

Italy/Austria

The Radical Right in Western Europe

Review/Introduction
Italy
Austria
Summary

Current Events?

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- ▶ Professor on AfD's EP list not really a professor
- ▶ ...

Last week

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 - ▶ FN dominated by Le Pen
 - ▶ Modern at the surface, more traditional inside
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 - ▶ Voters probably care about anti-immigrant message and not much else
- ▶ Belgium/Flanders: a lesser-known successful ERP
 - ▶ VB quite similar to FN
 - ▶ Initially, even more old-right in its outlook + flemish nationalism
 - ▶ Suffered from rise of NV-A

Today

- ▶ Today: Austria and Italy: two more countries with a long extreme-right tradition
- ▶ Histories of collaboration and occupation
- ▶ Histories of relevant Extreme Right movements *before* German National Socialism

The Extreme Right in Italy: MSI/AN

- ▶ Mussolini, obviously
- ▶ Republican constitution (1946/48) outlawed Fascism, but neo-fascist “Italian Social Movement” (MSI) in 1946
- ▶ Anti-Communism, but: 1960 Genoa → factions, terrorism; largely irrelevant but representation
- ▶ A southern party
- ▶ Mid-1990s: Fini becomes a moderniser (CD and the Second Republic) → MSI-AN, Fiamma Tricolore (FT), Alternativa Sociale (AS), ...

The Extreme Right in Italy: MSI/AN

- ▶ A “post-fascist”, CD-conservative party (?!?)
- ▶ 2009: merger with Berlusconi's party → “The People of Freedom”
- ▶ (Assets transferred to a “foundation”)
- ▶ December 2012: 8 dissident MPs set up “Brothers of Italy – National Alliance” and win right to use old party logo



The Extreme Right in Italy: The Lega (Nord)

- ▶ Regionalism movement in Northern Italy during 1970/80s
 - ▶ Cultural differences
 - ▶ Economic interests
 - ▶ The regional “Leagues”
- ▶ 1991: a federation of “Leagues”, soon dominated by Umberto Bossi, very successful during 1990s
- ▶ Campaigned for secession, later for (fiscal) federalism and devolution
- ▶ Resentment against Southerners, than against non-European immigrants
- ▶ Various factions, leadership struggles surrounding Bossi’s scandals and departure in 2012
- ▶ Currently led by Matteo Salvini (“Us with Salvini”)

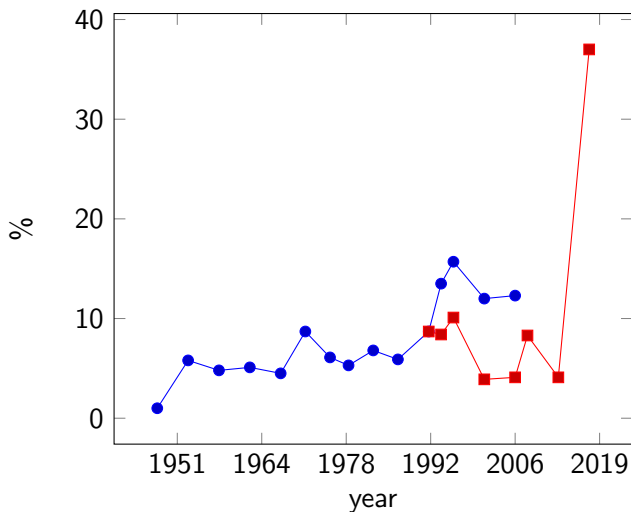
Policies

- ▶ MSI/AN
 - ▶ Initially, pro-fascist, suspicious of democracy
 - ▶ Anti-Communist but state-interventionist
 - ▶ Staunchly conservative but never racist, anti-semite etc. → refused to collaborate with NPD during 1970s/80s
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- ▶ Fiamma, AS, etc.: a bunch of weirdos
- ▶ Lega
 - ▶ Occasionally odd ideas (Pagan cult of the river)
 - ▶ At times almost racist approach to Southerners
 - ▶ Free-marketeers turned protectionists and globalisation critics
 - ▶ Discovered “gypsies” and immigration during the 1990s: camps, gun-boats, rail-road apartheid
 - ▶ Currently strongly anti-EU

Electoral Results (National Parliament)



Voters

- ▶ (At least) two electorates
- ▶ MSI: we don't know much
- ▶ Alleanza: more southern
 - ▶ Traces of old, fascist constituencies
 - ▶ Traditional, in later years not really xenophobic
- ▶ Lega:
 - ▶ Mixture of many different northern groups
 - ▶ Odd coalition of small business people, (their) workers, and others
 - ▶ A bit like Flanders: anti-immigrant party with a regionalist twist
 - ▶ *Becomes a national force in 2018*

The Extreme Right in Austria: History

- ▶ Historically, home of the original Nazi party
- ▶ Three “camps” after WW I
 1. Socialists/workers
 2. Authoritarian Catholics → “Austro-Fascism” 1934-38
 3. Non-liberal Liberals (German-nationalist) → Nazism
- ▶ After WW II, Austria restored as an independent, neutral and democratic republic → 3 camps, 3 parties
- ▶ VdU/WdU → FPÖ (1956)
 - ▶ Dominated by former Nazis/Nazi sympathisers
 - ▶ A more prominently liberal party from the 1960s
 - ▶ Support for SPÖ min. government from 1970, member of Liberal International from 1979, coalition 1983
 - ▶ New course unpopular with voters/members

The Extreme Right in Austria: Haider

- ▶ 1950-2008, born into a family of Nazi sympathisers, involved in Extreme Right politics as a teenager
- ▶ Throughout his career, positive remarks on Hitler/Nazis, racist sneers, a regular guest at Waffen SS veterans' meetings
- ▶ Rapid career within FPÖ
- ▶ Replaced liberal Norbert Steeger as party leader in 1986, radically transformed FPÖ, Carinthia as a power base (governor from 1999)
- ▶ Unprecedented success for FPÖ (up to 27 per cent, FPÖ/ÖVP coalition(s) 1999-2006)
- ▶ Haider stepped down as chairman in 2000 ...
- ▶ But dominated party completely until 2005 → split (BZÖ)

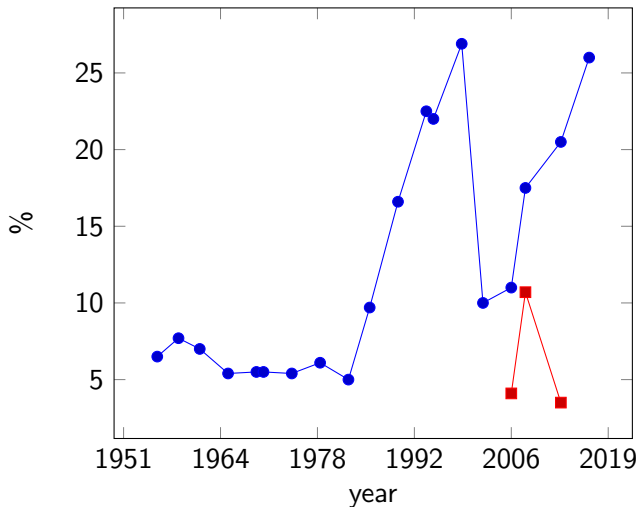
Policies

- ▶ Austria: strong corporatism, semi-permanent Grand Coalition government
- ▶ FPÖ and Haider: *populist*, anti-establishment, an “uncorrupted outsider”
- ▶ Anti-left (culturally), anti-corporatist (culturally & economically)
- ▶ Against foreigners and minorities (Slovenes, Romanians, “Gypsies”, Easterners, Jews etc.)
- ▶ Motto of 1991 municipal campaign: “Vienna for the Viennese”
- ▶ 1990s: “Austria First”; anti-EU, anti-globalisation, Temelin (2001)

After Haider

- ▶ FPÖ/BZÖ split geographically uneven (Carinthia)
- ▶ FPÖ recovered relatively quickly
- ▶ Led by Heinz-Christian Strache since 2005
 - ▶ A younger (born 1969) edition of Haider?
 - ▶ Various biographical links to Austrian/German “Burschenschaften”, Neo-Nazis, and other extremists
 - ▶ Similar policies, international contacts
- ▶ BZÖ never recovered from Haider's death
- ▶ “Team Stronach”? → gone
- ▶ FPÖ once more the dominant force
- ▶ Formed coalition with ÖVP following 2017 election

Electoral Results



Voters

- ▶ Liberals (into the early 1990s)
- ▶ Traditional right-wingers
- ▶ Xenophobes
- ▶ Young(ish), unaligned, dissatisfied voters

Summary

- ▶ Two countries with very long Extreme Right traditions
- ▶ Like Flanders/France, long-standing parties with very deep roots
- ▶ AN/FPÖ: Old parties, rebounding during 1990s
- ▶ But two very different trajectories!

Class Questions

Mudde 2007

- ▶ Minimum: Nativism
 - ▶ Radical Right: Nativism + authoritarianism
 - ▶ Populist Radical Right (Maximum): Radical Right + Populism
-
- ▶ (How is it possible that more than 25% of Austrian voters support the FPÖ/BZÖ?)
 - ▶ What do the FN, VB, AN, FT, L(N), FPÖ, BZÖ have in common, where are the differences?
 - ▶ Are they members of an RRP family? In which of Mudde's subgroups would they fit?