

IMPACT OF POPULIST REGIMES ON GLOBAL CARBON EMISSIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

Recent studies have asserted that populism and climate change agenda are inextricably linked with each other. While literature has explored structural and ideological explanations to link populism and climate change skepticism, there's a significant gap in our understanding of this causality. This paper explores the relationship between populism and climate change indirectly via the channels of the country's CO₂ emissions, intensity and its annual share of global total. Using a least square regression model on a balanced panel data of 32 populist countries over the period 1989-2019, we found that the country's annual share of global CO₂ emissions rises when it becomes extremely populist. The estimates show a strong presence of pollution halo effect in these countries. However, we could not establish any positive significant impact of populist regimes on per capita CO₂ emissions and CO₂ intensity. Estimates from the average cross-sectional model show no direct impact of populism on CO₂ emissions and intensity. Analysing the new wave of populism, we found populism to be hostile towards climate change discourse but this skepticism turned out to be based more profoundly on economic concerns rather than structural and ideological base of populist rhetoric. Mitigation policies which are inclusive of people's short run economic welfare lead to more efficient climate change actions in populist regimes.

Key Words: Climate Change, CO₂ Emissions, Populism, Populist Regimes

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