

The Rise of Extremism in Europe:

An Overview of 2016/2017

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Key Terms and Concepts¹

1) Extremism (noun): political extremism (in terms of extreme political opinions)

Extreme: beliefs and political parties which most people consider unreasonable and unacceptable

Extremist (adjective): represent a group of people with "extremist tendencies".

2) Right-wing populism: a political ideology that rejects existing political consensus and is anti-elitism.

3) Radicalization: a process in which individuals are introduced to extreme views and overtly ideological messages, sometimes in connection with a particular interpretation of a religion, that encourages extreme behavior in defending or advancing one's views²

3) Populism: a political communication strategy that splits society into two groups: the "pure people" and the "corrupt elite"³.

4) Terrorism: is violence that is consciously carried out by the perpetrator(s) primarily in order to influence the attitudes and behavior of a wider target audience (or multiple target audiences).⁴

5) Organized crime: criminal organizations that plan and commit crime

6) Wahhabist extremism: ultra conservative Muslim who opposes all other faiths and ideologies, even from other sects in Islam

7) Security: protection of a person, building, organization, or country against threats such as crime or attacks by foreign countries

8) Eurosceptic parties: a person, especially a politician, who opposes closer connections with the European Union

9) Eurozone crisis: financial crisis that began in Europe around 2011.

¹ Cambridge Dictionary Online

² Aydin Mustafa, "The connection between radicalism, extremism and terrorism"

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/the-connection-between-radicalism-extremism-and-terrorism.aspx?PageID=238&NID=93231&NewsCatID=468> (December 31, 2015)

³ Cas Mudde "Europe's Populist Surge." (2005)

⁴ Monterey Terrorism & Research Education Program

This report will provide an overview of the rise of extremism in Europe from early 2000 to present time. The rise of extremism in Europe is an evolving movement; covering topics on populism, immigration, and terrorism. This means that extremist views and practices destabilize society. This has happened in governments influenced by extremism and will continue to happen in Europe as right-wing populist parties influence increases. The rise of right-wing populism is an interesting case study for extremism. There is much debate on whether populism is an actual threat to the EU⁵. Particularly, this is in reference to the 2017 parliamentary elections; where, populist campaigns and parties did not do so well during the election. However, the issue of right wing populism cannot be entirely dismissed, since the rise of right-wing populism is linked to issues on immigration and terrorism which affects most member states. Following this review, is a policy brief on how Europe can find solutions to end the effects of extremism in regions affected by radicalisation and violent extremism.

If considering political developments, the rise of populism in Europe should be of no surprise to the international community. The late 1970s is when the movement for populism emerged, and it has had a great amount of influence since then. While at the time there were not many primary influential parties, the incoming of new parties and their successes gave hope to old parties. What we would consider ‘trivial’ successes, is greater success for them; that is, making the European Union appear inferior to populism. It is evident that populism involves a whole lot of strategy and effective planning. In this aspect, strategy for right-wing populist groups’ is the ability to convince others to hold a particular political view or belief. For example, early right wing populist parties would blame the elites of coddling communists, welfare recipients, or immigrants⁶. Ultimately, this prejudiced perspective would have extreme consequences on the state; such that, the public would be divided on an issue, and each populist party would have an immense power of miseducating the public. Another defining characteristic of populist parties is the “us vs. them” mentality. Judis defines this is a dominant feature for most of Europe’s right-wing populist party. In France, the National Front says it represents the “little people” and the “forgotten members” against the “caste”. In Finland, the Finns want a

⁵ Greven, Thomas “The Rise of Right-Wing populism in Europe and the United States”

⁶ Judis, John “Us vs. Them: the birth of populism” (2016)

democracy that rests on the consent of the people rather than that from elitists. In Italy, Beppe Grillo leader of the Five Star Movement is against the “three destroyers” – journalists, industrialists, and politicians⁷. The “us vs. them” mentality unifies right wing populist groups and helps shape a ‘concrete’ reality for its supporters. Hence, their popularity stems from granting their followers a sense of importance and voice in the political sphere. The problem with the nature of populist parties is that they lack a homogenous structure⁸. Meaning, these groups have a hard time identifying their political positions and consolidating their sphere of influence. This can be observed in the last decade, whereby right-wing populist parties have had periods of unparalleled growth. While some parties may achieve success at the national level, others have failed terribly. Following current trends in Europe, this discussion will focus on the degree to which these populist parties have become extreme. Unquestionably, the rise of these extremist parties challenges the European politics and is expected to increase over the coming years. These challenges can be observed in parliamentary elections; such as those in France, the UK, and Germany. Although representation of right-wing parties might seem miniscule (considering that their influence is mostly at the national level), data reveals that the populist parties have the capacity to influence the social and political health of these regions (for good or for worse).

FRANCE: The National Front

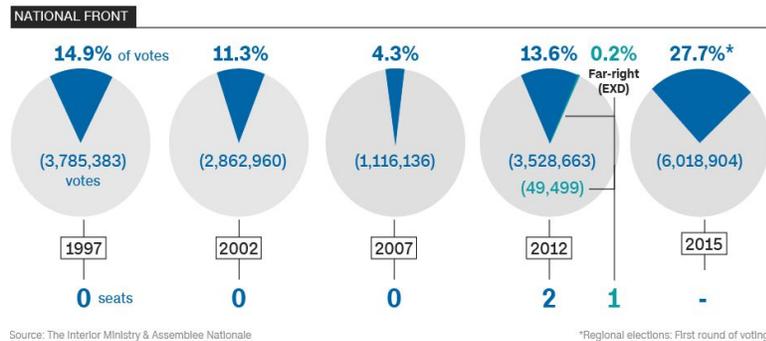
The National Front has been around for forty-five years. The party has went through many changes since 1972. The party’s leader at the time was Jean Marie Le Pen who introduced anti-semitic values and economic liberalism policies to the party. In 2011, daughter of former leader Jean Marie Le Pen, Marie Le Pen, decided that she would lead the party in a different direction. Her father’s anti-semitism rhetoric was a negative image for the party, and she believed that she could change the party’s direction. For the past several years, between Jean Marie Le Pen and Marie Le Pen, Marie is the lesser evil. Under her leadership, she has worked towards a de-dominization of the party in order to broaden its base. This has resulted in a shift

⁷ Judis, John “Us vs. Them: the birth of populism” (2016)

⁸ Guilbernau, “Migration: The Rise of the Radical Right” (2010)

from anti-Semitism to an anti-immigrant, islamophobic position, and a shift from economic liberalism to a policy of protection of the French people against globalization⁹. Marie Le Pen's policies and her leadership helped the National Front grow its base of support.

Parliamentary election results France



The diagram above depicts the rise of popularity in the National Front from 1997-2015. The National Front had some periods of low-support, but for the most part the party seems to be climbing the ladder. From 2015 to present time, the party has surprisingly lost its sphere of influence. The most recent parliamentary elections between Marie Le Pen and Emmanuel Macron, indicates that the National Front is either destabilized or ready for change. On May 07, 2017 Macron won the election with 65.5 percent of the votes to her 34.5 percent¹⁰. As seen in the history of presidential elections in the party, expect there to be changes for the National front party. Already, reporters have made comments to Macron and his new cabinet who have decided to change the name of the right wing populist party. The changes that have been made to the party does not make the party more or less of a threat to the political system. The National Front embodies an ideology that is threatening to Europe's liberal democracy, and the new changes that come with the party could potentially strengthen the party's original extremist views.

UK: United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)

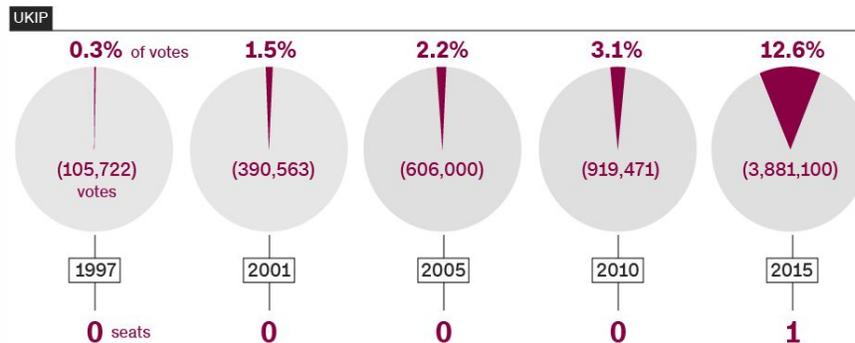
Like France, the UK has experienced many changes in the political sphere. The right-wing populist party United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) has had tremendous influence in the region. Founded in 1993, UKIP is widely known for rejecting further integration with European

⁹ Greven, Thomas "The Rise of Right-Wing populism in Europe and the United States"

¹⁰ CNN "Will Europe ride the populist wave" (2017)

Union and promoting conservatism. For years, the party has been under the charismatic leadership of Nigel Farage. The party saw its first successes at the election of the European parliament, which took place in 2011.

Parliamentary election results United Kingdom



Source: UK Parliament

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The diagram above shows the steady rise in support for UKIP. This data reflects the influence of Nigel Farage, and the successes of the party in 2011. Since then, there has been a lot of changes to the right wing populist party. In 2016 the Brexit campaign pressured the government to either remain or leave the EU altogether. The Brexit campaign was precipitated by the UKIP, and now remains as a sign that most of Europe is divided on European integration¹². The EU referendum results showed that the UK voted to leave the EU by 52% to 48%. Following the success of Brexit and the party's accomplishments, Farage decided to leave the party. The lack of leadership has led to the party's demise; whereby, the party lost thirty seats and failed to win a single contest in the local elections¹³. Despite this fact, the remaining supporters of UKIP and the contentious support for Brexit are a threat to Europe's liberal democracy. In most cases, those who supported Brexit will continue to vote against migration and economic globalism. In the end, the UKIP party reflects the willingness of Britain voters to adopt similar measures in other party systems.

¹¹ "Will Europe ride the populist wave" (2017)

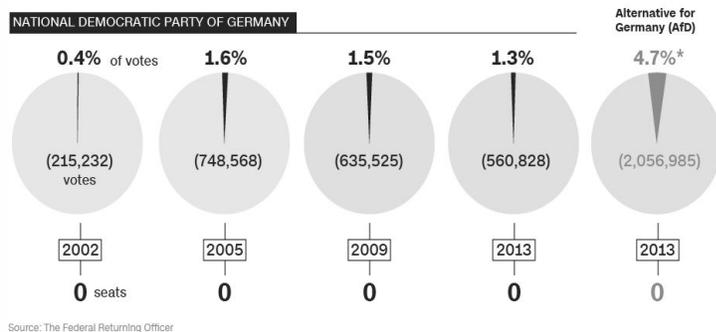
¹² CNN "UKIP faces wipeout in Britain's local elections" 2017

¹³ CNN "UKIP faces wipeout in Britain's local elections" 2017

GERMANY: AfD

Populist parties in Germany have not had much success in winning seats. The National Democratic party of Germany is the oldest right wing populist party, and is mostly known for its neo-Nazi political views. The party has never managed to get enough votes; thus, it has had very minimal political influence. Following very important political events in 2013, National Democratic party of Germany was replaced by the Alternative for Deutschland (AfD) --in opposition to German Chancellor Angela Merkel's open door policy to refugees. Many parties joined the movement, including the (neo)-liberal Free Democratic party and the Christian Democratic Party (CDU).

Parliamentary election results Germany



The diagram above shows the change from National Democratic party of Germany to AfD, and how much more support AfD received. In 2014, many demonstrations were held against Germany's immigration policy. This was mostly caused by the Pegida movement, which led to changes in the party's leadership. The political movement claims to be anti-Islamist and aims to stop Islamic extremism. Following 2015, the AfD party under the influence of Bernd Lucke, developed the same messages as members of Pegida. The party adopted much of Pegida language of anti-establishment, anti-Islam, anti-media, and anti-immigration. Separate from the influence of Pegida, the party also rejects further integration with the EU¹⁴. The progress of AfD remains relatively stagnant-- as the party is losing its support base. However, many Germans fear

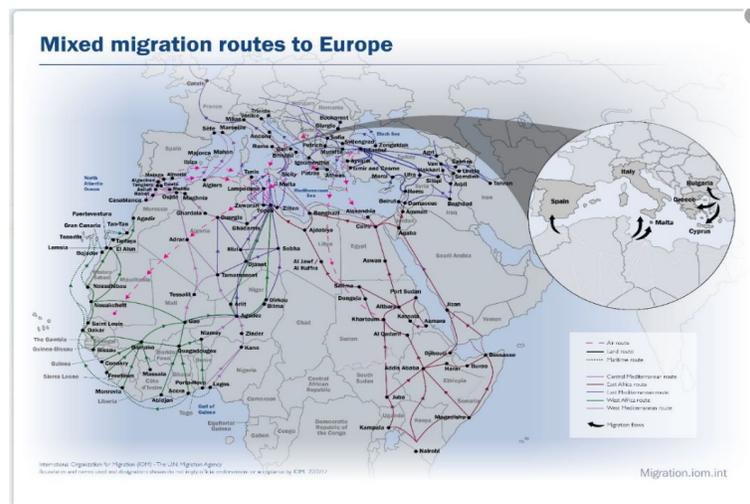
¹⁴ Grevan, Thomas "The Rise of Right-Wing Populism in Europe and the United States"

that supporters of the party could threaten Europe's liberal democracy with their extremist views.

Brief Analysis

The National Front in France, like UKIP in the UK, and AfD in Germany reflect the fragility of populist parties. Although these parties suffer from not having a good structure or unifying ideology, they still have the capacity to influence their political systems. Among the many factors that affect these regions, immigration is one that needs to be addressed. The next section of this paper will review the effects of immigration policy on the rise of these extremists' populist parties. The argument here is that although immigration is not the only reason for the rise of populism, it is one of the critical factors that continue to undermine the political and social health of Europe's political system.

Immigration Policy in the EU



Immigration policies and procedures are flexible for all countries in the European Union. While there are laws that each state must abide by, each state has their policies on immigration. This means that each state has a different policy regarding immigration. There are also other courses of action that each state decides upon. They are as follows (1) the total number of migrants that can be admitted to the country to look for work (2) all final decisions on migrant applications (3) rules on long-term visas (4) conditions to obtain residence and work permits when no EU-wide

rules have been adopted.

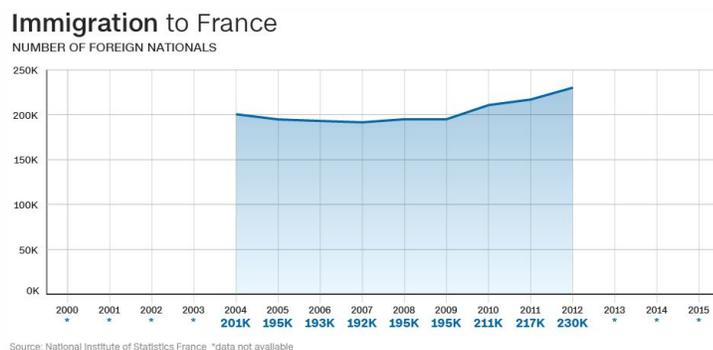
Effects of Current Migration patterns

85, 105 arrivals to Europe in 2017
 83, 928 by sea
 1,177 by land
 2, 108 dead/missing – Mediterranean 2017
 (migration flows, n.d.)

Updates as of June 21, 2017

Immigration in Europe has become a problem. As thousands upon thousands of refugees from the Middle East and elsewhere in neighboring regions seek asylum in countries like Germany, the European Union is gradually destabilizing. It is quite unfortunate that European states were unprepared for the immigration wave. A review of polls on the opinions of immigration and data on the number of migrants in France, the UK, and Germany, depicts how immigration affects populist parties mindset and the state.

Immigration in France



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The graph above shows that from 2004-2012 immigration to France increased about 29K per year. Following this pattern, France should expect a rise in the number of migrants. Researcher

¹⁵ CNN “Will Europe ride the populist wave” (2017)

Chantal Brutel's has also witnessed an increase in migration in France. Between 2006 to 2015, she conducted a study on the migratory flows between France and the rest of the world between 2006 and 2015. Brutel's data on immigration flow in Europe concludes that it is hard to calculate the number of migrants or refugees moving into and out of the country. For example, there were more people born in France who left the country than returned, thus their migratory balance was negative (-116,000 people). Conversely, this balance was positive for immigrants (+204,000), as there were more arrivals than departures¹⁶. There are many individuals who have gained permanent residence in France, and many who are being relocated elsewhere. The concern with immigration here is not entirely just the number of immigrants in France, but the effect that these migrants will have on the French national identity. Although the national front has lost a majority of its influence in the region, the party will continue to use anti-immigration rhetoric to rally up support from the French public; where the majority of people are against immigration.

Immigration in the UK

Immigration to United Kingdom

NUMBER OF FOREIGN NATIONALS



Source: UK Office for National Statistics

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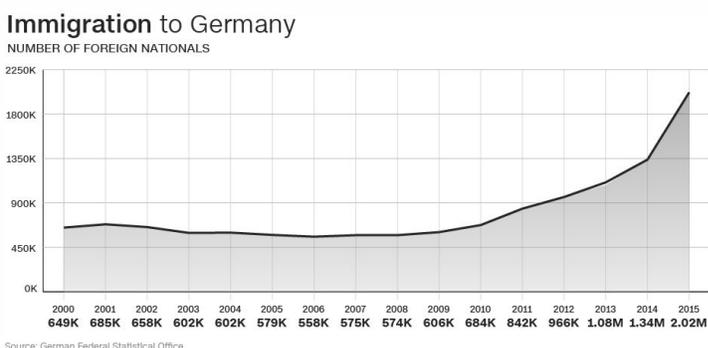
The graph above shows the rise of immigration from 2000-2015 in the UK. More recent data provided by the Home Office Immigration statistics has completed its research on immigration control in the UK for the 2016-2017 period. Ending on March 2017, there were 9,634 grants of asylum and an additional 6,245 people were resettled to the UK. In total, there was 24,293 initial decisions on asylum applications from main applicants. 33% of these applications were grants of

¹⁶ National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (2017)

¹⁷ CNN "Will Europe ride the populist wave" (2017)

asylum or an alternative form of protection, compared to 40% in the previous year¹⁸. In the UK, most if not all migrants can extend their stay by applying for a visa or British citizenship. When the UKIP party was active in Britain, it called for uncontrolled immigration to be curtailed by extending the existing points to EU citizens. Since Britain has exited the EU, it will make more decisive actions than the UKIP party. We can expect the region to spread even more negative messages about migrants coming from the Middle East and North African region.

Immigration in Germany



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The graph above depicts the rise of migrants in Germany. Germany is known to be the main area where refugees seek asylum. Germany is a hub for refugees because it is the most receptive to migrants from the Middle East and North African regions. Compared to France, and the UK, Germany has more migrants than both countries put together. France 2012 had 230K migrants, UK 2012 had 538k migrants, and Germany had 2.02M. The issue with migration here is very problematic because Germany has said that they can only take up to 500,000 migrants per year. This leads to a lot of refugees being relocated or missing within Europe. It is also problematic for parties like AfD and the Pegida movements that are against immigration. They have no power in changing the legislation, and as a result will only continue to build more hatred towards migrants.

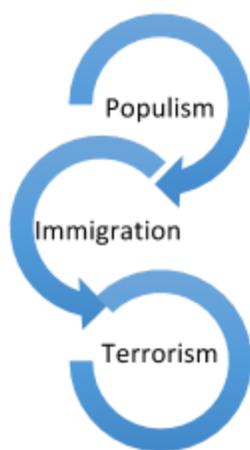
Brief Analysis

It is true that immigration is one of the critical factors that continue to undermine the political

¹⁸ Immigration Statistics 2017

¹⁹ CNN "Will Europe ride the populist wave" (2017)

and social health of Europe's political system. The right-wing parties have been able to rally support for their political parties by exposing the government's inability to deal with immigration. They have all made a conscious effort to portray immigrants as a threat to their national identity and state security. In fact, the rise of refugees and migrants across Europe has affected not only the political views of populist parties but has led to the success of many terrorist attacks, like those in Brussels. Recently, many scholars and political scientists have observed patterns in Wahhabist recruiting methods with the influx of immigration in Europe. Although not every person who migrates from the Middle and North Africa is ISIS inspired or ISIS affiliated, ISIS can exploit these routes for their agenda. The rise of populism, immigration, and terrorism constitute the tri-fold process on the rise of extremism in Europe.



Terrorism in Europe²⁰

Terrorism has increased over the last several decades in Europe, mostly due to the influence of the ISIS. However, not all of the attacks that have happened in Europe are caused by ISIS. There are many other groups that have committed horrible acts of terror against citizens in Europe. Below are a list of current active terrorist groups in Europe.

Wahhabist Extremists

Wahhabist extremists have a particular set of beliefs that make them distinct from other terrorist groups in Europe. In Europe, Wahhabists have committed mass casualty attacks with the help of foreign fighters in Syria. Between 2011 and 2016 over 5,000 European Muslims went to fight in Syria; about five times more than the number that went to anywhere else to join a terrorist group. In 2016, 135 people were killed in ISIS attacks in the EU. In total 13 terrorist attacks were reported: France 5, Belgium 4 and Germany 4. Out of these 13 attacks, 10 were completed. Close to 720 individuals were arrested as suspects with ties to ISIS or similar groups²¹. Attacks by

²⁰ European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (2017)

²¹ European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (2017)

these groups are against the West, and will continue to pose a threat to the stability of the region. The attacks in Brussels, Nice and Berlin in particular, with explosives (Brussels) and vehicles (Nice and Berlin) were used to randomly kill and wound as many people as possible. This again demonstrates the harm that Wahhabists are able and willing to inflict upon EU citizens²².

ISIS Trends²³

1. Nature of Attacks: The attacks can be planned out or they can happen randomly. Terrorists who act in the name of Islamic State - have carried out very complex attacks in the past.
2. Technology: consists of mostly low-tech small improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and improvised incendiary devices (IIDs) consisting of readily available material.
3. Targets: This group operates mostly in Western Europe. Targets include: large crowds; mosques; churches and places of international influence.
4. Perpetrators: Include EU citizens, foreigners especially from the Middle East and North Africa.
5. Migration: ISIS has exploited the migrant routes to recruit individuals to carry out their attacks

Current Political Situation

The fight against ISIS in the Middle East is beginning to wind down with ISIS losing territory in Iraq and Syria. The efforts of Iraqi and Kurdish forces have helped destabilize ISIS affiliated groups in the region. With the Islamic state weakening, there is this idea that Europe will be free from Wahhabist extremists. Although ISIS is losing ground, the ideology remains in the public consciousness and will remain a threat. In the future, Europe will face even larger threats from radicalisation and terrorism than the challenges today. One of the reasons is that there is persistent conflict in the Middle East. With this social climate, it only makes sense that the group will not lose its power²⁴.

²² European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (2017)

²³ European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (2017)

²⁴ Hegghammer, Thomas Terrorism Research Initiative (2017)

Ethno-nationalist & separatist groups²⁵ Ethno-nationalist and separatist groups are motivated by nationalism, ethnicity and religion. There are four different types of ethno-nationalist and separatist groups that pose a threat to Europe's political system.

1. Dissident Republican groups: Dissident republican groups pose an immediate threat to Europe's political system. There are three main groups in Northern Ireland: the Continuity IRA (CIRA), the new IRA and Óglaigh na hÉireann (ONH). These groups have the capacity to cause immense destruction, with weapons like under-vehicle IEDs and explosives. In 2016 alone, there were at least 76 attempted attacks, four of which were successful. In May of 2016, the United Kingdom government upgraded the threat from this group from moderate to substantial. The threat of this group remains high and will affect Europe regardless if some groups lose power.

2. PKK (Kongra Gel)/KCK: This ethno nationalist group targets Turkish institutions. France reported that there were five IED attacks against Turkish institutions in 2016. Germany also reported that there were significant amount of demonstrations for and against the PKK. In this region, the PKK also damaged Turkish institutions. Areas like Italy, Switzerland, and Romania have also described the growing influence of this party.

3. Euskadi ta askatasuna (ETA): Even after the ceasefire on October 11, 2011, this group still has influence over northern Spain and southwestern France. In 2016, five separatist terrorist actions were reported, and this group happened to have some affiliation. France and other countries continue to be a place where the ETA hides its weapon caches.

Right-wing terrorist groups: These groups seek to replace the entire political, social, and economic system but on the basis of an extremist right wing model. The core idea of this group is supremacy, in which one group, race, and religion is superior to all other people²⁶. Right wing groups have also taken on a xenophobic and islamophobic position to spread fear and concern in Europe. The rise of right-wing extremist groups is poorly researched in comparison to ethno-nationalist and separatist groups. Where there are about 2,110 cases of ethno-nationalist and separatist groups, there are about 4 or 5 reports on the attacks of right-wing extremists²⁷.

²⁵ European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (2017)

²⁶ European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (2017)

²⁷Ravndal Jacob Aasland Terrorism Research Initiative (2017)

There are several contributing factors that explain the decline of attacks by this group. In Ravndal's research in 2016, he identifies seven types of right-wing terrorists.

1. Organised groups: known entities with five or more members whose association primarily relies on a strong commitment to right-wing politics
2. Affiliated members: organised groups acting on their own
3. Autonomous cells: clandestine entity of two to four members whose association primarily relies on a strong commitment to right-wing politics
4. Gangs: informal constellations of three or more acquaintances with a general right-wing commitment, but whose loose association primarily relies on social bonds, e.g. skinhead gangs and racist youth gangs.
5. Unorganised: two or more perpetrators with no known association to any specific right-wing group, cell, or gang
6. Lone-actors: single perpetrators who prepare and sometimes also carry out attacks without anyone else knowing about it beforehand
7. Shadow groups: unresolved attacks claimed by formerly unknown groups

Table 1 shows the distribution of incident types across the seven RTV perpetrator types:

Perpetrator type	Type of Violence				Sum
	Premeditated attacks	Spontaneous attacks	Plots	Preparing for armed struggle	
Organized groups	30	4	8	9	51
Affiliated members	37	6	1	5	49
Autonomous cells	19	1	8	4	32
Gangs	117	40	-	-	157
Unorganised	47	34	-	-	81
Lone actors	96	25	11	8	140
Shadow groups	6	-	-	-	6
Unknown	61	-	-	1	62
Total	413	110	28	27	578

Table 1. RTV Violence and Perpetrator Types

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There are interesting findings based on this data alone. First, the research shows that most of the perpetrators of the attacks were gang related and lone actors. This makes the attacks less

²⁸Ravndal Jacob Aasland Terrorism Research Initiative (2017)

effective as organized groups tend to be more efficient. Since the 1990s these groups have used different weapons to attack individuals. RTV perpetrators most often resort to knives (119 incidents), unarmed beating and kicking (108 incidents), explosives (86 incidents), firearms (85 incidents), and blunt instruments such as iron bars, bats, or wooden sticks (68 incidents)²⁹. In addition, firebombs (38 attacks) and arson (20 attacks) have also been frequently used. Truly complex terrorist attacks that combine explosives and firearms have so far happened only once (the 7/22/2011 attacks in Norway). Second, it used to be the case that these groups also targeted certain kinds of people. Unlike other terrorist groups, right wing extremist threats are declining. Even though the data on right wing groups does not support the premise of this research paper, understanding their decline is useful for policy makers

Left-wing terrorist groups: This group seeks to replace the entire political, social, and economic system of a state by introducing a communist or socialist structure and a classless society³⁰. In 2016, left wing extremists groups remained a threat to the European member states. These groups choose to reside in certain areas in EU; they have established specific community centers where they can attack individuals. Left-wing terrorist groups can be found in Italy, Greece and Spain.

Italy: In 2016, there were a total of 16 attacks carried out by left wing terrorist groups. The majority of the attacks were carried out using unsophisticated incendiary/explosive devices (IID/IEDs). Eight people in the region were arrested as suspects.

Greece: Left-wing groups in this area have retained their operational capabilities as well as their access to weapons. In 2016, they carried out six attacks involving the use of IEDs, firearms and grenades.

Spain: Left-wing terrorist activities in this area remain low level. In 2016, five attacks occurred but they did not involve any sophisticated IEDs or firearms. The number of arrests continues to increase in this area, which explains why these groups have minimal impact.

²⁹Ravndal Jacob Aasland Terrorism Research Initiative (2017)

³⁰ European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (2017)

Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to figuratively paint the rise of extremism so that others could see how extremism has unfolded in Europe. Using data from Europol and a number of other European statistics this was made possible. The data depicted that as time went on each of these factors --populism, immigration, and terrorism-- also increased-- showing a positive correlation. A major concern that is shared among members of the international community is whether or not extremism poses a significant threat to Europe's political system. Even though recent parliamentary elections show that populist parties are slowly losing their political power, populist parties still have a number of supporters as the migration crisis continues in Europe. Certainly, the immigration problem is massive and is leading to more division among the member states. The issue here is not Europe's immigration policy, but what is happening on the ground. Thousands and thousands of people are being displaced, leading to a vulnerable population with no basic rights to food, shelter, or water. Moreover, with migration patterns being readily available for terrorists, terrorist groups across Europe have been able to exploit these routes for their personal agendas. The continent is suffering from these fringe and terror groups who have found many ways to inflict harm and wrongful ideology on civilians. The rise of terrorism in Europe is an evolving movement, and will continue to manifest in different ways. It is important that we do not let ignorance tell us otherwise.

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