ChatGPT

Study Notes: *Austria – Out of the Shadow of the Past* (Anton Pelinka)

Chapter 1: Austria's Complex Image

Basic Features:

- **Geography & Geopolitics:** A small Central European country (~8 million people) situated at the crossroads of Europe [1] [2]. During the Cold War, Austria was the **easternmost "Western" democracy**, bordered by Warsaw Pact states. Along with neutral Switzerland, it formed a geopolitical buffer between NATO and the Eastern bloc [3]. After 1990, the collapse of communist regimes transformed Austria's neighborhood – communist neighbors became democracies, Yugoslavia split, and Germany reunified [4] [5]. Austria joined the EU in 1995 as part of a **"Westernization" process**, shedding its Cold War role as a bridge and fully integrating into Western Europe [6] [7].
- **Population & Demographics: German is the dominant language**, spoken as a mother tongue by >90% of inhabitants [8]. Traditional linguistic minorities (e.g. ~20k Croats in Burgenland, ~20k Slovenes in Carinthia) persist but are small [9] [10]. Austria was historically a **Catholic-majority** society: ~78% Catholic in 1991 (down from 89% in 1951) with minorities of ~5% Protestants, 2% Muslims, 0.1% Jewish [11] [12]. The decline in Catholic share (and rise of nonreligious and Muslim populations) reflects post-1950s secularization and immigration [12]. Austria remains religiously homogeneous compared to many countries, but Catholic dominance has waned over time [13] [12].
- **Migration:** Foreign immigration surged after the late 1980s. By 1995 about **10% of residents (713,500 people)** were foreign nationals [14]. The number of non-citizens more than doubled from ~291,000 in 1981 to over 700,000 in 1994 [15]. This influx stemmed from the turmoil of Eastern Europe's opening and the Yugoslav wars, as Austria's prosperity and border location attracted Central/East European migrants [16]. The new immigrant communities introduced more diversity (e.g. a growing Muslim community) into a traditionally homogeneous society.

Changing Identities:

- **Historical Shifts in National Identity:** Austrian national identity underwent dramatic redefinitions in the 20th century. After **1918**, the new Republic of Austria struggled with its identity – many Austrians saw themselves as "Germans" and the rump state as unviable [17] [18]. Indeed, the First Republic initially called itself the "German-Austrian Republic" and sought union (`Anschluss`) with Germany. This pan-German sentiment was strong across the political spectrum; even the Social Democrats only abandoned the Anschluss idea in 1933 when Nazi influence grew [18]. In **1938**, Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany with significant local support, demonstrating that a distinct Austrian national identity was weak before World War II. After **1945**, however, the Second Republic cultivated a new identity separate from Germany. The Allied powers, via the 1943 Moscow Declaration, defined Austria as "the first victim of Hitlerite aggression" – a narrative eagerly embraced by Austrian leaders to portray Austria as a **victim rather than a perpetrator** of Nazism [19] [20]. This "victim theory" allowed postwar Austrians to evade deep confrontation with their Nazi-era culpability [21]. Both major parties (Socialists and conservatives) tacitly agreed to avoid divisive discussions of wartime guilt, instead emphasizing anti-Nazi resistance and suffering [20] [22]. Over time, this helped solidify an **Austrian national consciousness** distinct from German identity. Surveys reflect this shift: in 1964 only 47% agreed "Austrians are a nation," but by 1990 around 74% did – evidence that Austrians came to overwhelmingly see themselves as a separate nation [23].
- **International Image and the Waldheim Affair:** Austria's postwar image was long dominated by

positive narratives (Mozart, Alps, *The Sound of Music*) and its Cold War neutrality. However, in the **1980s the "dark side" came into focus**. The **Waldheim affair (1986)** – revelations about President Kurt Waldheim's hidden Nazi-era past – shattered Austria's benign image [24]. International critics pointed out that, unlike Germany, Austria had "escaped responsibility" for Nazism [21]. The Waldheim controversy catalyzed intense debates about Austrian complicity in Nazi crimes and stirred latent anti-Semitism in Austrian society (some Waldheim defenders portrayed him as a "victim" of an international Jewish campaign, prompting a new wave of anti-Jewish sentiment) [25] [26]. This episode forced Austria to finally confront historical truths that had been suppressed. By the 1990s, **Austria's self-image became more self-critical** and internationally Austria lost some of its "special" status. As Pelinka notes, **joining the EU in 1995** and rethinking neutrality made Austria appear more "normal" – "a small, rather ordinary country on the eastern fringes of Western Europe" [27] [28]. In sum, by the end of the 20th century Austria had emerged from the shadow of its imperial and Nazi past with a consolidated national identity and a status as a mainstream Western democracy, though one still grappling with the legacy of its darker history.

Chapter 2: Political Culture

Nation-Building through Consociationalism:

- **Consociational Democracy in Austria:** After 1945, Austria established a **consociational democracy** – a power-sharing system designed to stabilize a deeply divided society [29]. This was not a theoretical plan but a pragmatic elite response to the traumatic conflicts of the interwar years [30]. The two major political camps from the First Republic – the **Socialists (later SPÖ) and Catholic Conservatives (ÖVP)** – set aside their "lager" (camp) hostilities and entered **grand coalitions**, cooperating rather than competing to rebuild the nation [31] [32]. Key features of Austrian consociationalism included: **grand coalition governments** at federal and often state levels (SPÖ and ÖVP sharing power), proportional allocation of public positions and resources (known as *Proporz*), a **"party state"** where parties permeated all aspects of society, and **corporatist interest-group integration** ("social partnership") in policymaking [32] [33]. This system intentionally **bridged historic cleavages** – e.g. between secular Socialists and Catholic Conservatives, and even included rehabilitating former Nazis. Both SPÖ and ÖVP sought to recruit ex-Nazi supporters in the 1940s–50s, effectively re-integrating many "misguided" Austrians into democratic politics rather than excluding them [22] [34]. By accommodating all major social groups, consociational democracy "healed wounds" of the past and fostered a broad consensus on the **new Austrian nation and democracy** [35] [36]. Crucially, this **elite cooperation** helped transform old identities: Austrians who once identified primarily with a religious or ideological camp gradually developed loyalty to the Austrian state. As Pelinka observes, **national unity in the Second Republic was built via consociational techniques**, which created an inclusive sense of Austrian nationhood that transcended the previous supranational (Habsburg) and pan-German visions [37] [38]. Consociationalism was thus both a political arrangement and a nation-building tool in postwar Austria.
- **The "Party State" and Corporatism:** Austria became a **"party-state developed to the extreme,"** with political parties dominating society and even merging with state institutions [39]. During the first decades, nearly **all important positions in politics and public life were apportioned between the two major parties** [40] [41]. In the 1960s–70s, SPÖ and ÖVP together regularly won over 90% of the vote – an unparalleled concentration of power in Western Europe [42]. Party membership was massive (up to 30% of adults in the 1970s belonged to a party) [43], and each party presided over a vast network of affiliate organizations (unions, business federations, youth clubs, sports leagues, media outlets, etc.). This **pillarized subculture system** meant Austrians were often born into either the "red" (Socialist) or "black" (Catholic) camp and remained loyal for life [44] [45]. At the same time, interest group corporatism was institutionalized: peak associations of labor, business, and farmers were formally integrated into policy drafting. Through the **Paritätische Kommission** (Joint Commission on Wages and Prices) and other bodies, unions and employer groups coordinated with the government to set economic policy, wages, and social reforms. This **"social partnership"** ensured labor peace (virtually no strikes) and

stable growth, becoming a hallmark of Austrian political culture [46] [47]. In summary, the political culture of the Second Republic was characterized by an extraordinary **consensus-oriented governance** that balanced rival group interests through cooperation, thereby underpinning Austria's democratic consolidation and economic miracle in the postwar era.

Forces of Change and Transformation:

- **Erosion of the Traditional "Lager" (Camp) System:** By the late 20th century, the classic pillars of Austrian consensus politics began to weaken. Pelinka notes that **consociational democracy had "reached its goal"** – it stabilized Austria – and thereafter its necessity came into question [48] [49]. One major change was the **decline of lifelong party loyalty and subcultural milieus**. After about 100 years of political camps reproducing themselves, the chain was breaking: younger generations no longer automatically inherited the party allegiance of their parents [50] [51]. By the 1990s, Austria's electorate had split along generational lines. **Older Austrians** largely remained in a two-and-a-half party world (SPÖ, ÖVP, with FPÖ as a minor third), whereas **younger voters** experienced a competitive five-party system – with **FPÖ and the Greens rising** and the ÖVP often lagging among youth [52] [53]. This **generation gap** signified the end of the old camps: people were no longer simply "red" or "black" by birth. In the mid-1990s, political attitudes were sharply split between those with **"traditional loyalties"** to SPÖ/ÖVP and a new cohort of **volatile voters** drawn to insurgent parties [54] [55]. The social institutions that once bound individuals to a camp (party-affiliated schools, youth groups, churches, unions, etc.) lost influence. For example, the Catholic Church's role in socializing conservative voters waned, and union membership among youth declined. **Voter dealignment** was evidenced by a drop in electoral turnout (from ~93% in 1975 to ~82% in 1994) and a rise in late-deciding, swing voters [56] [57]. All these trends point to a **more individualized, issue-oriented political culture**.
- **Rise of New Parties and Cleavages:** The weakening of the SPÖ–ÖVP duopoly opened space for new movements. The **environmental movement** gave birth to the **Green Party** (entered parliament in 1986), injecting issues like ecology, nuclear energy, and gender equality that the old corporatist framework struggled to absorb [58]. More disruptively, the **Freedom Party (FPÖ)**, once a minor liberal-nationalist party, transformed under **Jörg Haider** into a right-wing **populist force**. Haider's inflammatory mix of anti-establishment rhetoric and anti-immigrant themes resonated with many working-class and young voters disillusioned by the grand coalition. The FPÖ's vote share leapt from **5% in 1983 to over 20% in the mid-1990s**, making it the **second-largest party by 1999** [59]. However, unlike the traditional "third camp" (German-nationalist) which had been marginalized in the 1950s–60s, Haider's FPÖ managed to **mainstream much of the far-right sentiment** by packaging it as broad populism rather than explicit neo-Nazism [60] [61]. This development introduced a **new cleavage** in Austrian politics: a **liberal-cosmopolitan vs. nationalist-populist** divide. Whereas old politics split chiefly on class and religion, the emerging divides centered on values and identity – for example, **integration with Europe vs. defending sovereignty**, or **multicultural openness vs. nativist backlash**. The FPÖ mobilized grievances against immigration and the "political elites," capitalizing on issues outside the consensus style of politics (e.g. a 1993 FPÖ-sponsored anti-foreigner referendum campaign garnered 7% of voters' signatures) [62]. In summary, by the 1990s Austrian political culture was in transition: **consensual habits persisted**, but they were increasingly challenged by **polarization and pluralization**. The grand coalition model still governed, yet underneath was a more **fragmented electorate** with new players and issues, presaging a more "normal" Western European party system after decades of exceptional stability [49] [63].

Chapter 3: The Constitutional Structure

The Constitution:

- **Basic Framework:** Austria's core legal framework is the **Federal Constitutional Law of 1920 (B-VG)**, as amended in 1929 and reinstated in 1945 [64] [65]. This constitution established Austria as a **parliamentary federal republic**. It was a pragmatic document, not ideologically driven – a compromise

crafted by legal scholar **Hans Kelsen** and the main parties of the time [66]. The 1929 amendments introduced semi-presidential elements (strengthening the head of state) but Austria remains essentially a **parliamentary system** (government depends on parliament's confidence) [65] [67]. One notable aspect is the constitution's **flexibility**: it can be amended by a two-thirds parliamentary majority, a provision that Austria's grand coalitions frequently used. As Pelinka notes, the 1920 constitution is a "formalistic frame" easily adjusted by political agreement [68]. This flexibility allowed pragmatic adaptation over time (Austria added many "constitutional laws" on specific matters). Importantly, after the authoritarian **1934–38** period and wartime annexation, the Second Republic simply revived the 1920–29 constitution in 1945, symbolizing a return to democratic norms.
- **Head of State:** Austria has a **federal president**, directly elected by the people every 6 years (direct elections since 1951) [69]. The president's constitutional powers include appointing the government, dissolving parliament, and commanding the military, but in practice the role has been largely **ceremonial**. Until the 1980s, presidents stayed above day-to-day politics (in Walter Bagehot's terms, acting as a "dignified" part of the constitution) [70]. The **Waldheim presidency (1986–92)** changed that to an extent – Waldheim's controversy and divisive tenure politicized the office and led successors to take a more active public stance [71]. Generally, however, the president defers to the chancellor and parliamentary majority.

The Legislature and Executive:
- **Parliament Structure:** Austria's parliament is **bicameral** in form but **unicameral in substance**. The powerful lower house, the **Nationalrat (National Council)**, has 183 members elected by proportional representation (currently five-year terms). The **Bundesrat (Federal Council)** is an upper house representing the states (*Länder*), but it wields only a **suspensive veto** and is often considered a mere "appendage" [72] [73]. Government is responsible only to the Nationalrat: if the cabinet loses the Nationalrat's confidence, it must resign, whereas a hostile majority in the Bundesrat cannot topple a government [74]. The Nationalrat can override a Federal Council veto with a simple majority ("Beharrungsbeschluss"), so the Bundesrat cannot permanently block legislation [75]. As a result, Austria's is sometimes dubbed a "**pseudo–two-chamber system**" – the Bundesrat exists mainly to fulfill the formal notion of federalism, not to provide equal bicameral power [72] [73]. Seats in the Bundesrat are filled by state legislatures (Landtage) roughly in proportion to state populations. In practice, the Bundesrat often serves as a **"waiting room" for junior politicians** on their way to the Nationalrat [76] [77], and occasionally as an "opposition chamber" when the federal opposition happens to hold more seats at the state level (as occurred intermittently 1966–1986) [78]. Overall, legislative initiative and meaningful debate occur overwhelmingly in the Nationalrat.
- **Government (Executive):** The federal government is led by the **Chancellor (Bundeskanzler)**, appointed by the president but dependent on Nationalrat support. Austria's cabinet usually operates on **collective consensus**, especially during grand coalitions where the Chancellor (from one major party) and Vice-Chancellor (from the other) must agree. Ministries are often divided between coalition partners (*Proporz* principle). Because Austria lacked alternation of power for long periods (SPÖ and ÖVP often governed together or swapped in coalitions), the traditional government–opposition dynamic was muted. Instead, governance was characterized by inter-party negotiation and **"behind closed doors" policy formulation** (often involving interest groups). Still, the formal mechanisms of parliamentary democracy exist: the Nationalrat can pass **no-confidence votes**, committees can scrutinize bills, etc. It's worth noting that since the 1980s the **parliament has become more assertive** as coalition discipline loosened – the 1990s Nationalrat was *"more dynamic than ever"*, with more parties and less strict voting along party lines [79] [80]. This hints at a system transitioning from rubber-stamp consensus to more pluralistic oversight.

- **Judiciary and Constitutional Court:** Austria's judiciary includes a separate **Constitutional Court (Verfassungsgerichtshof)** with strong powers of judicial review (a legacy of Kelsen's influence). The Constitutional Court can strike down legislation that violates the constitution and

adjudicates conflicts between federal and state authority. In the grand coalition era, even the Court reflected party influence – by informal agreement, SPÖ and ÖVP alternated in nominating judges (though overt party officials are barred from the bench) [81]. This led to a de facto **political balance** on the Court [82]. Nonetheless, the Constitutional Court has grown more independent and active over time. After the 1980s, it increasingly acted as an **arbiter on politically sensitive issues** (for example, electoral law disputes, EU treaty implementations, etc.) [83]. Austria also maintains an Administrative Court and other judicial bodies, but the Constitutional Court is pivotal for safeguarding the rule of law.

States and Municipalities:

- **Federalism in Austria:** Austria is a federal republic with **9 states (Länder)**: Burgenland, Carinthia, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Tyrol, Vorarlberg, and Vienna. However, Austrian federalism is relatively **centralized**. The federal constitution distributes legislative competencies, but most key areas (e.g. criminal law, civil law, finance, social security, education standards) are federally legislated. States have primary lawmaking power mainly in local matters (e.g. zoning, nature protection, youth laws) and execute many federal laws under a system of **indirect federal administration** (state authorities implement federal laws). Each Land has an elected legislature (*Landtag*) and a state government headed by a **Governor (Landeshauptmann)**. Uniquely, many states historically formed **"proportional governments"**: by state constitutional provisions, all parties above a certain vote share received seats in the state's executive cabinet, rather than the cabinet being formed by only the majority party [84] [85]. This was a continuation of consociational practice at the subnational level, ensuring broad coalition governance and virtually no opposition. By the 1990s, this practice came under criticism – as party competition increased and more parties entered Landtage, proportional cabinets were seen as **stifling proper opposition and accountability** [84] [85]. Several states (Tyrol, Salzburg, Upper Austria, Styria) began reconsidering or reforming this system in the late 1990s [84]. Indeed, as SPÖ/ÖVP dominance declines, the smaller parties (FPÖ, Greens) sometimes find themselves co-opted into state governments by default, raising the question of whether a genuine opposition is being "avoided" [86] [87]. There is a trend toward more *majority-based* rule in the Länder, mirroring national changes.
- **Local Government:** Below the Land level, Austria is divided into districts and municipalities. **Districts** (*Bezirke*) are administrative units run by a district commissioner (appointed by the state government) – they have no elected councils, which Pelinka notes as an "unfulfilled promise" of democratization at that level [88] [89]. **Municipalities** (*Gemeinden*), however, do have elected councils and mayors. Austria has thousands of municipalities (from small villages to cities). Historically, some municipalities (especially in mixed-language areas or under consociational norms) also followed proportional representation in their councils. A significant reform in the 1990s was the introduction of **direct election of mayors** in most states [90] [91]. This increased direct accountability at the local level and is seen as a move toward more **populist, personalized local politics**, breaking with the old party patronage system where mayors were chosen by council coalitions. For example, citizens in most Länder now vote for mayoral candidates directly, which can result in split-ticket outcomes (a mayor from one party and council majority from another) – a novelty in Austrian local governance that enhances voter choice and potentially local political competition. Overall, while Austria's formal structure remains federal, in practice strong central institutions and a tradition of cross-party power-sharing long kept regional autonomy and local politics subdued. By the turn of the century, that began to change with calls for clearer separation of powers, more opposition role in states, and vibrancy in local government – indicating a **modernization of Austrian federalism** in line with a more pluralistic polity.

Conclusion:

Austria's constitutional system provided stability and consensus in a once-fractured society. It established **effective parliamentary democracy with federal and direct democratic elements**. (Notably, referendums exist but have been rare – e.g. a 1978 plebiscite on nuclear power, and the 1994 referendum approving EU membership with ~66% yes [92].) The Second Republic's institutions proved

flexible, accommodating Austria's transformation from occupied state to neutral Cold War buffer and finally to EU member. By the 1990s, pressures from European integration and domestic political shifts were prompting reforms to Austria's constitutional practices – making the system more transparent, competitive, and similar to other Western democracies (a theme of "normalization" or **"Westernization"** of Austrian politics) [93]. The grand-coalition era left a legacy of strong, centralized governance and party involvement in all institutions, but that legacy was gradually fading in favor of greater separation of powers and openness.

Chapter 4: Political Parties, Elections, and Interest Groups

Political Parties and Elections:
- **Evolution of the Party System:** Austria's party system has its roots in the late 19th century and crystallized after 1945 into a **"two-and-a-half party system."** The two main parties have been the **Social Democratic Party (SPÖ)**, representing workers, secular and progressive segments; and the **Austrian People's Party (ÖVP)**, representing Catholic, conservative, rural and business interests. A smaller third party, today's **Freedom Party (FPÖ)**, carried the traditions of the German-nationalist "Third Camp" and liberal protest voters. Below is an overview of Austria's major parties:

Party (Abbreviation)	Ideology / Camp	Origins	Key Characteristics
Social Democratic Party (SPÖ)	Center-left; Socialist camp [94]	Founded 1889 (as SDAP); reborn 1945	Represents labor, urban secular voters. Led reformist governments (Bruno Kreisky era 1970–83). Embraced pro-EU, welfare state. Traditionally had close ties to unions (*ÖGB*) and a vast subculture (workers' clubs, *Arbeiterkammer*).
Austrian People's Party (ÖVP)	Center-right; Catholic/ Conservative camp [94]	Predecessor Christian Social Party (1890s); refounded 1945	Represents Catholic, bourgeois, and rural interests. Linked to the Church and business associations. Dominant in countryside and among farmers, professionals. Promoted market economy with social partnership. Provided long-serving Chancellors (e.g. Figl, Raab) in early coalition governments.
Freedom Party (FPÖ)	National-liberal (historic); Right-populist (under Haider) [95] [59]	Founded 1956 (from VdU, ex-Nazi voters' party)	Initially a minor liberal nationalist party, the FPÖ shifted to populist nationalism under Jörg Haider after 1986. Advocates anti-immigration, anti-establishment policies; critical of EU centralization. Attracted working-class voters disenchanted with SPÖ (the **"blue-collar vote" for FPÖ surged after 1986** [96]). Its rise disrupted the old two-party dominance, reaching 20–27% in the 1990s.

Party (Abbreviation)	Ideology / Camp	Origins	Key Characteristics
The Greens (Grüne)	Environmentalist, progressive	Emerged late 1970s, entered parliament 1986	Focus on ecology, anti-nuclear, social justice, and civil liberties. Born from citizens' movements (e.g. against nuclear plant at Zwentendorf, which was stopped by 1978 referendum). Brought new issues into politics that corporatist structures ignored (environment, gender equality). Often attract urban educated voters and young people.
Liberal Forum (LiF)	Centrist liberal (socially liberal, pro-EU)	Split from FPÖ in 1993 (by liberal wing)	Formed by FPÖ defectors opposed to Haider's rhetoric. Advocated individual liberties, minority rights, and Europe integration. Gained ~5% in 1994–1995 elections, briefly in parliament. Its support waned by 1999.
(Communist Party – KPÖ)	Far-left communist	Founded 1918; small after 1950s	Included here for completeness: The KPÖ was part of the first postwar government and received 5% in 1945 [97], but then lost relevance, polling below 1% in most elections thereafter.

- **Dominance and Decline of the Big Two:** From 1945 through the 1980s, SPÖ and ÖVP together consistently commanded the vast majority of the vote (often **85–95% combined** in postwar elections) [98]. They operated effectively as a **cartel ("elite cartel" of SPÖ–ÖVP)** [99], dividing power and keeping other parties at bay. For example, in **1949** the two won 82.7% while the precursor to FPÖ (Verband der Unabhängigen) managed 11.7% [98]. In the **1970s**, SPÖ under **Bruno Kreisky** even governed alone after 1971, reflecting its high popularity (SPÖ peaked at 51% in 1979). ÖVP and SPÖ alternated as senior partners but often ruled together (Grand Coalitions 1945–1966 and 1987–2000). Starting in the mid-1980s, however, **the two-party grip began to loosen**. By **1990**, their combined vote fell to ~79%, and in **1994** to just ~63%. This trend is attributed to factors noted earlier: voter dealignment, emergence of the Greens and Haider's FPÖ, and issues that cut across traditional class/religion lines. The **electoral system** – proportional representation with a modest threshold (4%) – facilitated multiparty representation as soon as voters shifted preferences. The establishment of a 4% threshold in 1994 slightly checked fragmentation, but as seen, FPÖ and Greens had already secured their spots. **Voter turnout**, once extremely high under the old mobilization structures (e.g. 95% in 1950s elections), declined into the 80% range by the 1990s [56], indicating a less mobilized base. Another sign of change: **party membership** in both major parties shrank significantly after 1980, and parties increasingly relied on state financing rather than mass dues [100] [101]. By the late 1990s Austria's party system was more pluralistic and volatile – moving closer to European norms and ending what Pelinka calls the **"exceptional stability"** of earlier decades [102].
- **Electoral Mechanics:** Austria's elections are governed by **proportional representation (PR)** with multi-member districts and a leveling mechanism to ensure overall proportionality. Since 1970, voting age is 18 (lowered to 16 in 2007, after Pelinka's period). The **Nationalrat electoral term** was four years (extended to five in 2008). A notable feature is the use of **preference votes**

so voters can influence candidate order on party lists, though party list ranking remains dominant. The combination of PR and grand coalitions meant that until 1983, Austrians never experienced a change of ruling party via election – either one-party dominance (Kreisky SPÖ) or coalitions that included both major parties prevented a classic government turnover. This changed in 2000 when ÖVP formed a coalition with FPÖ, illustrating the new fluidity (though that event is just after the book's main timeframe).

- **Presidential Elections:** While the presidency is mostly ceremonial, presidential elections have occasionally been important politically (e.g. the 1986 Waldheim election). They are direct and use a two-round system. Typically, either SPÖ or ÖVP (or both in consensus) provide the president. Waldheim's independent candidacy (with ÖVP support) and victory in 1986 was an*(Continuation of study notes...)*

Chapter 5: The End of the Subsocieties

A Farewell to Catholicism (Catholic Subculture):

- **Political Catholicism's Decline:** In the First Republic, the Catholic Church and its allied *Christian Social* party formed a powerful subculture. The Church wielded influence over education, social services, and voters' loyalties (priests openly instructed congregants on voting). After 1945, the Church initially retained a privileged status through the reinstated **1933 Concordat** (treaty with the Vatican). Catholic interests were formally integrated into the political system – for example, the state continued to fund religious education and collect **church taxes** on behalf of recognized denominations. This close **church–state partnership** (a legacy of Emperor Joseph II's *Josephinism*) ensured that Austria did not experience a harsh separation of church and state as France did; instead, a **"quasi-corporatist" relationship** developed, treating the Church as an official voice in public affairs. This arrangement *stabilized* politics by avoiding kulturkampf conflicts: controversial issues like divorce or abortion were handled via compromise, preventing the fierce ideological battles that occurred in the 1920s and 1930s [103]. However, by the late 20th century, **secularization** and internal Church changes weakened Catholic cohesion. Church attendance and influence fell sharply – younger Austrians became less religious, and the Church largely **withdrew from partisan politics**, focusing on its spiritual role. The traditionally Catholic ÖVP broadened its appeal beyond the pulpit. In the 1980s–90s, the Church faced new challenges: *progressive Catholics* sought reforms (e.g. ending celibacy, greater role for laity). This culminated in **1995's "Church Referendum" (Kirchenvolks-Begehren)** – a petition signed by over 500,000 Austrian Catholics calling for liberalizing church policies. While an internal church matter, its popularity showed that Austrian Catholics were no longer a monolithic bloc obedient to the hierarchy. Furthermore, high-profile controversies (e.g. abuse scandals or the 1995 resignation of Cardinal Groër) eroded trust. Thus, the once-dominant **"Catholic subculture" – with its dense network of clubs, media (like diocesan newspapers), and voter guides – largely dissipated**. Austrians of Catholic background became politically diverse: many still vote ÖVP, but others support SPÖ, Greens, or FPÖ based on issues rather than religious identity. **Pluralism within Catholicism** grew, and the Church's official voice became just one interest among many in policymaking [104]. In short, by the 1990s Austria was effectively a **secular democracy**, where Catholicism remained culturally significant but no longer dictated political alignments or state policy as it once did.

- **Continued Church Influence:** Despite secular trends, the Catholic Church maintained certain privileges and influence in Austrian society. Religious instruction in public schools (Catholic catechism classes) persisted, and the church tax system ensured stable financing. The bishops retained direct lines to policymakers (they are consulted on legislation affecting moral issues). Pelinka describes this as the Church being treated "as if it were a social partner" in corporatist terms. However, the **nature of that influence shifted**: it became less partisan and more moral or issue-specific (e.g. the Church lobbying against abortion liberalization or for social justice themes). The **"neutrality" of the Church in party competition**, established under Cardinal

König in the postwar era, remained – the Church did not officially endorse parties, unlike in the 1930s. This neutrality helped mitigate "culture war" divisions. By the end of the 20th century, Austria's Catholic subculture had essentially said *farewell* to its once-direct political role, integrating into a pluralistic society where **faith is a private matter and one identity among many** for voters.

A Farewell to Socialism (Socialist Subculture):
- **Transformation of Social Democracy:** The Socialist camp (anchored by the SPÖ and the trade unions) was the mirror image of Catholic subculture in Austria's political tapestry. In the early 20th century, "Red Vienna" and workers' organizations built a vibrant socialist counter-society – with party-affiliated housing, sports clubs, newspapers, and even literacy programs – which gave workers a strong class identity. After World War II, the SPÖ moderated its ideology (dropping Marxist references in 1958) and fully committed to parliamentary democracy and the mixed economy. In government, especially under Chancellor Bruno **Kreisky (1970–83)**, the SPÖ pursued pragmatic reforms and expanded the welfare state. This led to broad appeal beyond its blue-collar base – for a time, the SPÖ became the natural party of government, attracting professionals and youth as well. However, the traditional **socialist milieu eroded** over time due to rising prosperity, educational expansion, and the dilution of class consciousness. **Trade union membership**, while still high (Austria's unionization remained above EU average), no longer translated automatically into SPÖ votes or activism. Many union members supported the ÖVP or FPÖ by the 1990s, driven by non-economic issues. The **workers' loyalty** that once passed down generations ("my grandfather was a Socialist, my father was a Socialist…") weakened – as noted, younger working-class Austrians increasingly shifted to the FPÖ's populist appeal in the 1990s [51]. For example, the **SPÖ's share of the manual labor vote** fell significantly as the FPÖ gained among that demographic [96]. Organizationally, the SPÖ saw its **party membership in decline** (especially after the 1980s) [100] [101]. In Vienna – once the heart of socialist subculture – SPÖ membership and the density of party-linked social clubs dropped compared to the First Republic era [99] [105]. Even the SPÖ's May Day rallies, though still held (Vienna SPÖ famously continues to celebrate **May 1st** in grand style [106]), have lost the mass mobilizational character they had in earlier decades. In essence, the **social democratic identity became just one political affiliation** rather than an all-encompassing lifestyle.
- **Ideological Adaptation:** By bidding farewell to its old subsociety, the SPÖ also updated its program to the modern era. It shifted from class-struggle rhetoric to a **centrist, reform-oriented stance**. The party embraced Austria's EU membership (campaigning for the Yes side in 1994) and accepted market reforms like privatization of some nationalized industries in the late 1980s and 90s. This was Austria's version of the "Third Way" trend in European social democracy. However, such moves sometimes alienated the party's traditional left wing and labor union activists. The loss of a clear socialist ideological profile may have indirectly fueled voter drift to protest parties. Still, the **SPÖ remained one of Austria's two pillar parties**, and indeed by the 1990s it had spent more time in government than almost any other social democratic party in Europe. Pelinka points out that Austrian social democracy stayed in power (usually via coalitions) through the 1980s–90s even as it shed its subcultural armor. This prolonged incumbency without a strong subculture perhaps contributed to voter fatigue and the search for "new" politics among some citizens. Summarily, the **Red subculture's farewell** meant that being a Social Democrat in Austria no longer meant a cradle-to-grave immersion in party structures; it became a matter of policy preference, while lifestyle and social identity ceased to revolve solely around the party.

- **Implications:** The end of the Catholic and Socialist subcultures signified the **conclusion of the Second Republic's grand historic compromise**. Those two camps had defined Austrian politics since 1918. By the turn of the millennium, Austrians were far less constrained by camp loyalties – **issue-based and personality-based voting** grew. A more fluid society emerged: one could be a Catholic who votes Green, or a working-class person who votes FPÖ, combinations once almost unthinkable. The old cleavages (church vs secular, labor vs capital) lost their subcultural "army" of followers. New cleavages (open vs closed society, globalization winners vs losers, etc.) were now

cutting across the population, laying the groundwork for the new party system dynamics described in chapters 4 and 10. In a way, Austria was **catching up with the pluralistic pattern** of other Western democracies, moving out of the shadow of its pillarized past. Pelinka refers to this as Austria becoming a more **"normal" Western democracy** where broad subculture alignment is replaced by a spectrum of individual political choices [93].

Chapter 6: The Economy – Success and Dependence

Postwar Economic Success:
- **"Economic Miracle":** Starting from the rubble of 1945, Austria engineered a remarkable economic recovery. At war's end, the country was devastated – industrial output had collapsed and infrastructure was ruined. With aid from the **Marshall Plan (from 1948)** and prudent policies, Austria's economy rebounded strongly by the 1950s. GDP growth was high, unemployment low, and Austria rapidly transitioned from a poor, agrarian economy to an urbanized, industrialized one. By **1980**, Austria joined the ranks of wealthy nations. In fact, by 1994 it was the world's 8th richest country in per capita GDP (around $25,000), surpassing even some EU partners like the UK or Italy. This affluence allowed Austria in 1995 to become a **net contributor to the EU budget** – a point of pride that underscored its transformation from aid recipient to donor. The "economic miracle" was underpinned by Austria's unique social model: **strong social partnership and corporatism** kept industrial peace and wage inflation in check, while the state guided development through indicative planning and ownership of key sectors. **Nationalized Industries:** After WWII, the government (under coalition consensus) took majority ownership of crucial industries (steel, petrochemicals, mining) and banks. This was partly to prevent Soviet seizure of German-owned assets and partly to ensure national control over the commanding heights of the economy. These **nationalized industries**, alongside a burgeoning private sector, powered exports and job growth in the 50s–60s. The state sector also allowed successive governments (often SPÖ-led) to pursue near full employment by acting anti-cyclically – e.g., **Kreisky's government in the 1970s deliberately ran deficits to stave off unemployment during the oil shocks**, a policy that was feasible due to state influence in the economy. Austria thus avoided the high unemployment that many Western countries suffered in the 1970s; its unemployment rate remained among Europe's lowest. Another success factor was **tourism** – Austria's Alps and culture made it a top tourist destination, consistently earning a surplus in its tourism balance (Table 6.5 shows tourism brought in net revenues annually). By the 1980s, Austria also benefited from being a stable haven for investment, attracting some foreign capital and technology (though before EU entry, it limited foreign ownership in strategic sectors). In summary, **high growth, low inequality, and a robust welfare state** defined Austria's postwar economic success, often touted as the "Austrian model." Pelinka notes that Austria's experience disproved early skeptics who thought the small republic couldn't be viable without its empire – on the contrary, it thrived as an independent social market economy [107] [108].

- **Role of Geography:** Austria's location influenced its economic path. During the Cold War, it was literally at the frontier of East-West: while politically Western, it traded cautiously with Eastern neighbors under neutrality. After 1989, Austria moved swiftly to invest in and trade with the new markets of Central Europe (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, etc.). However, historically Austria often trailed the core of Western Europe in industrialization – Pelinka refers to a **"delay factor"**: Western Europe's economic trends would reach Austria later, causing a persistent developmental lag. For example, Austria's industrial take-off happened more in the 1950s, whereas Germany's was already earlier. Nonetheless, being on the **"fringe of the European prosperity zone"** had advantages: by the 1980s, Austria served as a bridge for West European firms expanding eastward, and Viennese banks became key players in new Eastern markets. Regionally, **western Austria** (Tyrol, Vorarlberg) historically enjoyed closer ties to Switzerland/Germany and often had higher incomes and more innovation, whereas **southern/eastern Austria** (Styria, Burgenland) had to overcome the loss of former imperial markets and the proximity to poorer communist

countries. These internal disparities were gradually evened out through federal investment and EU structural funds after 1995.

Dependence and Challenges:
- **Structural Dependency:** Despite its prosperity, by the mid-1980s Austria faced the less positive side of its economic model – what Pelinka calls **"dependency"**. Several dimensions of this dependency were noted:
- *International Trade:* Austria's economy is **highly trade-dependent**. Exports (especially to Western Europe) were, and are, a large share of GDP. This makes Austria's growth heavily reliant on the economic health of its main trading partners (Germany in particular). Pelinka points out that Austria is structurally **more dependent on the EU market than other small EU countries like Sweden or Denmark**. For instance, about a third of Austria's GDP comes from exports of goods and services, and over 70% of its trade is with EU countries. Such openness means external shocks transmit directly: a German recession or EU-wide downturn immediately affects Austrian employment.
- *Energy and Raw Materials:* Austria has modest natural resources (some iron ore, wood, hydroelectric potential) but relies on imports for oil, coal, and gas. During the 1970s oil crises, Austria's vulnerability became clear (though mitigated by its mix of oil and hydropower). There was also strategic dependence on Soviet gas and oil (through the Druzhba pipeline), adding a neutrality-era dimension to economic policy.
- *Technological Lag:* Being somewhat late to heavy industrialization, Austrian firms often licensed technology from abroad rather than developing it domestically. Some key industries were **foreign-dominated or required foreign expertise**, creating reliance on international know-how. This improved over time, but Austria did not produce a volume of global brands or high-tech exports comparable to, say, Switzerland.
- *Tourism Dependence:* The economy leans on tourism revenues which can be fickle (snow seasons, global travel trends). While usually beneficial, it's a sector sensitive to external perceptions and exchange rates.

- **Crisis of Nationalized Industries:** A concrete illustration of dependency issues came in the **mid-1980s**, when Austria's **state-owned industries fell into crisis**. Companies like VOEST-Alpine (steel) and ÖAMG (chemicals) faced huge losses due to a mix of **management failures and global market shifts**. For decades, nationalized firms had guaranteed jobs and social benefits, sometimes at the cost of efficiency. By 1985, as steel demand slumped and competition intensified, these firms required massive state bailouts. It "became obvious that Austria was economically more dependent than [many realized]" – i.e. not immune to global currents. The government (a SPÖ-ÖVP coalition under Chancellor Franz Vranitzky) launched painful restructuring: thousands of steelworkers were laid off (a shock in a country used to near-full employment), unprofitable units were shut, and a **wave of privatization** began. Over the late 80s and 90s, Austria privatized banks, steel plants, petrochemical firms, and airlines. This was partially ideologically driven (a shift toward market liberalism in line with EU trends) and partially forced by EU competition rules (state subsidies had to be curtailed upon EU entry). The **"end of Austro-keynesianism"** meant the government could no longer guarantee jobs for life in national industries. While necessary, these changes increased workers' feelings of insecurity and, politically, some of that discontent channeled into the FPÖ's appeal to those yearning for the old guarantees. Pelinka highlights that by the mid-1990s, **faith in the economic miracle had waned** as Austria confronted the reality of being a small player in a globalizing market.

- **EU Membership and Globalization:** Joining the **European Union in 1995** was the culmination of Austria's Western economic integration. It removed the last trade barriers with the EU and subjected Austria to EU-wide regulations. Austrian companies gained easier access to EU markets but also had to compete without protection. EU membership underscored Austria's

interdependence: for example, agriculture had to conform to the Common Agricultural Policy, and Austria became part of the EU's monetary union (adopting the euro in 1999/2002) which meant ceding independent monetary policy. Over the long term, EU integration has generally benefited Austria (increased trade, foreign investment, and the country's central location turned Vienna into a hub for Central-East European business). But in the short term, sectors like agriculture and retail saw new competition. The population approved EU entry by two-thirds in a referendum, indicating recognition that **remaining outside would be riskier** for such a trade-dependent nation [92].

Conclusion:
Austria's economy by the end of the 20th century was a study in **successfully overcoming historical disadvantages** (small size, loss of empire, war damage) through social cohesion and smart policies – achieving one of the world's highest living standards. At the same time, Austria exemplified the vulnerabilities of a small open economy: **global market forces and international dependencies** increasingly dictated fortunes. Pelinka suggests that Austrians had to adjust their mindset from one of exceptionalism (believing in Austria's "special" path of protected prosperity) to one of **normalization**, accepting that Austria is "more than ever before, part of Western Europe" and subject to the same competitive pressures. The economic Westernization meant embracing competition, innovation, and possibly a leaner welfare model – challenges that would dominate policy debates going into the new century. The central theme of chapter 6 is that **economic miracles don't last in isolation**; Austria's future wealth would depend on how it navigated interdependence in Europe and beyond.

Chapter 7: A Farewell to Corporatism?

Origins of Austro-Corporatism:
- **Historical Roots:** Austria's corporatism (social partnership) emerged as a solution to the severe class antagonism that had plagued the First Republic. Influenced by Catholic social doctrine (which sought to harmonize classes as "organism" rather than allow socialist class struggle or unfettered capitalism) [109], post-1945 leaders from both the Socialist and Conservative camps deliberately constructed a **"culture of cooperation"** between organized labor and business. Early steps included the creation of the **Joint Commission on Wages and Prices (Paritätische Kommission)** in 1957 and earlier informal agreements. This institutionalized **regular negotiation** on economic policy between the government, the **ÖGB (union federation)**, and the **business representatives** (Chamber of Commerce and Industrialists' Association), often behind closed doors. The corporatist approach was facilitated by a small number of key figures who straddled party and interest-group roles – e.g. ÖVP Chancellor **Julius Raab** had been president of the Federal Economic Chamber before leading the government, and Socialist leaders like **Bruno Pittermann** or **Benya** rose from union ranks. This **"elite continuity"** ensured that the party in power and the social partner heads were often from the same networks, making consensus easier. By combining the "party state" with a "corporate state," Austria solved two problems at once: it integrated former ideological enemies and it kept both capital and labor invested in the new democracy.

- **Characteristics:** Austrian corporatism had several defining features:
- *Inclusivity:* All major economic interests were included. The system gave equal weight to union and employer voices (often a 50/50 representation in commissions). Farmers had their own chambers as well. This **comprehensive coverage** meant outcomes were widely accepted and strikes or lockouts became extremely rare.
- *Informality and Consensus:* Many deals were struck informally, off-stage, then enacted formally by parliament. **Politics moved from parliament to boardrooms**, which some criticized as undemocratic, but it produced stable outcomes. The idea was to **pre-negotiate** conflicts so that by the time a bill reached parliament, it passed unanimously. For example, labor and business

would negotiate annual wage guidelines in light of inflation targets, avoiding public industrial action.

- *Mutual Guarantees:* Corporatism was undergirded by an understanding that neither side would radically undercut the other. Unions accepted the market economy and profit needs; employers accepted unions' right to organize and the welfare state. This tacit social contract ensured that extreme policies (either socialist nationalization of all industry or laissez-faire union-busting) were off the table. As Pelinka notes, corporatism "healed fragmentation" by **bridging past animosities** [35] . It turned the page on the 1930s, when labor versus capital had been a fight to the finish.
- *Democratic Legitimacy:* Although corporatism operated through unelected bodies, it rested on the fact that **Austria's major interest groups were democratically structured and membership-based** (except the Catholic Church). Union leaders were elected by workers; chamber presidents by business members. Thus, one can view social partnership as an extension of democracy into the economic sphere – sometimes called **"neo-corporatist democracy."** Pelinka also notes that the church–state arrangement functioned quasi-corporatist, though the Catholic Church lacked internal democracy (bishops weren't elected by laypeople).

The Peak and Contributions of Corporatism:

- **Economic and Social Stability:** Throughout the 1950s–1970s, corporatism delivered outstanding results. Austria enjoyed **decades of labor peace** – the last significant political general strike was in 1950, and it failed largely because social partnership was already taking root, offering a more effective path for workers' interests. Wages grew in line with productivity, avoiding runaway inflation. Austria's inflation and unemployment stayed lower than many European peers, a fact often credited to coordinated wage bargaining and joint crisis management by unions and employers. For example, during the **1970s oil crisis**, the government, ÖGB, and business struck agreements to moderate wage demands in exchange for government measures to control prices, thereby preventing a wage–price spiral. **Social cohesion** was another benefit – employees felt their voices were heard at the highest level, reducing resentment. Pelinka suggests that corporatism also **buttressed Austrian national identity**: by solving class conflict, it removed one of the threats to the new Second Republic's unity, allowing Austrians to feel more **"we're all in the same boat"** as a nation [37] [38] . Politically, corporatism strengthened the grand coalition model; since the SPÖ and ÖVP constituencies (unions and business) were cooperating, it reinforced party cooperation in government.

- **Democratic Critiques:** Despite successes, by the 1980s critics (like political scientist Peter Gerlich, whom Pelinka cites) labeled Austria a "**over-administered**" society where too much was decided by opaque bargaining. The **parliament seemed secondary** – often just ratifying consensus outcomes. Smaller parties or interests outside the corporatist "social partners" had little influence. Environmentalists, for instance, found the growth-oriented consensus (**"Mehrheitsfähigkeit"**) frustrating, as social partnership tended to prioritize economic expansion and jobs over ecological concerns. Feminists noted that corporatist bodies were dominated by older men, marginalizing women's priorities (though later unions and chambers began including more women). There was also the matter of **accountability**: if an average citizen disagreed with a corporatist compromise, there was no direct way to change it, since it was forged outside the electoral arena. Nonetheless, surveys in the 1980s showed Austrians were actually *proud* of their social partnership system – it was often cited as something that set Austria apart positively. It gave a sense of security in a changing world: when big parties fought more openly in parliament (like the SPÖ/ÖVP clashes of the mid-90s), many Austrians nostalgically valued the consensus style [110] .

Erosion of Corporatism by the 1990s:

- **New Social and Economic Context:** The chapter title's question – "A Farewell to Corporatism?" – reflects that by the 1990s, the conditions that sustained classical corporatism were fading. Key changes:

- *Political Deconcentration:* The dominance of SPÖ and ÖVP was eroding as described earlier. Corporatism was historically predicated on a **two-party hegemony** in which each major camp could deliver on agreements (ÖVP spoke for business, SPÖ for labor). With the rise of the FPÖ and Greens and more fluid party competition, the old social partners lost some **political leverage**. For instance, if a large chunk of workers aligned with FPÖ's populism, the ÖGB's influence as a representative of "all workers" diminished. Indeed, the FPÖ in the 1990s positioned itself as a critic of the "packelei" (backroom deals) of SPÖ-ÖVP and their affiliated unions and chambers. This resonated with some entrepreneurs and workers who felt left out.
- *EU Integration:* Many economic decisions moved to the European level, where Austrian corporatism had little reach. EU competition law prevented cosy domestic arrangements like fixed prices or protected sectors that partnership sometimes used. Also, policy areas like trade agreements, monetary policy, and even significant parts of social and environmental regulation were now EU competencies – beyond the direct control of national social partners. Austrian interest groups thus had to lobby in Brussels, a more pluralistic arena, instead of just cutting deals in Vienna. However, corporatist groups did adapt by forming EU-level federations (e.g. Austrian unions joined the European Trade Union Confederation), but the **playing field broadened** and diluted their influence.
- *Changing Values:* A younger generation of experts and public officials in the 1990s valued **technocratic decision-making and transparency** over opaque consensus. Pelinka notes a "cleavage between an academic/scientific approach and pure party politics" among the young, implying that many younger policymakers were more inclined to use data-driven methods than to simply respect traditional bargaining outcomes. Additionally, **neoliberal ideas** about competition and deregulation gained traction worldwide, pressuring Austria to reform institutions considered overly cartelized. Even within the SPÖ and ÖVP, voices emerged arguing that too much consensus can impede necessary reforms (for instance, pension reform or opening telecom markets).
- *Social Changes:* New social movements (Greens, feminist groups, immigration advocates) remained mostly **outside the corporatist framework** [58]. Their rise meant that crucial societal debates (environmental protection, gender equality, minority rights) happened on the streets or via NGOs, not in the Joint Commission. This pluralization of social interests made the old bipartite corporatism look incomplete. Furthermore, as noted, the **Catholic Church** – an important societal actor – while consulted on moral issues, wasn't formally in "social partnership," yet on issues like education or bioethics its stance had to be considered in modern policymaking. So the government increasingly had to juggle more stakeholders than the classic two (labor and capital), moving toward a more **issue-based pluralism** rather than stable corporatist routines.

- **Continuity and Adaptation:** Despite signs of "farewell," corporatism in Austria did not vanish in the 1990s. In fact, many observers predicted its demise prematurely. Pelinka himself acknowledges that corporatism will **"continue to be in great demand"** in Austria. The deeply ingrained habit of negotiation endures. For example, even after labor's political power waned, Austria still had industry-wide collective bargaining setting wages – a corporatist element ensuring moderate wage growth and few strikes. Even the right-populist FPÖ, when it entered government in 2000 (after Pelinka's book), initially left the social partnership largely intact (though with some conflicts). Thus, one might say Austria gave a **"farewell" to the *perception* of corporatism as its defining trait**, but not a complete goodbye to the practice. Austrians came to see themselves as a "normal" country, yet when crises hit (economic recessions, etc.), they often still utilized the old partnership mechanisms to respond.

Conclusion:
Chapter 7 highlights that the **Austrian model of corporatism**, so crucial to its postwar stability, was under considerable strain by the late 20th century. The grand consensus that once united virtually all of Austrian society was fragmenting under democracy's evolving pressures. However, the institutional memory and positive legacy of corporatism continued to influence Austrian governance. Pelinka cites

that the major economic associations were instrumental in legitimizing Austria's push to join Europe – e.g. unions and business both campaigned for EU membership, showing partnership could modernize its goals. Moreover, Austrian corporatism began to **internationalize** – the concept of "Euro-shop stewards" and cross-border labor cooperation emerged, hinting that aspects of social partnership might move to the European level. In sum, Austria in the 1990s was **saying goodbye to the era when corporatism defined everything** (the era of Raab and Benya forging deals in smoke-filled rooms), but it was **not rejecting the idea of consensus**. The challenge ahead was to make that consensus more transparent, inclusive, and compatible with a pluralist democracy and EU membership – essentially, to reinvent corporatism for a new age rather than abolish it.

Chapter 8: A Farewell to Neutrality

Austria's Permanent Neutrality – Background:
- **Birth of Neutrality (1955):** Austrian neutrality was born from the geopolitical compromise that ended the Allied occupation. In April 1955, in the **Moscow Memorandum**, Austria pledged to become **permanently neutral "of its own accord" following the model of Switzerland**. Subsequently, on **October 26, 1955**, the newly sovereign Austrian parliament passed the **Neutrality Act**, a constitutional law declaring Austria's everlasting neutrality. This declaration was **unilateral** but was implicitly accepted by the world powers as part of the State Treaty context. **Key features** of Austrian neutrality as officially defined: (1) Austria would not join any military alliances and would not permit foreign military bases on its soil; (2) neutrality is **perpetual** (not just during a specific conflict) [111] ; (3) it is **armed neutrality** – Austria maintains its own armed forces to defend its neutral status. The United States insisted on Austria having a credible defense capability as a condition for accepting neutrality (to avoid it becoming a defenseless vacuum). From the start, neutrality was understood as **militarily but not ideologically neutral** – Austria clearly belonged to Western democratic values, though it stayed out of NATO. This nuance allowed Austria to integrate economically with the West (it joined GATT, later EFTA) while maintaining a stance of not participating in military blocs.

- **Neutrality as Identity:** For the Second Republic, neutrality quickly became a pillar of national identity and pride. It was seen as the guarantor of Austrian independence (especially given memories of being drawn into Hitler's wars) and as a tool that allowed Austria to play an outsized international role as a **bridge between East and West**. Vienna positioned itself as a venue for East-West dialogue – exemplified by high-profile summits (Kennedy-Khrushchev 1961), the location of important international organizations (UN agencies, OPEC, later the OSCE), and Austria's active **UN peacekeeping** participation (Austrian troops served in missions in places like Cyprus and the Golan Heights). Domestically, all major parties embraced neutrality. It was often termed **"Austria's Third Way"** in foreign policy – neither West nor East, but a small state promoting peace. Neutrality also had broad public support: it was taught in schools as a core principle and celebrated on October 26 (now Austria's national day, commemorating neutrality's adoption). Indeed, by the 1980s **over 90% of Austrians consistently favored maintaining neutrality** in opinion polls. The policy insulated Austria from Cold War entanglements and buttressed the narrative of Austria as **"Hitler's first victim"** – i.e. Austrians liked to think their neutrality underscored their difference from Germany and their commitment to peace [20] .

- **Official vs. Real Neutrality:** Pelinka draws a distinction between **"official" neutrality (the legal stipulations) and the political reality**. Officially, Austria scrupulously observed neutrality's requirements: for example, during crises like the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, Austria did not allow its territory to be used for military aid (but it did quietly provide refuge to many Czechs). In 1991's Gulf War, Austria refused to send forces or material, though it aligned with UN sanctions on Iraq – showing that neutrality did *not* mean moral indifference, but it meant no combat participation. **Austria's military remained relatively small** (a few ten-thousand

conscripts), geared for Alpine defense and UN peacekeeping. There were a few Cold War hiccups – e.g. a 1958 incident of U.S. military planes overflying Austria triggered a protest, but such breaches were rare. In practice, Austria's neutrality leaned West: Austrian intelligence quietly cooperated with Western agencies; Austria condemned the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the UN, etc. But it also meant Austria often took a **moderating stance** – e.g. not joining NATO sanctions on the USSR in certain cases, or hosting neutral summits. **Kreisky's era (1970s)** especially showcased an *"active neutrality"* – he engaged with Middle Eastern countries, hosted disarmament talks, and championed dialogue with Eastern Europe, arguing that as a neutral he could speak to all sides. This raised Austria's international profile significantly.

Challenges and "Farewell" to Neutrality:

- **End of the Cold War:** The fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989–91 removed the primary raison d'être for Austrian neutrality. With no East-West divide, the initial purpose – to get Soviet troops out and keep Austria from being a Cold War battleground – was accomplished and arguably no longer relevant. Austria was now surrounded by democracies and no direct threat loomed. This prompted a fundamental debate: **Should Austria remain neutral in a unifying Europe?** Many argued that neutrality had outlived its usefulness and was incompatible with deeper EU integration. Others felt it was still a core part of Austrian identity and useful in a world of new uncertainties. Notably, **public opinion remained pro-neutrality** even after 1990, though support dipped slightly. For instance, in 1995, polls showed a majority still against NATO membership, but some younger and conservative Austrians began to reconsider alliance options. The grand coalition itself was split: the ÖVP was more open to dropping neutrality and joining NATO, while the SPÖ was more cautious, reflecting its base's attachment to neutrality (and fear of military spending increases).

- **European Union Membership (1995):** Joining the EU had a significant impact on neutrality. While the EU is not a military alliance, it does have a Common Foreign and Security Policy. Austria had to accept **EU sanctions and joint positions**, which sometimes strained neutrality. For example, when the EU imposed sanctions on rogue states (like Libya or Yugoslavia in the 90s), Austria participated – some neutrality purists argued this compromised impartiality. However, Austrian leaders claimed **neutrality only covers military non-alignment**, not political or economic stances, so aligning with EU foreign policy was acceptable. Importantly, by joining the EU, Austria implicitly joined the Western bloc's security architecture, short of NATO. It signed on to NATO's Partnership for Peace in 1995, beginning low-level military cooperation. The *farewell to neutrality* idea gained traction as integration deepened: if the EU were to develop a defense arm (WEU or a future EU army), could Austria remain fully neutral? Pelinka notes Austria **did not see neutrality as an obstacle to EU integration** – it basically chose Western integration over a strict reading of neutrality.

- **NATO and Security Debates:** In the 1990s, Austrian politicians gingerly started discussing NATO membership – something previously taboo. The ÖVP and FPÖ showed interest, especially after neighboring neutrals (like Sweden and Finland) joined the EU and cooperated with NATO. A 1998 public referendum initiative to **"maintain neutrality"** gathered 6.2% signatures – reflecting some popular anxiety about losing neutrality, but it lacked majority support. Still, Austria did not join NATO in the 90s, partly because **public support for NATO was low** (only around 25-30%). Instead, Austria increased participation in peacekeeping and sent troops to EU and UN missions in Balkan conflicts, trying to reconcile an active security role with formal neutrality.

- **Neutrality's Evolving Meaning:** Pelinka suggests that by the 1990s, Austria's neutrality had in practice been **hollowed out** of its original strictness. Austria was "neutral" only in the narrow military sense – and even that was theoretical since no military conflict directly implicated Austria. Meanwhile, the country was politically aligned with the West and economically

integrated into Western structures. In other words, **Austria had largely "Westernized" despite neutrality**, and the neutrality law was more of a cherished tradition than a practical policy guide [28]. The SPÖ-ÖVP coalition of the 90s seemed to treat neutrality as something that might eventually be phased out ("the last purpose this coalition has may be ending neutrality" as Pelinka paraphrases observers), but they did so cautiously not to outrun public opinion. The farewell to neutrality was thus more **psychological and incremental** than official: there was (and still hasn't been) no formal renunciation of the Neutrality Act – it remains on the books. But Austria's leaders acted increasingly as if Austria were a non-aligned Western nation rather than a strictly neutral arbiter. For example, Austria joined EU declarations criticizing human rights abuses by various regimes, something it might have avoided in the 60s or 70s to maintain neutrality.

Conclusion:
In chapter 8, Pelinka portrays Austrian neutrality as a concept that **served its historic purpose and then gradually faded in importance**. It was crucial for regaining independence in 1955 and gave Austria a distinct international role during the Cold War. But with the Cold War over and Austria firmly embedded in the European Union, neutrality became somewhat of an **anachronism** – or at least a flexible concept. By the mid-90s, Austria was **"no longer insisting on its special status"** and had assumed a foreign policy profile "normal in the sense of average West European" [28]. The phrase "farewell to neutrality" reflects that Austria's strategic outlook had shifted from carving a unique path to contributing to collective Western efforts (short of NATO). However, neutrality remained emotionally significant to many Austrians, symbolizing independence and peace. Thus, Austria's approach was to **quietly dilute neutrality without revoking it** – e.g., participating in EU security cooperation, hosting sanctions meetings, etc., all while officially stating "we are neutral." The ultimate fate of neutrality was left open-ended; as of 1998 it was still intact legally, but practically on the way out if Europe's integration continued. In summary, Austria was saying goodbye to the *strict* neutrality of 1955, moving toward a security policy compatible with Western partnerships, yet it tried to do so *without* alienating a public for whom neutrality was part of national identity. This careful balance is a defining element of Austria's foreign policy at the century's end.

Chapter 9: Austria's Darker Side

Confronting the Nazi Legacy:
- **Austrian Complicity in Nazi Era:** The title "Adolf Hitler, the Austrian Catholic" pointedly reminds that Hitler was born Austrian, underlining Austria's intimate link to Nazism. For decades, Austria downplayed its role in Nazi crimes, clinging to the victim narrative (that it was annexed by force in 1938). Chapter 9 delves into the historical reality that many Austrians were not just victims but **enthusiastic participants** in Nazism. In 1938, the Anschluss (union with Germany) was greeted by large jubilant crowds in Vienna. Austrians joined the Nazi party (NSDAP) in droves – about **700,000 Austrians (8% of the population) were NSDAP members**, roughly the same proportion as in Germany. Austrians were over-represented in the Nazi machinery of terror: key perpetrators like **Adolf Eichmann** (architect of the Holocaust) and **Ernst Kaltenbrunner** (Gestapo chief) were Austrian, as were many concentration camp personnel. Austrian anti-Semitism ran deep before Hitler (Karl Lueger, Vienna's mayor around 1900, was famously anti-Semitic). Pelinka notes that in the 1930s even the native Austrian right (the Dollfuss/Schuschnigg regime) had authoritarian and anti-Semitic tendencies, which created fertile ground for Nazi ideology [21]. Austrian Catholics in the 1930s often saw Jews and socialists as common enemies, sometimes competing with Nazis in anti-Semitic rhetoric. Thus, the "darker side" refers to Austria's failure, until the late 20th century, to fully acknowledge these uncomfortable truths. After 1945, **denazification** in Austria was relatively mild. By 1948, most ex-Nazis (over 90% of whom had their voting rights initially suspended) were amnestied and re-enfranchised [99]. The **"VdU" (League of Independents)** was even formed to represent former Nazis politically, later becoming the FPÖ [98].

Restitution to Jewish victims was minimal (this only seriously began in the 1990s). For many years, Austrian schools and media rarely confronted what Austrians did during 1938–45, focusing instead on Austrian suffering (bombing, Soviet rapes in 1945, etc.) and resistance stories.

- **The Waldheim Affair (1986):** The turning point in shattering Austria's historical amnesia was the **Kurt Waldheim affair**. Waldheim, a former UN Secretary-General, ran for Austrian President in 1986. During the campaign, revelations emerged that he had lied about his wartime service – he was an intelligence officer in a German Army unit implicated in war crimes in the Balkans, not merely a student as his memoir claimed. International outcry (led by the World Jewish Congress) ensued, with Waldheim getting shunned diplomatically after winning the election. The Waldheim scandal was a **catharsis**: it forced Austrians to discuss their Nazi past openly. It exposed latent anti-Semitism – some Austrians reacted by adopting a siege mentality, claiming foreign (Jewish) groups were smearing Austria. For example, FPÖ leader Jörg Haider and some media insinuated a "campaign" against Austria, and statements like those from a Waldheim supporter blaming Jews for new anti-Semitism surfaced [112]. Pelinka notes the Waldheim affair **"sharpened both international and domestic perspectives" on Austria's Nazi legacy** [25]. Austrians could no longer collectively pretend they had all been victims. The affair's most important outcome was the **"internationalization of Austrian anti-Semitism"** – the world began scrutinizing Austria's far-right tendencies. Waldheim's presidency isolated Austria (he was persona non grata in the US and UK), causing many Austrians shame and prompting introspection.

- **Memory and Education:** After Waldheim, Austria took steps to address the past. Chancellor Franz Vranitzky in 1991 gave a landmark speech acknowledging Austrian **"shared responsibility"** for Nazi crimes – a break from the official line that Austria was only a victim. Holocaust education in schools was strengthened. Memorials to Nazi victims were established or expanded (e.g., Mauthausen camp memorial). A historical commission was set up to investigate Aryanization and restitution issues, leading to belated compensations in the 2000s. Thus, chapter 9 discusses how Austria began to **emerge from denial** and confront the "dark side" directly, albeit under international pressure.

Contemporary Far-Right and Populism:

- **"The Roots Are Fertile Still":** This section conveys that the socio-political undercurrents that gave rise to fascism in the 1930s did not vanish; they were largely suppressed or channeled differently in the Second Republic, but some persisted. For instance, **anti-Semitic attitudes** lingered among older and less-educated Austrians into the 1990s. Surveys in the 1990s showed a significant minority of Austrians held anti-Jewish or racist beliefs, though often latent. The FPÖ's rise under Haider was partly built on appealing to such sentiments in coded ways – Haider frequently made controversial remarks minimizing Nazi crimes or using xenophobic tropes (e.g., referring to Nazi SS veterans as "honorable men" in 1995, or blaming immigrants for crime). Pelinka suggests that Haider's success was a **"catalyst"** – it brought prejudices into the open and forced Austrian society to debate them, similar to how Waldheim's affair had done earlier [25]. The presence of a strong far-right party indicated that the roots of extremism found new life in a populist context.

- **Neo-Nazism vs. Right-Populism:** Austria did see some **neo-Nazi fringe groups** post-1945. The most notable was perhaps Gottfried Küssel's movement in the 1980s, which openly glorified Nazism and was banned under Austria's strict anti-Nazi laws (*Verbotsgesetz*). Neo-Nazi parties like the **NDP** (National Democratic Party) tried to contest elections (NDP's leader Norbert Burger got 3.2% in the 1980 presidential race), but such groups were usually banned and their leaders imprisoned by the late 1980s. Thus, hard-core neo-Nazism remained marginal and legally suppressed. However, the **FPÖ under Haider absorbed much of the far-right support** in a more palatable form [60] [61]. Haider's party combined elements of the old pan-German

nationalism with modern anti-establishment and anti-immigrant rhetoric. This led to the question: is the FPÖ neo-Nazi or just a populist protest party? Pelinka leans towards seeing it as **radical right-populist rather than neo-Nazi** – because it operates within democratic rules and does not explicitly call for a Nazi regime or racial laws [60] [113]. Haider notably sought respectability: he wanted to position the FPÖ as a **"broad movement"** of protest, not a fringe neo-fascist sect [113]. He courted young voters, women, and blue-collar workers with issues like corruption of the "Old Parties," immigration limits, and Austrian patriotism ("Austria First" petition in 1993) [61] [62]. At the same time, Haider **dog-whistled to extremists** by downplaying Nazi atrocities, attending controversial gatherings, and never fully distancing from his party's German-nationalist core (he himself was part of a nationalist student fraternity). The FPÖ's voter base in the 1990s indeed included former SPÖ/ÖVP supporters frustrated with stagnation, but also a segment of hard-right sympathizers who previously had no one to vote for. By bringing these elements into a parliamentary party, Haider arguably **defanged overt neo-Nazism** (because those voters went to the FPÖ instead of extra-parliamentary neo-Nazi groups), but also **legitimized some extremist discourse** within the political mainstream.

- **Anti-Immigrant Sentiment:** A significant aspect of Austria's "darker side" in the 1990s was rising xenophobia directed at immigrants and refugees. The wars in Yugoslavia and the opening of Eastern Europe brought many asylum seekers to Austria. The FPÖ capitalized on fears of being "overrun" – their 1993 "Austria First" petition explicitly demanded stricter immigration and was supported by hundreds of thousands [62]. Incidents of **racist violence** occurred, most notoriously the letter-bomb terror campaign of Franz Fuchs (1993–1997) targeting pro-immigration activists and minorities. Though universally condemned, these incidents exposed an underbelly of racial hatred. The FPÖ's rhetoric (blaming foreigners for crime and unemployment) arguably inflamed tensions. The mainstream parties responded by tightening immigration and asylum laws in the early 90s, partly yielding to public pressure. All this showed that **while Austria had few Jews left (after the Holocaust) to be targets, other minorities (Yugoslav guest-workers, Turks, recent Bosnian/Serb refugees, Roma) became targets of prejudice**. This continuity of an exclusionary attitude towards the "Other" is part of the darker side Pelinka addresses.

Conclusion:
Austria's Second Republic was built on a **"deal with the past"** – forgetting it in order to move forward. This chapter illustrates how that suppressed past reasserted itself. By the 1990s, Austria could no longer remain in the shadow of a sanitized history. It had to face that it was "**the country that, together with Germany, was responsible for Nazism**" and that it had **"escaped this responsibility after 1945"** [21]. International scrutiny (Waldheim) and internal political shifts (Haider's rise) forced a reckoning. On the positive side, Austria did start coming to terms: official acknowledgment of co-responsibility for Nazi crimes, and educational efforts improved. On the worrisome side, the persistence (or revival) of far-right populism showed that some attitudes never fully disappeared – they merely changed form. Pelinka essentially warns that **the roots of intolerance and authoritarianism can remain fertile**, and Austria must remain vigilant. The inclusion of this chapter in the book underscores that to truly step "out of the shadow of the past," Austrians had to confront their dark history and its echoes in the present. Only by doing so could Austria ensure that the liberal democracy of the Second Republic would not be undermined from within by the same demons that destroyed the First Republic. In a way, Chapter 9 complements Chapter 2's discussion of political culture: beneath the stable, consensual surface of Austrian politics (*the bright side*), there were always currents of extremism (*the dark side*) that needed to be addressed to secure a healthy democratic future.

Chapter 10: Austria's Future

Westernization of a Central European Democracy:

- **Normalization into the West:** The final chapter discusses Austria's trajectory as it enters the 21st century, essentially arguing that Austria is becoming a **"normal" Western democracy** after a unique postwar path [93]. "Westernization" refers to the political, economic, and cultural convergence of Austria with other Western European countries. Pelinka notes that **layer after layer of Austria's peculiarities were being stripped away** – the legacy of Habsburg multi-national empire, the ultra-stable grand coalition politics, the stringent neutrality, the corporatist economy – revealing Austria underneath as a typical small democracy [93]. By the 1990s, Austria had multiparty competition, a market economy integrated in the EU, a public opinion tolerant of more adversarial politics, and a willingness to engage in international cooperation beyond neutrality. The country's **political institutions and values** were now very much in line with the Western European norm (constitutional democracy, rule of law, human rights, etc.). This Westernization was both cause and effect of Austria's EU membership and globalization – Austrians experienced new influences (travel, media, EU labor mobility) and their expectations of politics changed to be more like those in neighboring democracies.

    - **Crises and Integration:** Pelinka addresses how Austria manages crises and its integration process. The **1990s grand coalition** (SPÖ/ÖVP) often lacked a clear reform drive, leading to what some termed "standstill" or small crises of governability (frequent squabbles, short-lived governments in 1994–95). Yet Austria navigated major transitions relatively well: the **EU accession** was achieved smoothly by 1995 with strong public mandate [92]; the economy adjusted to EU competition with only mild turbulence; and institutions like the parliament became more lively as the dominance of two parties declined (which Pelinka sees as a healthy democratization). He does hint that the grand coalition of the 90s governed more from necessity (to exclude the FPÖ) than vision – lacking "alternatives," they stuck together and declared most of the **postwar goals accomplished** (democracy stable, nation built). However, this very success meant the old grand-coalition format had outlived its purpose, and any further "deconcentration" of politics (i.e., erosion of SPÖ/ÖVP duopoly) could open the door to new governing constellations. Indeed, Pelinka foresaw that the grand coalition might not hold forever – which was prescient, as in 2000 an ÖVP-FPÖ government formed, breaking the postwar mold. In terms of integration, Austria in the future would be ever more entwined with the EU. The author implies Austria must find its place in a possibly federating Europe – figuring out how to balance its sovereignty and identity with being a good EU member. For example, adopting the euro, participating in EU policymaking, and perhaps joining EU defense structures were on the horizon. These integrative steps require public support, so managing them without causing identity crises is a key task (hence emphasizing Westernization as a comfortable framing).

Old Cleavages, New Cleavages:

- **Political Cleavages Shifting:** Pelinka recaps that the **traditional cleavages** (religious, class, ideological) that dominated Austrian politics for a century have receded. The Catholic vs. secular split is no longer politically organizing (the ÖVP and SPÖ both have religious and non-religious supporters; culture war issues are muted). The worker vs. bourgeois divide also doesn't map neatly onto party politics now – SPÖ has middle-class voters; ÖVP has worker and employee voters; FPÖ drew many working-class voters from SPÖ, etc. However, **new cleavages have emerged** in their place:

- *Generation Cleavage:* As discussed in Chapter 2, young vs. old voters diverge, with youth more likely to support political change (FPÖ, Greens, Liberals) and older voters sticking to SPÖ/ÖVP [53] [44]. This relates to differing socialization – older Austrians grew up in the camp system, younger ones in a more individualized era. This cleavage could have policy implications on issues like pension reform, EU integration (younger were typically more pro-EU, older more skeptical), and cultural openness.

- *Education Cleavage:* Pelinka notes in chapter 2 (with Table 2.5 etc.) that educational level started to

correlate with party preference – higher-educated Austrians leaned more Green or liberal and less for FPÖ, whereas lower-educated voters had been a base for SPÖ and increasingly FPÖ. This mirrors patterns in other democracies where education level aligns with attitudes on globalization and cultural change.
- *Urban–Rural Cleavage:* Historically an old cleavage (ÖVP strong in rural, SPÖ in cities), it persisted but in new form: urban areas (especially Vienna) became more socially liberal and post-materialist (hence Greens did well there), whereas some rural regions remained culturally conservative and inclined towards either ÖVP traditionalism or FPÖ's populist anti-center message. This cleavage ties into center-periphery resentment (e.g., idea that "Vienna politicians" don't understand rural folk, something Haider exploited).
- *Globalization/Integration Cleavage:* By late 90s, a cleavage was visible between those embracing **international integration (EU, cosmopolitanism)** and those feeling **nationalist or protectionist**. The FPÖ's platform often catered to the latter (Euro-skepticism, anti-immigration), while SPÖ, ÖVP, and Greens broadly represented the pro-EU, pro-multicultural stance (with nuances). This cleavage cut across old left-right lines, with, for example, working-class voters split between SPÖ (more pro-EU leadership) and FPÖ (anti-EU rhetoric).
- *New Social Issues:* The emergence of issues like environmental protection, gender equality, LGBTQ rights, immigrant integration – these didn't align with the old camp structure and thus created new axes of political contention. The Green movement vs. industrial development is one such axis; it somewhat overlaps with generational and educational lines (younger, educated Austrians prioritizing environment). Feminism and women's representation became a political topic – while SPÖ and Greens championed them more, even ÖVP adapted by increasing women in leadership. These "new politics" issues represent a cleavage of *traditional values vs. progressive values*.

- **Party System Consequences:** As these new cleavages rose, the party system in the future would likely **re-align** to reflect them. Pelinka hints that SPÖ and ÖVP, big catch-all parties, were strained coalitions of varied groups and might lose ground to parties that articulated clearer positions on new cleavages (FPÖ on nationalism, Greens on environment). Indeed, he references that by mid-90s, Austria had a *five-party system* and even the notion of a **"Third Republic"** was floated in political discourse – implying a fundamental transformation of the party system and governance style. "Third Republic" would denote a break from the grand coalition consensus model (Second Republic's hallmark) to something new, perhaps more alternating in power or a different constitutional balance. This discussion means Austria's future might hold more **competitive, issue-driven politics** versus the old consensus-driven politics. Pelinka cites that some saw the deconcentration and polarization of the 1990s as heralding a possible new era in Austrian politics [80].

A Different Austria?
- **Identity and Society:** The concluding subsection considers in what ways Austria in the future will be "different" from the past. Having shed many shadows of the past – authoritarian traditions, Nazi silence, camp politics – Austria was now a pluralist democracy similar to its neighbors. One aspect is that **Austrian national identity has solidified**: by the 1990s virtually all Austrians (even those voting for pan-Germanic FPÖ) accept that Austria is a distinct nation [23]. The old debate "Are we Germans or Austrians?" is settled in favor of Austrian nationhood. However, an evolving identity issue will be **Austria's role as a multicultural society**. Historically, except for regional minorities, Austria was homogeneous; by the 2000s, with 10-12% foreign-born and their descendants, Austria will have to integrate immigrants into its national narrative. This includes second-generation Turks, Balkan refugees who stayed, etc. A "different Austria" will be one that possibly embraces a more multiethnic identity,

moving beyond the exclusively Germanic-Catholic image of old. That will take time and could be contentious (as evidenced by anti-immigrant politics).

- **Western and Central European:** Austria's future orientation is firmly Western, but geographically and historically it remains a **Central European crossroads**. Pelinka likely means Austria can leverage that by acting as a bridge or mediator in the EU for new Eastern members (which indeed Austria did after 2004 when many ex-communist countries joined EU). Culturally, Austrians have come to see themselves as part of the wider European mainstream rather than an isolated alpine republic. The population's overwhelming support for EU membership in 1994 and again in the Euro introduction reflected this acceptance.

- **Political Culture Changes:** A future Austria would probably be more open to political alternation and not fear instability as much as earlier generations did. The high voter volatility in the 1990s (with many late-deciding or swing voters) [57] suggests Austrians became comfortable "throwing the rascals out" if needed – a normal democratic impulse, contrasting with the deferential stability of earlier decades. Also, **civil society** has grown stronger: NGOs, citizen initiatives, and referenda started playing roles (e.g. various petition drives on EU, environment, etc., some listed in find results). This means a different Austria where politics is not just in party headquarters but also in grassroots movements.

- **Continuity:** Despite all changes, Pelinka likely concludes that some continuities will remain: Austrians' preference for consensus and moderation runs deep. Even as politics becomes more contentious, Austrians generally avoid extremes (Haider's FPÖ, while extreme in rhetoric, still operated within democracy). The fundamental success of the Second Republic – stable democracy and prosperity – sets a baseline that any future "Third Republic" would want to preserve. Austria's future thus is about adapting those successful foundations to new conditions.

Final Reflections:
In closing, Pelinka's study notes that Austria, after emerging from "the shadow of the past," is now **asserting itself as a modern European democracy**, no longer defined by its traumatic history or postwar exceptions. The exam-preparation takeaway is that Austria's political system and identity underwent profound transformations from 1945 to the 1990s: **from instability to stability, from isolation to integration, from homogeneity to diversity, and from consensus governance to a more open contest.** Austria's challenges ahead include managing right-populism, integrating into the EU fully (potentially even NATO one day), and integrating its own diverse society – but none of these are unique to Austria. They are the normal challenges of Western democracies. In effect, Austria has *"Westernized"* to where its future will be decided by the same forces and debates that shape any other Western democracy. This, in itself, is a testament to Austria's postwar journey out of a troubled past into a confident present. The **"different Austria"** of the future will be one that still cherishes aspects of its distinct heritage (like cultural traditions, neutrality ethos, social partnership values) but operates firmly within the common European democratic framework.
