P05 / Populism and Bureaucracy – Institutional and Ideological Dynamics in Governance

Topic : POLICY, POLITICS AND POLITICAL REGIME

Chair : Kutsal Yesilkagit (Leiden University)

Second Chair : B. Guy Peters (University of Pittsburgh)

Third Chair : Jon Pierre (Dept of Political Science, University of Gothenburg)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

General Objective

This panel examines the multifaceted interaction between populist movements and bureaucratic institutions, focusing on how institutional structures and populist ideologies jointly shape this relationship. While populism often challenges bureaucratic stability, the impact of populism varies significantly based on both the ideological leanings of the movement (right-wing, left-wing, or otherwise) and the specific political-institutional frameworks—such as federal versus unitary, presidential versus parliamentary systems, and centralised versus decentralised administrative structures.

By investigating how populist movements with distinct ideological aims interact with various institutional settings, the panel seeks to understand how these combined factors influence bureaucratic integrity, adaptability, and resistance. This dual approach will clarify the conditions under which populist movements either reshape or reinforce bureaucratic norms and practices across different national contexts.

Research Question

The central research question guiding this panel is:

How do the combined effects of institutional configurations and ideological orientations of populist movements influence the interaction between populism and bureaucracy, and what implications do these dynamics hold for governance and administrative resilience?

Key sub-questions include:

- How do federal and unitary systems affect the pathways through which populist movements, depending on their ideological orientations, interact with and challenge bureaucratic institutions?

- In what ways do presidential and parliamentary regimes influence the strategies used by left- and right-wing populists in their engagements with bureaucracies?

- How does administrative centralisation or decentralisation mediate the influence of ideologically varied populist movements on the stability and adaptability of bureaucratic institutions?

- How do party system structures (single-party vs. multi-party) impact populist engagement with bureaucracy, and do these effects differ between left- and right-wing populists?

Justification of Scientific Relevance

The recent global surge in populism has highlighted the vulnerability of bureaucratic institutions to political disruption, yet the role of ideological and institutional factors in shaping this vulnerability remains under-explored. Right-wing populists often seek to minimize bureaucratic intervention, emphasizing deregulation and nationalism, while left-wing populists may advocate for reforms aimed at promoting social equity through bureaucracy. However, these ideological aims are conditioned by the specific institutional settings in which populists operate, influencing whether they can bypass, reshape, or co-opt bureaucratic structures to align with their agendas.

This panel brings a comparative perspective to this under-researched area, examining how the interplay between institutional structures and ideological orientations affects the populism-bureaucracy relationship. By integrating ideological and institutional factors, this panel aims to identify patterns that explain the resilience or susceptibility of bureaucracies to populist influence. The findings are pertinent for both scholars and policymakers, offering insights on how institutional design can either buffer or amplify the effects of ideologically varied populist movements.

CALL FOR PAPERS

We invite scholars to submit empirical, theoretical, or methodological papers that explore the interaction between populism and bureaucracy through a dual focus on ideological orientation and institutional context. Papers may address, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Case studies on how ideologically distinct populist movements have attempted to challenge or co-opt bureaucratic institutions within different institutional structures.

- Comparative analyses of bureaucratic resilience in countries with varying institutional configurations (e.g., federal vs. unitary, presidential vs. parliamentary) and the contrasting approaches of left- and right-wing populists within these frameworks.

- Theoretical or empirical explorations of how left-wing populist governance, often advocating social equity reforms, impacts bureaucracy differently than right-wing populist agendas, which may emphasise deregulation and nationalism.

- Studies on how multi-party and two-party systems shape the influence of ideologically distinct populist movements on bureaucratic institutions.

- Investigations into how centralised versus decentralised bureaucratic structures respond to the pressures of both left- and right-wing populist movements, with regional case studies on populist influence in local versus national governance.

We welcome submissions from diverse fields, including public administration, political science, public policy, and comparative politics, that offer new insights into how the combined forces of institutional design and ideological orientation shape bureaucratic governance in populist contexts.

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Session 1

Friday, July 4th 08:00 to 10:00 (D3)

Populism and Bureaucracy in Italy During the Meloni Government (2022-2024)

Fabrizio Di Mascio (Università di Torino)

Anna Malandrino (Università di Torino)

Alessandro Natalini (University Parthenope)

(Virtual) Balancing distance and connectedness: policy advisory bodies in a context of science resistance

Alyt Damstra (University of Amsterdam)

Regulating Truth: The Role of Bureaucracy in Populist Control Over Digital Speech

Yashas P R (Christ University)

anurag mehra (Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay)

PRERNA YADAV (Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay)

Party Institutionalization and Ministers' Cabinet Careers in Presidential Democracies

Dong Lee (Sungkyunkwan University)