



The German Center for Research and Innovation,  
the Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences (BIGSSS),  
Columbia's Journalism School, the ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin and Gerd Bucerius  
and the German Research Foundation (DFG)

cordially invite you to a panel discussion on

# Booming Populism

On the Practice and Language of Political Polarization

Thursday, November 17, 2016 | 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

with

**Michael Werz**

Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress and Professor at Georgetown University's BMW Center for German and European Studies

**Tara D. McGuinness**

Senior Advisor to the Director of the White House's Office of Management and Budget and Executive Director of the Community Solutions Team

**Jan-Werner Müller**

Professor of Politics at Princeton University

**Todd Gitlin**

Writer and Professor of Journalism and Sociology at Columbia University

**Martin Nonhoff**

Professor of Political Theory at the Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences (BIGSSS), University of Bremen

**German House | 871 United Nations Plaza  
(First Ave. at 49<sup>th</sup> Street), New York, NY**

**RSVP by Nov 15 by clicking here.**  
Registration is required to attend. Seating is limited.

In the course of the Brexit referendum and the U.S. presidential elections, both the EU and the U.S. have seen a rise of populist political reasoning. Polarizing, overly simplifying or misleading communications of social, cultural and economic developments dominate current political debates and influence public perceptions of nationhood, inner security and minority politics. By claiming to speak in the name of ordinary people, politicians emphasize the direct democratic nature of their actions while at the same time often explicitly excluding certain groups of people from their societal models. By bringing together social scientists, journalists and communication experts, the panel discussion will enable a multilayered analysis of the current political implications of populism in its various forms and the role of different media—e.g. corporate vs. social—in the distribution of information, functioning as a public corrective, and shaping of public opinion. A novel event format will ensure an engaging discussion by challenging the renowned experts in the field with inputs developed in a preceding think lab of young researchers.

[www.germaninnovation.org](http://www.germaninnovation.org)  
[www.bigsss-bremen.de/populism](http://www.bigsss-bremen.de/populism)

# Speakers' Biographies:



## Michael Werz

is a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress where he is member of the National Security Team. Previously, he was a Senior Transatlantic Fellow at the German Marshall Fund where his work focused on transatlantic foreign policy and the European Union. He is currently an adjunct professor at Georgetown University's BMW Center for German and European Studies. Werz has published extensively on a wide range of scholarly and policy issues, including race and ethnicity in the 20th century; Western social and intellectual history; minorities in Europe and the United States; ethnic conflicts, politics in Europe, and anti-Americanism.

Michael Werz sees populism as a sociological miracle: The populist leader conveys to his supporters, that they are members of an elite that is privy to the conspiracies which govern modern mass societies, and that they are—at the same time—members of the (silent) majority. Populist movements derive their longevity from establishing this contradictory dynamic of a conformist rebellion. Populism drives traditional patterns of mobilization in a “news cycle democracy” to the extreme: It relies on the personalization of ideas and arguments and offers a magic political formula that seemingly reduces clashing interests to a common denominator.



## Tara McGuinness

is a Senior Advisor to the Director of the White House's Office of Management and Budget and Executive Director of the Community Solutions Team. Her portfolio includes work on evidence-based policies to improve economic and social outcomes in rural and urban America. From 2013 to 2015 she served as Senior Communications Advisor and member of the White House team working to implement the Affordable Care Act. She worked to develop and helped execute the outreach effort that signed up millions of uninsured Americans for health care. McGuinness has been working at the nexus of public policy and citizen engagement for over a decade. Prior to joining the White House, she was the Executive Director of the Center for American Progress Action Fund and a senior vice-president at the think tank, the Center for American Progress where she worked on a wide range of issues from economic equity to climate and resilience policies. Tara McGuinness also worked overseas for the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs with postings in Nepal, Bangladesh and Ethiopia. She is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania in urban studies.

Tara McGuinness sees the challenge of making public policies responsive to citizen voices as one of the defining questions of our time. She will discuss how the populist backlash against institutions, governments and political parties is directly tied to their ability to address the impacts of a changing economy on citizens and how new localism offers promising opportunities to restore community bonds.



## Jan-Werner Müller

is Professor of Politics at Princeton University and a fellow at the Institute of Human Sciences, Vienna, during the academic year 2016-2017. He works mostly on democratic theory and the history of European political thought. Müller has been a fellow at All Souls College, Oxford, at the Center for European Studies, Harvard, and the Institute of Advanced Study, Princeton. He is the author of *Constitutional Patriotism* (2007), *Contesting Democracy: Political Ideas in Twentieth Century Europe* (2011) and *What is Populism?* (2016), among other books. His public affairs commentary has appeared in leading international newspapers and journals.

Jan-Werner Müller sees at populism's core a rejection of democratic pluralism. He contests conventional wisdom according to which populists cannot actually govern. He argues that populists can govern on the basis of their claim to exclusive moral representation of the people and their true interests. He proposes a number of concrete strategies for how liberal democrats should best deal with populists.



## Todd Gitlin

teaches Journalism and Sociology and is the chair of the PhD program in Communications at Columbia University. He is a writer, novelist, and public intellectual. He holds degrees from Harvard University (mathematics), the University of Michigan (political science), and the University of California, Berkeley (sociology). He has published widely in general periodicals (The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, et al.), online magazines and scholarly journals. Gitlin is a columnist, a media commentator, and a member of the editorial board of *Dissent*. He is the author of *Occupy Nation: The Roots, the Spirit, and the Promise of Occupy Wall Street* (2012) and *The Bulldozer and the Big Tent: Blind Republicans, Lame Democrats, and the Recovery of American Ideals* (2007).

Todd Gitlin argues that if populism is the embrace of a passion strictly on the ground that it is popular, then it is automatically fodder for demagoguery and demonization.



## Martin Nonhoff

teaches political theory at the University of Bremen and is one of the field chairs at the Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences (BIGSSS). At the moment, he is a visiting scholar at Cornell University. His research interests include democratic theory, theories of power and hegemony, theories of discourse, and economic and tax policies. His publications include *Politischer Diskurs und Hegemonie* (2006) and articles on radical democratic theory.

Martin Nonhoff views populism as an unavoidable element of modern democracy, as a counterweight, able to question the results of pluralist interest politics as well as of the constitutional interplay of institutionalized powers. However, he also thinks that populisms can be potentially dangerous if they rest on absolute truth claims and if these claims are not sufficiently countered by representative politics.