Polarisation, Radicalisation, and Populism: Definitions and Hypotheses

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Abstract

Since the beginning of this century, politics has been marked by processes of radicalisation, polarisation and the resurgence of populist governments. The emergence of these processes have made both the deficits of political representation and the problems of democratic vulnerability evident. This new situation has translated into the rise of personalist leaders located throughout the right-left ideological spectrum. This has happened on both sides of the Atlantic. However, the new establishment/anti-establishment fracture is more powerful than the right/left one. Similar processes sometimes have different natures. In this article, these processes are defined conceptually, establishing the relationships among them as well as their conceptual particularities. The comparative method is adopted, and the results consist in depicting, first, the differences and similarities between polarisation, radicalisation and populism, second, between contemporary and 1950s populism, and finally, between populism in Europe and in Latin America.

Keywords

Leadership; Polarisation; Populism; Radicalisation; Radical Situation

Introduction: The new radical situation

The objective of this paper is to analyse the relationships between polarisation, radicalisation and populism, as well as the specificity of the current phenomenon. I will start by describing current politics as a radical new situation that is (a) characterized by actors, actions and speeches, which act according to (and promote) situations of polarisation/radicalisation, and (b) strong tensions between the institutions and actors in the political community, among other competing actors. This new situation in various European countries and in the Americas translates into the rise of personalist, autonomous leaders of traditional political structures (parties or unions), located on different points of the right-left ideological spectrum (ranging from Bolsonaro to Beppe Grillo, and from Le Pen to Maduro). The new establishment/anti-establishment fracture is more powerful than the right/left one. This fracture facilitates alliances, once unthinkable, between the right and left (e.g. in Italy the coalition between the Lega Nord/Cinque Stelle) or alliances of left-wing parties with right-wing parties (e.g. in Greece the coalition between Siryza/Anel). There is a predominance of radical speeches (inclusive or exclusive) that follow an adversarial logic of us versus them, in the context of a persistent loss of the esteem and confidence of the population towards State institutions and society at large. Finally, there is a concentration of political options in two large political blocks.

This new radical situation makes deficits of political representation and problems of democratic vulnerability evident. Representation deficits are reflected in the decline of leading actors of the twentieth century: parties and unions; in the emergence of new political movements and personalist parties (Calise 2000) reinforced by the forms of political communication now focused on global networks. The problems of democratic vulnerability are manifested in the enormous concentration of power of economic groups, declining controls over governments, as well as tensions that arise from the delegitimisation of pluralism and the liberal dynamics of democracy associated with tolerance to the opposition and the role of mass media and the separation of powers. In the following, I will consider some of these mentioned aspects in order to specify and define the main concepts, fundamentally point to issues that arise from these ongoing political processes, as well as differentiate the current situation with previous one.

Defining concepts

This section focuses on elucidating the phenomena of polarisation, radicalisation and populism in contemporary times, while outlining their relationship and offering some preliminary hypotheses. In some way, and in contrast to the events in the first half of the

twentieth century with the supremacy of mass parties, our contemporary times are characterized by political arenas with leaders and strategies that either dispense with party organisations (Jair Bolsonaro or Macron) or transform strongly rooted party organisations at the service of the leader (Aldrich 2011).

Polarisation is understood as the distance of political positions among citizens and elites on public policies, and relevant political issues. The distance between citizens' political positions is not necessarily determined by previous social or cultural divisions, but can respond to the dichotomic standpoints taken by political leaders in relation to certain affairs. Unlike the classical spatial scheme, in which leaders adopt strategic positions based on the positions of the voters, towards the center or towards the extremes, the radical leaders become the source of polarisation by leading voters to choose between extreme positions. Certainly, radical leaders are skilled at detecting citizens' political pre-sensitivities and find in them a fertile ground to nourish their extreme proposals. However, without the mediation of radical leaders, political polarisation would hardly arise (McCoy and Somer 2019). Thus, the principal difference between the conceptualisation proposed in the classic theorisations of Giovanni Sartori (1966, 1976, 1982) and Anthony Downs (1957) lies in the political contexts to which they refer to. While mass policy dominated in the 1950s, with parties structured as sound organisations, and as generators of strong ideology, today's polarisation finds roots in issues and radical leaders representing such issues. This is a situation of polarisation of citizens mobilized by personal parties (Calise 2000), that is, an electoral machinery created by radical leaders to compete. The above implies a reversal of the classical logic, in which political parties introduce candidates into the elections, to that in which candidates create ad hoc structures to meet the legal requirements of electoral competition. The cases of Berlusconi in Italy, Collor de Melo in Brazil, or Alberto Fujimori in Peru are good examples of personal parties. Contemporary cases are Morena, founded by Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador in Mexico, and Aliança pelo Brasil created by Jair Bolsonaro. Therefore, polarisation may be the result of a set of leaders' strategies that reinforce extreme alternatives, but do not necessarily represent an 'absence of basic consensus' in the electorate (Sartori 1982, 8). For Sartori (Sartori 1966, 138-140), polarisation implies a wide ideological distance, centered on the left-right axis. When the distance is small, there is a centripetal competition, while when the distance is large, there is a centrifugal competition with three poles (center, right and left) as occurs with the polarized pluralism system.

In contrast, when radical leaders govern, as in the case of *Kirchnerism in Argentina*, the ideological distance may not appear significant among followers of polarising leaders.

However, the separation in society regarding more recent leaders such as Cristina Kirchner or Mauricio Macri assume a polarising way, even if the social policies implemented in both governments are similar. Hence, polarisation can be measured as a distance among voters' positions (Dalton 2008), without necessarily incorporating the right/left ideological dimension. Polarisation is the result of the distance of citizens and elites with respect to issues, and also the result of the "quality" of that distance, that is, of the depth of the differences between the positions assumed.

Hereof, voters can be polarised by issues involving circumstantial affairs such as economic policies, and in that case polarisation is circumstantial or, conversely, polarisation may result from divergences on positions on issues such as the national identity, or political-religious positions. In the latter cases such profound polarisation is a component of the radical political situation. Circumstantial polarisation often occurs within political competition, while deep polarisation arises from critical situations (Gurr 1970) or is promoted by radical leaders as shown by former US President Donald Trump.

There is political radicalisation when deep political polarisation and risks of violence converge. Radicalisation includes not only political competition but also a conflictive relationship between the contenders and, therefore, the possibility of causing damage to the contenders and third parties (Bartolini 1996). With regard to populism, it is a way of exercising leadership, and when it enters the government, it involves costs for the quality of democracy due to its lack of transparency and accountability (Germani 1956; Ionescu & Gellner 1969; Panizza 2009; Tarchi 2015; Rovira et. al. 2017; De la Torre 2019). Populism includes, among its salient traits, a radical leadership which transforms position issues into valence issues; thus, populist leadership it is often an important causal factor of deep polarisation.¹

In this manner, there is a feedback circuit that might begin with a situation of political competence based on divisive issues, and that, in the hands of a populist leader becomes a

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¹ The so-called agonistic vision of politics is not considered here. This vision, in Chantals Mouffe's (2013) reading, implies the inevitability of antagonistic conflicts and the quest to impose hegemonies, as the formation of a political order. The position of Mouffe concerns general problems of political order, not just the populist response to modes of liberal political representation that are relevant for this article. On the other hand, the association between liberal and consensual assumed Mouffe appears too schematic. Various liberal scholars such as Ralf Dahrendorf or Lewis Coser have paid attention to conflict in social and political life. The positive assessment of conflicts can be revisited in the works of sociologist Lewis Coser, who follows in the footsteps of Simmel and Weber, by analysing the positive effects that conflict has on social and political life. It is interesting to note that Coser founded Dissent in 1954, a magazine of liberal cut, as a reaction to the McCarthyist control. Political conflicts might even have positive consequences, in terms of the organizational strengthening of political parties, as shown in the analysis of cases of conflicting democratic consolidation as in post-war Italy and post-1983 Argentina.

competition regarding valence issues², which can involve the repolitisation of cleavages present in society. Thereby, repolitisation of the fracture transforms conjunctural polarisation into deep polarisation while legitimising the political leader by reinforcing its radical behavior; polarisation becomes radicalisation (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Feedback among polarisation-radicalisation- populist leadership			
Surface-Polarisation → Populist leadership → Repolitisation of cleavages → Deep			
Polarisation → Radicalisation → Leadership legitimacy			
Source: Author			

Populism implies first and foremost a proposal for change in the style of political representation by suggesting a more reflective and immediate system of representation. The disparity between political representation and responsiveness has often been a source of non-conformity in citizens, exploited by populist leaders. In this sense, populism aims to resolve conflicts between representation and democracy, in contexts in which 'representation has supplanted democracy, rather than served it' (Pitkin 2017, XLI).

Polarisation, radicalisation and populism are phenomena that can be set apart analytically as seen in the particular cases shown below in Figure 2. Hence, a radical state of affairs (polarisation/radicalisation) can take place with or without populist actors. Hereof, it can be affirmed that whenever there is a majority of populist actors, there will consequently be a radical political situation. Nevertheless, radical situations do not always imply the presence of populist actors, as shown in Figure 2.

Fig.2 Polarisation and systems with relevant and non-irrelevant populist parties			
Polarisation / radicalisation	Relevant populist parties	Irrelevant populist parties	
Yes	Italy, Brazil, France	England, Chile	
No	Spain, Mexico	Uruguay	
Source: Author			

As shown above, Italy, Venezuela, Brazil and France have salient populist parties and therefore major polarisation/radicalisation processes. England and Chile have low-relevance populist parties, yet face issues such as Brexit or the constitutional reform in Chile, which have mobilised the population, assuming a radical adherence and attitude. Conversely, the Spanish case illustrates that there may be populist parties like *Podemos*, which before the

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² E.g. a 'migration problem' which raises questions such as: To which conditions and restrictions shall migrants be subjected to? This becomes a matter of national identity when it begins to raise questions such as: What constitutes the identity of the citizens of the United States of America?

phantom of political recovery of the right and the growth of the far-right, joins the government with pragmatic policies. In the Uruguayan case the parties are moderate and the polarisation/radicalisation is low. That is to say, there may be polarisation/radicalisation with or without populist parties, and conversely, populist parties can be polarising and radical (Brazil, France), or moderate (Spain, Mexico).

To summarise, polarisation occurs when the distance between the positions of the voters are placed in the antipodes. There is radicalisation when polarisation is due to differentiated position issues (deep polarisation), political competition between adversaries becomes conflictive, i.e. the contender becomes an enemy, and there are risks of violence. In such a situation, the populist leader is a catalysing factor in the conflict.

Populism is a style of political representation that seeks a bond of closeness with the population while distancing itself from the "establishment" and rejecting forms of liberal-democratic representation. In this sense, populism finds examples in both left-wing politicians (Evo Morales in Bolivia, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Chavez-Maduro in Venezuela), and right-wing ones (Donald Trump in the United States, Marie Le Pen in France, or Matteo Salvini in Italy).

Radical situation and populism

The changes that are currently occurring do not only obey a new political style (Taguieff 2003), ideology or syndrome, to repeat the terms of the pioneer work on populism³; on the contrary, the changes involve populist and non-populist actors, moderate actors and radical actors. These changes are about something broader like the emergence of a set of different expectations, mobilisations and reactions to the new conditions of the polity. Therefore, populism must be analysed both as generator and as generated by the new situation.

As previously stated, populism is not the only determining factor of polarisation; although, it is true that it may be an important factor in the creation of it. This can be measured, empirically, in those cases in which populist leaders take office in scenarios without strong prior polarisation and in those cases with party systems in which the populists were the predecessors of the government (e.g. Argentina pre- and post-Kirchner, as USA pre- and post-Trump).

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³ It is the work edited by Ionescu and Gellner (1969). In it, we can a find a diversity of positions that attempt to define it and range from an ideology as Mc Rae (1969) does, to a syndrome as proposed by Wiles (1969).

What follows is that the populists can initiate polarisation from the government or reinforce it from the opposition. Political polarisation is the result of a number of factors and in order to go beyond spatial representation, one needs to analyse the fractures that have become politicised. For our purposes, we can distinguish between impersonal polarisation (right/left, liberals/Catholics, liberals/conservatives, as in the USA or United Kingdom) and personalised polarisation around a leader, which is the type of fracture that populism produces and whose paradigmatic case is Argentina with Peronism/anti-Peronism. Currently, several countries are going through polarisations of a different nature from those prevailing in the second post-war, mainly characterised by the right/left ideological fracture⁴. The populist fracture is in prima facie represented by the rejection or support of a leader-movement.

Fig. 3. Radical situation and populism. Differences and similarities.			
Differences			
Radical Situation (Polarisation/radicalisation)	Populism		
It is a process of differentiation and confrontation	It is a process of supporting a radical political actor		
There is differentiation or extreme change in relation to the preceding situation	Develops a relationship, with little mediation, between leader and citizens		
It is compatible with the procedural vision of democracy	Legitimacy of popular origin is privileged		
It is compatible with accountability processes	It rejects or manipulates accountability		
It can include a radical government actor or other actors (social, political)	It is represented by a single actor		
It can be compatible with political liberalism	There is rejection of political liberalism		
Similarities			
Both question the preceding situation			
Both strengthen political polarisation			
There are differentiating measures and a hero leader			
Personalist governments			
Charismatic party (Panebianco 1982) or personal party (Calise 2010)			
Both use technological means of direct communication- the web			

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⁴ I refer to political fracture primarily as an axis of competition.

The radical situation (polarisation/radicalisation) refers to a set of factors that have changed sharply with respect to the preceding situation, while populism is essentially a new relationship between leader and citizens. Both imply a problem of political representation and include actors who question the preceding situation. Populism, in general, implies a rejection and a negative assessment (directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously) of accountability for governmental actions; on the contrary, a radicalisation process may include actors who claim accountability, as is currently the case of Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico and his fight against corruption. On the other hand, the populism usually implies positions that privilege popular sovereignty (Shils 1956), while a radical situation also includes governments with a procedural vision of democracy. The radical situation is not identical to populism and separating both concepts contributes to a better understanding of the malaises of contemporary democracies.

In ideological terms, the radical situation can include types of politically liberal governments, populist governments or mixed governments (López Obrador in México include characteristics of both). While in populism there is contempt for liberal values and behavior, a radical situation may include a claim for liberal values. Currently, there is an expansion of radical situations with populist, liberal, or mixed governments. Populism generally implies redistributive conflicts, and this does not necessarily happen in the liberal or mixed governments of a radical situation. Although current governments point in many cases towards a redistribution of resources, sometimes, as in Brazil, this is done in favor of greater concentration of them. On the contrary, the situation of radicalisation does not presuppose a redistribution dispute.

A common aspect of governments in a radical situation, be they populist, liberal or mixed, is that they reinforce polarisation. A potential difference is that because of their less liberal (if not illiberal) nature, populist governments tend to encourage an adversarial and disqualifying dynamic of opponents, while in liberal or mixed governments, there is a greater willingness to seek consensual solutions. In radical situations, a mixed or liberal government takes strong and differentiating measures, while the populist government builds its policies in adversarial terms, close to the friend-foe logic. This goes beyond the left/right positions that leaders usually assume. The disqualification of the adversary often arises from converting divisive issues (such as opting for an economic policy) into valence issues, implicating the economic policy in a matter of defense of the nation.

"The people are good and the elite are corrupt" is a defining axis of populist discourse. As Wiles (1969) pointed out, there is in populism "the conviction that virtue

resides in the simple people who are the majority and in their traditions" (Wiles 1969, 203). The emphasis on this aspect of populist discourse has reached such a point that there is a line of work of these studies that is defined by that content⁵ (Canovan 1981; Mudde and Rovira 2012, 2019). This type of discourse is not necessarily present in the other types of governments in a radical situation. According to Wiles (1969), for whom populism is a syndrome, populist discourse has a moralistic and non-programmatic character; efficacy is less important than spiritual connotation, a rejection of bureaucracy, a distrust of intellectuals and financial power and the establishment's nostalgia with the past and the seeking to model the future from its reading of that past (Wiles 1969, 204-211).

In summary, radicalisation implies a situation while populism fundamentally includes a single type of actors, public policies and ideology. The radicalisation space moves towards the extremes, but it is not necessarily anti-system or anti-regime; on the contrary, the polarising actors subscribe to different aspects of democracy. Its characteristic is confrontation and a non-consensus among political actors. The competition is permanent. The governing party governs without stable agreements with opposition parties.

Polarisation sometimes finds sustenance in long-standing historical divisions which date back to the formation of nation-states and are reinterpreted for political use. Fractures are re-politicised and gain intensity by triggers such as an economic crisis when used as an instrument by leaders (McCoy and Somer 2019). The use of the divisions of the political community rests with the leaders and is installed at the grassroots level as a conscious process that provides political benefits. Leaders manage to accumulate power in which an electorate can anchor their preferences, while grassroots members find a sense of belonging and recognition of their identity (Fukuyama 2018).

On the effects of the radical situation

Among the positive effects of polarisation are that of increasing political participation and a sense of being represented in the political community. In each pole, there are ideas, feelings and leaders that represent the opposition to the other pole. In this sense, polarisation can bring parties closer to the population (Lupu 2015). In terms of the organisations involved, cohesion and discipline increase, leading to greater coherence between government programs and action (Layman, Carsey and Horowitz 2006). Among the negative effects may be limited cooperation and the time spent in confrontation, both which may have costs in

⁵ This is at the base of what Mudde and Rovira call an ideational notion of populism, that is "a thin ideology, which considers society basically divided into two homogeneous and antagonistic fields, the pure people against the corrupt elite, and that maintains that politics must be the expression of the general will (*volonté générale*) of the people" (2017, 12).

effectiveness. The idea of belonging to a divided society deteriorates trust both towards institutions and toward the persons of the community; and deteriorates the effectiveness of public policies. If there is radicalisation, there may be institutional degradation and the fall of democracy. In a radical situation, the neutrality of the mass media, as well as the institutions of justice, is questioned, thereby weakening relevant actors for the maintenance of liberal democracy. This is due to the politicisation of social life and the consideration that any action by State institutions and civil society implies positive or negative effects towards any of the poles. Such a premise deteriorates the credibility of institutions and accountability processes, as they are attributed to the use of institutions as a political weapon.

A characteristic feature of this type of radical situation is the intrinsic value that polarisation assumes for actors beyond the content being debated. To be on one side is not to be on the opposite side and that has a symbolic identity value for the competing actors. The resulting trend, if each is identified with a pole, is clearly centrifugal. The dispute between the poles ends up building differentiated political cultures. Cultural fields are created with divergent codes and values. The poles have, as their axis, the differentiation from the adversary, which is the common element that ensures the difference. The part of a political community stabilized in a pole supposes to achieve a legitimisation that allows the assumed political positions to be justified. Therefore, valence issues are essential to stand "on the good side" of the dispute. Thus, one axis can be constituted by human rights and, on the other pole, public security. One pole privileges the social justice and another the freedom. Often one axis will be constituted by the fight against the manipulation of the press and the other in favor of pluralism, nationalism, and universal and individual values. One pole cries out for social justice and another for freedom. One pole cries out for the democracy of majority decisions and changes and the other cries out for the democracy of deliberation and consensus.

The polarisation actors will seek political invulnerability through the conversion of divisive issues into valence issues. Populist actors, in the search for invulnerability, are prone to advance institutional rules due to their low acceptance of the division of powers. On the other hand, they will seek invulnerability by appropriating issues that are coming from their followers and guarantors of the defense as shared values. In this sense, the populists have efficacy in the appropriation of valence issues and in the conversion of position issues into valence issues. This strategy contributes to the political competition assuming fundamentalist values, and the political community are culturally fractured to such a point of immeasurable communication (at the grassroots and elite levels) between competitors that supporters of

different values are unable to negotiate intermediate positions. Thus, a debate on economic policy becomes a debate on the defense of the country instead of on human rights, security or corruption. Populists turn the media into the adversary or contrary judicial measures into a negative power. In Argentina, the followers of former President Cristina Kirchner label President Mauricio Macri as a traitor to the homeland and Macri's followers label Cristina Kirchner as contrary to the values of democracy. As I have previously shown (Russo 2008), this capacity for appropriation of valence issues can grant a greater invulnerability to radical populist governments than to moderate ones. In what follows I will identify some differences between polarisation/radicalisation of the past with present situations and address some open questions.

Open questions about the new radical situation

The key questions are: 1. Does the new situation involve new fractures, and what is the nature of these fractures? Does the radical situation imply situations of ideological polarisation, which presuppose fractures of a globalising/nationalist territorial types that are reflected in trust/distrust and security/insecurity in the population? How strong is the establishment/anti-establishment polarisation corresponding to the political competition between populist forces and traditional organisations, setting aside the right-wing polarisation? Is this new fracture more important than the left-right fracture, as in Italy (Cinque stelle and La lega) and Greece (Syriza and Anel), where inclusive and exclusionary populisms (Graziano 2018) converge in a government alliance to compete with the "establishment" representatives? Are we facing a new voter freeze or is it a passing alignment? Cases like Argentina, with an electorate of around 30% support for Cristina Kirchner after two governments, show that it can be a new freezing, and a cycle destined to last.

2. Are democracies mutating? Do democracies, in times of globalisation, impact on the organisations of democratic representation? The situation of polarisation/radicalisation is part of a new dynamic of democracy. It is not just a new orientation of solo parties, but the formation of new party blocks. In this regard, a characteristic feature is that personal leadership replaces party devices. The politics parties, large vehicles of incorporation of mass of the twentieth century, appear today to citizens as structures of abuse, corruption and oligarchic exercise. Also, the forms of communication in the social networks favor leadership of more direct communication. Today's leaders have taken another step in relation to communication with citizens by communicating directly on the internet, overcoming the old

"politically correct" style, and proposing a new form of representation: the sincerity of the street (Mudde and Karlwasser 2017).

From the non-populist pole, populism is criticised for acting without limits, for rejecting controls and for its tendency towards intolerance, delegitimisation of opponents, lack of pluralism, and in some cases, corruption and lack of respect for established norms. In part, the competition between populist and non-populist actors translates into a competition of two antagonistic conceptions of democracy, which goes back to a long-standing history. That is, on the one hand, the conception that unites democracy with popular representation, that respects minorities and protects individual freedoms; and on the other, democracy against the oligarchies, and in favor of the excluded people.

3. How does the cycle of the radical situation begin and unfold? The following scheme can be proposed provisionally. The sequence of the radicaliation process seems to start with a political crisis caused by an extreme situation of lack of political resources. Economic, social and political crises that end in discredit, disaffection and a strong turn of the electors. A good example of an economic crisis that produces a political crisis and a break with the modus vivendi up to that moment was in 2001 in Argentina, which ended in the resignation of four presidents within a few weeks and the beginning of a Caesarist stage of Nestor Kirchner and Cristina Fernandez, which gave rise to what is known in that country as "la grieta" (the division) between Kirchnerists and anti- Kirchnerists. An example of a social crisis that resulted in a "presidential election of change" occurred in Mexico with the death of hundreds of thousands of Mexicans in drug warfare, and the disappearance of the 43 young people at the Ayotzinapa Teachers School.

The contemporary "crisis" is built on a foundation of very low public confidence towards state institutions and among the people. In Latin America, for more than two decades (Latinobarómetro 1995-2015) trust towards representative state institutions (Congress, the judiciary) has not surpassed 40 % and interpersonal trust has practically disappeared, while in Brazil only four percent has interpersonal trust (Latinobarómetro 2018, 46). In this sense, distrust translates into a change in political loyalties (as representation implies trust), the search for a leader to trust, by whom one feels represented, making a difference with the traditional political class and impersonal representation of state bureaucracies (Figure 4).

Fig. 4. Political cycle of radical situation

- 1. Crisis of legitimacy of the party system (economic crisis, scandals, *mani pulite*) including a. Representation crisis (2001 in Argentina with the protests "that all leave"); and b. Participation crisis (Chile)
 - 2. Social mobilisation → Uprooted community → representation search
 - 3. Founding leader;
- 4. Delegitimisation process of the previous representation- → establishment / anti establishment fracture.

Source: Author

Conclusion: radical situation, new and old era

Finally, it is useful to distinguish the new radical situation of polarisation/radicalisation in respect to that which occurred in 1930s-50s in Latin America, as well as to point out some similarities and differences between the region and Europe.

- 1. The ISI model (industrialisation by substitution of imports) versus the global production model. The polarisation processes of the first half of the last century, arose in the stage of the ISI model, and corresponds to an expansive strategy of the political system with modes of populist representation of mass integration to political recognition. This stage implied a closing of borders with the emergence of national economic actors and social actors governed by the state for Latin American countries. On the contrary, the current polarisation/radicalisation processes are responses to globalisation and the collective experiences of regional integration and decisions taken by extraterritorial actors on issues of impact on national communities. The latter corresponds to a global stage of neoliberal policies with unemployment and public security problems. Therefore, it is a defensive strategy of actors of national political systems that gives rise to a model of populist representation of protection of the national community.
- 2. Incorporation of new actors versus new representation. In the populist representation processes of the first half of the last century, the stage of crisis and social mobilisation occurred as a result of a process of social mobilisation in which citizens were incorporated into a mode of political representation that offered them root citizenship

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(Rokkan 2002) and social citizenship⁶. The ISI populism stage corresponds to citizens who abandon their political loyalties and assume a new political identity. On the contrary, the stage of contemporary populisms starts with voters who have left or maintained party loyalty in a tenuous way. In some Latin American countries, voters began to free themselves from party preferences since the beginning of democratization. Evidence of this is the unprecedented radical triumph over Peronism in 1983 in Argentina as well as the defeat of the radicals from 1987 to 1999. That is, this distancing from political parties is about free voters with party loyalties that opt for different alternatives according to the results of the public policies implemented.

The crisis and social mobilisation indicate not a breakdown of loyalties to previous parties, but the search for new loyalties with actors that represent an alternative way of doing politics. The freedom of voters is not to choose between existing options, but to choose new options. Not only new parties, but a new party system is demanded. This has happened in most of the countries in Latin America and in some European ones as well, in which a new system has been created where traditional parties begin to occupy peripheral positions and where centrality begins to be among the new political formations. The new party system does not involve new political personnel. In Latin American cases, in general, the new actors with personalist representation (not necessarily populist) of politics display a long political trajectory. This is the case with Nestor and Cristina Kirchner and Mauricio Macri of Argentina, Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico, or Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil. In other words, the population finds, in these leaders, the possibility of a representation that demands the change of agenda to privilege contemporary pressing issues.

3. Alternative models vs. democratic models. The third historical difference is that the models of populist representation of the last century are built amid political alternatives to liberal democracy. The affiliations of Peronism with fascism, as well as the affiliations of Peronist factions with alternatives to national socialism are not accidental. The priority in these models of representation is not to improve liberal democracy, but to strengthen and give autonomy to the nation state over the political powers of the time. On the contrary, contemporary populist models have been built within the framework of the disappointment produced by the democracies of the third wave, but, at the same time, they stretch, as much as possible, decision-making processes in democracy without proposing a new political order

⁶ The rights to roots are "the right for the origin community to be respected, such as language and ethnic composition" (Rokkan 2002, 230) and the social rights are related to health protection and opportunities for public education and housing.

to replace the old system. It is, ultimately, about governments that propose radical reforms to existing democracy.

- 4. Differences in approach in current studies. In addition to substantive differences, there are differences in the types of analysis carried out. During the mid-twentieth century, the study of populism was dominated by historical sociology approaches. Currently, political science approaches prevail. Thus, populism was analysed, in Latin America, as a crucial historical stage of the first half of the twentieth century and associated with structural transformations such as the ISI industrialisation model (Delich 2004). On the contrary, contemporary populisms are analysed as an epiphenomenon related to a drastic change of the party system. In the populisms of the mid-twentieth century, populism was studied as part of mass politics, while in contemporary populism, it is a post-mass democracy phenomenon. In both types of analysis, populisms pose a problem of political representation, but governments represent opposite categories. In the former, populisms represent a process of incorporation of actors, while current populisms represent citizens already incorporated and in fear of disincorporation, some of them outsiders (non-voters) in search of outsider leaders. The new system may contain new organisations in competition with traditional formations, such as in the case of Italy, or incorporate traditional formations into alliances that have new formations as protagonists, as in the Argentinian case. Therefore, although the concepts of crisis and mobilisation or electoral availability proposed by Gino Germani (1971) are useful today, their meaning must be differentiated when used to describe present phenomena.
- 5. Differences between Latin America and Europe. The political scientists Cas Mudde and Cristobal Rovira (2011) in their comparison of populisms in Latin America and Europe, based on the analysis of the cases of Austria, France, Bolivia and Venezuela, highlight (a.) a more inclusive and ethnic character of Latin American populisms versus the exclusionary character of European populisms (Mudde and Rovira 2011); in addition to, (b.) a greater electoral, political and ideological character of Latin American populisms. These conclusions are conditioned by historical evolution and must be qualified in (a.) light of the advance of populisms in Europe, as well as, in (b.), with the triumph of an exclusionary discourse of the right-wing populist leader in Brazil, the most powerful country in Latin America.

The differences between populism in Europe and the United States versus Latin America lie not so much in the positioning of the right and left space but in the weakness or strength of their institutions. In the cases of Europe, there is a tradition of strong institutions, while in Latin America, the institutions are relatively weaker. There are clear differences in the weight of the state as a mediator with limits to executive decision making. Also, at the civil society level, the forces of social organisations are greater in Europe in general than in Latin American countries. Finally, there are processes that acquire very different meanings, as with migration. In the classic works of Germani (1956, 1973) on migration and populist representation, immigration is part of the genesis of the Peronist national popular movement, in the sense that migrants find their form of representation in this movement. On the contrary, in contemporary European context, populist governments in Europe grow in elections with proposals that defend residents against migrants.

6. Some of the common features of the new radical situation include the personalisation of politics as a trigger for the creation of new organisations. Unlike in the first half of the twentieth century, party-less leaders rule in most countries. Macri and Kirchner, López Obrador, Bolsonaro and Evo Morales are all leaders who founded their organisations, and in those cases in which the organisation tried to set limits, they were abandoned by their leaders to create a new organisation, as was the case of Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico. What are the roots of the current polarisation? Can a common answer be given for the various cases? The new situation of current polarisation/radicalisation is not only constructed with divergent (polar) positions of citizens regarding some issues. It is possible that it is a type of polarisation that is based, not on issues, but on fractures and, therefore, compromises the identity and culture of citizens. In that sense, a multi-disciplinary approach is required for a better analysis of this phenomenon. Some sociological or economic issues seem worthy of being taken into consideration. Three are of key importance to be mentioned here.

The first one is the question of the recognition mentioned by Germani in his analysis of Peronism (Germani 1971), based on the notion of populations willing to follow populist leaders. This study coincides with the recent statement of Francis Fukuyama (2018), who hypothesises that populism arises in segments of the population that feel ignored and demand recognition. Secondly, there is the question related to unemployment, that is, whether unemployment is a basis that enhances the willingness of citizens in being represented by populist leaders. The relationship between unemployment and politics has been the subject of interesting work by Delich (1997). The unemployed were an important segment which supported Kirchner governments in Argentina, and fear of unemployment currently appears as an important factor in both Europe and the United States. The unemployed loses responsibility because they cannot answer to their family or dependents,

nor to the state, because they cannot pay taxes. In addition to being financially unsupportive, the unemployed tend to be marginalised. In that sense, it can be an available base for populist leaders who challenge the establishment and propose policies that break the current structures. Finally, the nation-security vs. global security-security fracture implies loss of community cohesion, as Germani (1978) pointed out, that is, a weakening of the prescriptive nuclei of society. The decreasing rates of interpersonal trust in Latin America are arguably a reflection of this phenomenon.

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