



# 18-19 MARCH 2021 POPULISM IN POWER AND ITS SOCIOECONOMIC POLICIES IN EUROPE

Faculty of Political  
and Social Sciences  
SCUOLA NORMALE SUPERIORE  
Altana  
Piazza Strozzi  
Florence

Local organizers:  
**GUGLIELMO MEARDI** Scuola Normale Superiore  
**MANUELA CAIANI** Scuola Normale Superiore

Elaborazione a cura del Servizio Comunicazione e Relazioni Esterne | SNS

[eventiculturali.firenze@sns.it](mailto:eventiculturali.firenze@sns.it)



The twenty-first century has seen a surge in the populist phenomenon across all regions of the world, with populist parties and leaders gaining crucial policy positions in parliaments and governments. Different combinations of economic, political, societal and cultural factors have led to the manifestation of distinct 'varieties' or 'subtypes' of populism and, in turn, to different categorizations by scholars, such as, among others, right-wing vs. left-wing (or exclusionary vs. inclusionary) populism. While the definition of 'populist' remains often contested, the call for ordinary people to stand against elites and reject intermediary representative institutions has been recorded from parties with different ideological underpinnings, discourse and organizational features, which we can expect to be reflected in distinct policy platforms. Yet policy agendas and reforms, compared to their discourses and communication instruments pursued by populist actors, are still a relatively under-researched area of study. The aim of the present workshop is to contribute to fill this gap by combining theoretical reflections and empirical analyses.

While the initial association of populism with specific combinations of economic and fiscal policies (the notion of 'economic populism' derived from the study of Latin American governments between the 1940s and 1970s) has now been dismissed, the idea of identifying an inherent, ideal-typical kind of populist policy or style of policy-making still sparks debates. The workshop will address this issue in an explorative way and through methodological pluralism, combining qualitative and quantitative studies that consider different policy areas, both at national and subnational level, as well as the wider transformations of societies, labour markets and economic systems in which policy-making is embedded. The workshop is organized along three main themes: the economic and social policies promoted by populist parties; the impact of populist policy-makers on labour market policies and labour relations; the relationship between populist policies and broader social issues, such as climate change and gender equality. By taking into account the analytical frameworks that have already been proposed to understand changes in the field socioeconomic policy, the workshop will shed light on the nature and direction of policy choices by populist actors, which adds important contributions to our understanding of the populist phenomenon as a whole.

Through the selection of single contributions and the overall themes that will be analyzed, the workshop will bridge the theoretical perspectives of two distinct disciplines that in this case appear especially complementary, those of political science and economic sociology: on the one hand, the lenses of political science and policy studies allow to unveil the dynamics of party competition, the relationship with social movements and the interactions among policy actors; on the other hand, the focus of economic sociology on the relationship between workplace and the wider social structures and processes will place the analysis of populist policies in the broader context of our changing labour markets, economies and societies. The following topics will be addressed: welfare and family policies; fiscal reforms, redistribution and taxation; market regulation; labour relations and labour market policies; migrants' integration and inclusion policies, but also populism and broader social challenges of the 21st century (such as health and environmental issues).

## DAY 1 (14-18.40)

14.00 – 14.15 Welcome and introduction

SESSION I

chair Manuela Caiani

14.15 - 14.35

14.35 - 14.55

14.55 - 15.15

15.15 - 15.35

15.35 – 15.55 Break

SESSION II

chair Guglielmo Meardi

15.55 - 16.15

16.15 - 16.35

16.35 - 16.55

16.55 - 17.15

17.15 – 17.35 Break 20 min

## SESSION I

- **ALEXANDRE AFONSO** (Leiden University)  
*Social and Economic Correlates of Aggregate Support for the Radical Right in Portugal*
- **OSCAR MAZZOLENI** (Université de Lausanne)  
**GILLES IVALDI** (Sciences Po-CEVIPOF )  
*Populism, Producerism and Sovereignism. The Moral Economy of the Radical Right-wing Parties.*
- **ARIANNA TASSINARI** (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies, Cologne)  
*Concertation and populisms in crisis-hit countries*  
**MATTEO JESSOULA** (University of Milan)  
**MARCELLO NATILI** (University of Milan)  
**EMMANUELE PAVOLINI** (University of Macerata)  
*Right-Wing Populists and Welfare Policy.*

## SESSION II Research in progress (Phd students at the SNS and EUI)

- **MATTEO MARENCO** (Scuola Normale Superiore)  
*Populist parties and the politics of 'digital outsiders' (co-authored with Beatrice Carella)*
- **BEATRICE CARELLA** (Scuola Normale Superiore)  
*Anti-neoliberal populism in Southern Europe and social policies*
- **FRED PAXTON** (European University Institute)  
*Populist radical right and local government*
- **REBECCA CAROLINE KITTEL** (European University Institute)  
*Patterns of populists in parliaments: a comparison of populists' debating behaviour and its influence on the electorate in Europe.*

17.35 – 18.40 Keynote:

**DAVID OST** (Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton)  
*Populism, Fascism, and Why So Many Workers Turn from Left to Right*  
chair **GABOR, SCHEIRING**

## DAY 2 (14 – 17.00)

SESSION I

chair MANUELA CAIANI

14.00 - 14.20

14.20 - 14.40

14.40 - 15.00

15.00 - 15.20

15.20-15.50 Break

SESSION II

chair ENRICO PADOAN

15.50 - 16.10

16.10 - 16.30

16.30 – 17 Final comments

## SESSION I

- **RATHGEB, PHILIP** (University of Konstanz)  
**MICHAEL BAGGESEN KLITGAARD** (University of Konstanz)  
*Attack or Adapt? The Institutional Politics of Populist Radical Right Parties*
- **GUGLIELMO MEARDI** (Scuola Normale Superiore)  
**IGOR GUARDIANCICH** (University of Padova)  
*Back to the Familialist Future: The Rise of Social Policy for Ruling Populist Radical Right Parties in Italy and Poland*  
**DOROTHEE BOHLE** (European University Institute)  
*Austerity and the rise of right-wing nationalism: Policy responses to the Great Financial Crisis in Europe's Periphery*
- **GABOR, SCHEIRING** (Bocconi University, Research Fellow of Dondena Research Centre for Social Dynamics and Public Policy)  
*The Political Economy of Illiberal Populist Governance: Poland and Hungary compared*

## SESSION II

- **BALSA LUBARDA** (CEU, Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy)  
**MANUELA CAIANI** (Scuola Normale Superiore)  
*Environmental policies of right wing populist in power: the cases of Hungary, Poland, Italy and Czech Republic.*
- **MICHELLE FALKENBACH** (University of Michigan School of Public Health)  
*Populism in power and health policies: the cases of Austria and Italy at the local level).*