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THE RISE OF THE EXTREME RIGHT IN SEE

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1. Introduction

One of the highly debated issues in the electoral procedures of different European nations is the appearance of the Extreme Right. Based on the thought that the nation is the primary unit of social and political organization, extremist nationalism has been revived since the end of communism. Extreme Right, Far Right or Radical Right has been defined by many scholars in various ways. Other than the name, Extreme right, in general, has been defined as an extremism of right-wing politics.

We can say that the rise of the Extreme Right in Europe began shortly after the fall of communism in the 1980s and even appears stronger after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the regimes of real socialism. The eternal enemy, communism, ceases to exist and the extreme right replaces it with a new national danger, globalization and multicultural society. In this pattern the political parties of the Extreme Right will enhance their anti-immigrant and xenophobic rhetoric with a new element.

The rise of the Extreme Right ideology as a political movement could be considered as the new wave in politics. The situation in the most countries in Europe in recent years has shown that many Extreme right political parties have gained seats, have entered in parliament and have gained more popularity. As the economic depression continues to grow, Extreme Right has defined and spread its right ideology. It is not only the economic factor that helped the growth of Extreme Right, but also the social and cultural factor.

An extremely important criterion to engage with this issue is both, the electoral rise of the Extreme right in many European countries and the factors that drive a significant portion of voters to the Extreme Right vote.

In this work it will be attempted to analyze the causes of the rising right-wind political forces and their plotting, ideology and their policies to consolidate power. This work will also try to examine the identity of the Extreme Right and will attempt to define the Extreme Right phenomenon. What is the ideology and what are the main features of the phenomenon, what is the clear definition of the Extreme right and what are the problems in approaching the phenomenon.

It will be given emphasis on the factors that enhance the effect of the Extreme right, due to the political and social changes. The political changes are mainly focused on the new political reality of Europe and the role of the parties of the Extreme Right

in politics of European countries. Additionally, it will be considered the social factors that enhance the Extreme Right, with emphasis on the Right-Wing voter's profile, which will give us a clearer picture of the Extreme Right vote.

There will be a presentation of three Eastern European Extreme Right-Wing parties. Studying these cases, someone can find that, although there are several differences between the Extreme Right parties, there are and important meeting points, on both their ideological part or their political programme and the argument which they develop in order to gain electoral power.

In the section that follows there will be a brief presentation of the electoral results in the last 25 years of the Extreme Right parties mentioned above and finally we will conclude summarizing our findings.

2. Definitions of the Extreme Right

The Extreme Right is not one type form with homogeneous characteristics, but a political family, with political formations which have common elements between them, have ideological relationship with fascism and undermine the foundations of democracy. The Extreme Right shares many common values with the traditional right but shares more extreme political positions. The Extreme Right parties are not considered reliable in terms of their involvement in democracy. (Georgiadou, 2004)

There is no common definition of the Extreme right, but additionally can be used different definitions to separate the parties of the Extreme Right with those in the political spectrum. One definition is the term Far Right which expresses a right that moves to the right of the traditional and proclaims that operates within the system boundaries which recognizes even if it is opposed to the so-called political establishment. A second and related term is the term Radical Right which expresses a conservative and compromised radical right.

Of course, it is worth mentioning that while the term Far with the term Radical as determinant terms of the Right are close, they do not always coincide, as both the radicalization and the individual characteristics of each party and political organization vary. The two definitions can be assigned as an Extreme right, a right which is to the right of the right-wing parties, and stands inside the institutional framework of democracy; therefore, it is not Extreme. The term Extreme Right is

used to describe parties or political movements that are against individual and pluralistic features of liberal democracy. (Georgiadou, 2004: 13-14)

There is a complexity of the Extreme Right and it goes one step further and is based on the systemic inconsistency, a nuclear and enduring feature of postwar Far Right which exists, in some cases so obvious and in other cases hidden, in every single party of extremist, radical, populist, neo-fascist far right. (Georgiadou, 2008:32-33) We should also note that the separation between the Radical and Extreme right, contains the assumption that “radicalism” can not be extremist but in that way scientific and theoretical ambiguities are ignored regarding the content of the term “radicalism” and the difficulties to clarify the differences between “radicalism” and “extremism”. (Georgiadou, 2008: 296)

The Extreme Right is a pan-European issue. Indicative of this are the findings of a comparative study regarding the hostility towards people based on the particular group they belong to, that the Fredrich Ebert foundation published in 2011. According to the study, almost half of the individuals that were asked in 8 European countries believe that in their country there are too many immigrants. Around 1/3 of them they believe in a natural hierarchy among people belonging to different ethnic groups.

In what extent bias, Extreme Right ideas and structures are widespread and established in Europe? In what way the extreme right and populist parties and movements are growing, all over Europe. Which are their historical routes and why they keep on attracting people?

In Greece, the financial crisis brought an erosion of the parties’ web and gave the opportunity to the Extreme Right party ‘Golden Dawn’ to get 18 seats in the parliament in the last elections. It is yet to be seen if the criminal prosecution against the MPs’ and the party itself will restrict the favour of the voters or in the contrary if they will cause an increase of its votes. (Melzer and Serafin, 2013:9-11)

Recent developments in many countries show the longevity and expansion of the extreme right in Europe. In many Western European countries, Extreme Right parties often get more than 10% of the votes in national or European elections. However, Central and Eastern Europe remains the place that extreme right is easier to evolve.

The biggest Extreme Right party in Hungary, Jobbik, got almost 17% of the votes in the elections of 2010. Nevertheless, it would be extremely misleading to assess the impact of these parties based just in their electoral results. We must broaden our

viewpoint to examine the general trends of the Extreme Right perceptions and xenophobic beliefs, as well as, their activities outside the party boundaries.

The overstressing and the radicalization of the social homogeneity is a main characteristic of the Extreme Right way of thinking, where the nation functions as the primary group, the “us group”. This way of thinking applies highly in the hostility towards foreigners. In other words, Extreme Right radicalism is a political ideology that rotates around the myth of a homogeneous nation – a populist ultra-nationalism that opposes the liberal, pluralistic democracy with its fundamental principals of individualism and universality.

Extreme Right in most cases support the idea that all people are not equal based on the ‘us’ group and the ‘others’ group notion. ‘Us’ being the group of native people the Nation and the ‘others’, the group representing the State and the System, the state itself, the elite that is corrupted, the national minorities, neighbouring countries. (Mudde, 2007)

The criteria of exclusion from the “us group” could be based on ethnicity, culture, religion and/or sex. Something that we find in all versions is the radical separation between the “us groups” and the “other groups”.

According to Mudde the ‘maximum definition’ of Radical and Extreme right is formed whether a party meets four criteria which are nationalism, xenophobia, law and order, and welfare chauvinism. Mudde excluded the welfare chauvinism as a criterion later, because he concluded that financial issues and economy are not that important for the Extreme right parties. (Mudde, 2007)

Thompson argued that a Radical Right party meets two ideological dimensions, radical nationalism and radical socio-cultural conservatism and has to have high scores in both dimensions in order to be classified as a Radical Right party. (Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky, 1990) (Bustikova, 2014)

Trying to define Extreme right we come across various names like Radical Right, New Right, Populist Right, Extreme right. (Arzheimer, 2012)

Radical Right parties in Eastern Europe were born after 1989 and the fall of communism and their electoral success and power vary a lot from one country to another as well as through time. (Bustikova, 2014)

The idea that during the periods of accelerated social or cultural changes, the rise of extreme right or other xenophobic movements emerged, is a starting point in order

to interpret these trends both in Eastern Europe after 1989, as well as in western Europe, before and after that period.

The main difference in the Extreme right parties family is whether today's Extreme Party follows historical movements, ideologies or regimes like Nazism or fascism that were openly anti-democratic or if keeps them in distance, and whether approves violence for achieving political goals, or even exercising violence in that respect.

Based on this fundamental difference and the criteria of exclusion mentioned earlier we could single out four Extreme right variations: 1) An authoritarian-fascist Right, usually characterized by racism and ethnocentrism getting inspired by the dictatorships of the Interwar, 2) A racist or ethnocentric but not fascist Right, using ethnic-pluralist arguments to justify the incompatibility between cultures and ethnicities, but in the same time rejects the existence of a 'natural hierarchy', 3) A populist-authoritarian Right, with a powerful, gifted leader, with authoritarian structures and vague nationalistic or xenophobic ideology, 4) A religious fundamentalist Right, which nationalism and xenophobia mix with religious intolerance, defending a notion of ethnic 'purity' cloaked in religion. All four variations deny diversity and pluralism, in the name of the ethnic homogeneity of the primary group, the 'us group', adopting populist strategies against the system.

Another way to distinguish the Extreme right groups among them is their organizational forms, 1) groups that seek public office and organize themselves through political parties and electoral race, 2) groups that do not seek public office but get support through wide social movements, with which they identify themselves and in which they can find the framework to interpret specific issues, 3) smaller groups and socio-cultural spatial, acting independently of parties and other social movements without typical organizational structures and possibly larger trend to violence.

Nation, national identity and ethnocentrism are the main elements of the Extreme right value system. Multi-cultural societies constitute a threat to the national identity and the cultural integrity of the nation. In general, Extreme right adopts a populist policy, trying to get votes from the lower social levels and gains power through an ethno-populist or neo-populist argumentation. (Georgiadou, 2004: 62)

According to Georgiadou, the Extreme right that seeks its presence in the parliament can not be, by definition, anti-democratic because it declares loyalty in the principles of democracy and constitutional order. Of course, in many cases, this is a

clearly typical declaration concerning just its formal political positions. The recognition of the constitutional state by the Extreme right takes place to avoid political isolation, to ensure its legitimate presence in the political scene and state fundings. (Georgiadou, 2008: 57)

An important parameter is the ideological and political distance between the parties of the political system. When this distance is big, the ideologies are distinctive and the political stand of the Extreme right is distinctive as well. On the contrary, if the distance is small and the parties multi-collective, the ideological and political figure of the Extreme right, does not appear as Extreme. (Georgiadou, 2008:37)

Of course, when parties' ideologies converge, the Extreme right has the advantage to distinct itself from them, but at the same time not to be presented as Extreme. In this way, it attracts the voters that are dissatisfied with that converge and gets acknowledge as forces against the system. The electoral success of the Extreme right in many cases, push other political parties to adopt its political agenda. (Georgiadou, 2008:38)

3. The Extreme Right in SEE- An Overview

Many of the most successful parties in Eastern Europe could be characterized as Extreme right parties. Furthermore, there are significant movement organizations, like Magyar Garda in Hungary, that use symbols originally been used by fascist groups and Interwar regimes. The use of such symbols is being widely tolerated from society as well as from the security forces. In Eastern Europe, the Extreme right is attacking the neo-liberal class, as well as, the state socialism that existed before and they clearly stand against the system.

The Extreme right in Eastern Europe is not as structured as in Western Europe. The variation of the electoral results of the Extreme right makes it extremely flexible and unpredictable. This flexibility makes it difficult for the people to distinct the Extreme right from the Right and the conservative Right parties. In other words, the boundaries of the Extreme right in Eastern Europe are totally different than in Western Democracies.

In Eastern Europe immigrants are not always available to play the role of the scapegoat in the Extreme right rhetoric, and this role is undertaken by national minorities and neighbouring countries (Kopecek, 2007). The routes for this could be

found in the particular procedures of the formation of the nations and states that took place in the area. Almost all Eastern Europe was under multinational empires (Russian, Ottoman) and the formation of the nations relied upon the collapse of the existing status quo. As a result the new states included large national minorities in their border and the existence of 'external homelands'. During the formation of the nations in the area, but even today 'external homelands' and 'lost territory' were and still are important issues of the Extreme right.

The particular East-European background of the hostility towards foreigners is formed by the 'external homelands' and the ethnic minorities that live in them. Here, is not a defensive ultra-nationalism directed against immigrants and multi-culture, but an offensive one that turns against neighbouring countries and minorities living there from the past.

The case of Greece seems to be a bit different though, because there are not any or the state does not officially recognize any national or ethnic minorities, and so anyone non-Greek is being classified as immigrant. That is why the immigrants play a big role in the rhetoric of this Extreme right in Greece.

The ideology of the Extreme right in Eastern Europe includes nostalgia for the authoritarian regimes of the past and the territorial conception of national identity, in them, following the efforts for the formation of nations, before and after the WWI.

The challenges of the Extreme right in Eastern Europe are fundamental, because they are not only about the policy towards minorities but the political order itself as well. In Hungary, for example, the Right party Fidesz moved more to the right after constant pressures from the Extreme right, something that caused the re-arrangement of the political system of the country. The extremist agenda of the Extreme right in Eastern Europe is only slightly curb by the Right parties of the democratic spectrum, and the boundaries between them are not very clear. (Minkenberg in Melzer, Serafin, 2013)

Extreme right ideology is in favour of the nation and national identity and struggles to preserve them. That is why Extreme right stands against multiculturalism which as they strongly believe, destroys individual cultures. In many cases Extreme right supports ethno-pluralism, believing that the only way to preserve the national identity and culture is to keep them clearly distinctive from other, different ones, because if they are mixed it would lead them to their destruction.

4. Extreme Right parties in SEE

4.1 Jobbik - Hungary

Jobbik, the movement for a better Hungary Party is a Hungarian Extreme-Right party, “which describes itself as a principled, conservative and radically patriotic Christian party with the fundamental purpose to protect the Hungarian values and interests” (wikipedia.org/wiki/jobbik) and it is considered a nationalistic, anti-Roma and anti-semitic party. Jobbik, however goes further than its populist rhetoric, as it has developed paramilitary activities.

Jobbik rhetoric is a mix of “anti-communism, anti-gypsyism, nationalism and hostility towards elites, particularly ‘all corrupted’ politicians” (Nagy, Boros, Varga, 2012: 1)

Although the party was founded in 2003, participate in the elections of 2006 in an alliance with the Hungarian Justice and Life Party, a party with nationalistic and anti-semitic orientation, but did not manage to win any seats in the Parliament getting only 2.2% of the votes, and the alliance was terminated.

In 2007, Jobbik created the ‘Hungarian Guard’, a paramilitary organization that helped the party to be known in the country. Two years later in 2009 and the elections for the European Parliament, Jobbik surprised everybody by getting a 14.77% of the votes and winning 3 seats in the European Parliament, going beyond its expectations and the results of opinion polls. (Nagy, Boros, Vasali in Melzer, Serafin, 2013: 247)

Only 30% of Hungarians believe that the accession in the EU was a positive fact, while 15% declare their distrust to the MPs, and almost half of the Hungarians disapprove the multi-party system. Nevertheless, the biggest social disorder came after the country was placed under the IMF. The austerity policy followed by the socialistic government resulted the decline of the standard of living of the citizens of the country. The strict financial measures that were imposed, like the cut of the 13th salary, the increase in product taxes and the increase of the retirement age limit by 3 years, deteriorate even more the political situation. The outcome was that Jobbik made it to the parliament, winning 47 seats in the 2010 election with 16.67% of the electoral votes as the third largest party.

An important characteristic of Jobbik that differentiates it, up to a point, from other Extreme right parties in the area, is that its objectives are more intense and closer related to nationalism on issues regarding Hungarians living outside the country as well as territorial demands on areas that Hungary lost after the WWI. (Nagy et. al., 2013: 249-250) Jobbik, as well as other Radical Right parties in Central and Eastern Europe, came up with an electoral success formula. Its ingredients are: hostility towards minorities, left-populist financial policy and socio-cultural conservatism. (Nagy et. al., 2013: 251)

As already mentioned before, the primary ‘enemies’ of the Extreme right parties are minorities and, especially in the Eastern Europe, the Romas. However, in Hungary this hostility towards Romas finds more fertile ground. Almost 60% of the country’s population believes that Romas are ‘criminals by nature’ and 42% agrees with the policy of some restaurants and bars to forbid Romas to enter.

Aside to the hostility towards the Romas, Jobbik stands against the activities of multi-national companies of foreign ownership, and claims that for the negative consequences of the financial and moral crisis of the country, the ex-communists or socialists that turned into liberals, are to blame. (Nagy et. al., 2013:256)

The financial crisis deteriorate even more the already bad situation of the country, in terms of unemployment, GDP growth etc, especially at the east part of the country, that led to larger social conflicts especially amongst those with Roma origin. That, along with the disappointment that a large part of society felt, when the democratic governments that emerge after the fall of communism failed to fulfill their hopes and expectations, raised the need of an ‘anti-establishment’ policy, like the one that is ‘‘part of the fundamental identity of Jobbik’’. (Nagy, Boros, Varga 2012: 1)

According to a study conducted in 2012, a high percentage of Hungarian population (48%) can be described as ‘‘extremely prejudiced that tend to have major reservations about minorities, mainly Roma and migrants from poorer countries, and a majority of them would also like to see the rights of homosexuals curbed’’. A high 34% are against the system, the EU institutions, the market economy and the Hungarian democracy in general. (Nagy et. al., 2012:1) Pessimism and fear about the future, typical characteristics of Extreme right voters, as well as the level of dissatisfaction have significantly increase, and that is in favour of the Extreme right. (Nagy et. al., 2012:2)

Many scholars argue that, Jobbik took advantage of the political gap created when the left and especially its main representative, the social democratic party MSZP experienced a rapid decline in voters' confidence, dropped from 43% in 2006 to 19.3% in 2010. (Nagy et. al., 2012: 2)

Regarding foreign policy, Jobbik is openly East, mainly Russian-friendly oriented and has not gave up hope of re-marking the country's borders to include territories lost after the WWI. (Nagy et. al., 2013: 252)

Jobbik not only rejects the EU and demands the withdrawal of the country from it, but also offers an alternative. It has political relations and contracts with Iran and many Arabic countries, whereas there are strong indications that the party has powerful allies in Russia. (Nagy et. al., 2013: 252-253)

For almost every negative development that takes place in Hungary, Jobbik holds the EU responsible, supposedly acting in the background, either it has to do with the bankruptcy of the Hungarian National Airline, or the conditions governing the European financial and Monetary Union convergence criteria that, according to Jobbik, limits the Hungarian national sovereignty. (Nagy et. al., 2013: 258)

Since its foundation, Jobbik is intensively involved with the radical re-interpretation of the national identity and the development of a relevant sub-culture. In this framework, the Hungarian Guard does not only shape the character of the party but at the same time offers the numerous young followers of the party 'trendy' forms that can be identify with. (Nagy et. al., 2013: 259)

Since 2006, Jobbik, forms its network very carefully, trying to find allies in the media and continuing its political activities in the streets of the country. The party needs to maintain a high profile and keep convincing the public and attracting followers of higher education. Jobbik, has its own national-wide newspaper, local papers and websites and an online TV platform. (Nagy et. al., 2013:260)

With its presence in and out of the parliament, Jobbik influenced significantly all major political parties in the country and managed to reform the framework within major political issues are discussed. The ruling party was forced to include many of the views of Jobbik in its programme. (Nagy et. al., 2013: 262) For example, it uses Jobbik's terminology that accuses politicians for criminal acts, as well as for the 'Roma issue', and holds special privileges for domestic producers and criticizes rules of the EU, some of the basic demands of Jobbik. (Nagy et. al., 2013:262-266)

After its success in the 2010 elections, Jobbik came up with a dilemma. Being the third largest party in the parliament, it could be accused that it is part of the political elite (the very one that Jobbik has so hard criticised) and therefore Jobbik had to develop a strategy in order to comply with the legislative framework as a party in the parliament on one hand, and to constantly prove that the party does not belong to the 'corrupted elite'. The request for the creation of a list with all politicians of Jewish origin, as they were considered as a threat to national security (Ramalingam, 2012) by a Jobbik MP, could be included in the above mentioned strategic framework.

The voters of Jobbik are neither from the margins of society nor of poorly or low education. People with a medium level of education as well as skilled workers represent a very high percentage of Jobbik's voters, while the party is least popular amongst people with low education. Jobbik is extremely popular to young people, under the age of thirty and those who vote for the first time. Young people are more willing to be politically active and not afraid to conflict with the system, and that can lead them to support Extreme parties, like Jobbik, that are more active in the streets and the Internet than traditional parties. Like most Extreme parties in Europe, Jobbik is considered a 'men's party', as the vast majority of its supporters are men.

Jobbik was very successful in promoting the 'us and them' theory, which is used by all Extreme right parties and aims in promoting and the 'us' identity, in our case a national identity, all the true patriots that their actions and will be for the benefit of the country and the nation, against a 'them' identity, in our case minorities, Roma and corrupted elites. The 'other' group is stigmatized and excluded from society as something evil, bad or guilty and worse than the 'us' group. The 'us' group at the same time is being defined as something different and better than the 'others', constructs a level of superiority and a coherent social identity, which lead to its detachment from the rest of society. When this is accomplished the members of the group can be easily manipulated in order to assimilate group doctrines and obey orders without asking questions or doubt them and their leader.

In 2014, we had two elections, both national and for the European Parliament. Jobbik managed to remain the third largest party in the country and the parliament, but increased its percentage by 3.63% rising up to 20.3%, an astonishing result for an Extreme right party, winning 23 out of 199 seats and getting 1.020.476 votes!

A month later, in the elections for the European parliament, Jobbik maintain its power winning 3 out of 21 seats and getting 14.67%, almost the exact results of 2009. One

interesting point is that it got 340.287 votes, while in the national elections more than a million. This differentiation in the number of votes can be attribute to the much lower participation, 28.97% of the total electorate down by 7.34% from the last European elections, while in the national elections the participation reached 61.73% of the electorate.

4.2 Ataka - Bulgaria

After the fall of communism in 1989 and the economic and political changes that followed, a number of Extreme right parties emerged, along with other political parties, and the issue of ethnic nationalism came into the surface once more. Bulgaria was no exception to that, although there is a particularity. In most of the Eastern European countries Extreme or Radical Right parties appear almost immediately, in Bulgaria that not the case. Small movements and organizations did exist but there were never significant enough to the point of influencing government policies, or the political system itself.

That changed in 2005, when the national movement of Ataka appear in the political scene of Bulgaria and got 8.14% of the electoral votes, winning 21 seats out of 240 in the parliament. (wikipedia.org) Ataka was initially formed as a coalition of the Bulgarian National Patriotic Party, the Union of Patriot's Forces and Militaries of the Reserve Defense and the National Movement for the Salvation of the Fatherland, smaller parties with negligible presence in Bulgaria's political scene. (wikipedia.org/wiki/Attack_(political_party))

The National Movement of Ataka was formed not long prior to the 2005 elections and became a party (Ataka Party) immediately after. The leader and founder of Ataka, is Volen Sidekov, an ex-journalist, who came publicly known from a TV show named 'Attack' on SKAI TV in 2003. He shared his thoughts about: "1) the inability and/or unwillingness of the Bulgarian state to curb raging Roma crime, which terrorized the majority of the Bulgarian population, 2) the rising threat of 'Turkification' of the country, and 3) the moral bankruptcy of the entire political establishment, which stole from the Bulgarian people through crooked privatization, foreign debt deals and ubiquitous corruption and nepotism". (Popova, 2013: 34)

The electoral success of Ataka in 2005 was an overwhelming surprise but still many experts argued that this success was coincidently and temporary and expected

that in the next elections Ataka would not make it to parliament. Nevertheless, Ataka surprised them once more in 2006, when its leader ran for president and managed to get through to the next round getting the second place, and 21,49% of the electoral votes (597.175 votes) and although he was not elected, he got 24,05% of the electoral votes (649.387 votes) in the second round. Ataka succeeded in the elections for the European Parliament in 2007 as well, winning 3 out 18 seats, with 14.20% of the electoral votes. [wikipedia.org/wiki/Attack_(political_party)]

In the parliamentary elections of 2009, Ataka maintained its strength in the parliament as it won 21 out 240 seats and increased its percentage of the electoral vote (9.63%) as well as its voters (395.707 votes) and was the 4th political party in the parliament once more. [wikipedia.org/wiki/Attack_(political_party)]

In the next presidential elections in 2011 Ataka and its leader came across their first defeat since 2005, watching their votes coming down to 122.466 and getting 4th place among the candidates for president with 3.64%, a significant decrease from 2006. [wikipedia.org/wiki/Attack_(political_party)]

Anyone that thought Ataka was close to disappear from the political scene of the country, was about to experience a big surprise, as in the parliamentary election of 2013, Ataka although scored lower in votes and electoral percentage, managed to win 23 seats out of 240 in the parliament and to be once more the 4th party in the parliament. [wikipedia.org/wiki/Attack_(political_party)]

In 2014, two elections took place for national and European parliamentary representatives. Ataka's decline is clear this time, as it did not succeed to win any seat in the European parliament, while in the national election managed to win 11 seats (less than half of the ones in 2013) with 4.52% of the electoral vote (148.262 votes), the lowest score in its short history. [wikipedia.org/wiki/Attack_(political_party)]

Upon its foundation, Ataka declared its 20 principles (www.ataka.bg). The first two principles stress the Unitarian character of the Bulgarian state (Genov, 2010:41) and skepticism against multi-cultural values (Popova, 2013: 5), while censorship and sanctions against those that obloquy Bulgaria (www.ataka.bg) are mentioned in principle 3. Principles 5 and 6 are very similar to programmatic documents of the Bulgarian Communist Party before 1989 (Genov, 2010:41) and one could say close to the left ideology, as it urges the state to interfere in order to ensure healthcare, social security, education and other public goods (Popova, 2013:5). In principle 6, the party calls the state to protect Bulgarian entrepreneurs over the foreign ones, something

completely against the legal regulations of the EU (Genov, 2010:41). In the rest of the principles the party asks the withdrawal of the country from NATO, the non-participation in military alliances and no military bases in Bulgaria. Ataka stands clearly against EU, IMF and the World Bank, as well as privatization deals. (Genov, 2010:41)

Generally, “Ataka promotes a racist, anti-capitalist and Anti-Euro-Atlantic political agenda” (Popova, 2013:1) and its leader acts like a “typical populist politician who is entitled to criticize everything and everybody (Genov, 2010:41) and declares the inefficiency, corruption and nationalism of all political forces and governments, excluding only the party and its leader. (Genov, 2010:41)

Ataka is a racist, anti-semitic party, which constantly accuses all minorities (ethnic, cultural or others) of “being eternally guilty” (Todorov, 2013:3) and struggles against their integration in the public sphere. (Smrikova, 2009:54)

The Jews, other communities as homosexuals and Romas, are the traditional targets of these accusations, with the Turkish minority as the largest ethnic minority in the country, occupy the first place in Ataka’s hostility against ethnic minorities.

The Turkish minority is represented in parliament by the Movement for Rights and Freedoms party which lies in the centre of the political spectrum and has made territorial demands. (Smrikova, 2009)

Some argue that the Turkish minority party which is consisted of, almost entirely, ethnic Turks is one of the reasons for the birth of Ataka. This can be attributed to the participation of the Turkish minority party in the government till 2005, governments that were accused of corruption and inefficiency by Ataka, but also because in 2005 the Turkish minority party blocked the privatization of Bulgaria’s largest tobacco company, because it traditionally employs ethnic Turks, even though the privatization was backed by the EU and the Bulgarian Government. That was interpreted by the Extreme right as anti-national, protecting the interests of other ethnicities.

Turks and Romas are constantly accused by Ataka of being responsible for the country’s bad economic situation, and calls for the prohibition of the Turkish minority party as an anti-systemic ethnic party. Ataka also supports the creation of local militia and the use of massive police intervention. (Smrckova, 2009:55)

Organized violent incidents against the Turkish minority in mosques and other places as well as against Romas are quite frequent.

In 2006 Siderov, in an outburst of conspiratorial populism, claimed that a conspiracy between Masons, Jews and Turks was the reason of the growing inflation in the country, aiming to harm the economy and ordinary Bulgarians. (Popova, 2013:7)

Ataka calls for the “nationalization of industry, criticize the effects of globalization on national economies and is against the cooperation with the IMF, because income and taxes should be appropriate to the needs of Bulgaria and not the IMF”. (Smrckova, 2009:52)

Ataka also calls for full neutrality, the absence of foreign military base in the country, as well as for the revision of any treaty or deal that put the national interest of Bulgaria in danger. (Smrckova, 2009)

As already mentioned earlier Ataka was founded in 2005 and its success in the elections came as a big surprise to almost everybody. That could be explained by the fact that it was a new party that “raised high expectations” (Todorov, 2013:7), but also because of the dissatisfaction of the voters and the bad economic situation of the country. (Smrckova, 2009:58) Post-communist developments left people dissatisfied and political elites, unemployment, the living standards reduction, the loss of hope, high inflation, corruption and economic depression added to this dissatisfaction. (Smrckova, 2009:58,61), that led to the lowest turnout since 1989.

Another way to explain this initial success of Ataka is by using the ‘backlash logic’(Bustikova, 2014:6) The Turkish minority party joined a coalition government in the 2001 elections for the first time and took under its control 2 out of 17 ministries. That allowed the Turkish party to influence policies in favour of the ethnic Turkish minority as well as the political system of the country, resulting a backlash. Ataka took advantage of this situation and made the “ethnic minorities with privileged access to policy-making, its primary political target” (Bustikova, 2014) which led to the success of winning 21 seats in the parliament in 2005. It is safe to assume that the mobilization that brought this success to Ataka is directly connected with the mobilization of the voters of the Turkish minority Party. (Todorov, 2013:9)

Ataka also took advantage of the crime and corruption increase, accusing the national minorities for it, the government as inadequate in stopping these phenomena as well as the fear that NGOs’ for human are civic rights and the EU produced. (Smrckova, 2009:61)

In the elections that followed until 2009, Ataka maintain its anti-systemic and anti-government role and manage to repeat its initially electoral success of 2005.

In 2009 Ataka gave its support to the Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB) part that was founded in 2006 and many of its voters defected towards this new party, while Ataka lost a part of its anti-systemic and anti-government role that had originally adopted, but managed to keep its percentage and even won more seats in the next elections in 2013.

According to a study, the voters of Ataka at that period can be classified in three categories, “1)biographical communists that felt betrayed by today’s socialists, 2)biographical nationalists and 3)ordinary middle class people”. (Todorov, 2013:9)

Popova comes to some interesting conclusions regarding the voters of Ataka. The vast majority of Ataka voters are male voters coming from different age groups and socio-economic levels. Ataka voters would like to curb the participation of the Turkish minority in the political life of the country. They are deeply dissatisfied by all the governments and the parties that are part of them and surprisingly enough they do not seem to share all Ataka leader’s positions. (Popova, 2013:20)

In the 2014 elections Ataka won half of the seats of the 2013 elections and many observers think that Ataka has already started to disintegrate. Many of its voters abandoned the party and voted for GERB as well as for the newly founded Patriotic Front Party (3 August 2014) located in the Right – Far Right wing of the political spectrum that got 19 seats in the parliament and 7.29% of the electoral vote, in its first participation in national elections.

Is this the end and the fall of Ataka? Is it going to rebirth? That remains to be seen in the next elections.

4.3 Golden Dawn

One of the characteristics of Metapolitefsi¹, is that for decades there was no space for right-wing extremism to evolve in the political scene. This can be attributed to the fact that the right conservative party (Nea Dimokratia-ND), applied certain strategies and tactics towards the political and ideological space in its right and managed to accommodate a significant part of ultra-nationalists, as well as supporters of the ex-king and the junta achieving its electoral strengthening and at the same time the

weakening of the Extreme right pole, especially from 1977/80 onwards. (Georgiadou in Melzer and Serafin, 2013: 82)

The ‘Popular Association – Golden Dawn’ was founded in 1983 and since then it supports openly national-socialism, uses its symbols (swastika) the Nazis salute, its speaking patterns (racism, anti-semitism) and its ways of action (Political violence). (Georgiadou in Melzer and Serafin, 2013: 83)

Although Golden Dawn participates for the first time in the elections for the European Parliament in 1994, insists on its self-determination as a political movement. It would be on the eve of the elections in 2009 that it will identify itself as a political party. (Georgiadou in Melzer and Serafin, 2013:96)

Golden Dawn established new organizational and political mobilization forms, that look like the way fascist and Nazi parties were organized and operated, adopting a party model called ‘militia-party’. This party type operates like a private army, with paramilitary structure and strict discipline and hierarchy. (Georgiadou in Melzer and Serafin, 2013: 99)

In the 90s, the name dispute with FYROM, over the use of the term Macedonia triggered nationalistic feelings in the Greek society, while at the same time xenophobia started growing due to the fact that Greece received a mass inflow of immigrants. Golden Dawn gradually moved its extremist activities from foreign policy issues, without changing its violent and aggressive activism wherever that was possible: immigration and crime became the main target of its offensive. (Georgiadou in Melzer and Serafin, 2013: 101)

Golden Dawn is a party hostile to immigrants. Its hostility towards them is based upon ethnic and racial prerequisites, as it defends the model of an organic state the connective tissue of which, is based upon the ideology of the continuation of the ‘race, the blood and the descent’. For this reason Golden Dawn view immigrants as a threat for the racial homogeneity of the nation and demands that “all immigrants should leave the country immediately”. (Georgiadou in Melzer and Serafin, 2013: 102)

Especially after 2008 when mostly Athens received a massive wave of non-registered immigrants in some districts and at the centre of the city, along with the deficiency of the state policy for immigration, created new political opportunities, that Golden Dawn took advantage of. Engaging violent anti-immigration tactics on one hand and the offer of ‘law and order’ services on the other, managed to achieve

‘visibility’ while a part of the electorate acknowledge its jurisdiction in managing the immigration issue. According to a research in 2011, between the voters that considered immigration as the most serious problem in their area, 25% of them believed that Golden Dawn is the most suitable party to deal with it. (Georgiadou in Melzer and Serafin, 2013:102-103)

Golden Dawn managed to exploit the development of what is called “political chance structure”, through “conditions of internal offer”. Mudde argues that there are two dimensions that support the possibility of political presence, even of political survival of the Extreme right parties. The exercise of ‘grassroots’ politics and the establishment of ‘strongholds’. Both of these conditions were valid in the case of Golden Dawn since 2010; it had already established its strongholds, in Athens but also in Piraeus. Having the acceptance of a significant part of the voters in the stronghold, as the responsible entity for dealing with certain political issues, and after becoming publicly known through the media, Golden Dawn had fulfilled all the pre-conditions in order to expand in the rest of the country. (Georgiadou in Melzer and Serafin, 2013:104)

After a long period of being on the margins of the political system and trivial electoral results, Golden Dawn managed to get 6.97% in May 2012 elections and 6.92% a month later. In 2010, in the local elections Golden Dawn had its first electoral success, managing to get 5.29% in Athens municipality and its leader was elected in the city council. (Georgiadou in Melzer and Serafin, 2013: 104-105)

The will of a punishing protest towards the political elites and the system as a whole, as a consequence of the financial crisis and the political trust deficit, was and still is very intense. Golden Dawn, having pure anti-systemic characteristics, favoured the will of the voters to denounce the political status quo and the system that supports it. (Georgiadou in Melzer and Serafin, 2013: 106)

A cynical, anti-party and anti-institutional background marked the choice of the voters of Golden Dawn, showing the negative and punishing background of the vote for Golden Dawn. Golden Dawn is a ‘male’s party’ with young average educated voters. (Georgiadou in Melzer and Serafin, 2013: 108))

Unlike in other European countries, where the Extreme right propaganda against immigration focuses of the workplaces issue that the ‘foreigners are stealing’, in Greece the racist rhetoric is oriented more to the magnification of the fear that the crime of the foreigners causes. The reason for that is that the working conditions of

the immigrants in Greece are so inferior, that even during the crisis the workplaces that they occupied are the least attractive for the natives. (Psarras, 2012, 367)

Golden Dawn expresses the simplistic conspiracy theory, which wants crisis to be the result of globalization and that Greece and its citizens are victims of an attack against them from the powerful of the Earth. In this framework, the immigration issue is used in two ways; the demand for a drastic and therefore violent restriction of the number of the immigrants can solve all the social problems such as unemployment, crime, financial deficits etc. On the other hand, targeting the immigrants makes easier the distinction between Greeks and foreigners and the creation of ‘Greek identity’ as an antidote to the ‘national decline’ that was caused by foreigners. (Psarras, 2012: 385)

Golden Dawn publicly declares that not only stands against the parliamentary system, but also declares that it participates in it, in order to take advantage its democratic rules and gain the time to abolish it. (Fragoudaki, 2013:66)

Golden Dawn is anti-European, anti-parliamentary and supports statism. (Fragoudaki, 2013:79) Its primary mission is to ‘save the nation’ from its enemies that classifies in three categories: to those that do not belong neither to the nation nor the state, all traditional enemies throughout history as well as foreign representatives of countries or international institutions. The second category is those that belong to the state, but not to the nation, Greeks with different religion, culture and language, immigrants and refugees. The third category is those who belong to the nation and the state, but they are ‘traitors’. The elites that do not belong to the ‘people’, the parliament and the political parties that led the nation to decline. (Fragoudaki, 2013:82)

The general lack of credibility of the political system and the democratic institutions, as well as the demise of important institutions from the political elite, can explain up to a point, the rapid rise of Golden Dawn. In addition to that, the lack of another political pole that could balance the shift to the Extreme right was catalytic. (Marvakis, Anastasiadou, Petritsi and Anagnostopoulou, 2013: 5)

Other scholars argue that the rise of Golden Dawn as a political alternative can not be attributed just to the failure of the political system, but also to the strategy of the party that managed to “replace the state in its provision of public goods at the local level”. (Dinas, Georgiadou, Konstantinidis and Roli, 2013:3)

Violence is an important element in Golden Dawn's strategy, using it "as a means of confrontation with the perceived enemies and as a symbol of power in order to attract members and voters". (Dinas et. al., 2013:13)

By providing goods and services in the local level, manages to be more sympathetic to the people of the local society, regardless of their stance towards immigrants. (Dinas et. al., 2013: 15)

According to Ellinas "the association with Nazism, the violent behaviour of Golden Dawn members and leaders, distinguishes it from all other Far Right formations that have surfaced in Greece in the past decades". (Ellinas, 2013: 550)

Golden Dawn is explicitly anti-communist, anti-semitic, accusing Jews for conspiracies against the Nations. It also "makes irredentist calls for the 'liberation' of northern Epirus, where there is a significant Greek-speaking population". It supports the idea that only those of Greek descent and conscience should enjoy political rights, while the rest only civil rights. (Ellinas, 2013: 551)

The Greek political system had, almost always, been clientistic and corrupted. The financial crisis as well as the austerity measures disrupted the clientistic relationship between voters and political parties, which were not capable to fulfill their voters' demands and thus radical forms of expressing dissatisfaction were facilitated.

Golden Dawn benefit the most from the financial crisis, because "its pariah status and violent tactics reinforced its anti-systemic profile at 'time when the system had lost its legitimacy'". (Ellinas, 2013:560)

In 2014 and the elections for the European Parliament, while many of its MPs where imprisoned, Golden Dawn managed to get 9.40% of the votes (536.409 votes) increasing its percent from the 2012 national elections.

Is Golden Dawn here to stay as a permanent member of the parliament and the political life of the country? Or is it going to vanish as the other Extreme right parties that emerge in Greece after 1974? The next elections might give us an answer.

5. Elections – Comparing the electoral results in the last 25 years

In this section we will try to give a brief description of the electoral results of the Extreme Ring wing in the countries of our case studies, from 1990 to 2014. (See tables 5.1 and 5.2)

We start with Hungary and the Hungarian Justice and life party which is the party that expressed far and extreme right attitudes before Jobbik appeared and took part in the national elections of 1994 and got only 1.58% of the votes. In the next elections in 1998 again for the national parliament the Far Right party managed to increase its percentage up to 5.47% and managed to win 14 seats in the parliament. This success was not repeated in the next elections again for the national parliament as it gained 4.37% of the votes and did not manage to win any seats in the parliament. In 2004 and 2006 in European and national elections the party got just 2.35% and 2.2% respectively and in 2010 and 2014 its percentage was close to zero. In 2006 it allied with Jobbik but came up with the poor 2.2%.

The period that followed Jobbik (was founded in 2003) took over as the representative of the Extreme right in Hungary. In the elections for the European Parliament in 2009 managed to get 14.77% of the votes and a year later in the national elections increased its strength up to 16.67%. In 2014, it increased its power even more, getting 20.3% in the national and 14.67% in the European elections.

In Bulgaria the party that expressed views and attitudes that could be consider as Extreme right before Ataka, is the Bulgaria Business Block. This party participate in the national elections in 1991 for the first time and received 1.3%. In the national elections of 1994 and 1997 managed to increase its vote getting 4.7% and 5.3%, and won seats in the parliament. In 2001 this party was dissolved and Ataka shortly after its foundation in 2005 participate in the national elections and got 8.14% of the votes. In the European elections in 2007, Ataka rise its strength to 14.20% and in 2009 dropped to 11.96% while in the national elections at the same year managed to get 9.36%. In 2013 in the national elections its percentage of votes dropped to 7.30% and in the next year's double elections (national and European) declined even more getting 4.52% and 2.96% respectively.

In Greece, although Golden Dawn participated in elections for the first time in 1994 was never able to get more than 0.75% of the votes. Its percentages vary between 0.07% in the national elections of 1994 and 1996 and 0.75% in the European elections of 1999. But it was another Far Right party that managed to get remarkable percentage of votes for the first time after 1974 in the country, and that was the Laikos Orthodoxos Synargemos party (LAOS). LAOS participated in the national and European elections in 2004 and got 2.20% and 4.12% while in the next national elections in 2007 3.80% and managed to win seats in the parliament. The year 2009

was the most successful for LAOS, in the double elections (national and European) 5.63% and 7.15% respectively. In 2012 its electoral power dropped to 1.58% and in the European elections of 2014, got just 2.69%.

As mentioned before Golden Dawn did not manage to win more than 0.75% in all the elections that it participated. All that changed in 2012, and in the double national elections Golden Dawn managed to get 6.97% in the first and 6.92% in the second a month later. In the European elections of 2014 its percentage increased to 9.40%.

After this brief analysis we can say that there is no significant presence of Far or Extreme right parties in the 90's. There were only some sporadic successes that do not last more than 2 consecutive elections. After 2004 we can see these parties to grow stronger and to last longer in the political scene. Ataka in Bulgaria seems to decline getting marginal percentages; Jobbik in Hungary seems to strengthen even more from elections to elections. As for the case of Golden Dawn, the successful electoral results are too limited to give us a trend for this party.

6. Where do extreme right parties get support from?

6.1 The voters' profile

The Extreme right has succeeded to increase its activity in voters groups, which previously had no impact. Regardless of its electoral success or variation in rates' level, the Extreme right aims to broader populations. It gathers voters regardless of sex, age, social status, people who are unemployed or those who usually do not vote at the elections. This leads us to conclude that the electoral preference in a Far-Right party is not only ideological issue. "Electoral availability" exists among voters who either see positively some parties of the Extreme right, or simply feel that they are expressed by a part of ideology. This development is reinforced by the fact that the right-wing parties adopt a populist profile, and try to reach mainly the working class. The right-wing parties, through the "unscrupulous use of feelings of anxiety and frustration, and also their impact on average people" distract votes from classes below middle in socioeconomic status. (Ignazi, 2003: 29)

This particular strategy, although it allows the penetration to a wider population category, it enables the Right-Wing to strengthen into the middle and the rising social classes. However, it is useful to note that the voters who follow these parties belong to

the entire political spectrum. They decide to support the Right-Wing parties, not only by the criterion of ideological identification, but also by the parties' political agenda. Indeed, the electorate of European states focuses on four major issues: unemployment, steady prices, arms reduction and environmental protection. (Oppenhuis, 1995:102)

Surveys on electoral behaviour show that voters, who are dissatisfied with the existing political system, have a dynamic that brings together the characteristics of a 'wandering' protest. The voters of the Right at 38% and voters of the left at 29% are potential supporters of neo-populist Right. In particular, vulnerable social groups (such as the unemployed or low-paid) seem to be more accessible to policies of the Extreme right.

Nevertheless, it has been observed, based on electoral data, that the Extreme right does not only attract voters from relative ideological parties but draws votes from the entire spectrum of the political system. This is explained by the current socio-economic conditions, as potential supporters of the Extreme right are identified despite their political preference. Unemployed and low paid, but also the wider working class, identified more with the positions of the Extreme right, they experience economic insecurity, they are socially marginalized in the labor market and they experience the lack of established parties to help address these problems. In contemporary Extreme right, which is distinct from welfare chauvinism, there is greater availability in this category of voters, as the parties of the Extreme right are against globalization (which has tremendous consequences in the working class, high unemployment, workers' movement) and they argue that should be given priority to indigenous people at work and state benefits. Globalisation has created a new form of migration, which includes continuous flows of refugees and people who seek asylum. (Κοτζιάς, 2003:141)

The Extreme right parties are against this migration wave, since they consider these immigrants responsible for many of the problems of modern societies. Therefore, the voting criteria can not be defined based on class features, so a very important factor to evaluate the characteristics of voters, are the gender and the educational level. However, these two features are not sufficient for assessing the causes that push voters to prefer the Extreme right. A necessary requirement is also the identification of voters to the political program of the Extreme right. The electoral rise is attributed to the ideological and political convergence of the government or the

parliamentary parties. Therefore, the lack of identification between voters and political parties, and their ineffectiveness to provide solutions to critical political challenges, strengthens the Right parties. Based on these data, the analysis of the Extreme right vote must be taken place under various characteristics.

Regarding the gender, many studies have shown that men are more likely to vote for Extreme right parties. Studies have also shown that voters with low educational level vote the parties of the Extreme right within the average voter. Thirdly, it has been argued that primarily younger people tend to vote the Extreme right political parties. However, the voters of the Extreme right are not younger to voters of other parties. In some cases, when there are many young voters and many Extreme right parties (those who vote for the first time usually turn to the Extreme right), then the Extreme right gathers the most votes from this particular group of voters. Generally, however, the age composition of the voters of the Extreme right approaches the age composition of voters in the electorate. This convergence is achieved mainly due to the adjustment of the Right-Wing parties' policy agenda to the critical challenges of the era. (Popova, 2013:8)

6.2 The role of the media

The media has the role to inform people about the competing political parties and their agenda. In this way, it contributes to the formation of opinion of the electorate. The media plays also a special role to the promotion of the Extreme right parties. Media can feature or isolate these political formations and large media has a direct impact on their political survival. But media is sometimes manipulated by these parties in order to report in their favour with interviews, discussion programmes, reports and news. This kind of propaganda is usually used to mislead the public since most voters gain their knowledge and opinion about politics through the media.

In the example of Golden Dawn, in the elections of May and June 2012, the party felt that it was excluded in promotion and accused media that had treated them in a negative way. (Psarras, 2012:192) On the contrary, media have treated the Extreme right representatives with a particular attention, showing them as specialists in "national issues". At the same time, TV channels "discovered" several "duets" in order to gain the necessary prime time. Therefore, the allegations of the Extreme right representatives that were dealt with negative exposure are beyond reality. (Psarras,

2012:193) It is also true that media have given larger exposure to the Extreme party than other political formations, which are without interest. (Psarras, 2012:200-201)

And there are at least three reasons why Extreme right representatives have a particular media attraction. First, the aggressive attitude of the representatives matches with the kind of the political programmes on TV. Secondly, in particular areas of current political affairs the rhetoric of the Extreme right is not anti-systemic. It expresses with arguments and “symbolic” acts the same with other “decent” representatives. (Psarras, 2012: 203-204). The third reason is that the Extreme right attracts more media attention with its distinctive actions. In order to project their views members of the party entered by force in a TV studio. The interesting thing is that only one person was prosecuted and media did not give much attention to the incident. (Psarras, 2012: 205)

In another example, in the case of Hungary, a general consensus has been reached in recent decades about how the media should treat Extreme right political formations. Although there has been a general opinion that Extreme right receives little coverage time given the level of voter support, this applies only to the mainstream media (television, radio, print media). First, the Extreme right party has been successful in creating its own alternative media and secondly the media do not necessarily have to report directly about a party to bring it to public attention. Media can also provide it with indirect publicity by devoting a lot of space to the controversial issues it stands for. (Nagy, Boros and Varga, 2012:10)

For the print media there is no study that would confirm the over- or under-representation of the Extreme right party as the print media have no obligation to engage in balanced reporting. However, it can be regarded as a fact that print media that take a positive attitude to Extreme right party are not the most widely distributed ones. The party was therefore forced to create its own alternative media on the internet, which later became one of the keys to its success. Online platforms proved to be the most effective means for the party to become recognized and popular among the younger generation. The party set up an online network, in which a crucial role was played not only by interconnected news portals but also by community media with technological advances. The party recognized this fact very quickly and since then has switched to communicating through various social networks and reaching far more people than larger party organizations. (Nagy, Boros and Varga, 2012: 11)

The Extreme right's image depends on the role played by the media and especially social media. Extreme right parties and their representatives have a particular media attraction because they can represent themselves as the new political faces in society and talk about 'important issues' such as Nation and Religion freely. The Extreme right has also tried to overcome the conventional media by using current forms of communication using the internet. This online coverage presents the emergence of populist parties and movements often described as Extreme right.

Media can build a close relationship between parties and people. Through the images shown and the messages given, media influence people in the interpretation and assessment of the information.

6.3 Education

Education is a powerful predictor of the electorate of Extreme right parties. It has been found that voters with low education are more likely to vote the Right parties. There is also scattered evidence that Extreme right is more popular among those with middle level of education than in the lower educational strata although there is no significant difference between these two groups. (Arzheimer, 2012)

People with lower levels of education will show a greater propensity to vote for Extreme right parties than people with higher levels of education. That can be explained by an economic or an interest-based argument to support that voters with lower levels of education tend to be less skilled and are more likely to fall victim to market forces. (Arzheimer and Carter 2006: 4) Another argument is value-based. Through education, people are exposed to liberal values and the longer a person spends in education the more likely he accepts such values. (Arzheimer and Carter, 2006: 5)

7. Reasons and explanations of Extreme Right emergence and rise

Apart from the certain reasons that can be attributed to the different socioeconomic parameters, and could explain the rise of the Extreme right as analyzed in our case studies in the previous section of this paper, we can pinpoint some others reasons that can explain the rise of the Extreme right in general.

The rise of the Extreme right can not be taken as a simple protest vote. For a part of the electorate the criterion of the national choice is valid, meaning that their choice is based on the declarations of the Extreme right parties. Therefore, the opposition to the traditional structures of power and the status quo is a basic criterion for the Extreme right voters, however it is not the only parameter to favour an alternative policy. Up to a point, an Extreme right vote is in favour of the nation and the national identity (Georgiadou, 2004: 64)

At times of financial crisis and recession, Extreme right parties find a fertile ground to emerge and rise. People's distress and disappointment towards the government and the political elites, fuel their anger and their will to revenge, as well as their hostility towards foreigners (immigrants, or EU, International institutions) and therefore turns them to more radical and extreme ways to express these feelings. Extreme right parties take advantage of this situations and presenting themselves as anti-systemic and as organizations that really care about the good of the people and the nation, gain significant public acceptance and votes.

Stoker argues that when people are financial insecure, they are positive towards authoritarian policies and powerful leaders, something that is common in countries that were through a period of massive social and financial changes. (Stoker, 2007:19)

The convergence of the ideologies of the traditional political powers was so high, that allowed the Extreme right parties to attract not only the traditional voters of other parties that felt abandoned but also voters that were very interested in the issues that the Extreme right deals with. Consequently, traditional parties were losing voters, while Extreme right increased its electoral power constantly.

As Ignazi states, "when confidence declines, more opportunities will spring up for these parties to prosper". (Ignazi, 2003:212)

Arzheimer and Carter (2006) make the hypothesis that 'the right-wing extremism party's vote will be higher in periods of grand coalition government'.

Apart from the global financial crisis, many countries face the consequences of the austerity measures that were impose to them either by the IMF or by the EU in order to fulfill the criteria for accession. That, along with other policies imposed by the EU (in agriculture, immigration policies etc) create anti-european feelings to a significant part of the population, that blame the foreigners (EU for its policies, immigrants etc.) for the bad situation of the country and fuel nationalism among them. Extreme right parties take advantage of this as the discourse against EU, IMF and other international

institutions as well as nationalism and xenophobia are on the top of their list. Halikiopoulou (2012) states “nationalism and euro-scepticism are central among radical parties independently of party competition and position in the party system”.

Another reason is the accommodation of issues that are at the top in the list of the Extreme right parties, from the mainstream traditional parties. The mainstream parties in their effort to limit the number of voters that vote for Extreme right parties and absorb them as their own, accommodate in their political agenda issues like immigrants or even nationalistic issues, without realizing that in this way they legitimize these issues, strengthening the political views and the public acceptance of the Extreme right.

In many cases, especially in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe after the fall of communism the lines of distinction between the political parties that emerged were not clear. The parties’ policies and agenda were converging. That created a political gap in the political spectrum which the emerge of Extreme right parties came to fill. That, along with the disappointment of people and the will to punish those who did not fulfill their high expectations, is another reason for the rise of the Extreme right.

Another explanation is given by Bustikova, who argues that the rise and success of an Extreme right party can be attributed to the success of ethnic and social liberal parties on the left of the political spectrum. (Bustikova, 2014:3) “Radical Right parties arise as a backlash against concessions extracted by politically organized ethnic and social minorities. When politically mobilized minorities extract concessions and accommodation increases, Radical Right parties will gain in strength”. (Bustikova, 2014:3)

8. Conclusion

It is more than obvious that the Extreme right is rising in Europe and SEE and what is most alarming, in countries with no significant previous presence of Extreme right ideologies and attitudes.

The countries of Eastern Europe are still facing a significant deficit of democratic institutions and big changes in their economic policies. The level of corruption is very high and the political status quo is engaged in scandals and has little or no intention to address and solve the problems that people face.

The financial crisis and the austerity measures that stem from it but also the reforms in the economic policies of countries that want to join the EU, cause the rising disappointment, frustration and anger of the people. The loss of faith and hope makes them more vulnerable to populist extremist discourses and to anti-elite, anti-systemic rhetoric that the Extreme right parties use. The high unemployment rates as well as the almost non-existent, but in any case, ineffective immigration policies can shift people towards ethnic nationalism, racism and hate. The distrust of the people towards the political parties in power makes them more willing to listen to Extreme right parties, which with their oversimplistic propaganda offer to solve all their problems.

Governments should try to improve the living standards of their people, introduce policies to integrate foreigners and immigrants into society instead of ghettoizing them. They should fight corruption, especially within their own and demonstrate their loyalty to the democratic institution that they serve and show zero tolerance against extremism and political violence that Extreme right parties use, in order to safeguard the democratic institutions and values of the state.

Political instability and the lack of determination, as well as the economic distress and people's frustration is the fertile ground where Extreme right can flourish.

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Table 5.1 : ELECTORAL RESULTS OF EXTREME AND FAR RIGHT WING PARTIES IN SEE
1990 -2001

Countries and Important Parties	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
HUNGARY Hungarian Justice and Life Party					Nat. 1,58%				Nat. 5,47%			
HUNGARY Jobbik												
BULGARIA Bulgaria Business Block		Nat. 1,3%			Nat. 4,7%			Nat. 5,3%				
BULGARIA Ataka												
GREECE LAOS												
GREECE Golden Dawn					Eur. 0,07%		Nat. 0,07%			Eur. 0,75% *b	Nat. 0,18% *b	

*b In coalition with First Line

Table 5.2 : ELECTORAL RESULTS OF EXTREME AND FAR RIGHT WING PARTIES IN SEE
2002 -2014

Countries and Important Parties	2002	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009	2010	2012	2013	2014
HUNGARY Hungarian Justice and Life Party	Nat. 4,37%	Eur. 2,35%		Nat. 2,2% *a			Nat. 0,03%			Nat. 0,04%
HUNGARY Jobbik		Eur. 4,12%		Nat. 2,2%		Eur. 14,77%	Nat. 16,67%			Nat. 20,3% Eur. 14,67%
BULGARIA Bulgarian Business Block										
BULGARIA Ataka			Nat. 8,14%		Eur. 14,20%	Nat. 9,36% Eur. 11,96%			Nat. 7,30%	Nat. 4,52% Eur. 2,96%
GREECE LAOS		Eur. 4,12 Nat. 2,20%			Nat. 3,80%	Eur. 7,15% Nat. 5,63%		Nat. 2,90% & 1,58% *d		Eur. 2,69%
GREECE Golden Dawn		Nat. 0,17% *c				Eur. 0,46% Nat. 0,29%		Nat. 6,97% & 6,92%		Eur. 9,40%

*a In coalition with Jobbik

*c In coalition with Patriotic Alliance

*d In 2012 two elections took place in May and June