

Call for Papers: Studying Popular Culture in Eastern European Transition

»Popular Cultures«, 8th Annual Conference of the Kulturwissenschaftliche Gesellschaft (KWG)

Saarland University, 27–30 September 2023

The study of popular culture has now spread worldwide as both an academic discipline and a general intellectual approach. However, a historical analysis reveals the very diverse trajectories of this field of study outside the English-speaking world. Our panel aims to discuss the different traditions of approaching the topic globally, focusing on the great social transformation of the former “second world”, i.e. the post-socialist transition in Eastern Europe. Depending on national and regional academic traditions, the study of popular culture was and still is incorporated into different disciplinary frameworks. While the academic reception of the approach represented by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) was often significantly delayed and problematic, culturology remained its dominant academic ally in some countries. In others, ethnology, social and cultural anthropology, cultural sociology, media studies, literary studies, and cultural history assumed responsibility for many of the research themes and questions addressed by Anglo-American cultural studies.

This conference panel proposes addressing the roots, objectives, and consequences of studying popular cultures of post-socialist transition to foster a better understanding of the generally understudied role of popular culture in the contexts of great social transformations.

We welcome contributions that discuss these topics by either providing general overviews or focusing on specific case studies. Questions to answer may include:

- Which approaches to studying popular culture have been used to address the transitional period in Eastern Europe?
- In which manners have the local contexts of economic, political, social, and cultural transformations shaped the study of popular culture in the region?
- Can the evidence from studying the popular culture of post-dictatorial regimes in Southern Europe, as well as that of different transitional processes in the Global South, form a common ground for a better understanding of societal concerns in uncertain times?
- How can different traditions of studying popular culture outside the Anglo-American realm become better integrated and share their proceedings effectively?

We invite cultural historians, cultural sociologists, cultural anthropologists, cultural geographers, scholars with interdisciplinary approaches to cultural and heritage studies, and members of all other relevant academic disciplines to hold a fruitful discussion. We plan to publish the contributions in a special issue of a high ranking journal.

Timeline:

- Abstract (300 words) and biography (50 words) by 20 January 2023.
- Contacting selected authors by 31 January 2023.

Panel chairs:

- Ondřej Daniel, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic, ondrej.daniel@ff.cuni.cz
- Irena Šentevska, Independent Scholar, Belgrade, Serbia, irenasentevska@gmail.com

Further information about the conference (in German): <https://kwg-ev.org/populaere-kulturen-2023/>