

## Call for Papers

### *Democracy, Rights, and Populism: Contested Concepts and Rhetorical Uses*

Civic Constellation II Project – Workshop IV  
University of Piemonte Orientale (Vercelli), 22–23 November 2018

Populism is a central political phenomenon of our times and some political scientists talk about the ‘age of populism’. Leaders and political parties, both on the right and on the left of the political spectrum, are labeled by the press as ‘populists’, but the criteria for applying the term are far from clear. Is it a style of doing politics or are there certain substantial ideological commitments supporting the label? Populism is a politically contested concept, with a long history behind it, which has become a polemical weapon in contemporary debates. Moreover, it is usually used in opposition to other important political concepts such as pluralism, constitutionalism or liberalism.

In the workshop we are particularly interested in the controversial relationship between democracy and populism. Populist leaders claim that they speak for the people and against the hijacking of democracy by the elites, whereas their opponents denounce populism as a ‘danger to democracy’. Therefore, the discussion on populism invites us to rethink the links between democratic ideals, practices and institutions. The language of rights is inseparable from democratic politics, especially as regards individual rights and the rights of minorities in a pluralistic society. So, it has to be considered a key issue in the tense relation of democracy and populism. Historical and interdisciplinary approaches are welcome as well as analytical studies on the concepts involved in the discussion.

#### Keynote Speaker

Damiano Palano (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano)

#### Convenors

Gabriella Silvestrini (gabriella.silvestrini@uniupo.it) and Manuel Toscano (mtoscano@uma.es)

#### Deadline for submitting to both convenors

Paper proposals: titles and up to 150-word abstracts, **2 July 2018** (notification of acceptance, before 20 July 2018)

Extended abstracts, or outlines, of accepted proposals: up to 1500 words, 5 November 2018

#### Organisers

University of Piemonte Orientale

Project *Civic Constellation II: Debating Democracy and Rights* (Spain’s National Research Fund, FFI2014-52703-P)



Civic Constellation II Project (FFI2014-52703-P)