



HSE
University



Populist Mobilization, Globalization and Locality in East and West

HSE University, Moscow, Russia

7-8 April 2022

The **joint HSE University – Freie Universität Berlin Doctoral Workshop** aims to explore the connections between populism / populist mobilization and hybrid trends such as conservative politics and discourses, neo-liberal interventions, (de-)globalization and reterritorialization. We also want to examine how the particularities of different modernization paths have shaped specific conditions under which populist mobilization and politics emerge today in former Socialist countries as well as in established democratic societies.

We will address three main dimensions of the rise of populism and its connection with broader trends such as (de-)globalization and new conservatism: 1) managing diversity and place-based / transnational identities, 2) socio-economic development and 3) electoral politics and authoritarianism. By analyzing how these three dimensions interact, we want to go beyond a more conventional focus on state / elite discourses or “top-down” populist and conservative politics to unveil a more complex and multifaceted picture of the factors that inform populist mobilization and contestation in the post-socialist context.

In particular, we want to shed light on hybrid trends that challenge the black and white binary of (Western) democratic liberalism vs. (Eastern) authoritarian populism, for example authoritarian neo-liberalism. Indeed, the co-existence of conservative discourses and neo-liberal policies give rise to other, under-explored forms of populist mobilizations “from below” such as the defense of place-based identities against neo-liberal interventions. This critique of globalization “from below” may lead to a reterritorialization of identities and populist contestation of elites. It also points to the question of center-periphery relations and the rural-urban divide in populist and conservative movements in the post-socialist context.

As a result, we witness varieties of conservatism and populist mobilization at the societal and state level, responding in different ways to the challenges of globalization and the question of the relationship between identity and place in a globalized world. Belonging, place and identity are connected in different ways to populist mobilization. On one side, we can find in the post-socialist world (non-Western) models of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism supporting specific understandings of ethnic and cultural diversity. On the other side, the defense of place-based identities or localism does not preclude the connection to global solidarity networks, showing how the global and the local are also interconnected in contemporary local communities.

We invite papers addressing the following questions and themes:

- ***Elite Contestation***: How “We the people” and concepts such as the common good are defined in different populist movements, what discourses and grievances

underlie people vs. elite discourses, and how do they connect to conservative, neoliberal policies and globalization?

- ***Migration and Diversity***: How and by which (collective) actors is migration politicized in different social contexts? Which categories and concepts (race, nationalities, ethnicity, class, gender etc.) are used in different attempts to manage and govern diversity and transnationalism? What role does populism play in conflicts over migration, and how and by what political forces and ideas is populism challenged? How do varying historical experiences of colonization and decolonization, as well as contemporary issues and developments related to a contested global order inform conflicts over migration? How do authoritarian and democratic regimes differ in their attempts to govern diverse societies?
- ***Populist Economics***: Populist movements propose a variety of economic programs to address developmental issues in their countries. The discourses of economics often concern middle income traps, relative deprivation vis-a-vis comparator countries, and the necessity of the state in coordinating investment. Alternatively, some populist movements advocate a business-led developmental model. What core elements do populist economics share, and what varieties of populist economics are there? What discourses do populists use to convey them?
- ***The Role of History***: Populist discourses often refer to a romanticized “heartland” and/or an idealized period of time that evoke feelings of nostalgia, which have subsequently been “destroyed” by contemporary establishment forces. How are “memory politics”, discourses and symbolic references of the past in post-Soviet countries used to inform populist politics and political strategies in the current day? What role do these ideas play in helping to construct and stabilize the state, justify the strategies of populist leaders, or as a means to resist economic forces of globalization?

PhD Students are invited to send their abstracts of 350 words to ldipuppo@hse.ru and mihai.varga@fu-berlin.de until **January 31st, 2022. The results of the selection will be announced on February 14th, 2022.**

The two-days workshop will feature three panels and a final roundtable discussion. Participants will receive feedback on their papers from senior academics and prominent speakers in the field of populism and populist mobilization will deliver two keynote lectures.

It is assumed that the event could happen in offline format; however, due to uncertainties of the pandemic, a distant or hybrid formats could be chosen – according to the situation at the beginning of March 2022.

For limited number of participants’ their travel and visa costs can be reimbursed on request from the institutional partnership project HSE–FUB supported by the Alexander von Humboldt foundation. Invitations to apply for visas will be provided.

Organizing Committee:

Lili Di Puppo (Assistant Professor of Sociology, HSE University, Moscow)

Christian Fröhlich (Associate Professor of Sociology, HSE University, Moscow)

Julia Glathe (Post-Doctoral Researcher, Freie Universität Berlin)

Mihai Varga (Senior Lecturer, Freie Universität Berlin)