

NO POPULISTS

LOOK RIGHT →

PROGRAMME

FROM FRINGE TO FOREFRONT: UNDERSTANDING
 POPULIST PARTIES AND THEIR GROWING
 INFLUENCE IN EUROPEAN POLITICS

13.05.-14.05.2024

13.05.2024

Monday

13.00h	Registration
14.00h	Message of greeting and introduction Manuel Becker, Head of Scientific Programme AIA NRW Inci Öykü Yener-Roderburg, Fellow AIA NRW
14.15h	Panel I - Populist perspectives: European elections and party strategies <hr/> Conceptualising sidestreaming: How populist radical right-wing parties reach out to minority voters Mari-Liis Jakobson, School of Governance, Law and Society, Tallinn University Transnational populism and democratic renewal in Europe. The case of DiEM25 in the 2019 & 2024 EP election Panos Panayotu, Department of Global Studies, Aarhus University EU parliament elections as a populist barometer: Evidence from resident and non-resident citizens' voter turnout Sebastian Umpierrez de Reguero, Tallinn University/Universidad Autónoma de Madrid Party activism and participation today: The case of the populist radical right Stijn van Kessel, School of Politics and International Relations, Queen Mary University of London Chair Inci Öykü Yener-Roderburg, Fellow AIA NRW
15.45h	Coffee Break
16.00h	Panel II - German populism unveiled: Insights into emerging parties & ideologies <hr/> What we talk about when we talk about 'the elite' in populism studies: Re-examining an often-neglected term in the cases of Die Linke and AfD Lazaros Karavasilis, Institute of Intercultural and International Studies, University of Bremen A transnational populist party in the making: the case of DAVA in Germany Mahir Tokatli, Department for Political Science, RWTH Aachen University Much ado about nothing - Understanding Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht Sarah Wagner, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics, Queen's University Belfast
17.30h	Chair Manuel Becker, Head of Scientific Programme, AIA NRW
19.00h	Dinner at "Bastei" Bastei, Von-Sandt-Ufer, 53173, Bonn-Bad Godesberg

14.05.2024

Tuesday

09.00h	Coffee and Networking
09.30h	<p>Panel III - Exploring populist trends: Global perspectives and case studies</p> <p>Navigating populist currents: A comparative analysis with a focus on Turkey Şebnem Yardımçı-Geyikçi, Institute for Science and Ethics, University of Bonn</p> <p>Video Data Analysis (VDA) as a novel method in the study of populist party leaders: The case of Turkey's 2023 presidential elections Pelin Ayan Musil, Institute of International Relations, Anglo-American University Prague</p> <p>What makes populism appealing to voters in Eastern Europe Sorina Soare, Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Florence</p> <p>Ethnocentric populism in the US: Make America white again? Philipp Adorf, Institute for Political Science and Sociology, University of Bonn</p> <p>Chair Katja Freistein, Academic Coordinator Fellowship Programme, AIA NRW</p>
11.00h	Coffee Break
11.15h	Closing Plenary
12.00h	<p>Lunch at "Rheinzeit" Rheinzeit, Rheinallee 25c, 53173, Bonn-Bad Godesberg</p>

**FROM FRINGE TO FOREFRONT: UNDERSTANDING
 POPULIST PARTIES AND THEIR GROWING
 INFLUENCE IN EUROPEAN POLITICS**

Panel I - Populist perspectives: European elections and party strategies

Conceptualising Sidestreaming: How Populist Radical Right-Wing Parties Reach Out to Minority Voters

Mari-Liis Jakobson (Tallinn University)

While the populist radical right is typically viewed as monist and exclusionary in its conceptualisation of 'the people' it aims to represent, developments in many Western democracies suggest that this is not necessarily the case, as many populist radical right parties are also attempting to entice ethnic, religious and sexual minority voters. The presentation aims to generate discussion over whether such campaign strategies can also be witnessed in the 2024 European Parliament elections.

Transnational Populism and Democratic Renewal in Europe: The Case of DiEM25 in the 2019 & 2024 EP Elections

Panos Panayotu (Aarhus University)

This presentation examines how DiEM25's transnational articulation of populism can affect Europe's democratic politics in terms of advancing the formation of a transnational collective identity and expanding party politics on the pan-European level. In doing so it analyses DiEM's strategy in the 2019 and 2024 European Parliament elections and argues that DiEM can be seen as a case that pre-figures a form of politics that is currently in the making or yet to emerge. A form of European politics where democratic contestation over alternative policies will finally take place on the EU level and genuine transnational Europarties will have an important role to play in EU politics. Finally, the presentation demonstrates that far from being anti-EU, populism can in fact advance the European project by constructively responding to its democratic deficit.

EU Parliament Elections as a Populist Barometer: Evidence from Resident and Non-Resident Citizens' Voter Turnout

Sebastián Umpierrez de Reguero (Autonomous University of Madrid)
Anca Turcu (University of Central Florida)

As a mid-term political process, supranational elections can be perceived as a barometer of what to expect prospectively at national- and sub-national levels of elections. While existing literature has already reported a negative effect on the electoral support for radical populist parties at the EU parliament as compared to national elections, there is no comprehensive explanation of Ehin and Talving (2021) significant correlation. Controlling by electoral rules and party-level factors, I use a cross-national dataset based on administrative data to explain why voter turnout varies when it comes to radical populist parties across these two levels of election. Disaggregating resident and non-resident citizens' voter turnout, this article also intertwines with the emerging literature on political preferences and minority representation. By zooming into the voter turnout of non-resident citizens, this contribution also interacts with preceding research on the political economy of voting by considering different costs of information and the rules of the game.

We take a comparative case study approach, and investigate the 'life of the party' within four seasoned PRRPs which are well-established within their party systems: the Lega for Salvini Premier, formerly Lega Nord (LSP – League for Salvini Premier); the Vlaams Belang (VB – Flemish Interest); Perussuomalaiset (PS – the Finns party); and, finally, the Schweizerische Volkspartei/Union Démocratique du Centre (SVP/UDC – Swiss People's Party/Democratic Union of the Centre). The book's empirical account of PRRPs as organisations sheds light on how and why they are trying and managing to avoid the membership decline affecting their mainstream competitors – which has implications for understandings of political parties at large.

Populist Radical Right Parties in Action: The Survival of the Mass Party

Daniele Albertazzi (University of Surrey)
Stijn van Kessel (Queen Mary University of London)
Adrian Favero (University of Groningen)
Niko Hatakka (University of Helsinki)
Judith Sijstermans (University of Edinburgh)
Mattia Zulianello (University of Trieste)

In our study, we focus on populist radical right parties (PRRPs), which currently pose perhaps the most serious electoral threat to traditional mainstream parties in Europe. An under-researched feature of these parties is their willingness to invest in the creation of communities of loyal partisan activists – a practice that mainstream parties have allegedly disengaged from (Heinisch and Mazzoleni 2016; Whiteley et al. 2021). PRRPs, then, do not only pose an electoral challenge to established political parties, but also to academic approaches arguing that the age of mass parties is over. While there certainly are prominent examples of PRRPs choosing a lean and leader-centred organisation, several others appear to see the benefits of developing an organisation which, among other advantages, allows them to signal societal rootedness and 'closeness to the people'.

Panel II - German populism unveiled: Insights into emerging parties & ideologies

What we talk about when we talk about 'the elite' in populism studies: Re-examining an often-neglected term in the cases of Die Linke and AfD

Lazaros Karavasilis (University of Bremen)

Populism studies have almost exclusively focused on understanding the phenomenon of populism based on how 'the people' are constructed as a political subject. Indeed, most of the relevant literature revolves around the different connotations that 'the people' have and under which conditions 'the people' become a populist subject in a political actor's discourse and practices. At the same time, populism's other constitutive term, that of 'the elite', has received surprisingly minimal attention. While there have been studies that focus on the anti-elitism aspect of populist actors, only a few have provided an in-depth examination of 'the elite' term. This paper aims to offer a theoretical and empirical understanding of what populist parties mean when they talk about 'the elite' and how the different connotations of the term can clarify the degree of populism in political parties.

A Transnational Populist Party in the Making: the Case of DAVA in Germany

Inci Öykü Yener-Roderburg (AIA NRW and University of Cologne)

Mahir Tokatlı (RWTH Aachen University)

At the beginning of the year, shortly before the European Parliament elections, DAVA (Democratic Alliance for Diversity and Awakening) was founded as a political association in Germany. With its close personal and ideological ties to the authoritarian AKP (Justice and Development Party) in Turkey, there are many overlaps.

Populist parties are often successful when they are able to exploit windows of opportunities and succeed in addressing political issues that are ignored by the established parties, i.e. when they manage to offer a serious alternative on certain policies. In this case, several points can be noted: (1) As the elections to the European Parliament are approaching, these so-called second-order elections, are fruitful for small or new emerging parties. Besides, unlike federal or state elections, there is no threshold, which increases the chances to enter the parliament; (2) Germany has renewed its citizenship law, which allows dual citizenship for Turkey-originated people; (3) the "mother party," the AKP, and its transnational support can play a major role in its success; (4) all parties in the Federal Republic have a more or less pro-Israeli position on the conflict between Israel and Palestine. This means that the party system cannot satisfy the voters' demand to be pro-Palestinian

Much Ado About Nothing - Understanding Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht

Constantin Wurthmann (University of Erlangen)

Sarah Wagner (Queen's University Belfast)

The recent launch of Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht (BSW), led by Sahra Wagenknecht, marks a significant development in German politics. Departing from her previous affiliation with The Left party, Wagenknecht's establishment of BSW has ignited debates and speculation regarding its potential impact on the country's political landscape. Notably, Wagenknecht's reputation for advocating an anti-immigration stance suggests the emergence of a left-authoritarian platform, poised to challenge traditional political paradigms. This research note delves into the demand for BSW and its left-authoritarian agenda within Germany. Leveraging individual-level data analysis, we investigate the structural factors influencing preferences for Wagenknecht's new party over The Left. Our findings illuminate the ideological segments gravitating towards BSW, particularly those embracing sociocultural right-wing ideologies, expressing skepticism towards migration, and voicing discontent with the prevailing democratic framework on top of centre-left support. Most importantly, this study finds that one's perception of Wagenknecht is the essential driving forces behind BSW. By examining the electoral potential of BSW under Wagenknecht's leadership, this study provides crucial insights into the

Panel III - Exploring populist trends: Global perspectives

Navigating Populist Currents: A Comparative Analysis with a Focus on Turkey

Şebnem Yardımçı-Geyikçi (University of Bonn)

This presentation scrutinizes the defining characteristics of populist movements and parties, shedding light on their anti-elitist rhetoric, the strategies they employ to engage with the electorate, and the consequent impacts on democratic institutions. We aim to dissect the manner in which these entities distill complex societal issues into stark 'us versus them' dichotomies, frequently resulting in the polarization of public discourse and erosion of pluralistic values. Turkey serves as a salient case study of populist governance's evolution and its capacity to consolidate power through the exploitation of national crises and the manipulation of democratic processes to maintain authority. Moreover, the paper will explore the ramifications of populist movements on international relations and the stability of democracies, drawing parallels between Turkey's trajectory under the AKP and similar manifestations of populism worldwide. The objective of this comparative analysis is to illuminate the distinctive and shared strategies populist parties utilize to acquire and uphold political power. By integrating theoretical perspectives with empirical findings from Turkey and beyond, this paper provides a thorough understanding of the mechanics of populism and its enduring impact on the landscape of global politics.

Video Data Analysis (VDA) as a Novel Method in the Study of Populist Party Leaders: The Case of Turkey's 2023 Presidential Elections

Toygar Sinan Baykan (Kırklareli University, Turkey)

Yaprak Gürsoy (London School of Economics)

Pelin Ayan Musil (Institute of International Relations, Prague, Czechia)

Today, visual data is more abundant and accessible than ever thanks to the increasing penetration of smartphones and social media to daily lives. Yet, methodologies deployed by researchers of populism are still overwhelmingly focused on textual analysis (such as party programmes, manifestos, legal documents and official leader speeches). We problematize this conventional proclivity to focus only on texts in the study of populism and highlight the increasingly ocular-centric nature of contemporary politics. Thus, this paper shares the conviction of performative and socio-cultural approaches to populism by acknowledging their emphasis on the importance of "visuality" while drawing attention to this approach's methodological vagueness in the use of visual evidence. The paper proposes a more specific, systematic and nuanced way to analyse visual data through the application and interpretation of Video Data Analysis (VDA) for studies on populism. To illustrate our methodological proposition, we have collected and analysed publicly accessible videos, encompassing a total of 350 instances of situational interactions between everyday voters and prominent Turkish political figures during the 2023 presidential election campaigns: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan who is the populist head of government and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu who is the non-populist main opposition leader. Beyond Turkish politics, the paper has implications for the study of contemporary populism and leader-voter linkages.

What Makes Populism Appealing to Voters in Eastern Europe

Sergiu Gherghina (University of Glasgow)

Sorina Soare (University of Florence)

Istvan Miskolczy (University of Glasgow)

The supply side of populism has been often investigated with emphasis on who conveys the messages, how these are formulated and conveyed, the evolution of political actors or their main characteristics. In spite of this rich literature, populism has been rarely analysed from the perspective of its meaning for the citizens. This is surprising especially because populism has evolved into an expression to which critics and supporters attach values, and which is often used as an insult or a pejorative descriptor. To address this gap in the literature, this article seeks to explain what are the elements in the populist discourse to which people in Hungary and Romania react. To this end, we conduct semi-structured interviews with citizens – both voters and non-voters in the most recent legislative elections – in each of the two countries. These countries are selected to increase variation on the history of populism in the political system, consolidation of representative democracy and the party system format.

Ethnocentric populism in the US: Make America white again?

Philipp Adorf (University of Bonn)

In 2016, Donald Trump's success in the primaries was to a significant extent attributed to the support he garnered from Republican voters harboring deep racial resentments along with an animus towards a political elite that they perceived to prioritize the interests of minorities. As president, Trump made international headlines for his defense of white nationalist protesters while his appeals to white identity have only intensified since leaving office. In many respects, Trump follows a historical pattern of right-wing populist U.S. politicians who champion an idealized version of a 'real' America, implicitly tethered to a white racial identity.

This analysis will explore the growing sense of status threat among conservative U.S. voters and its implications for American democracy. Recent years have witnessed a notable surge in perceived discrimination against whites among Republican voters, significantly bolstering Trump's resilience against scandals and legal challenges within his own party. The rise of ethnocentric populist sentiments among conservative white voters in the U.S. offers valuable insights and lessons for Europe as well, illuminating the ideological shifts within a once dominant group feeling threatened by the diversification of society.