

Dimensions of Populism

Exploits the “Representational Gap” left by major parties. Republicans focus on cutting taxes and smaller governments. Democrats failed to provide enough governmental support.

1.0 Distinctive Characteristics and Manifestations

- Conspiratorial thinking. – increase in ‘us’ vs ‘them’ conspiracies.
- Nativism. – fear of immigrants.
- Economic insecurity – bleak view of financial future.

Globalization increased the level of job insecurity and decreased economic prospects for the lowly educated, especially those directly involved in manufacturing. This decreases their status in society and damages their prospects. Identifying with populism is a coping mechanism for their precarious social positioning. Elites pursuing topics like climate change and greater social and gender equality do not resonate with the main issues faced by this cohort. They want action on their economic prospects and an increase in social status.

2.0 Communication

- “We” vs “They”. High collective rhetoric appeals to nativism and conspiratorial thinking. Simple rhetoric and speech patterns further solidify the “We”.

3.0 Common characteristics and statements with the most affiliation¹

3.1 Anti Elitism

- “Politics usually boils down to a struggle between the people and the powerful”
- “The system is stacked against people like me”
- “People at the top usually get there from some unfair advantage”

High correlation to conspiratorial thinking.

3.2 Anti Expertise

- “When it comes to important questions, scientific facts don’t help very much”
- “Ordinary people are perfectly capable of deciding for themselves what’s true and what’s not”

High correlation to fundamental Christian beliefs and conservatism.

¹ OLIVER, J. E., & RAHN, W. M. (2016). Rise of the “Trumpenvolk”: Populism in the 2016 Election. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 667, 189–206.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/24756150>

3.3 Nativism

- “I consider myself to be like ordinary Americans”