



Section 6. Political science

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IDEOLOGIES TRANSFORMATION TRENDS MODERN POLITICAL IN SPACE

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Abstract

Today, the contemporary political landscape is undergoing an ideological transformation characterized by the reshuffling of traditional political categories, populist movements, and electoral coalitions. The aim of the study is to examine the main trends shaping ideological evolution in contemporary politics, the decline of centrist politics, and the rise of populism across the political spectrum. Drawing on recent electoral data from Europe and North America, the study shows that traditional left-right distinctions are being complemented and in some cases replaced by new axes of political competition. The analysis reveals that these transformations reflect deeper structural changes in developed democracies, including economic insecurity, technological disruption, and changing forms of social identity. As for the research method, the article uses a *comparative-comparative* method.

Keywords: political ideology, populism, political transformation, Electoral realignment, modern politics

Results analysis:

Political ideology has long been an organizing principle of democratic politics, providing citizens with a coherent framework for understanding political positions and making electoral choices. The traditional left-right spectrum, based on class-based economic divisions, has shaped political competition in the modern era. However, recent political developments suggest that this traditional framework is undergoing profound transformation.

When analyzing the main trends characterizing ideological evolution in the contemporary political space, special attention is paid to the rise of populism, the decline of traditional party systems, and the emergence of new axes of political division.

One of the most important issues in contemporary politics is the systematic weakening of centrist and moderate political positions. This phenomenon manifests itself in many aspects: in voter self-identification, in the structures of the party system, and in political debates.

The decline of political moderation reflects several interrelated processes. First, the traditional class compromises that had helped sustain centrist politics in the postwar era have broken down under the pressures of globalization and economic transformation. The social democratic pact, which, as you know, balanced market capitalism with the protection of the welfare state, has struggled to maintain legitimacy in the face of deindustrialization, technological change, and fiscal constraints.

Second, the rise of digital media and social networks has created new information systems that are typically geared toward amplifying political views. Unlike traditional mass media, which often served as a centralizing force in political discourse, the fragmentation of modern media allows citizens to self-organize into ideologically homogeneous communities. This structural change in political communication has profound implications for ideological development and transformation.

Although the left-right spectrum is still relevant today, its meaning has changed significantly. Traditional economic divisions based on class position and attitudes towards redistribution are being supplemented by new divisions focused on cultural values, national identity, and attitudes towards social change.

This realignment has profound implications for party systems and electoral coalitions. Left-wing parties, which have historically represented working-class interests, now often draw their primary support from educated professionals, while right-wing parties increasingly attract working-class voters. The inversion of traditional class voting patterns represents one of the most significant transformations in modern democratic politics.

As you know, populist movements share a common ideological core, centered on a dichotomy between “the people” and “the elite,” with claims to represent the true will of the former against the corrupt interests of the latter. However, populism manifests itself differently across the political spectrum. Right-wing populists tend to embrace anti-elite rhetoric. Left-wing populists emphasize economic inequality, corporate power, and the failures of neoliberal governance.

In the 2024 European Parliament elections, populist parties won 263 out of 720 seats – around 36%. Electoral turnout shows that populism can no longer be ignored as a secondary phenomenon. On the contrary, it has become a significant force that can shape the political agenda and influence political discourse.

Let's look at a few examples; in Austria, the FPÖ became the leading party in the 2024 elections, winning 28.9% of the vote, and in Italy, the Fratelli. coalition “D’Italia” came to power in 2022 with 25.99% of the vote. These results show that populist parties are not just protest movements, they can gain governing power. In France, political protest and anti-establishment sentiment were key to populist voting across the spectrum: more than two-thirds of Republican voters said they were essentially voting to express opposition to the president and government, compared with 53% of Liberal Democrat voters. This finding highlights the extent to which populist support is driven by dissatisfaction with established political actors, rather than necessarily by coherent ideological programs.

The mainstreaming of populism has had multiple consequences for ideological structures. First, it has shifted the boundaries of acceptable political discourse, normalizing positions that were previously considered extreme. Second, it has forced mainstream parties to change their positions, often using populist rhetoric or policy proposals to compete for voters. Third, it has introduced new issues and divisions around cultural identity into the political debate. Contemporary politics is characterized by increasing polarization, with political actors and citizens taking increasingly different positions on key issues. This polarization operates at multiple levels: elite polarization between political leaders and parties, mass polarization among ordinary citizens, and affective polarization, characterized by growing antipathy and distrust across party lines.

Several factors contribute to the exacerbation of polarization: Economic inequality and insecurity create resentment and competition for resources, which can escalate into political conflict. Demograph-

ic changes and increasing diversity create tensions around national identity and cultural values. The rise of identity politics on both the left and the right has encouraged mobilization based on group grievances rather than cross-cutting economic interests. Geographic sorting, whereby individuals increasingly live among neighbors with similar political views, reinforces polarization by limiting alternative views. Residential segregation interacts with media fragmentation to create self-reinforcing information bubbles, where individuals are primarily exposed to perspectives that confirm their existing views.

In general, contemporary ideological transformation is characterized by cultural and identity-based issues. Issues of migration, multiculturalism, national identity, gender, and sexuality have moved to the center of political debate, often overshadowing traditional economic concerns. This shift reflects several developments. A shift in values has made cultural issues more important to affluent, educated voters who value self-expression and quality of life over economic security. Conversely, cultural backlash among those threatened by rapid social change has created a demand for parties that defend traditional values and national identity.

The rise of cultural politics has challenged traditional ideological positions. Economic leftists may hold culturally conservative views, while economic conservatives may embrace cultural liberalism. This multidimensional political space creates opportunities for new party configurations, but it also increases the complexity of coalition formation and governance.

Conclusion:

The transformations analyzed above indicate that contemporary political ideologies exist in a state of unusual volatility

and uncertainty. Traditional categories and alignments are dissolving faster than new stable structures are emerging. This period of transition creates both opportunities and risks for democratic politics. On the one hand, ideological variation may facilitate the creative recombination of political ideas and the emergence of new solutions to contemporary challenges. The breakdown of rigid party loyalties and ideological orthodoxies may facilitate more pragmatic, issue-based politics that respond to the real concerns of citizens rather than party traditions. On the other hand, ideological uncertainty can create anxiety, fuel extremism, and undermine the stable patterns of expectations and adaptation necessary for democratic governance. When citizens lack a clear ideological framework for understanding politics, they may be more susceptible to demagogic appeals or conspiracy theories that offer simple explanations for complex problems.

In conclusion, it was revealed that the contemporary political landscape is characterized by a profound ideological transformation. Traditional left-right differences are being supplemented by new divisions centered on education, cultural values, and attitudes toward globalization. Populist movements have spread across the political spectrum, challenging established parties and changing political discourse. Polarization has intensified, creating both opportunities for mobilization and risks to democratic stability.

These transformations reflect deeper structural changes in developed societies: economic fluctuations and inequalities, demographic shifts, technological revolution, and the re-examination of national identity in an era of globalization. Understanding these trends is essential for scholars, policymakers, and citizens trying to navigate the complexities of contemporary democratic politics.

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