

Political sciences

UDC 321

Khmelovskyi Borys

Student of the Faculty of Law

Oles Honchar Dnipro National University

METHODS FOR FORECASTING ELECTORAL SUPPORT FOR RIGHT-WING POPULIST PARTIES IN EUROPE BASED ON SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS

Summary. *The article explores the rise of right-wing populist parties and the socioeconomic factors contributing to their success. The study integrates sociological, econometric, and technological approaches to forecasting electoral outcomes by employing an interdisciplinary framework.*

The sociological approach focuses on value orientations, voter behavior, and reactions to political proposals through surveys and qualitative methods. Econometric models quantitatively assess the influence of factors such as unemployment and income inequality on voter preferences. At the same time, big data analysis leverages real-time social media trends to enhance predictive accuracy. The article emphasizes the role of technology, including machine learning, in processing large datasets and uncovering complex interconnections between socioeconomic variables and voter behavior.

Purpose. *The purpose of this study is to analyze the factors influencing electoral support for right-wing populist parties in Europe, focusing on socio-economic determinants and political dynamics. The research aims to develop comprehensive forecasting methods to identify voter behavior patterns, address socio-economic challenges that drive radicalization, and create practical strategies to mitigate political polarization and preserve democratic institutions in a rapidly changing environment.*

Materials and methods. The research employs an interdisciplinary approach, integrating sociological, econometric, and technological methods. Key materials include socio-economic data, public opinion surveys, and real-time social media trends. The primary methods used are sociological analysis through surveys, focus groups, and qualitative interviews to study voter behavior and value orientations; econometric models for quantitative analysis of socio-economic factors like unemployment and inequality; big data analysis for real-time assessment of voter sentiment through social media and search engine data; and technological tools such as machine learning algorithms to process large datasets and identify complex relationships between variables. This methodological framework ensures a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing right-wing populist party support.

Results. The findings reveal that socio-economic instability, such as unemployment and income inequality, significantly impacts voter preferences for right-wing populist parties. Regional analysis shows higher support in rural and economically struggling areas. Big data and machine learning enhance forecasting accuracy, especially during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The study provides practical recommendations, including early detection of socio-economic disparities and targeted political planning to reduce radicalization risks. Strengthening democratic institutions and adopting adaptive forecasting models are essential to addressing these challenges and promoting political stability in Europe.

Key words: electoral forecasting, right-wing populism, socioeconomic factors, machine learning, interdisciplinary analysis.

The modern political map of Europe is undergoing significant changes, particularly with the rise in popularity of right-wing populist parties. These parties, which rely on anti-system rhetoric, opposition to migration policies, criticism of globalization, and the defense of national identity, have gained

substantial voter support in many European countries.

Political forces such as the National Rally in France, Alternative for Germany, the League in Italy, and Fidesz in Hungary have become not only influential actors in domestic politics but also defining factors in shaping the broader European political landscape.

Forecasting electoral support for such parties is an essential task for both political science and practice. It enables the identification of key factors influencing voter behavior and the prediction of political changes, especially during crises. In this context, both classical sociological methods, such as public opinion surveys, and modern approaches, including econometric models, big data analysis, and machine learning tools, are utilized.

The relevance of this study arises from the need not only to understand the factors driving the success of right-wing populist parties but also to develop effective strategies for preserving democratic institutions and addressing related political challenges. This research is based on an analysis of socio-economic determinants, which are crucial for developing forecasting models for electoral support in contemporary Europe.

Forecasting electoral support for right-wing populist parties relies on comprehensive approaches that combine methods from sociology, econometrics, big data analysis, and regional modeling.

Sociological Approach

This approach focuses on studying value orientations, voter behavior patterns, and their reactions to political proposals.

Key tools: public opinion surveys, focus groups, and qualitative interviews. Sociological theories, such as the theory of social cleavages first proposed by Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, explain how economic and cultural differences influence political mobilization. As Lipset noted, “Social cleavages form the basis for political polarization, which can be exploited by populists.”

The sociological approach helps to identify key voter groups prone to

supporting right-wing populist parties. Research by Grymska (2023) shows that populist parties most often appeal to voters with low incomes or those experiencing economic instability.

Econometric Models

Econometric analysis allows for a quantitative assessment of the impact of socioeconomic factors on voter behavior.

For instance, the economic voting model assumes that voters respond to changes in their economic conditions. As researchers noted in the Cambridge Review of Political Studies, “Voters evaluate economic prospects through the lens of their current needs, which drives support for populist forces during crises.”

Such models utilize data on unemployment rates, economic growth or decline, tax policies, and levels of inequality.

A study by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (2022) demonstrates that in regions with high economic inequality, right-wing populists receive 15-20% more votes.

Big Data Analysis

This approach allows real-time analysis of voter behavior using data from social networks, search engines, and electronic surveys.

As noted in the Journal of Political Studies, “social networks have become not only platforms for political mobilization but also key tools for forecasting electoral outcomes.”

Social network analysis can determine the popularity of right-wing parties, for instance, by tracking the frequency of hashtags associated with their ideology. This enhances prediction accuracy, especially during rapid voter mobilization in times of crisis.

Regional differences in income levels, social structure, and degrees of urbanization significantly influence voter behavior.

As Lebedyuk (2019) stated, “support for right-wing populist parties is significantly higher in rural regions and industrial areas experiencing economic

decline.”

The regional approach also considers the role of migration policy, a key factor in border regions vulnerable to migrant flows.

Modern studies increasingly integrate methods. Combining econometric modeling with sociological surveys and big data analysis provides a complete picture of influencing factors. As Grymska (2023) notes, “Integration of qualitative and quantitative methods allows for consideration of both structural and subjective factors of electoral behavior” [12].

The Role of Technology in Improving Forecasting

The combination of classical methods, such as sociological surveys and regression analysis, with modern technologies opens new horizons in forecasting. Machine learning tools, particularly deep learning algorithms, can process large volumes of data and analyze complex interconnections between socioeconomic factors and political preferences.

As noted in the Journal of Political Studies, “Analytical models based on artificial intelligence algorithms provide a level of predictive accuracy previously unattainable with traditional approaches.

Forecasting in Conditions of Political Dynamics

The political landscape of Europe is constantly changing under the influence of socio-economic crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic or the war in Ukraine. This requires adapting forecasting models to new conditions.

Economic sanctions and energy crises have impacted the structure of electoral support in Central European countries and have contributed to the growth of right-wing populist parties. Utilizing dynamic models that account for changes in socio-economic trends over time allows for more relevant results [4].

Interdisciplinarity as the Basis for Modern Forecasting

Effective forecasting requires the integration of knowledge from several disciplines:

- Political science provides tools for understanding the structure and

functioning of party systems.

- Sociology helps identify voter motivations and value orientations.
- Economics evaluates the impact of crises on political processes.
- Data technologies create technical tools for analyzing large volumes of information [13].

As Lebedyuk (2019) emphasized, “A multidisciplinary approach allows for a deeper understanding of the causes of political changes and more precise forecasting of their development.”

Methodological approaches to predicting electoral support for right-wing populist parties in Europe are based on multi-component models that integrate socio- economic, psychological and regional factors [5].

The use of modern technologies, such as big data and machine learning, greatly expands analytical capabilities, which is important for policy making and predicting political change in Europe.

The main advantages of forecasting can be divided into several main factors.

Early Detection of Social Problems

Forecasts make it possible to identify socio-economic and political disparities that may contribute to the rise of populism.

Regional Analysis: Right-wing populists often gain support in regions facing economic difficulties or social marginalization. For instance, Grymska (2023) demonstrates that regions with high unemployment and limited access to educational and healthcare services show higher support for radical parties. This enables governments and civic organizations to develop timely support programs for such regions, minimizing the risk of political radicalization [6].

Improving Political Planning

Forecasts allow parties and political leaders to develop strategies aimed at reducing populist influence while considering public sentiments.

Using modern models, it is possible to predict which voter groups are most

susceptible to populist slogans and redirect efforts toward alternative political proposals.

As Lebedyuk (2019) underscores, “Understanding regional differences allows politicians to address voter needs in their electoral programs better.”

Strengthening Democratic Institutions

Forecasting political behavior enables government structures to proactively address challenges associated with the growth of radical movements.

Conflict Prevention: Identifying social and economic factors that increase the risk of political polarization helps develop programs that strengthen social cohesion [11].

Research by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (2022) demonstrates that integrating educational programs aimed at combating xenophobia and intolerance is an effective tool for reducing the influence of populist parties [7].

Political and economic instability, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and migration crises, significantly impacts voter preferences.

Forecasting helps to identify who benefits from economic or social upheavals, which is particularly crucial for governments aiming to maintain stability and minimize radicalization risks.

As Grymska (2023) notes, “The 2020 economic crisis demonstrated the importance of using adaptive models to assess changes in voter behavior over the short term.”

Forecasting also allows for understanding how specific political events (e.g., Brexit or EU migration policy decisions) affect voter attitudes and support for right-wing populist parties. This can assist in developing policies that promote stability and solidarity within the EU while reducing support for anti-European parties [8].

Forecasts help businesses and governments anticipate future political changes, such as:

- Reducing investment risks.
- Predicting economic consequences of electoral shifts, like increased protectionism among populist parties.

Forecasting electoral support for right-wing populist parties is not only of theoretical value but also has practical implications for maintaining political system stability, advancing democracy, and ensuring economic stability [9].

The use of modern technologies, integrative methods and dynamic models makes it possible to more effectively adapt to changes and influence political processes.

Conclusions. Right-wing populist parties are becoming increasingly influential in European politics, reflecting a range of social, economic, and cultural changes.

Instability related to unemployment, income inequality, and the decline of traditional industries are key factors contributing to the growth of populist support.

Social cleavages, such as migration crises and the divide between urban and rural regions, create conditions for voter radicalization.

The application of cutting-edge technologies—such as big data analysis and machine learning—significantly improves the accuracy of forecasts [10].

The growing role of technology and the complexity of political processes in the modern world highlight the importance of:

- developing adaptive forecasting models for rapidly changing conditions, such as economic crises or wars;
- incorporating larger volumes of data on cultural and psychological aspects of voter behavior;
- deepening the analysis of the impact of international events, such as migration processes and EU policies, on support for right-wing populist parties.

Forecasting electoral support for right-wing populist parties is not only a tool for analyzing political situations but also an effective means of risk

management and creating a stable political environment. The integration of quantitative and qualitative methods, considering socio-economic, cultural, and technological changes, is the key to successful forecasting and effective management of contemporary political challenges.

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