New Political Opportunities for an Old Party Family?
The Case of Golden Dawn in Greece

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Abstract
During the last three decades, new radical and extremist right-wing populist parties have risen across Europe, drawing lately their appeal and support mainly from anti-immigrant and anti-globalization platforms. Despite the fact that racism and xenophobia in Greece are above the European average since the 1990s, the right-wing vote has appeared in the 2000s, following the rapid increase of immigrants coming from Asian and African countries. This paper seeks to explore the rise of the Golden Dawn (Chrissi Avgi), a politically marginal, right-wing, extremist organization, which managed to win 5.3% during the local elections for the city of Athens in November 2010. This right-wing group marked an impressive electoral result in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods of Athens, where 1/3 of the inhabitants are immigrants. The research focuses particularly in the area of ‘Agios Panteleimonas’, where the Golden Dawn won 14.7% of the vote. We hypothesize that the immigrants' concentration in this area functioned as a structure of political opportunity for the Golden Dawn, in order to place its anti-immigrant positions in the public and local agenda. By the means of issue ownership and local organization, we argue, the Golden Dawn tends to become a political actor in the city of Athens. We will therefore try to trace the particular strategy and the mechanism employed throughout a series of face-to-face semi-structured interviews, participant observation and a quantitative data analysis.

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Introduction
Although the parties of the populist radical right are of particular concern to the international scientific literature, few works focus on the analysis of the Greek case (Dimitras 1992, Kapetanyannis 1995, Kolovos 2005, Psaras 2010, Tsiras 2012, Ellinas 2010). There are two main reasons for this. The first reason for this neglect is related to the marginal political presence and electoral appeal of extreme right parties in Greece since the second world war. By 2009, when the Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS) entered the house for a second time (2007 and 2009), the electoral and organizational development of parties of the extreme right has been extremely limited and only temporarily recorded in the elections for the national and the European Parliament (e.g. National Party in 1977, EPEN in 1984). It appears that the experience of an authoritarian past (the dictatorship of 1936-1941 and the most recent of 1967-1974), in conditions of transition to democracy impede the development of a viable right-wing pole (Taggart 1995: 46).

It might also be the case that the presence of a strong right-wing party discouraged the emergence of smaller parties in the same area of political competition (Pappas, 2003: 96). More complex analyzes argue that the popularity of the far-right pole is heavily dependent on the political strategies adopted by the dominant centre-right party, New Democracy. In general terms, right-wing parties follow one of two different strategies vis-à-vis their far right rivals: either they try to absorb them within the right-wing pole keeping, at the same time, distance from the far right agenda or, the opposite, they take distance from the far right parties whilst integrating some issues of their political agenda (Kriesi 1995; Georgiadou 2011). The conservative New Democracys in Greece had successfully employed both in the past, however in different moments. After the 2009 leadership change, New Democracy alters its usual strategy creating a new situation in the far right scene: LAOS has gradually been absorbed from the New Democracy, which has absorbed the anti-immigration and nationalist agenda of LAOS as well.

The second reason for the absence of a significant number of studies related to the difficulties of research. The organizational structures of these parties is hardly permeable to the outside observer. The far-right organizations create obstacles to the researcher, particularly because of strong suspicion of their members against any outsider. The difficulty grows from the fact that these are often marginal groups isolated from the external institutional environment; they usually perceive scientific research through conspiracy theory and can therefore become dangerous for the researcher (Mudde, 1996: 226-227). The case of Golden Dawn, the party under scrutiny in this paper, is perhaps the most inaccessible to scholars case, at least among those organizations of the extreme right which record a certain political influence and an organizational continuity. To date, despite the fact that the organization has occupied a considerable extent the media, no research has been published that addresses the organization itself.

This paper sheds some light on the ideological and the organisational profile of the most successful ever extreme right party in Greece, Golden Dawn, and, most importantly, aims at explaining its recent electoral successes in the local elections of November 2010 in Athens as well as in the last general elections held in May 6th, 2012.

Ideological and organizational features of Golden Dawn
The Golden Dawn was founded in 1985 but its actual activation recorded in the early '90s in the context of the broader mobilization of Makedoniko issue (i.e. the issue regarding the name of the neighbouring country of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), as this was perceived in Greece after the collapse of communism and the disintegration of Yugoslavia. The party participated for the first time in 1994 European Parliament elections, winning
0.11% of the total vote. In the national elections of 2009 the People's Association-Golden Dawn rate was 0.29%, or 19,636 votes, while in the elections for the European Parliament in June 2009 won 23,564 votes (0.46%).

The Golden Dawn belongs to the party family of the European extreme right. Applying either the ten criteria of Falter and Schumann (1988) or the five common characteristics identified by Mudde (1995, 1996) in his study of 26 different definitions of the far right (nationalism, tribalism, xenophobia, and strong state antidimokratikotita), Golden dawn meets all of them. We distinguish (see Cas Mudde, Pierro Ignazi, Hans-Georg Betz, etc) between the "radical right parties" like the French National Front, the Austrian Freedom Party or the Greek Popular Orthodox Rally (Laikos Orthodoxos Synagermos) and many others, which –according to Mudde (2007)– are nationalist, populist, and autocratic, and the “extreme right parties” like the German NPD, the former MSI in Italy, or the Greek Golden Dawn. The first are xenophobic and anti-immigrant; they put cultural and social prerequisites for the integration of people from other ethnic groups to the national body (see Betz 1994). The latter are using violence in order to fulfill their political aims or, at least, they don’t exclude the use of political violence in their political actions. Extreme right parties are not only against immigrants. They are also aggressive vis-à-vis the immigrants; they support racist ideas with cultural and/or biological connotations; they are irredentist as well, since they deny the existing geographical borders of the postwar nation states. Golden Dawn fits perfectly to this description.

Many scholars use the term “far right” as an “umbrella” in order to describe all the different parties, organizations, movements, and ideologies of the right-wing pole that differentiates itself from the established right (Art 2011: 10). To this typology belong very different parties, like neo-populist, anti-immigrant and xenophobic parties, but also extremist parties, which not only want to reduce the number of irregular immigrants using an anti-immigrant demagogic rhetoric, but they also seek to “clean up” nation states from people (foreigners, Muslims, people with different skin colors, etc.) who are seen as unwanted in an “organic” ethnic body.

The vast majority of the far right parties are radical. Many authors insist that the main feature of these parties is their anti-immigrant character. The term “anti-immigrant parties” is very often used in order to describe the party family of the radical right parties (see for example van der Brug and Fennema 2003; van der Brug and van Spanje 2004), although it is not only the issue of immigration, but also those of globalization and European integration that belong to the core agenda of the radical right (Art 2011: 11). Radical right parties are anti-immigrant, against the globalization (i.e. the neoliberal capitalism) and eurosceptic too, although their anti-immigration, anti-neoliberal and eurospective character is rather limited in comparison to the relative positions of their extreme right counterparts. Parties like the Greek Golden Dawn stand against any aspect of multiculturalism, against a non-ethnic industrial economy, against any sense of europeanisation and internationalization.

The core positions of the Golden Dawn is reflected in the organization's website titled: "Identity: What is to be a Chrysafgitis [a member of Golden Dawn]". Party positions are closest to National Socialism and the racist ideologies of the interwar period than any other far-right organization in Greece. There are three main ideological pillars of the Golden Dawn: nationalism /tribalism, the powerful people’s state of welfare chauvinism and anti-parliamentarism/strong leadership. According to the organization's positions: ‘nationalism is the only absolute and real revolution because it seeks birth of new ethical, spiritual, social

1 The idea that ethnic-states and their people are ‘organic’ entities belongs to the core idea of the ‘anti-enlightenment tradition’. For this tradition see Sternhell (2009).
2 Mudde (2007) refers to almost 120 political parties of the populist radical right from all over Europe.
3 For the different level of euroscepticism within the European Extreme Right see Vasilopoulou (2009).
and spiritual values. [...] For, the people's nationalism is not only a numerical section of people but a qualitative composition of people with the same biological and intellectual heritage [...] The only state that serves to correct the historical role of the People is the state where political power has the people, without party pimps. The secular state is the political organization of the Nation and the Nation is in itself not to be a invention. [...] The People is born in the types of a race and its existence raises the Nation as a manifestation of the higher spiritual (moral, cultural, religious). The Nation coming from the people is needed to empower and develop the state. [...] The People State of Nationalism is the only direct democracy. The People are the real ruler, the prince himself from inside his leadership." (Golden Dawn, Identity: http://xryshaygh.wordpress.com/).

Regarding the importance of the migration issue in the discourse of the Golden Dawn, we should mention that in the ideological core of the organization not a single word mentioned about immigrants or illegal immigrants, although in the party’s recent election manifesto there was a subchapter dedicated to the positions of the party against immigrants. The issue of immigration is consistently very high on its agenda, but the Golden Dawn wants to distinguish itself from other organizations of the extreme right, which according to the party’s leader, Nikos Michaloliakos, are "reactionary petty bourgeois political formations created by the presence of illegal immigrants and nothing beyond that" (quoted in Kolovos, 2005: 27). In other words, the Golden Dawn does not want in any way represent itself as a "single-issue" party.

However, in order to have a complete picture of the extreme right, one should not limit her analysis to the ideological aspects of an organization, but should also study party’s behaviour (Minkenberg 1994). In this sense, the second reason that makes the Golden Dawn a distinct case is the fact that it is associated with extremely violent activity. Members often use the fascist salute (raised right hand) and the military marching step mimicking paramilitary groups. There are many testimonies and reports that members of the Golden Dawn bear arms. The organization became known throughout the country in 2005-2006 with the condemnation of party’s highly-ranked members for attempted homicide against members of a left group. Most recently, Golden Dawn members have been arrested with connection to many attacks on Asian immigrants mainly in the Athens area.

Little is known about the party’s internal life. Following the tactic of other extremist parties, Golden Dawn refuses to provide specific information concerning its organization and membership, a fact that it justifies by saying that there is a negative predisposition, mainly by the media, which obliges them to organize obscurly. We can safely argue though that its organization has recently expanded its action in urban, semi-urban and rural areas. It has developed local structures in 15 cities, where it searches and forms its cadres and candidates. Faithful to the pattern of the extremist party family, the Golden Dawn maintains a stable leadership since its foundation. Whilst there is a specific party structure, local branches and procedures, they function mainly as spaces for membership formation. Obedience and respect to the leader are absolute (Fürherprinzip). This is not only related to the extremist ideology, but also to the need for gaining visibility and being recognized, especially during the party’s first years. However, Nikos Michaloliakos is a powerful and uncontested leader, his succession is already being prepared, according to information provided by upper cadres.4

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4 In general terms, all extremist, right-wing parties are authoritarian. Some of them follow the charismatic-type of leadership, which is of an extrovert kind, having as an objective to maintain themselves and/or their parties continuously active in the media. The LAOS practiced a leadership of that kind. Its leader, Giorgos Karantzaferis, treated the party like a television product: he elevated its television audience, but did not manage in the end to acquire parliamentary representation. Others adopt an introvert type of leadership, which is a kind of practical leadership aiming to the party institutionalization and stabilization. The Golden Dawn
Research hypothesis
What explains the success of extreme right parties? Most of the answers related to demand for extreme right parties. Theories of demand attempt to offer explanations in micro, macro, meso level (Mudde, 1999, Lubbers, Sheepers and Billiet 2000, Lubbers, Gijsberts and Sheepers 2002, Eatwell 2003, Thijssen, de Lange 2005). Scholars interpret the rise of extreme right parties based on social welfare of their constituents (unemployment, crime, deterioration of urban environment and quality of life), individual characteristics (poor, unemployed, low educated) or entrenched perceptions and attitudes for others who are widely known political culture (racist ideas, nationalism). Research on the causes of the rise of extreme right parties, special emphasis is given on issues of everyday life, such as unemployment, crime, corruption, the consequences of globalization, migration and the difficulties of multicultural coexistence between Europeans and Muslim immigrants from Africa and Asia. These parties show ready to respond immediately to requests from voters. The term "demand parties" has been used to highlight the status of these parties "as parties that are gathering votes (out of protest, resentment, disapproval, etc.) and have turned their gaze to the electoral market" (Georgiadou, 2008:304).

Close association between these parties and popular demand accounts for an economic and sociological determinism in the study of populist radical right; such studies realize the extreme right as a mere reflection and direct consequence of macro-economic and social changes. Put simply, the success of these parties is treated as "normal" evolution of the consequences of economic hardship, unemployment, and the presence of large numbers of immigrants mainly from Muslim countries. These parties succeed, the argument goes, in carrying the resentment of citizens from representative institutions and the media.

This sociological determinism, leads to little research done on the role of the parties themselves to broaden their electoral influence. As outlined in Mudde (2007: 275), “few theoretical frameworks include internal supply-side factors, i.e. aspects of the populist radical right itself. Like so much research on political parties, the success or failure of populist radical right parties is primarily explained by external factors and the parties themselves are regarded as “hapless victims” of the demand-side and the external supply-side. While there might be some truth to this with regard to the first phase of electoral breakthrough, populist radical right parties play a crucial role in shaping their own fate at the stage of electoral persistence. The internal supply-side is even the most important variable in explaining the many examples of electoral failure after electoral breakthrough”.

Thus, compared to the established parties, we know little about the organizational characteristics of the extreme right parties (Goodwin 2010: 49) and their grass-roots action (Martin, Ivaldi, & Lespinasse 1999, Thijssen & de Lange 2005). It is true that research so far has been attributed little importance to the role of party activists, members, party professionals or volunteers in spreading the party’s political positions around them. Some studies even showed that participation in parties of the extreme right has more complex causes than those assumed earlier (Klandermans & Mayer, 2006: 269). Also little attention has been given to the ideology of these parties and how this is propagandized (Mudde, 2000).

The present paper aims at better connecting demand with supply. We are arguing that to understand the vote for Golden Dawn, one has to study the link between supply and
demand. Our basic hypothesis is that differences in the electoral influence of Golden Dawn in the municipality of Athens are not so much related with demand, but with internal dimensions of supply, i.e. the increased mobilization and subsequent recognition by the citizens. In other words, the party initially appears and mobilizes in areas where demand is relatively high. This mere presence, but also mobilization, creates even more demand for the party. In fact, after a while, increasing demand causes further increases in the supply side and in the end you cannot tell which of the two affects the other.

**Building a supply-side model against competing explanations**

Common wisdom suggests that the increase in the electoral appeal of Golden Dawn has coincided with the massive arrival of immigrants in Greece, and especially in Athens. After 2004 the situation in the centre of the Greek capital became critical, as the immigration flows have hit their highest level. The rapid change of the inhabitant composition in underprivileged areas of Athens and the sharp drop in property values in former middle-class neighborhoods of the city, combined with the absence of immigration policies in order to address this multi-level issue, constitute a fertile field for the action of anti-immigrant and far right parties. In the local elections of November 2010, the Golden Dawn recorded its highest electoral scores in the 4th and the 6th municipal department, the areas with the highest levels of immigrant and crime rates.

![Figure 1 about here](image1)

But a more careful look at the electoral scores in the 59 electoral districts of the city of Athens per municipal department shows that, firstly, the party was electorally strong in other areas than the 4th and the 6th department; secondly, the Golden Dawn won more than 5.29% in districts with low (<5%) or medium level of immigration (11-20%) but remained under the total score of 5.29% in the second department, where the level of immigration is high; and, thirdly, the right-wing extremist Golden Dawn achieved its higher electoral scores in the same districts as the radical right Orthodox Popular Rally (LAOS) did in the last three general elections.

![Figure 2 about here](image2)

The upper-right graph of Figure 2 presents the relationship between support for the Golden Dawn and immigrant rates (panel 1). Although we do find a monotonic pattern, it is far from linear. There seem to be more that needs to be taken into account than the ethnic composition of Athens’ electoral districts. The results for the link between the Golden Dawn and the LAOS are analogous. Again, we find a positive relationship, which however is far from perfect. Thus, although it seems pertinent to account for both these factors in our empirical analysis to follow, it is still important to examine the electoral returns of grass-roots mobilisation.\(^5\)

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\(^5\) The fact that the GD was not simply perceived as a substitute of the more established in the electoral arena LAOS is also revealed by the non-monotonic relationship between the electoral success of the party in the municipal election and LAOS’ 2009 electoral performance (second graph of Figure 2). In the three districts in which LAOS achieved its higher electoral percentage, the GD did not perform equally well. To be sure, little can be inferred by these cases alone. However, there are clearly more factors that need to be taken into account when it comes to the GD’s electoral appeal apart from knowledge on LAOS’ electoral strongholds.
Our supply-side theory needs to be examined against other potentially relevant explanations of extreme-right support. In this section, we try to unpack these alternative theories. In a following section we describe in more detail the indicators used to capture these factors. A first competing explanation is that there are probably significant demographic determinants of support for the Golden Dawn (GD). Education, income, socioeconomic status, as well as gender and age have been frequently referred to as important predictors of preferences towards the party. If the Golden Dawn attracted mainly voters with lower socioeconomic status, the observed difference in its electoral appeal across the city may be due to such demographic differences across the various counties. We thus need to control for these potential confounds in order to distinguish their effect from possible mobilization effects that are of interest here.

Another important factor to be taken into account relates to objective indicators of immigration and crime rates. The Golden Dawn holds extreme anti-immigration stances and therefore, it is important to control for the average level of immigration and crime rates—often related to the presence of immigrants—at the local level when trying to detect any mobilization effect on the GD vote. Related to the aggregate level immigration and crime rates are people’s attitudes about immigrants. Our argument is not that the GD managed to intensify some people’s predispositions against the immigrants. Rather, by engaging in the local society, it provided goods and services that made people more sympathetic to the party, regardless of their attitudes towards immigrants. We thus need to control for attitudes towards immigrants. The reason we need to take this attitudes into account is that people who collect information about the GD are more likely to hold positive views towards the party. These are also the people more likely to be mobilized to take part in the party’s activities. These people are in turn likely to hold more anti-immigration views than average.

Attitudes are of course linked with perceptions. People may resort to the Golden Dawn if they perceive a personal threat from immigrants or if they simply perceive crime as an important problem affecting their living conditions. Again, if individuals mobilized by the Golden Dawn are those who are also more likely to attach high importance to crime and to link crime with the immigrants, we are again faced with the same selection problem. These people would be probably more likely to rate positively the party even without having experienced its grass-roots activities in their neighborhood. Thus, we need to take into account individuals’ perceptions about the current state of affairs with regard to crime.

A final factor that needs to be taken into account is that the Golden Dawn is not only an anti-immigration party. It is also and primarily an ultra-nationalist and extremist party with a discourse based on racial discriminations. Again, the GD is probably more visible among people who hold nationalist views. To account for this possibility we need to take into account people’s ideological predispositions as well as their more generic attitudes towards nationalism and towards other political representatives of this ideological camp.

Instrumenting Golden Dawn’s visibility: the results of a quantitative analysis
The analysis is based on a random survey of 1,630 individuals residing in the municipality of Athens. As shown in Figure 1, the municipality of Athens is divided into seven administrative units, the so-called municipal counties. Following our previous discussion about the physiognomy of the Golden Dawn, two contextual characteristics seem to be of primary importance, namely the level of delinquency and the ethnic composition of the area of residence. Table 1 displays the crime rates and the percentage of non-indigenous population in each county. Even at first glance, it is clear that the 6th county differs from all other areas with respect to both immigration and crime rates. It scores very highly in both of
them, although other counties score also high in one of the two categories (e.g. counties one and four with respect to crime, and counties one and two with regard to immigrants). This aspect needs to be born in mind in the next section when we spell out our identification strategy.

Table 1 about here

Even when accounting for all these potential confounds, there may still be various unobservable factors making the GD both more visible and more likeable. To mediate this problem, we do not simply add indicators of GD visibility in models that already contain information about all the factors described above. We rather use residence in the 6th county as an instrument of GD visibility. We argue that despite the obvious gap in immigration and crime rates in this area when compared to all other counties in the municipality of Athens, the reason the GD achieved this unprecedented electoral result relates to its grass-roots mobilization activity. Although its action eventually spread in various neighborhoods of Athens, its core fieldwork during all this period was Agios Panteleimonas and its surrounding neighborhoods. This area belongs administratively to the 6th county. Before we provide an intuitive justification for the use of county of residence as an instrument of GD visibility, we need to spell out the conditions that need to be fulfilled in order our IV analysis to be valid. To do so, we use the potential outcomes framework (Angrist et al. 1996).

Let Y denote the average level of support for the GD, where as D, our treatment variable becomes 1 if people have been aware of the Golden Dawn’s grassroots activity and 0 otherwise. We can thus denote the potential support for the GD under the two conditions defined by our treatment: Let Yi(1) denote the level of support if GD’s activity has been visible to respondent i, whereas Y(0) denotes the counterfactual support for the GD for i, had she not been aware of GD’s actions. Given that individuals’ prior characteristics may affect both their treatment values and their support for the GD, we find ourselves in the classic selection bias problem, whereby the baseline support for the GD would have been different among those who experienced the GD in their neighborhood than those who did not even if the former had not noticed the GD in their neighborhood E{Y(0)|D=1} \neq E{Y(0)|D=0}.

An important caveat is that although the survey is aimed to be representative for the population of Athens, we cannot necessarily expect that this will be the case when focusing on specific areas of the city. Most importantly, one of the reasons the municipal election results in Athens came as a big surprise was that opinion polls did a particularly poor job in predicting it. The reason for this party-specific downward bias is that at least until the 2012 May and June general elections, many people would avoid revealing their true preferences for the party. In effect, GD has been a typical case of a party characterised by “hidden vote” (Fernandez and Dinas 2012). Three factors impede us from addressing this limitation by weighting the observations in order to match the party vote share of the 2010 municipal election. First, the survey was implemented long after the actual election. The Greek party system entered in a period of dramatic changes and transformations as manifested by the two general elections of 2012. Our survey comes amidst this period, starting from the incumbent PASOK’s victory in 2010 and ending with the party’s electoral collapse in 2012. During the same period, the Golden Dawn saw its until then miniscule vote share escalating to a 7 per cent of the national vote. When all these developments are taken into account, we are forced to accept that what this survey captures is a snapshot of this period of continuous fluctuations and change. Second, people often vote in different areas than those in which they reside. Although this is only a trivial problem when one is interested in explaining vote choice and party preferences in a nation-wide scale, it becomes particularly problematic when we focus on the partisan dynamics of lower units of aggregation. Third, we are mainly interested in conditional relationships between party preference and various contextual, socioeconomic and attitudinal traits. Unless this measurement error at the level of the county affects our key independent variables, it only affects the precision of our estimates (?). For all these reasons, we take our data at face value. Doing so, we try to examine whether the visibility of the Golden Dawn helped the party increase its electoral appeal net from all other standard determinants of anti-immigration electoral success.
To account for this problem, we focus on county of residence as a way to alleviate the selection problem in the assignment to the treatment condition. Denote \( Z \) a dummy that switches on for respondents residing in the 6th county. The IV estimand can be thus written as:

\[
IV_{\text{estimand}} = \frac{E(Y | Z = 1, X) - E(Y | Z = 0, X)}{E(D | Z = 1, X) - E(D | Z = 0, X)}
\]  

The use of municipality of residence is based on the idea that residing in the 6th municipal county is likely to have brought people into contact with the GD. Although to a large extent this contact is likely to be the outcome of prior predispositions, it is also plausible to believe that many people would continue having no contact with the GD had they not lived in this area. In order the IV estimand to reveal the causal effect of GD visibility on GD support, the following conditions need to be satisfied. As is seen in the notation of equation (1), our identification strategy is based on the idea that our instrument can only be valid after we condition on our series of observables, i.e. all the factors highlighted in the previous sections. All these factors are summarized under the vector \( X \). The assumptions spelled out below are evaluated by taking into account this vector of observables.

1. **Ignorability**: The IV is independent of potential outcomes and treatments: \([Y_{00}, Y_{01}, Y_{10}, Y_{11}, D_0, D_1 | X] \perp Z\).
2. **Exclusion**: Knowledge on municipality status should not help us predict support for the GD in any other way than through its increased visibility in that area: \(E(Y_0t | X) = E(Y_{1t} | X)\) for \(T \in \{0, 1\}\).
3. **First stage**: knowledge on residence status should help us predict information about GD’s activities: \(0 < P(Z=1|X) < 1\) (not everyone has been mobilized) & \(P(D_1=1|X) > P(D_0=1|X)\) (residents in the 6th county more likely to be mobilized than those in other counties).
4. **Monotonicity**: No-one is discouraged from being mobilized because of living in the 6th municipality: \([D_1 - D_0 | X] \geq 0\).

Assumption 3 states that residing in the 6th county is makes it more likely to have witnessed the activity of the GD than residing in another county. In effect whereas 9 percent of respondents residing in other counties received a leaflet from the party, 15 percent did so among residents of the 6th county. Once the exact indicators used to measure all these concepts we will evaluate this assumption controlling also for the set of observables included in \( X \).

Monotonicity is unlikely to be violated in our setting: people were not discouraged from hearing about the GD as a result of living in the 6th municipal county. In other words, it is difficult to believe that the GD would be more visible for people living in the 6th county, had they lived in a different municipality.

What is much more problematic, however, is to establish ignorability and exclusion. With regard to the first, people may have chosen to either abandon this area or, reversely, to move in its neighborhoods as a result of the presence of the GD. In both cases, the demographic profile and attitudinal outlook of the resulting group of residents would differ from those residing in the rest of Athens. With regard to the second, people living in the 6th county may be fundamentally different in structural or demographic terms from those living in other areas of Athens. The implication from either these two possibilities is that living in
the 6th municipal county would induce higher levels of support for the GD even if its activities were largely invisible and unknown to its residents.

Our story is a story of observables. We believe that accounting for all factors alluded to above, the selection to treatment is as good as random. Moreover, accounting for this long series of demographic and attitudinal aspects, it is difficult to think in what other relevant terms would residents of the 6th county be different from the other residents of Athens. Although this assumption cannot be tested empirically because it presupposes the joint observation of both potential outcomes, some indirect evidence provided in the next section provides some confidence that conditional on this vector of covariates, what remains to distinguish residents of the 6th county with the rest of Athens is GD’s increased visibility.

We now briefly describe the indicators used for each set of competing explanations of GD support. With regard to demographics, we include gender, age, ethnicity, level of education, employment sector and a dummy denoting whether the respondent has property in the 6th municipal county. With the exception of age, all other covariates are fully factorized. Aggregate immigration and crime rates are measured by data gathered at the county level.7

Attitudes with regard to immigration are measured by using two indicators. The first consists of respondents’ self placement in a 0 to 10 scale on a question about whether immigrants are damaging (0) or beneficial (10) for the national economy. The second question captures concerns of cultural integration, asking respondents to locate themselves in the same 0-10 scale about whether immigrants undermine (0) or enrich (10) the cultural life of the country. Perceptions with regard to the status quo in the issue of immigration are captured with a question asking respondents to locate themselves in a 1 to 5 scale with regard to where they believe the country’s entrance policy stands: 1) free entrance; 5) absolute restriction. Crime perceptions are measured by a dummy denoting respondents who think crime is one of the most important problems the country is facing nowadays. Moreover, a question asking respondents whether they or significant others had been victims of a robbery attempt or some other act of violence also included as a control. As another way of capturing more general differences in political attitudes, political knowledge and sources of political information, we first include the classic left-right dimension as well as two indicators indicating first which TV news program people watch during the morning and which news-broadcast the follow most frequently in the evening. Finally, we also include the Propensity to Vote for LAOS, as another way to capture some latent underlying tendency to vote for the Golden Dawn.8

Finally, we need to discuss the measurement of our key independent variable, namely the visibility of the GD. We use two such proxies: 1) whether the respondent received a leaflet from the party; 2) whether people have been informed about the GD’s activities in their area of residence either by friends, neighbors or by other acquaintances. Other potential indicators, such as looking for information about the party on the web or having participated in one of a party’s rallies are not taken into account they are deemed to be behavioral manifestations of support rather than of learning about the GD’s action. Consequently, the area of residence is much less likely to predict such activities on behalf of the individual. In effect, when we use our municipality indicator as a predictor of either of these two activities we find an almost zero association which yields no statistical significance at conventional levels. These findings are at least an encouraging indication that once we control for our set of observables, we do not seem to be capitalizing on more general

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7 Aggregate immigration data have been found in the Athens Municipality records, while crime rates have been provided at the neighbourhood level by the Athens Metropolitan Area Police Authority.

8 The hidden assumption behind this line of thinking is that the PTVs for the two parties are positively associated. Indeed, their Pearson correlation is .37.
differences with regard to the political attitudes and preferences of people residing in different counties.

The first column of Table 2 presents the results from the first stage. GD visibility is regressed on the set of covariates plus a dummy denoting residents from the sixth or the fourth municipal county. Given the high number of factorized variables included in the model, we cannot present the full results here. What is of interest is that knowledge on municipality helps improve significantly our prediction about whether people were aware of GD’s visibility. In other words, the first stage assumption seems to be satisfied even in the presence of controls. The second column presents the LATE of visibility on GD support, using the Two-Stage-Least-Squares estimator. Indeed, even when instrumented through area of residence, knowledge about GD’s grassroots work at the local level seems to boost support for the party by almost 1 point in 0 to 10 scale. The magnitude of this effect is much higher than it may seem to be the case at first place, when one considers the very highly skewed distribution in this scale, whereby only 4 percent of the population gave a score higher than 5. The third column of the Table presents the same effect using a different estimator. Given the presence of covariates, the 2SLS estimator is only consistent under the assumption of homogeneous treatment effects. This assumption may be violated, however, in various real-world instances. To allow for heterogeneous treatment effects, the same effects are estimated by using a semi-parametric estimator, namely the Local Average Response Functions proposed by Abadie (2003). Evidently, the result is almost identical, indicating that the assumption upon which the 2SLS estimator is based is probably valid in this case. Again, the same substantive conclusions are drawn. Knowing about the action of the GD almost doubles the party’s PTV score.

Table 2 about here

It seems that GD’s grassroots activity has been an important factor that has shifted public opinion towards more positive views. Before we delve into a more in-depth narrative aiming to trace the process through which the party legitimized its presence in the local communities, it is informative to look at Figure 3.

Figure 3 about here

Both panels of this Figure constitute archetypical examples of the logic elaborated in this analysis. The horizontal axis sorts respondents according to their responses in the two questions tapping attitudes towards the immigrants. The left-most panel looks at people’s views on whether immigrants undermine (0) or enrich (10) the country’s cultural life. We compare residents in the neighborhood of Agios Panteleimonas, the stronghold of GD’s activities and residents in the two other counties with crime and immigrant rates quite as high as those observed in the 6th county. The vertical axis measures people’s PTV score for the GD. The local regression curves shown in the graphs trace the mean responses conditional on people’s scores in the horizontal axis. What is interesting here is that, consistent to our driving hypothesis, there is a gap between the residents of Agios Panteleimonas (AP) and those residing in the other two counties. Importantly, this gap is relatively stable across the x-axis. At any given point of the cultural dimension, residents of AP denote a higher mean PTV score for the GD than the residents of the other two areas. If GD’s support was contingent upon the local attitudes and perceptions about immigration, taking this diversity into account, would leave no remaining gap in GD support. However, the pattern observed here indicates that irrespective of people’s attitudes on this issue, there is still a gap which we attribute to the fact that GD has
found much more space to provide goods and services in the local community of AP than in the other two communities. The pattern depicted in the right panel of Figure 3 is analogous. Although the curve for AP is not exactly parallel to the two other curves, we still find a gap among those respondents who hold the least favorable views towards the immigrants. Thus, among people with equally extreme anti-immigration stances, i.e., people who believe that immigrants harm the economy, we find a gap which essentially cannot be explained on these grounds. Rather, we believe that this gap is due to the grassroot activities of the GD in the neighborhoods of the 6th county and most importantly in the area of Agios Panteleimonas. Engaging into a mixed-methods design, the next section will provide a more detailed explanation of how the GD managed to emerge as an important institutional actor in the municipality of Athens.

Building Golden Dawn’s visibility as a party strategy: the findings of a qualitative analysis
The strategy of the Golden Dawn is divided upon two discrete periods. The first one lasts from late 2008 until the municipal elections of November 2010 and it corresponds to the electoral breakthrough of the political organization, as it is certified by the electoral result. The second one extends from the aftermath of the elections to the national ballot of May 2012. It is identified by the electoral penetration of the organization in urban areas and its expansion to the rural areas.

Following a well-known tactic in right-wing, extremist European parties (Mudde 2007: 269), the Golden Dawn chooses the area of Agios Panteleimonas as a stronghold in order to acquire a local presence and, through it, a further visibility in the public sphere during the first period. The neighbourhood of Agios Panteleimonas, as well as the 6th department of Athens to which it belongs, become the base of the organization, since it is there that it chooses to move its headquarters and that the grass-roots campaign takes place. For sure, this specific department was not chosen by random, since it concentrates all the modern social and economic problems that one can find in urban areas: criminality, poverty, prostitution, illegal commerce, drugs.

According to the local token, the period that followed the summer of 2008 constitutes the organizational and activist momentum of the inhabitants, as the excessive and sudden concentration of afroasian immigrants mobilized them in order to revendicate public spaces in their neighbourhoods. The square of Aghios Panteleimonas becomes the symbolic place of this collective action. The Golden Dawn soon acquires a systematic presence in the area, either by ‘offering protection’ to the locals, or by excluding the immigrants from certain spaces, like the local playground. Activists of the indignant inhabitants’ groups that participated in the local actions reclaim the ownership of the grassroots movement and downplay the role of the Golden Dawn, even if some of them admit having initially regarded its extremist action, since it was perceived as reinforcing the visibility of the local issues in the media.⁹

Rival groups immediately organized under the common cause of offering support and solidarity to the immigrants, a fact that nourished tension and polarization. Confrontation between the rival groups has to be related to the permanent presence of anarchists and leftist activists through four occupations in the area. The interactive extremism between anarchists and the Golden Dawn further divided the inhabitants and reinforced the right-wing

⁹ Nonetheless, in retrospect the locals regret the hyper-mediatization that Agios Panteleimonas cumulated, since it further downgraded their neighborhood’s image.
extremists, what is validated not only through the 2010 electoral result, but also by the left-wing activists through the interviews conducted in the field.

Hence, the Golden Dawn took advantage of its local presence and the grassroots collective action until the elections of November 2010, in order to gain visibility and recognition, to recruit and to promote activists, to place a series of issues in the public agenda. Since the cadres of the Golden Dawn appear only rarely in the media until that period, the party benefits from traditional, pre-modern campaign methods, like door-to-door, press and leaflets' distribution (i.e. Agios Panteleimonas People's Voice), as well as post-modern campaign methods like the social media. This specific strategy followed by the party in the underprivileged areas during the first period, the political opportunity provided by the decision of the radical party not to present its candidate for the local election, as well as an increased demand for anti-immigrant political positions led to the unprecedented electoral turnout of 5.3% for the extremist party.

During the second period, which lasts from the aftermath of the 2010 election to the national ballot of May 2012, a series of changes in the rival parties’ strategies and the deterioration of the economical and political crisis provide new structures of political opportunity for the Golden Dawn, which multiplies its electoral and political penetration. The abrupt shift of the conservatives to the pro-bailout frame proposed by the Euro-partners and the governmental coalition which was formed by the socialists, the conservatives and the radical right party on November 2011 reinforce the centrifugal vague towards the extreme right of the political spectrum. The Golden Dawn manages to attract not only the right-wing nationalist voters, but also a significant part of the anti-bailout and the anti-political vote, which are reinforced since the radicalisation induced by the protest movement of the indignant citizens during the summer of 2011. Towards this direction functions the persistence of the issues owned by Golden Dawn among the media. Especially during the April 2012 campaign, the appropriation of the ‘law and order’ by the two major parties – mainly by the socialists– as well as the episodic framing of the immigration issue legitimises the positions of the Golden Dawn and its visibility.

In this second period, the Golden Dawn moves from the margins to the centre of the public sphere. It takes advantage of its institutional representation in the city council; it increases the frequency of violent attacks against immigrants, as well as protests in the city centre, what attracts all the more the media attention. The party's institutional representation is used through different ways by its leader who tries to de-stigmatise its image in the local population. Even though in the beginning of his mandate he adopts a provocative stance in order to attract attention, he uses his voice in the city council in order to affirm that he is neither nazi-friendly nor neonazi, but nationalist. In the same period he adopts a rather consensual behaviour in certain issues. The party voted with the majority of the city council for supporting the victims of the city riots and condemnation the riots in Athens in February 2012. Its grassroots action is expanded over and above the 4th and the 6th municipal departments and it certainly benefits from the protest movement of the indignant citizens during the summer of 2011, in two different ways: indirectly, by the development and reinforcement of anti-political and anti-systemic stances and, directly, through the active participation of a certain part of the right-wing extremist milieu.

Changes in the party strategy are confirmed in retrospect through the quantitative research that was conducted in two rounds. When asked in May 2011 whether they had accidentally or deliberately been in contact with the Golden Dawn, the respondents of the 4th and the 6th department answered by 50% more than the rest of the sample that they have been informed by leaflets or by their personal entourage. This information is consistent with the findings that emerged through interviews with the locals and participant observation,
according to which the Golden Dawn managed to get visibility during the first period through systematic presence in this certain area.

A year later, our second-round findings differentiate towards a direction that validates the change in the party strategy after the 2010 local election. Research through the Internet is considerably increased when compared to the first round (almost by 80%), as well as the information acquired by the personal entourage (almost by 25%). However, this time the increase corresponds to other municipal departments than the strongholds of the Golden Dawn. Our findings indicate a strong interest for the Golden Dawn as a possible electoral choice during 2012, on the one hand, and the homogenisation of the audience of the Golden Dawn in the city of Athens, on the other. The locally specialized material provided by the organization is no longer attractive to the voters, whereas the organization adopts more professionalised and modern communication strategies.

**Concluding remarks**

The municipal elections of 2010 saw Golden Dawn emerging in the central political scene. Golden Dawn’s aggressive anti-immigrant campaign was rewarded by 5.3% of the voters. But has this been the only –and not only the obvious– reason of its success? And, in any case, how has the party succeeded in gaining its recognition as the party that owns the immigration issue? After all, the conservative New Democracy did try to instrumentalise this issue and adapt an anti-immigrant rhetoric in order to win voters with anti-immigrant attitudes. As it is shown (Georgiadou, Kafe and Nezi 2012), the established right and the far right in Greece compete for the anti-immigrant voters, although those who voted for the far right LAOS (at least in the general election of 2009) are anti-immigrant electors with cynical attitudes, too.

Therefore, there must be some other reasons explaining the party’s successful entrance into the central political scene. In the local election of November 2010, LAOS did not present its own candidate for the municipality of Athens. The party decision to support the candidate of the conservative New Democracy created the circumstances for the far right cynical voters to change their preferences voting for the Golden Dawn. The strategy of the latter to gain visibility in the unprivileged areas of the capital has borne fruit; the electoral absence of the radical right and the inability of the conservative New Democracy to absorb cynical voters provide the Golden Dawn with the opportunity to gain votes from those who had previously voted for LAOS not only because they were against immigrants, but also because they were disappointed with the governmental parties. LAOS’s participation in the coalition government with the Socialists (PASOK) and the Conservatives (New Democracy) from November 2011 until February 2012 reinforced anti-immigrant and cynical voters' shifts away from LAOS or even New Democracy.

This paper has revealed that supply-side models adequately explain Golden Dawn’s electoral success in the mayoral elections of 2010. From this point onwards, classic demand-side explanations adequately explain the party’s meteoric rise in the general elections of May 2012. Demand for anti-immigrant views has increased all over the city; the increase has been larger in other than the 4th and the 6th municipal departments, that is in these areas where such views have been widespread a year ago. Respondents in 2012 turned to be clearly more tolerant towards Golden Dawn’s presence or even violent actions regardless of where exactly they are living. Our second round survey revealed that people have been increasingly more interested in collecting information on the party’s stances and have been started thinking of Golden Dawn as a legitimate electoral preference. The impact of region on voting for the Golden Dawn has been gradually diminished. This is not to argue though
that the party’s organizational strength does not account for its unexpected electoral success in the first place.

References


**Tables – Figures**

Figure 1. The seven municipal departments of the city of Athens
Figure 2. The relationship between Golden Dawn vote share, LAOS vote share and immigrant rates.

Note: All four figures are spines from Generalized Additive Models, the solid curve denotes the effect of the variable mentioned in the horizontal axis on GD vote share, the dashed curves cover the 95% bands of the point estimates.
Table 1. Immigration, crime rates and Golden Dawn vote share in the 2010 municipal election in Athens’ municipal departments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Portion of non-indigenous population</th>
<th>Crime Rates (attempted robberies) per habitant</th>
<th>Golden Dawn Vote Share</th>
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<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>.1596</td>
<td>0.533</td>
<td>4.67</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.0042</td>
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<td>Average</td>
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Note: Last column: Ministry of Athens; XXXX[ED1].

Table 2. The Local Average Treatment Effect of GD visibility on GD support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Stage</th>
<th>2SLS</th>
<th>LARF</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/4th municipal department</td>
<td>.131 (.032)</td>
<td>1.30 (.653)</td>
<td>1.28 (.660)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients in the first and the second column, LARF estimates in the third column. Robust standard errors, clustered at the neighborhood level, into parentheses. N=1406. The dependent variable in the first column is GD visibility. The dependent variable in the second and third columns is the PTV score for the Golden Dawn. The following covariates are included in both stages: gender; age; ethnicity; aggregate level of non-indigenous residents at the county level; crime rates at the county level; level of education; employment sector; “immigrants undermine/enrich the cultural life of the country; “immigrants are something bad/good for the economy”; “the current policy with regard to entrance restriction is far too conservative/liberal;” PTV score for LAOS; prior experience of robbery, theft or other act of violence. With the exception of age, all of these variables are fully factorized.
Figure 3. The local average level of support for the Golden Dawn in one neighbourhood of the sixth municipality and in the second and fifth municipal departments. Note: Local regression curves (bandwidth .7) are fitted into the scatterplot (not shown) between attitudes towards immigration (cultural integration; economic role of immigrants) and the PTV score for the party.