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Fred Paxton

Wien, 2017.

The Populist Performance of Urban Crisis

A study of populist radical right
leadership of local government
in Austria and Italy

Fred Paxton

Erasmus Mundus Master Course in Urban Studies [4Cities]

Supervisors: Prof. Hans Blotevogel and Ramon Bauer

Second Reader: Dr. Nick Schuermans

25 August 2017

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Abstract

The influence of *populist radical right* (hereafter PRR) parties when in local government power is an under-researched area, with only a few examples having focused on the sub-national level. This master thesis uses the conception of populism as a performative style to analyse the exercise of power by PRR parties in two case studies, for the first time, in local government. The political salience of the policy area of urban security is demonstrated through an initial contextual analysis, theoretically grounded in the concept of ontological security. Analysing the security policy of the PRR-led local governments in these cities, through semi-structured expert interviews and document analysis, the theory of a *populist performance of crisis* (Moffitt, 2015) is then demonstrated in parallel across both. In addition, the process-tracing approach is used to infer a relationship between the performance of a sense of crisis and the discursive creation of a new form of public order. The conception of public order emphasised in the PRR governing practice is found to be one overwhelmingly negatively defined – that is, in conceiving of urban *disorder* – grounded in the intensification of contemporary fears of security, and demanding diverse forms of exclusion for an ‘othered’ resident group. Exploring the variations between two cases in Austria and Italy, in terms of popular consensus (a cultural approach) and government autonomy (taking a structural approach), this thesis tests the hypothesis that a relationship exists between the legitimacy held by PRR-led governments and the form of urban disorder being discursively created. Finding the form and outcomes of the performance of crisis by these ideologically motivated local governments depends on the particular urban conditions and resulting legitimacy, this study suggests an outline of an adapted theory of a *populist radical right performance of urban crisis*, and signposts future research directions on the subject.

Keywords: populism; local government; urban security; far-right politics.

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Preface and Acknowledgments

I began writing this thesis in Vienna in early 2016, apprehensive about the approaching Austrian Presidential Election, and the very real possibility of a far-right victory. While that fear was eventually dispelled, the following year and a half produced recurrent trepidation ahead of the next possible electoral shock and the implications for our ever-shifting understanding of contemporary society. The feeling of a dystopian storm building, was, I felt at the time, not matched by close enough attention to the already existing manifestations of such change in Europe. I felt compelled to find out more.

The breadth of perspectives offered by an interdisciplinary course offered many, many ways in which to conduct an investigation of urban contexts in which radical right populism had already gained political power. I wanted to produce something which revealed genuine, specific insights into these cities. I began this work believing that people are profoundly shaped by their immediate environment and politico-cultural milieu, and that these are endlessly, deeply distinctive. The fascination and significance of the local has been a consistently motivating force as I've followed my nose down paths of interest, reassuring me: there are insights to be revealed here, and they matter.

I would like to express my gratitude to Ramon Bauer for all of his careful guidance and motivation throughout the period as my supervisor, as well as other 4 Cities tutors, Rosa de la Fuente, Nick Schuermans, Yvonne Franz and Hans Blotevogel for many varied and useful discussions and advice. Attending a workshop at the ECPR Joint Sessions at the University of Nottingham in March 2017 had a great impact on my research, for which I would like to thank my fellow participants: Georg Wenzelburger, David Laycock, Marcella Myers, Sofia Tipaldou, Benjamin Biard, Robert Sata, Emilia Zankina and Juliana Chueri. I would also like to thank Clara Rindler-Schantl, Paolo

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As always, I'm very grateful to my parents, my friends, my family; I hope I've said thank you for your support as much as it's been deserved, and that you might now enjoy the results.

Fred Paxton

Florence, 25 August 2017

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List of Abbreviations

FPÖ: Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (Freedom Party of Austria)

ÖVP: Österreich Volkspartei (People's Party of Austria)

PRR: Populist Radical Right

1. Introduction

While studies are usually conducted in the most virtuous cities, and those that are more willing to be analysed, in order to understand how Europe is treating its immigrants we need to pay more attention to cities at the opposite end of the spectrum.

(Ambrosini, 2013: 153)

The influence of *populist radical right* (hereafter PRR) parties when in local government power is an under-researched area, with only a few examples having focused on the sub-national, as opposed to national, level (for example: Bolin et al., 2014; Van Ostaïjen and Scholten, 2014). Yet PRR parties govern an increasing number of small and medium sized European cities: settings that are rising in importance having long been neglected by urban theorists amidst the epochal ‘global city’ agenda (Adam, 2006; Bell and Jayne, 2009). Processes of globalisation have brought about a dual set of changes to both the demand and supply sides of urban politics; respectively, a new set of salient political issues, favouring non-economic subjects of culture and identity, as well as altering urban policy making capacity and relations with other governmental scales (Hellwig, 2014). Research into the influence of PRR-led governments at this urban scale offers a fitting, and fresh, perspective on the new structuring conflicts of European society produced, and represented, by the contemporary populist challenge (Kriesi, 2014).

This thesis uses the conception of populism as a performative style to analyse the exercise of government power by PRR parties, for the first time at the urban scale, using a comparative case study approach. The first goal is to examine co-variation between the two cases, in terms of contextual factors contributing to an increase in the political salience of urban security, an investigation theoretically grounded in the concept of *ontological security* (Giddens, 1991). The second goal is to then analyse the security

actions of the PRR-led local governments of these cities, through semi-structured expert interviews and document analysis, and test the theory of a *populist performance of crisis* (Moffitt, 2015) in parallel across both. The third and final goal is to trace the process by which these performances of local crisis produce particular discursive forms of public (dis)order, and the contextual variations in government autonomy shaping divergences between the two cases. This study will seek to adapt the theoretical framework on which it is based from a comparative, urban perspective, to propose an adapted theory of a *populist performance of urban crisis*, drawing from the cases in focus, and thus providing the basis for further studies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 *The relationship between radical right populism and crisis*

A crisis only becomes a crisis when it is perceived as a crisis.

(Moffitt, 2015: 197)

The theoretical viewpoint that populism is a product of crisis (for example: Mouffe, 2005; Roberts, 2015) seems to be supported by the confluence of two trends. Today is both an *age of populism*, confirmed by the headline presence, if not victory, of populist figures in each of the epoch-defining elections in Europe and the USA of 2016 and 2017, as well as an *age of crises*, from the global financial and sovereign debt crises to the ongoing crisis of (post-)democracy (Crouch, 2004). The demand-side explanation for the rise of radical right parties (e.g. Bell, 1964; Lipset, 1960; Ramet, 1999) has long pointed to an objective, systemic crisis caused by the unsettling social changes brought by modernisation, especially those of globalisation, leading to new grievances of those felt to be losing from the changes and their seeking of new (non-mainstream) political outlets. A contrasting, constructionist argument regarding the relationship between PRR politics and crisis, is that crises are diffuse phenomena that only gain political salience through the mediation of political action, or in crisper terms: crises are only perceived as such due to their performance by political actors (Hay, 1999; Moffitt, 2015). Such explanations take a supply-side perspective, focusing on the PRR parties themselves, to understand how their construction of strategy and discourse creates a political space for themselves and shapes the wider context.

Considering crisis as a construction of the actions of PRR parties allows us to consider how its invocation is used to enable certain political and intellectual possibilities while restraining others (Roitman, 2013). Following Laclau (2005) though, a suitably nuanced

understanding of the relationship between populism and crisis would reconstruct both the Real (the societal dislocation creating a space for populist claims) and the Symbolic (their articulation in the crisis narratives of populists), and their relationship in particular contexts, rather than pursuing dichotomous objectivist and constructionist views as those outlined above.

The deeper aim of PRR parties, beneath the creation of a sense of crisis, is the execution of its core ideological division between ‘the people’ and the threatening ‘other’ (Mudde, 2010). The urgent threat posed by a defined ‘other’ group, including corrupt elites and antagonistic social groups, enables a more coherent formulation of ‘the people’, of whom the actors making such claims can profess to be distinctively protective. This exclusionary division takes a nativist form in the ideology of the PRR, in conceiving of an ethnically based threat to the ideally homogenous state (Ibid.), or, for the perspective of this study, city. To achieve the protection of societal homogeneity, the PRR typically execute a discourse of exclusion, although often disguised in rhetoric such as cultural incompatibility or economic insufficiency, and drive policy change on immigration, and associated policy areas such as culture, education, law and order and welfare. The actions, rhetoric and performances of political actors therefore function in combination to create distinct local political relations (Moffitt and Tormey, 2014).

2.2 The contemporary salience of urban security

The only secure thing about modernity is its insecurity.
(Harvey, 1989b: 11)

While crises are politically mediated phenomena, as previously stated, there are still objective macro-social transformations which have brought crucial mass changes in perception. By creating space for discourses of systemic failure and crisis, these are

necessary areas of analysis for a study of the articulation of populist crisis narratives.

Zygmunt Bauman has defined the social condition of late modernity as *Unsicherheit* ('insecurity'): a 'complex combination of uncertainty, insecurity, and lack of safety' resulting from the economic, social and cultural consequences of contemporary globalisation (Bauman, 2000: 135), a process that may reasonably be described as 'a fundamental, radical transformation [of a scale] hitherto unknown' (Giesecker et al., 2008). Its disruption of established economic, social and cultural patterns through the increased volume and speed of global flows of capital and people, have arguably resulted in a higher degree of 'ontological insecurity' (Giddens, 1991): a disruption in the sense of order that provides certainty and identity for the self. Ulrich Beck has characterised the resulting anxiety-driven society as 'Risk Society' (1992); a fundamental shift from the previous class-based society and its driving force of material need.

As well as identifying the particularly urban implications of the changes of late-twentieth century capitalism, David Harvey noted the 'abundant signs that localism and nationalism have become stronger precisely because of the quest for the security that place always offers in the midst of all the shifting that flexible accumulation implies' (Harvey, 1989b: 306). The archetypal urban political response to rising perceptions of insecurity has been a so-called 'revanchist city', characterised by heightened security measures and the tendency for exclusion, rather than attempted resolution, of urban social problems (Ambrosini, 2013; Uitermark and Duyvendak, 2008; Uitermark, 2014; Verga, 2016).

To conceive of identity as being constituted through differentiation from an 'other' (Rumelili, 2015: 56), we can see how a threat to the self may produce a form of

essentialism, with the emphasising of what are considered one's core characteristics, and the assertion of one's values as moral absolutes, while the individuals perceived to be lacking in such qualities core to the culture to which we identify are consequently vilified and excluded. Thus, in a condition of increased insecurity, individuals are prone to favour one's 'in-group' above others, including through hostile measures against the perceived 'out-group'. People may be mistaken in attributing the source of their felt insecurity; nevertheless, the emotional impulse acts as a motivational force for political engagement: 'anxiety matters for politics, even if the emotional accounting is off' (Albertson and Gadarian, 2015: 8).

This thesis follows Huysmans' (1998) treatment of security as a 'thick signifier', in considering the implications its contested meaning and use (particularly by governments) has in the determination of social relations (Huysmans, 1998). The contemporary societal shift to treat socio-economic transformations, including the increase in migration, with a security approach, leads to further changes in social relations with, for example, a new framing of urban disorder as a security threat to be eliminated, rather than a social problem to be tackled. When taking into account the twin factors of increased movement of people and diversity in European cities and an ever higher perceived threat of (foreign origin) terrorism, we see the clear opportunity for PRR actors to manipulate the increased subjective sense of insecurity for political gain through divisive, nativist policy in line with their party ideology (Jost et al., 2007; McCann, 1997).

2.3 Legitimacy, and the impact made by populist radical right executive power

The old adage that there is no Republican or Democratic way to collect trash, attributed to New York's Mayor LaGuardia, appears quite compatible with the reigning theories of urban politics.

(Gerber and Hopkins, 2011: 327)

Recent literature has demonstrated the tendency of PRR executive power towards greater durability and generation of significant impact than previously thought (Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2015). A number of studies have found PRR executive power at the national level generates an ideological 'right turn' in government policy (Akkerman, 2012; Albertazzi and Mueller, 2013; Minkenberg, 2001; Zaslove, 2004), that is, the radically right-wing ideology of the party bearing influence on public policies, party systems and, more fundamentally, democratic functioning, by initiating the redefinition of the concept of 'the people' from 'demos' to 'ethnos' and risking the eventual transformation of democracy into ethnocracy. This thesis transfers the investigation to the sub-national level, as so far few have done (for example: Bolin et al., 2014; Van Ostaïjen and Scholten, 2014).

As noted in the quote of Gerber and Hopkins (2011) above, there is considerable skepticism among scholars as to the possibility of distinctive party political, or ideological, influence over urban politics due to particular legal, political and economic constraints at this scale. Furthermore, the move towards urban governance methods away from traditional managerialism in the 1970s and onwards, in particular the institutionalisation of partnerships with private actors and entrepreneurial strategies by political actors in pursuit of international investment, has led to arguments that urban governments are now in fact motivated to aim away from ideological distinctiveness (Harvey, 1989a; Jouve, 2005). The result of the shift towards urban governance has

been labeled a ‘post-political condition’ (Swyngedouw, 2010): a consensual approach to governing with private sector actors, focused on providing heterodox market-driven solutions, and the preclusion of space for disagreement over different options, as well as the nature of the root problems themselves.

An investigation of whether radical parties - which PRR parties by definition are - make an ideological impact in local government leadership consistent with their claims of distinctiveness, requires a multi-scalar perspective to appreciate the cross-national, local and individual differences that shape their capacity to do so. A relevant conceptual construct for investigating the different causes and outcomes of PRR-led local government is legitimacy, although a concept rarely applied to sub-national levels of government. Rather than considering the concept in a system-level, Weberian (1947) sense, focusing on the perception of the rightful execution of power and the willingness to comply with the system, legitimacy can also be applied with an institutional and actor-level focus. Fundamentally, PRR parties have particular challenges in attaining legitimacy, to be perceived as ‘normal’ or ‘acceptable’, and in line with voters’ consideration of baseline national values (Van der Brug et al., 2005). The association of PRR parties with fascist pasts and possible anti-democratic futures, for example, has constrained their potential level of support. A rhetorical balancing act is demanded of PRR parties to be seen to conform to democratic principles and mainstream national values, while also pursuing a path demonstrably acting in a distinctive way towards their aims of protection of ‘the people’ and the achievement of a homogenous state.

The concept of legitimacy is particularly relevant at the local government level due to the voluntary, co-operative nature of much local government activity, relying on citizen consent to function. According to the communitarian idea of local self-government, the institution has a particular responsibility, and expectations, to realise the will of the

local people, being the closest unit of democracy and territorial identification for citizens (Ostrom, 1993). Citizens' relationship with, and assessment of, this level of government will vary based on their lived experience with local governments (Lidstrom and Waldersheim, 2016: 5); an implication being that individual cases of radical change experienced by citizens may affect wider perceptions of system legitimacy.

The legitimacy held by local governments can be defined, following Lidstrom and Waldersheim (Ibid.) by, on the one hand, the degree of autonomy granted from superordinate levels of government (top-down) and, on the other, the assessment of performance from citizens (bottom-up). The degree of popular consensus with the PRR party leading the local government and their policy programme is connected with the local cultural context and, for example, has been demonstrated to be higher in cultural contexts of a combined traditional Catholic homogeneity with a strong presence of Islam that provides fertile ground for PRR Islamophobia (Minkenberg, 2013). In addition to the success of particular parties, the salience of particular issues and mobilising campaigns are closely connected with the local politico-cultural context (Feischmidt and Szombati, 2016).

Local government not only derives its legitimacy from citizen assessment of performance, but also from the superordinate level of government, through the autonomy granted by central government. The impact made by PRR-led local governments in different contexts is expected to be moderated by their degree of autonomy, that is, the capacity of the PRR-led local government to implement desired policy programmes. Autonomy can be considered in both a vertical dimension, in relation to other levels of government, and a horizontal dimension, in relation to local political and socio-economic forces (Hudson, 1993). Varying amounts of local autonomy affect the capacity of local governments to implement policy (Wolman and

Goldsmith, 1990). Furthermore, previous studies have shown that, despite more limited policy making powers at this level, partisanship can affect policy in areas where the autonomy of local government is relatively high (Gerber and Hopkins, 2011).

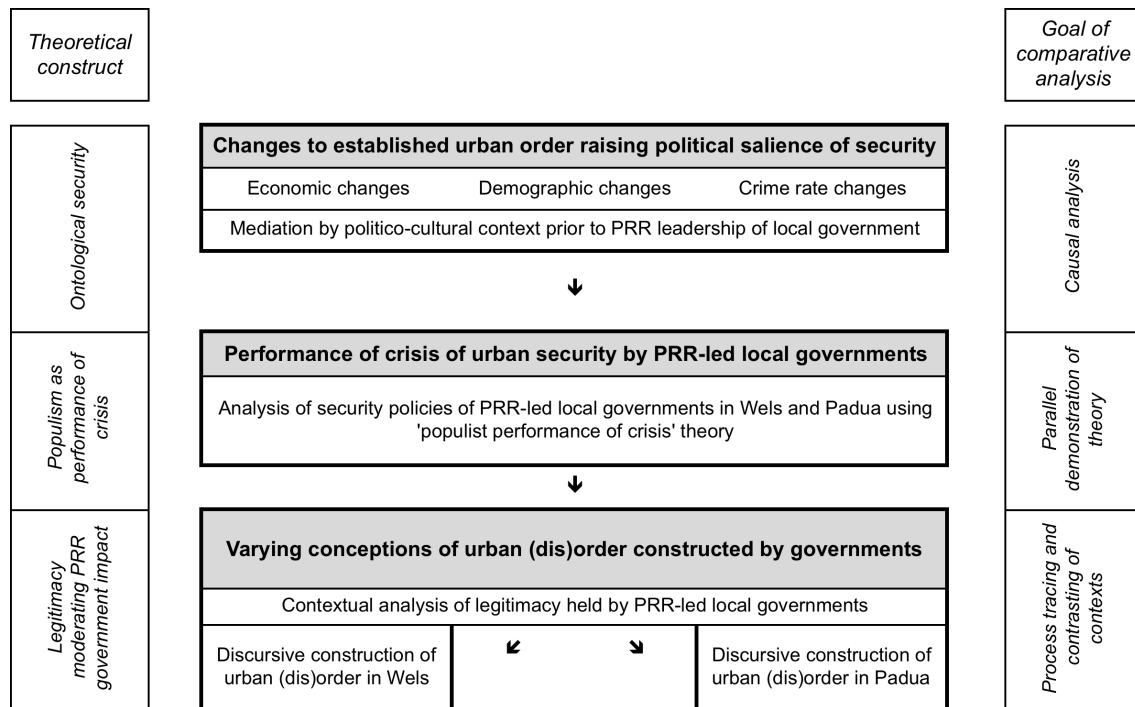
3. Methodological approach

Only through comparative work, will scholars be able to gain insight into the general properties of populism – a crucial feature of political reality in contemporary democracies.

(Gidron and Bonikowski, 2013: 33)

3.1 Research design

The literature review informed the concepts and structure underlying the argument of this thesis (see Figure 1), providing for the theoretical framework and the subsequent research questions. Following Skocpol and Somers (1980), this comparative study pursued three distinct, yet connected, goals. The first goal, pursued in section four below, was the examination of co-variation between two cases of PRR-led local government for the purpose of causal analysis; specifically, local contextual factors contributing to an increased political salience of the issue of security. The second goal, pursued in section five, was the examination of the cases to test the utility of the theoretical model of a six step populist performance of crisis as a core feature of contemporary PRR parties (Moffitt, 2015) in the illumination of the style of their local government leadership, regarding security in particular. The resulting phenomenon explained as a result of their actions was the form of public order being discursively created. The third goal, in part six, was to trace the process by which this outcome was produced as a result of their actions, and contrast the contexts of the two cases, highlighting the differences and the implications for the varying discursive creations. Specifically, this meant analysing how the parallel processes of crisis performance by PRR-led local governments (the independent variables) shaped particular discursive formations of (dis)order (the dependent variables), in different ways due to contextual divergences.

Figure 1: Theoretical framework of study

Source: author's own.

As a result of the theoretical framing of the study, the overall empirical focus is the political and policy actions of PRR local government actors on the theme of security and crisis, due to, as explained above, the theory of an increased political salience of urban security and the consideration of populism as a political style performing crisis. These core theoretical constructs informed four primary research questions, namely:

- How have recent societal transformations of globalisation, by disrupting pre-existing urban structures, raised the salience of security?
- Are the security policies of the PRR-led local governments consistent with a 'populist performance of crisis' (Moffitt, 2015)?
- What is the new conception of urban order discursively constructed in PRR-led local governments' performance of crisis?

- How does the degree of local government autonomy shape the new conception of urban order created by PRR-led local governments?

The following hypotheses were proposed, each of which is falsifiable:

- Changes raising the degree of felt insecurity will be evident in both cases, contributing to an increase in the salience of security as a political focus.
- The political and policy actions of PRR-led local governments will be consistent with the model of a ‘populist performance of crisis’.
- The crises created by the performance of PRR-led local governments will be focused on the threat to public order posed by an ethnicised ‘other’ group.
- The greater the degree of autonomy held by the PRR-led local government, the greater the conversion of the crisis of public order into policy measures.

The research questions and hypotheses, along with the resulting empirical focuses and their operationalisation, are summarised in Figure 2 below.

3.2 Comparative case study approach

A comparative case study approach was pursued in this study in order to uncover deep insights into the features of PRR-led local government. As noted by Gidron and Bonikowski (2013), case studies have been crucial to a more rich and nuanced theorising of populism in recent years, including the content and methods employed in the exclusionary claims-making of political actors. Different national contexts offer varying opportunities and constraints for PRR parties to exert influence when in office, therefore justifying a cross-national study. The decision to analyse a small number of cases, as opposed to a ‘large N’ approach, was strongly influenced by the existence of relatively few instances of the political phenomenon. Case study research, as with other

‘small n’ approaches, cannot reasonably seek to generalise from a small number of examples. However, this study has sought to adapt the theoretical framework on which it is based to propose an adapted theory of a *populist performance of urban crisis*, drawing from the cases in focus, and thus providing the basis for further studies.

The case studies were selected in light of the research design described above, in providing the conditions in which the hypotheses of interest could be tested. The primary condition for the selection of case studies – using the ‘most similar’ approach – was the control of the local government by parties of the same PRR party family, the *ethnocentrist right* (Minkenberg, 2013), through control of the council and the position of mayor. In addition, cities with a larger population were favoured as, generally speaking, the larger a city is, the greater its government’s powers of decision making and resource distribution are, and therefore also the potential for politically distinctive action. The selection was made simple by the small number of medium to large sized European cities¹ with PRR mayors as of September 2016: Béziers in France (led by independent, although Front National aligned, Mayor Robert Menard since March 2014), and, selected for the research, Wels in Austria (led by the FPÖ² Mayor Andreas Rabl since October 2015) and Padua in Italy (led by the Lega Nord³ Mayor Massimo Bitonci between June 2014 and November 2016). The selection of Wels and Padua was made due the formal party alignment of both allowing the analysis to incorporate party-based analysis, unlike the case of the independent mayor of Béziers, as well as my language capacities. The different contexts of the chosen cases enabled analysis of the extent to which the Austrian and Italian (and, more specifically, the Wels and Padua)

¹ Following the EC-OECD definition, medium to large cities have more than 50,000 citizens;

² *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*, translated as Austrian Freedom Party.

³ Translated as Northern League.

contexts influence different governing styles. The timeline analysed for Padua was limited between June 2014 and October 2016, when the governing coalition collapsed and Bitonci's position as mayor ended in anticipation of new elections the following spring. For Wels, the timeline was between the election of the FPÖ-led government in October 2015 and June 2017.

Figure 2: Outline of research design.

	Theoretical Construct				
	Ontological Security		Performance of Crisis	Legitimacy Moderating PRR Government Impact	
Goal of Comparative Analysis	Causal analysis		Parallel demonstration of theory	Process tracing	Contrast of contexts
Research Question	How have recent structural changes of globalisation, by disrupting pre-existing urban conditions raised the salience of security?		Are the security policies of the PRR-led local governments consistent with a 'populist performance of crisis'?	What is the new conception of urban order created by PRR-led local governments in their performance of crisis?	How does the degree of local government autonomy shape the new conception of urban order created by PRR-led local governments?
Hypothesis	Changes raising the degree of felt insecurity will be evident in both cases, contributing to an increase in the salience of security as a political focus.		In both cases, the PRR-led local government will follow a course of action consistent with a 'populist performance of crisis'.	The crises created by the performance of PRR-led local governments will be focused on the threat to public order posed by an ethnicized 'other' group.	The higher the autonomy held by local government, the greater the conversion of the crisis of public order into policy measures.
Empirical Focus	Analysis of structural changes to urban conditions pertaining to felt security.	Historical reconstruction of urban security issues and policies of previous local governments.	Analysis of security policies of PRR-led governments in parallel with 'populist performance of crisis' theory.	Analysis of discursive construction of (dis)order in the crisis created by PRR-led local governments.	Analysis of contextual variation in autonomy of PRR-led local governments.
Operationalisation	Economic, demographic and crime measures.	Political and policy actions of previous local governments, historical analysis of local political cultures.	Security policies and newsletters of PRR-led local governments.	Security policies and newsletters of PRR-led local governments.	Local Autonomy Index, secondary literature.

Source: author's own.

3.3 Methods used

The methods used for the investigation of the four main hypotheses follow from their

resulting empirical focuses and operationalisation. The first research question, regarding the causal relationship between the transformations of globalisation and the political salience of the issue of security, required analysis of structural changes to urban conditions pertaining to perceived security. These changes were operationalised, following the theoretical framing of *ontological security*, using measures of economic and demographic change, and levels of crime over the period of the local administration preceding the election of the PRR party. The political mediation of these changes was analysed using local press reports from the same period, demonstrating their political and policy approach and the discourse surround urban security issues.

The second research question, hypothesising a consistency between the actions of PRR-led local governments and a performative creation of a sense of crisis, required a focus upon (proposed and/or executed) security policies and their surrounding discourse by PRR government actors. For the policy actions, the analysis was conducted using policy documents, with the policy-making instruments held by the PRR-led local governments in each case context determining the different data gathered for analysis of the policy actions (see Figure 3). For Padua, mayor issued emergency ordinances were analysed, having been introduced in the 2008 Security Decree No. 92 (converted into law No. 125) by former Minister of the Interior (now President of the Veneto region) and Lega Nord representative Roberto Maroni⁴. For Wels, the evidence was drawn from the resolutions made within the monthly council meetings, in which all members of the administrative board including the mayor sit. While the policies are necessary to demonstrate the use of government office, their documentation is unlikely to receive a wide audience, although publicly available for reasons of transparency. For this reason,

⁴ The significance of this legal instrument, and the degree of autonomy thereby handed to Italian local governments, is explored in greater detail in section 6.2.

the discourse around the policies was also brought into focus. Council newsletters, as a medium in which the government policies are rhetorically packaged and distributed to the city more widely, were thus also analysed.

Figure 3: Source material for political and policy analysis of PRR-led local governments in Wels and Padua.

Wels	Padua
- Resolutions from Wels council meetings (WG), Oct. 2015 – Jan 2017, of which the following concern security: - DI-Verf-296-2015 of 14/12/2015 - DI-Verf-028-2016 of 25/01/2016 - DI-Verf-2005-2016 of 29/02/2016 - DI-AV-2002-2016 of 29/02/2016 - DI-Verf-147-2016 of 07/11/2016 - DI-Präs-2053-2016 of 07/11/2016 - DI-Verf-2024-2016 of 07/11/2016 - Council newsletters ‘Wels Informiert’ (WI) Oct. 2015 – Mar. 2017	- Emergency Ordinances issued by mayor (Ord.), Jun. 2014 – Nov. 2016, of which the following concern security: - Ordinance n. 36 of 1/09/2016 - Ordinance n. 43 of 08/09/2015 - Ordinance n. 30 of 13/07/2015 - Ordinance n. 20 of 26/05/2015 - Ordinance n. 17 of 15/05/2015 - Ordinance n. 12 of 02/04/2015 - Ordinance n. 5 of 27/02/2015 - Ordinance n. 46 of 04/11/2014 - Ordinance n. 42 of 17/10/2014 - Ordinance n. 38 of 02/09/2014 - Council newsletters ‘Padova in Comune’ (PiC) Mar. 2015 – Oct. 2016

Sources: <http://www.wels.at> / <http://www.padovanet.it>

The third and fourth research questions are closely related, in investigating the impact made by the local governments in the two cases, and, more specifically, the connection between a performative creation of a sense of crisis and its resulting discursive form of urban (dis)order, as well as their contextual variations. To illuminate the outcomes of their governing performances, the political and policy actions of the PRR-led local governments were analysed using the process-tracing technique. The causal mechanism linking the hypothesised explanation and its outcome was investigated through analysis of the activities (particularly the policy process outlined in the investigation of the second research question), drawing from the theoretical framework to seek observable

traces of the process. The process-tracing approach pursued could be reasonably described as *minimalist*, as opposed to one more intensive in its empirical unpacking of the particular workings of the mechanism and thus employing *systems-understanding*. Being a new investigation, without prior research into the mechanisms linking together the particular causes and outcomes here under investigation, the minimalist approach is a more appropriate one to make such an initial probe for plausibility (Beach, 2017).

It is important to state the asymmetric nature of the claim that was made in the study; that is, no claims are being made about the outcome in the absence of the cause here, because the investigation of the causal properties of the attributes of the populist performance of crisis does not require the definition of attributes of other governing performative styles. For instance, the question of whether a performance of crisis in governing style is not limited to PRR parties, but more generally applicable to other party groups, is a worthwhile one, but remains a question for another study.

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted, in order to gain accelerated access to the local context, and then gather data related to each of the research questions being investigated. These interviews were conducted with nine experts of PRR politics, local government, and the particular local context of the case study cities, during the initial exploratory phase of the research, and seven political actors across the two cases during the data gathering phase (see Figure 4 for outline, and Appendix B for transcripts).

Contacts were identified through a mixture of personal research and peer recommendations, via an initial six interviews, with a snowball technique followed to gain access to further interviewees.

Figure 4: List of interviews conducted.

Expert interviews	
Wels	Padua
• Urban governance professor, Vienna University of Economics and Business (WelsInt1) • Researcher, Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (WelsInt2) • Researcher, Wels Initiative Against Fascism (WelsInt3)	• Political science professor, University of Padua (PaduaInt1) • Political science professor, University of Padua (PaduaInt2) • Sociology professor, University of Padua (PaduaInt3) • Journalist, Corriere del Veneto (PaduaInt4) • Sociology professor, University of Milan (PaduaInt5) • Sociology professor, University of Milano-Bicocca (PaduaInt6)
Political actor interviews	
Wels	Padua
• Current mayor (WelsInt4) • Councillor from opposition party (WelsInt5) • Current employee of Wels city administration¹ (WelsInt6) • Former employee of Wels city administration (WelsInt7) • Former employee of Wels city administration (WelsInt8)	• Former spokesman of opposition mayoral candidate (PaduaInt7) • Former executive of Padua city administration (PaduaInt8)

Source: author's own.

4. Urban Security: a Salient Issue

It may be ruled out that immediate economic crises of themselves produce fundamental historical events; they can simply create a terrain more favourable to the dissemination of certain modes of thought.

(Gramsci, 1971: 184)

Political anxiety triggers engagement in politics and [...] it does so in ways that are potentially both promising and damaging for democracy.

(Albertson and Gadarian, 2015: 1)

The successful articulation of crisis narratives requires the opportunity provided by some form of societal dislocation, although the resulting discourse may speak of a different subject to the changes that created the necessary political space. The aim of this section is to introduce the case study cities, and conduct an examination of the local contextual factors contributing to an increased political salience of security prior to the election of the PRR parties. The changes to the urban environment due to the structural transformations of globalisation are examined in both settings, specifically through measuring recent changes in economic performance, demographics, and levels of crime. In addition, the recent political history, and the longer-term political cultures, are examined to explore how these changes are framed locally into particular perceptions of insecurity. First though, an exploration of the elections that brought the PRR parties to power, functioning as a baseline by which to illuminate the political condition of the case study cities, and indicate the local popular consensus with the PRR.

4.1 The election of the populist radical right

For the first time in their history, Padua and Wels elected PRR parties to local government leadership in elections in 2014 and 2015 respectively. However, analysis of the election results and the subsequent composition of local government institutions

reveals important differences between the two cities, in the implied popular consensus with the PRR parties and the autonomy gained by PRR political actors within these new governments.

Both the Austrian and Italian political systems directly elect mayors using a two-round system. The victory of the FPÖ in Wels was their first following SPÖ (Social Democrat) dominance throughout the entire post-war period (see Figure 11), and was definitive. With 62.97% of the vote, FPÖ representative Andreas Rabl clearly beat the SPÖ candidate at the second round, having narrowly missed out on a first round majority victory with 47.59% (see Figure 3).

As in Wels, a PRR party leading the local government of Padua was a break with an uninterrupted post-war history of mainstream party leadership, and an even more marginal prior position of the PRR (see Figures 10 and 11). Yet in contrast with Wels, the elections in Padua were not as clear in their allocation of power and demonstration of support for the PRR party of the mayor. The elected mayor – Lega Nord representative Massimo Bitonci – led a broad centre-right coalition (see Figure 3), with votes split across a number of parties besides his own. The Lega Nord list in fact received fewer votes (4.89%) than the separate personal list of Bitonci (16.66%), an increasingly common practice in Italian local elections, or centre-right coalition partners Forza Italia (7.43%). The election in Padua also went to a second round, due to no candidate receiving a majority (with the centre-left candidate Ivo Rossi leading after the first round with 33.76% to Bitonci's 31.42%), before a Bitonci victory in the run-off with 53.5% of the vote.

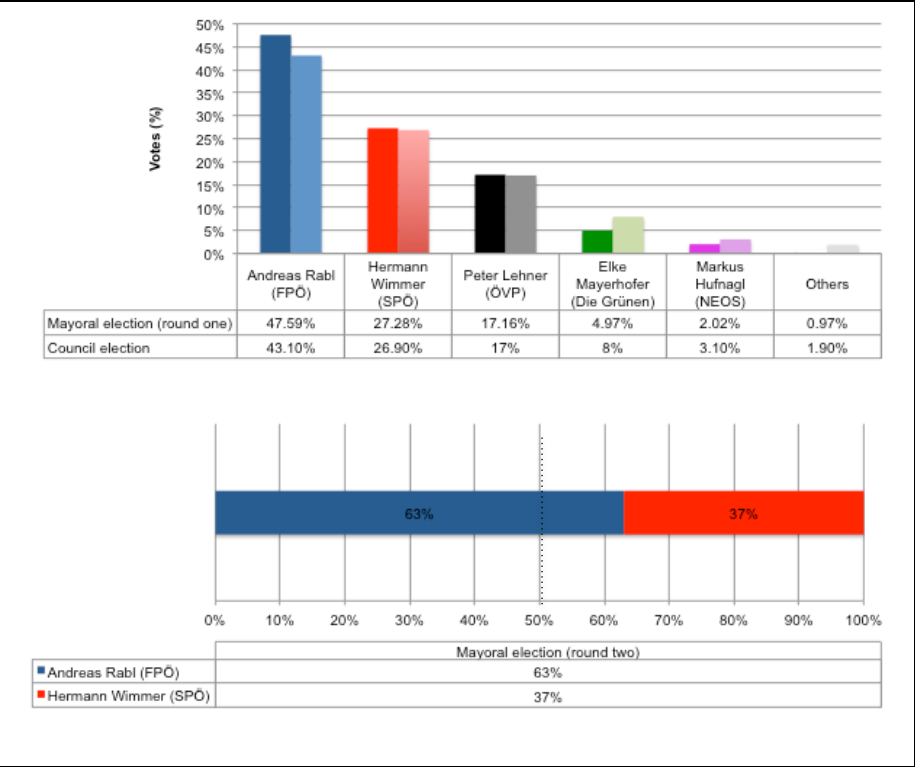
As well as the mayors, the elections of 2014 and 2015 in Padua and Wels generated new council and executive body compositions. Austria requires separate but simultaneous

elections to elect council members, while in Italian local politics, council seats are allocated through the same election as the mayor through the proportionality gained by party lists. The FPÖ gained 43.08% of the vote in the Wels council election, which necessitated the formation of a formal coalition with the ÖVP (People's Party, conservative; 17.01%) to achieve a majority to ensure the passage of council resolutions (see Figure 4). While the strength of party relations within this coalition were publicised in the media and asserted in interviews (WelsInt4, 2017), FPÖ actors also sought to maintain their distinctiveness party position: "It's pointless if both [parties in the coalition] say the same things" (Kronen Zeitung, 2015). The seats on the *Stadtsenat*, the executive arm of Austrian local government, are proportionately allocated to members of the legislative body, according to the results from the council elections. Negotiations over departmental responsibilities led to the FPÖ gaining responsibility over the areas of integration and security, described consistently by the party as the city's primary problems (Pachner, 2013; WelsInt4, 2017), and as such identified from the beginning, in words and deeds, as a critical topic for the FPÖ agenda in governing the city.

The proportionate allocation of council seats from the combined mayoral and council election in Padua gave Mayor Bitonci a vulnerable single seat majority, of 17 out of a total of 32 (see Figure 8), comprising individuals from a number of different party affiliations in a fragmented coalition. According to Italian local government law, and unlike the Austrian system of proportional allocation, the Mayor selects the members of the *giunta*, the executive arm of local government. Bitonci's executive board was made up of a mixture of Lega Nord colleagues and those from other parties such as the centre-right Forza Italia, far-right Fratelli d'Italia, and independents. The responsibility for security was given to Bitonci's rival for the first round of the election, Maurizio Saia, an independent formerly of the far-right *Fratelli d'Italia* party. Saia was promised the

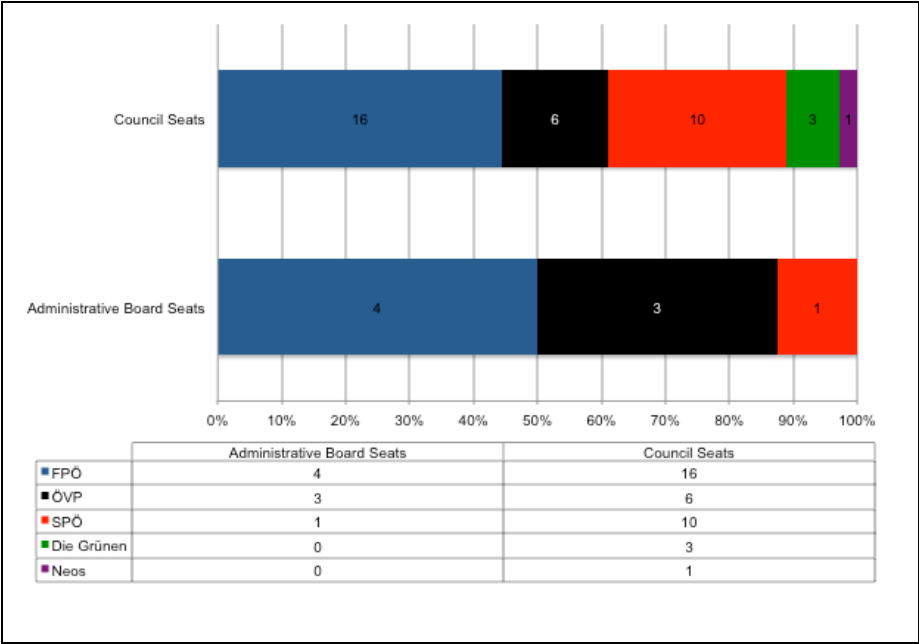
position in return for supporting Bitonci for the head-to-head second round of the election, in which Bitonci, at the head of a broader right-wing coalition, defeated the centre-left candidate. Security was thus a critical topic in the alliance formation, with Bitonci claiming that not only were he and Saia united on the subject, but that it would be impossible for Saia to unite with the centre-left opponent due to his views on the subject (Padova Oggi, 2014). However, its use as a bargaining chip with a rival, in a coalition with such a slender majority, meant it was also a vulnerability for the mayor.

Figure 5: Wels mayoral and council elections 2015, rounds one and two.



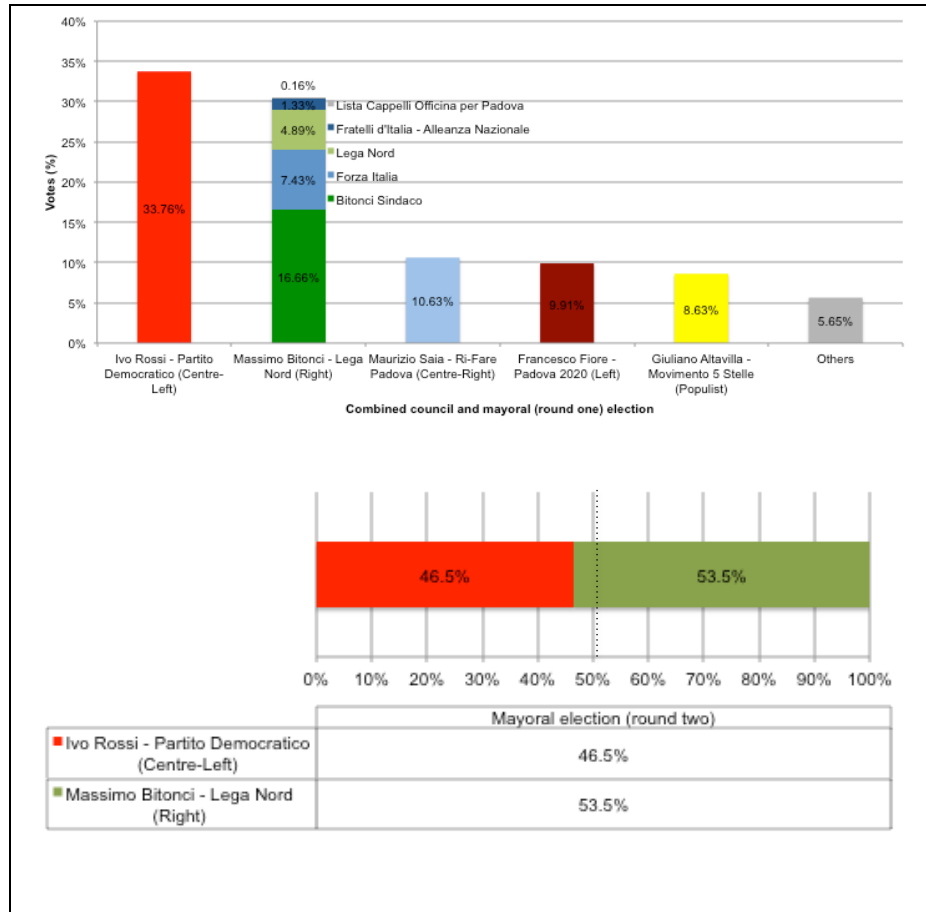
Source: Stadt Wels, 2017b.

Figure 6: Wels council and administrative board, following 2015 election.



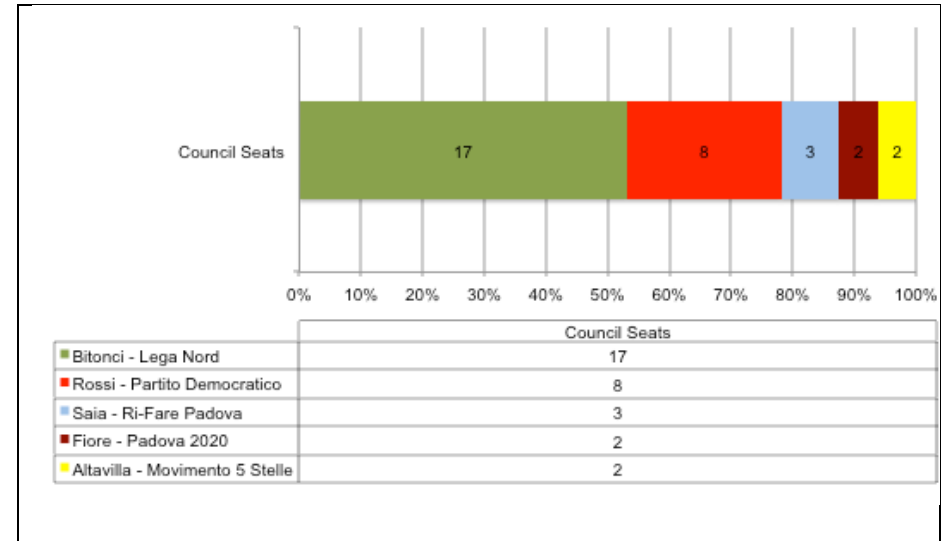
Source: Stadt Wels, 2017b.

Figure 7: Padua mayoral and council elections 2014, rounds one and two.



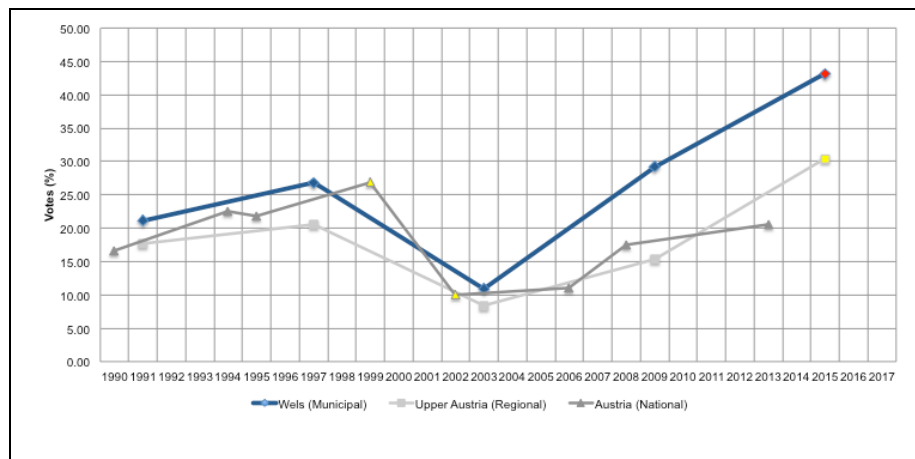
Source: Comune di Padova, 2017.

Figure 8: Padua council, following 2014 election.



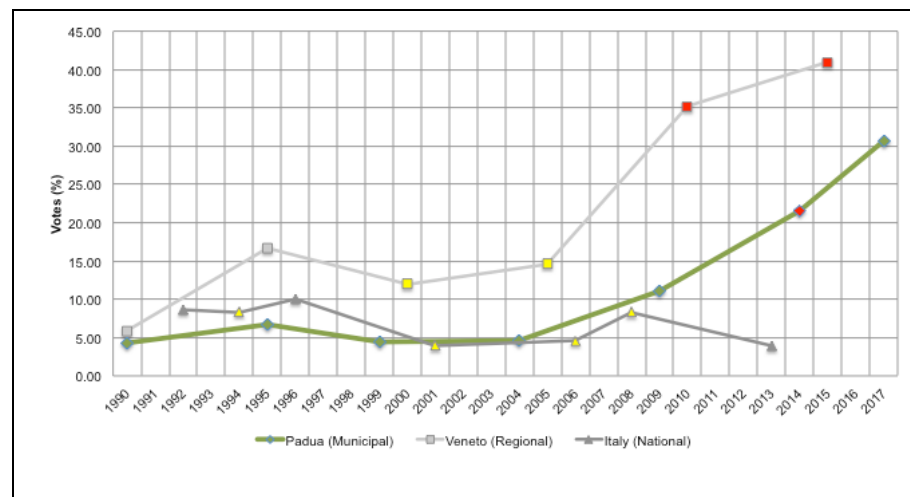
Source: Comune di Padova, 2017.

Figure 9: Electoral performance of FPÖ at different scales, 1990-2017⁵



Source: BMI, 2017.

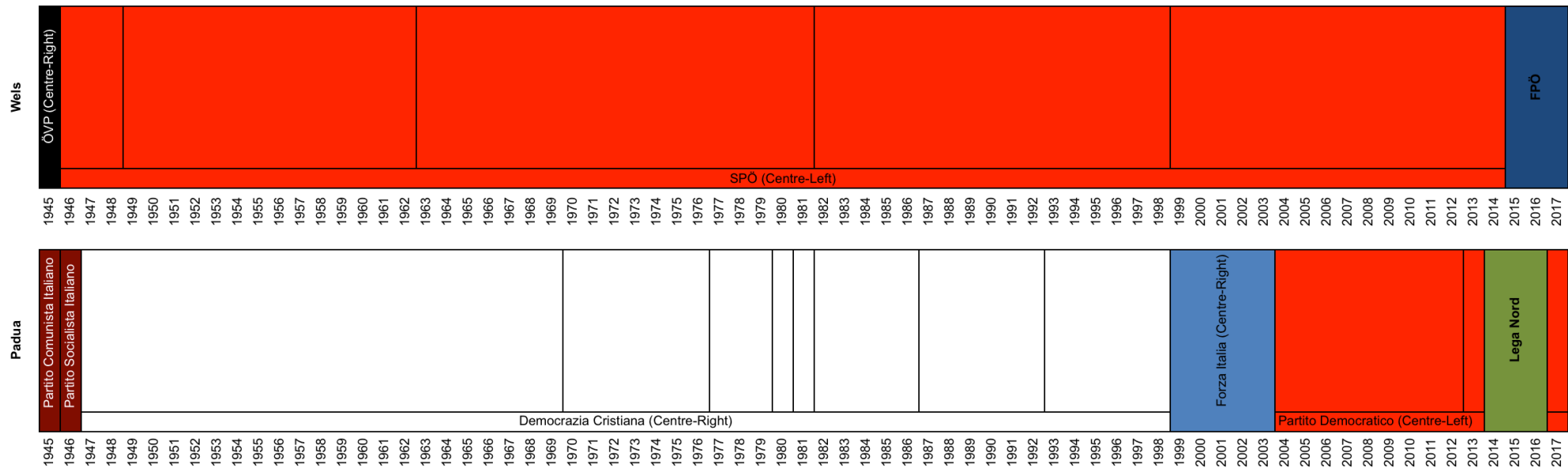
Figure 10: Electoral performance of Lega Nord at different scales, 1990-2017⁵



Source: Interno, 2017.

⁵ Yellow markers indicate resulting participation in government, red marker indicates their resulting leadership of government.

Figure 11: Party leadership of Padua and Wels local government, 1945-2017.



Source: Stadt Wels, 2017b; Comune di Padova, 2017.

4.2 Changing urban environments, rising insecurity

The issues that rise to the forefront of the local political agenda are a matter of contestation necessarily defined by actors; the socio-economic context of a city is not merely “a source of problems and challenges to which regimes *respond*” [emphasis added] (Stone 1993, 2), but one they shape. The focus of this thesis is upon the government actors, and the following sections five and six will demonstrate how local agency fits into the play of larger, structural forces in which they are enmeshed (Blanco, 2013). A contextual analysis of the case study cities is conducted here first though, to assess the urban manifestations of these structural forces, in particular those which may have contributed to a sense of threatened security. In so doing, the context can help to explain the change in social attitudes demonstrated by the unprecedented election of the PRR, and an increased salience of policy measures to address public order. The material is here considered in terms of changes to the socio-economic context, demographics, and crime levels of each city, before then looking at the political context, including responses to security and public order made by other governments, preceding the PRR-led administrations in focus.

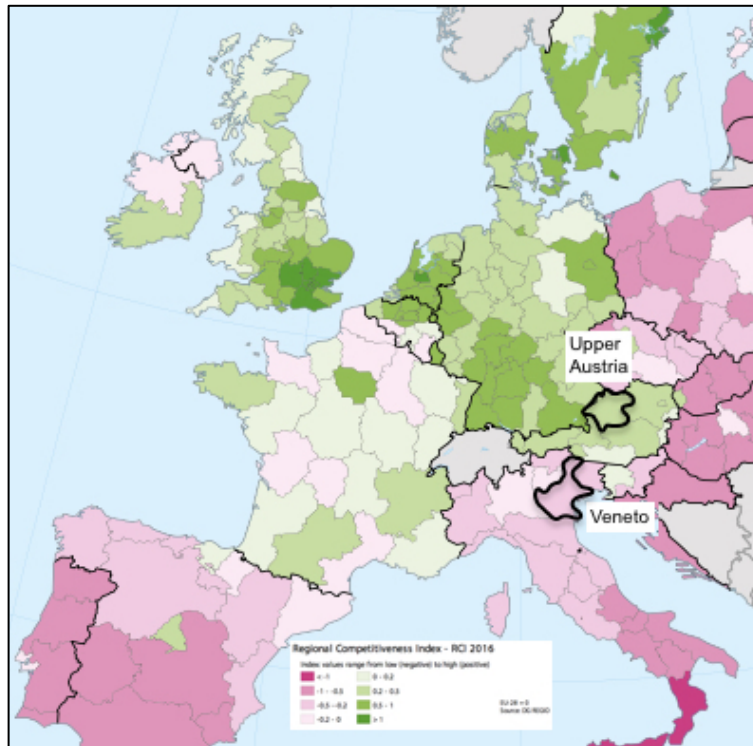
4.2.1 Economic changes: losers of globalisation?

Economic changes associated with the contemporary form of globalisation have brought about dramatic social transformations, which may impact the attitudes and behaviours of residents, including a rising sense of anxiety. Padua and Wels embody similar economic strengths, but also underlying insecurities liable for exploitation by political actors as indicators of failure. The prosperity of Padua - the third largest city in the Veneto region, and strongly linked with nearby Venice and Verona - is demonstrated by

the Purchasing Power Standard (PPS)⁶ per inhabitant of the Padua province being 30,800, above the regional average of 29,800 (Eurostat, 2013; see Figures 13 and 15). However, unemployment in Padua has risen dramatically in recent years, from 3.1% in 2007 to 9.4% in 2016 (Istat, n.d.; see Figure 14). The joint processes of Europeanisation and globalisation are radically transforming the conditions that enable economic productivity and competitiveness, leading to growing difficulties for the Veneto region as shown by the European Commission's report on the Regional Competitiveness Index (2013; 2017): Veneto declined between 2010 and 2013, and then stagnated at a level below the European average in 2016 (see Figure 12). Concomitant processes of change brought during this turbulent transition to late modernity are deeply modifying local community structures that had characterised the model of social integration in the so-called 'Third Italy' (Cento Bull, 2011), notable for successful small and medium businesses in an urbanised landscape of small and medium sized cities (Bagnasco, 1977).

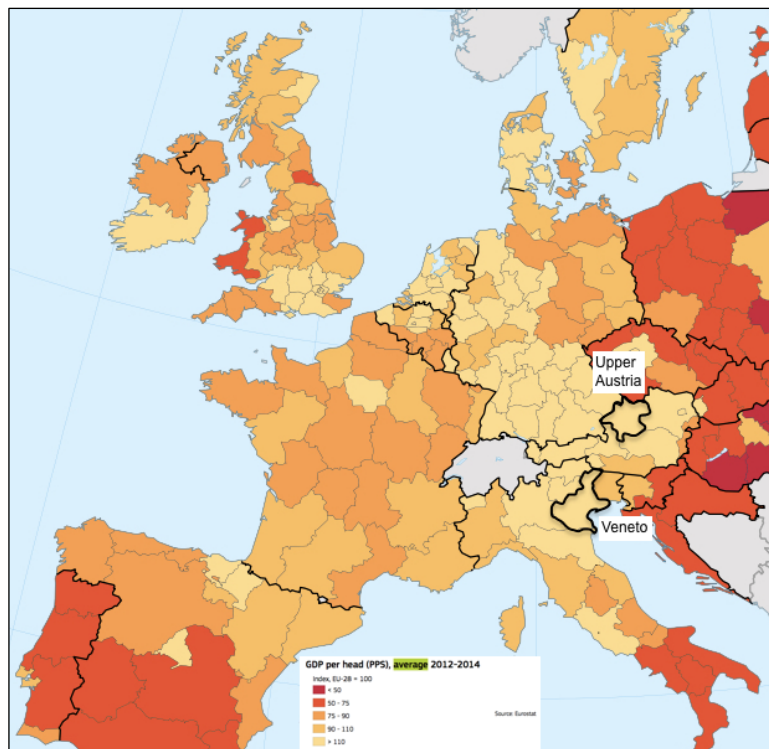
⁶ The purchasing power standard (PPS) is the name given by Eurostat to the artificial currency unit in which some economic measures for EU countries are expressed; having the same purchasing power over the whole of the EU 25, it thus reflects the average price level across EU member states.

Figure 12: Regional Competitiveness Index 2016, highlighting Veneto and Upper Austria.



Source: European Commission, 2017.

Figure 13: GDP per head (PPS), average 2012-2014, highlighting Veneto and Upper Austria.



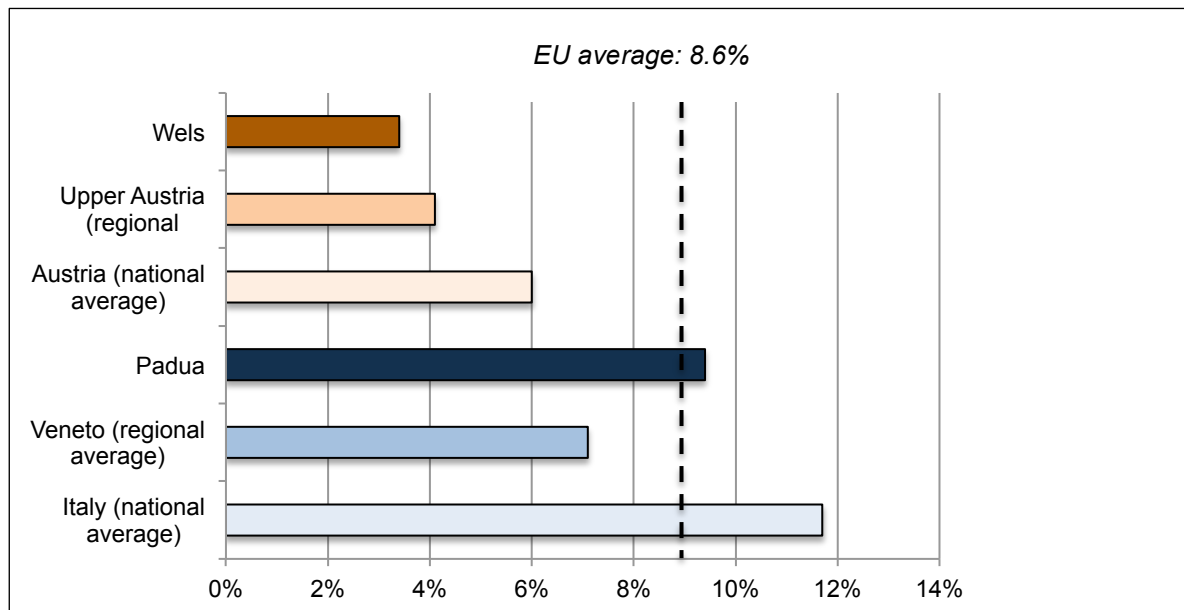
Source: European Commission, 2017.

Economic conditions seem more positive in Wels by comparison, and thus less conducive to a threatened sense of security. Unemployment is very low: 3.4% in 2010, following a decline of 10.3% since 2001 (Land Oberösterreich, 2010; see Figure 14). The second city of the Upper Austria region, Wels forms a tremendously prosperous area with nearby regional capital Linz, with a PPS of 44,800 per inhabitant, the highest in Austria (Eurostat, 2013; see Figures 13 and 15). The Upper Austria region as a whole has a correspondingly high level of regional competitiveness, higher than the European average (RCI, 2017; see Figure 12). However, in the face of competition from out of town shopping centres and nearby urban centres like Linz, 8.2% of inner-city retail space Wels was empty in March 2015, the third highest vacancy rate in Austria (Unger, 2015). Despite objective measures of economic prosperity, therefore, developments linked to post-industrial transformation have led to Wels losing symbolic and cultural relevance as a city (Schmidt-Lauber and Wolfmayr, 2016: 200). This sense of urban decline contributes to a contestation over the very urbanity of Wels, to some residents in fact a rural place defined by its agricultural activity, country fairs and history of homogeneity, rather than its industry, urban culture and contemporary ethnic diversity (WelsInt3, 2017), with resulting social anxieties when facing the ambiguities of the present reality.

50% of people think we (Wels residents) are a city and we are international, and 50% think we are villagers, farmers, and everything is against us, and we have to be afraid of everything.
(Ibid.)

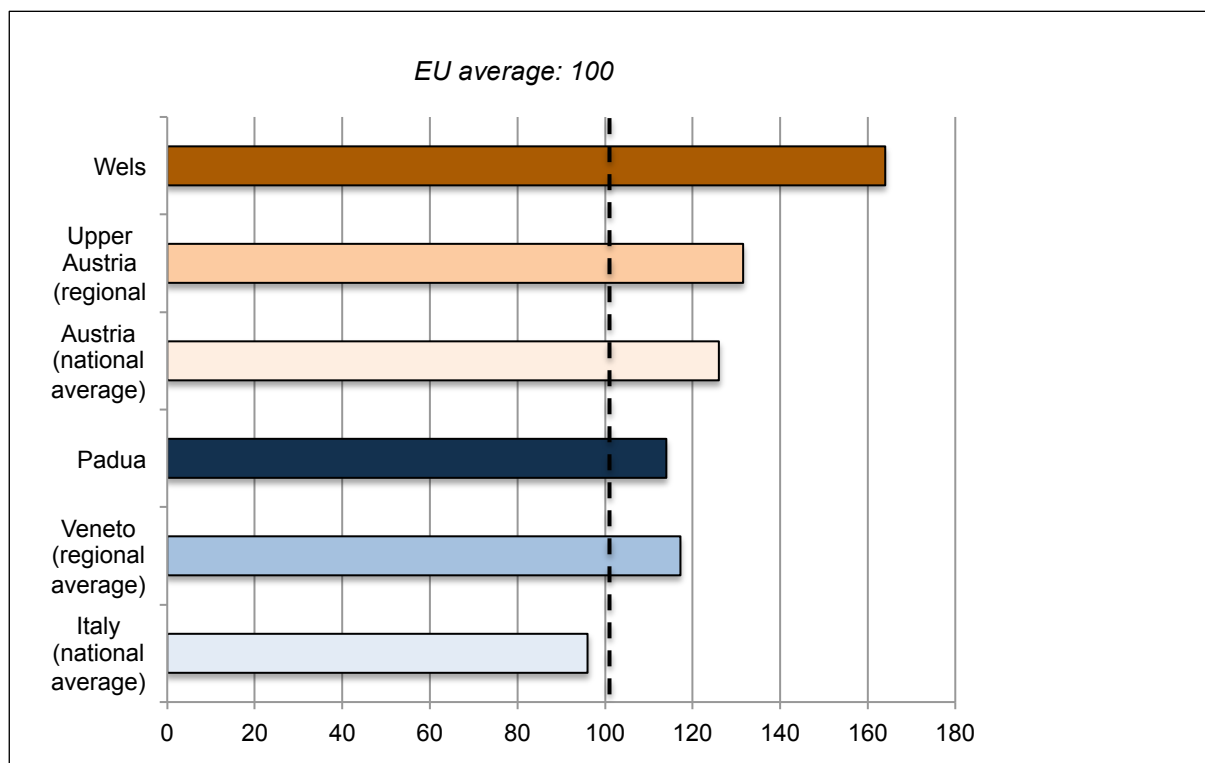
As demonstrated before in the work of Coffé et al. (2007), anxieties over urbanisation and urbanity are sources of support for PRR parties; according to their analysis of Belgian elections, to a greater degree than factors such as local economic turmoil.

Figure 14: Unemployment rate, 2016.



Source: Eurostat, 2017.

Figure 15: GDP per person (PPS), 2016.



Source: Eurostat, 2017.

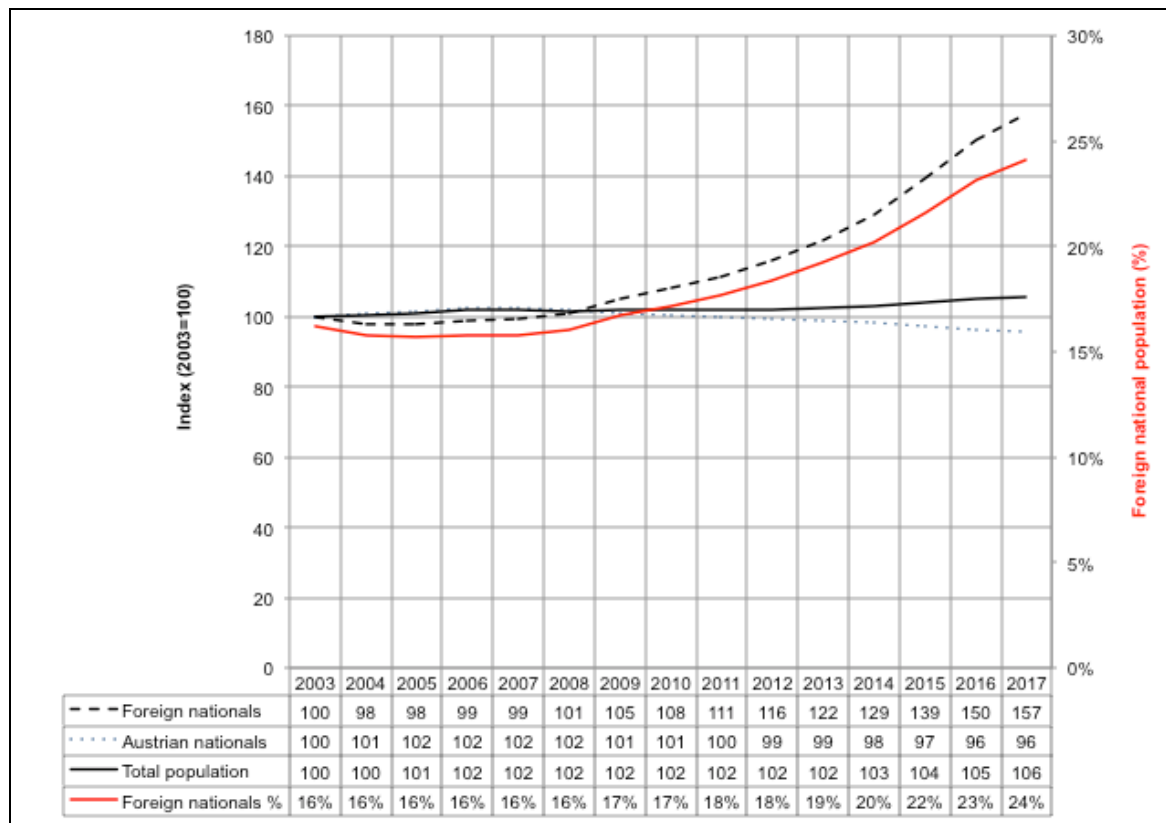
4.2.2 Demographic changes: diversity and urbanity

Demographic measures show an increasing urbanisation of both Wels and Padua, when, following classic urban sociological theory, population heterogeneity is considered as a core feature of urbanity (Wirth, 1938). In Wels, 24.11% of residents were foreign citizens in 2017, the largest of any Austrian city besides Vienna; and between 2002 and 2015, migration from abroad amounted to 4,258 while internal migration in the same period was -2,346 (Stadt Wels, 2016; see Figure 16). In Padua, the foreign population has more than doubled between 2002 and 2015, in both absolute and proportionate terms, from 13,545 (6.48%) to 33,395 (15.87%) (Comune di Padova, 2016; see Figure 17). In both cities, the population of national citizen residents declined in the reported period, with the migrant population ensuring the maintenance of a stable population which would have otherwise been reduced.

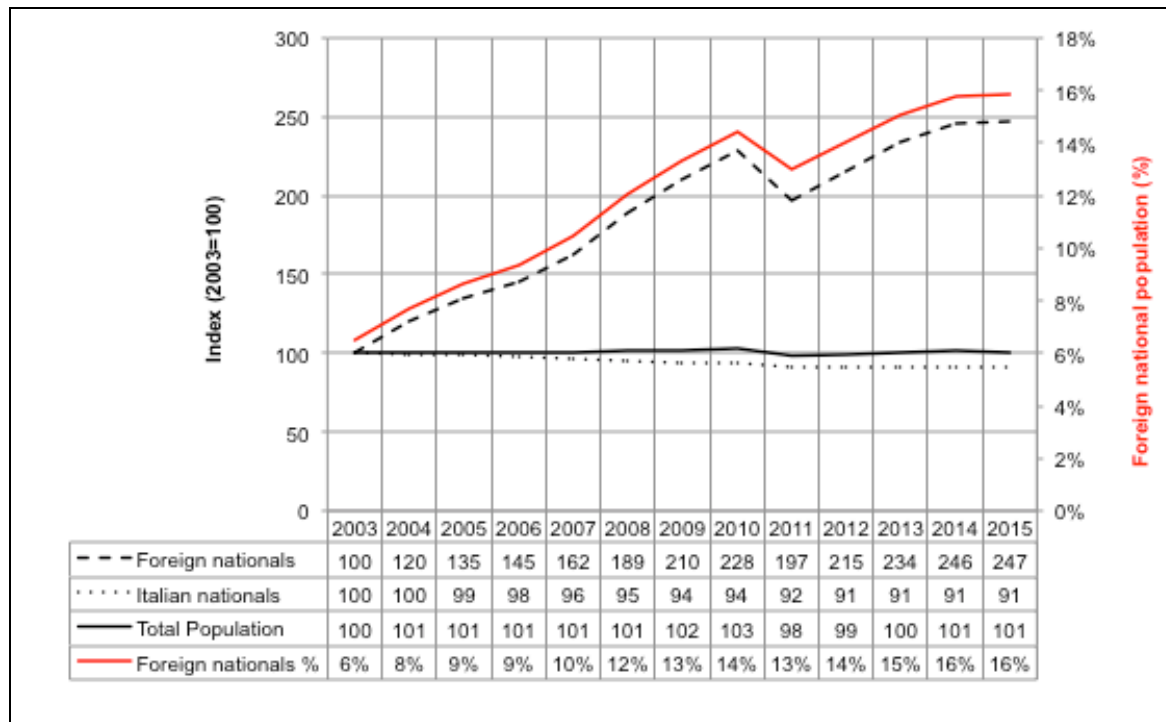
Migration to Western European cities has been steadily increasing in recent decades due to the increased movement of labour of contemporary globalisation, amongst other economic flows; and this fact is central to the PRR nativist ideology and rhetoric (Rydgren, 2008: 740). Cross-border labour movement is co-ordinated by the EU through the expanding Schengen zone, and a large proportion of foreign citizens in both Wels and Padua is from the European Union, particularly those thirteen countries that acceded after 2004⁷ (see Figures 18 and 19). In Padua, the most populous foreign national group as of 2016 is one of these: Romanian, with 4.17% of the total; the other groups of significance are from countries outside of the EU, above all Moldova (2.24%), Nigeria (1.25%) and China (1.18%). In Wels, the post-2004 EU countries

⁷ These countries are Cyprus, Malta, and - formerly of the Eastern Bloc - the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania.

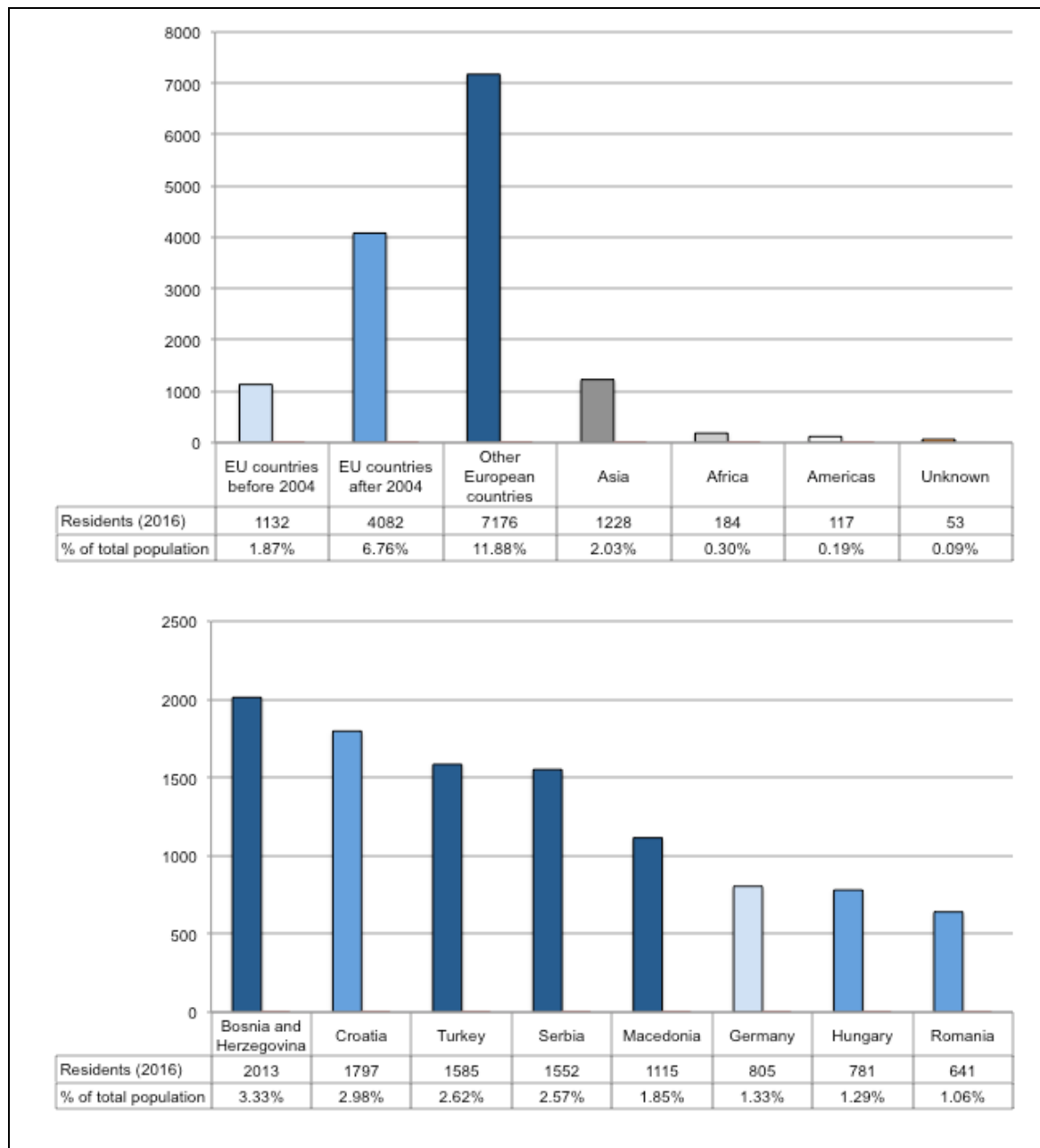
again make up a significant proportion of the foreign population, in particular from Croatia (2.98%), Hungary (1.29%), and Romania (1.06%). However, more significant is the non-EU European population, from Bosnia and Herzegovina (3.33%), Turkey (2.62%), Serbia (2.57%) and Macedonia (1.85%). As shown by the population pyramids (Figures 20 and 21), the foreign population in both cities is markedly younger than the total, with a much higher proportion of 20-49 year olds and infants, and – most dramatically in Wels – with many more young males than females.

Figure 16: Population development and share of foreign nationals in Wels, 2003-2016.

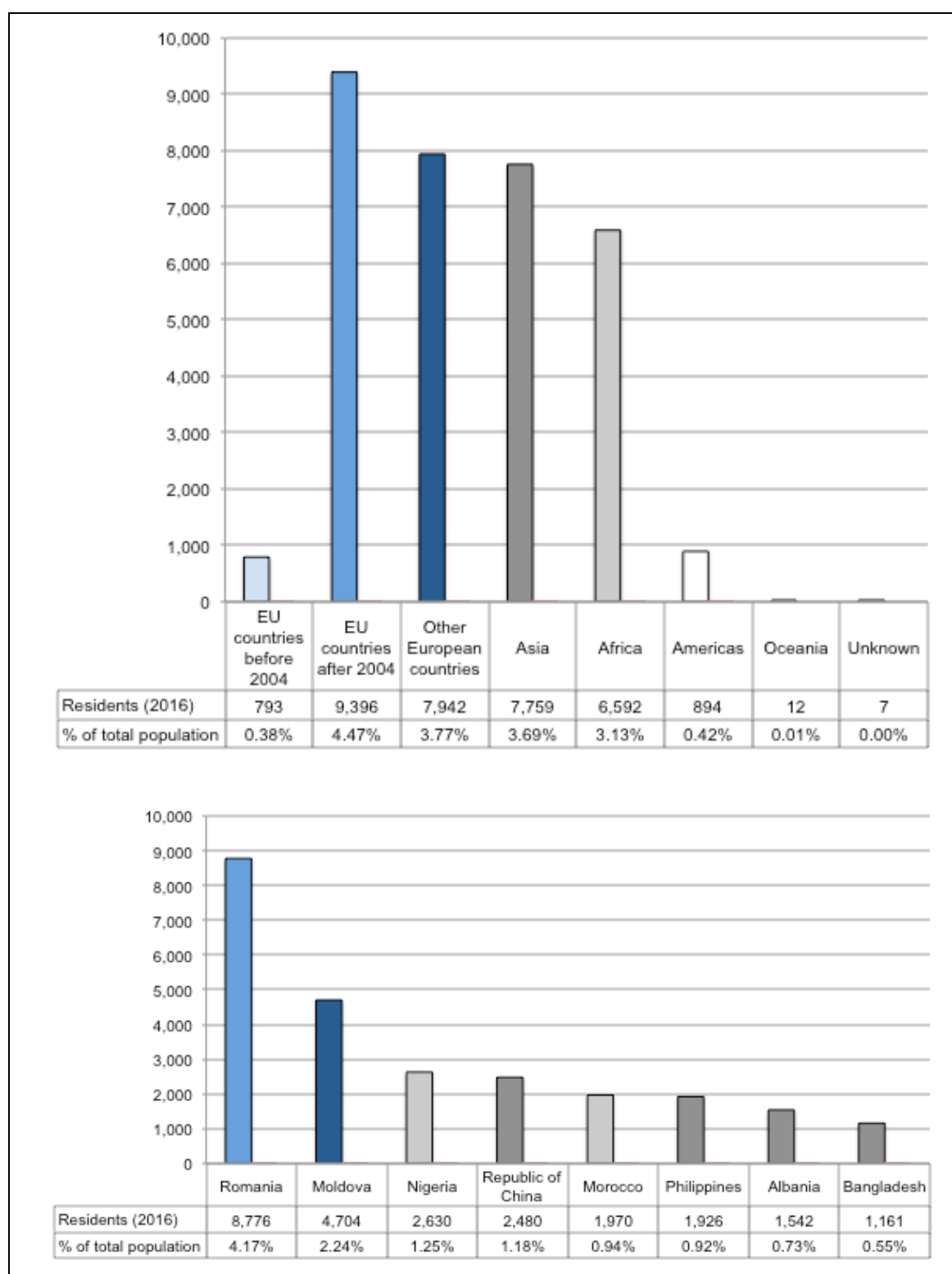
Source: Statistik Austria, 2017.

Figure 17: Population development and share of foreign nationals in Padua, 2003-2015.

Source: Istat, 2017.

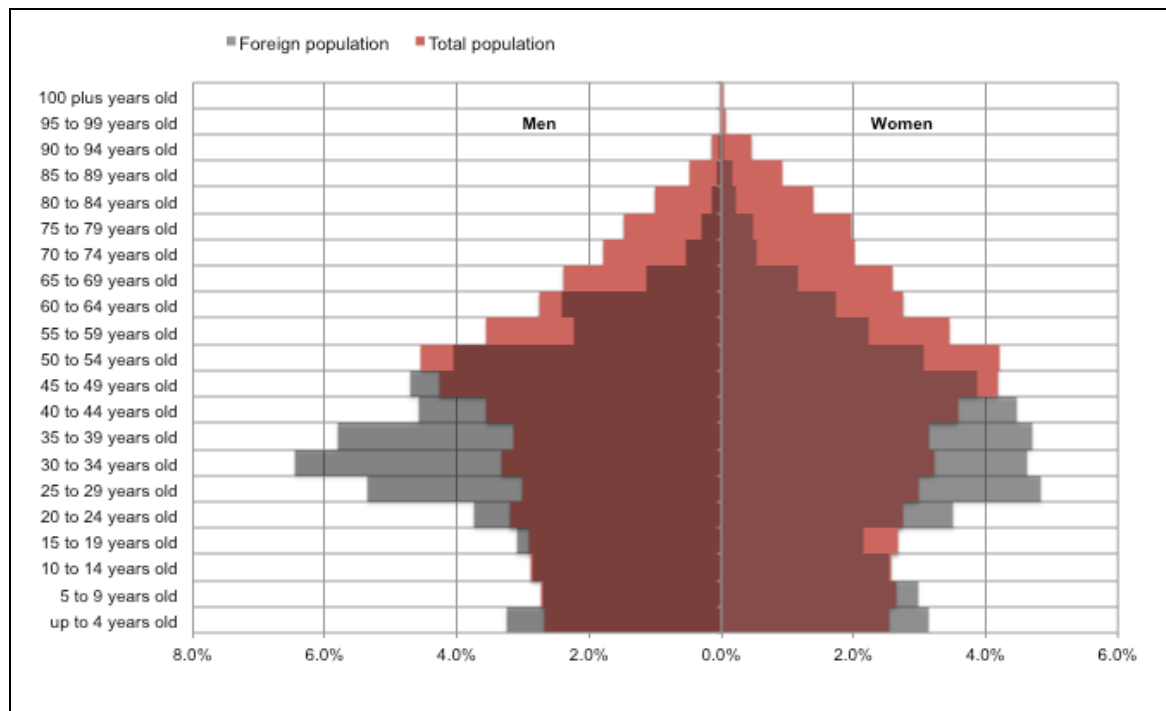
Figure 18: Foreign population of Wels by nationality group and nationality, 2016.

Source: Statistik Austria, 2017.

Figure 19: Foreign population of Padua by nationality group and nationality, 2016.

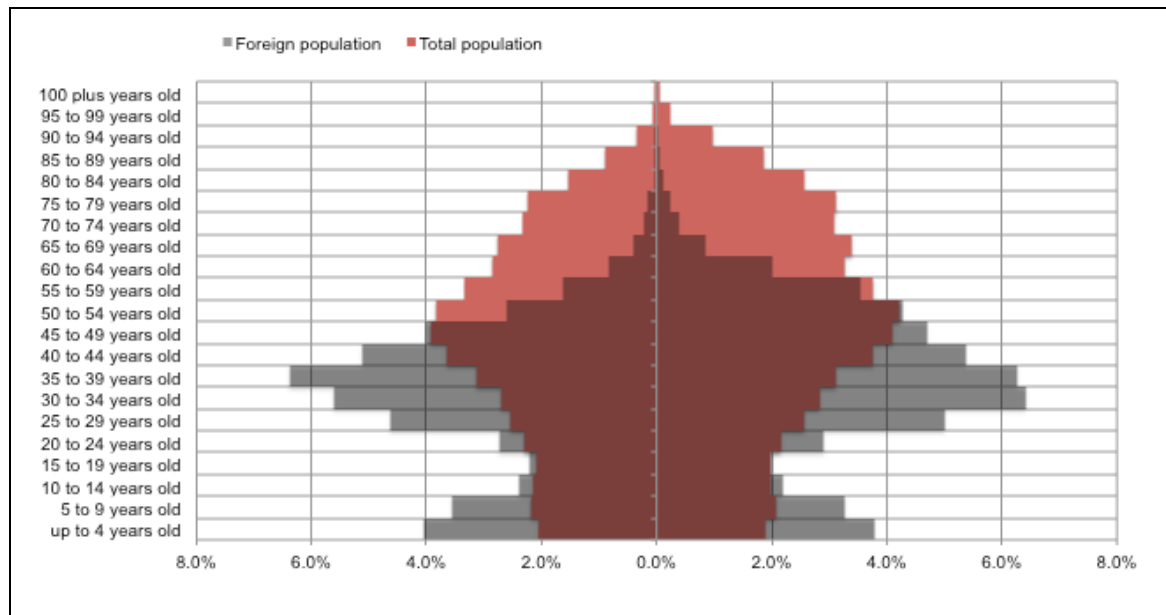
Source: Istat, 2017.

Figure 20: Population pyramid of Wels, 2016.



Source: Statistik Austria, 2017.

Figure 21: Population pyramid of Padua, 2016.

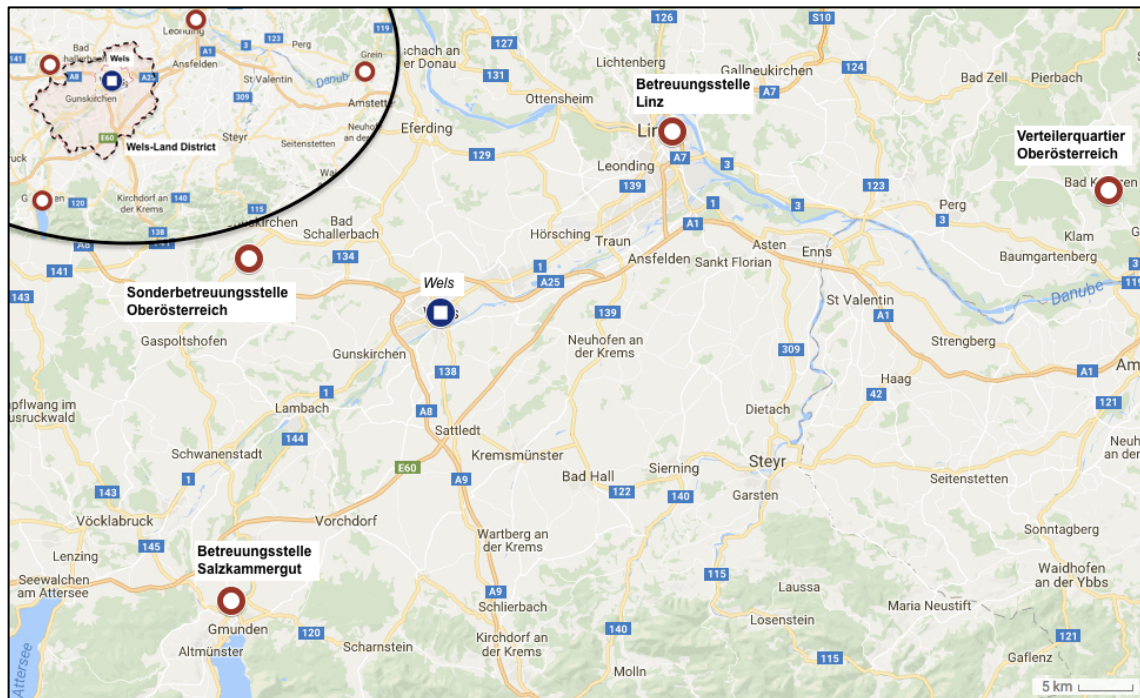


Source: Istat, 2017.

The rate of migratory movement has increased sharply in Austria and Italy in recent years, as has been intensely publicised during the so-called European migrant crisis beginning in 2015. Padua and Wels are points on the Central Mediterranean and Western Balkan migratory routes respectively. Arrivals to the city who settle are often placed in temporary shelters, of which there are a number close to both Wels and Padua (see Figures 22 and 23). These are securitised spaces – patrolled by security staff and in isolated positions – contributing to a perception of their ‘inappropriate and incongruous’ nature within rural environments connected to, but separate from, the cities, as is typical for refugee shelters (Hubbard, 2005). Their threatening status is also, of course, exacerbated by media coverage and the wider framing by political actors. As detailed in section five below, the prospect of additional centres for refugees in the vicinity of the city is expressed by the PRR-led local governments as a primary threat to be prioritised.

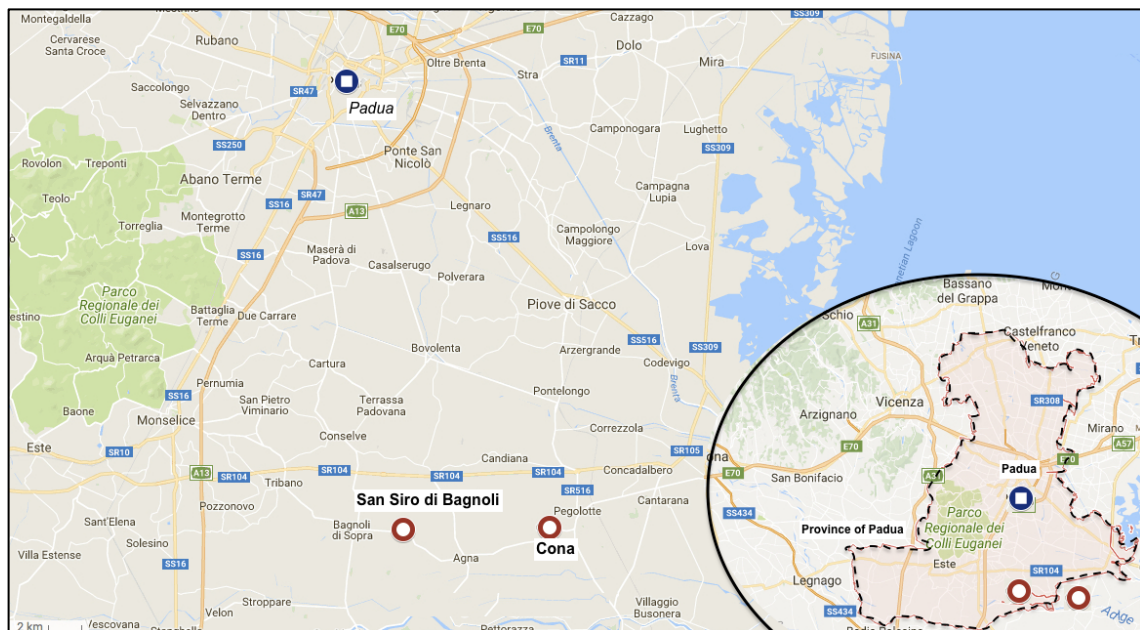
Whether or not such demographic change contributes to PRR electoral success is disputed between the optimistic *contact hypothesis* (Allport, 1954) and the *ethnic competition theory* (Campbell, 1965), the latter being underpinned by resident perceptions of migration related to status anxiety (Lipset, 1960) and a sense of moral decline (Taggart, 2000). This thesis does not seek to interrogate these competing theories in the electoral politics in Wels and Padua, but rather analyse how PRR parties exploit fears around immigration as part of their strategy; a popular tactic among European PRR parties (Ambrosini, 2013). Heightening the perceived level of insecurity through the formation of discursive connections between migration from countries of visibly different ethnicities and the threat of crime and terror is a common tactic, as well as the emphasis of failure by mainstream political forces to contend with these developments.

Figure 21: Refugee shelters in the vicinity of Wels, with inset map showing their position in relation to the district boundary.



Source: BMI, 2017. Map: author's own.

Figure 22: Refugee shelters in the vicinity of Padua, with inset map showing their position in relation to the provincial boundary.



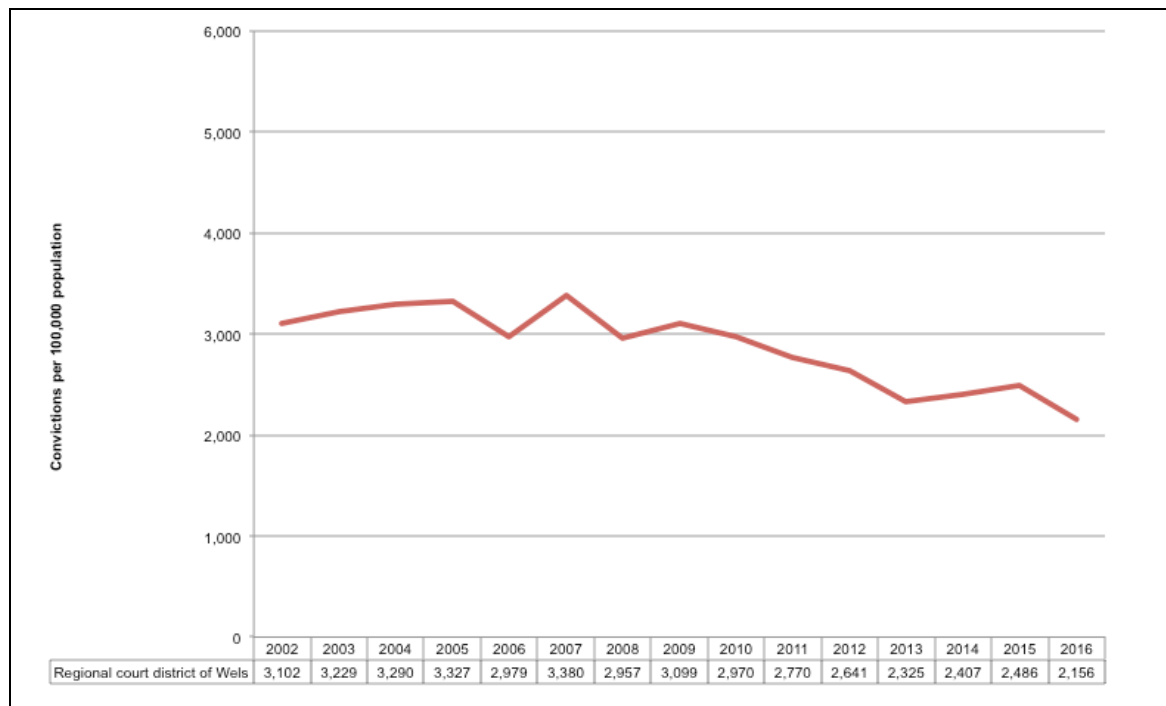
Source: Corriere del Veneto, 2017. Map: author's own.

4.2.3 Changes in the levels of crime, and the fear of crime

A subjective sense of insecurity in relation to crime has been rising across both Italy and Austria in recent years; the potential reasons for the general rise of levels of fear of crime are contended within a dense field of enquiry (Gerber et al. 2010). Nonetheless, the evidence shows levels of crime in both Padua and Wels are low and had been stable prior to the election victories of the PRR, according to official crime statistics. In Wels crimes had been steadily declining between 2002 and 2016 (see Figure 23), including a halving of robberies, and no changes caused by refugees moving through the city as part of the European migrant crisis from 2015 onwards (WI, Dec. 2015). In Padua, the level of crime has been stable in recent years (see Figure 24), slightly increasing from 4,443 crimes reported per 100,000 inhabitant in 2010 to 5,038 in 2012, before decreasing back to 4,678 in 2014, prior to the election of Mayor Bitonci (Istat, n.d.). The inaccuracy of reported crime figures is a well established fact of criminology though, due to under-reporting, particularly of minor crimes (Buonanno et al., 2014). Nevertheless, regardless of the objective change in levels of crime, public order is widely becoming an increasingly salient political concern due to changes in popular perception, as shown by the trend for a ‘new punitiveness’ in political discourse (Pratt, 2000).

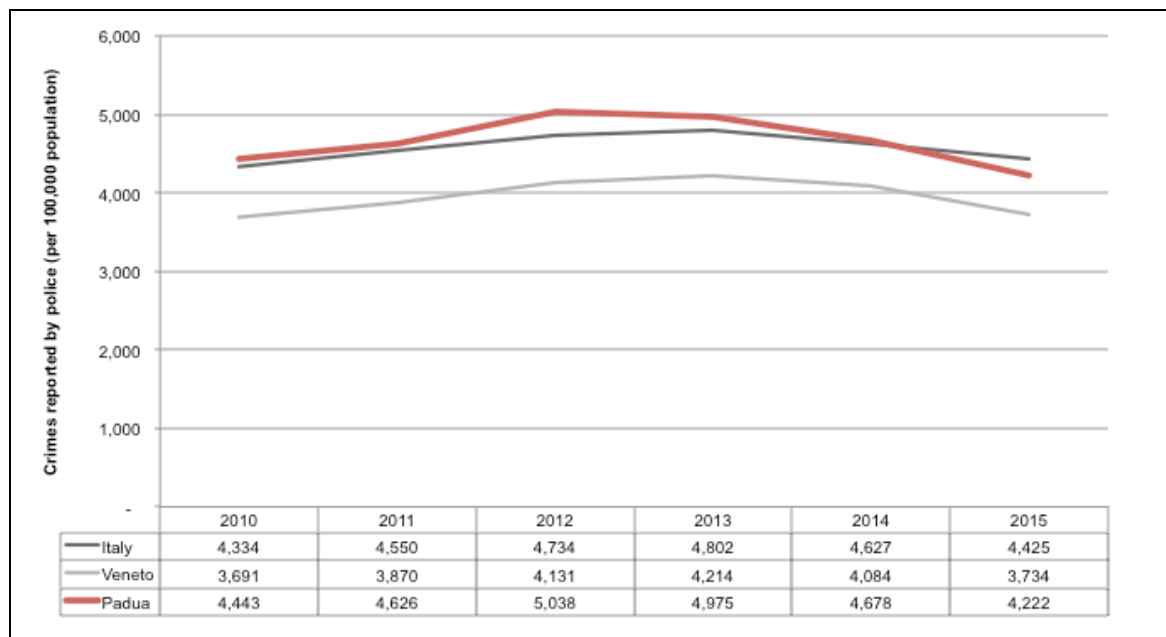
One important factor for the increase of fear of crime in western European cities is a perception of vulnerability to terrorist attack. As a significant tourist and Christian site, due to many notable ecclesiastical and medieval buildings, Padua has been a planned target of at least one foiled terrorist attack (VOA News, 2009). Yet there are also popular fears of terror threats in Wels (WT1, 2017), despite its lack of internationally renowned landmarks making it an unlikely target for terrorists seeking high profile, symbolic targets. As will be detailed in the following sections, such fears are shaped, responded to, and exacerbated by actions of the PRR-led local government.

Figure 23: Crime in Wels (convictions per 100,000 population recorded in the regional court district of Wels), 2002-2016.



Source: Statistik Austria, 2017.

Figure 24: Crime in Padua, the Veneto region, and Italy (crimes reported by the police per 100,000 population), 2010-2015.



Source: Istat, 2017.

Considering the recent changes to the local economy, demographics and crime levels in Padua and Wels outlined above (and summarised in *Table 4*), the evidence for structural changes clearly contributing in a direct way to a rise in popular insecurity is weak.

There are certainly significant urban transformations occurring in Wels and Padua brought by globalisation: in particular, the large population movements from abroad, and the economic challenges of integrating within an increasingly open and competitive European market environment. An increase in support for PRR parties in locations experiencing negative consequences from recent socio-economic transformations would be consistent with the ‘modernisation losers’ hypothesis (for example: Betz, 1993; Kriesi et al., 2006), in which their electoral success is derived from those suffering from the associated transformations. However, the evidence reveals a decline in crime levels, and prosperous, if strained, economies relative to the national and European averages.

There is an established disconnection between (typically rising) fear of crime and (stable or even declining) crime levels. Simply put, therefore, ‘fear of crime’ must be more than just ‘fear’ of ‘crime’⁸. The anxiety at the heart of contemporary fear of crime has for this reason been labelled an ‘*eigen-behaviour*’ by Niklas Luhmann: self-referential in its non-empirical basis, resistant to any rational critique, and therefore with a ‘great political and moral future’ (Luhmann, 1989: 128). The wider anxieties referred to within the theoretical construct of *ontological insecurity* are likewise not necessarily empirically supported by manifestations and transformations within the immediate environment.

⁸ There are concerns with conceptual slippage around ‘fear of crime’ (Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987: 71), in the divergent meanings attach to a vague phrase, with many proximate but different words explored (including worry, concern, anxiety, insecurity, and so on), in a seemingly endless debate. It is beyond the scope of this investigation to go into further depth on these semiotic issues and their relation to specific measurements in the case studies.

We must consider how the contemporary rise in this ‘deepening social malaise’ not only produces political consequences (Cento Bull, 2011: 102), in contributing to an increased salience of security issues and PRR electoral success, but has politically originating causes too. The social and economic changes are mediated through political communications and claims made by political actors, and only by understanding these rhetorical performances and the context in which they take place, is it possible to appreciate how these transformations can be framed as particular failures and moulded into a wider sense of local crisis.

4.3 Local political cultures, and previous mainstream responses to urban insecurity

Before analysing the practice of the PRR-led local governments regarding urban security, we should first note the contribution of other political actors in raising the salience of the issue in Wels and Padua. The socio-economic transformations detailed above already gained significance and meaning prior to the election of the PRR to government leadership through the mediation of the political culture and actors involved. Via exploration of the (historic and contemporary) political cultures in Wels and Padua, and the varying levels of consensus with PRR policy demonstrated within, we can also demonstrate other factors contributing to the election victory of the PRR in both cities, and their subsequent political performances.

4.3.1 Wels: opposing perceptions of insecurity

The circumstances of the victory of the PRR party in Wels suggests a recent deviation from the established political culture, being their first after such a sustained period of centre-left dominance. Support for the FPÖ has risen dramatically since the early 2000s, to a much higher point in Wels than that attained nationally. In the most recent national

legislative election in 2013, for example, the FPÖ gained 20.5% of the vote, under half of the 43.08% gained by the party in the Wels council elections the following year.

In fact, there has been a longer-term presence of an extremist right-wing political sub-culture in Wels. Immediately after the Second World War, and with continuing impact on voting behaviour today, former Nazis concentrated in the US controlled zone of Upper Austria, in which Wels was situated, having fled the newly Soviet controlled zone in the region (Oechsner and Roesel, 2016). Extremist right-wing movements with an anti-migrant focus have been persistently strong in Wels, with reports recently of a particularly high and increasing level of *Wiederbetätigung* ('Re-Engagement in Nazi Activities') convictions (Sterkl, 2016). The extreme-right activist, Ludwig Reinthaler, notorious for neo-Nazi activities, attempted to contest the 2009 Wels elections with a party drawing from the local extremist sub-culture, named *Die Bunten* ('The Colourful'). Their candidature was blocked under the *NS-Verbotsgesetz* ('Nazi Prohibition Act'), despite the opposition of the local FPÖ to their prohibition (OTS, 2010). Although the presence of fringe extremist movements does not demonstrate an overwhelming local consensus with the PRR party, considering the persistent electoral dominance of a social democratic party, it does nevertheless suggest their ethnocentric ideas are familiar to the local political culture.

More significant to the mainstream political culture has been a rise in felt insecurity in recent years. In 2013, the city centre of Wels was ranked as the district with the lowest quality of life in Austria; with the FPÖ response to the report highlighting the problems identified pertaining to urban security and integration, and the centre-left government accused as failing in these areas (Pachner, 2013). A comprehensive analysis into public security in Wels followed in 2014, under the name of 'DESSI (Decision Support on Security Investment)', intended to give an expert and non-partisan view on a by then

highly politicised subject (Pachner, 2014). The author of the report, Reinhard Kreissl, Head of the Institute for Legal and Criminal Sociology Vienna (IRKS), evaluated the issue of security as overplayed: stating ‘The objective security situation is not bad compared to other cities’, and evidence therefore lacking for the necessity of new measures such as the CCTV surveillance long campaigned for by the local FPÖ. The success of the PRR party in the elections the following year suggests the issue was not dispelled, as hoped for by the ruling centre-left party who had commissioned the report, but rather the FPÖ were able to attain a position of distinctiveness in their continued stressing of the importance of *perceived* insecurity, and depiction of the leading party as unwilling to contend with it as they would.

4.3.2 Padua: foundations of exclusionary security measures

Padua lacks a historically embedded right-wing political culture, but recent history demonstrates a precedent for exclusionary security policy. The electoral force of the Lega Nord originated in the small municipalities of the industrialised countryside of central Veneto, characterised by the strong presence of small-scale enterprises and concerns for local identity (Diamanti, 2003). The Lega Nord adapted to the ‘White’ (or Catholic) regional cultural preferences, including an anti-statalist localism (Messina, 1998). However, Padua has a contrasting political culture, in particular due to its university, which has the effect of producing a population more cosmopolitan than the average city in Veneto, and a resulting ‘urban’ political culture (although one whose effect on local electoral outcomes is weakened by the inability of foreign citizens and non-resident students to vote). While today it stands as a laboratory for a novel example of PRR local government leadership, in recent history Padua was internationally famous as a ‘laboratory of subversion’ (Gilbert, 1979), with a significant number of anarchist terrorist attacks during the 1970s.

Since the Italian political crisis of the early 1990s demolished the old party system, Padua has been governed by the Democratic Party of the Left (and then its successor parties, Left Democracy and the Democratic Party) for 16 years of the 21 year period prior to 2014. The victory of the Lega Nord candidate Massimo Bitonci in the Padua mayoral election that year was more a product of savvy political manoeuvring than a clear triumph for the PRR party though (as detailed in section 4.1).

I don't think that Padua is a Lega Nord city. In general, the parties from the centre-right were not very strong or well organised but they were very intelligent to appoint this candidate from Lega Nord.

(PaduaInt1, 2017)

However, the political culture has changed in Padua in recent years, reflected in a heightened focus on urban security, particularly by the so-called *scerrifo rosso* ('red sheriff'), Mayor Zanonato of the centre-left Democratic Party (1993-99, 2003-14). Relevant measures included the controversial walled enclosure of the Via Anelli neighbourhood between 2006-07, populated mainly by African migrants seeking asylum and notorious for drug dealing, as well as the dismantling of Roma camps. These measures initiated a process of raising the perceived urgency of crime within the city, and connecting the security threat with the presence of the rising foreign population.

4.3.3 Urban security: pathways to issue salience

An analysis of the local political culture in the two cities does not demonstrate a history of embedded consensus for the PRR. In recent years, through strikingly different processes, the rising salience of the issue of security is evident though, of which the FPÖ and Lega Nord have prioritised as one owned by them. In Padua, but not Wels, we see a gradual turn towards security solutions being taken, and the foundations being laid

for a connection of security with migration, by local mainstream political actors. In Wels, on the other hand, the raising of the issue of security took place against the actions of local mainstream political actors seeking to stress the objectively secure environment in opposition to the fearful rhetoric of the PRR party and others.

The analysis therefore shows that the objective conditions which give space for political change (outlined in section 4.2) require mediation by individuals to attain meaning and political significance (outlined in section 4.3). Furthermore, in the variation of the process by which this mediation between the two cases takes place, the observation of Laclau becomes evident, and will be explored in further detail in the following sections: that any particular discursive constructions (such as those discussed here of local insecurity) are only ‘a possible response’ and not the only one (Laclau, 1990: 65).

5. The Performance of Crisis

Populism is not the politics of the stable, ordered polity but comes as an accompaniment to change, crisis and challenge. This crisis may well stem from a sense of moral decay but it always spills over into a critique of politics and into the sense that politics as usual cannot deal with the unusual conditions of crisis... What is perhaps more important is that populism tends to emerge when there is a strong *sense* of crisis and populists use that sense to inject an urgency and an importance to their message.

(Taggart, 2004: 275)

It is productive to move away from ostensibly 'objective' notions of external crisis, and instead towards a view of crisis as a phenomenon that can only be experienced through performance and mediation, whereby a systemic failure is elevated to the level of perceived 'crisis'.

(Moffitt, 2015: 195)

The theoretical model of a six step populist performance of crisis proposes a performative role as a core feature of contemporary PRR parties (Moffitt, 2015), and will be used as the basis for this section's account of their local government leadership in Wels and Padua. The applicability of the theory for conceptualising PRR practice in the leadership of local, as opposed to national, government is here undertaken for the first time. In order to examine the practice of the new PRR-led local governments, and how they utilise the politically salient theme of security, their policy actions and surrounding discourse on the subject are the focus. The six stages of the theory are as follows:

- (1) Identify failure.
- (2) Elevate to the level of crisis by linking into a wider framework and adding a temporal dimension.
- (3) Frame 'the people' vs. those responsible for the crisis.

- (4) Use media to propagate performance.
- (5) Present simple solutions and strong leadership.
- (6) Continue to propagate crisis.

Rather than a temporally defined process in which the stages are taken in linear, chronological order, the analysis has used the evidence over the period in focus in considering the manner in which the different stages are performed, as a set of tactics used in combination. Following Moffitt's theory (2015) that the PRR discourse is not simply reacting to a pre-existing crisis, but acting to create the sense of one locally, this section describes the form and process by which this performance of crisis is taken, and in so doing tests its relevance for PRR parties in leadership of local government.

5.1 The populist performance of a local security crisis

5.1.1 Identification of failure

A sense of failure by past governments to contend with local socio-economic and demographic changes (detailed in section 4.2), and the resulting threats to public order, has been created by PRR government actors. Padua Mayor Bitonci used the fortnightly council newsletter to publicly depict the neglect of the preceding centre-left government in matters of crime and blame them for a rise in levels of reported crime: 'previous administrations had virtually eliminated [the urban security division of the local police force], thereby increasing thefts by 143% over the past 10 years of centre-left government' (PiC, April. 2015). In another edition, the councillor for security in Bitonci's administration, Maurizio Saia, stressed that 'the role of the mayor, in issues relating to security, is not a mere spectator as [preceding centre-left mayors] Zanonato and Rossi have been, but can and should legitimately intervene to ensure the safety of citizens' (PiC, Sep. 2015).

Furthermore, other scales of government have been blamed by both local administrations, in particular for their handling of immigration, illegal and otherwise. Padua Mayor Bitonci used the council newsletter to blame the Italian government for ‘welcoming criminals and offenders with open arms’, and the provincial government for misallocating €20 million on the ‘reception of illegal immigrants, as much as the monthly pension of our elders [...which is] the worst way to spend the money of taxpayers, who pay taxes for security and justice, not illegals [sic] in their home’ (PiC, Jan. 2016).

The Wels local government has fixated on the issue of migrant reception, with four of the seven security related council resolutions concerning their resistance to federally proposed placement of migrants within the city. Wels Mayor Rabl publicly castigated the regional government via the Wels newsletter for their decision to proceed with placing refugees in the city and neglecting, as he claimed had been promised, to take into account the already high foreign population in the city (WI, Feb. 2016). Not only is the identification of failure a necessary first step to building up a sense of crisis, but it is important in its own right for the de-legitimation of competitors through the PRR actors’ allocation of blame, and concurrent self-legitimation in their opposition and hostility.

Essential to the act of identifying failure, and its linking within a wider process of elevation to the level of crisis, is the political salience of the chosen topic of failure. The combination of crime and immigration has been the focus in Wels and Padua. As described in Section 3, there is a clear and widespread disconnection between decreasing levels of crime and increasing levels of fear of crime. By linking this fear of crime with the foreign population, the visible, rising foreign population become a tangible object of fear, otherwise lacking in relatively secure environments. Also

essential to the building of a sense of crisis is its linkage with a wider framework though, and the idea of a more general ‘criminal migrant’ threat.

5.1.2 Elevation to the level of crisis

The escalation of the failures described above to the level of crisis has been achieved through linking a number of incidents of threatened public order within a broader framework, and their characterisation as symptomatic of a wider problem. The examples of failure, as shown in 5.1.1, link topics as wide reaching as immigration, crime, and the incompetence of preceding governments in dealing with them. In the connection, they crucially draw upon the wider contemporary context, and the common conceptual framework of an on-going European migrant crisis and a heightened urban security threat from radical Islamic terrorism (Dahl, 2016).

The theory of a ‘populist performance of crisis’ (Moffitt, 2015) allocates critical importance to the performances of populist actors in this active connection of (often disparate) events and a wider framework, a linking which is by no means automatic. In Wels, reference to the migrant crisis has been crucial in escalating particular failures and issues into a crisis. From September 2015, the month before the election of the FPÖ in Wels, 40,000 refugees passed through Wels to Germany, 24,000 of whom were temporarily accommodated, and no criminal incidents were recorded (WI, Dec. 2015). Yet within the security statements from the Wels government, discursive centrality has been given to crimes committed by migrants as part of this movement. Due to the low crime rate within Wels, often the specific crimes mentioned are in fact taking place in other cities. In support of a council resolution to oppose additional accommodation for refugees in the city, FPÖ security councillor Gerhard Kroiß, first focused attention on the wider migration crisis by raising the impracticality of doing more to help with the

‘refugee problem [...] since September 2015. [...] Anyone who has read the media in recent weeks has read about sexual abuse in Austria, from the brawls of drunken Muslim Moroccans at the train station in Linz, to the sexual harassment of children in baths [reported in Vienna] – we can only say: “we do not want these conditions in Wels”’ (WG, Jan. 2016). Justifying an increase in police numbers the following month, the FPÖ councillor pointed towards a strain caused by transit refugees which, ‘became clear especially during the period from September to December 2015’ and distracted the police force from crime elsewhere in the city (WG, Feb. 2016). A similar threat is presented in justification of heightened security measures in Padua: in implementing health checks on migrants arriving in the city, the policy states that since the initiation of the Mediterranean refugee rescue operation *Mare Nostrum*, ‘there have been about 125,000 arrivals across the Mediterranean, adding a burden of approximately €9 million per month [...], an inevitable increase of health risks [...] and] a continuous influx of immigrants even into the Veneto area’ (Ord. 42, Nov. 2014).

Another wider framework to which migration and crime is linked is terrorism, which has gained increased salience since an upsurge in Islamist terror attacks in European cities since 2014. Following the terror attacks in Paris of November 2015, the ostensible message of sympathy in the council newsletter was used by Mayor Bitonci to highlight the local threat to citizens: ‘Padua, like many Italian cities, is a centre of Christian worship and destination of millions of pilgrims from around the world. On several occasions it has been named as a possible target of terrorist attacks’ (PiC, Nov. 2015; see Figure 25). By linking together individual local events, and combining them within a wider framework of threat, PRR actors attempt to make local events collectively symptomatic of a more general crisis facing the city. For Padua, Mayor Bitonci, used the threat of terror attacks to reinforce a sense of a culture under threat, asking ‘those

engaged in educating young people...to be strong advocates of the culture of freedom and non-violence. Padua embraces all *European* citizens...Padua will always stand by them in the fight of good against evil' [stress added] (PiC, Nov. 2015). Following the Nice terror attack of July 2016, Bitonci again used the event to raise a wider set of threatening issues: '[we have] an opportunity to discuss today, after Nice, the most difficult issues of fundamentalism, of war, of fear [...] and the big question of Muslim women and basic civil rights' (PiC, Oct. 2016).

External events are similarly presented as an opportunity for Wels Mayor Rabl, in highlighting underlying societal threats: 'triggered by the refugee crisis, much is currently being discussed about integration, culture and values. We are particularly concerned about this in Wels. For years, we have been showing developments that we consider to be problematic.' (WI, Feb., 2016). The threatening

Figure 25: 'Solidarity: we are all French'; Massimo Bitonci following the Paris Terror Attacks of November 2015.



Source: PiC, Nov. 2015.

combination of crime and migration in defining a threat to urban security use a wider framework of the dual crises of migration and terrorism, which also enables the drawing together of other societal issues, such as integration, and local culture and identity. The etymological root of crisis, the Greek *krisis*, denotes a moment of critical conjuncture; its open and malleable character famously noted by Gramsci in it consisting 'precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born' (1971: 276).

Due to the scale of the crisis being described, an urgency of response has been demanded in the prioritisation of measures promising to address particular threats to public order. The Wels government implemented video surveillance to combat city centre crime within the first month in power, despite its prior rejection following an independent consultation determining it expensive and ineffective (see section 4.3.1). The mayor claimed its introduction followed the wishes of the public and that crime data showed it to be ‘urgently necessary’ (WI, Nov. 2015). Padua also demonstrates how external events, and the framing they provide, enable a sense of urgency for local security changes: ‘In light of [the terror attacks] in Paris...[due to] the increasing risk of Islamist attacks in Italy, I ask the Prefect to convene urgently a table for safety. We must act now’ (PiC, Nov. 2015). Furthermore, such a situation of emergency legitimises more sweeping addressing of the claimed causes of the crisis, drawing both from its local manifestations and its broader framing.

5.1.3 Framing of ‘us vs. them’

The responsibility for the crisis has been assigned to a particular social group from whom the perpetrators are likely to be drawn, and against whom pre-emptory counter-measures are required. Simultaneously, as with the failures at the root of the crisis being blamed on political opponents (see 5.1.1), the continual neglect, or even resistance, of opposition elites enables a linkage between the offending social group and an elite protecting them.

The prime source of security threats communicated through the political and policy actions of both governments is the figure of the migrant. In the policies of Padua, a connection with migrants is explicitly stated in 4 of the eleven security policy ordinances issued by Mayor Bitonci, and justified using a web of threatening concepts,

such as safety, civility, and hygiene. An example of such a rhetorical combination is shown by an emergency ordinance banning prostitution (Ord.5, Feb. 2015), a ‘phenomenon that has undergone a major resurgence in recent months so as to recommend an urgent intervention’. Prostitution is characterised as a multi-faceted threat to ‘traffic safety’, a ‘deterioration of social values that can potentially affect the educational process of minors’, and a ‘degradation of environmental and hygiene conditions’. The policy also makes clear that this is fundamentally a problem caused by a failure of the wider system of immigration, given that a substantial percentage are migrants and therefore, ‘[being] less amenable to control and removal orders[...], it is deemed necessary to monitor more incisively their access routes’. Furthermore, the metaphorical framing in these emotionally evocative terms – the ‘social alarm and discomfort’ felt by the ‘local people’ - also enables the development of a shared sense of vulnerability for those depicted as within the victimised group (Brassett and Clarke, 2012).

The FPÖ-led government in Wels has followed a similar exclusionary approach, but has widened the group responsible for the crisis to include the wider non-Austrian resident population of the city. For example, the opposition to further settlement of migrants has been repeatedly justified by the security risk and strain already caused by the existing 32% of the population without Austrian citizenship, particularly in efforts of integration (WG, Jan. 2016; WG, Feb. 2016; WI, Feb. 2016; WI, May 2016)⁹. The local government of Wels does not have the legal power to resist the placement¹⁰. According to the *Durchgriffsrecht des Bundes* (‘Intervention Right of the State’), the federal government has the right to place refugees within federal property in any location when

⁹ It should be noted that due to the Austrian citizenship laws this 32% of the population will include some residents who were born and have lived their entire life in Wels.

¹⁰ More on the significance of local government autonomy in section 6.x

a region (i.e. Upper Austria) does not meet its 1.5% quota, without reference to the population of individual cities (WG, Jan. 2016). In response, repeated twice in newsletters, Rabl has asserted his opposition to the public as follows: ‘The goal must continue to be closed as a city and to be united against the federal and regional governments in order to achieve the best possible result for Wels’ (WI, Feb. 2016; WI, May 2016). The elite, in this case the national government and its bureaucrats, have been depicted as the enemy in implementing a harmful strategy against the wishes of the PRR party, and ‘the people’.

A targeting of people of different ethnicity and nationality is to be expected by PRR parties, due to their fundamentally ethnocentric and nativist ideology. Yet working within a framework of crisis enables the attainment of a wider consensus in their exercise of power, than would be possible if framed in raw, discriminatory terms. The framing of crisis produces a layer of seeming ‘objectivity’ in motivation (Moffitt, 2015: 202).

The severity of the threat posed and the urgency of the response demanded also produce a clearer rationale for action (Taggart, 2004: 275). The implications of the specific nature of the crisis being evoked in Wels and Padua - a growing insecurity in the city caused by migrants, amidst a context of out of control migration and terrorism - clearly frame the nature of the threat to urban security; that is, the specific group represented by, and thus responsible for, the threat.

Furthermore, in opposition to the ‘others’ – the criminal outsiders and the neglectful, even malevolent, elites – an identity of ‘the people’ can be more clearly constructed, who in contrast are a vulnerable, victimised but ultimately virtuous group. In Padua, ethnocentric welfare reforms were packaged with the pithy slogan: ‘*Prima i padovani*’

(‘Paduans first’) (PiC, Sep. 2016). In Wels, the direction for the newly elected PRR-led administration was framed in a similar fashion by Mayor Rabl: ‘My particular effort is to improve integration and safety in Wels. Our common goal is to bring Wels back to the top of Austrian cities. For this I need not only the support of the political parties, but above all of you, dear *Welser*’ (WI, Nov. 2015). Speaking in these homogenising terms is not only intended to render ‘the people’ present and real, but also mobilise them as a political component. The centrality of this *identitarian* aim is a crucial feature in distinguishing the *populist performance of crisis* from ‘crisis politics’ more generally (Moffitt, 2015), as will be discussed further in section 5.2.

5.1.4 Propagation through the media

The sense of crisis, and the proposed counter-measures, have been publicised through simple and often direct communication with citizens. Public performances are an important feature of populism, working to define the nature, and increase the sense, of the threat posed by their defined crisis and the responsible ‘other’ group, and seize attention for their efforts to represent ‘the people’ in countering it.

The mayor of Padua took a direct approach to communication of local government policy and his motivation to protect public order through a fortnightly council newsletter introduced during his tenure – *Padova in Comune* (‘Padova in Common’)¹¹. The messages transmitted in the press releases and newsletters of both governments have been relayed widely almost verbatim by a compliant local press that is often reliant on the advertising funding gained through local government (WelsInt3, 2017). At a more fundamental level, there exists a mutually beneficial relationship between populist

¹¹ ‘*Padova in Comune*’ is a pun, drawing on the dual meaning of *comune* both as a commune, or municipality, and common, as in mutual or shared; demonstrating the Italian communitarian idea of local government.

parties and the media (Mazzoleni, 2008: 55). After all, a heightened sense of crisis, particularly communicated in an informal, controversial and dramatic manner, promises to attract more readers than (local) politics as usual.

The use of spectacle, in more unusual and performative forms of communication, is also helpful for attracting media attention. In protest against the federal government's proposal for new refugee accommodation in Wels, Mayor Rabl publicised his intention to march and block the motorway, an act which gained national, as well as local, media coverage (Kurier, 2015; Müller, 2015). The intended impression of such dramatic, yet informal, collective performances is that of PRR actors being intermediaries of concerns driven by 'the people', arising naturally from the needs of the locality, rather than being political calculations.

The novelty of the character and approach of the PRR-led local governments in Wels and Padua have garnered wider national, and indeed international, media attention; unusual for these medium-sized and historically unexceptional cities. Press articles focusing on the cities highlight the phenomenon not only as a significant local development, but also a harbinger of wider change to come: examples include The Guardian's *'Fear of migrants and loathing of elites drive a small Austrian town to far right'* (Oltermann, 2016), Die Zeit's *'The Blue (FPÖ) Model City'* (Kapeller, 2016), and Time Magazine's *European Politics Are Swinging to the Right* (Shuster, 2016)¹².

¹² Beziérs, the French city governed by the independent but Front National-aligned Robert Menard, has been similarly framed in many international press features, for example: The Atlantic's *Inside Béziers, France's Far-Right Laboratory* (Masih, 2017), The Guardian's *Talk of the town: French mayor's 'laboratory of the far right'* (Chrisafis, 2015), and the Financial Times's *The French town that shows how Marine Le Pen could win* (Chassany, 2017).

5.1.5 *Presentation of simple solutions and strong leadership*

Throughout this process, PRR government actors in Wels and Padua have aimed to present themselves as distinctively capable of expressing the ‘will of the people’ (Taggart, 2000), through an emphasis on their leadership qualities and straightforward, simplistic solutions to the crisis. Amidst a long-term trend for professionalisation of local government and an expansion of the civil service (Berg and Rao, 2005: 7), their unorthodox, personal methods stand out even more starkly.

Bitonci clarified his understanding of the close role of the mayor to ‘the people’, after being placed fifth in a popularity survey of Italian mayors conducted by IPR Marketing Il Sole 24 Ore (PiC, Jan. 2016), as follows: ‘Mayors are the most beloved politicians of citizens, [being] without

privileges and neighbours to their people’. A characteristic example of the Bitonci approach to public appearances stressing his personal role in combating insecurity is shown in the newsletter of March 2016. Bitonci and the security councillor Saia accompanied local police carrying out identity checks in the city centre, with the stated aim to deter those without Italian nationality and notorious drug-dealers (the two categories being rhetorically combined) from attending soup kitchens (see Figure 26). The result was a success for Bitonci, as ‘local police officers checked the documents of dozens and dozens of people, and only four were of Italian nationality’, and ‘thanks to this first operation, only people came in[to the soup kitchen] meaning well, and there

Figure 26. ‘Soup kitchen: local police checks begin’: Mayor Bitonci publicises involvement in police activity.



Source: PiC, Mar. 2016.

were considerably fewer than usual' (PiC, Mar. 2016). According to Saia: 'Today the bad guys have disappeared and will have to stay away'. The populist leadership is thus presented as prepared to personally combat the visible manifestations of a security crisis.

Both mayors' performances are part of a struggle for distinctiveness, in spite of the sheer ordinariness of their profiles. They are entirely typical of European mayors in fitting into the so-called '3M-mantra' (Steyvers and Reynaert, 2006): both male, middle aged, and middle class. Both have conventional professional backgrounds; Rabl trained and practiced as a lawyer, Bitonci as an accountant. Their adoption of a performative populist style therefore requires a process of personal adaptation, and is a delicate balancing act when trying to also establish and maintain an image of competence and professionalism, so important at the local government levels. Furthermore, PRR populist parties are notorious for failure in transferring their protests to the exercise of power, summed up by Heinisch as 'Success in opposition – failure in government' (2003). The strain, and deception, of balancing a novel anti-politics style with administrative capability is clear in a statement of Bitonci's – a Lega Nord politician since 1994 – claiming: "I have proved to be far from the politics of parties and tactics [...] and [proven] able to govern" (Pietrobelli, 2016).

Wels Mayor Rabl has sought to present an image of competence and expertise in public appearances, with a capacity for successful managerial-style, top-down change, and has been reported as such in the press. The German newspaper *Die Tageszeitung*, warning against the complacent view that the appeal of PRR parties will be dispelled through inevitable incompetence and failure in positions of power, highlighted the example of Wels: 'What [Rabl] has done in his time so far is politically lethal - and it is implemented with the utmost diligence, excellent expertise and tireless perseverance.

Wels is called the "Blue (FPÖ) Model City" (Gürgen, 2016). This approach is used alongside the more typically populist stylistic features, such as the spectacle mentioned in the previous section and (symbolic) usage of bottom-up governing methods, such as referendums and surveys on a wide range of urban policies. The approach of the FPÖ in Wels therefore seems to be closer to the 'technocratic populism' suggested by de la Torre (2013: 42), in his analysis of former Ecuadorian President Correa, blending the two seemingly contradictory styles.

Accompanying the direct, action-focused communication, is a simplification of policy solutions, in line with the 'populist performance of crisis' theory. A survey of the policies proposed and implemented by both PRR local governments, reveals a concentration on the issues of migration and security, and their analysis reveals a straightforward and direct quality, as well as an exclusionary logic¹³. The aim and logic of the scapegoating is explained thus by Žižek, referring to the created enemy as:

‘the singular agent behind all threats to the people...externalized or reified into a positive ontological entity (even if this entity is spectral) whose annihilation would restore balance and justice’ (Žižek, 2006: 555-556; quoted in Moffitt, 2014: 206).

5.1.6 Continued propagation of crisis

The sense of crisis has been upheld throughout various events that are contentiously claimed by PRR actors as evidence of an ongoing state of insecurity demanding continuing counter-measures. The problem of retaining the relevance of the issues conjoined into the created crisis requires continued active PRR support, as much as for its initiation.

Following the first year of the PRR leadership of the local governments, there were

¹³ The policies of the governments are explored in detail in section 6.

reports of declining crime in both cities: 1% in Padua between November 2014 and October 2015 compared to the previous year (PiC, Nov. 2015) and 4.5% in Wels over 2016 (Stadt Wels, 2017). PRR actors responded with the reiteration of the continuing threat, rather than, for instance, stressing a decline in crime for which they might also claim credit (PiC, Nov. 2015; Stadt Wels, 2017).

"Our policy on this serious phenomenon continues and will continue until these people go away from this town."
(Mayor Bitonci, PiC, Nov. 2015)

"One thing must be clear: asylum seekers who have committed crimes have no right to protection and will therefore be deported"
(Mayor Rabl, Stadt Wels, 2017)

To give a more specific policy example of this style of response, the popularity of personal security alarms offered free to local women in Wels was highlighted by an FPÖ councillor as above all evidence of the impairment of the subjective feeling of security in Wels (WG, Nov. 2016). This perpetuation of the sense of crisis for political gain, and indeed its necessity for their political survival, is another factor which again distinguishes the 'populist performance of crisis' from typical 'crisis politics' (Moffitt, 2015), discussed further in section 5.2 below.

The narrow timeframes offered by the cases in focus preclude the analysis from fuller consideration of other possible methods which may be used to continue to propagate a sense of crisis outlined by Moffitt (Ibid.); for example, changing the subject or notion of the crisis, for instance, from cultural to economic, or by extending the scale of the crisis, from political opponents at the same scale, to wider forces at other scales. However, within the timeframe available for study, the theme of security as a means by which a local sense of crisis can be created by PRR actors is clear.

5.2 Crisis politics as usual? Assessing an alternative hypothesis

At a time of widespread crises being invoked, of many different forms, so-called ‘crisis politics’ - the formation of political strategy defined in its response to particular crises - is common for political actors of all party backgrounds (Schäfer and Streeck, 2013). In the urban setting, crisis politics may not only emerge after a disaster or terrorist attack, but are increasingly evident in pre-emptive measures to heighten the popular perception of security, through programmes of ‘revanchist urbanism’ (Uitermark and Duyvendak, 2006), or even ‘military urbanism’ (Graham, 2011).

Moffitt (2015) highlights two distinguishing features of a ‘populist performance of crisis’ from the more commonplace ‘crisis politics’, both of which are evident in Wels and Padua. Firstly, the central rhetorical importance given to the antagonistic relationship between ‘the people’ and their enemy (see 5.1.3). Although ‘crisis politics’ may invoke dividing lines within the populace based on the nature of the crisis, the construction of the divisive political relations, and in particular the invocation of ‘the people’, is not a consistently central tactic as it has been in the practice of the mayors of Wels and Padua.

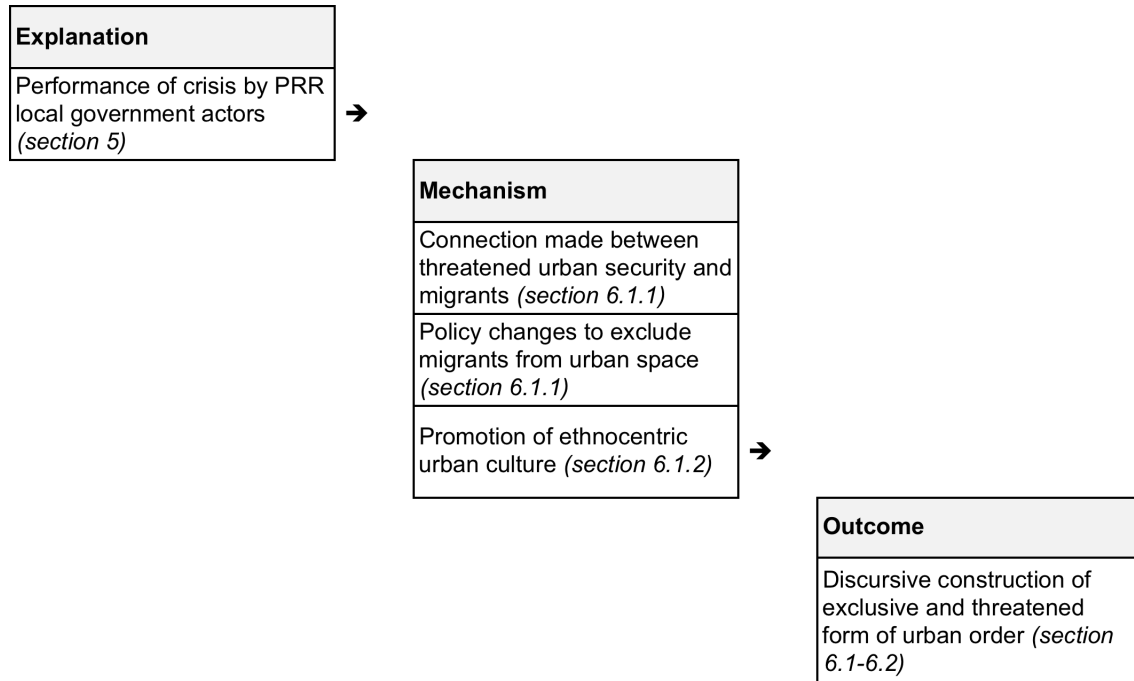
Secondly, crisis politics does not necessitate the perpetuation of crisis (5.1.6), rather political actors may seek to end a crisis and accrue political benefits in doing so. The continued success of PRR parties, on the other hand, is dependent on maintaining the sense of crisis which necessitated their rise to power in the first place. Having positioned insecurity as the central issue facing the city, and their governing approach as the best way of combatting it, its reinforcement at the top of the agenda is logical. As demonstrated, the PRR mayors’ responses to reports of a decrease in levels of crime were a reiteration of the necessity of their strategy, in particular the exclusion of the

threatening group.

6. The Construction of Urban (Dis)order

Crises are representations, and hence ‘constructions’ of failure. [...] Such perceived and identified failures thus form the basis for contested and competing constructions and mediations of crisis which attempt to find and construct resonance with individuals’ and groups’ experiences of the symptoms of failure. (Hay, 1995, p. 68).

Implicit in the discursive construction of a crisis is an absent or departed condition of normality, to which the crisis is a decision point from which a new direction can be taken. PRR local government actors in Wels and Padua, through their performances of a local crisis, are producing a new discursive construction of what urban normality means. When considering their ideological background and the motivations (stated and otherwise), one can anticipate the exclusionary character of this newly created form of public order. This section will make explicit its particular character and, in addition, explore the causal logic of this process; moving beyond description of the performances deployed (as done in section five), to also explore the outcomes produced, and how. The process-tracing technique is here used to link the ‘populist performance of crisis’ demonstrated in the two cases, to the outcome of a particular form of public order being discursively created (see Figure 27). Based on the theoretical argument outlined in section 2, and with the empirical support from section 5 connecting PRR executive action with the performance of crises founded on an ethnocentric, exclusionary logic, we now seek to find evidence of the activities associated with this process and their outcomes.

Figure 27: Outline of process being traced and causal mechanism under investigation.

Source: author's own

In addition to the tracing of a causal process *within* these cases, a comparison will be made between them (in section 6.2). While the contextual conditions described above brought a general convergence, in terms of the rising salience of urban security and the performative styles of the PRR-led local governments, the contextual differences described below will be shown to produce divergence in terms of the resulting particular discursive construction of public order. The varying degrees of autonomy held by the local governments are made explicit in the analysis, in order provide nuanced distinctions in the causal processes and thence, crucially, the outcomes.

6.1 The forms of public (dis)order under discursive construction

The crisis created in the performances of these PRR local governments has been one of a threatened state of public order, primarily negatively defined through presentation of a

certain sense of public *disorder*, the claimed remedy for which is the removal of the presence of the social group conceived as responsible for the threat. The process by which the normative image of urban order is constructed by the PRR-led local governments, with resulting political relations, is here analysed in two parts. Firstly, via the negatively defined public disorder of migrant threat, and secondly, through the positively defined ethnocentric public order constructed in opposition.

6.1.1 Disorder: connecting migrants with urban threat

The first mechanism by which the performance of crisis by PRR parties in Wels and Padua have constructed an idea of urban order is through new security measures being justified by the threat to safety and quality of life in public space made by migrant groups in general. A selection of the policies issued by the PRR-led local governments in Wels and Padua are outlined in Table 3 below, with reference to the categorisation of exclusionary policy forms of Ambrosini (2013). Some of these measures, for instance the increase in CCTV surveillance in Wels, are more typical of revanchist urban strategies (Smith, 1996), seeking to protect particular urban standards by excluding marginal groups and activities in a general sense. However, nearly all of the new security measures propose the exclusion of individuals based on ethnic or national characteristics, with migrant groups being conceived as threatening collectively for the crimes of individuals.

Following news of sexual assaults by migrants at swimming pools in other parts of Austria in summer 2016, given substantial local press attention in Wels, a curfew was imposed on an asylum centre housing young men (WI, Sep. 2016). The Ebola outbreak in West Africa was used as a pretext for a measure to prohibit residence in the city for non-Italian citizens without a medical certificate in order to live in the city, without

Italian citizenship (Ord. 42, 2014) . Such a general ethnicised rhetorical connection is also shown in reporting on the outcomes of policies; for instance, Padua Mayor Bitonci celebrated the implementation of hygiene checks on municipal housing in Padua (Ord. 17 , 2015) with reference not only to the criminal elements that were removed – drug dealing, prostitution and illegal immigration – but also the specific foreign nationalities identified to have been breaking the law in the process (PiC, Sep. 2016).

Figure 28: Exclusionary nature of PRR-led local government policies in Wels and Padua.

	Wels	Padua
Security exclusion	• Expansion of CCTV surveillance in city centre (WG, Nov. 2016) • Curfew imposed on asylum centre (WI, Sep. 2016)	• Ban on arrival of tents and caravans (Ord. 30, 2015). • Ban on public prostitution (Ord. 5, 2015).
Civil exclusion	• Resistance to federal government plan for new asylum centre in Wels (WG, Jan. 2016)	• Prohibition of residence of migrants without medical certificate (Ord. 42, 2014). • Hygiene checks on municipal housing (Ord. 17, 2015).
Social exclusion	• Proposed restriction of welfare benefits to Austrian nationals (Rohrhofer, 2015).	• Prioritisation of municipal housing for Italian nationals (PiC, Sep. 2016)
Cultural exclusion	• Proposed ban on Islamic headscarf for public employees (Herzog, 2017).	• Proposed prohibition of kebab shops in city centre (Il Mattino di Padova, 2016)
Economic exclusion	N/A	• Restriction on commercial opening times in certain areas deemed insecure (Ord. 43, 2015; Ord. 36, 2016).

Sources: as stated.

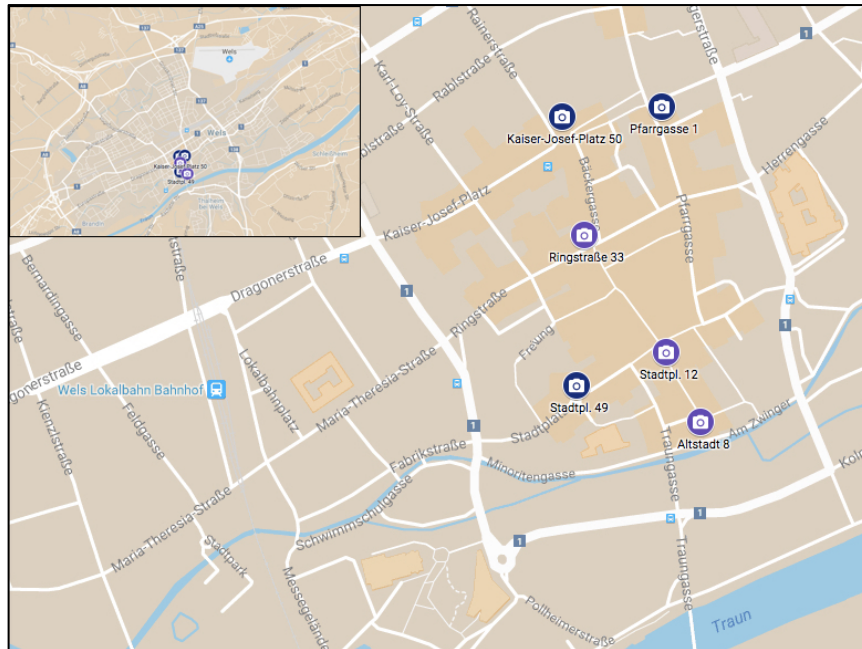
Public order is then shown to be dependent upon security policies pursuing the exclusion of the threatening social group, with measures grouped along a sliding scale of severity: from obstruction, to displacement, and ultimately, removal. Firstly, life has

been made more difficult for individuals within the defined ‘other’ groups, through obstructive measures that, for instance, restrict cultural expression, such as the proposed ban on the Islamic headscarf in Wels (Herzog, 2017). Another hindrance was imposed through restrictions of commercial operations in an area close to Padua train station, where the concentration of migrants is particularly high at 27.1% of the entire population (Comune di Padova, 2012)¹⁴, with the stated aim of ‘preventing and combating urban decay, and protecting the urban security and public safety’ (Ord. 12, 2015; see Figure 30). Secondly, measures seek to displace a threatening physical presence from particular parts of the city. The first major project of the FPÖ in government was an expansion of CCTV surveillance within the city centre (see Figure 29). Opposition from other councillors to the proposal came not only due to the cost (€160,000 amidst widespread budget cuts), but its ineffectiveness in the stated objective of actually combating crime. As argued by opposition councillor Reindl-Schwaighofer (SPÖ), this *Sicherheitsaktionismus* (‘security activism’), merely results in so-called *Junkie-Jogging*: the displacement of undesirable activities to other streets not deemed essential for the protection of video surveillance (WG, Nov. 2016). Similarly, the measures in Padua to limit certain commercial operations and the consumption of alcohol focused on displacing the activities from the vicinity of the main train station and other central areas. These areas are notable for being both central and therefore sites of investment and symbolic importance, while also those highlighted as gathering points for migrants (Cancellieri and Ostanel, 2015). The idea of the security measures only managing to displace, rather than solve outright, criminal activity is one acknowledged by Wels Mayor Rabl, and serves as a justification for further security changes to combat

¹⁴ This percentage refers to the immigrant population within the territorial unit numbers 5.2 (‘Stazione’) and 25.1 (‘Arcella’).

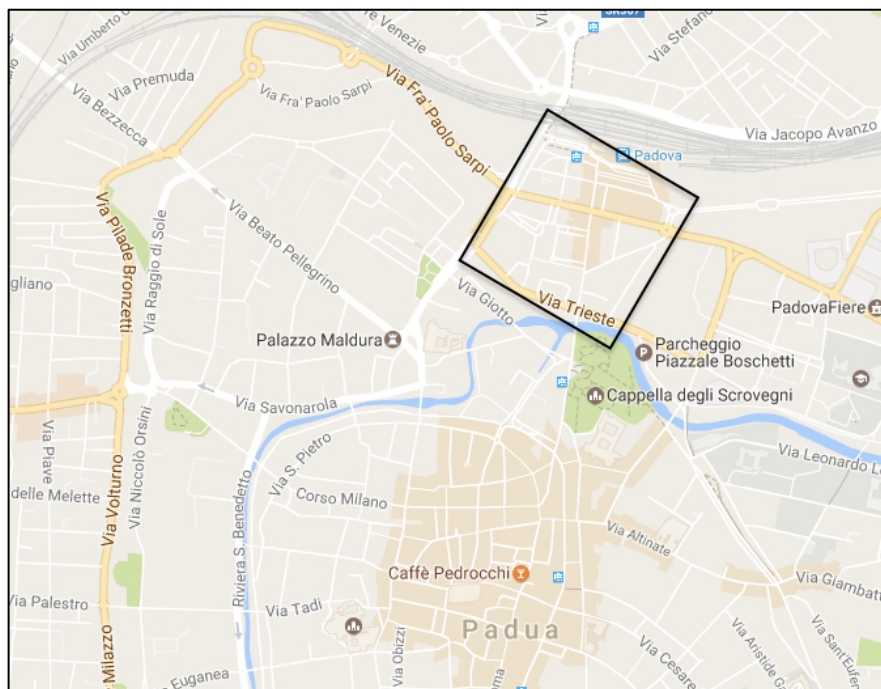
its new manifestations (WelsInt4, 2017). The logic of continuing to propagate crisis , as outlined in section 5 above, is clearly evident in such a tactic of crisis ‘resolution’.

Figure 29: Location of CCTV surveillance introduced by FPÖ-led government in Wels.



Source: WI, Nov. 2015. Map: author's own.

Figure 30: Location of restrictions on commercial activity introduced by Lega Nord-led government in Padua.



Source: Ord. 12, 2015. Map: author's own.

The most severe remedy to the crisis of public order is the complete removal of the ‘other’ from the city, to entirely eliminate the threat brought by their physical presence within the city boundaries. The measures implemented in Padua are distinctively forceful compared to Wels, in their capacity to carry out such a level of exclusion as opposed to mere displacement of the activities to other locations (for example: Ord. 42, 2014; Ord. 17, 2015). Austrian local governments lack the legal competences to place such localised restrictions on migrant entry, as those measures in Padua to ban the anti-Roma measure banning the arrival of tents and caravans (Ord. 30, 2015), and prohibit residence of migrants without a medical certificate (Ord. 42, 2014). The efforts to prevent further settlement of migrants within the city, as documented in four of the 11 security-related resolutions from the Wels council here examined during the period October 2015- January 2017, show a similar desire to (pre-emptively) remove a security threat to the city, defined by the status of migrant. The question of autonomy, as a crucial moderating factor on the implementation of PRR aims and rhetoric into policy action in the two contexts here under analysis, and thence the particular senses of urban order being constructed, is analysed in section 6.2.

6.1.2 Ethnocentric urban order

Policies of exclusion aim to reassure the indigenous citizens, the only holders of voting rights, about the priority of their status compared to that of outsiders, and to communicate that they are actively defended from the ‘invasion’ of urban space, by which they feel threatened. At the same time, by identifying certain groups, urban areas or behaviours as dangerous, local governments encourage a demand for protection by citizen voters and represent themselves as guardians of safety, dignity and social order.
(Ambrosini, 2013: 143)

As a consequence of the creation of a more clearly defined sense of urban disorder

through an overwhelmingly negative conception of an order under threat, a distinct local identity, being based on differentiation from this ‘other’, is being emphasised. The presentation by PRR local governments of public order as threatened by the foreign and migrant population is consistent with PRR ideology in its execution of nativist division. Migration and security are, after all, two of the ‘golden issues’ of the PRR (Mudde, 2010), and sit at the nexus of their key ideological tenets of authoritarianism, populism and nativism (Mudde, 2007). This latter element – nativism – is particularly crucial as a framing through which to better understand the new sense of urban order being created.

The exclusionary measures of PRR actors described above raise the level of threat perceived from the groups so defined, and represent themselves as ‘guardians of safety, dignity and social order’ (Ambrosini, 2013: 143). In addition they promote a logic of ethnocentric favouritism, rather than merely xenophobic exclusion, and thus further define ‘the people’ and maximise political rewards from their electoral base. The exclusionary measures are combined with actively ethnocentric policies; for example, a measure obstructing public housing for non-Italians was labelled as the ‘Paduans First’ policy, and resulted in 92% of public housing going to Italian citizens between March and September 2016, in comparison to 67% between 2010 and 2012 (PiC, Sep. 2016). Meanwhile, upon gaining office in Wels, Mayor Rabl announced his intention to restrict a number of welfare benefits to Austrian nationals, although, due to Austrian local government lacking the necessary legal power, the measures have not been implemented (Rohrhofer, 2015).

Cultural policy is a particularly important method through which contemporary urban governments attempt to form collective identities for their cities. The economic motivations of cultural regeneration have been the focus of urban scholars and governments, following the much critiqued (but highly influential) arguments of Florida

(2005), which argued for the importance of attracting a new ‘creative class’ and consequential global investment for post-industrial cities. However, these PRR governments also show the use of urban culture focusing on its fundamental cultural dimension, one ethnocentrically defined, and how the process of heightening and acting upon security concerns forms part of this process.

In Wels, raising the profile of the annual traditional cultural festival ‘Volksfest’, and emphasising its traditional elements, has been publicised as an aim of the Mayor, stating in the council newsletter: ‘The Volksfest is part of the *Welser* identity. We want to return the festival to tradition’ (WI, Feb. 2017). The failure of a prominent previous attempt of cultural change, the Welios Science Centre, to evoke the so-called Bilbao effect of cultural regeneration (Schmidt-Lauber and Wolfmayr, 2016: 201), also contributed to a wider reorientation towards a more nostalgic vision of the city.

Following an incident of a migrant accused of assaulting a visitor to the 2016 festival, the festival was continued with highly publicised added security, showing the use of culture to support the image of a threatened urban order (WI, Sep. 2016; WG, Nov. 2016). A threatened heritage is also presented by Padua Mayor Bitonci, for example in his opposition to public drinking. The damage is couched in populist terms, homogenising a threatened citizenry: ‘[such gatherings] fall back on the community and take from Padovan pockets [...] we want respect for Padua, for those who work in the city and pay taxes [...] we are on the side of the citizens, of those who work and appreciate a clean city’ (PiC, May 2015). The specific urban space referred to by Bitonci - to be cleaned after the neglect of preceding governments and appreciated by the local citizens - is the historic part of Padua: including the city walls (PiC, Dec. 2015) and the public square, Prato della Fale, currently patrolled by armed forces (PiC, May 2015). Such a recourse to nostalgia and retribalisation has been characterised as a

‘post-modern response to fear’ (Ellin, 2001), as opposed to the scientific efforts towards progression characteristic of earlier modernism. The combination of nostalgia and fear is exemplified in the cultural festival introduced by Padua Mayor Bitonci - ‘Babel’ - the first edition of which offered both discussions on the rediscovery of the historic Venetian dialect and ‘following [the January 2016 terror attacks in] Nice, the most difficult issues of fundamentalism, of war, of fear [...] the big question of Muslim women and basic civil rights’ (PiC, Feb. 2016, Oct. 2016).

The overall process by which a new urban order is formed through the populist performance of crisis demonstrated in both cases combines a closely linked process of depicting disorder and the potential for their construction of order. The nature of this new form of urban order not only, of course, contrasts with the disorder, and functions to exclude those social groups held responsible, but actually depends upon a continuing sense of disorder in its discursive construction. The new cultural festivals of Padua and Wells are not only traditional, they are also threatened. The mechanism followed by the PRR-led local governments to create this new sense of urban order - defining the threat, excluding the threat, and emphasising a new, threatened, exclusive order – has significant variations in the two contexts though, resulting in varying discursive constructions of public order.

6.2 Contrasting contexts: local government autonomy as a factor moderating the new construction of public order

The concept of autonomy provides contextual variables that function to shape different workings of the mechanism between the cause (of the PRR-led local government performing a local crisis) and the effect (of the discursive creation of a new urban order). An analysis of the local government systems of Austria and Italy shows a

different degree of autonomy offered to the local government level in Austria and Italy, crucial in moderating how the crisis performed by them is converted and formalised into policy changes.

Both Austrian and Italian local government have a relatively, and similarly, high level of autonomy, according to the Local Autonomy Index (Ladner et al., 2015). As of 2014, they are placed closely together, with scores of 25.17 and 25.5 respectively, and ranked thirteenth and eleventh of the 39 European countries measured. Their similarity is a new phenomenon, achieved after a dramatic increase in Italian local government autonomy between 1990 and 2014, due above all to increases in institutional depth, financial self-reliance and freedom from administrative supervision. The most significant change was the reform introducing directly elected mayors in 1993, bringing Italy in line with Austria in having a ‘strong mayor’ form of local government, according to the typology of Mouritzen and Svava (2002: 55).

Despite the Local Autonomy Index placing Austria and Italy closely together, there are in fact critical differences in the freedom of action granted to local governments to enact security policy in the two countries. Following Hudson (1993), the degree of autonomy can be considered in two dimensions: vertically, in relation to other levels of government, and horizontally, in relation to local political and socio-economic forces. In the vertical sense, a comparison of the formal policy-making powers available to local governments within the legal framework shows an important difference between Italy and Austria. As Minister of the Interior in 2008 (now President of the Veneto region), Lega Nord representative Roberto Maroni gave more law-making powers to local government, in particular through the introduction of mayor issued emergency ordinances in the 2008 Security Decree No. 92 (converted into law No. 125). Crucially, what constituted a threat to security, and therefore grounds for legal intervention, was

left open to interpretation, enabling its extension to a broader protection of urban standards of behaviour and place quality. The opportunity was enthusiastically taken up by municipalities in northern Italy, with 788 such ordinances issued between 2008-09 (Ambrosini, 2013). It is these emergency ordinances that have been analysed as Padua policy documents in this report.

Austrian municipalities are not offered such powers of legal intervention however, and as a result the Wels executive resorts to resolutions with symbolic purpose, often directed upwards towards the national and regional governments (see the quote below of a Wels ÖVP councillor). It is these resolutions from council meetings that have been analysed as the Wels policy documents in this report.

“I and our group are aware that we do not decide this in the town council. But it is a crucial signal when this body clearly expresses its freedom” (WG, Feb. 2016).

There is a noted tendency for populist actors to denigrate existing political institutions and processes, particularly those of opposition politics and checks and balances. The rhetorical stress surrounding the impending crisis brought by migrant settlement in Wels has been placed on the inability of the local government to practically do anything due to the powers held by the central government to act in this way, as in many others, against their preferences.

Another significant limitation on the (vertical) autonomy of contemporary local governments is their fiscal capacity, and the pressure to continually reduce levels of public spending. Due to globalisation, there has been a relative shift of accountability to creditors away from voters, leaving reduced room to manoeuvre in policy-making (particularly, but not only, on economic issues), due to pressures of maintaining competitiveness and the need to attract more freely moving investment capital (Hellwig,

2014). The orthodox consensus for austerity politics after the financial crash of 2008 cemented this, and provided the rhetorical foundations to justify government inaction and cutbacks. An additional outcome is an incentivising of symbolic political action. Furthermore, the shift in accountability from voters to creditors reduces the degree of trust felt for political actors, and therefore symbolic action which also exploits this mistrust is doubly incentivised.

Horizontally, when autonomy is considered in relation to local political and social forces, a major difference stems from the resilience and supportiveness of the coalitions formed by the two PRR parties in government. The Padua government of Mayor Bitonci collapsed in October 2016 due to coalition discord, precipitated by the departure of the independent councillor for security, Maurizio Saia, caused by struggles over responsibility for security between him, Mayor Bitonci and the Police Commander Antonio Paolocci (Today, 2017). The coalition in Wels, between the FPÖ and the ÖVP, has been far more stable, with the responsibility divided in a way which leaves parties in control of their favoured policy areas – including security by the FPÖ – with necessary voting support from each other.

In summary, Italian municipalities have a higher degree of legal autonomy to target urban security in policy than Austrian ones, and therefore the security actions of the PRR-led local government in Padua focused on constructing an urban order specifically targeted at the group desired to be excluded. However, the particular situation in Padua reveals how this autonomy can be undermined by the fragility of an unstable coalition and contested departmental responsibilities, in contrast to the stability enjoyed by the Wels PRR-led local government. Diverging from the Padua case, the activation of a crisis of urban security in Wels has produced, to a greater degree, rhetorical performances, symbolic actions, often focusing on political opponents and elites rather

than the population group depicted as the security threat themselves.

6.3 A re-politicised city: discussion and theoretical development

The organisation of cities as collective actors (to face increasingly complex challenges) is a political process [...] Legitimacy is no longer acquired just by getting elected, but partly also through public policy and through performance [...]making] a form of return to the political.
(Galès, 2002: 239)

Populism indicates another reason [why the neoliberal project cannot fully succeed]: this economisation of public life creates a vacuum and a longing for something other than technocracy and efficiency. We need to avoid romanticising politics, and recognise that this longing can manifest itself in some ugly ways. In that respect, we need also to recognise some of the value in the neoliberal position: politics can and does authorise violence.
(Davies, 2017)

This section of the study has demonstrated how the varying degree of autonomy in different national contexts modifies the process of the performance of crisis and its outcomes. As a result, a theoretical adaptation is proposed, which provides a framework for further investigation into this theorised populist characteristic, specifically in the act of governing at the local government level, drawing from the insights gained from this empirical analysis.

The evidence from Wels and Padua is that the process of the populist performance of *urban* crisis – a newly adapted theoretical model to be proposed in this section – is an inherently political one. The crisis constructed by PRR actors in these European cities is one symptomatic of a fundamental crisis of the state, unable to manage the societal consequences of globalisation being realised in urban space, most particularly in terms of its security. This undoubtedly reactivates the city as a political space, not least in its opposition to central government. The prioritised actions of the PRR-led local

governments stand aside from neoliberal logics of urban governance, following the definition of neoliberalism as the promotion of market-oriented logics by the state, penetrating into an ever-larger range of economic and social domains (including the value systems and behaviour of individual citizens). The new form of policy and urban regime is motivated by a logic of establishing an order of a cultural, rather than economic form, notwithstanding the economic causes for its increased relevance and popularity. The contradictions and tensions of the present regime of accumulation – those economic, but also cultural and even existential – are met with decidedly non-economic strategies. Although policy change requires autonomy, politicisation does not necessarily. Its relative absence in Wels is shown to produce a different route taken pursuing a similarly politically contentious goal.

The methods of performing and implementing a crisis of urban order rely upon the attainment of particular form of legitimacy from the populace and from implementation partners. Rather than drawing upon financial resources or incentives, the governments require a degree of consensus from the population to attain issue salience and election to office, and autonomy to direct the execution of their policy programme. In combination, these factors have been analysed in this study to judge the varying degree of legitimacy granted to the PRR-led local governments, and the effect on their practice in power. Legitimacy is a profoundly important topic in contemporary European politics, in a context of the so-called ‘crisis in representative democracy’ evident in low election turnouts and withdrawal of support from political institutions (Tormey, 2014).

Furthermore, local autonomy, and the expression of collective preferences in local government policy, is an essential tool for democracy. As the European Charter of Local Self-Government states: ‘Local self-government denotes the right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial

share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population' (Council of Europe, 1985: art.3: quoted in Ladner et al., 2016: 325). It is in this context, that the PRR-led local governments pursue political hegemony, in terms of the theory of Laclau and Mouffe (1985), in their linking together of contingent social demands into political projects pursuing social change. The project may, in its electoral support, be justified by the wishes of some citizens responding to a perceived crisis, yet remains harmful to targeted individual rights and liberal democratic norms. Mudde has for this reason suggested PRR parties do not necessarily act in anti-democratic ways, still observant of due procedure and fulfilling a representative function, but rather contravene established *liberal*-democratic norms, such as the rights of minorities (Mudde, 2010: 1168). Clearly, such changes are a profoundly political phenomenon, and contradict claims of a general post-political condition (Swyngedouw, 2007).

In applying Moffitt's theory of the 'populist performance of crisis' to the sphere of urban government, the evidence suggests some adjustments in order to propose a theoretical adaptation: the *populist radical right performance of urban crisis*. The adapted theory proposes that PRR parties (as with populist parties in general, following the prior theory) will impose a sense of crisis through their performance. When in leadership of local government, their actions – evident in security policy and surrounding rhetoric – function towards creating a new discursive construction of the urban order, defined as an (ethnocentrically) exclusive and threatened condition. The nativist aim specified in this new proposed theory is a departure from the more open possibilities of crisis described in the prior theory. The legitimacy held by the PRR within the local context is here argued to be an important moderating factor, to be considered in two mechanisms within the process of their attainment and exercise of power. The degree of popular consensus with the aims of the PRR is here proposed to

affect the salience of the issue of urban security, and the capacity for them to attain the semblance of objectivity in their discourse on the subject. The degree of autonomy is proposed to affect both the degree of their policy change aimed specifically towards the rhetorical target group or, in its relative absence, anti-elite rhetorical posturing directed at other government levels. The plausibility of the causal links demonstrated in this section of the study, including the variations proposed due to the additional layer of comparison, would require further, more intensive research, to unpack the mechanism in more detail, and thereby enable stronger causal inferences.

7. Conclusion

This analysis of the political and policy actions of the PRR-led local governments of Wels and Padua has demonstrated the relevance of the theory of a populist performance of crisis in their exercise of executive power at the sub-national level. The findings suggest a number of ways with which to adapt the existing theoretical framework connecting populism with crisis when applied to the local government level.

Regarding the first hypothesis of the salience of urban security, disruptive societal transformations are evident in both the Austrian and Italian cases, most significantly in terms of demographic changes due to migration. The political opportunity presented to the PRR parties by these changes, and the attainment of popular consensus, follow from local actions, of a contrasting nature in the two cases, and wider narratives of crisis beyond the local situation. Second, consistent with Moffitt's theory (2015), the PRR discourse of crisis is not simply reacting to one already existing, but acting to create the sense of one locally. Moreover, relating to the third hypothesis, the evidence of the policies and rhetoric around urban security show the nativist ideology of the PRR focusing the responsibility for the crisis on an ethnicised 'other' group. In the process, a new discursive construction of a threatened, ethnocentric urban order is being discursively constructed, although, in relation to the fourth hypothesis, with important variations based on the degree of autonomy held by the urban scale of government within the particular context. To assist with future investigations of how such performances are enacted in different local contexts, with variations in legitimacy derived from popular consensus and governing autonomy, an adapted theoretical framing of a '*populist radical right* performance of *urban* crisis' has thus been outlined.

Further research pursuing the idea of a PRR performance of urban crisis, should look

beyond actions directly related to security, to investigate how the crisis has roots, and effects, in their governance more broadly¹⁵. The field of urban governance should open our eyes to particularly urban areas of focus, and how the principles and instruments of supposedly apolitical, consensual New Public Management, for example, interact with the decidedly political, non-economic aims of PRR parties in leadership. In so doing, the wider implications for local (liberal) democracy may be further illuminated, some having already been suggested for the rights of migrants living within these cities.

Furthermore, while the scope of this study has been limited to the PRR actors themselves, future studies should consider the many other perspectives on the subject - particularly the response of local radical right sub-cultures, opposition social movements and parties, and the general public. Questions also remain about the distinctiveness of the approach of PRR actors in these contexts, in the form and intensity of the crisis performed, the process and its outcomes. Therefore, future comparative studies of the form and outcomes of crises performed by local governments of other party backgrounds are welcomed. Perhaps the implications of the study are wider and more generally applicable, beyond the confines of the PRR party family.

We must also ask about the actual implementation of policies in the cities under analysis, and therefore investigate more deeply the effects of their governance.

Measures here identified as powerful in the manner of exclusion for which they legislate, may, at least in Italy according to expert academic opinion (PaduaInt5, 2017), be weakly implemented. In following these directions, the specifically urban setting of their performances could be more fully explored, both in terms of governing processes

¹⁵ Another reason to look beyond security is the danger of a 'fear of crime feedback loop' (Lee, 2001), in which the disproportionate fear of crime to actual levels of crime may be encouraged by the intense focus upon it in the research field of criminology and elsewhere.

and outcomes.

The investigation has shown wider lessons to be learnt from, and possible implications of, PRR leadership of local governments. As conceptualised by Habermas (1975), a crisis can be understood as an event challenging the existing order, creating the potential for new ways of conceiving society. The performances of PRR-led local governments show their attempt to create a new conception of urban order through the creation of local crises of security, conceptually supported by a weakening of the political, economic and social status quo.

Features of contemporary European cities characterised by rising subjective insecurity can be used strategically by political actors to discursively frame policy in a manner that, while contributing to nativist aims, appear increasingly mainstream. The continuous emphasis on the threat to public order serves to intensify the uncertainty felt by 'the people' within their urban environment. As shown by Terror (or Uncertainty) Management Theory, the effect of reminding people of their sources of existential uncertainty has benefit for political actors stressing the role of security (Cohen et al., 2005), and produces more aggressive feelings towards out-group members (McGregor et al., 1998). The outsider status of the foreign and migrant populations is increasingly presented as objectively deserved, based on a persistent linkage with criminality and the wider European migrant crisis. Despite their prior extremist reputation, and marginal position in the urban politics, the PRR parties have constructed political relations through the strategy that enabled a change of fortune, and ultimately leadership of local governments.

The issues of the urban environment have become a significant frame through which national PRR parties can outline and develop their political project. For example, the response of the Lega Nord leader Matteo Salvini to the electoral gains made by his party in the local elections of June 2017 illustrates how the topic of urban insecurity has resonance beyond the urban level (see Figure 31), through the partisan claim on ‘order and cleanliness’, and nativist discursive connections, through the symbolic usage of an item of traditional Italian cuisine, the *biscotti*.

Figure 31: “Come on guys, take back order and cleanliness!”. Tweet of Matteo Salvini, Lega Nord



Source: PiC, Mar. 2016.

We are ready to govern nationally, I want to export this desire for change.
(Salvini, M., (@matteosalvinimi). 26 June 2017, 12:02 PM. Tweet.)

Come on guys, take back order and cleanliness!
(Salvini, M. (@matteosalvinimi). 26 July 2017, 6:57 PM. Tweet.)

Reflecting on the study, the focus on PRR parties and their discourse of urban insecurity has inevitably overlooked the insecurity of migrants themselves, in favour of considering them as a source of insecurity for the urban population as a whole (but, implicitly, for the non-foreign population, as the assumed supporting group of the PRR parties). Studies of the migrant populations’ sense of discrimination and exclusion, and the consequences, would certainly be worthy of future studies of the PRR leadership of local government. More broadly, the findings act as a warning regarding the uncritical use of the idea of a ‘European migrant crisis’, a trope which can be drawn upon by PRR actors in European contexts distant from vulnerability to, or damage from, such a crisis.

To paraphrase Brassett and Clarke (2012) on their analysis of the performance of the sub-prime financial crisis, by highlighting the political dimension of performativity, we raise the question: if these contemporary waves of seemingly objective crises are in fact performative constructions, then how might they be performed differently?

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9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix A: Guide for Semi-Structured Interviews

Introductory Protocol

Thank you for offering your time for the interview today, I'll keep this to an hour, with six main questions – but let me know if you need to go. To facilitate the conversation and note-taking, I would like to record our conversation. For your information, only I will listen to the recording, which I will securely store. Anything I write will be anonymised, and not reference names. Thank you for your agreeing to participate.

Introduction to Research

My thesis focuses on a comparison of local governments in two case studies, seeking to explore populist radical right leadership of local government, and understand how the Austrian and Italian contexts influence the changes resulting from these new parties in executive power. As an [expert/involved actor], I will ask you a number of questions related to my thesis in order to explore some central themes of my study. First, I would like to hear about you.

A. Interviewee Background

1. Please could you introduce yourself.

Probes:

- Please describe your role as [insert role].
- Please describe your connection with [case study city].

B. Autonomy

2. Tell me about the autonomy of the local government in [case study city].

Probes:

- Tell me more about the relationship between the local government and other levels of government, e.g. regional and national.
- Tell me more about the independence of actors within the local government institution, i.e. within the coalition.
- What implications does this level of autonomy and independence have for the implementation of security policy?

C. Consensus

3. Tell me about how much consensus exists within the cultural and historic context of [case study city] with the current local government.

Probes:

- How much consensus does the [PRR party] viewpoint on security have within [case study city]?
- Tell me about the security policies of the previous government in [case study city].
- How much consensus do you think the [PRR party] has more generally in Austria?
- What implications does this level of consensus have for the implementation of security policy?

D. Political Agenda

4. Tell me about the distinctive practice of the current [case study city] local government

Probes:

- What would you say are the main problems in [case study city]?
- What would you say is the political agenda of [PRR party] for [case study city]?
- How much difference is there between the security policy of the [PRR party] from their coalition partners, the opposition parties, and also the previous government?

E. Political Style

5. Tell me about the new political style of the [PRR party] government.

Probes:

- What are the effects of this new political style?

F. Post Interview Comments and/or Questions

9.2 Appendix B: Interview Transcripts

9.2.1 Professor of Urban Governance, Vienna University of Economics and Business

Interviewer: Fred Paxton

Participant: Professor of urban governance, Vienna University of Economics and Business

Date: 23 January 2017

Reference: WelsInt1

Interviewer	I'm making a comparative study of urban governance, specifically urban governments led by the populist radical right. So I'm looking at case studies in Austria and Italy and what effect these different contexts have on the impact a party with a non-mainstream, even extreme, ideological programme, has on the city. So I'm looking at the structure, the governance structure in Austria and Italy; I'm looking at the local culture; and also looking at the actions of the individuals involved.
Participant	So your question is: "does it make a difference if there is a right-wing government in office, speaking in terms of the city's governance in terms of its structure, it's formal features"?
I	[0:00:57.4] Exactly, its formal features and also it's mode, its behaviour as well. So, how policy changes, how rhetoric changes.
P	[0:01:07.4] So that would be content then. So, formal structure and political content. Whether there is something where those...intertwine with each other, right?
I	Yes, so I guess the question has two sides. The one side is, as you say, does it make a difference that they are in power? Do they have an influence, or on the other hand, are they just tamed by being in power, and there's there nothing they can even really do? So that's one side. And the other side is, what is it about the Austrian or Italian context which....
P	[0:01:43.7] Ok, but before we start, I have to admit that I'm not an expert in right-wing governance in city governance, because of two reasons. First, I'm not an expert in that kind of field. And second, speaking in empirical terms, there is no major city in Austria ruled by a right-wing party.
I	[0:02:11.9] So the case study that I'm using is Wels.
P	It's quite small, but everybody's looking at Wels since the FPÖ took over.
I	Maybe we could start just by getting an idea of what you do look at, your particular focus?
P	I'm an expert in public and city governance, in terms of New Public Management (NPM). The main focus of NPM in organisational terms was to disaggregate the monolithic bloc of public administration, and split it up into numerous full, formal organisations, delivering any kind of services to the citizens. So today we're confronted by this landscape of independent organisations, and literature says that the quality of this landscape is that they are fragmented, kind of decoupled, taking advantage of a lot of freedom and autonomy, also in strategic and policy terms, and so the question is: how does control happen in such settings? What about steering? What about political accountability of government? And this is actually...there is a bundle of questions that come hand in hand with this development. These questions I'm addressing in my research.
I	[0:03:57.1] Does a city of Wels's size come into your focus?

P	Actually it's too small. Because the cities, or overall public entities I'm looking at are those that have independent, formally independent organisations in significant number, and I would assume that Wels doesn't have that. But I haven't ever looked at Wels, I have to admit.
I	[0:04:28.2] So you focus is more Vienna, Graz, Linz, Salzburg?
P	And federal government of course. And the provinces' governments.
I	I have a structure of questions that I've been asking people, across a wide range of expertise. Firstly what I'm looking for is the structural or more formal side of Austrian politics, starting with the concept of autonomy in Austrian local government. Could tell me about the levels of autonomy the local government has to act in Austria?
P	[0:06:10.3] The level of autonomy a city government has to act? In terms of urban governance, there is something particular to the local level in Austria, which is set down in the <i>Bundesverfassungsgesetz</i> , the Austrian Constitutional Act, saying that municipalities are free to engage in economic activities. So actually there is a wide range to manoeuvre for municipalities in terms of holding shares in companies, investing, delivering services that others don't but they see as relevant to their citizens. So actually, in terms of economic activities, they enjoy a comparatively high degree of autonomy. So this is relevant for the field of public governance of course, and this is what I'm interested in. So, the municipalities have a lot of freedom in doing their own things, if you will. You're interested in the government's autonomy, right?
I	That's right; in order to get to the point of whether a change in government results in a change of action.
P	[0:07:47.2] Sure. I mean, maybe we have to...I'm a fan of this concept, maybe I'm a proponent of the concept 'Public-Corporate Governance'. It's an English term but a German concept, very interesting. I think there are three levels which you have to look at actually when you try to capture all levels of the public sphere. First is politics itself; what are the ideas, about the social order, about what life in a community looks like, I mean these are <i>the</i> political questions, right? Second is what about the administration? Third is what about the management of independent units? So there are three levels, right. But the interesting question is: the first is political by its nature, but where is politics in the second and the third levels? And of course there are manifestations of particular political ideas in the other levels. First of all, I'm sure that you've recognised that conservative, more liberal approach, and the social democratic approach differ, for example in terms of whether privatisation is a good thing. At first glance, you'd say this is question of efficiency, effectiveness, but not of political belief, or political ideas. But on the other hand, it seems to be highly political to decide to privatise a public enterprise or not. So maybe this is what you're looking for, the manifestations of particular political ideas in the administration and the management, which seem to be much more rational and independent of political ideas.
I	[0:10:22.4] Can you clarify the different between administration and management in this context?
P	By administration I mean the body...in German it would be ' <i>Verwaltung</i> ', which is the administrative body of the legal entity of the city or the municipality. Actually in your terms, it would be government.
I	So in Vienna's case these would be the departments with the acronym and number?
P	Yes, these are <i>Verwaltung</i> . This is the public administration of the City of Vienna. And by management I mean, in the Viennese context for example...how did you get here?
I	By metro.

P	Exactly - public transport. This is a corporatized unit of the city of Vienna. Actually it's a company, a private law based company - <i>Wiener Linien</i> - owned by the City of Vienna, managed by professional managers. So this would be a public sector entity outside the body of administration, the legal body of government.
I	[0:11:32.8] So the power of the third bloc has increased over the past few decades, in Vienna for example?
P	Yes, significantly. In Germany, about half of the amount of money invested by the municipalities is not invested by the government but by legally independent bodies and companies.
I	[0:12:02.9] There are obviously questions about accountability and co-ordination and steering about this more disaggregated set, but do you think these also have an impact on autonomy, in terms of the freedom of action of the elected part of the government? So there's an elected part of the government which has a role to set an agenda and solve defined problems; I'm wondering whether this more disaggregated setting, which is underneath that, whether that offers restrictions or more opportunities for the political actors?
P	[0:12:53.8] Actually the opportunities for discretionary action on the periphery has increased within the last decades. You would have suspected this, I think, well it's true. This is the question: how can the government control its own companies, for example? As another, how do they influence what the management does? Of course there is room for steering and for control, so this is nothing that would depend on what party is in power, this is just a matter of private law, for example. As owner of the company, you're entitled to do this, this, this and this, and you can make use of these instruments to, for example, develop a strategy. You can do that as an owner, together with your management, or you just let them act. This is what we see in a lot of contexts, that the government actually is not intervening with the daily operations of independent units.
I	Or in a longer-term view, for example the expansion of the <i>U-Bahn</i> , this is a management decision?
P	No, this is a city decision, because the city has to pay for it. These investments are too big to be handed over to the management of the public transport utilities. So these are political questions; exactly these are the interesting things. So where is politics outside of politics, that's the question. In the strategy of these companies: in the public governance context, politics is strategy and strategy is politics. It's actually the same concept. And there are also other things where politics may manifest. For example, let's take another frequent example: the share of women in management boards. This is a highly political question, because the government has to decide on "do we want that? In case we do, is there a quota? What is the quota?". So this is also a political question. So if you will, the corporate governance framework is highly political of course.
I	So while there's independence of management up to a certain point, there are moments where it becomes more political, whether that's because more money is needed, or a strategy is put in place, or whether there are specific politicised questions, such as gender quotas?
P	[0:16:13.2111] Sure, but actually independent units, independent agencies, companies, are instruments of the government to perform certain tasks, to deliver certain services, to achieve certain purposes, so they are instruments of the governments. So they are political in their nature.
I	[0:16:40.5111] They're executing...
P	Exactly.
I	Can I also ask how the city government relates to the other levels of Austrian government, the regional and the federal in particular?

P	[0:16:56.1112] This is a question concerning the legal framework. Actually they are widely independent, but there is a federal act that I think regulates how...there is an accounting directive. So they are not entirely free on how their accounting looks like, and how their budgets look like, and so on. But I'm not sure what you're interested in.
I	[0:17:48.4112] It would be interesting to know, for example, if in Austria there was a lot more power held at the regional level in relation to the city level. [Interruption] It would be interesting for me to know if in Austria, compared to Italy for example, the regional government holds a lot more back from the city government, or, in the same way that we've talked about the different parts at the city level...
P	[0:18:24.4112] So you mean, whether the province (state) governor can overrule the city mayor in certain cases?
I	Yes, or even if there are significant areas that aren't devolved down to the city level.
P	[0:18:41.4112] Ok, this sounds to me like questions addressing the legal framework. You have to know in Austria this is extremely complex, they are negotiating tasks to be performed by the regions, but financed by the federal government, actually executed by the cities, by the municipal level, and there is a meso-level even, between the regions and the cities, the municipalities; this is highly complex. I'm sure there is some good literature which gives you much more better insight than I can.
I	[0:19:20.4112] I was going to ask about coalition collaboration, and the experience in Austria when we have different parties, for example the FPÖ working with either the ÖVP or the SPÖ, and sharing power within coalitions, and how that has been a constraint on particular parties carrying out their programme, or not?
P	I think this depends on...My problem is that I'm not so familiar with politics at the small municipal level. In Vienna it's different, because you really have a coalition, since 2010.
I	Between the SPÖ and the Greens?
P	Yes. And in smaller municipalities, I actually don't know how this works out. But I assume it's rather similar. Do you know if there are any coalitions with the FPÖ in Austria?
I	Yes, in Wels for instance, it's a coalition with the ÖVP.
P	[0:21:10.5112] OK, so at the municipal level you have to know this is something that's more on a personal basis. There have been struggles within the SPÖ for instance, that they have come to the decision that at no level should there be a coalition with the FPÖ. And we know in the province of Burgenland, there is a coalition, and some municipal levels there are also coalitions with the FPÖ. So this is very different from the federal level. I would say at the municipal level is even very different from the provincial level. Coalitions are much more easy to do, because they are not so much of a big thing. They just say "OK, we work together", but in Vienna, you can't even think of that. So this depends on the size of the municipality, or the city.
I	[0:22:19.6112] And I suppose it's not such a constraint in Vienna for either party, because the actors are quite closely aligned with their agenda for the city?
P	Sure. More or less. Enough, I would say.
I	Moving on now to the cultural context, and how much legitimacy there is for the radical right wing viewpoint of that party, and how that affects their ability to implement change.
P	[0:23:08.3112] Just one sentence. The question is how to implement change, this is what you're interested in. Maybe you should have a look at the top executives in the city, because the top executives in the city, representing the top of the administration, being public officials, not politicians. They're key players in doing that. And I suppose, in Wels, the new city

	government installed a new chief executive, the ' <i>Magistratsdirektor</i> '.
I	Is such a change usual, when a new political party, a new administration comes in?
P	Yes, if you want to implement change, you have to, kind of, manage the bridge between politics and administration, via heads. So the top executives, they are key in...I would assume, for a change like you are interested in.
I	[0:24:15.2113] So therefore, you'd recommend looking at them and their own ideology, their own capacity, their ability, become very important.
P	Sure. It's the alignment of the top executives with the political agenda.
I	Is there anything you'd like to add on the issue of legitimacy and consensus in the local context of city government; the idea of the people, the ideas being shared amongst...
P	[0:25:05.3113] I mean, you can't change all the people in the city administration, right? So... Actually I was kind of curious, and wondering, what do you have in mind in your research, what do you want to find out, and what's the key question you would ask? How to organise political change, to move into a certain direction?
I	I think it's a question...I think it's what we should expect in terms of an impact being made on the city. It's a question of the actual freedom of action for local government. And we're living in an era where it seems such parties are increasingly getting into these positions of power, should we expect to see change, really? In which direction?
P	[0:26:12.3113] So do you know something about...Is it essential to the agenda of a right-wing party to have good city infrastructure? Is this a political question? No idea. I think that it's so hard to imagine what would be different. Because what is related to a right-wing programme? Not infrastructure, I would assume. What else...Investments in innovation and technology. Is this something dependent on politics. I would say in Vienna for instance, infrastructure has also been a highly politicised question, because the idea of a providing city, also in social democratic terms, is highly interlinked with the question of what infrastructure the city provides. Public transport, hospitals, childcare, stuff like that. So there can be a political agenda, a coherent political agenda, to which such policy issues are linked, but it's hard to imagine in the case of the right-wing party what actually the agenda is that covers all these aspects in one way or the other. So I don't have a clear picture of what a right-wing government would do in terms of positioning the city in the international contest for new companies to move to Wels, for example. Open a manufacturing site, or whatever.
I	[0:28:07.7113] So from an economic point of view, it's hard to see what change would come.
P	[0:28:10.8113] What is right-wing city economics? What is an economic city strategy with a right-wing handwriting? I don't know. But I can well imagine, they would not like too many women in the top administration, stuff like that. Probably that's a cliché, but that just comes to my mind.
I	[0:28:45.8113] But your main point here is that it's difficult to see that it would even be part of their manifesto for change.
P	I don't know; maybe that's a task for you to perform, to find out what is the right-wing party handwriting in terms of city governance. I mean, is this your real overall enterprise?
I	[0:29:14.2113] What we actually tend to find is that the difference introduced by these city governments is predominantly symbolic.
P	Of course, this is the easiest way.
I	And it's absolutely not anything to do with infrastructural changes, or growth programmes, these kinds of things.

P	[0:29:41.7114] Yes, in Upper Austria, they said in schoolyards students have to speak German.
I	Exactly, these kinds of things.
P	This is not relevant for the city governance. The interesting question would be, where do you see, where does the ideology manifest in structural elements of the city. That would be the question from my perspective.
I	[0:30:19.9114] And perhaps it doesn't so much. But in Wels, for instance, we have a situation where they are leading and they've changed the head of administration. And it's a big body, I mean it's not a huge city, but we have quite a significant body of an administration that's gone in a different ideological direction.
P	[0:30:37.4114] So probably they aren't too interested to do too much in terms of integrating migrants, for example. This would probably be something easily connected with right-wing politics. So other cities say this is a core element of the projects we want to implement, and we want to be leading the change, or leading the way into the future, like in Vienna for example. So this is a highly political element, how integration and the coping with the challenge of migration looks like. Probably this is something that you could see in the city politics of a right-wing dominated city parliament. I don't know, in the city governance, probably yes. Because maybe in a right-wing government...I don't have any clue, it's just speculation. Maybe you see it in the formal structure of Vienna, "there is an entity managing integration, having two houses where people can live", whatever.
I	[0:32:07.1114] So I think that is something that I'm trying to look into, that it's both structural change, how the departments are organised...
P	I beg your pardon, but what is structural change?
I	The structure of the administration. As opposed to policy change, for instance. So the content. And there is content - the policy change - being attempted, symbolic on one hand, as well as redistribution of resources, and making ethnic, nationalist requirements for certain welfare benefits and so on.
P	[0:32:42.6114] But this is not within the discretion of the city government.
I	No, but it's rhetoric.
P	Sure, and that's why it has to be what you call 'symbolic', or ceremonial, or whatever.
I	[0:32:51.5114] The other side is then structural, maybe there's a better term, but the kind of reorganisation of government departments, where the budgets go, whether there are things being combined, or lost altogether, and what's being 'beefed up'.
P	Exactly. How does a government change affect the overall structures of the city. I mean there are articles researching how a left-wing or right-wing government would approach certain policy issues, and how this would manifest, and what effects. I don't have any example in mind, but there are.
I	So looking at particular areas, how their approach differs, from different ideological directions?
P	[0:32:51.5114] For example, I can talk about Vienna, but Vienna's much more famous of course. For example, social housing. This is a manifestation of the politics and the ideology of social democracy. And it's an embedded element of the structure of the City of Vienna. You just have to look at the formal structure of the city and you see "ah, <i>Wiener Wohnen</i> , it's of that size", and you get an idea about the political idea behind. About the kind of decided...the social order that they have in mind, what social peace looks like, and so on. This is a political idea that is manifested in the structures of the city.

I	[0:34:59.3115] The physical structures?
P	Even in the physical, yes. But on a piece of paper you see “this is the <i>Wiener Wohnen</i> , it's a huge entity managing the housing...”.
I	I see, so in the same way that you have <i>Wiener Linien</i> , although that's more ideological.
P	Yes you could argue so. But generally it's not a liberal position as far as I can see, that the city government provides public transport utilities. The city of London just in-sourced the public transport because it didn't work properly, with all these public-private partnerships that they have set up. So maybe the structures that at first glance look rational, effective or ineffective, but not political, are actually manifestations of certain political beliefs. Should the city government provide public transport utilities: yes or no? Should someone else provide them? What about kindergartens, is the city in charge of the kindergartens, or do they just provide the legal framework for some entrepreneur to step in and say “yes, I want to found a new kindergarten and charge €2,000 each month”?
I	[0:36:49.7115] It's a question of redistribution of resources then, and that's when it becomes political. So the smaller the scale you get, the less redistribution that's going on, the less political it is.
P	[0:37:02.8115] Yes, probably. So, of course, your question would be entirely different, if you would...it's just an experiment of thought...What if the FPÖ had won the elections in 2015 in Vienna? Where would you see this power shift in daily life, in how the city approaches you as a citizen. Actually I think that at the end of the day, this is what you are interested in.
I	Yes but there are a number of problems I think with that direction. That is certainly what I'm interested in, to learn the lessons from this kind of laboratory, and what we can learn more widely. As we've been saying, Vienna has a number of greater responsibilities, so it's a different task that the FPÖ would have in Vienna than Wels.
P	So the question is does the political agenda...no, not the agenda...the ideology manifest in the city structures and the tasks performed by the city or not? And does it have any impact on the success of the city performing all these tasks. Maybe when it's Wels or a smaller city, the question is whether it's a clever guy leading this government or is it just an idiot?
I	[0:38:37.8115] Well, I have the structural approach that I'm taking, and the cultural approach with the legitimacy, and then I am trying to look at the individuals that are involved.
P	[0:38:49.8115] Probably a very good approach to the overall issue. It's about people, it's about culture, it's about...what was the first one?
I	Structure, as in the autonomy.
P	Well culture is also structure, but you mean the formal organisational structure?
I	Yes, as opposed to culture in terms of consensus and popular support for ideas. In terms of actors, I'm interested in how distinctive the behaviour and rhetoric is that's used by the radical right when in government?
P	I have no clue.
I	[0:39:33.8115] My next question is about the policy changes, particularly around security, as something that is a real focus of them.
P	What can you do about security at the local level? Set up a <i>Bürgerwache</i> ?[laughs] But even this is not in the legal competences of the municipality.
I	So they're powerless, it's symbolic, for demonstration.

P	[0:40:15.5116] Maybe in terms of symbols, it's "we as citizens, we stand up and do things on our own". So actually it's more about citizen involvement in a very particular way.
I	There was a how do you call it, <i>Bürgerbefragung</i> , <i>Umfrage</i> (referendum or survey), in Wels. In urban governance this idea of participation is obviously very trendy, and also kind of aligns somewhat with the radical right's obsession with direct democracy. So it was interesting in Wels we had this referendum of sorts, that actually only around 5% of the population participated in.
P	[0:41:15.4116] It sounds like Trump, giving the power back to the people, and stuff like that.
I	[0:41:28.2116] Ultimately, my final question is around a wider ideological turn to the right produced by them in government, or a sort of 'taming' of them having taken place, caused by the restrictions or some other way the experience of being in government has changed them. I appreciate your views on urban governance, and urban governance in Austria.
P	Why do you think this is a particularly Austrian perspective?
I	[0:42:18.0116] Well, in terms of it being confirmation that a lot of these things the politics, the administration, the management - this division is an important thing in Austrian governance, although it's a very widespread thing as well.
P	Yes, it has been a global trend, the disaggregation of the monolithic block of the administration, and the integration of the principles of organising in a business style. You will find this elsewhere in the western world.
I	So in Western Europe this is pretty much universal you think?
P	Yes.
I	And so with that in mind, what I'm interested in is that the structures at a certain level are very alike, but how different are they, for instance, between Italy and Austria, and how does this affect issues such as autonomy?
P	[0:43:26.8116] I mean the question of autonomy is a question of the legal framework of the governments, how the country is organised. So this might differ from country to country. But there definitely is an overall trend for city administrations, state administrations, governments elsewhere, that these governments have split off, have split up into numerous more or less independent bodies, organisations, that don't follow the rules of administration, bureaucracy, the management, the way they're organised. So this is rather universal.
I	[0:44:25.4116] But even though it's universal, there are certain moments, where different national variations of this might be crucial, for example: the tradition...it's completely normal that in Wels, the new mayor changed the head of the <i>Magistrat</i> , when he came in, and this has an influence perhaps.
P	Yes, exactly.
I	[0:44:47.1116] And in another country where this wouldn't be acceptable, wouldn't be possible, it would be much harder.
P	Exactly, yes, exactly. This is...well observed.
I	[0:45:01.5116] That's all the questions I had, I don't know if you had any questions or comments?
P	0:46:19.5116 Actually you're researching a big question on a small scale, which is how will populist right wing people in power change our country.

I	Yes. I think what we see is...I don't think Vienna is ever going to go for these ideas, and the same in many big cities due to the political culture being so far off, maybe. But in rural and smaller cities, the ideas are becoming more and more important, if we...and this is where most people live, as a proportion of the country, most people don't live in big cities.
P	Yes, but the share is increasing. On the global level, I think over 50% of people are living in big cities.
I	I don't know if that's big cities; it's urban areas, which would include places like Wels. I think small cities and towns are increasingly important. Does it matter if people in these small areas are supporting these parties?
P	[0:47:33.8117] As far as I can observe, the struggle is: does it make a difference to be a social democrat in a small city, or in Vienna, or in the federal government? In terms of positions you have, opinions you have, programmes you have, because what people need, what they ask for, their lives...are very different depending on where they live. So what does it mean to have a certain ideology, not in a bad sense, depending on the environment you're in. So maybe a right-wing populist in Wels is much closer to his liberal colleague, than an FPÖ <i>Abgeordnete</i> , representative, in Vienna...so they are much closer than the FPÖ and ÖVP representative would be in Wien, for instance... I don't know, just points to think about probably.
I	[0:48:56.8117] It's very context dependent.
P	Yes, probably.

9.2.2 Researcher, Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance

Interviewer: Fred Paxton

Participant: Researcher, Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance

Date: 23 January 2016

Reference: WelsInt2

Interviewer	I'm researching urban governments led by PRR parties currently, in order to understand how different national and local contexts affect how much influence they have on the city. So I'm taking one example in Austria, Wels, and one example in Italy, Padua. And I'm going to focus particularly on the rhetoric and policy around security, as that seems to be a really strong focus of these parties, and a chance where we can see an impact being made. So I've got in touch with you as you seem to be someone with relevant expertise around PRR parties, and when they're in government, and maybe also the Austrian system. So I'm going to ask you a number of questions about the themes that I'm really focusing on, which are: the autonomy and legitimacy that local government has in Austria, and also the rhetoric and policy actions of the FPÖ when in positions of power, and from that the impact they have made while in positions of power. But first it would be helpful to know a bit more about you and what it is that you focus on in your work.
Participant	My name's [redacted]. I did my doctoral dissertation on right-wing student fraternities in Austria and their role in Austrian politics. I studied political science and for almost a year now I've been working at the DÖW, which is an institution founded in the 1960s, basically to document resistance activities and persecution under the Nazi regime, and also <i>Austrofascism</i> , so the four years prior to that. And this is still the core of our agenda, documentation of resistance and persecution, but in the late '70s, the centre started to also deal with current far-right activism. And that's what I'm doing here, and the colleague you just met, the two of us are in charge of monitoring the far-right in Austria today.
I	[0:03:27.9117] So that includes parties as well as <i>Bursenschaften</i> , and more informal activists?

P	Yes, we consider and classify the FPÖ as right-wing extremist, so our focus is on everything from the FPÖ to the Nazi fringe.
I	You mentioned in your email, that you don't know so much about Wels. But I wonder we will be able to talk about the FPÖ and Austrian local government?
P	Did you read the article on Wels in Profi?
I	Yes, it's very good. And I met a prominent activist in Wels who was quoted in the piece.
P	That's excellent for the local goings-on.
I	That's interesting to know about your background. Like I said, the way that I'm looking at the difference between the Austrian and Italian context is in three different ways, in terms of the structure and therefore the autonomy the local government has, the local culture and therefore the legitimacy or consensus there is for the party to make an impact through policy, and also the individuals, what are they saying, what is the rhetoric being used. So first, in terms of autonomy, I wondered if you could tell me about, at the local level in Austria, what kind of autonomy you think the FPÖ, or other parties, have really to influence the city's goings on?
P	I'd say that strongly depends on the size of the community, because for example the village where I come from is a village of 3,500 inhabitants or so, and there politics is basically limited to paving the streets and fixing something that is broken, but there's not really any political debate on anything. But of course in a bigger city like Wels, or Linz, or Vienna of course, where there are more resources to be distributed that's a different story. Although I still think...I don't know if you can say that local government is very limited in Austria, because I'm not able to draw a comparison to other countries, to put it in relation to other countries, but I'd say it definitely depends on the size.
I	[0:07:12.7118] I see your point that it's hard to say how much autonomy without a relative comparison. But, for example, in the area of security, a kind of larger city like Wels, and not a 3,000 population village, do you think the local government truly has the autonomy to make concrete difference?
P	Well, something that, for instance, the FPÖ is demanding in many places and trying to implement as soon as they're in power is increase the sense of security that people have. And one measure that they like to adopt, and in Linz already, is introduce their own security guards, <i>Bürgerwache</i> , I think you call them. So, city security guards. You could say that this is making a difference, because it means a change in atmospheric levels, as it leads to some people feeling secure and some feeling more insecure, but really these guards don't have any powers. They can intimidate by their mere presence, but if they catch anyone doing anything illegal the only thing they can do is try and prevent these people from getting away until the police arrives. So they don't really have any executive power themselves. So basically a private security corps.
I	A private security corps of the city government, being the ones who implement this?
P	Yes. So, I mean, on one hand it makes a difference atmospherically, but on the other I'd say the powers are really limited. One thing cities can do is prohibit beggars, and this has been an issue in many Austrian cities in recent years. And cities and also the federal state have introduced all kinds of laws and prohibitions limiting the ways and the places in which you can beg for money. And this is something the FPÖ likes to implement too. And yes, this really makes a difference. Most importantly for the people who need to beg because they have no other choice. Basically these anti-beggar laws are anti-Roma laws, because it's mostly about preventing people from Romania, Bulgaria, who are often ethnically Roma people, preventing them, eradicating their presence from the city. And that's something that the FPÖ is really pushing.
I	[0:11:33.8118] So you're saying that the first one is purely atmospheric but it has real impact, and the measures targeting beggars certainly do have impact. One of the debates I'm working

	around is how much of it is purely symbolic, and how much of it is affecting people's lives? And if it is, then whose lives are being affected, like you say with these effectively anti-Roma laws.
P	I guess you're familiar with this idea that Andreas Rabl has put forward in Wels, the songs sung in kindergartens. I think in the end they didn't implement that, right?
I	No, that's a kind of autonomy thing as well I think, because education, or that element of it, is a responsibility of the state of Upper Austria, and therefore he didn't have the freedom to implement what he wanted.
P	For example, the place where i went to school, it's called a <i>Gymnasium</i> in Austria. And these are federal schools, while the alternative, at age 10 you can go to a <i>Gymnasium</i> or a <i>Hauptschule</i> , and the middle schools, the <i>Hauptschule</i> are state authority. So this made a difference which school you went to. And I think the elementary schools are under state authority too.
I	Or at least, the curriculum content is set by the state?
P	By the federal state? They're at least administered by the state (region), so in my case Salzburg.
I	The other kind of autonomy issue which I think is relevant, is within the coalition. Because obviously it's not just the FPÖ governing alone, they working with - predominantly - the ÖVP. Could you tell me a bit about how much of a restriction on autonomy that coalition working is for the FPÖ?
P	[0:14:27.1119] Just one thing, before i get to that, because I think that it illustrates well the size issue. For example, a city like Vienna has quite a lot of public housing, the <i>Gemeindebau</i> , so that's a big distribution issue. So, for example, are foreigners allowed to apply for public housing, for one of these apartments, or should they be Austrians only? Also in a village or small town like mine, there is no public housing, there is no housing that belongs to the local government, that the local government has authority over. Also there is no kind of social welfare distribution, I mean you can apply for a spot in the kindergarten but you can't apply for any subsidy or social assistance by the local government. Any social assistance you can get is from the federal state or by the state. And of course that's different in a city like Vienna or a city like Wels. So the bigger cities give really any party, but of course also the FPÖ much more instruments, tools to really exert influence on people's everyday lives.
I	And for more to be publicised, for the political arena to become politicised in a way that in a smaller city just isn't.
P	Yes and in smaller cities, often you only have two or three parties there. There are even villages where you only have the ÖVP and one candidate for mayor. And even if there are more parties, I couldn't tell the difference between a SPÖ and ÖVP candidate in the village I come from. But getting back to your question, regarding coalitions...what was it?
I	[0:17:33.8119] I wanted to know your thoughts around the idea of coalition working between the FPÖ and whichever party, how much of a restriction it is on their autonomy to implement what they say they believe in and what they want to change?
P	I think that, I would assume they feel less restricted when in coalition with the ÖVP, because the SPÖ have this, at least, tradition of anti-fascism, and the Social Democratic Youth are still very much into that. So the SPÖ when in coalition with the FPÖ and implementing 'Freedomite' policies will be faced with internal criticism and internal struggles, which will not be the case with the ÖVP. And so especially, when we talk about symbolic politics, commemorative events, I think that the FPÖ is more on the same page with the ÖVP than with the SPÖ. On the other hand, you know we have these debates going on, especially internal debates within the SPÖ, where a lot of people are saying, on the level of social policy, the SPÖ would have more in common with the FPÖ than the ÖVP, which I'm really not sure is true.

	And if it is, it tells you something about social democracy in Austria. So I wouldn't say that they're closer to the ÖVP on every level, in any policy field, but in general I would expect them to govern more freely, with less restrictions, in a coalition with the ÖVP.
I	[0:20:37.5120] And that is more frequently the case?
P	I really couldn't say in how many local governments the FPÖ participates.
I	But you don't think it's certainly dramatically one way or the other, it's a mix?
P	I really couldn't say. You know, what I mentioned before, it's really the smaller the community the more de-politicised the local government is. The smaller the city, the more arbitrary coalitions get. So you could get with one of the others, it really doesn't make a difference.
I	But in your typology of small to large cities, and with politicisation increasing with city size, Wels is in the bigger...
P	Yes. I think that it's the 8th largest city in Austria, something like that. I mean in Austrian dimensions, Wels is a larger city, yes.
I	[0:22:29.6120] Ok, moving on from the issue of autonomy then, I'm also thinking about legitimacy, or consensus. I'm thinking about the local cultural context, and how much general agreement from the local population there is with the ideas of the FPÖ. I would have asked someone in Wels, how much legitimacy does the FPÖ's ideological viewpoint have within the city. But maybe you could say something about that more widely, how much agreement there is in Austria, in particular contexts, with the FPÖ's ideological viewpoint?
P	Perceptions of the FPÖ are very polarised. So, for example, if you poll opinions on the party leader, you'll have very strong support on one hand and very strong rejection on the other, and the same is true for the FPÖ as a whole. We saw in the presidential elections, that up to half of the population at least feels closer to the FPÖ than the Green candidate. But, this is more of a feeling but many people say this and I would agree, the public discourse has shifted to the right over the past, I would say, at least since the 1980s. So things that would or might have been perceived as scandalous 20 years ago, may be perceived as normal today.
I	[0:24:47.2120] Can you give me any examples of this shift?
P	Yes, for example, in the early 90s, I think it was in 1990 or '91, there was a micro-party trying to run for the national elections, and I think it was the administrative court who rejected the candidacy, among other things because they were often resorting to the term ' <i>Überfremdung</i> ', which literally translates to 'over-foreignisation'. And this was mentioned as a reason for prohibiting them from running for elections in the early '90s. In the late '90s, I think it was in '98, you could read the slogan, 'stop the <i>Überfremdung</i> ' plastered all over Vienna, on the posters of the FPÖ.
I	[0:26:06.8120] So a normalisation of what was previously considered too extreme to be legal?
P	Yes. Because of course this is also, the term has its history, and most terms have a history in Austria...it has National Socialist roots too. And still in the late '90s, and still if it happens today, there would be criticism, but I have the impression that this criticism is more and more limited to the usual suspects, to the politically correct, the 'culturally elite'...
I	Those actively opposed?
P	Yes.
I	And more specifically, we mentioned security, the <i>Bürgerwache</i> , restrictions on begging, how much legitimacy do you think these kinds of ideas of the FPÖ have?
P	[0:27:10.2120] Among the broad public, and not just the FPÖ supporters? I'm not sure. I mean, I would assume, and I would assume there are polls to back me up on this, particularly

	in the cities there is a widespread insecurity, you know with all this discourse about terrorism and migrants that are permanently harassing women and perpetrating crimes. This is a media discourse and a political discourse that is pretty strong in Austria, and against that background there's a lot of people feeling insecure, and therefore ready to support measures that make them feel more secure. I'm not really convinced however that these kind of <i>Bürgerwache</i> is really something that would satisfy this demand. I think what these people that feel insecure, what they would like is more police on the streets. And you know these private security guards who cannot...who have no power, no authority, I don't know if they can fix this. But I would assume many people find it better than nothing. And, you know, it's not only about terrorist threat, it's about very, <i>very</i> mundane things, like youths drinking alcohol on the town square, or punks...
I	[0:29:48.1121] You mean the sense of insecurity is about these things as well?
P	I would say a sense of discomfort, and I think that this <i>Bürgerwache</i> may actually be an effective measure to harass punks and homeless people, but certainly not to fight organised crime and terrorism. But I think many people will support this measure for the harassment of punks and homeless people alone.
I	[0:30:41.1121] It would be interesting to know what is the distinctive rhetoric being used by the FPÖ at the moment, not necessarily in Wels, but generally when in local government. Firstly, what would you say the FPÖ defines as the urban problems to be faced?
P	[0:31:19.6121] In the cities in particular? Well, crime. And you know how the FPÖ tends to ethnicise any policy issue, so of course they're ethnicising crime too. They very closely associate it with immigration, so a spike in immigration and a spike in crime, according to them. Particularly some sorts of crime in their depiction are almost exclusively tied to immigration, so for example street harassment of women, and rape, which is statistically not true, most cases of rape, of domestic violence are perpetrated by Austrians, but if you follow what the FPÖ has to say on the issue it seems like that Muslims are the only people beating up their wives or harassing women on the street. So, crime. [0:32:42.0121] In general, the sense of change that has been going on over the decades, and that makes people not feel at home anymore. The fact that there are Turkish stores, or stores owned by Turkish people, that pop up on the street, and you can buy kebab meat but you can't buy <i>Lebekäse</i>, things like that. So a slogan the FPÖ has been using for a while is, or a phrase they've been using, is '<i>ein Fremd in eigenem Land</i>' (a stranger in your own country). And so what they propagate, or what they say is "if we're in power, we'll put Austrians first", like Trump is putting Americans first. And that also means no access for foreigners to public housing, it means also on a symbolic level. I think it was in Wiener Neustadt, where the FPÖ is participating in government too, and where a <i>Stadtrat</i>, a town councillor of the FPÖ, prohibited the display of Turkish flags on balconies and windows. So this would be...I would consider this as one of these measures to make Austrians feel at home again. Yeah, so crime, identity. [0:35:09.3121] What else? Well, in Vienna they like to point out how everything is getting more expensive, how the town raises the, for example, prices on parking tickets, on things like that. Also, they're criticising the subsidies the city gives to things the FPÖ doesn't like: migrant organisations, feminist organisations, modern art, art that is too modern for '<i>Freedomite</i>' tastes. Closely related to this identity issue, I mentioned before this term '<i>Überfremdung</i>', 'over-foreignisation', in recent years it has become replaced by this 'Islamisation' idea, or this notion that we're being 'Islamified'. That really is, you could say, at the core of the '<i>Freedomite</i>' agitation.
I	[0:37:05.3121] So, crime, often ethnicised, an assertion of a sense of identity and a resistance to change, and excessive costs, and Islamisation increasingly.
P	Yes and also this idea of putting Austrians first.

I	So that's an idea of the problems being defined, now what would you say - I mean you've kind of touched on it in a few ways here already - but what would you say is the agenda that is being set?
P	[0:37:41.3122] Really the solutions that the FPÖ offer are always based on ethnic segregation. So whether we're talking about the welfare system or social insurance, you know what the FPÖ wants. Right now there are like 16 or 17 social insurance <i>Kassen</i> . So all public have one, but you know there's one for the people working on the railway, one for the public servants. Instead, the FPÖ wants to have only two: one for Austrians, one for foreigners. Also employment insurance, the FPÖ wants to exclude foreigners from employment insurance, because the idea is once a foreigner becomes unemployed he has to leave the country, or he should have to leave the country. The pension system, very interesting, because there what the FPÖ wants is, you know the time that you spend at home with your children can count for your pension claims, or at least in part, can be claimed as work. And here the FPÖ wants to make a distinction between not only Austrians and foreigners, in the sense of citizenship, but in terms of autochthonous and non-autochthonous people. So they want to discriminate even against people who are Austrian, who hold Austrian citizenship, but who are not autochthonous. Austrians in an ethnic sense, basically in a biological sense, because how do you want to determine if someone is autochthonous or not, if not by heritage, by ancestry. So these are just a few examples to...I mean the last example illustrates how the nationalism that the FPÖ propagates is really an ethnic nationalism. And these are all examples showing that the solutions that the FPÖ proposes are always based on discrimination, including in the education system. You know, if Austria is doing terribly in the PISA test, for the FPÖ the reason is that real Austrian kids have to learn in classes with too many kids who don't speak proper German. I'm not saying that this is completely irrelevant, but in the 'Freedomite' discourse it's always one problem, one solution; always the same problem, always the same solution. Segregate, draw lines between those who belong and those who don't.
I	Is that somewhat ironic because of the stress that the FPÖ put on <i>integration</i> ?
P	Do they? Yeah. Yeah, I mean they're saying "well we're not against foreigners, foreigners who are willing to assimilate, and who are working, and have an income, and are ready to accept that in Austria we make rules. Those we are ready to accept, yes". I don't really know if they talk a lot about integration, but if they do, what they really mean is assimilation.
I	[0:42:28.6122] And the actual policy changes, the methods they propose, are founded on an idea of segregation, as in drawing distinctions?
P	Yes. I mean, they want people to assimilate culturally, but at the same time they are excluding them socially, politically. Also, of course, the FPÖ is fiercely opposed to giving foreigners the right to vote in local elections. I mean, non-EU foreign, because EU citizens are already allowed to vote in local elections. So they expect people to assimilate without for example giving them the right to participate in the democratic process.
I	[0:43:46.1122] What I've got from you in the sense of policy change is primarily around trying to increase the sense of security and other symbolic measures trying to bolster the sense of feeling at home nationally, and promoting native Austrians, sometimes symbolically, like with the Turkish flags being banned, and other times with more financial methods. Is there anything you'd like to add around policy change?
P	[0:44:39.8122] On the local level? No, well I can only reiterate, the less you have to redistribute in terms of resources, the more you have to resort to symbolic politics, in order to make the distinctions visible between the parties. Then we're talking about measures like the banning of the Turkish flags, or what monument to erect or not to erect, or over whom to name a street after, so this becomes a topic that is popping up again and again, in Vienna too. So the city tries to make a mark by naming more streets after women, or changing street names, streets that are named after Nazis, which the FPÖ of course opposes. Things like that. I think that Wels is really an interesting laboratory because it is one of the bigger cities, so there are some resources to work with. I mean, of course, the second biggest city, Graz, has been governed by a FPÖ mayor for quite some time in the '70s and early '80s I think, who was also

	party leader at that time¹⁶. But I couldn't really say anything about the policies he implemented. And you know, it was curious, he was elected as mayor twice. Now in Austria you can elect the mayor directly, back then it wasn't the case. So you had the <i>Kommunalwahl</i>, the local elections. So in both the elections the FPÖ took third place, and the SPÖ took first place, and the FPÖ candidate, the third placed candidate, got elected mayor with the support of the ÖVP, in both cases. Something similar may have happened in Klagenfurt, I'm not really sure, there was this FPÖ politician, Guggenberger was his name, but I'm not sure, I don't think he was the mayor¹⁷, but there definitely was a FPÖ/ People's Party coalition in Klagenfurt too¹⁸. Klagenfurt is also a city that is traditionally a social democratic city, or the SPÖ come in first place. And with Graz the same thing, and now in Graz the ÖVP is the strongest, also because the Communists have got strong of late, interestingly. But Graz is certainly the most prominent example of FPÖ local government. Now we also have Hohenems, where we have a FPÖ in Vorarlberg¹⁹.
I	[0:49:05.5123] So there are examples where we might see more about whether change has taken place.
P	The name of the mayor of Graz is Alexander Götz. There are two of them, his father is also called Alexander Götz and he also was in politics, so it's Alexander Götz Jr.
I	Both FPÖ?
P	Yes. He's still alive, you could interview him.
I	[0:49:49.8123] All of this comes down to, eventually, whether there's an impact made on the city in some way. An ideological turn to the right, an effect on the party system, in popular attitudes, and so on. And I think that we've made this distinction about symbolic policies or actual redistribution of resources, more practical things. But I think even with that distinction between those two different kinds of policies, the question is whether we see an ideological turn to the right produced by an extreme right party being in urban government. Could you say anything about that, whether the link between the rhetoric and policies, and a change in the direction or attitudes within the city?
P	[0:51:09.3123] I find it really hard to assess that. I can only speculate. What I'm pretty sure about is that if we look at Austrian society as a whole, the fact that the FPÖ has, due of course to its elections results, this really high presence in the media and parliament, actually in all levels - local level, state level, federal state level - that has really changed the political discourse in Austria. And also the more private discourse in the bars and restaurants. It has changed...It has shifted the boundaries of what you can say without being criticised for it. It has normalised certain things that might have been considered scandalous or at least not OK, might have drawn criticism 20 years ago. And certainly would draw criticism in Germany still nowadays, because political culture is very different in this regard. But I find it hard to determine...What I would assume is that local government, local FPÖ government, has this effect because, you know, for example, I know it from my village, but I assume it happens in almost all villages in Austria, the mayor, the town government, writes letters to all citizens, like newsletters you could say. And of course a FPÖ politician can be expected to write different newsletters. I said before in the country, in the villages, may not make such a big difference; but you could expect a 'Freedomite' politician to write these newsletters differently from how a Social Democrat would write them. And of course the mayor holds speeches, the

¹⁶ Alexander Götz, FPÖ Mayor of Graz 1973-83.

¹⁷ Leopold Guggenberger, actually of the ÖVP, Mayor 1973-97.

¹⁸ Christian Scheider, FPÖ Mayor of Klagenfurt 2009-15.

¹⁹ Dieter Egger, FPÖ Mayor Hohenems, since December 2015.

	mayor is addressed when he receives special salute when he attends public functions, in a local school or anything. So government participation, also at the local level, also raises visibility and contributes to this process of normalisation.
I	[0:55:09.5124] Do you see any evidence of 'taming', of 'softening' of the extreme-right while in local government having taken place?
P	We've seen that...you could make a good case that the FPÖ, federal government participation 2002-2005 proves that there is such a thing as a 'taming effect'. Once you're in government you realise you have responsibilities, you realise you don't have as much room for manoeuvre as you thought you might have, and I think that applies to local government too. And I think that actually your room for manoeuvre is even smaller in local government. So you realise: "actually there's not so much that I can really do differently from my predecessors, from my Social Democrat predecessors". So you may turn out to do the same as they did, and, especially at the local level, not every local office-holder of the FPÖ is an ideologist. Maybe he's just xenophobic, but you may find that in the SPÖ too. So not everyone is an ideologist, but if you're an ideologist you may not feel satisfied with only administering, and then you may turn to these symbolic policies, like the flag ban. I see this flag ban as a good example of a local FPÖ office-holder trying to make a mark, trying to show people once the FPÖ is in a position of power it will really make a difference. The city will look different then. You won't have to see Turkish flags. But that really depends on the individual actors, one FPÖ town councillor may find that important and another may not.
I	[0:58:13.2124] Depending on how ideologically committed they are?
P	Yes.
I	It's also interesting when the symbolic policies don't even actually get enacted, like the kindergarten songs, or I saw in Wels they're wanting to ban the head veil.
P	Or the use of other languages in schools, even in recess. So the pupils would only be allowed to speak German to each other. Things like that.
I	[0:58:45.4124] And that wouldn't be possible to be done anyway, but it's interesting that the tactic is to play off the people from the above authorities, the courts or whatever, that say "this is unconstitutional" or "this isn't within your power". And so there's the visibly symbolic things like the flag, but there's also the implicitly symbolic act of "we're trying to represent you but we can't do it because we're being blocked from above by the elites".
P	[0:59:24.0124] Yes, of course. So in that sense, it can really make sense to propose something that you already know can't be implemented to demonstrate how the powers that be restrict a politics of 'reason'.
I	And therefore the restrictions that you are constrained within at local government, could be turned into an advantage. If you do represent yourself as an anti-elite party then you showing yourself to be restricted by the elites.
P	It proves your case.
I	[1:00:07.9124] That's really all the questions I had. I don't know if you had any questions or comments about the interview or the research?
P	I find it very interesting. And I really feel that I cannot contribute as much as I like, really on this level of local government analysis, and I'm very much looking forward to your results.

9.2.3 Researchers, Wels Initiative Against Fascism

Interviewer: Fred Paxton

Participants 1 and 2: Researchers of the Welser Initiative Gegen Faschismus

Date: 20 January 2017

Reference: WelsInt3

Participant 1	I was attacked by skinheads and so there was only one situation: to become anti-fascist, as youths, as kids, only 15 or 16 years old. At the time I also worked in a bookstore in the city of Wels, which was led by Nazis.
Interviewer	<i>Und der Geschäftsführer war ein Nazi?</i>
P1	<i>Der Geschäftsführer</i> , and his mother and his grandmother, they were all from the Nazi movement, real Nazis, not nationalists or something. And so I was often confronted with this strong right-wing, German nationalist, Nazi thing in this town. There is a historical reason for it, and so I decided to do something against...like many other people, and we got a strong anti-fascist movement in Wels. We've got about 200 members, and in no other city is there an anti-fascist group with this number of members. So I'm still a member of this anti-fascist movement, and for two years a member of the Green Party in Wels. I work as a freelance journalist, and to 'earn my food' I work as a nurse, a geriatric nurse.
I	[0:03:20.2125] Wels seems to be a city of conflict, being very strong on both sides?
P1	A little about Upper Austria in general. In Upper Austria, in relation to other parts of Austria, 100 years ago there was an extreme left movement, and a militant social democratic movement. And the civil war started in 1934 in Upper Austria. There's also a strong Nazi movement, because secularism is strong in Upper Austria. Upper Austria was divided into right and left, and other countries like Salzburg or Lower Austria, were still Catholic and didn't care about the left and right.
I	[0:04:34.8125] So you think the Catholic Church bound them together?
P1	Yes. We also have parts that are still very Catholic, like the Innviertel, but in the central space that's not very important, the church and such things.
I	[0:05:02.8125] I know Italy and Austria, the church plays an important role, for instance with hospitals and schools. Is the hospital you work at connected to the church?
P1	No, I work for the Stadt Wels. But the hospital in Wels is ruled by the church, although their role is not very big.
I	[0:05:41.1125] I could first introduce what I'm researching. My research is looking at two cities, one in Austria and one in Italy, and these two cities are distinctive because the far-right is governing them. What I'm trying to find out is whether there's a real change, and what is that change. And also, in Italy and in Austria, what national factors enable or restrict these changes? So it's really looking at the context of these two countries. So the themes I'd like to talk about are: autonomy, so how much power the government has; the legitimacy or consensus, for the ideas of the government; and also what the individuals do, the rhetoric used. Throughout all of this, I feel a theme that runs through both cities is security, <i>sicherheit</i> , which seems to be a very strong focus. [0:07:46.4125] To begin with, in terms of autonomy, what could you tell me about the autonomy of the Wels

	government of Rabl?
Participant 2	You mean what can Wels legally do?
I	Exactly. In relation to the regional government of Upper Austria, for instance.
	[0:08:22.1126] I'm a lawyer. You know that Austria's divided into nine states. Everything is connected to each other: the highest part is the central state, and then there are the nine states, and then there are the so-called '<i>Gemeinden</i>'. Wels is a <i>Gemeinde</i>. And <i>Gemeinden</i> are so-called <i>Selbstverwaltungskörper</i>, self administrative bodies in Austrian constitutional law, meaning there are certain parts of the law that the <i>Gemeinden</i> like Wels can decide themselves. Like, for example, curfews for pubs, or security measures at the station. Everything that's connected to the town itself, and doesn't need another legal step, can be decided by the <i>Gemeinde</i>, like Wels itself. And there's the so-called <i>Gemeinderat</i>, this is like the parliament, elected by the people. And the <i>Gemeinderat</i> makes the decisions. They have a meeting once a month and there are all the different kinds of parties: the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ); the Christian Democrats (ÖVP); the <i>Freiheitliche</i>, the blue ones (FPÖ); and the Greens and the NEOS. And they can bring in their wishes, and it's going to be decided there. So this is the autonomy that Wels has, it has the same autonomy as all the other <i>Gemeinden</i>. But there's one special thing. Wels has a special status, it's called a '<i>Stadt mit eigenem Statut</i>', that means apart from being a <i>Gemeinde</i> and a <i>Selbstverwaltungskörper</i>, meaning a self-administrative body, Wels also has a law of its own, a <i>Statutstatut</i>, a statute. Wels is one of seven or nine towns that is not the capital of a statute but still has its own statute. So Wels has quite a lot of autonomy. It's more common for the capitals, but bigger towns like Wiener Neustadt, Villach, Wels, have it as well.
I	So my next question would be, Wels does have autonomy to...
P2	Yes it does.
I	Since 2015, when Rabl has been mayor, have there been instances when you know that autonomy has been an issue, when the FPÖ has been unable to do something due to lacking autonomy?
P1	I do think so. I think they try to change many things, like children in the kindergarten should learn five German songs, and such things. And now they try to put out the Muslim women with the <i>Kopftuch</i> , the veil, which I don't think is possible.
P2	[0:13:02.5126] And it's also not an issue of a town like Wels, because it's like a constitutional question about the freedom of religion and belief, so that has nothing to do with...
P1	They are very strong, so they say, if there is a refugee camp in Wels, Rabl says he will blockade the <i>autobahn</i> , and nothing is possible then. But he's a man with many words, but with very 'small eggs' [laughs].
P2	[0:13:47.5126] But that's a good example, concerning the refugee camp. Wels is supposed to have a very big refugee camp in the old psychiatric hospital, and the FPÖ says, Rabl says, we don't want it there. But they can't do anything about it, because this is like state and country, this is not an issue of the <i>Gemeinde</i> . So they can't do anything legally against it.
I	[0:14:14.2126] Because it's a decision by the state where the refugees are put?
P2	Exactly, the central state tells the states to find space for the refugees. And the state tells the town, we're going to hire this building, and we're going to put all the refugees in there, and the town can't do anything against it because it's not their legal issue.
I	[0:14:28.5126] So the response when Rabl has faced a lack of autonomy - with the refugee

	camp, with the kindergarten songs, or the Kopftuch - each time the response is to say he will continue anyway?
P1	Spreading hate. He's too silly.
P2	He's very vain too.
P1	He doesn't have the ' <i>macht</i> '.
P2	He doesn't have the power.
P1	He doesn't have the power to do anything. But some of his crazy followers ' <i>verhetzen</i> '?
P2	He puts up the people against foreigners, refugees.
P1	I think he's also...' <i>mitverantwortlich</i> '?
P2	He's responsible.
P1	He's responsible for violence against refugees, because of his [imitates meaningless talk].
P2	For instance, he said when they put the refugees here, I'm going to stand on the motorway with my followers and make a strike. But it's stupid. People think he would really do that, but he would never do things like that because he's like...before he was the mayor he was a lawyer, and he's like a...he was a very honourable citizen of this town. And he would never go on a demonstration or anything. He's not like that.
I	[0:16:10.6127] A question about what you said about him encouraging violence against refugees. Is this something that has increased in the period?
P1	We have problems. In this period, the last attack on a refugee camp was in 2014. It's difficult to say. There's a statistic that I can send you. [Speaks in German]
P2	[Translates P1] He said Wels has a court, is a court town. There's a <i>Landesgericht</i> . That means they have all the higher crimes. He said the State Prosecution of Wels was moaning about a higher level of <i>NS-Wiederbetätigung</i> crimes. That's the so-called ' <i>Verbotzgesetz</i> ', that's very special to Austria, for example Germany doesn't have that. That's the law that says you're not allowed to do anything that has anything to do with the NSDAP, the Nazi regime, or anything. For example, if you go out and tell people to say "Heil Hitler", you can be...
I	[0:18:11.6127] Is it like a constitutional protection?
P2	Yes, it's the constitutional protection. And, for example, Germany doesn't have that, and it's a big thing in Austria, the <i>Verbotzgesetz</i> , because the FPÖ is against it, because they say it's a limit to the freedom of speech. He [P1] just said that crime has gone up, the state prosecution of those crimes.
P1	In Wels. But the judgement in Wels is for...
P2	Many villages around too.
I	[0:18:54.5127] And that would be things like, graffiti, a swastika, or it could be...
P2	A lot on the internet.
P1	I think the situation 20 years ago was in this case more problematic. There's not a big Nazi youth movement in Wels now. We had it already in the late '80s and '90s. I think they are very...The right wing people are satisfied. They have the control of the city, so they don't run around and spray graffiti or burn houses, or clash with people. But we have these problems...
P2	Mainly on the internet.

P1	I think the headquarters of the Green Party was attacked three or four times last year, but that's normal for us. And 20 years ago, it was much more a problem. We had one person who was killed in 1997, attacked by Neo-Nazis.
P2	But that was a refugee who was killed then.
P1	Yeah, a worker from another country. A guest worker. In the 1990s, every week we had injured people from Neo-Nazi violence. Now it's [indicates decline/disappearance].
I	[0:20:53.1/28] Can I ask about legitimacy, or consensus? About how much agreement there is within the town for Rabl's views on issues like integration and migration. That's clearly the most distinctive viewpoint they have, saying firmly "no to migrants, and if they're here, they have to integrate": what's the general feeling in the town?
P1	I don't think so. I think that many...The victory of Rabl was a victory because he was very moderate, and not as far right-wing like the FPÖ in Linz, which is dominated by Neo-Nazis. In Wels it's very moderate.
I	[0:22:27.2/28] He doesn't look how you'd imagine a Neo-Nazi to appear.
P1	He's no Neo-Nazi.
P2	But he's still a racist.
P1	In my opinion, he's an asshole. His wife is from Russia, he has no problem with international things, but he says these racist things to get the votes from the people. So he's not very ideologically....
I	But he tries to look moderate.
P1	The teacher's pet, is his role.
I	[0:23:20.7/28] Do you think people who saw him as moderate in 2015 when they voted, would say the same having had a year of him governing?
P1	I think the voting from the Presidential Election was also a vote against Rabl. We had 63% for the Freedom Party in 2015, and last December in 2016 we had 43% in the Presidential Election for the Freedom Party. And that's 20% difference. I think, and as well as those numbers, I hear the people talking on the streets...
P2	That's an answer to his politics.
P1	The normal people, I don't live in a left-wing community. I have friends and so everywhere. I think he's very...[speaks in German]
P2	[Translates P1] He said that (Rabl) has lost a lot. I think what he wants to say is that, on the one hand, these people who wanted more, who wanted him to go further, the ones who said "he's not doing anything against refugees, he said he will ban all migrants, and now he's not doing it". These are the ones...these are his followers who are disappointed because he's not as far-right as they thought he was. And on the other hand, there are these people who got angry with him because he's closing a lot. For example, he's closed the youth hostel, he tries to decrease spending on cultural things, like theatres and stuff.
P1	He gives jobs to his friends and family. Like the Social Democratic Party before him.
P2	That's what he criticised the Social Democrat party before and now he's doing all the same. So people got pissed off in one year because for his followers he isn't as right-wing as they thought he would be, and for his opponents....

P1	He's not as liberal as he told them.
I	[0:26:10.2129] So he's kind of stuck in the middle.
P2	Yes.
I	So if an election happened tomorrow you don't think he would win?
P2	It depends on the opposition.
P1	I think he would win because there's no other...The SPÖ is...they are very....many problems with each other. The ÖVP is like a little dog for Rabl, they do not have any political profile.
I	[0:26:50.9129] They're very happy to work together?
P1	Yes
P2	They always prefer to be like the child of the FPÖ than the child of the SPÖ. Because they think the FPÖ still does more for the economy, but that's not true because they, within one year, have already killed a lot of jobs in Wels, the FPÖ.
P1	The Green Party is weak now, but it will get better! [Laughs]
P2	He's a member of the Green Party.
I	With security, I keep on reading about ways that security is a real issue in the town. The <i>überwachung</i> , the alarms given to women to carry around, and so on. Is this a popular thing?
P2	That's a very popular thing. And people don't feel secure I think. I mean, I feel totally secure. Wels is one of the safest towns in the world. I know that, because I've been travelling a lot and the crime rate here is low, really <i>really</i> low. I've worked in the court. The crime rate is low, there's hardly any women harassment out of the house. In the house it's different, domestic violence against women is a big issue. There's hardly any robberies, burglaries, murders. It's a very safe, <i>safe</i> place. As safe as you could imagine, you can go away for a month, leave your house open, and nothing would happen. I tell you that, that's true. But people still feel insecure. They feel so insecure! I think that's because they get told to feel insecure. The FPÖ has done everything to make them feel insecure. They tell them you have to be so afraid.
P1	They were very strong on social media and Facebook groups, on which everything is about rape and murder and robbery.
P2	And all done by people from other countries, and refugees. "You can't trust anyone, you can't walk into town, women on their own in the night"
I	[0:29:20.4129] So social media is a big force for this?
P2	Yes.
P1	It was very well used by the FPÖ before the election. They made many...The FPÖ told you Wels is between Gotham City and Mordor [laughs]. In this direction. And now they have the problem that they have the power, and they want to change the image, but it's difficult when they tell the people everything was rape and murder. The last murder in Wels was I think five or six years ago, and the murderer was a Neo-Nazi.
P2	The biggest crimes in Wels are concerning drugs. Because you know the train goes through from Vienna to Bregenz, and there is a so-called logistics centre in Wels, so there's a lot of drug trafficking in Wels. So most of the crimes we had at the court were drug crimes, like drug trafficking.

I	But not violent crimes? Just trade?
P2	Mainly trade, yes.
I	And this gets reported?
P2	Yes.
P1	[Speaks in German].
P2	He said that there's still some drug related burglaries, robberies, and stuff.
P1	That's a big thing in Wels. I'll tell you something but don't write it down: [Redacted]. As an example of how big the problem is in Wels, and how many people make business in this direction.
P2	But there's one thing I wanted to say. This is like a self-fulfilling prophecy, the security. You put a lot of security and police in town, and then people start to feel insecure. You know, like one year ago, there's a so-called <i>Stadtwache</i> , that's a part of the local administration, and they just walk around town. They are like the police, but they don't have the force the police have. They don't have the competences the police have. They can only...For example, if you sit in the park, on the ground, where you're not allowed to sit, then they come and tell you "fuck off". Or if you drink a beer in public at the station, which is not allowed anymore, then they tell you not to drink the beer anymore. But they can't put you in prison, or give you a fine or something. But they increased the number of the <i>Stadtwache</i> . They're everywhere now. And the people feel more insecure. And there's also more police. And so even people who didn't feel insecure, they think why is there so much security, why are there so many police in town?
I	[0:33:30.7130] I read about increasing the number of <i>Stadtwache</i> at <i>Welldorado</i> ? And these kinds of public spaces.
P2	Because they said refugees were going there, and that's why they increased them. But most of the people didn't like it because they said we can't even go swimming without them being around us. And you know Wels is a so-called <i>Messestadt</i> ? There's always a festival in autumn that's quite a big thing, and there were some women who were harassed by five or six refugees from Afghanistan. And that was also a very bad thing. That only happened once but they made it very big. Of course they did. That was bad, somehow.
I	[0:34:41.3130] In what way did they make it into a big thing?
P2	They made it into a big thing because the media, which is very connected with the FPÖ, made out as if it happened everyday and as if all the refugees did that. It's like, they generalised it, but it was only one thing that happened. They did it as if it what was going on in Cologne, last New Year's Eve.
I	[0:35:07.0130] I guess a lot of people probably thought of Cologne when they read about this, it reflected that.
P2	Yes.
I	Do you think that the media is quite supportive?
P2	Yes I think so. Because there's not really a...The media in Wels isn't really intelligent. It's very local, and it's always...when the SPÖ was in power, they were writing pro-SPÖ material, now the FPÖ is in power, they write pro-FPÖ. So it's as if they were bought by the parties. Which they are not, but they don't want to have any trouble with the government. I think the media is quite heavily influenced in Wels.

P1	Yes. I think half of the media in Wels is very right-wing, ideologically. And half of them are influenced...
P2	Scared, because of the money and subsidies and so on.
P1	Most of the media, 90% of the ads are from town or owned by....
P2	It's quite influenced.
I	[0:36:45.3131] So if they report something negatively about the government, the fear the government will withdraw the adverts, and so the newspaper goes.
P1	The newspaper and also the TV.
P2	We have an organisation, it's called the <i>Welser Initiative Gegen Faschismus</i> . And we're both part of it, and if we want to have something...if we have a reading or something, or some guest, and we want that in the paper, we have to write to the paper many times so that they put it in, and we have to call them, and we have to keep in contact.
P1	It's no big problem when we make a concert or a discussion..
P2	But if we do something critical then they want a call about it.
P1	Critical against the FPÖ, many of them tell us "we can't write about it. We can't print it".
P1	So opposition isn't really, the media doesn't really like opposition.
I	[0:37:56.9131] So, for example, the <i>Welser Initiative Gegen Faschismus</i> , that was in existence before Rabl came to power?
P2	Yes, it's been in existence for...34 years now?
P1	1984
P2	32 years now.
I	[0:38:13.4131] Has it become more difficult, or changed in some way, since 2015?
P1	I think so, because we did a lot of things together with the town, and there was also some kind of [inaudible] for us. But now we do it all independently.
P2	I think it's interesting to understand Wels. Until the late '90s, everything was SPÖ dominated. And in the SPÖ it was no problem when you were a Nazi, far right-wing, no problem until the late '90s.
P1	They were also very brown (i.e. Nazi).
P2	The SPÖ was very brown.
I	[0:39:05.3131] This is surprising for me. So there were many members of the SPÖ who had Nazi sympathies?
P2	Yes, of course. Like the whole of Austria is a big Nazi country. [both laugh]. It's really almost like that.
P1	Not whole. But most [both laugh]. And in the late '90s, in the SPÖ, there were many discussions about that. The Social Youth were very left, and wanted to put out the Nazis.

I	[0:39:46.6132] Were the Nazi part of the SPÖ generally older?
P1	Yes, but there were also younger people with sympathies for right-wing ideas. And we researched in this time, and there were Nazi skinheads who were members of the SPÖ because...
P2	They could get all the benefits from the party, like flats and stuff.
P1	In some parts of Wels, if you want to have a flat, then you had to go to the SPÖ. That was also the problem.
I	[0:40:39.4132] So it was useful to be...
P1	Yes, I think the Social Democratic party have had more members than joiners. [laughs].
P2	The big problem in Austria was, the learning and teaching about the Nazi past started very, <i>very</i> late. That started at the end of the '80s, beginning of the '90s. So we're still in the middle of it.
P1	In Austria at the end of the '80s, in Wels at the end of the '90s.
P2	So we're still in the middle of it, we're still struggling to put all this shit out.
I	[0:41:26.7132] I read that a common idea is that Austria was the 'first victim' of the Nazis.
P2	But it's not the victim! It's not.
P1	I think Germany was the first victim of the Austrian Nazis!
P2	No the first victim was Poland!
P1	Back to Wels, I think a problem was this whole Nazi and far-right and racist people left the SPÖ, because the last mayor, Peter Koits, was anti-fascist. And that was a problem for many SPÖ people, and they joined the FPÖ.
I	[0:42:25.8132] And this was in the 2000s?
P1	Yes
I	So Peter Koits becomes leader, mayor...
P1	1999, he becomes mayor, and then leader of SPÖ, and he was an anti-fascist. And maybe in the SPÖ they weren't happy with this situation. So many of them joined the FPÖ.
I	So they (the FPÖ) became stronger in those years?
P1	Yes. The SPÖ was very...The biggest fault, in history in Wels, was the SPÖ who...there was no [speaks in German].
P2	[Translates P1] He said the Social Democrat Party, instead of changing the Nazi attitude of some people and changing the right-wing attitude, they accepted it, just didn't try to change it or get rid of them.
I	[0:44:21.3132] The FPÖ when they took these people in?
P2	No, the SPÖ.

P1	So from 1945 to 1995, the SPÖ party has no problem with the Nazis. And then, Peter Kroits was elected for mayor, and he has another opinion. The first anti-fascist SPÖ mayor in Wels!
P2	He was the first mayor who tried to get rid of these people, and to try to change these people to become more liberal and stuff.
I	[0:45:10.9133] So in the '90s, there was more violence, such as the murder of the man in Lichtenegg, and also the SPÖ contained many Nazis. The 2000s then is a different era, they are removed from the SPÖ, and also the violence decreases?
P2	Yes. [speaks in German]
P1	The youth scene has changed. We had many people from other countries. A big youth scene from migrant people, Turkish, Albanian. And so the Nazis, this part of town, Notizmühle, in this direction, in my youth this was dominated by the Nazis, because we left-wing were too weak to beat them. But five years later, Turkish and other people claimed it from the Nazis.
P2	Ex-Yugoslavian, Albanian.
I	[0:46:30.1133] Is that still the case now?
P1	Yes. We had...the groups with immigrant background are very big, and there is no problem with skinheads, unlike in my youth 25 years ago. But maybe now with foreign extremism, like Turkish right-wing people, or Albanian or Serbian?
I	[0:47:20.2133] Is that seen as a problem?
P1	I see it as a problem. We have right-wing groups from Turkey, we have Salafists, of course this is also a problem.
P2	[Speaks in German]. I think the main problem of the FPÖ that we have in the whole of Austria, but especially now in Wels, because it's one of the biggest towns in Austria with a FPÖ government, is that for the first time in the history after the war, a right-wing party has more power than it's ever had. And the second thing is, it's in the middle of society, it's not at the edge anymore, like neo-Nazis, it's now in the middle, like it's ok to be right-wing, it's fashionable somehow, also for young people, it's in the middle of society, it's landed in the middle of society, and that's what scares me because when I was young, 16 years old or something, it was totally impossible that you could say to your friends you were against migrants. I have never been like that, but you would be an outsider, and now it's exactly the opposite.
I	[0:48:51.6133] So, one thing is that people are more comfortable to say they are against migrants?
P2	Exactly, yes.
I	Are there other things that show that...it sounds like people have shifted to the right? Or the right has become more normal.
P2	Yes, the right has become more normal.
I	Are there other examples that we can see, apart from the migrant issue?
P2	Then the security issue.
I	So that people want a different level of security?

P2	Yes, then I also think a big issue is the social system and the envy. People get very jealous about what other people have. The envy is getting really big, and the FPÖ does a lot to enforce that. They say “you know, people from other countries have so much, and you as an Austrian don't get all these benefits”. That's one of the biggest messages.
P1	[Speaks in German] I think one of the biggest psychological problems from the people...In Wels there are many migrants, not just from Turkey, but also from small villages in Austria. And you know, the people go to Wels and search for school or work, and haven't even seen people from Turkey before, from Africa, and they're very scared. I think they're very lost in the town. They go there, there's no social...
P2	The inner Austrian migrants.
P1	The inner Austrian migrants are a big problem I think.
P2	Lots of people from villages around Wels move to Wels. And then they go to schools, and for the first time in their lives, or they go to work, and for the first time in their lives they see a person from a foreign country, because in the villages there are hardly any people from foreign countries.
P1	And the other problem is they don't have the social life, like they have in the little towns and that they like.
P2	They move here because of work.
P1	They need it, but there's no...there's no substitution for small town life. And they see it, the people from Turkey or Yugoslavia or so, they have this life, they have a big community, everyone helps each other. No problem where you're from, the people help each other with everything. The Austrian people, the Austrian migrants in Wels, they don't have that.
I	[0:52:21.0134] So it's more complex than just white Austrian people and people with migration backgrounds. We also have the ‘village Austrians’, and they have a different mindset as well.
P1	That's a big problem!
P2	And the whole of Austria. There are lots of studies that have shown that racism is biggest in Austria where the least foreigners live.
P1	I think this rootless Austrian migrants are a big problem. They can't understand a town, they hear different languages [inaudible] really afraid of everything.
I	[0:53:19.8134] Are there particular areas of the town where there are more diversity, more races, nationalities?
P2	Notizmühle, and also here. And in the centre. And Vogelweide, for example, would be a place where there are mainly Austrian people living.
I	[0:53:52.8134] And so the people who move from Austrian villages, are they generally moving to diverse places like Notizmühle?
P2	No, I wouldn't say so.
P1	No, Notizmühle they are afraid because of the Turkish people, they don't want to go to Notizmühle.
P2	I think that people who move here from Austria try to live on the outskirts, where you can buy like...where there are no migrants. In richer areas. Like Vogelweide, Laahen, Neustadt.

I	[0:54:22.1135] So you said richer areas as well. Is income and wealth a factor in all of this?
P2	Yes, I think so. Absolutely.
I	[To P1] You seem unsure about that.
P2	[Speaks in German] We're not of the same opinion on this.
P1	It's difficult. Wels is not so big, but it's also very diverse. I think in the...here we have many foreign people, and very few votes for the FPÖ. Vogelweide, a white trash working-class village, there are many votes for FPÖ. I think that's the heart of the right-wing movement in Wels.
P2	You're right, but there's one special thing about Wels: also in the <i>bürgerliche</i> , the middle-class, Wels has a very strong right-wing middle class as well. Lawyers, doctors.
I	[0:56:08.7135] And they live on the outskirts?
P2	Yes. These are the richer areas. And this is very unlikely. Because usually, in most of the cities, you have the academic people who are not left-wing, but at least liberal, but not in Wels. You've got, for example my father is a dentist, and he has lots of friends who voted for Hofer (FPÖ presidential candidate). Loads of them also in hospital, everywhere.
I	So this is a an Upper Austrian phenomenon?
P2	Yeah, but he [P1] wouldn't say so, because he doesn't like that because he always thinks it has something to do with being working class or not, but I don't think so. I studied law in Vienna, and there were so many right-wing law students you wouldn't imagine. So it has nothing to do with education.
I	[0:57:01.7135] So [P1's] opinion is that it's more to do with...
P2	Income, education. But that's not true. It's not true for Austria I think. Yeah, it's a part. Of course, most of the people who voted for Hofer were white men in the 40s to 50s with a low income, that's true. But there are parts of Austria, like Upper Austria, where there are lots of academic people that are very right-wing. I worked at the court and I was one of the only ones who wasn't racist of my colleagues. I can tell you that, it's really true! And I come from an academic background and there are so many academic racists, so he's not right. But for him it's easier to think that, but it's not like that, it doesn't have anything....Ok, it has something to do with education, but it's not only that.
I	[0:58:09.9135] But it's the culture, in this particular state, in Upper Austria?
P2	Yes.
I	And I presume, because culture takes a long time to form, it's quite a historically formed thing?
P2	Yes, because, for example, Wels and also Linz, were always...They were very important towns during the war. And a lot of the citizens come from famous Nazi families, and they never got rid of it. Lawyers and doctors and whatever.
I	And so Linz and Wels were successful in the war?
P2	Yes.
I	Is there a sense that it was a golden age for some people who did well from that time?

P2	Exactly, yes. And a lot of companies were built around Wels and Linz, like the <i>Voest</i> , and other steel companies, car companies, and Upper Austria got really rich through the Nazi era. Most of its wealth was built by forced labour.
I	From concentration camps and so on?
P2	Yes. And Upper Austria, I would say, is one of the most right-wing states in Austria. Throughout history.
I	And throughout all social classes?
P2	Yes, I think so. Because I also always thought that if you were educated and stuff you wouldn't think like that, but it's not true. But maybe he [P1] thinks like that, because we come from different backgrounds. And he knows more workers, I know more people who went to university, but I can tell that most of the people that I know in Austria, lots of people I know in Austria are racists, are against foreigners, are very conservative.
I	[1:00:19.2136] I suppose you're both saying that people you know from each background, there are lots in both.
P2	Yes. So you have to say that Austria is a very conservative, racist country.
I	[1:00:34.2136] A slightly different question, but do you think people see Wels as a city?
P2	No, a small town, a province town.
I	Do you see it as a city?
P2	No.
P1	No [laughs].
P2	Maybe, for Austria it's not so small. Because Austria is a 'country country'! It's a country state. Like in England there are so many big cities. But in Austria there are not so many. So maybe for Austria, Wels would be quite big, because we have lots of schools, we have a <i>Fachhochschule</i> , there's a big station and there are lots of trains stopping here. We have a lot of companies, quite a lot of industry. A bit of culture, but not too much. Then we have the so-called <i>Messe</i> .
P1	On some things I disagree. Wels, in relationship to Austrian circumstances, it's a big city. It was built by the Romans. But from the tradition, it's a town, a real town. Also the classes...traditional. And one of the problems is a big brain drain, you know every people with higher school, they leave Wels. Every Autumn, 500 intelligent people leave this town, and 500 people from the agrarian...
P2	To Linz, Vienna, Graz.
P1	To study, to get jobs, and so on.
P2	I'm the only one from my class, nearly the only one who came back from Vienna.
I	[1:03:29.4136] So it's kind of the second level, and Vienna, Salzburg, Graz, Linz...
P1	Yes. From the people who make Matura, like A-Levels, maybe one from 15 stay here. All the others go...

P2	The schools are pretty good in Wels, and you get really good education in Wels until you're 18. But then you have to go, otherwise you don't get any higher education, and one of the biggest problems in Wels is that there's no university. There was talk...Because we have one of the biggest hospitals in Austria. We've one of the best heart units.
P1	The heartbreak station [laughs].
P2	There was talk that Wels was going to get a medical university, but then Linz got it. I think that was really bad for Wels, because that would have put so much...That would have been really good for Wels.
I	[1:04:36.6137] Well, Linz is really close?
P2	Yeah I know, but this is the thing, Linz is so close, everyone goes to Linz, all the things are happening in Linz, all the concerts are happening in Linz, all the young people are in Linz, and Wels is like pupils or old people. And there's nothing in between.
P1	We're the old people [laughs].
P2	My generation is like...really, I'm 34, there are hardly any women between 25 and 35 living in Wels. Maybe when they get kids, they come back.
P1	Yes. And there's many people who have no education and no work, they come to Wels, from the villages and other countries. That's a bit of the problem. And now with the FPÖ government, many people went away from Wels. The problem is older than...The problem of the brain drain is older, but with the FPÖ...
P2	It doesn't get better.
P1	It's worse.
I	[1:04:36.6137] You think that's encouraged people to move away?
P1	Yes.
P2	Yes.
P1	In all cases.
P2	I think a lot of intelligent people have moved away.
P1	10-12 people from my family went away because of that. It's the young, creative, intelligent people that move away.
P2	The town doesn't do anything to keep these people here.
P1	They don't like them! [laughs] Because they're intelligent!
P2	For example, I was working with the <i>Magistrat</i> . I was working as a lawyer for the Integration Office in Wels for over 3 years, and then when Rabl became mayor I quit my job because I knew he wouldn't...otherwise he would throw me out, because I'm a big opponent. Because I'm with the <i>Welser Initiative Gegen Faschismus</i> . I can't look for a job in Wels, because there is no job for me.
I	[1:07:14.8137] Because you couldn't work in the public sector any longer?

P2	I can't work in the public sector anymore. And the only thing I could do is with a law firm here, but most of the law firms wouldn't have me because I'm too left-wing for that. So I have to work in Linz, because I can't work in Wels, I wouldn't find a job here.
P1	Too left wing in Wels, means you are not right wing [laughs].
P2	Just a little, just normal!
P1	Expect human rights, or such things.
P2	You're not sexist, racist, so you're just... But I couldn't work in the public sector anymore, I wouldn't get a job here anymore, and there are hardly any jobs for higher educated people, either you can work as a teacher or a lawyer, a physician, but there is no work in science, political science, social science, there's hardly any work for higher educated people in Wels. And now as the FPÖ is in power, they don't do anything to change that. Because there was kind of a movement to get more organisations to Wels, but now it's not like that anymore, they want to get rid of them. They want to get rid of intelligent people, I think. They want just people who say "yes, yes, you are good, Rabl".
I	[1:08:44.1138] But they say that they want to create jobs, but how do they expect to do that?
P1	I think it's difficult. It's difficult for any party to create jobs in Wels. We had many jobs. Wels is no poor city, like others. I don't know where they want create them, because in industry there's no tradition in Wels, Wels is a town of trading, 2,000 years ago Wels was founded on salt trading.
P2	But around Wels there's a lot of industry.
P1	But in Wels there's no space. And I think there's a structural problem that's a bit complicated. [Speaks in German]
P2	[Translates P1] He thinks that one of the main problems in Wels concerning economics is that there's an industrial part of Wels where there are quite a lot of companies. But around the town there are quite a lot of shopping malls. And so there is no space anymore for the companies to get bigger, and so they move away from Wels. So there are two factors that matter. First, the inner part of the town is dying, because of all the shopping malls, all the small shops are closing; and the second part, all the industrial companies are moving away because they can't have the space around the town, where they would usually be, but there are so many shopping malls in Wels. I think that's a problem. I agree with him because when I was a kid, there was so...Wels was like...I have to say Wels was better. A lot going on in town, there were lots of shops, there were many cinemas, and there was a theatre, there was work open each day, and there were lots of coffee houses. And then they built all of these shopping malls, and now all the shops closed, all the things closed, all the coffee houses closed, on some days when you walk through town you see like ten people.
I	[1:12:19.8138] So it's become less busy in the city?
P2	Exactly.
I	And so it's become even less of a city?
P2	Yes, on some days in winter you think it's like dead.
P1	Yes, it's a structural problem.
P2	And so all the gastronomy, pubs, coffee houses, restaurants, there are not many openings anymore, there are lots of things closing, because why should they open? There is no-one coming. And I think, I don't know, they really messed it up with all these shopping malls. That was a bad idea. That was really bad for the town, really.

P1	Not only a problem for Wels, but for many towns in Austria. Also Linz, other towns.
P2	But it's not like...Wels is worse. Because it's also smaller.
I	[1:13:23.7139] But could you draw me a link? So, we have an economic problem, structurally, where the centre has less shops, less jobs, less activity, less people walking around and living in the city centre. Can you draw me the link, or links, with the FPÖ?
P2	No, he said that all the parties messed it up.
I	Not just with them being responsible, but has it helped them in someway?
P2	Yes.
P1	Before 2015, in the 25 years before 2015, the 18 years FPÖ was also in the government. So they were ruling Wels since 1991, and the problems of Wels...Not every problem of Wels is from the FPÖ.
P2	[Speaks in German] They don't do anything to change the situation either.
I	[1:14:50.6139] But I was also thinking, not just that they might have caused something, but whether this has contributed to them getting support in someway?
P2	Yes, I think so. Because I think that people don't see that it hasn't only been the SPÖ that has messed it up in Wels. So people wanted a change and there was the FPÖ.
I	[1:15:18.6139] So the blame for this decline is on the SPÖ?
P2	Yes, exactly. And one of the main reasons for the success of the FPÖ are the failures of the SPÖ. So I think they got so strong because the others fucked it up.
I	[1:15:40.8139] [To P1] Would you agree with that too?
P2	But not only because of that, but that's one of the main reasons for me, I think.
P1	Yes, I agree. But I think it's also a cultural problem, it's not only economic or political problem. Wels was...is still a rich city.
P2	That's true.
P1	It's not like we...Ok in other countries or in other towns like in Hungary...
P2	No, it's still rich.
P1	...where the people are poor and there's a big crisis, and then they join the right-wing or fascists. In Wels there was no big problem, like...I think that normally corruption, normally, from the SPÖ, I think it's a big cultural thing the FPÖ have...They have a spirit about "we give back the people the...".
P2	"We give everything back to the Austrians".
P1	Yes. And everyone is drinking beer and everyone is happy. And the women are [inaudible]. It's a big cultural thing, I think, that many people...[Speaks in German].
P2	[Translates P1] He said that lots of people want to live in, like, an idyllic place.
I	[1:17:52.4139] When I asked you, do you think people see Wels as a city, this is kind of what I was thinking as well, whether the vision of Wels as a kind of village or rural town, whether that helps the FPO in a sense?

P2	That helps the FPÖ.
P1	Yes.
P2	People want it as a rural town, and that's what they get with the FPÖ.
P1	I work in senior services in Wels, and I know when I see 90% of the people who live in Wels are not born in Wels. They come from...some come from Turkey or from Serbia or Kosovo, but many, many people come from the small villages, and they see Wels, the bigger city, like Gotham City [laughs], and there are foreign languages, there are drugs, and everything. It's a damn hard city for them.
P2	And for us it's the most boring place on earth!
P1	And we say "they are drugs in Wels, OK, I don't care, I can take it or leave it".
P2	There's another thing. And I hope you [P1] aren't angry with me now, but I think Wels is a very miserable place, there are lots of miserable people here, and everywhere I've been in the world, and in Austria, people were much nicer than in Wels. I have to say that. And sometimes I'm ashamed that I'm from Wels because the people are so miserable here [laughs]. It's really like that. He [P1] doesn't think so, but I think so.
I	[1:19:51.3140] And what do you think the significance of that is, for this?
P2	Like when you go somewhere they're not friendly. They are...They don't do anything to make you feel comfortable. I don't know why, but it's like that. I really think so, I really, <i>really</i> think so. There are places that are OK, but most of the shops, the coffee houses, they are like miserable. Or like when you ask someone for the way, it's like..."Uh, I don't know".
I	So the sense of community...
P2	It's not good. In my eyes.
P1	Yeah, I think it's because of this...[speaks in German].
P2	[Translates P1] De-rooting, de-rootment [sic], or whatever.
P1	De-rootment [sic]. In some of the communities, like here in Notizmühle, it's called a problem village, but the people are much nicer...
P2	People are much nicer there than in town, really.
P1	You can go there and play football and everyone's nice to you. And there are no problems with drugs or anything else, because people are too Muslim [laughs] to take drugs! But it's totally nice.
I	[1:21:11.9140] So the irony is the 'problem village' is in fact the place with the sense of community?
P2	I would say so, yes.
P1	It's crazy! But yes. I'm very sad, I don't understand this, you know, this street is called Hungary Street (Ungarnstraße) because of the refugees from Hungary in 1956. The whole village here was founded by the refugees post-world war. Everything was founded by refugees in this part of Wels. But people forget it one generation...they live here, and they get racist [laughs].
I	I guess this is why you wanted to do the exhibition about the history of migration in Wels?

P2	Yes, to show people that migration has always been here, that Wels wouldn't be the town without migration, that it would be the most boring town on earth, well it's the most boring town on earth but people shouldn't know that [laughs]. That without migration, this town wouldn't be...Because it can be a good town if you accept the people the way they are, and if you accept the diversity, then it can be really a good town. When I worked in the public sector, in the integration office, we met so many people, and we did so many projects that were good for the people, and the people liked it. It was a good feeling. But most of the Austrian people don't want to get mixed up with that sort of thing.
P1	[1:23:32.4141] Yeah, most of them, I think.
P2	Lots of them, lots of them.
P1	50 or 60% And the others...I think many people enjoy Wels as a multicultural town.
P2	That's the best thing about Wels, the <i>multikulti</i> for a small town it's...that's the best thing about it.
I	[1:23:58.1141] It's very interesting for an outsider, because it has this split personality. That on the one side it's trying so hard to be a village or a little countryside town, and on the other side, it's actually not so, and it's surprisingly diverse.
P2	And that's so good about it, I like that!
I	[1:24:15.8141] It feels like the people in the town are pulling in two directions maybe?
P2	Yes, maybe that's one of the problems, that there's no...
P1	It's maybe a good reason that 50% of the people think we are a town, and we are international, and 50% of the people are thinking we are villagers, farm and everything is against us, and we have to be afraid of everything.
P2	"We are such poor Austrians" although we are one of the richest nations in the world, so...
I	[1:24:57.9141] I thought a really nice example of that was the cuts to culture. Rabl seems very keen to support the agricultural fair, and not so much on the more urban side. There does seem to be this divide, culturally.
P2	Everything that's urban, he's like, refusing. He's not a very urban person. But Wels is an urban place, for Austrian circumstances.
I	[1:25:53.7141] My ultimate question, at the end of all of this, is whether there's been an ideological turn to the right, influenced by Rabl, whether he's changed things, has pushed the city to the right? And you said before, in terms of migration, security and the social system, beliefs have moved to the right, but I don't know if you think that's been influenced by Rabl and the FPÖ since 2015?
P1	Since the election, I think, they lost in public opinion, the right wing guys. I don't see anything positive what the FPÖ and their conservative friends did about Wels. Nobody can disagree. I ask on social media, or on reality, I talk to people who like them and I ask them "what did Rabl do for you? What did the blue and black (FPÖ and ÖVP) coalition do for you?". And nobody can say anything. Nobody. I think it's a feeling, many people share this feeling, still. But I think the power will get lost. The problem is they give many jobs to their people, to their friends and families.
I	[1:28:14.2141] In the city administration?

P1	In the city, about 2,000 people in Wels work for the city. It's the biggest group from workers, and FPÖ members are coming from other villages and towns, who get jobs here in Wels, and so they try to establish their power and influence, and that's a problem. But the normal people, I think, are not very happy with this government. Even the people who voted for the FPÖ in 2015, part of them. You can give some hundred jobs to FPÖ followers but not to 20,000 [laughs].
I	[1:29:37.7142] So, for FPÖ members, their lives might have changed because jobs were given, but for most people nothing really has changed?
P1	Most of the normal people who have voted for the FPÖ, nothing has changed. It's getting worse, because of the reforms. And I think many people are not very happy with this government. And I think that the voting from December (Presidential Election) was 56% for [Green Party candidate and eventual winner] Van der Bellen is a sign that the people are not very happy. The problem is the SPÖ is destroyed, they are in Wels without any plan, without anything, they are completely destroyed between a right wing and a small left wing and no ideas, no...anything. It's not my problem, I'm a member of the Green Party [laughs]. I do think, for good democracy though you need a social-democratic party.
I	It was interesting that [SPÖ leader and Austrian Chancellor] Kern did the recent speech in Wels, so Wels is seen as...
P1	A front town. Yeah, but in the local SPÖ there are some good ones.
P2	But it was a sign that he did it here because he wanted to say that even in a so-called <i>Vorzeigestadt</i> (model city) of the FPÖ, the Austrian media tends to draw a picture of the ideal blue (FPÖ) town, with Wels as the ideal blue town. And that's why Kern came here to say "I can even speak in the ideal blue town".
I	[1:32:47.8142] "We can even win here".
P2	Exactly. That's the sign they wanted to give.
I	[1:32:55.3142] But, and you said this earlier on too, the problem is the SPÖ don't have a plan, don't have a vision, and don't have popularity because of that.
P2	No.
P1	The SPÖ's not so highly corrupted as they were in Hungary or other states, it's not a gangster party, but...they have no...The people joined the SPÖ, for getting flats or getting jobs, but not because of hearts and brains.
P2	You could get a lot of advantages when you were a member of the SPÖ.
I	[1:33:51.2142] Which meant that everyone, even Nazis, joined.
P2	Yes, no matter who you were, you could get your benefits.
P1	In 2009, a real Neo-Nazi party was joining the election in Wels. They were forbidden by law, and some of them were members of the SPÖ, a Neo-Nazi movement! This is...Ach! It was very <i>angstrengend</i> (exhausting) [laughs]. Sometimes it's very exhausting. Our Social Democratic friends!

9.2.4 Current Mayor of Wels

Interviewer: Fred Paxton

Participant: Current Mayor of Wels

Date: 9 June 2017

Reference: WelsInt4

Interviewer	I'd like to start by asking you to introduce yourself and describe your role.
Participant	My name is Andreas Rabl, I'm 44 years old, and in 2015 I was elected Mayor of Wels. My primary profession was working as a lawyer in Wels for around 15 years. As a mayor I have responsibility for the personnel matters as well as the administration of the city finances, and furthermore it's of course my duty to define strategic goals in certain areas and monitor their implementation. I'm married and have two children.
I	You're now leading the administration in Wels. One of the first themes I want to talk about is autonomy, and how much autonomy the local government of Wels has.
P	Well, the city of Wels has its own statute, we have our own constitution, and the city deals autonomously with the city's tasks with the private sector on the one hand, and sovereign tasks assigned to us on the other hand. And duties to the private sector include handling the primary care of the population, such as water or electricity, gas, garbage collection, etc., as well as of course provision of essential urban infrastructure, streets and schools, kindergartens, nursing homes, sports and recreation facilities, and so on. And part of the civil duty entails handling the administrative procedures within the construction and industrial sectors, in addition to all tasks related to the civil status: passports, reporting systems, registry office, administrative police, and so on. And these are the things we can do autonomously as the city of Wels.
I	Could you tell me about the relationship between the local government and other levels, such as the regional and the federal government too?
P	Yes, that's correct, we have a lot of relations with the federal government, because also in Upper Austria, they are members of my party in the government, and they are also in a coalition with my coalition partners, and so there are a lot of relations between these governments. And these relations are really frictionless, and there is a good personal atmosphere for the collaboration between the city government and the Upper Austria government. Also with Austria, there is a good relationship, because Austria's not that big, that the politicians don't know each other.
I	And if we talk about within the local government itself, you're in a coalition with a party with whom you have good relations?
P	Yes.
I	Could you say anything about the independence, the autonomy, that your party actors have within that coalition?
P	Well, in the city government, the representatives of the Austrian Freedom Party can make independent decisions, which are defined in the constitution of Wels, and above certain value limits the approval of other parties is necessary. Therefore we also need the decision of the local government, it's called in Austria the <i>Gemeinderat</i> , where all the parties have members. Therefore, from my point of view, we are - also in big decisions - able to make very independent decisions.

I	When you say 'big decisions' do you have any particular examples recently?
P	For example, video surveillance. We can make a decision regarding the video surveillance on our own.
I	What implications does this level of autonomy have for your security policy? From my initial research, it appears that security is a particular focus in Wels.
P	Yes, that's right. There are two focuses: security policy and integration policy. What we did first, is that we made our own security advisor, who focused on all the duties in relation to the security policy in one jurisdiction, and furthermore, we implemented a regulation watch, and also made a video surveillance in Wels. This was the main focus in the last two or three years.
I	Could you repeat the second thing - as well as the security advisor and the video surveillance?
P	A regulation watch: a kind of police. The <i>Ordnungswache</i> , it's called.
I	[00:08:57] Does the local government in Wels have sufficient autonomy for your party to implement the security policy as you wish?
P	We needed a decision in the <i>Gemeinderat</i> and in the local government to establish this <i>Ordnungswache</i> , but now of course we have the possibility to handle this <i>Ordnungswache</i> as we think it's the right way.
I	Okay, so you needed to go through the <i>Gemeinderat</i> and have the support of other parties, but that was no problem?
P	No, that was no problem. There was a big approval of all the other parties for these <i>Ordnungswache</i> .
I	And the same for the other measures, the video surveillance, and so on.
P	Yes, our coalition partner made an approval for all these measures, concerning the security policy.
I	And is it similar with integration, which you said was the other main policy focus?
P	Yes, that's correct.
I	So you also have enough autonomy to do what you think is best for Wels in terms of integration too?
P	No, only in some little parts we have the possibility to change the integration policy, because the main decisions are made in the federal government, or the state government.
I	Are there particular things that you have done in terms of integration? What are you most proud of over the past two years?
P	There was a special programme so that only German speaking people get social housing. The second was that we made a value codex in the kindergarten, concerning European values. A third part was that it is now quite difficult to buy apartments or real estate for non-Austrian citizens. And we also made the kindergarten something new, so that now all children, starting at three years old, have to learn German.
I	So it's putting rewards in place for people who are integrating?
P	Yes.

I	But there are things that are held by the federal and state governments that you can't do yourself. Are there particular things that you would do if you could?
P	There are lots of things I would do if I could [laughs]. Because I think the integration policy should be much stricter than it is now. And the open borders are a really big problem in Austria. And therefore I'd make the integration policy much stricter than it is now.
I	Starting with the borders?
P	Yes, starting with the borders, but not only, of course.
I	If we move onto the next theme: <i>zustimming</i> in German, that is, legitimacy or consensus. I'm interested in how much <i>zustimmung</i> or consensus the history and the culture of Wels gives to the current Freedom Party government?
P	That's quite difficult to say! Because there are no new data on the degree of consent for the policy of the Austrian Freedom Party in Wels, this data isn't freely available. However I believe the vast majority of the Wels population shares our policy, and when I speak to the people I feel this support.
I	Are there particular parts of the policy that you feel are strongly supported?
P	Yes, concerning the security policy and the integration policy, concerning criminals, we have a big support in the population.
I	I thought security was the main focus, and that's certainly what you're saying as well. What was the security policy of the previous government would you say; what's changed?
P	That's really difficult to say. What has changed, I would say, is that we now have a special focus to the security policy. The previous government of Wels did not have its own security advisor, who focused on all these duties in relation to the security policy in one jurisdiction, and it was only with ongoing pressure by our party that the previous city government implemented the <i>Ordnungswache</i> , together with our party. We always need big, big pressure to get the next step concerning security policy. Also with video surveillance, it was only agreed after solicitation by our party. We needed big, big pressure and... [interruption].
I	Sorry you were interrupted by a problem with the signal. Do you mean within the <i>Gemeinderat</i> there are obstacles, that make it sometimes quite difficult to push these changes through?
P	Yes, it always needs big, big pressure to push through these changes, and the previous government didn't have this focus on these topics, concerning security and integration policy.
I	[00:17:58] You think the focus on security is something that's popular and has legitimacy within Wels?
P	It's not only popular, it's necessary. Because we had a big problem with the crime rate, and the last one and a half year, the crime rate decreases. Therefore we have success with our policy.
I	With the crime rate now decreasing, do you have an idea what caused that prior change - the increase in crime?
P	That's quite difficult to say, of course. But all the other cities in Upper Austria have increasing crime rates, and we have decreasing crime rates. So I think our measures concerning the video surveillance and the <i>Ordnungswache</i> made the difference.
I	That's very interesting that it's going against the general trend, seeming to show a successful policy. What do you think it is, from the perspective of the criminal, within the city, how the video surveillance and the <i>Ordnungswache</i> help to decrease that crime?

P	I think it's a general prevention that made a success. Because if somebody thinks he's observed all the time, then maybe - and it's just maybe, because I don't know each case - but maybe, this could be a reason why he doesn't, in some cases, make the vandalism or violence against other people. But I don't know exactly.
I	The video surveillance was placed in the centre of town, is that right?
P	Yes, we have about six cameras in the centre now, and we have a twenty four hour seven day video surveillance.
I	And what was the idea behind the location of the video cameras?
P	We looked at the criminal rates in special places, and when the criminal rate was higher than other places, we made the positions of the video surveillance to watch especially these places with the higher crime rate.
I	And thanks to identifying those places and making the changes, the crime seems to be coming down?
P	Yes, that's it.
I	So my next question is, what's next? With the security policy, the decrease in crime is happening, what are your next steps with security policy?
P	We are in very close contact with the police to discuss these next steps. From now on, it's quite difficult to say these next steps, because first of all we want to analyse the results of the video surveillance and the <i>Ordnungswache</i> , in concrete for the whole year, and then we will discuss next steps.
I	So, seeing what changes have been brought about?
P	Yes, and if in other places we have now higher criminal rates or not. That's also a big point, if there is just a change in that place or if it's a real declining criminal rate in the whole of Wels.
I	I see, so if the crime has moved somewhere else?
P	Well, in the whole of Wels, the crime rate was declining...[interruption].
I	To go back, the crime is generally declining, so it's not a question of crime moving between different parts of the city, but..
P	Nevertheless, it can be crime moving between different parts of the city. Although it's declining in the whole of Wels, maybe the places with video surveillance have a lower rate and some other places have higher rates, and so we have to think about measures for these special places with higher rates now than before, even though it's declining in the whole of Wels.
I	Do you have any idea where in Wels crime is still a problem?
P	Yes, for example, we have the Kaiser Josef Platz, where there's a big criminal rate and drug problems. There we had video surveillance, and this now seems to have changed to a park near the square, so now we are thinking how we can eliminate this drugs scene in the park.
I	Is the idea that could be done using the same methods, such as more video surveillance in a different location, or whether other strategies are needed?
P	This we are thinking about, but it's also possible that we do it with social workers, for example, who we are discussing with, but that's not fixed now. We don't have a position concerning these problems, maybe it's video surveillance, maybe the solution is social workers.

I	Looking ahead more generally, not just security policy, what would you say is your agenda for the rest of your term, between now and the next election?
P	Well, I think the main problems in Wels today are poor integration, of course, lacking security, but also deficient infrastructure, particularly in the area of schools and kindergartens. And insufficient industrial building areas, for business settlements. And this is also a problem, because we don't have enough real estate for the industry to settle. And when I started my work in 2015, I also started the positioning process, in this process we worked out 40 measures to resolve all the problems by 2021. And these measures cover all the problem areas. I think it's exactly 48 measures that we want to implement by 2021.
I	I suppose that helps to make it a reality, making it clear, putting together an agenda you can push forward.
P	I think it's also important to reduce the city's indebtedness, considerably, and to increase the efficiency of the administration, of course. This will really be a lot of work.
I	To reduce the debt?
P	Yes, of course.
I	If I may, I'd like to go back to the idea of security once more, but more to the security felt within the city, rather than the policy pursued by the Freedom Party. I would like to know your opinion if there's a feeling of insecurity within the city, and where you think this is coming from - if it's crime, or other things as well?
P	I think the reason is, of course, crime, yes. Also, the mass immigration to Wels. This also gives the feeling of insecurity.
I	Is there a connection between these changes: the mass immigration, crime, and feelings of insecurity?
P	Yes, I think so. I think so. Because we know the criminal rates among the immigrants is higher than among the Austrian population.
I	I imagine that exact fact is one of your key problems.
P	Yes, I think so.
I	And thus, the security and integration policies, both sides, are the solution?
P	That's too less [sic]. Poor integration is one problem, but the solution is not only strict and hard integration and security policy, there are also social facts we have to consider. It's too poor to reduce everything to security and integration. It's too less [sic]. It's not that simple, it's more complex, from my point of view.
I	Is the economic situation a source of insecurity in Wels?
P	No, Wels is one of the strongest economic areas in Austria, we are a very rich city, with a lot of employees and the real top industry. Therefore, economic matters are not the problem in Wels.
I	I did notice the unemployment is very low in Wels.
P	Yes, and also the unemployment declined, the last half year. Therefore, I think, no, economic matters are not the problem in Wels.
I	So, as you say - the jobs are high, the train station is there...I'm interested to know - do you think Wels is a city, or do you see it as a town, how would you classify Wels?

P	For Austria, we are a city, we are the seventh biggest city in Austria. But when we talk about it at an international level, we are a small village of course (laughs). With 65,000, it is nothing. Compared to the real big cities.
I	It changes whether you're comparing it within Austria or internationally. But do you have a sense, culturally, whether...[interruption]. The sense of movement and change [is going up, in comparison to the previous government]?
P	Yes.
I	And when you say identity, what do you think this new identity is?
P	The people in Wels are proud again to be 'Welsers'. Identity is always quite difficult to explain, because it's something emotional and something with feeling. But I think it's a feeling of being proud to live in Wels again.
I	As you say it's an emotional thing which is hard to explain in words; are there certain places or events in Wels that a visitor, an outsider, could get a sense of the Wels identity?
P	Yes, I think so. There's a big festival, called <i>Volksfest</i> , which is a historical festival, maybe similar to the <i>Münchner Oktoberfest</i> . And everybody is there, the whole of Wels goes to this festival. It's kind of part of our identity. Therefore, if you come to Wels, just give me a call.

9.2.5 Councillor from Wels opposition party

Interviewer: Fred Paxton

Participant: Councillor from Wels opposition party

Date: 9 June 2017

Reference: WelsInt5

Participant	I'm a local councillor of the Green Party, since 2015, when we had elections. And we are three people in our fraction; we are not in the local government because that's the FPÖ and the ÖVP, but we are on the opposite side. We are only three people there out of 36, so we are very small, but still...I've been active within the Green Party for about three or four years now. I studied educational and social sciences, so that's my background and that's what I focus on within the Green Party. What else? I'm also in the main board of the Greens, so I'm not only in the fraction in the <i>Gemeinderat</i> , but also on the operating main board of the party too.
Interviewer	I have a few themes to explore the local government from your perspective. The first thing is autonomy; could you tell me a bit about the autonomy that the local government in Wels has?
P	Within themselves, or within the national FPÖ, or in Upper Austria, or within their party?
I	Both. One way of thinking about it would be their relation with the state, with Upper Austria.
P	Well in Upper Austria, we also have a black and blue government. In Wels, we have it the other way round, we have a blue and black government. But still they are, well I don't know if they are that autonomous in most things, I won't say they are that autonomous, well, they are friends all together. In the years before we had the blue mayor, we had a red one. I want to tell you one example. We wanted to make a new parking lot at the main railway station. When we had the red mayor, the person who was in charge of the traffic and public transport in Upper Austria, he was from the FPÖ back then, so the red mayor had lots of trouble and problems in building this parking lot at the railway station. Then, suddenly we had the blue mayor, and within a few weeks we had the okay to build this parking house. So, I hope you know what I want to say. When the blue mayor talks to his blue friends in Upper

	Austria, who is in charge of the public transport, it works. And when there is a red mayor, and he tries the same thing, it doesn't work. So I don't know how autonomous they are, I don't think they are that autonomous. And also, all the security themes are basically the same in Upper Austria and also nationwide, but in Wels we have a really big and strong theme on this security. So Upper Austria says: "look, it works well what they're doing in Wels, so let's do it also in Upper Austria, and then, wherever, nationwide", or I don't know what they want to do.
I	What sort of security changes have been copied at the level of Upper Austria?
P	Because they say: "look it works well, the criminal statistics are going down, so we try to copy the security policy Wels has for Upper Austria".
I	Are there particular things that they attribute that decline in crime rates to, such as the video surveillance?
P	Exactly, so we have the video surveillance, so the criminality is going down. And, they are not policeman, they are somewhere in between the security guards and policemen, who are walking all over the city centre, all day, and surveying everything. And this is what they want to do as well. And this is what they say: "oh this works well, when there is this - it's called <i>Ordnungswache</i>". And this is what they want to copy as well. And this is what the FPÖ also says in Wels. That's the reason the criminality has gone down, because of the video surveillance and because of the <i>Ordnungswache</i>. And because they have information evenings about what to do when there is a giant blackout in Wels. So it's all about security, it's all about...well, they pretend, from my point of view they pretend...The people have fears, from terror, from whatever, from foreigners in particular, and the FPÖ pretends to listen to their fears, very carefully, and to do something against it. So we have loads of these information evenings, like the blackouts, and what to do when you get robbed, or whatever. So it's everything about this fear, and this surveillance and security thing we have here in Wels, and that's a really big thing here. So there is no money for social policy and there's no money for cultural things, but there is loads and loads and loads of money for video surveillance and for the <i>Ordnungswache</i> and for security and for not having fear here in Wels.
I	And you say there is a great amount of fear in the city around things like terror, and foreigners?
P	Yes.
I	I used the word <i>zustimmung</i> in the German translation, in English it's something like legitimacy. Are these actions and statements about security from the FPÖ, do they get some sort of legitimacy from the Wels population?
P	Well, some of them find this really, really good, what the FPÖ does. Like, finally someone is doing something against terror and something against foreigners and something against robbery and something against whatever kind of criminality there is. So they say finally with our blue mayor and the FPÖ man who is in charge of security policy, some people say: "thank god there is somebody for doing something against these things", but also loads of people, the people I know, we are on the opposite side, say it would be better to use the money, for example the €400,000 instead of video surveillance, on prevention. So, to make workshops at schools, or whatever, to prevent criminality, and not to put video surveillance cameras all over the city centre. To make the people feel free. There are shops that move from their place because they have a video camera up on their roof, so the people are changing because of the video cameras.
I	Why did the shops move due to the video cameras?

P	Because they don't want to be seen all day, because the material on the video camera is recorded for 48 hours, and there is only two or three, I don't know the number of people watching this. So Wels is like 65,000 people but everyone knows everybody, and especially when you are a shopkeeper the people know you, so they didn't want to...Or a photographer for example, he moved as well, because he said: "I don't want the police and whoever, when I come into my shop or my studio, I don't want them to see when I go for my lunch break, I don't want them to see when I go home". They also said, for example, one of them, a policeman or a friend of the photographer, I don't know, said: "oh you're working late at the moment", and he was like: "why do you know that?", and she said: "yeah, because I saw you going out of your studio at two in the morning". It's just crazy. But when we tell the FPÖ every time that these things happen, and especially in Wels, you know the people who are going...
I	Because it's quite a small town?
P	Yes, exactly.
I	As a quick side question, do you see Wels as a city or a town, how would you define it?
P	I think it's something in between. Well, we have a cultural society here and loads of bands, and shops, and alternative people here, so it's kind of something in between. Or in terms of security, I'm pretty sure we are like New York, or something like that [laughs], with video surveillance all over the city centre. So yeah, it's something in between, basically.
I	You said there's the way they're doing it, which is short-term, with things like video cameras, and you would rather another way that would get to the causes of crime. I'm wondering what's changed, and how it was done by the previous government in Wels?
P	What I know...I haven't been in this party that long, but what I know is the red ones are also for prevention of causes, workshops...But there was no problem there for putting video cameras up, so it's really an FPÖ thing to do that. So we had experts here, some years ago, five years, six years, or was it 2010, we had experts here in Wels. There was a scientist, and security experts, and someone from the police. And they looked at what's the problem here in Wels, what is the reason for criminality in Wels, and what can we do against it. And they made a list, I think it was five points, and the first point was prevention, the second was...well, I don't know. I think the shops working together, something like that. I think point four or five was the video surveillance, and the experts said that for the problems Wels has, like drugs and small robbery, the video surveillance doesn't make any sense. But the FPÖ does it anyway. So the experts and the police and the security scientists, it was a huge project and it cost a lot of money, but still the FPÖ is ignoring the fact that the experts said that video surveillance is not helping with the problems that we have here in the city. Because the people who deal drugs just move to another street, or the robbery, or the small crimes, they just move to the next street. The experts said it doesn't help that we have video surveillance now anyway. So the mayor before he called the experts and said: "what shall we do?", that was his idea of doing security policy. Let's ask them what we should do for our problems, if there's a prevention, and work together, and look after each other. So like the social part, not the surveillance part.
I	I understand, so look to the causes. With the idea that the crime has been displaced, rather than solved, are there particular parts of the city it's being displaced to?
P	Well, there is especially one street, and it's been known for drug dealing for years, and I think they're still there. Because the video cameras don't work well during night-time. So you just see that there is someone. But I don't know if there is a video camera in the street anyway. The <i>Ordnungswache</i> is there, but they know how to deal drugs without you really knowing when you walk by. I think they just don't mind if the <i>Ordnungswache</i> is walking by, and the video cameras are not very good during night-time anyway, because you can't see anything. So, well, for example, at the railway station we have two entrances, and on the one entrance you're not allowed to drink alcohol, so the people, the alcoholics, just moved to the other side of the railway station to the other entrance. So it is displaced when there are video cameras, and there is security there, yes. That's what I know, maybe there are other places, where it's already moved, but that I don't know. And for example, the social services, they really beg the

	government to give them more money, for all the courses they do with their clients, but they just don't.
I	I looked where the video surveillance has been placed, and it's quite a specific place in the centre of the city. And I imagine that crime isn't just in that specific area. It's interesting the focus is on those specific streets.
P	Yes, exactly, exactly. The ones in the city centre are really not in the hot spots. There was one, it was last year I think, a guy stabbed a young woman, and she was badly hurt, but it was in the bar, so they found the criminal because of the video surveillance in the bar but not because of the video surveillance outside. Well, it was a really bad crime, but that's not the point. But they saw they put the video camera up there, it's one of the streets where the shop moved, it's one street where there are lots of pubs and bars, but there is also a medical centre, so you see who is going into the medical centre. And as I said, when you know the people in Wels, and the policeman is looking at these pictures, I don't know if he is not, like, wondering why this woman he knows is going to the medical centre twice a week. It's just unbelievable what happens with the video surveillance there, and as I said they put it up on the street where lots of bars are, but you don't see anything during night time. And when you want to rob something, his phone, you can do it in the bar as well. The video camera outside won't solve the crime of the robber. It's a main street there, but nothing happens there. There is an H&M, there is the bank, there is a shop, and a big crossing.
I	So what would you say is the reason to put the surveillance there?
P	I don't know. I don't know. Even the police inspector said there is no reason for putting this camera up there. He doesn't want them either. That's the police inspector himself, from Wels. So I really don't know, I can't answer you this question, I don't know. [00:27:34]
I	Now to move onto a slightly different question, and thinking about the agenda of the current government, I'd be interested to know what you think are the main problems facing Wels, and how you think the FPÖ view it differently and would say are the main problems facing Wels.
P	In my opinion, we need more kindergartens for all our children, because there are loads and loads, and now they do some kind of...they make up kindergarten groups, but with social workers, or with pedagogues, with interns. And the other main problem is that they are opening kindergarten groups from private companies, and not from the city. So they open kindergarten groups from their blue FPÖ group, but not from public kindergarten groups.
I	These are private groups for members of the party?
P	Not only for members of the party, but it's run by members of the party. It's called <i>Abenteuer Familie</i> , and it's the FPÖ family company.
I	Is that usual?
P	Well, we have loads of...I think that it's been a problem for years. Because we Greens have been saying for years that we should open public kindergarten groups and public groups for the small children from one and a half to three years. But when there was the SPÖ red mayor, he opened up a lot of kindergarten groups from the red family club, from the <i>Kinderfreunde</i> . We do have public kindergartens, but the ones for the very small children, we have loads from the <i>Kinderfreunde</i> , from the red club, and now they are opening one after the other from the blue family club, from the FPÖ family club, and we have been saying for years, that we please should open public kindergarten groups, for the very small children. But the lady that's in charge of the government says that the groups from the private clubs are cheaper than if we were to open them publicly, because there's more money from Upper Austria for the private family groups. But I don't know if this is true, I'm trying to find this out now. This is a problem in Wels, and it has been a problem before.

I	So this is a real key concern for you, I suppose, as your focus is on social issues and education.
P	And also the culture. Because loads of cultural clubs get some money from the city, and when our blue mayor came he gave them 10% less money, just, all of them. So his focus is not social and cultural policy. Definitely not. But there is no problem with our music or cultural clubs, that is not our main problem. But still, they just...their focus is a very, very different one to mine. One other main problem is the public transport here. We need another bus line, and we need buses that don't stop at half past ten, but at least until midnight, we need a bus that goes on Sundays...there is no public transport on Sundays in Wels, and on Saturdays every hour, and this bus also ends at five or six in the evening. So we would do loads and loads and loads in the transport system, these are our themes: the social theme and the public transport. Also, all things to do with climate change, and energy, and all these things. Because we have a really big fair here, the <i>Energiesparmesse</i>, and loads and loads of people, international people come to Wels to talk about...It's a meeting for people who want to talk about how to save energy, to put solar panels on their roof, and things like that. So we have this in Wels, but still the FPÖ and also the ÖVP is blocking things for minimizing climate change and this is coming back to your first question, not being autonomous from the wants of the national FPÖ and from the ones in Upper Austria. They also think the climate change is not man-made.
I	So they're following the same line as the national and regional party?
P	Yes, exactly. And the main problems from the FPÖ, is the security one, it's a very big one. And they also...for the economy, they try to work very closely with all the shops in the city, and try to help them with their adverts or whatever.
I	Are there problems facing the shops in the city?
P	Well, there are not loads of people in the city centre, they're in the big shopping centres outside, like in every city. So the shops are facing these problems, that there's not too many people in the city centre to buy things from them. Well, they (FPÖ) try to help them. Some shops think that's great, and some shops don't want to have anything to do with the FPÖ. That's like the alternative shop, for example, that moved because of the video surveillance. And they also have their main focus on living, and also the kindergarten groups, and everything that has to do with youth and having a good programme for our young people in the city. But, well, I think, as I said before, they pretend to be interested in the problems of the people, but in the background they're doing the things they want to do, without being interested in what the people want. For example, our mayor always says: "I'm asking the people what they want to have and they should vote what they want to have". But the main problem is when you're really interested in what the people want, you ask them before the plan for whatever you want to do is ready, and he makes a plan – "and we are getting this and that" - and then he says: "and I'll ask the people". Why do we ask the people when the plan is ready already? And it's the same with the public transport. For example, like I said before, the bus, which is going now until half past ten in the evening, all the parties wanted that bus in the evening years ago, but then, I don't know, there was no money, and then there were elections again, and then he asked last year the people if they wanted this bus in the evening, and loads of people wanted the bus in the evening, so he said: "now, I'm listening to you, so we're getting the bus in the evening". You know what I mean? All the parties wanted that bus years ago (laughs), but now he is making the evening bus. He says finally somebody is...
I	Listening to the people?
P	Exactly! Someone is listening to the people, and finally somebody is in charge of this evening bus, so that's all the...I think you know what I want to say. The one thing they try to get the people to think they are doing, and on the other hand, often people just don't know the information, for example that this evening bus has been ready for years, the people don't know it.

I	It could be effective, if people don't know this has been going on for years, they could really believe..
P	Exactly, exactly, exactly. And that's really hard work to tell people then, that this has been the plan for years. Because then they say, as I said before: "finally we have a mayor who is doing something for us, you're just on the opposite side, you don't want him to be popular, you just don't like him". So that's sometimes really hard, to tell the people what he's really doing. And of course, there are some good things. For example, we now have the <i>Maibaumfest</i> , and we haven't had it for years. They just put up the maypole, and this year, and I think last year I think was his first year, we had this festival and the people love it! They come here in their <i>Lederhosen</i> and they just love it. Well, it's not for me but still...He's doing politics...I would call it 'show politics'. The people see the things. It's not politics, just within the building, it's like: "look at what I'm doing, I'm making a big festival for the <i>Maibaum</i> , and I'm making a big music festival, and film festival, and this festival, and that". And we're getting a new fountain in the city centre, and that's what he does. And the people like it. But this is not what, from my point of view, is politics for the people. Because what is a fountain helping, I don't know, a woman who is alone in charge of her kids and doesn't have enough money, or someone who is a drug addict; what does this fountain help him?
I	And those are in fact what you define as the problems of the city?
P	Yes, exactly. That's basically our differences.
I	What are the effects of all this 'show-politics'?
P	Maybe he will get elected again, that's what I think will happen. And the people are...well, my friends, or the people I'm talking to, are not people who vote for the FPÖ. Maybe it's because I don't know loads of people who vote for the FPÖ, so I don't know what the people really think of him. But if you talk to the population here, some of them say: "look, he's really doing something for us", and the other one says: "that's just show, we have different problems". But the people are interested in what the mayor is doing, so he is going to all different parts of the city to chat to the people living there, and there are 100 or 200 people there who listen to him, and he says: "the budget is perfect, the new fountain is this, and the new kindergarten is coming soon". But you have to tell the people that the new kindergarten is from the blue family club, because this is what he's not saying. He's just saying there's a new kindergarten so there will be enough places for all children. The city is changing, but also in a positive way. Because we have a new logo, so the people say something is changing, something is going on, the city has had a red mayor for years and years and years. I think that after the second world war, there've only been red mayors. So the people before the last election, the people were fed up with the red mayor, because they said: "he's not doing anything". And now, the new mayor came and put up a new logo within a few months, he asked the people what should we have with the public transportation, he's just doing, doing, doing. So the people see something is changing with this. And I think the people like him, but I don't know, so I can't say this for sure, what the people really think of him. Because there's like half and half.
I	From what you're saying, the way he's encouraging people to like him is through a form of politics that is about 'showing' something?
P	Exactly. Yes, yes, exactly.
I	Very visible changes, rather than other social problems that aren't so visible but you think are more essential.
P	Exactly, exactly, exactly what I'm saying.

9.2.6 Current employee of Wels city administration

Interviewer: Fred Paxton

Participant: Current employee of Wels city administration

Date: 18 October 2016

Reference: WelsInt6

Interviewer	What changes have you witnessed in Wels so far as a result of the 2015 election of mayor Andreas Rabl and the FPÖ majority council?
Participant	I think it is rather difficult to talk about changes that might have been witnessed. Because it is always a question of perspective. The one thing, that has changed, is the tempo of announcing reforms in different sectors, like childcare, financial, administration. In the beginning it really seemed that everything should happen in the first year after the election. And there has never been so much talk about the debts of the city. Knowing, that Wels is a rather wealthy city, it is kind of absurd, that Rabl has put a lot of effort in austerity programs. Also, what has changed, in my opinion, is the atmosphere in the community members. As there was a rather big atmosphere of departure after the election, a lot of people are now disillusioned. This might be due to the fact, that the FPÖ is making cuts even in areas which effect nearly everyone. But one of the main things that has changed, although not as much as it could be, is that a certain dynamic is perceptible amongst the civil society. These people become alert, and not only they fear about their funding, but they become aware, that someone has to fight instead of negotiating.
I	What do you expect will change to Wels over the next five years (until the next election)?
P	If the resistance, as well as from the opposing parties as from the civil society, does not get strong enough, the FPÖ will practice the same procedure they practiced from 2000 to 2005 in Austria when they were the junior partner besides the ÖVP in Austria. And what they did was to destroy established structures without giving alternatives or even rebuilding them. This was very much so in the cultural and social sectors or with the pensions. In Wels they will try to rebuild the administration. They are talking about a more service oriented administration but in fact they try to rebuild it to be able to use their “power” more direct on the staff of the city of Wels. This has its cause in the fact, that the administration has always been a concept of the enemy of the right-wing parties.
I	Are there particular constraints on the mayor and team implementing their desired changes in Wels?
P	If you mean by constraints legal boundaries, of course there are these. And it seems sometimes that Rabl, even if he is a lawyer, overlooks some of these boundaries. I don't know if you have followed the public opinion poll to justify the austerity programs, but there will be lawsuits because some people saw their right of protection of data privacy violated.
I	Have there been changes felt by local activists in the city – whether those opposing from the left, or those on the right or far-right wing?

P	The major changes will come. There was one in fact, that was the closure of the youth hostel in Wels. But we are aware, that certain organizations and structures (like the biggest cultural center) will have to fight. One kind of absurd change is, that Rabl respectively the city of Wels is holding a commemoration on 9 November, the night of the 'Kristallnacht', and they have invited two politicians of Israel. In the past, these commemorations were held from the city of Wels and the antifascism organization of Wels. This year there are two commemorations and it seems like Rabl wants to show that he is no right-wing politician, as he is inviting Jews.
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9.2.7 Professor of Political Science, University of Padua

Interviewer: Fred Paxton

Participant: Professor of Political Science, University of Padua

Date: 18 January 2017

Reference: PaduaInt1

Participant	I'm a teacher of local government from 1998 in Padua University and my research is on the <i>modo di regolazione</i> . <i>Modi</i> is not model, <i>modi</i> is in relation to the local territorial context, while model is more abstract. So the research is a comparison between the Veneto and Emilia-Romagna regions, and the two different local political cultures, and the local government political cultures. It's interesting because, in this way, you can understand better the specificity of the case of Veneto. The local government political system and city local government in Veneto are really, <i>really</i> different from Emilia-Romagna. If you were to study Bologna, or Reggio, they are very, <i>very</i> different from Padua, Vicenza, Verona, because the local government is traditionally oriented to the left or right in the two different regions. Left in Emilia-Romagna, right or centre-right in Veneto.
Interviewer	[0:02:39.8] And your work seeks to explain why there is this left/right divide between the two?
P	Yes, there are very important historical reasons. For example, the Catholic culture. We say the sub-culture, the local political culture. There is an article that I wrote about this, on the Northern League in the '90s. It is also important to understand the Veneto context and the Lega Nord phenomenon in Veneto.
I	[0:03:57.4] Because it's particularly strong in Veneto?
P	Yes. There is a historical reason because the anti-statism of the Lega Nord is typical of the 'white' sub-culture. We say Catholic is 'white'.
I	White as opposed to red?
P	Exactly. Red in Central Italy, Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria.
I	There are three ways that I want to understand the impact of the Lega Nord on the city. My question is: when the Lega Nord is in power, the mayor and council, how does the city change? I use a comparison of Italy and Austria, and I want to see how the different situations of Italy and Austria give different opportunities or different limitations on what these parties, which are very similar, between the Lega Nord and the FPÖ...
P	No, I don't think so. In Padua's case, I don't think so. Because Padua is traditionally, and was previously, governed by the <i>Partito Democratico</i> . [0:05:42.1] We had the mayor Zanonato, and then Ivo Rossi. That was the left position. You understand that Padua is a very particular case because we have the university from 800 years ago. So it's very important to understand there are many different cities of Padua. The university town, which is quite parallel, or 'the other'. We have 70,000 students, which is a lot of people, but these students are not in resident

	in Padua, so aren't able to vote for the mayor or local administration. So this is a problem. When I teach local government in my class, I ask, "how many of you vote for the mayor in Padua?". Maybe from 100 people, two people vote. [0:07:26.1] So the problem is: who votes for the local administration? Maybe, I think, just the older residents, and especially those in the historical centre. So, I think that Padua in particular has this problem. A lot of reasons are not in consideration for us. Bitonci wins, not because Padua is from the Lega Nord, but because he was the candidate of the right – centre-right coalition. In fact, Bitonci is not from Padua. He was the mayor of Cittadella. [0:08:46.1] Cittadella is a symbol of <i>città murata</i>, medieval architecture whereby towns have walls around. It is a very beautiful product. Cittadella is very interesting to visit. It is in the north of the Padua province, about 30 minutes from Padua. I suggest you go to visit. [0:09:46.8] If you go to Cittadella you understand what is the local government of a Lega Nord mayor. Just local; close the town within the wall, to protect the town from the outside. But this concept is very strange for Padua. Because Padua is an open city, it's a university town for a long, long time. It's next to Venice. Everyday we have a lot of students and workers that go from Padua to Venice by train, and by car. This is Padua [pointing to map], in this direction we have Cittadella, but in this blue line we have travel flows. Everyday there are thousands of travellers, for work and students. So we have an urban function, metropolitan function, we have this context, this territory. This is Verona, Vicenza, Treviso, Venezia. And Cittadella is here, it's just in the white line: it's a very, <i>very</i> different context. This is the central Veneto with the building constructions. In this time, this is Padua.
I	[0:12:26.1] So this shows the changes, what is actually built?
P	It is a polycentric area, a metropolitan area: Padua, Mestre, Venezia, Treviso, Vicenza, Pedemontana. Cittadella is about here, it's very different concept! You cannot govern Padua like it is Cittadella. Impossible!
I	[0:12:59.6] The Lega Nord typical way of governing is not urban then, it's a rural, defensive mode?
P	Exactly. Local, like rural, something like that. But Padua is not rural.
I	Has Bitonci tried to do the same thing in Padua?
P	Yes, the same concept of town is not possible, not sustainable in the long term. I think that probably at the next election... At this moment, Padua doesn't have a local government. Because it's impossible to govern in the way that he used to in Cittadella.
I	Why do you think it's so impossible? Because it's unpopular?
P	[0:14:17.5] It's unpopular. You have to understand, for example, that the network of services that Padua requests are not only for residents, the users of the services are more than just residents. For example, the hospital, the university, the public transport, everything. Free time for example, shopping, the supermarket. It's not only for Padua residents, but for a lot of people who are coming to Padua in order to use the services of the city. So to govern a city like Padua is a very different thing from governing a town like Cittadella with around 20,000 people.
I	[0:15:40.7] Because it needs people that aren't just residents, it has the flows of services. A very famous act of Bitonci was the anti-kebab law.
P	Yes. But you understand, Bitonci is in the Lega Nord, like Salvini, they are famous because the newspaper and the press in general cover them. [Translated from Italian] The Italian press functions through slogans. They don't ever really analyse real dynamics. Lega Nord is very good at using this style of communication to talk to the electorate of Veneto, in this case, to the belly of the electorate. Therefore they succeed in mobilising negative prejudices about foreigners, immigrants, anti-kebab, the mosque, everything that is external that threatens the local identity. This is the rhetoric of the Lega Nord, but it's a rhetoric! Rhetoric is what you say but don't think ever. [In Italian: "<i>la stampa italiana, soprattutto anche internazionale, ragiona per slogan. non</i>

	<i>analizzano mai le dinamiche reali. allora. la lega e molto brava a usare questo stile di comunicazione parlando all' elettorato veneto, in questo caso, alla pancia dell' elettorato. quindi a mobilitare pregiudizi negativi lo straniero l'immigrato l'anti-kebab la moschea tutto quello che e' esterno che minaccia l'identita' locale... questa e' la retorica della lega nord, ma e' una retorica! retorica is what you say but don't think ever."]</i>
I	[0:17:56.2] But it's powerful. Although it's not reality, I'd like to investigate whether this rhetoric impacts the city. So the law doesn't change anything concretely, but does it change city residents' thoughts?
P	I don't think that Padua is a Lega Nord city.
I	But Bitonci was elected?
P	[0:18:33.3] Bitonci was elected, not because of the win of the Lega, but because the failure of the centre left at the second round. You have two elections, in the first election you have a lot of candidates, and if one doesn't get the majority the other two go head-to-head. In this case, the first round of election, PD made some spectacular mistakes in defining the coalition, and the centre-right was right in appointing the Lega candidate. The centre-right was weak. In general, the parties from the centre-right were not very strong or well organised but they were very intelligent to appoint this candidate from Lega Nord. The centre-left was very fragmented and that's why they failed in the second round. A lot of candidates, and when they arrive in the second level, I remember this problem very well because the centre-left candidate, who dramatically lost the election, was vice-mayor of Zanonato. The result of the election therefore doesn't signify a victory of the Lega Nord, but a defeat of the centre-left. [In Italian: " <i>ha perso il centro sinistro al ballottaggio...ha sbagliato e centro destro appuntato su candidato che della lega, per che... centro destra era debolé. It was a partito forza italia, cose novo cento destra, partito centro destro, non lega. ma centro destra was non erano forte, non erano organizzati. allora ha no molto l'intelligenza, di puntare su candidato. chera lega nord. centro sinistra fragmentato. A lot of candidates, and when they arrive in the second level, I remember this problem very well because the candidato di centro destra, di centro sinistra, che ha perso la lezione, dramaticamente lezione. The problem was the former vice-mayor Ivo Rossi, this candidate was very problematic. I think that the <u>esito</u> dell'elezione is very interesting because non valeta come vitorio della lega nord ma come sconfitta della centro sinistra.</i> "]
I	[0:21:15.1] It was a defeat for the left and not a victory for the right?
P	Exactly.
I	It's also interesting that some actions of the previous centre-left government seem be quite similar to a Lega Nord mayor, for example, the wall in Via Anella.
P	No, it's not comparable, because Via Anelli was a problem of... The wall of Via Anelli was a very different concept because Zanonato, the mayor of the left, resolved the problem of a quarter that was very, very degraded. Now, if you go you can see this. empty, uninhabited. Nobody lives there anymore. The people were moved to the other side, and now this quarter, which is in a good position in respect of the quarter of <i>Stanga</i> , could be regenerated for students of the university, with the University of Padua contributing. It's a very interesting policy because it was a policy that resolved a problem of segregation of immigrants
I	[0:23:41.1] So before it was destroyed, Via Anelli was an area popular for migrants, who aren't there anymore. Do you know where these residents have been moved to, is there another place in the city?
P	There isn't just one.
I	So it's no longer segregated, they're spread out?

P	Exactly.
I	[0:24:05.4] And the idea is that it will become student housing?
P	Yes, maybe this is the project. I don't know if this administration would be able to! In the future...
I	[0:24:31.5] Do you think that the Padua city government has the autonomy within the wider Italian system to make change, to impact the city?
P	I don't know. Padua is in the Veneto region, and Veneto is a very, <i>very</i> particular region. Because we have a lot of enterprise, especially small and medium enterprises. In this context, like Cittadella for example, this is Padua province [pointing to map]. You can see these are the municipalities of Veneto. 578, a lot. In yellow and in green, you can see the municipalities that are less than 3000 inhabitants and less than 5000 inhabitants. 3000 in the mountains, and in the south of Veneto. Small and very small [<i>Piccolo and piccolissimo</i>]. This is not Lega, these small municipalities.
I	[0:26:36.9] So you're saying a real limitation on the Lega Nord is the size of the settlement. The bigger it gets...
P	Generally, yes. Although Verona is quite an exception. But their mayor Tosi is a very different person. Because he's not Lega Nord, but centre-right. He's a Lega Nord of the city, of town, he's not of local government or municipality. it's quite difficult to explain, it depends quite heavily on the leader. The Lega of Tosi, of Saia from Treviso, of Bitonci from north of the Padua Province.
I	[0:27:38.2] You mean their ideas are different?
P	Yes, and the culture.
I	So Tosi is more moderate? More soft?
P	Yes, a different concept of public administration, use of public resource for the government. I don't know... I am sure that there are a lot of differences based on the individual leader.
I	[0:28:11.4] And formally he [Tosi] is no longer in the Lega Nord?
P	The characteristic of the local government in the Veneto, especially from the Lega Nord, is fragmentation. So it's quite difficult to find two mayors that have the same idea of local government. A common idea may be, first of all, I have to guarantee my town, my people.
I	Like in Cittadella, with the walls?
P	Like in Cittadella. Cittadella is emblematic of this. So whatever is an outside challenge is a problem. Chinese, immigrants, Muslims, whatever - is a problem.
I	And any visual symbols of these outside people, such as the kebab shop, are then the target?
P	It's quite a symbolic policy to say that I mayor from Lega Nord defend the identity of local culture. [0:30:03.6] So local culture that is Catholic, small/medium enterprise or agriculture...
I	Which is very typical of the Veneto region?
P	And this concept is normal to understand in small municipalities, but not in the city or town. Because the social and social-economic reality is very different, especially in Padua.
I	Because of the flows, and so on?
P	Exactly.

I	One particular thing that I wanted to focus on is security. But I think what you're saying with security is that it's more symbolic, more rhetorical. But security is a focus, and it's related to a more general idea of protection of the culture within?
P	Yes. This was a symbolic policy, the security policy, absolutely.
I	So Bitonci was elected in 2014. And he's now just in the past two months been removed. So he had two years to make a difference. You say Padua is not a city of the Lega Nord, it is not a 'right-wing city', but Bitonci had the chance to change that. Do you see any real difference, any move to the right, in those two years?
P	It depends how the Partito Democratico is able to organise. I think that the real problem in Italy, but in Veneto more, is the capacity of propose a project of government of the region.
I	Of the whole Veneto region?
P	[0:32:42.2159] Yes. This is the weakness (<i>debolezza</i>), of the right party. Bitonci's chances do not depend on his strengths but on the alternatives of the centre left and the way they organize themselves. [In Italian: <i>Le chance di Bitonci dipendono non della forza di Bitonci ma dale alternative del centro sinistra di organizzarsi</i>]. In this moment I think that it's very important to understand who will be the candidate of the centre-left.
I	So the next election could be the same again?
P	Yes. I hope it won't be the same, to the other time, to Ivo Rossi. Because it was a great tragedy, the situation.
I	[0:33:49.7159] But are there other ways you can see an effect has been produced in viewpoints moved towards the Lega Nord? Or the lives of the outsiders affected, or security changing in the city? Are there factors that have really changed in these two years? Or do you think that it has just been talk?
P	I think the problem is to have a project of development of this city. What idea do you have of Padua, in the future? What is the Padua of which you dream? That you would like to propose, you being a leader of right or left? This is the question. I think the people of Padua are waiting for this. I am waiting for this. I would like to understand what is the political offer of this idea. Of the future of the town.
I	[0:35:11.9159] So in your opinion, the past two years haven't been a change to any of that.
P	It's been a time for people to continue to wait. Bitonci was able to stop everything. For example, the new hospital. That is a problem for the city. That was a topic that was discussed, discussed, discussed at the local level, at the regional level, at the university level. because we have a faculty of <i>medicina e clinica</i> , that is very important for the university of Padua. Padua is a university of the world, a very important node in the world network, not just in Veneto or Italy. Modern medicine was invented in Padua. It's very important because Padua is very important to the network of services related to this. So we have to decide for the new hospital, because this hospital has a lot of problems. It's quite small for the specializations, like cardiology, transplants. So we need a new hospital. We discuss where we have to build this new hospital. It was a problem that the last administration decided with the university and the region the location to build. Bitonci stopped this decision, and decided on another place. Another place that was very...was next to the <i>Padua Este autostrada</i> . A chaotic place.
I	[0:38:30.1159] And the previous plan was more within the city?
P	Yes. But this place was very horrible for the hospital. So the project was stopped and it's quite complicated situation, because the region, that is Lega Nord too, stopped Bitonci's decision. So in this moment we have no local government, so everything is on standby. The problem is that Bitonci stopped this solution.

I	[0:39:18.0160] So why was it a problem for Bitonci, this previous location?
P	It was a problem just because it was the previous administration's decision and not the decision of the Lega Nord. And for this reason only.
I	There was no reason he wanted it to be by the <i>autostrada</i> ?
P	No. Maybe for speculative reasons.
I	Because you could sell the hospital site?
P	Maybe for this reason. But not for strategic or logistic reasons.
I	And he himself, didn't explain why?
P	No, I think that the real reason is not well explained.
I	The region says no, it will be built where it was originally agreed between the left. So this is a good example, of Bitonci stopping something happening, but it's also an example of its irrelevance?
P	[0:40:53.1160] Padua, and Veneto need a new hospital. But it's not just the hospital of Padua, it's the hospital of the region, of Italy, of the world, because it's a very important place for the development of modern medicine. So the development of the region, not only of Padua, was stopped.
I	And this is why the region said "you need to build it", because it's important for Veneto.
P	Exactly.
I	[0:41:28.8160] It shows a weakness in thinking of the Lega Nord as a coherent party. It seems you have different individuals, Tosi, Saia, Bitonci, and even at the different levels, you have the Lega Nord of small towns, of the Veneto region. And the ideas are so different, they don't seem to work together.
P	It is. It's different concepts of development. Local, closed; or local, open. You know: 'glocal'. 'Glocal' is absolutely not Lega Nord! Lega Nord is just tradition, dialect, territory, to go back and not to go on.
I	[0:42:47.3160] For someone who doesn't like the Lega Nord, who thinks the Lega Nord's ideas are bad, then is this quite good news to you? Because the Lega Nord is limited, they can govern small towns, but nothing bigger.
P	In fact this is the problem. The Lega Nord is quite adaptable to the local culture to govern the local administration, but it's very problematic for the city, the town, the region, and the national administration.
I	But it's very hard for them to get power in anything bigger than very small towns?
P	The problem is you cannot think that the Veneto region is the sum of local administrations. You have to decide, you as the regional government, what is the strategic plan to develop the region?
I	Is there a regional strategic plan?
P	If you think about this, you have to understand that the central Veneto is here [pointing to map], this is the metropolitan area, that you have to valorise, to develop, because the city, these cities, are the motor of regional development. But Lega Nord does not have this concept of development.
I	Yes - their ideas are protection, conservation, don't change, tourism is key, tradition is key?

P	Another example was the tourism law, the regional law on tourism. The law is the 11/2013. I have written an article about this. It is a policy for Italy especially, and a very important policy for the strategic development of the territory. Because Italy is very rich in cultural and artistic resources. So the problem is that we have to organise the offer of tourism from the sector into a territorial approach. At this time we have a national strategy, and the different regional laws, to organise in the territorial context this idea of territorial policy. Tourism, or we say 'destination management'. [0:47:21.4161] For example, I can say for Veneto and Emilia-Romagna there are different cultures about this. In Emilia-Romagna, they have decided to organise three different destination managements: the sea and beaches of Romagna, the cities on the coast; the central, Bologna, and other cities; and the west, the other cities: of Piacenza, Parma. Three different 'destination managements'.
I	Three different strategies?
P	Yes, three different 'destination managements'. [0:48:54.9161] In Veneto, we have the regional law, that was with Lega Nord in government, that decided to valorize the different local resources. So for example, the beach of Venezia, in the north of Emilia-Romagna, over the Delta del Po, we have for example in this place, five different 'destination managements', just on the coast. How many different municipalities? One, two, three, four, five different 'destination managements'! So: fragmentation.
I	[0:48:54.9161] Why?
P	Because it's the culture of Veneto. Of the 'white' culture of Veneto. Extreme localism. Very difficult to connect and organise an inter-municipal network.
I	So from a Lega Nord perspective, this is more respectful to local culture?
P	Yes
I	But it has the negative side-effect that it's not possible to co-ordinate.
P	Exactly.
I	And what is the effect of that?
P	This is the problem of Veneto.
I	What is the problem that results, from a lack of co-ordination on a regional level, what is the effect?
P	The effect is that we have no co-ordination. So for example we have in Venice, 17,000,000 tourists a year. But we have no connection with the other places of tourism in Veneto.
I	[0:51:33.8161] So without the co-ordination, people don't go...
P	To the other side, to the coast, into the mountains, the Dolomites, to the artistic places like Cappella degli Scrovegni or Terme Euganee [both in the province of Padua]. We don't have the co-ordination of the offer.
I	So you don't get the flows of tourists between the places. So Emilia-Romagna you would...
P	Organise at the regional level.
I	But the effect is you would see in Emilia-Romagna tourists travelling from the beach to the cities, and so on.
P	Yes, because there are services, a network of services, transport and facilities for example for tickets. This affects transport policy, advertising. So you have an idea that other places exist, so you go to visit. In Veneto we have a lot of touristic resource. Venice first of all, but also Verona, Padua, the Dolomite mountains, the beaches, but it's not connected, not co-ordinated,

	in this different context. so everything is....
I	[0:53:16.6162] So fragmentation is a really key concept, not only in tourism, but on other areas, such as transport?
P	The original idea you have is that the <i>modo di regolazione</i> of Veneto is localistic, was historically, and is now, localistic. Maybe you can find the reason. In Veneto, the countryside was fragmented into small pieces. Consider the historical context. [0:54:38.5162] You can see here. It's a study of Italian history. We have to start from this problem. We have the cleavage of the centre from the periphery. And the local associations are strong with the Lega Nord, having been historically in the origin of the Italian state. But we have this legacy from this problem. And the Lega Nord are only the tip of the iceberg.
I	[0:55:49.4162] There was a work of Bagnasco, regarding the different colours of Italian political cultures?
P	Exactly – I reference Bagnasco.
I	[0:56:35.0162] I think the idea of fragmentation and localism is central to this.
P	[0:57:51.4162] Yes. I think this is the problem of Italian political system. Because Veneto, more than Emilia-Romagna, is a prototype of the Italian problem: fragmentation. It's quite difficult to govern the Italian system [laughs]. I hope you will share what you write on this with me. It would be interesting for me to read how you, an English researcher, reads an Italian case. [0:58:14.8162] You know the Regional Studies Association? I think it could be interesting to present something together, about the Italian case, maybe in comparison with another. I would like to try and participate about this. I was at a conference in Manchester regarding this problem of territorial government and development. I am the director of a master's course, 'Government of Networks of Local Development', in which we try to form the management of networks, because we have the problem of connecting the different parts, the local municipalities, small enterprises. This is my first work in this university, because this is a very important offer. It's a point of weakness of Veneto local governments.

9.2.8 Professor of Political Science, University of Padua

Interviewer: Veronica Conte

Participant: Professor of Political Science, University of Padua

Date: 18 January 2017

Reference: PaduaInt2

English translation:

Interviewer	Fred is carrying out a master's thesis, a comparison between urban governments led by right-wing populist coalitions. He is working on Wels in Austria and Padua in Italy. The objective of his research is to understand the impact of contextual factors on urban politics, in particular on security policy. To begin, we'd like to have some information on your background, your research field and your connection with the city of Padua.
Participant	I begin with the last part. I know Padua because I've been living here for 23 years. I was a resident and citizen of the city from 1993 to 2014; now I live in a province 20km to the north. I teach Political Science at the university. Therefore I know the Paduan urban context both as a citizen and as a worker. Regarding myself, I work above all on democracy, the quality of democracy, social capital in particular applied to the Italian political system and its sub-cultures (those that in the past that were the territorial political sub-cultures, of Veneto and Tuscany above all). Another focus of my work is political parties. These are my research interests.

	My approach is historical political science. I'm working on it with a national research group, created last year, and directed by me and my colleague [redacted] of the University of Florence. Within this group there's also the SISP and political scientists and historians from universities all over Italy. Our aim is to produce interdisciplinary research able to intertwine contributions from different disciplines: political science, contemporary and local history, and political sociology. The underlying idea is that Political Science and Sociology must intertwine with a strong drive from history.
I	I would say that we can start with an outline of the interview...
P	If I can be useful, I would say that I probably can't answer all your questions!
I	What is the level of autonomy of the local government in Padua in relation to the other scales of government, such as national or regional, and within the government coalition?
P	The local government in Italy has dramatically changed over time. In particular, the major transformation happened during the 1990s. In 1993, the national government introduced a law on the direct election of mayors, and that happened in particular for a specific reason. It was a time of political crisis that brought about the disappearance of all the parties that had founded the Republic: the Christian Democrats (DC), the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Liberal Party, the Social-Democratic Party. All of these parties disappeared and there was a severe crisis of legitimacy for the party system, that came out in 1992 but had been brewing for some time. To face these crises, that were threatening national democratic life, the parliament tried to implement some reforms, also driven by referendums, such as the national electoral law. With regard to the law on municipalities, the parliament produced a law on the direct election of mayors. In other words, the parliament said "since we have to face this crisis of legitimacy of the national institutions, and citizens have a better relationship and more trust in municipal government, let's try to concentrate the change and the regeneration of Italian politics starting from the municipal level". In this way, the idea was to change the rules of the game, to make the municipal institutions less dependent on the actions of the national parties... The mayor of a city was influenced by the discipline and initiatives of the national parties they belonged to: in those years, even if the mayor was strong enough, he was still able to have his political agenda. I was born in Brescia and for more than 30 years we had a mayor from the DC, that was able to have a powerful relationship with his party. Before the change of the law in some cases when the majority, and as a consequence the mayor and the council, could change depending on the state of the relationship between the parties at the national level. Following the 1993 law, this couldn't happen anymore. The direct election of the mayor was accompanied by the direct election of the city council, and in cases of a crisis of the majority, the mayor cannot be replaced by the city council without another election. This is what happened with Bitonci: having lost the trust of part of his majority, he was not replaced by another component of the city council but we fell back on a new election. This change is really important, because in almost every case, it gives more power to the mayor. And in case the mayor has some issues with the parties in their coalition, they can resign, thus triggering a crisis within the city council. This is a strength of the mayor in respect with the parties. Many times when there are conflicts between national leaders and mayors, one of the rhetoric resources that the latter use is: "I'm a mayor elected by the people". This point has further enhanced the figure of the mayor, but this doesn't mean that the mayor doesn't run a risk, because he can be impeached. The electoral law is in two rounds: in cities with more than 15,000 inhabitants, in case the majority isn't reached by one of the candidates in the first round, you go to a second round, that consists of a <i>ballottaggio</i>, in which the top candidates are presented. As an example: if candidate A gains 40% of the votes, candidate B 32%, candidate C 7%, A and B go to the <i>ballottaggio</i>. At this point a new game begins. The mechanism of <i>ballottaggio</i> is extremely interesting and makes the game more open. Because you can have new alliances in the second round. In sum, this change has given the mayor more power and somehow parties have less

	influence than in the past.
I	How much influence does the level of autonomy have on the implementation of security policy?
P	Sorry but I didn't reply to a small part of the question about the Lega Nord. In this region, the Lega Nord has a very strong consensus because it has been a party that has gained more than 30% of votes for a long time. Padua, however, has never been an area where the Lega Nord has reached that level of consensus. The consensus of the Lega Nord has often been outside of the bigger cities. In recent years however, particularly in relation to the question of security, Lega Nord has focused on these issues even more than in the past, and has succeeded in obtaining consensus in Padua too. So much that they succeeded in getting a strong candidate into the centre-right coalition that eventually won the election. Regarding the level of autonomy and the effect on security policy, there is a very relevant level of autonomy, introduced during the Berlusconi government, when the Interior Minister was Roberto Maroni, now President of the Lombardy Region. Mayors were made more autonomous, and they could implement ad hoc laws to face criminal episodes and decay. The so-called <i>ordinanze anti-degrado</i> (anti-decay laws) leave a certain freedom in the interpretation of what is meant by decay, and on the phenomena and episodes that can be acted upon by the mayor.
I	So, that means there was not an explicit definition of what decay is, therefore there was more freedom to act...
P	Exactly. I think that on this specific topic, the best person you can talk to is either a constitutional or administrative expert. The issue is also being discussed by legal experts because as a matter of fact it gives more power to mayors.
I	Do you have someone in particular to recommend?
P	[Redacted] from the University of Padua. He's an expert in constitutional law, very well informed on the balance of powers. I also recommend you to have a chat with legal experts because they can give you very precise information from the legislative point of view.
I	What is the level of legitimacy of the government of Padua. How much legitimacy does the approach adopted by the Lega Nord on security have within the city?
P	Legitimacy is a difficult concept to grasp in social sciences. Max Weber said that it has to do with something palpable, and it grows within a relationship. People who are subject to power are those who recognise legitimacy. We can't measure it objectively but we can obtain it from a relationship. Naturally, at least in this part of the country, there is a higher level of trust in the local government than in the central one. There is quite a strong tendency that gives more advantage to the regions than the municipalities. Having said that, I think that there are different reasons why Massimo Bitonci won the election in 2014 in a convincing manner (the first round was balanced, his victory was very strong at the second round). One of the reasons has surely to do with the issue of security because that was stressed strongly during his electoral campaign. Bitonci chose a topic that he took ownership of from the beginning. Other candidates tried to follow him but in these things it's 'the law of the first occupant' [<i>first come first served</i>]. This is something that surely had an impact. Since 2007 Bitonci was mayor of Cittadella, a small city that's very pretty, beautiful and well-ordered. Cittadella represented a model that Bitonci used as a best practice in his candidacy, as in that town there weren't security issues. This was a good brand. I also believe that some of his rivals underestimated that and were wrong when they said: "He comes from Cittadella, how can he think he could govern Padua?". Every time that he was attacked for this reason, I think that in reality he benefited from this. In the collective conscious, Cittadella - surely smaller than Padova - was a very well-ordered city and therefore, as a matter of fact, Bitonci represented a good administrator.

	There is another important topic to take into consideration, the objective difficulty of his rivals from the centre-left. The latter was undergoing a very complicated governing experience. The previous mayor, Flavio Zanonato, was already mayor for two terms from 1993-1999, and the latest from 2004-2009, and he was re-elected again in 2009. He was in his fourth term, and this is quite unusual in Italy. In the middle of his legislation, the fourth term was interrupted because Zanonato was called to become a minister of the national government. This meant the position transferred to the vice-mayor, Ivo Rossi, who was subsequently a candidate in the election. The primary election showed some problems in the centre-left: Ivo Rossi won but with little more than the <i>Lista Civica</i> candidate. The worst thing about the primary election was that the second candidate didn't support Rossi but decided to run as a candidate himself. That was a terrible blow to the centre-left that brought disorientation, tensions, conflicts, a modest result at the first round and defeat in the second. Therefore, to understand of Bitonci you need to consider: his appeal, the theme of security, his ability to present this theme as the central campaign to the electorate and to be perceived as reliable, and the crisis of the centre-left.
I	Are the security policies of the Lega Nord a continuation of the previous administration? What were the innovative elements introduced by the Lega Nord?
P	Bitonci's experience strongly belonged to the security approach of Lega Nord, above all since it has been guided by Matteo Salvini as leader. Lega Nord has changed over time. The '90s Lega Nord, at least in the North East of Italy, underwent a strong transformation. That Lega Nord had an inclination towards security but it was principally federalist, almost secessionist. Salvini's Lega is more nationalist and oriented to find new synergies with the Front National in France, for instance. This Lega is very different from the Lega Nord of Bossi. If you talk about Bitonci, what emerges is neither federalism nor autonomy but the security theme. There is a certain convergence between the political offer of Bitonci and that of the Lega. We have to say that the centre-left dealt with this theme (security) in the past. Zanonato was very sensitive to the theme of security and tried to deal with it using different measures which had a very strong symbolic impact (e.g. the wall at Via Anelli to reclaim a zone that had some real governance issues). Some called him "the Red Sheriff". This is to say that the theme was not completely ignored by the Centre-Left but evidently Bitonci was the first one to be perceived as straightforward, credible and authentic.
I	What is the level of legitimacy of the Lega Nord at the national level?
P	I'm not very convinced by the concept of legitimacy, because it's very difficult to evaluate. I can deduce the level of consensus from some tools like polls. I would rather stay on this level. Lega Nord is a party that plays this game at the national level. Polls give the party above 10% and sometimes even close to 15%. Therefore we can say that the Lega has a significant level of consensus. Nevertheless this doesn't mean it can be a governing alternative and can become the first party in the centre-right. The Lega is growing also in other areas where it wasn't historically present. Salvini is perceived as a good leader of the right, even in areas that don't belong to the 'Padania' area. But, watch out! The Lega in Veneto is also a different thing. Here it's much stronger than the national average, also because a number of local administrators are identified as good administrators, even by their rivals. Additionally, the Lega in Veneto has Luca Zaia who, according to polls, is the most popular Regional President in Italy. Zaia focuses on the theme of security along with other classic Lega's themes: autonomy, federalism, local government. This is very significant. I remember that the most popular party of the last regional election in Veneto was not the Lega Nord, but Zaia's list. In other words, the voters preferred the governor. Therefore, the Lega is very strong in the North East because of the theme of security but also because it manages to interpret the local political culture, based on anti-statist localism. Compared to the electorate of the right, that of Lega Nord has specific characteristic: it doesn't trust the national state or the capital, it prefers to trust the local government. Here politics is perceived as something close to the citizen. This is a strength of Lega in this area, more than in others.

I	What is the main rhetoric used by Lega Nord? What are the problems defined by the Lega Nord? You mentioned previously the emphasis on the theme of security...
P	Security but also criminality. The idea is that the two themes are linked to 'clandestine' (illegal) immigration. In addition, there is also deep polemic against Europe and the Euro. The leader of the Lega declared Euro to be a failed currency. The idea of Europe is refused as it is considered as a supranational construction that dispossesses the people of the sovereignty. Therefore the major themes are globalisation, Europe, the Euro. During the '90s, Europe was seen as a great opportunity. The Lega was initially pro-Europe, as it was sceptical towards Italian politics.
I	Have there been changes in the rhetoric around security in Padua?
P	This aspect would require monitoring of the different declarations made. We need a more systematic work for that. What I can say, according to a project that we are carrying out with the <i>Corriere del Veneto</i>, is that security was a frequently used theme during the 2014 electoral campaign, in particular by the centre-right candidates. Regarding this Bitonci was surely very efficient. Having said so, I think the answer to this question requires a weekly and monthly analysis of the evolution of rhetoric. But for this I don't think I can give you a precise answer, so I prefer not to. I can safely say that the theme [security] is central. When Bitonci was impeached, one of the first things he declared was that, from that moment on, nobody would be able to guarantee security. Somehow, he stressed the idea that with him citizens would feel more secure. I believe this theme will re-emerge in the next electoral campaign.
I	Can you tell us a little more about the political agenda of the Lega Nord in Padua?
P	The political agenda of Lega Nord concerned the theme of security, the arrival of refugees and the hospital in Padua. This last one hasn't found a solution yet, as we don't know where it will be built and which site will host it. The conflicts over this theme are not only around political forces but also internal because of different interests and opinions. We are talking about an invasive operation for the city that is also contentious in terms of the costs. The interruption of the legislation arrived before a solution was found. And so this theme will return in the next electoral campaign.
I	How have the urban policies changed since Lega Nord has been in government? What have the principal changes been in security policy?
P	Regarding this, we need some more data. I would recommend you someone. However I believe investment has been very strong from a symbolic point of view. It would be interesting to have data to understand what has actually been done. We agree that with the local government of Lega Nord there is more police in the street but we don't know if that has had a concrete effect in terms of reduction of crime. You should to local journalists. In particular, [redacted] has an excellent understanding of the local context.
I	Do think there has been a turn to the right in Padua? If yes, how much has Lega Nord influenced that?
P	We'll see with the next election. The composition of the electorate in Padua is quite competitive and nobody, since the early '90s, could have ever felt sure of winning the election. There is a certain balance between centre-right and centre-left, to which you now must add <i>Cinque Stelle</i>. There is surely a significant result of the mayor's Lega candidate, that has gained a strong consensus in the city. However, I don't know if this consensus will be enough to win the election as he doesn't have the support of all of the centre-right. A centrist option could be created, that brings together Forza Italia, PD, and other parties of the centre. We will need to see how the political forces will line up. I wouldn't say that there's been a turn to the right but rather a certain affirmation of the Lega candidate and his themes. It is still an option and the next election will be very competitive.

I	Do you believe there is a connection between the theme, the rhetoric around security and social exclusion in Padua?
P	Maybe! But I would also like to invert the question: it may be the way that the rhetoric regarding the issue of the refugee emergency and their reception affects citizens' perceptions and their demand for security. If we talk about these issues in terms of invasion, it's to be expected that the citizen will demand more protection through security policies. Probably, diffused forms of reception can have diverse effects. I also suggest you talk with [redacted] about this, in order to understand how you can find data and indices about this, perhaps even through a simple press review.
I	Any comments? Do you have anything to add?
P	The thesis is really interesting, I thought it is a doctoral thesis. It is very good! If he was a PhD student, I would recommend more case studies. A French case would be very interesting. I would suggest referring to a longer time frame, for instance to take into account the whole of the Second Republic, when the direct election of mayors was introduced, because since then the theme of security has emerged even more.

9.2.9 Journalist, *Corriere del Veneto*

Interviewer: Fred Paxton

Participant: Journalist, *Corriere del Veneto*

Date: 19 January 2017

Reference: PaduaInt4

Interviewer	What I'm trying to investigate is local government led by parties of the populist far-right, such as the Lega Nord or the Freedom Party in Austria, or the Front National in France. What I'm interested in is, in different countries, how much impact on the city, these different parties have. So, in Italy, whether certain things in the structure, or the culture, or individuals...
Participant	Well, I think it's a complicated matter, because of different factors. It's something connected with economic factors, with the great downturn. You know, Veneto was one of the well-off regions in Europe, during the 80s and 90s. It was very well-off. Even considering the low cost of the time, before the introduction of the Euro, it was very rich. And when Veneto was very rich, there was not such a crisis. Instead, we are on the edge of a big financial, economic and social crisis here in Veneto. I think that the left-wing party became out of touch with less wealthy classes; fell out of touch with reality, really. The left-wing has a great influence on some layers of society, and some parts of society, like universities, the church, public employees. However, it lost touch with very poor people and of course someone introduced himself as 'the god', who can solve the problems of these people. If you consider the language of the former mayor here in Padua, Bitonci, he's a very popular, very common, popular Italian. And he does so, using this simple language. He says: "I'm part of you, I can solve your problem, I can share your problem". Maybe he's not part of the poor - he's a former member of the parliament, he's a well-off person - but using simple language. Sometimes there are snooty people, but he's a very popular person.
I	[0:04:19.5167] Were there certain things in his language, which so appealed to people, that he focussed on?
P	Yes, you know, consider the question of migrants. To say "no", I must admit is a very simple recipe to solve a problem, but it is a recipe indeed. What is the recipe of the left-wing? When we consider the society is not rich, it's no longer rich, simple recipes are stronger.
I	So migrants were one focus?

P	Yes.
I	[0:05:19.2168] I'm interested in the period between 2014, when Bitonci was elected mayor, and recently when he was forced out.
P	You know, the migrant crisis actually started in the same period in which he was elected. So it was a very strong card to play, because, of course, there are many unemployed people with no work. And so this social crisis had a strong impact on the election. It may have a strong impact now when a new election happens, in some months here in Padua. I think that Bitonci is going to win again. Against all [inaudible], he's going to win again because he has to face the same conditions he had to face two years ago.
I	[0:06:52.6168] Some people have said 2014 wasn't so much a victory for the Lega Nord as a defeat for the left?
P	Well, the left-wing candidate was stabbed in the back by his party and by other personalities of the same area. It is quite common. And now I think it is the same situation of 2014, if you consider that different candidates in the left-wing... It is difficult to say which particular area Bitonci may represent because there are the poor, there are industrialists, it's a very complicated world.
I	Yes, so because Padua is a city and it's mixed...[Interruption]
P	And so, I think the situation is not so different, in comparison to the situation of 2014. And so I think that there's the same chance [of Bitonci winning] as that period. Even because, of course, the left-wing is dispersed in a variety of small groups - very influential groups - but small groups that stabbed each, and that's the real situation in Padua. So-called 'populism', which is really a result of the social crisis, populism is much stronger when you don't have an alternative. And actually we have three or four left-wing alternatives. And so people are quite confused: "which one is right?". The left-wing might win if a coalition, and a credible coalition...they have to link together, and they have to decide to define a strategy, and a strategy, a very simple strategy I think, with four or five strategic points to follow. Otherwise, of course, the victory of the former mayor will happen again.
I	[0:12:23.6168] What do you think the main issues will be? Someone mentioned to me the new hospital that's planned?
P	Yes. Well, if you read the newspaper there is the football stadium, the hospital. I don't think that a football stadium is so important to people, to common people. The hospital is of course much more important. It is a question linked with bureaucracy, with regional politics, and so, even if the former mayor was not able to manage in this particular field, I don't think the average citizen thinks that it was his fault. Because it's quite a complicated matter with regional laws, bureaucracy, and it was quite ridiculous, the question of where to build the new hospital, because at first they choose a part of the town, and then they choose another, and then they choose another again.
I	[0:14:23.6168] And there was some sort of conflict between Bitonci and the regional institutions about the location?
P	Yes. I think that Bitonci doesn't have any link or real influence on the whole bureaucratic class of this town. Notwithstanding so, he has a big impact on common people. I think it's a really common situation, not only in Padua, but in Europe generally, with the left-wing out of touch with common people but a strong power in the bureaucracy, and then this kind of figure like Bitonci.
I	Who speaks in a way that people like, but...it sounds like that makes it very difficult for him to change things?

P	Yes.
I	Do you see any big changes that have happened over the two years?
P	No.
I	Just words?
P	You know, a mayor doesn't have any real power, and so he has a very small amount of power. Everything you can do, someone can get a court to say "this is wrong, we have problems" and so generally in Italy it's very complicated to do something. For instance, we have to admit that he did was connect [sic] the timing of the shops. Now, even more than the shops, in the restaurants and bars in the centre you can get something drink now after midnight. It was a recipe of the former mayor, and I must admit he did well in this instance, because of course it's a university town.
I	[0:17:35.9169] So the change was to allow them to open later?
P	Yes.
I	And that's good for city life, the economy?
P	Yes, that's good for city life, the economy, and of course, for the students. We have 60,000 students in this town, a town of 200,000. It's a big part of the town. It was a brilliant idea I think. He did little changes in many aspects of this town. Like little infrastructures all around the town, like if you see there, there is a new roundabout. But of course there's not a great plan for this town.
I	No overall strategy?
P	No overall strategy. The left-wing says we can have an overall strategy, but it is an overall strategy based on terms that common people don't understand. For instance, we talk of smart cities or something like that. I don't think that people really understand what a smart city is. And so, instead he [Bitonci] did little things like roundabouts...Well, some people think that he had mostly a negative impact on the common mentality and they say "with Bitonci, the town is less important than before, because of his choices against migrants". Well, I'm not really sure about that. I think the left-wing has to be more practical, more wise, and more in touch with common people. Otherwise it is condemned to [inaudible].
I	[0:21:00.4169] You say that some people think he had a negative impact on the mentality of people in the town, because of his approach to migrants?
P	Some people think that he has quite a deep impact, in the sense that he reinforces, strengthens some negative sentiments against migrants.
I	And therefore, Padua becomes more of a 'Lega Nord city'? Because it was quite a shock, a new thing for them to vote for the Lega Nord in 2014?
P	Yes, well Bitonci won the election, and Bitonci is going to win the next election. I don't think Lega Nord without Bitonci, without the charismatic personality, is going to be a strong party. it is not. I don't think that Lega Nord without Bitonci is a strong party. Bitonci using a popular message, popular language, well of course, he's a very strong character.
I	So people are voting for him as a person and what he can do, rather than the party?
P	Yes.
I	[0:22:46.3169] But I also see that, if you say that the mentality has changed in some ways, you could say the mentality has changed in a way that's more favourable to the Lega Nord?

P	No. I don't think so. I think that in this particular period, without any reference to parties, I think that the more important thing is the personality, the character of the single man in charge. And you know, this man in charge represents the mentality of someone in this town.
I	Because of the language that he uses, and the small concrete changes that are made?
P	Yes, it's a simple recipe. It's a very simple recipe.
I	[0:24:32.6170] An interesting thing about Padua is how diverse it is. I read about the Via Anelli wall, and this is a long-standing issue. Do you think people of different races and backgrounds have been affected by Bitonci's time?
P	Well, this is quite connected with economic factors. Before there were a lot of general industries, which were able to get people from everywhere, because of the low standard of these jobs. And so during the 90s, and the first decade of the new century, a lot of people coming from everywhere found a job because these jobs weren't specialized. Now, all these general industries are closed, because of the downturn, because of the Euro. A lot of industrialists opened up industries in Asia, Morocco, before the revolution. Now, it is much more complicated to integrate these migrants, because even industries are searching for specialized and very competent workers.
I	[0:26:54.2170] So even though Padua still has a big industrial area, the types of jobs have changed?
P	Of course, it's completely changed, it's more skilled. They're looking for very, very skilled workers. People with experience, and people who studied for that job. The new industry is quite complicated, because you have to know a lot of things about electronics, about mechatronics [sic]. The reality is there is no place for migrants in this new kind of industry. And this is a big problem because before the state didn't do anything but the industry found these people a job. Now, what can we do? If I lost my job as a journalist, I wouldn't be able to find a job as a worker! Before they got people from everywhere, people without skills. The economy permitted that, but now it's changed a lot.
I	[0:28:44.8170] So this means you must have a problem with unemployment and other related problems?
P	Yes, I don't think that people from Padua are racist, or something like that. In this district of town, I think that one third of the people is from everywhere. If you go in that little street, you can meet people from the Phillipines, Romania, North Africa, China. Like in England or the United States, it's the same thing. These people are, I think, well integrated into society. I'm very happy to see a big group of children after school, when they walk through the street, and one is black and one is white and one is yellow: for them it's no problem, and fortunately there's really no problem. But I think the new people who came in the last year, or are going to come immediately or in the next months, these new people may have some problem. Because when you don't have a job, it's difficult to integrate, you don't learn the language, and when you don't learn the language of course you don't have the social results, social links. It is quite complicated.
I	Arriving without a job is going to make learning the language and socialization much harder; and nothing is really being done by the city, or the region, to help with that process of job creation or integration?
P	I think that nothing is going to be done. And that's because we have no money. Ten years ago, in a richer society, it was easier to find a job, part of a budget, and say "I want to help those people". But now, in this particular period, the state doesn't have money to help these peoples. And so it's quite complicated to help them. Of course, some little experience, social co-operation, can help someone. But we have to think about a massive migration, not a little number. We are thinking about big politics, and no mayor can solve a problem connected with big politics, only the government can really help migrants. Now a lot of people enter this country but, after all, what can we offer? Really, what can we offer them? I think it's not something connected with racism. Maybe there are some people with ideas, as everywhere in

	Europe, or the world, but it's a very small group who are racist or Nazi, or something like that, and it doesn't influence common people.
I	So you think that it's not racism, but people think that the economy can't integrate people, in the way that it's structured now?
P	Yes, it is that people think in this particular period it's difficult to integrate people coming from everywhere. Because there's no longer a general industrial structure which can help them and find them a job.
I	And therefore, the simple recipe to say "we need to stop it then" becomes...
P	Yes, becomes a solution.
I	It's effective.
P	Of course, it's only words. Because of course, the migrant policy isn't connected with the mayor, it's national. You can't say: "no, I don't want those people". The government sends you them. But the only thing to say [inaudible] as a politician.
I	But it is just words?
P	Yes, of course. You know, it is something regulated by the government, not by the municipality of course. It is connected with European laws and national laws.
I	[0:36:07.6171] I suppose it could impact the national government, if the actions in the city work to change mindsets, and therefore convince more people to vote for a different national government in the national elections, and therefore at a later date the national policy towards migrants could change as a result?
P	It may appear a mayor doesn't have any power, and the government has a big power. But for the common people, the mayor has a lot of power and the government doesn't. Because of course the first person you can meet in the town is the mayor. And you think he can help you. Even for a traditional mentality, if you've got a problem, you go to the mayor and you speak with him. And so it appears to me, the two layers - the government and local administration - are so deeply divided in this period. There isn't a real link, they are one against another, especially in this matter. Especially in the migrant matter.
I	[0:38:04.2171] And how does the regional government, Veneto, fit in? Is it a conflict involving all three: the local, the regional and the national?
P	Well, the government of the Veneto is led by the Lega Nord, and it's sometimes in a big contest with the government of the country which is much more left-wing. It is a left-wing government with Renzi, Gentiloni. It is quite separated from the local government. You know, the situation of the region reflects the situation of the town. Bitonci counts much more than Lega Nord. In the region, Zaia counts much more than the Lega Nord. People voted for Zaia and not for the Lega Nord. Without Zaia, the Lega Nord counts for very little.
I	So it's the same for the local and the regional?
P	The individual is much more important than the party. I think that maybe we shall have an autonomy referendum...I don't think that it will really happen, and even if it happens, of course it is not going to change a lot, because of course autonomy for a region means very little in this time. You can't have the same level of autonomy as Trentino-Alto Adige and other Germanic regions in Italy. You can have very little autonomy from the state. But if you say you'll do an autonomy referendum, you can consolidate your particular audience in the public, and that's what it's going to be with Zaia. Zaia is a very strong character and he won the second election. I think that even in this case, even in the last regional election in 2015...[inaudible]. [0:42:10.4171] As you can see there's a [inaudible] situation between the town and the region, which is mostly influenced by the strategic weakness of the left-wing party. I think a left-wing

	party, united and led by a strong character, may win again in Italy, in Padua and the region. But there is no hope! Frankly speaking, when you speak with a left-wing politician, it tends to happen, he speaks with his partner from the same party, so he's not believable in a general election. If you remember the English philosopher, Hobbes - "the war of all against all" - it's the same thing [laughs]!
I	So a big change is needed before something can be done?
P	In the past, the left-wing party was very, very strong. It had a big, big impact on manufacturing, with the lower classes, with the middle classes. In the last ten years, the party spent a lot of time consolidating its power within the institutions, and spent no time consolidating amongst the people. This was a terrible mistake. I think that in this particular period, the left-wing is paying the price for its mistakes.
I	Their paying and the Lega Nord is receiving?
P	Yes. Because, you know, in this period, the left-wing parties are very, very important in the university, of course. In Italy, the university is not like Oxford or the American ones. It's very difficult to get a job without a political sponsor. It's sad to say, but it's true. And the truth is the left-wing has a strong power in the university, and sometimes the left-wing was able to put someone in university without any competence. And this is a big problem. Usually, the left-wing in this period has a big influence on public employment.
I	In academic roles?
P	Yes. [Interruption]
I	[1:03:13.1172] [The economy of Veneto] is more balanced?
P	Yes, you can see very small industries everywhere in Veneto. And these industries grant jobs to workers, and so the money is much more spread (than in the UK). One thing to help understand the situation, connected with the fiscal residue [sic]: the difference between the public spending and the fiscal levy here in Veneto. In 2012, this imbalance was very, very strong, it was remarkable. According to an estimate made by a famous study, it was nearly €18.2bn, and so it was €3,300 per inhabitant. And so in a family: €9-13,000. So a lot of money, and you know, this money is for the south of the country. Before the economic downturn, this was not a problem, because people here were very wealthy. Now with the downturn, of course, it's going to be a problem to maintain the unemployed in the south of this country.
I	So some of this money is being redistributed to the south?
P	Yes, to the central administration, but of course it's a sort of devolution to the south of the country.
I	Well, of course this is something the Lega Nord is always saying is a problem.
P	Yes. That sum refers to 2012, and this imbalance has gone downward a little, because of the unemployment benefits, the lay-off benefits for a lot of people, a lot of general industries closed after the crisis, and so a great number of payoff benefits were paid by the state. So this imbalance has declined recently. Anyway, Veneto gives a little and receives very little from the central state. This is one of the reasons for the electoral victories for the Lega Nord I think. It's much more an economic factor than a social factor.
I	And you say the residents of the Veneto take less, because, for instance, there's less unemployment benefit being taken. And the structure is more small businesses...

P	Ok, I try to make it clear. Before, in 2012, there was a big difference. Now this is lowered, because the state gave much more money then in unemployment benefits to the Veneto. And yes, I think the south is taking less now from here [Veneto]. Because of course in this period, there are problems even here, so of course this may have an impact on the south of the country.
I	[1:09:18.3173] Can I ask you about another area, about the security of the town?
P	Ah, the security. When you look at the newspaper, Padua seems to be a place for gangsters and criminals. Well, in reality, in Veneto generally we have two or three murders from 4 million people. We usually have 15 murders in the whole region. Of course, it's not a great number. If Veneto was a country, it would be one of the most secure countries in the world. 15-20 murders for the region, which actually has 5 million inhabitants, so it's a very, very small number. Anyway, little crime, little criminality, is going to be more important, is going to have an impact on the mentality because of the quality of the crime, this criminality. Of course, in every period we had people who entering [inaudible] in order to rob, thieves, or something like that. Mostly now, those people come from the eastern region of Europe, and they're more violent, and so people are much more scared than before.
I	So the fear is higher?
P	Yes. I don't think the numbers have changed. I don't think that the figure, the percentage is changing in a relevant way. But I think that in the common mentality, the impact is strong when you see in the newspaper that thieves have beaten people in their homes. Well, it was not common here. We had thieves, but when they discovered you they escaped; now they beat you! So, people fear...And you know, it's quite difficult to stop the problem, because you can't say, they're European people, they're not from Africa, they're people from Romania, Bulgaria, they have a passport and they can go around all of Italy, Veneto and Lombardy, the richest regions in Italy are most important to them.
I	[1:13:44.5173] It was interesting yesterday, that I saw soldiers with guns in the Prato. Is that in relation to this?
P	I think that after the problem with terrorism, there are a lot of soldiers with guns. I don't know if they have a rule [sic] in the matter. You can say that it's more connected with anti-terrorism than anti-criminality. But honestly, we haven't had any problem with terrorism. But sometimes, someone goes to jail, but before doing anything, only for his belongings or belonging to a particular fanatical Islamic group. Fortunately we don't have any such problems.
I	Do you see any security changes over the past two years that have been made by Bitonci's government?
P	Well, Bitonci said he wanted to have a more secure town by using cameras, cameras everywhere. Honestly, I didn't see any changes. Maybe there are some video cameras, but usually people that are going to commit crimes are desperate people with 100 crimes already recorded by the police. We have a very big problem with very minor criminality. There are lots of bicycles disappearing everyday, but I don't think cameras would be useful, because they're desperate people. You can't arrest people for stealing a bicycle, you can only order them to present themselves in a criminal case.

9.2.10 Professor of Sociology, University of Milan

Interviewer: Fred Paxton

Participant: Sociology Professor, University of Milan

Date: 16 January 2017

Reference: PaduaInt5

Interviewer	It's an urban governance focused study. And I'm particularly interested in populist right wing politics. So I'm taking two case studies: Padua in Italy and Wels in Austria, two cities where the populist right are in control: the mayor with the majority council. So although there are many studies that are seeking to explain why people support such parties, I'm trying to do something a bit different and look at the impact that they make on the city. And whether there's evidence of the city being moved to the right, the city politics moving to the right. Or on the other hand if these parties are being softened, becoming more mainstream when in power. And the more particular focus for the master's thesis is security, and how they use security in the city.
Participant	Yes, I think we have to establish two points. The first one is that declared policies in general are a different thing from actual policies. Immigration is a field where this divergence is particularly wide. But in general declared policies in the past in this field, as in other social fields, were more liberal, more generous towards people. In general politicians promised huge efforts against poverty, or to welcome those in need. The reality is poor in comparison to declarations. The last years, the landscape has changed, the declared policies are often very adversarial. And then the reality is also less restrictive than promised. And the second point: we have to be more modest about the possibilities of politics, in constructing and producing social realities, social life. Northern Italy, Veneto, is a case in point. For years, immigration was driven by the market, as in the United States one hundred years ago. Employers in the economy needed immigrants, policies were not so inclusive, but also not able to stop immigration, that was needed by the market and Italian factories.
I	[0:03:47.7174] Are you talking about the time of internal migration as well, the movement from the South?
P	Also internal, but in the last 30 years international migration. Northern Italy, and in particular Lombardy and Veneto are the regions where the level of immigration is higher because of economic needs, the liberal market shortcomings, and the necessity to hire immigration to fill the voids in the labour market. It's not so important from this point of view. Less important when the national policy had established the framework in which immigrants are authorised to stay and to work, the fact that the mayor and the majority is not happy, is not so important. They cannot impede employers from hiring. So the national framework is important, much more than local policies [inaudible]. [0:05:25.7174] We have granted seven amnesties in 25 years. It means that the market has required a higher number of immigrants, and then policies have authorised migrants to stay. So, the economy has influenced, even determined, the national framework, and not the contrary.
I	I want to take a three-pronged approach with this study, where I think about the structure, as well as the culture and the individuals, as factors that influence how much impact these governments can make on the city. And in terms of the structure, I mean in terms of autonomy that the local government has. So what you're saying really, is that in that area there's very small amount of autonomy or power the local government has within the overall economic and political structure.
P	[0:06:47.2174] It is not indifferent, because for instance the message of hostility has an influence on behaviours of citizens towards immigrants. So I don't want to say that declared policies are indifferent, or the local government has no power in this field. But the general framework is not determined by local policy, when it is by the market for instance, the liberal market in particular. Furthermore, you have to take into account that governance of immigration, as probably of other social issues, is determined by many actors and forces. For

	instance, in this field, employers are an important actor, and [inaudible], the Catholic Church is an important actor, trade unions are an actor, and in some ways employers, more implicitly. You don't probably...you will not find official declarations of the confederation of the employers in Veneto saying that they want immigrants, but implicitly, by hiring them, they vote against the restrictive policies. And more openly, trade unions or the Catholic Church have conducted important battles against the policies of exclusion. And in some way, they have provided services to migrants that were excluded by official policies
I	This is the case in Padua?
P	Yes. Padua is an important case, things are even more complicated because in some way probably more than ten years ago, twenty years ago, local governments play a double game. Because officially they don't want to recognise rights or give official (inaudible) to immigrants and to irregular immigrants in particular. But when they fund some associations, co-operatives, some activities of the Catholic Church that give services for immigrants...
I	Without taking responsibility for the assistance? Or being <i>visibly</i> responsible?
P	The local government visibly don't recognise immigrants as [inaudible] of rights. They try to exclude them from some rights, but through the third sector, many immigrants can obtain some services they need. One case is medical care.
I	But it's a function...it's on purpose that the state, the local state, doesn't directly fund these initiatives, because it doesn't want to be seen by the population more widely that they are supporting them?
P	They want to continue to establish a divide between the native population and the newcomers. They want to give some satisfaction to the actors who claim for the exclusion of migrants' human rights. They enact some symbolic battles, against the mosques for instance, or against the acceptance of asylum seekers, some visible issues.
I	[0:10:31.6175] I read your paper that categorises the different exclusionary measures, which is very helpful. I think you broke it down into ten different areas.
P	Probably you can do the same. Study the official documents of the local governments, their decisions, their regulations on commerce, for instance, or limitations on ethnic trade. [0:12:35.9175] They are in Italian but I think that you understand. Another point is street-level bureaucracies, the civil servants are often not compliant with the restrictions decided by their political leaders. And they try in some ways to escape from limitations in the access of social services.
I	And you think that's a conscious resistance, more than a lack of power to implement a policy?
P	Both are possible. So, laziness...
I	Or ineffectiveness of the policy chain of command from implementation to execution?
P	As [inaudible] states: bureaucracies don't like discriminations, distinctions, different treatment. They prefer to apply the same rule to all the people who claim something. So there are also these reframing of behaviour.
I	[0:14:23.4175] Another area that I'm very interested in is the rhetorical function of it. And perhaps, for the Lega Nord, it's not so important whether it's implemented or not, but for them to be seen in the media to be making these changes. There's power in that on its own.
P	It's in part a symbolic battle. But probably the same will happen in the United States with Donald Trump. Already the fact that he promised to build a wall against Mexican immigration. The wall already exists! There were 300,000 deportations under the Obama presidency. Probably he will build another piece of wall, he will enact some more expulsions, he will give interviews or call the TV to show deportations. But there is not a radical change I'm sure. And

	he will not be able to deport 11 million irregular immigrants from the United States. [0:15:48.7176] So this is a field where symbolic battles are important. Also, the judicial power has a role. Also they block [inaudible] many decisions taken at the local level. For instance, against the veil. Some mayors in small villages decided not to allow the possibility to wear a veil. But the judges rejected this decision. In every case that was submitted to the courts.
I	So, it's still useful for them to say they tried to put this ban in place, and also it's the function of saying the 'elites', the judge, the judiciary, are blocking...
P	It's exactly what I wrote in the conclusion of my article. For them there is a symbolic game, a political game in any case. Even if they fail in practice to enact this kind of decision. I think also that there is such importance given to symbolic policies because in reality they have very little money to enact real policies. In this way, they distract the attention of the voters from the poverty of their policies, establishing a cultural and symbolic battleground at zero cost for them.
I	[0:18:12.2176] I suppose another question is how distinctive this is for the Lega Nord, and whether this is characteristic of Italian politics more generally?
P	Yes. Lega Nord is very vocal in this field, and often the more controversial policies were decided by governments in which the mayor was the Lega Nord. But in general, the centre-right follows. They feel their electors want this. They vote for them, exactly demanding a more restrictive attitude towards immigration. At the national level, it depends. For instance, the Italian government has continued to save asylum seekers in the sea, but have excluded them in other aspects. They have not, until now, changed the law on [inaudible], fearing a political cost. Because even if the two aspects, of relation [inaudible], for the right or Lega Nord, it's easy to establish a link, that you can say the government not only receives asylum seekers – 'clandestines', they say - but also gives them citizenship.
I	[0:20:40.8176] So you're saying at the national level, there's also this distance between what is said to be done and what is actually be done, in relation to immigration.
P	Yes, and they fear to lose votes, now they are...The new Ministry of Home Affairs has announced the establishment of new centres for the exclusions of irregular immigrants, to establish agreements with countries of origin for easy deportations for people without authorisation. They announced the creation of new centres for exclusion of irregular immigrants. So they have tried...they are trying to take a more restrictive attitude towards immigrants and asylum seekers in particular. Note that the Italians, including mainstream media and TV, are persuaded that Italy is under an invasion of new immigrants, that immigration is growing at an unprecedented scale. But this is not true. Immigration is stable. Asylum seekers are 3% of immigrants living in Italy. There is no invasion, but they don't look at data, they look at impressions.
I	The TV news?
P	Yes, but also on the Corriere della Sera, the mainstream, the main newspaper. Two or three days ago, there was an article saying that no country could bear such a huge flow of immigrants as Italy does in this moment. Oh my god! What is happening? [inaudible] about the variation in the number of immigrants in 2015, it was [inaudible] stable. The arrival of 170,000 asylum seekers doesn't change this general framework, because other immigrants leave.
I	[0:23:43.3176] You used the word 'distraction' before. So this is a sort of tactic of distraction? For example, in relation to the idea of 'post-democracy', that there isn't a kind of potential for much change through the political system as it is structured now. Could this be an example of a route by which parties have a means to hold on to power, giving them something with which the population can rally around, as opposed to economic measures, for instance?
P	The point is a bit more complicated, because it's not true that the elites in Italy, as in other countries, are in favour of immigrants, or work in favour of asylum seekers. It was surprising

	that again the Corriere della Sera, the mainstream newspaper, not a right-wing newspaper, a centre, liberal newspaper, some weeks ago attacked the mainstream media system, accusing it to be more in favour of immigrants and multicultural society. It is as if, the main channel, the BBC, attacks the TV system. Completely absurd! But also strange, because there is not a majority of media in favour of multiculturalism. But the impression, what is interesting, is that people are also writing, one of the main editorialists of the Corriere della Sera needs to justify himself, and present himself, as a victim of elite society in favour of immigration. But asylum seekers are very weakly supported by many political and social and cultural forces, and so, probably for this reason, they become the classical, as you say in English, 'scapegoat'. Too easy to attack, to consider as scourges of the welfare system, invaders, and so on.
I	[0:27:14.8177] Have you been following developments in Padua recently?
P	I went there last year. I know that the mayor is very vocal in blaming asylum seekers, and also people who receive asylum seekers. This is probably a new development, in general, in the past they were more generic in their claims, but the mayor of Padua more specifically to some buildings where private people decided to receive immigrants, or allowed them to stay in their flats, and to blame them, under the light of the local TV system. So there is an escalation, in this symbolic way, against...
I	[0:28:30.1177] It's very unusual for a mayor to be almost personally condemning their own citizens for such an act?
P	Yes, it's a sign of escalation, a new step in a political and cultural war, an effort to exploit this fear of the majority. at the same time, in Padua, I think there are 700 asylum seekers in the town. And many thousands of immigrants. So one distortion of the debate, from both sides I would say, is to exchange asylum seekers with immigration in general. And to think of the problem of asylum as the problem of immigration. Nobody minds about several hundred thousand women taking care of the elderly in Italian families, even without any visa or permit to stay. When authorities, local governments, people demand more restrictions against immigration, they don't mind these women. They are completely free of any control in practice, they are tolerated, they can circulate. Now it is winter, in Spring it's more interesting, I would have invited you to take a look in some public parks, where you would find hundreds of old people walking accompanied by women who are not their daughter or wife.
I	And that's accepted?
P	It's completely accepted, you don't find any policemen going to them to ask for papers. And if they do, they will be blamed by public opinion in this case, because women care-workers are not considered illegal or ' <i>clandestines</i> ' to deport, to exclude from the country. So, there is a kind of cultural selection that goes before any elaboration of debate, political debate, policies, in the field of immigration, immigration policy, authorisation, local policy.
I	So, it's defining the term, who is the 'migrant', and who is to be excluded.
P	Yes.
I	And you think productive women, who are seen to be helping, aren't included in this 'to be excluded' group, it's more a male character that is the 'problem migrant', the young male.
P	Yes, it's one of the few cases in which women are treated better than men! As I explain to my students, the ' <i>clandestine</i> ', because we have gendering of names, is always a man. ' <i>Clandestina</i> ' in practice doesn't exist in the Italian language. It's completely framed as a problem of young men of colour, African or Muslim, those who circulate, not identified, are framed as a danger for the society. But, again, what is also interesting, also in this case is the lack of efficiency of the policies of exclusion. These young men are not arrested and deported in general. They remain at the margin of society, helped by NGOs, the Catholic Church. For example, soup kitchens, or homeless dormitories. So in a very precarious welfare system, they are in some way protected.

I	A very famous recent example was the Berlin truck attacker, who slipped through in Italy, having been held in an asylum centre, and managed to escape from the system because the system didn't have anything more to do.
P	In general, it is not an exception. In this case, it was a bit more surprising, because he was jailed. In general the few resources used for deportations, are used more for people who are jailed, they finish their detention and in principle, these people are actually deported. So the system was less efficient than usual. But in general, for several reasons, there is not enough capacity to enact policies of exclusion and deportations.

9.2.11 Professor of Sociology, University of Milano-Bicocca

Interviewer: Fred Paxton

Participant: Sociology Professor, University of Milano-Bicocca

Date: 16 January 2016

Reference: PaduaInt6

Participant	What was the focus of the study? It was a community study. So we have studied globally the context from as many of the sociological points of view as possible: work, sociability, political networks, relationships, scale levels between a small town and a small area, Milano, and then the European level of governance: Brussels, Strasbourg. But this is a particular study, because in the Alto Milanese, that is the general name of the area, the government at the moment of our study was the Lega Nord. But I think it's not very interesting from the point of view of security, because there were not real or massive problems of security, at the moment of our study. It is a classic government of Lega Nord in a small town. And this is one of the points of interest of our study. But not on the point of view of security; that in Padua is more interesting, but I'm not so skilled on that point.
Interviewer	[0:02:36.7] What do you mean when you say it's a classic example of a Lega Nord government?
P	Yes, of course each community study is a single case study. And this is the problem of case studies. It's quite difficult to take a community study as a paradigm of a model of explanation. But in each case study you can find a pattern of some occurrences that usually happen in a social factor.
I	I have themes that I'd be interested to know more about. So, I wanted to start off to get to know what your field of study is?
P	[0:06:19.9] I have a strange story, because I started studying social movements for a long time, studying consumerist movements and political cultures. Then my interests have gone to the political science, classical problems such as 'who governs?' [inaudible]. And this was the reason I've made with [redacted] the study I mentioned. Now my interest is quite strange, because I'm studying almost exclusively stadiums. Football stadiums: as an urban building, in which a lot of normative tendencies of urban life are condensed. Such as commodification, such as securitisation, such as gentrification, and the expulsion of the low target fan. You are a football fan?
I	Yes, I'm going to San Siro later today.
P	Ah, you will find an almost empty stadium. It was a stadium of 85,000 fans, and now if you fill half of the stadium it's a great result, apart from the derbies or Champions League. But the third ring of the stadium, you know this, San Siro has three rings, the third ring is the highest up. Now I think it's closed for most matches in the San Siro, because people don't go to the stadium, they watch it on TV, as the prices of the tickets have raised incredibly. Rules to be

	observed for accessing the stadium have become harsher, you can't take there a lighter, you can't take water, you can't take food, you can't take anything. Everything in the name of security. But as a matter of fact there is also another kind of normative path, typical of the urban context, that is the attempt to commodify the fans. So people at the stadium must pay for a high priced ticket and drink beer at high price - without alcohol! You can't drink alcohol in the stadium.
I	So the culture has changed?
P	The culture has deeply changed. It's no longer a popular sport. It's not only changed in the San Siro, but also in the London stadiums or the Amsterdam Arena, and so on. You find the sky boxes that actually are one of the most relevant revenues for the match day. No more the tickets or the...And the models of security in stadiums are often used outside the stadium. This is what I find quite interesting, because in Italy there is....When it's enough you can tell me, and I'll stop talking about football. [laughs]
I	It's interesting, and relevant I think because of security. It's about security.
P	In Italy there's a law that - for 10 years more or less - says fans who are found guilty of rioting can no longer go to the stadiums for five years. It's called <i>Daspo</i> . It's a prohibition against entering the stadium for a period of time. And on the day of the match, people who are under <i>Daspo</i> , have to go to the place of police to sign. This of course is a normative measure and a law made for the security of fans, to avoid riots and so on. But four years ago, a Minister for Security, for Interior Affairs, has suggested to extend this kind of law to political manifestations, parades, to political events. So in a political protest, there is a struggle with police, like sometimes happens, and you are pictured or filmed or documented as guilty for rioting, you can't go to a political protest for five years. It hasn't passed a law, but it has been suggested, and all the strategies of police during a political protest are often experimented in the stadium. The stadium is a kind of...
I	Laboratory?
P	Yes, it's a place where all the techniques of the police are first used, for instance, the baton was first used in Italian policy history in the stadium, with a lot of damage to fans.
I	And now it's used for example in protests?
P	Now it's used in all kinds of protests, as an extension of something tried first in the stadium. So in my opinion the stadium is a place particularly interesting, because it opens some future techniques, kinds of control, but also from the stadium are spreading some values that...
I	Such as commodification...?
P	Yes, they spread out from the stadium, and go through all society. The stadium is not the centre of the world of course [laughs]. But it's a place particularly interesting for my point of view, to study society, some facts of society, this is my actual...Now I'm studying the history of the derby between Milan and Inter, since 1946 until today. And I have a project with the region Lombardy, and I'm paid with a colleague in this department to study the history of fans during the derby.
I	So Padua isn't a place you've worked on?
P	No, I know something I read in the newspaper, nothing more.
I	And you worked on the Lega Nord when you were doing the Alto Milanese study?
P	Padua had some specific problem with the wall, and so on.
I	But the Lega Nord more generally, have you worked on the Lega Nord?
P	Yes, when I was interested in political culture.

I	Ok, so what I'm trying to understand, by using two case studies in Italy and Austria, is how in these different contexts, there are different opportunities for a populist government to impact the city. And so I'm trying to do that by investigating the structures, the culture, and the actors involved. So in terms of structure, I wanted to know more about the autonomy that Italian urban governments have, and from that, the idea I'm trying to get towards, is how the Lega Nord are enabled to make an impact because of the structure that they work through. Is the autonomy something you could talk about?
P	[0:18:34.6] Autonomy is quite interesting from two points of view. First point is about the normative and legal autonomy of local government, with respect to national or European government. This is something which changed after '92, or '94, when local governments and cities gained a superior autonomy, particularly with regard to security, but also to urban planning generally. Until the '90s, the definition of land uses was specifically regulated by a plan which had a <i>longue durée</i> . A long time of use. It was a plan that was made for at least ten years, and in those ten years, you cannot change the land use. So if you say that this lot is commercial, that is commercial for ten years, or more. It was very difficult to change the land use of an area. You had to go through deep and complicated public procedures. You have to call the <i>consiglio comunale</i> , the communal council, which is the institution who has the responsibility to go to the local government. The mayor is the chief of the communal council. For a change of land use, you have convene the communal council, and all the council had to agree with the change. So it was quite a bureaucratic and regulated process. [0:21:52.9] After the '90s, the rise of the so called 'governance' has regulated the areas on the basis of agreement between public and the owner of the area. The financier and the public government. So in three months, you had the opportunity to change the land use.
I	So much quicker?
P	Much quicker, and much less under public evidence. Not with an institutional act, in a very liquid way, in a very easy way. There are several reasons which caused this transformation. The first was the spread of the neoliberal ideology, that has delegitimised the central planning. And so this is a legal result of an ideological transformation, and has a strong actor and a strong motor in the Lega Nord. The Lega Nord had a relevant role in changing the ancient idea of central planning. The very first issues of the Lega Nord were related to federalism, to the independence of northern Italy from Rome, who was a thief, who was immoral, who was not productive, while Lombardy, Veneto, Padania, was seen as something more connected to central Europe, to [inaudible]. Something relevant from an economic point of view, and so on. For all the second half of the 80s, and all the 90s, Lega Nord was I think the only political actor who claimed strongly these kinds of ideas. Opposing the first Italian Republic, the parties that had emerged historically after World War Two. Democrazia Christiana, Partito Socialista Italiano, Partito Comunista Italiano, who were very strong, who were very rooted in cities in the regions. In this historical decades, Lega Nord has little by little raised its power. And its main actors, Umberto Bossi, Maroni, who is the actual governor of Lombardy, have raised their power and their national visibility. They have become relevant actors on a national level. But they were the only party who claimed this kind of ideology. The other parties were, as Lega Nord saw it, centralistic. In those decades, Lega Nord has little by little raised its power. [0:27:05.4] Around the middle of the 90s, there has been a relevant change in the national political articulation. Because Silvio Berlusconi has become the Prime Minister, with Lega Nord as an ally. My opinion is this was the point in which Lega Nord has started to decrease its power. Because first of all, at the national level, they have become centralistic actors, relevant in the parliament, not only at the local level at which they were set until that moment. But the chief work of Silvio Berlusconi has been the opening of the Prime Minister to a populist vision of the world. Silvio Berlusconi has grasped, eaten out some land of Lega Nord.
I	So they've influenced Berlusconi's policy, ideology?
P	Berlusconi's ideology was more similar to the one of Lega Nord. There was less difference between Berlusconi and the Lega Nord than the Lega Nord and the former parties. In the first situation, Lega Nord was the only voice against the immoral politics in the First Republic. In the age of Berlusconi, Berlusconi also claimed the same issues.

I	So this bit, when we're talking about the rise of the Lega Nord, that's quite a short period?
P	The rise is between '85 and '95. And the fall of popularity of Lega Nord, and the originality of their agenda, is from '95 to, in my opinion, 2010.
I	And you're saying their fall in popularity is partly because their uniqueness is taken away by Berlusconi adopting what they do.
P	Yes, that's the point. This is the most relevant reason from the ideological point of view. After 2010, the Lega Nord have understood their lack of power, and so they tried new strategies. They have almost completely changed their topic focus, their main priorities. And Umberto Bossi, who was one of the founders of the Lega, was pushed aside.
I	And this is when Salvini appears?
P	No, before Salvini was Maroni. Maroni, and after Maroni, Salvini. Salvini has impressed an important change to the strategies of Lega, because he has joined the right and sometimes extreme right parties, such as Meloni; do you know?
I	No I don't. I know the Alleanza Nazionale?
P	Well, Alleanza Nazionale no more exists, because it has divided into a group who has gone into Forza Italia, and another group has founded the Fratelli d'Italia. Fratelli d'Italia is more on the right side than the Alleanza Nazionale, it is the right wing of the former Alleanza Nazionale.
I	And they openly use fascist...?
P	Yes.
I	I think there is one representative from the Fratelli d'Italia in the Padua council.
P	I'm sure. And they're allies. Fratelli d'Italia, and this is the leader: Georgia Meloni. She's a relevant national level leader. They are particularly strong in Rome and in the south of Italy. So Salvini has hoped to be the northern league of the same movement. Meloni, Fratelli d'Italia: in the south; Lega Nord in the north. "We try to stay together with Marine Le Pen, with Farage, with all the right wing European movements, against the immigration, against Europe, against plutocracy, against, you know, all the issues typical of right populist movements".
I	[0:34:17.8] And so the issues focussing on federalism, and moving away from centralism, is now replaced by a true right-wing populism.
P	This is the problem for Salvini now. Because Salvini has to re-orientate his voters who are used to vote against Rome, against centralism. I think he has moved the central issue of his agenda from the opposition to Rome to the opposition to Europe. And this is a joint venture with Marine Le Pen, also in Austria, the right movements of this kind. With Hungary, with Orban. This is the kind of political [inaudible] Salvini is moving now. In my opinion it's quite different from the Lega Nord of previous periods, it's quite different also the history of leaders. Umberto Bossi was...I completely dislike him [laughs]...but he was older, he has a left wing history, at a certain point he has tried to have some fortune in politics with anti-centralism issues, anti-immigration, but in the very first period the problem was not international immigration, it was...Italy has a history of south to north, and that was the problem of the Lega Nord of the first period, in opposition. In Italy they're called <i>terroni</i> . It's a bad word, it's offensive, it's as if you use <i>nigger</i> . <i>Terroni</i> is the word northern people use to call southern people. And Lega Nord of the first period was against - sorry for the use of the word - was against <i>terroni</i> . They called them this way. At the beginning of the '90s, strong immigration to Italy began, especially from Sub-Saharan Africa, from Morocco, and Algeria. The issue has moved from internal migration to international migration, but that was the second wave of the ideology of the Lega Nord. [0:37:51.4] The years in which the Lega Nord was in the government with Silvio Berlusconi, they had the problem to balance the level of the declaration of claims and the level of policy, because Maroni was a minister. Umberto Bossi

	was a minister. So when you are out of the room, the 'power room', you can claim what you want. But when you are a minister, you have to do something, and not so often you can do what you have been saying until the day before [laughs]. And this has been the problem of the government years, at the national level. Something similar has happened, in my opinion, at the local level, because for example, Flavio Tosi who was the mayor of Padua for two administrations, that's 8 years.
I	Or was that Verona?
P	[0:37:51.4] Yes, he was with Verona. Flavio Tosi was a perfect model of Lega Nord in power. He was very right-wing, I don't know if you've ever heard about this, but he was in an Oi! music group, Nazi, almost Nazi, he was a singer or guitarist of such a group. So he was very right-wing, at the border of Neo-Nazi movements, neo-fascist movements, and so on. When he was the mayor of Verona, he had a lot of force given to security, CCTV in the stadium, they have tried before and then in town. But at a certain point, he has taken distance with respect to the Lega Nord. When he was at the end of his role as mayor, he disagreed with the Secretary lines of the Lega Nord, and he ran as a candidate for Secretary, against Salvini. He lost. But at that point, he has left the Lega Nord and made a different movement, a political movement, I don't remember the name. And in my opinion at the local level, Flavio Tosi is a model of <i>sindaco</i> (mayor). In a rich town such as Verona, not quite different from Padua, but with a good level of administration, of course not a good life for migrants in that town. And this is a particular point that has to be studied. But not a totally bad administrator.
I	[0:42:11.3] When you say he's a model of Lega Nord mayor, it's because he moves, he softens the far-right...
P	Yes, he softens a lot of his positions, the ideas. He had a good... Ordered?
I	He was competent? Aiming to make the city simply...function, work?
P	Yes, that's what Flavio Tosi has made. But also with...He's not my favourite politician of course, I'm quite distant so I have to say it, even if my name is the same [laughs]. He was a good administrator. Another north east mayor, of Treviso, was Gentilini. He's called the 'Mayor Sheriff'. Maybe on security issues he's one of the figures you have to study, to understand, to try to see what they... Because he was a mayor who has never...in someway we can say he was more coherent than Flavio Tosi. Flavio Tosi was very right, but when he had to administrate the city he has done what had to be done. Obviously, it's subjective what to do. But from an economical point of view, he has tried to be the mayor of all the citizens of the city and so on. Gentilini, known as the Sheriff Mayor, has never changed his claims. When he was the mayor, he said things such as, "I will shoot personally the [inaudible] in town". I'm not joking. Gentilini is older than Flavio Tosi, I think now he's 70 years old more or less, while Flavio Tosi is 40, 45, younger. But these are two models of local government of the Lega. There are some cases in which it depends on the qualities of the people, the single people, in which Lega Nord mayors have taken the responsibility seriously. Another in which they have continued to perform their mediatory role, their exaggeration of the tones of the level of struggle, without any result effective in respect to immigration or criminality or something like that, without any efficacy.
I	[0:46:16.4] So it's more of a rhetorical tool?
P	Absolutely, played upon a rhetorical level.
I	It's interesting to me that you have these two very different models, showing the party is very diverse. And at the same time, it's the same system, the same Italian local government system. So I'm wondering whether it's something to do with the individuals, the differences between Gentilini and Tosi, and maybe also whether it's something to do with the local cultures of these two cities?
P	[0:46:56.5] Both the themes are real. Of course, Treviso, the city of Gentilini, is a smaller town than Verona, and this maybe a dimension which has to be taken into the model of explanation. But I think something relevant is in the biographies, in the histories of the

	different mayors, the individuals. Because Gentilini is someone who often talks in <i>dialetto</i> – dialect, not in Italian. He was a very rough person. Tosi was a little bit smarter. It's difficult for me to say this for someone who is close to a Neo-Nazi, but he was more polite. A little more. Gentilini was, sorry for my English, he's a kind of animal, very rough, very, very rough. Embarrassing sometimes. He was always on the title of some leftist journal for some wrong phrase he has said. Something against gays, something against...a strange mayor. But he was the kind of mayor that Lega Nord has given to Northern Italy for 25 years. There has been the two models of good administrators, for example Varese. Varese is a small town close to where I live, on the west Lombardy, close to the lakes. Varese has had good administrators as mayors, until the end of the millennium. Also in Varese there is a very rooted movement of extreme-right, and then the mayor who after 2000 has been more right, in a more Gentilini way. But in the first administrations, the mayors of Varese were of the Lega but with an eye on the good administration, as in a Flavio Tosi way.
I	[0:50:24.3] And then since the 2000s, it moved to the right?
P	To a Lega Nord mayor more interested in the struggle against immigration, the struggle against Roma. Roma are the great problem for the Lega Nord at the moment. In the Salvini agenda, the enemies are: <i>centri sociale</i> , places where generally young people squat, ex-industrial areas, have music there, such as let's say Christiana. In Milan there are several squats of that kind, some historical, some new. Bologna has a strong history of such squatting centres. And Salvini often goes to their manifestations to give some provocations. And all times the protestors throw stones at him and then he goes on television to say “you have to close their social centres, they're violent, they're uncivil” and so on. But he goes there to provoke, for example, now squatting movements and so on, are particularly involved in action against the centres where the migrants that arrive in Lampedusa are placed. You know that in Italy generally migrants arrived in Lampedusa, and they are moved to different towns into specific centres.
I	And it's the national government that chooses where they go?
P	Yes, but with a power to decide of towns, because this is a qualitative element. Because a mayor that goes to the newspaper, saying we have too many migrants in Padua, or Verona, or Treviso, or Milano, create a social [inaudible]...who can't receive migrants. In a small town in Veneto, a couple of months ago, there were I think ten women with small children who were sent to the centre of this town and when they have arrived with the bus, people living in this town have made barricades and thrown stones at the bus. This was a local situation created by the political local forces.
I	And you mean specifically by the Lega Nord?
P	Generally, the main actors, I'm not sure about the case I'm talking to you, but generally the actors mobilising inhabitants against migrants who are arriving, are Lega Nord and Fratelli d'Italia. It's the general strategy of these kind of parties.
I	[0:54:46.5183] Well, this is exactly the point that I want to get to. The real ultimate question is whether the Lega Nord, and the populist right in general, are pushing the city to the right, pushing attitudes, pushing popular actions. And I would see a result like throwing stones at a bus of migrants as a city that is firmly to the right in some way, in terms of attitudes. And the question that I want to understand is, is that the result of policy of the Lega Nord, have they changed something through their actions? Or is it something more rhetorical strategies that have done this? And how have they done this, as well? Is it through the local government, or is it through national networks?
P	I think it has nothing to do with policies. At the moment, it is the strategy of Salvini and Meloni, from Fratelli d'Italia, but more Salvini, to raise his visibility. It's a strategy particularly strong in this last year, year and a half. Because most likely we are going to have elections, I think in Spring or maybe some months later. And Salvini will go to have the measure of his popularity and see the level of voting he can raise. Because he's the first Secretary of the Lega Nord after the historical wave. He's the first to have challenged the traditional top level of the

	Lega Nord. So it's a strong challenge for him. If he goes to lose a lot of votes, maybe Salvini will not exist in the next years.
I	And maybe the strategy will change again?
P	I think so. I think so. Because, I'm not sure what I'm saying, but maybe Lega Nord is going to disappear, or maybe resist in the local, at the small, local levels, where he has his sections, his voters. But he no longer has a meaning in the national institutional articulation of parties. Forza Italia has incorporated a lot of the values, claims and points of the agenda typical of the Lega Nord.
I	And Cinque Stelle?
P	Cinque Stelle is the other contender, yes. And furthermore, in Italy is very strong the rhetoric "what we do, is not our choice, something opposed by the European Union, we are not the owners of our policies, policies we have to do, to make are dependent by the European level". On migration, in my opinion, Renzi has tried to negotiate with Germany better levels of decision making without great results, but Lega Nord, from this point of view, the strategy of Salvini, to try to jump through the level of contra-position between South and North of Italy, and go in a more general [inaudible] of scale. And work on the contraposition between Italy and the European Union, or between government of our interests and government in the interests of financiers: this is the great rhetoric used at this moment. Salvini sometimes goes to the centres of migrants to carry food, he tried to show a human and paternalistic side, as if to say "I have nothing against this black girl, this black guy, these children", and so on, "but the problem is that they are slaves, wanted by the financial system, who want a second labour market".
I	It's like this idea that Merkel wants cheap labour.
P	Yes, they are Marxian in their interpretation [laughs]! They say "you are slaves, because the real power want you to be slaves. I am the one who will give you the freedom, but the freedom will not come through immigration, you have to become rich in your country, so get back there". But sometimes, in this period, across the first wave of international migration, Lega Nord people have said, "send the Italian navy to shoot the boats of migrants. To shoot them." This was said by European parliamentarians of the Lega Nord, in public declarations to a newspaper, in the '90s. Now Lega Nord would never say something like that, because they are more...because their rhetoric about migration has changed. Italian newspapers a while ago showed a famous image, which in my opinion has changed the Italian vision of migration. It was the one of a very young boy ended up on the beach. This has, on an emotional level, has changed the view. From this moment if he says to shoot them, he will lose votes. But in '90s it was not this way. They were...I think the most interesting research you can do, but is a little bit of a problem if you don't understand Italian, watch very local small television shows. In Italy there is a system of television in which there are seven, eight broadcasting networks that broadcast almost exclusively information about criminal chronicles. In these local television shows you can perceive, you can feel the real emotions about order and security through the Lega Nord, because there are normal people calling on the phone, local journalists on the medium to small level, without too many filters between what they think and what they say, and this is a real point of observation of Italian feelings about migration, security. All the night. I am a little strange, sometimes I spend quarter of an hour - I can't for more than a quarter of an hour - just watching these kinds of debates. It's incredible. There's a transmission called Black Lombardy, <i>Lombardia Nera</i> . Only about assassinations in small towns of Lombardy. There is a house in the periphery that's been assaulted by Slavic people, who have beaten the old lady who lived there, something catastrophic. All the night, from 19 in the evening until 2 in the night. And their broadcasts are well watched. They have a great capability to influence the public opinion, of the popular strata, of popular culture.

I	[1:06:16.0185] One theme that I'm interested from the cultural side is the legitimacy that these parties have. Surely that influences the legitimacy of the ideas of security, if greater security is needed, if crime is so bad as it's shown on <i>Lombardia Nera</i> . And it sounds like there's also a racial or ethnic focus sometimes in the programmes....
P	But they don't have a direct link to policies. They create an anxiety. They create a feeling, something that remains in the back side of the brain, not in the conscious side. For example, I have three sons: 18, 15 and 12. When they see for a couple of minutes this kind of broadcasting, they ask me a million questions. "What's happening? Who are those people? Can that happen to us?". It's incredible the construction, the rhetorical construction, of the thing. It's good for... I think it's a strong power on the weak by the popular people. Then arrive at the political level. The political levels say: "we know there are problems with a lot of migrants. We know they are often criminal. But, anyway, we are ..we want...we agree to a certain level, a certain quota of incoming migrants. But not the one as high as Renzi says". Like in the American movies with the good and bad policemen. Broadcasting is the bad policeman. The level is aggressive. While Salvini is the good policeman.
I	So, "we accept some"?
P	Yes, some, but not all...Very human and Christian – which also in Italy is a relevant dimension. The Five Star Movement is quite different from Lega, because it doesn't have a local rooting. Lega Nord until seven years ago, was the only Italian party that had a local level that was very active. In small towns of 20, 40, 100,000 people, you could find the sections, <i>sezione</i> , of the Lega Nord, which was the classic structuring of mass parties, in the history of parties. Partito Comunista Italiano, and Democrazia Cristiana, and also Socialist Party, had a relevant network of local sections in towns. In a town of 100,000 people, you had ten sections of the Communist Party, ten sections of Christian Democracy. Now you can't find anything of that kind, in the traditional parties, in all the Italian parties, except for the Lega. Lega has at the local level, open into the night, you go there at 7pm, and you find people playing cards, drinking, talking about politics, complaining about their problems, public administration, public administrators, or <i>cittadini</i> ...But are...leave the places... And this is another, in my opinion, interesting point of Lega Nord. I'm quite fascinated by the Lega Nord, not sympathetic I hope this is obvious, but they are interesting something they have done. They have understood something about the transformation of the Italian political system that the other parties have had more difficulties to understand.
I	They sound like social centres almost, bringing people together?
P	[1:12:29.3185] [In Padua] they have specific problems. they have relevant social movements, of left squatting, especially around Seattle, Genova, the anti-globalisation movements. From Padua a significant part of the movement came, and also a <i>plotone</i> , a group of police from Padua, is particularly famous in Italy, because they are one of the more strong and fearsome policemen in Italy, along with some of Rome. In Italy when you are at a political rally, if police from Rome or Padua start to arrive, you better run. They are very, very bad. It is a tradition of socialisation of policemen that has...they are fascist often. They are very...in Genova, 2001, the G8 in Genova, where Carlo Giuliani died, and so on. The worst policemen in town were from Padua and from Rome, they were the ones who had the worst reactions to the protestors. I was there, I remember very well. [1:15:44.4185] But this, from a sociological point of view, is the real point. The normative in the <i>Durkheimian</i> meaning of the word, the normative effect of the rhetoric. And also, in a more <i>Foucauldian</i> point of view, the result of policies. Because it's exactly what I was talking to you about in my studies on stadiums. The point is, what comes out from the stadiums has a normative general level of good being. Who is defined as a good fan? Who is defined as a good fan is defined as a good citizen. And a good citizen is the one who can spend €100 for an evening. If you can't spend that morning, you are not a good citizen. And this is relevant for urban planning, because Milan is going straight in this direction. With the rhetoric of 'City of the <i>Moda</i> ', city of economic affairs, city of...the financial centre of Italy.
I	So the true Milanese appreciates and can take part in these kinds of things?

P	I think a very small quota of Milanese are involved. But this is the [inaudible] that Milan is going to give of himself. And in these representations, homeless are completely lost, low level income families are completely lost. In Milan there is not a Euro spent for housing policy. Of course there are funds for middle classes, or the upper middle classes strata. But for really poor people, there is nothing at all, except for what is given by the informal system, generally the Christian church, voluntarism and so on. It is a dual city. Maybe I am exaggerating a little bit. It is going to risk become a dual city. With schools for good students coming from good families, and schools for sons of the [inaudible], the sons of the workers. But there is a dual level market, dual school market, a dual housing market, or worse, maybe only one market for high level prices people. With sport only for the high target of spender. This is not a fault of...this is not caused by the Lega Nord. In my opinion, my view on the fact is more linked to neoliberalism, as a general frame of economic development of capitalist model, much wider than a party or a politician. Since Thatcher and Reagan until today, and with Silvio Berlusconi in the middle, we had a great explosion of the rhetoric of the 'self made man', "everyone can reach every social position, it doesn't matter where he comes from". That's not what is happening here. If you work in this university, you ask "what's the work of your father?", to me, to my colleagues, etc., you find only social reproduction, very closed. <i>Weberian Social Closure</i>. Very gated. The figure you can talk of, the folk evil of this moment are Roma. Roma are absolutely the social figure generalised with...no-one can make distinction between <i>corrocone</i>, Roma, all the different...Roma Italians, or Roma from Hungary. Roma here since 600 years, or Roma escaped from war a couple of years ago. In Italy there is no attempt to have a distinction about who Roma are, they are a target as the folk evil, the absolute bad, the total bad. And they are treated as a consequence...
I	[1:22:18.6186] It's like the other side, from how you say the new football fan is like the ideal citizen, who can spend €100, who doesn't drink too much, who behaves in a certain way; and the idea of the Roma that is sold is the antithesis, the exact opposite, it's the person who doesn't work, who doesn't try...
P	That's exactly the point. The opposite of what is called the model. The model has to be this one: spending, working, a couple of sons, and so on. A very small model, without any variation. If you are diverting from that, you are bad. And Roma are the evidence of the complete opposite. And the politics are dramatic, because in Italy when Roma arrive you find, without any problem, groups with molotov who go and burn their house. It has happened in Opera, close to Milan, it has happened in Turin. And often with football Ultras involved. This is the other link we find.
I	[1:23:56.3186] I see what you mean, it's bigger than any party, this isn't to do with the Lega Nord, it's to do with a whole structure, the neoliberal system. The targeting of particular groups like the Roma and migrants is far more complex and far bigger than the Lega Nord, it's a whole system of thought. Like you say the Roma is the evil of our values. What I want to find out is how different it is in different local places. And whether the Lega Nord actually doing something, or saying something different, or is it irrelevant?
P	No, I'm sure there are differences between local contexts, also about policies and the specific treatments of specific targets in the population. But I can't say they resolve the differences. Sometimes it depends by the presence of an association. Particularly skilled and capable of raising up their issues, to make pressures, to have a problem taken seriously. In Italy, a lot upon the low level policies, the policies towards low income, excluded. Welfare generally, but the first level of welfare, not school. The assistance. It's always seen a relevant role from the voluntary sector. This is a very, very strong tradition in Italy. Since 19th century, also the co-operatives of workers, in Italy they were called SMS, Society of Mutual <i>Soccorso</i> - Help. There was a strong cooperative tradition between low income families, low income professions, and so on. And the church is overlapping with this level generally, being the other important factor informing the policy towards excluded groups. Now, for example, the temperature of the weather is particularly bad, having been four, five, eight below zero. There were churches opened, as homeless couldn't find a public place provided by social services, they can find churches. Also for food, also for showers. All the system of homelessness assistance in Milan is provided by Catholic associations, and sometimes directly churches, which open and give a place to sleep for a couple of hours, for a night. Padua has a very strong

	Catholic tradition. Because historically it was a 'white' town, one where the Christian Democracy has always won. It's a place of Christian Democracy, like all of the Veneto has a strong tradition of that kind. While when you move from North East to North West, you little by little find the growing left side of political parties, arrive to Milan where the Socialist and also in Sesto San Giovanni, the town here north from where we are, is historically called the Stalingrad of Italy, because it was very red. The communist party governed for 40 years without interruption. And then you go to Torino, where there is the Fiat, so a working class culture organisation. But if you want an interesting work on this segmentation of Italy in different cultures, there are two books I can suggest. <i>Le Tre Italiani</i>, Arnaldo Bagnasco. The second is Ilvo Diamante. He is a political scientist. He has worked on local political cultures and on differences between embeddedness...the embeddedness of politics is the core of his work. Why a place is for 30 years white, and another for 20 red, and so on. And why are there transformations of that as...a brilliant book, but the only version I know is in Italian, it's <i>Bianco, Rosso e Verde</i>.
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9.2.12 Former mayoral spokesman, Padua

Interviewer: Fred Paxton

Participant: Former mayoral spokesman, Padua

Date: 19 June 2017

Reference: PaduaInt7

Interviewer	Can I get an idea of your background and your role? You were working in the election?
Participant	Unfortunately, I didn't take part in the election. I was the spokesman of the former Mayor, Ivo Rossi. He was the Vice-Mayor of Flavio Zanonato. When Zanonato became Minister of Economic Development, the law says that if you are close, not more than one year, to the election, the Vice-Mayor - Ivo Rossi - becomes the Mayor. My experience was that I've been for 14 years a journalist in Padova, for ten years I was a correspondent of ANSA, the most important journalism agency in Italy. It's like Reuters. He asked me to make this role, because we were friends. He taught me to ride a bicycle when I was like Julia, my daughter! Because my uncle, the younger brother of my father, is Settimo Gottardo, who had been mayor of Padova between 1982 to 1986. And then he took part in the parliament from 1986 to 1992. He is still a very influential person. And I met Ivo Rossi when I was a child, in the house of my uncle. So he knew me for 30 years, when he became the mayor and he said: "okay, please help me". Because I wasn't only the spokesman, I wasn't only writing what he had to say and taking part in the press conferences, and things like that. He didn't have a Vice-Mayor, because he was the Vice-Mayor! And so, I was his deputy in effect. Because I was the spokesman, I couldn't manage the campaign. I couldn't. If I could have managed the campaign, I would've managed a completely different campaign. But there's no use crying over spilt milk! And so, we lost the election due to a lot of factors. Bitonci didn't win that campaign, it was Ivo Rossi and the left party who lost. There is a difference, I don't know if I can explain it well.
I	I know what you mean: it was their mistakes that were more important.
P	A very long wave of mistakes. The first one: to make the primary - an election in the left party to decide who runs the campaign for the left party. If you just have the mayor who wants to be re-elected you don't do a primary. If you have the former mayor, he is the natural candidate. But they had the primary.

I	They didn't need to do the primary?
P	They didn't! No exiting mayor does the primary in PD. Well, what happened is that he won the primary but by a very small number of votes. And for the first time in the history of the primary in Italy, the candidate who came second didn't support Ivo Rossi...
I	He stood on his own.
P	And this never happens! But it happened in Italy for the first time, for the first time in the political history in Italy. And in 2013, after one month I'd been working for Ivo Rossi, I said to him: "call Zanonato, call everyone you know who counts in the party, and say – 'okay, I'm just a mayor, even if I wasn't the mayor, but I am doing the part of the mayor. If you want to do the primary, I don't run'". And he said: "why?". Because if you run in the primary, you lose the primary or you win with a very small amount of votes, which is worse than losing it. And it was what happened. But why did it happen? When Ivo Rossi became mayor, there was a technical government, and then in some months, the government changed, and Matteo Renzi came, who is 40 years old. Everybody suddenly seemed old! And Ivo Rossi had been in the city council from 1982. He was the younger of the older generation of politicians. He was of the generation of my uncle. That was why I met him, and why I know him for so many years. So, the first mistake: to make the primary for the mayor. [00:08:18] And the second one was that he didn't change anything from Zanonato to his premiership.
I	And things needed to change?
P	Oh absolutely! They needed to change the representative of the security. I said to him: "change him, name another person". In the next year, we do nothing, but you send a message to the city, that we want to change the security, so we change one person on the team of the mayor. There were other small things to change, for example, another that was mentioned. [Interruption]
I	They're looking to invest in Padua?
P	They're looking for another route, they've managed a direct flight from Rome to Taipei everyday for one year. Now they're investigating opening another one either from Venice or Milan. And they will decide, depending on how they find connections, business opportunities, and so they've come here to know Venice. To know Venice well you don't have to go to Venice, they come to Padua. Why do I say so? Because in Venice they have enough money, they're not looking for other opportunities. They're full. In Padua, it could be fruitful for them to move tourists, not directly to Venice, but to Padua, 40km from Venice. By train, that's 50 minutes. For a person who's coming from Taipei that's like being right in the city.
I	Does it make a difference who's the mayor, when you're doing such business deals and trying to advertise the city? Whether it's, for instance, Ivo Rossi or Bitonci?
P	It could make a difference. Not a very huge difference, but a difference, because the mayor doesn't own the hotels or the main roads, but can facilitate and help on such things that I'm doing on my job. If I were the spokesman of the mayor I could receive such kind of person in the municipality building, I could organise a dinner...Anyway, I organise a dinner...Because the things happen, whether the mayor is Bitonci or someone else. To have an open minded mayor could help. But China Airlines isn't looking who is the mayor.
I	But I suppose there are actions the mayor could do to to help.
P	Absolutely. But he never would. They hate me. My life for the last three years was very hard because of him. Because when Rossi lost the elections, their new spokesman, whose name is [redacted], he called me to arrange going for a coffee. We went to have a coffee and he said: "okay, if you disappear, politically speaking, you can go on working for some company, we'll find a job for you". Because I was unemployed at that time. I said I would never do it. Because I would never work with you. Because working with you could never be something that's good for me. After that, when I started working with a company here in Padua, their spokesman was calling that company to say: "no, you can't work with [redacted], because [redacted] is a kind

	of enemy of us". And I was losing these jobs, five or six times. It's incredible. I would never do that, I'd never imagine to do that. It happened! Also with the Japanese television. Fuji TV: that was one of the two or three television companies in Italy. A friend of mine said: "okay, they're here in Padua, they need a guide, could you be a guide for them for two days, they paid me €40". When the City Hall saw written on the paper that the guide would be [redacted], they said to Fuji TV that they will not sign the permissions and make the images, because of me.
I	Because of your associations with Ivo Rossi?
P	Absolutely. Exactly. It's ridiculous.
I	It's not normal when parties change?
P	No, no. The spoils system is normal, like everywhere in the world. If I was the spokesman for Ivo Rossi, I can't be the spokesman for Bitonci. The chief of some part of the administration changed. But the other person makes his life...Everybody was an enemy. Anyway, I survived. But it was not easy. You feel bad when it happens in your city, the people say: "okay I can't go on working with you because of this and this". It's unfair.
I	I can imagine. And before that, you were in a very important and interesting position, working with the mayor; it must have felt like a big change. So you said the mistakes were very important?
P	Yes. The primary, and him not changing anything. And the third mistake is that on the first round of the election, they ran three candidates: Ivo Rossi, Francesco Fiore, who took the party to the primary and even if he lost he'd won anyway, something that doesn't happen elsewhere in the world, only in Padua...
I	And these were all centre-left candidates?
P	Yes. And the third was left, rather than centre-left. It was called Padova 2020. It was like Podemos in Spain, something that doesn't look to the traditional parties, it's a new party. Because they tried to do something new for the 21st century, but they didn't make something strong enough to overcome PD, the Partito Democratico. And so, they make a lot of problems for PD. They can't kill the traditional parties...
I	They just take some of the votes.
P	Exactly. They just take some of the votes. Francesco Fiore and another candidate. What happens is that the left party is divided in three parts. And there is the Movimento Cinque Stelle. Then the right is divided in two parties. One supports Massimo Bitonci, another supports Maurizio Saia. Saia is a long-term politician of the right party, the post-fascist party. The name of the party was the Alleanza Nazionale, which became Fratelli d'Italia. [00:15:23] Let's make a spoiler. Bitonci won on the second round, because all the votes of Saia went to Bitonci, and one half of the Movimento Cinque Stelle votes went to Bitonci.
I	And the two other left candidates?
P	The other two left candidates supported Ivo Rossi, but one half of the votes of Padova 2020 didn't go to Ivo Rossi because he was only on 35%...[00:18:38]
I	So Movimento Cinque Stelle becomes quite important here, because you don't know which way their voters will go?
P	Yes. That's why Bitonci won.
I	So why do you think the people who decided to vote for Cinque Stelle go for him?
P	For two reasons. Ivo was the older politician taking part in that election. M5S is for the new politicians. Ivo Rossi came to the city council, as I said, in 1982. It was, in 2014, 32 years that he'd been in the city council. But if people think that new is better, they'll vote for the new one.

	That's the first reason. The second reason, is that M5S is a movement of right, you can see in these days, they are against the <i>ius soli</i> law. It is a right-wing position to be against it.
	They share the position on migration?
P	Exactly, they share the position on migration, they share the populism. Massimo Bitonci is a person, like Julius Caesar. Julius Caesar says: " <i>homines id quod volunt credunt</i> ", "people believe what they want". Massimo Bitonci understood also this of Julius Caesar: people pay attention to you if you tell them what they want to hear. And Bitonci, to the person who wants one thing, says that thing. To the other person, that wants another thing, the opposite thing, says the opposite. Everybody's happy! Ivo Rossi came from the government of the city. He couldn't say everything to everybody. It was a problem. But the main problem was that he had been in political life for 32 years. In the government there was Matteo Renzi, 20 years younger than Ivo Rossi. And you see it, take a look to the European elections, held on the same day. 33% for PD in the comunale election, and 41% in the European election. The same day, the same election, a person with two papers: European, 41%.
I	These are very different results, why is this?
P	Because they support...these are votes for Matteo Renzi, not the PD. Renzi won the European, Rossi not. Because Rossi, and Zanonato, were the old way of making political activity. He was 60 years old.
I	People are voting against old politics, because of the age of politicians?
P	No, because after twenty years of the same mayor, they want a new one. Better, they don't mind. They want a new one. After twenty days you eat the spaghetti of my wife. Okay, it's delicious, but after twenty day, spaghetti? I want something else.
I	It's very difficult. You say there were mistakes made, but this seems something out of Rossi's control.
P	The problem of Rossi was that he didn't pay attention to anybody. To me, to anybody. He was completely confused. Complete confusion. You can be a very good Vice-Mayor, and the worst Mayor in the world. It's like, when I was a consultant of some companies, I was used to to driving cars on on Sunday morning. When I was behind the first, it was very easy to drive. When I was the first, it wasn't easy. I didn't know when to push the brake, because I didn't have anybody in front of me. In political activity, it's the same. You can be very fast, very good, as the second one. As the first one, you have to be the one to decide when to brake, when to push the gas. He didn't know this. Definitely. He is a very good friend of mine, and is still a very good friend of mine. But friendship didn't make me blind. The first reason is he wasn't able to manage the power that he had. To manage the power is that if I'm not in agreement with the chief of security, I change him! I change him, I send a message. To have to the power is to have the power to change. To have the strength to change. He didn't change anything, and so the people changed the mayor.
I	So, the security was a problem then?
P	No, not a problem. I wrote for 14 years on the 'black news'. Murders, and so on. I was the journalist working on this. Padua is much safer than 20 years ago. Much safer than 10 years ago. But people - particularly old people and those not so educated - see black people, like my wife, in the street and it makes them feel unsafe. Black people who work, have children, that do nothing, but they're afraid of them.
I	More than 10 or 20 years ago?
P	Because 10 or 20 years ago we didn't have such kind of immigration. Immigration here is very young. When I was in the elementary school, and the secondary school, I didn't have any students in my class coming from abroad. No-one. Now it's 30%. 30% of the children in elementary school have at least one of the parents born outside of Italy. It's a very huge change in only 20 years. And people don't have the ability to face that change.

I	So they're scared of change?
P	They're scared of change on one hand. And on the other hand they want a change. But the change that they want is to turn back to 20 years ago, when there weren't black people on the street. That's the promise of Bitonci. ' <i>Basta negritudine</i> '. That's the promise of Bitonci: "I will fight immigration". He can't! Donald Trump can't! But he won by telling the people: "I will build a wall". Bitonci is the first Trump, the first Le Pen. He made the election in 2014, it was full of bullshit, full of fake news. I will send you an example of fake news. He made a fake document of the <i>prefettura</i> (prefect), writing that the <i>prefettura</i> was going to take some apartments to house the immigrants. In 2014, I'd seen the same methods of Trump in the election of Bitonci, the same.
I	The original Trump.
P	He is the original Trump. And much more 'Le Pen-ist' than Le Pen.
I	I noticed, looking through the security actions, they seem to quite often connect crime and insecurity with migration.
P	Certainly.
I	This is effective, and popular?
P	Yes, absolutely.
I	Do you think it makes people feel more secure?
P	Absolutely not. Because the insecurity is in the head. The neighbours, people who live with people coming from other countries, they still have neighbours from other countries. Since one of the two died, they will feel unsafe. It's racism, it's a kind of racism. They don't <i>hate</i> people coming from abroad, but they don't want them. They want only white people on the street. Because they didn't study, they didn't travel, that's the problem. Not all the citizens from Padua are like that, but it could be one half of those who vote. Next Sunday, I think 50% of the people will vote that way. What does it mean? The mayor will be elected with 25% of the voters, if he's got 50%. It could happen that 25% of the racists elect a racist mayor, even if 75% don't.
I	And even more I suppose, as a lot of people aren't registered to vote?
P	Yes, because they are abroad, or because they're not yet citizens. Because here it's very tough work to become a citizen. My wife has lived here since 2011, six years. She lives here for 8 years, she still has to wait another two years to become a citizen. She could be, because her daughters are Italians. But anyway, that's why they are changing this law, but again the Lega Nord, and the M5S, have the same position, in 2014, they didn't want it. Because they are scared that one million more voters won't vote for M5S. And one million people, we'll have to see next time, but...we are 25-30 million people here in Italy. One million more people is 4-5%. That's big. In Italian we say: " <i>niente si crea, niente si distrugge, tutta si trasforma</i> ". Nothing's lost, everything's transferred. If you compare the elections, you'll see the change.
I	It's interesting how low the Lega Nord vote is still.
P	Well, Bitonci...
I	So he is much more powerful here than the Lega Nord party?
P	Yes, absolutely
I	People have said to me before that Padua is 'not a Lega Nord city'.

P	Take a look at the Lega Nord vote, compared to the vote for 'Bitonci Sindaco'.
I	Do people know about his time in Cittadella? Is that an important factor?
P	Yes. But no it's not an important factor. It's important he had some kind of experience. But anyway, he was younger, 10 years younger than Ivo Rossi, and he says to people what they want to hear.
I	But he's been tested now; it's very easy to say anything when you don't have power but...
P	No, no, no; now he just says: "I was doing my job but they kicked me out".
I	The Forza Italia party?
P	Yes, exactly. So he says: "vote for me another time and I'll finish the job".
I	And Saia?
P	Saia now, it's important: last time he had 10%, now he's supporting Giordani, the PD candidate.
I	And Saia was previously in Alleanza Nazionale (post-fascist party)?
P	Yes.
I	He's been on a journey then.
P	So long a journey the votes didn't follow him, but remained with Bitonci. Because it was artificial.
I	He was going where he thought the power was going.
P	Absolutely, yes.
I	Between 2014 and 2016, when he was in the government, he was in charge of security; was he important for the changes?
P	Yes, certainly. It happened anyway. It's very strange. PD, when it was called <i>Ulivo</i> , was born in Padua. Padua has always been a kind of laboratory, a political laboratory, from the age of Toni Negri. I don't know if you remember the terrorism, the political terrorism of the 1970s.
I	<i>Anni di piombo</i> ?
P	The <i>anni di piombo</i> were born in Padua! Left-wing, but also of the fascists. Both sides in Padua.
I	Why here in Padua?
P	I don't know! It's a laboratory. Everything new - the best and the worst practices - are everytime born in Padua.
I	Do you think the university plays a part?
P	The university plays a part because it selects the most smart people. That's why a lot of new things in politics were born here in Padua.
I	And extreme things as well.
P	Extreme, extreme. It's a strange city. Padua is a strange city.

I	You must know it very well.
P	My uncle was the mayor. I've been a journalist for 15 years. And I was the spokesman of Ivo Rossi. Yes, I know everybody here. I love the city. It's a city full of opportunities. But this is a time that people have had a bad reaction to immigration. It will pass. I don't know how many years will have to pass. But immigration won't be a problem for my daughters, and for the 30% of the new citizens. They will think about the things that Bitonci and other people like him say, the things that people in the 19th century said, when there was a war of 100 years between Germany and France. To me it's incredible that my grandfather went to fight against the Austrians! In another 30 years, I hope not 70, when they (his daughters) will vote, they'll vote for a person, who knows, from China or somewhere else in the world.
I	And they'll be voting for different parties to this.
P	The parties: in 20 years they will have changed a lot. Well, I'd say it's about experience. For example, next door lives a lawyer who supports Bitonci.
I	So you've talked about politics with him?
P	Yes, absolutely. But he doesn't have children. His wife has three dogs. He's of the right-wing party. I've got a wife who comes from 11,000 km from here. I've got two daughters who aren't white like me or you. I can't be on the right. I've seen here in Padua who votes for Bitonci, has a very shit life. People who are frustrated; they don't have anyone on the team of Bitonci who has children. No-one. Two are homosexual, but have never come out. Bitonci doesn't have children. He has two adopted children, but that's not the same. The left or the right is only part of the story, in my opinion. It's not an ideological division. The Communists don't exist any longer, nor the Nazis. Nobody thinks in racist ways like we used to think about in the 20th century. But they are against immigrants because of the African people. The first people say to you is: "African people have got a lot of children". They are jealous about this! Because they don't have it. They say – "I feel unsafe" - but to feel unsafe is because you know that in 20 years ago you'll be old and nobody will take care of you, because you don't have children, you don't have family. You feel unsafe not because of the negroes on the street, but because of the safety in your house; the culture is something that depends on the way you live. If you live with three dogs, you will love them. There are people who love much more the animals than people.
I	So you care more about yourself as an individual.
P	Yes, you put on the society what you feel within your own life. The society is the sum of the families.

9.2.13 Former executive of Padua city administration

Interviewer: Fred Paxton

Participant: Former executive of Padua city administration (president of APS Holding, public transport company of the Padua municipality)

Participant 2: Former mayoral spokesman, Padua

Date: 19 June 2017

Reference: PaduaInt8

Participant	Padua has a multi-regional level hospital. It is the second for transplants in Italy. Also for children, the hospital of Padua is the second of Italy, after Rome, for treatment of children.
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Interviewer	So people travel to here from far away?
P	No, we go to take them. My company goes to take them. We go to take people at the airport, and organs, to hospitals across northern Italy. There is an organisation based in Milan called North Italy Transplant, that organises the movement of organs and we go everywhere they request in order to take the organs to the people and then to Padua to make the transplantation.
I	An important job.
P	Not as important as my former job. My former job was a €100 million company, of 900 people.
I	Were you there when the tram network was developed?
P	Yes, exactly. I finished the tramway, starting in 2007 and finishing in 2009, with me as president.
Participant 2	You finished the tram without any public money.
P	The tramway was started with a financial framework of €60 million from the government and €35 million from the municipality. I finished with 120, because the last tranche of the tramway was unfinished, and I took €20-22 million to finish that.
I	It looks like a big project.
P	It's not a network, but only one line at the moment. In 2014 we found financing from the government for another €60-70 million but the former mayor failed in asking for it from the government before the election, so we lost it.
P2	We lost it because Massimo Bitonci didn't want another line of the tram, because people don't love change, and the tram is a type of change for the city.
P	It's a radical change. Take for example the area of the hospital, if you put the tramway in the middle of the road connecting the two main hospitals, Ospedale Sant'Antonio and the General Hospital, you must take away the cars from the road and force people to park, for example physicians and doctors. 4,000 people, force them to put the cars outside when they arrive and take the tramway to go to work. They don't want to, they want to go and arrive exactly in front of the hospital.
I	Was that why Bitonci wasn't happy with the plan?
P	No, no. Between me and Alberto, there is a small difference in point of view regarding this. I am convinced the money we took from the government could have been taken just in March 2014. Because the money, in other ways, as it is gone, went to the Expo in Milan to make another line. So the former mayor lost the money. So when Bitonci arrived, he confirmed this loss. The reasons are various. The first is that people wanted to go by car to the hospital. The other is that the tram line would have been placed in a big park near the hospital, and would have crossed this park. So the people didn't want this. We told them: "go to Germany, or everywhere in the world, the tramway passes areas that aren't occupied by cars".

P2	It's very difficult to make changes. And it pays well in votes to do nothing.
P	In Italy, if you do nothing, you win. Also in Germany, in many cities.
I	Do you think much has changed since 2014, since Bitonci has been mayor?
P2	He has corrupted the good name of Padua in Italy. Padua is - was and still maybe is - because three years aren't enough to destroy it, Padua was the city of immigration but also of integration between different cultures. The university was founded eight centuries ago. Sant'Antonio was from Portugal, from Lisbon. Everything calls him Sant'Antonio of Padua. The citizens of Padua made him their saint. Somehow the people of eight centuries ago were much more open minded than those living here now. It's an anti-globalisation movement, that of Bitonci.
P	This is obvious. I didn't understand exactly what you are aiming for, but the problem of the political issues now in Italy is to do with the aging population. We have the most important share of over 65s in Europe, and the most, most, most important share of over 75s. We have 30% of the population over 65 and 10% of the population over 85, in Italy. Padua is worse even than the nation, because we have more of an aging population. This situation creates two problems. The first problem is we are losing population. In 2016 the Italian population lost 400,000 people, that's two times Padua. If you think a nation of 60 million people loses 400,000 people, net of the income of immigrants, that means it could have lost 350,000 people per year, but we have 150,000 people coming from abroad, and we covered part of the losses. But when you lose 200,000 people, you lose a city like Padua, buying in the shopping malls, buying cars. So the development is less, you have GDP starting less at the beginning of the year because you have a smaller population consuming, spending. So we have a shrinking population. On the other hand, we didn't win the education challenge, because we have the smallest share of people with a degree in Europe. People don't go to university, they want to work first. And so, we have both problems: low culture and people aging. This is increasing a lot the populist parties like Lega, and Bepe Grillo and M5S. Because it is simple to exaggerate the situation with the people, and the people think there are immigrant invaders, and they are losing their position from an income point of view, etc. etc. These creates a lot of rage, and when the people are angry they don't want to understand anything. We have one third of the population going this way. The other third is based on public jobs, without any innovation, without any competition. They are not competitive. So they don't want anything to change, because any change creates a lot of problems and causes them to change their way of life. Both these situations are creating problems for Italy. In three years, Renzi succeeded in creating the basis to change this, but it's not so simple, because they made Renzi leave the government twice. Once in December, resigning as president of the government, and the second in January, making him resign as Secretary General of the Partito Democratico. Then we made again the primary elections to choose the Secretary and he won with 1,500,000 votes. But they don't want to allow him to return back to the government. This is the situation in Italy. So, an aging population creates problems. As a matter of fact, we could also see that there is no growth of important companies, but the growth of companies in Veneto and Padua is based mainly on immigrant autonomous activities, like, for example, builders, carpenters. People come here, and they don't find a job as an employee, so they choose to have autonomous activities to work in the construction sector. If you go out, they are working here, you find of three or four people, there are three people from Tunisia, Albania. Please, explain your research to me. At 2pm I must go to an army base in the southern part of the province, where there are 2,000 immigrants, it's a concentration camp, and we must put an ambulance there 24 hours a day, and I must go.
I	It's near Padua?
P	We have two of them. I call them concentration camps, because all the army buildings are used to store people waiting for authorisation.

I	And they're not allowed to come into the city?
P	Well, it's open, they are able to, but it's in the middle of the countryside.
I	Well, let me explain my research. What I'm researching is the leadership of local government by populist right-wing parties. There's been a lot written about why populism is rising, for example due to globalisation and people's fear of change, amongst other things. What's interesting to me is to look at specific local cases and see what has developed over the past 10-20 years ago, to feed into a successful political campaign. Because it seems to vary between places; and in Padua it seems to really concern security.
P	No. We have reduced crime, and any kind of criminal issue, in the last five to ten years, we haven't had any surge of crime. The problem is that the people are aging, and older people fear everything. It's the same for Brexit.
I	So that's one thing, but also, I'm interested in looking at the actual impact. Not just the causes for their rise to power, but what they do once they have power. In local government, do they really have the autonomy to put their words into action?
P	No, absolutely not. Take for example, this army base where I'm going. One month ago, the ministry of security, of police, came here to Padua. He held a meeting with all the mayors, and told them: "no fear, we will close it". 400 people are arriving per day. Per day! And 200 people go away from this base of Bagnoli. They come from the ships, from Africa, directly here. They stay in order to make the health checks, vaccinations, take the documents, photographs, etc. etc. And there are people staying there for six months, and people staying for ten days. After that, they go away. Some of them try to go to France, because they have relatives there. Some of them try to go to Germany; they take the trains to Germany, they arrive in Bolzano, and then they try to jump on the train going to Munich. I took the train a few months ago to Munich and at the border the police came and checked all the carriages. But they try to go in every way. They go to Sweden. Some of them are moved on the basis of the shares given to the different countries. In Poland, Hungary, Czechia, Slovakia, Austria, nobody goes, apart from those who succeed in escaping. But one of the main places is here in Padua. There are two actually, one in San Siro di Bagnoli, and one in Cona.
I	So they can't change things like migration policy.
P	The local authorities are unable, totally unable.
I	But are there other things; you mentioned, the aging population have increasing fear, but they can't do anything to change this?
P	They can't do anything.
I	But Bitonci, and others, have continued to talk about it.
P	Yes, they try to avoid people coming in and living in our cities. They have a shield, made by Romanians and Albanians and other eastern countries. They, as a matter of fact, make a shield, an wedge through the African parts of immigrants. Because if there are Romanians and Albanians, they are worse, they are more fascist than Italians are. They make people from Africa stay away. And we have a big Romanian, Moldavian, and Albanian population. Maybe, more or less, 10% of the population.
I	And you said they act as a shield somehow?

P	Yes, because where Romanians are based, public apartments etc., the people coming from Africa, they don't want them. [00:24:20] We have these people coming from the eastern countries. They are much, much more fascist. As a matter of fact, they don't want people coming from Africa going to the eastern countries. The problem today in Europe is they take money from us, from Austria, Germany, Italy, but they don't want immigrants. At all. And it's the same here. They don't want immigrants, immigrants from Africa, they don't want them. There is more capability to live together between Italian people, some Italian people, and African people, than between eastern European people and African people.
I	Do they live in different parts of the city?
P	Mainly, the people coming from the eastern countries, for example, Romanians and Bulgarians are European citizens, so they don't have any problems of the right of establishment. They come here and they are residents.
I	So if they have the money they can get their own place.
P	Exactly, they go to live where they can with a low income.
I	And they can vote as well?
P	For the municipality, yes. If they are resident, they can vote. As soon as they have a job, and the income is low, they obtain public apartments. So they go to live in public buildings, or small apartment buildings. So all the buildings, especially condos, in the surrounding of the city, are filled with these people coming from the eastern countries. Everywhere they throw away the people coming from Africa.
P2	The people coming from Africa live in the area of the train station, or in Arcella. Or in marginal buildings.
P	Buildings that could not be inhabited by Italian or European people.
I	Via Anelli was very famous.
P	Exactly.
P2	It's ten years that Via Anelli has been closed. If you are happy in your everyday life, you don't have a fear of everything. This is part of the story. Being happy or sad in your everyday life.
P	He is joking, but we have an important problem of absorbing the globalisation effect. As I told you before, the schools, the education of Italy has not maintained, didn't achieve, the European level for schools. For example, over the last 30 years, we didn't have in Italy excellent schools, so people didn't succeed in putting their children in excellent schools. People didn't give value to the training of the people, because they were convinced - not because they were stupid - they were convinced that Italian schools was excellent. They were told Italian schools and universities were the most excellent in the world, so they didn't pay so much attention to the quality of the school, and this created a big gap. If you speak with people, young people, you find that they have taken more from the environment, from an educational point of view, technology, use of electronic gadgets, fashion, capacity of understanding and seeing what is nice and not, etc. etc., more by the environment than the school. The school didn't upgrade to the globalisation. I travelled a lot in the United States, all the world, in emerging countries, and I found in the last twenty years, for me, the division is as follows. Between 1980 and 2000, there was a big preparation of the globalisation. When China started, first the South East Asian countries, and then China, started in 1997-98, they departed, the globalisation started keeping pace in 2000. Until 2007 we reached the peak of globalisation. The people in Italy didn't have any perception of these changes. Didn't have any perception of these changes! They didn't understand they are forced to study to change their points of view, to develop.

I	They weren't ready for what the global economy needed?
P	They weren't ready! Not only that, but they didn't do anything. As Italy was the fifth most powerful country in the world. By the way, in the middle of the 1990s we overtook the UK, in terms of GDP. So Italy became the fifth after the United States, Germany, Japan and France. Italy was the fifth. But it was exactly the beginning of the end.
I	And in Padua specifically?
P	Yes, because Veneto was the trainer of Italy. From an international point of view, an export point of view, tourism point of view, etc. We are still the locomotive, the first wagon of the railway.
P2	But not from the education point of view.
P	From the point of view, if you go to Milan, for example, Milan at the end of the 90s was lost. Then the government decided to invest in the Expo, and the government put €5.4 billion to develop the Expo, and also a lot of private investment went to develop the skyscrapers in Milan, Porto Garibaldi, etc. etc. In Veneto, the government invested the same, because they put €5 billion in the MOSE. The system of protection of Venice from the sea. But the MOSE didn't do anything, it doesn't exist! Maybe it will never work. They're all in jail, because they're all corrupt, from the Governor General of the region down, everybody. They are still there. It doesn't function. And they took away €5 billion. The same money the government put on Milan.
I	So Veneto stalled, and if that hadn't have happened it could now be at Milan's level?
P	There was a phase at the end of the 90s when Veneto was overtaking Lombardy, because in Lombardy they had a strong change to the tertiary, service sector, and they lost a lot of jobs in the manufacturing sector. While Veneto maintained these kinds of activities, as Germany did, because we were well connected with Germany. But at the end of the 2000s, the government gave the money, and now Milan is again the head of Italy, and we lost everything. In ten years we lost everything. The crisis of 2007 created the basis for the destruction of Veneto. Now we have the situation in which a lot of companies, small and medium sized companies, are rising because of the export in the fashion and in the technology sectors. But they are companies not the system. Companies not the system.
I	What is the difference?
P	The difference is that all the land has wages that are less than in the rest of Italy, especially in Lombardy. They are half, one third, of that in Germany. People are not rich, people are poor. We didn't have any...I would say, I had lunch with a friend of mine who has been in China. He told me: "it's 20 years that I've been going to China. Ten years ago, in China, the wages were ten times lower than now". I'm earning less than what I earned in 1990. Less now, in real terms.
I	The other issue is whether there are jobs for all the people who arriving, of the appropriate skill level?
P	No, no. People arriving mainly work in the black market. Without any protection. Italian white people earn less today than what they earned ten years ago, Italian people in the factories.
I	Because of global competition.
P	Yes, and also because the quality's not so high. The quality of the people. Many companies decided to relocate abroad. Now some of the companies are deciding to relocate here in Italy, because they found there are also problems abroad. But the problem is that the quality's not so high.
I	Because of the education problems you mentioned.

P	Exactly. If you travel around the world, in Austria, Netherlands, I was in the United States last week, and the Netherlands one month ago. Most of the western countries have focused in the last ten years on the alternation between job and labour. They sent young people to the companies just as they are in school, to understand what it means to work. In Italy, nothing like this, nothing. Nothing. Or very poor. Companies don't want young people because they find it is a waste of time. But why? Because we cut every margin of time in order to increase production. So the companies don't have money in order to make research and development, and the people aren't free to invest time in companies to develop the point of view, the vision, of the company. There is a very narrow point of view. Increase a lot the exports, in volume. Also, even if we have a good quality of production, there is not a view towards quality, there is a view towards volume. We return back to the 60s and 70s. Produce a lot, export a lot. Not exactly the quality, but produce a lot.
I	And that doesn't work anymore, because you're in competition with countries around the world?
P	We are lucky because it is demonstrated, it's not necessarily that I can show you, but the quality of the Italian exports, the Venetian exports, are on average better than others. I don't know for how much time, because the Germans are in pursuit, but we are still good producers. And also, there are a lot of entrepreneurs going to other parts of the world. For example, we are the main partner of Iran, main partner of Qatar. This means nothing to you. Qatar has been the main site of the Americans for the problem of Isis. Italy is the first trading partner of Qatar, the first trading partner of Turkey, the first trading partner of Iran, the first trading partner of Arabic countries. Libya, everywhere. Small and medium companies. We have thousands of small and medium companies.
I	And this is what Veneto is famous for.
P	Exactly.
I	The 'Third Italy', in which the small and medium companies were so powerful.
P	Exactly, but these people take the aeroplane and go to Vietnam, Thailand, Burma, Bangladesh, they go everywhere in the world.
P2	Consider this: the airport in Venice is named Marco Polo, he was the first. There is something cultural, in this international point of view of the people of this area. Because of the Venetian Republic, that was the first globaliser.
P	My point, why you go to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, you find Italians everywhere. Trading, building, constructing. Personally, I have a friend of mine who has a company of engineers, 20 engineers. Everywhere they are fighting against the Chinese. And everywhere they go they rebuild what the Chinese had built, because it doesn't work, it's fallen down!
I	Does the money they make come back to Veneto?
P	Not all of it.
P2	Because of the tax rate.
P	A lot of the money goes to the Arabian countries: Dubai, Abu Dhabi.
P2	Because of the tax rate, the taxation is too high here.
P	No, it's not so. The interesting thing is that we are very advanced, in the sense that our region is one of the more globalised, in the sense that you find Italian people, Venetian people, everywhere in the world putting up factories. And we are globalised also in the capital point of view. If you have Siemens or Bosch, you have single companies and their strategy is to be abroad as a company. With Deutsche Bank or other German banks, they arrive there, they work, they take a lot of work. We have 10, 25, 100, 200 companies arriving, every one of them takes small bits and works. And they work everywhere in the world. They are small, often they fail, but they are present, and they keep

	money there also, and companies. If you go to Brazil, Mexico, Romania, Azerbaijan, everywhere you'll find Italian companies based there, with a stable organisation. So, we are very globalised, from an entrepreneurial point of view. But the land, and the public institutions, and the framework, the institutions, are very, very...They do not follow.
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N.B. Interview transcripts unavailable for the following:

Interviewer: Fred Paxton

Participant: Former employee of Wels city administration

Date: 21 October 2016

Reference: WelsInt7

Interviewer: Fred Paxton

Participant: Former temporary contracted employee of Wels city administration

Date: 1 November 2016

Reference: WelsInt8

Interviewer: Fred Paxton

Participant: Professor of Sociology, University of Padua

Date: 19 January, 2017

Reference: PaduaInt3
