

Zeynep Somer-Topcu

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Professor Department of Government, The University of Texas, Austin, 2025-present
Faculty Affiliate, Center for European Studies
Faculty Affiliate, Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies

Associate Professor Department of Government, The University of Texas, Austin, 2018-2025

Assistant Professor Department of Government, The University of Texas, Austin, 2015-2018
Department of Political Science, Vanderbilt University, 2009-2015

Education

Ph.D. Department of Political Science, University of California, Davis, June 2009.

M.A. Department of Political Science, Texas A&M University, August 2005.

B.A. Department of Political Science and International Relations, Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey, June 2003.

Highlighted Honors and Awards

- The Lijphart/Przeworski/Verba Best Dataset Prize of the APSA Comparative Section for the Comparative Campaign Dynamics Dataset, 2024.
- Comparative Political Studies (CPS) Journal Extraordinary Reviewer Award, 2021, 2016.
- 2013 Emerging Scholar Award given by the American Political Science Association (APSA) section on Political Organizations and Parties.
- 2013 Jack Walker Outstanding Article Award for “Government versus Opposition at the Polls: How Governing Status Changes the Impact of Policy Positions” (coauthored with Kathleen Bawn) given by the APSA section on Political Organizations and Parties.
- 2012-2013 Max Weber Fellowship, European University Institute, Florence, Italy (declined).
- 2012 American Journal of Political Science Best Article Award for “Is Anybody Listening? Evidence that Voters do not Respond to European Parties’ Policy Programmes” (coauthored with James Adams and Lawrence Ezrow), given by MPSA to the best paper published in the *American Journal of Political Science* in the previous year.
- 2008 Leon Weaver Best Paper Award for “Moderate Now, Win Votes Later” (with James Adams), given by the Representation and Electoral Systems Section of APSA to the best paper presented in the section at the 2007 Meeting.

Grants

- Dassonneville, Ruth, Patrick Fournier and Zeynep Somer-Topcu. “Party Attachments: What Leads to Dealignment, Realignment and Polarization?” Canada Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Insight Program Grant (CRSH Savoir). 2020–2025. Total Funding Awarded: CAN\$ 228,355.
- Cozza, Joseph and Zeynep Somer-Topcu. “The Party Divides? The Political Impact of Party Leadership Contestation.” Edward A. Clark Center for Australian and New Zealand Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. 2019. Total Funding Awarded: \$7,000.
- Debus, Marc, Zeynep Somer-Topcu, and Margit Tavits. “Where is my party? Party position-taking between elections and its consequences for party performance.” German National Science Foundation. 2019-2021. Total Funding Awarded: Euros 467,010.
- Somer-Topcu, Zeynep and Jeffrey Treem. “Twitter Politics: The Use and Consequences of Social Media Messages by Candidates in British Parliamentary Elections.” Associate Professor Experimental Grant by the University of Texas at Austin. Nov 2018-Nov 2019. Total Funding Awarded: \$100,000
- Debus, Marc, Zeynep Somer-Topcu, and Margit Tavits. “Where Is My Party? Voter Agreement about Party Ideological Position.” German National Science Foundation. 2014-2017. Total Funding Awarded: Euros 319,240.
- Somer-Topcu, Zeynep and Margit Tavits. “Where is My Party?” Discovery Research Grant, Vanderbilt University. 2014-2015. Total Funding Awarded: \$50,000.

Published Research: (* Graduate Student, # Undergraduate Student)

Books:

- (1) Aldrich, Andrea and **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. 2025. *Glass Ceilings, Glass Cliffs, and Quicksands: Gendered Party Leadership in Parliamentary Systems*. Cambridge University Press.

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

- (1) Cozza, Joseph, Gonzalo di Landro*, Andrea Aldrich, and **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. “A Rainbow Ceiling? Sexual Orientation and Party Leader Legitimacy.” Forthcoming in the *British Journal of Political Science*.
- (2) Amini, Arash, Yigit Ege Bayiz*, Eun-Ju Lee, **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**, Radu Marculescu, Ufuk Topcu. “How Media Competition Fuels the Spread of Misinformation.” *Science Advances* 11(25). DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.adu7743
- (3) **Somer-Topcu, Zeynep**, Patrick Fournier, Ruth Dassonneville. 2025. “Perceptual Accuracy and Issue Saliency.” *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2024.2395349>
- (4) Adams, James, Luca Bernardi, Lawrence Ezrow, and **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. 2023. “Why Parties Gain Votes When the Public Perceives Them Shifting to the Right.” *Political Studies* 72(3): 1203-1222. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00323217231178979>

- (5) **Somer-Topcu, Zeynep** and Margit Tavits. 2023. "Message Distortion as a Campaign Strategy: Does Rival Party Distortion of Focal Party Position Affect Voters?" *Journal of Politics* 85(3): 892-904. <https://doi.org/10.1086/723817>
- (6) Dassoneville, Ruth, Patrick Fournier, and **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. 2023. "Partisan Attachments in a Multi-Dimensional Space." *West European Politics* 46(4): 678-704. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2022.2087387>
- (7) Liu, Amy H., Michael G. Findley, David Leal, Raúl L. Madrid, Eric L. McDaniel, God'swill Osa,* Tasha Philpot, Brooke Shannon,* **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**, and Chris Wlezien. 2023. "Normalizing Diversity in Merit Review Forms." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 56(1): 123-127. <https://www.doi.org/10.1017/S1049096522000920>
- (8) **Somer-Topcu, Zeynep** and Daniel Weitzel*. 2022. "Negative Campaigning and Vote Choice in Europe: How do Different Partisan Groups React to Campaign Attacks?" *Comparative Political Studies* 55(13): 2283-2310. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140221074283>
- (9) Jung, Jae-Hee and **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. 2022. "United We Stand, Divided We Fall? The Effects of Parties' Brexit Rhetoric on Voters' Perceptions of Party Positions." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*. 32(3): 596-614. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2020.1839470>
- (10) Cozza, Joseph* and **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. 2021. "Membership Vote for Party Leadership Changes: Electoral Effects and the Causal Mechanisms Behind." *Electoral Studies* 71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2021.102326>
- (11) **Somer-Topcu, Zeynep**, Margit Tavits, and Markus Baumann. 2020. "Does Party Rhetoric Affect Voter Perceptions of Party Positions?" *Electoral Studies* 65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2020.102153>
- (12) Fernandez-Vazquez , Pablo and **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. 2019. "The Informational Role of Party Leader Changes on Voter Perceptions of Party Positions." *British Journal of Political Science* 49(3): 977-996.
- (13) **Somer-Topcu, Zeynep**. 2017. "Agree or Disagree: How do Party Leader Changes Affect the Distribution of Voters' Perceptions." *Party Politics* 23(1): 66-75.
- (14) **Somer-Topcu, Zeynep**. 2015. "Everything to Everyone: The Electoral Consequences of the Broad-Appeal Strategy in Europe." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(4): 841-854.
- (15) Adams, James, Lawrence Ezrow and **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. 2014. "Do Voters Respond to Party Manifestos or to a Wider Information Environment? An Analysis of Mass-elite Linkages on European Integration" *American Journal of Political Science* 58(4): 967-978.

- (16) **Somer-Topcu, Zeynep** and Laron Williams. 2014. "Opposition Party Policy Shifts in Response to No-Confidence Motions." *European Journal of Political Research* 53(3): 600-616.
- (17) **Somer-Topcu, Zeynep** and Michelle Zar[#]. 2014. "European Parliamentary Elections and National Party Policy Change." *Comparative Political Studies* 47: 878-902.
- (18) Adams, James, Lawrence Ezrow, Samuel Merrill III, and **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. 2013. "Does Collective Responsibility for Performance Alter Party Strategies? Policy-Seeking Parties in Proportional Systems?" *British Journal of Political Science* 43(1): 1-23.
- (19) Bawn, Kathleen and **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. 2012. "Government versus Opposition at the Polls: How Governing Status Affects the Impact of Policy Positions." *American Journal of Political Science* 56(2): 433-446.
 - Winner of the 2013 Jack Walker Outstanding Article Award
- (20) Adams, James, Lawrence Ezrow, and **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. 2011. "Is Anybody Listening? Evidence that Voters do not Respond to European Parties' Policy Programmes." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(2): 370-382.
 - Winner of the 2012 American Journal of Political Science Best Article Award
- (21) Maoz, Zeev and **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. 2010. "Polarization and Political Stability in Multiparty Systems (1945-1998)." *British Journal of Political Science* 40(4): 805-833.
- (22) Adams, James and **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. 2009. "Do Parties Adjust Their Policies in Response to Rival Parties' Policy Shifts? Spatial Theory and the Dynamics of Party Competition in Twenty-Five Postwar Democracies." *British Journal of Political Science* 39: 825-846.
- (23) Adams, James and **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. 2009. "Moderate Now, Win Votes Later: The Electoral Consequences of Parties' Policy Shifts in Twenty-Five Postwar Democracies." *Journal of Politics* 71(2): 678-692.
 - Winner of the 2008 Leon Weaver Best Paper Award
- (24) **Somer-Topcu, Zeynep**. 2009. "Timely Decisions: The Effects of Past National Elections on Party Policy." *Journal of Politics* 71(1): 238-248.
- (25) **Somer-Topcu, Zeynep** and Laron Williams. 2008. "Survival of the Fittest? Cabinet Duration in Post-Communist Europe." *Comparative Politics* 40 (3): 313-329.

Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters

- (1) **Somer-Topcu, Zeynep** and Daniel Weitzel. 2024. "Leadership Turnovers and Their Electoral Consequences: A Social Democratic Exceptionalism?" In S. Hausermann and H. Kitschelt and (Eds.) *Beyond Social Democracy: The Transformation of the Left in Emerging Knowledge Societies*, Cambridge University Press.

Non-Peer-Reviewed Publications

- (1) Somer-Topcu, Zeynep. 2024. "Allan Sikk and Philipp Köker: Party people: candidates and party evolution." *European Political Science* <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41304-024-00498-1> (Book review)
- (2) Somer-Topcu, Zeynep. 2022. "The Cycle of Coalition: How Parties and Voters Interact Under Coalition Governance. By David Fortunato." *Perspectives on Politics* 20(3): 1134-1136. (Book Review)
- (3) Jung, Jae-Hee and Zeynep Somer-Topcu. "Brexit: how intra-party unity helps voters understand and feel certain about party policy positions." *London School of Economics British Politics and Policy* blog post. December 7, 2020.
- (4) Somer-Topcu, Zeynep. 2019. "Close to Home: Local Ties and Voting Radical Right in Europe. By Jennifer Fitzgerald." *Perspectives on Politics* 17(2): 616-617. (Book Review)
- (5) Somer-Topcu, Zeynep. Can a New Leader Change a Party's Fortunes? How Leadership Changes Affect Voter Perceptions about Party Policy. *London School of Economics EUROPP* blog post. September 19, 2016.
- (6) Somer-Topcu, Zeynep & Laron Williams. Motions of No-Confidence Can Negatively Impact upon the Public's View of the Government. *London School of Economics Democratic Audit UK* blog post. June 5, 2014.

Research in Progress:

Under Contract:

Debus, Marc, Zeynep Somer-Topcu, and Margit Tavits, eds. *Negative Campaigning in Europe*. Under advanced contract with the Oxford University Press.

Revise and Resubmit and Under Review Manuscripts:

Cakir, Semih, Oguzhan Alkan*, Ruth Dassonneville, **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. "The Informational Environment and the Voters' Perceptions of Parties' Ideological Positions." *Revise & Resubmit at Political Behavior*.

Cozza, Joseph, **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**, Gonzalo di Landro*. "Leadership Election Competition and Leader Legitimacy." *Revise & Resubmit at European Journal of Political Research*.

Dassonneville, Ruth, Patrick Fournier, **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. "Do citizens perceive an empty left-authoritarian quadrant? Citizen perceptions of parties' positions in a multi-dimensional space?"

Dassonneville, Ruth, Patrick Fournier, **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. “Citizens’ Perceptions of Parties’ Positions in a Multidimensional Space.”

Work in Progress:

Somer-Topcu, Zeynep and Margit Tavits. “Party Message Distortion and Voter Perceptions of Party Positions in Multi-Party Systems.”

Aldrich, Andrea, Joseph Cozza, Gonzalo di Landro*, and **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. “Gender, and Legitimacy in Party Leader Selection.”

Nasr, Mohamed, Elizabeth N. Simas, **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. “The Lady's not for Turning? Candidate Gender and Position Switching.”

Curtis, Kendall* and **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. “Various Types of Snap Elections and the Responsible Party Performance.”

Dassonneville, Ruth, Patrick Fournier, Jelle Koedam, **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**. “The Dimensionality of Party Competition as Seen by Citizens.”

Somer-Topcu, Zeynep, Ruth Dassonneville, and Patrick Fournier. “Voter perceptions of ambiguous party issue positions.”

Goes, Iasmin, **Zeynep Somer-Topcu**, Daniel Weitzel, and Elise Frelin. “Political Candidates on Twitter: How do social media campaigns respond to public preferences?”

Invited Talks, Lectures, and Conferences (last 10 years)

- University of Houston, *Information and Messages in Sociopolitical Life* conference, May 2025.
- Department of Political Science, Lund University, Sweden, May 2024.
- Department of Political Science, University College London, May 2024.
- Department of Political Science, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain, May 2024.
- Department of Political Economy, King’s College London, UK, March 2024.
- Political Behavior Group, London School of Economics, UK, February 2024.
- Department of Political Science, University of Nottingham, UK, February 2024.
- European Politics Group, London School of Economics, UK, February 2024.
- Department of Political Science, University of Oxford, UK, February 2024.
- Department of Political Science, Royal Holloway University, UK, January 2024.
- Department of Government, University of Essex, UK, January 2024.
- University of Gothenburg, *Intra-Party Politics* conference, September 2023.
- Science Po, Paris, France, June 2023.
- Aarhus University, February 2023.
- University of Oxford, Nuffield College, January 2023.

- University of Pittsburgh, *Changing Voters, Changing Parties: Re-Defining the Electoral Landscape in Europe* conference, October 2022.
- Humboldt University, *Intra- and Inter-Party Conflict* conference, Berlin, Germany, August 2022.
- University of Maryland, July 2022.
- University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign, June 2022.
- Duke University, February 2022.
- Central European University, October 2021.
- Highschool AP Comparative Government program presentation, September 2021.
- ECPR Summer School on Political Parties, Aarhus University, August 2021.
- University of Liverpool, UK, February 2021.
- University of Montreal, October 2020.
- Yale University, September 2020.
- European Politics Online Workshop, Syracuse University, July 2020.
- University of Montreal, Winter School on Elections, March 2020.
- University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK, September 2019.
- University of Vienna, Austria, September 2019.
- University of Zurich, Switzerland, September 2019.
- Institute for Historical Studies Panel on “Brexit in Global and Historical Context,” April 2019.
- South by Southwest (SXSW) Panel on “Disinformation in the context of European elections,” March 2019.
- WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Berlin, Germany, March 2019.
- Sabanci University, Istanbul, Turkey, December 2018.
- Texas A&M University, November 2018.
- University of Montreal, Winter School on Elections, March 2018.
- Aarhus University, Workshop on Democratic Representation in Comparative Perspective, Aarhus, Denmark, November 2017.
- Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany, March 2017.
- University of Mannheim, Workshop on Comparative Campaign Dynamics Project, Mannheim, Germany, March 2017.
- Keynote Speech at *The Responsible Party Model in Times of Dealignment* conference, Leuven, Belgium, December 2016.
- University of Houston, October 2016.
- Center for the Study of Democratic Citizenship, McGill University, April 2016.
- Duke Frontiers of Political Science Workshop: Parties as Micro-Polities, May 2015.

Conference Participation (last 10 years)

- American Political Science Association (APSA), 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021, 2018, 2017, 2016.
- Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA), 2025, 2023, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2015.
- European Political Science Association (EPSA), 2025, 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019.
- Southern Political Science Association (SPSA), 2022, 2019.
- Texas Circle of Comparative Politics (TXCCP) 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019.

Teaching Experience

Undergraduate:	Comparative Political Parties European Union/ Regional Integration Government & Politics of Western Europe
Graduate (PhD Level):	Comparative Political Parties Scope and Methods (Research Design) Statistics I Comparative Representation and Accountability

Ph.D. Dissertation Committee Chair or Co-Chair for:

Berk Filcan (in progress)
Grace Morris (in progress)
Oguzhan Alkan (in progress)
Kendall Curtis (2025, tenure-track assistant professor at the University of Mississippi)
Mehmet Semih Cakir (2023, University of Montreal PhD, post-doctoral fellow at University of Vienna)
Daniel Weitzel (2020, tenure-track assistant professor at Colorado State University)

Ph.D. Dissertation Committee Member for:

Woong Kwon (in progress)
Jiseon Chang (2024, post-doctoral scholar at Niehaus Center at Princeton University)
Keith Chew (2024, post-doctoral scholar at Arizona State University)
Joseph Cozza (2022, tenure-track assistant professor at Smith College)
Roman Hlatky (2022, tenure-track assistant professor at the University of North Texas)
Vera Liu (2022, Department of Statistics, PhD)
Mollie Cohen (Vanderbilt, 2016, tenure-track assistant professor at Purdue University)
Margarita Corral (Vanderbilt, 2013)
Brian Faughnan (Vanderbilt, 2013)

Service (last 10 years)

University of Texas at Austin:

Co-organizer, Texas Circle of Comparative Politics (TXCCP) Conference, April 2025.
Chair of the Comparative Politics Search Committee, Fall 2024.
Member, College of Liberal Arts Academic Excellence Award Committee, 2025-2026.
Member, College of Liberal Arts Competitive Scholarship Review Committee, 2023-2025.
Organizer, Gender and Politics in Advanced Democracies Workshop, September 2023.
Member of the Comparative Politics Search Committee, Fall 2023.
Director of Graduate Studies, 2020-2022
Member of the Political Methodology Search Committee, Fall 2022.
Co-organizer, Texas Circle of Comparative Politics (TXCCP) Conference, February 2022.
Member of the Executive Committee, Department of Government, 2018-2019, 2020-2021, 2021-2022.
Member of the Executive Committee, Center for European Studies, 2017-2021.
Member of the Diversity Task Force, 2020-2021

Co-organizer, Consequences of Partisanship for Public Opinion Workshop, May 2019.
Member of the International Relations Search Committee, 2018-2019.
Member of the Graduate Fellowship Committee, Spring 2018.
Member of the Undergraduate Teaching Committee, Fall 2017.
Member of the Public Policy Search Committee, Spring 2017.
Organizer, Voter Perceptions of Party Positions Workshop, April 2017.

Profession:

Chair of the Diversity Committee, European Political Science Association, 2024-2026.
Vice-President of the Midwest Political Science Association, 2025-2027.
Secretary of the APSA Political Organizations and Parties Section, 2024-2026.
Co-Organizer, Where is my Party Workshop, University of Mannheim, November 2023.
Co-Organizer, Conference on Voters' Perceptions of Political Parties, Texas A&M University, October 2023.
European Political Science Association Council Member, 2023-2025.
Member of the Executive Committee of the APSA European Politics and Society Section, 2023-2025.
Member of the Executive Committee of the APSA Political Organizations and Parties Section, 2022-2024.
Member of the Scientific & Advisory Board of the Turkish Political Science Association, 2022-
Member of the Diversity Committee, European Political Science Association, 2021-2023
Member of the Executive Committee of the APSA Political Organizations and Parties Section, 2014-2016.
Member of the Executive Council of the APSA Representation and Electoral Systems Section, 2013-2018.
Section Chair of the Political Parties Section at the Southern Political Science Association Conference, 2019.
Division Co-Chair of the Comparative Politics of Advanced Industrial Nations division at the Annual American Political Science Association Conference, 2017.

Journals

Executive Co-Editor, British Journal of Political Science, 2025-
Co-Editor in Chief, Research & Politics, 2022-2025.
Member of the Editorial Board, *Political Science Research Methods* 2023-
Member of the Editorial Board, *West European Politics* 2019-
Member of the Editorial Board, *Political Research Quarterly* 2018-
Member of the Editorial Board, *Journal of Politics* 2018-2020.
Member of the Editorial Board, *Party Politics* 2015-
Member of the Editorial Board, *British Journal of Political Science* 2014-2025

Award Committees

Member of the 2025 APSA CP Lijphart/Przeworski/Verba Best Dataset Prize Committee, 2025.
Chair of the 2025 APSA POP Emerging Scholar Award Committee, 2025.
Chair of the 2024 APSA POP Best Paper Award Committee, 2024.

Chair of the 2024 APSA EPS Best Dissertation Award Committee, 2024.
Chair of the 2023 APSA POP Emerging Scholar Award Committee, 2023
Member of the MPSA Council and Officers Nominations Committee, 2022
Member of the 2022 SPSA JOP Best Article Award Committee
Member of the 2022 APSA-IPSA Theodore J. Lowi First Book Award
Member of the Kellogg/Notre Dame Award Committee for the best paper in comparative politics presented at the previous year's MPSA conference, 2017.
Member of the Best Article in *Political Behavior* Committee of the APSA Elections, Public Opinion, and Voting Behavior Section, 2016.
Member of the GESIS Klingemann Prize for the Best CSES Scholarship committee, 2015.
Chair of the Best Paper Award Committee of the APSA Elections, Public Opinion, and Voting Behavior Section, 2014.

PhD Thesis External Examiner

Maria Belén Abdala, University of Vienna, Austria, 2025.
Andrew McKenna, University of Strathclyde, UK, 2024.
Mathias Bukh Vestergaard, Aarhus University, Denmark, 2023.

Others

Presenter, Today's International Politics Speaker Series, AP Comparative Politics courses, 2024, 2021.
Co-organizer of the European Politics Online Workshops (EuroPOW) 2022-2023
Member of the Advisory Board for Henrik Bech Seeberg's (Aarhus University) Project, Political Parties and Problems: Which Indicators Get Attention? Funded by the Aarhus University Research Fund.

Peer-Reviewer (ad hoc since 2008):

American Political Science Review, American Journal of Political Science, British Journal of Political Science, Comparative Political Studies, Comparative Politics, Electoral Studies, European Journal of Political Research, Journal of Politics, Journal of Public Policy, Party Politics, Political Behavior, Political Research Quarterly, Political Science Research and Methods, Political Studies, Public Choice, Research & Politics, Scandinavian Studies, West European Politics, National Science Foundation, the Israel Science Foundation, the Dutch Science Foundation, the French Science Foundation, the Swiss Science Foundation, the European Research Council, Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press.

Languages: Turkish (native speaker), English (bilingual proficiency), German (limited working proficiency)