The Extreme/Radical Right in Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Switzerland

The Radical Right in Western Europe
Review
The Mediterranean Countries
  Spain
  Portugal
  Greece
Switzerland
Summary
Last week

- Two constitutional monarchies/liberal democracies
- Both with long histories of high levels of (non-Western) immigration
- Two very different electoral systems
  - Tiny, marginalised, old-fashioned, slow-to-modernise Extreme Right in the UK, but then UKIP
  - Modern, strong, (close to) acceptable Extreme Right in NL
- Which other parties do UKIP and PVV resemble most?
Today

- Three countries with long authoritarian histories and a (mostly) weak Extreme/Radical Right
- One country with a long democratic history and a strong Radical Right (?) party
What did they have in common?

- Late and selective modernisation/industrialisation, huge agricultural sectors
  - Small, marginalised, radicalised working class
  - Impoverished peasants (vs. rich land-owners)
  - Smallish middle-class
- Late transition to democracy (1980s/90s)
- Very strong position of the church
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- Very strong position of the church
- Split, underdeveloped societies, left behind by developments in north-western Europe
Where did they differ?

- **Colonialism**
  - Greece a relic of the crumbling Ottoman Empire
  - Spain severed from its American dependencies during 19th century; basically finished as a colonial power by the end of the 19th century
  - Portugal lost Brazil in 1822 but regained/retained territories in Africa. Colonial history only ends in 1970s (technically: 1999)

Maybe not so different: complex and ongoing, often violent political struggle – a “Mediterranean Model”? 

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▶ Monarchy
  ▶ Portugal: Monarchy ends with 1910 revolution
  ▶ Greece: Constitutional monarchy; kings frequently in exile during 20th century, republic from 73/74
  ▶ Spain: Republic in 1873/74, restoration, Second Republic from 1931-39, restoration after Franco
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The Extreme Right in Spain: History

- Military coup and early Falangist movement (Primo de Rivera father & son) with little public support
- Falange movement initially “modern”, though with a Catholic twist
- Civil war and Franco’s dominance of Falange party from 1937
- More an odd mixture of Catholic-authoritarian ideas + military rule than a proper Fascist movement
- Transition in 1975 managed by former members of regime; some involvement in the creation of the PP
- Several tiny, traditional Falangist parties
- Only very recently: VOX
The Extreme Right in Portugal: History

- 1926 Military coup → “Estado Novo” from 1932 (Salazar, †1968)
- Suppressed native Fascists (1934); authoritarian, Catholic regime
- Regime survived colonial uprisings and Salazar’s dead
- Finally ended by the Carnation Revolution (1974)
  - A left-leaning military coup (!)
  - Very low levels of violence (!)
  - Military managed de-colonisation and transition to democracy (!)
- Left-wing bias in Portuguese politics; ER/RR extremely weak
  - “Christian Democrats” PDC (< 1%)
  - “Social Democratic Centre” (CDS/PP) – not
The Extreme Right in Greece: History

- Communists vs. Anti-Communist forces
- Military rule 36-41; war with Italy from 1940; German involvement and occupation from 1941
- Civil war 46-49 left Greece devastated and split
- Military rule 1967-74 (Papadopoulos) → transition to democracy, republic
- Largely irrelevant Extreme Right, but . . .
  - “National alignment/camp” (?) – royalists, traditionalist, ND defectors, (6.8% in 1977)
  - Progress Party and National Political Union (EP elections 1981/84) – aligned to dictatorship
  - Political Spring (4.9% 1993): ND splinter, tough(er) on Macedonia
  - The Church under Archbishop Christodoulos
LAOS

▶ 2000- Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS)
▶ Funded by Karatzaferis
  ▶ Former controversial ND MP, expelled from the party
  ▶ Owner of small radio/TV stations and a newspaper
  ▶ Dozens of controversial statements (by Greek standards)
▶ Electoral successes
  ▶ 2004: 2.2%, 2007: 3.6%, 2009: 5.6% (shortly in gov)
  ▶ 2012 May: 3%, 2012: 1.6%, 2015: 1.0%
▶ Pro-church, populist, anti-immigrant
▶ Allegedly anti-Jewish, anti-gay
▶ Suspicious of Turks, Macedonians, Albanians
▶ Somewhat dodgy, but not extreme (not even properly radical) competitors
ANEL

- “Independent Greeks” – conservative or right-wing populist?
- Formed in 2012 by Panos Kammenos, former ND MP (defected from unity government)
- Opposed to Germany, Troika, memorandum
- Pro law & order, orthodoxy, nation, military; socially conservative, against immigration
- 2012: 10.6%, 7.5%; 2015: 4.8% (in government until January 2019 (Macedonia))
Golden Dawn

- One of the most extremist right-wing parties in Europe, neo-Nazi/fascist
- Founded by Nikolaos Michaloliakos in 1985 (broke away from National Political Union), affiliated with (para)military and dictatorship
- Aggressively opposed to immigrants/foreigners/leftists; investigated as a criminal organisation
- Less than 0.5% before 2012; 2012-15: 7.0%, 6.9%, 6.3%
- Calls for a revolutionary transformation of Greek society based on ethnicity
- Closely linked to interwar extreme right ideology
Why Golden Dawn?

- Greek far right divided and tied to dictatorship, but slowly modernising
- Economic, political, and moral crises undermined ND/PASOK duopoly
- Dual social and political strategy in Athens, also successful in Attica, Corinth, Peloponnese (mixed electorate)
- Voters: usual suspects; young electorate, yet tapping into old pockets of nationalism
The Extreme Right in Switzerland: History

- Long history of prosperity and consensual democracy (after civil war in the 19th century), neutral during the wars
- Some support for xenophobic parties since 1960s: “Swiss Republican Movement”, “National Action”, “Vigilance” – up to 19% in sub-national elections
- Late 1980s: “Car-drivers party/Freedom Party”; “National Action” → “Swiss Democrats”
- 1990s: Zurich wing of the SVP (Blocher) discover anti-immigrant issue and replaces Swiss Democrats et al.
- SVP strongest party in Switzerland
- Parties highly de-centralised plus language barriers; very unusual political system (“magic formula”)
SVP

- French/Italian name: Union of the centre
- Created by merger of two smaller and older parties with a agrarian/petty bourgeoisie bases
- Originally, partly a social-liberal party
- Transformed into a right-leaning, national and populist catch-all by Blocher during 1990s
  - Born 1940
  - A self-made billionaire
  - A gifted orator and populist (by Swiss standards)
- Socially conservative; anti-German, anti-EU, anti-immigrant
- Party split in 2008 → (BDP in Bünden, Berne, Glarus, . . .)
  → SVP now completely dominated by “Zurich faction”
SVP: Controversial posters
National electoral results: SVP

![Graph showing SVP electoral results from 1984 to 2016.](image)
Summary

- Failure in Portugal
- Mixed success in Greece (and, recently, Spain)
- Striking success in Switzerland
Class questions

- (Take home question) How is LAOS different from your average Radical Right party? How is GD different?
- (Take home question) Why is the Extreme Right so unsuccessful in the Iberian Peninsula?
- Like the PVV, the FPÖ and some other parties, the SVP claims to defend liberal rights (freedom of speech, women’s rights) against Islam. Can you build a case against this argument?
- (in teams of 2-4 students)
- Online evaluation of this course: https://befragung.uni-mainz.de/evasys/online. Code: DQDFZ