

The Global Rise of Populism
Working Group
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Sponsored by: International Political Sociology (IPS) Section

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Objective:

To explore the nexus between populism and IR, the working group will 1) investigate underlying dynamics that give rise to populist developments, 2) analyze commonalities and differences between the different phenomena commonly labeled populism, both in terms of domestic and foreign policy, 3) identify and scrutinize global links between different populist movements and 4) establish a more precise theoretical framework for the analysis of populism as a global phenomenon.

Overview:

The idea of the working group is to bring together scholars from various theoretical and methodological backgrounds, as well as with different regional expertise, to explore to what extent it might be fruitful to analyze populism specifically from the perspective of IR. In this context, the working group functions as the seed of more long-term cooperation between the participants as well as other interested colleagues both from within IR and related disciplines. We are therefore proposing two milestones on the way to institutionalizing what is from the outset designed to become a research program on global populism. Firstly, we would propose to the participants to pursue the issues further in a series of follow-up workshops and/or conferences, for which we would strive to acquire additional external funding. Secondly, as the first interim aim of the research cooperation to be established, we would propose to work on a joint edited volume on global populism, to be published with a first-rate publisher (Cambridge or Oxford UP). Given the current salience of populism in the general media as well as political science more generally, we are optimistic that such a project will be met with interest on the side of publishers.

The full-day workshop will combine two introductory input presentations with shorter presentations by participants followed by discussion. The input presentations will address two topics: (1) a mainly empirical overview on the rise of populism as a global phenomenon and a field of interest for IR and (2) a presentation on different avenues for the theorization of populism specifically as a global phenomenon. Professor Robert Patman, University of Otago, New Zealand, has kindly agreed to give the first input presentation on empirical developments of global populism. The second, theoretical, input presentation will be given by the working group coordinators. Following these general introductory remarks, we will discuss theoretical and empirical core issues in thinking populism globally, based on short presentations by participants on specific theoretical frameworks concepts, or particularly relevant empirical cases, based on previously submitted abstracts and a call for papers advertised globally. The purpose at this stage is not to present polished papers but rather to identify core theoretical issues and arguments at stake in the analysis of populism as a global phenomenon as well as empirical cases suited for comparative analysis.