



The Rise of 'Populist Internationals'?: Exploring Transnational Activism from Left to Right

Workshop
Centre for Advanced International Studies (CAIS)
University of Exeter

Thursday 13 June 2019
12:30 – 18:30
Ibrahim Ahmed Room – Reed Hall

For questions please contact the organizers:
Bice Maiguashca (b.maiguashca@exeter.ac.uk) and
Gregorio Bettiza (g.bettiza@exeter.ac.uk)

2016, the year of 'Trump-and-Brexit', is now considered a benchmark date for the rise of 'populism', a virulent political force now being touted as the main threat to the global liberal order. Replacing the usual suspects of Islamist terrorists or rising powers like China and Russia, populists of both the left and right are now seen as the new danger, 'insiders' working from within the 'core' of globalization to dismantle it. Indeed, we are being told that we have entered an age of crisis in which new political cleavages between globalisations 'winners' and 'losers' or 'open societies' vs. 'closed ones' now trump the old left-right divide or what Steven Lukes called 'the grand dichotomy of the 20th century'.

This workshop seeks to critically interrogate this overall narrative by comparing and contrasting several cases of so called 'international populism' across the left-right political spectrum in light of three broad lines of inquiry. First, we want to investigate the critiques that activists on the right and on the left are mobilising against the established international order – invariably defined as liberal international order, capitalist world system, or globalization – and of the ideology/social imaginary that underpins it – invariably defined as liberal internationalism, neo-liberalism, or globalism. Conversely, we wish to identify and investigate what alternative visions of world order, if any, these supposed 'populists' are envisaging, especially as they relate to: (a) global governance institutions and rules; (b) the state, borders, and nationalism; (c) economic globalization and capitalism; (d) norms, values and identities (especially on human rights, gender, race, and religion).

Second, the workshop seeks to explore how these exemplars of left and right wing politics are organising in and across transnational, international and global spaces. More concretely, we are interested in mapping the networks – whether formal organizations and groupings, regularized meetings and conventions, *ad hoc* encounters, or online forums – through which their ideas are disseminated, information is circulated, strategies of contestation are shared, and collective mobilization is organized.

Third, the workshop seeks to explore and identify the embodied, practical, aspects of these different forms of political contestation. So what visual/aesthetic ‘symbols’ are deployed to signify criticism of the liberal international order? What discursive representations of global elites are circulated and reproduced - such as the ‘Eurocrat’ or the ‘Davos man’ – amongst activists? What particular modes of contestation are undertaken – e.g., protests (e.g. occupations, demonstrations), mimicry (e.g. holding separate summits, releasing alternative communiqués), or distinction (e.g. not attending meetings, speaking or dressing ‘differently’)?

The aim of the workshop is threefold.

1. To empirically identify and map: (i) what are the main critiques offered by these left and right-wing strands of activism and what alternative visions do they articulate and advance; (ii) what are the main international networks and transnational connections between different left and right movements across Europe and North America; and (iii) identify and highlight the main practices of contestation.
2. To complicate the present conceptual understanding of populism in political science and IR, by exploring and identifying the key connections and differences between North American and European populist movements, leaders and agendas on the left and on the right.
3. To contribute to debates about the crisis, transformation and future prospects of the liberal international order and globalization.

Programme

12:30 – 13:45 Lunch / arrivals

13.45 – 14:00 Welcome and opening remarks

- Bice Maiguashca, Exeter
- Gregorio Bettiza, Exeter

14.00 -15.30 The (populist) left in global perspective

- Paloma Caravantes-Gonzalez, Rutgers
- Bice Maiguashca and Dario Castiglione, Exeter

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee break

16:00 – 17:30 The (populist) right in global perspective

- Aristotle Kallis, Keele
- Ray Kiley, Queen Mary

17:30 – 17:45 Break

17:45 – 18:30 Open Discussion: Reflections and Comparisons

- Lise Herman, Exeter

20:00 Dinner