THE POTENTIAL OF THE EUROZONE CRISIS TO MOBILIZE EXTREME RIGHT SUPPORT IN SPAIN, PORTUGAL, AND ITALY

Gabrielle Horta

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Political Science, Concentration TransAtlantic Studies.

Chapel Hill
2013

Approved By:
John Stephens
Don Searing
 Liesbet Hooghe
ABSTRACT

GABRIELLE HORTA: The potential of the Eurozone crisis to mobilize extreme right support in Spain, Portugal, and Italy
(Under the direction of John Stephens)

Since the 1980’s, Europe has experienced a resurgence in the extreme right. In this paper, attention will be directed on the successes and failures of the extreme right in Spain, Portugal, and Italy. Additionally, this paper will analyze whether the current Eurozone crisis has benefitted the extreme right in these countries, as it has done in Greece. However, it will be argued that the benefits of the Eurozone crisis for the extreme right have been limited to increased media attention and less on electoral success. This is evidenced by the vast array of news articles contributing to the idea that the extreme right is strengthening in light of the Eurozone crisis; yet the extreme right has experienced limited electoral success in Spain and Portugal due to its inability to shed its fascist links, and the extreme right has had decreased electoral success in Italy’s recent elections.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. Introduction .............................................................................................................. 1

II. What is the extreme right? ...................................................................................... 3

III. Theory .................................................................................................................. 5

IV. Spain ...................................................................................................................... 10

   Tracing the roots of the extreme right ................................................................ 10
   Extreme right at the national level ..................................................................... 14
   Extreme right at the local level .......................................................................... 16

V. Portugal .................................................................................................................. 20

   The fall of Salazar and the extreme right ......................................................... 20
   The slow awakening of the Portuguese extreme right .................................... 23

VI. Italy ....................................................................................................................... 26

   The resurgence of Italy’s extreme right in Mussolini’s wake ................... 26
   Extreme right representation in the Italian government .............................. 29
   February 2013 Italian election results ............................................................. 31

VII. The Eurozone crisis, the extreme right, and the media ................................. 34

VIII. Can the Eurozone crisis benefit the extreme right in Spain, Portugal, and Italy? ................................................................. 39

IX. Conclusion .......................................................................................................... 41

Bibliography .............................................................................................................. 43
I. INTRODUCTION

The extreme right in European politics has become a popular academic discussion since the reemergence of the extreme right in the 1980’s. The electoral success that several small extreme right parties have experienced throughout Europe drew much attention because the extreme right is often associated with the fascist governments that ruled various European countries over different time spans. Because of this and their common “anti-system” rhetoric, the academic and public spheres still view the extreme right as a potential threat to democracy.

The association of extreme right politics with fascism is very much a fact in Spain and Portugal, both of which endured fascist regimes for fifty years. This has been one of the factors that has limited the growth or even reappearance of the extreme right since the end of their respective fascist regimes. However, further east along the Mediterranean, Italians were supporting the extreme right to the extent that an extreme right party became part of one of Italy’s coalition governments in the 1990’s. This occurred despite Italy’s own history with a less enduring, yet more violent fascist regime ruled by Benito Mussolini. In this paper, attention will be directed on the successes and failures of the extreme right in Spain, Portugal, and Italy, specifically since the fall of their fascist regimes. In addition, this paper will analyze whether the current Eurozone crisis has benefitted the extreme right in these countries, as it appears to have done so in Greece with the recent electoral success of the Golden Dawn. However, it will be argued that the benefits of the
Eurozone crisis on the extreme right have been limited to increased media attention and less on electoral success. These countries have been selected due to their common fascist pasts; their similar Mediterranean cultural features; as well as their economic decline amidst the current Eurozone crisis.
II. WHAT IS THE EXTREME RIGHT?

To begin, a definition of the extreme right must be established. Although there are several explanations as to what constitutes an extreme right political party, each with their own nuance, this paper will rely on the explanation given by Piero Ignazi (1992). Ignazi explains that there are three components necessary to identify a party as an extreme right party. The first component is placement on the right side of the left-right political continuum. The second is ideological references to fascism, whether blatant or disguised. The third component is an anti-system attitude, which is evident by attitudes of anti-parliamentarism; anti-pluralism, meaning against multiple party systems; or anti-partism, which is more generally an attitude against any political party system. In addition, Ignazi uses these components to describe two types of extreme right parties, an “old right” and “new right.” If a political party exhibits all three components, it is an extreme right party of the “old right” kind. However, if a political party only shows signs of the first and third components, it is an extreme right party of the “new right” type as they still support antidemocratic values, even if they do not have a historic link to fascism. In contrast, the conservative right is differentiated from the extreme right as having a more central placement on the political spectrum, a conservatist ideology, and political attitudes that do not undermine the democratic political structure. According to the criteria outlined by Ignazi, extreme “new-right” right-wing parties active in the 1980's and 1990's in Europe were the Popular Alliance (AP) of Spain,
the Austrian Liberal Party of Austria; the Progress Party (FRP) of Denmark; the Progress Party (FRPn) of Norway; the French National Front (FN) of France; the Republicans (REP) of Germany; the National Front (FNb) of Belgium; the Flemish Bloc (VIB) of Belgium; the New Forces’ Party (PFN) of Belgium; the Center Democrats (CD) of the Netherlands; and the National Action (AN) of Switzerland (Ignazi 1992). The differentiation between “old right” and “new right” is important because the “new right” is predominantly the type of extreme right party that emerged in the 1980’s and continued to evolve into the 1990’s.
III. THEORY

By the 1980’s, “old right” extreme right parties were experiencing a decline in electoral support, largely due to their public sympathetic stance on fascism. However, the “new right” that emerged in the 1980’s in Europe was able to shed the fascist link many extreme right parties had been holding onto, yet still maintain political platforms that defined the extreme right. The rise of extreme right support can be explained in relation to four elements that were present in the 1980’s. The first is a rise in a neo-conservative cultural mood legitimizing extreme right platforms and the subsequent shift of conservative parties further right on the political spectrum. This shift allowed extreme right parties to emerge and still have electoral appeal, since they appeared less radical. The second element is the tendency for polarization and radicalization, which expanded the political spectrum and allowed for greater ideological differences between the right and left. The remaining elements are a legitimacy crisis of the political and party system, as well the increased importance of immigration and security issues in Europe (Ignazi 1992). Arzheimer (2009) and Lubbers et al (2002) both found evidence that confirms the latter two of these elements and shows that there is a positive correlation between popular anti-immigration attitudes and political dissatisfaction, as well as higher levels of extreme right support. Arzheimer (2009) also determined that an additional factor is that the importance placed on the issues supported by the extreme right (i.e. immigration, national identity) in the manifestos of
established political parties has a significant positive impact on votes for the extreme right.

Theories of economic interest have also been used to explain why high levels of immigration and unemployment are correlated to extreme right support. Whether an increase in competition for scarce resources (i.e. jobs) in a given country occurs as a result of increased immigration, economic hardship, or other reason, public perceptions of what caused the increased competition for resources are what matter most to extreme right support. Typically, social groups do not blame their own for this phenomenon, but rather shift the blame to out-groups, upon whom they ascribe negative attributes. Furthermore, out-groups can also be perceived as a cultural threat. Lubbers et al (2002) present evidence in support of these theories of economic interest in regards to support for the extreme right. They confirm that in countries where immigrants are perceived as competition, there was an increased propensity to support the extreme right. However, high unemployment was not a significant factor in explaining support for the extreme right, and could possibly even have a negative effect on support. In the case of Western European countries, the influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe and Turkey following European integration can be seen as a threat to Western values and ideals. Extreme right parties who tend to have a strong platform based on anti-immigration are able to capitalize on the perceived threats of social groups by immigrants to gain more support. Along with economic theories, political factors also have explanatory power in terms of how the extreme right gains electoral support. Extreme right parties that have charismatic leaders and a well-organized party have greater
electoral support. Other significant political factors related to extreme right success are space in the political spectrum for extreme right parties with a strong anti-immigration stance, as well as a general anti-immigrant attitude within a country. The Lega Nord party, which formed in 1990 in Italy is one such example of an extreme right party with a charismatic leader and organized party participating in a political climate where the opportunity-structure for the extreme right is large (Lubbers et al 2002).

Along with external factors such as the political environment and attitudes in Europe that contributed to extreme right support, studies have also focused on the electoral support the extreme right gained in the 1980’s. Four attitudinal clusters explain why people of various social demographics vote for extreme right parties. The clusters include anti-immigrant attitudes, in-group attitudes, authoritarian attitudes, and political dissatisfaction, of which anti-immigrant attitudes and political dissatisfaction are the most salient clusters (Lubbers and Scheepers 2000). These attitudes are specifically reflected in the demographic population that most shows support for the extreme right. Research on individual contextual factors in relation to extreme right support has found consistent evidence that those who are of the same social status as immigrants, generally those of a lower socioeconomic status, are more apt to vote for anti-immigration parties, a characteristic shared among extreme right parties. Manual workers, the unemployed, young people, and those who are non-religious are also more inclined to vote for the extreme right (Lubbers, et al 2002). A study by Arzheimer (2009) also confirmed that manual workers, younger voters, and the unemployed show significantly more support for
the extreme right than other groups. In addition, he found that those with university degrees were less likely to vote for the extreme right. However, previous research has shown that being part of the lower socioeconomic class mitigates the effect education has on decreasing extreme right wing support. Arzheimer also determined that mobilization of the extreme right is facilitated by high unemployment and high levels of either immigration or unemployment benefits, but not both. Conversely, low levels of extreme right support can be found in countries with minimal welfare state benefits, low unemployment, and minimal immigration. His study concludes that the extreme right benefits from a combination of individual and external contextual factors.

Various studies including those by Ignazi, Arzheimer, and Lubbers et al, have provided several explanations for the reemergence of the extreme right party family in Europe in the 1980’s. Pardos-Prado and Molins (2009) summarize the breadth of such research well. Theories explaining the reemergence of the extreme right address the dissolution of established political identities; rise of political discontent and economic vulnerability among certain social strata; increased levels of unemployment and immigration flows; strength of xenophobic attitudes; convergence between established parties in ideological terms; existence of proportional voting systems; legitimizing reaction of the status quo via radical parties; and the interaction of these factors amongst each other. Together, they offer a multifaceted perspective on the justification of the electoral success of extreme right parties across Europe. These theories are also instrumental in understanding
the electoral performance of the extreme right in Spain, Italy, and Portugal from the end of their fascist regimes.
IV. SPAIN

TRACING THE ROOTS OF THE EXTREME RIGHT

The extreme right in Spain has essentially been considered a failure since General Francisco Franco’s regime came to an end following his death in 1975. A significant factor in this is the fact that the extreme right’s reputation is often associated with the Franco regime (1936 to 1975) because the Franco coalition government was made up of factions from the anti-liberal and fascist right. For this reason, historical factors help explain the successes and failures of the extreme right after the fall of Franco’s regime.

Right-wing extremism first appeared in Spain after the turn of the twentieth century as a response to three major events including the collapse of Spain’s colonial empire (1898), World War I (1914-1918), and the Russian revolution (1917). Although not fascist, General Miguel Primo de Rivera staged a coup d’état in 1923 and abolished the parliamentary system. He set up an authoritarian system by banning political parties, suspending the constitution, and monopolizing channels for popular representation. His son, Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera, tried to launch fascism in Spain, but was unsuccessful. However, in 1933 he managed to launch the extreme right party, Falange Espanola (FE, Spanish Phalanx). Its credo included nostalgia for the fifteenth century, militarism, imperialism, anti-capitalism, populism, Catholicism, and violence. A year later, the FE merged with Committees for National Syndicalist Attack (JONS) to become FE de la JONS. Much like the
extreme right of today, FE de la JONS was an electoral failure. However, the military coup of 1936 by General Francisco Franco saved FE de la JONS from extinction. In 1937, Franco declared that all parties serving the anti-Republican cause would come together as one party, the Falange Espanola Tradicionalista y de las JONS (FET y de las JONS, Traditionalist Spanish Phalanx and of the Committees for National Syndicalist Attack) (Ellwood 1992).

While not all Falangists agreed with Francoism per se, most of the extreme right relied on Franco for representation and participation in state affairs. Following Franco’s choice of a successor in 1969, the Falangists split into the blandos (reformists), who wanted to adapt to the current national and international context, and duros (hardliners), who wanted to maintain the orthodoxy of the Falangist doctrine. The duros formed the basis for future extreme right parties, while the blandos supported the opening up of the political system and tried to win support from moderate anti-Franco opposition, and so evolved or merged into more moderate parties. However, even the hardliners were split into two tendencies. The neo-fascists vindicated the first period of Franco’s regime (1936-1942) and were later represented by the party FE-JONS, while the neo-Francoists mostly identified with the second period of Franco’s regime (1943-1957) and were represented by the party Fuerza Nueva (FN, New Force) (Jimenez 2012). FN was a non-Falangist extreme right party that appeared in 1966 under the guise of a publishing house. It was based upon antidemocratic principles and became an official party following Franco’s death (Ellwood 1992).
Other significant changes after the death of Franco included the appointment of Adolfo Suarez as Prime Minister in 1976 by Franco’s successor, King Juan Carlos I. Suarez was a ranking member in the Franco regime, but was more modern. He was instrumental in leading the democratic transition of Spain from fascism. He passed the Law of Political Associations to reintroduce political parties to Spain and dissolved the “rubber-stamp” parliament. The first democratic elections since 1936 were held in 1977, where Suarez became the first democratically elected Prime Minister in the post-Franco regime (Ellwood 1992). By 1977 though, the gap between the extreme right and conservative right had widened since they were no longer forced into an alliance as they were under Franco. As evidenced in the electoral results of 1977, much of what would have been extreme right support went to the conservative and center-right parties (Jimenez 2012). Although the extreme right was becoming distanced from the conservative right, it was not itself a united front. Four different groups claimed the original Falange title in the 1977 elections, not to mention the number of Falangist groups that did not run in the elections. Other non-Falangist extreme right parties who competed in the elections were the Traditionalist Communion, Civil War Veterans Association, FN, and the ultra-nationalist, National Action Party (Ellwood 1992). In total, the extreme right won less than one percent of the vote, an utter failure. It was made clear that political rally cries such as “Franco resuscitate, Spain needs you,” did not resonate with Spanish voters (Jimenez 2012). The Suarez-led center-right coalition, the Union de Centro Democratico (UCD, Democratic Centrist Union), won the election with 35 percent of the vote. Although Franco believed his regime would continue under his
personally appointed successor, it appeared the extreme right could only survive as long as Franco did. The extreme right did fare better in the 1979 elections where they doubled their votes to 2.2 percent. The majority of the extreme right votes went to a coalition of the three largest extreme right parties, the FN, FE de las JONS, and the Jose Antonio Doctrinal Circles (Ellwood 1992). Their votes earned them one seat in the legislative assembly, which was appointed to Blas Pinar. Pinar is the only Minister of Parliament to have been elected to the assembly from the extreme right since the re-establishment of democracy. However, in 1982, their votes dropped back down to 1977 levels and the coalition split as a result of the disbandment of FN. The extreme right still refused to distance itself from the Franco regime and even defended the Franco era as a time of peace, employment, and economic progress. Furthermore, they accused democracy for the political problems of the time (Jimenez 2012). The FN managed to reemerge in 1986 as the Frente Nacional (FN, National Front) in 1986 led by Blas Pinar. Along with FE de la JONS, they still had minimal electoral success, while the socialists led the Spanish government with successive election wins in 1982, 1986, and 1989 (Ellwood 1992).

After the fall of the Franco regime, the extreme right was unable to adapt its program to align with the interests of its electorate, nor did it advocate change in a time of political transition. Antidemocratic options only attracted a minority of urban, middle-class voters who were either young (18-25) or elderly. Falangist parties defended their political stance contending that Franco never implemented the Falangist doctrine, thereby making the doctrine still valid. However, this was not enough to disassociate the public opinion of the extreme right with Pro-Franco
repression and dictatorship. It is noteworthy that even under Franco, the extreme right never truly won support or acceptance by the majority of Spaniards. It was merely a partner in Franco’s regime. Yet it is this partnership that has tainted the extreme right’s reputation ever since. Other weaknesses of the extreme right post-Franco are that it has little material or organizational infrastructure, is not large enough to ignite mass movements, and the use or support of political violence (Ellwood 1992).

EXTREME RIGHT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Even with poor electoral success post-Franco, the extreme right in Spain experienced a revival in the late 1980’s, along with several other countries across Europe. This revival began with the Bases Autonomas (Autonomous Grass-Roots Groups) who mobilized students at Spanish universities. They believed that a series of small-scale violent acts were necessary to demonstrate to the Spanish public that the institutions of the democratic system were unable to maintain law and order (Ellwood 1992). However, not until the 1990’s did the extreme right finally start to revise its program. Some extreme right parties in Europe had already replaced the rejection of democracy with a formal acceptance of it. They refocused their attention on xenophobic discourse, which centered on the rejection of immigrants and maintained an ultra-nationalist tone. This fundamental change found new support in Europe and even electoral success, and so Spain followed suit (Jimenez 2012).

Three major differences separate the Spanish extreme right from that which typifies the extreme right in Europe. First, the extreme right in Spain remains predominantly neo-Francoist and neo-fascist. It maintains the historical memory of
Spanish fascism, the Spanish Civil War, and the Franco regime, which have consistently worked against them. Even those neo-Francoist and neo-fascist parties that have most revised their programs remain stagnant and divided. Second, contrary to results in other parts of Europe, extreme right parties in Spain with a xenophobic emphasis have experienced poor electoral results. This is curious because Spain has not been immune to immigration over the years. In fact, immigration in Spain has quadrupled over the last decade with over four million immigrants recorded in 2008, representing ten percent of the population. Third, the lesser of the extreme right groups in Spain are the national populists, who have insufficiently been able to construct a new extreme right. One example of such is the Democracia Nacional (DN, National Democracy) founded in 1995. DN is the Spanish party that has tried most to utilize immigration as a way to mobilize voters. It openly accepts the Spanish constitution but its model is against parliamentary democracy and has clear limits on individual freedoms. It is ultra-nationalist and denies political autonomy to the Spanish regions. Later, a DN splinter party called Espana2000 formed (Jimenez 2012).

The extreme right has experienced such failure at the national level for several reasons. One such reason is the persistence of nostalgic Francoist rhetoric, which does not resonate with the post-Franco era electorate. Another is the capacity of the Spanish mainstream right to attract radical right voters (Pardos-Prado and Molins 2009). The extreme right also provokes rejection because even when it is not linked to the Franco regime, it fosters associations with violence, as it has
encouraged aggression and protests on several occasions. The extreme right has also lacked a defined or charismatic leader since Franco’s death (Jimenez 2012).

In the post-Franco era, the extreme right in Spain can best be characterized as fragmented and stagnant. Only one Falangist group of the 1970’s exists today, which is the FE de la JONS. Other extreme right parties that have survived include the Traditionalist Communion (who hasn’t participated in elections since 1977) and FN. Furthermore, the economic crisis and political polarization that benefitted the extreme right in the 1930’s are no longer present in today’s world (Ellwood 1992). However, as mentioned in the introduction, this paper will later analyze whether the Eurozone crisis could provide an opportunity for the extreme right to mobilize.

EXTREME RIGHT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Electoral results in the post-Franco era have made it clear that the extreme right has failed to break ties with its fascist past and mobilize a new electorate. An extreme right party has yet to win representation in the Spanish parliament since the end of the Franco regime. However, the extreme right is not extinct. While the extreme right reemerged across Europe in the 1980’s, it wasn’t until the 2000’s that the extreme right made any impact in Spain. The main difference between electoral success of the extreme right in Spain and in Europe is that electoral success in Spain has mostly occurred on the local level. In 2003 and 2007, at least five extreme right parties obtained, maintained, or increased representation in local governments. This trend is attributed to the partisan conversion of socialist voters and the mobilization of former vote abstainers, rather than the mobilization of new cohorts.
of voters or swings from right wing or nationalist voters. (Pardos-Prado and Molins 2009).

Of the five extreme right parties that have received local representation, two are new parties including the Plataforma per Catalunya (PxC, Platform for Catalonia) and Espana2000 (Spain2000). The other three parties have links to the traditional, authoritarian Spanish right. These include the Democracia Nacional (DN, National Democracy) represented in Avila and Burgos; the Partido de Accion Democrata Espanola (ADE, Spanish Democratic Action Party) represented throughout Madrid and Guadalajara; and the Movimiento Falangista de Espana (MFE, Falangist Movement of Spain) with representation in Cantabria. The most successful of these parties has been the PxC led by Joseph Anglada, possibly positioning itself as a new radical right alternative. In 2003, PxC won representation in four city councils in Catalonia despite the cities’ five percent threshold. This was followed by further electoral success in 2007, where PxC increased or maintained seats in the aforementioned cities, as well as in five additional municipalities. PxC has succeeded in attracting voters in two consecutive elections, which is a potential indicator of its staying power. (Pardos-Prado and Molins 2009).

PxC maintains radical right elements in its anti-immigration statements, authoritarian and hierarchical values, and in the explicit rejection of ideological labels of “right” and “left.” With this political stance, PxC has earned representation across four provinces within Catalonia. A common characteristic among the provinces where the PxC has won political seats is that the industrial sector contributed 20 to 40 percent of the municipalities’ GDP. In comparison to other
Spanish municipalities, this is unusually high since the service sector tends to trump the industrial one in terms of GDP contribution. Another common factor is the high presence of a foreign-born population, which constitutes 13 to 43 percent of the population in the municipalities with PxC representation. The Spanish average is only 20 to 30 percent. Turning attention to PxC voters themselves, PxC votes came from two main sources. These are socialists who previously voted for Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (PSC, Socialists’ Party of Catalonia) and those who abstained from voting in the previous election. More specifically, 32.37 percent of PxC votes came from former PSC voters while abstainers cast 33.98 percent of votes. However, PxC was only able to retain between 10 and 22 percent of voters (with the exception of one municipality where it retained 42 percent of voters) from the 2003 to the 2007 election (Pardos-Prado and Molins 2009). This shows that PxC has been more successful in gaining new votes than retaining old ones, a common dilemma for extreme right parties. Only time will tell whether the PxC has long-term staying power and whether they may somehow expand their platform beyond Catalonia and adopt a more national political program.

Along with the PxC, Espana2000 has also experienced relatively increased success in comparison to other extreme right parties, mostly in Valencia. Another party with success in Valencia is the Grup d’Accio Valencianista (GAV, Valencian Action Group)(Jimenez 2012). It is important to note that the parties with the most electoral growth in Spain are the ones that have emerged most recently. They are primarily comprised of middle class university youths and elderly. As has been mentioned in the theoretical discussion of the extreme right, new parties have an
advantage in mobilizing younger voters because they can take advantage of their lack of party loyalty. It is possible though that the extreme right has long-term potential electorally competing at the regional level. Emphasizing anti-immigration may also prove to generate more electoral success in light of recent Spanish ultra nationalism making immigration an increasingly salient political issue.
V. PORTUGAL

THE FALL OF SALAZAR AND THE EXTREME RIGHT

Similar to Spain, the extreme right in Portugal had abysmal success following the collapse of the fascist regime as a result of the Carnation Revolution in 1974. Following the end of authoritarian rule, anyone who identified with the revolution was politically labeled simply as “not of the right” and those who identified with the former regime were “of the right.” Despite Portugal’s status as a fascist regime under Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, the extreme right did not believe that the regime adequately represented fascist values and goals. Upon Salazar being succeeded by Marcelo Caetano, the voice of the extreme right grew. At the time of Caetano’s leadership, the extreme right consisted of an alliance among radical right university students, purist fascist intellectuals, Salazarist Catholic traditionalists, monarchists, and anti-Salazarist republicans, who together defended the Portuguese empire.

After the military coup of April 25, 1975 that successfully ended fascist rule, the extreme right broke into two groups. The minority view rejected any form of adherence to the new political situation or of values promoted by the revolution movement. Those who pertained to this group founded the Movimento de Accao Portuguesa (MAP, Portuguese Action Movement). In contrast, the majority view accepted the military coup and instead rejected “restorationist” temptations, referring to the restoration of a fascist regime. They formed the Movimento Federalista Portugues (MFP, Portuguese Federalist Movement). MFP became the
most significant extreme right party in the aftermath of the revolution. MFP also supported the right of self-determination for Portugal’s former African colonies, but suggested the possibility of maintaining institutional links to Portugal (Marchi 2012).

Some months following the coup that overthrew Caetano, other extreme right movements joined MAP and MFP. Though, these were less structured and less radical than both established parties. Extreme right publications also appeared. With the exception of MAP, the small right-wing parties that emerged attempted to legitimize themselves by declaring themselves faithful to the liberal, democratic, and western political project of the revolutionary military’s moderate wing. Ironically, some Salazarists were even claiming to be anti-fascist or leftist. Unlike MAP, the MFA faction did not believe that an extreme right party would be a viable option against the left. Instead, MFA concentrated on the more moderate elements of the deposed government and instead sponsored the creation of the Centro Democrático Social (CDS, Social Democratic Center). The CDS was a self-described moderate, liberal constitutional, Social-Catholic, and anti-Marxist center party. On the other hand, the MFP transformed into the Partido do Progresso (PP/MFP Party of Progress). PP/MFP formed an electoral coalition with the Partido Liberal (PL, Liberal Party) and the Partido Trabalhista Democrático Português (PTDP, Portuguese Democratic Worker’s Party) called the Frente Democrática Unida (FDU, United Democratic Front). However, the Partido Comunista Português (PCP, Portuguese Communist Party), military, and civilian extreme left successfully accused several extreme right organizations being anti-revolutionary, which
resulted in the offices of the PP/MFP, MAP, and others being occupied and subsequently dissolved (Marchi 2012).

Only the Partido da Democracia Crista (PDC, Portuguese Christian Democrat Party) survived the second “coup” attempt of the extreme right and thus was the only right party to campaign for the 1975 elections. Because of this, the PDC was able to unite more conservative anti-communist voters and attracted many former Salazarists and supporters of the radical right. However, the PDC nailed its own coffin when some of its leaders were involved in a third coup attempt in March 1975. The coup failed and resulted in the banning of the PDC. In the 1975 elections, votes that would have likely gone to the extreme right were lost to the CDS, PPD, and PS. Even so, only one percent of the electorate in those elections were declared fascists and two percent were conservatives. With the extreme right essentially exiled, neo-fascist factions formed two clandestine groups in Francoist Spain, which were the Movimento Democratico de Libertacao de Portugal (MDLP, Democratic Movement for the Liberation of Portugal) and the Exercito de Libertacao de Portugal (ELP, Portuguese Liberation Army). The former included radical members from the PP/MFP and the latter included elements of the Portuguese Legion, PIDE secret police, and former fascist regime supporters. From May to November of 1975, the two groups participated in various anti-communist, propaganda activities. They were more successful in the north where the “northern revolts” occurred against left-wing organizations by small farmers, artisans, and shopkeepers who were concerned with the increasing encroachment of the left (Marchi 2012). Political instability followed a November 1975 counter-coup by the communists. It appeared
that the extreme right could have the opportunity to reassert itself politically as large groups of people were becoming increasingly unhappy with the revolution, over one million people returned from Portugal’s former African colonies, and exiled right-wing radicals began to return. However, the extreme right still faced the possibility of being banned and had low economic and political support upon which to mobilize. Therefore, creating an extreme right political party remained an unrealistic goal.

By 1977, the PPD had become the Partido Social Democrata (PSD, Social Democratic Party). The extreme right voiced support for a center-right coalition, which included the PSD. This was a strategy of “entry” into the institutional party system. In the 1980 elections, a right wing coalition called the Direita Unida (DU, United Right) ran, but won a paltry .4 percent of the votes. This was the final electoral attempt by the extreme right for several years, while only the PDC was able to maintain a minimal presence over the years (Marchi 2012).

THE SLOW AWAKENING OF THE PORTUGUESE EXTREME RIGHT

While little was heard from the extreme right in the early 1980’s, it did start a radical right magazine publication titled Futuro Presente (Present Future). The magazine sought to establish a unique Portuguese “formula” that combined the tradition of conservative realism with a neo-fascist renewal (Marchi 2012). Although it never achieved its goal of cultural hegemony, it represents the transition between the old and new right in Portugal. It also reflects the inclusiveness of Portuguese media outlets to all voices of political opposition, despite the outlawing of the fascist party following the Carnation Revolution (Fishman 2011).
In the mid-1980’s, Portuguese radical nationalism echoed patterns of the general European extreme right. In 1985, youths formed the Movimento de Accao Nacional (MAN, National Action Movement), which calls for an anti-systemic “third way” and developed an ethno-nationalist identity based on the defense of racial homogeneity and against the perceived threat of immigration. This broke with traditions of the Portuguese extreme right, which instead emphasized multiracialism and multiculturalism as a result of the country’s colonial conquests around the world. Despite a change in the rhetoric of the extreme right, MAN was still associated with political violence in the late 1980’s due to an investigation into the organization as a result of the death of extreme left leader allegedly murdered by some of the party’s neo-Nazi members. This led to its dissolution in 1991. However, MAN was successful in bringing the discourse of the extreme right movements that had been sprouting across Europe to the radical political scene in Portugal, and subsequently the extreme right now refocused its efforts on establishing a viable political party (Marchi 2010).

In 1995, the Alianca Nacional (AN, National Alliance) formed, which aimed to reanimate the defunct extreme right parties such as the PDC. A few years later in 2000, the AN successfully restructured an existing extreme right party and created the Partido Nacional Renovador (PNR, National Renovation Party). The PNR reclaimed the anti-revolution nationalism of the extreme right following the Carnation Revolution, but without its nostalgic aspects, meaning without advocating for the extreme right status quo, which never existed after the revolution. It recognizes the legitimacy of the democratic system but advocates the preservation
of Portuguese values and declares Salazar to be the greatest statesman of the twentieth century. Furthermore, it has a highly ethno-nationalist tendency and calls for the suspension of the Schengen Treaty among other policies. It is a party that falls into the “new right” category as many recent extreme right parties across Europe do (Marchi 2012). In terms of its political strength, it has yet to win any parliamentary seats in the four elections it has participated in. However, whether the Eurozone crisis will benefit the PNR remains to be seen in the next election in 2015.

In sum, the extreme right in Portugal has been nearly paralyzed since the fall of the fascist regime. Similarly to Spain, the extreme right stubbornly held onto its fascist tendencies and refused to evolve and maintain an electorate. This has proven to be even more detrimental to the extreme right in Portugal than in Spain, because Portugal’s revolution was actively pursued by the Portuguese people and was less of an evolution following the death of the regime leader Salazar. Even with an extreme right movement spreading across Europe in 2012, Portugal was slow to catch on. Only in 2000, with the newly created PNR, has Portugal showed any sign of following suit with this trend. While this party has consistently appeared on the ballot for nearly a decade, it has yet to have any electoral success.
VI. ITALY

THE RESURGENCE OF ITALY’S EXTREME RIGHT IN MUSSOLINI’S WAKE

Despite the fact that Italy banned the revival of the fascist party after World War II, Mussolini sympathizers who wanted to continue political traditions that had emerged from fascism founded the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI, Italian Social Movement). Its policies emphasized ethnic nationalism, authority, law and order, demand for state superiority, violent enforcement of the law (i.e. capital punishment), and the rejection of a pluralistic government. Historically though, the party has had trouble maintaining a stable electorate. The MSI went back and forth between overcoming its political isolation in parliament by toning down its anti-system stance. However, this threatened to lose electoral appeal by its traditional base and so the party would re-radicalize itself. In the 1970’s, Italy saw an increase in left and right wing violence and terrorism. This allowed the ruling Christian Democrats (DC) to essentially control policy-making in the parliament because they were able to position themselves as a party of order. Therefore, although the MSI had seats in parliament, they had limited influence in policy-making due to their marginalization by the DC. By the 1980’s, the communists had compromised its radical left platform, so that it could ally with the ruling Christian Democrats to prevent a right-leaning coalition. At this time, Italians were becoming more and more disillusioned with the main political parties (and coalitions), their corruption, and inefficiency. This gave the MSI an opportunity to defend itself as the “party
against parties.” Its emphasis on anti-system governance shifted from a system against communists to a system against the parties. This resulted in some success for the MSI, which won 7 percent of the vote in 1983, their second highest electoral success ever. This was followed by 5.5 percent of the vote in the 1989 elections (Ignazi 1992; Newell 2000).

Along with increased support for the MSI, the 1980’s in Italy were also marked by the mobilization of northern regionalist movements. These regionalist movements, such as the Lombardy League, contrasted the hard-working and productive qualities of northerners against the corrupt state based in Rome and the perceived-to-be lazy southerners to support their desire for economic autonomy. Around this same time, a wave of anti-immigrant sentiment spread throughout Italy. As intolerance grew, this sentiment grew into large protests and even became violent. By 1990, the Lega Nord (Northern League) had formed and represented a united stance of northerners against the central Italian state and the south. They even threatened secession to push for a greater federalist system. The Lega Nord can be characterized as a “new” extreme right party, as described by Ignazi and was typical of the extreme right parties that appeared in Europe in the 1980’s and 1990’s. It denounces fascism, but still supports traditional moral values, law and order, and xenophobic sentiments. Confirming accusations of government corruption, the Italian First Republic collapsed amidst the crash of the lira in 1992 and the “clean hands” scandal shortly after. Following the collapse of the government, much political space had opened up for new representation in the government. By this time, the MSI had evolved little and their anti-system platform
was becoming less salient in a world where the Cold War had ended and in a
country where the communist party (PCI) had transformed into a social democratic
party. However, by the 1994 elections, the MSI now called the Alleanza Nazionale
(AN, National Alliance), entered into a coalition government with the Forza Italia (FI,
Italian Force) led by Silvio Berlusconi and the Lega Nord (Koopmans and Statham
1999).

The rise in extreme right electoral success in the 1990’s is not only attributed
to changes in Italian political institutions due to the spread of corruption
culminating in the “clean hands” scandal in February of 1992 and eventual fall of the
First Republic. Other contributing factors included a change in voting patterns and a
change in the electoral system. Prior to the scandal, voter behavior had already been
changing as fewer voters made a “vote of belonging (to the party)” and began a
trend of casting a “vote of opinion” to reflect individual preference and not party
loyalty. Dissatisfaction with the main political parties due to mounting accusations
of corruption was also reflected in decreased voter turnout. In addition to
corruption coming under scrutiny and a change in voter behavior, the electoral
system itself changed in 1993. It was altered by replacing a list-system of
proportional representation to a more limited version of proportional
representation. Following a referendum, three-quarters of the seats in the Chamber
of Deputies and the Senate would be allocated on single-member, simple plurality
basis. The remaining seats would be allocated according to proportional
representation with a four percent threshold. The change was made in hopes that
this could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Italian government by
essentially forcing parties to form two main coalitions prior to voting, a right leaning
and a left leaning one. In addition, there was hope that this would reduce clientelism
and corruption by offering less incentive (in the form of parliamentary seats) to the
individual politician and more to the party (Newell 2000). Around the same time,
the MSI was actually achieving local success (after a slight decline in support in the
late 1980’s) by winning several elections for local office, since DC candidates had
become less appealing to the center-right voter in light of the “clean hands” scandal.
This, in addition to the change in the electoral system, actually increased the
extreme right’s opportunity for electoral success (Morlino 1996).

EXTREME RIGHT REPRESENTATION IN THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT

Furthermore, as Berlusconi was forming the new FI party, he not only allied
with the Lega Nord, but voiced public support for the MSI as well (Newell 2000).
Berlusconi was motivated to maintain a center-right government after the fallout of
the DC. In order to achieve this, he made electoral pacts with both the MSI and Lega
Nord (Koopmans and Statham 1999). Together, they formed the electoral coalition
known as the Freedom Alliance. During this time, the MSI merged with a few smaller
parties to become the AN in order to revamp their image, as well as attract new
electoral support in addition to their existing electorate for the upcoming elections
in 1994. This, along with being part of the Freedom Alliance, proved to be a
successful tactic when the new AN won 13 percent of the vote in the 1994 elections
(Newell 2000). In the election, the FI received 21 percent of the vote, the AN 13.5
percent, and the Lega Nord 8.4 percent. This coalition marked the beginning of the
Italian Second Republic. However, the coalition proved difficult to maintain.
though the two smaller coalition members were extreme right parties, the MSI’s electoral base was southern Italians and the Lega Nord’s was northern Italians. Needless to say, representing two electoral bases that are in stark opposition to each other made for complicated negotiating in government, which contributed to its fall just eight months after the election. Nevertheless, the electoral win was monumental for the extreme right in Italy because it was the first time it participated as part of the parliamentary majority and was democratically elected. Additionally, it legitimized the newly formed AN and Lega Nord, setting them up for greater electoral success in future elections. In academic studies, the political power gains of the extreme right in Italy have been attributed to institutional opportunities (i.e. joining Berlusconi’s coalition government), in combination with discursive opportunities (i.e. mobilization of the people, as well as preemptive measures by opposing parties to appease the extreme right) (Koopmans and Statham 1999).

In the technocratic government that followed led by Dini, the AN and Lega Nord worked together to politicize immigration as a national issue and to mobilize the Italian public in support of policies to limit immigration. The Lega Nord even refused to pass the public budget unless Dini passed stricter measures against immigration. Until this point, immigration policy in Italy promoted social integration. However, under pressure by the AN and Lega Nord, Dini passed the Dini Decree, which included more restrictive policies against immigration. This was one of the first successful policy outcomes in government for the extreme right and a testament to the political power they had obtained. Despite the Freedom Alliance coalition only lasting eight months, its significance lies in the fact that it marked the
first time in postwar Europe, not just in Italy, that the extreme right had governmental power and was democratically elected. In the 1996 elections, electoral votes for both extreme right parties increased, with the AN receiving 15.7 percent of the vote and the Lega Nord receiving 10.1 percent of the vote. An additional extreme right-wing party, a neofascist splinter group of the AN called the MS-Fiamma won .9 percent of the vote. In total, the extreme right won 26.7 of the vote, an increase of 22 percent (Koopmans and Statham 1999).

External contextual factors of the political atmosphere in Europe explain the resurgence of the extreme right throughout Europe during the 1980’s and 1990’s. However, the aforementioned events and transformations that transcended in the 1980’s and 1990’s in Italy are unique to Italy. It is the exceptionalism of Italy’s political climate and events that explain not only how the extreme right reemerged in Italy, but also how the extreme right was able to succeed to the extent that it was part of a majority coalition in 1994. Extreme right support has since continued to ebb and flow in Italy. The AN has modified and become less radical, merging with Berlusconi’s Il Popolo della Liberta (PdL, People of Freedom) party in 2009. However, the Lega Nord remains a politically represented extreme right party in the Italian government as it continues to be in coalition with Berlusconi’s PdL and smaller, center-right/right parties.

FEBRUARY 2013 ITALIAN ELECTION RESULTS

The recent Italian elections in February 2013 provide some indication as to how the Eurozone crisis has affected the electoral potential of the extreme right. Pier Luigi Bersani leading the Partito Democratico (PD, Democratic Party) just
barely edged out a win against Berlusconi’s center-right alliance (Mackenzie and O’Leary 2013). Berlusconi and his party were quite successful in the elections, which was surprising following Berlusconi’s resignation as Prime Minister in November 2011 and currently postponed trials for tax fraud and paid sex with a minor (“Sex trial of Italy’s Berlusconi delayed until April 22,” 2013). Even more surprising was the strong performance by the new left wing Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S, Five Star Movement) led by comedian Beppe Grillo, which won approximately 25 percent of the vote (Traynor et al 2013). Their success gave the center-left bloc the majority in the lower house, but not in the Senate. Seats in the Senate are now distributed as follows: 123 seats to Bersani’s Common Good coalition, 117 seats to Berlusconi and his center-right coalition, 54 seats to Grillo and the M5S, 19 seats to Mario Monti and his centrist party, and 2 “other” seats (“Ungovernability wins,” 2013). The big loser was clearly Mario Monti, even though he was favored by the international community and responsibly led Italy’s former technocratic government that followed Berlusconi’s resignation in 2011. Some are already predicting that the close election results will make it impossible for Bersani to form a government and so voters could be back at the polls within six months. Although, both Bersani and Berlusconi have declared that a government will indeed be formed (Mackenzie and O’Leary 2013).

The Italian people have made a clear statement against the EU and their austerity measures via the elections. Voters were determined to make their voices heard and voted for Berlusconi’s promises of returned taxes. However, Grillo’s success with the M5S showed that a significant number of voters did not turn to the
extreme right to express discontent with the former Italian government and EU. Rather, approximately 25 percent of voters turned to the left. The extreme right and the Lega Nord were unable to capitalize on the public unrest and dissatisfaction with the government caused by the Eurozone crisis in the same way that Grillo did. This is possibly due to the very success that the Lega Nord had experienced in the previous election. It is incredibly difficult to campaign as an anti-system extreme right party when one has become part of the system, as Lega Nord has. Grillo, on the other hand, is a newcomer to the Italian political stage and successfully used his non-political background and anti-system rhetoric to gain a substantial footing in the Italian government. Although Grillo himself will not hold a seat in parliament (the M5S has a rule stipulating that anyone convicted of a criminal offense cannot run and Grillo has a previous conviction for involuntary manslaughter), he remains the movement's leader. So far, he is living up to the anti-system rhetoric, expressing doubt that Bersani will be able to form a government and that the M5S will continue to pursue a program including free water, free education, and free health care. The movement also pushes for an end to austerity, drastic tax reductions, and a referendum to exit the Eurozone. Furthermore, Grillo has rejected the idea of forming an alliance with any other party (Poggioli 2013).
VII. THE EUROZONE CRISIS, THE EXTREME RIGHT, AND THE MEDIA

Several media sources have highlighted the growing concern over the rise of the extreme right in Europe. The New York Times published the article “Europe’s New Fascists” in November of 2012 where it stated that the “Golden Dawn’s rise [in Greece] has parallels across Europe, and its significance should be of Continental concern.” In May 2012, the UK Independence Party leader was quoted in a BBC article warning that some EU countries face “mass civil unrest, possibly even revolution” due to the austerity measures being enforced to combat the Eurozone crisis. Mario Monti was quoted in another BBC article warning that “Italy could flee into the hands of populists” if the EU continued to reject more concessions on Italy’s bailout package, which to an extent, is exactly what happened in the February 2013 elections. A Huffington Post UK headline from March 2013 declares “Europe’s Anti-fascists warn of Neo-Nazi Rise,” in which a European Parliament MP stated that “parties are prepared to move even further right” in countries such as France and Italy. However, headlines such as this are not purely propaganda. This particular article was reporting on the British conference Unite Against Fascism, which warned against mainstream political parties adopting policies from extreme right parties to win votes. One CNN articles asks “Is the Far Right Gaining Ground in Europe?” published April 2012. Another Economist article (2011) titled “Beyond the Fringe” claims that “the rise of populists is a threat both to the euro and the EU as a whole.”
The media is not the only entity with a close eye on the extremist political tendencies that are arising in light of the Eurozone crisis. Academics are also increasingly analyzing the rise of the extreme right in Europe in relation to the Eurozone crisis. One such academic, Steven Philip Kramer, concluded that the EU’s handling of the Eurozone crisis could lead to Europe’s return down an historical path of authoritarianism and undemocratic political systems, especially in Southern Europe which encapsulates four of the five PIIGS (the EU member states which comprise the Eurozone crisis and include Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece, and Spain). He states that “one result of the [Eurozone crisis] has been the reemergence and strengthening of the extreme right” (Kramer 2012). In regards to the reemergence of the extreme right, this paper has shown that this can be traced back to the 1980’s, both in Southern Europe and across Europe.

Interestingly, recent media reports on mobilization of the extreme right in Europe have been concentrated on the National Front in France and the Golden Dawn in Greece due to their recent electoral successes. Although, some media coverage has reported populist-driven upheaval spreading throughout Southern Europe, especially when protesters in Spain and Portugal expressed solidarity through coordinated protests in the summer of 2012. An Economist article (2012) titled “The Rage in Spain” reports on the mounting protests and secessionist threats in Spain in response to economic troubles amidst the Eurozone crisis and austerity measures handed down by the EU. Secessionist threats are primarily being voiced by Catalonia, the region of Spain where the extreme right has had the most local success. In the case of Portugal, political analyst Pedro Adao e Silva was cited in a
CNN article suggesting that continued high unemployment and lack of opportunity for youth employment were potential catalysts for social unrest. This turned out to be somewhat of a premonition as the article was published in December 2011 and, as aforementioned, mass public protests broke out in the summer of 2012.

Media reports appear to be based on commentary made by public officials voicing concern over the EU’s response to the Eurozone crisis and its potential effects on the electorate, as well as a return to right-wing led governments. However, as empirical data has shown, the electoral success of the extreme right in the EU member states suffering the most (i.e. Portugal, Spain, and Italy) from the Eurozone crisis has been limited. However, only time will tell if the Eurozone crisis is a catalyst for extreme right mobilization in Spain, Portugal, and Italy, as it has been in Greece. Recent elections in Italy show inexplicable support for Berlusconi, whose tainted reputation has barely put a dent in his electoral success. Even in Portugal, where the extreme right has had virtually no electoral success since the end of the Salazar/Caetano regime, an article in the national newspaper, Jornal de Noticias (2013), compares Berlusconi’s strategy and subsequent success in Italy with Pedro Passos Coelho and his right-wing forces promoting “reforms of the state” and a “reshuffling of the regime” as a strategy of securing right and extreme right success in the future.

It is important to note that while the media, both American and European, are fueling the idea that the extreme right is becoming polemic throughout Europe, its attention has been greatly concentrated on EU member states that have been less affected by the Eurozone crisis (Greece being an exception of course). Media articles
often discuss the extreme right pointing to Central and Eastern Europe, Nordic Europe, Western Europe, but rarely voice such concern for Southern Europe. Increased media attention on the extreme right has increased in accordance with the Eurozone crisis as is evident by the sheer number of articles on the subject published within the last four years. It is ironic then that, with the exception of Ireland, Southern Europe has been the hardest hit by the Eurozone crisis and yet their extreme right parties continue to perform dismally in national elections. Italy's Lega Nord is an exception to this as they have electorally performed well and maintained political representation for about a decade now. However, in Italy's recent elections, the Lega Nord won fewer votes than in the previous election due to its inability to mobilize Italian citizens frustrated with the Italian government and EU mandated austerity measures to secure votes for the extreme right. Instead, a significant number of extremist votes went to Grillo and his M5S, which won nearly 25 percent of the vote. Whether Grillo's M5S has the staying power of the Lega Nord remains to be seen, but it did absorb some of the potential of the electorate to vote for the extreme right and pulled them left.

Therefore, what is preventing the extreme right from mobilizing and capitalizing on the popular mood of discontent and political apathy in Spain and Portugal? [I would say that the AN and Lega Nord were pretty successful in Italy.] you need to delete this. One problem with answering this question is that the Eurozone crisis is still a current problem. Not enough time has passed to see what long-term effects the Eurozone crisis will have on these countries politically, specifically in terms of electoral success for the extreme right. In the case of
Portugal, their last national elections were held in 2011, before any major public unrest developed. The next elections are not scheduled until 2015. The same holds true for Spain, whose last elections were in 2011, with the following elections not scheduled until 2015. Italy can provide some insight into the repercussions of the Eurozone crisis on extreme right electoral success as they just held elections in February 2013 to replace the technocratic government led by Mario Monti. In these elections, the Bersani’s Common Good coalition narrowly won over Berlusconi’s center-right coalition. The success of the center-right coalition was surprising for many reasons, one of which is that national polls leading up to the election had Berlusconi’s coalition looking much more disadvantaged. It was believed that Berlusconi’s scandals and delayed criminal trials would hurt the coalition, but the electoral results show otherwise. Despite the success of Berlusconi’s coalition, the Lega Nord only won 4.1 percent of the vote, down from 8.3 percent in 2008. Though, it is significant that the extreme right remains a constant presence in the Italian government.
VIII. CAN THE EUROZONE CRISIS BENEFIT THE EXTREME RIGHT IN SPAIN, PORTUGAL, AND ITALY?

Earlier in this paper, attention was paid to the historical evolution of the extreme right in Spain, Portugal, and Italy. This is because much of the electoral performance of the extreme right in these countries can be better understood within their historical context. Although Spain, Portugal, and Italy can be lumped together and referred to as Southern Europe, no single explanation can be used to address how the extreme right has fared in contemporary society in these countries. In Spain and Portugal, where fascism only saw its end in 1975, the memories of a fascist dictatorship have haunted the extreme right and inhibited its ability to participate in their national governments ever since. Additionally, extreme right parties have been slow to evolve in Spain and Portugal, stubbornly holding onto fascist rhetoric and/or nostalgia. However, in Italy, where Mussolini and his fascist regime faced their demise following World War II, the extreme right has been more publicly active and has benefitted from participating in coalition governments, namely with Berlusconi’s center-right coalition.

The Eurozone crisis brings in a new dimension with respects to the extreme right. It has attracted much media attention amidst mass public protests throughout Spain, Portugal, and Italy. The media has also placed a spotlight on the resurgence of the extreme right across several countries throughout Europe and hinted at the possibility of greater social unrest due to the Eurozone crisis, which could potentially lead to increased support of extremist parties as a way to express
dissatisfaction with the ability of mainstream parties to effectively rule the country and maintain economic prosperity. However, even in the countries most affected by the Eurozone crisis, the extreme right remains a minor presence. The extreme right remains unrepresented in the national parliaments of Spain and Portugal. Also, in Italy’s recent elections, the Lega Nord saw a decrease in electoral support from the previous election and a large number of the potential extremist electorate voted for the left-wing M5S led by Grillo. However, the increased media attention on the extreme right and its concern over extreme right support mobilizing as a response to the Eurozone crisis, has given salience to the extreme right agenda. The extreme right could potentially capitalize this on if they use the platform to convert public frustration with the current mainstream parties to electoral votes.
IX. CONCLUSION

Based on historical evidence, the reemergence of the extreme right in Portugal, Spain, and Italy can be traced back to the 1980’s and has since evolved gradually, albeit more slowly in Portugal and Spain than in Italy. It did not appear overnight, nor as a direct consequence of the Eurozone crisis. The fact that the fascist legacies of Portugal and Spain are still part of the recent past makes today’s citizens wary of the extreme right and of the possibility that voting in a new extreme right party could lead to the return of such a regime. There is also little evidence to support that the extreme right has strengthened in these countries as a direct result of the Eurozone crisis. The extreme right has made little electoral advancement since the onset of the crisis in these national governments, although some growth has been shown at the local level in Spain. Furthermore, even though the extreme right remains politically represented in Italy, it is a minor presence in the Italian government.

Although outside the scope of this paper, Greece appears to be the only country in which the Eurozone crisis generated an electoral shift to the extreme right. Certainly, perceptions that the extreme right is strengthening in Spain, Portugal, Italy, have increased in accordance with increased media coverage, especially as mass protests against the EU and austerity measures broke out in 2012. However, only time will tell if there is more fact than fiction to this perception. In Italy’s recent elections, the extreme right did not increase its political
representation, but remains part of the coalition government. Italy actually serves as an example of how the Eurozone crisis can benefit the extreme left, or at least a new extremist political party. Perhaps elections in 2015 will offer more insight into extreme right support in Spain and Portugal.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


