



POPREBEL

<https://populism-europe.com/>

Foresight scenarios on populism:

Imagining Central and Eastern European politics in 2030

*Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES), San Francisco, 23 November
Roundtable “Foresight Scenarios on Populism: Imagining Central and Eastern European Politics in 2030”; REVISED Nov 2021*



WP 6 of the project “Populist rebellion against modernity in 21st-century Eastern Europe: neo-traditionalism and neo-feudalism” funded by the EU H2020-SC6-GOVERNANCE-2018 program, grant agreement no. 822682.

POPREBEL

- *“Populist rebellion against modernity in 21st-century Eastern Europe: neo-traditionalism and neo-feudalism”*
- *a H2020 project uniting cross-disciplinary research teams from 6 universities (UCL, Corvinus, Charles University, Belgrade, Krakow, Tartu) and an independent research group Edgeryders*
- *separate WPs on cultural, economic and political dimensions of ‘populist rebellion’*
- *plus, an innovative on-line discussion platform in four languages (PL, CZ, SRB, ENG) that has been ethnographically coded to map out contemporary political discussion around populism*
- *builds on Marie Curie ITN (doctoral training) project FATIGUE*

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

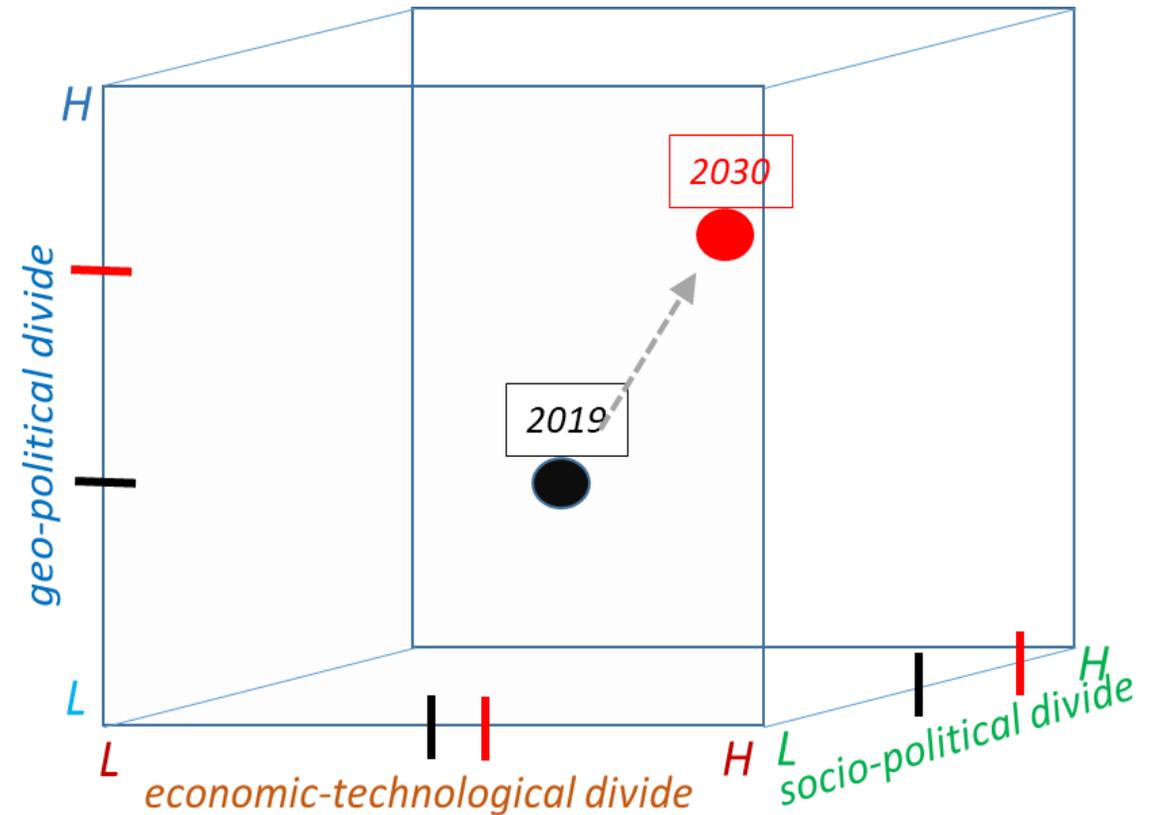
- an analytical system for mapping out possible futures within a certain domain or environment in order to reflect on possible consequences or courses of action under different eventualities
 - scenarios do not predict the future
- they are a tool for critical thinking, discussion and interaction
 - 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 2019 – March 2020
- 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



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



[Streetsweeper CN100 Sinder - Street sweeper - Wikipedia](#)



[File:Day 14 Occupy Wall Street September 30 2011 Shankbone 49.JPG - Wikimedia Commons](#)

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



[File:Strasbourg Plenary November 2019 F70A6122 \(49132216507\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Strasbourg_Plenary_November_2019_F70A6122_(49132216507).jpg) - Wikimedia Commons

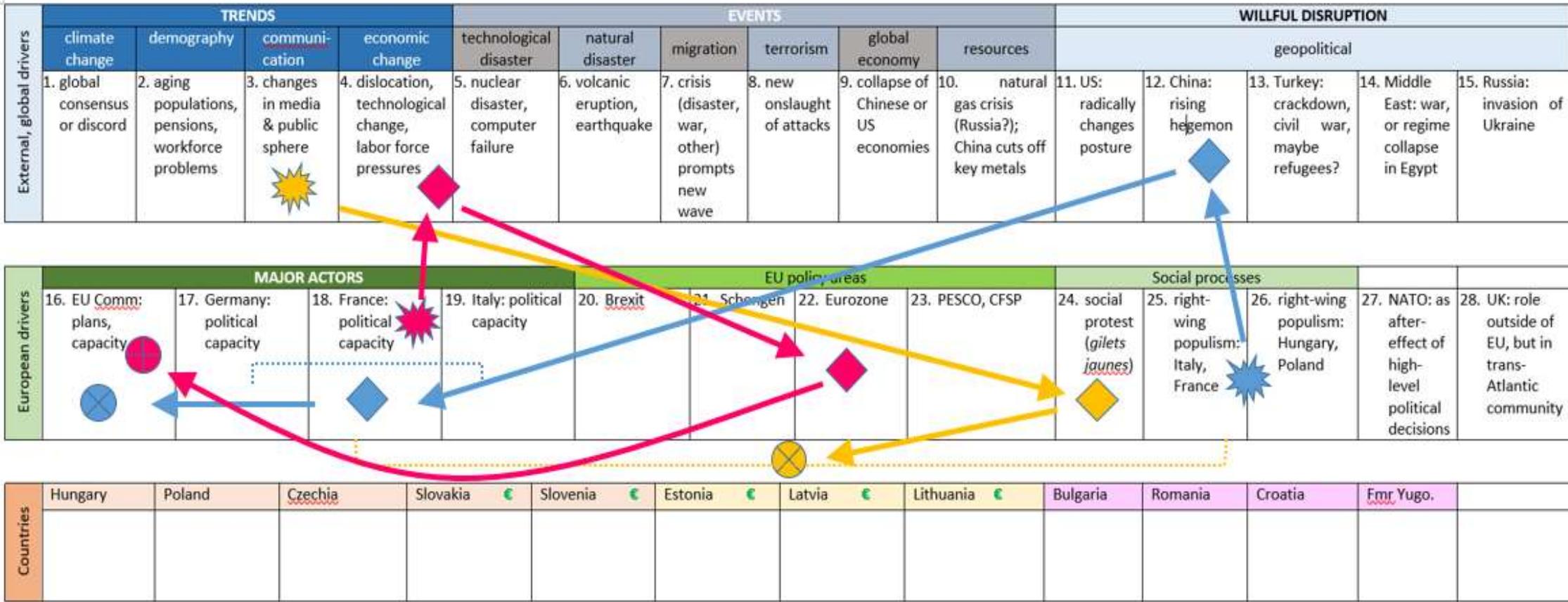
March 2024

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



Scenario 1

Scenario 2

Scenario 3

a cohesive set of events/processes???

other points of departure ???

additional drivers to bring in ???

stylistic modifications to be made ???

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