International workshop

Populism, Regionalism and Nationalism in Western European Party Mobilisation. The territorial Dimension

30 September 2016
13:45-17:00
1 October 2016
9:00-12:00

Room 2218 - Bâtiment Géopolis (Dorigny - UNIL)

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In recent decades, several successful Western European political parties have been labelled as populist (see, for example, Mudde 2007; Akkerman, de Lange & Rooduijn 2016). The defence of sovereignty, the attack on the establishment, and the claim for the power of the community are often emphasised in their discourse and strategies. The literature devoted to these parties provides a rich volume of contributions, including discussions about the definition of populism (e.g. Mény & Surel 2001; Canovan 2005). However, despite its underlying role in the concepts of sovereignty and community, the territorial component has rarely been taken into account within the current context of party populism. The consequence is two-fold. On the one hand, populist parties are conceptually related, albeit often implicitly, to the nation-wide frame, which assumes that the perimeter of the power of the people coincides with the national state; on the other, theoretical perspectives that emphasise territoriality in party mobilisation, such as regionalism, tend to avoid or marginalise the concept of populism. What currently prevails in the literature, therefore, is an implicit divide between "state-wide" or "nation-wide" populist parties, and parties (sub-nationally) regionally bounded and claiming for regional empowerment.

On the one hand, scholars working on populist parties mainly focus on "nation-wide" parties that provide a national organisation, a dominant state-wide strategy (towards national parliament and/or government), and an agenda shaped by national issues. The FN in France or the FPÖ in Austria represent some of the best-known (and more durable) cases of this type of national-populist – and radical or extreme right-wing parties in Western Europe. However, having a national organisation/strategy does not necessarily mean these kinds of nation-wide populist parties achieve homogenous rates of success across the country, for instance, in terms of electoral support or participation in regional government. Thus the role that is played by regional and centre-periphery components (issues, agenda, manifesto, electoral strategies, etc.) often remains unclear, also because these parties usually compete in multi-layered contexts, which implies regional, national, and European elections.

On the other hand, as we note, the literature devoted to regionalist parties rarely makes a clear conceptual link with the populist frame. Arguing that regionalist parties are "present and/or field candidates only in a particular sub-territory (region) of the state" (Massetti & Schakel 2016, 62), scholars in this sub-field tend to distinguish regionalist parties from nationalist parties. The core regionalist issue is to achieve, protect, or enhance the "political reorganisation of the existing national power structure, for some kind of 'self-government'". (De Winter 1998, 204). Some contend that regionalism gathers a new political family (Seiler 1982), but as is often recognised, regionalism is a very heterogeneous ideology. Whilst some regionalist parties have been labelled as populist (e.g. Lega Nord, PVV, SVP), regionalism is also adopted as a form of nationalism, or sub-state nationalism (Erk 2009), minority nationalism (Elias 2009), peripheral nationalism (Gourevitch 1979), or stateless nationalism (Keating 1996). It remains unclear, therefore, how regionalism and nationalism are linked to each other (also due, for instance, to the fact that some regionalist parties also make a claim for nation-wide sovereignty, as is currently the case with the Lega Nord), and whether regionalist parties express a specific populism claim in comparison with nation-wide parties.

Programme

Friday, 30th September

13:45-14:00 Welcome

14:00-14:30 Introduction (Oscar Mazzoleni, Université de Lausanne).

Panel chair: Reinhard Heinisch

14:30-15:00 Are Regionalist Parties Populist? An Overview of the Ideological Linkages between Regionalism and Populism (Emanuele Massetti).

15:00-15:30 Are government regionalist parties populist? A comparison between the Südtiroler Volkspartei and the Union Valdôtaine (Maxime Bottel, Université de Lausanne & Günther Pallaver, Universität Innsbruck).

15:30-15:50 Coffee Break.

15:50-16:00 Regionalism or populism? A comparison between the N-VA and DéFi in Belgium (Emilie Van Haute, Université libre de Bruxelles).

16:20-16:50 How do regionalist parties use anti-elite/establishment rhetoric in multilevel competition? The case of the Vlaams Belang in Belgium (Teun Pauwels, Université libre de Bruxelles & Dave Sinardet, Université Saint-Louis Bruxelles).

Saturday, 1st October

Panel Chair: Emilie Van Haute

9:00-9:30 How do regionalist parties deal with nationalism against EU and globalisation? A trans-border comparison between the Lega Nord and the Lega dei Ticinesi (Oscar Mazzoleni, Université de Lausanne & Carlo Ruzza, Università di Trento).

9:30-10:00 How do regionalist parties mobilise the territorial community for a new national state? The case of separatism mobilisation in Catalonia (Oscar Barberà, Universitat de València).

10:00-10:20 Coffee Break.

10:20-10:50 Regional radical right-wing populism in Austria. Exploring causes and consequences (Vanessa Marent & Reinhard Heinisch, Universität Salzburg).

10:50-11:20 Explaining regional support for national-populist parties. The case of the FN in France (Lisa Lanzone, Jerôme Dutozia & Gilles Ivaldi, Université de Nice).

11:20-12:00 General discussion.