Discourse, Behavior, Identity: The Three Dimensions of Populist Agitation Nationalism

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Abstract. By inciting nationalism, populism has caused a huge impact on social economy, politics, culture and other aspects. On the one hand, populism extends the influence of discourse to the whole country and incites people's nationalist emotions through the transformation of discourse system; On the other hand, in terms of behavior, it incites nationalism by means of the transformed discourse system to carryout political movements such as marches, rallies and protests for populism, with the ultimate goal of building an ideal community that truly belongs to "the people". At the same time, behind these discourses and behaviors, there is a deeper identity of exclusion, which exposes the existing problems of Western liberal society. Their emergence is due to the imperfection of the legal and political system, which makes these identities unable to enjoy due legitimate rights and interests in the society. Therefore, these people hope to incite nationalism through discourse and behavior, so as to shake the national system based on nationalism. In a word, by exploring the discourse and behavior of populism as well as the identity behind it, this paper discusses a feasible way to fundamentally solve a series of social problems caused by populism inciting nationalism.

Keywords: Populism; Nationalism; Identity Politics.

1. Introduction

Since the 19th century, populist movements have emerged one after another across the globe. At present, populist movements are no longer limited to developing countries and regions such as LatinAmerica and Africa, but also show a growing trend in developed countries and regions such as Europe and the United States, such as Brexit, the US election and so on. In the wave of these populist movements, due to the "dependence" of populism itself, populism is easy to "attach" to other concepts to carryout discourse dissemination, and conduct behavioral incitement on the basis of discourse incitement. It is more common to "attach" to nationalism, which leads to populist agitation. The social problems caused by nationalism are more complicated than the simple populist problems or nationalist problems. In the discourse and behavior of populism inciting nationalism, due to the development of social economy and the frequent flow of population, the reasons for the outbreak of many populist movements are becoming more and more complicated, some are due to economic reasons, some are due to political system reasons, some are due to racial and cultural reasons, and so on. Most of the causes of populist movements cannot be summarized and analyzed solely by unilateral reasons. Thus, the reason why populism incites nationalism is not simply a question of ideology, political movement, ideology or culture, or exclusivity, but a deeper political cause -- the discontent and revolt of the excluded against social injustice. Based on this, this paper will adopt Jan-Werner Muller's definition of populism: "Populism is a specific moralization of political imagination, which categorizes' elites' and pluralist figures as immoral people, standing in opposition to morally pure people". To explore the specific manifestations of populist agitation of nationalism and the reasons behind it.

2. Organization of the Text

2.1 The Overlap of "People's" Discourse: The First Consistent Cause of Populism Inducing Nationalism

As the most basic means of human communication, language is the primary way for us to express our views and thoughts. In Cassirer's definition of semiotics, symbol is the most basic and universal form of human being, and its first level is language. Language, in Cassirer's view, gives definite meaning to this subjective, changing world, making it an objective, stable world. At the same time, language as a human being is the oldest and most typical form of sign, inevitably accompanied by other cultural forms. These accompanying cultural forms are people's thoughts and opinions. Therefore, language is also the way in which people express their thoughts and opinions. And in populism, we can often see them using phrases such as "representing the" people ", "opposing the" elite ", "equality" and "fighting for rights and interests", which can clearly express their thoughts and opinions. Moreover, compared with "equality" and "fighting for rights and interests", which demand to meet their own needs, the statements "representing the" people "and" opposing the "elite" are given more distinct colors of political stance. Therefore, language is also an important way for populism to express its ideas and political positions. Through language, we can more directly grasp the core ideas of populism, so as to explore the relevant factors that incite nationalism in its ideology. Therefore, we should start with language to explore how populism incites nationalism.

In purely conceptual terms, populism and nationalism are unrelated. The concepts of populism and nationalism have both etymological and semantic components. From an etymological perspective, the origins of populism and nationalism are different. The English word populism comes from the Latin "populus", meaning "people." Nationlism, nation from the Latin "natio", means people, race, or nation. From a semantic point of view, populist and nationalist discourses are also used in unconnected ways. Benjamin De Cleen and Yannis Stavrakakis have used the term "vertical register" and "horizontal register The register makes a distinction between populist and nationalistic discourse. They distinguish between populism and nationalism on the basis of different subject-object antagonisms. Among them, the discourse of populism belongs to the "vertical register". In the lower end of the vertical coordinate, the subject of populism "belongs to the weak people", and in the upper end of the vertical coordinate, the "elites" or "authorities" are opposed to the "people". Nationalist discourse belongs to the "horizontal register," a distinction that Dekele and Stavrakakis also explain In/Out. At the left end of the coordinate, the "people representing the nation" belong to the inside, while at the right end, the "enemies" belong to the outside. It can be seen that the subject and object of opposition in populist discourse are "the people who belong to the weak " and "the elite", while the subject and object of opposition in nationalist discourse are "the people who represent the nation" and "the enemy". Populism and nationalism are semantically unrelated. Therefore, from a conceptual point of view, populism and nationalism belong to different fields and directions, both in terms of etymology and semantic use.

But from a practical point of view, because of the polysemy of the core "people" of populism, the overlap of the discourse space of populism and that of nationalism is possible. First of all, the concept of "people" itself can refer to a very wide range of groups in practice, which makes the "people" in populism and the "people" in nationalism easily overlap in practice. As the core of populist discourse, "the people" is defined in populist discourse as a group that is eternally righteous and morally pure. At the same time, "the people" is a concept that is embedded in nationalism. However, the "people" in nationalism is more about being a member of a nation or a cultural community. That is to say, when we use the word "people", the "people" can refer to the just and morally pure group in populism, can refer to the people in a country or a cultural community in nationalism, and can even refer to an explanation and generalization of the people in other concepts (such as Marxism). Therefore, it is precisely because of the universality of "the people" that populists use this label to maximize the scope of influence of their discourse and make their discourse more appealing, thus laying a mass base for launching a larger populist movement.

Secondly, because the concept of "people" is extensive but not specific, its concept has an empty character. In the populist definition of "people", these so-called "people" sometimes refer to the common people, the masses, sometimes refers to the legal definition of citizens, sometimes refers to a specific cultural group of people, but as long as they meet the definition criteria, they can be included in the team of "people". In other words, it is not so much that "they alone represent 'the people'" as that only they represent the eternally righteous and morally pure class of people, and this class of people is called "the people" in a moral sense. In fact, "morality" and "justice" in this definition are also extremely vague and empty concepts. Because in populist discourse, "moral" and "just" people sometimes refer to farmers and workers belonging to socially disadvantaged groups, people belonging to a certain political party, and people with opposing positions and conflicting interests. Therefore, "morality" and "justice" have also become a "label" that can be arbitrarily applied to people, as long as they are related to their own positions, status and interests. Therefore, here, " morality" and "justice" also become an empty, vague "label" that can be applied at will. This definition of the people thus lends moral legitimacy to populism as an empty identity label. Under such a moral discourse, "the people" is only an identity for them to distinguish others, and those who do not conform to the identity of "the people" are labeled as "immoral" and "unjust" and as "a minority, illegitimate but powerful 'elite'". When the influence of populist discourse expands to the whole country, the moral and just "people" here will eventually be incorporated into the nationalistic and "nation and state" discourse system. Because when populism affects the whole country, in order to call on more groups in the country, under the modern concept of the state, they will choose "nation" as their narrative background and call their "enemy" as "foreign forces". When populism speaks of resistance to "foreign forces", not only populists, but also other non-populists will respond to their call. This "inside and outside" discourse structure is similar to the "horizontal register" of nationalism. Therefore, due to the overlapping of the concept of "people" caused by the expansion of the influence of populism's discourse, populism will inevitably affect nationalism and thus incite nationalism.

2.2 Building an "Illusory Community": The Second Cause of Populism's Incitement to Nationalism

After analyzing the influence of populist discourses on nationalism, we should continue to explore the populist behaviors guided by these discourses. Historically, the spread of any populist discourse has been accompanied by a populist political movement. The "bottom class" farmers of the 19th century People's Party movement in the United States claimed that "Republicans and Democrats are too close to each other and too close to special interests." They campaigned against railroad companies, bankers, and politicians in Washington, and tried to break up the two-party politics in the United States. In the subsequent French Boulanger movement, French Minister of War Georges Boulanger claimed to be a resurgent nationalist and opposed to parliamentarianism, for which he carried out a series of radical acts. After that, the rise of populism in Latin America and the emergence of Bourgedism in France and other populist movements were accompanied by populist political movements at the same time as their discourse spread. When they express their demands through discourse, they will try to change the political status quo through actual political movements, such as marches, strikes, rallies and so on. Countless populist movements in history have all shifted from their initial words to their final actions. Therefore, after focusing on the populist discourse, we should also continue to explore the influence of the populist behavior after the discourse on nationalism.

The ultimate goal of a populist movement is to build a community that truly belongs to "the people." This overlaps with the aims of nationalism, which often confuses itself with the aims of   populism and is thus inflamed by populism. In populist movements, their common aim is to build an ideal community that they imagine to be truly of "the people". At the same time, nationalism's ultimate behavioral orientation is based on the whole national community. When the influence of populist discourse extends to the whole country, they will borrow the discourse system of "nation" to act for their ultimate purpose. But this context, like the concept of "the people," in populism is just a label used as a tool to give greater legitimacy to their actions and to call on more people in the country to

participate in their actions. On the one hand, they may confer political legitimacy on their political actions as a third party, thereby influencing the current party's rule. In the American People's Party Movement, the populist People's Party succeeded in winning 1.03 million votes and 22 electoral votes with a complete and unique campaign platform under a broad mass mobilization campaign, shaking the rigid system of two-party rule in the United States. On the other hand, they will strengthen their position as representatives of "the people" by constantly creating antagonisms and conflicts and by giving them moral meaning. They will blame all failures of governance on the stealthy elites, whom they call "enemies that threaten the nation's survival." Thus, through the "national" context, populists more rationalize their actions and provide moral justification for their activities in the country. Through this moral justification, they are able to use "national" as an excuse to incite nationalism into their actions, allowing nationalism to help populists build their ideal community.

2.3 The Reason Behind Populism's Agitation of Nationalism: Excluded Identity

It is not hard to see here that populism is actually a form of exclusionary identity politics. The term "identity" in identity politics usually refers to the characteristics, beliefs, personality traits, behaviors, or expressions of a person or group. Normally, identity in political practice would represent an individual's perception of self-identity and the perception that the identity of the individual is recognized by others. In populism, they not only use their "people" identity to represent their sense of self-identity and their sense of identity recognized by others, but they also use their "people" identity to distinguish others. On the one hand, they use this identity to exclude the "elite", that is, the symbol of opposition to the "elite", so as to highlight their own justice as the "people" and the injustice of the "elite"; On the other hand, they will also oppose pluralism, claiming in the name of "the people" that people outside of them are not "the people" in the real sense, and exclude people in other senses from the "people". In this way, they ostensibly claim to represent what appears to be a broad sense of "the people", while in fact excluding a large part of the population.

The reason why the exclusionary identity politics of populism exist is actually because the populists themselves are excluded from society, and because of their identity they often suffer injustice. The identity of these "people" is the people at the bottom of society, mainly workers and peasants who have no rights at all. They believe that they are "marginalized" under the current political system built by the "elites". The status they have been given exposes them to unequal treatment, such as unemployment and economic depression, and their complaints about their injustices are often ignored. As a result, they naively believe that the source of all this injustice is the rule of the "elite" who are in power at the top. Therefore, they build social movements around their identity, with their dissatisfaction with the "elite", to save their identity. In the process, these people first expand the scope of their ideas and positions through the dissemination of discourse, while at the same time using these discourses to incite people to carry out political movements in society. As their influence expands to a national scale, the populist discourse system transforms from a purely "people's" discourse system into a "nation's" discourse system, and integrates their discourse system into practical action. In doing so, they are able to stir up nationalism and thus call on more people in the country to join their actions. Through this nationwide and powerful group, they hope to make the legitimacy of their identity and personal dignity more valued by the society, so as to improve their social status, and even overthrow the rule of the "elite" and establish a country suitable for their identity.

Although the influence of populist agitation nationalism is great, it is only a moral fantasy, because it is difficult for them to achieve their aims in the end. On the one hand, populists mostly belong to the bottom class who have no identity and status and lack of voice. The purpose of these populists is to build an ideal community that truly belongs to "the people". However, as the bottom people without status and identity, despite their huge number, they can hardly reach the real center of political power and have no substantial influence on political rule. Therefore, it is difficult for them to build an ideal community that truly conforms to their imagination and belongs to "the people". On the other hand, they are easily taken advantage of by some upper class "elites" who pretend to represent "the people". These "elites" take advantage of the fact that people's collective rationality will decrease when mass

movements breakout, so that those people in populism can help him gain more benefits in the political power field. In the end, the entire populist movement will only become a social upheaval and turn to the opposite of what they expect: the "elite" will have more power, while they remain a "marginalized" group. Generally speaking, the ultimate goal of populists is blocked by their original identity and status. At the sametime, populists are easy to be used as tools for power struggle by the upper "elites", making them unable to truly realize the ideal country that belongs to the "people" in their fantasy.

In order to curb the acts of populism inciting nationalism and break this moral illusion, we must first pay attention to the living conditions of real people and meet their needs. The fundamental reason for the current upsurge of populism is that, under Western liberal democracy, there are still many marginalized groups who do not enjoy the benefits brought by the democratic system. Society appears to be functioning normally, but these marginalized groups are still excluded from this functioning society. They have no discourse channels to express their ideas and needs, no behavioral channels to exercise their legitimate rights as citizens, all because they have no "legitimate" political identity. When disaster strikes, such as an economic crisis, these groups are the first to suffer. In the wave of populism again and again, in order to obtain a real "identity", these groups take the "nation" as their morally reasonable background and launch large-scale social movements in the name of the "people", such as the "Tea Party" movement in the United States and the "National Front" in France, etc., which have a certain impact on the stability of social order and economic development. Therefore, in order to curb a series of social order and development problems caused by populist incitement to nationalism, we must first solve a series of survival problems of the people under the liberal democratic system.

3. Summary

To sum up, in the process of populism inciting nationalism, populism transforms the discourse system into a "nation" in order to incite nationalism, with the aim of overthrowing the upper "elite" ruling order and building the imaginary ideal community belonging to the "people". In this process, through the transformation of the discourse system, populism uses the spread of discourse across the country to incite nationalist sentiment, and at the sametime incites nationalism to carryout nationwide political campaigns for them, so as to achieve their goal of building an ideal community that truly belongs to "the people". And the most fundamental reason behind these discourses and behaviors is the identity of those who are excluded. It is precisely because these excluded identities cannot enjoy the legitimate rights and interests of citizens stipulated by laws and institutions in real life, they hope to incite nationalism through discourse and behavior, so as to overthrow the "unreasonable" rule of the current "elites" and establish a country that can accept their identities and enjoy the legitimate rights and interests due to citizens. However, due to the limitation of their own identity and status, populism can't really achieve its purpose, and it will only evolve into a social and political turmoil in the end. Therefore, from the perspective of the words and behaviors of populism inciting nationalism as well as the identities behind them, in order to fundamentally solve a series of problems brought by populism, we should first pay attention to the living conditions and needs behind these populists and consider the institutional defects of liberal society exposed therein, so as to find ways to better improve the current system.

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