

A Populist Crisis? The dislocating effects of globalization and populism as political communication style

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The Transformation of European Party Systems in the Shadow of the Great Recession

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- Financial crisis developed into the **Euro-crisis**
- Tough conditions by international creditors for the countries that needed financial help

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- **Refugee crisis:** massive inflow of asylum seekers (especially from war-ridden Syria)
- **Combination of economic and political crisis:**
 - → Impact on the structuration of the countries' party systems most pronounced (Kriesi et. al. 2019)

Multiple Crises Embedded in Structural Changing Societies within Europe

- Experience of the crises:
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 - Strategies of position-taking and issue emphasis (Hobolt and De Vries 2015)
 - **Which type of political party** might be most likely to exploit the mobilization potentials induced by the crises with **what kind of strategy?**

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 - **Which type of political party** might be most likely to exploit the mobilization potentials induced by the crises with **what kind of strategy**?
- Did the crises experience reinforce existing divisions?

Long-term Processes of Societal Change

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 - Class
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 - Class
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- Political conflict in Central Eastern Europe structured by: ethnicity, religion, class

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 - Opening-up of economic, cultural, and political national borders: accelerated since the late 1980s
 - Divide between winners and losers of globalization
 - **Losers:** traditionally protected by national boundaries, “threat” perception to social status & social security, heterogeneous group (losing in economic terms, in cultural terms, and/or in political terms)
 - **Winners:** people who benefit from new opportunities resulting from globalization, life chances enhanced.

Long-term Processes of Societal Change in Southern and Central Eastern Europe

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- **Countries in Southern Europe (SE):** democratic transformation from authoritarian past only in second half of the 1970s (but: Italy)
- **Countries in Central Eastern Europe (CEE):** from early 1990s
 - Economic conflict most salient
 - Not highly politicized (convergence of the post-com-munist left and right on a policy of neoliberal reforms)
- Legacies of previous non-democratic regimes continue to contribute to structuring of party competition in SE and CEE (Kriesi and Hutter 2019)

Limitations of a Potential Impact of the Crises?

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- Impact of the crisis depends on:
 - Severity
 - Timing in relation to ongoing processes of change
 - Short-run effect of economic crisis: government punishment
 - Great Recession: undermine legitimacy of all mainstream parties?
Question the entire democratic system as it has been operating in a given country?

Group Exercise 1

Develop some hypotheses how the experience of the financial crisis might have impacted the political space within Europe.

- Group 1: How did the financial crisis impact the **populist demand**?
- Group 2: How did the financial crisis impact the **populist supply**?

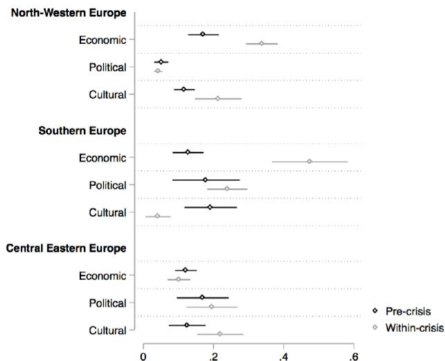
Transformed political spaces?

Kriesi et. al. 2019::

- 2 quality newspapers per country, in the case of Southern and Central Eastern Europe one each from the center left and the center right.
- Articles that report on the campaign and national party politics in general during the two months preceding Election Day
- **party system level polarization**: salience \times polarization
- **party level polarization**:
 - Party's salience score with its issue position distance
 - For each party in each election: multiply its salience score with distance between its position and mean position of all parties in the system on that issue

Transformed political spaces?

Figure 15.1: Predicted probabilities of the politicization levels by region, issue domain, and crisis period



Note: Based on Model 4 from Table A.1 in the Appendix. Standard Errors Clustered by Country-election. C.I. levels 84.4% (i.e. if C.I. do not overlap it means that there is a significant change at $\alpha = 0.05$).

Figure 1: Hutter et. al. (2019)

The issue of immigration: salience and position (expert surveys)

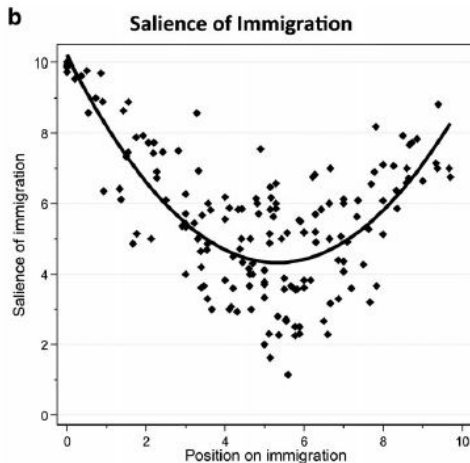


Figure 2: Hooghe and Marks (2018), 118

The Greek case of SYRIZA (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014)

■ The case of Syriza:

- Discourse organized on the basis of antagonistic schema (pattern “us/ the people” vs. “them/ the establishment”)
- “Us”: hit by austerity policies
- “Them”: the political establishment implementing policies dictated by the Troika.

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■ Two-level character of the opposed “them”

- **First level:** specific political forces within the country (ND, PASOK, DIMAR, LAOS)
- **Second level:** neoliberalism and its advocates (international financial institutions IMF, leadership of the EU)
- “External troika vs. internal troika”: three-party coalition government between ND, PASOK and DIMAR equated with the EC, the ECB and the IMF

Populism as a Political Communication Style (Jagers and Walgrave 2007)

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- Emphasis on the (ideal) homogeneity of the people by excluding specific population segments
- **Need to measure** these kinds of political communication styles

Empirical Study: Belgian six-party system

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- Political party broadcasts
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- **Method:** comparative discourse analysis
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 - Direct communication from party towards population
 - Identical format of all broadcasts (similarity and comparability across parties)
- Quantitative analysis: construction of a **people-index**
 - **Proportion:** share of populism in the total party broadcasts (referring to the people in general)
 - **Intensity:** Number of times “the people” mentioned in citations included in the analysis
 - Compound people-index: simple multiplication of proportion and intensity

Findings of the Jagers and Walgrave (2007) study

- Degree and the type of populism highest among the extreme-right party Vlaams Blok

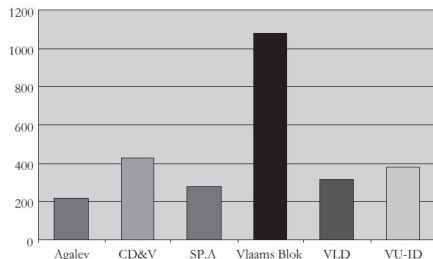


Figure 1. Thin populism: People-index (proportion*intensity) for each party (1999–2001).

Figure 3: Jagers (2007), 328

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