Populism and economic performance: a quantitative perspective

Political competition and differences in party ideology at parliamentary level are of great economic and social importance, as they translate into legislation and public policies in various dimensions. A type of political ideology that seems to be gaining increasing attention in research and public debate is populism. This is excellently illustrated by economic debate, which in recent times has often looked at either the impact of populism on various economic indicators, or economic factors that could favor the emergence of populist parties and their possible electoral success. Despite the fact that several databases have already been created to enable this type of research, one of the key challenges in this area remains the issue of defining variables that indicate which political parties should be classified as populistic. The same is true with regard to indices measuring the intensity of populist views in a country. In response to this, the main goal of the project is to quantitatively analyze the reliability of the available measures of political populism and the stability of results obtained in works of economists interested in the impact of populism on one economic indicator or another. In addition, the project will attempt to address potential problems associated with public perception of populism, as well as to determine the dynamics of populism over time and its popularity among political parties.

The research will be conducted primarily on databases that allow the stated objectives to be met on a global sample of countries over the past several decades. Carrying out these research tasks in quantitative perspective will allow to draw conclusions on to the possible limitations of the available measures of populism, and consequently as to the findings of the existing studies that use them. In addition, carrying out the project will provide conclusions on the possible problems involving the perception of populism from the standpoint of voters and on the actual changes in the level of populism in parliament. Importantly, we will verify the extent to which political parties adopt populist behavior represented by their opponents as part of the struggle for voters' votes.

Thanks to the use of quantitative apparatus, i.e. statistical and econometric tools, as well as machine learning algorithms, the reliability of selected measures of political populism will be verified. This will be done both in terms of the economic or social effects of populism, and in terms of the propensity to vote for populist political parties. In addition, an attempt will be made to find out what voters may understand by populism, to what extent populism is on the rise in politics and whether populist slogans are becoming stronger over time. Moreover, issues such as the adoption of populist behavior by new and existing political parties depending on the dominant ideologies in parliament, as well as resistance to populism, will be analyzed. With the implementation of the project, the picture of political scene in quantitative perspective will be more complete.