

Populism's Roots: Economic and Cultural Explanations in Democracies of Europe (PRECEDE)

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The rise of populism is often portrayed as one of the most pressing challenges for the future of national and EU democracies. The consortium proposes to explore the roots of populist demands by combining political, economic and sociological factors as well as demand- and supply-side explanations. Overall, the proposed study aims to explore the socio-economic and cultural roots of European populism by analyzing both existing established datasets and data from new online surveys across 10 European countries during national elections occurring before the 2024 EU elections: United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Spain, Romania, France, Sweden, Hungary and Poland. The proposed study is guided by the following research questions: How do socio-economic and cultural triggers of populist voting change both across countries and across the political spectrum (left-wing and right-wing populism)? How do populist parties' agendas (supply) influence populist voters (demand), and vice versa? How are 'push' factors of populist voting transformed into 'pull' factors, which move voters away from populist voting? The project allows for capturing the widespread socio-economic malaise affecting 'the squeezed middle' (intermediate segments of the population with a declining position) and for investigating the role of economic macro factors. The team has developed advanced techniques to link the online panels to probability sampling datasets and guarantee the representativeness of its findings. The approach will also use multilevel modelling to combine macro- and individual-level explanations of populist voting and to develop a policy toolkit. This toolkit will be discussed with EU policy makers and presented on several media channels. The cross-national consortium involves partners from four countries (Germany, Great Britain, Italy and the Netherlands) and contains internationally renowned senior academics, young scholars, and junior researchers.

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