



universität
wien

Far-right party electoral performance and perceived disinformation threats in European Parliament elections

Katjana Gattermann^a, Elske van den Hoogen^a, and Claes de Vreese^a

* Corresponding Author (k.gattermann@uva.nl)

^a Amsterdam School of Communication Research (ASCoR), University of Amsterdam

Katjana Gattermann, Associate Professor

Monday, **Nov 18th, 2024**, 11:30 a.m.

Hörsaal 10, Rathausstraße 19, 1010 Vienna

Abstract:

European policymakers repeatedly warned that non-European actors would spread disinformation in the 2024 European Parliament elections. However, within the European Union disinformation was also likely spread by supporters and politicians of populist and far-right parties, which had been expected to significantly increase their vote shares in the elections. These developments probably provided for a disorderly and unreliable information context at the time of the 2024 EP elections, which poses a threat to European democracy. This paper therefore asks: To what extent and how does far-right party election performance impact disinformation concerns of European voters? We posit that the election context moderates the extent to which (partisan) motivated reasoning explains variation in voters' disinformation concerns: while voters of winning parties and of GAL parties, respectively, are likely less concerned about disinformation, higher vote shares for far-right parties in a given election context are likely associated with more concerns and also amplify the concerns of election winners and GAL party supporters, respectively. To test our hypotheses we rely on the voter survey of the 2024 European Election Study (EES) that has been conducted in all 27 member states right after Election Day. If hypotheses are confirmed, this would mean that the (heightened) presence of far-right parties makes voters feel insecure about the information environment in elections. As such, our findings will have important implications for European electoral democracy.

Katjana Gattermann is an Associate Professor at the Amsterdam School of Communication Research. Her research interests comprise media-politics relations, political communication, political behaviour, public opinion, journalism, and legislative behaviour with a regional focus on Europe and the European Union.
