

Toril Aalberg, Frank Esser, Carsten Reinemann, Jesper Stromback,
Claes De Vreese
Populist Political Communication in Europe
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Who can doubt about the existence in Europe of a contagious phenomenon called populism? Phenomenon with novel elements, but at the same time with historical symptoms within of our recent history. Populism is a phenomenon which, as the authors affirm on this magnificent work *Populist Political Communication in Europe*, has been studied very little in the academic sphere.

This work is a response to what many scholars consider academic needs, and it is a deep and more rigorous research on populist phenomena under the approach of political communication processes. This is recognized in most of the cases presented on the book in hand. Hence, these lines aim to stimulate future research and future publications towards knowing about and studying in depth the specificities of this phenomenon, taking into account socio-political and cultural context, country history, among others.

In this sense, we may affirm that communication is not a concept that intermittently accompanies politics but rather communicating is politics itself. This fact is clearly evidenced in politicians, social movements and political parties with a populist discourse. Throughout this publication, we can notice how the conquest of spaces by these three actors would be unimaginable without the use of discourses, the use of media and a rapprochement to citizens appealing above all to the emotion, stimulating people to encourage them to express their feelings, which are sometimes hidden.

The lack of studies regarding populism makes us also conclude that there is a certain relativization in the definition of populism. For instance, is the presence of populism negative or positive?, we keep asking ourselves. On the one hand, most authors agree that the existence of this phenomenon responds to an immediate opposition to structures, institutionalism and pre-established rules, especially elements which are present in a liberal democracy. All these aspects are known regularly as "establishment". In these cases, we find, generally, the extreme left populism. On the other hand, we find populism as an opposition no longer to political systems and political decisions but to cultural and social changes resulting from migratory phenomena and direct consequences of globalization. According to some authors, this responds to the presence of extreme right political parties, movements and leaders.

Those who consider populism as something negative itself affirm that populism is a risk to the values of liberal democracy and therefore it encourages the appearance of leaderships with authoritarian features, stimulating, among other things, an electoral and political contest based on a populist construction. For instance, due to the success of a populist political actor, the opponent is tempted to repeat and adopt ways for the purpose of keeping positioned in the public opinion.

Those who are optimistic, however, insist that populism is a factor that draws politician attention to indicate that "something is missing", "something is not right" in the political system and thus it is imperative for those actors to react and address the problem. Certainly, in this case, we can observe, and this publication confirms it, the most common characteristics that respond to a politician, social movement or political party with populist features: political disaffection, distrust toward political parties, lack of representation, lack of identity and lack of belonging of individuals to a social group.

In a systematic and, in my opinion, accurate way, the authors of this work focus their research in each of the countries (twenty-four in total) under three characteristics: (i) populist actors as communicators, (ii) the media and populism, and (iii) citizens and populism. In all three elements, we find the traditional chain in the message conformation, being: an issuer of the message, a channel through which the message goes, and an audience that receives that

message. Unlike decades ago, the receiver of the message is in itself a potential issuer of such message, as it answers the message and therefore shapes and influences the public sphere.

In addition, the authors of the work make clear and remind us of the use of the words "The People", where many populists insist on taking advantage of the relativization of its concept. Therefore, it is easier to use such word so that it is understood in a more flexible manner, and without provoking questionings from their opponents. Who can be against "The People"? The use of the term allows to integrate and persuade in a more effective way.

Within this scheme, the authors agree, as we notice throughout this publication, about the fact that a populist discourse presents two possible intentions: the inclusion of in-groups or the exclusion of out-groups. In the first case, the issue of inclusion is mainly appealed by extreme left populist actors, where they build the confrontation between "we" (the people, the citizens) and "them" (elites, the powerful). On the other hand, from the extreme right groups, the exclusion of these out-groups refer to ethnicities, regions and religious groups, and are seen as factors of "danger" or "risk" that threaten the identity of a certain place.

From my perspective, this work presents a challenge to the academy, not only in Europe but also in the United States and Latin America. First, the need to promote qualitative research to understand the stimulus that make possible the acceptance and engagement, before the proposals and demands of populist actors. Second, the need to better understand the role of the media and the diverse position of the large corporations considering these phenomena. And third, the role of alternative media and social media in this whole issue, as they are already part of the public sphere and most of the populist actors have understood so.

Alejandro G. MOTTA NICOLICCHIA

amotta@alumni.unav.es

