Italy/Austria

The Radical Right in Western Europe
Current Events?
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- Professor on AfD’s EP list not really a professor
- ...
Last week

- France: the “mastercase”
  - FN dominated by Le Pen
  - Modern at the surface, more traditional inside
  - Voters probably care about anti-immigrant message and not much else
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- 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”)

The Radical Right in Western Europe
Policies

- **MSI/AN**
  - Initially, pro-fascist, suspicious of democracy
  - Anti-Communist but state-interventionist
  - Staunchly conservative but never racist, anti-semitic etc. → refused to collaborate with NPD during 1970s/80s
  - A “normal” centre-right party?

- **Fiamma, AS, etc.:**
Policies

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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, Temelín (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?