Seminar in Political Behavior

W5: Party Position-Taking

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Plan for Today

1. Basic Concepts
2. Ezrow et al. 2014
3. Abou-Chadi and Krause 2020
4. Tips for Next Time

Basic Concepts

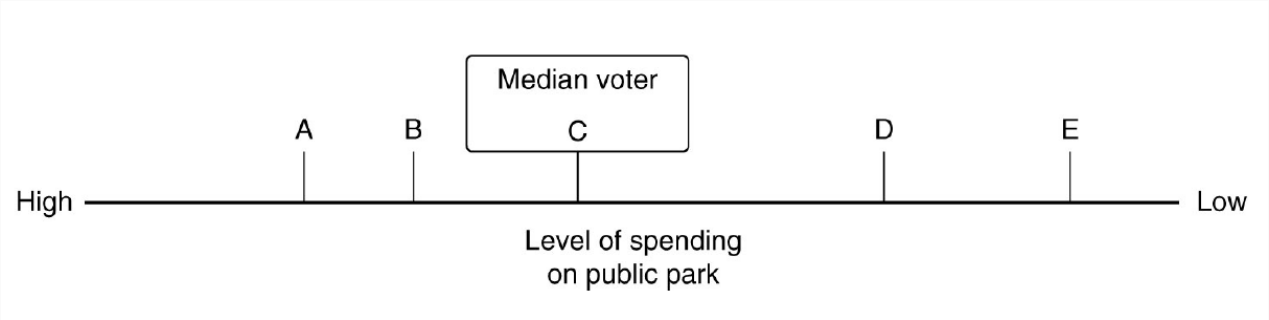
Spatial Model of Voting

- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper.
- Some assumptions
  - Unidimensional policy space. preferences can be ordered from left to right.
  - Preferences are single-peaked.

Median Voter Theorem

If preferences are single-peaked, and there are two candidates who can commit in advance to policies and care only about winning, then in equilibrium, $Position_1 = Position_2 = Position_{Median}$

Spatial Model of Voting: Example



- Issue: Level of spending on public park
- Alternatives: A, B, C, D, E
- Which one will be chosen? (under head-to-head competition)
    - C

Criticism of the Model

- Multiparty system?
- Multidimensional policy space
  - The issues evaluated by voters > 1
  - Note that some issues are more salient than others
    - In Taiwan? Sovereignty
- Valence-based voting

Niche Parties

- **Mainstream parties** basically compete on a great number of issues, and they are office-seeking.
- **Niche parties** only compete on few issues (most of time, $n = 1$), and they are more policy-seeking.
    - These niche parties can be punished if they attempt to shift toward center (median voter). (Adams et al. 2006 *AJPS*[1])
- Examples of niche parties: Green, Radical Right, Communist Parties.

[1] Adams, James, Michael Clark, Lawrence Ezrow, and Garrett Glasgow. 2006. "Are niche parties fundamentally different from mainstream parties? The causes and the electoral consequences of Western European parties' policy shifts, 1976–1998." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(3): 513-529.

How Do Mainstream Parties Respond Niche Success?

- Some niche parties won seats in parliament.
  - Because citizens think their issues are important, and these issues are not appropriately addressed by mainstream parties.
  - How did mainstream parties respond to this success?
- Meguid(2005 *APSR*[2]): 3 strategies.
  - responses are not only about **issue position**, but also about **issue salience**.

Issue salience

The importance of a particular issue.

1. Accommodative: Salience ↑, taking a closer position to the niche party.
2. Adversarial: Salience ↑, adopt the opposite position of the niche party.
3. Dismissive: Salience ↓, ignore the issue.

[2] Meguid, Bonnie M. 2005. "Competition Between Unequals: The Role of Mainstream Party Strategy in Niche Party Success." *American Political Science Review* 99(3): 347–59.

Ezrow et al. 2014

Ezrow et al. 2014

Ezrow, Lawrence, Jonathan Homola, and Margit Tavits. 2014. "When Extremism Pays: Policy Positions, Voter Certainty, and Party Support in Postcommunist Europe." *The Journal of Politics* 76(2): 535-547.

- Research question? In post-communist (new) democracies, policy moderation $\rightarrow$ electoral success(votes, seats in the parliament, etc.)?
- Conventional wisdom in political science:
  - Median voter theorem (Downs 1957): When party *i*'s position is closer to the median voter, party *i* typically gain votes.
  - Problem within median voter theorem: these literature only focuses on established democracies (Western Europe, US, etc.)
- Authors' argument: The relationship between policy moderation and votes maximization is less likely to exist in new democracies.

Ezrow et al. 2014

- Potential mechanism
  - Voter support is lower for the parties whose positions are uncertain
  - Voters are more likely to be certain about the positions of noncentrist than centrist parties because these positions send clearer and stronger signals about party stances
  - Noncentrist position taking is an especially informative signal in new democracies.
- In a nutshell,
  - No psychological cues/heuristics/shortcuts, no partisan attachment.
  - Voters have no prior belief on these political parties.
  - Taking extreme policy positions is a strong signal to voters that the party clearly understands their position and policy agenda.

Ezrow et al. 2014

- Hypotheses:
  - H1: (The Established Parties Hypothesis): In established democracies, the closer the party is to the mean voter position on the left-right scale, the higher its vote share.
  - H2: (The Postcommunist Parties Hypothesis): In post-communist democracies, the closer the party is to the mean voter position on the left-right scale, the lower its vote share.
- Data, measurement, and method
  - Data: CSES (Comparative Study of Electoral Systems)

Ezrow et al. 2014

- Measurement
  - IV: Party policy distance
    - Measurement 1: *party policy distance* $= |A_i - X_i|$, where A_i is the median voter position and X_i is the mean perceived position of party X.
    - Why absolute value?
    - Measurement 2: *relative party policy position* $= \frac{|A_j - X_{ij}|}{\sum_i |A_j - X_{ij}|/n}$
    - Why considering measurement 2? account for variation in the dispersion of parties along the left-right scale across different countries.
  - DV: Normalized vote share (NVS) = $V_{ij} \times N_j$,where V_{ij} is the absolute vote share for party i in election j, and N_j is the number of parties in election j receiving over 5% of votes.
    - Why using this "weird" measurement? Is there any problem for merely using V_{ij} as our measurement?
- Model:
  - $NVS = \beta_1 + \beta_2[(relative)\ party\ policy\ position] + \epsilon$
  - $H1 \rightarrow \beta_2 < 0$; $H2 \rightarrow \beta_2 > 0$

Ezrow et al. 2014

- Result

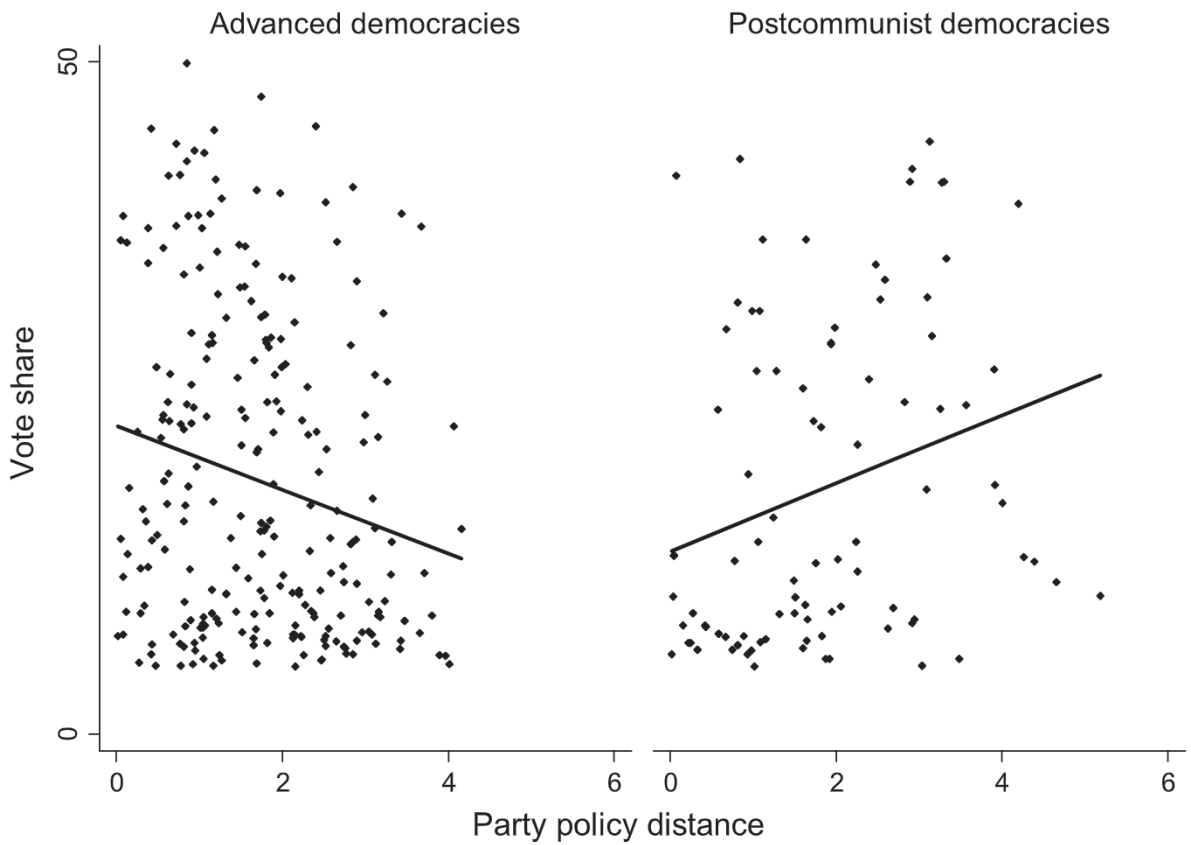
TABLE 2 The Effect of Party Policy Distance on Normalized Vote Share

	Advanced Democracies		Postcommunist Democracies	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Party policy distance	-10.12***		10.01*	
	(3.13)		(5.19)	
Relative party policy distance		-18.10***		20.17*
		(6.43)		(11.06)
Constant	106.88***	107.66***	73.59***	72.20***
	(5.41)	(6.39)	(12.57)	(12.66)
N	245	245	90	90
R^2	.04	.03	.04	.04

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on election) in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Normalized vote share*, which is calculated as the party's vote share multiplied by the number of competitive parties in the election (see Equation 1 in the text). *Relative party policy distance* is described in Equation (4) in the text. $^{*}p < .10$; $^{**}p < .05$; $^{***}p < .01$, two-tailed test.

Ezrow et al. 2014

FIGURE 1 Party Policy Distance and Vote Share



Note: The figure presents party policy distances from the mean voter position and vote shares for parties in advanced and postcommunist democracies, including line of best fit. The data are based on respondents' perceptions of parties' left-right policy positions from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES).

Ezrow et al. 2014

- Testing mechanism - Party Policy Distance and Voter Certainty
  - DV: (1)Proportion willing to place the party and (2) SD of citizen placements
  - IV: Party Policy Distance

TABLE 3 Regression Coefficients for Party Policy Distance When Estimating Voter Certainty

	Postcommunist Democracies		Advanced Democracies	
	Proportion Willing to Place Party (1)	Standard Deviation of Placements (2)	Proportion Willing to Place Party (3)	Standard Deviation of Placements (4)
Party policy distance	4.62***	-.11**	1.27*	-.03
	(1.18)	(.05)	(.71)	(.04)
Constant	67.16***	2.54***	82.50***	2.08***
	(3.33)	(.11)	(1.46)	(.09)
N	90	90	245	245
R^2	.17	.08	.02	.00

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on party) in parentheses. Dependent variables are noted in column headings.
*$p < .10$; **$p < .05$; ***$p < .01$, two-tailed test.

Ezrow et al. 2014

- Testing mechanism - Voter Certainty and Vote Share
  - Argument: Uncertainty repels voters.
  - DV: NVS
  - IV: (1)Proportion willing to place the party and (2) SD of citizen placements

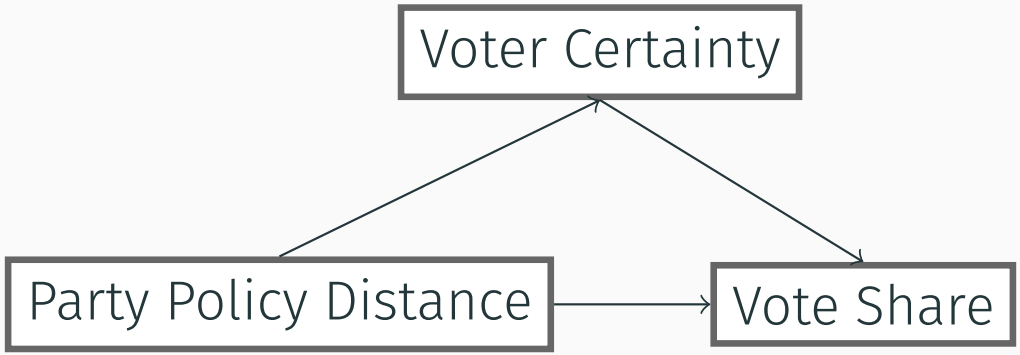
TABLE 4 The Effect of Voter Certainty on Normalized Vote Share, All Countries

	(1) Proportion Willing to Place Party	(2) Standard Deviation of Placements
Proportion willing to place party	.56**	
	(.25)	
Standard deviation of placements		-2.38
		(5.10)
Constant	44.17**	95.34***
	(22.13)	(9.66)
N	335	335
R^2	.014	.001

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on election) in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Normalized vote share*, which is calculated as the party's vote share multiplied by the number of competitive parties in the election (see Equation 1 in the text).
*$p < .10$; **$p < .05$; ***$p < .01$, two-tailed test.

Ezrow et al. 2014

- In a nutshell,



- Discussion
  - If you have totally no idea on all parties, what will be the determinants when you cast your ballot?
  - In the long run, (when voters have a clearer idea of these parties), would these parties choose to moderate their ideological position?

Abou-Chadi and Krause 2020

The Rise of Radical Right in Europe

The Rise of Radical Right in Europe

Abou-Chadi and Krause 2020

Abou-Chadi, Tarik, and Werner Krause. 2020. "The causal effect of radical right success on mainstream parties' policy positions: A regression discontinuity approach." *British Journal of Political Science* 50: 829-847.

- Research question? The success of RRPs $\rightarrow$ mainstream party policy shift
- Some research had already addressed this issue. Why we still need this article? (or, why would this article get published?)
  - Maybe it is not

    "the success of RRPs $\rightarrow$ mainstream party policy shift."

    There could also be possibility for

    "change in public opinion $\rightarrow$ mainstream party policy shift."
  - Thinking counterfactually. In absence of a successful RRP, would we not have seen a shift in policy position?
- What's the intuition behind mainstream accommodation? To steal niche parties' issue ownership.

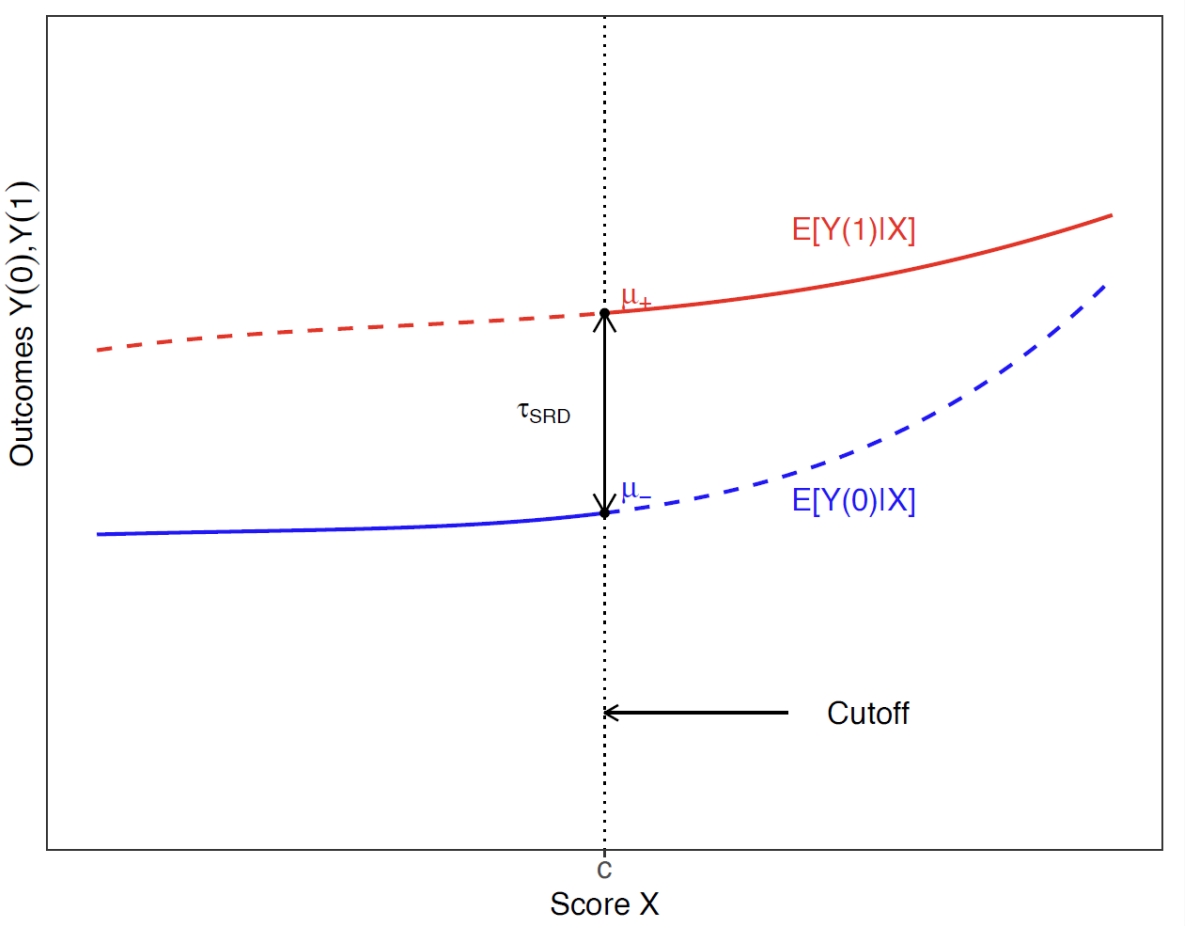
What Is Regression Discontinuity?

- Three variables: X, D, Y.
  - D is the treatment (Whether a RRP entered the parliament or not) decided based on X.
  - Y is the outcome. (Mainstream accommodation)
  - X is a running variable. (RRPs' vote share)
- How to determine the treatment status?
  - Using a cutoff, c
  - When X_i is greater than or equal to the cutoff, then we assign its treatment status as "treated"; whereas X_i is smaller than the cutoff, we assign its treatment status as "untreated"
  -

$$D_i = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } X_i \geq c \\ 0 & \text{if } X_i < c \end{cases} \tag{1}$$

What is Regression Discontinuity?

- If there is a causality between *D* and *Y*, we should expect a ”jump” around the cutoff



What is Regression Discontinuity?

- More formally,
  - Treatment effect $\delta = \lim_{X \to c^+} \mathbb{E}[Y_i|X_i = c] - \lim_{X \to c^-} \mathbb{E}[Y_i|X_i = c]$
    - We also call this **"Local Average Treatment Effect (LATE)"**
  - When estimating this treatment effect, most of people will do this:
    - $Y_i = \alpha + \beta(X_i - c) + \delta D_i + \epsilon_i$
  - This is what we called **sharp RD design**. There are still some issues about RD (fuzzy RD, order of polynomial, the use of nonparametric kernel, etc.), but we have no time to introduce them.
- Back to Abou-Chadi and Krause (2020).

Abou-Chadi and Krause 2020

- We have introduced the method. How about the data and measurement?
  - Running variable *X*: RRPs' vote share.
  - Outcome *Y*: Mainstream parties' policy shift on multicultural issues.
    - Data from CMP/MARPOR project (now it is called Manifesto project).
  - Treatment: Whether a RRP entered the parliament or not.
    - This one is tricky. Some countries do not use PR with legal threshold (use of SMDP/FPTP or Mixed system). How do the authors overcame this issue?
    - Using an **"effective threshold"** suggested by Taagepera (2002). (We won't go further into this issue).

Abou-Chadi and Krause 2020

- Result:

TABLE 2 *Mainstream Party Position Change on Cultural Protectionism*

LATE	St. Err.	Bandwidth	Polynomial	Approach	$N < c$	$N \geq c$
3.072***	0.643	3.315	1	Non-Parametric	214	32
4.388***	1.184	3.315	2	Non-Parametric	214	32
3.777***	0.820	global	3	Parametric	272	119
4.853***	1.003	global	4	Parametric	272	119

Note: Country-fixed effects and two-way clustered standard errors used. Bandwidth estimation according to Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2009). *$p < .1$, **$p < .05$, ***$p < .01$.

Abou-Chadi and Krause 2020

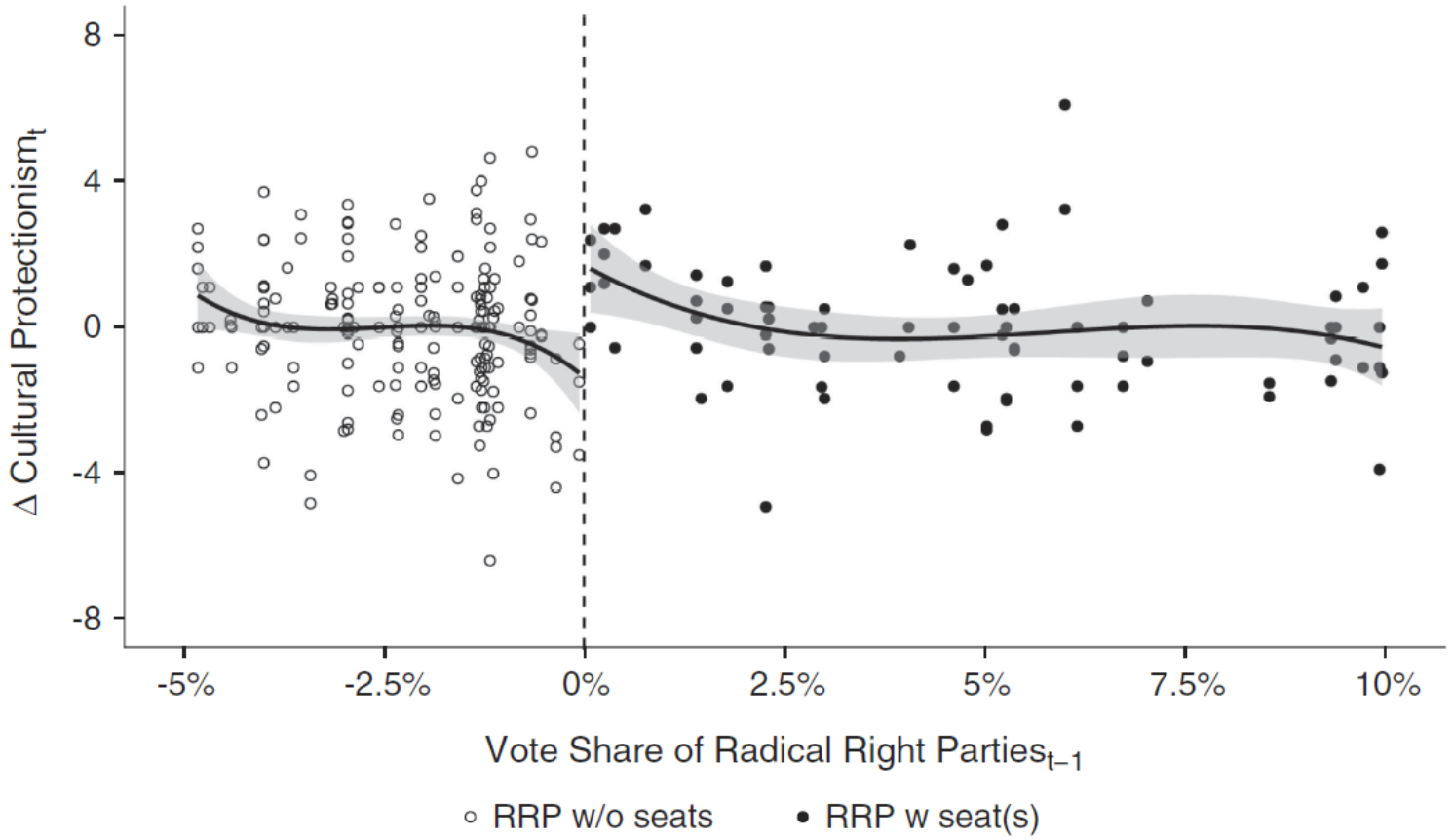


Fig. 1. Mainstream party position change on cultural protectionism
Note: The solid lines plot the cubic fit and the shaded areas denote the 95 per cent confidence bands.

Abou-Chadi and Krause 2020

- Conclusion
  - Success of RRPs[3] $\rightarrow$ Mainstream accommodation ✓
    - We can be confident that success of RRPs does have effects on mainstream parties' strategies.
    - This is not a spurious correlation.
  - Implication: RRPs did play a key role in the politicization of the immigration/multicultural issue.
- Discussion
  - Being extreme is a good strategy for new parties? Why?
  - Do you think accommodation is a good strategy for mainstream parties to gain more votes?
  - If you are a leader of a successful RRP, what would you do if the mainstream parties in the country choose an accommodative strategy?

[3] In election $t - 1$

Tips for Next Time

Tips for Next Time

- Next time will be W9(10/29)
- Two articles:
  - Pereira, Miguel M. 2021. "Understanding and Reducing Biases in Elite Beliefs About the Electorate." *American Political Science Review* 115(4): 1308–24.
  - Pereira, Miguel M., and Patrik Öhberg. 2024. "The Expertise Paradox: How Policy Expertise Can Hinder Responsiveness." *British Journal of Political Science* 54(2): 474–91.
- Both of them use **experimental method**.
  - Less technical stuff :)
  - Focus on the difference (or more formally, ATE) between treatment and control groups.

Thanks for Today