



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

COMMUNITY CLASSROOM

Power to the People? Lessons from Europe's Populist Turn

October 7 – November 4, 2020

Wednesdays, 10 AM – 12 PM

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Course Description

In this Community Classroom course we will examine the rise of radical rightwing populist parties. Virtually all (West) European countries possess nowadays a rightwing populist party, defined as a political group that claims to represent the people against the elite and espouses nationalist, anti-immigration, and anti-EU rhetoric. This course will explore why rightwing populism has spread in Europe since the early 2000s. We will compare the political dynamics in three West European countries: France, Germany, and the Netherlands. Special attention will be given to the domestic electoral system and how this enables (or not) the rise of anti-establishment challenger parties. In our final meeting, we will discuss whether Covid-19 has or will arrest the growth and appeal of rightwing populism.

Students do not need any prior knowledge.

Readings

All the readings will be made electronically available to all registered participants.

Schedule

OCTOBER 7 - Week 1: The end of the postwar settlement

After 1945, West European countries built substantial welfare states and pursued solidaristic economic policies that produced overall prosperity. In the 1990s, governments abandoned that framework and embraced neo-liberal policies that resulted in the fraying of the social safety net just when many countries experienced increased economic pressures. In the early 2000s, the EU accession of former Soviet bloc countries increased the movement of workers from east to west. The combination of small and large changes since the 2000s created a window for anti-establishment parties who campaigned against the 'elite', immigrants, and the European Union.

Cas Mudde, "Europe's Populist Surge: A Long Time in the Making," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2016.

Paul Taggart, "Populism in Western Europe," *The Oxford Handbook of Populism*, edited by Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, Paul Taggart, Paulina Ochoa Espejo, and Pierre Ostiguy. Oxford: NY, 2017.

Cas Mudde, "Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe Today," edited by G. Marotta, *Transformations of Populism in Europe and the Americas : History and Recent Tendencies*. London: Bloomsbury Academic; 2016. Pp. 295-305.

OCTOBER 14 - Week 2: France: The Rise, Fall, and Revival of the National Front/Rally

Of all the West European countries, France is the only one that has had a robust rightwing party since the late 1960s. This unit examines why France's rightwing party has remained out of power in spite of its organizational resources and long history. The institutions of the Fifth Republic marginalized anti-establishment political actors (including the Community party) and helped suppress the appeal of the National Front/Rally. This situation has changed, however, as the traditional French parties have imploded and as the National Rally is now the main opposition party to the incumbent La République en Marche, the party of President Emmanuel Macron.

Nonna Mayer, "The Radical Right in France," edited by Jens Rydgren, *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*. Oxford 2017, pp. 433 - 451,

D.T., Daigle, J. Neulen, A. Hofeman, "France 2017," In: *Populism, Nativism, and Economic Uncertainty. Europe in Crisis*. Palgrave 2019, Pp. 31-45.

Yves Surel (2019) "How to stay populist? The Front National and the changing French party system," *West European Politics* (2019), 42: 1230-1257.

October 21 - Week 3: The Netherlands: The emergence of anti-immigrant movement

The Netherlands has a reputation of being a tolerant and liberal country. Yet in the early 2000s, a quixotic rightwing populist politician won a surprising share of the national vote, and since then, new nativist, anti-Islamic parties have popped up to promote an anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim message. This unit will look at the Dutch electoral system, which incentivizes fragmentation and reconsolidation of political blocs and will trace the rise of challenger parties to a political system that prioritizes consensual, technocratic policy making.

Joop J. M. van Holsteyn, "The Radical Right in Belgium and the Netherlands," *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*, edited by Jens Rydgren NY: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. 1-35.

H. Pellikaan, De Lange, S., & Van der Meer, T. "The Centre Does Not Hold: Coalition Politics and Party System Change in the Netherlands, 2002–12." *Government and Opposition* (2018), 53: 231-255

Ben Marguiles, "Why Europe Should Worry about Rising Dutch Populist Thierry Baudet," *New Statesman*. May 2019. <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/2019/05/why-europe-shouldworry-about-rising-dutch-populist-thierry>

October 28 - Week 4: Germany: the late arrival of a radical rightwing populist party

For a long time, Germany was considered "immune" to rightwing populism because of its symbolic association with Nazism. Yet with the appearance of the Alternative for Germany, the country has joined the club of liberal democracies with a nativist, anti-elitist, authoritarian political party. The support of the AfD is concentrated in the Eastern part of the country, something that has caused great concern. This week's readings look at the German electoral system and the breakthrough of a rightwing party whose success is shaking up the German mainstream political class.

Joseph Sterphone, "'Mut zu Deutschland!' On the Populist Nationalism of the Alternative für Deutschland," edited by Fernando López-Alves, and Diane E. Johnson, *Populist Nationalism in Europe and the Americas*, Routledge, 2018, pp. 99-115.

Matthew Dilling, "Two of the Same Kind?," *German Politics and Society* (2018), 36: 84-104.

Lars Rensmann, "Divided we stand: An Analysis of the Enduring Political East-West Divide in Germany Thirty Years After the Wall's Fall," *German Politics and Society* (2019), 132: 32-54.

NOVEMBER 5 - Week 5: Covid-19 and the future of Europopulism

Will the covid-19 pandemic put a brake on populism as voters/citizens gain a new appreciation for experts and expertise to guide them through the storm? This final unit will argue that some populist leaders topped the ranks of incompetence, which would make us think that they will soon be its political victims. But other populist leaders have been able to exploit the pandemic to enforce illiberal laws and strengthen their power. Thus, it may be too premature to announce the death knell of populism. Moreover, the aftereffect of the pandemic will sow plenty of social and occupational divisions and could mean a repeat of 2010, which originally fueled the anti-elitist, populist movement.

Martin McKee, et.al. "Are Populist Leaders Creating the Conditions for the Spread of COVID-19?" *International Journal of Health Policy Management*, 2020: 1-5.

Stavrakakis, Yannis, and Giorgos Katsampekis. 2020. "Populism and the Pandemic: A Collaborative Report". Loughborough University Pp. 3-10; 21-26; 34-37.

Matthew Goodwin, "Why Covid won't kill off populism," *Unherd*. July 6 2020

TBA