

CALL FOR PAPERS

Populism in the Postcolony

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Although the idea of populism is as old as Phaleas of Chalcedon, it has gained a new currency in the aftermath of the 2008 global economic meltdown. For Phaleas, if the right to private property and democracy were the pillars of *vox populi*, the current wave of populist politics are plagued by what Yochai Benkler et al. call an ‘epistemic crisis in media and politics that threatens the integrity of democratic processes, erodes trust in public institutions, and exacerbates social divisions’. Even if the very term populism ‘carries associations of crowd-pleasing and cheap emotionalism’, as the South African anthropologist Jean Comaroff argues, ‘a certain populist radicalism – an opposition to the dictatorship and doxa of elites [...] is a necessary, if not sufficient condition of mass transformative movements in all times and places’. Reaffirming this view, Chantal Mouffe has called for a radical reframing of populist politics that would not only counteract the politics of exclusion or polarization, but also preserve the existing domestic spaces and institutions (e.g. Podemos in Spain, the Zapatista movement in Mexico).

Since the 2008 global economic crisis, however, populist politics have become a dominant mode of mass mobilization at both ends of the political spectrum; the far right and the radical left. The collective desire for a strong leader or the ‘colonial potentate’ – to borrow Achille Mbembe’s term – in the postcolony is often held culpable for the rise and fall of a spate of populist dictatorships in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In the wake of such epistemic crises, political mimicry and discursive ruptures on both sides of the Atlantic, how could the rise of populist political figures in the postcolony – Narendra Modi of India, Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines, Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, Andrés Obrador of Mexico, Mahinda Rajapaksa of Sri Lanka, Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, to name a few – be conceptualized? Is there a contagious element to populism that defies our established understandings – if any – of public sphere and political behaviour? This special issue invites original contributions that shed light on the nature of populism, its ideologies and leadership in the postcolony, both from national and transnational perspectives. The special issue also welcomes contributions that explore the points of ideological convergence (and divergence) between populist politics in Europe and the Americas (e.g. Donald Trump of USA, Marine Le Pen of France, Giuseppe Conte of Italy, Geert Wilders of the Netherlands, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey, Björn Höcke and Alice Weidel of Germany and Boris Johnson of the UK), and the postcolonial world. We invite papers from all disciplines of the humanities and social sciences that respond to, but are not restricted to, the following subthemes:

- populism, nativism, nationalism and identity politics

- ideologies, technologies and epistemologies of populism
- populist mobilizations through social media
- populism as a form of protest (e.g. the Brexit ‘protest vote’)
- populism and ethnic cleansing
- populism and class divisions
- populism, terrorism, migration, climate crisis and states of emergency
- populism, dynasty politics and dictatorship regimes (including benevolent dictatorships such as Singapore)

Please send abstracts (400-500 words) to editorskairos@gmail.com (Anindya Purakayastha and Pavan Malreddy) by **September 30, 2019**. Based on the abstracts received, the editors will invite full essays of 6,500-7,000 words. The deadline for full essays is **January 15, 2020**.