

Call for Papers, EWIS, 2024, İstanbul, 3-5 July 2024

Populist Geopolitics? Rethinking (Geo)political Space through the Lens of Populism

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Populists and their international engagement have received considerable attention through a burgeoning research agenda on populist foreign policy making. Although these studies address the discursive, ideational, behavioural, and performative aspects of populist foreign policy, attempting to deconstruct the populist resentment against domestic and international elites, lesser attention has been paid to deconstructing how populists (as leaders and/or political parties) imagine (geo)political space at the international level. With imagining the (geo)political space, or populist geopolitics, we mean populist imaginaries of not only the spatial aspects of the world but also consider international (dis)order yet another “space” in which populists position and imagine themselves and their states functionally and/or temporally. We believe tracing the spatial repercussions of the populist discourse together with the populist projections of global geopolitical order at the international level is essential to shed light on the ongoing crises of the international system.

Given this, this workshop aims to unpack, elaborate and theorize how both physical and imagined geographical, temporal and functional space is politicized, perceived, and constructed by the populists at the international level. In order to do so, we call on contributors that examine not only contemporary populists but also encourage contributions that think historically and comparatively, using different methodologies and data (textual and visual) about the populists and their geopolitical imaginations covering different cases, periods and geographies around the world. While our main focus is the spatial imaginations of the international, we are also interested in uncovering the possible link between spatial imaginations and transformations of the built environment at the domestic level (such as monuments, infrastructure projects, cultural heritage items and architectural styles etc.) as well as the discursive constructions of physical borders, “emotional topographies” (Sofos and Meissner, 2021) and their populist repercussions at the international level. Such an elaboration can allow us to understand both the ascendance of populist discourses, strategies, and imaginations from domestic to international level as well as the domestication of foreign policy issues for electoral gains in the hands of populist elites.

The Contributors of the Workshop are expected (but not limited to) engage with the following questions:

- How do/have the populists imagine(d) national borders/sovereignty/international order/ rise and fall of great/lesser powers/empires domestically and internationally?
- What are the visual and textual cartographic interventions of populists?
- How does the understanding of frontier geopolitics (including populist-led countries’ presence in the Arctic and Antarctic) happen?
- How do populists change the architectural styles and built environment (infrastructure projects, monuments, memorials, naming practices, cultural heritage etc.) at the domestic level and how is this linked to populist spatial imaginations of the international?
- How do the populists imagine the geo-economic space (transnational transportation networks (energy, road, railroad etc.) and link it to geopolitics? What role has neoliberal capitalism played in the populist geopolitical imaginaries?
- Historically speaking, how different has been the geopolitical imaginations of the past and present populists?
- How do populists shape transnational memoryscapes through monuments, commemorations and/or diplomatic rituals and practices, and mega sports events?

Deadline: 5 February 2024