
Explaining Electoral Support for Far Right Parties

HU Berlin, Winter Semester 2017-2018

Logistics

Time: Tue, 10:15 - 11:45

Location: Universitätsstr. 3b, Room 001

Moodle enrollment key:

Instructor*

Denis Cohen, BA MSc

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Office Hours: Tue 16:30-17:30 (by appointment)

🌐 [denis-cohen.github.io](https://github.com/denis-cohen)

Course Description

In recent years, many Western democracies have experienced a dramatic surge in far right populist success. But the far right achieved notable levels of success long before Brexit, Trump, or Le Pen's strong performance in the 2017 French presidential election. During the past three decades, many European party systems have seen the entry and consolidation of far right parties into the electoral arena. In order to explain this phenomenon, this seminar aims to investigate both individual and contextual drivers of electoral support for far right parties. It will primarily focus on far right parties in Western European parliamentary systems.

The seminar covers four substantive domains. The first is a brief overview of the definitional and conceptual approaches to classifying far right parties. This will involve a discussion of the core ideological features that characterize far right parties and of the issues and issue positions that far right parties campaign on. The second is an extensive analysis of the 'demand-side' of far right voting. For this purpose, we will engage with both general theories of voting behavior and empirical analyses of far-right voting in order to tackle

* Temporary office through October 31, 2017: Universitätsstr. 3b, Room 404 (☎+49 30/2093-66568).

two questions: Who votes for far right parties (i.e., what is the demographic and socio-structural make-up of their electorates?) and why (i.e., which attitudes, grievances and preferences underlie far right voting behavior?). The third part of this course covers an overview of the ‘supply-side’ of far right voting with special emphasis on theories of political competition. Here, we will examine how the strategic agency of far right parties and of their established competitors shape their electoral fortunes. Lastly, part four provides a brief overview of consequences of far right success: Their performance in government and their effects on policy, competitors, and public opinion.

Thus, this seminar is designed to familiarize students with seminal contributions in the theoretical and empirical literatures on voting behavior and political competition that help understand and explain electoral support for far right parties. It is less concerned with a discursive understanding of far right parties’ ideology or normative evaluations of their agency. Much of the empirical literature will feature results from quantitative analyses. Some familiarity with descriptive and inferential statistics (e.g., at the level of Statistik I+II) is therefore strongly recommended. The general language of instruction and communication is English.

Course Requirements

I: Attendance, Readings, and Active Participation (2 Credit Points)

Active participation is central to this class. Participants are expected to have read the assigned readings prior to class and should be able to engage critically with the contents. Class sessions are designed to provide a forum for clarification and discussion – not for extensive summaries and recaps – of the readings.

II: Text Memos (1 Credit Point)

Text memos should focus on one of the weekly readings and must not exceed *300 words*. They should provide a concise summary of the central arguments and findings in the style of the abstract of a journal article (strict limit: 150 words) and a brief critique of one or more aspects of the text.

Participants are required to submit *two text memos* over the duration of the course, each worth *0.5 ECTS* credits. Text memos should be submitted to the instructor via email no later than Monday before class, 8.00 AM in PDF format (no MS Word/Open Office files!)

III: Question Papers (2 Credit Points)

Question papers will address a number of questions on the topic of the weekly readings in 750-900 words. The questions will be distributed one week in advance. Question formats may prompt participants to synthesize the week's readings, contrast the readings with additional literature, or apply the concepts introduced in the readings to empirical cases. Question papers should be distributed to, and read by, all participants before class. Participants who submitted a question paper are expected to briefly present their findings and to answer questions from other participants in the corresponding session.

Participants are required to submit two question papers over the duration of the course, each worth 1 ECTS credits. Question papers should be submitted to the instructor via email and uploaded to the Moodle Forum no later than Monday before class, 8.00 AM in PDF format (no MS Word/Open Office files!).

Accreditation

Participants who successfully complete course requirements I+II will earn 3 ECTS credit points. Successful completion of course requirements I+II+III will yield 5 ECTS credit points.

Participants who require additional credit points or a course grade for accreditation under the regulations of their program (e.g., Erasmus students) should approach the instructor within the first two weeks of class.

Overviews and Repositories

The far right, and especially the populist radical right in Western Europe, is arguably the most extensively researched party family in political science. Throughout the course (and beyond), participants may find it helpful to consult these sources that provide systematic overviews of the extant literature:

- Kai Arzheimer (2012). “Electoral Sociology: Who votes for the Extreme Right - and when?” In: *The Extreme Right in Europe. Current Trends and Perspectives*. Ed. by Uwe Backes and Patrick Moreau. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, pp. 35–50
- Kai Arzheimer (2017). “Explaining Electoral Support for the Radical Right”. In: *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*. Ed. by Jens Rydgren. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Matt Golder (2016). “Far Right Parties in Europe”. In: *Annual Review of Political Science* 19
- Herbert Kitschelt (2007). “Growth and Persistence of the Radical Right in Post-industrial Democracies: Advances and Challenges in Comparative Research”. In: *West European Politics* 30.5, pp. 1176–1206
- Cas Mudde (2007). *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, esp. Part III
- Jens Rydgren (2007). “The Sociology of the Radical Right”. In: *Annual Review of Sociology* 33.1, pp. 241–262

I can also highly recommend Kai Arzheimer’s ever-growing bibliography on research on far right parties in political science and neighboring disciplines:

- <http://www.kai-arzheimer.com/extreme-right-western-europe-bibliography>

Over and beyond these resources that focus explicitly on far right parties, the *Web of Science* provides a comprehensive search engine for academic publications:

- <https://apps.webofknowledge.com/>

Course Schedule*

(1) October 17, 2017: Introduction

Introduction, course outline, and administrative issues.

Introduction

(2) October 24, 2017: Definition and Delineation

- Cas Mudde (2007). *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 11-59
- Optional: Golder (2016, pp. 478-482)

(3) October 31, 2017

No class (national holiday).

(4) November 07, 2017: Issues

- Cas Mudde (2007). *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 63-89, 119-157
- Optional: Cas Mudde (1999). “The single-issue party thesis: Extreme right parties and the immigration issue”. In: *West European Politics* 22.3, pp. 182–197

The Demand-Side of Far Right Support

(5) November 14, 2017: Voting Behavior in Changing Party Systems

- Kai Arzheimer and Jürgen W Falter (2008). “Voter Behavior”. In: *Encyclopedia of Political Behaviour*. Ed. by Linda Lee Kaid and Christina Holtz-Bacha. London: Sage. Available online at <http://www.kai-arzheimer.com/paper/voter-behaviour/>
- Hanspeter Kriesi et al. (2008). *West European Politics in the Age of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-22

(6) November 21, 2017: Demand-Side Explanations – An Overview

- Pippa Norris (2005). *Radical Right. Voters and Parties in the Electoral Market*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 129-187

*Subject to change. All changes to the schedule will be announced on Moodle.

- *Optional*: Sections on demand-side explanations in Rydgren (2007), Arzheimer (2012), Golder (2016), and/or Arzheimer (2017).

(7) November 28, 2017: Which Attitudes Matter?

- Elisabeth Ivarsflaten (2008). “What Unites Right-Wing Populists in Western Europe? Re-Examining Grievance Mobilization Models in Seven Successful Cases”. In: *Comparative Political Studies* 41.1, pp. 3–23
- Steven van Hauwaert and Stijn van Kessel (2017). “Beyond protest and discontent. A cross-national analysis of the effect of populist attitudes and issue positions on populist party support”. In: *European Journal of Political Research*
- *Optional*: Jens Rydgren (2008). “Immigration sceptics, xenophobes or racists? Radical right-wing voting in six West European countries”. In: *European Journal of Political Research* 47.6, pp. 737–765

(8) December 05, 2017: Understanding Attitudes and Preferences

- Jens Hainmueller and Daniel J. Hopkins (2014). “Public Attitudes Toward Immigration”. In: *Annual Review of Political Science* 17.1, pp. 225–249
- Herbert Kitschelt and Philipp Rehm (2014). “Occupations as a Site of Political Preference Formation”. In: *Comparative Political Studies*
- *Optional*: Denis Cohen (2017). “Economic Risk, Anti-Immigration Preferences and Voting for the Radical Right”. In: (*Working Paper*)

(9) December 12, 2017: Understanding the Electoral Sociology

- Elisabeth Ivarsflaten and Rune Stubager (2012). “Voting for the populist radical right in Western Europe. The role of education.” In: *Class Politics and the Radical Right*. Ed. by Jens Rydgren. New York: Routledge. Chap. 7, pp. 122–137
- Eelco Harteveld and Elisabeth Ivarsflaten (2016). “Why Women Avoid the Radical Right: Internalized Norms and Party Reputations”. In: *British Journal of Political Science*, pp. 1–16
- *Optional*: Daniel Oesch (2008). “Explaining Workers’ Support for Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe: Evidence from Austria, Belgium, France, Norway, and Switzerland”. In: *International Political Science Review* 29.3, pp. 349–373

Supply-Side and Context

(10) December 19, 2017: Programmatic Appeal and the Political Space

- Jens Rydgren (2005). “Is extreme right-wing populism contagious? Explaining the emergence of a new party family”. In: *European Journal of Political Research* 44.3, pp. 413–437
- Sarah L. de Lange (2007). “A New Winning Formula?: The Programmatic Appeal of the Radical Right”. In: *Party Politics* 13.4, pp. 411–435
- *Optional*: Elisabeth Ivarsflaten (2005). “The vulnerable populist right parties: No economic realignment fuelling their electoral success”. In: *European Journal of Political Research* 44, pp. 465–492

(11) January 09, 2018: Contextual Conditions and Competitive Configurations

- Kai Arzheimer (2009). “Contextual Factors and the Extreme Right Vote in Western Europe, 1980-2002”. In: *American Journal of Political Science* 53.2, pp. 259–275
- Wouter van der Brug, Meindert Fennema, and Jean Tillie (2005). “Why Some Anti-Immigrant Parties Fail and Others Succeed: A Two-Step Model of Aggregate Electoral Support”. In: *Comparative Political Studies* 38.5, pp. 537–573

(12) January 16, 2018: Mainstream Party Reactions

- Bonnie M. Meguid (2005). “Competition Between Unequals: The Role of Mainstream Party Strategy in Niche Party Success”. In: *American Political Science Review* 99.03, pp. 347–359
- Sergi Pardos-Prado (2015). “How can Mainstream Parties Prevent Niche Party Success? Center-Right Parties and the Immigration Issue”. In: *The Journal of Politics* 77.2, pp. 352–376

(13) January 23, 2018: Party Building and Organization

- David Art (2011). *Inside the Radical Right*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-60
- *Optional*: Sarah L. de Lange and David Art (2011). “Fortuyn versus Wilders: An agency-based approach to radical right party building”. In: *West European Politics* 34.6, pp. 1229–1249

Beyond Explaining Support

(14) January 30, 2018: Far Right Parties in Office

- Tjitske Akkerman and Sarah L. De Lange (2012). “Radical Right Parties in Office: Incumbency Records and the Electoral Cost of Governing”. In: *Government and Opposition* 47.4, pp. 574–596
- Alexandre Afonso (2014). “Choosing whom to betray: populist right-wing parties, welfare state reforms and the trade-off between office and votes”. In: *European Political Science Review* 2015, pp. 1–22
- Optional: Sarah L. de Lange (2012). “New alliances: Why mainstream parties govern with radical right-wing populist parties”. In: *Political Studies* 60.V, pp. 899–918

(15) February 06, 2018: Effects on Policies, Parties and Public Opinion

- Cas Mudde (2013). “Three decades of populist radical right parties in Western Europe: So what?” In: *European Journal of Political Research* 52, pp. 1–19
- Tarik Abou-Chadi (2014). “Niche Party Success and Mainstream Party Policy Shifts - How Green and Radical Right Parties Differ in Their Impact”. In: *British Journal of Political Science*, pp. 1–20
- Optional: Andrea Bohman (2011). “Articulated antipathies: Political influence on anti-immigrant attitudes”. In: *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 52.6, pp. 457–477
- Optional: Tim Bale et al. (2010). “If You Can’t Beat Them, Join Them? Explaining Social Democratic Responses to the Challenge from the Populist Radical Right in Western Europe”. In: *Political Studies* 58.3, pp. 410–426

(16) February 13, 2018

Wrap-Up Session. Feedback and evaluations.