

CALL FOR PAPERS

Populisms, medias and networks in the countries of the Baltic Sea Region Circulation of ideas and political practices

International symposium

INALCO, Research Center Europe-Eurasia (CREE)

Paris, June 12th, 2020

Organisation committee:

Yohann AUCANTE (CESPRA-EHESS)

Katerina KESA (INALCO-CREE)

Jacques RUPNIK (CERI-Sciences Po)

Amélie ZIMA (CERCEC-IRSEM)

OBJECTIVES

In the countries of the Baltic Sea region, like elsewhere in Europe, the far-right populist movements have made an important breakthrough these last years. Their growing popularity in Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark or Poland can be explained, amongst other factors, by globalisation and growing inequalities. Those movements are characterized by the rejection of the Other/Foreigner, by nationalistic tendencies (*replis identitaires*) and by a growing distrust of some segments of the population towards national and European institutions and elites. Social networks have contributed to strengthening the attraction of these movements by giving them more visibility.

This international symposium aims to analyse how populist ideas, values or political practices circulate from one country to another in a region which has the particularity of being a space of cooperation and contacts. It aims to stimulate and to confront different research on the regional cooperation and transnational circulations of ideas taking an interest in the political and social aspects of regionalisation of the Baltic space. It is innovative because most of the research about circulation in this region has been mostly about economic integration, environmental and defence cooperation.

Moreover, the objective of this symposium is to question the way some issues such as international migration, minority rights (religious, ethnic, sexual), and attitudes towards Europe or Russia are treated by the medias and by populist movements in the countries of this region.

Drawing on a transversal and comparative approach, the symposium aims to question the similarities and differences of treatment of these issues by the far-right and populist movements of this region as populist Finnish party *True Finns*, the *Swedish Democrats*, the

far-right Estonian party *EKRE* or the nationalist and conservative Polish party *Law and Justice (PiS)*. It also plans to question to what extent it is relevant to talk about circulation of representations, perceptions and images between conservative, nationalistic and far right parties? How does the context of the refugee crisis and terrorism result in appropriation of extreme right ideas by conservative parties? Do some political practices or populist ideas, which have been formed in the Baltic region, serve as a “model” in other countries or are they readapted to fit domestic context and issues? Furthermore, does the existence of some far right movements, such as *Soldiers of Odin*, *Nordic Resistance Movement* or alliances between populist parties of this region, allow us to talk about transregional cooperation of populist and extreme right movements of the countries of the Baltic Sea region?

Finally, the very notion of populism could be questioned to define these processes. Indeed, populism is understood as the claim of a political party to represent the people against the elite considered as little concerned by the fate of ordinary citizens (Kriesi, 2014). Far-right populism is the combination of at least three characteristics, namely nativism, authoritarianism and populism (Mudde 2007). If the term "populism" is frequently used, its polysemy seems to be a barrier to a detailed understanding of current political phenomena (Mink, 2016). Thus, some researchers have preferred to describe these regimes as "neo-conservatives" (Zalewski, 2016) focusing on their ability to recycle and redefine conservative and anti-communist themes, the rightward polarization of public spaces and the counterrevolutionary ideology of these regimes as well as the circulation of neo-conservative ideas between Western and Central Europe. Other authors have analyzed those regimes as authoritative to explain the exercise of power, which subverts and by-passes the parliamentary practices and implements legislative changes to ensure electoral victories (Mink, 2016). Others, rejecting the term "populist", understood as a party that uses social rhetoric to implement a neoliberal policy, describe them as the neo-authoritarian typified by social policies, a strong centralization of power and attacks on independent institutions (Gdula, 2018). Finally, for B.Badie, populism is neither an ideology nor a doctrine or a political system, but a situation or a political context leading to certain political practices and generally referring to a crisis of trust between the governed and their institutions (Badie).

THEMES

The symposium will be based on a transversal and multidisciplinary approach structured round the following themes concerning the countries of the Baltic area:

1. Populist networks, movements and alliances

Trans-regional cooperation between populist movements, far-right networks, alliances with American and European populist networks...

2. Social media and informational strategies

Use of alternative media by populist movements, use, evolution and tactics of, communication. Perceptions by traditional medias of the populist ideas and programs.

3. Sociology, political platforms and history of populist and far-right movements

Tactics and political practices; Speech of the actors; Origin and evolution of populist movements; Ideas and ideology; Positioning on the political chessboard.

4. Perceptions and political positioning of the populist parties in foreign affairs

Perceptions and representation of Russia; links with Russia; perception and attitude towards crises in Eastern Europe (Georgian 2008, Ukrainian 2013-2014); Perceptions and attitudes towards the extra-European powers (China and the New Silk Roads, United States of Trump, Brazil of Bolsonaro ...).

5. European policies

Speeches, uses and practices of the European Union; evolution of populist and sovereignist groups / parties in the European Parliament; Brexit discourses and uses in the European and national arenas.

Through the case of the populist movements, this symposium aims to analyse the transregional circulation of ideas and political practices as elements allowing to rethink the regionalisation of the Baltic Space.

This research, transversal by definition, leads to cross approaches of specialists of different countries of the Baltic region in political science, communication and media, sociology, history and geography in order to study different political and social aspects of circulation, diffusion and sharing of populist ideas. Moreover, the idea is to analyse the transnational cooperation between different networks and populist movements of the countries of this region between themselves.

CALENDAR:

Deadline for abstract submission (maximum 300 words, short CV and major publications), in French or English: **November 11th, 2019.**

Notification of acceptance: **January 31th, 2020.**

Deadline for sending texts: **May 29th, 2020.**

Date and venue of the congress: **June 12th 2020, Paris.**

The paper proposals should be sent to:

Katerina.kesa@inalco.fr

amelie.zima@sciencespo.fr

A publication may be envisaged after the symposium either in the form of a collective book or of a special issue of a journal.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE:

Yohann AUCANTE (EHESS – CESPRA) ; Andres KASEKAMP (University of Toronto) ; Katerina KESA (INALCO – CREE) ; Eric LE BOURHIS (INALCO-CREE) ; Jacques RUPNIK (CERI- Sciences po) ; Anne DE TINGUY (INALCO AND CERI-Sciences po) ; Amélie ZIMA (CERCEC)