

POPREBEL

Foresight scenarios on populism: Imagining Central and Eastern European politics in 2030

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Thinking about populism with a twist

- populism is the new buzzword in political research
- but instead of taking a **retrospective** view about the causes of populism, the POPREBEL project attempts to bring in a **prospective** view . . .
- . . . by combining our existing **analytical tools** regarding the study of politics (populist and otherwise) with **foresight techniques** in order to look around the corner and reflect more systematically on where some of the trends might go

Foresight scenarios

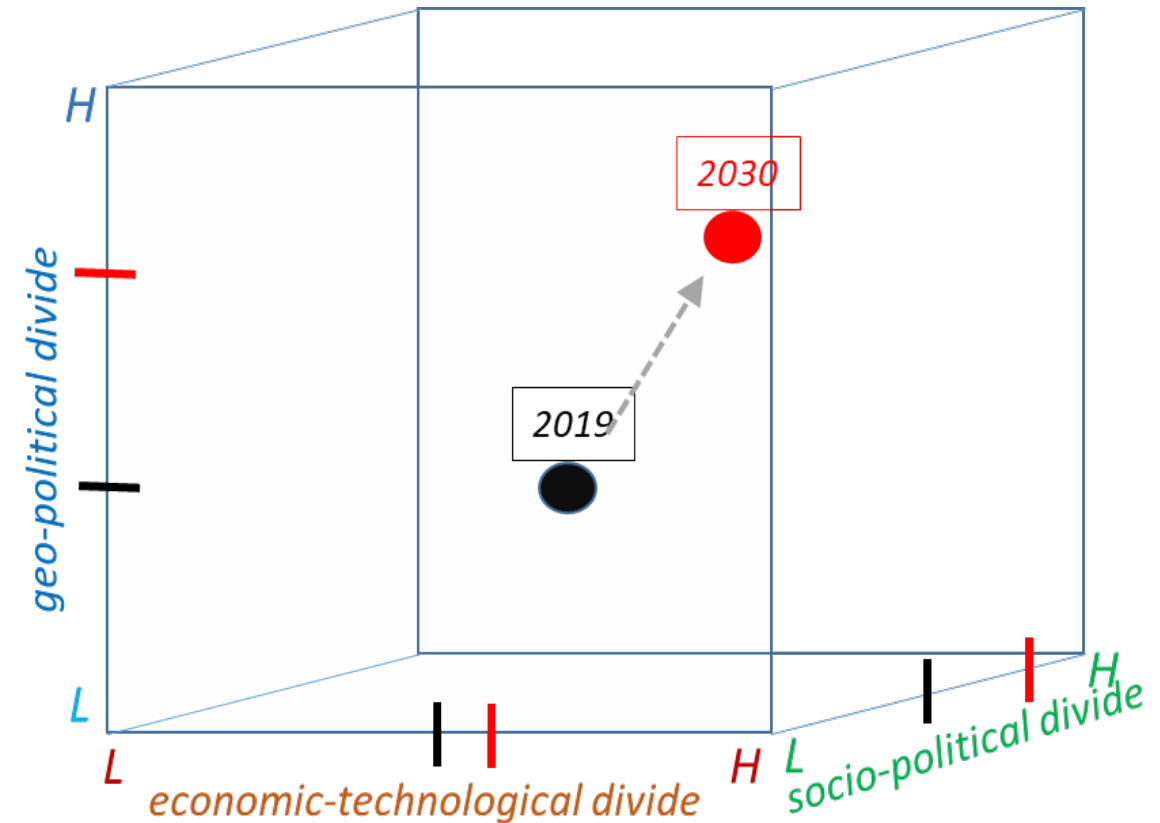
- an analytical system for mapping out possible futures within a certain domain or environment in order to reflect on possible consequences or courses of action under different eventualities
- scenarios do not predict the future
- they are a tool for critical thinking, discussion and interaction
 - in the business world → planning commercial activity
 - in the policy-making world → preparing for different political choices
 - in the academic world → understanding and generating future research questions
- in POPREBEL they are for:
 - internal project discussion
 - engagement seminars with policy-makers and civil society leaders

Foresight methodology

- a highly developed array of methodological procedures and tools for the generation of scenarios, including
 1. horizon scanning
 2. driver selection procedures
 3. consultation and verification
 4. target group engagement and outcome realization
- currently the project is in the 3rd phase: consultation & verification
 - horizon scanning: March 2019
 - driver selection procedures: June-August 2019
 - consultation & verification: Sept-November 2019
- I am asking for your help!!!

Drivers and parameters

- formal scenario building relies on certain broad trends as parameters
- many recent foresight studies have brought out three generalized parameters
- we can imagine any given scenario as representing some kind of shift along these three axes



More proximate sub-parameters

- additionally, scenarios need to bring into play more specific actors and their relationships alongside the background processes

External, global drivers	TRENDS				EVENTS						WILLFUL DISRUPTION				
	climate change	demography	communi-cation	economic change	technological disaster	natural disaster	migration	terrorism	global economy	resources	geopolitical				
	1. global consensus or discord	2. aging populations, pensions, workforce problems	3. changes in media & public sphere	4. dislocation, technological change, labor force pressures	5. nuclear disaster, computer failure	6. volcanic eruption, earthquake	7. crisis (disaster, war, other) prompts new wave	8. new onslaught of attacks	9. collapse of Chinese or US economies	10. natural gas crisis (Russia?); China cuts off key metals	11. US: radically changes posture	12. China: rising hegemon	13. Turkey: crackdown, civil war, maybe refugees?	14. Middle East: war, or regime collapse in Egypt	15. Russia: invasion of Ukraine

European drivers	MAJOR ACTORS				EU policy areas				Social processes				
	16. EU Comm: plans, capacity	17. Germany: political capacity	18. France: political capacity	19. Italy: political capacity	20. <u>Brexit</u>	21. Schengen	22. Eurozone	23. PESCO, CFSP	24. social protest (<u>gilets jaunes</u>)	25. right-wing populism: Italy, France	26. right-wing populism: Hungary, Poland	27. NATO: as after-effect of high-level political decisions	28. UK: role outside of EU, but in trans-Atlantic community

[illegible]

Help verify the scenarios!

- to what extent does each scenario string together a **cohesive set** of logically following events and processes?
- are there other relevant **points of departure** for constructing additional scenarios?
- what kinds of **additional “drivers”** (i.e. trends, processes and events) might be worth bringing into the scenarios?
- are there **stylistic elements** to be corrected or tweaked?

Scenario 1

- downsized EU Commission due to major retrenchment of the EU's activities after:
 - further rise of far-right power (incl. France)
 - immobilism in Germany (weak CDU govts)
 - feeble Maltese Commission head 2024-29
- China enforces social credit system and targets Western businesses, leading to economic slowdown in Europe
- Sovereigntist forces are entrenched; globalism and liberalism is in retreat

November 2029

Antal Rogán, President of the EU Commission



June 2030

Dimitar Gochev waits to clean up
Alexander Nevski Square in Sofia



Scenario 2

- European politics is beset with constant restlessness and protest
 - Sofia, Riga, Warsaw, Madrid, Paris, London
- polarization driven by a fragmented public sphere that is exasperated by proliferation of new social media and private media moguls
- politics end up in a stalemate
 - ‘feckless pluralism’
- right-wing populism becomes an enduring feature, but never actually triumphs over liberalism

Scenario 3



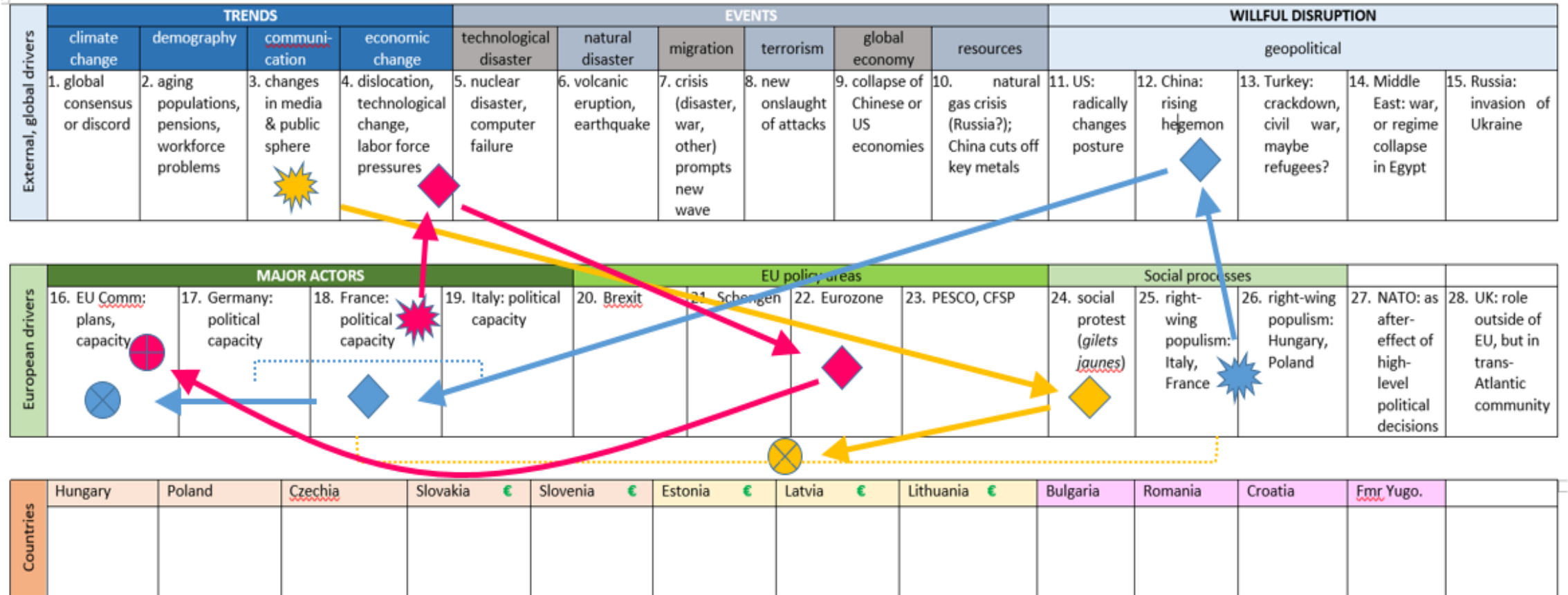
March 2024

Manon Aubry (*La France insoumise*)
strategizes for EP elections

Stop looking at only the expenditure side of things! Let's rethink the revenue side too!

- Breaking out of austerity, but not thru debt
 - Elizabeth Warren wealth tax
- spending for new challenges: pensions, climate change, industrial restructuring
- taxing new domains of wealth
- retaining economic sovr. vis-a-vis China
- Macron and other centrists come on board; a rebound of leftist parties
- EU integration returns; populists diminish

Morphological approach



a cohesive set of events/processes???

other points of departure ???

additional drivers to bring in ???

stylistic modifications to be made ???

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