Backlash or normalization? The gender dynamics of far-right voting

While gender equality issues play an important role in far-right discourses, attitudes toward gender equality have received remarkably limited consideration in empirical analyses of why people vote for a far-right party. We argue that attitudes such as modern sexism are profoundly connected to far-right parties' discourses, and consequently, are expected to affect the probability of voting for the far right, both as a predisposition and as an activated motivation. We distinguish backlash activation, in which sexism becomes electorally consequential as a reaction to feminist mobilization, and normalization activation, associated to the visibility of far-right sexist discourses. Using panel data from Spain we show that modern sexism is indeed an important factor in the rise of the far-right party Vox. We further show that the activation of sexism was more related to feminist mobilization than to the normalization of sexist discourses that came with the enhanced visibility of the far right.