

## Populism And Democracy: A Study Of Political Movements In The 21st Century

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### ABSTRACT

Populism has seen a global comeback in the twenty-first century, upending long-standing political conventions and institutions. This study looks at the emergence of populist political groups and how they affect democracies. The paper traces the historical origins of populism from the late 19th century to the present, investigating how contemporary populist movements represent dissatisfaction with political elitism, economic inequality, and globalization. In addition, it looks at how protest, the state, and civil society interact, emphasizing how social movements influence political discourse. The study evaluates the threat that religious and populist groups represent to democratic norms and highlights how different nations have responded to these threats. The study attempts to provide a clearer understanding of the reasons behind the worldwide populist wave and its impact on modern political contexts through a thorough investigation.

**Keywords:** Populism and Democracy, Civil Society, Political Movements, Globalization, 21st Century.

### INTRODUCTION

The first few years of the twenty-first century seem to have seen an increase in protest. In some ways, the anti-globalization movement of the 1990s seemed to be resurrected in the wake of Occupy and its manifestations. Protest, nonetheless, has spread past Europe and North America; the Variety Upheavals and the Middle Easterner Spring filled in as instances of how exceptionally petulant occasions could spread to different areas of the planet. Inside this flood of protest, the food revolts that got the world's consideration 2007-2008 built up the impacts of globalization on scattered networks. Technology's rapid advancement has also made it easier for resources and knowledge to circulate during these protests, allowing the targeted to act more swiftly. Protests around the world were not unique; they resembled and mirrored those in the 1980s, when protests against the hegemony of international institutions like the IMF and World Bank helped bring about the fall of communism.

People have been suing the state in most of the recent rallies as they try to get their grievances and perceived injustices fixed. Besides, the rush of democratization that obvious the last piece of the 20th century has eased back and may try and have begun to retreat, so these statements are being made in something else altogether. Following the finish of the Virus War, occasions feel somewhat doubtful on the commitment of abundance and opportunity by featuring the state's relative shortcoming despite non-state entertainers and worldwide patterns. New (and old) patriot associations have emerged to challenge the crucial presumptions of globalization, similarly as the Involve development planned to scrutinize the impact of huge business and corporate voracity.

Extreme right associations like Brilliant First light (GD) and the Option für Deutschland (AfD) have been doing great all through Europe because of disappointment with legislators and an ascent in populism. This has permitted Donald Trump to win the Conservative Faction's designation for the 2016 official political race. Contingent upon the sort of guarantee and the assets accessible to address it, the state's reaction to these issues has varied. The development of extremist philosophies and vulnerability over the job and reason for the state have made a fierceness that has prompted a chase after substitutes and targets. One such point of convergence and a method

for specific systems to pick an objective for the disdain of their residents has been made conceivable by the improvement of strict illegal intimidation.

The twenty-first century appears to help reductions and a conclusion of chances, rather than the late 20th century when globalization was on the ascent and more noteworthy transparency was considered what's to come. There has been a broad backlash against traditional politics, which has given rise to a number of opposing movements. The purpose of this essay is to analyze the relevance of this recent protest wave and pinpoint its motivators. Three sections that correspond to the primary themes make up the remaining portion of the paper. The arguments regarding the quality of democracy are examined in the first section, along with the degree to which weak democracies can withstand the inclination towards authoritarianism. The features of civil society are delineated in the second section, which also looks at the nature of the relationship between social movements and the government. Lastly, the emphasis turns to the emergence of religious and populist groups in reaction to the issues that underlie the current ant political environment in order to assess the degree of damage these movements pose to democratic practice.

## **1. LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Urbinati, N. (2019)** examined the primary modern interpretations of the idea and made the case that there is currently considerable consensus regarding the rhetorical nature of populism and its approach to gaining power in democracies. The country and individuals, who have created famous sway in the time of democratization, are the two essential substances that feed the philosophical heart of populism, which empowers us to put it inside the worldwide peculiarities known as democracy. This is made conceivable by an abundance of socio-verifiable investigations. To respect one gathering of individuals over another, populism includes changing the popularity-based standards of the larger part and individuals through the persona of a pioneer and the help of the general population.

**Nedelcu, H. (2014)** stated that regardless of the larger ideological groups to which political parties belong, there is also a substantial association between economic-leftist views and populism. A relatively ill-defined term, populism is commonly used to characterize a rhetoric critical of contemporary democratic institutions, which pits an idealized populace against the corrupt and malevolent elites who govern them. Typically, populism in South American politics is associated with the left. It is linked to the radical right in Europe. There is a growing trend in anti-establishment literature to quantify and measure the level of populism within modern anti-mainstream but also mainstream parties, notwithstanding the lack of agreement on what populism is. However, very few studies attempt to investigate the connection between political party ideology and populist discourses. Even fewer investigate the relationship between populism and electoral success.

**Galston, W. A. (2018)** asserted that the requirement for solid pioneers has been started by segment shifts and financial commotion in the West. Something beyond a profound response, the ascent of populism is cultivating a political framework that places liberal democracy in danger. Despite the fact that populism embraces majoritarianism and well-known sway, it is questionable of constitutionalism and liberal individual freedoms. Moreover, a cutting-edge democracy can't be based on the homogenous meaning of "individuals" progressed by egalitarians, as majority guarantees that democracy perseveres. The deficiency of liberal society might lead to this resurgent tribalism; however, the liberal-majority rule framework has the capacity to self-right, which is the vital starting point for essential upgrades.

**Ferraresi, G. (2016)** attempted to decide every one of these gatherings' philosophical starting points, if any. The 5 Star Development has rather been related with Rousseau, fundamentally due to its help for direct democracy. Numerous pundits have connected Podemos and Syriza to Argentinian political rationalist Ernesto Laclau, whose political hypothesis looks at the components of libertarian political talk to propose a principle of extremist democracy that can offer an option in contrast to both standard communism and the New Left. A short outline of these gatherings' social foundations will be given through an assessment of these potential connections. It's intriguing to take note of that Laclau's hypothesis can be utilized to portray the attributes of almost any libertarian development, including conservative ones.

**Gagnon, J. P. (2018)** tracked down that the expressions "populism" and "egalitarian" are every now and again utilized mistakenly in scholar and public talks since they have for quite some time been viewed as not well

characterized. The term's importance shifts inside and between worldwide locales (e.g., Latin America versus Western Europe); time spans (e.g., the 1930s versus the present); and characterizations (e.g., left/right, tyrant/freedom supporter, pluralist/antipluralist, as well as strains that sloppy these differentiations like homoantagonism, xenophobic women's liberation, and multicultural neonationalism), which makes this definitional challenge considerably more troublesome. Even if helpful attempts have been made to traverse the wide and varied conceptual landscape of populism, they hardly ever interact with one another. As a result, there is an overwhelming number of definitions without any idea of how they might relate to one another.

## **2. THE PEOPLE'S INVOLVED WITH CUTTING EDGE POPULISM: THE AUTHENTIC BEGINNING OF POPULISM**

In the late 19th century, a group of American farmers and laborers formed the Populist Party, marking the historical emergence of populism. The party's founders intended for its platform to pit the interests of the working class against those of the wealthy and powerful. It was in favor of policies like a progressive income tax, the nationalization of railroads, and the printing of more money with silver. The Populist Party may have been short-lived, but it has left an indelible mark on modern populist movements. Amid rising political and economic inequality as well as the effects of globalization, populism has made a triumphant comeback. People who feel left out by the social and economic changes of the past few decades have become increasingly angry and resentful, and populist politicians have taken advantage of this sentiment.

There has been a recent upsurge in anti-immigration nationalism among European populist organizations. Stronger border controls and hostility to multiculturalism have been advocated by leaders such as Geert Wilders of the Netherlands and Marine Le Pen of France. Latin American populists like Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and Evo Morales of Bolivia have advocated for social welfare programs and the nationalization of businesses.

Populist groups now share several traits with the original Populist Party despite having different genesis stories and political philosophies. Instead of putting the interests of the ruling class first, they put the needs of the people first. They oppose globalization and the establishment and often advocate for a simpler lifestyle. Populism is not a new phenomenon; its historical roots prove it. What distinguishes the current populist wave, however, is its breadth and the extent to which it affects long-standing democracies. The future of populist movements and whether they will be able to overcome the challenges they face in successful governance is an open question.

## **3. PROTEST, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

Civil society lends legitimacy and responsibility to democracy, according to literature. Linz and Stepan define civil society as a space for self-organizing groups, movements, and individuals to express values, form associations, and achieve their interests, independent of the state. This battlefield will be shaped by the state, with authoritarian systems diminishing and sometimes dominating non-state groups. When civil society participation is limited, people feel isolated, demoralized, and self-centered, reducing associational activity. Chandhoke claims that civil society cannot be "assumed emancipated or abstracted from the ethos that permeates" the economic and political sectors, even when it is free to operate. In his research of Tunisia's labour movement before 2011, Wilder underlines civil society's embeddedness. The labour movement moved forward and backward as possibilities and threats changed throughout times of crisis and upheaval. This shows how social, political, and economic restrictions and interests affect civil society in a state.

Civil society revolves around individual interaction and interest-based groupings. The state regulates this activity to protect civilian interests. Directly, the state provides a legal and political framework and supports and shapes civil society. Civil society actors pressure the state to make reforms that serve their priorities. Civil society is frequently seen emphatically, yet Berman cautions that it can present dangers assuming that political establishments are frail or the system is viewed as ineffectual and ill-conceived. Civil society movement might turn into an option in contrast to governmental issues, engrossing residents' energies and addressing essential requirements. Civil society support in these circumstances shows government and party disappointment and may undermine the autocracy. In deficiently democratized countries, civil society coordinating may undermine governmental steadiness. Kopecký and Mudde say that civil society is a domain where various gatherings prepare and peaceful protest is a method for residents to interface with the political first class.

Civil society activists can convey their cases through combative governmental issues like protest and direct activity. Tilly portrayed combative legislative issues as 'collaborations in which players make claims bearing on

another person's advantages, in which governments arise either as targets, initiators, or outsiders.' The thought covers a wide range of civil society exercises, from gatherings and shows to state-undermining measures. Sewell adds that it 'could on the other hand be portrayed as concentrated social activity that has the reason for defeating profound laid out primary disservice.' The state decides and imparts which exercises are permitted, satisfactory, and denied, with results. As De composes, restricting impression of occasions can start protests, uncovering stowed away strains. In the Shahbag development in Bangladesh, she guarantees that a solitary photo started sensations of past bad form and current disparity, prompting mass preparation. This example shows that cultural standards, democracy, and limit figure out what a state might permit.

Civil society activists use protest to challenge these laid out standards. Tarrow says the 'collection of debate gives movements three significant kinds of aggregate activity - disturbance, brutality and contained conduct.' The troublesome sort of protest is best in standing out in light of the fact that it 'consolidates claims, picks objects of cases, incorporates aggregate self-portrayals, as well as uses strategies that are either strange or unlawful inside the framework being referred to. Contained direct purposes formal channels to seek after claims and might be more genuine in the setting or issue. Ruibal claims that early termination campaigners in Brazil have utilized the courts to impact social and political change when different channels fizzle. At the point when formal cycles are frail or missing, less questionable civil society commitment is reduced and savagery might be legitimate. This is significant in systems with confined majority rule commitment or during emergencies when customary governmental issues might be debilitated.

Civil society entertainers can test resistance and drive the state to answer by reprimanding the state. States can answer civil society demands with 'a blend of concessions and constraint'. Majority rule systems might be more able to make concessions even with protest assemblies, yet they will likewise use unpretentious method for social control, typically missing the mark concerning suppression because of expenses. Alongside institutional systems for coordinating and overseeing civil society exercises, the state might energize and uphold countermovement's or straightforwardly undermine associations through specialists to penetrate and disturb. Civil society entertainers' assumptions for the state rely upon the system. States that are insufficiently democratized or whose democracy is questionable may be less able to meet civil society demands, especially if their legitimacy is in question. According to Tilly and Tarrow, this weakness may radicalize civil society or lead to the acceptance of authoritarian methods to address perceived threats to the status quo.

#### **4. POPULISM OF THE 21ST CENTURY**

A famous gathering of Latin American, U.S., and European specialists met on October 8, 2009, at the Latin American Program to investigate populism's resurrection in 21st-century Latin America and its impacts on equitable organization. The gathering was essential for a three-year drive on "Popularity based Governance and the 'New Left' in Latin America." The meeting inspected the similitudes and contrasts somewhere in the range of 1930s and 1940s libertarian systems and present-day populism, the qualities of 21st-century populism, and the wellsprings of preparation, allure, maintainability, and pertinence for territorial legislative issues. Authors debated populism's definition, its link to democracy and political institutions, and poverty and inequality policies.



**Figure 1:**Francisco Panizza

The difference between populism and "populist interventions," according to LSE's Francisco Panizza, is that the former makes direct appeals to "the people," searching for support from social groups that are under-represented in politics. These leaders provide a way out of historical exclusion. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil, Carlos Menem of Argentina, and Barack Obama were all portrayed by Panizza as having engaged in populist interventions in their speeches.

Since all politicians actively appeal to and identify with voters for votes, several participants argued that populist discourse defined populism. Populism, as per Carlos de la Torre of FLACSO-Ecuador, is based on a profoundly

separated people and is portrayed by direct political portrayal that debilitates majority rule establishments. The social hole between the advantaged minority who have profited from political exercises (popularity based etc.) and the barred larger part is underscored by egalitarian systems. Moderate legislators guarantee to represent "individuals" (i.e., the oppressed and impeded) and advocate for social equity. Political mediation can limit the power of leaders like them, therefore they avoid it. Societal mobilisation and support are the bedrock of populism, which is authoritarian, patriotic, and redemptive.



**Figure 2:** Hector Schamis

Consider populism as a transitory phenomenon that arose in Latin America in the aftermath of the Great Depression, according to Hector Schamis of Georgetown University. Despite the superficial resemblance, labelling leaders of the populist movement of the 21st century as populists diminishes the distinctiveness and historical significance of the notion.

Kenneth Roberts of Cornell University studied governments, political parties, and populism. His view was that populist regimes might dismantle established parties only to resurrect them with the help of newly mobilized people. Acute economic catastrophes were identified by Roberts as "critical junctures" that gave rise to populist regimes. The present populist movements reflect the fact that traditional market reforms and import substitution industrialization have not been successful in sustaining economic growth, producing employment opportunities, or eradicating poverty and inequality. At a basic intersection, the political system is chosen, as per Roberts, by the organization of party frameworks and the contestation of neoliberal universality. Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador (drove by President Rafael Correa) all have "energized populism" for the reasons expressed previously. These countries all lack institutionalized party systems and are strongly opposed to neoliberalism. He used the terms "serial" and "neoliberal orthodoxy" to describe the populism that existed in Peru and Ecuador during the rule of former administrations that lacked institutionalized party institutions.



**Figure 3:** Alexandra Panzarelli

Professor Alexandra Panzarelli of Venezuela's Universidad Central highlighted the typical instance of Hugo Chávez. Social protests escalated and the two main political parties fell before Chávez's election. According to Panzarelli, the number of protests averaged 720 year from 1989 to 1992. Venezuelans were happy to welcome Chávez, an outsider who promised to fight for the poor and oppose neoliberal economic policies, upon his election in 1998. Venezuelan society is deeply divided as a result of Chávez's consolidation of power and employment of authoritarian tactics to silence his critics. With the money he made from oil, Chávez has been able to keep his regime in power.

During the last option part of the 20th century, Brazilian history specialist Leslie Bethell named potential "traditional egalitarians" like Getulio Vargas, Janio Quadros, and Ademar de Barros in São Paulo, and Leonel Brizola in Rio Grande do Sul and Rio de Janeiro. In 1992, following 2.5 years in office, conservative neo-populist Fernando Collor de Melo was eliminated from office by prosecution. As indicated by Bethell, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is certainly not a neo-libertarian from the left. From its origin during the 1970s and 1980s, when he was an association chief, the Laborers Party (PT) was made by him. Not the dejected, yet coordinated work, the expert

working class, the gradual wing of the Catholic Church, and savvy people on the left supported the PT. Lula at long last won the administration in 2002 after three fruitless endeavours. Regardless of how libertarian he is, Lula has utilized "mindful" social, financial, and macroeconomic arrangements to kill neediness and imbalance. There has a major civil society, free media, and a laid-out party framework in Brazil, which makes it a delegate democracy that works generally. Lula, who is generally famous, has not tried to revise the constitution to empower a third order since he knows about the significance of force balance. In his closing comments, Bethell focused on the way that Lula's extraordinary endeavours to have Dilma Rousseff chosen as his replacement in 2010 have stirred up worries that she addresses a third order, and that he expects to recapture power in 2014 "in the arms of individuals."

## 5. POPULISM AND ITS IMPACT ON DEMOCRACY: POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Positive effects of populism on democracy include:

- **Increased participation:** Individuals who are embittered or disappointed with the ongoing political framework are as often as possible attracted to egalitarian movements. Populism can advance more cooperation in the popularity-based cycle and raise citizen turnout by exciting these gatherings.
- **Responsibility:** Egalitarian pioneers regularly blame the political class for being deceptive or disengaged from the worries of the average person. Populism can alleviate the force of exceptional interests and advance straightforwardness by making legislators responsible for their deeds.
- **Social equity:** Egalitarian movements much of the time put a high need on issues relating to disparity and social equity, including laborers' freedoms, medical services, and training. Populism can help with tending to the worries of underestimated individuals and propelling a more pleasant society by focusing on these issues.

Populism has detrimental repercussions on democracy that include:

- **Polarization:** Rather than relying on reasoned discussion and compromise, populist movements frequently appeal to emotions and identity politics. This may exacerbate polarization and division in society, making it more challenging to come to consensus and advance significant issues.
- **Authoritarianism:** Libertarian pioneers habitually reprimand autonomous organizations like the media, courts, and civil society while professing to represent individuals. Basic liberties and opportunities might be disregarded thus, and majority rule balanced governance might be debilitated.
- **Democracy versus Populism:** Libertarian movements plan to limit civil opportunities and common freedoms for the sake of "individuals" and may place the interests of the larger part over the privileges of minority. This might cause a break among democracy and populism, with the last option being seen as an obstruction to the acknowledgment of famous will.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The rise of populism in the twenty-first century reflects a generalized lack of trust in established political structures as well as a growing desire for change among marginalized populations. From Europe to Latin America, the political landscape has changed due to the global populist movement. Populist politicians have been opposing the status quo political elites and promoting policies that put the needs of "the people" first. Although populism portrays itself as a remedy for democracy's alleged shortcomings, it also offers serious threats to democratic government, especially because of its propensity to weaken political institutions and encourage authoritarian inclinations. The emergence of populism highlights the necessity of strong democratic processes capable of resolving disputes and defending democratic values. Ultimately, political systems' ability to adjust to and address the intricate problems of the modern era will determine how democratic societies fare in the face of populism.

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