

Rural Sociology

Call for Papers: “The new populism in western rural areas”

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Ever since the vote on Brexit, many scholars have begun to question the emergence of neo-populism in Western countries, a variegated and contradictory set of ideas with three common characteristics: an anti-establishment narrative, authoritarianism, and nativism. The first characteristic stresses the wisdom and virtues of ordinary people—the silent majority—against the knowledge of the experts and the material and moral corruption of the elites. Authoritarianism recalls the direct relationship between a strong and charismatic leadership and the people, a relationship built on forms of direct plebiscitary democracy that weaken structured policy processes originally meant to guarantee the protection of minorities and their integration into political life. Nativism presupposes the privileged treatment of the natives, and is nourished by xenophobic watchwords and references to the contrast between “us and them”. These three ideas are organized according to different combinations and intensities by some political forces that acquire strong consensus, especially in rural areas. Scholarly literature illustrates how in certain countries the urban-rural divide has manifested itself in a very evident way, while in others the geography of the new populism has taken shape according to more articulated electoral dynamics, so as to induce some scholars to use the concept of “places left behind”. Rural areas, urban suburbs, medium cities and declining industrial districts would be the losing territories of globalization. This is why they would be more sensitive to the spread of populism.

This call for papers focuses on the spread of neo-populism in Western rural areas. We want, however, to overcome the representation of the rural as a homogeneous space, and investigate instead how the phenomenon of populism takes hold in a diverse spectrum of rural areas: marginal areas, tourist resorts, food districts, intensive agriculture zones, hinterlands. Some of the questions this call aims to address include:

- Does populism in rural areas spread as a result of chiefly economic factors or cultural-identitarian dimensions? One way to overcome the economic-cultural dichotomy is to look at the dimension of recognition, which contains aspects of perceptive nature in terms of class positioning and on the front of values and identities.
- Are there features unique to the neo-populism of rural areas? What rhetoric of the populist political offer can intercept the rural common sense? Is there only one common sense, or do rural areas respond to logics of differentiation?

- Does neo-populism spread evenly in the rural areas of different western countries, or are there differences? How are the economic dimensions (territorial and social inequalities) and the cultural dimensions (demand for identity protection) articulated in rural areas of different regions?
- Does populism in rural areas stand in continuity with the conservative tradition, or does it represent a break with the past?

We are looking for papers dealing with American and European case studies. Field researches as well as comparisons between two or more countries are especially welcome. Adequate clarification of the meanings of populism is preliminary to a robust search for empirical evidences and connection with more general societal phenomena. Manuscripts that do not meet these criteria will not be considered for publication. Papers should be 8,000 words, not including references, and 9,500 words for the complete manuscript. Please consult the website *Rural Sociology* for further information on formatting.

We request that interested authors submit a 1000 word précis or extended abstract by Dec. 15, 2019. Conditionally accepted abstracts will be notified shortly after, and full papers will be due June 15, 2020. Submitted manuscripts will undergo a quick internal review and then be sent out for external double-blind peer review. Co-editors of the issue are Giovanni Carrosio and Giorgio Osti. Send abstracts and any inquiries to Giovanni Carrosio (gcarrosio@units.it).