

PhD Thesis Project Offer

(valid during the calendar year 2025)

Provisional Title of the Doctoral Thesis

Populisms and New Political Identities in the Globalised Digital Public Sphere

Subject area* / Research line

Social and Legal Sciences / Political Communication and Public Opinion

Summary of the Doctoral Thesis (maximum 300 words)

This proposal aims to explore the interaction between contemporary populisms—both right-wing and left-wing—and emerging political identities within the context of the globalised digital public sphere. The study seeks to analyse how supposedly populist discourses, characterised by their direct appeal to “the people” and opposition to established elites, find in both old and new communication platforms a fertile ground for expansion and reconfiguration.

The phenomenon of populism has gained relevance across multiple regions of the world, manifesting in diverse sociopolitical and cultural contexts. Simultaneously, the digitalisation and globalisation of the public sphere have facilitated the formation of fluid and dynamic political identities, challenging traditional structures of political representation and participation. In this context, the research will examine the dynamics through which populist movements use digital and analogue technologies to mobilise their base, disseminate their messages, and construct narratives that resonate with specific segments of the population.

A possible focus of interest is to analyse how new political identities—which often transcend national borders—are articulated around cross-cutting issues such as gender, ethnicity, social justice, and other shared areas of concern. The thesis will address how these identities are formed, negotiated, and transformed in response to populist discourses, and how these interactions influence the shaping of public opinion and democratic practices.

Methodologically, the research may combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive view of the phenomenon. For instance, case studies of populist movements and/or digital communities, content analysis of social media platforms, and interviews with key actors will be conducted to unravel the complex relationships between populism, political identities, and the digital public sphere.

This study aims to contribute to the critical understanding of political transformations in the digital era and offer insights into the challenges and opportunities arising from the interaction between populism and new political identities in a globalised world.

Is the development of this thesis associated with the execution of any research project? If so, provide details of the project (title, funding entity, and execution period)

If so, please provide details of the project (title, funding institution and implementation period)
Not directly linked to any pre-existing research projects.

Academic Profile of the Student (maximum 200 words)

The ideal candidate will have a demonstrable interest in political communication studies and a high level of academic reading and writing skills. A Bachelor's and/or Master's degree in Political Science, Sociology, Philosophy, Communication, Cultural or Gender Studies, or related disciplines is desirable. Additional desirable qualifications include:

- Knowledge of political theory, especially in populism and political identity studies.
- Proficiency in qualitative (content analysis, interviews, case studies) and quantitative (data analysis, surveys) research methodologies.
- Familiarity with digital platforms and social media.
- Proficiency in English and, preferably, in other relevant languages for international case studies.
- Critical and analytical thinking. Excellent written and oral academic communication skills.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively. Strong motivation and interest in research on populism and political identities.
- Commitment and motivation to develop a rigorous and original academic investigation.
- Previous experience in related research projects and academic publications will be valued

Contact: institutional email of the Supervisor

miguel.peralta@urjc.es

Institutional Website of the Supervisor

<https://gestion2.urjc.es/pdi/ver/miguel.peralta>

*See the Subject Areas at <https://www.urjc.es/informacion-practica#oferta-proyectos-de-tesis>.
Each project will be included in a single subject area.