POLITICAL POPULISM: HANDBOOK OF CONCEPTS, QUESTIONS AND STRATEGIES OF RESEARCH, EDITED BY REINHARD HEINISCH, CHRISTINA HOLTZ-BACHA, AND OSCAR MAZZOLENI. BADEN-BADEN: NOMOS VERLAGSGESELLSCHAFT, 2021, 595 PP.

REVIEW BY:

NANE ALEKSANYAN[*]
University of Tuscia

Abstract

This handbook is divided into three parts, the first of which includes theories, approaches, conceptualizations and dimensions of political populism. The second part analyzes populist manifestations in Europe and America, while the third part focuses on new phenomena and new research programs of political populism. In this context, the interdisciplinary nature of research is considered, taking into account the peculiarities of political populism in Europe and America. This handbook offers a comprehensive theoretical and empirical introduction to the manifestations, causes, and consequences of political populism and the political dimensions of various populist phenomena, especially in the democracies of Europe and the Americas. The main focus of this handbook is on explaining the phenomenon as a result of the crisis of legitimation of the representative system, as well as contradictions and limitations in the current political science debate. The phenomenon of political populism is considered primarily from the standpoint of political science and communication studies. This handbook also offers a comprehensive analysis of the impact of political populism on various policy areas such as the environment, health or economic policy.

This handbook is devoted to the study of political populism, thereby separating the field of political populism from other manifestations of populism. The handbook analyzes various concepts, issues, and empirical cases of political populism, as well as populism's relationship to both politicians and political institutions, as well as their

[*] **Nane Aleksanyan** an Erasmus+ mobility MA student of Human Rights and Security at University of Tuscia, Italy. She is a MA student of Law at Eurasia International University, and she also holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the Yerevan State University. Email: nane.alexanyan@gmail.com. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8692-2641.

political discourse and style (Heinisch, Holtz-Bacha and Mazzoleni 2021, 19-37; Skenderovic 2021, 41-58). After the numerous electoral successes of right-wing populist parties, we see that the influence of right-wing populism on European politics cannot be underestimated. This is especially evident in the context of the migrant crisis, which continues to irritate right-wing populist voters, the wave of terrorist attacks in Western Europe, the problems of the functioning of the EU political system, also exploited by populists, and the Brexit referendum.

This handbook addresses the problem of political populism, which has been a political problem for Western democracies and non-Western autocracies since World War II. The purpose of the handbook is a comparative analysis of political populism and the electoral successes of populist parties and actors. The salient features of Brexit, the presidency of Donald Trump or campaigns against measures to contain the pandemic are highlighted and described. Therefore, there is an urgent need to improve the theoretical and empirical base for research on political populism and fill in the existing gaps in the study of this phenomenon, which is so important for understanding the functioning of modern European polities (Heinisch, Holtz-Bacha and Mazzoleni 2021, 19-37).

An analysis of the contradictory processes of democratization taking place in modern Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and the United States leads to the conclusion that it is necessary to include effective mechanisms for controlling the use of democratic institutions for selfish purposes in the legal system (Vergari 2021; Ruth and Hawkins 2021). In everyday reality, the spread of the values of freedom and democracy often gives rise to the abuse of information channels for influencing public opinion, leads to political and legal demagogy, which has replaced effective mechanisms for ensuring the rule of law, law and order and legal regulation in general. The emergence of democratic institutions and mechanisms designed to implement the people's will makes it possible for individual participants in the political process, using modern technologies for manipulating consciousness, to realize their selfish interests without formally violating the law (Lanzone 2021; Loch 2021). As a result, the goals of economic growth, improvement of the welfare of citizens, and the fight against corruption, proclaimed at the beginning of the reforms, did not bring any positive changes to life. Appealing to the mistakes of the modernization reforms, the leaders of the opposition movements in Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America, under the slogans of the struggle for the rights of the people, transformed political systems (Mastropaolo 2021; Pauwels 2021; Roncarolo 2021; Ruzza 2021).

Recently, along with the persistence of a number of crisis phenomena in Central and Eastern Europe, there has been a positive nature of transformations, largely due to the implementation of the national interests of sustainable development (Akkerman 2021). The accumulated problems in healthcare, education, agriculture and housing cannot be solved quickly. However, a significant leap, designed to improve the quality of life of the citizens of Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, can be made if the steps being developed by the legislative and executive authorities do not carry the features of populism, despite the fact that a certain negative experience of confronting this phenomenon available. Legal demagogy and populism hinder the fulfillment of the tasks of realizing the national interests of sustainable development.

The study of these phenomena will make it possible to determine ways to optimize the legal policy of the state and the current legislation in order to increase the effectiveness of legal regulation, as well as to consolidate the efforts of the state and society in achieving the goals of priority national projects, building a strong state. In this sense, the purpose of the handbook is to provide a theoretical and legal analysis of populist political activity that affects the dynamics of law and the legal consciousness of society in the United States, Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, as well as to develop proposals for preventing and eliminating the negative consequences of this phenomenon (Mastropaolo 2021, 59-72, Heinisch and Mazzoleni 2021, 105-122; Pauwels 2021, 123-136.).

Based on the goal, the following tasks were solved in the handbook: 1) the definition of the concept and signs of political populism were formulated, proposing a methodology for its study; 2) the manifestations of populism in the political and legal life of society are considered; 3) analyze the correlation of political and legal populism, as well as political and legal demagoguery; 4) the forms of manifestation of constitutional populism are established, revealing the shortcomings of the current constitutional model that contribute to legal populism; 5) researched legal populism in the modern political process; 6) analyze the forms of expression of political populism in the law-making and law enforcement process, developing recommendations to eliminate the negative consequences of its manifestation; 7) the main directions of modern legal policy in the field of combating political populism are determined, proposing a set of measures aimed at rationalizing the current legislation.

In the handbook, in a comparative analysis of the crisis in political and legal development, modern concepts of the social and cultural identity of Latin American and Western European civilizations, their history, identity, state and legal continuity were used. Studies of the legal policy of these states and modern political processes were carried out using the methods of political science, conflictology, sociology, communication, and psychology (Roncarolo 2021; Ruzza 2021).

Political populism is a kind of manipulation of public consciousness with the help of political tactics and strategy, as well as a set of special psychological techniques commonly used in public discourse, associated with an appeal to the ordinary sense of justice of the masses, in an attempt to adapt to the right of the majority of the population, using the following features: ordinary legal consciousness, as a simplification of ideas about the legal regulation of social relations, the immediacy of the perception of legal phenomena, moral and legal maximalism and a tendency to simple and unambiguous political decisions (Aschauer 2021).

Political populism should also be understood as the proclamation and consolidation by legal acts of such political provisions that in reality do not ensure the achievement of socially and politically useful results, but, on the contrary, contribute to the satisfaction of the interests of individual citizens or their collective formations.

Political populism is closely related to legal demagogy, including intentional, deceitful, outwardly effective influence on legal consciousness, hidden under the guise of benefiting the people and the state, an individual or all kinds of associations of citizens and carried out through various forms of false one-sided or grossly distorted representation of political reality to satisfy one's own or collective vested interests.

Political populism accompanies liberal and democratic regimes, where the masses act as voters as participants in the political process. Political populism manifests itself especially clearly in the course of the election campaign, legislative lobbying, and state management of information resources of civil society. In the political life of society throughout human history, many of the public politicians were forced to use certain populist methods, since their complete disregard in most cases leads to defeat in the elections.

Political populism reaches its maximum potential in the conditions of a low level of political and legal culture of society, the absence of a legal mechanism for public influence on the legislature, and the integration of business structures with the media.

Political populism intensifies during a period of radical transformation of legislation in connection with a change in the social and economic situation in the state, as well as in case of instability, when most people experience worsening living conditions and lose confidence in the future.

The weak public legal awareness of the prerequisites for the effective functioning of the international and European legal institutions of liberal democracy imposed by the authorities contributes to the development of political populism. Legal passivity, collectivism and gullibility of the citizens of these countries help populists achieve their political goals and manipulate public opinion.

During discussions and debates about the rise of right-wing populist parties, the phenomenon has not only been characterized as born out of historical fascism or as a reaction to contemporary concerns about culture, insecurity and social precariousness generated by global neoliberal agendas. This rise is also seen as a systemic correction of politics that has become very far removed from the people, or as an illiberal democratic response to undemocratic liberalism. Given these conflicting interpretations, it is not surprising that anti-establishment populism is sometimes described as having both hostile and friendly relations with democracy. Exclusivist opinions and ideas about what constitutes a demos are juxtaposed with opinions and ideas that emphasize the salvific potential of democracy, on the basis of which the 'people' should decide about their future by direct expression of their sovereign will. The association of right-wing parties with populism, which has its own distinct left-wing historical lines, is another complicating factor. Some scholars argue that political populism is a so-called 'subtle ideology' (Dan and Arendt 2021) and it joins the 'mainstream ideology', which can be either on the left wing or on the right. Such a flexible definition, which implies an organized, albeit fleeting and fleeting response to various political conditions, runs the risk of erasing the concept of historical scope, as well as the origin, succession and relationship of concepts.

Since left-wing and right-wing forms of political populism are often diametrically opposed, their merging or unification does not include crucial ideological differences. The criticism by radical left parties of social inequality and the identification of liberalism with democracy is clearly based on anti-elite discourses. But the extreme right's criticism of the elites on behalf of the people and in the name of the people can partly be seen as a reaction to the anti-democratic technocracy, it is rather an anti-politics based on ethno-nationalism and socio-cultural conservatism. For this reason,

some scholars are sometimes reluctant to use the label of political populism on the grounds that it merges the left's critical appraisals of neoliberalism with the racist traditions of the right. In this sense, the moralistic condemnation of political populism in all its manifestations comes down to the attempts of the representatives of the elite to reduce the expression of the democratic will of the people. At the same time, the absence of a clear definition of political populism, which would not only take into account the ambivalent history of populism as a political concept, but also how it has been used and continues to be used in practice, constantly reminds of itself.

In this handbook, the authors explore American and European political populism as an ideology and the basis for the formation of parties, but from the point of view of going beyond the borders of one state and compare its various manifestations. Historically, right-wing political populism must be seen as part of a tradition that goes back to two world wars and the Cold War period. It has its roots in various political environments, and it can be part of the heritage of neo-radicalism, neo-liberalism, and anti-tax increases, that is, it exists in several forms. And there are undoubtedly functional links between modern right-wing parties and right-wing parties that existed between the two world wars. Despite their different positions in relation to liberal democracy, nevertheless, they have common interests and programs of action in relation to the representatives of the elite, on the ethno-national issue, traditional social and cultural issues. More important, however, is their behavior within political systems. While political populists do not use violence, they are willing to enter into alliances with conservative elites in order to achieve their goals in terms of gaining power and seats in government.

The party platforms of Latin American and European right-wing parties, with the exception of those clearly associated with radical roots or ideology, have common features that not only emphasize their transnational character, but also show their belonging to the same group of parties (Casullo and Freidenberg 2021a, 2021b). This is reflected in particular in their ideological emphasis on the ethnic issue, where they demand the exclusion of certain elements, welfare chauvinism and cultural conservatism. Finally, the struggle for votes with right-wing populists, conservative parties from Northern and Western Europe, with a small but important exception in Germany, France and Sweden in particular, has accelerated the acceptance of right-wing parties into the political mainstream, and this has become part of the governance strategy (Havlík and Mareš 2021). However, it must be emphasized that this cooperation does not follow a single pattern. Some conservative parties, especially in the Nordic countries, are not willing to go as far as others in neutralizing populist right-wing parties or through semi-authoritarian rule, as in the case of Hungary and Poland, as in Austria, on issues such as immigration and Islam (Betz 2021). While populist theorists define the concept in a variety of ways, they usually describe it in terms of the antagonistic relationship between the people and the elites. Like other ideologies such as liberalism, nationalism, or socialism, populism can produce positive or negative results: as a potential adjustment or a threat to democracy, depending on the political context. As a democratizing force, liberalism advocates the principle of popular sovereignty in order to empower groups that feel that the political establishment does not represent their interests. On the other hand, it can also lead to authoritarian change

and conflict with liberal democracy over the rejection of pluralism, including minority rights (Heinisch and Mazzoleni 2021; Heinisch and Saxonberg 2021). Thus, the definition of political populism is too broad and flexible, since the opposition to populism is not only elitism, but also pluralism, which includes diverse, overlapping social groups with different ideas and interests (Diehl 2021). The focus here is primarily on right-wing populism, which dismisses its salvific possibilities and sees it as fundamentally incompatible with democracy. Right-wing populists want to identify with the people in an attempt to represent them in an exclusive way. They equate liberal democracy with democracy and emphasize that liberals and decocrats can never improve a political system that has become elite-led. Thus, the populist distinction between 'pure people' and 'corrupt elite' involves a specific moralistic political strategy.

In the context of political populism, it is 'pure people' that appears as an imaginary construct created for anti-democratic purposes. While the practices of liberal democracy leave much to be desired in a number of countries, it must be defended against populist false promises of democratic renewal. Taking such a moralizing and defensive position, a number of authors argue what the theorists criticizing democracy claim, since they take into account that in an age of increasing social inequality and technocracy, most of the political elite are to blame for the separation of liberalism from democracy and usually create the conditions for the current rise populist right-wing parties (Dingler, Lefkofridi and Marent 2021). Indeed, the failure of political elites before and after the 2008 financial crisis may, at least in part, explain the decline in confidence in liberal democratic institutions. However, a number of scholars warn of the destructive tendency of populism (whether right or left) to make democracy more majoritarian or less liberal. In their opinion, populism distorts democratic institutions in a destructive way, because it makes it difficult to manage the polemic between the minority and the majority who express their opinions. They argue that a strategy involving hegemonic politics would run the risk of becoming a means to an end for reactionary autocracy using populism to win. If successful, this could lead to a move away from representative and constitutional democracy (Huber and Schimpf 2021; Ivaldi 2021). Instead, one can emphasize the key role of intermediary institutions in liberal democracies, which are able to convey political demands from the party base to the elite without the direct association offered by populist demagogues. All of these views emphasize that populists want to circumvent representative institutional arrangements, including parliamentary procedures, reduce the distance between the people and their representatives, such as through plebiscites, and weaken the separation of powers. However, the dominant trend in academia is to define populism solely in terms of discourse, ideology, or worldview, but this is erroneous because it does not pay enough attention to the practice of political populism (Gherghina, Miscoiu and Soare 2021).

The emphasis on populism's radical anti-elite stance not only tends to obscure its collaboration with conservative elites, but also its functional roles within liberal and democratic systems. Regardless of the definition of right-wing parties, they have benefited in Europe from the de-regulation of liberal and democratic systems, or from breaking the link between self-determination of the individual and joining a political

party. After the severe decline of the social democratic and some centre-right parties that allowed for great diversity (a trend accompanied by the weakening of liberal parties), far-right parties in many countries have become the second or third largest political force. And if the weakening of the moderate left parties has opened up space for radical left and some 'green' parties, the overall result of this political restructuring has been the strengthening of right-wing parties. Several explanations for the shrinking and weakening of leftist parties have been proposed, such as the adoption of a globalist neoliberal agenda in the decade leading up to the 2008 financial crisis, typified by the 'Third Way' ideology (Bastow, Martin and Pels 2002), and the growing disconnect from the trade union movement. This has allowed populist right-wing parties to forge trails in territories where the left has traditionally voted, as well as win over labor force voters, especially after shifting the emphasis, as has been done on many occasions, from neo-liberal policies to the welfare state and the portrayal of foreign workers as competitors in the labor market. In addition, right-wing populists have combined a pro-social stance with anti-elite and anti-immigration rhetoric.

It appears that a populist moment has arrived, signaling a crisis in the neoliberal hegemony established in the 1980s. Moreover, the central axis of political conflict in the near future will be between right-wing populism and left-wing populism. In order to counter the surge of right-wing parties, in line with the theory of political populism, a left-wing populist strategy was developed to establish a more democratic hegemonic formation. The experience of Thatcherism in Great Britain shows that it is possible in European societies to bring about a transformation of the existing order without destroying liberal and democratic institutions. Given the left's current weakness, it's hard to see how a populist strategy will provide them with the weapons they need to counter right-wing parties (Sorensen 2021; Krämer 2021). But there is no doubt that the electoral success of right-wing populists in Europe must be seen in the context of broader social trends, such as the rise in social inequality stemming from neoliberal globalization agendas, symbolized by the severe economic downturn dubbed the 'Great Recession' and backlash such as 'identitarianism' against the background of multiculturalism launched by the recent influx of immigrants.

Despite the revival of right-wing parties in Latin American countries, the United States and Europe, where populist parties are fighting for a monopoly of power or form their own government (Casullo and Freidenberg 2021). While the populist parties have needed to dilute their radical agenda somewhat in exchange for government commitments, either directly or indirectly, they have been able to play a leading and guiding role in setting the political agenda on issues such as immigration. The desire and willingness to form coalitions with other political forces undermines the erroneous but oft-repeated claim that populists consider all political competitors and elites to be illegitimate. Here you can clearly see the relationship between the present and the past. The claim that fascist regimes were elitist rather than populist due to the ideological emphasis on the cult of the leader and racial politics seems to be incorrect. Like the populists, the fascists adopted a program of action directed against members of the elite, even though it was compromised by their cooperation with the elites (Saxonberg and Heinisch 2022). After they came to power in Germany and Italy, there was a fierce competition between the party and the state, echoing the tension that is an integral part

of the relationship between old and new forces. This helps explain why conservatives tend to collaborate with far-right parties; they do so out of necessity, not out of close political, cultural, or social kinship. From a regional European perspective, this alliance is currently most visible in Scandinavia, but is also present in other countries, such as Austria. Right wing populism is not a resurgence of historical fascism. But it cannot be defined as an exclusively new phenomenon, associated with the emergence of a specifically formed party in the 1970s, rooted in anti-tax campaigns and neoliberal economic programs. The rejection of multiculturalism by the populist parties, their desire for purity, their nostalgia for the mythical world of racial homogeneity, as well as clearly defined boundaries between different cultures and their use of history, is a reframed version of the same basic myth. Thus, the current populist moment that challenges the liberal order is evocative, points to a historical footprint, and not only in relation to past right-wing ideologies, but more importantly, their practices. And again, some conservative parties have adopted key anti-liberal ideological elements in the agendas of radical right parties as a way of responding to political competition. It remains an open question who exactly, populists or conservatives, will eventually win the political struggle.

The attempt by many populist parties to soften their message of ethnic exclusivity has opened up opportunities for collaboration with other parties. Since then, accommodation has become the predominant form of relationship between European conservative and populist parties, and it has been practiced through coalition agreements in the formation of government or ideological kinship. However, in some cases, centre-right parties, for ideological reasons, refrain from any kind of cooperation with radical right parties. In other cases, conservatives may govern on their own or in collaboration with other centrists or, in some cases, with social democratic parties. Scandinavian populist parties have been the most successful in Europe in terms of recognition by other parties and integration into the political system. Moreover, they became the ruling partners of the conservative parties in Denmark, Norway and Finland. This means that liberal and centrist parties play a less important role as influential political forces than in the past.

In some countries, historical or ideological factors prevent any collaboration between conservatives and populists. In Germany, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) are forced to renew their coalition governments, precisely in order to counter the populist activities and anti-immigrant rhetoric of the Alternative for Germany (AfD). There is a similar situation in France, when French President Emmanuel Macron, who won the presidential election of Marine Le Pen, continues the policy of his predecessors, right-wing conservatives and left-wing socialists, refusing any cooperation with the far-right National Rally.

Other conservative parties, notably in countries such as Hungary and Poland, have transformed into semi-authoritarian right-wing parties that are good at fighting populist parties as ideological rivals.

Thus the success of populist right-wing parties in many Latin American and European countries, whether as part of coalition governments or parties supporting the conservative government, has allowed them to act both as a systemic destabilizer and stabilizer, paradoxically. On the one hand, it is a destructive force against the elites,

trying to change the main political line on issues of immigration, welfare, multiculturalism and European integration. On the other hand, it is an opportunistic political force, ready for political alliances based on nationalist and traditionalist programs of action.

Supplementary material
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