

# The Extreme Right in Belgium and France

## The Extreme Right in Western Europe

Introduction  
France  
Belgium  
Conclusion

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## Essays and Class Test

- ▶ Essay titles: <http://www.kai-arzheimer.com/The-Extreme-Right-in-Western-Europe/essaytitles.pdf>
- ▶ Class test:
  - ▶ July 8, 12.15-12.45 (12.45-13.45: Immigrants (Rydgren 2008))
  - ▶ You need to *pass* the test
  - ▶ Lots of short, factual questions
  - ▶ Use readings/lecture slides for preparation

## A little more on frames and manifestos

- ▶ Norwegian Progress Party: market liberalism, no old racism, next to no evidence for new racism
- ▶ Today: Wilders
  - ▶ Can you recognise elements of the “New Master Frame”?
  - ▶ Are there any elements of the “Old Master Frame” left?
  - ▶ Do the texts provide evidence in favour of Kitschelt’s original “winning formula” thesis? To they contradict the thesis?
  - ▶ Can you spot any important points that go beyond the frame/formula?

## Summary

- ▶ Different frame, different supply of extreme right policies
- ▶ Reflects changing environment
- ▶ Broad range of ideological packages
  - ▶ Across time
  - ▶ Across countries
- ▶ From today on: five weeks worth of case studies

## The Extreme Right in France: History

- ▶ Catholic-authoritarian backlash against French Revolution
- ▶ Strong anti-Jewish tendencies during 19th century
- ▶ Occupation, collaboration and resistance against Germany during WW II
- ▶ Poujadist movement 1953/56, constitutional shake up in 1958
- ▶ Colonial war and Algerian independence, 1954-62
- ▶ OAS ("The Secret Army") large-scale settler/army-conspiracy

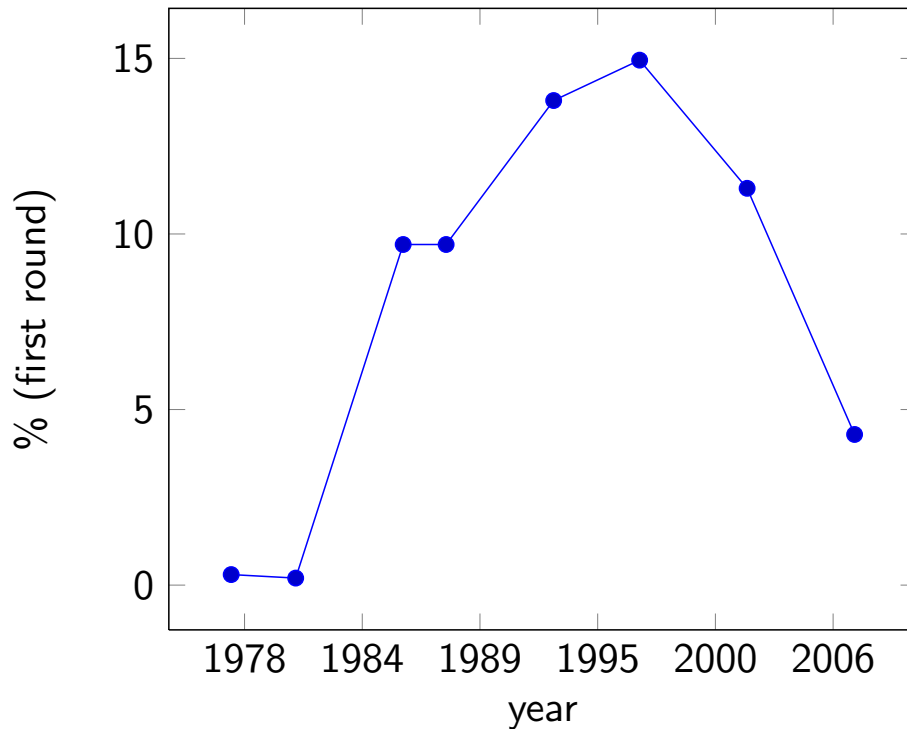
## The Front National

- ▶ Founded in 1972 as a vehicle for Ordre Nouveau, since then led by Jean-Marie Le Pen (\*1928)
  - ▶ Fundamentalist Catholics and royalists
  - ▶ Collaborators and nazi pagans
  - ▶ Veterans and OAS characters
- ▶ Marginalised for a decade, then: Dreux
  - ▶ FN councillors, then mayors
  - ▶ Support from the centre-right (at the local and regional level)
  - ▶ 1986
  - ▶ Growth at the sub-national level during 1980s/90s
  - ▶ Support (still) localised: North-west, Alsace, south-east
- ▶ 1999: Split (Bruno Mégret → MNR)
- ▶ Highly personalised/centralised leadership → Marine as Jean-Marie's successor?

## Policies

- ▶ Core: Immigration, security, unemployment
- ▶ Immigration becomes dominant, “matrix” issue during early 1980s
- ▶ “National Preference” since early 1990s
- ▶ Repatriation the solution to almost all political, social, economic problems (cf Chirac)
- ▶ Nominally, a culturally racist party, but lots of cruder traditional racism in speeches, interviews etc.
- ▶ Against Communism/Socialism, Islam, European Integration, abortion, homosexuals, globalisation (broadly defined)
- ▶ In favour of Catholicism, Frenchness
- ▶ From 1990s: “neither left nor right”

## Electoral results: National Assembly



## Voters

- ▶ Very diverse electorate during 1980s; high turnover, later on: stabilisation
- ▶ Working class and lower middle class voters
- ▶ Predominantly male; youngish; many former non-voters
- ▶ From the 1990s on, a non-traditional working class party
- ▶ Yet: different sub-groups within electorate
- ▶ Well-defined strongholds

## History

- ▶ Historically, “the Low Countries” (Dutch/Orange vs. Spanish/Austrian provinces)
- ▶ Vienna Conference (1815) creates “United Kingdom of the Netherlands”, but ...
  - ▶ South Catholic and romanised vs. Dutch, Calvinist king in the North
  - ▶ Diverging economic interests
  - ▶ Resistance from southern elites/church
- ▶ Belgian Revolution of 1830 → independent, French-speaking Belgium (constitutional monarchy)
- ▶ Dominance of Walloon (and Brussels, which *became francophone*); industrial revolution
- ▶ (Horrible colonial past in the Congo)



## Flemish nationalism and the Extreme Right

- ▶ Flemish nationalism from the late 19th century
- ▶ Encouraged by Nazis during occupation
- ▶ 1954: creation of the Volksunie (*not* an Extreme Right party) from various successor parties/groups, including collaborators
- ▶ 1977/79: right-leaning radicals lead by Karel Dillen break away from Volksunie to form Flemish National Party → Vlaams Blok
- ▶ Dillen (1925-2007):
  - ▶ A “passive collaborator” with open sympathies for Nazism; a friend of Holocaust-deniers
  - ▶ Proud to be called a “racist and fascist”
  - ▶ Undisputed leader, appointed his own successor (Vanhecke) in 1996

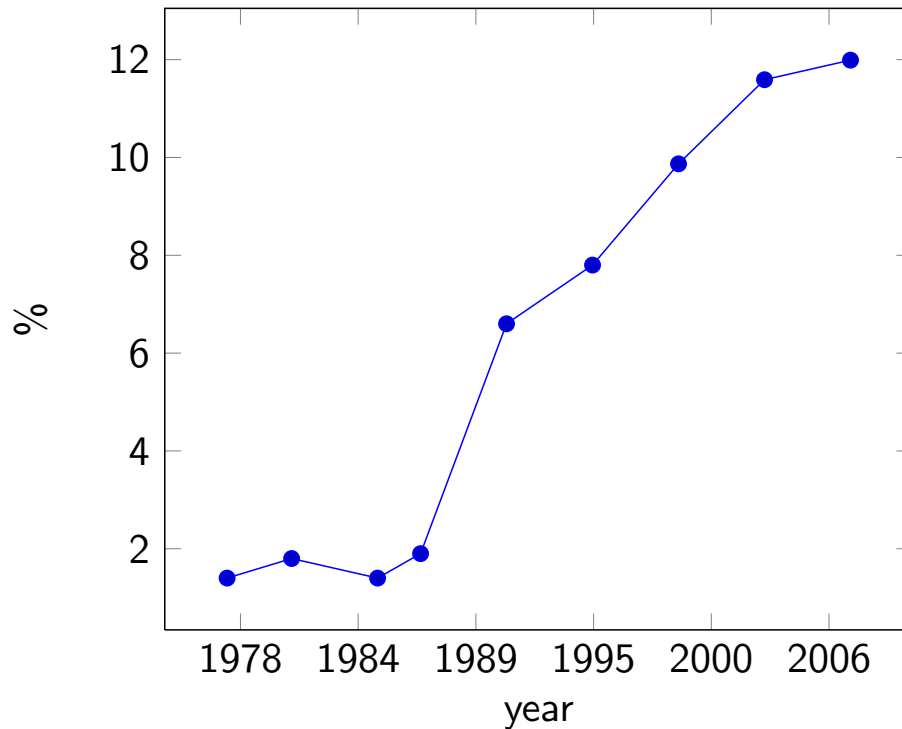
## Vlaams Blok/Belang

- ▶ Electorally successful from day one in Flanders
- ▶ Particularly strong in the city of Antwerp (almost 1/3 of the votes in local elections)
- ▶ Isolated by other parties (“cordon sanitaire”)
- ▶ One of the most aggressive *and* most successful extreme right parties in Western Europe
- ▶ Banned in 2004 because the party (or rather three of its affiliate organisations) violated Belgian laws against racism
- ▶ Party “disbanded” itself – for all purposes and intents just a new name and a slightly more moderate stance

## Vlaams Blok/Belang: policies

- ▶ Cultural racism with a clear hierarchy:  
Flemings/Dutch/Afrikaaner – assimilated Flemings – other (western) Europeans – other people
- ▶ Nominally, an utopia
  - ▶ Creation of an independent Greater Flanders
  - ▶ Nation, family, “Volksgemeinschaft” based on “Flemish Solidarism” (1930s)
  - ▶ (little practical relevance at the moment, limited relevance for voters, Solidarism ditched in 2004)
- ▶ Immigration an issue since 1980s (de Winter)
- ▶ Strictly against non-European immigrants, against Islam, Homosexuals, etc. . . .
- ▶ More recently, pro-Jewish
- ▶ (Economic) resentment against Belgium/Walloon and Europe
- ▶ Voters: the usual suspects

## Electoral results: Belgian Lower House



## Conclusion

- ▶ Lots of similarities
  - ▶ Strong, authoritarian leadership
  - ▶ Ideological and personal links with older right-wing extremism
  - ▶ Clever use of media
  - ▶ At the surface, “acceptable” cultural racism + “hints”
  - ▶ Ideological flexibility
  - ▶ Immigration of non-Europeans a recent addition to the cocktail
  - ▶ Mixed electorates with strong working class accents
- ▶ Belgium:
  - ▶ Incorporation of Flemish Nationalism
  - ▶ French-speaking all-Belgian Front National insignificant

## Class questions

### The Belgian measure (translation: AFP)

“To be punished by a fine of 15 to 25 euros and imprisoned for seven days, or one of these punishments only, will be those who, without legal exemption, appear in places accessible to the public with their faces masked or hidden entirely or in part in such a manner that they cannot be identified.”

Legal exemptions “due to work regulations or for those who have obtained a police order for festive occasions”.

Will apply in streets, public gardens and sports grounds or buildings meant for public use or to provide services to the public, including places of business, but also hotels and restaurants.

1. The liberal parties
2. The VB
3. Churches and Amnesty
4. Citizens' initiative of your own choice