

# Class 1: The Far Right in Europe and Beyond

Introduction to Course

Dr. Michael C. Zeller

# Agenda for the day

- Course Introduction
- Course assessments
- Course practicalities
- Onto our topic: concept formation and conceptualising the far right

# Course Introduction

- What is 'far right'?
- Course structure
- Learning aims
- What the course is not...

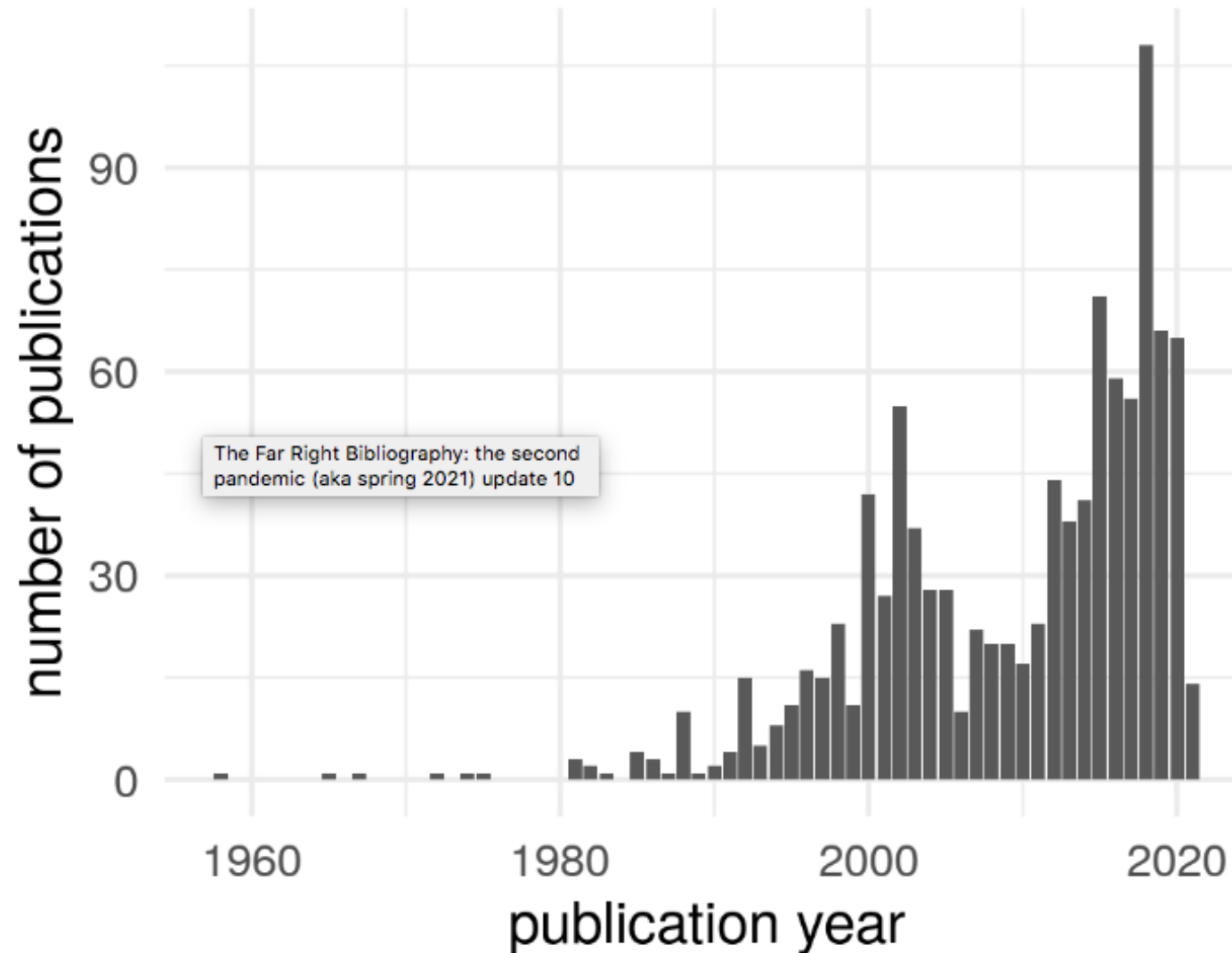
# Read the syllabus!

- We have a shiny new (developing) website for the course
  - <https://michaelzeller.de/course-fr/>
- Before our next meeting, your task is to peruse the website
  - especially the **Syllabus**, **Schedule**, and **Report example** pages.

# Defining 'far right'

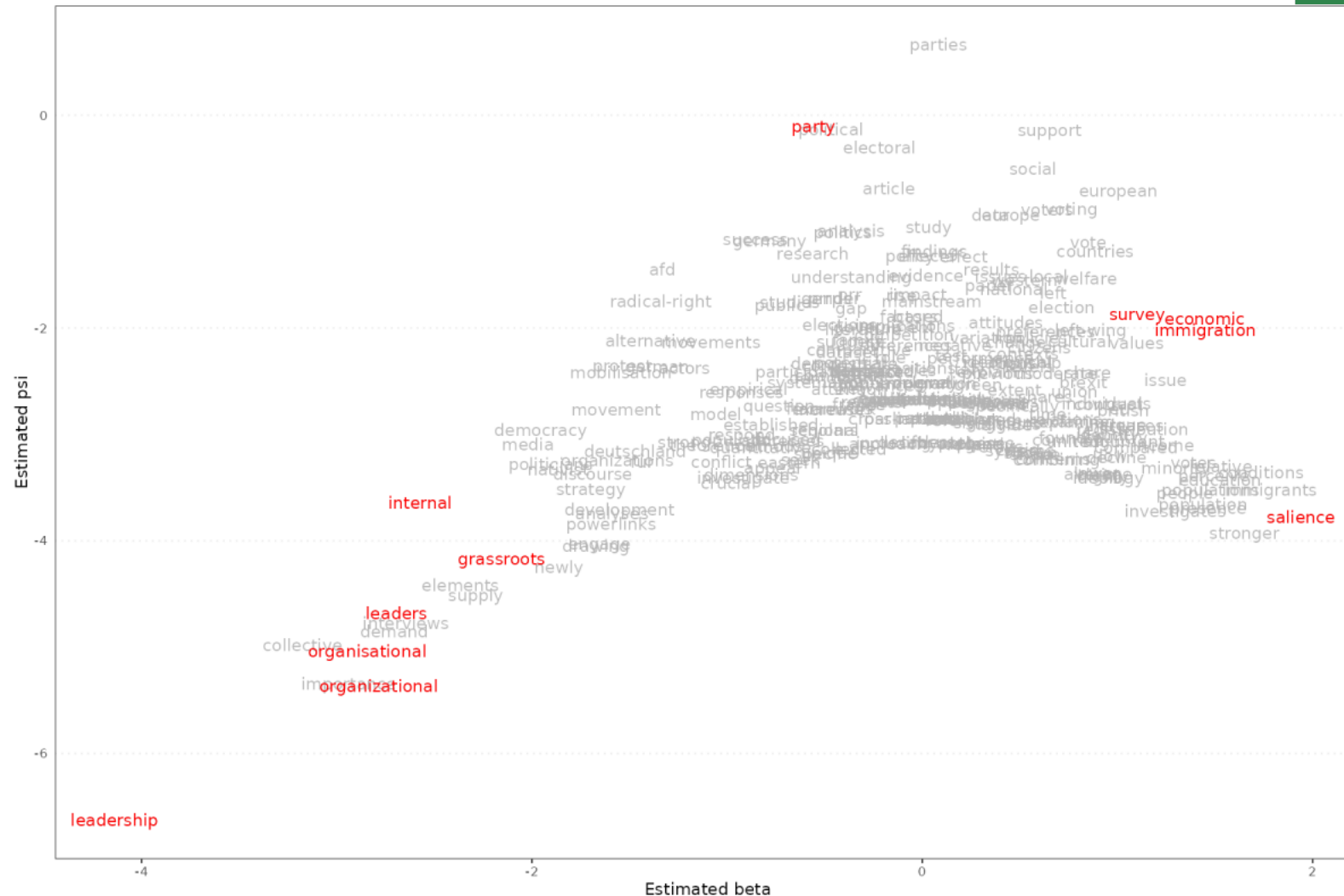
- Broadly: a **noun** or **adjective** referring to phenomena that reject (at least elements of) *liberalism* and/or *democracy*, and is characterised by **nationalism**, **exclusionism**, **xenophobia**, **strong state**, **welfare chauvinism**, **traditional ethics**, **authoritarianism**, and/or **populism**
- **Radical** right (populist and non-populist cases): opposition to fundamental values of liberal democracy (radical) and belief in a natural order with inequalities (right)
- **Extreme** right: rejection of democracy (Ignazi's 'antisystem'—but that depends on the system)
- **far right** encompasses both these terms

# Publications on radical right (from Arzheimer)



From Arzheimer's bibliography: <https://www.kai-arzheimer.com/tag/bibliography/>

# Idea of the research field (Arzheimer, 2022)



Wordfish from Arzheimer's bibliography: Y-axis - how likely the appearance of a word is in research on far right; x-axis - strength of association of a word with underlying dimension

# Structure of the course

- PART I - What is 'far right'?
  - Concepts
  - Far-right ideology: from transnational traits to local idiosyncrasies
- PART II - Far-right parties
  - Radical and extreme
  - Representatives
  - Voters
  - Responses and counter-strategies
- PART III - Far-right movements
  - Movement-parties
  - Mobilisation and movements
  - Counter-mobilisation
  - Demobilisation
- PART IV - Individuals in far right
  - Radicalisation
  - Violence
  - Online
- PART V - Studying the far right
  - Methods, ethics, and safety



# Holidays

Several holidays overlap with our class meetings:

- 1 May (Class 2)
- 29 May (Class 6)
- 19 June (Class 9)

**FOR NOW, no make-up classes are planned...**

- requires attentive reading and preparation so we can cover the material in the surrounding classes
- possibly adding short recorded lectures...

- knowledge about past and contemporary far-right political and social activity
- familiarity with breadth of research literature covering the far right
- Capacity to...
  - assess developments in far-right socio-politics, especially by identifying underlying factors and comparing across contexts
  - critically evaluate research on the far right, especially by evaluating the data and methods used
  - gather, assess, and present data about far-right socio-politics

# What the course is not...

- not for activism against the far right
  - it's a seminar, like many others, with real-world implications
- not for airing grievances about far right and caricaturing far-right supporters
  - good research on the far right takes seriously its ideology, organisations, and supporters—and tries to divorce analysis from normative commitments

# Connection to Vorlesung

This seminar is connected to **Prof. Dr. Berthold Rittberger's** lecture  
(*Vorlesungsübung: The Political System of the European Union*)

- is everyone enrolled in that?
- we will tie in Prof. Rittberger's content through class discussions

# Course assessments

- Participation
- Presentation
- Essay (Data report)

	BA main	BA minor (60)	BA minor (30)	Pedagogy	Exchange
Participation	X	X	X	X	X
Presentation	X	X	X (or Exercise)	X (or Exercise)	X
Essay	X	X			X
Exercise			X (or Presentation)	X (or Presentation)	
Klausur				X	

- do the readings and discuss in class
- make note of any questions or comments you have as you go through the readings
- most of the readings are research journal articles
  - more in-depth than book chapters—requires greater concentration
  - consider complementing with a general reader (examples listed at of [Syllabus](#))

# Presentation (*Referat*)

- short (max. 20 mins.) group presentation on a method
- groups, topics, and preferred date due to me by **Week 4 (15 May)**
  - but there are advantages to booking early...



# Essay (*Hausarbeit*): Data report

- data report on a far-right phenomenon (e.g., voters, a party, protests, violence)
- gather and present data, generate analytical insights
- 2500-3500 words (excluding citations)
- **28 June**: short synopsis due. **16 August**: full, final report due.
- consider working with data visualisation and analysis software!

# Course assessment summary

Overview

Participation

Presentation

Data report

	BA main	BA minor (60)	BA minor (30)	Pedagogy	Exchange
Participation	X	X	X	X	X
Presentation	X	X	X (or Exercise)	X (or Exercise)	X
Essay	X	X			X
Exercise			X (or Presentation)	X (or Presentation)	
Klausur				X	

# For the essay and writing in general...

## Crafting Papers for Publication

757

Table III. A semiotic checklist

- 
- 
1. This is what I am focusing on
  2. This is why it is relevant
  3. This is what is known/not known (and why it needs attention)
  4. This is my burning question
  5. This is how I aim to address the question (theoretically/empirically)
  6. This is what I did
  7. This is what I found
  8. This is what it means
  9. This is what I add
  10. This is why you should care
- 
- 

Patriotta, G. (2017). Crafting papers for publication: Novelty and convention in academic writing. *Journal of Management Studies*, 54(5), 747-759.

# Course practicalities

- Typical class meeting
- Office hours and communication
- e-learning site
- resources
- about me
- Q & A
- student introductions

# Typical class meeting

- Opening question(s)/discussion point(s)
  - e.g., theoretical dilemma, typology forming, item from the news
- Summarising lecture on theory/findings related to week's topic
  - discussion points
- Discussing the reading(s)
  - highlighting important points (esp. theory and research design)
    - *students who read will find discussion more illuminating*
- Presentation of further research relevant to week's topic
- Summative discussion: takeaways, new ideas, lingering questions

Throughout, we will use *cases* to link *theory* to *real-world events*

# Office hours and communication

- best to send an email
  - [michael.zeller@gsi.uni-muenchen.de](mailto:michael.zeller@gsi.uni-muenchen.de)
  - [m.zeller@lmu.de](mailto:m.zeller@lmu.de)
- 11.00 - 12.00 on Wednesdays at GSI (Oettingenstr. 67) - Room H105
- or by appointment

- Self-enrol: 15030 The Far Right in Europe and Beyond
  - access key: “FR2024”
- All course readings are available
- The **syllabus** is there – the mystical, magical source of all knowledge about the course

# Resources

Kai Arzheimer's website: <https://www.kai-arzheimer.com/> and  
Twitter: @kai\_arzheimer

- Extreme Right Bibliography: <https://www.kai-arzheimer.com/extreme-right-western-europe-bibliography/>

Cas Mudde's podcast, *Radikaal*: <https://www.radikaalpodcast.com/>  
and his Twitter: @CasMudde

C-REX: <https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/>

- *Knowing what's (far) right: A compendium*:  
<https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/groups/compendium/c-rex-compendium-print-version.pdf>



# Resources

ECPR Extremism & Democracy website:

<https://standinggroups.ecpr.eu/extremismanddemocracy/>

- *e-Extreme* newsletter:  
<https://standinggroups.ecpr.eu/extremismanddemocracy/newsletter/>
- Routledge book series: *Extremism and Democracy* and *Fascism and the Far Right*

Anti-Defamation League: <https://www.adl.org/>

and much, much more

- tell me if you have problems understanding me
  - there's an accent at work that I tragically cannot shake off
- Ph.D. in political science from Central European University (CEU)
  - specialisation in qualitative methods (incl. QCA, [Bayesian] process tracing), but also quant. text analysis, network analysis
- researcher in funded projects on ...
  - violent/banned far-right groups and online content moderation
  - radicalisation, violent extremism, polarisation, and resilience
- current work: militant democracy; far-right activist networks; political violence (in 1970s Northern Ireland; in contemporary Italy); paths to female leadership in Asia; protest and polarisation

# About the course

- Q & A

# About you! Student introductions

- Information about you, possibly including...
  - Expectations for this course
  - favourite joke
  - Study programme
  - favourite song
  - Country (place) of origin
  - top source for news
  - Background in education/research
  - secret skill
  - Academic/professional aspirations

# Onto our topic: concept formation and conceptualising the far right

- fundamentals of social science concepts
- Mudde's approach for the far right

- **concepts** are the building blocks of social science research
  - a term denoting an abstract idea

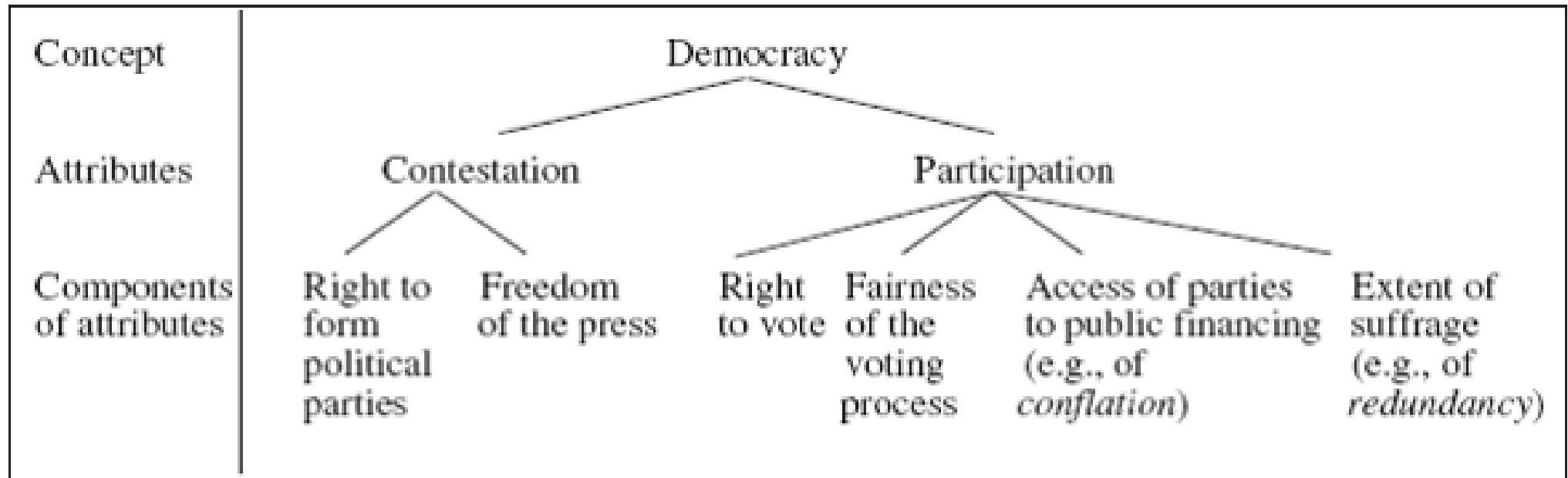
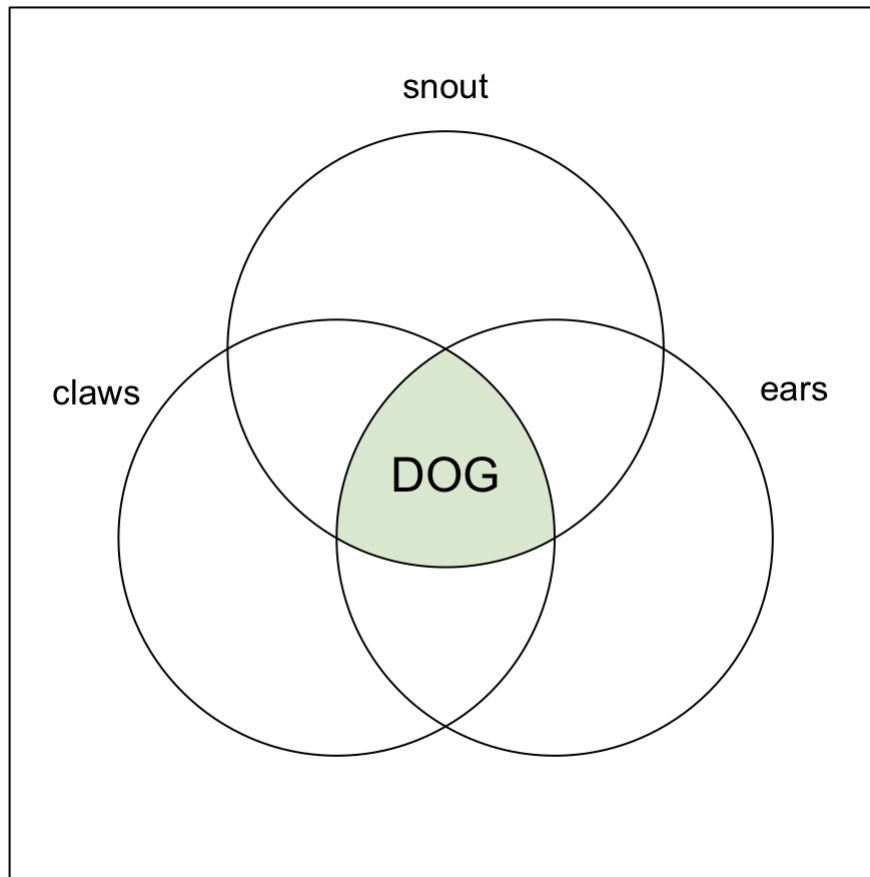


Figure 1. The logical structure of concepts.

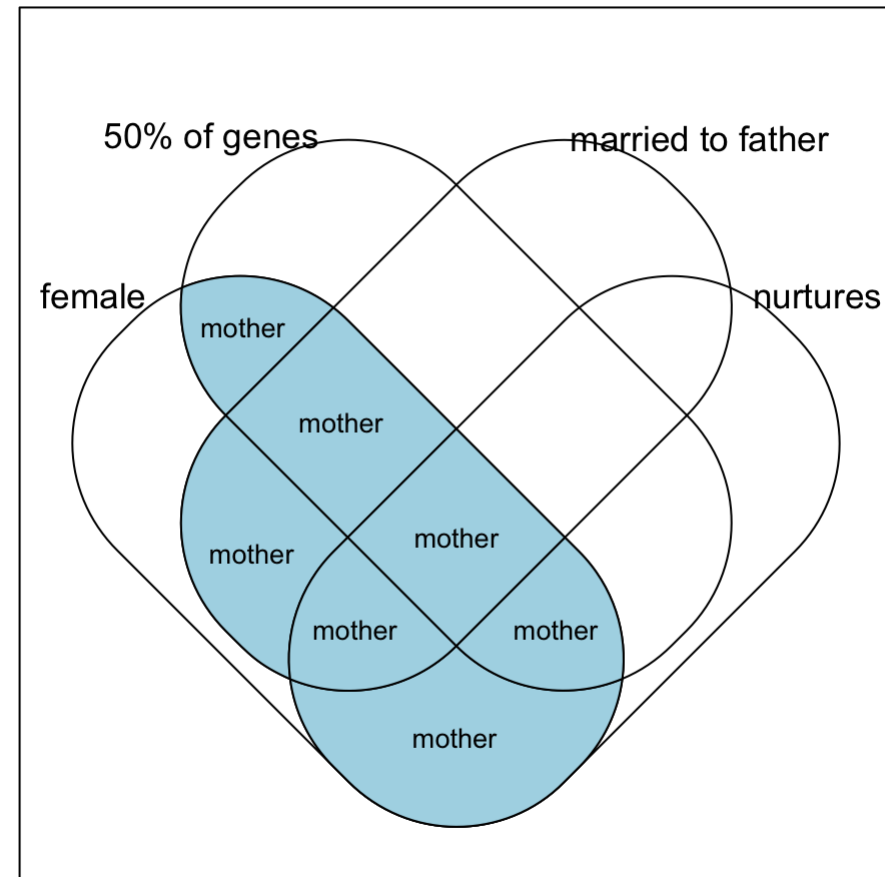
- identifying bounds of concepts
  - See Sartori (1970)
- broadly, three types of concepts in social science
  1. **classical**: **all** criteria are shared by **all** cases
  2. **radial**: **some** criteria are shared by **all** cases; others are not
  3. **family resemblance**: **No** criterion is shared by **all** cases

# Visualising classical/radial concepts

Classical concept (all criteria)



Radial concept (all share 'female')



and family resemblance: no characteristics shared by all (e.g., games)



# Classical vs. radial (Collier and Mahon 1993)

FIGURE 4

## Differentiation of Classical and Radial Categories

Classical Category: Dog		
	Category	Components
Primary Category	Dog	A B C
Secondary Categories	Retriever	A B C D
	Sheepdog	A B C E
	Spaniel	A B C F

Note: Differentiating characteristics of secondary categories are *in addition to* those of the primary category.

A, B, and C = Hypothetical set of general attributes of dogs

D, E, and F = Hypothetical attributes that differentiate specific types of dogs

Radial Category: Mother		
	Category	Components
Primary Category	Mother	A B C D E
Secondary Categories	Genetic mother	A B
	Birth mother	A C
	Nurturing mother	A D
	Stepmother	A E

Note: Differentiating characteristics of secondary categories are *contained within* the primary category.

A = Female

B = Provides 50% of genetic makeup

C = Gives birth to child

D = Provides nurturance

E = Married to father

# Options (according to Mudde)

1. family resemblance
2. Weber's ideal type
3. *Primus inter pares* ('first among equals'): one example that sets the model for all others
4. lowest common denominator: group on the basis of the (few) features that all individual members have in common. This would lead to a so-called "minimum definition" (cf. Eatwell 1996)
5. greatest common denominator: a "maximum definition," maximise possible number of similarities within (part of) the family

# Ideological components

- nationalism
- exclusionism
- xenophobia
- strong state
- welfare chauvinism
- traditional ethics



- **nativism**
- **authoritarianism**
- **populism**

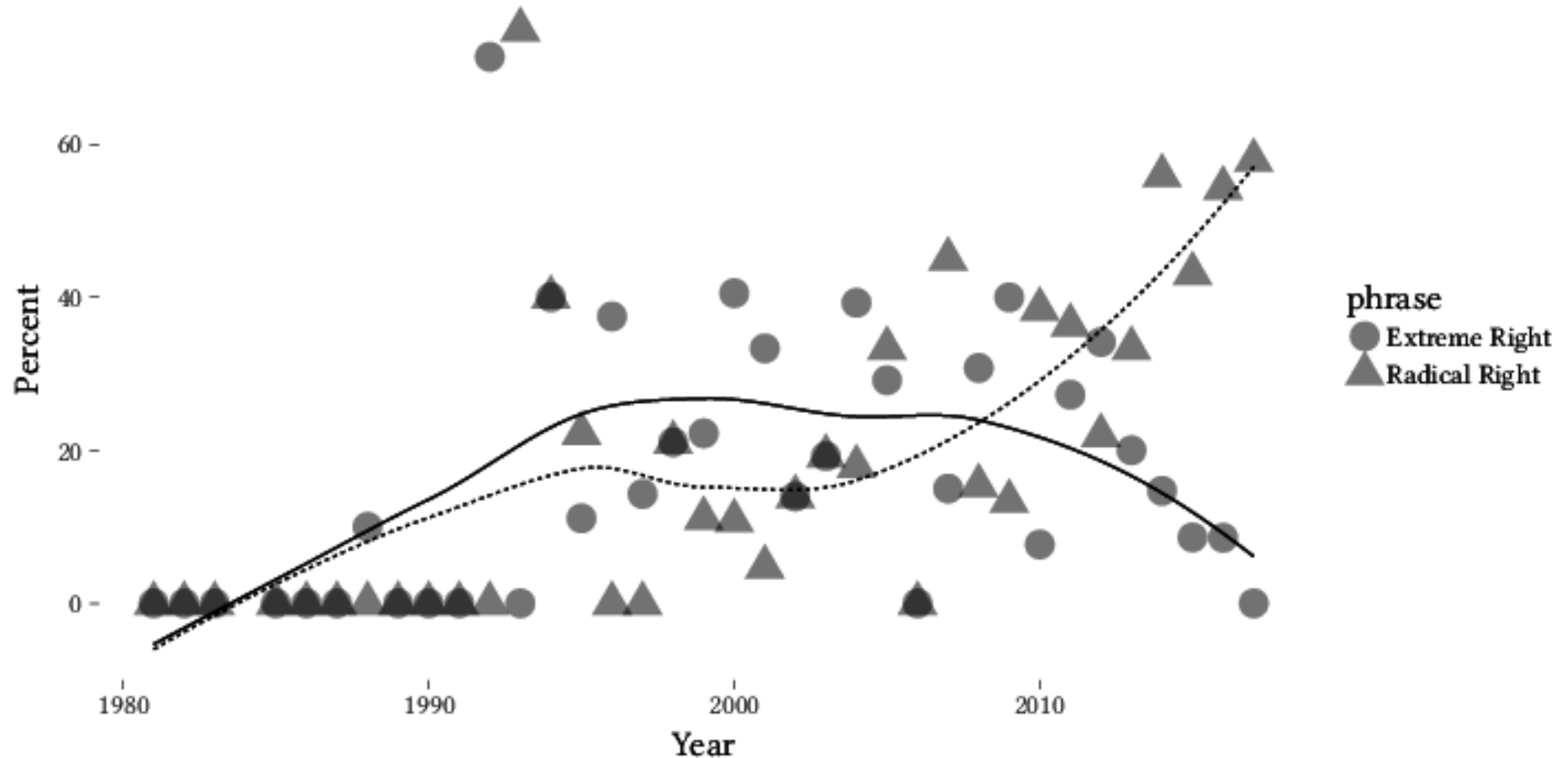
Again...

**Radical** right (populist and non-populist cases): opposition to fundamental values of liberal democracy (radical) and belief in a natural order with inequalities (right)

**Extreme** right: rejection of democracy (Ignazi's 'antisystem'—but that depends on the system)

**far right** encompasses both these terms

# Radical and extreme



From: Arzheimer, Kai. "Conceptual Confusion is not Always a Bad Thing: The Curious Case of European Radical Right Studies." Demokratie und Entscheidung. Eds. Marker, Karl, Michael Roseneck, Annette Schmitt, and Jürgen Sirsch. Wiesbaden: Springer, 2018. 23-40.

# Examples?

What cases are you familiar with?

How should we categorise them and why?

# Examples - talking through (party) cases

Radical	Extreme
AfD	Der Flügel?
FPÖ	NPD
UKIP?	British National Party
RN/Front National	Britain First
PiS/United Right	Casa Pound
Fidesz	Mi Hazánk Mozgalom
Fdl, Lega, Forza Italia?	Golden Dawn
Partij voor de Vrijheid	

even trickier with movements?

# Points to be aware of?

- concept formation
- measurement
- methods
- descriptive vs. causal inference
- generalisation



# References

- Collier, David, and James E. Mahon. 1993. "Conceptual 'Stretching' Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis." *American Political Science Review* 87 (4): 845–55.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2938818>.
- Sartori, Giovanni. 1970. "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics." *The American Political Science Review* 64 (4): 1033–53.