

## **Teaching instructions for the chapter: 'The Impact of Populist Parties in Government'**

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### **Learning Objectives**

- Understand the rise of populist parties into government, considering long-term and short-term factors, and the parties' own strategies.
- Explore the challenges faced by populist parties in government, specifically 'inclusion-moderation' dynamics, organizational issues and electoral consequences, and the resulting impact of such challenges on their governing behaviour.
- Examine the impact of populist parties in government, distinguishing between policy and democratic dimensions.
- Evaluate variations in the impact made by populist parties in government, considering the factors of cross-national institutional variation, organizational strength, and strategic choices.

### **Lecture Structure**

#### **A. Overview of Populists in Government (10 minutes)**

- Mapping instances of populists in government, over time, and in different world regions
- Historical context of the rise of populist politics in response to a crisis of representation

#### **B. Challenges faced by populist parties in government (15 minutes)**

- Examination of challenges faced by populist parties in government
- Case studies illustrating instances of populist failure in power

#### **C. The policy impact of populist parties in government (15 minutes)**

- Analysis of specific (economic, sociocultural) policies implemented by populist governments

#### **D. The democratic impact of populist parties in government (15 minutes)**

- Analysis of specific policies implemented by populist governments aimed at institutional change

#### **E. Explaining variations in impact (20 minutes)**

- Examination of factors which are linked to varying levels of policy impact made by populist governments
- Discussion of cases that illustrate different levels of government impact and the contrasting underlying factors

## **Group Exercises**

### **A. Case study analysis**

1. Divide students into small groups
2. Assign each group a case study on a specific populist government
3. Each prepares a presentation to the class on the aims and consequences of their case
4. Following presentations, initiate a discussion on the similarities and differences between the cases, drawing out the possible explanatory factors through the comparisons

### **B. Debate: pros and cons of a 'cordon sanitaire' (20 minutes)**

1. Split the class into two groups – one supporting and one opposing the exclusion of populist parties from government participation (a so-called 'cordon sanitaire')
2. Conduct a structured debate on the merits and drawbacks of the measure
3. When appropriate, prompt the debate in either direction with reference to empirical examples taken from the chapter

## **Discussion Points**

1. What do populists want to achieve from their participation in government?
2. Are populists 'doomed to fail' in government?
3. 'All bark and no bite': is this a fair assessment of populist parties?
4. Why should we expect populists to be 'tamed' by government (and why not)?
5. To what extent is populism a threat to liberal democracy, and to what extent is it a corrective to existing problems?
6. Is it sensible to compare populists from the right-wing (e.g. Donald Trump) and those from the left-wing (eg. Podemos) despite their clear differences in aims?
7. Which challenges of being in government are distinctive to populists and which are generally true for all (new) parties?
8. How should we determine the level of vulnerability of a particular democratic state to the impact of populism?

## **Assessment**

### **A. Essay assignment**

1. Critical analysis of a chosen populist government
2. Argument regarding causes for variation in impact made by populists in government

### **B. Evaluation of group exercises and debate performance**

### **C. Class discussion participation and engagement**

## Recommended Reading

- Pirro, Andrea L. P., and Ben Stanley (2022). 'Forging, Bending, and Breaking: Enacting the "Illiberal Playbook" in Hungary and Poland', *Perspectives on Politics*, 20:1, 86–101.

An examination of the consequences of the populist-led governments in Hungary and Poland that demonstrates shared elements of an 'illiberal playbook' through which they have subverted democracy.

- Juon, Andreas, and Daniel Bochsler (2020). 'Hurricane or fresh breeze? Disentangling the populist effect on the quality of democracy', *European Political Science Review*, 12:3, 391–408.

A systematic analysis of the impact of populism on the quality of democracy which shows the diversity of effects of populists in power. By disaggregating the concept of democracy into distinct components, the article demonstrates the conditions under which both positive and negative consequences have followed.

- Riera, Pedro, and Marco Pastor (2021). 'Cordons sanitaires or tainted coalitions? The electoral consequences of populist participation in government', *Party Politics*, 28:5, 889–902.

A study of the electoral consequences for populist parties in governing coalitions that tests several hypotheses regarding the mechanisms that lie behind the generally negative effect.

## Further Reading

- Bartha, Attila, Zsolt Boda, and Dorottya Szikra (2020). 'When Populist Leaders Govern: Conceptualising Populism in Policy Making', *Politics and Governance*, 8:3, 71–81.

An analysis of populist policy making that considers the underlying policy-making process.

- Pappas, Takis S. (2020). 'The Pushback Against Populism: The Rise and Fall of Greece's New Illiberalism', *Journal of Democracy*, 31:2, 54–68.

An analysis of the emergence, rule, and downfall of populist parties in Greece.

- Weyland, Kurt (2020). 'Populism's Threat to Democracy: Comparative Lessons for the United States', *Perspectives on Politics*, 18:2, 389–406.

An article that makes the case for institutional weakness as a necessary condition for populists in power to be able to subvert democracy, and so argues that the United States should be resilient to the challenge.