SS01   SPECIAL SESSION GENERAL POOL

243   Populism at Work. Empirical Definitions and Conflicting Meanings

Convenor   **Criscitiello, Annarita** - *University of Naples Federico II*, Italy, crisciti@unina.it

At the end of the 80‿s, encyclopaedias and dictionaries attributed new and conflicting meanings to the word populism. Nowadays it is still a cover-all term, applied to many different cases, movements, languages. Neo-populist parties (and leaders) burst on to the political scene during the last decade as part of Western democracies. This led us to reconsider our own concept of democracy. Populist rhetoric itself is not simply an ideology of opposition. Populism is now taking and keeping command. Understanding whether and how this is the case, and what kind of differences might exist between diverse populist leaders and regimes will provide a clearer working definition of populism and democracy. This panel intends to examine these issues through both theoretical and empirical papers.

1.480   The Two Faces of Populism: A Map for a Working Definition

Criscitiello, Annarita - *University of Naples Federico II*, Italy, crisciti@unina.it

In spite of its sound historical roots, populism has become a catch-all word applied to many different ideologies, movements, and governmental experiences. This paper takes into consideration two aspects of democracy--redemptive and pragmatic, as described by Margaret Canovan (1999)--underlying the fact that populism is no longer limited to the ideology of opposition movements but has become, in many instances, an instrument of governmental power. These two aspects help us design a conceptual map to distinguish the traditional populist environment, based on communitarian and ethnic linkages, from the individualistic mobilization typical of contemporary media-driven and charismatic populism. In this proposal for a working definition of populism we can observe four driving directions of the map. In the first one, populism appeals to people through specific class interests, if not boundaries. In most of these cases, populist ideology tends towards a violent, revolutionary upheaval. Otherwise populism can move towards cultural phenomenon, where communities are identified by their ethnic and/or territorial dimension (nation, language, race). Here the main populist target consists of alien cultural groups, calling for outright political mobilization to restore law and order. The third direction refers to populist governments led by strong leaders, a phenomenon first developed in Latin American countries and now spreading into several newly established democracies, especially in the post-Soviet bloc. This dimension stresses the individualist aspects of the populist regime: the personal power of the president, with his main mission consisting of protecting citizens‿ safety through discretionary decisions. The last direction shows the rise of media populism, also called telepopulism (Taguieff 2003), which brings together ideology and propaganda through intensive use of all sorts of media. People are, to a large extent, a substitute for--and transformed into--public opinion. Deep-rooted and complex cultural values are replaced by sudden changes in opinion and mood concerning oversimplified issues. People thus become a function of popularity, and democracy--government by the people--is turned into "opinioncracy."

1.613   Antipolitics in Power: The Use of Populist Language for Government

Campus, Donatella - *University of Bologna*, Italy, donatella.campus@unibo.it

The paper investigates the role of the language of antipolitics in policy propaganda. Populist language is commonly regarded as a useful tool for antagonizing ruling elites and replacing them in power. Less attention is devoted to the use of populist imagery in channeling popular consensus on projects of political reform or specific policy programs. The paper analyzes how the anti-status quo motivation among citizens can be nurtured and amplified by the government, and in particular by charismatic leaders, in order to create support for reform of public administration and/or the introduction of new economic and social policies. The paper provides and discusses a survey of cases in Western democracies.