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SOC 190

The re-birth of populism across the globe

This is a research-heavy course that focuses on contemporary populist movements (in world-historical perspective). The precursor to the current global populist wave was the rise of new movements and regimes in Latin America in the 1990s. After the 2008 financial crisis, revolutions and protests erupted in quite dissimilar geographies: the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street in the US, the failed Arab revolutions, horizontalist revolts in Southern Europe, ISIS in the Muslim world, and right-wing radicalization in Venezuela and Ukraine.

These movements also triggered each other. Tahrir inspired Occupy. The post-Arab Spring refugee wave (and fear of Islamism) fed into further right-wing radicalization in France, Poland, Germany, and Hungary. Repeating the Latin American experience, some of these movements might lead to populist regimes (or at least populist political options), as the rise of Trump, Corbyn, the daughter Le Pen, Syriza, Podemos, and Sanders suggests.

Since it has been frequently stated that downwardly mobile middle-class youth are central to this “fall of the center,” we will discuss the concept of class. Not only academics and journalists, but even populist politicians themselves put the category “middle class” in the center of their appeal (most recently, Donald Trump pictured himself as the savior of the “disappearing middle class”). How can we test the claim that the sociological base of this new wave is indeed a class actor? Given that most populist movements and regimes have cross-class characters, what is the payoff of focusing on political economic issues in our analyses of populism?

The required reading load for this class is pretty light, but you are expected to develop your own reading list (based on this syllabus and further guidance you will get during class and office hours).

Assignments

Each student will choose two or more populist movements and compare them along the following axes: reasons for emergence; demographic bases of support; main resources; policy implications; the prominence of violence; leader-mass organization balance; reasons for success or failure; and impact on democracy.

Especially after the second week, most of class time will be based on discussion and exchange of ideas (with the primary purpose of sharpening students’ focus on their own research projects). We will share information and ideas about the movements we are studying. This will be an opportunity for you to get feedback (from the professor and other students) for your ongoing project.

By **September 15**, you will decide which movements you are going to cover (on that date, you will submit **a paragraph on each of the movements** you have chosen and your rationale). On **October 13**, you will submit **preliminary tables** summarizing your analysis of the movements'/regimes' economic policy (and/or rhetoric), race and immigration policy (and/or rhetoric), and at least four other issues (of your own choosing). By **November 3**, you will be ready to present all comparisons and contrasts to class. **Starting September 22**, you will submit **short memos** that summarize the *additional* articles you have read that week for your project (except October 13). The last memo is due on October 27.

The final paper (15-20 pages) is due on **December 8**. The paper will present your findings on the movements of your choice in an academic article format.

Grading:

Attendance and participation: 20%

Assignments: 30%

Presentation: 10%

Final paper: 40%

September 1: Global revolt

Martin Jacques. "The death of neoliberalism and the crisis in western politics"

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/aug/21/death-of-neoliberalism-crisis-in-western-politics>

Mason, Paul. "Podemos: how Europe's political centre is being eaten by the radical left and nationalist right"

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/dec/21/podemos-europe-political-centre-radical-left-nationalist-right-spain-anti-austerity-party>

Matt O'Brien. "The stunning truth that explains the rise of the far-right in Britain and elsewhere"

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/05/31/the-simple-and-shocking-truth-that-explains-the-rise-of-far-right-politicians-everywhere/>

Tuğal. 2013 "Resistance Everywhere: The Gezi Revolt in Global Perspective." *New Perspectives on Turkey* 49: 147-162.

<http://sociology.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/faculty/tugal/Cihan%20Tugal%2C%20NPT-Gezi%20Revolt.pdf>

Further readings

Arrighi, Giovanni, Terence K. Hopkins, and Immanuel Wallerstein. 1989. *Anti-Systemic Movements*. London: Verso.

September 8: General characteristics of populism

Laclau, Ernesto. 1977. *Politics and ideology in Marxist theory: capitalism, fascism, populism*. London: NLB. Pp. 143-198.

September 15: Populist Wave

Mudde (2004), 'The Populist Zeitgeist', *Government and Opposition*, 39(3): 541–63.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00135.x/epdf>

Jansen, Robert S. (2011). 'Populist Mobilization: A New Theoretical Approach to Populism'. *Sociological Theory*, 29(2), pp. 75–96.

http://www-personal.umich.edu/~rsjansen/docs/ST_2011.pdf

Further readings

Laclau, Ernesto. 2005. *On Populist Reason*. London: Verso.

M Rooduijn, SL De Lange, W Van Der Brug. 2014. "A populist Zeitgeist? Programmatic contagion by populist parties in Western Europe." *Party Politics* 20/4: 563-575.

September 22: The American legacy

Kazin, Michal. 1995. *The Populist Persuasion: An American History*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Selections.

Further readings

Taggart, P. (2000), *Populism* (Buckingham: Open University Press).

Piven, Frances Fox and Richard A. Cloward. 2000. *Why Americans still don't Vote*. Boston: Beacon Press.

September 29: Current and recent populist regimes

Roberts, Kenneth. 2010. 'Latin America's Populist Revival', *SAIS Review* 27 (1), pp. 3-15.

<http://muse.jhu.edu/article/212482/pdf>

Weyland, Kurt, 1999. "Neoliberal Populism in Latin America and Eastern Europe" *Comparative Politics* 31/4.

Further readings

de la Torre, C. (2007), 'The Resurgence of Radical Populism in Latin America', *Constellations*, 14(3): 384–97.

October 6: Historical antecedents

Polanyi, Karl. 2001 [1944]. *The great transformation*. Boston: Beacon Press. Pp. 231-256. Skim 257-268.

Further readings

Moore, Barrington, Jr. 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Boston: Beacon Press.

October 13: Democratization and authoritarianism

Kaltwasser, Cristobal Rovira. 2012. 'The Ambivalence of Populism: Threat and Corrective for Democracy'. *Democratization* 9/2: 184–208.

Further readings

Kaltwasser, Cristobal Rovira. 2013. 'The Responses of Populist to Dahl's Democratic Dilemmas', *Political Studies*.

Kurt Weyland. 2013. "The Threat from the Populist Left." *Journal of Democracy* 24/3: 18-32.

<http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Weyland-24-3.pdf>

Levitsky, Steven and James Loxton. 2013. 'Populism and competitive authoritarianism in the Andes', *Democratization* 20/1: 107-136.

October 20: Middle class potentials

Therborn G. 2012. "Class in the 21st Century." *New Left Review* 78: 5-29.

<http://newleftreview.org/11/78/goran-therborn-class-in-the-21st-century>

Further readings

Tuğal, Cihan. 2015. "Elusive Revolt: The Contradictory Rise of Middle-Class Politics." *Thesis Eleven*
<http://sociology.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/faculty/tugal/Tugal-Thesis%20Eleven-2015.pdf>

Poulantzas, Nicos. 1974. *Fascism and Dictatorship*. London: NLB.

October 27: The contemporary American right

Arlie R. Hochschild. 2016. *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. The New Press.

November 3-November 10: Presentation of student projects

Readings to be determined.

November 17-24: No class

December 1: Presentation of student projects

Readings to be determined.