



"Discourse on populism in Europe: circulation of the world populis\* between Spain, France and Belgium and its relation with their national contexts."

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the circulation of the term populis\* between Spain, France, and Belgium in the context of the year 2019. We employ a constructivist perspective to explore how varied expressions and interpretations of populism circulate across different national contexts and investigate the influence of third-country political contexts on national conceptions of populism. The analysis centers on messages from the parliamentary arena, the media arena, and Twitter, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. By delving into the intersections of language, politics, and transnational discourse, the research aims to contribute to a nuanced understanding of populism beyond the national level and elucidate the role of different arenas of public discussion in circulating messages across diverse national contexts.

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**Title:** Discourse on populism in Europe: circulation of the word *populis\** between Spain, France and Belgium and its relation with their national contexts (2019).

**Abstract:**

The meaning of the word *populis\** is uncertain (Canovan: 1999; Mazzoleni: 2003) and varies depending on the national context in which it is used (Herkman, 2016; Hamo, Kampf, & Weiss-Yaniv: 2018). Starting from this point, our proposal, which is built on a constructivist perspective, seeks to understand how different expressions about *what is populism* or *who is a populist* circulate between different national contexts in Europe and to what extent different national conceptions of populism are influenced (or not) by the political context of third countries.

In order to do so, we study the circulation of the word *populis\** between our three case studies: France, Spain and Belgium. We centre our study in the year 2019, when the elections to the European Parliament were held. For each of the countries studied, we analyse messages produced in three arenas of public discussion (Jasper, 2019; Badouard, Mabi and Monnoyer-Smith, 2016): the parliamentary arena, the media arena and Twitter. We have two corpora for each of them: first, a general corpus with all the messages that contain the word *populis\**; secondly, a smaller corpus, manually filtered and coded, containing detailed information on each use.

Our analysis combines a quantitative and qualitative methodology. Quantitative, insofar as for each case study we study how many uses of *populis\** refer to third countries, as well as the number of messages circulated from other countries, the arena in which they were produced and the topics to which these messages refer. Qualitative, because we analyse the trends, as well as the exceptions, observed in the quantitative analysis in relation to the political context of each country in order to offer an interpretation that explains (1) why certain uses of *populis\** circulate from one country to another at a given moment and (2) why the word *populis\** is in some situations associated with the political reality of other countries.

With this proposal we want to contribute to a better understanding of populism by carrying out an analysis that goes beyond the national level. Additionally, we aim at shedding light on the role played by different arenas of public discussion in terms of circulating messages to and from other national contexts.

*\*By populis\* we mean the words populism(s) and populist(s), as well as their French and Dutch variants.*

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