

Section 3 – Politica comparata

Panel 8. Religion, populism and political parties.

Chairs: Pierre Baudry, Luca Ozzano

To explain the formation and the persistence of political parties in Europe, political science has mainly focused on four social cleavages rooted in European history: among them, a religious/secular cleavage created by the birth of the modern national state (Rokkan and Lipset, 1967). However, the emergence of populist parties and illiberal ideologies has challenged the traditional political cleavages (Ignazi 2003; Mastropaolo 2005). Political scientists have tried to grasp the emerging ideological landscape by using concepts like postmaterialism (Inglehart, 1990) and the divide between pro- and anti-globalization parties (Perrineau and Rouban, 2017).

The aim of this panel is to contribute to this debate by reflecting on the new cleavages and the new party types in Europe, by adopting a comparative politics approach. Who votes for populist parties? What do they want? Are populist parties the expression of new cleavages or the expression of older anti-modern ideologies? And what role play religions and identity in the emerging political landscape? Is this political engagement of religions simply the expression of traditionalist movements or the result of new kinds of political ideology? This panel will focus on these questions by highlighting how some European parties, previously secular or focused on the “traditional” religious cleavage, are increasingly using religion-related arguments in the context of anti-globalization and anti-EU discourses (Ozzano and Cavatorta, 2014).

This panel welcomes papers on:

- The role of religions and identity in a secular Europe. What political roles play “Christianity”, “Islam” or “Judaism” in a post-religious continent? How to describe the religions’ comeback in political parties in the beginning 21th century?
- The new political and ideological cleavages beyond the classical left/right divide: pro- and anti-globalization, pro- or anti-Europe, pro-multiculturalism and pro-national homogeneity.
- The influence of the new cleavages on public policies. Innovative papers on the connection between politics and policies are welcome to grasp to what extent populism affects the common political practices (e.g. Poland, Hungary, Brexit, Trump).
- Discourse analyses, political sociology papers, quantitative approaches are all encouraged.