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Between convergence and divergence: How political orientation can explain the change in confidence in institutions among Italian people

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Abstract

During the last forty years, confidence in several institutions has broadly changed among Italian people. However, patterns of variations are highly dependent on the type of institution. Confidence in political-administrative institutions did not substantially vary; confidence in order institutions has substantially increased; instead, confidence in supernational institutions has dramatically collapsed, especially during the last decade. This work aims at providing an original interpretation of the variation of the three dimensions of confidence in institutions by highlighting the role of the political context in shaping those attitudes. In particular, we argue that variation in parties' positions toward institutions could lead to a change in confidence in order and supernational institutions. By using longitudinal data coming from the Italian edition of the European Values Study (from 1981 to 2018), we offer indirect evidence to our argumentation by analysing trends of confidence in those institutions by political orientation, measured by the left-right scale.

Keywords

Confidence in institutions; Political context; Party positions; Attitudes change; Longitudinal analysis