

Call for Papers “Liberal Responses to the Twin Challenge of Populism”

The current challenge for democrats that subscribe to some form of classical liberalism is to walk the tight rope between two types of populism: while the *populists on the street* proclaim that the truth in political matters is manifest to common sense, the silent buzzing technocratic offices of the *commanding heights* proclaim that there is no alternative to their vision of social progress (Friedman 2020). These two variants of populism are of particular concern to classical liberalism for many reasons. One of them is that classical liberals understood as a loosely connected network of scholars, public intellectuals and institutions may have consciously contributed to the ideological superstructure of both developments. Moreover, in terms of its popular basis, classical liberalism continues to bleed into both.

While classical liberalism tries to find its bearings by re-conceptualizing itself against the current tides, a *great realignment* challenges the traditional faultlines of political contestation. This realignment could be captured as a process in which the one or two major issues that define political identities and divisions change. As a result, old alliances and voting patterns break down and new ones emerge. The emerging cleavages within society will thus create a new faultline separating the *cosmopolitan minded urban populations* on the one side and *rural ethno-nationalists* on the other. The cosmopolitans' mindset is characterized by openness, a willingness to experiment, and some moral universalism. The ethno-nationalists are skeptical, if not fearful, of the instabilities implied by the former group's politics.

Bearing this in mind, the NOUS Network aims to provide an open platform for scholars to discuss and engage with the outlined challenges above in a format that encourages more speculative and broad-strokes reasoning. We plan an online (or possibly in-person) **academic workshop with around 10 papers**. The selected scholars will receive a honorarium of 800 euros after attending the workshop and contributing, up to 10 months later, a piece to a **collected volume, to be published at De Gruyter**.

We invite contributions that respond to the twin challenge of populism against three particular sets of questions: a) Does classical liberalism need to re-think its relationship to democracy? In particular, we invite scholars to take up the challenge posed by *left-wing cosmopolitans* that urge classical liberals to reexamine their relationship towards democratic governance schemes in the political sphere (Biebricher 2020) and the market (Anderson 2019). Moreover, we invite scholars to b) reflect on the potential benefits and threats of the *digital transformation* to democratic governance in the future. Finally, we c) encourage the submission of probing, early-stage research proposals that aim to develop classical liberalism at the conceptual or institutional level in the face of the twin challenge of populism.

Scholars should submit a **500-word abstract** for a paper, additionally specifying in the abstract form attached here the title of their presentation and its theme, their full name and institutional affiliation, and an e-mail address for correspondence. Please **submit all that by e-mail to karen.ilse.horn@gmail.com**. The **deadline for submitting abstracts is the 31 December 2021**. A decision will be made until end of February 2022, and you will be notified directly thereafter. The workshop is planned for the fall of 2022.

The NOUS Network is a non-partisan international community for interdisciplinary research. It links all academic fields relevant for thinking about social order and liberty. It spans philosophy, politics, economics and much more. Find out about our members and activities at **www.nous.network**.

**“Liberal Responses to the Twin Challenge of Populism”
NOUS Workshop and Collected Volume**

Abstract form

Please return by e-mail to karen.ilse.horn@gmail.com
no later than **31 December 2021**

Title, name and surname _____

Affiliation _____

Tel. _____ fax _____

e-mail _____

I intend to propose a paper on the following theme:

Title:

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