Case studies on political parties

As a part of the PaCE report D1.1. Historical and political development of populism in Europe

WP1 – Historical and comparative analysis

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D1.1. Historical and political development of populism in Europe

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Political Parties Case Studies
0. Introduction

This report provides an outline of the historical and political development of eighteen (18) populist, nativist, nationalist, antidemocratic and secessionist parties in Europe between 1990 and 2020. The case selection reflects most of the distinct party types – based on the political goals and kind of society each type wants to achieve –, as per the typology of parties in contemporary Europe developed in D1.2. Furthermore, it takes into account the divergence of these parties in terms of their age, ideology, geographical region, as well as whether or not they have acquired governing experience. To be more specific, as Table 1 demonstrates, our sample includes:

- Ten nativist, five populist, one nationalist, one secessionist and one antidemocratic parties;
- Seven older (founded pre-1990) and eleven younger (founded post-1990) parties;
- Sixteen right-wing and two left-wing parties;
- Seven Western, four Northern, four Southern and three Eastern European parties;
- Ten parties with and eight parties without governing experience.

The analysis presented in this report is based on desk research on secondary sources including, but not limited to, scholarly books and articles, news articles and party manifestos. For each case study included in this report we have outlined the historical and political context within which the party in question was founded; its core ideological and policy positions and whether and how these have changed over time; any changes in party leadership and whether and how these have influenced its organisation; and the electoral performance of each party, understood within the broader national party politics context. Finally, for those parties that have served in office, singlehandedly or as part of a coalition, as well as for parties that have lent their support to minority governments, we have also provided an assessment of their impact on government and policy-making.

	Country	Party name	Party type	Year Founded	Ideology	Region	In Office
1	Austria	FPÖ	Nativist	Pre-1990	Right	W. Europe	Yes
2	Belgium	VB	Secessionist	Post-1990	Right	W. Europe	No
3	Bulgaria	Ataka	Populist	Post-1990	Right	E. Europe	Yes
4	Denmark	DF	Nativist	Post-1990	Right	N. Europe	No
5	Finland	PS	Nativist	Post -1990	Right	N. Europe	Yes
6	France	RN	Nativist	Pre-1990	Right	W. Europe	No
7	Germany	AfD	Nativist	Post-1990	Right	W. Europe	No
8	Greece	SYRIZA	Populist	Post-1990	Left	S. Europe	Yes
9	Greece	GD	Antidemocratic	Pre-1990	Right	S. Europe	No
10	Hungary	FIDESZ	Populist	Pre-1990	Right	E. Europe	Yes
11	Italy	L	Nativist	Post-1990	Right	S. Europe	Yes

12	The Netherlands	PVV	Nativist	Post-1990	Right	W. Europe	No
13	Norway	FrP	Nativist	Pre-1990	Right	N. Europe	Yes
14	Poland	PiS	Populist	Post-1990	Right	E. Europe	Yes
15	Spain	PODEMOS	Populist	Post-1990	Left	S. Europe	Yes
16	Sweden	SD	Nativist	Pre-1990	Right	N. Europe	No
17	Switzerland	SVP	Nativist	Pre-1990	Right	W. Europe	Yes
18	UK	UKIP	Nationalist	Post-1990	Right	W. Europe	No

Table 1 Cases/Parties studied and case selection criteria

1. Austria – Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)

1.1. Intro

Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (Freedom Party of Austria – FPÖ) was founded in 1956 as the successor to the short-lived Federation of Independents (VdU). Its founder, Anton Reinthaller, was a former SS officer. However, FPÖ never endorsed Nazism, and presented itself as a pragmatic centrist party and, at least at the national level, an opponent of both socialism and political Catholicism. The party was significantly rebranded in mid-1980s when Jörg Haider took over the leadership and steered FPÖ further to the right and its biggest electoral success so far. FPÖ is a nativist right-wing political party, which counts 13 changes in leadership, four terms in power (of which three in the post-1990 era), and five party splits in its 65-year history.

1.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

FPÖ, in its inception, inherited from its predecessor, VdU, the principle of liberalism, which it bolstered with a strong sense of nationalism in the form of pan-Germanism. Although its founder, Anton Reinthaller, was a former SS officer, and the party attracted a large number of former Nazis as members, FPÖ never really endorsed Nazism. In the 1980s, and particularly after Jörg Haider took over the leadership of the party in 1986, FPÖ went through its first significant rebranding. Haider helped sharpen FPÖ's neoliberal positions, by starting to strongly advocate, for example, tax reduction, less state intervention, and more privatisation.[1] FPÖ also incorporated a distinctive anti-establishment narrative. Haider sensed Austrian voters' increasing disaffection with the two mainstream parties, and began openly criticising the concentration of power 'in the hands of the elite', presenting FPÖ as the only serious alternative to the 'cartel party'.[2] However, Haider, maintained and further strengthened the centrality of the concept of 'Heimat' ('the homeland') in FPÖ's ideology, advocating more explicitly the belonging of Austrians to the German ethnic and cultural community.[3]

In the 1990s, FPÖ underwent its second main ideological transformation. Haider maintained the party's highly popular anti-establishment positions, which he complemented with explicit calls for Austria's radical transformation from a party state to a citizens' democracy through, for example, more referendums, direct election of the federal president, reduction of the number of ministries, and devolution of power to the federal states and local councils.[4] What is more, in 1995, Haider started shifting away from pan-Germanism, which culminated in the replacement of the German ethnic and cultural community with the 'Austrian people' in the party's 1997 manifesto.[5] FPÖ's shift to Austrian nationalism was topped with the growing of Euroscepticism, particularly following the replacement of the Austrian schilling with the euro in 1998, and the intensification of the discussions regarding Turkey's accession to the EU.[6] Furthermore, following the creation of the border-free Schengen Area

[1] Rathgeb, P., 2021. Makers against takers: the socio-economic ideology and policy of the Austrian Freedom Party. *West European Politics*, 44(3), 635-660.
[2] Wodak, R. and Pelinka, A., 2002. *The Haider Phenomenon in Austria*. Transaction Publishers.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] Pelinka, A., 2017. *Austria in the European Union*. Routledge.
[5] Fillitz, T., 2006. "'Being the Native's Friend Does Not Make You The Foreigners Enemy!' Neo-nationalism, the Freedom Party and Jörg Haider in Austria". In Gingrich, A. and Banks, M. (eds.) *Neo-nationalism in Europe and beyond: perspectives from social anthropology*. Berghahn Books, 138-161.
[6] *Ibid.*

in the early 1990s, as well as the large refugee flows resulted from the intervention in Kosovo in the late 1990s, Haider introduced restrictive immigration and anti-multiculturalism positions to the top of, not only the party's agenda, but also the broader public agenda in Austria. FPÖ asserted that 'Austria is not a country of immigration',[7] and eschewed multiculturalism because it 'deliberately fuels social conflict'.[8]

In the 2000s, particularly after Heinz-Christian Strache's transition to the leadership of the party in 2005, FPÖ underwent its third main political 'rebranding'. Following a short spell in power in the early to mid-2000s, when FPÖ was forced to significantly water down its anti-establishment discourse, such positions returned strong after the party's return to opposition in 2005. Euroscepticism and restrictive immigration positions were also significantly amplified thereafter, particularly amid the EU's economic and migration crises. Moreover, the concept of Heimat, or else the portrayal of FPÖ as the guarantor of Austrian national identity, was promoted and developed even further than before. Lastly, under Strache, FPÖ combined positions in favour of a social market economy, such as tax cuts, increased privatisation, trade union suppression, and increased social welfare support only to natives (i.e. welfare chauvinism).[9]

1.3. Leadership and Organisation

FPÖ's founder and first leader, Anton Reinthaller, had ministerial experience as a former Nazi Minister of Agriculture, and despite being a former Nazi functionary and SS officer, positioned the party in the political centre.[10] Under his leadership, FPÖ became the third largest party in Austria and attracted a large number of former Nazis as members, becoming essentially a platform for their integration in the Second Republic, which was welcomed by both mainstream political parties in regional and local politics.[11] Friedrich Peter, who succeeded Reinthaller after his death in 1958, as well as Götz and Steger who took over later, continued the party's moderation and liberalisation through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, which resulted in FPÖ's first party split in 1967, when a more extreme faction broke away and established the National Democratic Party.[12] However, FPÖ's liberalisation project never translated into tangible electoral gains for the party, which started being torn by internal strife in the early-1980s.

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
Anton Reinthaller	07/04/1956	06/03/1958	698
Friedrich Peter	13/09/1958	30/09/1978	7322
Alexander Götz	30/09/1978	01/12/1979	427
Horst Schender	01/12/1979	02/03/1980	92
Norbert Steger	02/03/1980	14/09/1986	2387
Jörg Haider	14/09/1986	01/05/2000	4978
Susanne Riess-Passer	01/05/2000	08/09/2002	860

[7] Goodman, S.W., 2014. *Immigration and membership politics in Western Europe*. Cambridge University Press.
[8] FPÖ, 1999. *Das Programm der Freiheitlichen Partei Österreichs*. Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/42420_1999.pdf
[9] Rathgeb, P., 2021. Makers against takers.
[10] Höbelt, L., 2003. *Defiant populist: Jörg Haider and the politics of Austria*. Purdue University Press.
[11] Riedlsperger, M., 1998. 'The Freedom Party of Austria: From Protest to Radical Right Populism'. In Betz, H.G. and Immerfall, S. (eds.) *The new politics of the right: Neo-populist parties and movements in established democracies*. Macmillan, 27-43
[12] Campbell, D. F. J., 1995. 'Jörg Haider (1950–)'. In Wilsford, D. (ed.). *Political leaders of contemporary Western Europe: a biographical dictionary*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 183-188.

Herbert Scheibner	08/09/2002	21/09/2002	13
Mathias Reichhold	21/09/2002	31/10/2002	40
Herbert Haupt	31/10/2002	03/07/2004	611
Ursula Haubner	03/07/2004	04/04/2005	275
Hilmar Kabas	04/04/2005	18/04/2005	14
Heinz-Christian Strache	23/04/2005	18/05/2019	5138
Norbert Hofer	18/05/2019	11/04/2021	694
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***1682***

Table 2 FPÖ leaders and duration in post, 07/04/1956 – 11/04/2021

FPÖ's intra-party conflict was exacerbated in 1983 after Jörg Haider's election as leader of the party's significant Carinthia branch. It culminated in an open conflict during the 1986 national party convention, which saw Haider becoming the new FPÖ leader with 58% of the vote, supported by conservative and pan-German factions.[13] Under Haider's leadership in mid/late-1980s and 1990s, FPÖ underwent a gradual, yet, distinct reversal of its previous leaders' liberalisation project. Although this resulted in a strong surge in electoral support, it also undermined FPÖ's chances of forming coalitions with other parties, and led to a second splinter when a more moderate faction broke away and established the Liberal Forum in 1993. However, the party became a force to be reckoned with after the 1999 general election, which earned FPÖ 26.9% of the votes – its highest rate so far – , beating the ÖVP for the first time by a small margin. Eventually ÖVP and FPÖ agreed to form a coalition government in February 2000, yet, without the participation of Haider, who, although should have been offered the federal chancellorship, he was deemed too controversial to be part of the government, let alone lead it. The intense international criticism that followed FPÖ's participation in the government, the concession of the chancellorship to ÖVP, the subsequent forced change in the party's leadership, and the struggle to shift from an anti-establishment party to a credible coalition partner triggered a major internal party crisis in FPÖ. This escalated with the resignation of several prominent FPÖ government ministers in 2002 amid strong attacks by Haider, and a continued leadership crisis, which saw FPÖ changing leaders five times in less than two months. The intra-party crisis eventually culminated in 2005 when FPÖ's former leader Jörg Haider, then-chairwoman and his sister Ursula Haubner, vice chancellor Hubert Gorbach and all of the party's ministers broke away and founded the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ).

Heinz-Christian Strache was elected leader in April 2005. Freed from the party's office-seeking elite who had gone over to BZÖ, Strache 'rebranded' FPÖ as 'anti-establishment' party, and, by taking advantage of the EU's economic and migration crises to promote strong Eurosceptic and restrictive immigration positions, led the party to gradually regain its popularity. However, Strache was replaced as party leader in September 2019 by Herbert Hofer following the 'Ibiza affair' scandal, which involved Strache soliciting funds from a purported Russian national to boost FPÖ's popularity in the run-up to the 2019 election.[14]

[13] Fillitz, T., 2006. "'Being the Native's Friend'".
[14] BBC. 'Heinz-Christian Strache: Vice-chancellor caught on secret video'. 18 May 2019. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-48318195

1.4. Electoral performance

FPÖ's electoral performance remained stagnant, fluctuating between 5% (1983) and 7.7% (1959) of the vote, for almost three decades since its foundation. Its first electoral breakthrough occurred in the 1986 general election, where FPÖ almost doubled its vote share (9.7%); a success which coincided with Haider's accession to the party's' leadership. Thereafter, the party's electoral performance kept improving, and culminated in the 1999 general election, where FPÖ gained 26.9% of the vote, its record high vote share so far. Indeed, Haider's ideological and political 'rebranding' of FPÖ, in combination with his constant 'fine-tuning' of the party's agenda to keep it up-to-date with public affairs developments and evolving public sentiments and concerns (e.g. the public's growing disenfranchisement with established/mainstream parties; Austria's accession to the EU), contributed massively to the party's electoral success.

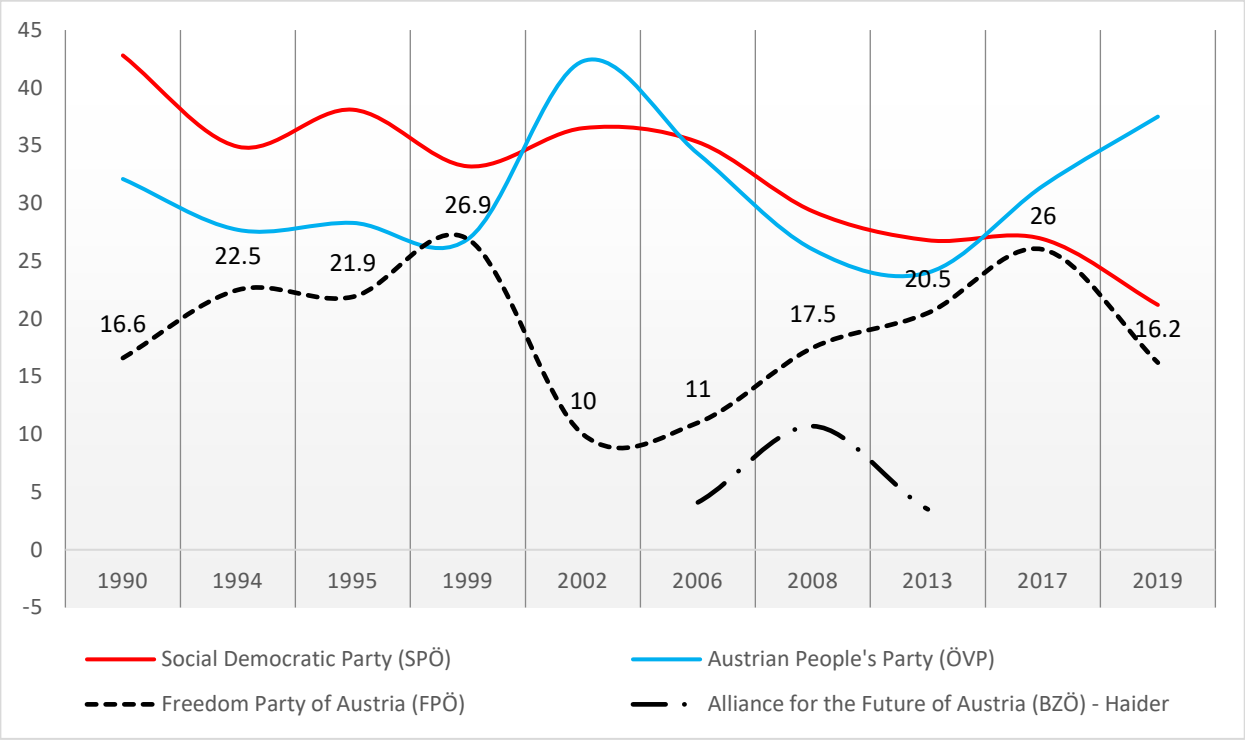

Figure 1 FPÖ's electoral performance in Austrian general elections, 1990-2019 (%)

FPÖ's participation in government with ÖVP in 2000 and the ensuing challenges and prolonged intra-party crisis that erupted, sank the party's popularity to 10% and 11% in the 2002 and 2006 general elections respectively. Under Strache's political and ideological 'rebranding', which followed the breakaway of the party's office-seeking elite and the return of the party to opposition, FPÖ made its electoral comeback in the 2008 general election where it gained 17.5% of the vote. Thereafter, the party's electoral performance kept improving, climbing at 26%, the party's second-best performance, in the 2017 general election. However, Strache's involvement in the 'Ibiza affair' scandal and the ensuing intra-party crisis significantly impacted FPÖ's popularity, which dropped to 16.2% in the 2019 general election.

1.5. Party in Government

FPÖ counts four terms in power so far, three of which in the post-1990 era. In 1970, FPÖ supported an SPÖ minority government, without, however, contributing any cabinet members. Moreover, following the outcome of the 1983 general election, FPÖ decided to enter into coalition government with SPÖ, which sank the party's electoral support even further and triggered a prolonged intraparty strife. The coalition government was disbanded soon after Haider's accession to the party's leadership three years later, with the Socialist Chancellor Franz Vranitzky citing FPÖ's shift away from liberalism as the main cause.

Cabinet Name	**Cabinet Start Date**	**Cabinet End Date**	**Duration in Office (Days)**	**Ministerial Posts share**
Schüssel I	04/02/2000	23/11/2002	1023	6/11
Schüssel II	24/11/2002	27/02/2003	95	6/11
Schüssel III	28/02/2003	04/04/2005	766	3/11
Kurz I	18/12/2017	27/05/2019	525	6/13

Table 3 FPÖ's duration in office and ministerial posts share upon cabinet appointment

During FPÖ's terms in office in 2000 and 2002 respectively, the party's overall performance was significantly limited by a series of factors.[15] First and most importantly, the close international scrutiny significantly moderated FPÖ's radical rhetoric and policies in the areas of social welfare and public order. Second, the lack of experience of the party's ministers – with the exception of Karl-Heinz Grasser, Minister of Finance – and its lack of support in a highly politicised civil service also hindered FPÖ's overall performance. Third, FPÖ's lack of coherent policies and its tendency to take positions based on short-term popularity – such as the threat to veto EU's enlargement to the east, which it later dropped to re-join the coalition – considerably impacted on its success. Fourth, the moderating influence of the head of state, Thomas Klestil, in combination with constitutional guarantees, a series of checks and balances on the executive, and Austria's international commitments deriving from its EU membership also hampered FPÖ's overall performance. Finally, FPÖ's overall performance was severely affected by Jörg Haider's opportunistic behaviour, best exemplified by his visit to Saddam Hussein on the eve of the Iraq War, and increasing internal disagreements, best exemplified by the 2002 'Knittelfeld rebellion' when several prominent FPÖ government ministers resigned. These eventually led to a party split and the replacement of FPÖ by the newly founded BZÖ led by Haider as coalition partner in April 2005.

FPÖ's fourth term in office, in 2017, was not very successful either. Much of the party's programme, particularly its immigration and public order positions, was co-opted by its government partner, ÖVP. FPÖ, despite being reasonably disciplined and competent after it entered office in December 2017, struggled to find its own voice in its one and a half years in power. FPÖ's gradual decline in popularity led its leadership to get involved in a major scandal – the so-called 'Ibiza Affair' – that eventually caused the collapse of the governing coalition in May 2019. This involved the release of a video of a meeting in Ibiza, Spain, showing FPÖ leader Heinz-Christian Strache soliciting funds for his party from a Russian national in return for business contracts, also suggesting his intention

[15] Heinisch, R., 2003. Success in opposition – failure in government: explaining the performance of right-wing populist parties in public office. *West European Politics* 26(3), 91-130.

to censor the Austrian media in a way favourable to FPÖ interests. The footage led immediately to the collapse of the governing coalition and to snap elections held in September 2019. In those elections, FPÖ managed to win just 16.2% of the vote (i.e., almost ten points down from its 2017 electoral result), which represented a loss of about one-third of the party seats in parliament. In the aftermath of electoral defeat, Strache announced that he was retiring from politics and returning his membership in the party. He was promptly replaced in the FPÖ leadership by Norbert Hofer.

2. Belgium – Flemish Interest (VB)

2.1. Intro

Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest – VB) was founded in 2004 as the rebranded direct successor to Vlaams Blok, which was dissolved earlier that year after a trial which found the party to be in breach of the anti-racism law. VB, similarly to its predecessor Vlaams Blok, has been subjected to a formal cordon sanitaire by mainstream political parties. Following an agreement in 1989, traditional Flemish parties committed themselves not to undertake any political agreements with Vlaams Blok and never to form a coalition with it.[16] VB is a secessionist political party, which has undergone three leadership changes and counts no party splits in its 17-year history.

2.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

VB's predecessor, Vlaams Blok, from the outset focused mainly on the independence of Flanders. The issues of migration, refugees and migrant integration were barely mentioned in the foundational principles of the party, and were only added to the agenda at the sixth party conference, in March 1984, when Vlaams Blok presented its restrictive programmatic immigration positions for the first time.[17] These positions were amplified and coupled with calls for a strict enforcement of the rule of law in the 1990s.[18] Following the party's reorganisation under its new name in 2004, VB has retained a separatist and Flemish nationalist platform at the core of its agenda. At the same time, it opposes multiculturalism, calls for stricter immigration, assimilation, and law and order policies, as well as the safeguard of Flemish cultural identity and Western values. VB also takes a Eurosceptic stance towards the EU, while it's relatively conservative towards ethical/political issues such as abortion and same-sex couples' rights. It's worth noting, however, that since the beginning of its current leadership in October 2014 under Tom Van Grieken, VB has moderated its image and softened its tone.

More specifically, VB's proclaimed goal is the establishment of an independent Flemish republic through a peaceful secession of Flanders from Belgium on grounds of the 'enormous cultural and political differences between Flemings and Walloons'.[19] VB calls for the exclusive use of Dutch in Flanders and the subjugation of Brussels under Flemish control.[20] VB argues for the deportation of those immigrants who oppose Flemish and European culture and values, such as freedom of expression and gender equality.[21] It is against the multicultural approach to migrant integration and advocates the need for migrant assimilation to the Flemish and European way of life. Although VB describes itself as pro-European, it strongly opposes the federalisation of the EU. It argues that lax immigration policies and the multicultural integration project have been imposed on the Flemish region by the Belgian federal government and the EU, and calls for the withdrawal of Flanders from the Schengen Area, which increases the region's vuLerability to cultural erosion and the terrorist threat. VB favours a policy of 'zero tolerance' towards criminality, particularly in cases where the crimes have been committed by immigrants.

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[16] Van Spanje, J. and Van Der Brug, W., 2007. The party as pariah: The exclusion of anti-immigration parties and its effect on their ideological positions. *West European Politics*, 30(5), 1022-1040.
[17] van Holsteyn, J. M., 2018. 'The Radical Right in Belgium and the Netherlands'. In Rydgren, J. (ed.) *The Oxford handbook of the radical right*. Oxford University Press, 478–504.
[18] Mudde, C., 1995. One against all, all against one!: A portrait of the Vlaams Blok. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 29(1), 5-28.
[19] Vlaams Belang, 2011. *2. The Program: 2.1 Flemish independence*. Available at:
[20] Vlaams Belang, n.d. *BEGINSELVERKLARING*. Available at: https://www.vlaamsbelang.org/beginselverklaring/
[21] Erk, J., 2005. From Vlaams Blok to Vlaams Belang: the Belgian far-right renames itself. *West European Politics*, 28(3), 493-502.

Lastly, the party opposes drug liberalisation and abortion, while it was initially against same-sex marriage. However, since 2014, VB has moderated this latter position and has shifted to support same-sex marriage.

2.3. Leadership and Organisation

Both the original Vlaams Blok, as well as its successor, VB, are considered rather conventional and very well institutionalised membership parties from an organisational perspective.[22] Compared to other Belgian political parties, however, VB is less internally democratic, as its members enjoy fewer formal rights and opportunities to participate in intra-party decision-making.[23] For example, unlike other Flemish parties, VB's party members do not have the right to directly vote on their new party chair.[24]

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
Frank Vanhecke	12/12/2004	01/03/2008	1175
Bruno Valkeniers	02/03/2008	15/12/2012	1749
Gerolf Annemans	16/12/2012	19/10/2014	672
Tom Van Grieken	20/10/2014	13/04/2021	2367
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***1491***

Table 4 VB leaders and duration in post, 12/12/2004 – 13/04/2021

Following the disbandment of Vlaams Blok after the Supreme Court ruling, VB was established on 14 November 2004. A month later, on 12 December 2004, the former Vlaams Blok chairman, Frank Vanhecke, was chosen as new leader of VB. Under its new name, the party carefully moderated or removed some of its more radical positions, yet, its leader was quick to clarify that 'We change our name, but not our tricks. We change our name, but not our programme'.[25] On March 2 2008, Bruno Valkeniers was named as new party leader, succeeding Vanhecke who, after almost four years at the party's leadership decided not to apply for the party chairmanship. Under Valkeniers, VB experienced an internal crisis which saw a number of high-profile members, among them former leader Frank Vanhecke, defecting from or quitting the party in 2010 and 2011. Following the party's heavy losses during the local elections of 2012, Valkeniers decided to step down as party chairman and was succeeded by Gerolf Annemans on 16 December 2012.

Annemans attempted to sharpen VB's programmatic positions by calling for stricter migration policies, a revision of EU cooperation, and Flemish independence. Despite these attempts, however, VB suffered heavy losses at the European, Flemish and federal elections in 2014, which forced Annemans to announce an extraordinary party council and an early intraparty leader election for October that year. After only two years at the party's leadership, Annemans was succeeded by Tom Van Grieken, who was 28 years of age at the time. Van Grieken has attempted to further soften and moderate the party's image without, however, tampering with VB's core positions, namely

[22] van Holsteyn, J. M., 2018. 'The Radical Right in Belgium and the Netherlands'.
[23] Van Haute, E., 2015. 'Party membership in Belgium: From the Cradle to the Grave?'. In Van Haute, E. and Gauja, A. (eds.) *Party members and activists*. Routledge., 34–49.
[24] van Holsteyn, J. M., 2018. 'The Radical Right in Belgium and the Netherlands'.
[25] Swyngedouw, M., Abts, K. and Van Craen, M., 2007. 'Our own people first in a Europe of peoples: the international policy of the Vlaams Blok'. In Liang, C.S. (ed.) *Europe for the Europeans: The foreign and security policy of the populist radical right*. Routledge, 81-102.

Flemish independence and restrictive immigration policies, including welfare chauvinism. Van Grieken has implied his aspiration to break the cordon sanitaire imposed on the party and, in this regard, has stated that 'there is no cordon sanitaire around our ideas, but there is about our style'.[26]

2.4. Electoral performance

VB was initially popular with the Flemish electorate, winning 12% of the vote in the 2007 federal election, which placed it, more or less, at Vlaams Blok's status quo. However, the party's electoral downturn began with the establishment of the regionalist, yet, more moderate New Flemish Alliance party in 2008. In the ensuing 2010 federal election, VB's vote share was reduced to 7.8%, which sparkled an intraparty crisis. The party's vote share plummeted in the 2014 federal election, when VB received just 3.7% of the vote. This result triggered a change in party leadership a few months later, which saw the election of Tom Van Grieken at the party' chair. Under Van Grieken's leadership, VB has managed to regain its lost popularity. In the 2019 federal election, the party finished second in the Flemish region, after receiving 12% of the popular vote. What is more, in the aftermath of the election, Van Grieken became the first VB leader to attend a meeting with the King along with the other main party leaders, which fuelled Van Grieken's aspirations for an end of the cordon sanitaire on the party.

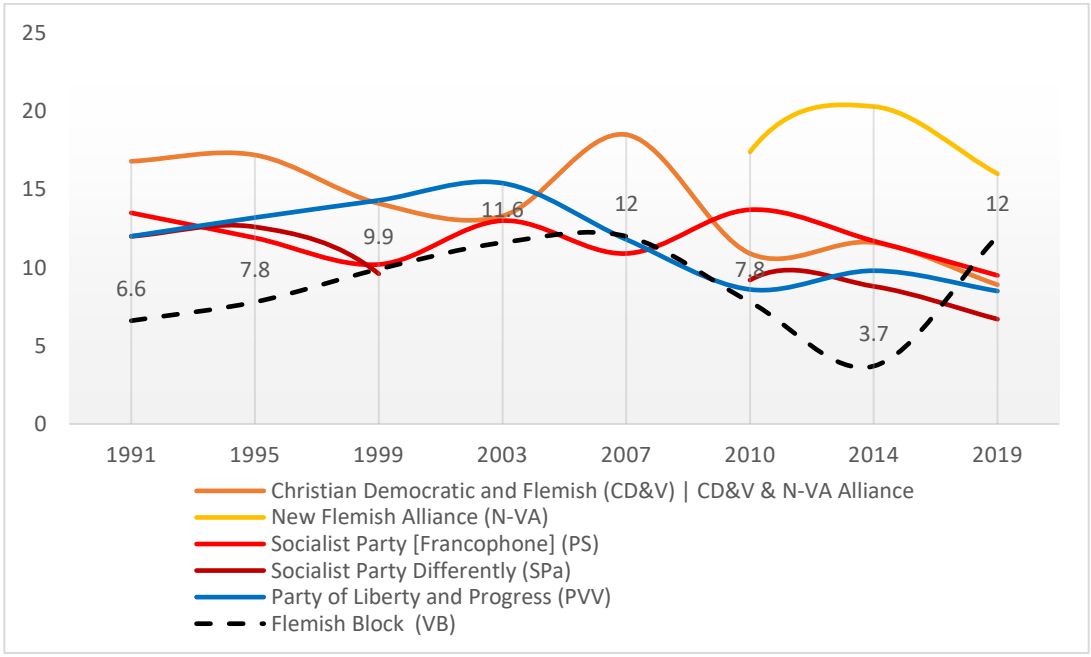

Figure 2 VB's electoral performance in Belgian federal elections, 1991-2019 (%)

[26] Nieuwsblad, 2014. BIO. Wie is Tom Van Grieken?. 19 September 2014. Available at: https://www.nieuwsblad.be/cnt/dmf20141019_01329230

3. Bulgaria –Ataka

3.1. Intro

Political party Ataka was founded in April 2005, two months before the June Parliamentary elections of the same year, by Volen Siderov, who was at the time the TV presenter of the show 'Attaka' on SKAT TV. Ataka, as part of the coalition 'National Union Ataka', which included four minor parties alongside party Ataka, is the first coalition of strong nationalist appeal to enter the Bulgarian Parliament in its post-1989 history. Indeed, the party is identified as the 'most visible and structurally stable representative of Bulgarian populist radical right'.[27] Ataka is a populist right-wing political party, which counts no change in leadership and three party splits in its 16-year history. It has also provided various governments with a parliamentary majority in the 2009-2017 period, while since 2017, Ataka has been part of the government as a minor coalition partner, without, however, contributing cabinet members.

3.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

With a strong skew on the left in socio-economic issues and a solid ethno-nationalist discourse, Ataka seems to have struck a chord in the overall political context that underpins the timing and speed of the party's emergence and sustained presence. Within the context of division and lack of alternative on the centre-right side of the political spectrum in Bulgaria from early/mid-2000s, Ataka's social and economic welfare calls, openly Russophile, anti-NATO, anti-US, Eurosceptic and anti-Movement for Rights and Freedom (MRF)[28] positions, as well as its explicit nationalist calls for sovereignty in economic, ethnic, foreign and monetary policy terms have become increasingly popular. However, a running paradox in the path from a TV show to a political party (a case of party-media hybrid[29]) remains the strong anti-establishment rhetoric alongside a strategic role in parliament in support of incumbents. Yet, any such contradictions seem to be consistently mitigated by the swift controversies staged by its leadership in the public space. These, usually confrontational, incidents, have become the party's trademark and seem to coincide with upcoming elections, bringing Ataka disproportionately to the spotlight at key junctions of election cycles.

The party's core programmatic policy positions are articulated in the 2005 Election manifesto which is titled 'To give Bulgaria back to Bulgarians' and contains the 20 principles of 'National Union Ataka'.[30] By 2013, however, the election manifesto had matured into 'a governing programme' titled 'Siderov's plan against colonial slavery'.[31] Ataka has invested heavily in anti-establishment, nationalist and anti-minority stances with its main slogans being 'And God is with us', 'Let's get Bulgaria back!' and 'Bulgaria above all'. The party positions itself in stark opposition to establishment parties and the political elite, despite, at times, lending its crucial parliamentary support to

[27] Avramov, K., 2015. 'The Bulgarian radical right: Marching up from the margins'. In Minkenberg, M. (ed.) *Transforming the transformation? The East European radical right in the political process*. Routledge, 299-319.
[28] MRF represents predominantly the Turkish Minority in Bulgaria. It is worth mentioning that ethnic parties are banned by the Bulgarian Constitution.
[29] Smilova, R., Smilov, D. and Ganev, G., 2012. 'Democracy and the Media in Bulgaria: Who Represents the People?'. In Psychogiopoulou, E. (ed.) *Understanding media policies: A European perspective*. Palgrave Macmillan, 37-53.
[30] National Union Ataka, 2005. *To give Bulgaria back to Bulgarians*. Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/down/coded_originals/80710_2005.pdf
[31] National Union Ataka, 2013. *Siderov's plan against colonial slavery. A governing programme by 'Ataka' Political Party 2013*. Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/80710_2013.pdf

incumbents irrespective of which side of the political spectrum they are on. Ataka juxtaposes 'the people as a whole, undifferentiated and unified, to the corrupted political class'.[32] A narrative of election fraud is a recurring feature in Siderov's public speeches around election periods. To this end, the party is in favour of conducting referendums for 'important issues' which 'concern over 10% of Bulgarian population'. The party also uses references that draw on social and economic injustices brought onto 'the people' by what is repeatedly referred to as homogenous categories of 'national traitors', 'criminals', 'robbers' etc. In its calls to protect the people of Bulgaria, Ataka 'relies on an ethno-nationalist interpretation of 'the people' which excludes ethnic minorities, namely Roma and furthermore migrants, but also on an anti-elitist, anti-EU and anti-foreign influence/capital base'.[33] Christian orthodoxy and traditional family values hold a central place in the party's positions.

In terms of economic policies, Ataka stands for re-distribution of wealth, re-nationalisation of industries and revision of the country's post-1989 economic transition by ensuring priority for Bulgarian businessmen over foreign investors. More specifically, it calls for the re-nationalisation of key industries which will help finance higher state pensions and a higher minimum wage 'corresponding to European standards'. It calls for a reconsideration of the privatisation process during the transition period and for a re-nationalisation of electricity distribution companies, mobile telecommunications companies and banks. It also advocates zero tax on profits, the prioritisation of advanced technologies, electronics, the weapons industry, and agriculture, 'ending the dependency' of Bulgaria on the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, as well as reconsideration of foreign debt as a whole.

3.3. Leadership and Organisation

Ataka's snap emergence and swift establishment in Bulgarian politics constitutes the perfect example of the importance of consolidation over growth. Ataka has not had a leadership change since its establishment. Siderov has cemented an image of an unpredictable and controversial figure. A number of public appearances and incidents have become a dominant feature of his leadership style.

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
Volen Siderov	17/04/2005	12/04/2021	5839
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***5839***

Table 5 Ataka leaders and duration in post, 17/04/2005 – 12/04/2021

The party's founder and only leader so far, Volen Siderov, is a former journalist and TV presenter who used to run a popular TV programme under the name 'Ataka' on the regional satellite channel TV SKAT. The TV programme Siderov ran prior to the birth of the party was nationalistic, expressed socialist nostalgia, economic revisionism towards the democratic transition process in Bulgaria and the ex-Soviet bloc, as a whole. In 2009, following a 'divorce' between the party and its leader from TV SKAT, the TV station withdrew its support for

[32] Todorov, A. 2007. 'The Evolution of the Post-Communist Bulgarian Party Sytem'. In Getova M. and Uste A. N. (eds.) *The Impact of European Union: Case of Bulgaria, Case of Turkey*. New Bulgarian University Press, Dokuz Eylül University, 115-131.
[33] Otova, I. and Puurunen, H., 2018. 'From Anti-Europeanism to Welfare Nationalism: Populist Strategies on the Web'. In Pajnik, M. and Sauer, B. (eds.) *Populism and the web. Communicative Practices of parties and movements in Europe*. Routledge, 90-107.

Ataka. Soon after that, the party set up its own media channels, 'Alfa TV' and the 'Ataka Newspaper'. The channel broadcasts political, news and journalist programmes, while Siderov himself frequents a number of its programmes. He leads a talk show titled 'Freedom', which presents a strong anti-establishment and conspiracy theory interpretation of current affairs.

A clash between Pavel Chernev, one of Ataka's leading figures and elected MP, and Volen Siderov prompted the former to defect from the party and found a new political party - Svoboda in 2007. Moreover, in 2011, Valeri Simeonov, the owner of TV SKAT where Siderov and Ataka featured for years, also defected from the party and formed the National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria (NFSB). The split was brought by a clash between Simeonov and Siderov. What is more, in 2012, Siderov's step-son and Ataka's MEP between 2007 and 2014, Dimitar Stoyanov, established the National Democratic Party. The party's activity was terminated in 2014. Lastly, in 2012, Slavi Binev – an elected MEP with Ataka's support, but not a formal member of the party – established the Conservative Party Movement for Success. Failing to gain electoral traction, Binev re-registered the party as People for Real, Open and United Democracy (PROUD) in 2013, a move which, however, failed to make much of an electoral difference.

3.4. Electoral performance

In the Bulgarian parliamentary elections of 2005, 2009, and 2013, Ataka was consistently the fourth-strongest party, although long-term measurements in Siderov's and Ataka's support show a decline. Despite its electoral volatility, Ataka has remained recognisable in the electoral arena and a permanent feature of the Bulgarian Parliament since its inception. The party's electorate consists predominantly of men, and its supporters are exclusively of Bulgarian ethnicity. These tendencies have remained stable over the years. Controversial public appearances have been often employed by the party's leader as strategic attempts to increase the party's electoral support. However, Ataka's electoral campaigning style has been sanctioned by the Central Electoral Commission on a number of occasions. Agitation videos in the run-up to national and European Parliament elections have been banned and taken down in 2005, 2007 and 2014 for violation of a number of laws and regulations.[34]

[34] Central Electoral Commission, Decision 381, 15.05.2014; Central Electoral Commission, Decision 1081, 26.09.2014.

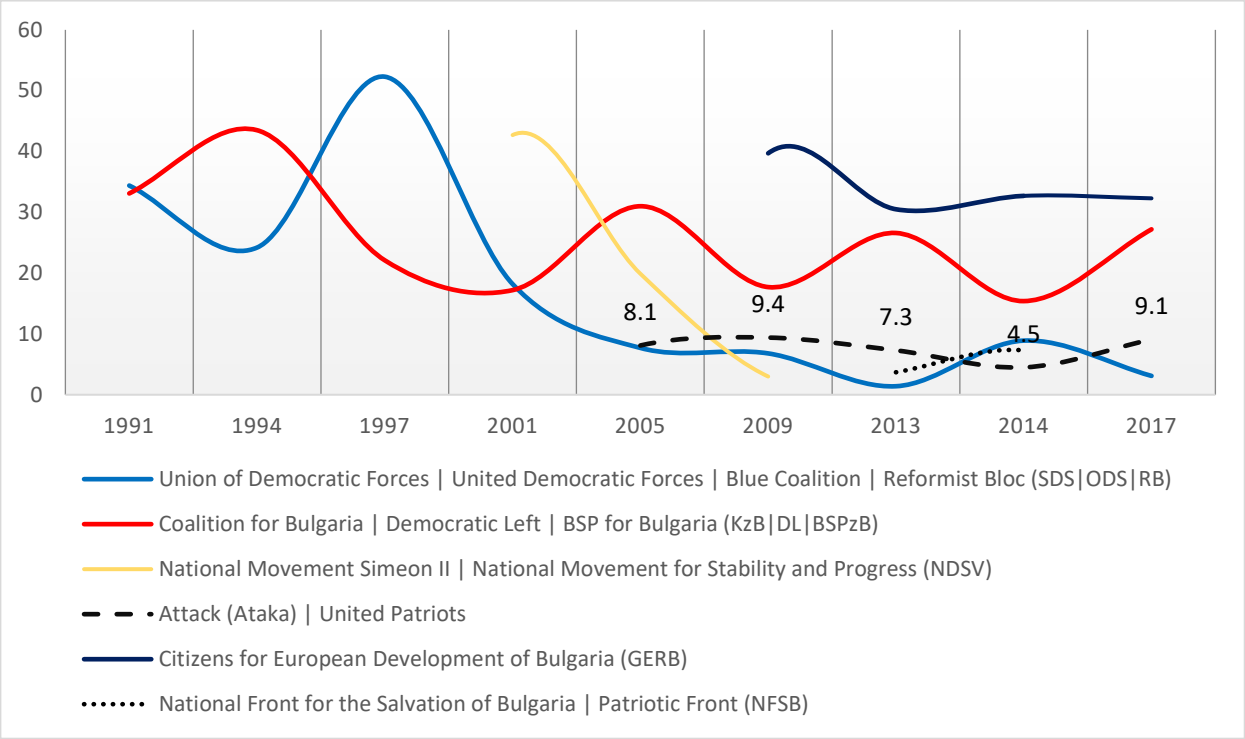

Figure 3 Ataka's electoral performance in Bulgarian general elections, 1991-2017 (%)

In the 2005 parliamentary election, Ataka ran in a coalition with a number of nationalistic associations and movements due to the court's refusal to register it to run in the elections on its own.[35] The 'National Unity Ataka' coalition gained 8.1% of the vote and 21 seats in Parliament. Turnout for the coalition was boosted by non-voters, as well as Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) supporters with 37% of those who cast a vote for the newly established party pointing to BSP as their second choice.[36] Votes came mainly from people between 41 and 50 years of age with secondary and higher education who did not cast a vote in the previous parliamentary election.[37] In geographic terms, core support came from district cities and small towns, but less so from the capital and villages. Ataka's electoral support peaked in the 2009 parliamentary election when it received 9.4% of the vote and 21 seats. By 2009, the party had gained popularity in the 18-30 age group, manual labourers, as well as the over-51 years of age group with a high-school level of education. However, Ataka's ability to increase its electoral support has stalled and has seen a steady decline – with some noticeable fluctuations at key moments of electoral cycles – since 2009.

While Ataka saw the highest gain in opinion polls from the 2013–2014 protest wave in the country, this did not translate into an electoral success. In the 2013 parliamentary election, Ataka's support dropped to 7.4% with the party managing, however, to increase its seats in the parliament to 23. This decrease in Ataka's support could be, perhaps, partly attributed to the series of defections of key party members that occurred in the period between the two elections. What is more, Ataka's electoral popularity plummeted in the 2014 parliamentary election, when the party won just 4.5% of the vote and 11 seats. In the run-up to the 2017 parliamentary election, Ataka joined the 'United Patriots', an electoral alliance with Bulgarian National Movement (IMRO) and NFSB – one of Ataka's splinter parties. The alliance ran with common electoral lists in the 2017 parliamentary election and achieved third

[35] Карасимеонов, Г. 2010. „Партийната система в България".
[36] Alpha Research, 2005. 'Public opinion 2005'. Available at: https://alpharesearch.bg/userfiles/file/Alpha%20Research_book_2005.pdf
[37] *Ibid.*

place by winning 9.1% of the vote and 27 seats, 8 of which went to Ataka. United Patriots were the minor coalition partner in the third Borisov cabinet, led by the Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB). Though Ataka had a ministerial quota in the coalition government, its appointee there – the Minister for the Economy Emil Karanikolov - was an expert, not a member of Ataka[38]. In 2019 after a series of scandals between the minor coalition partners, Ataka left United Patriots and withdrew its support for Borisov's cabinet.
In 2021 regular election, held on April 4th, Ataka ran on a separate list and received just 0.49% of the vote. [39]

3.5. Party in Government

In the parliaments of 2005, 2009, 2013 and 2014 Ataka provided support, with varying degrees, for governments of all constellations despite its strong anti-establishment platform. This has given the party a pivotal role in turning the wheels for governments in the Bulgarian Parliament. Ataka has played key role in motions of no confidence by opposition parties – its abstentions can be interpreted as support for government despite Ataka's persistent anti-establishment rhetoric. Moreover, Ataka has maintained the necessary quorum during parliamentary procedures of high importance - especially during the period between the summer of 2013 and spring of 2014 when the main parliamentary opposition party GERB refused to sit in parliament, and the governing coalition of BSP and MRF relied on Ataka for the quorum in Parliament.

Cabinet Name	**Cabinet Start Date**	**Cabinet End Date**	**Duration in Office (Days)**	**Ministerial Posts share**
Borisov III	04/05/2017	25/07/2019	812	1/20

Table 6 Ataka's duration in office and ministerial posts share upon cabinet appointment

After four consecutive terms of parliamentary presence, Ataka gained a governing position in 2017. In May 2017, the United Patriots alliance entered a coalition government with GERB for a four-year term, contributing a total of 28 seats. However, it can be argued that Ataka had the lower hand in this coalition. This was mainly due to the fact that the minister it appointed – Mr. Karanikolov – was never really 'owned' by Ataka. This severely limited Ataka's bargaining power, which, in turn, was further exacerbated by infighting and its leader's controversial appearances. Indeed, Ataka's leverage was weakened by its participation in government, since being part of 'the establishment' was in direct clash with its electoral promises and overall anti-elitism. Following numerous instances of infighting, internal rivalries and political scandals among the leaders of the three parties, the alliance was terminated in the summer of 2019. More specifically, Ataka was accused of boycotting the functioning of the alliance, which led NFSB and VMRO to expel it from 'United Patriots', ending in this way a prolonged period of tension and scandals. Volen Siderov along with two other Ataka MPs were also expelled from the 'United Patriots' parliamentary group. However, this did not impact the governing majority in the National Assembly, as 'United Patriots' still had 21 seats in the Parliament. None of the constituent parties of United Patriots – all of whom ran on separate lists - made it into the 45th National Assembly, elected in April 2021.

[38] https://www.mi.government.bg/bg/teams-minister-1/emil-karanikolov-41.html.
[39] https://results.cik.bg/pi2021/rezultati/.

4. Denmark – Danish People's Party (DF)

4.1. Intro

Dansk Folkeparti (Danish People's Party – DF) was founded in 1995 as a splinter party, and eventually a successor to the Progress Party, which soon lost its representation in parliament. DF held its first national congress on 1 June 1996, where Pia Kjærsgaard was unanimously elected as the party's leader. DF is a nativist political party, which counts only 1 change in leadership and no party splits in its 25-year history, while it has provided the various Liberal-Conservative governments with a parliamentary majority in the 2001–2011 period.

4.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

From the outset, DF advocated against immigration to Denmark, multiculturalism and the European Union, and highlighted the need to safeguard the values and cultural heritage of the Danish people, including family, the Monarchy and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark. It also called for a strict enforcement of the rule of law, and the strengthening of social welfare provisions particularly for the elderly, as well as animal welfare.[40]
More specifically, DF maintains that Denmark is not naturally a country of immigration, and calls for a drastic reduction of non-Western, particularly Muslim, immigration to the country. The party rejects multiculturalism, and expresses its preference for assimilationism, whereby immigrants are expected to contribute to the society and adhere to the natives' cultural norms and 'basic values such as gender equality, democracy and freedom of speech'.[41] What is more, although the party is pro-welfare, and specifies that '[n]ursing and care of the elderly and the disabled is a public responsibility',[42] at the same time, it calls for the restriction of such provisions to natives only. Welfare chauvinism is topped up with calls for lowering the age of criminal responsibility, and introducing stricter punishments for crime, especially crimes regarding personal violence, and more police and surveillance.[43] Criminal acts committed by (descendants of) immigrants are often invoked by DF in support of such calls.[44] Lastly, DF advocates for renegotiation of Denmark's EU membership and opposes a political union, as well as Denmark's accession to the Eurozone. At the same time, however, the party welcomes European collaboration on trade, the environment and technology.[45]

4.3. Leadership and Organisation

DF was founded in October 1995, after Pia Kjærsgaard, three other MPs, central organisational people, and about a third of Progress Party members broke out as a 'protest' against the party's chaotic organisation and radicalism.[46] A few months later, on 1 June 1996, Pia Kjærsgaard was unanimously elected as the party's leader. Kjærsgaard's vision of DF was that the party will be entrusted with parliamentary power and play a central role in political developments. However, the party's instant success in the first elections that it participated attracted many

[40] Danish People's Party, 2019. *Mærkesager*. Available at: https://danskfolkeparti.dk/politik/maerkesager/
[41] Danish People's Party, 2019. *Udlændingepolitik*. Available at: https://danskfolkeparti.dk/politik/maerkesager/udlaendingepolitik/
[42] Danish People's Party, 2019. *Tiltag på ældreområdet*. Available at: https://danskfolkeparti.dk/tiltag-paa-aeldreomraadet/
[43] Kosiara-Pedersen, K., 2020. 'The Danish People's Party Centre-Oriented Populists?'. In Christiansen, P.M., Elklit, J. and Nedergaard, P. (eds.) *The Oxford handbook of Danish politics*. Oxford University Press, 313-328.
[44] *Ibid.*
[45] Danish People's Party, 2019. *EU-politik*. Available at: https://danskfolkeparti.dk/politik/maerkesager/eu-politik/
[46] Kosiara-Pedersen, K., 2020. 'The Danish People's Party Centre-Oriented Populists?'.

'opportunists' who would often divert from the party's line and did not make good and decent candidates.[47] Kjærsgaard soon realised that in order for the party to be taken seriously and continue to grow, a higher level of centralisation and party discipline would be required. In this respect, DF quickly established a powerful leadership to ensure a tight central control, which would allow it to keep growing and pursue influence within parliament. This eventually led to the expulsion of a number of MPs in 2000. What is more, DF created a traditional party member organisation with dues-paying party members and local branches. This organisation was, however, much more centralised than that of mainstream parties', in the sense that rank-and-file members had very limited involvement in decision-making.

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
Pia Kjærsgaard	06/10/1995	11/09/2012	6185
Kristian Thulesen Dahl	12/09/2012	13/04/2021	3135
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***4660***

Table 7 DF leaders and duration in post, 06/10/1995 – 13/04/2021

On 7 August 2012, Kjærsgaard announced her resignation from the leadership of DF. She appointed Kristian Thulesen Dahl as her successor who was one of the Progress Party MPs who left with her in 1995. Thulesen Dahl took office on 12 September 2012, promising to maintain the course laid out by Kjærsgaard, although his political image was different from Kjærsgaard's, emphasising more his political competences and knowledge in regard to economic issues, rather than immigration and integration.[48] Kjærsgaard, however, remained as spokesperson for the 'value politics', particularly regarding the issues of immigration and integration and law and order, a position which she maintained until she became Chair of Parliament in 2015. Yet, following DF's electoral defeat in 2019, Kjærsgaard left her role as parliamentary chair and returned as DF's 'spokesperson on foreigners'.[49]

4.4. Electoral performance

DF made its electoral debut in the 1998 general election, gaining 7.4% of the vote and 13 seats. Significantly strengthened, perhaps, by power centralisation, the tightening of party discipline and ensuing expulsion of a number of its MPs, DF increased its vote share to 12% and 22 seats in the 2011 general election. This enabled DF to become the third largest party in the parliament and allowed it to play a key role in the formation of a coalition government between the Conservative People's Party and Venstre. In the following general election, in 2005, DF further increased its popularity, receiving 13.3% of the vote and 24 seats. The party's popularity in opinion polls skyrocketed in 2006 following the Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons controversy. However, DF did not manage to capitalise on it as much as it would have wanted, as in the 2007 general election it was met with minimal electoral gains, having received 13.9% and 25 seats. Four years later, in the 2011 general election, DF recorded its first electoral decline, yet, it maintained its position as the third largest party after gaining 12.3% of the vote.

[47] *Ibid.*
[48] Meret, S., 2015. Charismatic female leadership and gender: Pia Kjærsgaard and the Danish People's Party. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 49(1-2), 81-102.
[49] Kosiara-Pedersen, K., 2020. 'The Danish People's Party Centre-Oriented Populists?'.

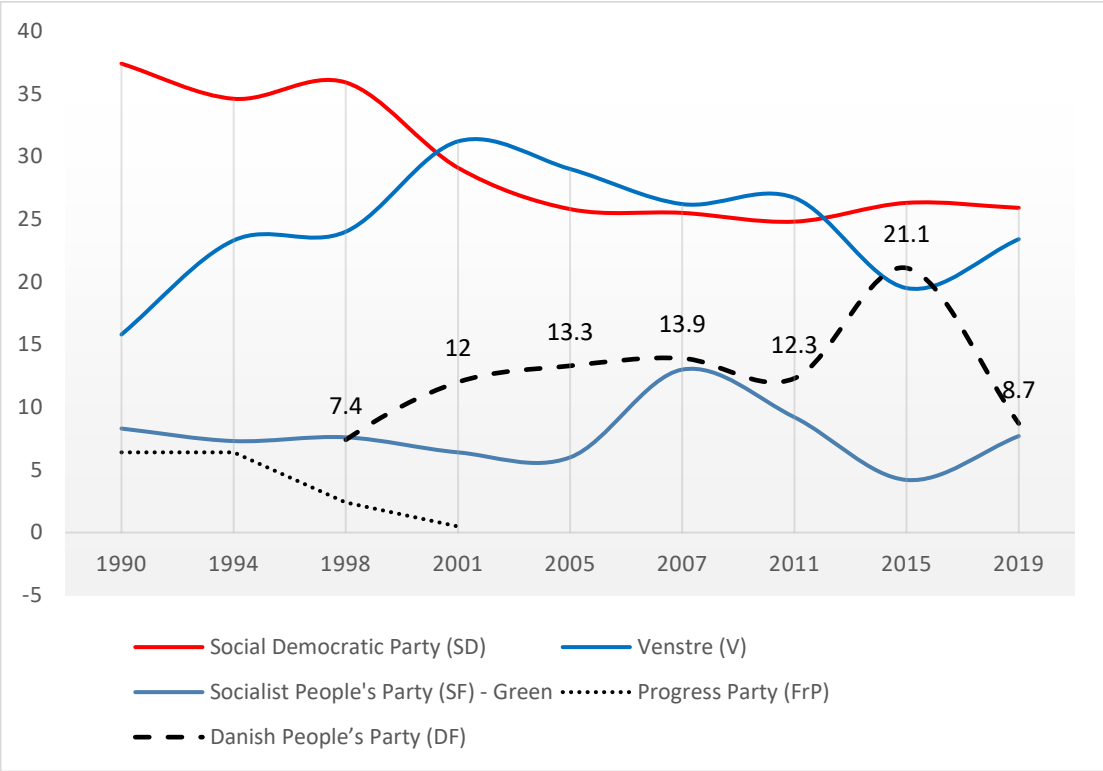

Figure 4 DF's electoral performance in Danish general elections, 1990-2019 (%)

This outcome contributed to the change in the party's leadership which came a year later, when Kjærsgaard stepped down after more than 6,000 days in the post. DF benefitted significantly from this leadership change in the 2015 general election, gaining 21.1% of the vote, which rendered it the second largest party in the parliament for the first time. However, the party suffered a major defeat in the next general election in 2019 after it received just 8.7% of the vote and 16 seats, having recorded a net loss of 21 seats compared to 2015, which placed DF back in the third position in the parliament. This drastic decline in the party's electoral support could be attributed, to an extent, to an intra-party scandal that same year, which saw Morten Messerschmidt, one of DF's MEPs, being involved in a case of alleged EU funding fraud. DF's poor electoral performance, which was its second worst since its establishment, triggered internal changes and a re-evaluation of the party's strategy.

4.5. Party in Government

Mainstream political parties' 'cordon sanitaire' towards DF did not last long. Despite the party's success in gaining parliamentary influence following the 1998 general election, DF was left with no influence in the formation of a government and was shut out due to being perceived as unreliable. This, however, changed following the 2001 general election outcome. Centre-right parties, particularly the Liberal party (Venstre), saw DF as a potential ally, since the latter had supported the Venstre candidate, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, for Prime Minister during the election campaign. Hence, DF was invited by the minority Liberal-Conservative government to lend its support without contributing any of its members to the cabinet though. This was repeated three more times, in 2005, 2007, and 2016. Indeed, government participation was never on the table for DF, since the party's leadership was convinced that DF could get more out of staying out of government.[50]

[50] *Ibid.*

By supporting minority coalition governments as an 'outsider', DF managed to indirectly influence policy-making in its key policy areas (i.e. immigration and 'welfare chauvinism') and further its political goals, while, at the same time, it avoided the electoral costs of government participation. It should be noted, however, that restrictive immigration and integration policies, as well as 'welfare chauvinist' positions were already part of the agendas of both the Conservatives and the Liberals, and, hence, no major concessions were necessary.[51] More specifically, in the 2001-2005 period, DF played a key role in drafting the new immigration law that was introduced by the government in May 2002, which, at that point, had been described as 'Europe's strictest'.[52] Furthermore, in the 2005-2007 and 2007-2011 periods, DF expanded its policy influence to the government's welfare policies. In tandem with the cuts in unemployment benefits and the reforms in the early retirement scheme, which were tolerated by DF, some social welfare benefits for refugees were also cut by 30-40% during the first seven years of the Liberal-Conservative government in power.[53] Yet, at the same time, DF leveraged the increase of social welfare provisions for the elderly, particularly those with low income. Finally, in the midst of the 'refugee crisis' in 2016, the parliament adopted several changes to Denmark's asylum legislation, which aimed at making seeking asylum in the country 'less attractive', and protecting Denmark's social cohesion and identity.[54]

[51] Christiansen, F.J., 2017. 'Conflict and co-operation among the Danish mainstream as a condition for adaptation to the populist radical right'. In Odmalm, P. and Hepburn, E. (eds.) *The European mainstream and the populist radical right*. Routledge, 49-70.
[52] Meret, S., 2015. Charismatic female leadership and gender
[53] *Ibid.*
[54] Kreichauf R., 2020. 'Legal Paradigm Shifts and Their Impacts on the Socio-Spatial Exclusion of Asylum Seekers in Denmark'. In Glorius B., Doomernik J. (eds.) *Geographies of Asylum in Europe and the Role of European Localities*. Springer, 45-67.

5. Finland – Finns Party (PS)

5.1. Intro

Perussuomalaiset (Finns Party – PS) was founded by Timo Soini, Raimo Vistbacka, Urpo Leppänen and Kari Bärlund in 1995 as a successor of the Finnish Agrarian Party (SMP). The party was initially called True Finns. Following the dissolution of SMP, Timo Soini – SMP's last secretary – and Raimo Vistbacka – SMP's last chairman and MP – managed to collect the five thousand signatures needed for registration to the official party register. In October 1995, PS was added to the party register and a month later, in the party's first congress, Raimo Vistbacka was elected party chairman and Timo Soini party secretary. Finns Party adopted its current name in 2011, a few months after its best national election performance so far. PS is a nativist right-wing political party, which counts two changes in leadership, one term in power and one party split in its 25-year history.

5.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

PS started as the party of the 'forgotten people' – the underprivileged ordinary man – mainly working in rural areas, who has been neglected by political elites.[55] It built on SMP's politics by keeping a strong focus on Finland's centre-periphery divide. However, PS substituted its predecessor's strong emphasis in agrarian issues with a more general focus on cultural divides and ethno-nationalist themes.[56] PS has been described as a fiscally centre-left, socially conservative, Eurosceptic party.[57] Although the party's main ideology has not changed much in its 25-year history, certain policy positions have been amplified, or conversely, toned down at certain junctures.

PS opposes neo-liberal economic policies, and has advocated instead for more progressivity to taxes, increase of the capital gains tax, re-institution of the wealth tax, and increase of state investments in social welfare, infrastructure and industry.[58] Indeed, Timo Soini once described PS as a "workers' party without socialism".[59] These positions, however, were significantly toned down during the party's participation in its first and, so far, only government between 2015 and 2017. Moreover, PS has consistently advocated for restrictive immigration policies, such as introduction of refugee quotas, and assimilationist policies, which go hand-in-hand with welfare chauvinism. Indeed, migrants are explicitly excluded from PS's vision of a just social welfare. In its 2015 manifesto, the party stated that 'a generous welfare state and open borders are not compatible' and that 'tax-financed public services do attract migrants seeking high standards of living'.[60] In other words, the consistency of present immigration flows 'is only weakening the level of services and the financial well-being of the welfare state itself'.[61] In this regard, the party has proposed the exclusion of any undocumented persons from social welfare provisions and their immediate deportation. It has also proposed the non-renewal of residence permits for all those who are

[55] Oxford Research Group, 2017. The Surge of the Finns Party: A Brief History, 6 March 2017. Available at: www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/Blog/the-surge-of-the-finns-party-a-brief-history.
[56] *Ibid.*
[57] Arter, D., 2010. The breakthrough of another West European populist radical right party? The case of the True Finns. *Government and Opposition*, 45(4), 484-504.
[58] Finns Party, 2011. *Suomalaiselle sopivin.* Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/14820_2011.pdf
[59] Ahponen, T., 2017. True Finns, False Hopes, 4 August 2017. Available at: https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/04/true-finns-finland-timo-soini-nationalists-far-right-xenophobia-elections.
[60] Finns Party, 2015. *Perussuomalaisten eduskuntavaaliohjelma – pääteemat.* Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/2019-2/14820_2015.pdf.
[61] *Ibid.*

'continually applying for financial social support'.[62] It is worth mentioning that several of PS's anti-immigration positions, such as the introduction of refugee quotas, were softened during the party's participation in government.

PS advocates various socially conservative positions. It opposes same-sex marriage, adoption and in vitro fertilisation rights for same-sex couples and single women, declaring, instead, its support to the traditional family model.[63] PS also favours various ethno-nationalist positions, such as mandatory teaching of 'healthy national pride' in schools, and funding of cultural activities that 'promote Finnish identity', while it calls for a ban on wearing the burqa and the niqab in public.[64] PS has traditionally supported a strong 'law and order' agenda, focusing on strengthening law enforcement agencies, and tougher punishments for violent crimes including terrorism, among others.[65] Furthermore, since its inception, PS has been a Eurosceptic party. More specifically, its Euroscepticism has focused on four areas: 'the over-centralisation of power to unelected technocrats and commissioners [in Brussels]'; Finland's high EU membership cost; the 'common responsibility in economic affairs'; and the lack of purpose in EU's common security and defence policy, since 'the majority of EU members already belong to NATO'.[66] However, Timo Soini's vocal Euroscepticism was significantly watered down during the party's participation in government between 2015 and 2017. The party's positions towards the EU were hardened again under the leadership of Jussi Halla-aho.

5.3. Leadership and Organisation

Despite PS's participation in government, the party did not manage to make the step from opposition to office organisationally. With one-third of its delegates being members of activist nationalist groups, the party retained its strong social movement character while in office, and never required its delegates to quit such organisations.[67] PS's chairmanship is divided between four persons – the party chairman and three deputy chairs –, elected biannually at the party congress.

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
Raimo Vistbacka	16/06/1995	13/06/1997	728
Timo Soini	14/06/1997	09/06/2017	7300
Jussi Halla-aho	10/06/2017	13/04/2021	1403
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***3144***

Table 8 PS leaders and duration in post, 16/06/1995 – 13/04/2021

[62] *Ibid.*
[63] Finns Party, 2011. *Suomalaiselle sopivin.*
[64] Wahlbeck, Ö., 2016. True Finns and non-true Finns: The minority rights discourse of populist politics in Finland. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 37(6), 574-588.
[65] Finns Party, 2011. *Suomalaiselle sopivin.*
[66] Finns Party, 2015. *Perussuomalaisten eduskuntavaaliohjelma – pääteemat.*
[67] Heinze, A.-S., 2018. Strategies of mainstream parties towards their right-wing populist challengers: Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland in comparison. *West European Politics*, 41(2), 287-309.

Its first leader, Raimo Vistbacka, was born into a farming family. Prior to the dissolution of SMP, Vistbacka had managed to gain considerable parliamentary experience (1987-1995), as well as some ministerial experience as Minister of Transport between 1989 and 1990. Raimo Vistbacka's vision of PS was that the party will become and remain a 'challenger' to mainstream parties, and that its parliamentary group will grow up to 10-14 MPs; a view based on the rationale that a larger parliamentary group would not be possible to be controlled.[68] This vision and strategy, however, changed when Timo Soini took over as leader in 1997.

Timo Soini, PS's party secretary, succeeded Vistbacka as chairman in 1997 after being elected at the party's biannual convention. Soini, who was a member of SMP from the age of 16 till the party's collapse in 1995, did not have any parliamentary or ministerial experience. Despite that, he led PS for 20 years, and the party was met with unprecedented success under his leadership. Soini was first elected to the parliament in 2003. He also served as an MEP for two years before returning to the Finnish parliament after the 2011 election. Under his leadership, the party adopted strong nativist and Eurosceptic positions, which were, however, significantly softened upon PS's decision to participate in a coalition government in 2015. This resulted in the party losing its edge. Moderating the party's hard-line anti-immigration and Eurosceptic positions, which had won PS its unprecedented popularity in the 2015 general election, significantly alienated its core voter base and caused internal strife. Under increasing intra-party tensions, Soini announced in March 2017 that he would step down as party chairman in the forthcoming June party congress.

Jussi Halla-aho succeeded Soini as party chairman in June 2017 – a succession which triggered PS's first serious internal crisis since its establishment. Halla-aho was elected as a member of the parliament for the first time in 2011, and he quickly became the informal leader of the party's anti-immigration wing.[69] Halla-aho started his political life in a Finnish far-right umbrella organisation called Suomen Sisu, and built his political career as an avid blogger.[70] Halla-aho defeated easily Soini's preferred leader, Sampo Terho, at the 2017 party congress. While Terho's vision of PS was a folksy version of the British Conservative Party, Halla-aho's promise was to return the party to its anti-establishment roots.[71] However, PM Sipilä and Finance Minister Orpo quickly made clear that their party would not continue the coalition with PS under the leadership of Halla-aho, who did not have the intention to step down. As a result, twenty PS MPs, including Soini and Terho, left the party in the summer of 2017 to form a new parliamentary group under the name New Alternative, later renamed into Blue Reform. As all cabinet ministers were among the defectors, the Blue Reform continued to support the government coalition, while PS went into opposition.

5.4. Electoral performance

PS experienced a slow and steady electoral growth from its establishment in 1995 until its breakthrough in 2015. The party's chairman and only MP, Raimo Vistbacka, at the time of its founding in 1995, was re-elected in the 1999 election after PS won 1% of the popular vote. In the 2003 parliamentary election, PS increased its share to 1.6%, which amounted to three parliamentary seats in total. Four years later, in the 2007 parliamentary election, PS almost trebled their vote share (4.1%), which added two further seats to the party's parliamentary power.

[68] Arter, D., 2010. The breakthrough of another West European populist radical right party?.
[69] Ahponen, T., 2017. True Finns, False Hopes.
[70] *Ibid.*
[71] *Ibid.*

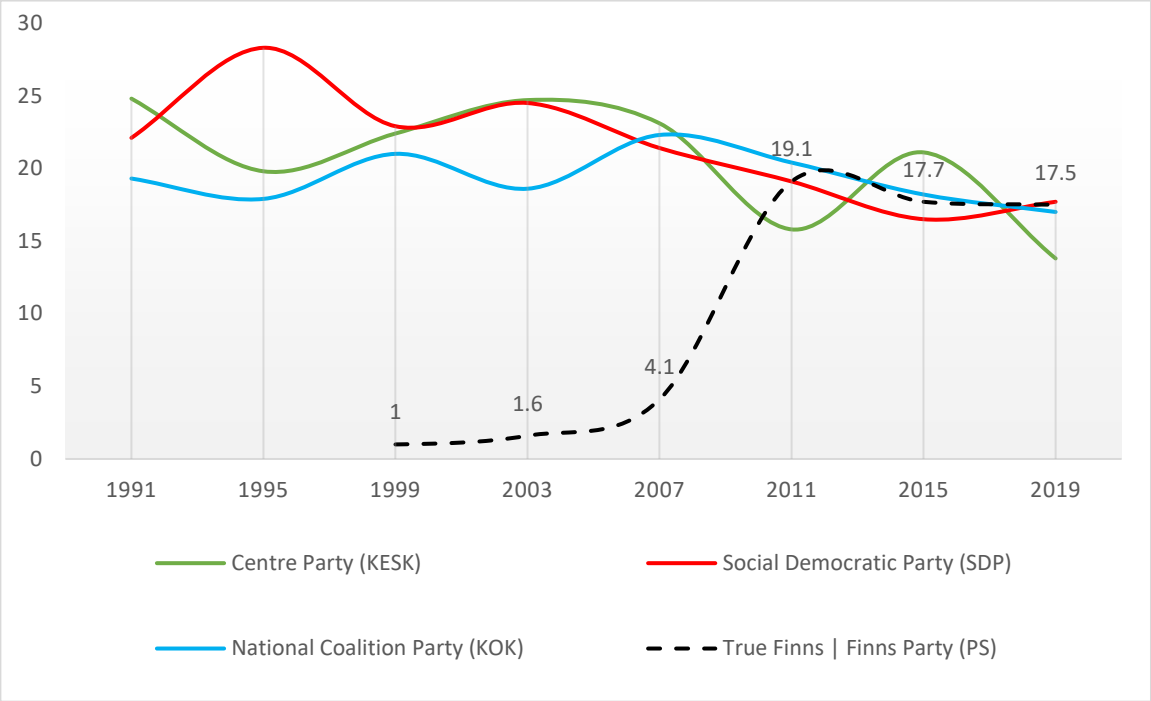

Figure 5 PS's electoral performance in Finnish general elections, 1991-2019 (%)

The party became a force to be reckoned with after the 2011 general election, which earned PS 19.1% of the vote share and 39 parliamentary seats, making it the third largest party narrowly behind the National Coalition Party (KOK) and the Social Democrats (SDP). In its campaign, PS had significantly amplified its Euroscepticism, turning opposition to bailouts for debt-ridden Euro countries into its main campaigning issue.[72] Both KOK and SDP contemplated inviting PS to join the newly formed government, however, this initiative was quickly abandoned due to differences on European policy.[73] PS largely repeated their campaign and performance in the 2015 general election. Although their electoral popularity and parliamentary seats share decreased by a fraction, to 17.7% and 38 seats, this was largely considered a small victory, taking into account Soini's increasing difficulty in managing the party's parliamentary group.[74] Shortly after the announcement of the result, the big winner of the election, the Centre's (KESK) leader and millionaire businessman Juha Sipilä, invited PS to join a coalition government with KOK, which Timo Soini eventually accepted. PS's ascension to power only intensified the party's internal strife, which culminated in a party split and the establishment of New Alternative, later renamed to Blue Reform, in 2017. As discussed above, Blue Reform continued to support the coalition government, while PS went into opposition. Despite these developments, PS managed to preserve its electoral power and strengthen its position in the parliament (i.e. increased its share of parliamentary seats from 38 to 39), as in the 2019 general election the party earned 17.5% of the popular vote, which rendered it the second strongest party, right behind SDP.

[72] Oxford Research Group, 2017. The Surge of the Finns Party.
[73] Ahponen, T., 2017. True Finns, False Hopes.
[74] *Ibid.*

5.5. Party in Government

The first and only time so far that PS participated in a coalition government was in 2015, when the party was handed four ministerial posts: Foreign Affairs (including European Affairs); Justice and Employment; and Social Affairs and Health. Timo Soini, had to make significant compromises on major policy issues, such as EU bail-outs, wage freezes, further spending cuts and immigration, in order to become and remain part of the centre-right coalition. As previously discussed, this significantly alienated PS's core voter base and caused internal strife.

Cabinet Name	**Cabinet Start Date**	**Cabinet End Date**	**Duration in Office (Days)**	**Ministerial Posts share**
Sipilä I	29/05/2015	13/06/2017	746	4/13

Table 9 PS's duration in office and ministerial posts share upon cabinet appointment

Timo Soini, the party's leader, demonstrated very limited impact on EU affairs during his term as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Soini faced criticism from members of his party for taking the Foreign Affairs Ministry instead of the heftier Ministry of Finance, which allowed him to evade responsibility for some of the hardest decisions of the government.[75] Perhaps his chief accomplishment during his time in office was that he managed to persuade the PM that Finland should abstain from the EU relocation voting in September 2015 – in line with his party's objection to compulsory 'burden sharing' – rendering Finland the only EU member state that abstained from the vote. PS's policy impact on public order was considerable and in line with the party's proclamations, yet, it should definitely not be attributed to PS alone. In April 2017, the Ministers of Justice, Interior, and Defence jointly introduced a draft bill on expanded intelligence powers. The long-anticipated bill constituted, perhaps, the most significant policy initiative of the Ministry of Justice, aiming to increase the country's capability to successfully tackle serious threats to national security, such as terrorism, foreign espionage and disruptions to critical infrastructure through the expansion of security authorities' rights to conduct intelligence operations both inside and outside the country.

In March 2017, Timo Soini announced that he would step down as party chairman in the next party congress, forthcoming in June of the same year. Meanwhile, in May 2017, a cabinet reshuffle resulted in PS losing control of both public order and EU affairs portfolios, despite Soini still remaining in his position as minister of Foreign Affairs. The events precipitated an intraparty conflict between the old guard of PS, many of whom had softened their positions while still enjoying ministerial posts, and a group led by the new hard-line party leader Jussi Halla-aho who did not wish to support Sipilä's government any longer. This eventually led to a party split in June 2017 when 19 MPs left PS to found New Alternative, which continued to support the government while Halla-aho's PS went into opposition.

[75] *Ibid.*

6. France – National Rally (RN)

6.1. Intro

Rassemblement National (National Rally – RN) was founded in 1972 as National Front by Jean-Marie Le Pen as a merger of a number of French nationalist movements of the time. Jean-Marie Le Pen remained leader of the party until his resignation in 2011 when he was succeeded by his daughter Marine Le Pen. In June 2018, National Front was renamed National Rally. RN's ideological orientation has changed significantly since its foundation, demonstrating considerable adaptability to the changing political climate.[76] In its current form, RN is a nativist political party, which counts 1 leadership change and four party splits in its 49-year history.

6.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

RN's ideological roots can be found in Poujadism – a small business tax protest movement in the 1950s – and a generalised right-wing dismay following France's defeat in the Algerian war and subsequent withdrawal from the country. However, the party's ideology and policy positions have changed substantially since its inception. In early and mid-1970s, RN's programme was relatively moderate and did not differ much from that of the mainstream right.[77] For example, anti-communism, which was a major theme in RN's manifesto, was shared by most of the mainstream right. At the end of 1970s, RN started moving away from the anti-capitalist ideas of Poujadism, and began adopting market liberal and anti-statist positions, such as calling for privatisations and the downscaling of the public sector. What is more, following RN's entry into the European Parliament in 1979, the party's Euroscepticism was amplified, with the party consistently stating that it's pro-Europe, but anti-EU.[78] By mid-1980s, the party had been considerably radicalised on a number of social issues, advocating highly controversial, divisive and xenophobic positions, such as the restoration of the capital punishment, restrictions in naturalisations of immigrants and the introduction of a 'national preference' for employers.[79] At the end of 1980s and in the wake of RN's electoral success and growing concerns over Islamic fundamentalism following the Iranian revolution, the party had already become explicitly Islamophobic. From the 1980s to the 1990s, and as the party kept growing increasingly popular among the socioeconomically vuLerable, RN's economic positions shifted from neoliberalism to policies of social welfare and economic protectionism.

Under the leadership of Marine Le Pen, RN has gradually become more moderate. Since 2019, the party has softened its Eurosceptic message, arguing for a reform of the EU, rather than France leaving it, and maintaining the Euro as the main national currency. Moreover, in her 2017 campaign, Marine Le Pen removed the party's traditional support for the capital punishment, declaring instead her support for perpetual imprisonment of those who commit the worst crimes.[80] What is more, Le Pen has distanced herself and the party from her father's anti-Semitic discourses. At the same time, however, RN still exemplifies a number of its old characteristic features,

[76] Shields, J., 2007. *The extreme right in France: from Pétain to Le Pen*. Routledge.
[77] *Ibid.*
[78] Lorimer, M., 2020. Europe as ideological resource: the case of the Rassemblement National. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(9), 1388-1405.
[79] Fabre, C., 2002. Entre 1986 et 1988, les députés FN voulaient rétablir la peine de mort et instaurer la préférence nationale, 4 May 2002. Available at: http://felina.pagesperso-orange.fr/doc/extr_dr/prop_lois.htm
[80] Vinocur, N., 2017. Marine Le Pen's plan to make France great again, 4 February 2017. Available at: http://www.politico.eu/article/marine-le-pens-plan-to-make-france-great-again/

reflected in its anti-immigration and Islamophobic positions and its support for economic interventionism, protectionism, and a zero-tolerance approach in law and order. For example, the party still opposes immigration, particularly of Muslims from Africa and the Middle East. Furthermore, in 2011, Marine Le Pen described wearing face-covering Islamic clothing in public spaces as the 'tip of the iceberg' of France's Islamisation, while she has consistently portrayed Islam as phallocratic, homophobic, and anti-Semitic.[81] Lastly, under her leadership, RN has been more explicitly in support of protectionism, particularly with regards to health, education, transportation, banking and energy.[82]

6.3. Leadership and Organisation

RN was founded in October 1972 under the name National Front for French Unity, or National Front in short, modelling the more established Italian Social Movement (MSI). The establishment of RN was an attempt to bring together various small far-right groups, movements and parties, from nationalists, anti-Gaullists and former Poujadists, to Algerian War veterans, and some monarchists.[83] On 5 October 1972, Jean-Marie Le Pen was chosen to be the first leader of the party, as he was considered as a relatively more moderate figure on the far-right.[84] Le Pen's vision of the party was a more mainstream RN whose members would refrain from engaging in acts of radical activism and, in this regard, he sought the 'total fusion' of the currents in the party.[85] This move towards the mainstream cost RN many leading members and much of its grassroots base. Indeed, the party's youth movement was banned from RN soon after its establishment in 1973. Moreover, several of RN's more militant leading members left the party and in 1974 founded the Party of New Forces (PFN), which antagonised and weakened RN throughout the 1970s. What is more, following the death of one of RN's most prominent revolutionary nationalist members in 1978, a neo-fascist radical group split off in 1980 and a few years later founded the French Nationalist Party.

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
Jean-Marie Le Pen	05/10/1972	15/01/2011	13981
Marine Le Pen	16/01/2011	14/04/2021	3741
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***8861***

Table 10 RN leaders and duration in post, 05/10/1972 – 14/04/2021

Le Pen's move to the mainstream did not pay off electorally in the first decade of the party's existence. In the aftermath of the Iranian revolution and the emergence of less favourable immigration policies, RN started gradually adopting hard-line positions on a number of social issues, such as immigration and multiculturalism. Indeed, in the early-1980s, Le Pen was in favour of the prospect of alliances with the mainstream right, under the condition that RN would not have to water down its positions on key issues. By the mid-1980s, and particularly

[81] Shorto, R., 2011. Marine Le Pen, France's (Kinder, Gentler) Extremist, 29 April 2011. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/01/magazine/mag-01LePen-t.html?pagewanted=all
[82] *Ibid.*
[83] DeClair, E., 1999. *Politics on the Fringe: The People, Policies, and Organization of the French National Front*. Duke University press.
[84] *Ibid.*
[85] Shields, J., 2007. *The extreme right in France*.

after the party's 1984 European election success, RN had managed to attract moderate supporters, including some high-profile defectors from the mainstream right. However, in the late 1980s, a number of RN's important members left the party following Le Pen's anti-Semitic comments made in the press. Although RN kept growing electorally throughout the 1990s, so did intraparty turmoil. In 1997, following RN's best performance in a general election so far, Le Pen had a disagreement with the party's deputy leader Bruno Mégret over RN's strategy, with the latter favouring a tactical cooperation with the weakened centre-right and the former refusing to compromise. This disagreement escalated during the party's 1997 national congress when Le Pen refused to make Mégret the leader of the RN list for the upcoming European election. Eventually, in January 1999, Mégret and his faction left RN and founded the National Republican Movement (MNR).

This party split, in combination with increased competition from more moderate nationalists, left RN electorally impaired for most of the 2000s. Consecutive electoral defeats, particularly in the 2007 general and presidential elections, brought financial problems for the party, and in September 2008 Jean-Marie Le Pen announced his intention to retire as RN's leader in 2010. Marine Le Pen, backed by her father, and RN's deputy leader Bruno GolLisch campaigned to succeed Jean-Marie Le Pen, and on 15 January 2011 Marine Le Pen was announced the new leader of RN. Marine Le Pen sought to return RN to the mainstream by softening the party's xenophobic and Eurosceptic image. In 2015, Marine Le Pen first suspended and then expelled her father from the party, as he was deemed too controversial for RN's new image. In 2017, following RN's softening of its Eurosceptic discourse, the party's deputy leader split from RN and founded The Patriots. Marine Le Pen completed the party's rebranding in 2018 when her proposal to rename the party to its current name was accepted by party members. Indeed, Marine Le Pen seems to have succeeded in establishing RN as a major political force in recent years.

6.4. Electoral performance

RN struggled electorally during the first decade of its existence until its first electoral breakthrough in the 1984 European parliament election. The party fared poorly in the 1973, 1978 and 1981 general elections, receiving 0.5%, 0.3% and 0.2% respectively. Things started gradually to change in the 1980s. The 'socialist takeover' in the 1981 general election triggered the consolidation and radicalisation of the centre-right.[86] Meanwhile, the Socialist 'austerity turn' in 1983 rendered the two political blocs largely indistinguishable in the eyes of many voters, which, in turn, induced them to search for alternatives.[87] In combination with RN's political and strategic recalibration and the end of the media's cordon sanitaire on the party in the early 1980s, these developments contributed to RN's first electoral breakthrough in the 1984 European parliament election.

[86] White, J.K. and Davies, P.J., 1998. *Political parties and the collapse of the old orders*. SUNY Press.
[87] Kitschelt, H. and McGann, A.J., 1997. *The radical right in Western Europe: A comparative analysis*. University of Michigan Press.

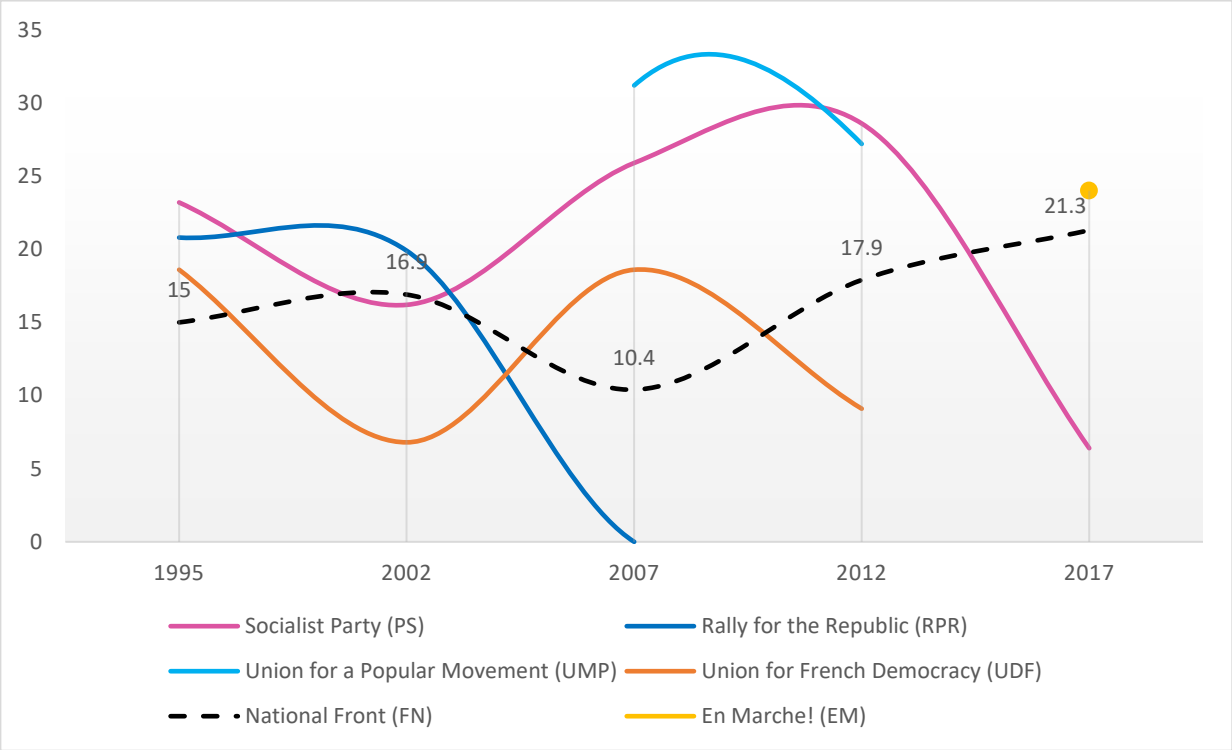

Figure 6 RN's electoral performance in French Presidential elections (1st round), 1995-2017 (%)

This result marked the beginning of RN's electoral rise, which lasted slightly over a decade. In the 1986 general election, RN received 9.8% of the vote and 35 seats in the National Assembly, taking advantage of a new proportional representation system that had been introduced by the Socialist Party to moderate its foreseeable electoral defeat. Although this record number of seats did not mean much for RN in terms of tangible political influence, it helped to increase the party's political legitimacy in the eyes of its voters.[88] In the 1988 snap general election, RN retained its 9.8% support, but its number of seats was reduced to one following the return of a majoritarian electoral system. In the 1993 general election, RN rose to 12.4% of the vote but did not manage to secure any seats due to the nature of the electoral system. RN further increased its vote share to 15% in the 1997 snap general election, which allowed it to win one seat in the National Assembly.

RN's second major electoral breakthrough came in the 2002 presidential election, when Jean-Marie Le Pen beat unexpectedly the Socialist Party candidate Lionel Jospin by 0.7% in the first round. This triggered the merger of the main centre-right parties under the broad-based Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) in an attempt to counter RN's electoral rise. Indeed, in the 2002 general election, RN's vote share dropped to 11.3% and no seats in the National Assembly, and in the 2007 general election it further plummeted to 4.3%. These results, in combination with Le Pen's poor performance in the 2007 presidential election triggered his decision for a leadership change in the party.

In 2012, in the first elections under RN's new leadership, Marine Le Pen finished third with 17.9% in the presidential election, while RN won 13.6% and two seats in the general election. Yet, RN's third major electoral breakthrough came in the 2014 European parliament election, when the party finished first with 24.9%. Although the party failed to increase its vote share in the 2017 general election, receiving 13.2% of the vote, it increased its number of seats to eight. Finally, Le Pen finished second in the 2017 presidential election, receiving 21.3% of the vote, which constitutes RN's best record so far.

[88] DeClair, E., 1999. *Politics on the Fringe.*

7. Germany – Alternative for Germany (AfD)

7.1. Intro

Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany – AfD) was formally founded on 14 April 2013 at its first convention in Berlin, which elected the party leadership and drafted the party's manifesto. Bernd Lucke, Frauke Petry and Konrad Adam were elected as party chairs. AfD constitutes the evolution of the political group Electoral Alternative 2013, which was founded by Alexander Gauland, Bernd Lucke, and Konrad Adam in September 2012 as an opposition platform against German federal policies concerning the eurozone crisis. AfD is a nativist political party, which counts four changes in leadership and four party splits in its 8-year history.

7.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

AfD started as a soft Eurosceptic party, in support of Germany's membership in the EU, but against further European integration, the Eurozone and bailouts for debt-ridden southern European countries.[89] The party also argued for a Swiss-style direct democracy, restrictive immigration policies, and opposed marriage and adoption rights for same-sex couples.[90] In 2015, AfD sharpened its programmatic positions and shifted to a more explicit Eurosceptic and nativist agenda. The party now calls for Germany's withdrawal from the Eurozone and the common European asylum and security policy, and the retrenchment of Brussels' control over the country's laws and policies.[91] AfD also expresses scepticism with regards to climate change, calling for a halt to Germany's energy transformation policies that have promoted renewable energy.[92] Additionally, it advocates the privatisation of social programmes and state-owned enterprises.[93]

More specifically, since 2015, the issue of German national identity has become more central in AfD's ideology. For example, Frauke Petry has argued that Germany should reclaim the German word 'völkisch'[94] from its Nazi connotations, recover Germany's sovereignty and national pride and put an end to the country's culture of shame regarding its Nazi past.[95] Indeed, both the project of European integration and multiculturalism – in the form of hosting immigrant and refugee populations within Germany – pose direct threats to German national identity. Along these lines, AfD opposes EU federalism and in Spring 2016, at the party congress, it adopted a policy platform that calls for the ban of Islamic symbols including face-covering Islamic clothing in public spaces, minarets and the call to prayer, using the motto 'Islam is not a part of Germany'.[96] By extension, amid the 2015-2016 'European migration crisis', AfD amplified its calls for restrictive immigration policies with its former leader,

[89] Arzheimer, K., 2015. The AfD: Finally a Successful Right-Wing Populist Eurosceptic Party for Germany. *West European Politics*, 38(3), 535-556.
[90] Thompson, W.C., 2018. *Nordic, Central, and Southeastern Europe 2018-2019*. Rowman & Littlefield.
[91] The Atlantic, 2019. The Far Right Wants to Gut the EU, Not Kill It, 7 May 2019. Available at: https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/05/far-right-politicians-euroskeptics-election-europe/588316/
[92] Knight, B., 2016. What does the AfD stand for?. Deutsche Welle, 7 March 2016. Available at: http://www.dw.com/en/what-does-the-afd-stand-for/a-19100127
[93] Werner, A., 2017. Germany's Shift to the Right. Jacobin. Available at: https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/07/alternative-germany-right-spd-merkel-gabriel-immigration-refugees-xenophobia-austerity-die-linke/
[94] Derived from the German word Volk, which has overtones of 'nation', 'race' or 'tribe'.
[95] Taub, A. and Fisher, M., 2017. Germany's Extreme Right Challenges Guilt Over Nazi Past. The New York Times, 18 January 2017. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/18/world/europe/germany-afd-alternative-bjorn-hocke.html
[96] Financial Times, 2016. Germany's AfD party adopts anti-Islamic manifesto. 1 May 2016. Available at: https://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/ae9e9a92-0f9d-11e6-839f-2922947098f0.html

Frauke Petry, stating that "I'm not against immigration, but [...] the economic and social consequences of migration on both home and host countries are equally momentous [...] The immigration of so many Muslims will change our culture".[97]

7.3. Leadership and Organisation

Bernd Lucke, Professor of Macroeconomics, Frauke Petry, entrepreneur, and journalist Konrad Adam were elected as AfD's first speakers in April 2013. The party was the evolution of the political group Electoral Alternative 2013, founded only a few months earlier, and for that matter it lacked a party organisation. Hence, in Spring 2013, AfD established affiliates in all 16 German states in order to take part in the upcoming federal election, while in June 2013 the party's youth organisation was founded. By May 2015, AfD had become polarised into two factions: one led by Lucke and his economic policies; and one centred around Petry and her restrictive immigration policies.

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
Bernd Lucke, Frauke Petry & Konrad Adam	13/04/2013	03/07/2015	811
Frauke Petry & Jörg Meuthen	04/07/2015	29/09/2017	818
Jörg Meuthen	30/09/2017	01/12/2017	62
Alexander Gauland & Jörg Meuthen	02/12/2017	30/11/2019	728
Jörg Meuthen & Tino Chrupalla	01/12/2019	14/04/2021	500
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***584***

Table 11 AfD leaders and duration in post, 13/04/2013 – 14/04/2021

In July 2015, after months of intra-party strife and a cancelled party gathering, Frauke Petry was elected as the de facto principal speaker, with Jörg Meuthen as co-speaker, of the party ahead of Bernd Lucke at the party congress. Her election deeply divided AfD, as it was perceived as an attempt to shift the party's agenda towards predominantly cultural conservativism. Only a few days later, five out of seven AfD MEPs left the party, and former co-chair, Bernd Lucke, announced his resignation decrying the party's 'xenophobic shift.[98] Soon after, the first splinter party, the Alliance for Progress and Renewal (ALFA; later renamed to Liberal Conservative Reformers – LKR) was announced by Lucke and former AfD members. In the run-up to the 2017 federal election, and amid increasing intra-party strife and decreasing popularity in polls, Frauke Petry announced at the party conference in April 2017 her decision not to run as the party's main candidate. The party eventually elected Jörg Meuthen as its interim leader.

[97] Beyer, S. and Fleischhauer, J., 2016. AfD Head Frauke Petry: 'The Immigration of Muslims Will Change Our Culture'. Der Spiegel, 30 March 2016. Available at: http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/interview-with-frauke-petry-of-the-alternative-for-germany-a-1084493.html

[98] Barkin, N., 2015. German AfD founder leaves party decrying xenophobic shift. Reuters, 8 July 2015. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/08/us-germany-politics-eurosceptics-idUSKCN0PI25720150708

One day after the 2017 federal election, and despite AfD's success, Frauke Petry announced her immediate independence from and intention to leave the party, citing her unease with the party's shift to a more radical cultural conservativism.[99] Soon after, Petry announced the formation the more moderate but short-lived Blue Party, AfD's second splinter party. Four other AfD members defected and eventually formed Citizens for Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (BMV) in January 2018, a conservative regionalist, albeit short-lived, party based in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Alexander Gauland – one of the party founders, and a former member of the CDU known for his stark conservativism – was elected as the party's principal speaker in December 2017 at the party congress, which also saw the return of Jörg Meuthen as co-speaker. Gauland and Meuthen attempted to soften the party's rhetoric to safeguard AfD's appeal to its expanded body of voters. However, this was perceived as 'watering-down' by André Poggenburg, the party's regional leader of the eastern Saxony-Anhalt state, who announced his resignation in 2018. Poggenburg announced the formation of the more radical Dawn of German Patriots (AdP) in January 2019 – AfD's fourth, yet, also short-lived splinter party. In November 2019, Alexander Gauland announced his decision to retire from frontline politics. At the ensuing party congress in December 2019, Jörg Meuthen returned as AfD's co-speaker. Alongside Meuthen, Tino Chrupalla, a house painter by profession and Gauland's preferred successor, was elected as the party's co-speaker. Their election has been perceived as a continuation of the attempt to give 'the most radical forces in the AfD a bourgeois face'.[100]

7.4. Electoral performance

In its first participation in a federal election in 2013, AfD secured 4.7% of the votes, just missing the 5% threshold to enter the Bundestag. Even so, however, this result was interpreted by the party as satisfactory.[101] By October 2017, AfD had managed to secure representation in 14 of the 16 German state parliaments by capitalising on "Europe's migration crisis", Germany's "open doors" initial response to the surge of asylum seekers, as well as a series of terrorist attacks and violent incidents associated with perpetrators of a migrant background. To little surprise, in the 2017 federal election, AfD gained 12.6% of the vote share and received 94 seats in the Bundestag. This result not only marked the first time AfD had won seats in the Bundestag, but it also rendered it the largest opposition party in the parliament.

[99] Chase, J., 2017. Frauke Petry, co-chair of the far-right AfD, to quit the party | Germany. Deutsche Welle, 26 September 2017. Available at: http://www.dw.com/en/frauke-petry-co-chair-of-the-far-right-afd-to-quit-the-party/a-40686693
[100] N.A., 2019. Gauland resigns – and opens the fight for his successor. Available at: https://www.archyde.com/gauland-resigns-and-opens-the-fight-for-his-successor/
[101] Backes, U., 2018. 'The radical right in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland'. In In Rydgren, J. (ed.) *The Oxford handbook of the radical right*. Oxford University Press, 452–477.

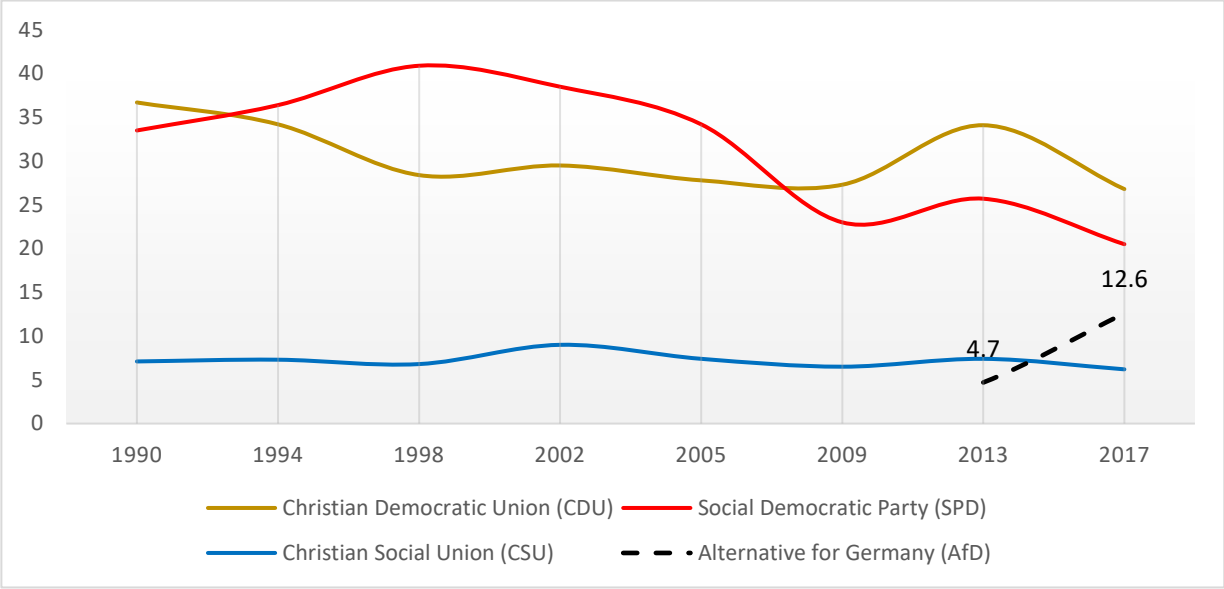

Figure 7 AfD's electoral performance in German federal elections, 1990-2017 (%)

8. Greece – Coalition of the Radical Left – Progressive Alliance (SYRIZA)

8.1. Intro

Coalition of the Radical Left – Progressive Alliance (SYRIZA) was founded in 2004 with the goal of uniting a broad array of left-wing and radical left parties and groups, from social democrats and democratic socialists to Marxist-Leninists and Trotskyists. Its main constituent element was Synaspismos (SYN), a democratic socialist party which was dissolved in 2013. The election of Alexis Tsipras in the party's leadership in 2008 marked the transformation of SYRIZA to a populist party. SYRIZA is a populist party, which counts two leadership changes, two terms in power and three party splits in its 17-year history. It is worth noting that the party has embarked on a moderate shift towards liberalism since its defeat in the 2019 general election.

8.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

SYRIZA has been an anti-establishment party since the election of Tsipras in the party's leadership and the escalation of Greece's debt crisis. As far as economic policies are concerned, SYRIZA has always declared its opposition to the EU's neoliberal policies and, in general, to international economic institutions. The party also calls for state interventionism and the strengthening of social welfare and has opposed privatisations. SYRIZA has taken a progressive stance on ethical, cultural and socio-political issues such as abortion rights, homosexual partnership, the separation of Church and State, as well as immigration and multiculturalism.

Following Greece's first bailout in May 2010 and as anti-austerity protests intensified throughout the country, SYRIZA came out enthusiastically in favour of the protesters. Alexis Tsipras took the initiative to organise and lead a massive grassroots movement of indignant citizens,[102] claiming that "'the people' had been betrayed by the political elites, which [were] held responsible for the socioeconomic collapse and could no longer represent them".[103] His main mottos came straight out of the populist toolkit and SYRIZA's primary slogan "It's either Them or Us" appeared across billboards and stickers; 'Together we can overturn them', was the byline. 'They decided without us: we move on without them' said another party poster.[104] In parallel with populist sloganeering and its pledge to 'organise the democratic overthrow of the political system and its underpinnings', Tsipras made improbable promises. He vowed to end austerity by simply 'tearing up the Memorandum [i.e., the agreement signed between Greece and the troika]', end Greece's 'humanitarian crisis' and restore the 'dignity' of the Greek people,[105] force creditors to write down the national debt, renegotiate Greece's massive international bailout, and lead the country to social peace and economic growth. He also assured party supporters and voters that his government would rehire fired public workers, cancel an onerous tax on household property, halt privatisations of state-owned assets, and fight the corrupt oligarchs that had dominated the economy. What all this simplistic

[102] Rüdig, W. and Karyotis, G., 2013. Beyond the usual suspects? New participants in anti-austerity protests in Greece. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 18(3), 313-330.
[103] Katsambekis, G., 2016. Radical left populism in contemporary Greece: Syriza's trajectory from minoritarian opposition to power. *Constellations*, 23(3), 391-403.
[104] Stavrakakis, Y. and Katsambekis, G., 2014. Left-wing populism in the European periphery: the case of SYRIZA. *Journal of political ideologies*, 19(2), 119-142.
[105] Tsakatika, M., 2016. SYRIZA's electoral rise in Greece: Protest, trust and the art of political manipulation. *South European Society and Politics*, 21(4), 519-540.

and adversarial rhetoric lacked was consistent ideological principles and a realistic policy package; what it had in abundance was a strong moralistic message as well as a promise, however vague and certainly unrealistic, for ultimate redemption from the crisis conditions.

In terms of immigration and asylum policies, during the party's election campaign in the end of 2014 and early 2015, SYRIZA pledged to expedite the asylum application process; stop the use of systematic and indiscriminate detention; close down the detention centres and replace them with open hospitality centres; stop push-backs at the borders; encourage family reunification; abolish EU restrictions on the travel of migrants; remove the fence from the Greek-Turkish land border; grant citizenship to second-generation migrants; and strengthen the protection of human rights in general.[106] In addition, SYRIZA also pledged to pursue the revision of Dublin Regulation in order to secure a more equal distribution of asylum seekers and refugees across EU member-states. Of course, very few of these pledges actually materialised. In fact, the long-promised policy shift was designed to fail as it was largely symbolic and paid no consideration to the rapidly increasing flows, the unfolding humanitarian emergency on the Greek islands, and the increasing pressures and tensions in other EU member-states.[107]

8.3. Leadership and Organisation

SYRIZA was founded just before the 2004 general election, however, the process that led to its formation is rooted back to the Platform for Dialogue for the Unity and Common Action of the Left in 2001. This grassroot initiative was an attempt to bring together a number of different parties and groups of the Greek left, which, despite their many ideological differences, shared common mobilisation against several socioeconomic and political issues that had become salient in the country by the end of the 1990s. The overarching aim of this initiative was the formation of an electoral alliance, which eventually materialised in the establishment of SYRIZA. Yet, the resulting intraparty polyphony, although welcomed and desired initially, would end up undermining the party's cohesiveness at various critical junctures.

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
Nikos Konstantopoulos	07/03/2004	12/12/2004	280
Alekos Alavanos	12/12/2004	10/02/2008	1155
Alexis Tsipras	10/02/2008	15/04/2021	4813
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***2083***

Table 12 SYRIZA leaders and duration in post, 07/03/2004 – 15/04/2021

Nikos Konstantopoulos, the leader of SYRIZA's main constituent element SYN, was decided to lead the newly established coalition. SYRIZA managed to elect six MPs following the 2004 general election, all of whom were members of SYN. This created the first serious intra-coalition crisis, as smaller constituent groups accused SYN of not honouring an informal agreement made prior to the election, according to which SYN would give up one

[106] Katsiaficas, C., 2015. A New Day for Greek Migration Policy? The New Government and Prospects for Reform. *BREF Commentary, No. 33*. Available at: http://www.bridgingeurope.net/uploads/8/1/7/1/8171506/brefcommno.33_ckatsiaficas.pdf
[107] Skleparis, D. 2017. The Greek Response to the Migration Challenge: 2015-2017. *KAS Katoptron #5*. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

seat in order for a smaller group of the coalition to be represented in the parliament. The crisis led to a temporary split, when the Internationalist Workers Left decided to leave the coalition. Eventually, tension subsided and a permanent split was avoided at the December 2004 SYN convention, which saw Nikos Konstantopoulos stepping down amid pressures and Alekos Alavanos, an avid supporter of the coalition, taking over SYN's, and, by extension, SYRIZA's leadership. Under Alavanos the coalition started recording a small increase in its popularity, which was reflected in the 2006 local election results in Athens and Piraeus. It is worth mentioning that Alexis Tsipras headed the coalition's ticket in the municipality of Athens local election and was elected as municipal councillor. However, despite SYRIZA's improved performance in the 2007 general election, Alavanos announced in November of that year that he would not be seeking his re-election as SYN's leader for private reasons. At the party convention in February 2008, Alexis Tsipras was elected as party and coalition leader, although Alavanos retained the leadership of SYRIZA's parliamentary group, since Tsipras was not a MP at the time.

Alexis Tsipras had risen to prominence as one of the leaders of the student movement during the student uprising in the 1990s. Being a high school student and member of the Communist Youth in those years, he had led the occupation of his school in Athens. Under the leadership of Tsipras, SYRIZA would eventually experience an unprecedented electoral popularity, which would come, however, at the expense of the coalition's cohesiveness. Following a mediocre performance of the coalition in the 2009 general election and amid the early stages of Greece's multifaceted crisis, the 'Reforming Wing', a group of SYN's radical social democrats departed from the party and the coalition during SYN's 6th convention in 2010. The group, which included four of SYN's MPs, announced in June 2010 the formation of Democratic Left (DIMAR) –SYRIZA's first major splinter party.

In the meantime, on top of Greece's debt crisis which erupted in late 2008, a crisis of democratic representation had already started unfolding, following the country's first bailout in May 2010, intensified social unrest, and the subsequent formation of a national unity government under the premiership of technocrat Lucas Papademos in November 2011. This facet of the country's crisis essentially amounted to the collapse of Greece's time-honoured two-party system. Within this context and in the void created by the old parties falling apart, SYRIZA, under the firebrand leadership of Alexis Tsipras, emerged as a populist force to be reckoned with, recording a more than threefold increase in its vote share in the May 2012 general election, which gave it a major opposition party status. In the face of the June 2012 general election, SYRIZA re-registered as a single party rather than as a coalition, in order to become eligible to receive the 50 'bonus' seats given to the party that finishes first under the Greek electoral system. However, SYRIZA came second again.

The 2012 election results made clear that SYRIZA's organisational underdevelopment and subsequent inability to balance all different intra-party ideological and political tendencies would be a hindrance to its further electoral growth. Indeed, in May 2013, former SYRIZA leader Alekos Alavanos announced the formation of the anti-austerity and pro-drachma/'Grexit' Plan B – SYRIZA's second major splinter party. A couple of months later, at the July 2013 SYRIZA convention, a decision in principle to dissolve the constituent groups in favour of a unitary party was made. Although Tsipras was confirmed as leader of SYRIZA with 74% of the vote, radical-left intra-party factions, such as the Left Platform and the Communist Platform, managed to secure a significant number of seats in the party's central committee. It is these factions that would threaten to break SYRIZA down into its constituent parts following the party's ascend to power in January 2015 and Tsipras's change of course after the July 2015 referendum. Following the acceptance by Tsipras and the SYRIZA government of the third bailout in the summer of 2015, 25 party MPs who were mainly affiliated with the Left Platform split to form a new radical-left party, Popular Unity (LAE) – SYRIZA's third main splinter party.

8.4. Electoral performance

A deep political crisis was evident in Greece well before the sovereign debt crisis erupted. By that time, as shown by repeated Eurobarometer surveys, trust in Greece's political institutions was eroding across the board and really fast. Between 2007 and 2008, trust in government plummeted from 46% to 2%; in parliament from 52% to 32%; and in political parties from 21%to 14%. Institutional legitimation took a new deep dive between 2010 and 2011 as trust in government settled at a disheartening 8%; in parliament at 12%; and in political parties at only 5%. In December 2008, the killing of a young schoolboy in Athens catalysed a violent mass insurrection against the state akin to a low intensity civil war. Greece was undergoing an unprecedented crisis of political legitimacy. It is against this background that SYRIZA's electoral performance should be understood.

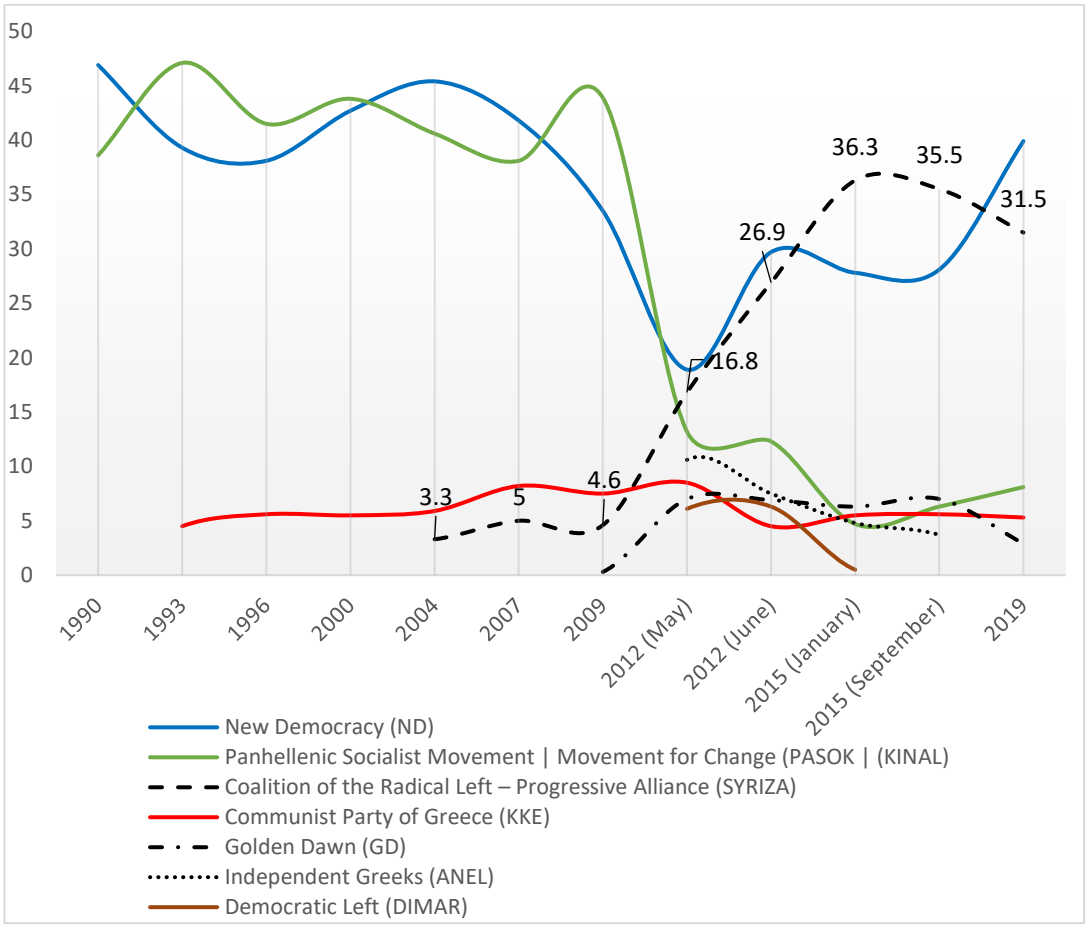

Figure 8 SYRIZA's electoral performance in Greek general elections, 1990-2019 (%)

In the 2004 general election, SYRIZA gained 3.3% of the vote share and six parliamentary seats, and three years later, in the 2007 general election, the party increased its share to 5%. In the general elections of October 2009, populist PASOK, now led by George Papandreou, the son of party founder Andreas, won office singlehandedly for one last time, but singularly failed to change Greece's disastrous course. SYRIZA's vote share dropped to 4.6% and thirteen seats, while the incoming MPs included Tsipras, who took over as SYRIZA's parliamentary leader. In the aftermath of this election, and especially after Greece entered a bailout-for-austerity programme in early 2010, there was a flight of PASOK's electoral constituency to newly emergent populist parties, especially SYRIZA. Under the circumstances, PASOK, that erstwhile exemplar of pure populism, undertook reluctantly to

transform itself into a liberal party. As the troika put the screws on the governing PASOK, most opposition parties decided to steal the populist clothes and put them on themselves. They engaged in 'blame-shifting rhetoric',[108] each of them claiming to speak in the name of the people whom they portrayed as the victims of foreign-imposed austerity; encouraged and, in many cases eagerly promoted, mass protest and political polarisation; and disregarded institutional legality, especially the obligations imposed on Greece by the troika. At the same time, social unrest continued unabated throughout the country.

In that setting of populist exuberance, PM Papandreou agreed in November 2011 to step down, thus paving the way for the formation of a grand coalition of ND and PASOK headed by Lucas Papademos, a former vice president of the European Central Bank (ECB). After PASOK, it was now ND's turn to abandon reckless populism in a willy-nilly fashion and try to play by liberal rules. But its effort was too little and it came too late. By then, the Greeks' satisfaction with democracy had dived from an already unhealthy 64% in 2007 to a menacing 14% – the lowest in Europe. Amidst the ever-growing political and economic crises in the country, the two general elections that were held in quick succession on 6 May and 17 June 2012 turned out to be the most volatile ever recorded in post-war Europe.[109] In the first 2012 general election, SYRIZA gained 16.8% and quadrupled its number of seats, becoming the second largest party in parliament, behind ND. In the aftermath of the election, Tsipras was invited by the President to try to form a government but failed. In turn, Tsipras rejected the President's proposal to join a broad coalition government with ND and PASOK, which led the country to the second 2012 general election. On 17 June 2012, although SYRIZA further increased its vote share to 26.9%, it finished second behind ND and became the main opposition party to a ND-PASOK-DIMAR coalition government. The new coalition government reached agreement with the troika to receive more debt relief in exchange for tough reform measures including new tax rises and pension cuts while unemployment, already over 20% at the time and still rising, was the highest in Europe.

In early December 2014, the government decided that the Presidential election due in the following spring should be held before the year's end. Since the rickety ruling coalition did not have the required number of seats in parliament to ensure the election of a President, parliament was dissolved and the country became set for a snap election in early 2015. In the fresh general election held in January 2015, SYRIZA came first with 36.3% of the vote, but was still two seats short of securing a parliamentary majority. To general public amazement, it promptly formed a coalition government with the far-right populist ANEL, which commanded 4.8% of the national vote and thirteen seats in parliament. Greece thus achieved the first government in post-war European politics – and, indeed, the liberal world over – consisting of leftist and rightist populists. In the aftermath of their electoral landslide, Greece's new rulers entered into negotiations with the troika about reformatting the Greek financial bailout. The negotiations eventually failed and in late June 2015, lest a disorderly bankruptcy be avoided, the troika offered Greece a proposal including harsher austerity measures for a new loan. In that critical moment, Tsipras decided to call a referendum, promptly scheduled for July 5, asking whether the Greeks would prefer the continuation of austerity or not. Astonishingly, the Greek people rejected the EU proposals by a majority of over 60%. Most astonished of all was Tsipras himself, who, now coming face-to-face with the possibility of Greece's economic destruction, decided to return to the negotiating table ready for an unconditional acceptance of the creditors' terms. On July 13, the Greek government reached a deal with its European partners and the IMF for a

[108] Vasilopoulou, S., Halikiopoulou, D. and Exadaktylos, T., 2014. Greece in Crisis: Austerity, Populism and the Politics of Blame. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52(2), 388-402.
[109] Kriesi, H. and Pappas, T.S.., 2015. *European populism in the shadow of the great recession*. ECPR Press.

third bailout package of about 80 billion euros, with harsher terms than the previous two such programmes. Amidst political flux and a collapsing economy, Tsipras called a snap election for 20 September 2015, which he won with 35.5% of the vote share. He also renewed his party's governing coalition with ANEL.
Eventually, SYRIZA was defeated by ND in the 2019 general election after gaining 31.5% of the votes and returned to opposition. This result triggered SYRIZA's moderate shift towards liberalism.

8.5. Party in Government

Once in power in January 2015, new PM Alexis Tsipras determined on ruling Greece based on the populist rulebook. During his tenure in office, he succeeded to remain in full control of both his party and government even in the toughest of circumstances. In July 2015, following his acceptance of a third bailout package with Greece's lenders in exchange for harsh austerity, he called fresh elections, which he won with relative ease (September 2015). Thereupon, he not only consolidated his grip over SYRIZA but was also able to renew his previous coalition agreement with his right populist partner.

Cabinet Name	**Cabinet Start Date**	**Cabinet End Date**	**Duration in Office (Days)**	**Ministerial Posts share**
Tsipras I	27/01/2015	20/08/2015	205	9/13
Tsipras II	21/09/2015	12/01/2019	1209	11/15
Tsipras III	13/01/2019	07/07/2019	175	11/15

Table 13 SYRIZA's duration in office and ministerial posts share upon cabinet appointment

Although staffing the state with party loyalists was hardly anything new in Greek politics, the scope, speed, and intensity of the phenomenon under the SYRIZA-led administration was stunning, especially given the harsh financial situations within which it occurred. Already by late 2015, European officials who were responsible for the implementation of the Memorandum agreements, expressed concern over massive party appointments in the public sector. The opposition parties, too, accused the populist government of appointing scores of political cronies to prime state positions based only on party affiliation criteria. Nepotism was rampant. As it was plentifully recorded in both Greek and foreign media, spouses, siblings, and party veterans were appointed to high-ranking state posts, often without any of the qualifications necessary for it.

State grab was followed by massive assault on institutions. In mid-2016, Tsipras launched a public consultation process for revising the Constitution. He pledged to give Greeks 'direct democracy', a say in electing the President of Republic (hitherto a prerogative solely of the Parliament), and the right to hold referendums after citizens' petition for introducing new legislation. The intended revisions would surely necessitate the creation of unstable coalitions and make Greece harder to govern. At any rate, by fall of the same year a committee appointed by government loyalists announced a programme of open public discussions in every corner of the country, even the smallest municipalities, about the constitutional reform. Alas, such deliberations were simply against institutional legality as the Greek constitution strictly foresees that constitutional reform procedures are undertaken by the parliament rather than the government. After that, constitutional revisions stalled.
The populist government also hurried to change the country's electoral system of reinforced proportional representation, which was meant to yield stable governments. It scrapped the 50-seat bonus in parliament that

was given to the party that wins elections, reduced the voting age from 18 to 17, and lowered the electoral threshold required from small parties to enter Parliament. Again, those changes would make Greece harder to govern and necessitate the creation of unstable coalitions in which SYRIZA, even if not the election winner, would be a part of.

In terms of freedom of the press, immediately after the populist government assumed office, several public officials began a campaign of intimidating the press, especially by filling lawsuits against newspapers and other media outlets that were critical of the government. In one such instance, Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias sued a major Greek journal for defamation in an obvious attempt to silence a dissenting voice, thus forcing the journal to appeal to the European Court of Human Rights. In another incident, three Greek journalists were detained after Defence Minister Panos Kammenos accused them of defaming him in an article that alleged mishandling of EU funds intended for migrant and refugee centres. The government also moved to limit the number of national television broadcast licences from eight to only four by keeping control of the bidding process itself (rather than entrusting it to Greece's independent regulatory authority) in the hope of wielding more influence to a smaller number of stations through the distribution of public advertising.

No less ferocious than on the freedom of press were the SYRIZA-led government's attacks on the independence of the judiciary. As the populist government's newly appointed minister of justice put it in August 2018, 'The judiciary and the executive need be on the same side in the fight against the public interest'. Or witness the case of judge Vassiliki Thanou, a vocal anti-austerity advocate who, in 2014, battled against wage cuts imposed on the judiciary as result of the Memorandum and openly condemned the then Greek government as 'totalitarian'. After SYRIZA came to power, Tsipras appointed her to a number of influential posts. In June 2015 she was made president of the Supreme Court by circumventing established procedures, which drew fierce criticism from the opposition parties. Immediately after her retirement from the judiciary, Thanou moved to the PM's office to serve as Tsipras's legal adviser.

Besides the separation of powers, which became blurred, and institutional integrity, which was often violated, political polarisation during the years of populist rule skyrocketed. The prime minister himself and other government officials missed no opportunity to denounce their political opponents as 'traitors' and a 'fifth column' serving the interests of 'neocolonial foreign centres'. Patronage also flourished, especially before elections that were forthcoming. In November 2017, Tsipras distributed 1.4 billion euros, most of it in the form of one-off financial handouts to citizens on low incomes, derived primarily from the over-taxation of the country's middle and professional classes. In December 2018, now with an eye on impending elections for mayors and regional governors as well as for the European Parliament, the populist government went into a new spree of handouts including fuel subsidies to small islands, emergency aid measures for livestock breeders, and the reduction of social insurance contributions of non-salaried workers. And in May 2019, just a few days before the elections of the European Parliament and with a possibility of national elections now in the air, Tsipras announced a yet another series of pension handouts and cuts to value-added tax on food and services designed to appeal to several specifically targeted social groups. He also declared new measures for the following year, 2020.

9. Greece – Golden Dawn (GD)

9.1. Intro

Golden Dawn (GD) was founded by Nikolaos Michaloliakos in 1985 after he broke away from National Political Union (EPEN). GD was officially registered as a party in 1993. Following an investigation into the 2013 murder of a Greek musician and activist by a supporter of the party, Michaloliakos and several other GD core members and MPs were arrested on suspicion of operating a criminal organisation. After a five-year trial, in October 2020, more than 60 defendants, including the entire party's leadership, were found guilty of forming and/or participating in a criminal organisation. GD is a criminal organisation, which posed as an antidemocratic party, and counts just one leader and one party split in its almost 30-year history.

9.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

GD started in the 1980s as a minor Neo-Nazi, antidemocratic group that embraced Neopagan beliefs. It remained largely on the margins of far-right politics until the 'Macedonia' name dispute in 1991-1992.[110] During that period, and despite the group's openly Nazi character and long history of violence, the Greek state recognised it as a legal political party (1993) and GD began incorporating various nationalist objectives into its main programme, such as the revival of the concept of 'Greater Greece' – the irredentist idea that guided Greece's foreign policy until its defeat in the 1919-1922 Greek-Turkish war; and the expulsion of Northern Greece's Macedonian-speaking and Turkish-speaking Muslim minorities. It also started advocating explicit Islamophobic and anti-Muslim positions. In the early 2000s, the party shifted away from Neopaganism and 'rebranded' itself as Greek Christian Orthodox; a shift, which overlapped with mass mobilisations – openly encouraged by the Archbishop of Athens – against the newly introduced ID cards. By the mid-2000s, amid increasing non-European immigration flows to and settlement in Greece, GD had already started openly advocating racist anti-immigration positions. What is more, following the outbreak of the Greek financial crisis in the late 2000s/early 2010s, GD added Euroscepticism and anti-EU positions to its ideology mix. Lastly, GD denounces multiculturalism and LGBT rights, is openly anti-Semitic, while the glorification and use of violence always had a central place in the repertoire of actions deployed.[111]

9.3. Leadership and Organisation

Nikolaos Michaloliakos is GD's founder and lifelong leader. Prior to this, Michaloliakos was initially a member of EPEN, and later the leader of its youth organisation. His past experience in politics also included publishing an extremist journal, as well as having been arrested several times for politically motivated offences, such as assaults and illegal possession of explosive materials. Although GD was founded in 1985, it was only recognised as a party in 1993 after gaining some momentum during the 1991-1992 'Macedonia' name dispute mass mobilisations. GD remained on the fringes of far-right politics for more than a decade, and in 2005, it temporarily ceased its political

[110] Psarras, D., 2014. *The rise of the neo-Nazi party 'Golden Dawn' in Greece*. Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung.
[111] Anagnostou, D. and Skleparis, D., 2015. Trends in radicalisation that may lead to violence: National background study – Greece. Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP).

operations and was absorbed by Patriotic Alliance, following clashes with anarchist groups.[112] In 2007, Michaloliakos decided the relaunch of GD and the subsequent breakaway of its members from Patriotic Alliance, which was dissolved in the same year. From that point on, GD kept growing, taking advantage of Greece's deepening financial, social and political crisis and ensuing polarisation. GD's serious internal crisis started in 2013 following the murder of a Greek musician and activist by a supporter of the party. This triggered a widespread public outrage and a government-led crackdown, which involved the prosecution of more than 60 key party members – including the leader and several MPs –, and the cut off the party's state funding due to the ongoing investigation. This sank GD into a deep and prolonged crisis, which involved the breakaway of various high-profile members in 2018 and 2019; the closure of the party's headquarters in Athens in 2019; and a party split, which saw the establishment of Greeks for the Fatherland in 2020. The intra-party crisis culminated in October 2020, when the defendants were found guilty of forming and/or participating in a criminal organisation.

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
Nikolaos Michaloliakos	01/01/1993[113]	14/04/2021	10330
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***10330***

Table 14 GD leaders and duration in post, 01/01/1993 – 14/04/2021

GD has always followed a strict hierarchical organisation and semi-military structure, in which the leader has the ultimate authority and decision-making powers. The party proclaims that it follows a military model, departmentally organised along the lines of the Greek military. GD members, but also its top leadership, including elected MPs, profess themselves to be 'soldiers' who have absolute faith in their leader, whose orders they blindly obey. Party members are called to show obedience to 'hierarchy and discipline' while at outdoor events members often wear camouflage and boots, carry flag-bearing sticks and march in military order.[114] The supreme position of the leader is independent of the party statute, even in the process of recruiting new members, whom the party leader must approve. This thoroughly hierarchical structure explains why the regional and local organisations as well as the youth, women's and green movements the party set up after 2012 were not granted any official role in decision-making processes.[115]

GD has traditionally followed power maximisation strategies to attract supporters, which are more characteristic of gangs and criminal organisations, rather than political parties. GD's more 'conventional' strategies have relied upon publishing, and broadcasting on traditional and new media, such as the internet. They have also included participation in mass rallies, as in the nationalist rallies of the 1990s around the name of 'Macedonia', and in the late 1990s and early 2000s around the exclusion of religious affiliation from the new ID cards. However, in the early 2000s, GD started building a large network of organisations and groups at the grassroots level, an explicit

[112] Baboulias, Y., 2013. Who is Nikolaos Michaloliakos?. London Review of Books, 3 October 2013. Available at: http://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2013/10/03/yiannis-baboulias/who-is-nikolaos-michaloliakos/.
[113] Date GD was registered as a political party.
[114] Georgiadou, C., 2014. A De-Radicalization Strategy for Greece: Baby steps back to social common sense. *Journal Exit-Deutschland. Zeitschrift für Deradikalisierung und demokratische Kultur*, 3, 108-116.
[115] Ellinas, A. A., 2015. Neo-Nazism in an Established Democracy: The Persistence of Golden Dawn in Greece. *South European Society and Politics*, 20(1), 1-20.

strategy pursued to recruit new members and enhance its power.[116] The party focused its grassroots initiatives in particular areas of Athens, where large numbers of legal and irregular immigrants settled. More specifically, GD members and their local organisations engaged in reactionary and divisive social work and social activism, as well as acts of hate and racist violence. For example, in 2012, the party started setting up medical centres under a programme called 'Greek doctors' and it planned to establish childcare centres. Through other programmes, such as 'Jobs for Greeks', GD attempted to convince employers to replace their foreign employees with Greeks.[117] In a 'Solidarity for Greeks Movement', GD members delivered food and clothes to 'Greeks only'. GD members have also engaged in providing security services to Greek nationals, purportedly to protect them from 'criminal immigrants'.[118] What is more, since the 2000s, GD targeted immigrants in the centre of Athens with its members perpetrating a series of violent assaults.[119] Physical assaults, intimidation, and destruction of property were all employed by GD against immigrants, whom the party perceives as 'criminals' and from whom it vows to 'purge' the public squares of the city of Athens.[120] Its members have also engaged in actions of 'interactive extremism', that is confrontational incidents and protests against leftist pro-migrant groups among local inhabitants.

9.4. Electoral performance

Despite its almost 30-year history, GD has participated in only a handful of general elections. Its first participation was three years after its registration as a political party, in the 1996 national election, where it received a mere 0.07% of the votes cast. The party's next appearance in a general election was thirteen years later, in 2009, where the party gained just 0.3% of the vote share. Signs of an imminent GD electoral breakthrough can be traced back to the 2010 local election, where GD received 5.3% of the vote in the municipality of Athens, winning a seat at the City Council. Indeed, by exploiting the country's deepening socioeconomic and political crisis and increasing polarisation, the party made its electoral breakthrough and entered parliament for the first time following the May 2012 general election, after receiving 7% of the popular vote. What is more, in the rerun of the general elections in June 2012, the party managed to repeat this feat after securing 6.9% of the vote share. Neither the arrest of the party's leadership on suspicion of operating a criminal organisation, nor the intra-party crisis that ensued deterred the party's supporters. To the contrary, in the January 2015 general election, GD confirmed that it's a force to be reckoned with after gaining 6.3% of the vote share, which rendered it the third largest in Parliament. Amid hiking polarisation and political instability, the trial against the party leadership, which started in April 2015, was successfully used by GD to present itself as the victim of state repression. This was reflected in the ballot box in the September 2015 general election, when GD managed to increase its vote share to 7%, its highest rate so far. However, GD eventually lost all of its seats in parliament following the 2019 general elections where the party received just 2.9% of the vote, a manifestation, perhaps, of the party's failure to cope in the long run with the discontinuation of state funding and prolonged intra-party strife.

[116] Dinas, E., Georgiadou, V., Konstantinidis, I., and Rori, L., 2013. From dusk to dawn Local party organization and party success of right-wing extremism. *Party Politics*, 1-13.
[117] Ellinas, A. A., 2015. Neo-Nazism in an Established Democracy.
[118] Georgiadou, C., 2014. A De-Radicalization Strategy for Greece
[119] Georgiadou, V., 2013. "Right-Wing Populism and Extremism: The Rapid Rise of the 'Golden Dawn' in Crisis-Ridden Greece". In Melzer, R. and Serafin, S. (eds.) *Right-Wing Extremism in Europe- Country Analyses, Counter-Strategies and Labor-Market Oriented Exit Strategies*. Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 75-101.
[120] Psarras, D., 2014. *The rise of the neo-Nazi party*.

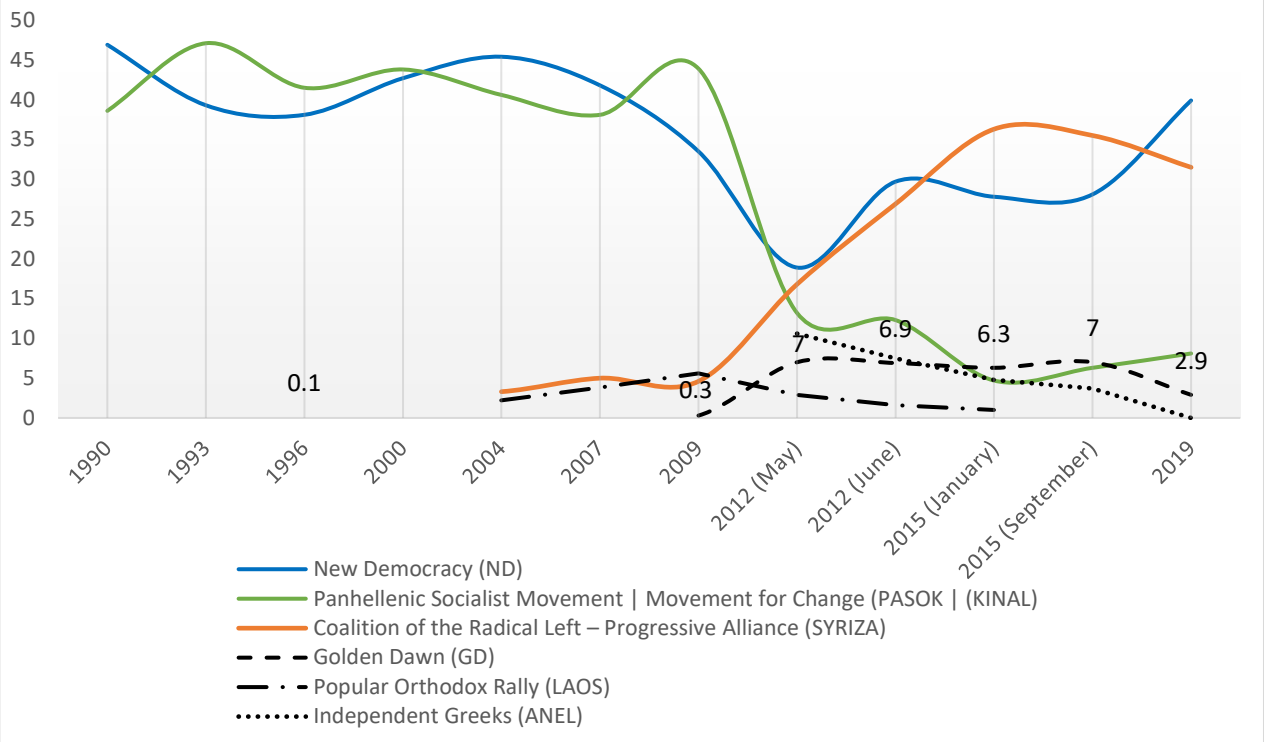

Figure 9 GD's electoral performance in Greek general elections, 1990-2019 (%)

10. Hungary – FIDESZ – Hungarian Civic Alliance

10.1. Intro

FIDESZ – Magyar Polgári Szövetség (FIDESZ – Hungarian Civic Alliance) was initially established as Alliance of Young Democrats in 1988 prior to the fall of communism in Hungary. It was based on an informal network of dissident students at university colleges, who were opposed to the official communist youth organisation there. FIDESZ was self-described as 'radical, liberal, and alternative', situating itself close to Western left-libertarian parties in terms of its values and style.[121] Shortly after the beginning of the post-communist transition FIDESZ abandoned its 'alternative' image and started portraying itself as 'a mainstream, pragmatic, and professional party' with liberal ideology, openly opposing the clericalist and nationalist views of the right-wing ruling parties at the time.[122] FIDESZ is a populist right-wing political party, which counts five leadership changes, no party splits, and four terms in power in its 33-year history.

10.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

FIDESZ is a formerly moderate liberal turned populist political party. Indeed, in July 2014, its leader and PM Viktor Orbán defiantly described his new counterrevolutionary project to be the creation of 'a non-liberal state'.[123] FIDESZ's ideology has undergone a remarkable evolution. Starting as a dissident student network under communism, it became a moderate liberal party in the beginning of the country's democratisation. It soon started drifting away from its liberal beginnings to become a civic-centrist party (adding 'Hungarian Civic Party' to its original name) and then continued its journey towards the right-conservative end of the ideological spectrum. The notions of 'Christianity', 'family' and 'fatherland' featured heavily in its programme, and by 1995/1996 the party had developed into a conservative right-wing party, soon to become the strongest party on the right. Under Orbán's leadership, FIDESZ became a 'catch-all' people's party. It gave up its sharp anti-Communist rhetoric and promoted its self-description as a 'Civic' ('polgári') party, aiming to unite the disintegrated right. This enabled FIDESZ to bring together all those who opposed the ruling socialists yet shared little else. If there was an ideological element, it was the rejection of neo-liberal and technocratic policies, presented by the incumbents as without alternative. After its gradual move to the right on sociocultural issues, FIDESZ began shifting to the left on socioeconomic issues. It adopted nationalist protectionist positions and criticised the privatisation process while urging lowering the income tax. The party avoided presenting a fully developed ideological program, focusing instead on concrete policies: benefits for families and those raising children, stop to privatisations, increased funding for education and culture, enhancing law and order, and, generally, increased role for the state.[124] While the ideological transformation of the party started already in the 1990s, the decisive formative years for its trademark ideological profile were the 8 years (2002-2010) that FIDESZ spent in opposition. It is during this period that the intensity and scale of the political ambition of Orbán's project started taking its current shape. It

[121] Enyedi, Z., 2006. 'The Survival of the Fittest: Party System Concentration in Hungary'. In Jungerstam-Mulders, S. (ed.) *Post-communist EU member states: parties and party systems*. Ashgate Publishing, 177-202.
[122] *Ibid.*
[123] Orbán, V., 2014. Speech at the 25th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp. 26 July 2014. Available at: https://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-Orbán-s-speech-at-the-25th-balvanyos-summer-free-university-and-student-camp.
[124] Lanczi, T., 2005. 'Why FIDESZ lost: A successful government and unsuccessful party'. In Ucen, P. and Surotchak, J.E. (eds.) *Why We Lost: Explaining the Rise and Fall of the Center-Right Parties in Central Europe, 1996-2002*. International Republican Institute, 31-50.

aims at nothing less than a fundamental social and political change of the Hungarian state – a radical regime change. Yet the ideological ambitions of FIDESZ go even beyond the transformation of the political regime. In his agenda-setting speech in July 2018, Orbán set out his vision for 'a cultural era' that would transcend politics, aiming at imposing a lasting imprint on the political culture of society: 'An era is a spiritual order, a kind of prevailing mood, perhaps even taste – a form of attitude. A political system is usually determined by rules and political decisions. An era, however, is… determined by cultural trends, collective beliefs and social customs'.[125] There are three distinct tenets that can be identified at the core of FIDESZ's ideology: 1) popular sovereignty is unrestrained; 2) 'common good' precedes the individual; and 3) safeguarding national interests can be anti-globalist and anti-liberal. More specifically, neither in foreign nor in domestic politics, neither externally nor internally, can liberal values and norms – such as international human rights law, the constitutional protection of individual and minority rights, and rule-of-law instruments – limit public will, that is the ultimate source of political power. The cultural preservation of the values and traditions of the nation is of utmost importance, and FIDESZ's mission is to restore the nation to its lost glory. Furthermore, the community (organised in an ethnically defined homogeneous nation-state), with its shared identity, common interests, and collective duties, enjoys strict priority over individual interests and rights. Lastly, ensuring the prosperity of the nation-state may require aggressive protectionism of the national economy, rather than free competition in the open global markets, and (ethnicized) redistribution aimed at fostering social cohesion. These tenets have regularly translated in recent years into hostile policies towards and interference with the Constitution, institutions, immigrants, minorities, universities, civil society organisations, EU norms, *laissez-faire* and free market capitalism.

10.3. Leadership and Organisation

FIDESZ was born out of a semi-legal liberal student activist movement opposing to the ruling communist party. On 18 April 1993, Viktor Orbán became the first president of FIDESZ, replacing the national board that had served as a collective leadership since its founding. After a disappointing result in the 1994 general elections, FIDESZ took a turn away from its liberal beginnings to become a conservative party, and in 1995 it added 'Hungarian Civic Party' ('Magyar polgári centrumpárt') to its original name. This ideological shift triggered a severe within the party, and in 1994 the liberal wing (several hundred members, 5 MPs, among which some prominent founding members of FIDESZ) left the party. Yet despite FIDESZ's 'civic' transformation, the top leadership preserved its almost dictatorial power over the party.[126] Telling in this regard is that even though Orbán handed the party leadership to a series of high-ranking FIDESZ functionaries – László Kövér, Zoltán Pokorni and János Áder – he maintained full control and ensured that the party supported his government. Once FIDESZ returned to opposition, Orbán restored his formal leadership and became the chair of the party.

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
National Board (Collective leadership)	30/03/1988	18/04/1993	1845
Viktor Orbán	18/04/1993	29/01/2000	2477
László Kövér	30/01/2000	06/05/2001	462

[125] Orbán, V., 2018. Speech at the 29th Bálványos Summer Open University and Student Camp. 28 July 2018. Available at: http://www.miniszterelok.hu/prime-minister-viktor-orbans-speech-at-the-29th-balvanyos-summer-open-university-and-student-camp/.
[126] Enyedi, Z., 2006. 'The Survival of the Fittest'.

Zoltán Pokorni	07/05/2001	03/04/2002	331
János Áder	04/07/2002	17/05/2003	317
Viktor Orbán	18/05/2003	14/04/2021	6541
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***1996***

Table 15 FIDESZ leaders and duration in post, 30/03/1988 – 14/04/2021

In 2003 the party adopted its current name 'FIDESZ – Magyar Polgári Szövetség' (FIDESZ – Hungarian Civic Alliance). Between 2002 and 2010, that is the years that FIDESZ spent in opposition, Orbán invested in further strengthening the party's ideology and developing the party's grassroots organisations (i.e. the civic circles movement). These 'circles' served as a robust social foundation for the FIDESZ-regime, partly explaining its resilience and characteristic features.[127] FIDESZ has paid special attention to the organisational side of ideology and has found its own institutions. These include the now government-funded Nezopont Institute, which conducts polling and policy research, as well as the Centre for Fundamental Rights founded 2013, the priorities of which are seamlessly aligned with FIDESZ's core ideology: national identity, sovereignty and social Christian traditions.[128]

10.4. Electoral performance

In the first free and competitive elections in March/April 1990 under a mixed electoral system, FIDESZ received 9% and 22 out of a total of 386 seats. A weak performance at the 1994 parliamentary elections where FIDESZ received 7% of the vote and 20 seats, and the defeat of the disunited right-wing ruling parties by the ex-communist Socialist party MSZP, accelerated FIDESZ's journey towards the right-conservative end of the ideological spectrum. Right-conservative values appeared on the party's programme and by 1995/1996 the party had developed into a conservative leaning right-wing party. This shift in the party's ideological positions and its rebranding as a 'catch-all' people's party allowed FIDESZ to win the 1998 general elections. While it received 28.2% of the vote (350,000 less votes than the incumbent Socialist party, which won 32.2%), FIDESZ received most seats – 148/386 – under the mixed Hungarian electoral system. This marked FIDESZ's first term in power in coalition with two well-established, yet weakened, right-wing parties – the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) and the Independent Smallholders' Party (FKGP). During this term, FKGP disintegrated due to corruption scandals involving its leadership, while MDF practically integrated into FIDESZ.

[127] Greskovits, B., 2017. Rebuilding the Hungarian right through civil organization and contention: the civic circles movement. *Research Paper No. 37*, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.
[128] Hopkins, V., 2020. "How Orbán's Decay in Power Changed Hungary". Financial Times, 21 May 2020. Available at: https://www.ft.com/content/414f202e-9996-11ea-8b5b-63f7c5c86bef

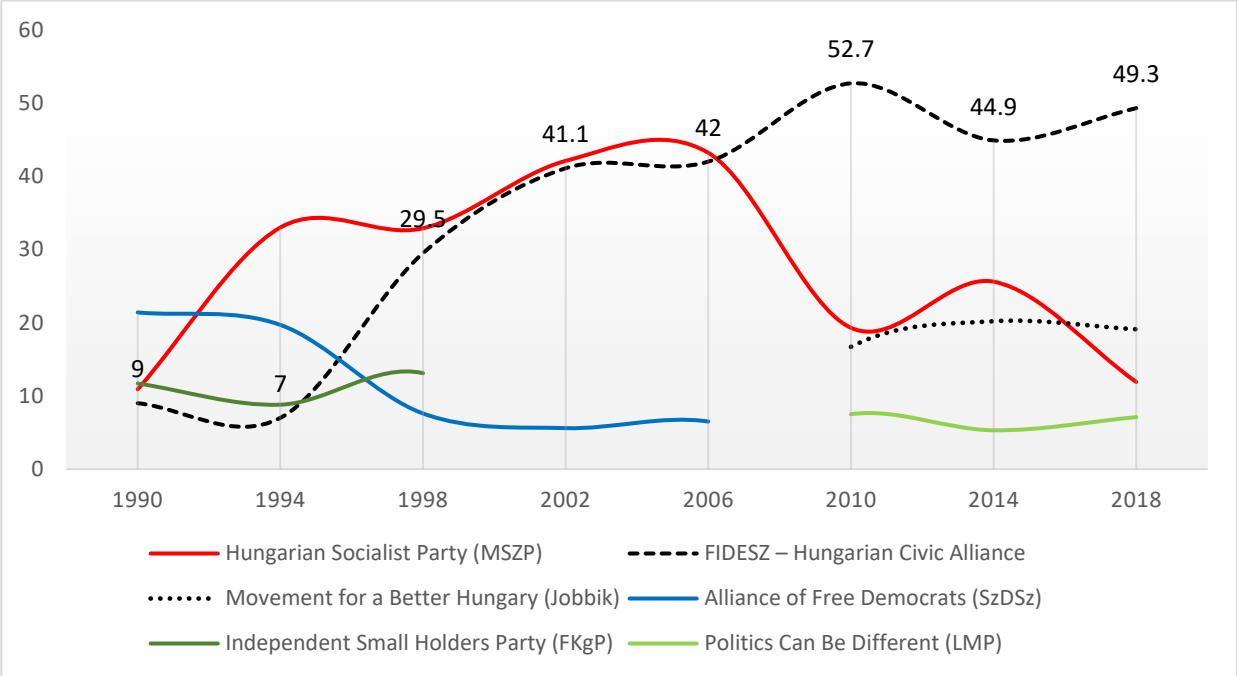

Figure 10 FIDESZ's electoral performance in Hungarian general elections, 1990-2018 (%)

However, after a successful term in office and against all expectations, FIDESZ narrowly lost the 2002 general election amid high voter mobilisation. Though the party increased both its vote share to 41.1% and its seats to 164, MSZP received 42.1% and 178 seats, and formed a coalition government with the Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz), with a majority of just 10 seats. Despite its narrow majority, the MSZP-led government served a full term, as have all Hungarian governments after 1990.[129] The 2002 elections result was partly due to the restructuring of the right end of the political spectrum. This process was accelerated by the term in office of the FIDESZ-led coalition during which the senior partner got stronger, while the junior partners weakened and ultimately disintegrated, as did some of the other right-wing parties. Indeed, MDF survived only because of its electoral coalition with FIDESZ. All this meant, however, that despite FIDESZ's increased vote share, the party would not be able to form a new governing coalition.

While in opposition between 2002 and 2010, FIDESZ 'together with its allies in civil society worked hard to catch up with the Left... [and it managed to] transform its social capital into political capital'.[130] The civil mobilisation – the massive Civic Circles Movement – paved the way for FIDESZ's landslide victory in 2010. As László Kövér, Speaker of Parliament in 2014 put it: '[T]he civic circles and their activists turned politicians played an important role in the march of FIDESZ from opposition to a government backed by parliamentary super-majority'.[131]

In the 2006 general election, the alliance between FIDESZ and the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) received 42% of the votes, yet just 164 seats (141 for FIDESZ). The socialist-led coalition (MSZP and SzDSz) managed to remain in power for a second term earning 210 seats – the first government re-election in Hungary's post-1989 political history. The incumbent Ferenc Gyurcsány, who had been appointed PM after a conflict within

[129] This stability, which distinguishes the Hungarian political system from most of the other post-communist ones, is due to the institution of constructive vote of no-confidence, introduced in 1990. This strengthens the power of the PM and his/her removal requires the consensus of the parliamentary majority on an alternative candidate.
[130] Greskovits, B., 2017. Rebuilding the Hungarian right.
[131] *Ibid.*

the governing coalition in 2004 forced the then PM Péter Medgyessy to resign, led the coalition to victory. Yet, shortly after his second government took office, he admitted at an internal meeting that, in order to get re-elected, his government had lied to the Hungarian public about the actual budget deficit. The leaked recording produced a public uproar with anti-government protests demanding Gyurcsány's resignation turning violent. After Gyurcsány received a vote of confidence in the parliament, he started implementing painful economic reforms. The global economic downturn added to the unpopular reforms, further undermining his cabinet standing.

In the 2010 general election, the FIDESZ-KDNP coalition won both the absolute and constitutional majority after receiving 52.7% of the vote and 263 seats (227 for FIDESZ). FIDESZ used this opportunity to swiftly adopt a new Constitution and a new electoral law, which reduced the number of parliamentary seats to 199 and further strengthened the majoritarian element, giving an even larger bonus to the winner. In the 2014 general election, the first under this new electoral system, the FIDESZ-KDNP coalition maintained its 2/3 majority (133/199 seats; 117 for FIDESZ) by gaining 44.9% of the vote. These elections brought the downfall of the disunited left (it received just 38 seats), with the far-right nationalist Jobbik becoming the second largest party. FIDESZ won a third consecutive term in office in the 2018 parliamentary election by increasing its share of the vote to 49.3% and retaining its constitutional majority (133/199 seats; 117 for FIDESZ).

10.5. Party in Government

FIDESZ's four terms in power have left a lasting impact on Hungarian politics and policies. One of the main characteristics of FIDESZ's governing style has been the centralisation of power and resources, which has been achieved through the growth and capture of the state apparatus by loyalists, that is not-too-competent party-loyal staff, whose survival on the job depends on the party remaining in power.[132] A further way of centralising power has been through a redistributive welfare largesse towards party loyalists and the wider clientele. This form of neo-feudalism has created considerable social, cultural, and economic dependencies, with wide strata perceiving their wellbeing as directly dependent on the survival of the party in power. [133] In all, FIDESZ's spells in power have been characterised by the absolute supremacy of the executive, accompanied by the weakening of checks on its power;[134] anti-constitutionalist and anti-institutionalist tendencies, accompanied by the prevalence of practices, which may be permissible under the letter of the Constitution, but, nevertheless, undermine its principles;[135] and partisan entrenchment, which consists of limiting democratic competition.[136] All these features of unlimited personalist rule have undermined liberal-democratic institutions by subverting liberal ideas of limited power and the rule of law and can be identified to a lesser or greater extent in Hungary under FIDESZ rule after 2010.

Cabinet Name	**Cabinet Start Date**	**Cabinet End Date**	**Duration in Office (Days)**	**Ministerial Posts share**
Orbán I	06/07/1998	26/05/2002	1420	11/16
Orbán II	29/05/2010	06/04/2014	1408	5/8

[132] Vermeule, A. 2018. Integration from Within. *American Affairs*, 2(1), Available at: https://americanaffairsjournal.org/2018/02/integration-from-within/.
[133] Sajó, A., 2019. The Constitution of Illiberal Democracy as a Theory About Society. *Polish Sociological Review*, 208(4), 395-412.
[134] Bermeo, N., 2016. On Democratic Backsliding. *Journal of Democracy*, 27(1), 5-19.
[135] Tushnet, M., 2004. Constitutional Hardball. *John Marshall Law Review*, 37, 523-553
[136] Balkin, J. M. and Levinson, S., 2006. The Processes of Constitutional Change: From Partisan Entrenchment to the National Surveillance State. *Fordham Law Review*, 75(2), 489-536

Orbán III	10/05/2014	08/04/2018	1429	4/9
Orbán IV	10/05/2018	14/04/2021	1071	6/13

Table 16 FIDESZ's duration in office and ministerial posts share upon cabinet appointment (until 14/04/2021)

FIDESZ's major achievement in office has been the adoption of a new Constitution (i.e. The Fundamental Law) in 2011. This contained a reference to God and the Holy Crown, as well a number of other provisions praising and strengthening the national identity of Hungarians. Generally, it preserved the institutional infrastructure of liberal democracy but, at the same time, created numerous opportunities for concentration of power in the hands of the PM Orbán and FIDESZ's loyalists. First, the new constitution was supplanted by dozens of 'cardinal laws', adopted by a two thirds majority, which regulated most of the key areas of governance in the country: the electoral law, the judiciary, the media, banks, etc. Secondly, it introduced an enormous range of 'independent bodies', appointed mostly by the parliamentary majority for very long terms of office (i.e. up to twelve years). These independent bodies regulate and govern the judiciary, affect the fiscal policy (the so-called Fiscal Council), and many other areas of governance. Together with the 'cardinal laws', these allow FIDESZ to entrench itself in power even if it loses parliamentary elections. The new constitution also reduced and reshuffled the powers of the constitutional court and allowed for serious personnel changes in the judiciary. Indeed, with each successive term in power, Orbán has attempted to bring the highest-level courts to heel and increased control over the media.[137]

To substantiate the grand idea of the flourishing – both culturally and materially – of the Hungarian nation, FIDESZ has introduced something, which could be called 'demographic governance': a set of strong incentives for the reproduction of the Hungarian nation. To this end, FIDESZ has introduced generous social benefits for a wide range of families. For example, in February 2019, Orbán announced that women who bear four or more children would be exempt from income tax. In essence, the programme involved loans of up to 30,000 euros, open to heterosexual couples where the woman is younger than 40 and at least one spouse has never been previously married. The 'demographic governance' has also entailed policies in the citizenship area, such as granting citizenship rights to Hungarians living in adjacent countries. Since 2010, approximately one million ethnic Hungarians living outside the country's borders have become citizens, while more than 90% of them vote for FIDESZ in elections. It is also worth mentioning here that another special aspect of FIDESZ's ideological stance has been the party's attempt to instil its own ideas into the public education system, including not only universities, but also schools and kindergartens. In the past years, the Hungarian government has increased the pressure on those that don't conform to its worldview: it has forced a flagship university – the CEU founded by George Soros – to withdraw from the country, demanded that international NGOs register as foreign agents, constitutionally banned homelessness and moved to exert closer control over Hungary's theatres. In July 2018 the government withdrew funding and support from gender studies departments in universities and effectively took over the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Moreover, the same month that Orbán set out his plan for a 'cultural era', Hungary's kindergarten curriculum was amended to promote a 'national identity, Christian cultural values, patriotism, attachment to homeland and family'.

Although FIDESZ is not openly anti-Semitic or anti-Roma, many policies of the party have been directed against the Roma minority. For instance, 'FIDESZ decided to support the possibility of segregated Roma classes. Schools regained their earlier right to fail pupils in elementary classes. Law enforcement officials were assigned to schools.

[137] Hopkins, V., 2020. "How Orbán's Decay in Power Changed Hungary".

The educational system was centralised, the production of school books was nationalised and an obligatory moral/religious component was introduced into the school curricula. Schools were required to organise excursions to the territories that were lost at the end of the First World War'.[138] An electoral change – the introduction of active registration (voluntary registration of voters) – was also designed to discourage minorities from voting. FIDESZ has also had a major impact on the laws and practices in the area of immigration and asylum. Viktor Orbán has been a major critic of EU policies on migration, especially after the 2015-2016 'refugee crisis' and Chancellor Merkel's welcoming policies. Since then, Orbán's government has built fences and tightened Hungary's asylum laws significantly. For instance, in 2017, the FIDESZ-led government organised a massive state-sponsored anti-migrant campaign, which accused NGOs, such as the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, of taking orders from George Soros. In 2019 the government continued a policy of refusing to provide food for adult migrants whose asylum claims had been rejected.

Finally, FIDESZ has supported tough law-and-order policies, cracking down on criminality, and enacting respect-for-authority measures. Between 2010 and 2012, the FIDESZ-led government passed twelve bills which introduced stricter regulations and harsher punishments for criminal actions and lowered the age of criminal responsibility to twelve years old.[139] The new regulations allowed property owners to use disproportionate violence against intruders, while they doubled the penalties of those with three violent criminal acts and constrained the power of judges to release prisoners who received life sentences.[140]

[138] Enyedi, Z. and Róna, D., 2017. 'Governmental and oppositional populism: competition and division of labor'. In Wolinetz, S. and Zaslove, A. (eds.), *Populist Parties and Their Impact on Parties and Party Systems*. ECPR Press, 251-273.
[139] *Ibid.*
[140] *Ibid.*

11. Italy – League (L)

11.1. Intro

Lega (League – L) was founded by Umberto Bossi in 1991 as a federation of six regional parties of Northern and North-Central Italy, which then became L's national sections. L was first launched as an upgrade of Lombard League – Northern Alliance (LL-AN), before officially being registered as a party in 1991 under the name Lega Nord per l'Indipendenza della Padania. League adopted its current name in the run-up of the 2018 general election, when its leader, Matteo Salvini, rebranded the party without, however, altering its official name in the party's statute. League is a nativist political party, which counts three changes in leadership, four terms in power, and four party splits in its 30-year history.

11.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

League started as a regionalist party with the overarching goal to transform Italy into a federal state, wherein Padania would be allowed political and fiscal autonomy. In its original manifesto, the party self-identified with 'federalist libertarianism', which comprised political and fiscal federalist positions, libertarianism and social liberalism, anti-clericalism, and Europeanism. The party, in its early stages, maintained strong anti-southern Italian positions.[141] L has traditionally combined positions in favour of a social market economy – such as lower taxes, especially for families and small entrepreneurs – with anti-statism, such as small government as opposed to governmental bureaucracy. Boosted by the party's electoral success in the 1996 general election, its founder and first leader, Umberto Bossi, transformed L from a regionalist to a secessionist party and switched its narrative of autonomy to separatism, openly calling for the independence of Padania. The party's constitution was revised accordingly, while in September 1996 the party unilaterally proclaimed the independence of Padania.[142] However, the narrative of secessionism and independence was abandoned following L's electoral setback in the 1999 European Parliament election, and the party's renewed alliance with Berlusconi in 2001. In this regard, Bossi shifted away from demands for independence towards a much more moderate focus on devolution and federal reform.[143]

The election of Roberto Maroni in the party's leadership did not alter much the party's agenda for independence and federal reform. It steered L, however, more towards regional Europeanism. More specifically, in a public speech in 2012, Maroni stated that '[t]he project of Padania is not anti-European, this is a new Europeanism which looks at the future: a Europe of the regions, a Europe of the peoples, a truly federal Europe'.[144] Indeed, under Maroni, L supported the direct election of the President of the European Commission, the expansion of the European Parliament's power's, and the acceleration of the EU's political, economic, banking and fiscal integration, among others.[145] However, these positions proved to be highly unpopular among the electorate.

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[141] Tambini, D., 2012. *Nationalism in Italian politics: The stories of the Northern League, 1980-2000*. Routledge.
[142] Lega, 1991. Statuto della lega nord per l'indipendenza della padania. Available at: https://www.leganord.org/phocadownload/ilmovimento/statuto/Statuto.pdf.
[143] Tambini, D., 2012. *Nationalism in Italian politics*.
[144] Timbro, 2019. Timbro Authoritarian Populism Index. Available at: https://populismindex.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/TAP2019C.pdf
[145] Lega, 2013. Lega Nord Como Progamma Lega Nord Elezioni Politiche 2013. Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/2015-1/32720_2013.pdf.

The election of Matteo Salvini in the party's leadership in 2013 drastically pushed the party's ideological positions further to the right. Under Salvini, L maintained its anti-statism and its positions in favour of the social market economy, traded its regionalism for nationalism, and, at the same time, moved closer to social conservativism, a pro-Catholic Church stance, and a marked Euroscepticism. More specifically, L is in favour of both deregulation and social democratic positions, such as a strong welfare state and defence of workers' wages and pensions.[146] The party is very critical of the EU, especially of the Euro and imposed austerity measures, which Salvini has described as 'a crime against mankind'.[147] Salvini's L became markedly more aggressive towards immigration too, advocating for the introduction of budget constraints for social assistance to refugees and reception of asylum seekers, and making specific references to Muslim immigrants as posing particularly high risks for the Italian society.[148] What is more, the party started advocating more strongly for various other social conservative positions, such as anti-abortion, anti-euthanasia, against medical embryonic stem cell research and in vitro fertilisation, against same-sex marriage rights, and in favour of the mandatory display of crucifixes in all public buildings.[149]

11.3. Leadership and Organisation

L has been traditionally divided along regional, as well as political/ideological lines. The wing from the province of Varese, and the majority of the original LL-AN, including L's founder and first leader, Umberto Bossi, and his 'number two' and subsequent party leader, Roberto Maroni, have tended to be the 'left-wing' of the party.[150] However, it is worth noting that within this wing, Roberto Maroni had his own 'faction', having been more independent from Bossi and somewhat critical of the centre-right alliances of the party. The wing from the province of Bergamo, including, for example, Roberto Calderoli, the influential coordinator of L's national secretariats, has tended to be the more socially conservative one. The wing from the province of Veneto, although closer to Umberto Bossi, has tended to be the 'independent' one. Lastly, L has also been home to issue-oriented factions, such as the Christian democrats and Monarchists, who are closer to the party's 'right-wing'; the libertarians, who have presence in both the party's 'left-wing' and 'independents'; and the agricultural faction, which is particularly strong among the 'independents'. All these dividing lines and group dynamics have played an important role in the party's leadership changes and organisation.

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
Umberto Bossi	08/01/1991	05/04/2012	7758
Roberto Maroni, Roberto Calderoli, Manuela Dal Lago	05/04/2012	30/06/2012	86
Roberto Maroni	01/07/2012	15/12/2013	532
Matteo Salvini	15/12/2013	14/04/2021	2677
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***2763***

Table 17 L leaders and duration in post, 08/01/1991 – 14/04/2021

[146] League, 2018. Elezioni 2018 – Programma di Governo. Available at: http://www.leganord.org/component/phocadownload/category/5-elezioni?download=1514:programma-lega-salvini-premier-2018.
[147] Timbro, 2019. Timbro Authoritarian Populism Index.
[148] League, 2018. Elezioni 2018.
[149] *Ibid.*
[150] Albertazzi, D., 2016. Going, going,… not quite gone yet? 'Bossi's Lega'and the survival of the mass party. *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 8(2), 115-130.

The party's founder, Umberto Bossi, was federal secretary from 1991 to 2012. Bossi began his political career in 1987 as LL-AN's only senator, and, subsequently, leader in 1989. In July 1991, Bossi became the federal secretary of the newly formed L. Bossi took advantage of the 'Tangentopoli' corruption scandals, which were unveiled in 1992 and involved most of the established parties. He presented L as a 'breath of fresh air' in Italy's corruption-ridden established political system, and advocated for 'small government' in form of regionalism, as a solution to systemic problems. Bossi's decision to form an alliance and, subsequently, a coalition government with Berlusconi's Forza Italia (FI) in 1994 caused the first serious internal party crisis since its establishment, which spilled over into the government. In a 12-month period, three splinter parties were created: the Federalist Party (initially known as the Federalist Union), and Federalists and Liberal Democrats, both founded in 1994; and the Federalist Italian League founded in 1995. By 1996, a total of 40 deputies and 17 senators had left the party.[151] As a result, L fought the 1996 general election outside the two big coalitions. In 2001, however, Bossi decided to steer the party once again to the right, after having briefly entertained the idea of forming an alliance with the centre-left to appease Maroni's 'left-wing'. This created a new intra-party strife between Maroni, on the one hand, and Bossi and Calderoli, on the other, who were vigorous supporters of the alliance. This strife only became stronger when L allied with Berlusconi for a third time in 2008.

By the end of L's third term in power in 2011, Maroni's 'left-wing' had clearly become the strongest faction within the party, and Maroni himself had become Bossi's obvious successor.[152] In April 2012, the party went through its second major internal crisis when it was hit by a corruption scandal, which involved its leader Umberto Bossi and another prominent member of the 'right-wing'. Bossi resigned as the federal secretary on 5 April 2012, and a triumvirate, including both Maroni and Calderoli, was appointed to lead the party until a new federal congress. Maroni was virtually unanimously elected federal secretary at the party's federal congress on 1 July 2012. Maroni changed the party's constitution, and restructured its federal organisation, giving more autonomy to the national sections, transforming L into, essentially, a confederation.[153] In September 2013, Maroni announced his intention to leave the party's leadership, following his personal election as President of Lombardy in the 2013 regional election, and L's electoral setback in the simultaneous general election.

Umberto Bossi and Matteo Salvini managed to pass the 1,000 party members' signatures threshold, which was necessary to participate in the internal 'primary'. On 7 December 2013, Salvini, who was endorsed by Maroni and most prominent L members, prevailed over Bossi with 82% of the vote. Salvini, not only rebranded the party ideologically/politically, as discussed earlier, but he also transformed L organisationally, without, however, being successful in ridding of the usual regional and ideological/political divides. In 2014, Salvini started to build a network of supporters in central-southern Italy and the isles, which culminated in the creation of Us with Salvini, a sister party to L, in December 2014. The shift of the party's focus to the South was criticised by both the 'right' and 'left' wings of the party, yet, it found broad support among the 'independents' in Veneto. Salvini's trade of regionalism for nationalism was complemented by the rebranding of the party's symbol and name prior to the 2018 general election. These changes, and particularly the removal of 'North' from the party's name, were met with strong opposition by Bossi and the 'right-wing', which, however, held a minority position within the party.[154]

[151] *Ibid.*
[152] *Ibid.*
[153] McDonnell, D. and Vampa, D., 2016. 'The Italian Lega Nord'. In Heinisch, R. and Mazzoleni, O. (eds.) *Understanding populist party organisation*. Palgrave Macmillan, 105-129.
[154] Balmer, C., 2018. Italy's League leaves northern bastions, bangs anti-migrant drum. Reuters, 9 February 2018. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-italy-election-league-idUSKBN1FT1Q9

Nevertheless, these changes would prove to be decisive in L's 2018 electoral success, which was topped with the party's fourth spell in power.

11.4. Electoral performance

L's electoral performance had its ebbs and flows, before the explosion of the party's popularity in the 2018 general election. L made its electoral breakthrough in the 1992 general election, when the party gained 8.7% of the vote, which rendered it the fourth largest party, amid the 'Tangentopoli' corruption scandals, which shook Italy's political establishment. L's alliance with Berlusconi's FI in the face of the 1994 general election, seemed to stabilise the party's electoral popularity, as the L maintained its electoral strength, securing 8.4% of the vote. However, L's participation in Berlusconi's coalition government in the aftermath of the 1994 election triggered a major internal crisis in both L and the government. Despite this crisis, L managed to increase its vote share to 10.1% in the 1996 general election, competing outside the two big electoral alliances. L returned to Berlusconi's electoral alliance in the face of the 2001 general election. This decision resulted in the party's 'punishment' at the ballot box, as L's vote share dropped dramatically to 3.9%. L's subsequent participation in Berlusconi's coalition government, as well as electoral alliance ahead of the 2006 general election did not impact upon the party's electoral performance. L, more or less, maintained its strength by gaining 4.5% of the vote despite the alliance losing the election. In the aftermath of the fall of Prodi's government in January 2008, which led to an early election, L re-joined Berlusconi's electoral alliance. The alliance won the 2008 general election and, subsequently formed a coalition government, while L managed to almost double its vote share to 8.3%.

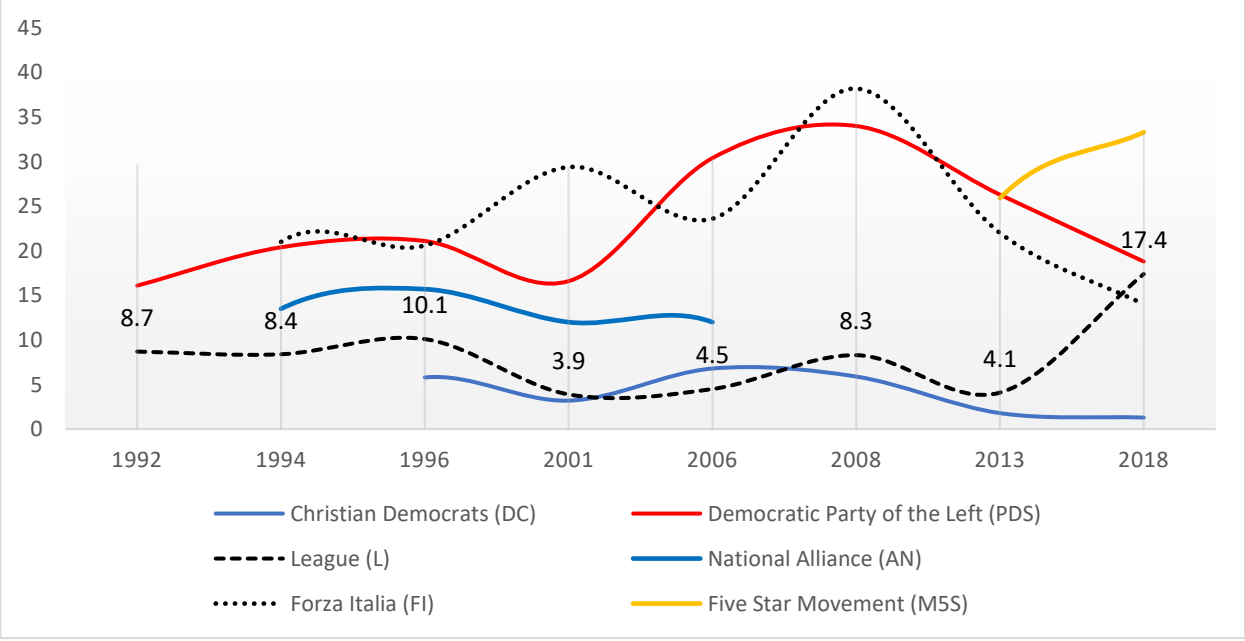

Figure 11 L's electoral performance in Italian general elections, 1992-2018 (%)

The 2013 general election was overshadowed by Italy's serious economic crisis, and the electoral rise of the Five Star Movement (M5S). L, once again, competed as part of Berlusconi's electoral alliance, however, under a different leadership for the first time since its establishment. The alliance lost the election, while L conceded its previous electoral gains and returned to a mere 4.1%. L's best electoral performance occurred in the 2018 general election. Following Salvini's 'rebranding' of the party, and as the main party of the right-wing electoral alliance for

the first time, L more than quadrupled its vote share to 17.4%, finishing third, significantly behind M5S, however, which finished first.

11.5. Party in Government

L, in contrast to other nativist parties, did not have to wait long before participating in government for the first time. Indeed, L's first participation in government came only three years after the formal establishment of the party. What is more, L has been part of three more coalition governments – in 2001, 2008, and 2018 –, while its members have been included in five cabinets in total.

Cabinet Name	Cabinet Start Date	Cabinet End Date	Duration in Office (Days)	Ministerial Posts share
Berlusconi I	11/05/1994	22/12/1994	225	5/25
Berlusconi II	11/06/2001	23/04/2005	1412	3/25
Berlusconi III	28/04/2005	16/05/2006	383	3/24
Berlusconi IV	08/05/2008	16/11/2011	1287	4/21
Conte I	01/06/2018	05/09/2019	461	5/18

Table 18 L's duration in office and ministerial posts share upon cabinet appointment

L's first spell in power occurred in the aftermath of the 1994 general election, when the party joined FI, National Alliance (AN) and the Christian Democratic Centre (CCD) in a short-lived coalition government under Berlusconi. L received five out of a total of twenty-five ministerial posts, including Interior (Maroni, who was also Deputy Prime Minister). The government was never really cohesive and relations both within (e.g. L), as well as between (e.g. L and AN) coalition partners were tense. Although L's impact on policymaking was virtually non-existent, the party was instrumental in the collapse of the coalition. Following a proposed pension reform, which would have damaged L's popularity in some of its key constituencies, Bossi decided to withdraw from government in December 1994; a decision that further exacerbated the party's internal conflict.[155] L returned to power in June 2001 when it joined FI, AN, CCD and CDU in a coalition government. Although severely reduced in its parliamentary representation, L was handed three out of the twenty-five ministries, including Justice and Institutional Reforms and Devolution, which was key for the party's agenda. L continued with the same ministerial posts in April 2005 after a cabinet change following the resignation of most of the ministers of CCD and CDU. During its five years in government, L was instrumental in passing in the parliament an important constitutional reform, which included provisions on federalism and an increase of powers for the Prime Minister. However, the reform was eventually rejected in the 2006 constitutional referendum.[156]

L's third term in power, in coalition with FI, AN and Christian Democracy for the Autonomies (CDA), lasted three years, from May 2008 to November 2011, when PM Berlusconi announced his resignation after failing to secure an absolute majority in a budget vote. L was handed four out of a total of twenty-one ministries, including Interior, and Reforms for Federalism. The party was instrumental in passing a bill that introduced a path towards

[155] Ignazi, P., 1995. Italy. *European Journal of Political Research*, 28, 393-405.
[156] Ignazi, P., 2007. Italy. *European Journal of Political Research*, 46, 993-1004.

fiscal federalism. The bill was approved by the Senate, and almost all of the important decrees on regional and provincial fiscality were approved by the Parliament. L was also influential on the government's irregular immigration policies, and pushed for a more restrictive approach to sea arrivals.

L's fourth term in power, in coalition with M5S, was short-lived – having lasted a little over than a year, from June 2018 to September 2019 – and turbulent. The party received five out of a total of eighteen ministries, including Interior (Salvini, who was also Deputy Prime Minister), which was key for the party's agenda. Indeed, Salvini left his mark in the government's immigration policies by introducing a number of, not only symbolic, but also substantial restrictive immigration measures. L's perhaps most substantial immigration policy reforms were introduced in October 2018 when Decree Law 113/2018 – dubbed the 'Salvini Decree' – entered into force, instigating the virtual elimination of the provision of services in reception centres, the extension of the grounds for detention of asylum seekers, and the restriction of access to citizenship. However, L's overall performance was severely damaged by its leader's political opportunism. Following the May 2019 European elections results, where L received 34% of the vote, Salvini attempted to orchestrate a political crisis and force early elections to improve his party's standing in parliament and become Italy's prime minister. Yet, Salvini's plan backfired when the M5S and the Democratic Party agreed to form a new coalition government against all odds, hence, sending L into the opposition, and eventually avoiding to resort to early elections.

12. Netherlands – Party for Freedom (PVV)

12.1. Intro

Partij voor de Vrijheid (Party for Freedom – PVV) was founded in 2006 as the successor to Geert Wilders's one-man faction (Wilders Group) in the parliament. Following his departure from the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) in September 2004, Wilders refused to return his seat to his former party and continued to sit in the parliament as a one-man faction until 22 February 2006, when PVV was officially registered as a party with the Electoral Council. PVV is a nativist political party, which has never undergone a leadership change, while it counts two party splits in its 15-year history. It has provided the conservative-liberal (VVD) Christian-Democratic (CDA) coalition government with a parliamentary majority in the 2010–2012 period.

12.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

PVV's ideology and policy positions have not evolved much in its 15-year long history.[157] From the outset, PVV advocated against immigration, multiculturalism – particularly Islam –, and the European Union – especially the process of European integration –, and highlighted the need to safeguard the Dutch Judaeo-Christian values and tradition. It also called for a strict enforcement of the rule of law, and the strengthening of social welfare provisions – particularly healthcare social services and elderly care – but only for the natives. What is more, PVV also advocates various progressive libertarian positions on ethical/political issues such as abortion, euthanasia, and gay marriage.[158]

With regards to immigration, PVV argues for a strong assimilationist approach to integration, whereby all immigrants should be bound by contracts to adapt to the dominant Judaeo-Christian and humanist values of the Dutch society. The party calls for a halt to immigration from non-Western countries and the introduction of restrictions on intra-EU labour migration, particularly from newer EU member-states.[159] It argues for the administrative detention of all asylum seekers, and the deportation of foreign citizens who have committed a crime, after serving a prison sentence. PVV also favours ethnocultural exclusionist policies with respect to citizenship rules, such as, for example, opposing the right to dual citizenship. These positions have been coupled with a strong nativist and welfare chauvinist agenda. The party has advocated a number of restrictions on minority rights, which have been described as anti-Polish, anti-Slavic, anti-Romani and, particularly, anti-Muslim.[160] For instance, PVV has called for a ban on the Quran and face-covering Islamic clothing in public spaces, shutting down all mosques and Islamic schools in the Netherlands, the introduction of Dutch language proficiency and a 10-year Dutch residency and work experience requirement for welfare assistance.[161] However, the party has been selectively inclusive towards certain minorities. For example, it calls for harsher penalties for violence against Jews and the LGBT community, which is, allegedly, disproportionately committed by Muslims. Lastly, PVV has been

[157] Vossen, K., 2010. Populism in the Netherlands after Fortuyn: Rita Verdonk and Geert Wilders Compared. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 11(1), 22-38.
[158] van Holsteyn, J. M., 2018. 'The Radical Right in Belgium and the Netherlands'. In Rydgren, J. (ed.) *The Oxford handbook of the radical right*. Oxford University Press, 478–504.
[159] PVV, 2010. De agenda van hoop en optimisme. Available at: https://www.pvv.nl/images/stories/Webversie_VerkiezingsProgrammaPVV.pdf
[160] Monsma, S.V. and Soper, J.C., 2009. *The challenge of pluralism: Church and state in five democracies*. Rowman & Littlefield.
[161] PVV, 2010. De agenda van hoop en optimisme.

consistently Eurosceptic since its inception.[162] Among others, it has strongly advocated the Netherland's withdrawal from the EU and the Eurozone, and the return to the old Dutch currency.

12.3. Leadership and Organisation

PVV was founded on 22 February 2006 by Geert Wilders, a 'professional politician' who has worked in the Dutch parliament most of his adult life.[163] It was established as an association with Wilders as its sole member, as after the party's registration with the Electoral Council, he immediately introduced a membership stoppage. The party has been deliberately developed as a top-down organisation and a strictly political project, owing to Wilders's negative personal experience within the VVD as a traditional party organisation, and the lessons that he learned from the rapid decline and disappearance of Pim Fortuyn List (LPF).[164] Although the party is represented at the national, subnational, and supranational levels, it does not have any institutionalised links with organised societal groups or movements (e.g. it does not have local departments, a youth wing, or a research institute), and does not organise public party conferences. In this regard, from an organisational perspective, PVV 'can hardly be regarded a true membership party'.[165] By extension, since political parties in the Netherlands need to have at least 1,000 members to qualify for government funding, PVV is ineligible for state support and relies on donations.

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
Geert Wilders	22/02/2006[166]	14/04/2021	5530
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***5530***

Table 19 PVV leaders and duration in post, 22/02/2006 – 14/04/2021

However, this unconventional party organisation has not saved PVV from intra-party frictions. On 20 March 2012, PVV MP Hero Brinkman quit the party, citing a lack of democratic structure within the party, among other reasons. Two days later, three other PVV representatives followed his example. Brinkman's departure resulted in the first splinter party, Independent Citizens' Party (OBP), which was founded in April 2012. A couple of months later, in July 2012, MPs Marcial Hernandez and Wim Kortenoeven also quit PVV, citing Wilders's autocratic leadership of the party. In October 2013, another party MP, Louis Bontes, was, this time, expelled by Wilders following statements that he made to the media voicing his disappointment with the party's methods. In late 2013, MP Johan Driessen departed from PVV, joining the independent MP Louis Bontes. Lastly, in March 2014, two other MPs, Roland van Vliet and Joram van Klaveren, left the party citing their disagreement with Wilders's divisive comments on the Moroccan minority in the Netherlands. van Klaveren's departure resulted in a second splinter party, For the Netherlands (VNL), which was jointly founded with Louis Bontes and Johan Driessen in May 2014.

[162] Albertazzi, D. and McDonnell, D., 2007. *Twenty-first century populism: The spectre of Western European democracy*. Palgrave Macmillan.
[163] Vossen, K., 2011. Classifying wilders: the Ideological development of Geert Wilders and his party for freedom. *Politics*, 31(3), 179-189.
[164] De Lange, S.L. and Art, D., 2011. Fortuyn versus Wilders: An agency-based approach to radical right party building. *West European Politics*, 34(6), 1229-1249.
[165] den Ridder, J., van Holsteyn, J. and Koole, R., 2015. 'Party membership in the Netherlands'. In Van Haute, E. and Gauja, A. (eds.) *Party members and activists*. Routledge., 134-150.
[166] Date PVV was registered with the Electoral Council.

12.4. Electoral performance

PVV made its electoral debut in the 2006 general election, gaining 5.9% of the vote and 9 seats, which made it the fifth largest party in the parliament. The party's breakthrough was built on Euroscepticism, which gained significant momentum following the Dutch referendum on the European Constitution, which was rejected by Dutch voters by 62% in June 2005. Wilders was one of the leaders in the Eurosceptic campaign. In the following 2010 general election, PVV's popularity skyrocketed, receiving 15.4% of the votes and 24 seats, which enabled PVV to become the third largest party in the parliament and allowed it to play a key role in the formation of coalition government between the conservative-liberal (VVD) and Christian-Democratic (CDA) parties. In the September 2012 snap general election, which followed PVV's withdrawal of support to the coalition government over Wilders's refusal to accept the imposition of austerity measures in line with EU rules, PVV recorded its first electoral loss. Its popularity decreased to 10.1% of the vote and 15 seats, which still, however, made it the third largest party in the parliament. This decrease could, to a certain extent, be attributed to the intra-party strife that erupted earlier that year, as well as PVV's unsuccessful coalition government arrangement. Lastly, in the 2017 general election, PVV saw its popularity increase to 13.1% and 20 seats, which rendered it the second largest party in the parliament for the first time. Despite this success, the result was perceived as disappointing by party supporters in light of earlier polls which placed PVV as the most popular party in the country.

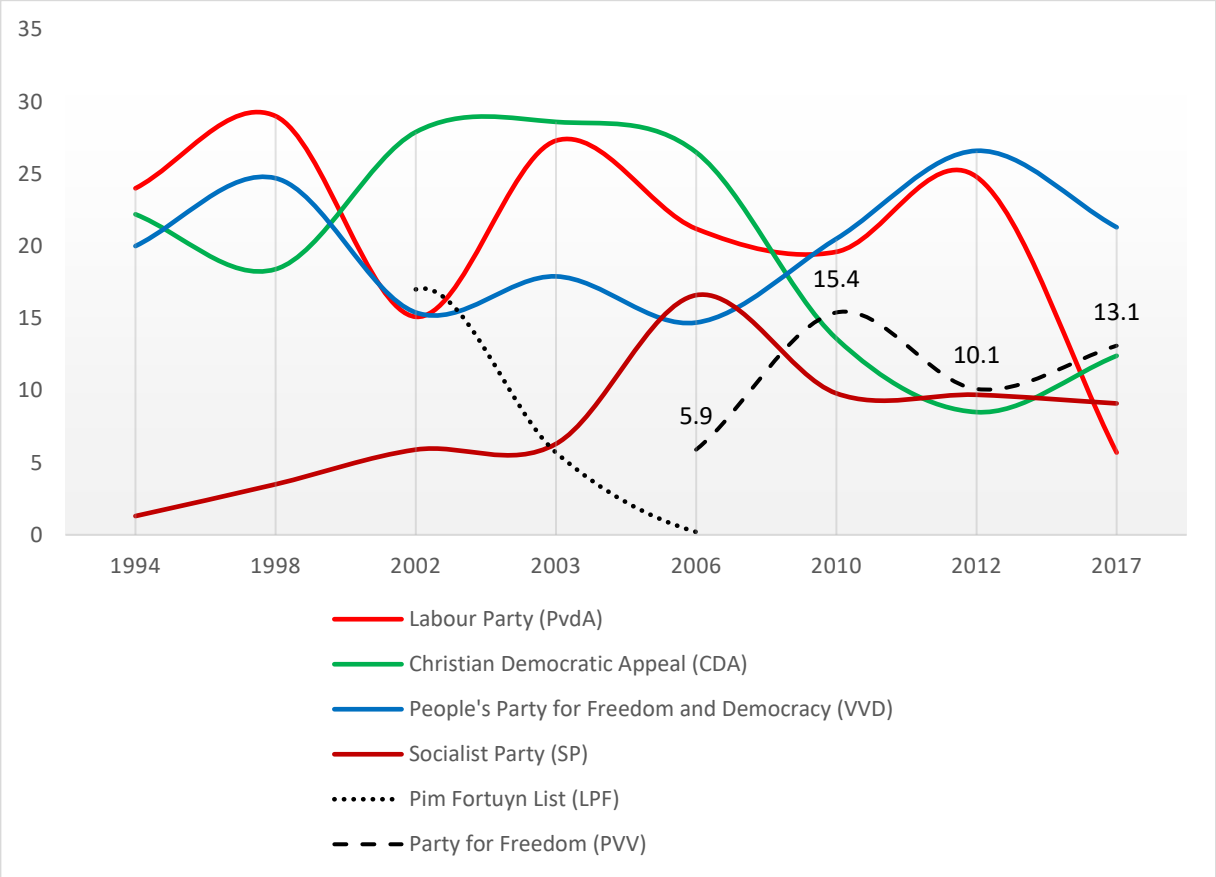

Figure 12 PVV's electoral performance in Dutch general elections, 1994-2017 (%)

12.5. Party in Government

Dutch 'mainstream democratic' parties have always refrained from imposing a formal cordon sanitaire to smaller party challengers, such the nativist LPF and PVV. They have, however, informally ignored and isolated such parties within the Second Chamber of the parliament.[167] Nevertheless, this strategy changed in the 2000s, after smaller party challengers started winning a gradually increasing number of parliamentary seats in the Second Chamber, making, by extension, the formation of coalition governments hard without the support of such parties. It is against this background that PVV's negotiated support to the minority government led by Prime Minister Mark Rutte between 2010 and 2012, without, however, PVV contributing ministers to the cabinet, should be understood.

Although VVD supported the formation of a coalition with the support of PVV from the outset, a sizeable part of CDA was strongly opposed to it. Yet, CDA was convinced to finally agree after tumultuous and complex negotiations.[168] The three parties were 'tied' to the coalition through a special agreement, which set out policy aims and areas to which PVV would lend its support, that is immigration and integration, crime and security, elder care, and finance.[169] Moreover, the three parties also agreed to disagree about their stance towards Islam. PVV was not coerced to concessions on immigration and integration during the 2010-2012 period. It did not, however, manage to avoid crucial compromises on socioeconomic policies, such as raising the retirement age and introducing austerity measures. These compromises, in combination with PVV's weakening position within the coalition arrangement due to internal dissent, eventually led Wilders to pull the plug on the party's support to the coalition in April 2012.[170] In all, despite some limited impact on key policy areas – such as the introduction of important restrictive changes to the Civic Integration Act of 2007 with regards to immigration and integration, which was admittedly, however, VVD's programmatic position too, PVV's influence on the VVD-CDA coalition's policies was limited.[171] Much of the draft legislation introduced by PVV was abandoned following the party's withdrawal of support, while the coalition partners' concessions on restricting dual nationality and introducing a face-covering Islamic clothing ban were later dropped. PVV's unwillingness and inability to mature organisationally, as well as its lack of government experience,[172] were the biggest impediments in the party's policy impact.

[167] van Holsteyn, J. M., 2018. 'The Radical Right in Belgium and the Netherlands'.
[168] Akkerman, T., 2018. *The Impact of Populist Radical-Right Parties on Immigration Policy Agendas*. The Impact of Populist Radical-Right Parties on Immigration Policy Agendas.
[169] Wilders used Danish People's Party's (DF) earlier coalition government agreement as a template for PVV's. See *ibid.*
[170] *Ibid.*
[171] *Ibid.*
[172] Clearly reflected in the unattainable and unrealistic nature of the immigration control policies it tried to push forward, such as, for example, the reduction in immigration, which would require the amendment of a number of EU Directives.

13. Norway – Progress Party (FrP)

13.1. Intro

Fremskrittspartiet (Progress Party – FrP) was founded by Anders Lange in 1973 as an anti-tax protest movement. It was initially commonly known as the Anders Lange's Party (ALP). In 1974 the party established its first political conventions, and in 1977, it adopted its current name, inspired by the success of Progress Party in Denmark. FrP is a nativist party, which counts four changes in leadership, two terms in power and three party splits in its almost 50-year history.

13.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

FrP started as an outsider anti-tax movement in the 1970s. From the second half of the 1980s, FrP started incorporating economic and welfare aspects into its criticism of Norway's immigration policies, emphasising particularly welfare state concerns and considerations.[173] At the same time, after its national convention in 1983, the party started self-identifying with libertarianism. In the 1990s, the party's attention shifted to more cultural issues and debates associated with immigration, reflecting, perhaps, a more general turn in public discourse towards such issues.[174] The party started gradually moderating its discourse in the 2000s, as it began seeking government cooperation with centre-right parties.[175] In the 2010s, one can still clearly distinguish within FrP a wing that self-identifies as economically liberal or libertarian, and a wing that is more in line with national conservativism, with the latter gaining increasingly more ground.[176] Indeed, the national conservative wing, which focuses heavily on restrictive immigration policies, enjoys more support among the membership of FrP, while the liberal or libertarian wing, which emphasises downsizing the bureaucracy and the public sector, is stronger among the party elite.[177]

FrP currently advocates neo-liberal economic policies that mainly focus on the reduction of state interventionism and the public sector, the lowering of taxes, and the increased reliance on market economy.[178] The party also calls for libertarian policies, having, for example, supported same-sex marriage and same-sex adoption, and the legalisation of blood donation for homosexuals. At the same time, FrP advocates a ban on face-covering Islamic clothing in public spaces, schools and universities. Indeed, FrP claims that its proposed policies are built on Norwegian and Western traditions and cultural heritage, which are rooted in Christianity and humanist values. What is more, the party favours the reorganisation and strengthening of the police, and the extension of its powers, particularly with respect to the investigation and prevention of serious offences, such as terrorism. It also calls for tougher sentences for those who have been convicted of similar offences. Restrictive policies towards immigration have a prominent place in FrP's manifestos. The party identifies the immigration problem in the strong migration

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[173] Hagelund, A., 2005. 'The Progress Party and the problem of culture: immigration politics and right wing populism in Norway'. In Rydgren, J. (eds.) *Movements of exclusion: Radical right-wing populism in the Western world.* Nova Publishers, 147-163.
[174] *Ibid.*
[175] *Ibid.*
[176] Jupskås, A. R., 2016. 'The Norwegian Progress Party: Between a Business Firm and a Mass Party'. In Heinisch, R. and Mazzoleni, O. (eds.) *Understanding Populist Party Organisation: The Radical Right in Western Europe*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 159-187.
[177] *Ibid.*
[178] FrP, 2017. *Prinsipp- og handlingsprogram 2017-2021*. Available at: https://www.frp.no/hva-vi-mener/prinsipp-og-handlingsprogram

pressures and weak border controls at the external borders of the EU which, by extension, jeopardise the integrity of the Schengen area. In this regard, FrP calls for a restrictive immigration and asylum policy which focuses on stricter implementation of the criteria for granting asylum, limitation of refugee resettlement from third countries, stricter family reunification rules, and active integration for those already settled in Norway. Lastly, the party is officially opposed to the prospect of Norway's membership in the European Union.

13.3. Leadership and Organisation

FrP has managed to successfully transform from a personalist party into one with a more solid organisational structure, combining characteristics from both the business-firm model and the traditional mass party.[179]

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
Anders Lange	08/04/1973	18/10/1974	558
Eivind Eckbo	19/10/1974	26/05/1975	219
Arve Lønnum	27/05/1975	11/02/1978	991
Carl I. Hagen	12/02/1978	06/05/2006	10310
Siv Jensen	07/05/2006	14/04/2021	5456
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***3507***

Table 20 FrP leaders and duration in post, 08/04/1973 – 14/04/2021

Its founder, Anders Lange, was a charismatic public speaker with some political experience, who stayed in the party's leadership until his death in October 1974. Lange was replaced by Eivind Eckbo, who remained the interim chairman of ALP until May 1975. In the meantime, however, in early 1974, Deputy Member of Parliament Carl Hagen together with some other members who were dissatisfied with ALP's 'undemocratic organisation', left the party and created the short-lived splinter Reform Party in the same year. After Lange's death, Hagen stepped in as a regular Member of Parliament, and Reform Party merged back into ALP in 1975. Under the leadership of Arve Lønnum, who succeeded Eckbo in 1975, ALP changed its name to Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet) in 1977. In the 1978 FrP convention, Hagen was eventually elected as party chairman, while the Progress Party's Youth was also established in the same year.

Carl Hagen remained the leader of FrP for more than 10,000 days, from 1978 to 2006, and influenced the party's programme more than any other of its leaders. Hagen sharpened FrP's 'anti-tax movement' image, expanded its political programme to issues such as immigration and social welfare, while, at the same time, he transformed FrP into a more conventional party organisation-wise.[180] These transformations did not, however, take place unchallenged.

[179] Jupskås, A. R., 2016. 'The Norwegian Progress Party'.
[180] *Ibid.*

Between 1992 and 1994, FrP experienced its second internal crisis, which culminated in a party split and the establishment of Free Democrats in 1994 – another short-lived splinter party. An intra-party conflict came to head in 1992 between a more radical libertarian minority, which favoured homosexual partnership and free immigration among others, and the more social conservative majority led by Hagen. Many of the libertarians left FrP before the 1993 parliamentary election, while others were 'punished' at the ballot box. Yet, the main rift was created at the 1994 party conference, when four libertarian MPs broke off, initially as independents, after facing Hagen's ultimatum to either adhere to the majority's political line or leave the party. These events had a major impact on the party's policy positioning and electoral performance.[181]

Between 2000 and 2002, FrP experienced its third internal crisis, which culminated in a third party split and the establishment of Democrats in Norway (formerly 'Democrats') in 2002. After the 1994 party conference, radical anti-immigration voices started gaining significant ground within the party. Although this shift reflected good in the polls, at the same time, it undermined FrP's prospects of participation in government, which was Hagen's end game. After being unsuccessful in taming these voices for years, and under the pretext of a conspiracy against the leadership of the party, Hagen, eventually, performed a 'purge' in early 2001, which saw seven MPs being suspended, excluded from or voluntarily leaving the party. This paved the way for the rise of a more moderate libertarian minority within FrP.

One of the most prominent members of this minority was Siv Jensen, who replaced Carl Hagen in May 2006 when the latter stepped down to become Vice President of the Norwegian parliament. The election of Jensen as party leader opened the way for FrP's first participation in government in 2013, and again in 2017. Jensen is FrP's second longest-serving leader, counting more than 5,000 days in this role. Although Jensen has been faced with various scandals throughout the years, involving various of the party's MPs, none of these 'mini crises' has resulted in a major intra-party rift.

13.4. Electoral performance

FrP's electoral performance in the 1970s was mixed, yet, the party recorded its first real breakthrough in late 1980s. In the 1973 parliamentary election, the first that FrP ever participated, the party managed to win 5% of the popular vote, a result mainly attributed to its anti-tax positions, the charisma of its leader, and the momentum of the 1972 European Community membership referendum outcome. In the 1977 parliamentary election, however, FrP performed poorly and was left without parliamentary representation. Four years later, in 1981, FrP managed to return to parliament amid an election in which right-wing parties in general recorded significant gains. In 1985, the party lost two of its four seats in the parliament, but became a kingmaker; a position which eventually took advantage of in May 1986 to bring down the Conservative-led government. In 1989, FrP made its breakthrough in national politics, gaining 13%, up from 3.7% four years earlier, and became the third largest party in Norway. FrP's successful incorporation of the immigration issue and respective calls for a strongly restrictive immigration policy into the public agenda have been used to explain this success.

[181] Bjørklund, T. and Andersen, J.G., 2002. 'Anti-immigration parties in Denmark and Norway'. In Schain, M., Zolberg, A. and Hossay, P. (eds.) *Shadows Over Europe: The Development and Impact of the Extreme Right in Western Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan, 107-136.

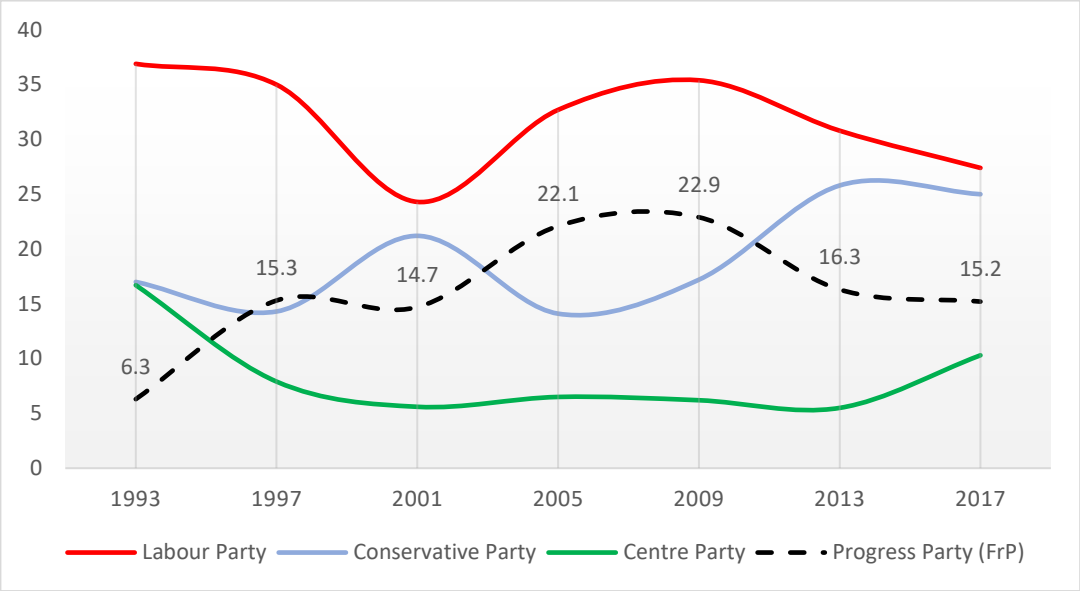

Figure 13 FrP's electoral performance in Norwegian general elections, 1993-2017 (%)

However, in 1993, the party's support was halved to 6.3%, which has been mainly attributed to intra-party strife between a more radical libertarian minority – for which immigration was a non-issue and homosexual partnership was acceptable –, and the majority led by Hagen. In the 1997 parliamentary election, FrP finished second for the first time, obtaining 15.3% of the vote. The ejection of the libertarian wing from the party and the sharpening of FrP's anti-immigration discourse has been commonly used to explain this success. In the 2001 parliamentary election, the party gained 14.6% of the popular vote and managed to maintain, more or less, its 1997 percentage. However, this was deemed a failure as FrP had receded to third place and had lost the gains it had made according to opinion polling in late 2000, which was placing its support close to 35%. This was due to another intra-party strife in late 2000, which culminated in the expulsion or voluntary departure from the party of seven MPs in early 2001. The 2001 parliamentary election result allowed FrP to become a kingmaker again; a position which it took advantage of by unseating the Labour Party government and allowing it to be replaced with a three-party coalition led by the Christian Democratic Party. Four years later, in the 2005 parliamentary election, FrP returned to the second position, gaining 22.1% of the votes, and managing for the first time to get MPs elected from all counties of Norway.[182]

The 2009 parliamentary election result showed that FrP is a force to be reckoned with. The party finished second again, having obtained 22.9% of the popular vote – a slightly increased share compared to 2005. However, the result was deemed relatively disappointing, as according to some polls earlier in the year, FrP was expected to win above 30%.[183] Nevertheless, the election result boosted its leader's confidence to vow that FrP would never again support any government coalition that the party itself was not a part of, and forced the Conservative Party to declare that it is considering building 'a bridge between the Progress Party and the centre'. Indeed, this eventually happened in 2013, after the Conservative Party invited FrP to participate in government for the first time, despite the fact that FrP had finished third in the election, gaining 16.3% of the votes, that is, 6.6% less than in 2009. FrP managed to maintain its vote share in the 2017 parliamentary election, obtaining 15.2% of the vote, testament, perhaps, to the public's approval of the party's performance in government.

[182] Aalberg, T. and Brekken, T., 2006. Norway. *European Journal of Political Research*, 45, 1221-1230.
[183] Aalberg, T., 2010. Norway. *European Journal of Political Research*, 49, 1113-1121.

13.5. Party in Government

Although FrP had enjoyed increasing electoral success and had been part of the Norwegian parliament for the most part of almost four decades, mainstream political parties had been consistently refusing to include it in a government coalition until recently. This situation started to gradually change in 2006, after the more moderate Siv Jensen took over as FrP's leader. FrP has been in power twice – in 2013 and 2017 –, and has participated in four different cabinets. In its first term in power, FrP was junior partner of the Conservative Party in a coalition which ended with election on 9 September 2017. In its second term in power, FrP participated in three cabinets: initially with the Conservatives only; then with the Conservatives and the Liberals; and, finally, with the Conservatives, the Liberals, and the Christian Democratic Party. FrP's second term in power ended on 20 January 2020 after its withdrawal from the coalition due to an internal policy dispute. FrP has received nine different ministerial posts in the two times it has participated in a coalition government, including Finance, and Justice, Public Security and Immigration in both 2013 and 2017; Children, Equality and Social Inclusion in 2013; and Labour and Social Affairs in 2013.

Cabinet Name	**Cabinet Start Date**	**Cabinet End Date**	**Duration in Office (Days)**	**Ministerial Posts share**
Solberg I	16/10/2013	09/09/2017	1424	7/16
Solberg II	11/09/2017	16/01/2018	127	8/18
Solberg III	17/01/2018	21/01/2019	369	6/17
Solberg IV	22/01/2019	20/01/2020	363	7/21

Table 21 FrP's duration in office and ministerial posts share upon cabinet appointment

During its first term in office, FrP took advantage of the 'refugee crisis' in order to push for its promised policies. On 19 November 2015, a broad majority in Parliament signed an agreement asking the Government to develop concrete proposals with the aim to limit the inflow of asylum seekers. Thus, the 'refugee crisis', which peaked at the end of 2015, provided FrP with the necessary legitimacy to put forward a series of restrictive and, quite often, controversial migration and asylum policy proposals. For instance, a draft law presented at the Parliament on 5 April 2016 targeted family reunification, permanent residence, and unaccompanied minors, which, according to the Minister for Immigration and Integration, would give Norway the strictest asylum/immigration regime in Europe.[184] These were combined with the proposal of new measures and the allocation of additional funds for integration, in line with FrP's pre-election proclamations. However, FrP's success was limited, as its most radical policies were repelled by the Parliament in the June 2016 vote. Still, in the aftermath of the general elections of September 2017 both coalition partners were able to maintain their previous electoral support almost intact, which was interpreted as a vindication for Solberg's decision to include FrP in the coalition and as an indication that voters had approved FrP's performance in power.[185]

[184] Pedersen, A. W., 2016. New legislation to reduce the inflow of asylum seekers in Norway. *ESPN Flash Report 2016/38*, July 2016, European Commission.

[185] Aardal, B. and Bergh, J., 2018. The 2017 Norwegian Election. *West European Politics* 41(5), 1208-1216.

FrP's second term in office was particularly turbulent. Perhaps the boldest measures adopted were the ban against the use of garments that cover all or part of the face, in all kindergartens and educational institutions, in June 2018; the introduction of a new equality and anti-discrimination act in January 2018; and the amendment of the nationality act in January 2019, introducing rules on loss of citizenship in cases of serious crimes against the state. On 14 January 2018, FrP lost control of the immigration portfolio following an agreement to separate migration and integration policies when the Liberals joined the coalition government. Integration policy was moved to the control of the Conservatives, while migration policy remained under the control of FrP. Moreover, shortly after the appointment of the new government, the Conservatives and FrP were hit by scandals involving allegations of inappropriate behaviour from MPs. Three high-profile FrP ministers were forced to resign in the beginning of the party's second term in government: the Minister of Justice, Public Security and Immigration in March 2018; the Minister of Fisheries a few months later; and the new Minister of Justice and Immigration in March 2019. Eventually, on 20 January 2020, FrP decided to quit the coalition stating that the Conservatives were being far too accommodating to the Liberals and Christian Democrats.

14. Poland – Law and Justice Party (PiS)

14.1. Intro

Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice Party – PiS) was founded in 2001 by twin brothers Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński as a Christian democratic party. At its foundation, PiS was a splinter from the Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS). The party was created after Lech Kaczyński, Minister of Justice and Public Prosecutor General (June 2000 - July 2001) in the AWS-led government, gained popularity for his strong stance against corruption. Under its first leader Lech Kaczyński, law and justice featured heavily in the newfound party's programme, mirroring the party's name. PiS is a right-wing populist political party, which has undergone one leadership change, while it counts three party split and three terms in power in its 20-year history.

14.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

PiS was founded on an anti-establishment agenda, which called for the 'purge', even dismantlement, of institutions, created during the flawed post-communist transition of the country. The early 1989 roundtable talks, which paved the transition trajectory for post-communist Poland, are considered by PiS as the rotten compromise between the communists and Solidarity opposition that undermined the process. Anti-establishment has been coupled with virulent anti-communism, as PiS has identified the source of the transition problems in the pathologies of the communist regime, that is corruption and political clientelism. Along these lines, a further strong element in the party's ideological package has been the rejection of the 'liberal consensus' of the transition period and its three constituent elements – economic (free market and individual economic freedom), civic (individual rights and free and active participation of individuals in civil society and the political process) and cultural (openness and cultural plurality) liberalisation. PiS's nationalism, which drives its soft Eurosceptic positions, and close association with the Catholic Church, which is reflected in the party's conservative sociocultural positions, complete the ideological foundation of the party.

PiS's populist anti-establishment agenda is clearly evident in the party's portrayal of institutions as corrupt, serving the interests of the pro-Western post-communist elites at the expense of the decent Polish people. It is within this context that the party's calls for law and justice should be understood. Such calls have been expressed in the form of decommunization of institutions, a process aimed at 'finishing the unfinished' dismantling of the communist regime. The overarching goal of the proposed transformations started taking shape around 2003 and was crystalised in the 2005 party manifesto, titled 'The Fourth Republic: Justice for all': the instigation of a 'moral revolution' in Polish society and the establishment of a 'Fourth Republic' in the place of the corrupt, degenerate Third Republic (c. 1991).[186] This would entail the 'moral cleansing through deep lustration, anti-corruption measures and reaffirmation of Catholic values'.[187] Although the idea of building a 'Fourth Republic' via a new Constitution[188] was largely dropped in later party programmes,[189] it was re-conceptualised as 'a strategy of executive

[186] PiS, 2005. *IV Rzeczpospolita: Sprawiedliwość dla Wszystkich*. Available at: https://piotrbabinetz.pl/pdf/programpis2005.pdf
[187] Millard, F., 2008. 'Party politics in Poland after the 2005 elections'. In Myant, M. and Cox, T. (eds.) R*einventing Poland: Economic and political transformation and evolving national identity*. Routledge, 71–90.
[188] PiS, 2005. *Konstytucja IV Rzeczypospolitej*. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20070716132651/http://www.pis.org.pl/doc.php?d=unit&id=7
[189] Folvarčný, A. and Kopeček, L., 2020. Which conservatism? The identity of the Polish Law and Justice party. *Politics in Central Europe*, 16(1), 159-188.

decisionism' (further elaborated below) and operationalised after the party obtained an absolute parliamentary majority in 2015.

The relatively 'thin' anti-corruption and decommunization proposals were gradually further substantiated by 'thicker' ideological items in PiS's anti-establishment agenda. These came from its conservative sociocultural positions, as well as from its nationalist and economic interventionist stance. PiS's socio-cultural conservative positions have been strengthened after 2005, when the party moved closer to the Catholic Church. In a series of party programmes, PiS has promoted the idea that the Catholic Church and faith are constitutive elements of the Polish national identity, where traditional and family values and patriotism are intertwined. Indeed, the party's declared overarching goal – which runs through all PiS's programmes since 2005 – is the creation of a moral order in society, whereby the Catholic church and faith play a central role. Along these lines, family and the nation take precedence over certain individual (particularly rights of women, including reproductive rights) and minority (LGBT in particular) rights. PiS advocates pro-life policies (including a total ban on abortion, which came into force in early 2021) and strongly opposes rights to gender identity. Moreover, PiS's nationalism drives its soft Eurosceptic positions. The party perceives the EU as exacerbating the crisis of Polishness with its push for deeper EU integration. More specifically, EU-led multiculturalism and other liberal values are portrayed as threats to Poland's sovereignty, since they promote a pan-EU identity 'at the expense of national states and national identities'.[190]

What is more, since its early days, PiS has opposed open markets and neoliberal economic policies, expressing support for Polish businesses and for limiting foreign investment. The party has called for national and social solidarity, which was amplified prior to the 2015 general elections, including proposals for free medication for the elderly, the reduction of the pension age and an extensive profamily programme (Family 500+). Thus, calls for free market limitations have been justified by the aim to redistribute more equitably the benefits of pro-market transition reforms, which, according to PiS, have disproportionately disadvantaged 'ordinary Poles'. This position has taken the form of nationalism-tainted anti-globalist interventionist policies of state control over key national industries, as well as stricter regulations for banks and the stock market, and increased support for small and medium sized enterprises, including tax cuts for physical and legal persons.

14.3. Leadership and Organisation

The founding brothers Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński were involved in the dissident movement in the 1960s and 1970s (Lech was even jailed for ten months in 1981-1982), though neither of the twins was a key figure in the Solidarity trade union until 1989. They were, consequently, not influential during the early 1989 roundtable talks.

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
Lech Kaczyński	13/06/2001	18/01/2003	584
Jarosław Kaczyński	19/01/2003	15/04/2021	6661
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***3623***

Table 22 PiS leaders and duration in post, 13/06/2001 – 15/04/2021

[190] PiS, 2005. *IV Rzeczpospolita*.

At its foundation PiS was a splinter from the Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS), a political coalition in Poland with strong links with Solidarity. The coalition included the party Social Movement for Electoral Action Solidarity, the political arm of the powerful trade union. The transition reforms exacerbated the contradictions within the coalition, with many of its members joining the right-wing liberal Civic Platform, while others joining the newly established right-wing conservative PiS. The core of PiS came from the Christian-Democratic Centre Agreement party, founded in 1990 by Jarosław Kaczyński, which had joined AWS in 1997 and was instrumental in the latter's dissolution in 2001 after its members left the coalition to form PiS.

In 2002, Lech Kaczyński was elected mayor of Warsaw and a year later he handed the party leadership to Jarosław Kaczyński who still leads the party. In April 2010, Lech Kaczyński was among the nearly 100 victims of a tragic plane crash near Smolensk, Russia. The accident fuelled a number of conspiracy theories – elements of which are largely found in PiS's 2014 programme – that have consolidated party support, while 'the Smolensk tragedy' has become part of PiS's 'internal mythology'.[191] Following his brother's death and his failure to win the 2010 presidential election, Jarosław Kaczyński decided not to run for public office again. He still maintains, however, the authority and status of PiS chair and the absolute control of the PiS government and parliamentary majority.[192] In January 2010, the short-lived Poland Plus was founded as an indirect splinter party from PiS. It was established on the basis of the civic movement 'Poland XXI', which was founded by Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski, former vice-chair of PiS, who, together with Paweł Zalewski and Ludwik Dorn had left PiS in 2007. Poland Plus re-joined PiS in September 2010. What is more, in November 2010, Poland Comes First was founded as a moderate splinter party from PiS after a number of prominent members were expelled from the party for disagreeing with Kaczynski's leadership. Moreover, PiS's conservative Catholic-nationalist wing split off in 2011 to form United Poland (SP) in 2012, after the leader of this faction and vice-chair of PiS, MEP Zbigniew Ziobro, and two other MEPs were expelled from PiS 'for disloyalty'. Ziobro criticised PiS's leadership and personally Jarosław Kaczyński for the weak performance of PiS at the 2011 parliamentary elections. However, in the 2015 general election the two parties ran on a joint ballot, and SP is currently part of the ruling United Right coalition, led by PiS.

14.4. Electoral performance

PiS has historically benefitted electorally from its association with the Catholic Church. The influential ultra-Catholic Radio Maryja and other media related to the Church are vocal supporters of PiS, and some Catholic priests are openly calling to vote for the party during mass. However, the strong PiS support for a leading role of the Church in the public and even in the political life, and the reciprocation by the Church, has recently caused a backlash. The introduction of a total ban on abortions by PiS in early 2021 sparked mass protests, which made international headlines. What is more, polls conducted during that time show that just 41% approved the Catholic Church, down from 90% in the beginning of the transition.[193]

[191] Folvarčný, A. and Kopeček, L., 2020. Which conservatism?
[192] *Ibid.*
[193] Pawlak, J. and Ptak, A., 2021. As Poland's Church embraces politics, Catholics depart. Reuters, 3 February 2021. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-poland-church-insight-idUSKBN2A30SN

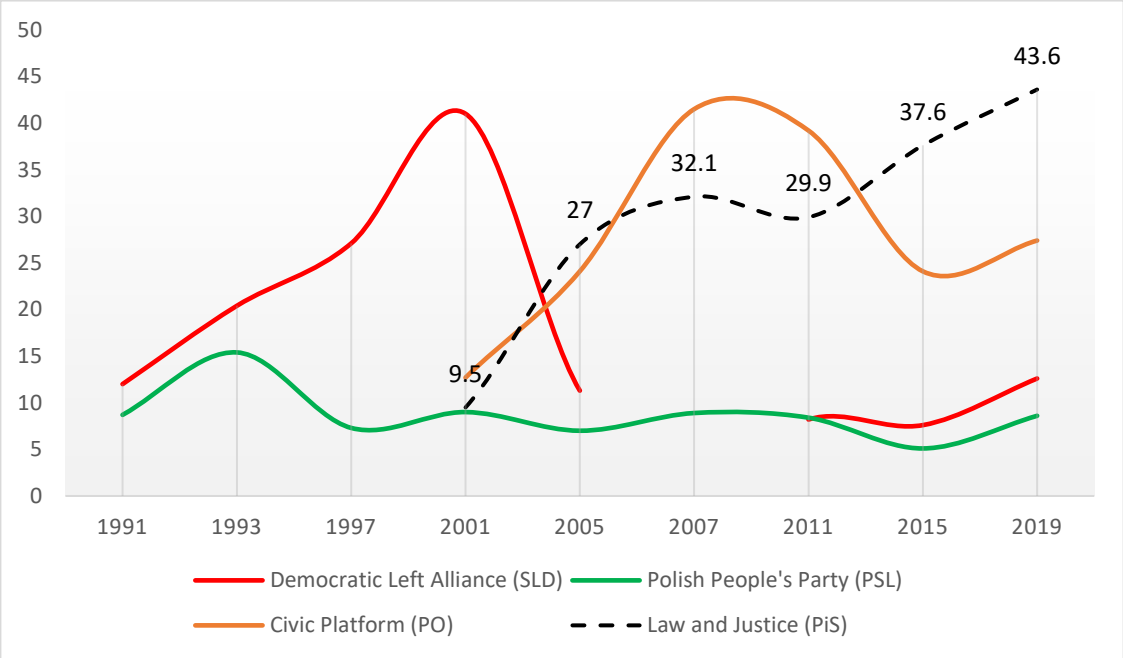

Figure 14 PiS's electoral performance in Polish general elections, 1991-2019 (%)

In the 2001 general election, PiS won 9.5% of the vote and 44 seats. PiS almost tripled its vote share in the 2005 general election, after winning 27% of the vote. In the next two general elections, PiS finished second after receiving 32.1% and 29.9% in the 2007 and 2011 elections respectively. With 37.6% of the votes in the 2015 general election, PiS won the absolute majority of seats in both the Sejm (235/460) and the Senate (61/100), becoming the first political party in post-communist Poland to have achieved this. PiS performed particularly well among older and less well-educated voters, those living in rural areas, workers, farmers, the unemployed, retirees and pensioners. In fact, the party won the largest share of the vote in virtually every demographic group, including younger voters and students. It was outperformed by its main competitor, Civic Platform, only among high socioeconomic strata, which included entrepreneurs, directors and managers.[194] It is worth noting, however, the important role of the high number of wasted votes (almost 17% of the votes cast) in PiS' landslide victory, after leftist parties failed to cooperate and did not clear the 5% threshold to enter the Sejm.[195] Lastly, in the 2019 general election, PiS, as part of the United Right coalition, won 43.6% of the votes and 235 in the Sejm (199 for PiS), yet failed to gain absolute majority in the Senate (48/100 seats).

14.5. Party in Government

PiS has served three terms in power in its 20-year history. Following PiS's win in the 2005 general election, cabinet formation proved to be difficult as negotiations with Civic Platform, the other splinter from AWS with largely similar, albeit more moderate, ideological stance failed. Eventually, a minority government was formed in October 2005 with the support of unlikely allies: the ultra-conservative League of Polish Families and the agrarian nationalist party Self Defence. Jarosław Kaczyński did not initially become PM, as he had declared that he would not accept the role if his brother Lech won the strongly contested presidential elections (which he did). Thus,

[194] Szczerbiak, A., 2016. An anti-establishment backlash that shook up the party system? The October 2015 Polish parliamentary election. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 18 (4). 404-427.
[195] Markowski, R., 2016. The Polish parliamentary election of 2015: a free and fair election that results in unfair political consequences. *West European Politics*, 39(6), 1311-1322.

Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz was appointed PM of the first PiS minority government, which was, however, short-lived (Marcinkiewicz resigned in July 2006). It was followed by a second PiS government – led this time by Jarosław Kaczyński who was appointed as PM by his brother Lech –, in which the League of Polish Families and Self Defence became coalition partners. Yet, this second PiS government was also short-lived. As a result of controversies between the coalition partners and the government's growing unpopularity due to a corruption scandal and criminal charges involving the controversial deputy PM and leader of Self Defence, Andrzej Lepper, the cabinet was dissolved in November 2007 and new elections were called.

Cabinet Name	Cabinet Start Date	Cabinet End Date	Duration in Office (Days)	Ministerial Posts share
Marcinkiewicz I	31/10/2005	04/05/2006	185	10/17
Marcinkiewicz II	05/05/2006	10/07/2006	66	9/19
Kaczyński I	14/07/2006	20/09/2006	68	11/21
Kaczyński II	21/09/2006	15/10/2006	24	11/20
Kaczyński III	16/10/2006	11/08/2007	299	11/21
Kaczyński IV	13/08/2007	05/11/2007	84	15/22
Szydlo	16/11/2015	10/12/2017	755	17/23
Morawiecki I	11/12/2017	13/10/2019	671	16/21
Morawiecki II	15/11/2019	15/04/2021	517	14/23

Table 23 PiS's duration in office and ministerial posts share upon cabinet appointment (until 15/04/2021)

Despite being short-lived, PiS's first attempt to overturn Poland's post 1989 constitutional settlement was during its first term in power. In December 2006, Kaczynski's cabinet expanded the lustration law with the broad support of the parties in the Sejm, including the oppositional Civic Platform. The amended law granted the main body responsible for the lustration, the Institute of National Remembrance, sweeping powers to check 52 categories of people in public services, including teachers and journalists.[196] However, in May 2007, key articles of the amended law were struck down by the Constitutional Tribunal (the Polish Constitutional Court), overturning the implementation of a major item from PiS's 2005 programme.[197] It is worth noting that there was much less consensus on other PiS's proposed policies. Although a 'stabilization pact' containing some 144 legislative initiatives was agreed upon under PiS threat to call new elections, the PiS-led government failed to implement it, as the cabinet was constantly shaken by internal strife between the coalition partners.[198]

After returning to power in November 2015, this time in a single-party majority government, PiS started re-implementing its plan for the establishment of a 'Fourth Republic'. However, instead of attacking head-on the 1997 Constitution, and since PiS did not have a constitutional majority, it employed 'a strategy of executive decisionism' aimed at 'disempowering or politicizing the institutions that would otherwise hold the executive to

[196] It is estimated that 400,000 to 700,000 individuals in total were affected.
[197] Szczerbiak, A., 2016. Deepening democratisation? Exploring the declared motives for "late" lustration in Poland. *East European Politics*, 32(4), 426-445.
[198] Millard, F., 2008. 'Party politics in Poland'.

account'.[199] This process started with capturing the Constitutional Tribunal.[200] In turn, the lack of constitutional control over the executive facilitated the purging and subsequent politicisation of other institutions. The judicial system was purged through the introduction of stronger control over the judiciary by the Parliament and government. An amendment to the law on the judiciary allowed legislative majority and government to appoint and discipline judges.[201] The Ministry of Justice was merged with the Office of the General Prosecutor, thus placing the prosecution under direct governmental control. By reducing the retirement age of Supreme Court judges, voices critical of PiS were removed and judges loyal to PiS were appointed in their place. Moreover, PiS took decisive steps to overtake and subdue public media. It took control over the appointment of directors and governing bodies of public media by transferring powers from the independent National Council of Broadcasting and Television to a new parallel institution, the Council of National Media, which was under government control. This allowed the legislative majority to fast-track unhindered major legislative initiatives without discussion or scrutiny from the opposition.[202] At the same time, PiS delivered on its 2015 social promises by rolling out a comprehensive and successful social and redistributive programme. Building the 'Polish welfare state' enabled PiS to effectively occupy the vacant place of the ex-communist left in the ideological spectrum.

Despite mounting internal and external criticisms against the institutional reforms undertaken by PiS between 2015 and 2019, the party pledged in its 2019 programme to deepen these changes in order to make them irreversible upon its return in office. PiS also committed to further extend its social programme, promising more benefits to the young, increases in the minimum wage and preservation of the '13th pension'. This PiS-sponsored 'Polish welfare state' programme proved to be highly effective electorally, and in November 2019 the party returned to governing singlehandedly. PiS has lost, however, control over the Senate this time around, which can potentially hinder the full implementation of its programme. PiS's third term in power has seen the return to public office of the party leader, Jarosław Kaczyński, as deputy PM in Mateusz Morawiecki's Cabinet. In October 2020, the largely PiS-controlled Constitutional Tribunal passed a decision which declared the law permitting abortions for malformed foetuses unconstitutional. This decision, which entered into force in January 2021, enables the implementation of PiS's long-standing commitment to introduce an almost absolute ban on abortions. In turn, this provoked a series of two-month-long 'women protests' in Poland, in which hundreds of thousands of men and women took to the streets to express their opposition to the implementation of the decision.

[199] Bill, S. and Stanley, B., 2020. Whose Poland is it to be? PiS and the struggle between monism and pluralism. *East European Politics*, 36(3), 378-394.
[200] Sadurski, W., 2019. *Poland's Constitutional Breakdown*. Oxford University Press.
[201] *Ibid.*
[202] Bill, S. and Stanley, B., 2020. Whose Poland is it to be?

15. Spain – Podemos

15.1. Intro

Podemos (We can) was founded in 2014 by Pablo Iglesias Turrión in the aftermath of the Indignados movement against inequality and corruption (also known as the 15-M Movement). It was officially launched as a movement on 16 January 2014 in Madrid and was formally established as a political party in March 2014. Podemos emerged as a collaborative initiative between a group of political scientists from the Complutense University and the far-left Izquierda Anticapitalista (IA) with the aim to 'convert the social indignation' expressed by the 2011 Indignados movement into a 'political and electoral majority' that could combat the EU-led austerity policies.[203] Podemos is a left-wing populist political party, which has not undergone any leadership changes, while it counts one party split and one term in power in its 7-year history.

15.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

Podemos's fundamental goal in its inception was to oppose the EU-led and government-implemented austerity policies. The party strongly advocates anti-austerity, anti-corruption and anti-establishment positions and has called for the curtailment of the Treaty of Lisbon.

More specifically, Podemos has challenged the legitimacy of the Spanish political class, which it considers 'corrupt' and 'incompetent' and accuses it of representing only itself and the 'interests of the [European] Troika'.[204] What is more, it contests the historical foundations of the political establishment as undemocratic, resting on 'the impunity of Francoist crimes' and 'the forgetting of antifascist memory', which has resulted in the establishment of an 'oligarchic' regime.[205] Podemos calls for state interventionism and the strengthening of social welfare through the introduction of a basic income for everyone. Indeed, there is a strong sense of civic nationalism underlying these positions, as for Podemos a strong and healthy welfare state lies at the heart of the Spanish national identity and national pride.[206] By contrast, those who tax evade (from businessmen to politicians) are labelled as political adversaries, 'enemies of the fatherland' and 'anti-patriots'.[207] By extension then, the party advocates strict penalties against tax evasion by large corporations, politicians and multinational organisations, as well as the support of smaller enterprises.

Podemos has also called for the curtailment of the Treaty of Lisbon, the abandonment of memoranda of understanding with the EU on austerity, the withdrawal from certain free trade agreements, as well as more direct democratic procedures on major constitutional reforms, such a referendum on whether Spain should retain the Spanish monarchy or become a republic. Moreover, the party has advocated Spain's withdrawal from NATO and the strengthening of the country's self-determination rights. Podemos also supports the reduction of fossil fuel consumption, the strengthening of public transport and the promotion of renewable energy initiatives. Lastly, the

[203] Mazzolini, S. and Borriello, A., 2021. The normalization of left populism? The paradigmatic case of Podemos. *European Politics and Society*, 1-16.
[204] Cervera-Marzal, M., 2020. Podemos: A 'Party-Movement' in Government. Jacobin magazine, 1 September 2020. Available at: https://www.jacobinmag.com/2020/01/podemos-party-social-movement-pablo-iglesias
[205] *Ibid.*
[206] Custodi, J., 2020. Nationalism and populism on the left: The case of Podemos. *Nations and Nationalism*, 1-16.
[207] *Ibid.*

party has taken a progressive stance on ethical/political issues such as abortion rights, as well as immigration and multiculturalism, regarding which Iglesias has claimed that the country 'ensures that all citizens are protected and that national diversity is respected'.[208] Indeed, social cohesion is not threatened by the existence of different national groups inside the country's territory, but by Spanish businessmen who hold bank accounts in tax havens.[209]

15.3. Leadership and Organisation

The main organisational challenge for Podemos from the outset was striking the right balance between its social movement and political party characteristics and aspirations, as well as successfully managing the power dynamics and interests of the disparate groups that comprised it. The main cleavage in Podemos has been the opposition between the group of political scientists from the Complutense University and the far-left IA, which joined forces in January 2014 to launch the initiative, but have publicly confronted each other in internal elections ever since.[210] Yet another important divide in the party has been within the Complutense group, between the pro-Iglesias and the pro-Errejón party members, with the former being much less interested in investing in the party's 'activist' profile as a strategy for electoral success.[211]

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
Pablo Iglesias	15/11/2014	15/04/2021	2343
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***2343***

Table 24 Podemos leaders and duration in post, 15/11/2014 – 15/04/2021

The party grew exponentially until the 2015 general election. On 12 January 2014 a news website published a manifesto entitled 'Moving the counter: converting indignation into political change', which was the result of the collaboration between the Complutense group and the leaders of IA. Two days later, on 14 January, Pablo Iglesias, a professor of political science at the Complutense University and a TV presenter, was announced as head the movement. In March of that year, Podemos was formally established as a political party, and in June Iglesias announced that the citizens' assembly would take place in autumn. The assembly, which also was the party's founding congress, took place in Madrid on 18 and 19 October 2014, and all members were invited to participate in determining Podemos's political and organisational principles and structure through direct democratic procedures. This process was followed by internal elections to fill the positions that had emerged from the agreed party structure. This was the first occasion where the divide between the Complutense group and their predominantly non-activist supporters, and the IA and their activist members became apparent.

Signs of this cleavage persisted in all Podemos's congresses, with the Complutense group imposing primaries on the party positions with the participation of activist and non-activist supporters alike, against the wishes of the IA

[208] *Ibid.*
[209] *Ibid.*
[210] Cervera-Marzal, M., 2020. Podemos.
[211] *Ibid.*

group, which wanted to restrict the vote to activists.[212] This cleavage was eventually overshadowed by the intra-Complutense group divide, which escalated during Podemos's second citizen assembly in February 2017 that sealed the victory of Pablo Iglesias's strategic line over Íñigo Errejón's.[213] Podemos's concentration on building a centralist and vertical structure in the first three years of its existence, with an exclusively electoral focus aimed at generating immediate consensus, proved to be at the expense of developing intermediary and decentralised structures that would diffuse tensions and successfully manage internal dissents.[214] In late 2018, an internal disagreement about the party's candidate re-election strategy in the 2019 Madrid municipal election deepened the rift between the two sides. The rift eventually became a split following the pro-Errejón supporters' dissatisfaction with the government formation process between the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) and Unidas Podemos in September 2019. Indeed, in September 2019, Errejón announced the creation of a splinter party, Más País, in order to contest the November 2019 Spanish general election. The announcement of the new party triggered the defection of many members from Podemos, including leading figures, such as Carolina Bescansa, one of the Podemos co-founders. Following the party split and the result of the November 2019 Spanish general election, Podemos entered a coalition government with PSOE, whereby Iglesias assumed the roles of Minister of Social Rights and 2030 Agenda, and Second Deputy Prime Minister.

15.4. Electoral performance

Podemos became an electoral sensation almost overnight, receiving 20.7% of the vote in the 2015 general election and 69 out of 350 seats, which rendered it the third largest party in the parliament in less than two years after it was founded. Following the failure of the 2015–2016 Spanish government formation negotiations to lead to a stable coalition government, a second general election was called for June 2016. Podemos took part in this election in alliance with United Left, Equo and regional left-wing parties. Under the name Unidos Podemos (UP; later renamed to Unidas Podemos), the alliance gained 21.2% of the vote. However, from there on, within the context of the failure to overtake PSOE at the electoral repetition, Podemos started to experience an electoral decline, which, in turn, triggered intense intra-party strife.[215] In the April 2019 general election, the alliance received just 14.3% of the vote share. In the aftermath of this election, Podemos entered negotiations to form a coalition government with PSOE, which not only failed, but they also further deepened the intra-party rift, which eventually escalated into a party split in September 2019. In the electoral repetition of November 2019 that followed, the alliance's vote share dropped further to 12.9% and 35 seats in the parliament. Yet, this time around, the negotiations ushered the formation of a coalition government between PSOE and UP.

[212] *Ibid.*
[213] Mazzolini, S. and Borriello, A., 2021. The normalization of left populism?
[214] *Ibid.*
[215] *Ibid.*

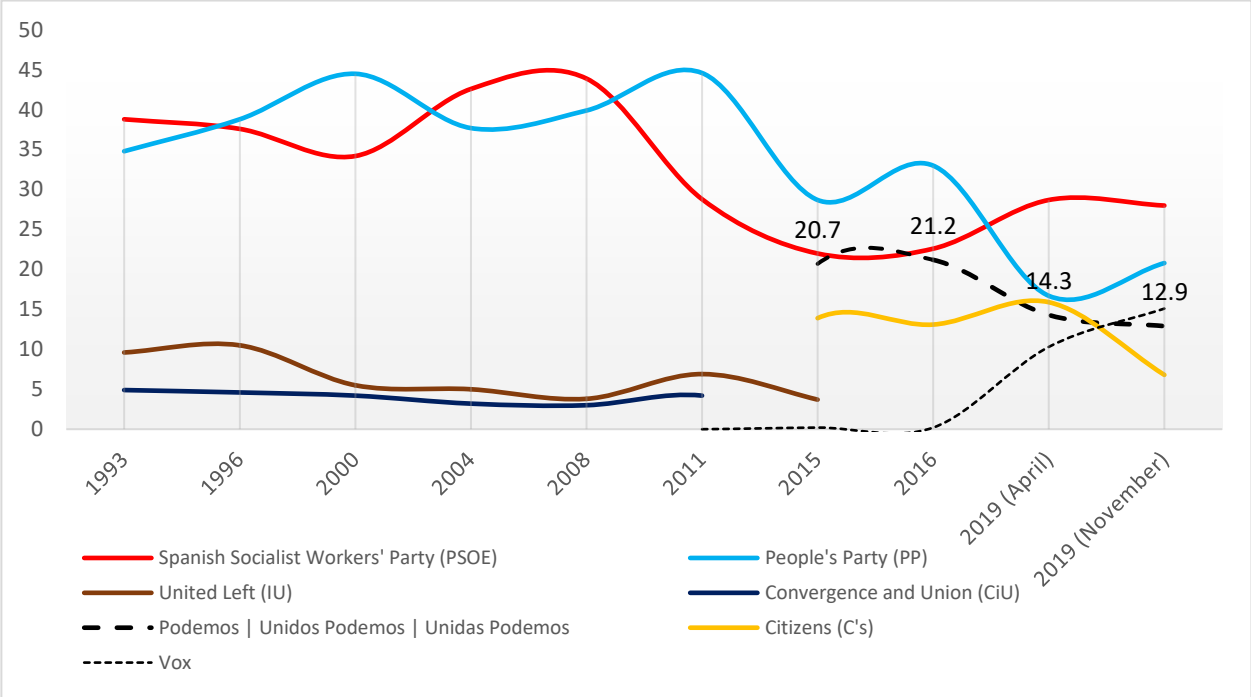

Figure 15 Podemos's electoral performance in Spanish general elections, 1993-2019 (%)

15.5. Party in Government

In January 2020, Podemos, as part of the UP alliance, entered coalition government with PSOE following the November 2019 general election result. The party was handed just two ministries – Social Rights and 2030 Agenda (Iglesias), and Equality –, while Iglesias was also trusted with the position of Second Deputy Prime Minister. However, this minimal involvement in power came at high cost for Podemos. The party lost two million votes since 2015, went through some intense internal strife, and had to gradually and to a large extent abandon the more radical positions of its agenda.[216] The latter becomes particularly apparent when one compares Podemos's initial programme with the forty-nine-page coalition agreement, unveiled on 30 December 2019. Indeed, Podemos's calls to stop paying the public debt have been replaced with the 'respect for the mechanisms of budgetary discipline'.[217] What is more, the calls for Catalonia's right to self-determination, as well as for the need to create a public bank or a public energy company, were both dropped in the coalition agreement, while with regards to the party's emblematic question of home evictions, one can only discern 'good intentions' in the government's programme.[218]

Cabinet Name	Cabinet Start Date	Cabinet End Date	Duration in Office (Days)	Ministerial Posts share
Sanchez III	13/01/2020	15/04/2021	458	2/22

Table 25 Podemos's duration in office and ministerial posts share upon cabinet appointment (until 15/04/2021)

[216] *Ibid.*
[217] Cervera-Marzal, M., 2020. Podemos.
[218] *Ibid.*

16. Sweden – Sweden Democrats (SD)

16.1. Intro

Sverigedemokraterna (Sweden Democrats – SD) was founded in 1988 by old national-socialists and fascists, former members of the Sweden Party. Despite that, it has never been an antidemocratic party. SD is a nativist party, which counts seven changes in leadership and two party splits in more than 30 years since its establishment.

16.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

Although some of its founding members were affiliated with Swedish fascist and white nationalist groups, SD was never a Neo-Nazi party. Indeed, SD started in late 1980s as a strictly nationalist party, whereby nationalism was understood as 'open and non-racial,' that is belonging, in the form of membership in the nation, could be accomplished either by birth or assimilation.[219] By extension, the party opposed multiculturalism, stating that its members favour 'a multicultural world, not a multicultural society'.[220] In recent years, SD has supported a ban on wearing the burqa in public places, while it has strongly criticised Swedish immigration and integration policies. What is more, since its inception, SD has advocated 'welfare chauvinism', calling for the exclusion of immigrants from social welfare provisions and, instead, the increased support of the elderly and families with children. It has also been critical of the special minority rights granted to the indigenous Sami people of northern Sweden. SD's original policy agenda also included calls for stricter 'law and order' policies (e.g. the re-introduction of the death penalty), ecological responsibility, and respect of traditional family values (e.g. restricted abortion rights), as well as animal rights.[221]

Since mid-2000s, under the leadership of Jimmie Åkesson, SD started undergoing a process of moderation by expelling several hard-liners who were consistently caught defying the party's official positions. At the same time, the party also started incorporating more Eurosceptic (e.g. against further EU integration, and Sweden's accession to the Economic and Monetary Union), as well as explicit social conservative positions. With regards to the latter, Åkesson's leadership invested in social conservativism as the ideal complement to the party's nationalism, in the sense that 'the central aim of conservatism is to safeguard well-functioning and deeply rooted communities' with the nation being 'besides the family, the primary example of such a community'.[222] After heated debates, social conservatism was added to the party's ideological profile at the party convention in 2011.[223] In this regard, SD considers traditional nuclear family as the preferred environment for raising a child, however, the party is not against same-sex marriage and civil partnerships as long as this is allowed by the relevant individual religious

[219] Jungar A. C., 2016. 'The Sweden Democrats'. In Heinisch, R. and Mazzoleni, O. (eds.) *Understanding populist party organisation.* Palgrave Macmillan, 189-219.
[220] Rydgren, J., 2004. Radical Right-wing Populism in Sweden and Denmark. *The Centre for the Study of European Politics and Society Papers, No. 5*, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.
[221] Mulinari, D. and Neergaard, A., 2014. We are Sweden Democrats because we care for others: Exploring racisms in the Swedish extreme right. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 21(1), 43-56.
[222] Sweden Democrats, 2011. *Sverigedemokraternas principprogram 2011*. Available at: https://sd.se/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/principprogrammet2014_webb.pdf
[223] Jungar A. C., 2016. 'The Sweden Democrats'.

institution. More recently, the party has been particularly critical of Sweden's 'Islamisation', which is threatening, not only the country's identity, language and culture, but also the rights of its LGBT community.[224]

16.3. Leadership and Organisation

SD has successfully transformed from a party with a 'chaotic' and 'secret' organisation during the first decade of its existence to a highly disciplined and the most centralised of all Swedish parties.[225]

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
Leif Ericsson & Jonny Berg	01/01/1988*	01/01/1989*	366
Ola Sundberg & Anders Klarström	01/01/1989*	01/01/1990*	365
Anders Klarström & Madeleine Larsson	01/01/1990*	01/01/1992*	730
Anders Klarström	01/01/1992*	01/01/1995*	1096
Mikael Jansson	01/05/1995	07/05/2005	3659
Jimmie Åkesson	07/05/2005	16/10/2014	3449
Mattias Karlsson	17/10/2014	27/03/2015	161
Jimmie Åkesson	28/03/2015	16/04/2021	2210
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***1505***

Table 26 SD leaders and duration in post, 01/01/1988 – 16/04/2021*[226]

SD was initially run by a small and closed circle of individuals with roots in the Neo-Nazi and fascist activist milieu, who prioritised the establishment of local party branches.[227] The party at first adopted a dual-party leadership model, copied from the Swedish Environmental Party, wanting to avoid personalised leadership. In this regard, from 1988 to 1992, party leadership was shared and time-limited in order to differentiate SD from mainstream parties. However, issues of miscommunication regarding the party activities and its economic resources drove SD to switch to a traditional single leader model in 1992 with the election of Anders Klarström as the sole party chairman. Under Klarström, who was one of the party's founders and was previously affiliated with the old-school national socialist Nordic Reich Party, SD radicalised, partially disintegrated and lost party members.[228]

In 1995, Klarström was replaced as party leader by Mikael Jansson, a former member of the Centre Party and moderate nationalist with previous experience in party organisational development. Soon after, and in response to this success of the moderate faction, several radical SD members-activists broke away and formed Hembygdspartiet, which later became known as the Conservative Party before dissolving in 1999. However, intra-party strife persisted. In 2001, the Stockholm SD faction, which was the party's most extreme faction, was expelled by the party congress not only due to consistently advocating out-of-line positions, but also, and most importantly,

[224] Rydgren, J. and Tyrberg, M., 2020. Contextual explanations of radical right-wing party support in Sweden: a multilevel analysis. *European Societies*, 22(5), 555-580.
[225] Jungar A. C., 2016. 'The Sweden Democrats'.
[226] Note: Dates with asterisk are approximate.
[227] Jungar A. C., 2016. 'The Sweden Democrats'.
[228] *Ibid.*

due to allegations for preparing a 'coup' to take over the party.[229] Shortly thereafter, the expelled party members formed the more radical National Democrats.

The party's efforts to moderate itself continued throughout the 2000s, and particularly intensified after the election of Jimmy Åkesson in SD's party leadership in 2005. Åkesson, who was a key figure in the party's youth wing and enjoyed the support of the electoral committee, defeated Jansson at the party congress, after the latter was forced to step down following a 'coup' orchestrated by SD's southern branches, which were the electoral strongholds of the party. Åkesson's vision for the party was to 'grow up', mature, and moderate in order to overcome the 'pariah status' and enter government or support another party in government.[230] Indeed, under Åkesson's leadership, SD built a highly bureaucratic and centralised party organisation thanks mainly to its 'zero tolerance' policy which was introduced in 2012 and consisted of the expulsion of any member who would be caught off the party's official line. In October 2014, after the general election, Åkesson announced that he would be stepping down from the leadership of the party due to 'burnout'. He was temporarily replaced by Mattias Karlsson, who led the party for a few months until Åkesson's return in March 2015.

16.4. Electoral performance

SD's electoral performance was unremarkable in the first decade of its existence, yet, the party's popularity started gradually increasing in tandem with SD's moderation and organisational restructuring. In the 2002 general election, SD's presence became noticeable after it gained 1.4% of the vote. The first important party success came after the 2006 general election, when SD received 2.9% of the popular vote, which entitled it, for the first time, to public funding. This significantly strengthened SD's organisational development and electoral campaigning, and contributed to the party's electoral breakthrough in the next election. Indeed, SD entered the parliament for the first time following the 2010 general election, after it gained 5.7% of the vote share, surpassing the required 4% threshold. What is more, following a period of high party bureaucratisation and power centralisation, SD more than doubled its share in the 2014 general election, gaining 12.9% of the vote, which allowed it to become the third largest party and a kingmaker; a position which it did not exploit, as, for the most part, it tolerated the 'red-green' coalition government. Finally, this stance was perhaps rewarded in the 2018 general election, when SD received 17.5% of the vote – its highest share so far. However, the party did not grow as much as some polls had predicted.[231]

[229] Rydgren, J., 2004. Radical Right-wing Populism.
[230] Jungar A. C., 2016. 'The Sweden Democrats'.
[231] The Economist, 2018. The anti-immigrant Sweden Democrats fail to break through. 13 September 2018. Available at: https://www.economist.com/europe/2018/09/13/the-anti-immigrant-sweden-democrats-fail-to-break-through

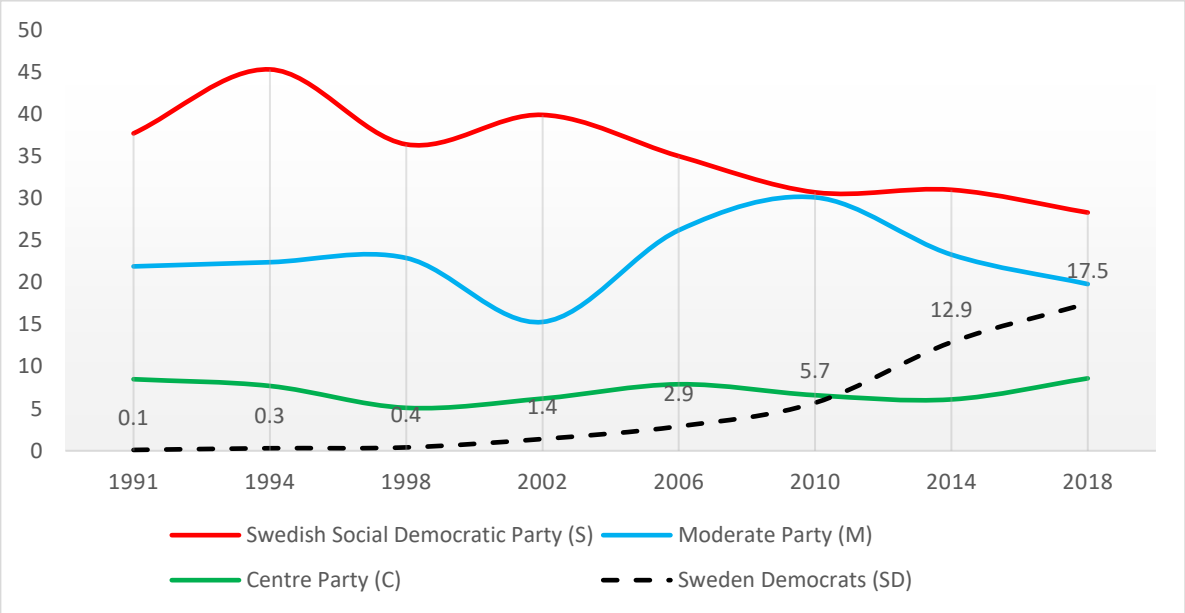

Figure 16 SD's electoral performance in Swedish general elections, 1991-2018 (%)

17. Switzerland – Swiss People's Party (SVP)

17.1. Intro

Schweizerische Volkspartei (Swiss People's Party – SVP) was founded in 1971 as a merger of the Party of Farmers, Traders and Independents (BGB) and the Social-Political Group (also known as the Democratic Group). BGB's electoral base in the rural population had started to gradually lose its significance in the post-war era, while the Democratic Group had some support among the urban working class. In the face of the 1971 federal election, two of the Democratic Group branches split and merged with BGB to form SVP, which sought to expand its electoral base towards city workers. SVP is a nativist political party, which counts seven changes in leadership, thirteen terms in power (of which eight in the post-1990 era), and one party split in its 50-year history.

17.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

Following the merger, SVP shifted towards the political centre, retaining, however, BGB's adherence to social conservativism and economic liberalism.[232] The appointment of the young billionaire entrepreneur, Christoph Blocher, as the party's president of the Canton of Zurich branch in 1977 marked the increasing hardening of the party's rhetoric with an emphasis on opposition to European integration and calls for restrictive immigration and asylum policies. Nevertheless, it also marked the beginning of an ideological struggle between SVP's largest branches: Bern, which represented the old moderate style, and Zürich, which was led by Blocher and stood for a more radical political agenda.

More specifically, SVP supports the principle of individual responsibility and opposes any expansion of governmental services. For example, the party favours lower taxes and is against deficit spending, rejecting

[232] Backes, U., 2018. 'The Radical Right in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland'. In Rydgren, J. (ed.) *The Oxford handbook of the radical right.* Oxford University Press, 452-477.

increases in public spending on social welfare and education, such as the public financing of maternity leave and nursery schools.[233] The party puts emphasis on 'law and order' and advocates Swiss neutrality and the safeguard of homeland security policy. It calls for the preservation and strengthening of the role of the Swiss army in national defence, as well as its non-involvement in international military operations. What is more, SVP advocates the safeguard of Switzerland's political sovereignty. For instance, the party opposes the country's involvement in intergovernmental and supranational institutions, such as the UN, the EEA and the EU. SVP is also sceptical towards the increasing influence of international law on domestic politics, which puts Swiss direct democracy in question. Along these lines, SVP calls for stricter laws and policies for asylum seekers and economic immigrants, who are perceived as threats to public order and burdens to the country's social welfare programmes. By the same token, SVP is critical towards the eastward expansion of the Schengen Area, as well as externally imposed environmental policies that aim to reduce CO2 emissions. Lastly, as a socially conservative party, SVP is critical of multiculturalism, and particularly of Islam, and has consistently advocated a ban on the construction of minarets.

17.3. Leadership and Organisation

SVP was founded as a national organisation in 1971 by uniting different cantonal parties in the German cantons and beyond. Its first president was Hans Conzett, former chairman of BGB, who remained the head of SVP until 1976. Conzett was succeeded by Fritz Hofmann, another representative of the old moderate BGB faction, who led the party till 1984. However, it was the election of young entrepreneur Christoph Blocher as president of SVP's Zürich branch in 1977 – a position he held until 2003 – that really shaped the party's organisational structure and development. Although he never held the most important office in the national party in formal terms – that of national president –, Blocher became the undisputed leader at the national level predominantly by building a collective leadership, surrounding himself with other influential SVP members from the Canton of Zurich, such as Ueli Maurer.[234] Soon after his appointment, Blocher began consolidating his power and renewing the party's organisational structures, activities, campaigning style and political agenda at the local level.[235] More specifically, Blocher developed professionalised and capital-intensive forms of campaigning; strengthened the party's grassroots membership and simultaneously expanded its repertoire of action; and increased the power of the head office formed around a strong national leadership, while leaving some autonomy to the local branches.[236]

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
Hans Conzett	22/09/1971	01/01/1976*	1562
Fritz Hofmann	01/01/1976*	01/01/1984*	2922
Adolf Ogi	01/01/1984*	01/01/1988*	1461
Hans Uhlmann	01/01/1988*	01/01/1995*	2557
Ueli Maurer	27/01/1996	01/03/2008	4417
Toni Brunner	01/03/2008	23/04/2016	2975

[233] *Ibid.*
[234] Mazzoleni, O. and Rossini, C., 2016. "The Swiss People's Party: Converting and Enhancing Organization by a New Leadership". In Heinisch, R. and Mazzoleni, O. (eds.) *Understanding populist party organisation*. Palgrave Macmillan, 79-104.
[235] Skenderovic, D., 2009. *The radical right in Switzerland: continuity and change, 1945-2000*. Berghahn Books.
[236] Mazzoleni, O. and Rossini, C., 2016. "The Swiss People's Party".

Albert Rösti	23/04/2016	22/08/2020	1582
Marco Chiesa	22/08/2020	16/04/2021	236
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***2214***

Table 27 SVP leaders and duration in post, 22/09/1971 – 16/04/2021[237]

Blocher's new entrepreneurial style of politics was met with considerable intra-party resistance. Internal debates and tensions between the Bern – the centrist/moderate faction –, and Zürich – the new more radical faction – cantonal branches, were a constant throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. The election of Adolf Ogi from the Bern branch as the chairman of SVP in 1984 intensified these struggles. Gradually, the Zurich branch started to gain ground in the party at the expense of the Bern faction, and the party became increasingly centralised. The appointment of Hans Uhlmann in the party's leadership in 1988, a position he held until 1995, was a catalyst towards that direction. During this period, the changes in the party's internal rules facilitated the consolidation of Blocher's leadership as a cohesive team, while SVP doubled its number of cantonal branches. Indeed, in the 1991-1995 period, one can witness a gradual break with the 'old' moderate SVP and the emergence of the new national leadership, which saw the strengthening of the Zürich wing.[238]

The election of Ueli Maurer as the leader of SVP in 1996 marked the beginning of the party's consolidation and electoral success – a phase which lasted until 2007.[239] During that period, SVP transformed from a party with a strong leader and a relatively weak organisation to a party with a solid leadership and organisation.[240] By 2001, SVP had a branch in every canton, while its relatively concentrated national leadership with marked centralisation had strengthened its internal ideological coherence.[241] Maurer, who was former director of the farmers' association in the Canton of Zurich and a member of federal parliament, remained national party president until the beginning of 2008, and along with Blocher and other influential politicians from the Zurich Canton played key role in reorganising the party at the national level.

However, in 2007, SVP entered a third phase in its evolution, during which, although the party's organisation remained strong, its leader's strength was temporarily damaged.[242] In December 2007, a parliamentary majority voted to expel Blocher from the federal government due to his alleged inability to abide by the rules of the Swiss consociational system. This triggered SVP's most serious intra-party crisis, when another SVP member, Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf of the moderate Graubünden branch, was elected to the Federal Assembly in Blocher's place. As a result, Blocher's intra-party influence was temporarily challenged.

Yet, in Spring 2008, Toni Brunner, a party hardliner, and one of Blocher's young disciples, replaced Maurer in the party's leadership. Brunner introduced new mechanisms for controlling internal discipline, which, essentially, marked Blocher's renewed grip on the party's organisation. Subsequently, SVP withdrew its support from Widmer-Schlumpf and expelled the Graubünden branch from the party. A few months later, in June 2008, the ousted Graubünden SVP branch and several members from other branches founded the more moderate

[237] Note: Dates with asterisk are approximate.
[238] Mazzoleni, O. and Rossini, C., 2016. "The Swiss People's Party".
[239] *Ibid.*
[240] Carter, E., 2005. *The Extreme-right in Western Europe. Success or failure?*. Manchester University Press.
[241] Mazzoleni, O. and Rossini, C., 2016. "The Swiss People's Party".
[242] *Ibid.*

Conservative Democratic Party (BDP) – SVP's only splinter party. Soon afterwards, virtually all of SVP's Bern branch broke away and joined BDP. Under these circumstances, the Federal Council (i.e., the national government) changed its composition of parties for the first time since 1959, and SVP formed the opposition. Lastly, the election of Albert Rösti in 2016 and Marco Chiesa in 2020 in SVP's leadership did not change much in the party's power dynamics. In fact, the new leaderships demonstrated that Blocher's influence on SVP was as strong as ever.

17.4. Electoral performance

In the first decade or so of its existence, SVP didn't see any particular increased support beyond that of the BGB, retaining around 11% of the vote through the 1970s and 1980s. With the election of Blocher as president of the Zurich branch in 1977, and the ensuing sharpening of the party's rhetoric locally, SVP's support in Zurich increased in the 1979 federal election from 11.3% to 14.5%. However, this did not have a lasting effect, as support for SVP stagnated in Zurich and the other cantons throughout the 1980s.

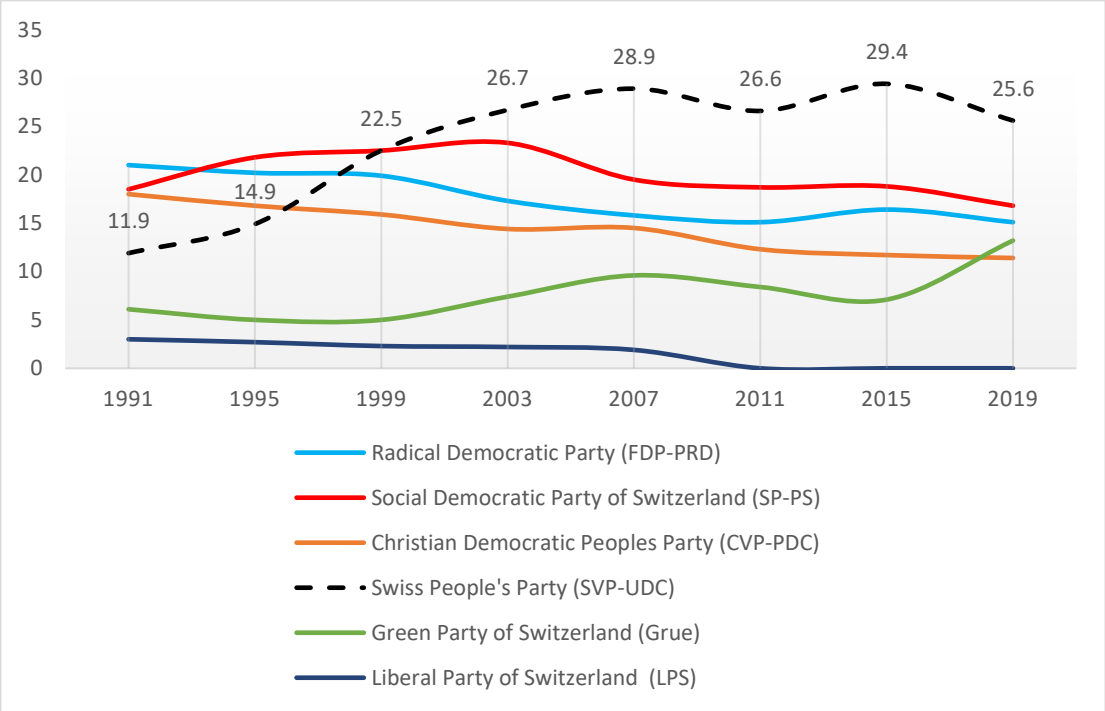

Figure 17 SVP's electoral performance in Swiss federal elections, 1991-2019 (%)

This changed during the 1990s, following deep structural changes in the party's organisation, its gradual expansion throughout the country, and the emergence of the new leadership under the influence of Christoph Blocher. In the 1991 federal election, although SVP received only 11.9% nationally, it became, for the first time, the strongest party in Zürich, with 20.2% of the vote. SVP's rise continued in the 1995 federal election, when the party gained 14.9% of the share. Its support skyrocketed in the 1999 federal election, when SVP won 22.5% of the votes, which rendered it the strongest party in Switzerland for the first time. By expanding, not only territorially, but also in terms of its electoral base towards new voter demographics, SVP, from being the smallest of the four governing

parties at the start of the 1990s, emerged as the strongest party in Switzerland by the end of the decade. What is more, SVP recorded its best results in cantons where its branches had adopted the agenda of the Zürich wing.[243] SVP's popularity continued to rise throughout the 2000s. The 2003 federal election confirmed that SVP still was the most popular party in the country, after it won 26.7% of the vote share. As a result of the election, SVP obtained a second seat in the federal government at the expense of the Christian Democrats, which was, nevertheless, lost following an internal conflict in 2008-2009. In the 2007 federal election, SVP further increased its share to 28.9%, which was the highest vote share, up until that point, ever recorded for a single party in Switzerland since 1919, when proportional representation was first introduced. However, in the beginning of the 2010s, SVP experienced its first electoral setback since 1987, which can, perhaps, be explained by the party split that occurred in 2008 and the creation of the moderate BDP splinter party. In the 2011 federal election, SVP drew 26.6% of the vote, a 2.3% decrease from the previous elections in 2007. Yet, this was just a hiccup, as in the 2015 federal election, SVP returned stronger than ever and managed to surpass its own record by receiving 29.4% of the vote share, partly by capitalising on "Europe's migrant crisis". Lastly, in the 2019 federal election, SVP experienced its second electoral setback, when its share of votes went down to 25.6% from 29.4%. Although this result still rendered SVP the most popular party in the country, it triggered a change in the party's leadership, which was materialised in August 2020 when Marco Chiesa replaced Albert Rösti.

17.5. Party in Government

The Swiss political system includes all major parties in the federal government, independent of election results, and allows referenda to be held on popular initiatives or proposed legislation (or amendments). Within this context, SVP has never been met with a 'cordon sanitaire'. To the contrary, SVP is the only nativist party in Europe to be the senior party in government, since it became the largest party in Switzerland in 1999. Henceforth, it's no surprise that SVP's policy impact has been, throughout the years, considerable, yet, not without occasional pushbacks and compromises.

Cabinet Name	**Cabinet Start Date**	**Cabinet End Date**	**Duration in Office (Days)**	**Ministerial Posts share**
Bundesrat 1991	04/12/1991	12/12/1995	1469	1/7
Bundesrat 1995	13/12/1995	14/12/1999	1462	1/7
Bundesrat 1999	15/12/1999	09/12/2003	1455	1/7
Bundesrat 2003	10/12/2003	11/12/2007	1462	2/7
Bundesrat 2008	10/12/2008	13/12/2011	1098	1/7
Bundesrat 2011	14/12/2011	08/12/2015	1455	1/7
Bundesrat 2015	09/12/2015	10/12/2019	1462	2/7
Bundesrat 2019	11/12/2019	15/04/2021	491	2/7

Table 28 SVP's duration in office and ministerial posts share upon cabinet appointment (until 15/04/2021)

[243] Skenderovic, D., 2009. *The radical right in Switzerland.*

The party's policy successes have been studied in the realms of social welfare,[244] as well as law and order.[245] In the immigration policy area, SVP has used referenda to promote a number of its policy positions, such as a ban on the construction of minarets, 'the deportation of criminal foreigners', and curbs on EU immigration. More specifically, in November 2009, SVPs' proposed ban on the construction of minarets won the majority vote, which, however, did not affect the four then existing minarets. Moreover, SVP's federal popular initiative on deportation was accepted in November 2010 and went in effect in October 2016. Yet, a follow-up initiative on the same subject, also launched by the SVP in February 2016, was rejected by voters. What is more, the SVP-driven federal popular initiative 'against mass immigration' was accepted by a majority of the electorate in February 2014. It should be noted though that following prolonged negotiations between Switzerland and the EU, the Swiss government largely backed down from the original referendum proposals, adopting instead a 'watered down' version.

[244] Afonso, A. and Papadopoulos, Y., 2015. How the populist radical right transformed Swiss welfare politics: from compromises to polarization. *Swiss Political Science Review*, 21(4), 617-635.
[245] Biard, B., 2017. The influence of the Swiss SVP on policy-making: opening the black box. *Politologický časopis-Czech Journal of Political Science*, 24(1), 21-36.

18. United Kingdom – United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)

18.1. Intro

United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) was initially founded by Alan Sked in 1991 as Anti-Federalist League (AFL), a single-issue Eurosceptic party. AFL was renamed to UKIP in 1993, yet, its electoral popularity remained low. The election of Nigel Farage in the party's leadership in 2006 marked the broadening of the party's political agenda. The party reached its electoral peak in the mid-2010s, yet, fell into an ongoing 'existential crisis' following the British public's decision to leave the EU in the 2016 EU membership referendum. UKIP is a nationalist political party, which counts 19 leadership changes and three party splits in its 18-year history.

18.2. Party Ideology and Policy Positions

UKIP can be understood as a typically single-issue (i.e. Eurosceptic) party, from its establishment until the election of Nigel Farage in the party's leadership in 2006. Soon after his election, Farage sought to broaden UKIP's agenda by introducing a number of socially conservative positions, such as the re-introduction of the death penalty and restrictive immigration policies.[246] Following the British public's decision to leave the EU in the 2016 EU membership referendum, UKIP fell into an 'existential crisis', as the party's primary aim had been, in principle, accomplished. After Farage's departure from the party's leadership in September 2016, various subsequent leaders have attempted to 'rebrand' the party by shifting its agenda to more nativist positions, such as explicit opposition to Islam and multiculturalism. In all, UKIP has traditionally advocated Eurosceptic, British/English nationalist and unionist, as well as liberal economic and socially conservative positions, with an increasing emphasis on restrictive immigration measures and opposition to multiculturalism and Islam.

The politics of national identity have always held a key place in UKIP's agenda.[247] The party's main claim has been that 'the highest priority for the British polity is to assure that it is fully governed by the national state'.[248] Although the party describes its position as being that of civic nationalism, UKIP's emphasis in recent years on 'restoring Britishness', and resisting the 'Islamification' of Britain, the EU's and national elites' multiculturalism project and the 'pseudo-nationalisms' of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, reveal clear elements of ethnic nationalism.[249] However, UKIP's nationalism and unionism are inherently 'Anglocentric', as they conflate 'Englishness' and 'Britishness' and negate the distinct culture of the Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Irish peoples.[250] Indeed, UKIP initially opposed devolution and the establishment of the Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament in the late 1990s, although, in 2011, Farage supported the establishment of an English Parliament to accompany the other devolved governments.

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[246] Lynch, P., Whitaker, R. and Loomes, G., 2012. The UK Independence Party: Understanding a niche party's strategy, candidates and supporters. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 65(4), 733-757.
[247] Hayton, R., 2016. The UK Independence Party and the Politics of Englishness. *Political Studies Review*, 14(3), 400-410.
[248] Dye, D.T., 2015. Britain's Nationalist Moment: The Claims-Making of the SNP and UKIP. *Political Studies Association Annual International Conference*, Sheffield, England.
[249] Mycock, A. and Hayton, R., 2014. The party politics of Englishness. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 16(2), 251-272.
[250] *Ibid.*

Euroscepticism has also been central to UKIP's identity.[251] The party has consistently presented the EU as undemocratic, corrupted, inefficient and responsible for the 'flooding' of the UK with migrants, in particular from Eastern Europe.[252] It is worth noting that the idea of conducting a referendum on the UK's EU membership was added to UKIP's manifesto only recently, in 2015. Indeed, the party claimed for almost two decades that it would remove the UK from the EU without a referendum on the issue, in the event of them winning a general election.[253] UKIP's Euroscepticism has always gone hand-in-hand with anti-elitism, that is the idea that a fundamental divide exists between the British population and the elite who govern the country. Along these lines, it's the latter who have imposed the UK's EU membership in order to serve their interests, against the will and interests of the former.

Anti-immigration is the third key theme in UKIP's agenda, although it was added relatively recently in the mid-/late- 2000s. In 2013, Farage described immigration as 'the biggest single issue facing this party'.[254] Throughout the years, UKIP has presented immigrants, mainly those coming from Eastern Europe, as a source of crime, pressure on housing, the welfare state, and health services.[255] Within this context, the party has called for a number of restrictive immigration policies, ranging from a five-year ban on any migrants coming to the UK, an immigration points-based system akin to that employed by Australia, and increased conditionality to migrants' access to welfare benefits, to cuts in the country's foreign aid budget and a ban on face-covering Islamic clothing in public spaces.

18.3. Leadership and Organisation

UKIP has undergone 19 leadership changes in its 18-year history, the vast majority of which have occurred in the post-June 2016 'Brexit' referendum era. Indeed, the referendum outcome has triggered an ongoing series of leadership crises within the party, which have resulted in the departure of Nigel Farage, UKIP's longest-serving leader and by far its most influential figure, in December 2018.

Leader	**Leadership Start Date**	**Leadership End Date**	**Duration in Post (Days)**
Alan Sked	03/09/1993	01/07/1997	1397
Craig Mackinlay	06/08/1997	01/09/1997	26
Michael Holmes	02/09/1997	22/01/2000	872
Jeffrey Titford	23/01/2000	05/10/2002	986
Roger Knapman	06/10/2002	12/09/2006	1437
Nigel Farage	13/09/2006	27/11/2009	1171
Malcolm Pearson	28/11/2009	02/09/2010	278
Jeffrey Titford	06/09/2010	05/11/2010	60
Nigel Farage	06/11/2010	16/09/2016	2141
Diane James	17/09/2016	04/10/2016	17
Nigel Farage	05/10/2016	28/11/2016	54

[251] Ford, R. and Goodwin, M.J., 2014. *Revolt on the right: Explaining support for the radical right in Britain*. Routledge.
[252] Deacon, D. and Wring, D., 2016. The UK Independence Party, populism and the British news media: Competition, collaboration or containment?. *European Journal of Communication*, 31(2), 169-184.
[253] Usherwood, S., 2016. Did UKIP Win the Referendum?. *Political Insight*, 7(2), 27-29.
[254] Tournier-Sol, K., 2015. Reworking the Eurosceptic and Conservative Traditions into a Populist Narrative: UKIP's Winning Formula?. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 53(1), 140-156.
[255] Goodwin, M. and Milazzo, C., 2015. *UKIP: Inside the campaign to redraw the map of British politics*. Oxford University Press.

Paul Nuttall	29/11/2016	09/06/2017	192
Steve Crowther	10/06/2017	29/09/2017	111
Henry Bolton	30/09/2017	17/02/2018	140
Gerard Batten	18/02/2018	02/06/2019	469
Piers Wauchope	03/06/2019	09/08/2019	67
Richard Braine	10/08/2019	30/10/2019	81
Patricia Mountain	16/11/2019	25/04/2020	161
Freddy Vachha	22/06/2020	12/09/2020	82
Neil Hamilton	12/09/2020	15/04/2021	215
Average Duration in Post	-	-	***498***

Table 29 UKIP leaders and duration in post, 03/09/1993 – 15/04/2021[256]

UKIP started as AFL in 1991, led by historian Alan Sked – a former Liberal Party candidate and professor at the London School of Economics (LSE) who had 'converted' to Euroscepticism. On 3 September 1993, at a meeting held at the LSE, AFL was renamed UKIP. After a very poor performance in the 1997 general election, in which UKIP was defeated by Referendum Party in almost all seats in which they stood against each other, Sked was forced to resign following pressures by a party faction led by Farage, among others. Sked left the party in July 1997, citing that UKIP had been infiltrated by racist and far-right individuals – a reference to the hundreds of candidates that joined UKIP, many of whom were personally recruited by Farage himself, following the dissolution of Referendum Party earlier that year.[257] A series of leadership changes ensued, with Michael Holmes, Jeffrey Titford and Roger Knapman serving as party leaders between September 1997 and September 2006. During that period, UKIP softened its discourse in an attempt to become more 'mainstream': it became less critical of the EU under Holmes; and, under Knapman, it reorganised itself nationally as a private company limited by guarantee and professionalised its fundraising, which enabled the party to upgrade its campaigning. However, these developments, although they allowed UKIP to grow, fuelled an internal party struggle. This resulted in the removal of, initially, Holmes and then Titford from the party's leadership, and the defection of Robert Kilroy-Silk – a celebrity talk show host and UKIP MEP – in January 2005. Soon after, Kilroy-Silk founded the more radical Veritas, UKIP's first splinter party, joined by a number of UKIP members.

Farage, whose role was instrumental in the aforementioned leadership changes, was elected party leader on 12 September 2006. Under his leadership, UKIP adopted a wider policy agenda capitalising on concerns about increasing immigration to the UK following the 2004 EU eastward enlargement. Farage's image as a 'man of the people', which he meticulously cultivated of himself, proved to be extremely popular among the electorate, as the outcome of the 2009 European elections manifested. In November 2009, Farage resigned from UKIP's leadership to focus on his campaign to become an MP for Buckingham in the 2010 general election. He was succeeded by Malcolm Pearson who proved to be unpopular among the party's grassroots and remained in the post a little less than a year. Farage returned to the party's leadership on 5 November 2010 and introduced a new emphasis on building up local support in councils where UKIP had done well in previous elections.[258] This strategy, combined with the increasing public dissatisfaction with the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government and its

[256] Alan Sked's and Craig Mackinlay's leadership end dates, as well as Michael Holmes's leadership start date are approximate.
[257] Ford, R. and Goodwin, M.J., 2014. *Revolt on the right*.
[258] *Ibid.*

implemented austerity policies, resulted in UKIP's significant breakthroughs at the 2013 local elections, 2014 European elections, and 2015 general election. To counter the loss of further votes to UKIP, the Conservatives promised to hold a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EU. The outcome of the June 2016 referendum – where 51.89% voted in favour of leaving the EU – sealed Britain's departure from the EU and sank UKIP into an 'existential crisis', since its *raison d'être* had been accomplished.

On 16 September 2016, Farage stepped down as UKIP leader, and since then has been succeeded by a total of 9 aspiring leaders – elected or interim – who have attempted to 'rebrand' the party, albeit unsuccessfully. During that period, UKIP has undergone a series of leadership crises, internal power struggles, scandals involving key party figures, a heavy decline in its vote share and membership, and a number of members defections and suspensions. Henry Bolton, who served as UKIP leader between September 2017 and February 2018, was removed as party leader and subsequently established a new, albeit short-lived, political party, under the name One Nation. By December 2018, a majority of the party's MEPs had left the party. On 4 December 2018, Farage announced he had resigned his UKIP membership citing his disagreement with the party's recent anti-Islam turn. Soon after, Farage co-founded Brexit Party (renamed Reform UK in January 2021), and on 22 March 2019 he was officially announced as the leader of the newfound party.

18.4. Electoral performance

UKIP's electoral growth remained slow in the 1990s and 2000s. The party reached its electoral peak in the mid-2010s, when it secured two MPs in the British Parliament and became the largest party representing the UK in the European Parliament.

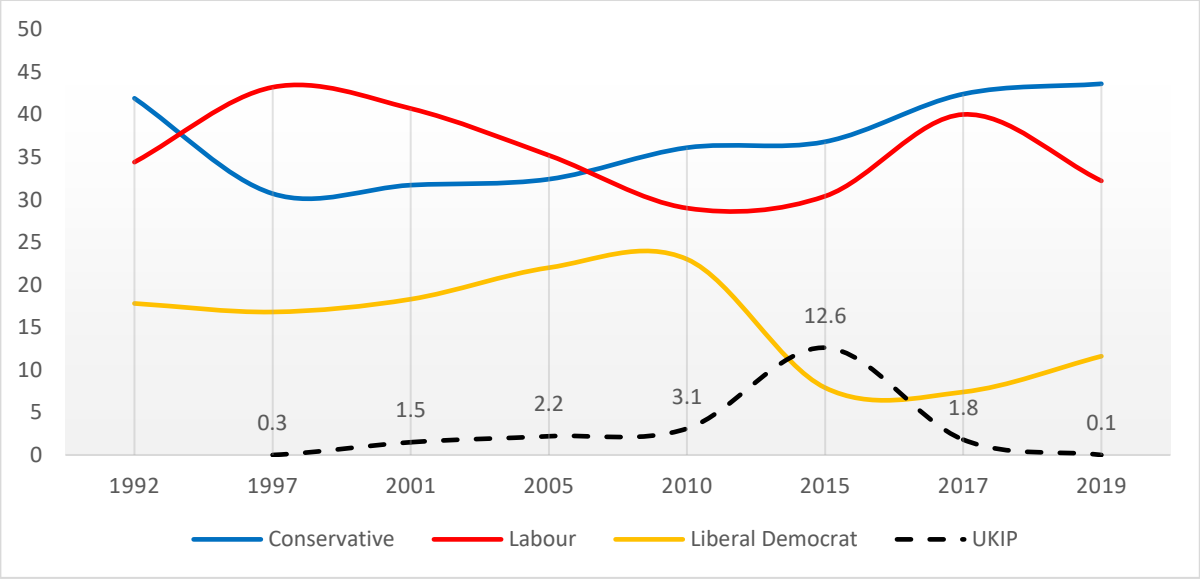

Figure 18 UKIP's electoral performance in British general elections, 1992-2019 (%)

In the 1997 general election, UKIP gained just 0.3% of the national vote, being largely eclipsed by the Referendum Party. The dissolution of the latter and leadership changes in the former failed to drastically improve UKIP's electoral performance, with the party winning 1.5% of the vote in the 2001 general election. UKIP's single-issue campaigning did not pay off in the 2005 general election either, with the party receiving only 2.2% of the vote. UKIP made its electoral breakthrough in the 2009 European Parliament election, soon after Farage took over the

party's leadership and broadened its political agenda. What is more, UKIP also capitalised on the parliamentary expenses scandal, which damaged trust in the mainstream parties. However, this success was not replicated in the 2010 general election, where UKIP secured 3.1% of the vote, but failed to win any seats in the British Parliament. UKIP's best performance in a general election came in 2015, when the party won 12.6% of the vote and replaced the Liberal Democrats as the third most popular party, having secured, however, only one seat. Finally, UKIP's 'existential crisis' that ensued the outcome of the 'Brexit' referendum was further deepened by the 2019 general election, where the party received only 0.1% of the vote share – UKIP's lowest result in the party's history.