

ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΑ II

Η συλλογική δράση των «αγανακτισμένων
πολιτών» στην Ελλάδα
αίτια, περιεχόμενο, ενέργειες,
και συμπεράσματα για φορείς
χάραξης πολιτικής

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The impact of the Greek indignados on Greek politics

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Introduction

In tune to other parts of the world, the Greek indignados movement took the country by surprise. Even though Greece stood at the epicenter of the Great Recession, an inclusive and vibrant movement such as the indignados was totally unexpected for a society accustomed to traditional repertoires of protest. On May 25, 2011, taking their cue from the success of the 15M movement in Spain, Greeks flooded their city squares under the banner of the “*aganaktismenoi*”, the indignant citizens. The protesters channeled a deep feeling of injustice, opposing the harsh austerity measures of the bailout agreement and calling for “real” democracy which would reinstate popular sovereignty into the hands of its rightful owners, the people.

The Greek indignados were a mixed bag of individuals with diverse values and ideologies who had never before marched in unity. Setting aside their differences, they managed to band together against common adversaries in order to bring about change. They set up tent camps and debated in general assemblies on how to go forth, consciously refraining from appointing leaders or issuing specific claims, and engaging in an unprecedented use of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter (Theocharis forthcoming). The movement unfolded during the early summer of 2011, experiencing its highs and lows, striving to attract new members and reach further into society. While it constantly engaged in verbal abuses against the political and financial

elites, it was generally peaceful in character. Serious episodes of violence took place mainly in Athens Syntagma square in conjunction with strikers and other protesters on only a few occasions which, however, made headlines across the globe. While the majority of the population sided with the protesters, gradually, and after a failure to pose a serious obstacle to the flow of austerity bills, support started to wane, and camps were dissolved in early August, with indignados events only sporadically taking place after the summer.

Indeed, the indignados greatly influenced political developments, opening up new avenues for social mobilization in Greece, constituting a point of reference in terms of their innovative practices and reinvigoration of civil society processes (Theocharis forthcoming). However, instead of contributing detailed descriptions of the movement's manifestations and dynamics, we follow McAdam and Tarrow's (2010; 2013) criticism of the tendency to neglect associations between mobilization and electoral politics, and opt to focus on the repercussion of the indignados on Greek politics, since we feel that this crucial aspect is sorely missing from extant literature. Our task is performed along two axes: first, we discuss the impact of the movement on electoral politics by mainly studying public opinion polls, and second, we study the supply side by showing how the indignados influenced political discourse and party dynamics.

The political setting

Before we move on to our main analysis, it is necessary to paint a broad picture of the political setting within which the movement emerged. The most important thing to note is that until the onset of the Great Recession, Greece had one of the most stable party systems in the Western world. After the fall of the military junta in 1974, the Conservatives (ND: New Democracy) and the Socialists (PASOK: Panhellenic Socialist Movement) took turns ruling through majority governments. Their joint share of the vote usually surpassed the 80% mark after the consolidation of the two-party system in

1981, also the year that Greece entered the European Union (Nicolacopoulos 2005; Moschonas 2013). The country dwelled in a seemingly healthy state, with landmark achievements in managing to enter the Eurozone in 2001 and hosting the successful Olympic Games of 2004.

Table 1. PASOK and ND in national elections, 1974-2012. The Greek *Vouli* has 300 seats.

		National elections														
		1974	1977	1981	1985	1989a	1989b	1990	1993	1996	2000	2004	2007	2009	2012a	2012b
Socialists (PASOK)	%vote	13.6	25.3	48.1	45.8	39.1	40.7	38.6	46.9	41.5	43.8	40.6	38.1	43.9	13.2	12.3
	seats	12	93	172	161	125	128	123	170	162	158	117	102	160	41	33
Conservatives (ND)	%vote	54.4	41.8	35.9	40.8	44.8	46.2	46.9	39.3	38.1	42.7	45.4	41.8	33.5	18.9	29.7
	seats	220	171	115	126	145	148	150	111	108	125	165	152	91	108	129
Total	%vote	68.0	67.1	84.0	86.6	83.9	86.9	85.5	86.2	79.6	86.5	86.0	79.9	77.4	32.1	42.0
	seats	232	264	287	287	270	276	273	281	270	283	282	254	251	149	162

Notwithstanding the healthful facade, Greece's comfortable political setting was ridden with polarizing, populist overtones rather than a consensual culture, and consistently fraught with patronage and clientelistic practices rather than a sustainable plan for economic development that relied on firm institutions (Pappas 2014). Above all, the boom was fueled by loans upon loans from foreign creditors, with the majority of spoils directed towards the various domestic "Vikings", the rent-seeking interests of the country, be it individual business oligarchs who "grab anything they can while roaming freely through various aspects of social and economic activity" (Mitsopoulos and Pelagidis 2011: 8), or the numerous professional associations, at the expense of the common good. And while Vikings reaped their rents in big chunks, a majority of the citizenry also acquired some level of rent through this exchange of votes for privileges and vice versa, usually in the form of a job in the public sector or the opportunity to evade taxes at no cost. The only ones left out of the loop were either the poorer strata with no access to party mechanisms, or those sectors of the economy unable to pursue extractive collective claims towards the government. Meanwhile, sovereign debt was piling.

This arrangement was working almost seamlessly when in September 2007 the ND Conservatives won a second, consecutive term. What came to be known as “Greek statistics”, the systematically misleading reporting of fiscal figures by Greek officials, had ensured a semblance of stability. However, everything started to change with the Lehman Brothers collapse in 2008 which made it increasingly difficult to conceal the real state of the economy. With corruption scandals undermining his cabinet and financial woes looming, PM Kostas Karamanlis called for snap elections. In a typical swing of the pendulum, the PASOK Socialists won the contest in October 2009, under the leadership of George Papandreou, son of Andreas Papandreou, the radical political maverick of the Left who founded PASOK in 1974 and ruled the country for eleven years.¹

The country quickly went bust following the return of the Socialists to power. Having been elected on a platform of “green development” and on the premise that “the money is there”, rejecting the need for mild austerity measures that ND had implied during the campaign, Papandreou soon discovered that book-cooking was no longer an option, since the European Commission appeared determined to end this practice. In November, Socialists had to admit that deficit for 2009 stood at 12.7% (later upped to 15.7%), rather than the mere 4% that ND had officially reported to European authorities. The revelation made headlines across the globe and soon Greece was shut out of the financial markets, having to ask for a bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Eurozone peers. The bailout agreement with the “Troika” (the IMF, the European Central Bank, and the European Commission), famously dubbed “the Memorandum”, was ratified by the parliament in May 2010, offering a staggering €110 billion in exchange for a package of strict austerity measures and structural reforms.

¹ See Dinas (2010) for more on this election.

Those twelve and a half months, from the ratification of the Memorandum to the outbreak of the Greek indignados was a rapidly unfolding national tragedy. Austerity measures were applied horizontally on every Greek family, taxes were hiked, strikes and political violence became a common spectacle, and the country secured the unwelcome privilege of being the prized protagonist of international news outlets. To top it all, the Golden Dawn, an old but yet insignificant neonazi group, started making inroads into society with a vehement anti-immigration agenda, swelling its ranks with new and predominantly young members and making its violent presence felt in the run-down neighborhoods of Athens. The situation was toxic.

Emergence of the indignados

The Greek indignados hit the streets under the dismal circumstances described above, born out of the actions of a single individual, a 39-year-old citizen of Thessaloniki, the second largest Greek city.² Contrary to the Spanish indignados who sprang out of a cooperation of existing social movement organizations (Castells 2012), the Greek branch was created when this Thessalonikean citizen, frustrated with the political and economic situation and envious of the successful Iberian movement, created a Facebook event on May 22, 2011, calling for a demonstration at White Tower square, the landmark of Thessaloniki, on Wednesday, May 25. The event was titled “Indignants at the White Tower”, and its instigator, surprisingly without any prior experience in grassroots or other political organizing, took extra care to stress the non-partisan, non-ideological, and peaceful character of the event, in an effort to illustrate its authentically catch-all nature and tap into the anti-political zeitgeist of the era. Bolstered by a network of local radio producers who volunteered to spread the word, the event soon became viral on Facebook, attracting thousands of enthusiastic followers. Similar Facebook

² Interview to first author on August 22, 2014.

events sprang up on the next days, calling for rallies at central squares of almost every Greek city such as Patras, Heraklion, and, most importantly, Syntagma square in Athens. The traditional media were quick to catch up and the mobilization became a national phenomenon in waiting.

On May 25, tens of thousands of people joined the protests, most notably in Athens, and the movement received favorable publicity from the press and TV, which stressed the non-partisan, inclusive, and peaceful nature of the mobilization. On this first and rather peculiar day, the protesters, a colorful assortment of mostly non-partisan individuals with views ranging from the far right to the far left, but also several young cadres of extra-parliamentary radical left parties, remained in the squares for several hours, chanting spontaneous slogans against the government, the political system, and the bailout agreement. Politicians, and especially PM Papandreou, were accused of selling the country to foreigners, and protesters were seeing themselves as rising to reclaim popular sovereignty according to the constitution. Many stayed late to debate what was to be done, giving birth to makeshift general assemblies; others, in the spirit of the Arab and Spanish paradigm, set up tents to spend the night in the squares.

The protests continued the next day, and very soon, with the help of experienced leftist activists, the typical framework of the indignados took shape; a permanent tent camp, a daily general assembly with horizontalist organization and procedures, and a number of working groups debating specific policy aspects. While the Greek indignados did not put forward specific policy claims, they resembled other European movements in arguing generally against austerity and in favor of national sovereignty. The protesters were initially very reluctant to allow trade unions in the squares, since their leaders were also seen as representatives of “the establishment”. However, striking trade-unionists frequently finished their marches at Syntagma square or White Tower square to join the indignados. After much effort on the part of leftist cadres active in the movement, it was

decided that the indignados participate in the large demonstrations held during a 24-hour general strike on June 15. In Athens, the people tried to surround the Parliament and violent clashes broke out. Strong rumors circulated of PM Papandreou considering resignation in face of the increased polarization in Greek society and an urgent cabinet reshuffle took place. Later in June, with their ranks still swelling, the protesters set a specific target for the first time: to fight against the passing of the Medium Term Fiscal Strategy bill. On June 28, after intense planning, a 48-hour general strike brought a massive crowd of indignados and other protesters at Syntagma square. Soon, violence erupted, with the police using excessive force to disperse protesters. The bill was passed on the next day, and streets saw even more violence.

Even though the indignados continued their activity after these historic incidents, it was evident that their vigor had dissipated significantly. With summer approaching, and under the diluting influence of intramural rifts between ideologically disparate groups, more and more people started to retire from the squares. Police gave the *coup de grâce* to the Syntagma camp on July 30; on August 7, the birthplace, Thessaloniki, followed suit. A few activists, particularly those originating from SYRIZA and the extra-parliamentary left, tried to resuscitate the movement after the holidays, but participation reached nowhere near the original levels. However, the violent protests against political authorities during the national holiday of October 28 were a remarkable one-off return of the indignados which shocked the political system and severely destabilized the Papandreou government, dealing it, one could say, the final blow. Therefore, while it is safe to claim that the movement lasted approximately two months, from May 25 to late July 2011, select events after the summer are also attributed to the indignados. Thus, having provided a concise history of the movement, we can move on to the main burden of this paper, the study of its impact on Greek politics.

The impact of the indignados on Greek politics

In social movement literature, it is unfortunately common to refrain from investigating electoral repercussions when studying social mobilization. As McAdam and Tarrow (2013) note, the reciprocal relation between movements and elections remains understudied due to a respective division of labor between sociologists and political scientists on these topics, despite a wealth of empirical evidence in favor of such a connection. The direction of influence usually flows from movements to party systems, however, at times, we may even find these two fields of action sharing the same human resources, discourses, and tactics, or mobilizing along the same cleavages. Hutter and Kriesi likewise proclaim that “social movements are integrally related to mainstream politics” (2013: 292).

Taking our cue from these authors, in what follows, we contribute to the study of how movements and elections interact, by showing how the Greek indignados influenced the Greek party system. Our analysis is divided in two parts. In the first part, we look at how mobilization affects electoral politics by functioning as a source of influence over public opinion; here, we are interested in how the emergence of the indignados reshuffled party affiliations in the electorate. In the second part we turn to the supply side, treating political parties rather than public opinion as the dependent variable; hence, we study how the indignados influenced political parties and their personnel, either by transforming their discourse and electoral strategy, or affecting intramural dynamics. Drawing on McAdam and Tarrow (2010; 2013), we distinguish a set of mechanisms and processes at work: movements can (a) introduce performative and discursive innovations that can be taken up by election campaigns, (b) join electoral coalitions or turn into parties themselves, (c) engage in proactive or reactive electoral mobilization, and (d) induce polarization within parties. We take upon these in turn.

Impact on public opinion

While in October 2009 the two-party system of PASOK and ND managed to gather a still healthy 77.4% of the vote, only marginally lower than the previous election, the next ballots cast for the two parties in May 2012 showed an extraordinary demise in their popularity (see Table 2). Both parties scored their all-time lows and approximately 3.28 million voters defected from two-partyism. Only 2 million voters remained loyal, in a total of 6.8 million. To provide a benchmark, a combined 6.4 million ballots had been cast for ND and PASOK in 2004. Arguably, the May 2012 election was one of the most volatile elections in European history, since almost half the voters changed preferences (Verney and Bosco 2013).

Table 2. Greek elections, 2009-2014. The June 2009 and May 2014 are European elections, the rest are national elections. In May 2014, PASOK ran under the coalition of “Elia”, and the Ecologist Greens ran in coalition with the Pirate Party.

	June 2009		October 2009		May 2012		June 2012		May 2014	
	%vote	seats	%vote	seats	%vote	seats	%vote	seats	%vote	seats
PASOK (Socialists)	36.6	8	43.9	160	13.2	41	12.3	33	8.0	2
New Democracy (Conservatives)	32.3	8	33.5	91	18.9	108	29.7	129	22.7	5
SYRIZA (Radical Left)	4.7	1	4.6	13	16.8	52	26.9	71	26.6	6
Ind. Greeks (Radical Right)	-	-	-	-	10.6	33	7.5	20	3.5	1
LAOS (Radical Right)	7.2	2	5.6	15	2.9	0	1.6	0	2.7	0
Golden Dawn (Extreme Right)	0.5	0	0.3	0	7.0	21	6.9	18	9.4	3
KKE (Communists)	8.4	2	7.5	21	8.5	26	4.5	12	6.1	2
Democratic Left (Center Left)	-	-	-	-	6.1	19	6.3	17	1.2	0
To Potami (Center-C.Left)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6.6	2
Ecologist Greens	3.5	1	2.5	0	2.9	0	0.9	0	0.9	0

Many analysts, using data from the Eurobarometer and other surveys, explain the collapse of the two-party system as an outcome of steadily deteriorating figures for

Greeks' trust in democracy and other political institutions, claiming moreover that the violent urban riots of December 2008 had already sent the message to the dwindling political system (Verney 2014; Pappas and O'Malley 2014). While both positions may carry certain merit, there is considerable danger of a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy at work. The elephant in the room is, of course, the onset of the sovereign debt crisis and the impact of economic voting. Data from public opinion polls illustrate that, rather than a gradual process, the demise of the two-party system took place rather abruptly, and that the movement of the indignados stood at the pivot point of this process.

First of all, in October 2009, the Greek electorate was still rather oblivious to the economic thunderstorm at its doorstep (Verney and Bosco 2013). Papandreou was voted in with 43.9%, the fourth best outcome for the Socialists in the thirteen national elections since the inception of PASOK and significantly higher than the 36.6% the party had gathered only four months earlier for the European election (see Tables 1-2). In the immediate aftermath of the contest, things were even better for PASOK: a poll reported 51% of respondents satisfied with the new government, compared to only 32% of the opposite opinion (Public Issue 2009). Most importantly, the same poll revealed an unprecedented 82% of positive views for PM Papandreou, up from 56% just before the election. In January 2010, after the first shocks had already settled in, Papandreou's popularity was as high as 72% and pollsters estimated PASOK's share of the vote at 48% compared to 30.5% for ND, 7.5% for the Communist Party, and 5.5% for the radical right LAOS and the radical left SYRIZA (Public Issue 2010a). The same month, another poll reported a 42.9% of respondents believing that the government had the ability to steer the country out of the crisis, and a 60.9% who understood that strict measures were justified in that respect (Alco 2010a). By April 2010, just before the country requested a bailout, Papandreou's popularity stood at 68%, and estimates for PASOK's vote share were at 46.5% (Public Issue 2010b).

These figures show that rather than a general crisis of the two-party system, the 2009 election were another swing of the pendulum from one pole to the other, the difference being that ND suffered a somewhat harder blow compared to the past. There was still a more than healthy level of support for PASOK, and even a slight improvement in perceptions against political institutions: according to the Eurobarometer, the difference between Greeks who tended not to trust political parties compared to those who did, dropped from 70% in June 2009 to 62% in November 2009, a performance better than the one registered back in October 2004, the year of the Athens Olympics. Even more significantly, no other party could yet be perceived as a serious contender to the two-party system, with only LAOS enjoying a moderate upswing by absorbing disaffected conservative voters. The other anti-establishment forces did not manage to mobilize voters: SYRIZA was stuck around the disappointing 5% mark and the Communists were suffering a slight drop of support compared to the 8.4% they received in the European election (see Table 2). Overall, the situation was not peculiar at all until the bailout agreement and it would be plausible to hypothesize that the two-party system would have survived the crisis of trust and legitimation as it had done in the past.

In May 2010, the Greek government signed the bailout agreement. Economic hardships started to severely affect the average citizen, and economic voting was bound to take its toll. In the following months, Greece plunged deeper into recession, taxes were raised further, wages and pensions were slashed, and unemployment thrived across the country. Papandreou's popularity dropped 15% in just one month (Public Issue 2010c). However, even after these unprecedented negative developments, the two-party system showed remarkable signs of resilience, managing to score a clear victory in the municipal and regional elections of November 2010. Papandreou had warned that if the local election turned out negatively for his party, he would immediately resign and call for snap elections. Surprisingly, with unemployment at 14% for November and GDP bound to contract 4.9% in 2010, PASOK managed to secure seven out of thirteen

regions, winning a total of 43.6% of seats in regional councils (Gemenis 2012). In December polls, Papandreou enjoyed a rise in popularity compared to the previous month, from 43% to 47%, still the most popular politician in the country by far, and his party's vote share was estimated at 39%, with ND at 30%, the Communists at 11% and LAOS with SYRIZA at 5.5% (Public Issue 2010d). The country was already seven months into the Memorandum, the two-party system stood at almost 70%, and still there was no viable alternative in sight. The situation was tough, but not dire just yet.

Even though Greece was at the epicenter of the sovereign debt crisis in 2010, other significant international developments also made headlines towards and after the end of that distressing year and influenced political dynamics in Greece. On December 17, 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi, a Tunisian street vendor, set himself on fire in the city of Sidi Bouzid, igniting a tremendous wave of protest against the authoritarian regime of Ben Ali which spread to neighboring countries and ultimately came to be known as the Arab Spring. Ben Ali fled Tunisia in mid-January 2011, and on the 25th, tens of thousands of Egyptians gathered at Tahrir square to protest against Mubarak's own regime, who resigned on February 11. In March 2011, Portugal's indignados, the *Geração à Rasca*, took the streets, just before the Portuguese Socialist government requested a bailout from the IMF. On May 14, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, director of the IMF, was arrested at JFK airport on accusations of sexual assault, producing worldwide uproar and the scorn of Greek public opinion. Significant political events around the world had started to be shared transnationally, perceived in a somewhat similar fashion across a range of diverse publics. On May 15, the Spanish indignados took off, drawing the spotlights of global media. Their message reverberated in Greece, and a week later a rumor circulated in Greek social media that Spaniards were ridiculing Greeks for their quiescence, flustering the latter. This remarkable chain of political events and rising social turmoil culminated with the emergence of the Greek indignados on May 25, 2011.

It seems utterly surprising today, but according to polls, after all the harsh austerity measures, violent protests, recurring strikes, rapidly deteriorating economic figures, and other negative events that took place after the signing of the memorandum a year earlier, in May 2011 PM Papandreou was still the most popular political leader of the country, and PASOK was heading electoral estimates with a small advantage over ND; more than two thirds of Greek voters did not believe in the usefulness of new elections (Public Issue 2011a; GPO 2011; Marc 2011).

As Ellinas (2013), as well as Teperoglou and Tsatsanis (2014) argue, austerity disrupted the clientelistic networks the two major parties employed to distribute rents in return for votes, facilitating the defection of alienated voters to other political forces. This process was already underway before the Greek indignados took the squares, as witnessed by the significant drop of support to the two major parties. However, since no other political party rose significantly to capture the lost ground, it seems that, at least initially, disoriented voters did not *en masse* switch to a new contender but rather chose to temporarily withdraw. Even though the economic situation was tough, political identities and their transformations are rarely explained away by materialistic considerations alone; the affective element always accompanies rational calculation (Neuman et al. 2007). Employing Hirschman's (1970) useful model, austerity measures can justify voice, but they can't necessarily justify exit at such a tremendous level as the one witnessed in the May 2012 election. On an individual level, we find it difficult to defend a switch in party affiliation by merely referring to a suffered wage or pension reduction, since partisan bonds are seen as encompassing moral values that travel further than cynical material returns (e.g. Campbell et al. 1960). Moreover, simple materialist arguments are vulnerable to the "securitization" discourse of the government, a discourse that claims inability to eschew austerity in face of existential threats to the nation (Karyotis and Rüdig 2013). Polls seem to vindicate this conscious strategy on the part of the Socialist government; for instance, the day following the

ratification of the first bailout agreement, 54.2% of respondents were found in favor of the recourse to the Troika in order to avoid bankruptcy, with only 33.2% supporting alternative scenarios (Alco 2010b). A month later, only 9.5% of respondents thought that the pension reform package was fair, but 43.9% reckoned it was inevitable if pension funds were to be saved (Alco 2010c). Voters were largely convinced of the securitization rhetoric. Even a year later, just before the eruption of the indignados, 48.7% of PASOK voters judged government performance positively (GPO 2011). Only 26.9% of respondents at another May 2011 poll testified feeling angry against the government, with the rest expressing milder or even positive feelings such as disappointment (35.4%), understanding (15.6%), toleration (11.2%), and support (9.9%) (Marc 2011). Clearly, the radicalization of Greek voters had not yet reached the levels required to produce extensive defection from the two-party system.

Therefore, without delving too deep into political psychology, economic hardships were not adequate to turn voice into substantial exit (Teperoglou and Tsatsanis 2014). People needed to couple their materialistic instincts with arguments from a moral perspective in order to take the extra step. As Jones (2001: 119) notes, “even when we are acting in a supremely selfish fashion, we seem to desire to construct nonselfish motives for our behavior”. We possess an innate drive to “discuss motives in terms of collective as opposed to (or in addition to) self-centered motives” (ibid.). The famous counter-frame of the Vice President of the Greek government, Theodoros Pangalos, “we were all in this together”, uttered in September 2010 and referring to the fiscal profligacy of the previous decades, was an attempt to hold Greek citizens accountable of their share in the spoils and counter the affective element of the people’s reaction to austerity. Evidently, a new perspective was needed, one that would add moral grounds for defection.

Teperoglou and Tsatsanis (2014) rightly stress the significance of shifting from a debate of strictly economic issues to a polarizing sociocultural discourse in explaining electoral choice in 2012. They argue that, increasingly, for Greek public opinion, “the bailout ceased to represent an exclusively economic policy question but became entangled with the much more politically charged question of national sovereignty” (p. 233). In our view, the analysis of the indignados through textual material and interviews of key informants shows that the movement of the squares was crucial in bringing about this shift from a mere economic debate to a sociocultural one, by providing a venue to bring together a diverse range of people to discuss issues in a backdrop of indignation against ruling elites. The populist discourse of the indignados was crucial in unleashing and legitimizing a torrent of feelings of injustice over the fact that the political caste is betraying the people, relinquishing national and popular sovereignty to foreign centers of power (Pappas and Aslanidis forthcoming; see also Cossarini 2014; Sotiropoulos 2014).

The indignados functioned as a melting pot in which cognitive arguments by radical economists, lawyers and political activists were enmeshed with affective and moral arguments in favor of the primacy of the people and against the unfair loss of popular sovereignty to exogenous forces. The bailout was characterized not simply as a fallacious decision, but as a deliberate plan to divest ordinary Greeks of their democratic authority. An inclusive we-identity of the people against a “they” comprised of political and economic elites was forged in the squares, functioning as a resonant beacon of counter-hegemonic opinion with a non-partisan and non-ideological, therefore legitimate, hue. This all-inclusive political identity of the “indignant citizen” could finally manage to catalyze the political transformation of disaffected voters and justify exit from the – now unanimously proclaimed – corrupt and immoral two-party system.

The indignados were supported by an overwhelming majority of citizens since their emergence: almost 9 out of 10 Greeks felt positively about the protests (MRB 2011; Public Issue 2011b). An early June poll found 26.5% of respondents having taken part at least once in the indignados protests, with another 42.1% declaring eager to do so in the near future (MRB 2011). Another poll recorded a 35% of participation in indignados protests and revealed that 43% of participants had voted for PASOK or ND in 2009 (26% and 17% respectively), with a joint 35.7% declining to reveal their vote, claiming to have abstained or to have cast a blank/invalid ballot (Public Issue 2011b). Citizens had a high perception of efficacy for the movement, and MRB (2011) reported three out of four respondents believing that it could destabilize the government and force it to resign. Obviously, most Greeks, lacking a credible institutional political alternative to channel their anger, wholeheartedly embraced a trustful, non-partisan, and non-institutional outlet to express their disaffection.

By September, the influence of the indignados on binding materialistic concerns and affective elements into a coherent, anti-bailout, political opinion had become obvious; polls revealed that 76% of respondents declared themselves overwhelmed by a feeling of national humiliation (Alco 2011). PASOK dropped to 28%, overtaken by ND at 32%, with SYRIZA rising somewhat to 9%; Papandreou plunged below both Samaras and Tsipras in popularity during the summer (Public Issue 2011c). Then, on October 28, 2011, during the national celebration of the “Ochi” [No] day, a remembrance of the nation’s resistance against Fascism and Nazism during the Second World War, the indignados resurrected spontaneously all over the country to deal another heavy blow to the government. Scores of protesters in various Greek cities violently disrupted official ceremonies, verbally or physically attacking politicians and other officials. In Thessaloniki, the local indignados forced the President of the Republic, the symbol of national unity, to flee the ceremony and cancel the military march. This was an unprecedented event in contemporary Greek history, a sign of severe, even dangerous

destabilization of the political system which spread uneasiness throughout the governing sectors and precipitated the demise of Papandreou's cabinet.

The impact of the indignados on radicalizing a large portion of the population, leading to the exit of millions of citizens from the two-party system is therefore far from negligible. On the contrary, by facilitating exit, the indignados helped to produce a huge pool of floating voters, opening up the political market to intense competition for the first time in 30 years, and allowing new or transformed political actors to enter the field with high hopes (Pappas and Aslanidis forthcoming). It was only when the newly radicalized voters pledged publicly among themselves in the indignados squares that they would never vote for the old and treacherous parties again and broadcasted their convictions to personal and social networks, that the situation became irreversible for the two-party system and dealignment was rendered inevitable. The emergence of the movement of the squares consolidated a rupture in the traditional cleavage structure in the Greek political system which had started taking shape towards the end of 2010. The left-right cleavage, though still relevant, was partially superseded by the new cleavage between pro- and anti-bailout Greeks which would go a long way into explaining voter displacement in the 2012 elections (Mavris 2012; Dinas and Rori 2013).

After the events of October 28 the two-party system became cornered and the pressure rose so high that, following a failed attempt by Papandreou to regain control of the situation by recourse to a referendum, the government realized that it would not be able to pass a new austerity bill that was needed in exchange for a new bailout package and a haircut on privately owned sovereign debt. Samaras, the leader of ND, and until November, a staunch critic of the first bailout, capitulated to international pressure and performed a U-turn, agreeing to participate in a coalition government with PASOK and LAOS under the technocratic leadership of Lucas Papademos, former Bank of Greece governor and ECB vice-president, which was sworn in on November 11, 2011. However,

his voters, now mostly affiliated with the anti-bailout camp, found it hard to change sides so abruptly, and ND took a plunge in the polls (see Verney and Bosco 2013; Gemenis and Nezi 2014; Pappas and Aslanidis forthcoming). The once deadly foes, Socialists and Conservatives, became unwilling partners in a coalition with the once despicable radical right, sealing the fate of the two-party system.

Having so far described the impact of the indignados on swerving public opinion away from PASOK and ND, we now turn to studying the impact of the movement on the supply side, and how it influenced developments within Greek political parties.

Impact on Greek party system

To study the influence of social mobilization on political parties, we have drawn from McAdam and Tarrow (2010; 2013) to distinguish four areas of influence: (a) the introduction of performative and discursive innovations that can be taken up by election campaigns, (b) the transformation of movements into political parties or their absorbance into existing ones, (c) the engagement in proactive or reactive electoral mobilization, and (d) the production of polarization within parties. Since proactive and reactive mobilization presupposes a certain temporal overlap or proximity between movements and electoral campaigns, these two processes are eliminated from our list. We will therefore focus in this section on how the Greek indignados influenced discourses and campaign strategies, whether they joined or formed parties, and if they polarized existing political organizations. To make the analysis more intuitive, we study these points in separate subsections for the parties that are relevant in our discussion, namely SYRIZA, the Independent Greeks, and the Golden Dawn. Regarding PASOK and ND, we take it that the few points that can be raised in their respective cases have been exhausted in the previous sections of this paper; the two parties of the old establishment were hit hard by the unprecedented developments in the political system, a fact

reflected in the centrifugal tendencies of their political personnel. Between the signing of the first bailout agreement and the European elections of May 2014, no less than thirty-one new political parties emerged to claim their fleeing voters, most of them spin-offs from either PASOK or ND (Table 3). However, the indignados also influenced those parties which registered electoral gains in the aftermath of the bailouts, and we now turn to them.

Table 3. Greek political parties founded between the first bailout agreement (May 2010) and the May 2014 European elections.

	Party name	Founding date	Founder(s)	May 2012 election result	June 2012 election result	May 2014 election result	Party website
1	Democratic Left [Dimokratiki Aristera]	June 27, 2010	Fotis Kouvelis Synaspismos MP (1989-93, 1996-2010), Democratic Left MP (2010-14), Minister (1989)	6.11%	6.26%	1.20%	http://www.dim-ar.gr/
2	National Hope [Ethniki Elpida]	July 5, 2010	Yorgos Papadopoulos	-	0.07%	-	http://www.ethnikielpida.gr/
3	Democratic Alliance [Dimokratiki Simahia]	November 21, 2010	Dora Bakoyannis ND MP (1989-2002), Minister (1992-93), Mayor of Athens (2002-06), Minister (2006-09), ND MP (2007-10), Democratic Alliance MP (2010-12), ND MP (2012-14), daughter of K. Mitsotakis (PM 1990-93)	2.55%	disbanded and absorbed by ND	-	http://www.dimsim.gr/
4	Panhellenic Citizens' Chariot [Panellinio Arma Politon]	April 14, 2011	Yannis Dimaras, DIKKI MP (1996-2000), PASOK MP (2004-10), Independent MP (2010-12)	in coalition with the 'Independent Greeks'	in coalition with the 'Independent Greeks'	in coalition with the 'Independent Greeks'	http://www.armapoliton.gr/
5	Unified People's Front [Enieo Palaiko Metopo]	July 11, 2011	Dimitris Kazakis economist	0.92%*	-	0.86%	http://epamhellas.gr/
6	Free Citizens [Eleftheroi Polites]	October 19, 2011	Vasilis Ikonomou PASOK MP (2000-11), Panhellenic Citizens' Chariot MP (2011), Democratic Left MP (2012-14), Independent MP (2014)	in coalition with the 'Democratic Left'	in coalition with the 'Democratic Left'	-	http://www.eleutheroipolites.gr/
7	National Unity League [Syndesmos Ethnikis Enotitas]	November 21, 2011	Nikos Alikakos retired Major General, Greek Army	0.61%	-	0.30%	http://www.syndesmosee.org/
8	Creation, Again! [Dimiourgia, Xana!]	December 8, 2011	Thanos Tzimeros marketing professional	2.15%	1.59%**	0.91%***	http://www.dimiourgiaxana.gr/
9	Pirate Party of Greece [Komma Piraton Elladas]	January 14, 2012	ruling committee	0.51%	0.23%	0.90%****	http://www.pirateparty.gr/
10	Independent Greeks [Anexartiti Ellines]	February 24, 2012	Panos Kammenos ND MP (1993-2012), Independent Greeks MP (2012), Deputy Minister (2007-09)	10.61%	7.51%	3.46%	http://www.anexartitoiellines.gr/
11	Movement I Won't Pay [Kinima Den]	March 13, 2012	Vassilis Papadopoulos	0.88%	0.39%	-	http://www.kinimadenplirono.eu/

	Plirono]		lawyer				
12	Social Pact [Kinoniki Symfonia]	March 14, 2012	Louka Katseli PASOK MP (2007-11), Minister (2009-11), Independent MP (2011-12), Social Pact MP (2012)	0.96%	supported 'SYRIZA'	-	http://www.koinonikisymfonia.gr/
13	Panathenian Movement [Panathinaiko Kinima]	April 20, 2012	Giorgos Betsikas	0.00%	0.20%	0.74%	http://pan-ki.gr/
14	Society of Values [Kinonia Axion]	April 27, 2012	Dimitris Bourandas university professor	-	-	0.37%	http://koinoniaaxion.gr/
15	Dynamic Greece [Dinamiki Ellada]	October 6, 2012	ruling committee, including Ilias Mossialos, PASOK MP (2009-12), Minister (2011-12)	-	-	participated with 'Olive'	http://dynell.gr/
16	New Reformist Radical Reconstruction [Nea Metarithmistiki Rizospastiki Anasigrotisi]	March 21, 2013	Christos Zois ND MP (2000-12), Independent Greeks MP (2012), Deputy Minister (2007-09)	-	-	in coalition with the 'Union for the Fatherland and the People'	http://www.neamera.gr
17	Pact for New Greece [Symfonia gia ti Nea Ellada]	April 15, 2013	Andreas Loverdos PASOK MP (2000-12, 2014), Independent MP (2012- 13), Deputy Minister (2002-04), Minister (2009-12)	-	-	participated with 'Olive'	http://newgreece.eu/
18	Society First [Kinonia Prota]	April 24, 2013	Odysseas Voudouris PASOK MP (2009-12), Dimar MP (2012-13), Independent MP (2013-14) and Paris Moutsinas DIMAR MP (2012-13), Independent MP (2013-14)	-	-	-	http://koinoniaprotta.gr/
19	Drachma – Greek Democratic Movement Five Stars [Drachmi – Elliniki Dimokratiki Kinisi Pende Asteron]	May 1, 2013	Theodoros Katsanevas PASOK MP (1989-93, 1996-2004), son-in-law of Andreas Papandreu (founder of PASOK and PM 1981-89, 1993-96)	-	-	0.15%	http://www.drachmi5.gr/
20	Christian-Democratic Subversive Party [Christianodimokratiko Komma Anatropis]	May 23, 2013	Nikos Nikolopoulos, ND MP (1989-2007, 2009-12), Deputy Minister (2012)	-	-	in coalition with the 'Union for the Fatherland and the People'	http://www.xristianodimokrates.gr/
21	Plan B [Shedio Vita]	May 19, 2013	Alekos Alavanos Greek Communist Party MEP (1981-89), Synaspismos MEP (1989-2004), Synaspismos President (2004-08), SYRIZA MP (2004-09)	-	-	0.20%	http://www.sxedio-b.gr/

22	Initiative of the 58 [Protovoulia ton 58]	October 14, 2013	Yannis Voulgaris university professor	-	-	participated with 'Olive'	http://kentro.aristera.gr/
23	New Party [Neo Komma]	January 16, 2014	ruling committee	-	-	-	http://toneokomma.gr/
24	Greek European Citizens [Ellines Evropei Polites]	January 23, 2014	Jorgo Chatzimarkakis FDP (Germany) MEP (2004-14)	-	-	1.44%	http://ellinespolites.gr/
25	Europe-Ecology [Evropi-Ikologia]	January 25, 2014	ruling committee	-	-	supported 'To Potami'	http://europe-ecology.gr/
26	Socialist Party [Sosialistiko Komma]	January 26, 2014	Stefanos Tzoumakas PASOK MP (1981-2007), Deputy Minister (1986-88), Minister (1995-98)	-	-	0.19%	http://socialistpartygr.blogspot.gr/
27	Union for the Fatherland and the People [Enosi gia tin Patrida kai ton Lao]	February 6, 2014	Vyron Polydoras ND MP (1981-2013) Independent MP (2013-14), Deputy Minister (1990-93), Minister (2006-07)	-	-	1.04%	http://www.enosi-patrida.gr/
28	The River [To Potami]	February 26, 2014	Stavros Theodorakis Journalist	-	-	6.60%	http://www.topotami.gr/
29	Olive – Democratic Party [Elia – Dimokratiki Parataxi]	March 8, 2014	Coalition of 'PASOK', 'Pact for New Greece', 'Initiative of the 58', 'Dynamic Greece', and other smaller groups	-	-	8.02%	http://www.elia-dimokratikiparataxi.gr/
30	Greens: Solidarity-Creation-Ecology [Prasini: Alilegii-Dimiourgia-Ikologia]	March 21, 2014	Nikos Chrysogelos Ecologist Greens MEP (2012-14)	-	-	0.50%	http://prasinoi.gr/
31	Patriotic Network of Awakening [Patriotiko Diktio Afipnisis]	April 7, 2014	Panayotis Psomiadis ND MP (1990-2003), Prefect of Thessaloniki (2003-10), Head of Regional Government of Central Macedonia (2010-11)	-	-	in coalition with the 'Union for the Fatherland and the People'	http://www.panagiotispsomiadis.gr/patrida-patriotiko-diktyo-afypnisis

* in coalition with 'Democratic Rebirth'

** in coalition with 'Drassi' and 'Liberal Alliance'

*** in coalition with 'Drassi'

**** in coalition with the 'Ecologist Greens'

The indignados and SYRIZA

Analyzing political discourse, what is central for the Greek indignados is the injection of a new wave of populist discursive elements within the domestic rhetorical landscape. While Greek voters have long been accustomed to populist discursive schemata by political contestants (Pappas 2014), the 2009 elections were rather moderate in that respect. In the summer of 2011, the indignados forcefully reintroduced populism and acutely polarized the landscape into ‘the sovereign people’ and their corrupt enemies, leaving no ground for moderate opinions that would eschew this binary antagonism. The populist zeitgeist was taken up by several existing and new parties on the way to the first 2012 election. SYRIZA, a radical coalition of thirteen leftist groups with a history going back to a split with the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) in 1968, rose to prominence during the years of the crisis and especially after the appearance of the indignados (Marantzidis 2014; Moschonas 2013).³ The significant expertise of many of its members in grassroots politics and civil society organizing (Tsakatika and Eleftheriou 2013) facilitated an osmosis with the indignados, rendering SYRIZA the main political party to channel this populist discourse into the political scene.

SYRIZA was not directly involved in the emergence of the movement, and the party became polarized on how to deal with the new situation. Several member organizations were strongly opposed to participating in what was perceived as an apolitical, even reactionary movement, yet others were more sympathetic and saw the indignados as a political opportunity not to be missed. Despite this friction, the comparatively loose hierarchy within SYRIZA allowed for a diversity of approach, and it is no secret that several of its young cadres rode on the bandwagon of the indignados in a covert fashion (Spourdalakis 2013). Member organizations such as the Communist Organization of

³ On the trajectory of the communist parties in Greece after the fall of communism see Marantzidis and Kalyvas 2005.

Greece (KOE) and the Synaspismos Youth, very early took the decision to actively mobilize their resources, managing to win some level of control over the movement's direction along the way, albeit in competition with forces of the extra-parliamentary left and anarchist groups.

Most importantly, the President of SYRIZA, Alexis Tsipras, was the only major political leader to come out enthusiastically in favor of the movement from the very start, and always took care to celebrate the re-emergence of "the people" into the political scene through the indignados in his 2012 campaign. In contrast, the General Secretary of the KKE dismissed the movement and advised the party's cadres and voters to stay away from the squares. While it is hard to measure how much the emergence of the indignados contributed to the meteoric rise of SYRIZA, from 4.6% in 2009 to 26.9% of the vote in June 2012, Tsipras has repeatedly acknowledged (e.g. Tsipras 2014a; 2014b) that the movement greatly empowered his party and led to the overthrow of the Papandreou cabinet.

SYRIZA therefore consciously revamped its political rhetoric to align closely with the zeitgeist of the indignados. While the party traditionally relied on the standard radical left platform of anti-neoliberalism, anti-racism, pro-immigration, ecology, and minority rights (see March and Mudde 2005), the onset of the indignados gradually turned SYRIZA towards articulating political claims in a strongly populist manner, constantly employing "the people" as the signifier of its targeted constituency, and the "elites" as the signifier of the enemy, in a textbook application of populist strategy (Laclau 2005). Recourse to the virtue of popular sovereignty over the power of unaccountable elites and typical populist frames such as "the people can do everything", "it is either us or them", "they decided without us – we move on without them," became staples of the party leading into the 2012 elections (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014; Pappas and Aslanidis forthcoming).

The party also adopted the ferocious anti-German discourse of the indignados, frequently attacking Chancellor Merkel and Finance Minister Schäuble as vicious enemies of the people, with the treacherous Greek government acting as their local lackeys. The anti-German drive of the indignados was systematically historicized, drawing on memories of the Second World War Nazi occupation to proclaim the bailout agreement as documenting a new German occupation, and the German domination over Europe as a Fourth Reich. SYRIZA was favorably positioned towards this end, being one of the two parties of the far left (the other one being the KKE), to claim the heritage of the Greek resistance against the Nazis. Prominent figures of the party, such as Manolis Glezos, an icon of Greek resistance who famously removed the Nazi flag from the Acropolis in 1941, were frequently invited to speak at indignados rallies across the country, providing a symbolic link between the two allegedly similar stages of Greek history. In the 2014 European election, 464,436 Greeks voted for Glezos in the SYRIZA ballot, by far the most successful MEP candidate of the country. Several other figures who became involved with the indignados due to their “technocratic” expertise, later capitalized on their acquired fame to win seats or other offices with SYRIZA.⁴

⁴ For instance, Giorgos Katrougkalos and Kostas Chrysogonos, both law professors in Greek universities, were elected MEPs in 2014 with SYRIZA. Euclid Tsakalotos, professor of economics in Athens University, was elected MP in 2012 and is a member of the Central Committee of SYRIZA. Yanis Varoufakis, also a professor of economics in Athens, is an advisor to Alexis Tsipras, having failed nomination for the 2014 European ballot due to intraparty disagreements on his candidacy, but found a place on the SYRIZA ballot for the January 2015 election. All four men were frequently invited by the indignados to provide their technical expertise in the struggle against the bailout agreement, made several appearances on TV and other media, and their opinions circulated widely in the indignados’ circles.

The indignados and the Independent Greeks

While SYRIZA tuned into the zeitgeist of the indignados originating from the radical left, it was the party of the Independent Greeks who came from the radical right to proceed likewise. However, a crucial difference is that the Independent Greeks were established after the demise of the movement, in February 2012. Yet, the leader and founder of the party, Panos Kammenos, a defector from ND after a career of 20 years as one of its most vocal MPs, never ceases to emphasize that the Independent Greeks were forged in the squares of the indignados and that the party absorbed several small groups active in the movement. Only a few weeks before the May 2012 election, the Independent Greeks even signed an alleged “contract of honor” with representatives of eleven such groups.⁵ Therefore, while the indignados never transformed *per se* into a political party, it is the party founded by Panos Kammenos which most forcefully claims their heritage as part of its core identity.

The Independent Greeks, a rather typical party of the populist radical right-wing family (see Mudde 2007), scored a remarkable 10.6% in May 2012, dropping to 7.5% in June 2012, and even lower, to 3.5% in the 2014 European election (see Table 2). Panos Kammenos defected from ND after his party decided to support the Papademos cabinet in November 2011, having been one of the staunchest opponents of the bailout while ND was still part of the anti-bailout camp. His widely circulating philippics against the treacherous PASOK government who signed the Memorandum and allegedly sold the country to foreign loan sharks, had earned him enough support to consider forming his

⁵ The press release can be found [in Greek] at

http://www.anextitoellines.gr/post.php?post_id=281, accessed December 20, 2014.

own political party after ND decided to switch camps, drawing a large portion of its defecting voters.

The discourse of Panos Kammenos is invested with multiple themes from the indignados. Kammenos employs a fierce populist rhetoric, condemning both ND and PASOK as treacherous parties and calling for the restoration of popular sovereignty according to the Greek constitution, always stressing the need for direct democratic measures as championed by the indignados (Pappas and Aslanidis forthcoming). He also invests heavily in the anti-German feelings of the Greek population, invoking images of the Second World War by calling the Greek PM a Quisling, and accusing Chancellor Merkel and other international centers of power of having deliberately thrown Greece into the sovereign debt crisis in order to install a new occupation regime and divest Greeks of their private and public property. Together with SYRIZA, the Independent Greeks argue that Germany still owes major war reparations and has failed to return a loan seized by force from the Greek government during the Nazi occupation. Many individuals who later became cadres for the Independent Greeks had been active in the indignados movement and the party's sole current MEP, Notis Marias (also elected MP in both 2012 national elections), was another member of the informal committee of academics who provided technocratic support to the indignados and became famous for his activity.

However, due to his right-wing ideological roots, Kammenos differs considerably from Tsipras in employing a high level of nativist and anti-immigrant overtones and appealing strongly to such staples of Greek conservative ideology as Christian Orthodoxy, the primacy of the Greek *ethnos*, and family values. Interestingly, despite their deep ideological differences, the dominant position of SYRIZA and the Independent Greeks on the left and right-wing of the anti-bailout camp and the exigencies of electoral law have brought the two parties very close together, since their joint forces may build

an anti-bailout governing coalition in the near future. Thus, the two seemingly ideological enemies have refrained from attacking each other or raising issues of contention (e.g. immigration, human rights etc.), their MPs and cadres have acted jointly in various occasions, and the two leaders have at times met to discuss strategic issues.

The indignados and the Golden Dawn

The third Greek political party which has arguably benefitted from the indignados is the neofascist Golden Dawn, which had started receiving publicity after its success in the 2010 local election in Athens (Dinas et al. 2013). Most frequently, the Golden Dawn is associated with the “upper” part of Syntagma square during the summer of 2011, where citizens with right-wing authoritarian tendencies used to gather in order to protest against the political order while the left-wing of the indignados hosted the Popular Assemblies at the “lower” part of the square. Even though Dawners did not roam the upper square in an organized fashion, the violent anti-democratic tendencies that developed in a part of the Athens indignados, with recurring verbal abuses against politicians and the parliament, as well as physical attacks against MPs, legitimized the violent rhetoric and the appeal to physical force that later became a staple of Golden Dawn’s political rhetoric. The framing of the “indignant citizen” had also been employed previously by the Golden Dawn to justify attacks against immigrants in poor neighborhoods of Athens. And even though the party officially denounced the indignados as a communist-led movement in which nationalists had no place, their reaction betrayed frustration in failing to infiltrate the movement due to the domination of leftist activists, rather than a dismissal of the movement’s rhetoric *per se*.

However, the benefits for Golden Dawn did not immediately become apparent, since pollsters only started to measure significant support (i.e. over the 2% mark) for the party after January 2012. Therefore, while one could claim that the violently anti-

democratic behavior that was born in upper Syntagma square contributed largely to the legitimization of the Golden Dawn's rhetoric in the eyes of the Greek public, their increased popularity has also been attributed to supply and demand factors exogenous to this movement. Most important of these have been the unintended consequences of agenda setting efforts of the socialist government on law and order issues as a diversion from austerity debates, the media frenzy regarding the Golden Dawn which kept the party constantly in the spotlight, their successful allocation of resources into grassroots organizing at specific neighborhoods of Athens, and the electoral demise of the radical right-wing LAOS after its false strategic decision to join the Papademos cabinet which led to a defection of its voters towards the Golden Dawn (see Ellinas 2013; Dinas et al. 2013).

Conclusion

This paper has only provided a brief analysis of the manifestations of the Greek indignados, opting to focus on the greater significance of the movement for Greek politics. In the first part, a large set of public opinion polls was employed to suggest that the emergence of the indignados was a pivotal event for the downfall of the two-party system that had remained impregnable since 1981. We have used insights from political psychology to argue that economic voting alone could not lead to such a massive exit of voters away from established parties, corroborating this argument with evidence from opinion polls that show a remarkable resilience of the establishment until the onset of the indignados. It was the movement of the squares, in our opinion, that contributed moral and affective arguments to disgruntled voters, facilitating their defection from decades-old political affiliations. Therefore, the impact of the indignados is crucial in understanding the monumental volatility of the May 2012 "earthquake" election.

In the second part, we have tried to look into how the indignados influenced processes within political parties rather than public opinion. We have found that the populist discourse of the indignados was taken up by both SYRIZA and the Independent Greeks, the two main parties of the anti-bailout camp, arguably contributing to their electoral success by drawing considerably from the pool of floating voters. At the same time, we found that even though the Golden Dawn had no organizational links with the indignados, the neo-fascist party registered its own gains through the proliferation of abusive and anti-democratic political language within the discursive field produced by the “darker” side of the indignados at Syntagma square, thus legitimizing the violently anti-democratic and anti-parliamentary rhetoric of the Golden Dawn. The only Greek party that was found broadly untouched by the indignados in its discourse or internal dynamics is the Communist Party (KKE), illustrating once more its long commitment to ideological and strategic rigidity.

The Greek indignados was the most important movement for Greek politics since the restoration of democracy in 1974. Its impact on the Greek psyche has had tremendous repercussions in consolidating new cleavages and restructuring the party system away from the domination of a two-party configuration. Further research on the movement at both the macro and micro level of analysis is bound to help us improve our understanding of the tremendous impact of the Great Recession on Greek society.⁶

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