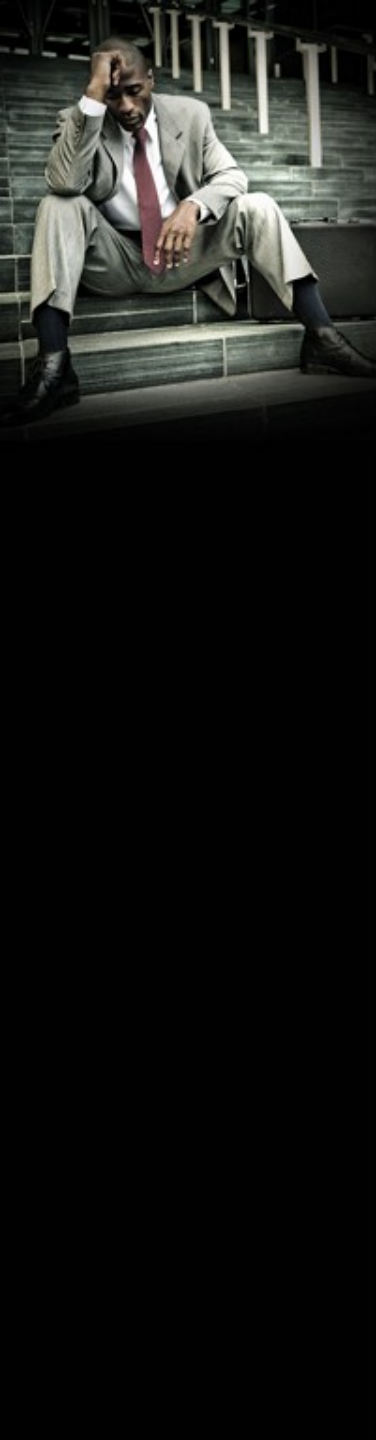


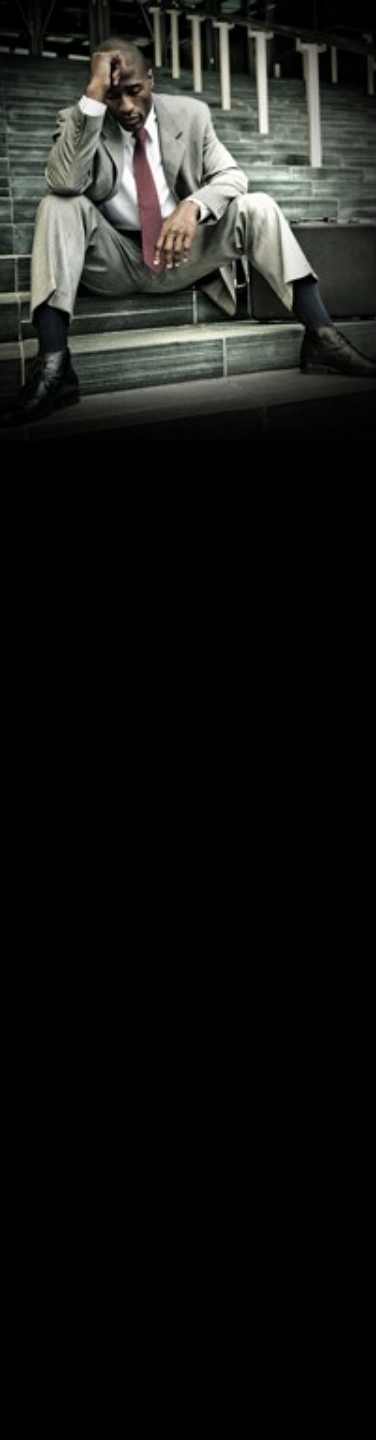
Lecture 7: The Eurozone crisis and the acceleration of decline (II)





Political Landscape After the Crisis

- Fragmentation of traditional parties
- Rise of anti-establishment sentiment
- Increasing distrust in EU institutions
- Growing debate on Italy's role in the Eurozone

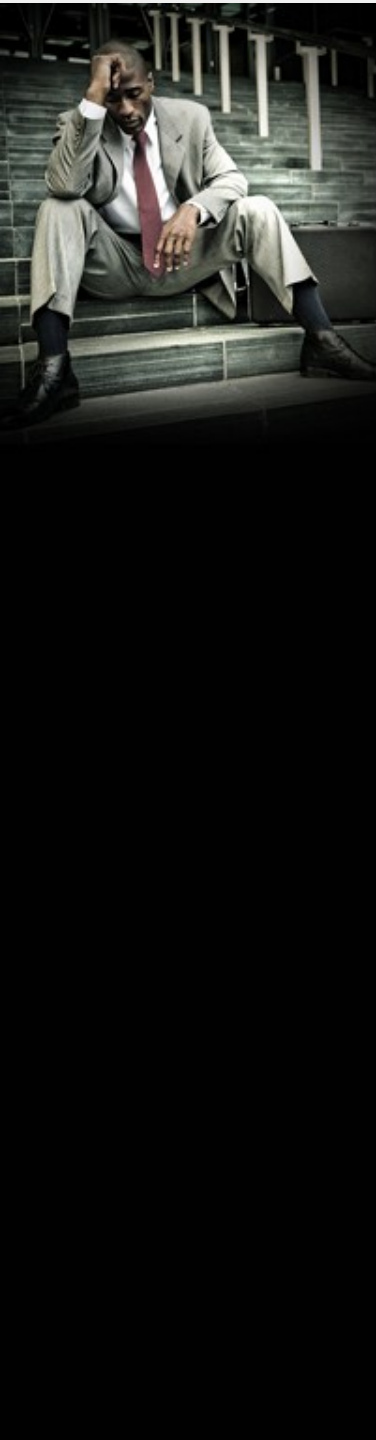


Populist Parties: A Summary

Definition and Emergence Populist parties are political organizations that claim to represent the interests and will of the "common people" against a perceived elite or establishment. Emerging prominently in the early 2000s, these parties gained traction across Europe as they capitalized on societal grievances, economic insecurities, and disillusionment with traditional political elites.

Key Characteristics

1. **Anti-Establishment Rhetoric:** A central feature is their opposition to established political parties and elites, portraying them as corrupt, disconnected, and self-serving.
2. **Direct Appeal to the People:** They emphasize a direct connection between the leader and the people, often bypassing traditional party structures.
3. **Focus on Sovereignty:** Many populist parties advocate for national sovereignty, opposing supranational entities like the European Union.
4. **Simplistic Solutions:** Their discourse often includes straightforward, emotionally appealing solutions to complex societal issues.
5. **Flexibility in Ideology:** Populist parties can align with the left, right, or adopt a mix of ideologies, depending on the context and electorate.
6. **Charismatic Leadership:** Leaders often play a central role in shaping the party's image and messaging.
7. **Crisis Framing:** Populist parties frequently frame their rise as a response to a crisis, whether economic, political, or cultural.



The Broader Context

The rise of populism in Europe has been fueled by several factors:

1. **Economic Disparities:** Post-2008 financial crisis repercussions heightened social inequalities.
2. **Migration Pressures:** Increased immigration has sparked debates on identity and integration.
3. **Distrust in Traditional Parties:** Scandals and perceived inefficiency eroded public trust in mainstream politics.

Populist parties continue to influence European politics by challenging traditional power structures, reshaping political discourse, and reflecting societal divides. Their rise underscores the importance of addressing the root causes of public discontent to ensure democratic stability.



Populist Parties in Major European Countries (1)

1. France:

1. **Rassemblement National (RN):** Led by Marine Le Pen, this right-wing populist party focuses on nationalism, immigration control, and Euroscepticism.
2. **La France Insoumise (LFI):** A left-wing populist movement founded by Jean-Luc Mélenchon, emphasizing social justice and opposition to economic elites.

2. Germany:

1. **Alternative für Deutschland (AfD):** A right-wing populist party known for its Euroscepticism and strong stance on immigration.

3. United Kingdom:

1. **UK Independence Party (UKIP):** Instrumental in promoting Brexit, focusing on nationalism and reducing immigration.
2. **Reform UK:** A successor to UKIP, advocating post-Brexit reforms and criticizing government inefficiencies.



Populist Parties in Major European Countries (2)

1. Spain:

1. **Vox:** A right-wing populist party emphasizing Spanish nationalism, opposition to Catalan independence, and conservative social values.
2. **Podemos:** A left-wing populist movement born out of economic crises, advocating for anti-austerity and social equity policies.

2. Netherlands:

1. **Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV):** Geert Wilders' right-wing populist party, focused on anti-Islam rhetoric and immigration control.
2. **Forum voor Democratie (FvD):** A populist conservative party opposing climate policies and EU integration.



Populist Parties in Italy

Italy has been a fertile ground for populism, with the emergence of parties like the Five Star Movement (Movimento 5 Stelle) and Lega (formerly Lega Nord):

1. Five Star Movement (M5S):

1. Founded in 2009 by Beppe Grillo, M5S combines environmentalism, anti-corruption, and digital democracy.
2. It rejects traditional political labels, presenting itself as a vehicle for citizen-driven governance.

2. Lega:

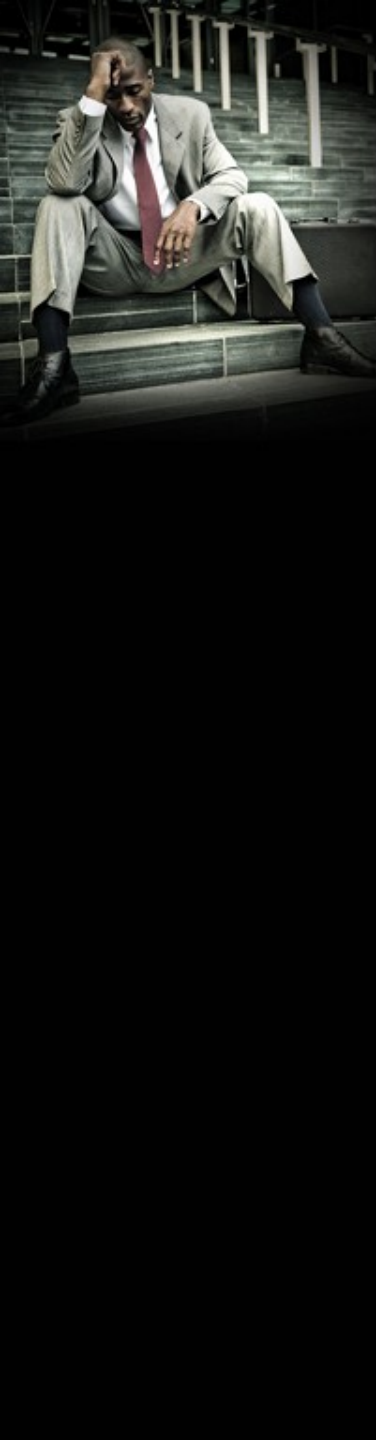
1. Originally a regionalist party advocating autonomy for Northern Italy, it evolved into a nationalist, right-wing populist movement under Matteo Salvini.
2. It emphasizes immigration control, Euroscepticism, and national identity.



Populist Parties vs. Far-Right and Far-Left Parties

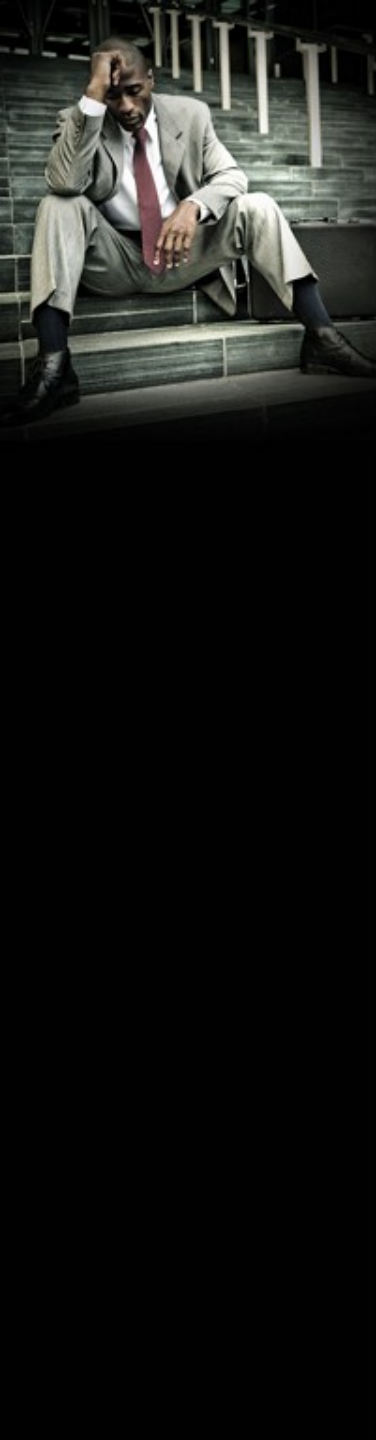
Populist parties are distinct from far-right and far-left parties, although overlaps can occur. The key differences include:

1. **Core Ideology:** Far-right parties typically emphasize nationalism, xenophobia, and cultural homogeneity, while far-left parties focus on anti-capitalism, wealth redistribution, and class struggle. Populist parties, in contrast, are defined by their anti-elite rhetoric and "people vs. elite" framing rather than a specific ideological foundation.
2. **Flexibility:** Populist parties often adapt their platforms to align with the grievances and priorities of their constituencies. Far-right and far-left parties tend to adhere more rigidly to their ideological positions.
3. **Inclusiveness:** Populist parties aim to appeal broadly to "the people," while far-right parties may exclude certain groups based on ethnicity or nationality, and far-left parties often focus on specific socio-economic classes.
4. **Institutional Approach:** Far-right and far-left parties are often more confrontational toward democratic norms, advocating for radical systemic change. Populist parties may criticize institutions but often seek to work within them to gain power and implement reforms.



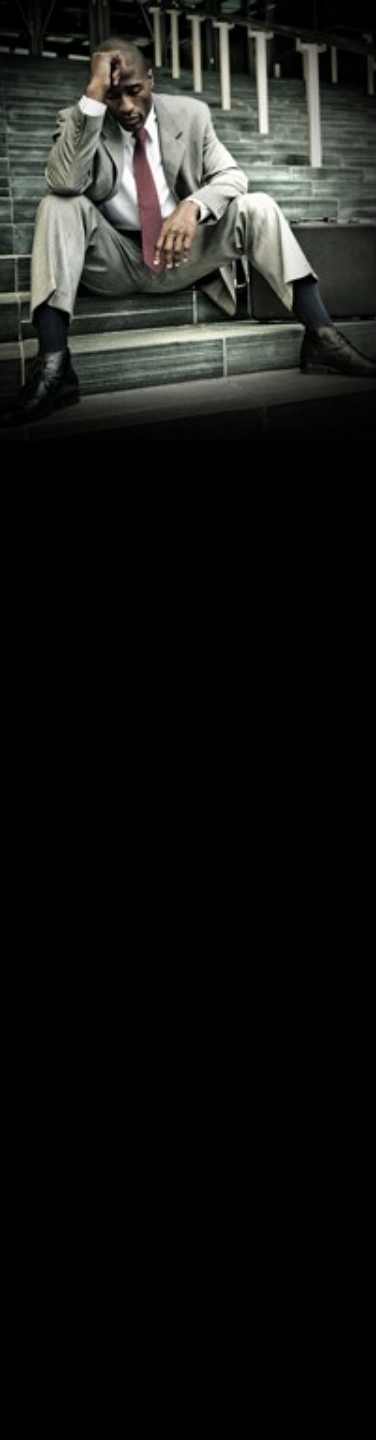
Emergence of the Five Star Movement (M5S)

- Founded by Beppe Grillo in 2009
- Anti-establishment and anti-corruption platform
- Direct democracy and internet-based participation
- Rapid growth in popularity (2013-2018)



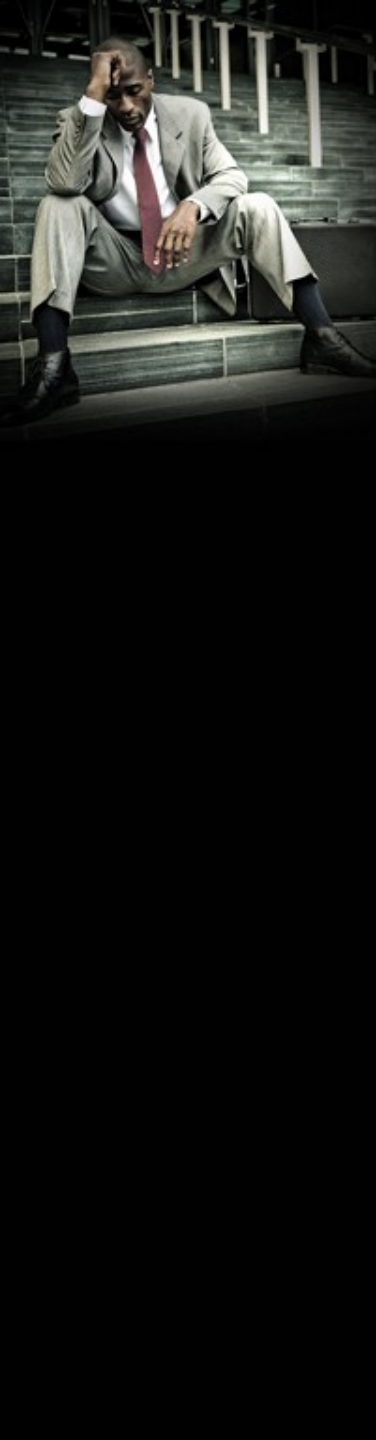
M5S's Position on the EU and Euro

- Initial Eurosceptic stance
- Calls for a referendum on Euro membership
- Criticism of EU austerity measures
- Evolution of views over time



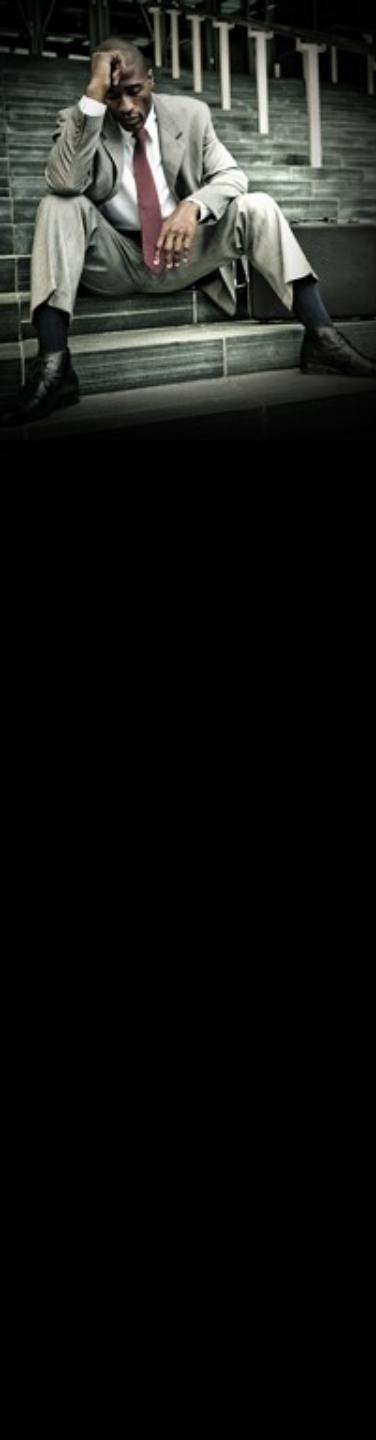
Transformation of the Northern League to Lega

- From regional party to national movement
- Matteo Salvini's leadership (2013-present)
- Shift to anti-immigration and Eurosceptic positions
- Alliance with other European far-right parties



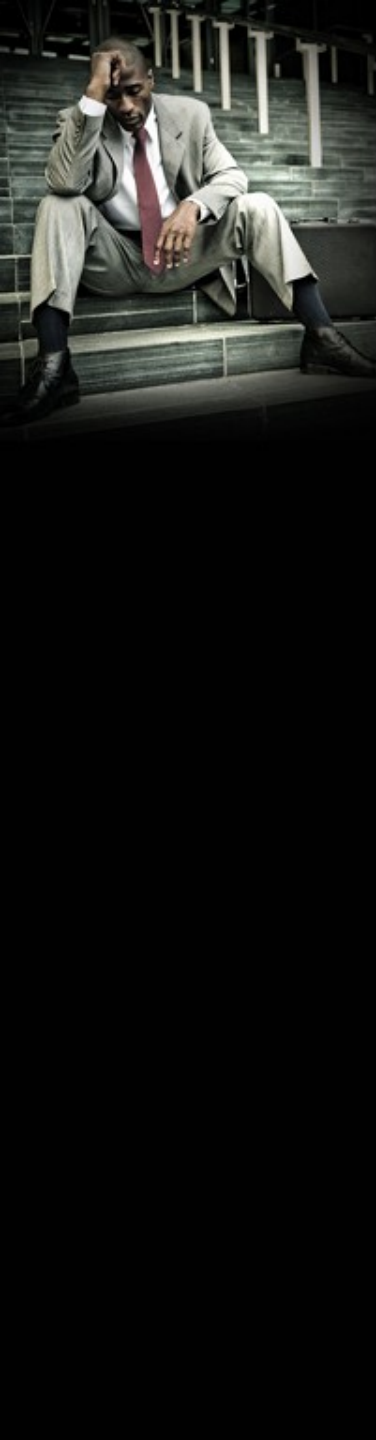
Lega's Euro-critical Stance

- Opposition to EU fiscal rules
- Proposal for "mini-BOTs" as parallel currency
- Critique of Germany's role in the Eurozone
- Calls for greater national sovereignty



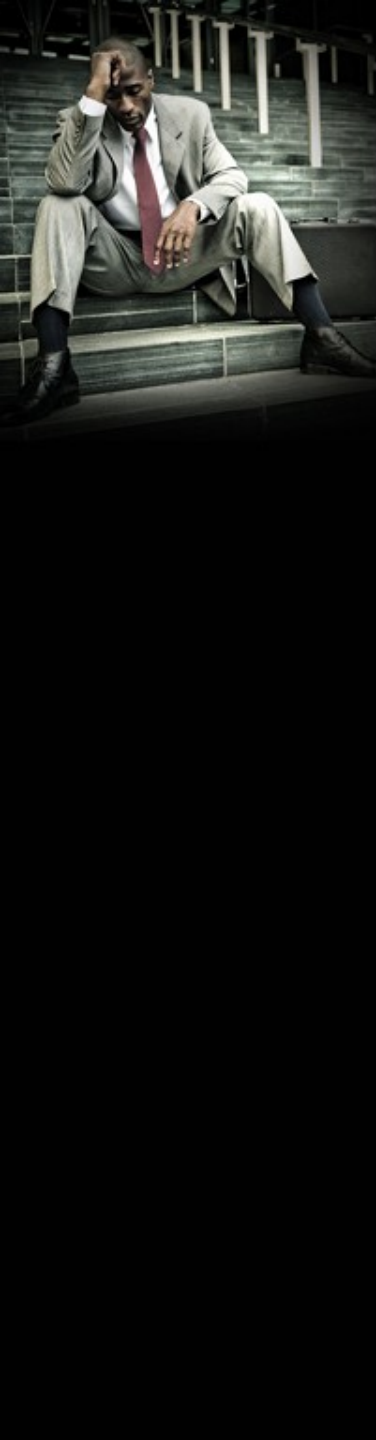
The Debate on Exiting the Euro

- Economic arguments for and against "Italexit"
- Legal and practical challenges of leaving the Eurozone
- Public opinion on Euro membership
- International reactions to Italy's Euro debate



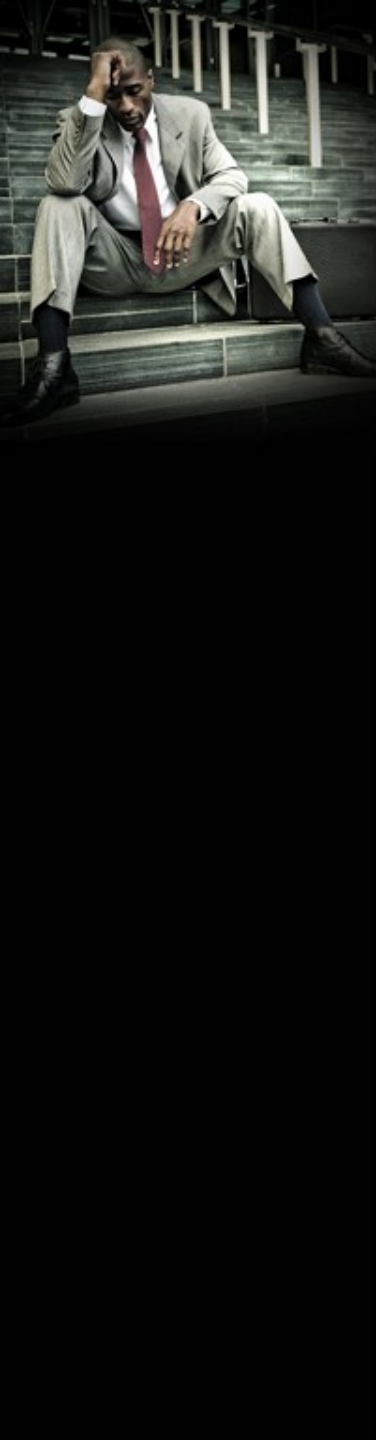
2018 Elections and Government Formation

- Electoral success of M5S and Lega
- Formation of the "yellow-green" coalition
- Appointment of Giuseppe Conte as Prime Minister
- Initial confrontation with EU over budget



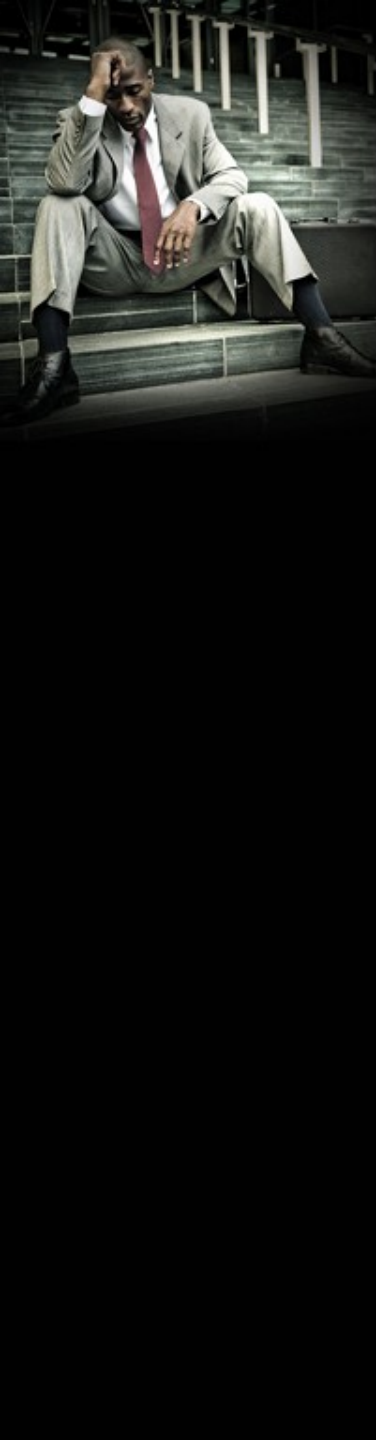
Economic Policies of the Populist Government

- "Citizens' Income" welfare program
- "Quota 100" pension reform
- Attempts to increase deficit spending
- Tensions with EU over fiscal rules



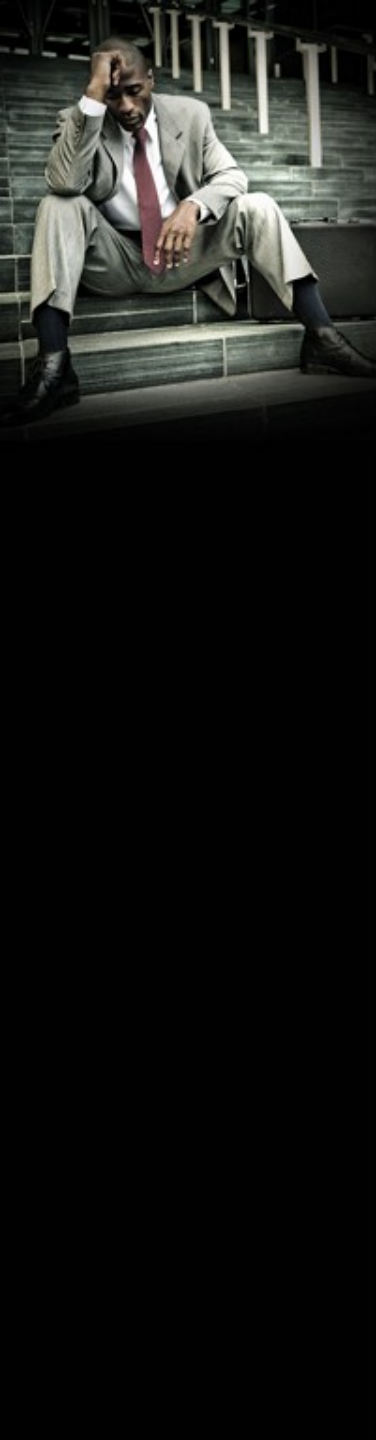
Impact on Italy-EU Relations

- Deterioration of diplomatic relations
- Increased market volatility and spread widening
- Debates on EU reform and fiscal flexibility
- Italy's isolation in EU decision-making processes



Changing Attitudes Towards Euro Exit

- Moderation of M5S stance on Euro
- Lega's evolving position on Eurozone membership
- Role of economic realities in shaping political discourse
- Public opinion trends on Euro membership



Lessons from the Populist Experience

- Challenges of translating anti-EU rhetoric into policy
- Constraints of Eurozone membership on national policies
- Persistence of structural economic issues
- Ongoing debate on Italy's future in the EU and Eurozone



Notable Far-Right Parties

1. France:

Rassemblement National (RN): Under Marine Le Pen, the RN has transitioned from its extremist origins to a more palatable nationalist platform, focusing on immigration, identity, and Euroscepticism.

2. Germany:

Alternative für Deutschland (AfD): Initially a Eurosceptic party, the AfD shifted toward anti-immigration and nationalist rhetoric, gaining significant traction after the 2015 refugee crisis.

3. Italy:

Fratelli d'Italia: Led by Giorgia Meloni, it combines conservative social policies with a strong nationalist agenda.

4. Hungary:

Fidesz: Though initially a center-right party, Viktor Orbán's leadership has transformed Fidesz into a far-right populist movement, known for its anti-immigration and Eurosceptic policies.

5. Poland:

Law and Justice Party (PiS): While technically conservative, its nationalist and anti-EU policies align it closely with far-right ideologies.

6. Austria:

Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ): A long-standing far-right party, it has focused on anti-immigration and Euroscepticism.



The Rise of Far-Right Parties in Europe Since the 2000s (1)

The early 2000s marked a significant shift in the political landscape of Europe, with the steady rise of far-right parties. These parties have gained momentum by capitalizing on economic crises, cultural anxieties, and dissatisfaction with traditional political elites. They often challenge liberal democratic norms, emphasizing nationalism, anti-immigration policies, and a rejection of multiculturalism.

- **Key Drivers of Growth**

1. **Economic Discontent:**

1. The global financial crisis of 2008 exacerbated unemployment and inequality, creating fertile ground for far-right rhetoric. These parties presented themselves as champions of "ordinary citizens" against globalized elites.
2. Austerity measures implemented by governments further alienated working-class voters, pushing them toward parties that promised to prioritize national interests over global economic integration.

2. **Immigration and Identity Politics:**

1. The 2015 refugee crisis heightened fears about cultural integration and national security. Far-right parties framed immigration as a threat to national identity and public safety.
2. These parties also exploited anxieties about Islamic radicalism, linking it to broader concerns about immigration and multicultural policies.



The Rise of Far-Right Parties in Europe Since the 2000s (2)

1. **Distrust in Traditional Parties:**

1. Scandals, inefficiency, and perceived detachment from public concerns led to declining trust in mainstream political parties.
2. Far-right parties presented themselves as alternatives, emphasizing a return to "traditional values" and national sovereignty.

2. **Euroscepticism:**

1. Many far-right parties oppose the European Union, criticizing its perceived erosion of national sovereignty and promoting withdrawal or significant reform.
2. The Brexit referendum in 2016 emboldened Eurosceptic movements across the continent.



Impact on European Politics

1. Policy Shifts:

1. The rise of far-right parties has pressured mainstream parties to adopt stricter stances on immigration and cultural issues.

2. Polarization:

1. Increased support for far-right ideologies has led to greater polarization within European societies, complicating consensus-building in governance.

3. Challenges to EU Integration:

1. Far-right Euroscepticism has fueled debates about the future of the European Union, threatening its cohesion and prompting reforms to address national concerns.



The rise of the New Extreme Right in Italy

Since the late 2000s, Italy has witnessed the consolidation and growth of far-right parties, particularly those emphasizing nationalism, anti-immigration policies, and conservative social values.

Smaller Far-Right Parties in Italy

CasaPound Italia:

Founded in 2003, CasaPound is a neo-fascist movement named after the American poet Ezra Pound. The group advocates for nationalism, anti-globalization, and social housing policies.

It is known for its provocative rhetoric and use of cultural events to spread its ideology. CasaPound remains controversial due to its explicit embrace of fascist symbols and ideas.

Forza Nuova:

Established in 1997, Forza Nuova is a far-right party promoting Catholic traditionalism, opposition to immigration, and anti-abortion policies.

It has been involved in numerous protests and has a history of confrontations with left-wing groups. The party's platform includes reintroducing pre-Vatican II Catholic values into Italian society.



The Rise of Fratelli d'Italia (1)

- **Origins and Development** Fratelli d'Italia (FdI) was founded in 2012 by Giorgia Meloni, Ignazio La Russa, and Guido Crosetto as a split from the People of Freedom (PdL) party led by Silvio Berlusconi. Its roots lie in the Italian Social Movement (MSI), a neo-fascist party established after World War II, and its successor, the National Alliance (AN), which sought to moderate its ideology to appeal to a broader conservative electorate.
- **Program and Ideology (2010-2018)** During the 2010s, Fratelli d'Italia positioned itself as a defender of Italian identity, tradition, and sovereignty. The party's platform focused on:
 1. **Nationalism:**
 - A strong emphasis on protecting Italian culture and heritage.
 - Opposition to globalization, which it argued undermined national interests and identity.
 2. **Immigration:**
 - Advocated for strict immigration controls and the deportation of illegal immigrants.
 - Criticized the European Union's handling of the refugee crisis, calling for more robust national borders.



The Rise of Fratelli d'Italia (2)

3. **Social Conservatism:**

- Supported traditional family values and opposed progressive social policies such as same-sex marriage and adoption rights for LGBTQ+ couples.
- Promoted policies to increase birth rates, including financial incentives for families.

4. **Economic Policies:**

- Proposed tax cuts for families and small businesses to stimulate economic growth.
- Advocated for protectionist measures to safeguard Italian industries from foreign competition.

5. **EU Relations:**

- Called for renegotiating Italy's role in the European Union, emphasizing national sovereignty over EU directives.
- Opposed further European integration and criticized the euro as detrimental to Italy's economy.



The Rise of Fratelli d'Italia (3)

Growth and Electoral Success FdI's rise was gradual throughout the 2010s, but its nationalist rhetoric and Giorgia Meloni's charismatic leadership resonated with an electorate disillusioned by traditional parties.

By 2018, FdI had become a key player in right-wing coalitions, aligning with Lega and Forza Italia while maintaining its distinct ideological stance.

Fratelli d'Italia's trajectory underscores the appeal of far-right politics in Italy, driven by themes of national identity, immigration, and skepticism toward the European Union.

Its roots in post-war neo-fascism and evolution into a modern nationalist party illustrate the enduring influence of far-right ideologies in shaping Italy's political landscape.



Elections in Italy in the 2010s

Electoral Results of Some Italian Parties (2013-2022)

