Lynchburg College
Digital Showcase @ Lynchburg College

Undergraduate Theses and Capstone Projects

Spring 4-1-2007

Hate, Hegemony and Hooliganism: The Rise of Far-Right Nationalism in Great Britain

Ben Sprague
Lynchburg College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalshowcase.lynchburg.edu/utcp

Part of the Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Communication Commons, International and Intercultural Communication Commons, Mass Communication Commons, Other International and Area Studies Commons, Social Influence and Political Communication Commons, and the Social Statistics Commons

Hate, Hegemony and Hooliganism:
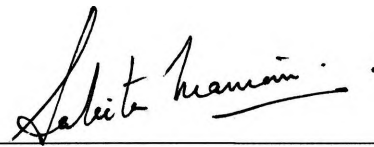The Rise of Far-Right Nationalism in Great Britain

Ben Sprague

Senior Honors Project

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the graduation requirements
of the Westover Honors Program
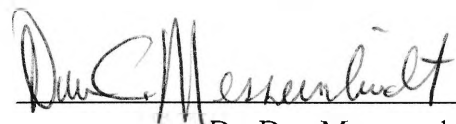
Westover Honors Program

April 2007

Dr. Sabita Manian, Committee Chair

Dr. Edward DeClair, Westover Director

Dr. Dan Messerschmidt

CONTENTS

Abstract

This thesis seeks to examine the impact of far-Right political parties on the British political system. It cites relevant theories of nationalism and provides a brief historical background to frame the analysis of the present case study. Additionally, the work analyzes the British political system to help explain the inability of extremist parties to win a seat in Parliament. This piece argues that far-Right parties in Great Britain, despite their electoral failures and limited membership, have maintained political legitimacy by recruiting marginalized youth and embracing radical methods. These groups, moreover, could garner more public support with increases in terrorism, levels of immigration, European integration and a shift in the present voting system.

Introduction

The rise of far-Right and neo-nationalist[1] parties in Western Europe has been well

documented in academic and popular literature. The developed world watched in astonishment

as Jean-Marie Le Pen, the head of the radical French National Front, advanced to the second

round of the 2002 presidential election in France. Although he ultimately lost to Jacques Chirac

in the subsequent election, it illustrated that extremist groups in Western Europe were

increasingly exerting their influence on the political process. While the French case is perhaps

the most notorious example of the burgeoning far-Right, similar examples have emerged from

places throughout the European continent. The German right-wing has become notorious in

recent years for their "street terrorism" against minority groups in Jena and Erfurt, but has still

managed to make electoral progress (Merkl, 2003, 3). These disturbing trends, which have

mirrored occurrences in Italy, Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands, indicate that this topic is

worthy of study.

Despite the electoral successes of similar groups in other European countries, the British

far-Right has been remarkably unsuccessful in its quest to win parliamentary seats. This thesis,

consequently, seeks to answer a variety of questions about extremist groups in the United

---

[1] The description of groups as neo-nationalist, right wing, far-Right and extremist will be used synonymously for the purposes of this research project.

Kingdom. Since the British electoral system effectively limits political participation to two parties, how have organizations such as the British National Party (BNP) and National Front (NF) exerted their influence on British politics? As recently as 2002, British police have cited extremist groups for inciting riots against South Asian immigrants in former industrial towns plagued by problems of unemployment and urban decay (Merkl, 2003, 2). While these actions have earned disproportionate media attention, have they had any effect on mainstream British political discourse? If so, what legislation have they helped to influence?

This thesis also attempts to address questions on the effect of these organizations on not only politics in the United Kingdom, but also British society as a whole. In what ways do these groups spread their message to the general population? What are the most contentious issues addressed in the rhetoric and literature of extremist political campaigns? Do these organizations have any chance of winning a future seat in the House of Commons? If so, what would have to change in British society and political culture? These questions will be explained in a section following the analyses of the BNP and NF.

The large body of work on the topic of far-Right extremism seems to indicate that the subject is worthy of further study; however, the relative dearth of sources on British neo-nationalism demonstrates that new insights can be made on its potential for growth in the United Kingdom. This could ultimately lead to the prevalence of racism and bigotry, retard democracy and infringe upon the freedoms of an entire nation (Eatwell, 1998, 150). It is important, therefore, to study and monitor the spread of extremism for the benefit of not only the United Kingdom, but the entire European community facing the same problems, especially given the growing immigrant population of Muslim descent.

This research project should help to illustrate the potential implications of the spread of extremism in Great Britain. It is clear, however, that the lack of solid data on far-Right party membership will make the project more challenging to develop. The figures provided by the right wing political parties benefit from overstatement, while statistics prepared by the government suffer from understatement.[2] Although relevant economic and social data will be cited, this work will approach the subject from a primarily qualitative perspective. Additionally, restraints on time and funding make conducting field research, administering interviews and extensively reviewing government data impossible. Therefore, the focus of this thesis is to analyze the methods used in recruiting new members for these far-Right parties in the post-Cold War period and the future implications of these actions.

Theories of Nationalism and Neo-Nationalism

The idea that nationalism is a powerful force which has the potential to expose both the best and the worst elements of society is a common theme through much of the literature. Additionally, it appears that there is agreement on the suggestion that a historical connection exists between national movements and marginalized groups of people. Despite this consensus, however, each of the following authors analyze these sections of society and the sources of nationalism from distinct views. The work of the most popular scholars of nationalism, including Anderson, Nairn, Hobsbawm, Tilly, Merkl and Hutchinson are discussed in order to ensure multifaceted analyses of possible theoretical sources of nationalism in Britain.

The impact of commerce, technology and the predominant economic system in the development of nationalist movements appears to be a popular source of study. The authors

---

[2] The figures provided by the groups seem to be inflated to project greater public support and legitimacy, while statistics prepared by the government are seemingly underreported to marginalize their political impact.

discuss the use of these drives throughout history to generate patriotic fervor in order to bring about societal change. Nairn and Anderson utilize economic examples and agree that capitalism has aided in the creation of many movements throughout history. They discuss changes in technology, including the advance of printing methods and modes of transportation, to illustrate the increasing ease with which fringe movements could spread their message. Nairn takes a macro approach to the issue and argues that the system, which is inherently premised on the creation of inequalities, alienates sections of the population and generates new movements (1977, 70). This methodology, however, makes his theory more difficult to quantify and analyze for the purposes of this research. Anderson, however, cites specific examples to test if technology generated by competition actually empowers the proletariat and leads to the creation of "imagined communities" (1991, 89). The clarity of his logic lends itself to further study and is useful in the development of the theoretical framework for the research project.

A historical and cultural analysis, conversely, leads both Hobsbawm and Hutchinson to conclude that many nationalistic movements "invent" common cultural traditions to exclude perceived outsiders from their ranks (1983, 78; 1987, 122). However, the authors are in disagreement as to the means by which nationalist movements generate this imagined notion of shared history. The use of examples from the French revolution allows Hobsbawm to develop a benchmark against which modern campaigns can be compared. These authors, through study of the sociological and psychological factors associated with nationalism, are less concerned with factors of production than the causes contributing to the development of a group mentality (Hobsbawm, 1983, 78; Hutchinson, 1987, 122).

Although many scholars have analyzed the connection between historical development and nationalistic violence, Tilly was the first scholar to posit the idea that violence is a natural

extension of nationalism (1975, 249). His analysis of the impact of fear as a catalyst for change is similar to concepts developed by Anderson and Hutchinson. Tilly posits that public unease generally leads to changes that are not always in the best interest of the society (1975, 249). This argument that nationalism is a largely negative phenomenon seems to contrast with Hutchinson's ideas that there is the possibility for constructive upsurges of this sensation (Tilly, 1975, 249). This positive view of nationalism helps to paint a clearer picture of the complicated nature of this entity and dissuades readers from only discussing the harmful impact of these movements.

While a majority of researchers have focused their works on understanding the issue of traditional nationalism, a number of authors have attempted to explain the burgeoning problem of neo-nationalism. While groups that adhere to this ideology differ from country to country, Merkl attempts to categorize them saying that:

> A modern right-wing subculture is a rather stable social world in itself that may derive its specifically right-wing views from antecedent subculture, profound reactions to a historical crisis, the anomic of war and destruction, the dragon seed of struggles against cruel antagonists or rivals, or the walking wounded of horrible massacres of the past, or of painful social changes (Merkl, 2003, 5).

These sentiments are reflected in the work of Hobsbawm, who believed that common history was an important factor in the creation of nationalist movements. This theory helps to explain the potential for the legacy of colonialism and the inflow of immigrants to generate extremist movements in the United Kingdom and elsewhere throughout Europe.

The relationship between neo-nationalism and modern political and socio-economic issues is thoroughly explained in the work by DeClair. He and Merkl excel in their ability to segregate the goals of the newer form of nationalism from the traditional aims of the phenomenon (1999, 204; 2003, 23). They excel in their ability to utilize interviews and a broad array of data to support their contentions. While DeClair focuses on the case study of the

National Front (NF) in France, Merkl uses a more limited analysis of a broader range of European movements to assess his hypothesis (1999, 204; 2003, 23). Despite differences in scope and depth, both authors clearly illustrate that extremist movements in Western Europe are increasingly diverse, popular and dangerous.

History of Radicalism in the United Kingdom

The inflow of immigrants from colonies formerly occupied by Great Britain has steadily increased in the period after World War II (Coleman, 1987, 1138). This includes the arrival of nearly 500,000 Indians, 350,000 Pakistanis and 250,000 others from the Caribbean since 1971 (See Table 1). The Table below illustrates the census data on the three largest immigrant populations currently living in the United Kingdom.

Table 1. British Residents Born Abroad		
Country of Origin	*1991*	*2001*
India	409,130	466,416
Caribbean	266,902	254,740
Pakistan	234,164	320,767

Source: "An Immigration Map of Britain." 2007. *BBC News Online.* Accessed 9 Apr. 2007.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/uk/05/born_abroad/html/overview.stm>

This issue, consequently, has given neo-nationalist parties the surest form of ammunition with which to kindle the fears and hostilities of the British people (Eatwell, 1998, 144). However, the inability to move from a reactionary form of neo-fascism to the populist approach utilized by more successful movements in Western Europe has retarded the development of extremist groups in the United Kingdom (Eatwell, 1998, 144). The former, which primarily adheres to Nazi allusions and symbols, proved to be worrisome to a people still cognizant of the hostilities brought by the Hitler regime. Despite strong leadership and public support of their immigration

policy, groups such as the NF were unable to make a meaningful impact on Parliamentary elections in the post-war period.

The efforts of the far-Right did, however, affect the direction of immigration policy for the Conservative government. Since the1960s saw another round of decolonization in mostly British held Africa, the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1961 responded to the concerns of constituents worried about the inflow of asylum-seekers (Eatwell, 1998, 144). The legislation required potential immigrants to obtain vouchers, which were designed to limit the arrival of undocumented and (to some) undesirable new people. Additionally, the infamous "River of Blood" speech by Conservative MP Enoch Powell in 1968 warned that the violence between different ethnic groups in London had the potential to spread throughout the whole country:

> We are on the verge of a change…Now we are seeing the growth of positive forces acting against integration, of vested interests in the preservation and sharpening of racial and religious differences, with a view to the exercise of action domination, first over fellow immigrants and then over the rest of the population. The cloud no bigger than a man's hand, that can so rapidly overcast the sky, has been visible recently in Wolverhampton and has shown signs of spreading quickly (Powell, 1968).

The venom of this rhetoric clearly indicates a shift in not only the platform of the Conservative party, but also in the political climate surrounding immigration policy. The sentiments of Powell reflected the somewhat popular notion that community leaders had the potential to incite violence amongst the local populations (Eatwell, 1998, 144). The ensuing general fear of a race war helped the NF to make its largest electoral gains in the 1973 British Parliamentary elections, when it won nearly 20 percent of the vote in an economically depressed section of London (Eatwell, 1998, 144). Despite these gains, the inability to shed its violent image resulted in widespread losses in the next round of elections only five years later.

The embarrassing defeat subsequently led to widespread division amongst the various factions of the British NF. The former party leader, John Tyndall, decided to leave the group and

in 1982, the disgruntled former neo-Nazi started the British National Party (BNP) (Eatwell, 1998, 144). This group, however, faced many of the same problems confronted by other extremist parties. Although the polarizing leader of the new party initially sought reconciliation with other extremist groups, his past political associations, domineering manner and explosive personality blocked the creation of such a union (Eatwell, 1998, 145). Despite electoral and political failures, the frequent displays of racism and violence earned the group an abundance of media coverage in Great Britain. Additionally, these attacks against immigrants have sometimes resulted in "race riots" between the groups, which have generated public support and high voter turnout for the BNP (Norris, 2005, 72).

The period leading to the end of the twentieth century resulted in limited change for extremist parties in the United Kingdom. Despite the post-Maastricht emergence of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) in 1993, few groups were able to manage more then 5 percent of the vote in Parliamentary elections (Norris, 2005, 72). The NF switched their party name to the National Democrats (ND), but was still unable to make any meaningful political gains. The BNP managed to win a local election in London in 1993, but have presently been unable to continue their electoral momentum.

While the inability of these organizations to win a seat in the House of Commons continued into the new millennium, their focus on the problems of British immigration policy forced mainstream politicians to address the issue. In the debate leading up to the 2001 elections, Conservative party opposition leader William Hague blamed the Blair administration for turning England into a "foreign land" (Merkl, 2003, 2). He expressed sentiments that pro-European policies and a wave of 'bogus asylum-seekers" were threatening the fabric of English

society (Merkl, 2003, 2). This not only drew the ire of those concerned about exploiting racial tensions for political gain, but also legitimized the anti-immigration platform of the far-Right.

This fear of immigration and further European integration also led to tangible political gains for a number of far-Right candidates in European Union elections. Notwithstanding the stance of the UKIP for immediate British withdrawal from the European Union, the group mounted a strong campaign and won twelve seats in the European Parliament (Norris, 2005, 72). This seemingly paradoxical position could grant this group a measure of credibility and aid in their efforts to win seats in the British Parliament in the future.

Factors Contributing to British Extremism

Although immigration remains the primary issue for recruitment of new members to British extremist parties, a variety of other factors have emerged as useful tools to enlist new supporters. The body of research related to the topic indicates that certain factors have had a noticeable impact on the prevalence of extremism in the United Kingdom. While football has emerged as the British national pastime, it has also become a fertile recruiting ground for the far-Right. Additionally, the theme of violence in "hate" rock has drawn many to extremism and sped the internationalization of neo-Nazi parties in the European Union (Brown, 2004, 162). The inability of mainstream parties to satisfactorily handle the issue of European integration has also granted extremist parties a measure of credibility (Merkl, 2003, 32). The selection of these variables was a result of not only popular research on British extremism, but also a thorough review of the relevant theories of nationalism. The subsequent sections will explore the various aspects of immigration, hooliganism, "hate" rock and European integration and their relationship to the recruitment and propaganda efforts of far-Right extremist groups.

Immigration

The emergence of hooliganism, "hate" rock and European integration have been agents for the emergence of the far-Right in the United Kingdom. It is evident, however, that the issue of illegal immigration has been a significant force behind these distinct movements. Although estimates vary on the number of illegal aliens who have entered the country, the British government granted nearly 70,000 new people permanent residence in 2005 (Heath et al., 1999, 5). These migrants joined the estimated 4.5 million out of 60 million British inhabitants that come from foreign countries ("Born Abroad: An Immigration Map of Britain", 2007). The increasing inflows of immigrants and asylum-seekers have given extremist parties new ammunition in their struggle for political legitimacy in Great Britain.

It would not be fair to state that the British people are an inherently racist group, but race relations in the United Kingdom have historically been tense. Despite formerly granting citizenship to colonials, the fall of the empire caused the government to institute its first restrictions on asylum-seekers to the United Kingdom (Fraser, 2001, 163). Although the British population only grew by 1.89% between 1971 and 1981, the percentage of foreign residents grew by over 15% (See Table 2).

Table 2. People Living in Britain				
	1971	*1981*	*1991*	*2001*
All People	52,559,260	53,550,270	54,888,744	57,103,331
Foreign Born	2,390,759	2,751,130	3,153,375	4,301,280
Percent Foreign	4.55%	5.14%	5.75%	7.53%

Source: "An Immigration Map of Britain." 2007. *BBC News Online.* Accessed 9 Apr. 2007.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/uk/05/born_abroad/html/overview.stm>

This rapid influx of foreign peoples during the 1970s led to the prevalence of race riots in the more economically depressed sections of London (Fraser, 2001, 165). The heightening of racial tensions throughout Britain allowed the far-Right to spread its message of hate through fear.

Although the United Kingdom has historically struggled with illegal migration, the issue of immigration-related crime has been magnified by the extreme Right. This idea is reflected in many of the manifestos and literature promulgated by extremist parties in the United Kingdom (See Appendix A). Their desire to impose "law and order" is clearly a ploy to curry favor with the more conservative members of society concerned about an increase in crime perpetuated by immigrants. Although this poster is clearly a screed against foreigners residing within the United Kingdom, the group makes a point to state that their organization is "not racist" and that they "do not hate anyone." This seems to have been done in an attempt to maintain legitimacy with those concerned with the problem of immigration, but fearful of being labeled as extremist. Nonetheless, the British National Front has proposed that all foreigners should be immediately repatriated:

> In the case of Britain the National Front upholds the wish of the majority of British people for Britain to remain a white country, with customs and a culture which have been developed to suit our character. Consequently the National Front would halt all non-white immigration into Britain and introduce a policy of phased and humane repatriation of all [colored] people currently resident here. Such a policy would be expected to extend over 10-15 years and its completion would thus depend on the recurrent election of successive NF governments ("The Secretary", 2006).

This proposal not only illustrates the racist policies advocated by the National Front, but also gives an insight into their ultimate political goals. Although new legislation has been passed to reduce the amount of immigration in the United Kingdom, it is clear that this issue will remain a focal point for the politics of the radical Right in Great Britain.

Hooliganism

There are few things more distinctly British in nature than the game of football.[3] The modern form of the sport was created in the United Kingdom over a century ago and it is still

---

[3] Although "football" is the term for the sport used in the United Kingdom and elsewhere around the world, the American designation "soccer" will be used synonymously with "football" in this work.

revered as a near-religious practice throughout the nation. The violence, passion and nationalism inspired by the game clearly explain its ability to aid in the recruitment efforts of extremist political parties. Although no explicit connection exists between English extremist groups and soccer hooligans, it is not uncommon to hear chants of "no surrender to the IRA" before a game against Germany or Spain (Merkl, 2003, 35).[4] Additionally, crimes against immigrants, including assault, vandalism and murder are often perpetrated by the most extreme football supporters. It is clear, moreover, that these fanatics often have ties to far-Right groups in the United Kingdom. The deaths of 39 people at Heysel Stadium in 1985 after rioting, which caused the collapse of a wall was believed to have been carried out by a section of the crowd carrying Union Jack flags, sporting National Front tattoos and distributing racist literature in the crowd (Buford, 1992, 130). In more recent years, right-wing agitators at the 2000 EuroCup tournament in Belgium and the Netherlands incited riots that led to the arrest of 921 British hooligans (Merkl, 2003, 2). These events were considered by many to have been the catalyst by which policymakers recognized the severity of the connection between extremism and hooliganism.

The British government, consequently, has enacted preemptive measures to curb the spread of football violence throughout the country (Buford, 1992, 35). These laws, which enable police to arrest suspicious supporters before they commit a crime, have reduced the number of soccer related crimes (after being adjusted for attendance) during the past decade ("Statistics", 2006). These techniques, however, have been counteracted by extremists that have adopted measures to conceal their outward signs of political allegiance by avoiding revealing haircuts and articles of clothing (Merkl, 2003, 32). Despite policy changes and increased government enforcement, hooliganism remains a popular method for recruiting militant supporters.

---

[4] The reference to "no surrender to the IRA" refers to the British nationalist desire to retain control of Northern Ireland, which has been the location of a violent separatist conflict between forces of the United Kingdom and the terrorist group known as the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

The actual system by which extremist political party leaders exert their influence at football matches is unclear, but the prevalence of racist, xenophobic and nationalistic chants during games is surely a product of their efforts. A popular method for supporters of extremist parties to incite expressions of hatred is to throw bananas or incessantly grunt when a black player from an opposing team touches the ball (Matas, 1997, 88).[5] This enables the perpetrator to monitor crowd support and approach potential sympathizers with racist literature or information about the future undertakings of their group. These actions are often supplanted by the incitement of violence against minorities and distribution of extremist periodicals after the matches (Matas, 1997, 88). This helps the far-Right and other neo-nationalist groups to spread their message, influence and credibility without ever winning a single election.

There have been a number of authors who have addressed the connection between soccer hooliganism, racism, violence and marginalized youth, but no consensus exists on the origin of their relationship (Buford, 1992, 35; Fraser, 1998, 350; Merkl, 2003, 3). A common theme, however, is the attraction of young men to the power of the crowd. The masses present at football matches are impulsive, powerful and not accountable to the voice of reason or common sense. The more "enthusiastic" supporters in the mob, therefore, are obvious candidates for the type of political action espoused by British extremist groups (Merkl, 2003, 158). Although most far-Right political leaders have rejected violence as a primary activity, they are still cognizant of the inherent power possessed by an angry mob of young men.

It is clear that the marginalization of far-Right political parties in British elections has forced these groups to exert their influence in alternative manners. Although throwing a brick through the window of a Pakistani restaurant after a football match is a seemingly minor act, it

---

[5] The constant grunting at football matches is a reference to the racist notion that Africans are "apelike" in appearance.

has a multiplier effect on the rest of the society. The responsible parties, without ever having formulated a policy or engaged in debate, have attracted media attention and influenced public perceptions of the issue (Norris, 2005, 72). Additionally, the ability to sway a crowd of people towards your position requires limited membership, but can have powerful societal implications. As the violence at Heysel stadium and the EuroCup games illustrates, a mob of people is inherently endowed with the power to forcibly overcome even the strictest political and legal obstacles. This, ultimately, makes it clear to understand why football matches and hooliganism have become such popular recruiting venues for extremist parties in the United Kingdom.

"Hate" Rock

The predecessor to modern "hate", "Nazi", or "Oi!" rock was ironically an adaptation of reggae performed by Jamaican immigrants and embraced by the "mod" subculture in London during the 1960s (Brown, 2004, 1). The members of this movement came to be described as "hard mods," since followers shaved their heads, wore leather boots and sported bomber jackets (Brown, 2004, 1). The original "skinhead" music embraced diversity and celebrated the musical achievements of previously unknown performers from foreign countries. The present style, however, has been molded into a seemingly unrecognizable medium that thrives on shock value, hate and violence. Additionally, it has become a popular tool in the recruitment of young people for extremist movements in the United Kingdom. Despite its British origins, the music has also sped the internationalization of far-Right political groups throughout Western Europe (Ebata, 1997, 220). The success of "hate" rock groups would ensure the exposure of many young Europeans to the politics and policies of the far-Right for the foreseeable future.

Although not all supporters of "hate" rock share the same style, a stereotypical description of a young man with a shaved head, covered in tattoos and wearing high boots has

become the popular image associated with the movement (Brown, 2004, 3). The standard "skinhead" look not only represents adherence to a personal and political philosophy, but also projects a willingness to use violence to achieve these goals. In addition to the cultural implications of the chosen style of dress, "skinhead" fashion also inherently suggests loyalty to negative personal lifestyle choices. The prevalence of drug and alcohol abuse amongst supporters has been frequently cited in connection with many of the antisocial characteristics of the group, including crime, violence and unemployment (Brown, 2004, 3). It is clear that these illicit substances are often the lynchpin that holds "skinhead' movements together Britain.

The success of the "hate" rock movement in Great Britain fostered its spread across the channel to Germany and other Western European nations. The blossoming far-Right in these countries embraced "Oi!" music and understood its potential for recruiting new members to their ranks. A variety of extremist parties organized concerts and provided free spirits in hopes of generating interest and support for their policies (Brown, 2004, 9). Additionally, the rise in popularity of British bands such as "White Noise", "Skrewdriver" and "Brutal Attack" in Western Europe led many supporters, despite their national origin, to embrace the Union Jack and other English nationalist symbols in their attire (Brown, 2004, 9). Although no coordinated internationalization effort exists presently between far-Right parties, the prevalence of "Nazi" rock has increased the awareness of issues facing other extremist movements throughout the European Union (Ebata, 1997, 220).

The primary value of "hate" rock lies in its ability to generate an emotional and visceral response in its listeners, but the lyrics clearly reflect the personal politics of the composers. The music has been historically based on an anti-immigrant theme, but development of the subculture

has fostered a broadening of the subject matter addressed by the bands. The more traditional

lyrics of the band "Skrewdriver" plainly express their racist pride and support of Great Britain:

> I believe in the White race-
> A race apart, we've got a mile start-
> I believe in my country-
> It's where I belong, it's where I'll stay...(2006)

Although these words discuss conventional far-Right subject matters, groups such as "Brutal

Attack" have expanded upon this theme to discuss the threat immigration poses to the "purity" of

the European ethnicity:

> European unity-
> White power, pride and dignity-
> European unity-
> Our lands free from alien creeds... (2006)

This sentiment clearly expresses a desire for an international extremist movement and indicates a

subrogation of nationalist beliefs to defense of a European identity. Despite differences in

approach, the radical calls of "Oi!" music to violence and revolution have been embraced by

extremist parties in their efforts to recruit new members.

European Integration

The United Kingdom, despite its late entry into the European Union in 1973, has

become among the most powerful players in the organization. In spite of its continued

reluctance to accept the euro, Britain has become increasingly involved in the economic, social

and political actions of the EU. This has drawn the ire of eurosceptics and led to the creation of

the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) (Norris, 2005, 72). Although it has faced

similar electoral struggles as other extremist parties in Great Britain, this group has developed

the unitary political voice against British participation in the European Union. The UKIP party

manifesto explicitly states its desire for the removal of Great Britain from the EU:

[The European Union] is undemocratic, corrupt and [unreformable]. The only way for Britain is UKIP's way: we must leave. Until this is done, individuals and our businesses will continue to be strangled by all the ill-conceived intrusive regulation, supposedly to protect our environment, to ensure our health and safety, to uphold all our 'rights' and, most recently, to protect us from terrorism (2005).

This statement indicates not only the opposition of the group to membership in the European Union, but also its support for traditional Right-wing issues.

Despite its classification as a far-Right political entity in the United Kingdom, however, the UKIP has made a concerted effort to distinguish itself from more radical groups like the National Front (NF) and British National Party (BNP) (Norris, 2005, 72). The group has made it clear that violence and intimidation are not acceptable tactics in pursuance of their political agenda. The stance of the organization on immigration reform does, however, indicate a willingness to appeal to more extreme British voters. The group argues that immigration leads to "social tensions and places huge strains on our already over-stretched infrastructure" ("Freedom from Overcrowding", 2006). Although the UKIP seems more rational then their counterpart organizations, they still possesses a crude nationalism and desire to keep the country "British" and white.

The UKIP has never managed to win more than 7 percent of the vote in British Parliamentary races, but the election of twelve of its members to the European Parliament in 2004 was an unprecedented accomplishment in the United Kingdom (Norris, 2005, 72). This not only gives the group a voice within the European Union, but also grants the organization a measure of credibility in British politics. It is evident that this result aids in developing support and gaining funds from donors throughout the country. The continuing effort of the leadership in Brussels to bring more policy cohesion to the Union should generate new interest in the politics of the United Kingdom Independence Party and ensure its solvency for years to come.

Implications for British Society

The manner by which far-Right parties have historically attempted to exert their influence on British politics is clear, but predicting the future implications of such actions is more opaque. Nonetheless, it is evident that a thorough examination of the prevailing political, social and economic climate in the United Kingdom should allow for such an exploration. The study of the present electoral system and its potential for change should enable analysis of the potential for future far-Right gains in Parliamentary elections. Additionally, the public reaction to acts of terrorism could have an impact on perception of the strict immigration controls proposed by extremist groups. A complete analysis of these factors should help to gauge the potential for future success of the radical Right in Great Britain.

Elections and the British Electoral System

The British electoral scheme, often referred to as "first past the post", is essentially a two-party system ("The British Electoral System", 2006). A candidate running for an elected office must simply receive a higher percentage of the vote than any other person in the race. This system, also described as a plurality or majority, generally allows for a single party to win a clear majority in the House of Commons (McCormick, 2005, 44). The "first past the post" system simplifies the electoral process and provides stability for both government and its constituents. Despite the longevity of the voting arrangement, however, critics have begun to question its accuracy in reflecting the voting patterns of the people. The 2001 British elections awarded the Labour party with 63 percent of the seats in the House of Commons, despite their capturing of only 41 percent of the Parliamentary vote (McCormick, 2005, 44). This led both Conservative and other parties to demand the institution of a system of proportional representation (PR) for national elections. Under this scheme, parties in various districts

compose a list of candidates and seats are awarded based on the percentage of the vote won by each party (McCormick, 2005, 44). The Blair administration has adopted PR for European Parliament and regional assembly votes and has considered instituting the system for all elections (McCormick, 2005, 44). The adoption of this system could present the opportunity for the far-Right and other extremist parties to win a seat in a Parliamentary election.

Although the group has explicitly stated its support for violence in the past, the mission statement of the British National Party (BNP) presently states their desire to return the country to the British people through legitimate political process:

> The struggle to secure our future is being waged on many fronts. The need for political power is crucial to bring about our goals. Without effective political representation the majority of Britons, who are deeply concerned about the future, have no voice in the chambers where decisions are made. [Increasing] numbers of voters are expressing apathy and discontent with the endless incompetence, lies, false promises and sleaze coming from the three parties that make up the Old Gang. The BNP will contest and win elections at council, parliamentary, Assembly or European level in order to achieve political power to bring about the changes needed ("Political Battle", 2006).

The discussion of a "struggle" being "waged on many fronts" implies a willingness to continue to utilize violence as a political tactic. However, the statement of the limitations of such actions without appropriate Parliamentary representation indicates a desire to achieve true electoral credibility. A switch to a different electoral system might aid the BNP in their quest to achieve electoral legitimacy in the United Kingdom.

The PR system, which enabled the election of a dozen UKIP candidates to the European Parliament, could cause a shift in the structure of the British government. The extremist parties in Britain have sporadically won significant portions of the vote in past elections. The "first past the post" system, however, prevented them from sending any candidates to the House of Commons. Despite support on both sides of the political spectrum, a shift in the status quo will certainly generate impassioned debate. A variety of Labour party

officials have expressed their concerns that changing the system would allow extremist parties to potentially win seats in Parliament (Fekete, 1999, 74). Matthew Taylor, a diplomat stationed at the British embassy in the District of Columbia, worried that an electoral shift would lead to "increased legitimacy for fringe parties on both sides of the political spectrum in [British] Parliamentary elections" (Taylor, interview by author, 2006). As the Blair administration moves closer to changing the system, the extreme Right in Britain seems poised to make their first electoral breakthrough.

International Terrorism

The subway attacks in the London Underground during the summer of 2005, which killed nearly 60 commuters, were among the deadliest terrorist actions ever perpetuated on British soil ("Moving Tribute Marks 7/7 Attacks", 2006). The attacks not only caused alarm throughout the United Kingdom, but also led many to worry about the spread of fundamentalism throughout the millions of Muslims living in the country. Although government officials cautioned their constituencies not to vilify the Islamic population, far-Right parties seized on the opportunity for political gain. The UKIP, for example, issued statements that blamed the Labour government for failing to protect its people and reiterated its desire to reform the "broken immigration and asylum system" (Batten, 2005). It is evident that increases in terrorist activity in Britain could potentially grant extremist parties a wedge with which to divide the country.

A poll taken during the summer of 2006 indicated that the British people, twelve months after the 7/7 attacks, were significantly more fearful of terrorism than respondents asked one year earlier ("Moving Tribute Marks 7/7 Attacks", 2006).[6] The British National Party (BNP) has seized upon this theme, suggesting reinstatement of the death penalty for convicted

---

[6] The poll revealed that 42 percent of British people were "very concerned" with Islamic fundamentalism, a statistic up nearly 25% since the previous year.

terrorists on a continent that is virulently against this form of punishment ("What we stand for", 2006). This hard-line stance on criminals could potentially curry favor with a population still reeling from the viciousness of the attacks on its civilian population. Additionally, the BNP and other extremist organizations have promised to improve border controls and asylum policy if elected to government. The party issued various manifestos promising to increase funding to combat illegal immigration, deport illicit aliens and strengthen border controls ("Immigration-A Crisis without Parallel", 2005). A frightened population could certainly agree with the logic of tightening borders to prevent the entry of terrorists to Western Europe and the United Kingdom.

It is clear that far-Right political parties are most credible during times of fear, violence and chaos. They achieved their strongest Parliamentary election showing during periods of racial unrest and conflict. The British government, which has instituted a terrorism warning system similar to the "color system" in the United States, may have unintentionally generated support for fringe groups by describing the chance of another terrorist attack as being "highly likely" ("Security: Current Threat Level", 2007). It is clear that extremist parties, which have become adept at sowing hate and fear throughout society, could rise to prominence through the spewing of racist and anti-immigrant rhetoric during a period of heightened tension or in the aftermath of a terrorist attack. As fundamentalist groups continue their war against the West, it is likely that the United Kingdom will again become the object of terrorist activity. This could set the stage for far-Right parties in the United Kingdom to rise to political legitimacy.

Conclusion

Despite the incapability of extremist parties to garner electoral support for their candidates, their ability to recruit new members through utilization of unconventional political

activities has ensured their legitimacy in British politics. Their radical appeals to violent football supporters have generated hooligans prone to aggression and racist activity. Additionally, their moral and financial support of "hate" rock has generated a subculture of intolerance that has spread across the entire continent (Brown, 2004, 1). The continued expansion of the European Union has spawned more extremist activity and credibility for the movement. The issue of terrorism and illegal immigration has stoked this fire of hate and laid the groundwork for electoral gains for the radical Right throughout the United Kingdom.

The ultimate goals of the far Right, however, are somewhat difficult to comprehend. Although violence and hate has earned these movements disproportionate media attention, it is unclear how party leadership intends to spend this political capital. It does not seem likely that far-Right parties are determined to overthrow the government through force, but the present electoral system makes their legitimate entry to politics in the near future less likely. It is evident, nonetheless, that a shift in the prevailing electoral system could prevent a unique opportunity for these parties to make gains in Parliamentary elections.

The most recent round of British general elections resulted in the BNP doubling its number of council seats in the United Kingdom (Wheeler, 2006). Although many attributed this success to "protest votes" by constituents dissatisfied with the Labour government, the issue of immigration and terrorism clearly played a factor in the decision to elect extremist groups to local governments. Despite winning less than 1 percent of the Parliamentary vote, the BNP candidates managed to double their presence in local legislatures through the system of proportional representation (Wheeler, 2006). Although the legitimate political influence of these groups is still relatively minute, it is evident that another terrorist attack or wave of immigration could help extremist parties continue to make gains in British elections.

The issue of British nationalism, despite being historically limited, also has potential to emerge as another manner by which the far-Right in the United Kingdom could gain legitimacy. The "imperial guilt" that has prevented citizens of the United Kingdom from embracing nationalist sentiment in the past could slowly recede with new inflows of immigration (Wellings, 1999, 99). Although nationalism has been traditionally manifested among marginalized groups, increased European integration and decreases in defense spending have resulted in a heightened sense of patriotism for many throughout the country (Heath et al., 1999, 155). An increase in nationalist sentiment could benefit the far-Right, which has emerged as the most prominent apologists for "keeping Britain British."

While the prospects of recognized national political dominance seem remote, the far-Right in Britain does have potential to emerge as a viable third party (Eatwell, 1998, 154). If a new organization were to consolidate the entire extreme Right into one organization, play upon growing resentment of immigrants and the European Union and were to abandon its fascist roots, it could quickly rise to prominence. It is unclear if the differences amongst the various factions can ever be mended, but it is evident that continued publicity from "hate" rock and hooliganism, expanded European integration and further inflows of immigrants will guarantee the existence of extremist parties on the British political scene for years to come.

ASYLUM & IMMIGRATION IS OUT OF CONTROL

ASYLUM: We would detain and screen all asylum seekers that enter Britain for thorough health and person checks, those that fail can then be fast-tracked out of Britain. Preferably have our immigration control centres situated at the foreign ports so the failed cases will not even enter Britain. **Remove all failed asylum seekers and illegal immigrants from Britain immediately.**

How can money, houses and resources easily be found for these people when cash and levels of care for our elderly and other basic services are being cut?

IMMIGRATION: All non-white immigration into Britain must stop immediately and a humane programme of repatriation commenced on a last in first out basis. Already 6 whole London boroughs are now white minority and whole major cities like Leicester and Birmingham will be white minority by the year 2012 (or sooner) with other cities and towns with immigrant enclaves close behind them as the ethnic birth-rates are five times greater than that of our own.
Britain will be white minority by the year 2060 if nothing is done about it!

LAW AND ORDER: The very first duty of a government is to protect its citizens. In this respect successive labour and conservative governments would have to be adjudged as failures. We believe the only way to stop the spiralling out-of-control crime rates is introduce real punishments that fit the crime including reintroducing the death penalty for certain crimes including murder and terrorism. By equipping our Police to the highest possible standard and bringing back real community policing where the officers live in the communities they serve tackling real crime, not street wardens or other cost cutting schemes. Immigrants are also responsible for a disproportional higher number of murders, drug related and other serious crimes as our jails are filling up with them. The police need a free hand to tackle crime, this cannot be done with do-gooders shouting racism because they think the police are targeting immigrants when in fact they are only targeting criminals.
We must return law and order to the streets of Britain.

The National Front are not racist and we do not hate anyone, we only strive for a better Britain for the true British people with our policies of common sense.

VOTE NATIONAL FRONT

Works Cited

Anderson, Benedict. 1991. "Imagined Communities." *Nationalism.* Edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 89-96.

Batten, Gerard. 2005. "The Terrorist Threat facing Britain and what we should do about it." Speech delivered at UKIP Conference 2005, London, United Kingdom by UKIP Spokesman on Security and Defense. Accessed 4 Dec. 2006. <http://www.ukip.org/ukip_news/gen12.php?t=1&id=1639>

Bell, Fraser. 1998. "Play up, play up and stick it to them." *Queen's Quarterly* 105(3): 350-355.

Brown, Timothy S. 2004. "Subcultures, pop music and politics: skinheads and "Nazi rock" in England and Germany." *Journal of Social History* 38(1): 157-179.

Brutal Attack. 2006. "European Unity." Accessed 4 Dec. 2006. <http://www.seeklyrics.com/lyrics/Brutal-Attack/European-Unity.html>

Buford, Bill. 1992. *Among the Thugs.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Coleman, David A. 1987. "U.K. Statistics on Immigration: Development and Limitations." *International Migration Review* 21(4): 1138-1169.

Dalton, Russell J. 1988. *Citizen Politics in Western Democracies.* Chatham: Chatham House.

Eatwell, Roger. 1998. "Britain: The BNP and the Problem of Legitimacy." *The New Politics of the Right.* Edited by Hans-Georg Betz and Stefan Immerfall. New York: St. Martin's Press, 143-155.

Ebata, Michi. 1997. "The Internationalization of the Extreme Right." *The Extreme Right: Freedom and Security at Risk.* Boulder: WestviewPress, 220-247.

Fekete, Liz. 1999. "Why we should say no to proportional representation." *Race and Class* 40(4): 74-77.

Fraser, Nicholas. 2001. *The Voice of Modern Hatred.* New York: Overlook.

"Freedom from Overcrowding." 2006. *UK Independence Party Manifesto.* Accessed 13 Nov. 2006. < http://www.ukip.org/index.php?menu=fivefreedoms&page=fivefreedoms3>

Heath, Anthony, et al. 1999. "British National Sentiment." *British Journal of Political Science* 29(1): 155-174.

Heath, Tina, et. al. 2006. "Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2005." *Home Office Statistical Bulletin* 14(06), p. 5. Accessed 13 Nov. 2006. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs06/hosb1406.pdf>

Hobsbawm, Eric. 1983. "The Nation as Invented Tradition." *Nationalism.* Edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 76-83.

Hutchinson, John. 1987. "Cultural Nationalism and Moral Regeneration." *Nationalism.* Edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith. Oxford: Oxford Press, 122-131.

"Immigration- A Crisis without Parallel." 2005. *Rebuilding British Democracy: BNP General Election Manifesto 2005.* Accessed 5 Dec. 2006. <http://www.bnp.org.uk/candidates2005/manifesto/manf3.htm>

Matas, David. 1997. "The Extreme Right in the United Kingdom and France." *The Extreme Right: Freedom and Security at Risk.* Edited by Aurel Braun and Stephen Scheinberg. Boulder: WestviewPress, 84-105.

McCormick, John. 2005. *Understanding the European Union.* Houndmills: Palgrave.

Merkl, Peter H and Leonard Weinberg, eds. 2003. *Right-Wing Extremism in the Twenty-First Century.* London: Frank Cass.

Messina, Anthony M. 1995. "Immigration as a Political Dilemma." *Political Studies Journal* 23(4): 686-699.

"Moving Tribute Marks 7/7 attacks." 2006. Accessed 14 Nov. 2006. <http://www.cnn.com>

Nairn, Tom. 1977. "The Maladies of Development." *Nationalism.* Edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith. Oxford: Oxford Press, 70-76.

Norris, Pippa. 2005. *Radical Right: Voters and Parties in the Electoral Market.* Boston: Cambridge University Press.

Peatling, G.K. 2003. "Home rule for England, English Nationalism and Constitutional Reform." *Albion* 35(1): 71-91.

"Political Battle." 2006. Accessed 14 Nov. 2006. <http://www.bnp.org.uk>

Powell, Enoch. 1968. "Rivers of Blood." Speech delivered to the Annual General Meeting of the West Midlands Area Conservative Political Centre, Birmingham, England. Accessed 8 Nov. 2006. <http://theoccidentalquarterly.com/vol1no1/ep-rivers.html>

Ranger, Terence and Eric Hobsbawm, eds. 1992. *The Invention of Tradition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

"Security: Threat Level." 2007. *Home Office.* Accessed 8 Apr. 2007. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/security/current-threat-level/>

Skrewdriver. 2006. "Race and Nation." *Hail to the New Dawn.* Accessed 13 Nov. 2006.
< http://www.stlyrics.com/songs/s/skrewdriver9731/raceandnation477459.html>

"Statistics on Football-Related Arrests and Banning Orders." 2006. *Home Office.*
Accessed 13 Nov. 2006.
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/football-arrests-0506?view=Binary>

Tilly, Charles. 1975. "Europe and the International System." *Nationalism.* Edited by John
Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith. Oxford: Oxford Press, 249-254.

Taylor, Matthew. 2006. Interview by author, 16 November, Washington DC. British Embassy,
3100 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, 20008.

"The British Electoral System." 2006. Accessed 14 Nov. 2006.
<http://www.hewett.norfolk.sch.uk/CURRIC/POLIT/electoral.htm>

"The Secretary." 2006. "Race and Immigration." *Policies of the National Front.* Accessed 14
Nov. 2006. <http://www.natfront.com>

"UK Independence Party Manifesto." 2005. Accessed 4 Dec. 2006.
<http://www.ukip.org/>

Wellings, Ben. 1999. "England's occluded nationalism: state and nation in English identity."
Arena Journal 14(1): 99-107.

"What we stand for." 2006. *British National Party.* Accessed 14 Nov. 2006.
<http://www.bnp.org.uk>

Wheeler, Brian. 2006. "Will BNP election gains last?" *BBC News Online.* Accessed 6 Dec.
2006. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4968406.stm>