go unreported.

Despite a flurry of media attention, academic literature on GD is only just beginning to emerge (cf. Ellinas 2013) and remains mainly descriptive or overly focused on the party's neo-Nazi character (e.g. Psarras 2012). While Golden Dawn has sought to downplay this image since the 1990s,³ its ideological pronouncements continue to evidence a biological and racial understanding of nationhood (Ellinas 2013: 7). For this reason, existing accounts suggest that GD is not comparable to Western European far right parties (FRPs), despite the fact that many of these – most notably the German National Democratic Party – have also been considered neo-Nazi. In fact, GD's political agenda is very much built on the 'signature issue mobilising support for the radical right today...the threat of 'the other', driven by patterns of immigration, asylum seekers and multiculturalism' (Norris 2005: 132). Its sudden success at the expense of LAOS – which *has* been considered comparable to the Western

¹ With a margin of error of $\pm 2\%$.

² In an April 2013 report to the Council of Europe, Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muižnieks suggested that it is within Greece's capabilities to outlaw Golden Dawn if necessary (Muižnieks 2013: 2).

³ On its website, the party states: 'Golden Dawn is not a fascist or neo-Nazi movement. At the centre of fascist ideology is the state, not the Nation...at the core of our ideology is the Nation...and not the state. Those who characterise us as fascist or neo-Nazi are mere slanderers' (Golden Dawn 2012a).

European far right (Ellinas 2012: 126) – also indicates that the two might share a similar electoral base. For these reasons, I build a theoretical framework based on existing literature on the far right. Specifically, I take a demand and supply approach, in which the electoral market is viewed as akin to any other type of market. While the demand side reflects those factors that ‘affect the preferences and grievances among the population’, supply-side accounts refer to the ‘networks, resources of organization and political constraints and opportunities’ that affect the electoral success of parties (Muis 2012: 27). Though demand-side factors can be crucial, the extent to which these can be mobilized by FRPs depends on the supply side (Mudde 2007: 298). For instance, the British National Party has been unsuccessful in national elections largely because the first-past-the-post electoral system prevents the breakthrough of fringe parties. While it is tempting to attribute Golden Dawn’s breakthrough to grievances resulting from the Greek debt crisis, this on its own paints a very incomplete picture.

The paper begins with an outline of the theoretical framework, followed by a brief exploration of the history of the Greek far right. I will argue that four factors in particular are crucial to an understanding of GD’s electoral breakthrough. These include unemployment and economic discontent, and immigration and asylum on the demand-side; the compatibility of GD’s rhetoric with Greek conceptions of citizenship and nationhood, and the conduciveness of the political space on the supply-side. The empirical basis of the paper is derived from a wide range of relevant statistics. These data go back to 1990 wherever possible, though there are numerous gaps, particularly in immigration statistics.⁴

2 Theoretical framework

Since the 1980s and 1990s, the electoral success of parties such as the Front National in France or the National Democratic Party in Germany has sparked a torrent of academic interest. There continues to be little consensus on what such parties have in common. At the least, they are identified by their nativism – ‘an ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group’ (Mudde 2007: 19). A more comprehensive definition might also characterise them as authoritarian for their ‘belief in a strictly ordered society’ and populist for the conviction that society is made up of ‘two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, “the pure people” versus “the corrupt elite”’ (Mudde 2007: 23). Like many such parties, GD draws on a variety of these labels. Its ideological statements point chiefly to elements of populist nationalism and nativism, and are replete with anti-immigration and anti-system rhetoric (see for example Golden Dawn 2012a). I therefore use the various aforementioned terms liberally, though there is some debate on whether they should be interchangeable.

The most systematic attempts to explain the rise of far right parties have typically borrowed the ‘market metaphor’ from economics. Like firms, political parties are in constant competition over their market share. Those parties that fail to offer an appealing ‘product’ lose out in the electoral market, while those ‘with efficient routines and high-quality products will gain market share and prosper’ (Muis 2012: 27). Explanatory factors are therefore commonly split into demand- and supply-side elements (some social movement scholars prefer to use ‘grievances’ and ‘political opportunities’ as the corresponding categories (Koopmans et al. 2005)).

⁴ I have also drawn inspiration from a workshop organised by the Oxford European Studies Centre in May 2013 titled ‘Agency in the time of structural adjustment: social perspectives on contemporary Greece’. This explored various anthropological perspectives on the Greek crisis and helped shed light on the present social situation in the country.

Demand-side factors include objective conditions that ‘lead to subjective grievances or discontent’ that the far right can exploit (Koopmans et al. 2005: 181-3). On the macro-level, the factors most commonly referred to include: disaffection with globalization, economic or political crisis, and anti-immigrant sentiment (Eatwell 2003; Norris 2005; Mudde 2007). On the meso-level, any factor that bridges individuals and FRPs is considered relevant – for instance, the family has a particular role in socialising individuals into certain ways of thinking. Finally, on the micro level, individual characteristics such as ideology or personal insecurity are believed to be important (Mudde 2007: 202).

The supply side constitutes all the institutional and political opportunities that create an opening in the electoral market (Koopmans et al. 2005: 181). Some accounts further distinguish external and internal supply factors. External factors include, among others, the type of electoral system; the available political space; a cultural acceptance of populist parties; and the role of the media in propagating them (Mudde 2007: 233 ff). Among the internal factors are the party’s organisational capacities, but also the quality of its leadership (ibid: 261 ff).

In this paper, I examine four factors – two demand-side and two supply-side – that are especially pronounced in the literature and that seem to be prominent in the case of Greece. The following section lays out the theoretical setting for each of these factors.

2.1 Unemployment and economic discontent

One of the most common grievance explanations for the rise of far right parties is unemployment and economic discontent (Eatwell 2003; Koopmans et al. 2005; Norris 2005; Arzheimer and Carter 2006; Mudde 2007). When a country suffers high unemployment, ‘socioeconomic issues will normally have greater salience in the political debate’ (Mudde 2007: 206). Parties that convincingly place issues of particular interest to the electorate at the centre of their agenda - as FRPs often do - should thus benefit (ibid: 206).

It has also been argued that in times of economic downturn the opportunity cost or risk of supporting a more radical party is lowered (Brückner and Grüner 2010: 3). Voters have less to lose by voting for a fringe party in times of economic downturn than they do in times of economic growth, when they might prefer to vote for more familiar or established parties. Others find that voters are more likely to support far right parties in times of economic prosperity because ‘people in these circumstances are afraid to lose what they have gained’ – for instance through economic competition with immigrants (Lubbers et al. 2002: 371). In this case, the far right vote might come from those who are afraid they will become vulnerable, such as those employed in industries subject to structural change, rather than those who are already disadvantaged (Eatwell 2003: 57).

2.2 Immigration and asylum

If there is one thing most accounts of the rise of the far right can agree on, it is that far right parties tend to be particularly successful where there are concerns about immigration (Eatwell 2003: 49). An ‘ethnic backlash’ in response to increasing numbers of immigrants or refugees is not only the result of a perceived economic threat, but also of an ethnic or cultural threat felt by the majority population (Mudde 2007: 210). The level of perceived threat thus depends not only on the number of immigrants in the country, but also on the ethnic make-up of the immigrant population (ibid: 210). As with economic discontent, a far-right party’s ability to mobilize support based on ethnic grievances depends on the extent to which it can claim ownership of immigration issues. The capacity to do so is related to the resonance of such issues within the national discourse, as well as to the available political space.

2.3 Citizenship and national tradition

A factor that remains relatively overlooked in discussions on the emergence of the far-right is the prevailing ‘national configuration of citizenship’ and how this determines ‘the extent and forms of claims making by the extreme right’ (Koopmans et al. 2005: 186). Anti-immigrant and xenophobic claims of far right parties are more likely to resonate with the electorate where they somewhat coincide with both formal and cultural definitions of citizenship and belonging (ibid: 186). FRPs will be most successful where they are able to ‘portray themselves as in some way a legitimate part of the national tradition’ (Eatwell 2003: 62). Where this is not the case, it could be said that a crucial part of the ‘discursive opportunity structure’ (ibid: 62) necessary for the emergence of such a party is absent.

2.4 Political space

Finally, the political space (Norris 2005: 192) refers to the dynamics within a party system that enhance or limit the ability of far right parties to penetrate the political arena (Mudde 2007: 237). There are two ways of assessing the available political space: the positioning of the mainstream right party with regards to the FRP, and the positioning of the mainstream right with respect to the mainstream left.

In terms of the placement of the mainstream right with respect to the extreme right, the space could be said to be least conducive where the former is more right-wing, thus narrowing the space available to the extreme right (Arzheimer and Carter 2006: 423-4). The extreme right would then be most successful when its right-wing competitors take a more moderate stance (Norris 2005: 193). On the other hand, a greater overlap in the ideological positions of the two contenders might help legitimise the claims of the far right. Where a mainstream party adopts a more right wing stance consistent with far right claims, ‘political discourse becomes contaminated by its themes, especially ones relating to immigration’ (Eatwell 2003: 58).

In terms of the placement of the mainstream right with respect to the mainstream left, it could be argued that the far-right benefits most when these two converge at the centre (Norris 2005: 192). When this is the case, the far-right can convincingly claim to offer a significant alternative to mainstream parties (Eatwell 2003: 58). On the other hand, where the established parties diverge significantly, ‘this distinctiveness may signal the lack of elite consensus, which might further extreme right party success’ (Arzheimer and Carter 2006: 424).

3 A recent history of the Greek far right

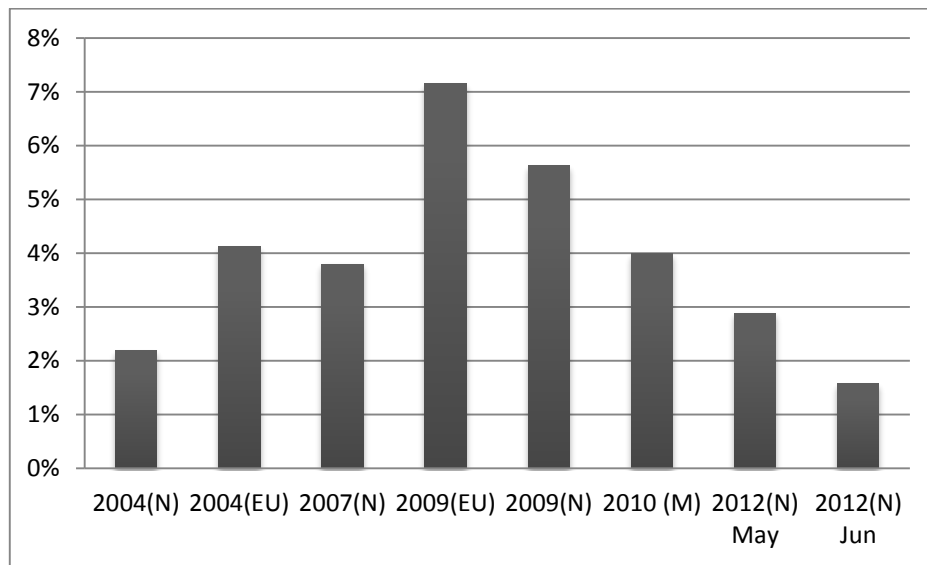
Following a seven-year dictatorship under a military junta known as the ‘Regime of the Colonels’, Greece returned to democracy in 1974 under the premiership of conservative New Democracy’s Konstantinos Karamanlis. In an attempt to distance itself from the military regime, New Democracy immediately made a conscious effort to alienate its extremist elements (Davis 1998: 166). As a result, an array of short-lived far-right fringe parties began to emerge, appealing to ND’s disillusioned members (Ellinas 2013: 3). Except for a result of 6.8% in the 1977 election,⁵ their total vote never once exceeded 1.7% in post-1974 national elections. Mainly royalist, the Greek far right failed to find a place in the academic literature on far right parties of the 1980s and 90s, which concurred that ‘despite the fact that public dissatisfaction with political institutions has risen during the past decade in Spain, Portugal and Greece, far-right movements have had no meaningful influence on the political landscapes

⁵ This was largely due to disaffection with the government and with the abolition of the monarchy (Ellinas 2012: 127).

of these relatively young democracies' (Davis 1998: 157). But though seemingly inconsequential, these parties did ultimately influence Greece's political landscape by keeping alive a piece of the country's authoritarian past: they were a reflection of a 'fascist legacy' (Anastasakis 2000) that left behind a generation set to challenge authority (Hirschon 2013).

The first Greek party to have been considered comparable in ideology and success to modern Western European FRPs was the Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS), founded in 2000 by Georgios Karatzaferis.

Figure 1: LAOS's performance in European, national and municipal elections, 2004-2012



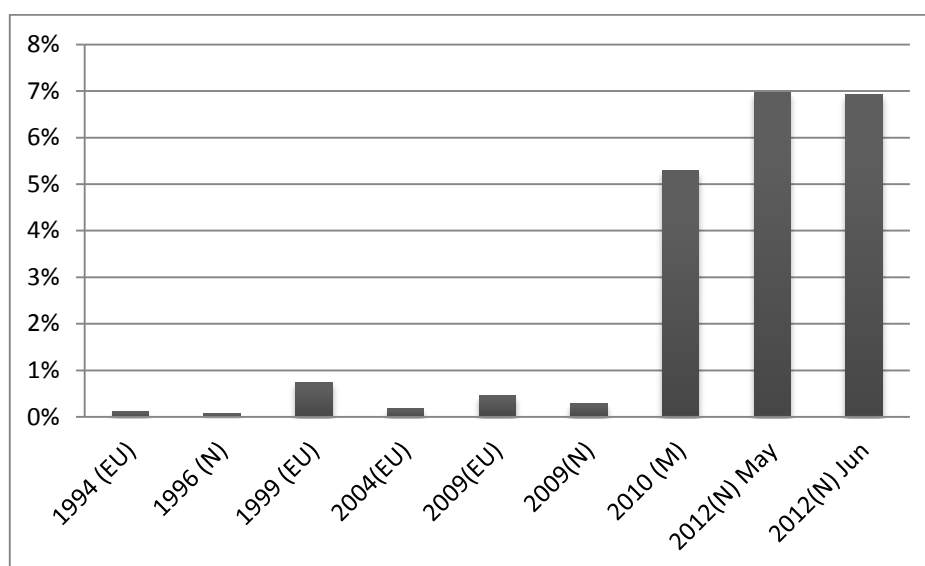
Note: N= National election, EU= European Parliament election, M= Municipal election

Sources: Ellinas (2012) and Hellenic Ministry of Interior (2012).

Characterised by the typical nationalist, populist and anti-immigrant discourse, LAOS's electoral successes were mainly attributed to growing xenophobia (Ellinas 2012:133). At the same time, the party reflected 'certain Greek particularities' given, as its name suggests, its religious appeal (ibid: 126). Figure 1 shows its vote share in national, European and municipal elections. Despite doing well in the 2009 national election, in the 2010 municipal election (branded the 'eurozone's first post-bailout election'), LAOS 'emerged weakened' (Verney 2012: 209). By the June 2012 elections, in winning only 1.58%, it had virtually been kicked off the political map by a much more extreme far right contender.

At the time of its founding in 1980, 'The People's Association-Golden Dawn' was very much like the small far right parties discussed above. GD held a deep admiration for the authoritarian 4th of August regime that governed Greece in the period 1936-1941 and explicitly expressed its admiration of Hitler's Germany (Psarras 2012: 31). In 1990, the Macedonia naming dispute and the first waves of mass Albanian immigration to Greece provided Golden Dawn with the ideal opportunities to engage in open violence against the 'internal enemy': Albanians, leftist students and Pontiac Greeks (Psarras 2012: 63ff). In fact, until the mid-1990s, it made no serious attempt to market itself as a viable political candidate, instead preferring an anti-system approach (ibid: 340). The party ran for the first time in the 1994 elections, winning only 0.1% of the vote. Figure 2 shows its electoral results from 1994 to the most recent elections.

Figure 2: Golden Dawn's performance in European, national and municipal elections, 1994-2012



Note: GD ran the 1999 European elections alongside Front Line, and the 2004 European elections as part of a 'Patriotic Alliance' group. The 2010 municipal election results are for Athens only.

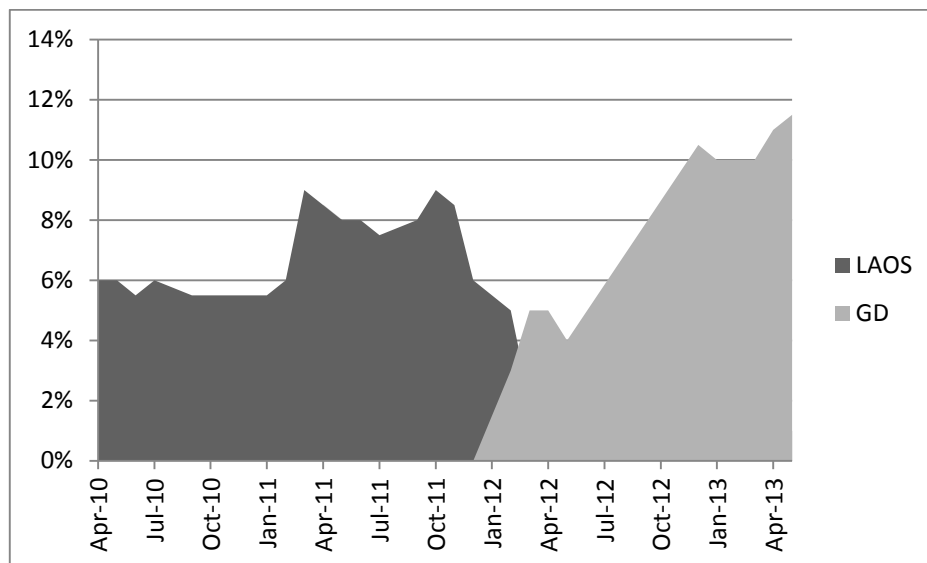
Source: Ellinas (2013: 26).

Following its electoral failure in the mid-1990s, GD chose to contest subsequent elections alongside other parties, though such 'nationalist alliances' proved no more successful (Ellinas 2012:347). While the party's manifesto remained replete with references to national socialism, by this time the need for a strategic transition from a 'national socialist' to a 'nationalist' party (described by LAOS's leader as the 'Trojan horse' tactic) had become especially important for its political career (ibid: 251). Ironically, this shift was not accompanied by a moderation of its violence. One of the most notorious cases on Golden Dawn's record remains the violent assault of student Dimitris Kousouris in 1998 by a high-ranking party member known as Periandros, who was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment in 2005 (Psarras 2012: 129). Kousouris was allegedly assaulted for insulting the Greek flag (ibid: 106). A national scandal ensued in 2004, when allegations emerged that Periandros, who had until then evaded arrest, had been able to do so because of his ties to the police (Athanasidou 2004)⁶.

Golden Dawn's success in electing its leader as a local councilor for Athens in the 2010 municipal election marked a first step towards its eventual electoral breakthrough in 2012. As shown in Figure 3, this breakthrough coincides with the effective replacement of LAOS by Golden Dawn following a brief overlap in their support in opinion polls in early 2012.

⁶ Indeed, GD seems to have received overproportionate electoral support among members of the police force in the 2012 elections. In 13 polling stations surrounding the Attica General Police Directorate, 'Golden Dawn averaged more than 20 per cent of the vote, whereas in the neighbouring "civilian only" polling stations it received 6 per cent of the vote, or below the Athenian average' (Phillips 2012). Members of the Hellenic Police vote in the district in which they work, and not based on where they live (Fisher 2012).

Figure 3: Support for LAOS and Golden Dawn in opinion polls, April 2010- May 2013



Note: Until December 2011, GD either does not appear in the opinion polls or comes under the ‘other’ category. The same happens for LAOS starting May 2012.

Source: Compiled by the author based on Public Issue political barometer polls (<http://www.publicissue.gr/en/category/surveys/>).

This shift marks a qualitative change in the nature of the modern far right in Greece. Though the two parties have been fairly similar in their nationalist and anti-immigrant discourse, GD has been much more involved in grassroots action than its predecessor. Most notably, Golden Dawn – in contrast to LAOS – has been explicitly violent throughout its political career. This is unusual, given that frameworks on the rise of far right parties typically view the ‘electoral struggle’ and violent tactics as antithetical forms of ‘political mobilisation’. The expectation is that parties moderate their violent claims once they select the parliamentary route (Koopmans et al. 2005: 187), but Golden Dawn does not seem to fit this pattern.

The following two sections address the four factors outlined in the theoretical framework and their potential role in catapulting GD into the political arena.

4 Unemployment and economic discontent

Between 1995 and 2008, Greece boasted a relatively high average GDP growth rate of 4% (Pelagidis 2010: 1), mainly thanks to credit expansion, the growth of the shipping and tourism industries, as well the stimulus of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games (ibid: 5). Despite a traditional abhorrence of indebtedness (Hirschon 2013), the Greeks began to embrace a new culture of consumption based largely on credit (Dalakoglou 2013). But while the ‘private standard of living’ began to improve, little was done in the public sphere in terms of structural reform (Pelagidis 2010:1).

As a result, the Greek crisis has had more to do with structural issues, such as low productivity, than with the global economic recession and financial crisis (Triantafyllidou 2011a: 6). Since agreeing a first rescue package or ‘memorandum’ with the EU and IMF in 2010, followed by a second rescue package in 2011-12, a series of ‘drastic austerity measures’ has been imposed ‘with a view to correcting its budget deficits and making the economy more competitive’ (ibid: 6). These measures have included 30% reductions to the salaries of public-sector employees, both direct and indirect taxes, as well as major cuts in public expenditure (ibid: 6). The period 2010-2012 saw ‘the abrupt impoverishment of a

large part of the population' (Dalakoglou 2012: 543). While the total unemployment rate was at around 13% in 2010, by 2012 it had reached 24%. What is more shocking is the massive spike in youth unemployment during the same period, from 33% to 55%.

These economic conditions have translated into widespread pessimism. A report based on the spring 2012 Eurobarometer poll reveals exceedingly negative attitudes about the economy, with 68% of participants saying that their current situation did not allow them to make any plans for the future, and that they lived day by day. This was the highest percentage in the EU (Eurobarometer 2012a: 11). 100% of respondents described the economic situation as 'bad', and 82% as 'very bad' (Eurobarometer 2012b: 26). Finally, while 20% thought that the impact of the crisis on jobs had reached its peak, 77% thought that the worst was still to come (Eurobarometer 2012a: 5). This pessimism has made itself manifest in the form of collective action against globalisation (Doxiadis and Matsaganis 2012: 48-9).

In the 2012 elections, economic discontent was evidenced in the vote shares of three parties in particular: Golden Dawn, the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA), and the Independent Greeks (ANEL). SYRIZA, founded in 2004, won between 3 and 5% of the vote in the 2004, 2007 and 2009 elections. In 2012, it emerged second (with 27% in June) while ANEL – a right-wing single-issue anti-austerity party founded in February 2012 – did slightly better than GD, gaining 7.5% of the vote (Doxiadis and Matsaganis 2012: 14-15). The unemployed were overrepresented by a factor of 1.7 among GD voters, 1.5 among ANEL voters and 1.4 among SYRIZA voters. More indicative is the fact that 60% of the unemployed voted for one of these three parties, while their combined total vote share was 41%.

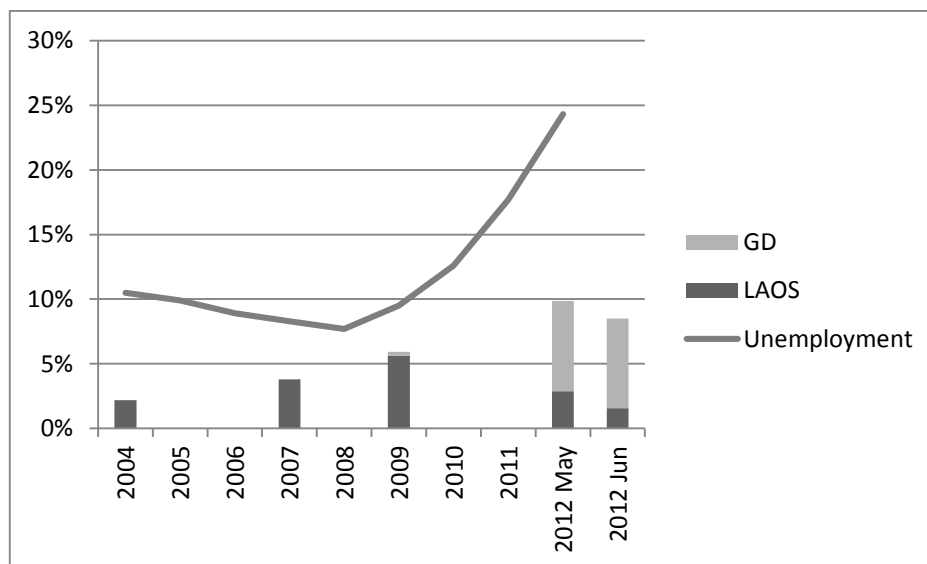
GD also drew over proportionate support among the self-employed or youth (Public Issue 2012b). In a pre-election poll, 13% of 18-24 year-olds and 16% of 25-34 year-olds indicated they would vote for GD, but only 4% of 55-64 year-olds and 2% of those of 65 years and over voiced similar intentions. Finally, 10% of males but only 4% of females voted for the party (Public Issue 2012b). The above groups are precisely those that tend to be most economically vulnerable (Arzheimer and Carter 2006: 422). But in which ways has the party mobilised economic discontent? In rhetoric, very much as one would expect:

EVERY FOREIGN WORKER IS ONE UNEMPLOYED GREEK: An expulsion of illegal immigrants would mean hundreds of thousands of new jobs for Greeks (Golden Dawn 2012b).

This quote, taken from GD's online manifesto, poignantly links anti-immigration rhetoric to the economic situation. The party's proposed solution to the country's woes is a restructuring of the economy around the primary sector, which currently employs a large number of cheap immigrant labour (Golden Dawn 2012b). Golden Dawn's tactics have been very much based around its social action, which is always arranged 'only for Greeks'. Perhaps most relevant are its unofficial employment programmes that seek to aid unemployed co-nationals. The party has been known to arrange visits to enterprises that employ immigrants in order to advise employers to hire Greeks and thus stop being 'irresponsible to local communities' (Koronaïou and Sakellariou 2013: 335). It also organizes regular public food donations, which require recipients to produce a Greek national identity card (ibid: 336). These efforts to project itself as a party of action rather than of words set it apart from other right-wing parties and certainly contribute to its popularity, but could be seen as part of a broader trend of grassroots movement that reflects 'citizens' fatigue' and a feeling that demonstrations are no longer a sufficient means of challenging authority (Agelopoulos 2013). Given these circumstances, it is tempting to

attribute Golden Dawn's success to the debt crisis. Figure 4 visualizes the increase in the far right vote in 2012 in the context of the spike in unemployment starting in 2010-11.

Figure 4: Total unemployment rate and vote shares of Golden Dawn and LAOS in national elections, 2004-2012



Sources: Electoral data from Ellinas (2013) and Hellenic Ministry of Interior (2012); unemployment figures from International Monetary Fund (2013).

However, the graph indicates an increase in the far-right vote in the latter half of the 2000s that coincides with a steadily declining unemployment rate. Though the economic crisis seems to have contributed to GDs breakthrough, previous fluctuations in both unemployment and far-right support suggest other driving forces are at play too. An economic explanation of GD's success also falls short because it is but one of the parties that were able to capitalise on economic discontent in the 2012 elections. While SYRIZA has attracted the greatest unemployed vote, it seems that ANEL more broadly appeals to those discontented with austerity measures. Economic discontent is thus a significant but insufficient factor to understanding the rise of Golden Dawn.

5 Immigration and asylum

Since the start of mass immigration to Greece in the 1990s, the country has struggled to collect immigration data, and flow data in particular (Triantafyllidou 2012: 9). Eurostat estimates from 2012 place the number of foreign citizens in Greece at approximately 975,000, or 8.5% of the population. This compares to 6.6% in the EU as a whole (Doxiadis and Matsaganis 2012: 35). The number of foreign citizens resident in the country has progressively increased in recent years,⁷ though there is no evidence of any particular spike between the 2010 and 2012 elections.

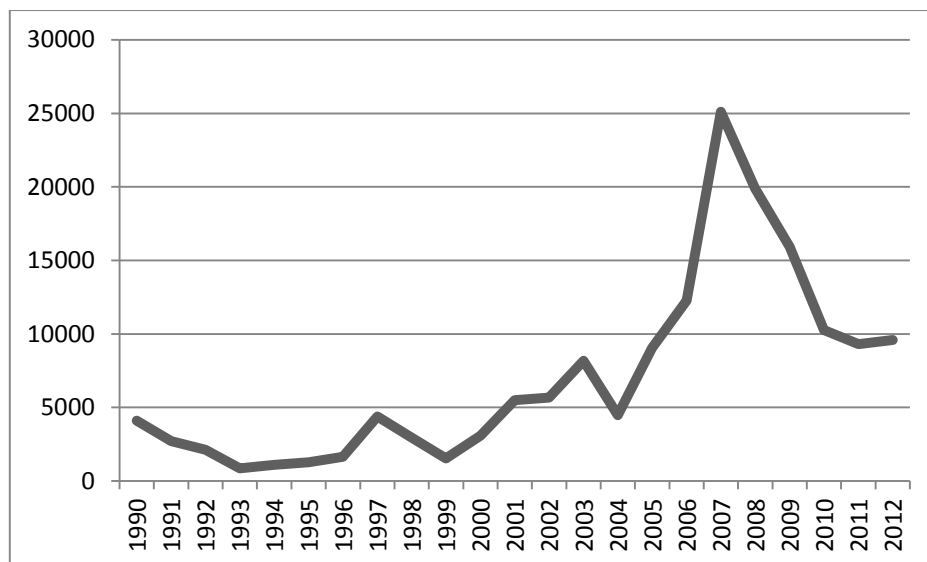
Given the country's failure to develop 'a credible policy for managing legal migration inflows', the majority of immigrants are nevertheless thought to arrive undocumented (Triantafyllidou 2011a: 7). An estimate from 2011 puts the number of irregular immigrants at approximately 391,000, or 3.5% of the population (Triantafyllidou 2012: 7). In 2010, Frontex, the EU's external border agency, announced that 'Greece accounted for 90% of all irregular border crossings into the EU' (Human Rights Watch

⁷ Eurostat data on the number of foreign citizens in Greece begin in 2006.

2012: 31). Following apprehension at the border, most migrants are handed an expulsion order and are asked to leave the country (Triantafyllidou 2011a: 14). Presumably, the majority then travel to Athens, whether to seek asylum, transit to another EU country, or to meet ‘their co-ethnic networks or their smugglers’ contact people’ (ibid: 14).

Figure 5 shows the number of asylum applications filed in the period 1990-2012. The graph evidences a peak in the number of applications in 2007, followed by a rapid decline until 2010. This is partly due to a reform of the asylum procedure in 2009, which scrapped the appeal system and assigned ‘the responsibility for status determination to local police’, thus resulting in the UNHCR’s ‘withdrawal from assistance in the process’ (OECD 2012: 234). In addition, several countries have suspended returns to Greece under the Dublin Regulation⁸ following reports and court rulings that have highlighted the inadequacy of the country’s reception facilities (ibid: 234). It is worth noting that only a minute fraction of all asylum applications are approved, such that it is not the number of applications in itself that is significant, but the possibility that many of the asylum seekers whose requests are rejected manage to remain in Greece illegally.

Figure 5: Number of applications for asylum in Greece, 1990-2012



Source: Eurostat (2013) and Hellenic Police (2012).

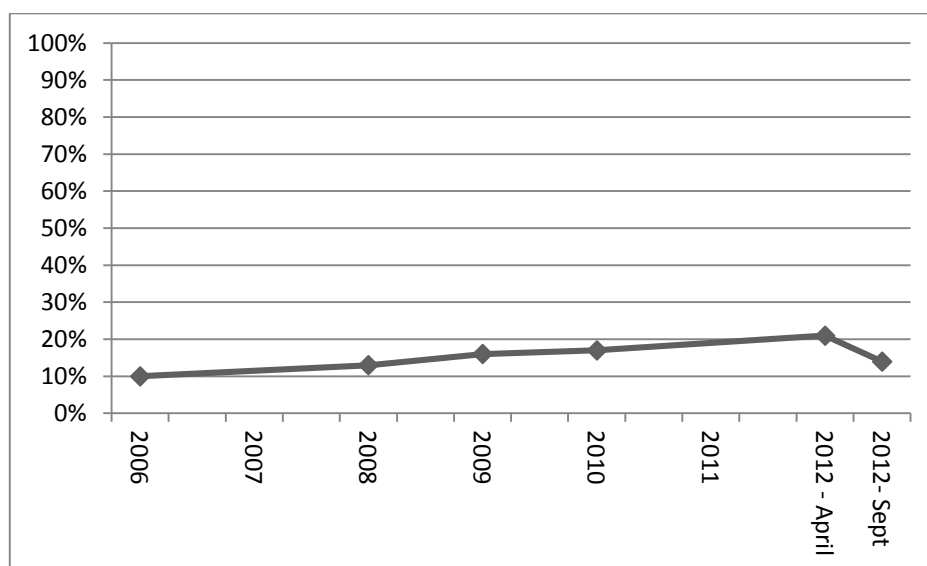
Overall, then, there has been a gradual increase in the number of foreign citizens resident in Greece, though there has been no sudden spike in numbers in the past couple of years. It is impossible to know how many irregular migrants are currently present in the country, though it seems that the crisis has pushed more and more people into undocumented status. However, as emphasised in the theoretical framework, perceived numbers matter just as much as actual numbers in generating a sense of threat that may result in far-right party support.

A factor that might have a particular impact on people’s perceptions is the ethnic composition of the immigrant groups described above. In 2011, 57% of the legal stock of migrants consisted of Albanians (Triantafyllidou 2012: 13). In fact, since the mass immigration of Albanians began in the

⁸ The objective of the EU’s Dublin Regulation ‘is to identify as quickly as possible the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application, and to prevent abuse of asylum procedures’ (European Union 2011). In practice, the responsible Member State is usually the first country of entry into the EU.

1990s, the average Greek has very much come to associate ‘the term “immigrant” [...] with Albanian man’ (Batziou 2011: 50). But particularly in the past five years, Greece has seen an increase in the number of Asian and African immigrants, mainly from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. ‘These new immigrants have some special features that make them stand out from the settled Balkan and East European immigrants of the former 15 years: they are predominantly young men, they are darker, they are Muslim in the vast majority; and they are trapped into an irregular status’ (Triantafyllidou and Kouki 2013: 7). Indeed, a recent Public Issue poll reveals that the visibility⁹ of Albanian immigrants among respondents has gradually declined in recent years (from 88% in 2006 to 74% in 2012), while that of Pakistanis and Africans has increased (from 2% to 7% for Africans, and from 18% to 33% for Pakistanis) (Public Issue 2013b). This seems to have affected people’s perceptions: the percentage of respondents who felt that immigrants caused problems increased gradually between 2006 (10%) and April 2012 (21%).

Figure 6: Percentage declaring that immigrants cause many or some problems in their neighbourhood, 2006-2012



Source: Public Issue (2013b).

The decrease observed between April and September 2012 (to 14%) may in part be due to the launch by the Police in August 2012 of the ironically-named Xenios Zeus (Hospitable Zeus) programme (Public Issue 2013b). The programme, which aimed to ‘sweep’ the streets of Athens of illegal immigrants (Psarras 2012: 441), approached as many as 65,767 individuals in the period August-December 2012, of which 4,145 were arrested (Hellenic Police 2013). It is likely that the launch of the programme encouraged many immigrants to stay out of the public eye.

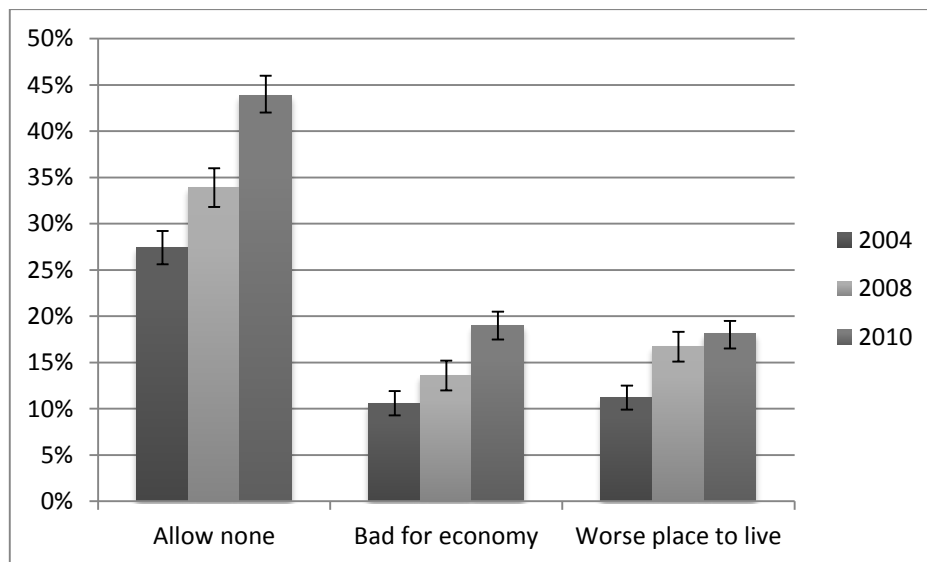
Yet while the Public Issue poll suggests that the majority of respondents might have had a positive, or at least neutral attitude towards immigrants, the European Social Survey paints a very different picture. As shown in figure 7, respondents to the ESS became consistently more negative in their attitudes to immigration over the years 2004, 2008 and 2010. Strikingly, in 2010, Greeks were

⁹ Visibility here refers to the respondents’ awareness of immigrants of these particular nationalities in their neighbourhoods.

significantly more negative about immigration than the respondents of any other country participating in the survey.¹⁰

So how has GD mobilised such sentiment? On its website, the party explains: ‘Illegal immigrant invaders are an uncontrollable army, which depletes our social structure and alters our national identity’. GD calls for the imprisonment of irregular migrants far from residential areas ‘where conditions do not resemble those of a five-star hotel’, until such time as they can be repatriated (Golden Dawn 2012b). The party thus holds particular sway in areas of Athens that are home to high immigrant populations (Doxiadis and Matsaganis 2012: 33). One such neighbourhood is Agios Panteleimonas, where the party has seized responsibility for law and order, portraying itself as somewhat of an urban hero (Psarras 2012: 369). Not unlike its social action for the unemployed, Golden Dawn markets itself as the guardian angel of those vulnerable to immigrant crime. In fact, it seems that in comparison to the typical ‘immigrants stealing jobs’ rhetoric seen in much of the rest of Europe, in Greece anti-immigrant rhetoric has been more about the mobilization of fear of crime (ibid: 367). In some ways, criminality has been ‘migratised’, to the extent that police have been known to ask victims to claim that their assailants were immigrants (Dalakoglou 2013).

Figure 7: Attitudes toward immigration in Greece in 2004, 2008 and 2010



Note: The figures correspond to the most negative answer category on the questions: ‘To what extent do you think Greece should allow people from poorer countries outside Europe to come and live here?’; ‘Would you say it is generally bad or good for Greece’s economy that people come to live here from other countries?’; and ‘Is Greece made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?’. Design weights have been applied and error bars denote 95% confidence intervals.

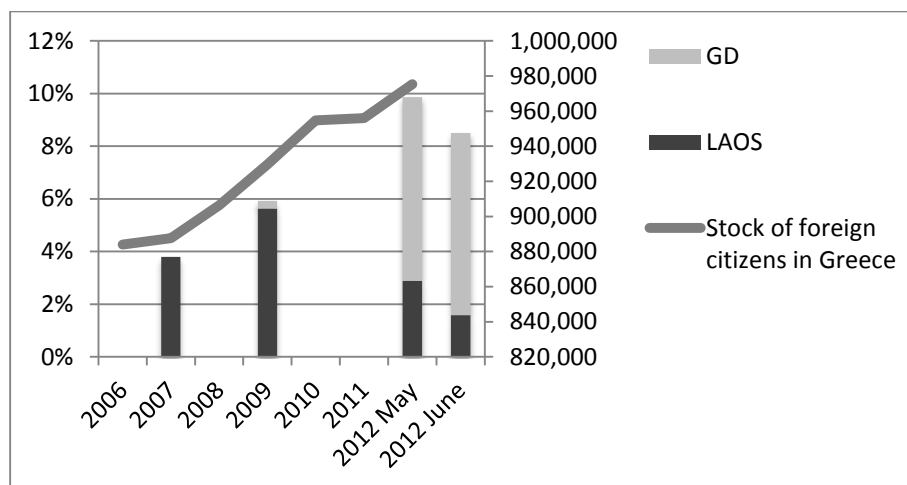
Source: European Social Survey 2004, 2008 and 2010.

It is thus clear that there is strong and rising anti-immigrant sentiment in Greece, but to what extent has Golden Dawn succeeded in capitalising on this? In the aftermath of the 2012 elections, 27% of its electorate mentioned the immigration issue as their primary motivation for voting for the party (Public Issue 2012a). In this particular poll, only GD voters mentioned immigration as a reason for

¹⁰ The puzzling mismatch between the results of the aforementioned poll and those of the ESS might be due to a feeling that if not in the respondents’ own neighbourhoods, immigrants must cause problems elsewhere.

voting for their chosen party. Indeed, as figure 8 reveals, the rise in the far right vote in recent national elections coincides with an increase in the number of foreign citizens.

Figure 8: Stock of foreign citizens in Greece and the vote shares of Golden Dawn and LAOS in national elections, 2006-2012



Sources: Stock figures from Eurostat (2013); electoral data from Ellinas (2013) and Hellenic Ministry of Interior (2012).

In short, it is likely that the changing ethnic composition of immigrant populations has enhanced their visibility as well as the tendency to associate migrants with crime. It is thus through its local action that GD seems to resonate with people's grievances. Where successive governments have failed to deal with the pressures of immigration due to 'a total lack of administrative capacity, structures and funding' (ECRE 2012), GD has taken law and order into its own hands. At the same time, immigration pressures cannot on their own explain Golden Dawn's success over LAOS, which was highly anti-immigrant itself. I will continue by arguing that GD's anti-immigration rhetoric resonates with the ethnic nature of the Greek model of citizenship, and is partly legitimized by the political positioning of other parties.

6 Citizenship and national tradition

As was argued in the theoretical framework, the resonance of far right anti-immigrant discourse has a lot to do with a country's formal and cultural definitions of citizenship (Koopmans et al. 2005: 186). 'Models of citizenship reflect the relationship between immigrants' and citizens' rights in each country and, thus, the ways in which national identity, cultural difference and tolerance interact in each case' (Triantafyllidou and Kouki 2013: 6).

Greek citizenship law is very much based on the *ius sanguinis* principle – in other words, 'the automatic acquisition of the father's [or mother's] citizenship at birth, irrespective of where a child is born' (Christopoulos 2013: 1). Though ethnic origin is very much considered the principal marker of Greekness, what is more important in principle (though often not in practice) is one's 'Greek national consciousness', which is largely defined 'in terms of common language, religion, and traditions' (ibid: 8).

In 2010, the PASOK government took a significant step toward the reform of the Greek Citizenship Code through an amendment that was widely hailed as a positive development in indicators such as the Migrant Integration Policy Index, which declared in its 2010 assessment that 'Greece made the greatest overall progress of any MIPEX country' (MIPEX 2010). At its core, the amendment sought to implement rules on the processing of citizenship claims, which until then had been decided at the

discretion of administrative authorities (Christopoulos 2013: 11). The reform simplified the citizenship acquisition process for several groups, and for the first time ‘incorporated provisions for the naturalisation of third-generation migrants’ (ibid: 12). Within the domestic arena, the amendment did not receive as warm a welcome as that of MIPEX. The current Prime Minister, Antonis Samaras (ND), has been a ‘ferocious opponent’ of the legislation (ibid: 15), which was in fact recently deemed unconstitutional by the Council of State because the formal requirements that it introduced were seen as inadequate tests of an individual’s attachment to the ‘nation’ (Triantafyllidou 2013).

Interestingly, it is very difficult to separate this conception of Greek nationhood from Helleno-Orthodox religiosity (Triantafyllidou and Kouki 2013: 6). For the average Greek today it is an undisputed fact that Helleno-Orthodoxy defines Greek culture, and that the latter should enjoy a certain status for its ‘antiquity and disproportionate influence in western civilisation’ (Tsatsanis 2011: 18).¹¹ This has meant that religious elites have traditionally participated in the immigration debate as ‘securitizing actors’. While the Church usually shies away from direct anti-immigrant rhetoric, ‘its nationalist discourse, deriving from a self-declared role as custodian of national identity, [is] clearly hostile to those that [do] not belong to the in-group, that is, that were not born Greek Orthodox’ (Karyotis and Patrikios 2010: 47). This is corroborated by quantitative studies, which reveal a strong relationship between religiosity and anti-immigration attitudes (ibid: 54). Both LAOS and GD – the former directly, the latter more instrumentally – have engaged religious elites, and they in turn have spoken out in favour of the parties (Psarras 2012: 211-5). In the words of GD’s leader Michaloliakos, “the church and the army are the supporting pillars of the nation” (quoted in Psarras 2012: 218). In practice, such attitudes have been evidenced in a number of national controversies in recent years, three of which I turn to next.

The first case is that of the ‘Ohi’ (No) day parade in the town of Nea Michaniona near Thessaloniki in 2000 and 2003. The parade takes place on the 28th of October each year to commemorate the fascist Metaxas regime’s rejection of Mussolini’s ultimatum to Greece on 28 October 1940 (Tzanelli 2006: 28). Traditionally, each school’s best pupil carries the flag, but in 2000 and 2003, the Michaniotes discovered that their local school’s top pupil, Odysseus Cenai, was a second-generation immigrant from Albania. In both years, Odysseus ‘encountered hostility from his fellow students and so many parents of his classmates that he decided to give up his right to parade altogether’ (ibid: 28). The incidents escalated into nationwide debates over citizenship, with many arguing that ‘granting Cenai citizenship would not erase his ‘alien’ identity’ (ibid: 32). Similar episodes have occurred across Greece (ibid: 29).

The second case is that of the 2007 history textbook controversy, which concerned a school textbook that was widely criticised for its ‘denationalising effects’ (Tsatsanis 2011: 16). The book, which was immediately withdrawn by Minister of Education Euripides Stylianides (ND) upon his appointment in 2007, was seen as misrepresentative ‘of key events and of the role of iconic/heroic (male) figures in modern Greek history, for the sake of focusing on more quotidian aspects of Greek society’ (ibid: 15). The Greek curriculum has long been known to reinforce a xenophobic notion of Greekness (Tzanelli 2006: 41) and to encourage children’s pride in their country’s ancient myths and history. A 2011 report for the European University Institute’s *Accept Pluralism* project finds that the country’s educational system very much perpetuates the assimilationist model. For example, though religious diversity is largely tolerated, ‘the whole school environment is impregnated with the majority

¹¹ A 2012 survey by the market research company TNS ICAP found that 63% of respondents thought that the Greek nation is in many ways superior to other nations (TNS ICAP 2012: 4).

religion to the extent that migrant children feel forced to assimilate' (Triantafyllidou 2011b: 28). The history textbook controversy thus serves more broadly to highlight not only the ways in which the educational system consolidates national pride, but the means by which it perpetuates the dominant model of citizenship.

A final example comes from November 2010, at which time the Muslim population of Athens had gathered on the city's squares to pray and celebrate the end of Ramadan. The gatherings were used as a quiet means of protesting the fact that Athens remains the only European capital city without an official mosque (Triantafyllidou and Kouki 2013: 8). The event was tainted by violence, with demonstrators (among them GD members) distributing xenophobic leaflets 'while hostile locals blared music from nearby apartments, taunting unwanted immigrants as they gathered to pray' (ibid: 8). The incident demonstrates that any assertion of difference by a minority group is easily interpreted as a challenge to 'national homogeneity' (ibid: 9). Importantly, it also illustrates the role of actors such as Golden Dawn in bridging and transforming nationalist tendencies into racist ones (Tzanelli 2006: 45).

In many ways then, GD merely radicalises existing beliefs (Psarras 2012: 387). In its ideological statements, the party evidently mobilises ideals of Hellenism and the country's past:

All those who live in this Fatherland and have the honour of belonging to the Greek Nation must feel deep in their soul that they have a special responsibility because they do not belong to just any Nation, but to the Great Nation of the Greeks, which created culture, built two world empires and was reborn like a phoenix out of the ashes with the blood of the fighters of 1821 (Golden Dawn 2012a).

Such rhetoric seems to have been a major selling point in the 2012 elections. In a 2012 Public Issue poll, an overwhelming 46% of GD voters identified as 'nationalist'. This compares to only 6% of voters overall, 5% of ND voters and 13% of ANEL voters (Public Issue 2012c).

The party's image as an urban hero is again relevant here. In addition to its exclusivist unemployment programmes and food donations, GD has set up blood banks 'only for Greeks' as well as its own healthcare programme titled 'Medicines avec Frontiers' (as opposed to sans frontiers) to reflect its exclusion of foreigners, who are portrayed as a huge expense to the state health care system (Koronaïou and Sakellariou 2013: 337).

To sum up, the existing ethnic or assimilationist model of citizenship and nationhood that is prevalent in Greece is 'mobilised even in the face of recent changes in citizenship policy to reject migration-related diversity and migrants in general' (Triantafyllidou and Kouki 2013: 15-6). However, a word of caution is in order, in emphasizing that this account has not sought to imply the existence of a path dependency, or that racism is the inevitable result of certain national traditions. National history and tradition are certainly crucial in shaping a country's model of citizenship, but 'these are constantly in interaction with broader geopolitical and economic developments, migration flows, politics, diaspora and colonial settlements, or power relations within each nation state' (ibid: 15).

7 The political space

As was explained in the theoretical framework, there are two ways of scrutinising the political space: the positioning of the mainstream right with respect to the extreme right, and the positioning of the mainstream right with respect to the mainstream left. In Greece, the mainstream left (PASOK) and mainstream right (New Democracy) parties have long formed a rather strong two-party system. While

they had averaged about 83.8% in elections between 1981 and 2009, in the 2012 elections their combined vote share fell to only 32% in May and 41.9% in June (Ellinas 2013: 2). This is widely attributed to their support of the Greek bailout packages, but also to public disenchantment with corruption and clientelism (Doxiadis and Matsaganis 2012: 10). A 2012 study on corruption in Greece found that 84% of respondents strongly agreed that ‘there is a lot of corruption in Greek society’ (Public Issue 2013c).

A dataset created for the Choose4Greece voting advice application (VAA)¹² at the time of the 2012 elections contains the positions of Greek political parties on 38 different policy questions (Gemenis and Triga 2013b: 1). The parties’ positions were coded with the help of a panel of experts, who each ranked the parties on a five-point scale ranging from ‘completely disagree’ to ‘completely agree’ on each of the policy issues. These included questions relating to the economy, immigration, policing, the bailout agreement, as well as foreign relations. The experts were requested to support their decisions, for example with quotes from party manifestos (ibid: 1-2). The table below illustrates the results for the two mainstream parties, LAOS, GD, and SYRIZA. Based on the expert scores on each policy issue, the parties were given an aggregate score to reflect their left-right positioning as well as a second score based on their stance on the economic adjustment programme (memorandum).

Several observations can be drawn from Table 1. The first is the evidently leftist and anti-memorandum nature of SYRIZA, which confirms the finding that other parties have, like GD, attempted to capitalise on the issue of the bailout. The table also reveals that at the time of the 2012 elections PASOK was virtually a centrist party, while New Democracy diverged significantly from the centre. Indeed, what is immediately striking is the fact that both LAOS and ND were considered more right wing than Golden Dawn. This is largely due to the latter’s positioning on economic issues. For example, in contrast to ND, GD officially supports the raising of taxes on large corporations, and stands against privatization as a means of reducing the Greek deficit.

Table 1: Party positions data based on left-right and pro-/anti-Memorandum placement of parties in the May and June 2012 parliamentary elections.

	Left-Right May	Memorandum May	Left-Right June	Memorandum June
PASOK	-0.14	3.43	-0.14	3.43
ND	3.29	1.14	3.57	1.86
LAOS	2.57	-1.29	3.71	-1
GD	1.14	-2	2.29	-2.43
SYRIZA	-3.86	-3.29	-3.43	-3

Note: Each of the scales ranges from -4 (left/anti-memorandum) to +4 (right/pro-memorandum).

Source: Gemenis and Triga (2013a).

Meanwhile, on traditional ‘right-wing issues’, the three parties converge. All three are in favour of strong policing, and believe that irregular immigrants should be deported from Greece. They also concur that the granting of citizenship to second-generation immigrants will encourage more immigration to Greece, and that multiculturalism is not a positive phenomenon. Table 2 summarises

¹² ‘VAAs are online tools which aim to help voters by comparing their policy preferences to those of candidates and/or political parties’ (Gemenis and Triga 2013b: 1).

these findings by combining the relevant policy questions under the categories of immigration, law and order, and the economy. It confirms the convergence of ND, LAOS and GD on matters of immigration and law and order, and reveals that (on paper) Golden Dawn is in fact quite leftist in economic terms.

Table 2: Averaged party positions on issues relating to immigration, law and order, and the economy

	Immigration	Law & Order	Economy
PASOK	2.3	3.75	3.7
ND	4.75	5	4.3
LAOS	5	4.5	3
GD	5	5	1.7
SYRIZA	1	1.25	1

Note: The average positions, which range from 1 to 5, have been compiled based on the relevant policy questions in the dataset. For immigration and law and order, 1 denotes the most liberal view and 5 the most conservative one. With regards to the economy, 1 denotes a leftist stance and 5 a neoliberal one.

Source: Compiled by the author based on Gemenis and Triga (2013a).

Judging by its divergence from the centre, then, the theory that New Democracy may have legitimised Golden Dawn’s discourse seems plausible. Its right-wing conservative positioning on immigration and law and order indicates that at least at the time of the elections this stance was in fact mainstream. LAOS is likely to have played a similar role, particularly given that by 2011 it had itself achieved a ‘mainstream’ status by participating in an interim government (together with PASOK and ND) tasked with dealing with the political chaos surrounding the economic crisis (Triantafyllidou 2012: 28). This chaos was the result of the emergence, since 2010, of a new ‘cleavage’ in Greek politics. At this time, the two-party left-right system had begun to crumble due to widespread inter- and intra-party disagreement over the memorandum and subsequent austerity measures (Dinas and Rori 2013: 272). This resulted in increasing polarization between more pragmatic pro-bailout parties such as PASOK, and an anti-bailout camp ‘for whom Eurozone membership was not necessarily a priority and who could risk a potential exit’ (Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2013: 7).

In the 2010 elections New Democracy had sided with the anti-bailout camp, while PASOK and LAOS stood in favour of the memorandum. While the latter was immediately penalized for its decision, PASOK, which had been elected into government in 2009, managed to maintain its vote share in large part because it had been the main opposition party in 2004-09, and was thus ‘not associated with the debt and deficit explosion of that period’ (Verney 2012: 212).

Following the temporary collaboration of PASOK, ND and LAOS in the 2011 interim government, the stances of the latter two parties were reversed. In the 2012 elections, ND sided in favour of the bailout, and LAOS joined the anti-bailout camp in a scramble to salvage its reputation. Ultimately, all three parties were penalized, whether due to their pro-bailout positioning or their indecisiveness (Dinas and Rori 2013: 277).

The party positions data thus paint a powerful picture of the dynamics at play in the most recent elections. The positions of ND and LAOS regarding matters such as law and order or immigration coincide almost perfectly with those of Golden Dawn. The opportunity for GD to exploit this legitimizing effect was provided by the pro- and anti-bailout cleavage, on which front ND and LAOS

demonstrated considerable indecisiveness. This supports the hypothesis that where the mainstream right significantly diverges from the centre, it is likely to legitimize the claims of the far right. The second mode of scrutinizing the political space – the positioning of the mainstream right with regards to the mainstream left – is less helpful in this case, because PASOK and ND neither converge at the centre nor both diverge from the centre.

The two supply-side factors – conceptions of citizenship and the political space – both contextualise and substantiate the evidence provided for the demand-side explanations.

8 Discussion and conclusion

With the help of empirical evidence, I have explored four factors – unemployment, immigration, conceptions of citizenship, and the political space – that help explain the sudden electoral breakthrough of Golden Dawn in the Greek parliamentary elections of 2012. This breakthrough heralded a qualitative shift in the nature of the far right in Greece, given that GD's violent tactics vastly differentiate it from its predecessor, LAOS. Compared to LAOS, GD has also been much more engaged in grassroots action. At a stage in the economic crisis in which demonstrating is no longer considered sufficient, Greece has witnessed an upsurge in citizens' initiatives. In this context, Golden Dawn's employment programmes, food donations and 'law enforcement' efforts offer an appealing challenge to state authority that also incorporates xenophobic sentiment.

Taking a demand and supply approach has allowed me to develop a more complex understanding of the elements driving the rise of GD. While economic discontent, immigration pressures, and the ethnic-assimilationist model of citizenship help to explain the context for far right support more generally, the dynamics of the political space elucidate the specific reasons for which GD was able to profit at the expense of LAOS. In many ways, the four factors are highly complementary. I have argued that Golden Dawn mobilizes the Greek model of citizenship – an ethnic-assimilationist one – in order to capitalize on anti-immigrant sentiment. This has been on the rise in recent years, and has been strengthened by an acute economic crisis that has led to an unprecedented spike in unemployment and poverty levels. Since the signing of the first bailout agreement in 2010, Greece's political space has witnessed the weakening of a long-standing two-party system, and its replacement by a new cleavage between pro- and anti-bailout parties that transcends the left-right spectrum. As LAOS was discredited for joining the anti-bailout camp, so Golden Dawn was able to step in to occupy the far right political space. At the same time, the analysis revealed that the placement of New Democracy and LAOS on right-wing issues served to legitimize GD's discourse. As this paper has sought to highlight, then, no single factor can, on its own, adequately explain GD's success. For example, though the economic crisis seems a timely explanation, it cannot be a sufficient one given that countries such as Spain have experienced similar levels of economic discontent without witnessing the rise of an extreme right party.¹³

A factor that this paper has not addressed, in large part because it does not appear to have played a big role in the run-up to the 2012 elections, is the role of the media. This might form an interesting area for further research, given that previous studies have highlighted the role of 'media hypes' in propagating far right parties (Muis 2012: 153). Post-election, GD has received unprecedented media attention that has very likely merely served to further its reputation as a grassroots movement. In this

¹³ Though there have been some signs that the political space may be becoming increasingly conducive to the breakthrough of Platform for Cataluña, an anti-immigration party (Hernández-Carr 2012).

sense, it is important to remain wary of overemphasizing the party's electoral success, particularly given that it is the radical left SYRIZA that most benefitted from the 2012 elections.

While it may portray itself as anti-systemic and spontaneous, GD is in many ways a part of the system that enabled its breakthrough in the first place (Dalakoglou 2012: 539). This is evidenced not only by its alleged ties to the police, but by the lack of any meaningful action against the party on behalf of the Greek government. Until the drivers of populist sentiment are addressed, any such action is likely to prove ineffective.

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