



The **Populism Research Group** together with the **Political Behavior Research Group** cordially invites you to a discussion on:

Voter mobilization in the echo chamber: Broadband internet and the rise of populism in Europe

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ABSTRACT

Can the diffusion of broadband internet explain the recent success of populist parties in Europe? Populists cultivate an anti-elitist communication style, which, they claim, directly connects them with ordinary people. The internet therefore appears to be the perfect tool for populist leaders. In this study, we show that this notion holds up to rigorous empirical testing. Building on survey data from Italy and Germany, we find a positive correlation at the individual level between internet use and voting for populist parties. We then demonstrate that this relationship is causal with an instrumental variable strategy, instrumenting internet use with broadband coverage at the municipality level. Finally, we explore heterogeneity in our sample in order to test for three mechanisms that theoretically link internet use to populist voting. Our tests indicate that broadband internet allows populists to effectively activate pre-existing political attitudes in the electorate.

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Populism Research Group is a platform bringing together scholars and students working on populism or topics related to populism. For more information, please visit:
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