The Extreme Right in the Netherlands and Britain

The Extreme Right in Western Europe
Recruiting Flemish volunteers for the Waffen-SS
Current events
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- EP elections:
  - Some impressive results: Italy, France, UK, bounce-back in Belgium...
  - But no overall “win” & some rather weak (Germany, Netherlands)
- National election in Denmark: PP 21→9, “hard line” below threshold, “New Right” 2.4
- ...
Two weeks ago

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- Germany: Long shadow of the past
  - Extreme Right stigmatised by other players
  - Extreme Right very traditional, but AfD
- Scandinavia
  - Initially too extreme and still isolated in Sweden
  - Rather successful in Denmark
  - Very successful (but not very extreme) in Norway
  - Finland: ?
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  - The voters?
  - Other political players?
  - External circumstances (e.g. the relatively strong neo-nazi movement in Sweden?)
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- Testing is difficult, because $n$ is very small
Today

- The Netherlands and Britain (UK + Ireland)
- Two fairly stable democracies (Netherlands, UK)
  - Two very different political systems, but . . .
  - Low levels of Extreme Right success during 1920s/30s
  - Low levels of Extreme/Radical Right success during 1980s/90s
- Very different trajectories from the early Naughties
(Ireland: The absence of a (relevant) Extreme/Radical Right)

- Long, unhappy history of internal colonisation by the English/Scots
- Overlapping cleavages: ethnicity, religion, class, (centre/periphery)
- Violent secession/partition in the early 20th century
- Extreme poverty and emigration
- Nationalist mainstream centre-right, very specific left-right conflict, very recent onset of immigration
- STV
- Basically, no room for a Extreme/Radical Right?
The Extreme Right in the UK: History

- In the 1920s, a well-developed liberal democracy/constitutional monarchy
- Mosley and the “British Union of Fascists” (1932-40): largely a failure
- Mass immigration from former colonies after the war

Sir Oswald Mosley, 1896-1980
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Enoch Powell, 1912-98
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- 1967#: National Front, an in-fighting political sect killed by Thatcher
- 1982: British National Party; 1999 taken over by Nick Griffin, since then “moderate” in the British context, now irrelevant
The Extreme Right in England: Policies

- Extreme Right Mobilisation mostly confined to England
- More specifically: East London, Midlands, Yorkshire
- Mosley: Classic Fascism
- National Front/National Democrats etc.: Unrefined racism, white supremacy, strong state, pro-welfare state, socially conservative, anti-Jewish, overlap with skinhead culture
- Very much a sect from the 1980s, focus on marching, internal political struggles completely irrelevant for voters/supporters
- British National Party
  - More moderate in its style
  - Forced to accept non-white members
  - Focused on immigration and welfare of “native” British (English) population, Griffin’s resignation & decline (2014)
The Extreme Right in England: Electoral Success

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  - 2005: 0.7%
  - 2010: 1.9%
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- 6.2% in 2009 EP elections (2 seats), 1.1% in 2014
- 1990s-: moderately successful in local politics
- Targeting deprived white areas (East London, Yorkshire and other parts of the North, Midlands,)
- Particularly strong in former Labour strongholds; second party in Barking & Dagenham
- All in the past since ≈2010
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UKIP

- Formed in 1991/1993 as eurosceptic alternative by LSE historian Alan Sked as a reaction to Maastricht Treaty, forced to resign after 1994
- Rose to prominence from 2004, Farage leader from 2006 (briefly resigned in 2009)
- A “hard eurosceptic” outfit with populist and xenophobic undercurrents
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- Wiped out b/c of Cons adopting Brexit agenda, now replaced by Brexit party
- Now marginal and old-school racist
UKIP voters (before 2017)

- Attracted at least some of the old BNP vote, but socially more acceptable
- Core demographic: Older, white working class men
- Core concerns: (hard) Anti-EU/nationalism, immigration, dissatisfaction with establishment
- “Left behind”
  - In terms of their qualifications, economic value, prestige
  - In terms of their values and lifestyle
- Winning formula: EU as a scapegoat and driver for activists + immigration concerns + some respectability
The Extreme Right in the Netherlands: History

- Netherlands largely stable Parliamentary Monarchy during 1920s/30s
- “Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging”
  - 8 per cent in a provincial election (1935)
  - 4.2 per cent nationwide (1937)
- Under German occupation from 1940; oppression, atrocities & collaboration
- Post-colonial and other non-European mass immigration after World War II
- Mid 1990s: VVD (Frits Bolkestein) critical of immigration, huge success for party
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- PVV (2006-)
The Extreme Right in the Netherlands: Policies

- Centreparties: Connected to Nazism, racist, anti-Jewish, anti-Immigrant (Turks, Moroccans)

- LPF
  - Roots in the “Leefbaar” movement: local reformist (populist) parties
  - Fortuyn: Leefbaar, then formed his own list
  - Populist style/approach: Reform and efficiency savings
  - Libertarian on drugs, same-sex marriages, euthanasia
  - Against “political correctness” and further immigration
  - Highly critical of Islam, defending “Dutch Freedoms” (i.e. freedom of speech of freedom of religion)

- LPF very successful after assassination in 2002 but collapsed within months
Wilders, (Verdonk)

- Not a party but Wilders’ machine
- Wilders: A lapsed Catholic and VVD member who left the party in 2004 (Turkey’s accession to the EU)
- Assistant to Bolkenstein for eight years, detailed knowledge of the Middle East
- “Judeo-Christian values” against Islam; a staunch supporter of Israel
- Populism & reform, recently a move away from capitalist/anti-welfare policies
- *Still* in favour of lower taxes
- Obsessed with immigration from Non-Western countries
Electoral Success (national)

- Centreparties: basically none (1-2 per cent)
- LPF: 17 per cent (2nd) in 2002, 5.7 per cent (5th) in 2003, gone in 2006
- PVV:
  - National parliament: 5.9 per cent (5th) in 2006, 15.5 in 2010 (3rd), 10.1 in 2012 (3rd), 13.0 in 2017 (2nd)
- PVV tolerated centre-right minority government from 2010-2012
Electoral Success (national)
Summary

- Britain: Despair for the traditional Extreme Right, “Rebellion on the Right” led by UKIP/Farage
- Netherlands: Once a pariah, now a sizable force
Class questions

- Britain + NL as political systems: where are the commonalities, and how do they differ?
- Where are the differences between UKIP/Brexit-Party and the PVV?
- Which other European parties do they resemble most?

(work in teams of 2-4 students)