



Karlstad Applied Analysis Seminar (2021)

Eckehard Olbrich,
Max Plank Institute for Mathematical Science, Germany.

October 20, Wednesday, 10:30


~~Public - isop~~

~~Public - Gen~~

~~is~~

Ab

In this talk I will explore the notion of a reconfiguration of political space in the context of the rise of populism and its effects on the political system. I will focus on Germany and the appearance of the new right wing party "Alternative for Germany" (AfD). The idea of a political space is closely connected to the ubiquitous use of spatial metaphors in political talk. The idea of a political space is closely connected to the ubiquitous use of spatial metaphors in political talk. In particular the idea of a "distance" between "political positions" would suggest that political actors are situated in a metric space. Using the electoral manifestos from the Manifesto project database we investigate to which extent the spatial metaphors so common in political talk can be brought to mathematical rigor. Many scholars of politics discuss the rise of the new populism in Western Europe and the US with respect to a new political cleavage related to globalization, which is assumed to mainly affect the cultural dimension of the political space. As such, it might replace the older economic cleavage based on class divisions in defining the dominant dimension of political conflict. An explanation along these lines suggests a reconfiguration of the political space in the sense that (1) the main cleavage within the political space changes its direction from the economic axis towards the cultural axis, but (2) also the semantics



the cultural axis itself is changing towards globalization related topics. In this paper, we empirically address this reconstruction of the political space by comparing political spaces for Germany built using topic modeling