# Main Text: The German Far-Right Voter

**The Rise of the Far-Right**

* Far-right parties have been increasing their vote share and gaining power across Western Europe
  + New parties founded or old ones gaining in strength
  + Parties joining federal or regional governments
  + In France making it to the second stage in voting for president
  + *Visual*: Map of Western Europe with shading proportional to party vote share in last federal/national parliamentary election
    - *Optional:* slider showing vote share from 2000 to 2019
* Germany seemed resilient to this trend till the 2010s
  + Germany’s history with fascism, WWII and the holocaust led many to think it was resilient to such tendencies
  + There were populist parties, particularly in regional elections and the far-right NPD would field candidates but never got close to crossing the national threshold of 5%
  + Starting with the Euro crises in 2010 a new party was founded in April 2013, the AFD that quickly moved to the far-right
    - *Optional Visual*: Table with AFD’s electoral successes in Landtagswahlen and European Parliament elections
  + Strong anti-immigrant, anti-establishment message
    - Optional: Populist quotes by party leaders or from manifesto
  + 2017 became third largest party and largest opposition party
* The AFD’s voter has fewer years of formal education, is more likely to live in the former GDR and …
  + Analysis of 2017 national parliamentary election voters yields the following (summary of findings)
  + *Visual*: Main visual with probabilities similar to *The Economist*
* Education as the new class:
  + Education seems to be the strongest predictor both of voting for the far-right as well as the party that is increasingly positioning itself as their anti-thesis, the Greens
  + Blue-collar men whose education stopped at a pre-college level are more likely to support the nationalist populists
  + Trend seen in other countries
  + “Often described as the losers of modernization, individuals with low education are the primary target of the radical right; these individuals are possibly also the least able to cope with the multicultural and globalized world of the twenty-first century.” / globalized knowledge economy
    - Optional: Discussion of authoritarian vs libertarian values
  + Research shows education has a causal effect, how it works unclear
  + Argument on the rise of education as a new cleavage that separates people by income, values, type of jobs, whom they interact with, their social circles and where they live
  + Increasing share of voter with higher education and expansion of higher education in the West gives hope that populist anti-immigrant sentiments might recede
    - *Visual*: Share of different population groups in the electorate/among voters
    - *Optional visual*: Increase in higher education in OECD over the last 30 to 60 years

# Underreporting and data constraints

* Find significant underreporting of voting for AFD in data set
* Either the cross section is not representative or more than half of the AFD voters were too ashamed or shy to report voting for the party
* Generally lower education voters are more difficult to reach for polls – might be the same in this survey
  + *Visual*: Difference between AFD’s vote share and % of respondents reporting to have voted for them

# Data

1. Data on Voter Demographics

About: <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/about/>

All data on voter demographics and voter turnout in German elections are derived from the **Year-Year** European Social Survey (ESS), an academic semi-annual cross-national survey of over 30 countries. Interviews are conducted face-to-face and include a minimum effective sample size of 1500 for larger countries and 800 for smaller ones.

ESS data are available for download for non-commercial use upon registration here ([registration](https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/user/new)).

The code used to clean and prepare the data for the analysis can be found here:

2. Data on election results in Western Europe

Following data was used for visualizing election results in Europe:

3. Data on far-right categorization of parties

The categorization of parties as far-right was done following …. More information can be found here.

4. Data on federal and regional election results in Germany

Data on federal and regional elections in Germany can be found here:

# Contact

This website and its content were developed by Harvard Kennedy School students Lucas Kitzmüller, Siddhant Gokhale and Ahmed Ragab as part of their coursework for the class Programming and Data for Policymakers.

*Optional*: For inquiries please reach out to *our email adresses*

**Notes for self:**

Ideas for titles:

# Education as the new class

How education increasingly predicts voting for far-right parties and positions in the West

Percentage of college educated of overall electorate

Statistic on higher educational levels in Western Europe

Percentage of MPs with a university degree?

<https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/education-as-a-new-political-divide/>

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-political-science-review/article/education-and-antiimmigration-attitudes-evidence-from-compulsory-schooling-reforms-across-western-europe/15551FC325C118588CF61113697488A3>

A second line of argument highlights the emergencein advanced democracies of a new structural cleavagepitting those adversely affected by deindustrialization,automation, and globalization—both materially andsymbolically—against those benefiting from thesestructural changes (e.g., Kitschelt1997). Individualswithout qualifications fall on the losing side of thiscleavage. For such voters, the activation of physicaland cultural boundaries—signified by economic pro-tectionism and ethnocentric policies—may boost theirdisposable income (Mayda2006; Scheve and Slaughter2001), in addition to their self-worth and social status(Lamont and Molnar2002; Shayo2009). In this“edu-cation-as-cleavage”literature, education not onlymatters because of what happens while one is gettingan education but also because of everything else thathappens after exiting the educational system: the suc-cessful completion of additional degrees translates intodifferent life expectations and experiences—e.g., lowerunemployment risks, higher wages, and differentoccupational choices—that make one less likely to holdanti-immigration attitudes