

Democracy in an Age of Populism: The Electoral Success of the Radical Right and its Consequences for Citizens' Perceptions of Democracy

Chairs:

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Abstract:

During the last decades, much of the scholarly and political debate has been devoted to the signs of erosion of public trust in and support for representative democracy in advanced democracies. Simultaneous, Radical Right Populist Parties (RRPPs) have persistently gained strength and achieved electoral successes in many countries. The success of RRPPs has motivated many commentators to argue that liberal democracy faces a severe legitimacy crisis.

Traditionally, research on populism has explained RRPP's electoral success as a consequence of declining political trust and discontent with the way democracy works. However, new research shows that the causality also runs in the opposite direction, i.e. that RRPPs not only thrive on but also themselves fuel discontent. At the same time, in many countries where RRPPs have gained substantial electoral success, satisfaction with the way democracy works has actually increased during the last decades (e.g. Austria, Denmark, Netherlands and Sweden). This somewhat paradoxical development warrants further research on the relationship between the growth of RRPPs and democratic legitimacy.

From a broader perspective, the aim of the proposed panel is to collect new research contributions that deal with the question how the dynamics generated by the electoral success of radical right populist parties affect citizens' perceptions of contemporary democracy. In doing this, the panel seeks to bridge two important strands of research that traditionally have not been engaged in much discussion with each other – populism studies and political support research. In particular, we welcome papers that examine how the growth of RRPPs affect a) political trust and support, both among radical right populist parties' supporters and their opponents, b) political polarization, and c) political attitudes in general, and notions of the meaning of democracy in particular.

If you have a Paper you think might fit in this Panel, please contact the Panel Chair before 8 February with the following information:

- Title of the paper (no more than 20 words)
- Abstract of the paper (no more than 250 words)

- Author's (and if applicable co-author's) email address as registered in their MyECPR account
- 3–5 keywords