

Mnemonic Populism in Contemporary Europe.

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This project explores the role and relevance of collective memory in right-wing populism. Following the most commonly accepted definitions of populism as a form of political communication based on a moral dichotomy between the pure people and the corrupt elite, in which the former are considered to be the only legitimate source of political power, mnemonic populism is understood here as poll-driven, manifestly moralistic and anti-pluralist imaginings of the past. The innovativeness of this project lies in its holistic approach toward political agency. Whereas the study of memory politics has usually been focused on mnemonic strategies pursued by the state, this project acknowledges the critical role of the entanglements between political actors and social movements. What is more, the activities pursued by right-wing authorities and activists are only part of a much larger universe consisting of heterogeneous and yet mutually reinforcing cultural and commercial developments. As a result, this project sets out to study different settings of discursive and performative memory-making extending between the official and unofficial, political and popular, and public and private forces. By studying the mechanisms of mnemonic populism across Europe since the 1970s, we bring together memory and populism studies in order to explain what can happen to history in illiberal surroundings.

Projektbeteiligte

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