

# 8. POPULIST PARTIES

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# POPULIST PARTIES

- ❑ Ambiguous term
  - Parties without a clear ideology
  - Success based on defense of ordinary people and critique of elites
- ❑ Common pattern across the Western world
  - Left-wing (southern Europe)
  - Right-wing (West and North)
- ❑ High electoral relevance



# WHAT IS POPULISM?

1. A full-fledged ideology
2. Communication strategy/style
3. A thin-centred ideology
  - No complex picture and vision of society
  - focus on selected issues



# POPULISM AS A STYLE AND COMMUNICATION

- ❑ Simplification
  - Seemingly simple solutions
  - Black-white perspective
  - We X they
- ❑ Emotional appeal
  - Encouraging sympathies, fears, insecurity, hatred or fear
- ❑ Flexibility
  - Party manifesto adjusting to current atmosphere and popular demands
- ❑ Unclear, unfeasible aims, policies and solutions



# DEFINITION

□ Francisco Panizza (2005):  
analytical core

- People and elites: homogenous groups
- Antagonism between people and elites
- People – morally „clean“ sovereign that is to take decisions



# ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT

- faith in the wisdom and virtue of ordinary people
- silent majority X 'corrupt' establishment
- deep cynicism and resentment of existing authorities
  - big business, big banks, multinational corporations, media pundits, elected politicians and government officials, intellectual elites and scientific experts, and the arrogant and privileged rich...
  - E.g. dishonest elites ('Crooked' Hillary)



# ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT

- „anti-political-establishment party“ APE
  - Andreas Schedler (1996)
  - APE blame traditional parties for creating exclusive power cartel unaccountable to the people
  - APE: save and protect citizens from corrupt elites



# ANTI-PARTY PARTIES

Cas Mudde (1996)

Hans Georg-Betz (1993)

anti-party sentiment

- Deep distrust of parties
- Parties perceived as incompetent, selfish and corrupt

populist parties capitalize on the sentiment

leads to success of populist parties



# CAS MUDDÉ (1996)

- ❑ Extremist anti-party sentiment
  - „denial of parties“ as such
  - Fascism and communism
  - Anti-democratic
- ❑ Populist anti-party sentiments
  - Selective denial of parties
  - Only some parties are criticized



# POPULIST ANTI-PARTY SENTIMENT: 2 KINDS OF CRITICISM

- ❑ Against party policies
  - Immigration friendly
  - High-tax friendly
  - EU friendly
  - ....
  
- ❑ Against party behavior
  - Corruption
  - Manipulative – manipulating media that attack anti-party parties
  - Power cartel
  - Inability to adapt to changing world
  - Inability to respond to citizens



# PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

## □ Isaiah Berlin (1972)

- nationalism expresses desire of those underrated to be taken seriously

## □ Elisabeth Ivarsflaten (2008): grievance theory

- Economic concerns
- Cultural concerns (immigration)
- Political concerns (corruption)

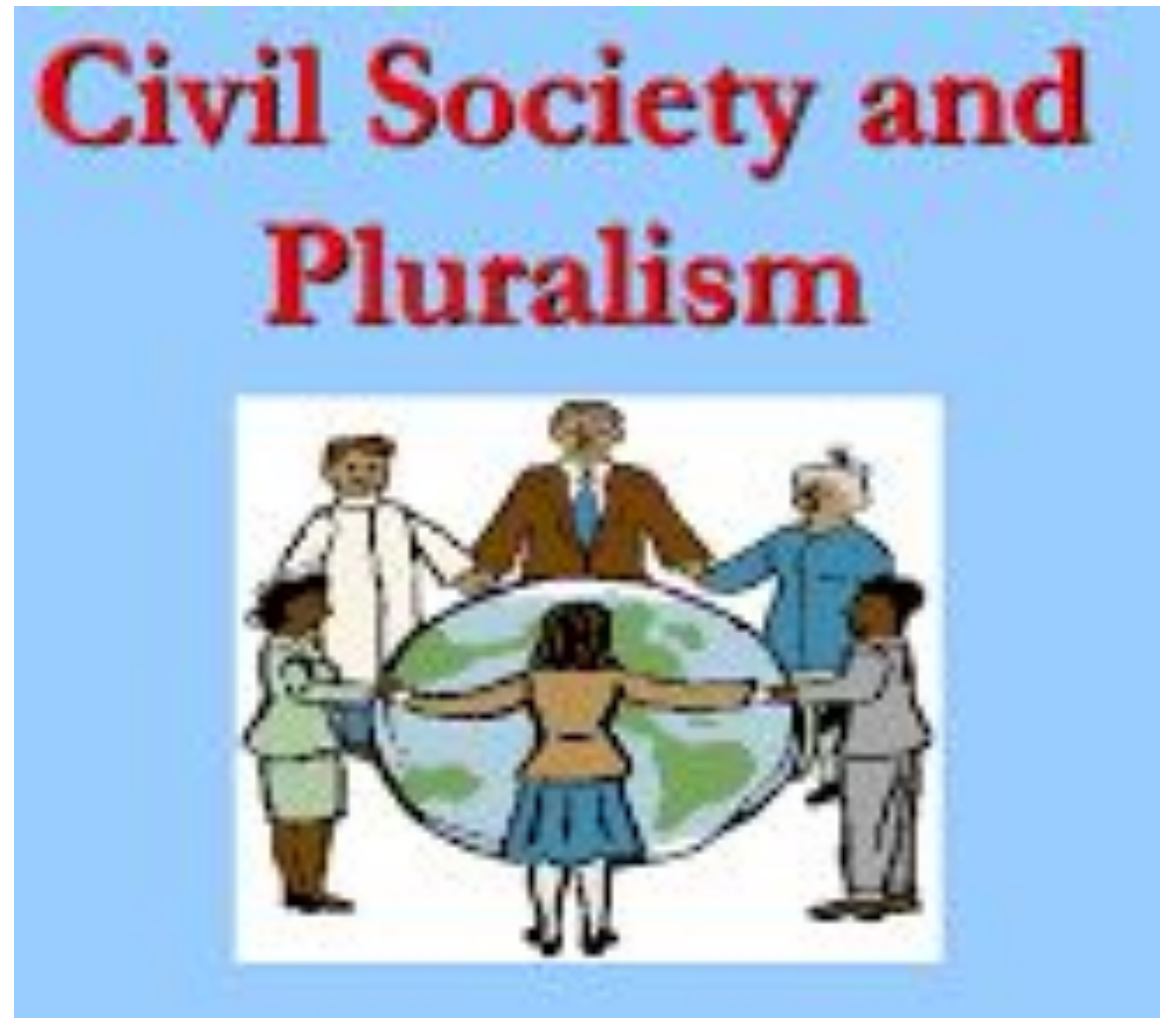
## □ Francis Fukuyama (2014)

- Demand for recognition of one's identity
- People feel not to be respected and valued
- Forgotten people



# SHIFT FROM....

- Pluralist civil society
- Shared values of liberal democracy
- Partisanship, ideology, faith
  - Compromise possible
- Free debate, critical thinking
- No gaps between people



# ... TO TRIBALISM (TRIBAL MENTALITY AND CULTURE)

- Erosion of shared values
- Gaps between people
- No room for compromise and debate
- Tribal identity
  - Rationality, facts, truth – do not work
- Social media
- Originally – relevant only to sport teams and fans



# TYPES OF POPULIST PARTIES

1. Populism without a specific ideology
2. Radical left-wing populism
3. Radical right-wing populism