

Populist Power, Faith, and Precarity in Europe

May 24-25, 2019

Columbia Global Center | Paris

Call for Papers

Abstract Deadline: **February 20, 2019**

Paper Deadline: **May 10, 2019**

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

The Institute for Religion, Culture and Public Life (IRCPL) at Columbia University in collaboration with the Columbia Global Center | Paris and co-sponsored by our partners in Europe, is organizing a conference entitled “Populist Power, Faith, and Precarity in Europe.” The conference will consider various forms of popular power in Europe by examining how populism is defined in various contexts, the role of historical movements in the present-day construction of populist narratives and rhetoric(s), how the use of religious identity shapes these movements, as well as the relationship between populist ambitions and how a movement engages with different media platforms.

Although “populism” is a contested term, here we use it to characterize political trends in which leaders mobilize social groups for political action through rhetoric(s) that weave together emotionally charged themes into a message of economic uplift, nationalism, the wrestling of power from entrenched elites, and claims to the protection of the state, people, identity, religion and class. Over the past several years, populist parties across Europe have gained increasing support and various levels of electoral success, both in established democracies and in former Soviet states. The recent victories of populist parties and leaders across the continent directs us to question the relationship between economic security and voting behavior, and the role of populist mobilization across different class, gender, racial and religious groups.

The two-day conference at the Columbia Global Center | Paris will provide an interdisciplinary forum for scholars, local experts, and advanced doctoral students to investigate the themes outlined above and to explore how populist movements are being deployed across Europe. Following the conference, select participants will be invited to contribute to a revised and extended version of their papers to an edited book volume and other online writing fora.

Contributors are invited to submit abstracts for the following thematic panels which are elaborated below.

Conceptualizing Popular Politics in Europe

- Theorizations of populism post-1970s
- Comparative studies of contemporary populist parties, leaders and movements
- Notions of legitimacy, sovereignty, democracy, and authoritarianism
- The impact, changes, and transformations of political systems interacting with populist movements
- Discourses of nationalism, civil rights, equality, religion, and secularism
- The rise of populism in Europe and its relationship to new forms of constitutionalism and illiberal democracy

The Past in the Present: Populism in Historical Perspective

- The history of populist movements in European contexts
- The role of leadership, political parties, ideological positionings, and extra-parliamentary mobilization
- Tracing popular support and/or opposition to political institutions, established policies, values, and norms (i.e. EU, pluralism, open borders, etc.)
- The social, political, and religious roots of populist movements

Amplifying Religion and Identity in Political Discourse

- Relationships between right- and left-wing populisms and religion
- Religiously motivated “culture wars”
- Use of religion and religious identity by populist leaders and movements to pursue national, economic, and social objectives
- Ways in which populist movements envision community and identity, and target particular social groups (e.g. religious communities, ethnic groups, and economic classes)

Media(ted) Populism

- The contribution of traditional media and social media to contentious politics and social movements, in the past and today
- Tension or support between populist figures and media and “illegitimate” or “fake” media
- Media and “anti-politics” rhetoric

Inequality and Financial Crises: The Role of Economics and Globalization

- Notions of populism specific to various socioeconomic classes
- Economic precarity and inaccessibility of resources correlated with changing views of what constitutes legitimate use of authority in Europe
- Diverse framings of welfare and who is mobilized around such claims
- The impact of financial crises on the rise of populist movements across Europe.

GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

Please submit the abstract to Marianna Pecoraro (IRCPL Program and Communications Manager) at **mp3699@columbia.edu** with the subject line of the email titled “Populism Europe Abstract” by **February 20, 2019**. Abstracts should be 250 words maximum in length. They should be titled and have all requisite bibliographic citations. Along with the abstract, please include a detailed, recent curriculum vitae/resume (no longer than 3 pages). Please include your last name in the title of every document you submit.

Abstracts will be evaluated according to the following categories: originality of theme, clear data and methodology, clarity, and relevance of the proposal to the conference theme. Questions regarding the content and themes of the conference may be directed to K. Soraya Batmanghelichi at **k.s.batmanghelichi@ikos.uio.no**. Walid Hammam (IRCPL Associate Director) can be reached at **wh2326@columbia.edu**.