

The Extreme Right in Belgium and France

The Extreme Right in Western Europe

Introduction
France
Belgium
Conclusion

Current events?

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- ▶ (Tiny) party that calls for “deportation” of Muslims will contest national election in Denmark
- ▶ Alliance of (tiny) radical right parties will contest EP election in Portugal
- ▶ ...

Review: Frames and Manifestos

- ▶ Norwegian Progress Party: market liberalism, no old racism, next to no evidence for new racism
- ▶ Wilders
 - ▶ Less savoury, more old-style . . .
 - ▶ But avoids biological racism
- ▶ Little evidence for Kitschelt's original "winning formula"

Summary: First Part

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

Today: Belgium & France



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” 1961-62): large-scale settler/army-conspiracy



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 - ▶ Fundamentalist Catholics and royalists
 - ▶ Collaborators and nazi pagans
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- ▶ Marginalised for a decade, then: Dreux (1983)
 - ▶ 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
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- ▶ 1999: Split (Bruno Mégret → MNR)
- ▶ Highly personalised/centralised leadership → Jean-Marie's vs. Marine vs. Marion?

Policies

- ▶ Traditional ideology
 - ▶ In favour of: Catholicism, Frenchness
 - ▶ Against: Communism/Socialism, Islam, EU, abortion, homosexuals, globalisation (broadly defined)

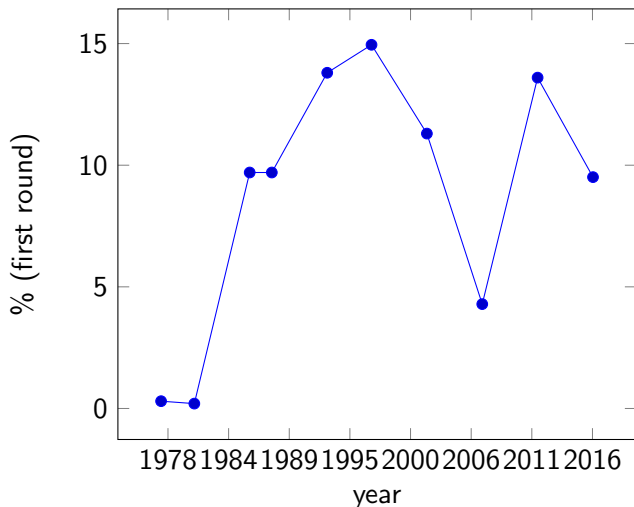
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- ▶ Immigration becomes dominant, “matrix” issue during early 1980s
 - ▶ “National Preference” since early 1990s
 - ▶ “Repatriation” the solution to almost all political, social, economic problems (cf Chirac, Sarkozy)

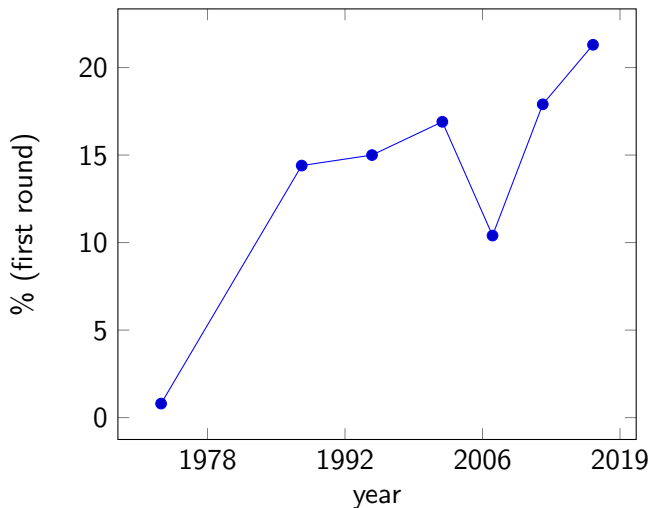
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 - ▶ “Repatriation” the solution to almost all political, social, economic problems (cf Chirac, Sarkozy)
- ▶ Culturally racist, but lots of cruder traditional racism in speeches, interviews etc. (Jean-Marie vs. Marine)
- ▶ From 1990s: “neither left nor right”
- ▶ Marine Le Pen: “de-demonisation”

Electoral results: National Assembly (First Round)



Electoral results: Presidential Election (First Round)



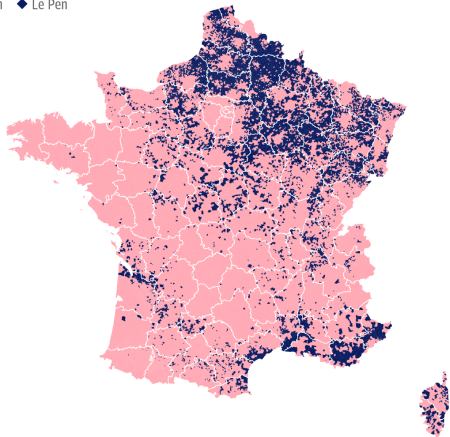
Voters

- ▶ 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

Presidential Elections 2017 (Second Round)

How each commune voted in the second round

◆ Macron ◆ Le Pen



Source: Telegraph <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/0/french-election-results-analysis/>

Belgium: 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 parties/groups, including collaborators
- ▶ 1977/79: right-leaning radicals (Karel Dillen) break away from Volksunie to form Flemish National Party → Vlaams Blok
- ▶ Dillen (1925-2007):
 - ▶ “Passive collaborator” with open sympathies for Nazism; 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 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 party/affiliate organisations violated anti-racism law
- ▶ Party “disbanded” itself – just a new name and a slightly more moderate stance?

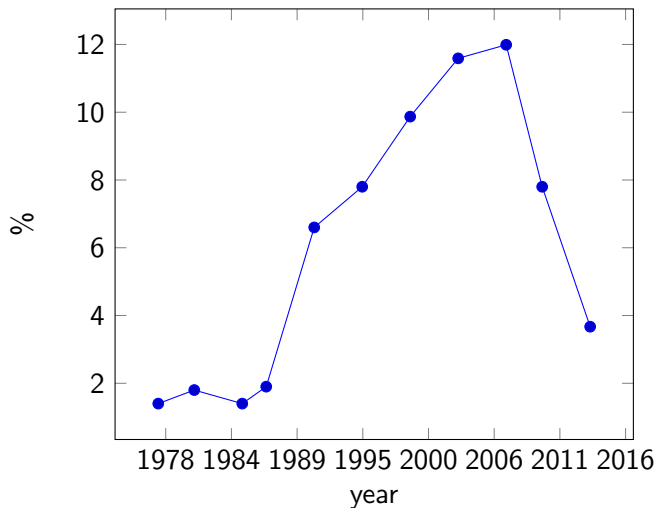
Vlaams Blok/Belang: policies

- ▶ Cultural racism with a clear hierarchy:
Flemings/Dutch/Afrikaaner ↔ other people
- ▶ Nominally, an utopia
 - ▶ Creation of an independent Greater Flanders
 - ▶ Nation, family, “Volksgemeinschaft” based on “Flemish Solidarism” (1930s); ditched in 2004 & not relevant for voters

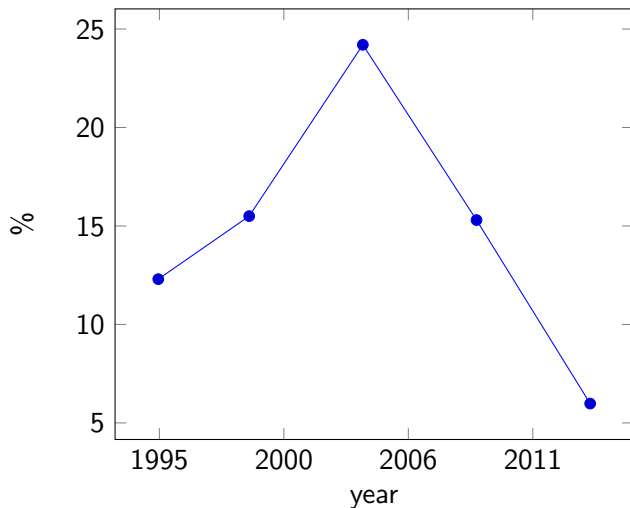
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- ▶ Immigration an issue since 1980s (de Winter)
- ▶ Strictly against non-European immigrants, against Islam, Homosexuals, etc. . . . , now pro-Jewish/Israel
- ▶ (Economic) resentment against Belgium/Walloon and Europe, “neo-liberalism”
- ▶ Voters: the usual suspects

Electoral results: Belgian Lower House (next: May 26)



Electoral results: Flemish Parliament (next: May 26)



What happened to the VB?

- ▶ Cordon Sanitaire probably worked
- ▶ Old Volksunie split in 2001
 - ▶ Spirit → Greens
 - ▶ “New Flemish Alliance” (Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie N-VA) - regionalist but not Radical Right, now strongest party in Flanders
- ▶ Attractive for voters unhappy with status quo but dislike VB's baggage

Conclusion

- ▶ Lots of similarities
 - ▶ Strong, authoritarian leadership, links with older right-wing extremism
 - ▶ Clever use of media, at the surface, “acceptable” cultural racism + “hints”
 - ▶ Immigration of non-Europeans a recent addition to the cocktail
 - ▶ Ideological flexibility; mixed electorates with strong working class accents

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 - ▶ Ideological flexibility; mixed electorates with strong working class accents
- ▶ Belgium:
 - ▶ Incorporation of Flemish Nationalism; French-speaking all-Belgian Front National insignificant
 - ▶ Recent VB decline vs. FN success

Class discussion

The Belgian measure (2011, 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. Liberal parties
2. The VB/FN
3. Churches and Amnesty
4. Citizens' initiative of your own choice