

# Right-Wing extremism in unified Germany

Unified Germany in Perspective

# Outline

## Background

Theory

Germany before 45/49

## The first two waves of Right Wing extremism

The Post-War years

The Second Wave

## The Third Wave

Modern Right Wing Extremism

Recent Developments

Voters

Violence

## Class questions

## What is 'right', what is extremism?

- ▶ Left-Right dominated by class conflict
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  - ▶ Individual vs. collective
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  - ▶ Inclusive vs. exclusive citizenship rights
- ▶ Extremism
  - ▶ Directed against liberal democracy
  - ▶ (Within democratic context)
  - ▶ Traditional right often pretty undemocratic, too

## What about right-wing extremism before 1933?

- ▶ Largely cultural 'völkisch' (national) movement emerges in 1880s/90s
- ▶ Racist, social-darwinistic currents everywhere in Europe
- ▶ Anti-semitic parties emerge very late (during 1890s) and lack support
- ▶ First World War and its outcomes fuelled extreme right thinking
  - ▶ Rise of Fascism in Italy ('Third Way')
  - ▶ Rise of 'National Socialism' in Germany; DAP/NSDAP founded 1919/20
  - ▶ Similar and related tendencies in many European countries

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- ▶ But...
  - ▶ Fascists not concerned about race but culture, paternalistic attitude
  - ▶ Generally, much lower level of political violence in Italy
  - ▶ Nazis willing and able to use war and genocide as means for realising their 'vision'

## Who supported the Nazis?



- ▶ A fail in terms of mass support until 1930s
  - ▶ Backed by heavy industry and conservatives
  - ▶ Hitler a household name as (failed) revolutionary
- 
- ▶ NSDAP polled 6.6/3 per cent in 1924, 2.6 in 1928
  - ▶ but 18.3 in 1930, 37.4/33.1 in 1932
  - ▶ (43.9 in 1933)

## Who voted for the Nazis?

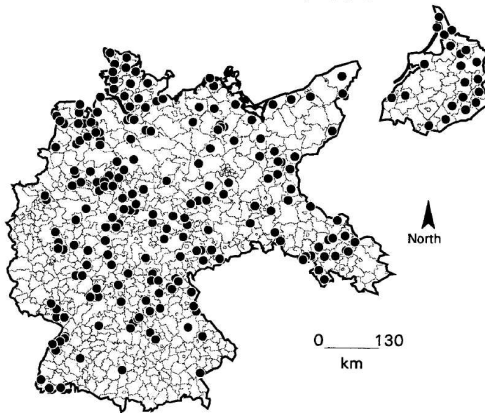
- ▶ Difficult to tell (aggregate data)
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- ▶ Allies and surviving German elites determined never to let it happen again

# Nazi strongholds in 1930

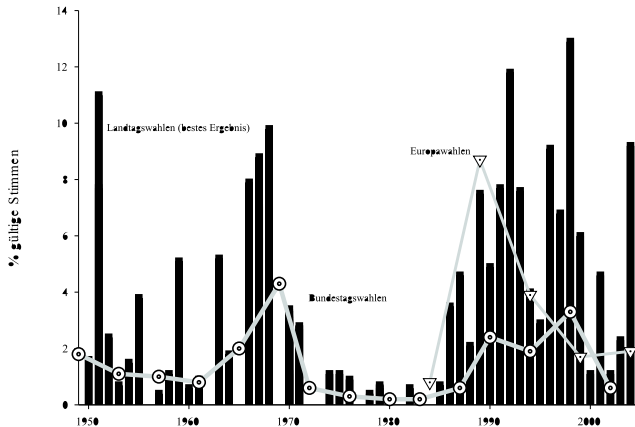
Kreisunits with NSDAP percentage  
between 24.61 and 58.5



## Which parties did exist?

- ▶ Licence
- ▶ Many small, sect-like groups
- ▶ Most important and successful: Sozialistische Reichspartei (SRP)
  - ▶ Founded by former members of DKP-DRP in October 49
  - ▶ All founders involved in National Socialism; rank within NSDAP/SS/Army criterion for appointments
  - ▶ Supported NS ideology, denied legitimacy of FRG
  - ▶ Up to 10,000 members (mostly in Lower Saxony)
  - ▶ Federal government takes legal action but electoral success in Lower Saxony (11 per cent) in May 1951, coalition talks, eight per cent in Bremen (October)
  - ▶ Moderate success (four percent) in Baden-Württemberg immediately before ban in October 1952
- ▶ Devastating effect, but yet single successes

# Extreme Right voting 49-04

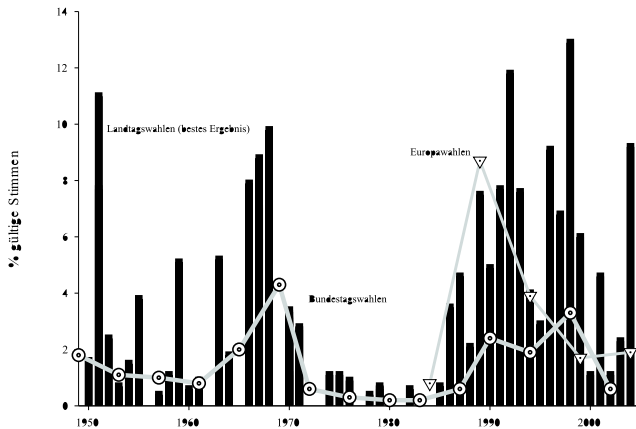




## Where did the NPD come from?

- ▶ Founded as a merger of diverse forces right wing groups in 1964, broad appeal
- ▶ Former SRP members influential
- ▶ BTW 1965: 2 per cent; more than 5 per cent in Bavaria, Hessen, Bremen, Rheinland-Pfalz, Niedersachsen and Schleswig-Holstein (1966/67)
- ▶ Baden-Württemberg 1968: 9.8 per cent; thousands of party members, student associations
- ▶ Law, order, nation ('Deutschland ist größer als die Bundesrepublik'); foreigners not yet a big issue
- ▶ Rural protestant areas, alienated workers
- ▶ But failure in BTW 1969
- ▶ Irrelevant through the 1970s and most of 1980s

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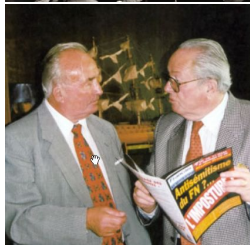
## New kids on the block: REP



- ▶ NPD increasingly outdated
- ▶ 'Republikaner' founded in 1983 by CSU dissidents, 85 taken over by controversial Schönhuber ('Ich war dabei')
- ▶ Moved party to the right; coup in 1990; finally left the party in 1995

- ▶ Replaced by Schlierer – 'modern conservatism'

## The new kids on the block: REP II



- ▶ Schönhuber moved further to the right and finally ran for the NPD in 2005
- ▶ Party most successful during late 1980s/early 90s
- ▶ Seen as more moderate, but still linked to Nazi past
- ▶ At the moment, no delegations in Land parliaments (failed to field candidates)
- ▶ Still active at local level, probably approaching bankruptcy

## The new kids on the block: DVU



- ▶ Frey made a fortune with war-time novels, brochures, video tapes & memorabilia
  - ▶ Sold up to 44,000 copies/week of his weekly papers
  - ▶ Only in it for the money?
- ▶ Founded DVU as a club in 1971 to distribute publications
  - ▶ Became party in 1987, dominated by & dependent on Frey
  - ▶ A 'virtual' or 'phantom' party with less than 10,000 members
  - ▶ Over the years successful time and again *if* they ran



## What happened to the NPD?

- ▶ Party more aggressive since the early 1990s
- ▶ Udo Voigt took over in 1996: 'Kampf um die Straße, die Parlamente, die Köpfe'
- ▶ Headquarters moved to East Germany, party forged links with neo-nazi and skinhead groups; increase in membership, youngsters
- ▶ Elements of 'National Socialism' & anti-globalisation
- ▶ After the ban-failure, NPD *electorally* successful for the first time since 1969

## What happened to the NPD? II

- ▶ 9.2 per cent in Saxony, four per cent in Saarland (2004), 7.3 in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (2006)
- ▶ Party strong and deeply rooted in some parts of East Germany (and Hessen)
- ▶ Strategic alliance with DVU ('Deutschlandpakt', 2005); REP activists joining NPD
- ▶ But failed in recent state elections and federal elections
- ▶ Massive financial problems, leadership crisis, new attempt to ban party



## Who votes for the extreme right?

- ▶ Very clear social profile
  - ▶ Men
  - ▶ Workers and petty bourgeoisie
  - ▶ Low level of formal education
- ▶ Very clear attitudinal profile
  - ▶ Dissatisfaction and protest
  - ▶ Distrust
  - ▶ **plus** xenophobia, racism, welfare-chauvinism
  - ▶ Lack of traditional social ties (unions, churches)
- ▶ Content, integrated racists vote SPD or CDU/CSU
- ▶ Success apparently dependent on external factors (agenda, coalition format etc.)
- ▶ Will AfD benefit from NPD/REP decline?

# How can we explain extreme right party success?

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3. Micro-Factors: Education, occupation, attitudes. . .

## Right-wing violence

- ▶ Violence against asylum-seekers, “foreigners” during 1990s and early 2000s, with East German regions as hotspots
- ▶ Sometimes on a large scale, semi-organised
- ▶ But allegedly less of a problem in last decade
  - ▶ BfV, state offices for protection of constitution, police restructured after 9/11
  - ▶ Right-wing extremism confined to “propaganda crimes” and violence against left-wing extremists?
- ▶ “Informers”
  - ▶ *Not* secret service officers/employees
  - ▶ Active right-wingers who sell information (?)
  - ▶ Recruited by various branches of secret service/police

## The “NSU”

- ▶ Roots in the 1990s, links to various right-wing/skinhead organisations, NPD, “informers”
- ▶ Various convictions, but managed to go off the radar (?) from late 1990s until 2011
- ▶ Probably responsible for killing at least 10 people + various other crimes
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- ▶ Police and secret services did not pick up racist motive, missed several opportunities to arrest them
- ▶ So ...
  - ▶ Unknown right-wing terror group operative for a decade
  - ▶ Forces unwilling/unable to identify problem
  - ▶ At least some of their (known) supporters on payroll



## Class questions

1. How can we explain extreme right voting in unified Germany?
2. Why are Extreme Right *parties* in Germany so *weak* (compared to France, Austria, Norway ...)?
3. How is the Extreme Right in Germany different from
  - 3.1 The Extreme Right of the 1920s/30s
  - 3.2 The Extreme Right in other West European countries?