

# How radical right-wing populism deals with demographic challenges. An international workshop



## Organization

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## Friday September 29th to Saturday, September 30th 2023 - Géopolis - Rooms 2224 GEO and 2230 GEO

On September 29th and 30th, the University of Lausanne will be hosting an international research workshop on the theme of right-wing populism and demographic issues. The workshop, linked to the SNSF-WAVE project "Populism and conspiracy theory", aims to examine how immigration, the defense of the Christian religion, the traditional family, and the birth rate are all part of the radical right-wing agenda. The focus will be on three continents (Europe, North and South America).

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In the last decades, new or radicalized actors have become electorally and politically successful in many contemporary democracies. Such actors have been often included in the “family” of radical right-wing populism and have put migrants and immigration at the core of their agenda and narratives across continents. In fact, immigrant flows, mainly from the poorer to the richer countries, have opened a wide and persistent political opportunity for radical right-wing populism.

However, immigration is not the sole issue of this ideological “family” and the migration flow is not the unique structural opportunity framed and exploited by radical right-wing populism. Nowadays new issues take increasing relevance concerning structural, social and cultural transformations, such as the attack against “gender ideologies”, abortion, LGBTQ rights, Islamophobia, etc.

However, academic literature has often considered these plural sets of issues as separate research topics. The depenalization of abortion, recognition of same-sex marriage, fluid sexuality, etc. are framed by radical right-wing populism as the causes of the crisis of the traditional family model. Immigration from non-European/non-Christian countries is seen both as prosperity and threat, as a danger to the Christian/Western/traditional family’s model. At the same time, the defense of the traditional family model is presented as a crucial response against demographic threats undermining the “true” people (e.g. declining birth rates, decreasing shares of Christians and white people, etc.).

The workshop deals with a redefinition and a dramatization of the “cultural backlash” by radical right-wing populism on demographic-related issues in many democracies, in Europe and the Americas. Right-wing populism ideologically politicizes and takes advantage of official projections which foresee, for instance, a significant decrease of the EU residents in the next decades. The main official explanation of the EU demographic decline is the lowering of birth rates and the growth of the aging population. For the US, the demographic decline mainly refers to the non-Hispanic white population. In Brazil, population projections also expect a decreasing trend after 2050 and a shrinking proportion of the white population.

The workshop will address the following main research question:

How/to what extent the current radical right-wing populist agenda/issues/ideological stances might be interpreted as responses to key demographic challenges, connected to changes related to gender, sexual relations, and family models?

The workshop pursues the following goals:

- Connecting scholars interested in studying radical right-wing populism but working in different and often separate topics/sub-fields (immigration, gender, family-related issues, religion, etc.);
- Highlighting the different framing of demographic-related issues by radical right-wing populism in different contexts, assuming each actor (i.e. leader, movement, party) shapes and frames demographic challenges in different ways;
- Developing and sharing a theoretical discussion on radical-right-wing populism and demographic populism;
- Drawing a collective and cohesive project of an edited book.

**Friday 29th September 2023**

**Géopolis, Room 2224**

09:00-09:30 Introduction

09:30-10:15

Michał Krzyżanowski, Uppsala University, Sweden, Natalia Krzyżanowska, Örebro University, Sweden, Monica Colombo, University Milano-Bicocca, Italy

**Re/Definitions of the 'Family' in/and the Discourse of European Right Wing Populist Parties: Strategies of Pre-Legitimising and Normalising the Politics of Exclusion**

Discussant: Marianna Griffini

10:15-11:00

Carlos de la Torre, University of Florida

**Comparing the racial and gender projects of right and left populists in Latin America**

Discussant: Javier Corrales

Coffee break

11:15-12:00

Carol Mason, University of Kentucky

**Opposing Abortion, Protecting Women, and Transnationalizing US Populism**

Discussant: Mattia Diletti

12:00-12:45

Javier Corrales, Amherst College

**Polarization, Policy Extremism, and Homophobia under Populist Governments**

Discussant: Carol Mason

Lunch break

14:15-15:00

Alberta Giorgi, University of Bergamo, Italy

**Grounding anti-immigration and pro-traditional family values on science**

Discussant: Michał Krzyżanowski

15:00-15:45

Marianna Griffini, King's College London

**Demographic entanglements: colonial reflections in the discourse and policy of the populist radical right on natality**

Discussant: Juliana Chueri

Coffee break

16:00-16.45

Oscar Mazzoleni and Emilia Meini, University of Lausanne

## **The Challenge of conspirational right-wing populism. The Great Replacement in Western Europe**

Discussant: Reinhard Heinisch

**Saturday 30th September 2023**

**Géopolis, Room 2230**

9:30-10:15

Juliana Chueri, University of Amsterdam, and Catarina Ianni Segatto, University of São Paulo

### **Bolsonaro's (anti-) Gender ideology: Social Policies and Attitudes Among Female Supporters**

Discussant: Alberta Giorgi

10:15-11:00

Reinhard Heinisch and Diana Lucia Hofmann, University of Salzburg

### **The Effects of Othering: Anti-Islamic Mobilization in Austria**

Discussant: Oscar Mazzoleni

Coffee break

11:15-12:00

Mattia Diletti, University La Sapienza

### **Transatlantic nostalgia. Traditional family and global conservative networks**

Discussant: Carlos de la Torre

12:00-12.45

### **Final remarks**

14.30-15:30

### **Civis Meeting**

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This event is organized with the support of :



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