

IREb2014

CULTURE, SOCIETY AND POLITICS IN THE GERMAN-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

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Fall 2020-2021

Session 9: Austrian Politics + Political History I

Introduction to Austria

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■ Facts and Figures

- Economy
- Culture

■ Austrian Politics

- Government
- Political Leaders
- Contemporary Trends

■ Austrian Political History

- Keeping up with the Habsburgs



Facts and Figures



- **Welfare State**
 - Medical Insurance
 - Public welfare benefits
- **Wealthy**
 - High standard of living

Economy =>

- **Free market economy + social partnership**
- **Highly developed industrialized country**
 - **Skilled labor force**



Facts and Figures



Economy =>

- **Top economic sectors:** services, industry and agriculture
 - **Main industries:** food + luxury commodities, mechanical engineering + steel construction, chemicals, vehicle manufacturing, tourism
- Has **natural resource**, but is also importing due to its growing industrial sector
- **Transit country**



Facts and Figures



Climate =>

- **Typical** central European transitional climate

Nature =>

- **Water-wealthy**
 - A European leader pertaining to hydroelectric power
- Austria's **terrain** is highly **mountainous**- the Alps
- Almost **half** is covered by **forests**

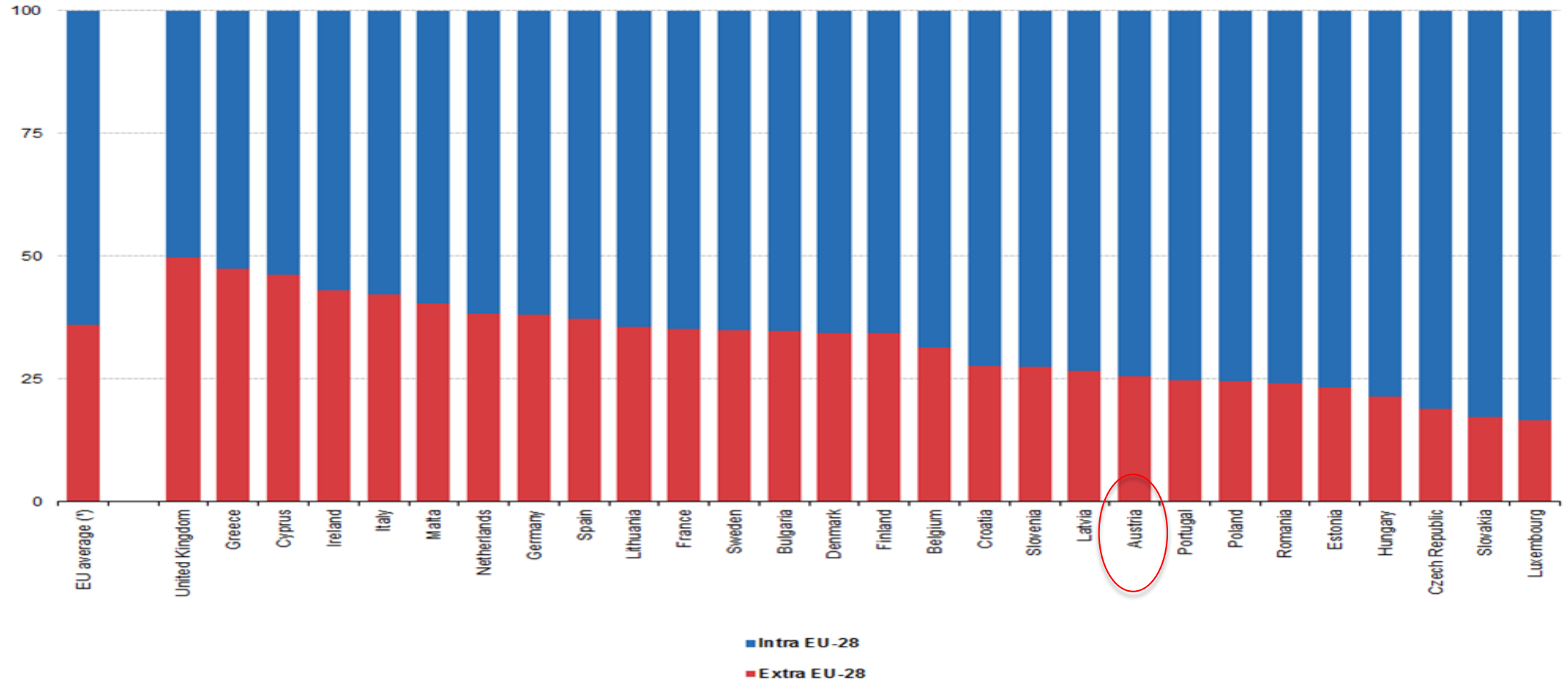


Facts and Figures



- Export oriented

Intra and extra EU-28 trade in goods, 2017
(imports plus exports, % share of total trade)



Facts and Figures



Political History =>

Key Dates in Austria's Modern History	
1918	End of the Hapsburg empire
1920	New constitution creates Republic of Austria
1938	The Anschluss (union): Austria incorporated into Germany by Hitler, renamed Ostmark (Eastern March)
1945	Soviet troops liberate Vienna , Austria occupied by Soviets, British, US + French
1955	Treaty signed by Britain, France, US and Soviet Union, establishes an independent, neutral Austria. Austria joins the United Nations .
1995	Austria joins the European Union

Facts and Figures



Austrian Culture =>

■ Traditional dishes (Vienna):

- Wiener Schnitzel
- Tafelspitz
- Apfelstrudel
- Palatschinkeen
- Sachertorte
- Opera Ball (Vienna)
- Krampus
- Lederhosen
- Dirndl



Government



Constitutional Framework =>

- The constitution formed in 1920, amended in 1929: Austria as a democratic, federal republic
- 1934: The constitution was **replaced** by an **authoritarian regime** under Chancellors Dollfuß + Schuschnigg
- 1938: **Eliminated by Hitler** after Nazi Germany annexed Austria (**Anschluss**)
- 1945: Austria **liberated**, the constitution of 1929-**revived** (aka the “**Second Republic**”)

Bundesgesetzblatt

für die Republik Österreich

Jahrgang 1920

Ausgegeben am 10. November 1920

1. Stück

Inhalt: (Nr. 1—3.) 1. Gesetz, womit die Republik Österreich als Bundesstaat eingerichtet wird (Bundes-Verfassungs-gesetz). — 2. Verfassungsgesetz, betreffend den Übergang zur bundesstaatlichen Verfassung. — 3. Annäherung, betreffend das Inkrafttreten des Gesetzes vom 1. Oktober 1920, St. G. Bl. Nr. 450, womit die Republik Österreich als Bundesstaat eingerichtet wird (Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz), und des Verfassungsgesetzes vom 1. Oktober 1920, St. G. Bl. Nr. 451, betreffend den Übergang zur bundesstaatlichen Verfassung.

I.
Gesetz vom 1. Oktober 1920, womit
die Republik Österreich als Bundesstaat
eingrichtet wird
(Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz).

Die Nationalversammlung hat beschlossen:

Erstes Hauptstück.

Allgemeine Bestimmungen.

Artikel 1.

Österreich ist eine demokratische Republik. Ihr
Recht geht vom Volk aus.

Artikel 2.

(1) Österreich ist ein Bundesstaat.
(2) Der Bundesstaat wird gebildet aus den selbst-
ständigen Ländern: Burgenland, Kärnten, Nieder-
österreich (Niederösterreich-Land und Wien), Ober-
österreich, Salzburg, Steiermark, Tirol, Vorarlberg.

Artikel 3.

(1) Das Bundesgebiet umfasst die Gebiete der
Bundesländer.
(2) Eine Änderung des Bundesgebietes, die zu-
gleich Änderung eines Landesgebietes ist, ebenso
die Änderung einer Landesgrenze innerhalb des
Bundesgebietes kann — abgesehen von Friedens-
verträgen — nur durch übereinstimmende Ver-
fassungsgesetze des Bundes und jenes Landes er-
folgen, dessen Gebiet eine Änderung erfährt.

(3) Die für Niederösterreich-Land und Wien
geltenden Sonderbestimmungen enthält das vierte
Hauptstück.

Artikel 4.

(1) Das Bundesgebiet bildet ein einheitliches
Währungs-, Wirtschafts- und Zollgebiet.
(2) Innerhalb des Bundes dürfen Zwischenzoll-
linien oder sonstige Verkehrsbeschränkungen nicht
errichtet werden.

Artikel 5.

Bundeshauptstadt und Sitz der obersten
Organe des Bundes ist Wien.

Artikel 6.

(1) Für jedes Land besteht eine Landesbürger-
schaft. Voraussetzung der Landesbürgerschaft ist
das Heimatrecht in einer Gemeinde des Landes.
Die Bedingungen für Erwerb und Verlust der
Landesbürgerschaft sind in jedem Land gleich.
(2) Mit der Landesbürgerschaft wird die Bundes-
bürgerschaft erworben.
(3) Jeder Bundesbürger hat in jedem Land
die gleichen Rechte und Pflichten wie die Bürger
des Landes selbst.

Artikel 7.

(1) Alle Bundesbürger sind vor dem Gesetz
gleich. Vorrechte der Geburt, des Geschlechtes, des
Standes, der Klasse und des Bekenntnisses sind
ausgeschlossen.
(2) Den öffentlichen Angestellten, einschließlich der
Angehörigen des Bundesheeres, ist die ungeschmälerte
Ausübung ihrer politischen Rechte gewährleistet.

Government



- The Austrian **Parliament** (legislative) consists of **two chambers**:
 - **National Council**: 183 members
 - **Primary legislative power**
 - Elected by popular vote
 - Distribution of seats based on **proportional representation**
 - **Federal Council/Chamber of Provinces**: 61 members
 - Appointed by + represents the states
- Together they form the **Federal Assembly** =>



Government



- The **legislative** process **originates** in the **National Council**, but bills must be approved by the **Federal Council** (not the budget)
 - National Council can override a Federal Council **veto**: Simple majority vote
- **President** => Head of **state**
- **Chancellor** => Head of federal **government**
- Post-war, '**grand coalition**' governments ruled Austria
- May 2019: **Coalition collapsed** following the '**Ibiza scandal**' involving **Strach**, leader of the Freedom Party

Austria - Official results

National parties	Percentage of votes
ÖVP - Österreichische Volkspartei	34.55%
SPÖ - Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreich	23.89%
FPÖ - Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs	17.20%
GRÜNE - Die Grünen - Die Grüne Alternative	14.08%
NEOS - NEOS - Das neue Österreich	8.44%
JETZT - JETZT - Liste Pilz	1.04%
Other parties - Other parties	0.80%
	100.00%

Government



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbbdsohTQyg>



Government



- **Current coalition:**
Austrian **People's party**
(**ÖVP**) + the **Green**
party (first ever)



Kurz, Kogler

Government



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Elections =>




- Austrian citizens elect:
 - The **National Assembly** (people's chamber of Parliament)
 - The **Provincial Parliament** (Landtag, Parliament of a Province)
 - The **Municipal Council** (EU citizens residents can also vote)
 - The **Austrian Members of the European Parliament** (EU citizens residents can also vote)
 - the **Federal President**
- Austrians (+ some EU citizens) aged **16** can vote

Government



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Political Parties =>

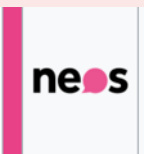

Logo	Name	Abbr.	Ideology	Leader	NC	FC
	Austrian People's Party Österreichische Volkspartei	ÖVP	Liberal conservatism Christian democracy	Kurz	71/183	23/61
	The Greens – The Green Alternative Die Grünen – Die Grüne Alternative	GRÜNE	Green politics Social liberalism	Kogler	26/183	4/61
	Social Democratic Party of Austria Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs	SPÖ	Social Democracy	Rendi-Wagner	40/183	20/61

Government



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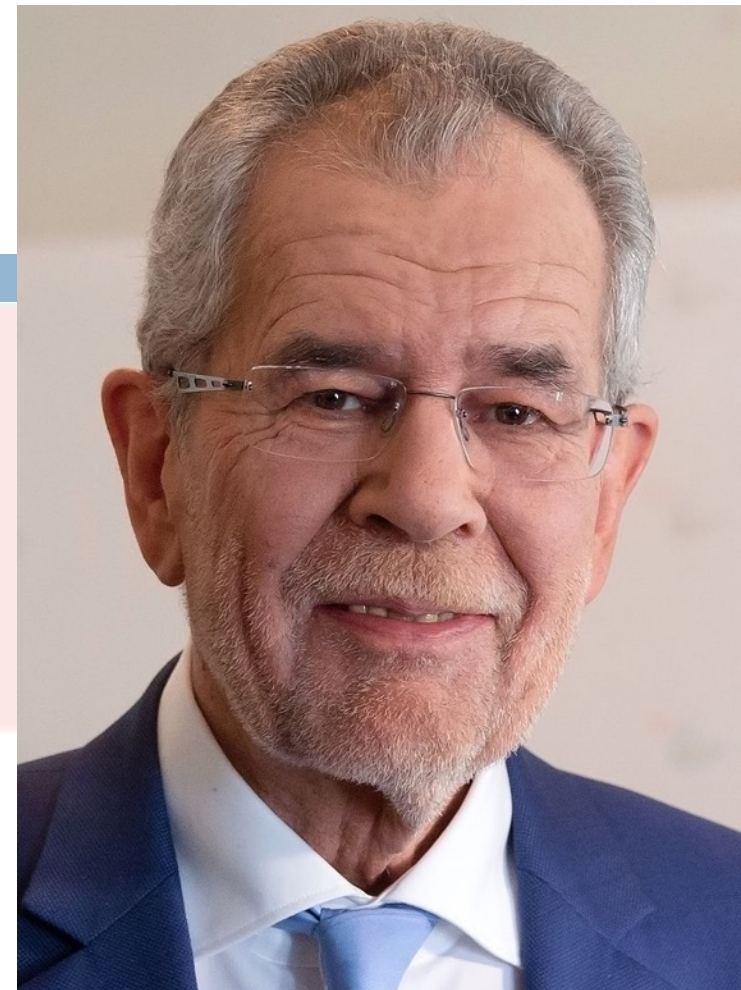
Political Parties =>

Logo	Name	Abbr.	Ideology	Leader	NC	FC
	NEOS – The New Austria and Liberal Forum NEOS – Das Neue Österreich und Liberales Forum	NEOS	Liberalism Eurocentralism	Hofer	30/183	14/61
	Freedom Party of Austria Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs	FPÖ	Right-wing populism National conservatism	Meinl- Reisinger	15/183	0

Political Leaders

The President

- Acts as **head of state**, but is largely a **ceremonial** post
- Elected by **popular vote** for a term of **six years**
- Appoints the chancellor, acts as commander in chief of the armed forces
- Current President: **Alexander van der Bellen** (Elected in December 2016, after a bit of political Drama)
 - Defeated **far right** contestant, Norbert **Hofer** =>



Political Leaders



The Chancellor

- Bundeskanzler, head of government, most powerful position
- Nominate cabinet members
 - Can be voted off by the N. council (no confidence)
- Current Chancellor: **Sebastian Kurz (ÖVP)**
 - Dec 2017-May 2019, Sep 2019-
- Youngest Minister of Foreign Affairs in Austria (27)
- Youngest head of state (31)

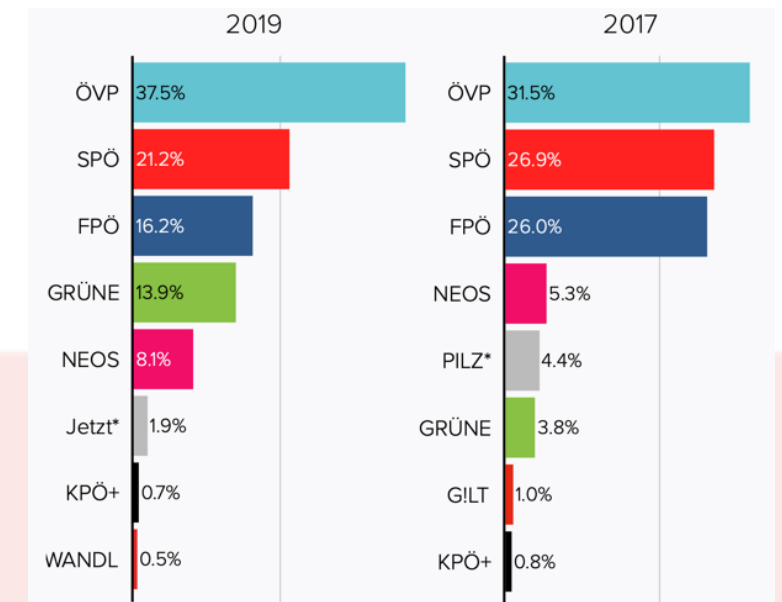
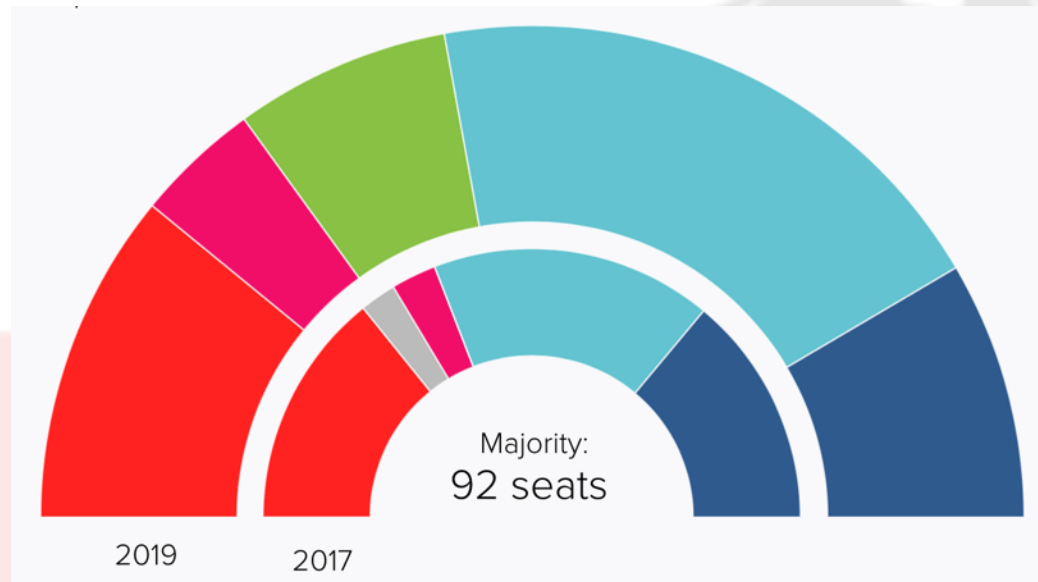


Contemporary Trends



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- Volatility (2017 coalition with the right wing FPÖ) =>
- **Electoral volatility, government instability**
 - Coalition broke down in 2019
 - In the following elections, FPÖ lost support, ÖVP increased its power
 - **Public discussion of Nazism linked to contemporary domestic politics**



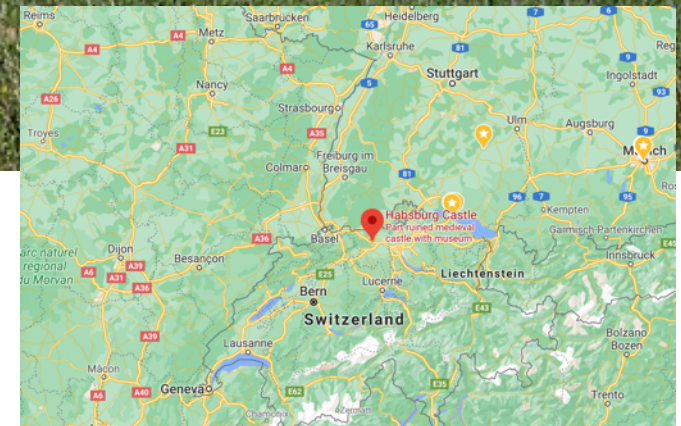
Austrian Political History

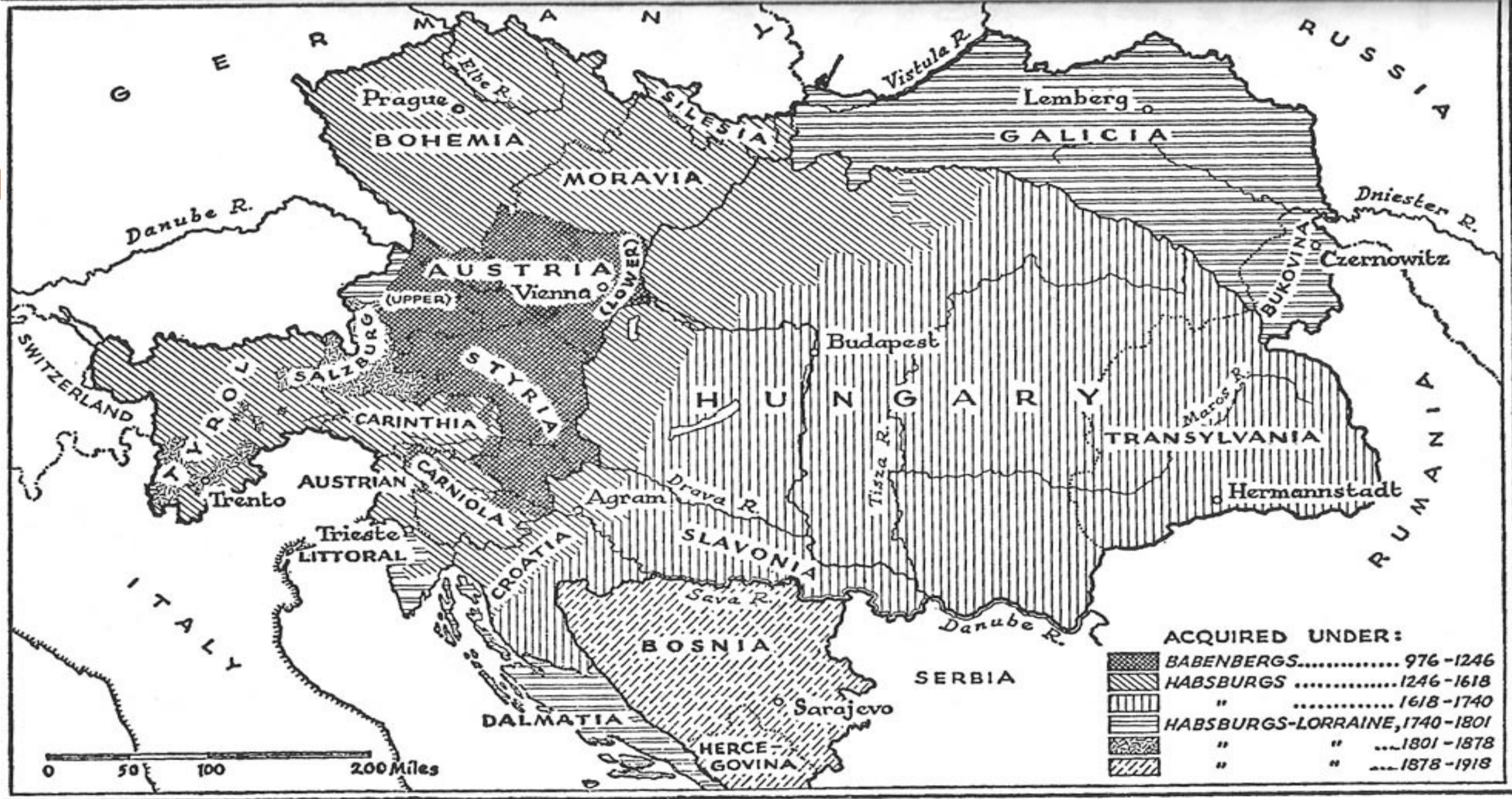


'Keeping up with the Habsburgs'

House of Habsburg

- **'House of Austria'**
 - **Principal sovereign dynasties of Europe (15th-20th century)**
 - **Best known for being the origin of all Holy Roman Emperors (1438-1740) + all rulers of the Austrian Empire, Spanish Empire + several other countries**
 - **The House takes its name from the Habsburg Castle, built around 1020–1030 in present day Switzerland**





AUSTRIA-HUNGARY, HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Only changes within the boundaries from 1878-1918, including the occupied and in 1908 annexed territory of Bosnia-Hercegovina, are shown on this map.



House of Habsburg

- A **powerful family**, they often made **land alliances** through **marriage**
 - Vast **expansion** of its domains (Burgundy, Spain, Bohemia, Hungary etc.)
 - **In-breeding**: Family members typically shared unique facial features (the **Habsburg Jaw**)





Moving to Austria

- The House of Habsburg gathered **dynastic momentum** in the **11th-13th centuries**
 - **1273** => **Rudolph of Habsburg** (Rudolf I) becomes **King of Germany/Holy Roman Emperor**
 - **1276** => **Rudolf I** moved the **family's power base** from Habsburg Castle to the Archduchy of **Austria**
 - **1282** => **Rudolph II** became **sovereign ruler of Austria**
 - **Austria will be** ruled by the Habsburgs for the next 600 years



House of Habsburg



- 14th century => House of **Habsburg** establishes its **power base**
 - Friedrich III of Habsburg (Frederick V)
 - 1440: Elected **German King** + successor of Albert II
 - 1452: Crowned **Holy Roman Emperor** as Frederick III
 - **Married Princess Eleonor of Portugal**: cement his power
 - 1485: Tried to gain control over Hungary + Bohemia, defeated by the Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus
 - Ultimately **prevailed** by **outliving** his opponents + inheriting lands (gained **Lower Austria** from Ladislaus Posthumus, **Upper Austria** from brother Albert VI)

Double Wedding

- **1477: Friedrich III arranged the marriage of his son, Maximilian, to Mary of Burgundy in order to acquire additional land for the Habsburg Empire**
 - ‘Let others wage wars, but you, happy Austria, shall marry’
- **1496: Double wedding**
 - **Maximilian’s children, Philip and Margaret of Austria, married the children of Ferdinand II & Isabella, Joan/Juana of Castile and Aragon + Don John/Juan, Prince of Asturias**
 - **Ensuring Habsburg interests in the regions held by Spain (but also Italy, the Netherlands + N. America)**



To be continued ...

