

# 4th International ESS Conference

## Turbulent times in Europe: Instability, insecurity and inequality

### 15-17 April 2019 | University of Mannheim

#### A2. Electoral participation in a turbulent era

The session focuses on political engagement and, more precisely, political participation in elections. In the latter years, many citizens throughout the developed world have become increasingly critical towards politicians, political institutions and even liberal democracy itself. While these developments have had important consequences upon citizens' voting patterns (most notably, the rise of radical and populist parties at both the right- and the left- side of the political spectrum), as well as upon electoral volatility and the configuration of party systems in many countries, they also pose an important challenge for political participation itself.

Thus, one of the first obvious avenues of research is the following: how do the different (and varying) levels of political efficacy; confidence in institutions; satisfaction with democracy and with the way it works; affect participation in elections? Recent studies have also pointed to a renewal of the importance of socio-demographic factors for electoral behaviour and, most importantly, for the propensity to vote for the so-called new parties, many of which are also radical and populist as well. To what extent can their conclusions be extended to electoral participation?

More generally, this session aims at studying the effects of a wide array of attitudes and beliefs on voting, understood in the participatory sense: to vote, or not to do so. Therefore, proposals will also be welcomed that investigate the relationship between both short-term and long-term factors that are traditionally related to electoral behaviour. On top of the classical ones, such as left-right ideology, studies that deal with attitudes on a wide array of dimensions that can contribute to shape electoral competition also fit in this session. These may include, for instance, studies that analyse the eventual effects of attitudes towards migration (or towards the EU), given the increasing salience that these are reported to have in many countries for the whom-to-vote-for decision.

Finally, work that takes advantage of the wealth of information of ESS surveys to explore more innovative avenues of research (for instance, is there a relationship between attitudes or behaviour driven by environmental concerns and the propensity to vote?) is also fully consistent with the goals of this session.

Session Organiser:  
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