

GV101

Introduction to Political Science

Week 08: Political Parties

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Essential Reading Overview

- Clark, Golder and Golder introduce an array of important concepts including the party whip, nonpartisan/single-party/one-party dominant/multiparty systems, the effective number of parties*, Lipset and Rokkan's freezing hypothesis, plus *the functions of parties*, *political cleavages*, and *Duverger's work on party systems*.
- Golder uses survey data to demonstrate that higher immigration levels increase support for populist parties but that unemployment rates only increases such support when there are high levels of immigration. By contrast, he shows that immigration levels and unemployment rates have no substantive relationship with support for neofascist parties.
- Mudde provides an important definition of populism and distinguishes the New Left populism of the past (often manifested in green parties) from contemporary right-wing populism. Further, he argues that mainstream parties respond to populism by co-opting some of the rhetoric (hence 'The Populist Zeitgeist'), and that this process is cyclical so they will abandon such rhetoric when it's no longer needed. Crucially, he also argues that the democratising response to populism is flawed because it comes from mainstream parties and doesn't address what contemporary populists want.

Real-World Example



The new populism

Revealed: one in four Europeans vote populist

Exclusive research shows how populists tripled their vote over the past two decades

Paul Lewis, Seán Clarke, Caelainn Barr, Josh Holder and Niko Kommenda

Tue 20 Nov 2018

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Populist parties have more than tripled their support in Europe in the last 20 years, securing enough votes to put their leaders into government posts in 11 countries and challenging the established political order across the continent.

The steady growth in support for European populist parties, particularly on the right, is revealed in a groundbreaking analysis of their performance in national elections in 31 European countries over two decades, conducted by the Guardian in conjunction with more than 30 leading political scientists.

Appendix: Arrow's Theorem

Conditions for fair decision-making:

- Not be a dictatorship; decisions should not be made by a small sub-set of people (or just one of them), referred to as the 'nondictatorship condition.'
- Not exclude those with certain preferences, referred to as the 'universal admissibility condition.'
- Not deliver an outcome other than the one that most people prefer (i.e. it must actually deliver what has been chosen, not something else), referred to as the 'unanimity, or pareto optimality, condition.'
- Not change preferences between two items because another item is introduced (e.g. if I prefer political party x to political party y then that should be the case even if political party z arrives on the scene; I might rank z above x and y, below them, or between them, but I don't suddenly prefer y to x because z has arrived), referred to as the 'independence from irrelevant alternatives condition.'

