

Call for Papers: Annual Workshop of the Populism Working Group of the German Political Science Association (DVPW)

In collaboration with the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute, Freiburg; and Institute for Research on Far Right Extremism (IRex), University of Tübingen

“Current Perspectives on Populism in Authoritarian Regime Contexts”

25-26 September 2025, University of Freiburg

This workshop responds to the pressing need for up-to-date analysis of fast-paced political developments worldwide by bringing together current perspectives on populism in authoritarian regime settings. Over the past decade, much has been written on populism in relation to authoritarianism and “democratic backsliding,” from Hungary and Poland to India and the Philippines. As ever, the boundaries between democratic and authoritarian regimes have become porous and elusive, with authoritarian ruling practices coexisting alongside formally democratic institutions in so-called hybrid regimes or “diminished subtypes” that have been widely discussed in the literature (from competitive authoritarianisms to defective democracies). How is populism being used today within authoritarian regime contexts of all stripes around the globe by regime and oppositional actors alike against the ongoing backdrop of wars, trade disputes, and protests? In placing this line of inquiry at the forefront, the workshop aims to explore aspects of growing current relevance such as the following:

- 1) *Populism and authoritarian regimes at war*: How and to what extent is populism used as a domestic mobilizing resource for authoritarian regimes in their wars – such as Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine and Azerbaijan’s recent wars in Nagorno-Karabakh – and/or for opposition forces operating under conditions of heightened wartime repression?
- 2) *Populism and new opposition challengers to authoritarianism*: What is the role of populism in the emergence of new challenges to authoritarian rule – from the Tisza Party in Hungary to heightened anti-regime protests in Serbia and Turkey – as well as regime responses to them?
- 3) *Populism and new “backsliders”*: What role does populism play for recently elected governments with authoritarian tendencies such as the current Trump administration in the United States? What similarities and differences to other, more established cases of democratic backsliding can be identified?

The organizers aim for a broad range of contributions focusing on these and other aspects related to populism in authoritarian regimes. In addition to research works-in-progress, we welcome discussion-oriented analyses of current developments. Papers are strictly optional and can be submitted two weeks before the workshop.

We request submissions of abstracts of max. 300 words each (in English or German) by **9 June 2025** to seongcheol.kim@uni-bremen.de and sabine.volk@uni-tuebingen.de. Acceptance decisions will be communicated within two weeks after the deadline.

The organizers will make an effort to acquire funding for covering travel and accommodations expenses for all presenters, though this is not guaranteed.

Individuals from all career stages and backgrounds are welcome to attend. Membership in the German Political Science Association (DVPW) is not required. Those who are interested in getting involved in the Populism Working Group are encouraged to attend and will have the opportunity to participate in a general meeting of the working group during the workshop.