PaxMUN 2022

Forum: GENERAL ASSEMBLY ONE

Issue: Combating nationalism and religious extremism in the EU

Author: Philip Anghel

Personal Introduction - Chairs

When I joined the Model United Nations meetings in year 7, I always harbored an admiration for the vast knowledge of MUN terms the student officers possessed, never imagining I could ever remember the sophisticated syntax and rules of procedures the chair and deputy chairs needed to know. However, as my MUN experience developed and my skills as a delegate sharpened, I saw myself employing the same terminology that had intimidated me just a few years back. Even though I still cannot compare my current level with the distinguished presidents and chairs I've spoken to in past conferences, I am confident that I can continue developing to reach the caliber of the chairs. Therefore, the moment the opportunity to take on a chairing position arose, I knew I had to seize it since I considered that becoming a chair would be a catalyst to both my MUN and personal development. I wish to not only extend my chairing knowledge, but furthermore to thoroughly communicate with the many delegations in my committee - learning more about their journey into MUN.

Introduction

In recent years, Europe has seen new waves of violent extremism that have claimed countless innocent lives. Extremist ideologies glorify the supremacy of a specific group, whether on religious, ethnic, or political grounds, and oppose a more accepting and inclusive society. The emergence of violent extremism and its dissemination over national borders, as well as the administration of increasingly varied and multicultural cultures, provide two distinct but related difficulties for contemporary nations.

While violent extremism necessitates measures to safeguard persons and assets, violent extremism prevention must look beyond just security considerations to development-related causes and remedies. Experiences in both development and peacebuilding suggest that increasing levels of inclusion and tolerance in communities may lead to both better diverse governance and societies that are more resistant to violent extremism.

Definition of Key Terms

In terms of ideology, right-wing/nationalistic extremism has three distinguishing traits, which we characterize in the context of this study as follows:

1. Belief in some type of inherent inequality or hierarchy between persons or groups of people, which can include racism, xenophobia, and homophobia;

2. Belief in authoritarianism (tight position on law and order typified by conventionalism, subordination, and hostility).

3. The implied or explicit goal of destroying the present democratic system (antidemocracy).

Figure 1: Spectrum of ideologies from nationalism to right-wing extremism

	+ xenophobia		+ authoritarianism		+ anti-democracy	
Nationalism		**Radical nationalism**		**Right-wing radicalism**		**Right-wing extremism**
State and nation should be unified		Exclusionary nationalism. *Cultural nationalism* *Ethnic nationalism* *Racial nationalism*		Illiberal opposition to equality Rejection of 'liberal' elements of democracy		Replacement of democracy

Ideological spectrum

Source: Cas Mudde adapted by Asterisk Research and Analysis

Drivers of Violent Extremism

Violent extremism's drivers The fundamental causes of violent extremism are diverse, multidimensional, and interwoven, and they are related to the structural context in which radicalization and perhaps violent extremism might emerge. Violent extremism is a result of historical, political, economic, and social factors, as well as regional and global power dynamics. One of the most frequently mentioned factors of violent extremism is growing horizontal inequality. Importantly, unemployment or poverty are not the only push factors inspiring violence and extremism: feelings of unfairness, human-rights breaches, social-political marginalization, systemic corruption, or long-term maltreatment of particular groups are also key push factors. Radical movements and violence are more likely to emerge when all of these horizontal inequities collide for a certain population.
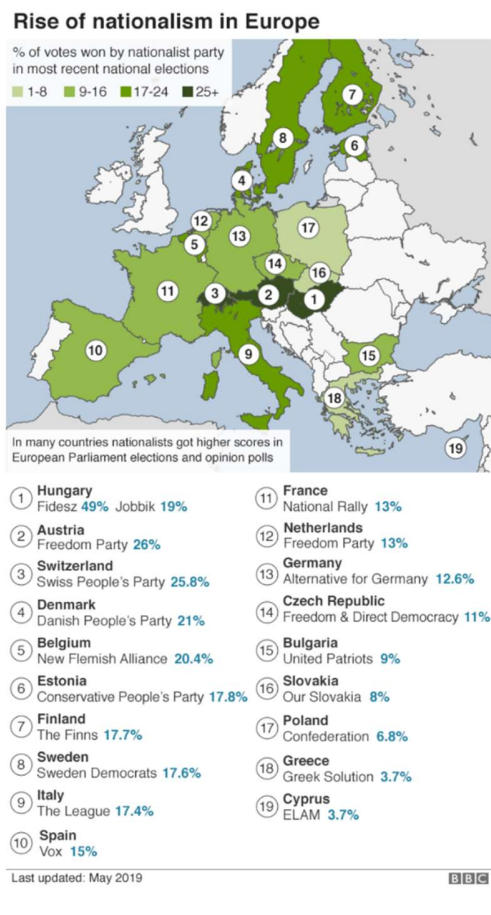
Main participating countries:

Nationalism has long existed across Europe's political spectrum, but right-wing and populist parties have recently seen a surge in voter support.

It can be seen everywhere from Germany, where the AfD has risen to become the largest opposition party in the Bundestag, to Spain, where Vox has risen to become the third largest political force in the country.

Voters are dissatisfied with the political elite in part, but they are also concerned about globalization, immigration, a loss of national identity, and the European Union.

Nine far-right parties have created a new alliance in the European Parliament dubbed Identity and Democracy (ID).

So, where do right-wing nationalists retain control in Europe's political landscape?

Rise of nationalism in Europe

% of votes won by nationalist party in most recent national elections

■ 1-8   ■ 9-16   ■ 17-24   ■ 25+

In many countries nationalists got higher scores in European Parliament elections and opinion polls

1. **Hungary** Fidesz **49%** Jobbik **19%**
2. **Austria** Freedom Party **26%**
3. **Switzerland** Swiss People's Party **25.8%**
4. **Denmark** Danish People's Party **21%**
5. **Belgium** New Flemish Alliance **20.4%**
6. **Estonia** Conservative People's Party **17.8%**
7. **Finland** The Finns **17.7%**
8. **Sweden** Sweden Democrats **17.6%**
9. **Italy** The League **17.4%**
10. **Spain** Vox **15%**
11. **France** National Rally **13%**
12. **Netherlands** Freedom Party **13%**
13. **Germany** Alternative for Germany **12.6%**
14. **Czech Republic** Freedom & Direct Democracy **11%**
15. **Bulgaria** United Patriots **9%**
16. **Slovakia** Our Slovakia **8%**
17. **Poland** Confederation **6.8%**
18. **Greece** Greek Solution **3.7%**
19. **Cyprus** ELAM **3.7%**

Last updated: May 2019   BBC

Italy

Despite the breakdown of his government coalition with the anti-establishment Five Star Movement in August, Italy's Matteo Salvini - the League's leader - is a significant player on Europe's nationalist landscape.

Mr Salvini's stint as interior minister was ended by a surprising accord between Five Star and the center-left Democratic Party (PD).

The popularity of the League coincided with the aftermath of the financial crisis and a large inflow of migrants from North Africa into Sub-Saharan Africa in 2016. Mr. Salvini was the architect of an anti-immigration policy that prohibited humanitarian rescue ships from entering Italian ports.

Germany

With 12.6 percent of the vote in 2017, the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) became Germany's largest opposition party and entered the federal parliament for the first time.

It has advocated for severe anti-immigration policies, embraced animosity against Islam, and breached decades-old anti-Nazi taboos since its inception as an anti-euro party. It gained popularity when Germany allowed over a million unauthorized migrants to enter the country.

Despite Chancellor Angela Merkel's attempts to toughen her position on immigration, the party has grown in popularity and currently has lawmakers in every state legislature.

In the eastern state of Thuringia, the AfD came out ahead of Mrs Merkel's Christian Democrats (CDU) in October 2019, shocking the political establishment.

France

Despite leader Marine Le Pen's efforts to make the extreme right acceptable to the French mainstream, she was soundly beaten by Emmanuel Macron in the May 2017 presidential election.Her National Front (FN) was renamed the National Rally after failing to break through in legislative elections the following month (Rassemblement National).

Ms. Le Pen's party opposes the euro and blames the EU for mass immigration; she has found common ground with other European nationalist and far-right parties.
There is evidence that some far-right individuals have joined the grassroots "gilets jaunes" (yellow-vest) protest movement.

The anti-establishment demonstrations over the expense of living have presented the most serious threat to Macron's leadership.In their enraged campaign, some gilets jaunes demonstrators add anti-Semitic insults.

Spain

The ascent of the far-right Vox party has been one of Spain's biggest political tales. On the 10th of November, Spain held its fourth general election in four years, and Vox stormed to third place, tripling its seats to 52. It was only in April that it was initially introduced into parliament. Vox positions itself as a defender of the Spanish state's unity, promising to expel illegal immigrants and overturn anti-gender violence legislation.

After separatists failed in their bid for independence in October 2017, it gained significant gains by calling for the suspension of autonomy for the north-eastern Catalan region. Many assumed that because of the country's past under dictator Francisco Franco, who died in 1975, Spaniards would never support a far-right party. Since then, just one seat has been won by a far-right contender - in 1979.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

UN plan of action

In the Plan, the UN Secretary-General calls for a comprehensive approach encompassing not only essential security-based counter-terrorism measures but also systematic preventive steps to address the underlying conditions that drive individuals to radicalize and join violent extremist groups.
The Plan is an appeal for concerted action by the international community. It provides more than 70 recommendations to Member States and the United Nations System to prevent the further spread of violent extremism . It is not enough to combat violent extremism; we must also prevent it, which necessitates the use of 'soft power' to oppose a danger fueled by incorrect cultural interpretations, intolerance, and ignorance. Violent extremists are created and motivated, not born. Disarming the radicalization process must begin with human rights and the rule of law, with cross-border discourse, by empowering all young women and men, and by starting as early as possible on the school benches.

The important resolution by UNESCO Member States to strengthen UNESCO's capabilities to help States in developing stronger plans to combat violent extremism was accepted. The UN Secretary-Plan General's of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism has also been endorsed by UNESCO.

UNESCO has placed an emphasis on four areas that are directly relevant to UNESCO's work: education, skills development, and job facilitation; (ii) youth empowerment; (iii) strategic communications, the Internet, and social media; and (iv) gender equality and women's empowerment.

Possible solutions

From radicalization to violent extremism, there is a continuum. People are drawn into radical and violent movements by well-planned manipulation and accompaniment (socialization) processes, which are often aided by personal, emotional, or psychological factors such as alienation, a search for identity and dignity, revenge for previous mistreatment, breakdown of communication between authority figures and youth, and virtual communities on social media. Preventing people from joining violent extremist organizations necessitates a more in-depth examination and reflection of the societal underpinnings of nations at danger of violent extremism. Therefore, clearly identifying sources of manipulation before they can impact populations and voting demographics could allow the subsiding of these extremist views being openly circulating. However, identifying the sources and stopping them is easier said than done - so we look forward to hearing the plethora of bright ideas and solutions you, the delegates, come up with.

Bibliography

https://en.unesco.org/preventingviolentextremism

https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/plan-of-action-to-prevent-violent-extremism

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/700953/IPOL_STU(2021)700953_EN.pdf