In recent years, research on populism has flourished in response to the increasing success of (so-called) populist parties. Existing studies cover a broad spectrum of approaches, with most studies aiming at explaining the mechanisms behind the rise of populism. The focus of populism research is shifting towards specific attitudes present in society and addressed by populist political actors. However, with respect to the origins of these populist attitudes, research is disorganized and sometimes conflicting – especially between scientific disciplines but also between different theoretical approaches in one and the same discipline.

In an attempt to foster more exchange and to stimulate dialogue between different disciplines, we invite 15–20 researchers from various disciplines to discuss their empirical research on the sources, nature and function of populist attitudes.

We welcome submissions for oral presentations from a variety of different disciplines, e.g., communication science, political science, sociology and psychology.

The conference is organized by the team of the WZB bridging project Against Elites, Against Outsiders: Sources of Democracy Critique, Immigration Critique, and Right-Wing Populism:

https://www.wzb.eu/en/research/trans-sectoral-research/against-elites-against-outsiders
Key questions

While not constituting an exhaustive list, key questions addressed by the presentations and in the discussion could be:

- Which causes of populist attitudes are discussed in different disciplines and can theorized effects be validated empirically?
- Are populist attitudes formed in current times or pre-existing and, therefore, simply activated? How do these processes work and why is this happening nowadays?
- How are populist attitudes and their sources related to other important factors often driving populist party support, especially nationalism, authoritarianism and socialism?
- Is there a commonality between left- and right-wing populism when looking at the populist attitudes?
- Are there relevant differences between countries or societal groups regarding all these different mechanisms?
- What are potential remedies to populist attitudes and what diminishes the relevance of populist attitudes?

Submission

Please send your application (including a 300 word abstract with title, contact details, and your discipline) till 31 January 2020 to populism.conference@wzb.eu. Travel costs and accommodation will be reimbursed for one author of each accepted proposal. At this point, we are also negotiating the possibility for an optional joint publication as a special issue in a peer-reviewed journal.