

Section 3 – Politica Comparata

Chairs: Gianfranco Baldini, Elisabetta de Giorgi

Panel 3.9 Is that right? The transformation of the supply and the demand side of the Right in Europe

Representative democracies are in turmoil throughout Europe. In the last two decades, the crescendo of European integration has revealed also a negative domino effect in the form of the economic recession and the refugee crisis, which aggravated disillusionment over the conduct of established parties and nurtured Euroscepticism throughout Eastern and Western Europe.

In view of the structural dealignment of European party systems (Kriesi 2008), populist and radical right forces have found a profitable environment that pushed them to unprecedented levels of electoral support. Following a cross-national tendency, far-right parties have breached the previously bipolar order between moderate left and right alignments and rearranged political competition into a tripolar structure that is now skewed to the right (Oesch & Rennwald 2018).

Therefore, right-wing politics are currently undergoing deep transformations within and outside the political mainstream, on both the supply and the demand side. In the case of the mainstream right, questions include the tension between the ideological convergence towards the centre and the contagion effects of populist actors, the decline of traditional cleavage voting and dealing with the threat posed by new political actors. Contrarily, far-right challenger parties increasingly face the test of government participation, the lack of political professionalization and the need to overcome their initial single-issue vocation. Accordingly, the papers should engage with the ideological and organizational adjustments embraced by the 'old' and the 'new' right to ensure their electoral, governmental and participatory endurance. Moreover, at the core of the research interests are the relationship between the variety of right-wing parties, taking into account recent exogenous shocks and transnational pressures (e.g. the economic depression, the migration emergency, EU-exit movements). The debate on the destiny of the right offers diverse cues, covering confrontational as well as cooperation mechanisms that fit in the framework of the ideological contagion of populist right parties on the mainstream right and the adaptive capability of the latter.

In substance, the panel seeks analyses that confront these changes and ambivalences from diverse perspectives, tackling their causes and advancing expectations either theoretically or empirically, relying on qualitative or quantitative data, engaging in single-case or comparative studies.

Chairs: Gianluca Piccolino, Maria Giovanna Sessa