Proposal for the Workshop “Comparing Values in (Post-)Crisis Europe”

The conditional effects of the economic insecurity on the voting for the populist parties in the European Union

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Abstract

This research contributes to the debates on the economic insecurity and the cultural backlash as the explanatory frameworks for the rise of populism across the European Union (EU). I assume that the economic insecurity operationalized as the regional unemployment rate change moderates the effects of 1) the confidence towards the national and the EU institutions, 2) the attitudes towards migrants, 3) the materialist/post-materialist index, on the voting for a populist party. In order to test the moderation effects, I run two-level linear regression and impute three cross-level interaction terms between the unemployment rate change and 1) confidence towards the national institutions and the EU, 2) attitudes towards migrants, 3) materialist/post-materialist index.

I draw on the EU member countries data from the European Values Study (EVS) (fourth wave 2008 and fifth wave 2017) on confidence towards the national governments, parliaments and the EU; materialist/post-materialist index; attitudes towards migrants; age and education (control variables). Consequently, the voting outcomes from the last national elections before the completion of the EVS fieldworks in 2008 and 2017 are selected. From the national electoral data, the mean voting for the populist parties was estimated. The classification of the parties as populist comes from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey. The data on the regional unemployment rate change originates from the Eurostat. Thus I use cross-sectional data controlling for time trends.

Keywords: populism, Euroscepticism, institutional trust, economic insecurity, cultural backlash.