**Mass media as another factor for the rise of European far-right parties**

**2nd semester Essay**

**Lesson: English –Basic Concepts and Technical Language Structures in International Relations & Global Economics ΙΙ**

**International & European Studies**

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In the last 3 decades, far-right’s rise is notable across Europe. The role of mass media in this rise hasn’t been given that much attention by many political scientists and analysts. However, the cases that media’s assistance has led to the promotion of rightwing parties’ political positions are too many to be ignored.

**Definition:**

Before dealing with the role of media and social media in this rise, we should define the nature of the far-right parties. Rightwing parties are considered the parties that oppose immigration, compete against globalization and maintain an anti-Communist and anti-Islamic character in their political positions. These radical right organizations get advantage of the fact of public distrust in political parties and uncertainty in the global economy. Fears related to immigration and the weakening of national identity; also strengthen their positions(Heywood, n.d, p. 418-422).

**Incidents that media influence extreme right’s enlargement:**

* In France, in the 80s, FrançoisMitterrand*,* President of the French Republic, ordered 3 state channels to propound **Jean-Marie Le Pen**, the leader of the far-right political party **Front National**, in order to strike the other right parties. As a result, Le Pen’s rates reached 3, 5%-4%, and passed from margin to the epicenter of the publicity.
* In Austria, media with their extensive view in the face of **JörgHaider** led **FPÖ**’s rates from 5%, in 1993, to 27%, in 1999(Mpozaninou, 2012).
* In Germany, the **Republicans**, back in the 1989, after their success in the elections of Berlin, had been forceful subject of discussion over the German media. Even though the publicitythey granted wasn’t always positive – their leader had been characterized as the new Führer – their rates reached 7% on European elections(Mpozaninou, 2012).
* In Greece, we meet the development of **Golden Dawn**, a neo-Nazi political party [her members refuse this characterization (Anonymous, 2012)] with racist and anti-Semitic attitude in her positions. This party, before elections of 2012, had been surrounded by urban myths that helped in its rise and its entry in the Greek parliament with 18 seats. These myths (protection from immigrant violence or help for elders) have been replicated by mass media. For example, the existence of an article that presented Golden Dawn’s members as ‘boy-scouts’ and a picture of a member that helped two older women, assisted the party to create the image of an organization that helps Greeks –even though, one of the elder women was the mother of a party member(Koronaiou&Sakellariou, 2013).[In the case of Golden Dawn, it’s notable that before the elections, the party has been included in a group of parties that would receive extra coverage from state channels, according to a Joint Ministerial Decision(2012).]Event though the publicity she gets the most of the times is negative, she is been considered third political force with almost 10% rates in all the polls.

**Role of media:**

Mass media provide right wing’s leaders the chance to immerge their positions about their main issues, like immigration and Islam. Smaller parties are benefited by media exposure, because they get the chance to spread their word to a wider audience than their finances would permit. This fact, combined with the strong personality of a leader like **Fortuyn**or**Le Pen**, assists in the right wing’s rise. Another factor to be considered is the media emphasis on the ‘human interest’, which places a skilled (in communication) leader of a far-right party, with a populist message, in the center of publicity (ENAR, 2012).

However, political parties aren’t always equally treated by media. This happens either, because journalists can’t transmit all positions of all parties on all issues at any time(VrijeUniversiteit, 2012, p. 120), or either, sometimes, because the promotion of the violent side of radical right organizations by media, is done for **reasons of feasibility**, in an attempt to recede viewers’ look from the violence of left-extremists, and to promote a sense of conflict between ‘the voice of reason’ and ‘the violence of the extremes’ (Chatzistefanou, 2012).

**Social media:**

We can’t ignore the role of social media in the development of far-right parties. This placement is based on the sayings of **Peter Barabas**(2012), who states that the'evolution' of communicationin modernright-wingers
extends notonlyto the approachin conformistmediabut also infunctioningin social media. The Hungarian far-right party, **Jobbik**, is based on an extensive network of nationalist sites (ENAR, 2012). Also, anti-Islamic movements asEnglish Defence League and Anti-Islam Alliance use network for support mobilizing(Brussels Bureau, 2011).

**Conclusion – Measures against far-right parties:**

It’s obvious that extreme right parties have been established in the political scene of European countries, but some countries have taken measures against it.

In Germany, media decided not to endorse far-right’s actions, fearful of a greater rise in Republicans’ rates. This meter looks effective, because since the decision was made the party can’t outreach 3% (Mpozaninou, 2012).

In Britain, **Nick Griffin** has faced the court many times and was forced to change the party’s constitution (Walker & Matthew, 2010). Hope et al. (2009) published that**Geert Wilders**, the leader of the **DutchFreedom Party**, was banned the entry to Britain because he promoted a film who presents the Koran as a ‘fascist book’.

It’s also notable the reaction of the Members of the European Parliament in the face of the far-right’s rise. A group of 22 Euro Members, addressed question to the European Commission if she has a **Response Plan**(European Commission, 2013).

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*ΧρυσήΑυγή:’’Δενείμαστενεοναζί, είμαστεΈλληνεςεθνικιστές’’[Golden Dawn: We are not neo-Nazis, we are Greek nationalists]* (2012, May 10). <http://news247.gr/eidiseis/politiki/xrysh_aygh_den_eimaste_neonazi_eimaste_ellhnes_ethnikistes.1768276.html>