Populism in Europe and the Americas

Although ‘populism’ has become something of a buzz word in discussions about politics, it tends to be studied by country or region. This is the first book to offer a genuine cross-regional perspective on populism and its impact on democracy. By analysing current experiences of populism in Europe and the Americas, this edited volume convincingly demonstrates that populism can be both a threat and a corrective to democracy. The contributors also demonstrate the interesting similarities between right-wing and left-wing populism: both types of populism are prone to defend a political model that is not against democracy per se, but rather at odds with liberal democracy. *Populism in Europe and the Americas* offers new insights into the current state of democracy from both a theoretical and an empirical point of view.

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Populism in Europe and the Americas

Threat or Corrective for Democracy?

Edited by

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University of Georgia and University of Sussex
To Peter Mair (1951–2011)
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As holds true of so many things today, the origins of our scholarly collaboration and of this edited volume can be traced to a random match on the Internet. In 2009 Cristóbal had just started a post-doc – financed by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation – on populism in Europe and Latin America at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB) and was surfing the Web for scholars of and texts on this topic. He came across the page of Cas, who had just started a similar project as a visiting fellow at the Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies at the University of Notre Dame. We started an extensive exchange of e-mails, in which we discussed the challenges of undertaking cross-regional research on populism. Beyond these virtual discussions, we met in the fall of 2009 in Berlin and decided to collaborate on various related topics, one being this book.

After developing a rough theoretical framework, of which a significantly revised version is published as Chapter 1, we started to apply for funding and to invite potential collaborators. We were very lucky not only to find such a great team of esteemed experts, but to convince everyone we invited that this was worth their time. Thanks to the financial support of the Volkswagen Stiftung, we organized a workshop titled “Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or Corrective for Democracy?” at the WZB in Berlin in August 2010, where all collaborators presented the first versions of their chapters, which were discussed by the collaborators and a broad group of colleagues from Germany and beyond. Our workshop discussants all took their role very seriously and provided invaluable feedback to all authors. We want to thank Carlos de la Torre, Wolfgang Merkel, Emilia Palonen, Karin Priester, Hans-Jürgen Puhle, Paul Taggart, Peter Učec, and Kurt Weyland once again for their great and thoughtful contributions to this project. We also want to thank the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the Volkswagen Stiftung, and the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung for their generous financial and practical support for the workshop.
After the workshop we gave all contributors a couple of months to re-write their chapters for the edited volume. While not everyone made the original deadline, all contributors not just stayed close to the deadline, they also provided excellent second drafts of their respective chapters. This was confirmed by the two anonymous reviewers of Cambridge University Press, who addressed problems in the framework chapter rather than in the individual country chapters. We want to thank all authors for being so engaged with and so open to our project, despite legitimate concerns about, and differences of opinions on, the key definitions used in this volume. It truly was a pleasure to work with all of you. Similarly, we want to thank the people at Cambridge University Press, in particular editor John Haslam, for their cooperation and support for our book. Moreover, we discussed the subject of this book with different friends and colleagues, who gave us invaluable comments and ideas. In this regard, we are particularly grateful to Martin Beckstein, Nancy Bermeo, Giovanni Capoccia, Matias Dewey, Klaus Eder, Raimundo Frei, John Keane, Alan Knight, Kirk Hawkins, Herfried Münkler, Pierre Ostiguy, and Laurence Whitehead.

As we were in the final stages of editing this book, we were, like many in the discipline, shocked by the devastating news of the sudden death of Peter Mair. Peter was a professor of comparative politics at the European University Institute and one of the leading scholars on parties and party systems and European democracy. Most of the collaborators of this book knew Peter and/or were heavily influenced by his work. Peter was also the Ph.D. supervisor of one of the editors at Leiden University, who remembers him not just as an exceptional scholar, but also as a kind and warm Doktorvater who will always be an inspiration to him. We dedicate this book to him.

Cas Mudde & Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser