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Leadership as a discourse
Rhetorical tools of Marine Le Pen (Front National) and Timo Soini (True Finns)

Populism as a Political/Rhetorical Style (The French Discourse Theory Pierre-André Taguieff, Alexandre Dorna)

Lula in Brazil, Thatcher , Reagan , even Ségolène Royal or Marine Le Pen, Jörg Haider are all seen as populists. They are for the People and against the “elite” even than “elite” presents different things for them. My aim with this paper is to discuss “populism”, which is one of the most controversial concepts of political science. Some theoreticians (anglosaxons such as Taggert) see populism as an ideology or even –ism. Therefore political communication is the most vibrant area of French political science and theoreticians such as Pierre-André Taguieff and Alexandre Dorna are seeing populism as a “rhetorical style”, which appears together with charismatic leader, who is seen as a Saver. Populism (derived from the Russian word narod, People, Latin populus) has presented several movements in different times. In the end of 1850 there was classical populism, which simply points to Lenin in Russia and People’s Party in USA. After WW II there has been protest populism – which was movement against establishment. Protest populist is movement against something, like poujadisme in 1953-1957. Identity populism has its roots in the 1980’s in economic situation. The archetype of identity populism is Front national. After the economic crisis of 2008 and the collapse of Lehman&Brothers fell down populism has been growing everywhere. Today in Europe there are around 27 populist movements. Populism of 2000 is often called as “new populism” or “paternalist populism” (Reynié 2012).

If we see populism as a discourse which kind of rhetorical tools it is using both France and in Finland? What kind of role religion plays in it? In which way populism and religion are related to? This question helps more deeply understand the “concept” of populism and its evolution in Europe. In which way is populism adapted? The populism of Marine Le Pen (3rd generation populism) is called a “dédiabolisation”, which means it is attracting middle class and women, who are not seen as traditional voters.

I would rather study how Marine Le Pen and Timo Soini use rhetorical tools and act as telepopulists. They use a language, which is biblical and present them as Savers.

Key words: Taguieff, populism, rhetoric, populism, leadership, Finland, France, religion

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