

Election results of right-wing extremist parties - a regional science analysis

The project

The election results of the right-wing extremist parties DVU and NPD at the local elections for the county council of Brandenburg in 2008 shall be examined from a regional science perspective.

The focal point will be a multi-level analysis of local and regional patterns as well as possible causes for right-wing extremist voting behavior. In this process, election data are going to be linked to quantitative methods with different aspects - such as location (town or countryside), urbanistic structure and selected social data - on the one hand. On the other hand qualitative surveys will be carried out in order to gain statements about connections between election results and for example local social engagement or local activities of right-wing extremist groups.

Spatial view at a social phenomenon

Right-wing extremist voting behavior is a social phenomenon which is considered on a spatial level in societal practice. This carries the risk of a spatialization of this social phenomenon with the consequence that regional factors are seen as main causes and preconditions for right-wing extremism. Such spatializations produce and consolidate asymmetry: Firstly by accentuating isolated circumstances and combining them selectively with locations. Secondly by shifting the cleavage which normally runs between right-wing extremist and democratic attitude to a level of a city and countryside conflict ("Right-wing extremism is a rural area problem"). As a result, homogenization and stigmatization of territories and their population is encouraged (e.g. "right-wing extremist Eastern Germany", "No-Go-Areas").

In line with modern social geography, the regional science analysis shall not examine how spatial conditions "create" right-wing extremism and how spatial patterns are motivated by it. It shall primarily extract how space-orientated communication contents are constructed and established around the right-wing extremist phenomenon and how their integration into discourses and correlated actions is effected.

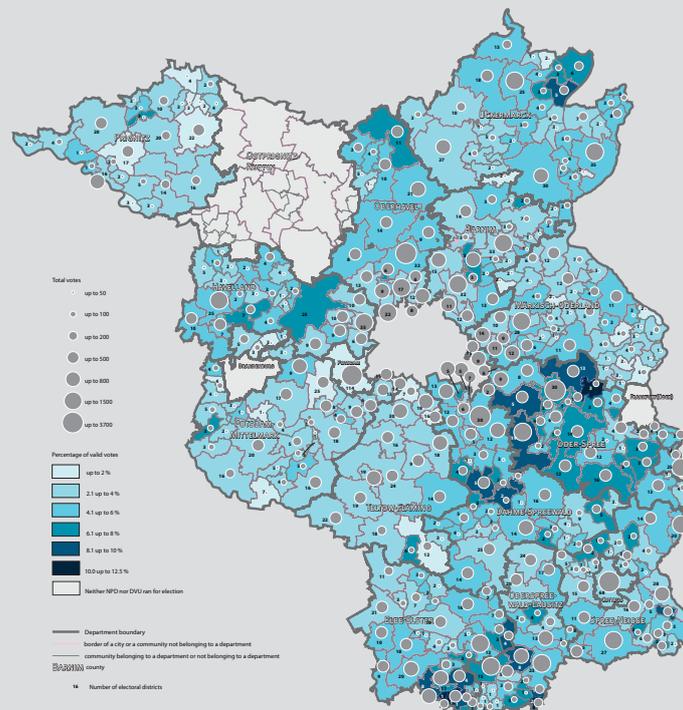
Research questions

Against this background the following research questions are investigated in this project

- Do parallelisms exist between social, economical or infrastructural phenomena and local right-wing extremist voting behavior?*
- Is it possible to derive adjuvant advice out of the results in order to optimize the (regionalized) actions against right-wing extremism?*
- What part does the spatial view play in conjunction with right-wing extremist parties and their political and social activities?*

Co-Operation partner:

This project will arise in collaboration with the coordination partner "Tolerantes Brandenburg" and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Spatial Planning, the Ministry for Agriculture, Environmental Protection and Spatial Planning, and the Ministry of the Interior of the federal state of Brandenburg.



Map: Election results of right-wing extremist parties DVU and NPD/county council 2008; U. Dolezal, 2009