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Populism in Latin America and in the European Union: Two Sides of the Same Coin?

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I. INTRODUCTION

The title of the essay requires a double justification. As a matter of fact, in spite of the European Union representing a strong base of regional integration since the Treaty of Rome of 1957, the actual designation is recent, because it only started to be used from the 1st November 1993. Hence, rather than Populism one must speak of Neo-Populism, since the most relevant populist experiences, the Populism of the first phase, go back to 30s and 40s of the last century.

This dating is relevant for Latin America and Europe, even though in the case of Europe the designation Populism appeared in the Czarist Russia of the 19th century, with Herzen as its originator. It was studied by Frank Venturi in his book *Roots of Revolution* that carried a systematizing preface by Isaiah Berlin.

Moreover, the option of putting the word "Populism" in the singular may be insufficient to convey fully a phenomenon that, in its concept and practice, is far from homogeneous. Populism can be seen both as "an ideology (Laclau 1977; Mudde 2004), style of politics (Knight 1998), specific discourse (Hawkins 2009) or the political strategy (Weyland 2001)" (Pappas, 2014, pp. 2-3). However, the comparative study of Populism in a country at two distinct moments of time, or in different countries simultaneously, permits to understand that, despite the specificities, there is something that can be considered as the essence of Populism. According to Taggart (2004, pp. 271-273), "the study of populism has been characterised by three

tendencies" and the third approach "is to argue that there are common features to populism".

I define Populism as a way of articulation of the discourse conveying a fight for hegemony. Unlike the fight by the mainstream political parties, it provokes an antagonism between two collective bodies conceived as homogeneous: the people and the elite. It is a deeply entrenched antagonism that does not accept intermediaries, because the populist leader considers only himself in conditions to decipher the will of the people.

All the demonstrations against the leader's will are severely punished, as Federico Mello proved in what concerns Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S) because Beppe Grillo kicked out several members¹ who did not respect his advice not to participate in television debates.

This presence of the leader is not direct democracy but a sort of referendum democracy as we can conclude from the official sites of some populist parties. There is never a real discussion that precedes a decision. Lanzone and Morini (2017) denounced that "the question of internal democracy has become evident in Autumn 2012 with the complain made by Giovanni Favia, a leading M5S politician in Emilia-Romagna, on the absence of debate and the role played by Grillo and Casaleggi". The party usually proposes the approval of a decision. It is a democracy of consent using the computer keyboard as a tool.

My understanding does not accept Dahrendorf's statement (2007)² that Populism is simple, and that democracy is complex. Neither the former nor the latter are simple. This presumes Woods' view that Populism is still looking for its model, even though there is abundant literature about this evasive phenomenon.

Perhaps the exposition helps to explain the reasons for the choice of our heading. It is not difficult to justify the thematic. Indeed, according to Simón Pachano and Manuel Anselmi (2017, p.3), the populist experience in Latin America "is gradually fading", giving way to a new neoliberal wave, putting aside what was thought as a "twenty-first socialism", but that did not last "more than a decade and has undergone degeneration made of clientelism, personalism, corruption and instability". However, it is not less real

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¹ Giovanni Fava and Federica Salsi for example.

² The sentence «Populismus ist einfach, Demokratie ist komplex» can be found at the beginning of point 5.



than a "legacy the Latin American neo-populist experiences [...] outside the Latin America" can be identified. Or, one must inquire if this legacy, as cited by the above authors, is characteristic of some cases in the European Union, like Podemos in Spain. If this influence is real we need to understand not only what brings closer or moves away Populism in Latin America and in the European Union, but also the reason why a model that did not succeed in American lands got followers on the other side of the Atlantic.

II. THE POPULISM OF THE FIRST PHASE IN LATIN AMERICA

The analysis of Populism, whatever its definition, implies four issues: the reasons for the emergence of Populism, that is, the description of the initial conjuncture, the cause of its increased intensity, the way a populist party conquers the power, and how the populist agent acts once it reaches the political hegemony.

In what concerns the first issue, Laclau (2015, p. 207) considers that there are two necessary conditions for the emergence of Populism: a particularly serious crisis in the block of power that allows a part of it to intend to establish its own hegemony through the mobilization of the masses, and a crisis of the transformism.

There are, thus, two distinct forms of Populism. One, when a part of the non-governing elite thinks that the situation is ripe to conquer the power. It is the elitist Populism. Another, when the Government does not respond to the demands of its citizens, and one of those demands succeeds in mobilizing and initiating change from a differentialist logic - one that recognizes Government authority - to the equivalential logic. It is a Populism from below.

In Latin America, from the 30s of the 20th century, the two previously identified conditions came together and, therefore, the populist phenomenon spread, even when countries presented different characteristics. For example, Brazil still faced interregional problems, while Argentina had already overcome that phase due to the federalization of Buenos Aires in 1880.

According to Ignacio Walter (2008, p. 2), "the period between the 1930s and the 1940s that saw the emergence of populism in Latin America, corresponds to an authoritarian wave, characterized by negative attitudes towards liberal-democratic institutions and liberal capitalism". Indeed the world crisis of 1929 modified the *status quo* that assigned the hegemony to the elite or a landowner oligarchy.

Thus, the option for a political economy that valued the import substitution industrialization led to conflicts of interests between the great landowners and the industrial sector, and to the change of the effective

situation of articulation between liberalism and democracy as compatible, because, according to Laclau (2015, p. 219), the democratic mass demands and the symbols that represented them were increasingly less acceptable to the liberal regime.

The Populism spread across Latin America from the 30s of the 20th century, favoured by the great depression, but in reality the economic and social structure of the subcontinent was mainly responsible. Therefore, in the case of Brazil, Antônio Carlos' slogan became popular: "let us make the revolution before the people make it".

If the so-called revolution served the interests of the people or of a part of the elite, it is a matter for discussion with several readings, as Alan Knight (1994, p. 78) wrote about Mexican cardenism, a populist regime that nationalized the oil in 1938 and proceeded to an agrarian reform according to the model of the ancient *ejidos*, small communal properties that could benefit of a specific credit facility. Indeed, "there were Cardenistas who believed that «their» regime was the only one which delivered the goods to the people, literally and figuratively" while revolutionary veterans "reversed this picture and branded Cardenas as a traitor to the Revolution". Knight had no doubt that Cardenas regime "was more jalopy than juggernaut" (p. 79). An evaluation that is not in favour of a leader who assumed "an autocratic role, «amo y señor de México», less of St. Francis than a wily Machiavellian fox (or worse, *un zorro com sayal franciscano*) (p. 76). The perfect art of concealment. The ability to hide the force and the craftiness, but to use both whenever necessary.

In what concerns the second aspect, or the increase of Populism, Yascha Mounk pointed out three reasons for this increment: the stagnation of the standard of living of the common people or the middle class, the slow change of countries that ceased to be monocultural and monoethnic and turned into multiethnic and multicultural, and a deep division between flourishing urban areas and agricultural or de-industrialized areas that had lost influence. Such were the areas where, for example, Marine Le Pen counts on a broad supporting social basis.

There are few doubts that the middle class has usually been the preferential victim of the politics of the parties in power. It is enough to watch where the tax burden falls when the public safes are almost empty. In the same way, the times of crisis become propitious for the revolt against the presence of the immigrant, seen as the usurper of jobs, and deemed responsible for growing insecurity, a fertile ground to feed Populism.

As for the way the populists gain power, in the initial conjuncture, Octavio Ianni (1991, pp. 121-122) evidenced that there is no typical way of conquest by the populist forces. A situation already verified when Maquiavel presented the diverse ways of somebody becoming a prince.

In fact, in Latin America, while Lazarus Cárdenas in 1934, Juan Perón in 1946, 1951 and 1973, after the military coup that had dismissed him in 1955, had gained power through electoral processes, in the institutional frame of the representative democracy, Getúlio Vargas did it in 1951, after reaching it through a coup d'etat in 1937, and Velasco Ibarra led Ecuador five times, between 1934 and 1972, using both these processes. This without counting that João Goulart became President after the resignation of Jânio Quadros, supported by a social movement, Victor Estensoro ruled Bolivia after a revolution by the Revolutionary Nationalistic Movement, and Fidel Castro was the guerrilla leader who, on the second attempt, knocked down Fulgêncio Batista, in 1959.

The examples pointed by Octavio Ianni had also been verified in Europe. It seems sufficient to remember that Mussolini was nominated First-Minister as a consequence of the march on Rome in 1922, and Hitler gained power by vote, though after attempting a coup d'etat. Both Fascism and Nazism have their own characteristics, but share in common the Populism. Like the Sovietism that used the Communist Party as the vanguard of the people.

Three regimes based on the antagonism and without any repulse in what concerns the invention of scapegoats. This justifies our use of the term "Populism" in the singular.

Populist regimes with exception of Peronism and of Sovietism, did not survive the disappearance of their charismatic leader. According to Laclau (2015, p. 223), in the case of Peronism, its roots in the factory workers allowed it to spread its influence into the middle class that had been radicalized in the last two decades as a result of the contradictions created by the expansion of the monopolistic capital.

As Philippe Raynaud (2017, p. 12) states, Perón represents an ambiguity because he was an extreme-right military officer, an admirer of Mussolini and Hitler, and ruled in a totally arbitrary way without any regard for the law. However, thanks to his economic and foreign policies, he won sympathies of the left and even of the extreme left. Perón had understood the importance of the trade unions because, as Capelato (2013, p. 145) tells us, the number of factory workers doubled between 1935 and 1946. Similarly, it was the case of the trade unions, which in 1943 represented 20% of the urban workers. In 1948, the unionization reached 30.5%, and 42% in 1954. So, between 1946 and 1951, the number of union members grew from 520 000 to 2 334 000.

The Trade Unions that Perón controlled and placed at the service of the State served as a strategy to guarantee the social peace of the State and the harmonization between the capital and the labour. Similarly with the Carta del Lavoro or the Portuguese Corporativism was not a mere coincidence.

That was the reason of Peronism returning to power and a kind of dynastic succession through Isabelita Perón. A return was a complete failure. As Laclau (2015, p. 224) recognized, the efforts to put back the History clock failed. It was unable to articulate popular-democratic ideology in a way that the bourgeoisie could assimilate.

Instead, the Peronism resorted to a repressive chaos without attempting any form of stable articulation between popular demands and bourgeois ideology. As Chico Buarque sang in Brazil: nobody returns to what does not exist anymore.

As regards the Sovietism, its continuity was the result of conceiving the party as vanguard of the people. Such a single or hegemonic party was not the experience of Getúlio Vargas since the forces that supported him were organized in two parties. Laclau (2015, p. 225) defends that Vargas was supported by the Partido Socialista Democrático that joined the conservative forces of the coalition, and by the Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro, based on urban sectors, mainly factory workers, intending through them, to develop a populist jacobinism. With such a mix of contradictory forces Vargas was never the leader of a unified and homogenous movement.

Concerning the importance of a party we must say that the Cardenism opted for the constitution of social organizations outside the party, aiming at centralizing in the executive power every decisive element. It did not use the Revolutionary National Party, established by Plutarco Calles in 1929 to institutionalize the Mexican revolution. It was the Government that effectively programmed everything to do with the industrial revolution or the agrarian reform. Capelato (2013, p. 158) considers that it was only in 1946, after the end of the government of Cardenas, with the creation of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, that an elite of politicians would become entrepreneurs through the state management and it started to dominate the social organizations. A change of masters.

III. THE FAILURE OF THE FIRST POPULIST EXPERIENCE IN LATIN AMERICA

This first populist wave in Latin America lasted a long time, but it did not create conditions for its continuity. Errors of planning and execution, patronage due to social Populism, and personalization and abuse of power would be sufficient to pull down the populist construction. The adhesion or sympathy for ideas connected with the left, in a conjuncture that partially coincided with the cold war, hastened this process.

After all, Latin America is a close neighbour of one of the two superpowers that controlled the World, and for the United States of America the Soviet influence in Havana was serious enough. In Cuba the Populism

imitated, and even exceeded the Sovietism benefiting from its support for a longer time.

In this initial phase of Latin American Populism, History demonstrated the importance of the military in the subcontinent, and that the elites have many lives. In Brazil, João Goulart, like Vargas, did not count on urban social bases due to the low industrialization. He was overthrown by the military coup d' etat on the 1st April of 1964. Populism gave way to the military dictatorship that ruled the country with Constitutional Acts, before promoting the transition to democracy that would allow the populist return. Populism did not exist during the mandates of Humberto Castelo Branco, Artur da Costa e Silva, Emilio Médici, Ernesto Geisel and João Figueiredo, because, as Canovan says, Populism follows democracy as a shadow, while the authoritarianism tramples any shadow.

In Argentina, General Jorge Videla put down Isabelita Perón through the military coup of 24th March of 1976 and led the country into a five year long dictatorship, before being replaced by Robert Viola, his military chief. Videla has a record of two convictions to life imprisonment, in 1985 and 2010, respectively.

In Paraguay, General Alfredo Stroessner staged a coup d'etat in 1954 and through manipulated elections, ruled during seven consecutive mandates, until being knocked out by another military coup in 1989. However, in the case of Paraguay it will be more correct to speak of Populism after 2008.

In what concerns Mexico, the measures adopted by Cardenas would be reverted by his successors: Ávila Camacho (1940-1946), Miguel Alemā (1946-1952) and Adolph Ruiz Cortines (1952-1958). The revolution was not institutionalized. The interests of the erstwhile big landowners and of the recent industrial entrepreneurs became compatible at the expense of the workers' rights. The triumph of a neoliberalism *avant la lettre*.

However, if the elite is like a Phoenix, also Populism saw a second life in Latin America, the Neo-Populism, that, according to Walter (2008, p. 2) appeared "in this third and unprecedented wave of democratization in Latin America and around the world". Between Populism and Neo-Populism, as mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the military sought to leave the authoritarian mark.

IV. NEO-POPULISM: OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

Vélez-Rodríguez (2001) defines Neo-Populism as a political style of wide ideological spectrum and lists its twelve characteristics: soteriology or incarnation in the figure of the savior of the people, personalism, demagogic, seduction, plea, direct action, popular image, wide phenotype, denunciation, antipolitical feature, anti-elitism and nationalism. These

characteristics could be grouped into just one single category, a discourse form of fighting for the hegemony.

However, the inclusion of the nationalistic element represents a newness, which makes Populism and Nationalism represent different concepts, though Walter (2008, p.2), referring to the previous wave of Latin American Populism, defends that it was a popular and national phenomenon. Popular "in terms of its anti-oligarchic component", and national "in terms of its anti-imperialism", because rejecting "foreign control of natural resources and national economies".

In the case of the European Union, it does not seem abusive to attribute that inclusion to the fact of the financial crisis and the conflicts, some of which by proxy, have originated hordes of immigrants and refugees, a circumstance that allowed the populist parties to discover an enormous potential to attack the governmental elite. Hence the use of flags, which were initially raised on behalf of other interests. The context dictated the adaptation. On this issue we may refer to Mény and Surel's study about the people and its three levels: the people-class, the people-sovereign and the people-nation. The latter is the one that seems more sensitive to the populist appeal.

In South America, Vélez identifies some faces of the neopopulism: the Kirschner couple in Argentina, Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, Correa in the Equator, Evo Morales in Bolivia, the bishop Lugo in Paraguay, when a populist coalition Populist won the 2008 elections and took power out of the Party Colorado, and Lula da Silva in Brazil.

Larry Diamond (2015, p. 147) and Kenneth Roberts (1995) complete this list. Diamond agrees that "Hugo Chávez (1999–2013) gradually suffocated democratic pluralism during the first decade of this century" and he defends that "after Daniel Ortega returned to the presidency in Nicaragua in 2007, he borrowed many pages from Chávez's authoritarian playbook". Roberts considers that "the leadership of Alberto Fujimori in Peru suggests that new forms of populism may be emerging despite the fiscal constraints of neoliberal austerity".

In the cases of Venezuela and Brazil, Vélez's list could also include the successors, Maduro and Dilma, although one needs to take into account the warning of Pachano & Anselmi (2017, p. 3) about "a post-populistic condition, in which the disappearance of a populist leader leaves, on one hand, a strongly shaped institutional political system imprinted on personalist leadership, and on the other, a highly polarized society, where the possibility of a democratic dialogue between the opposition and the government is almost completely deleted".

A more intense Post-Populism surged in Venezuela due to Chavez's physical disappearance, despite Maduro's attempt to invoke the continuation of Chavez's presence and the influence of the erstwhile

leader, than in Brazil, where Dilma, although re-elected, has often been seen as a creation of the lulism. A hiatus until Lula da Silva comes back to the Presidency. It is an assumed intention, but the problems with Justice and the destitution of Dilma Rousseff during the second mandate are making such a come-back difficult.

Will Lula da Silva obtain, as it happened in the re-election that many analysts considered impossible - in accordance with the polls the dispute would be between Alckmin and Jose Serra - a social base of support to put him again in Planalto Palace? The answer is not easy, even considering that the re-election of Lula had been preceded by the *Mensalão*. However, in the next presidential election it is not sure if the subproletariat - a creation of Paul Singer in the 80s to identify the voters of very low income - remains faithful to Lula, their late option of vote. In other words: after the generalized corruption - *Mensalão* and *Lava-jato* are examples - could there be a space for a direct intervention and ubiquity of the State, without confronting the interests of the capital?

According to Pachano & Anselmi (2017, pp. 3-4) "the Latin American neo-populist experience to date" has been an "attempt to replace the classical liberal democracy with a model of plebiscitary democracy" of a "socialist and participatory" nature, implying "direct relationship between the president and the people, and where the intermediate bodies and pluralist dialogue between the parties are almost excluded".

The leader appears as the only person who can understand the will of the people. A leader who, in a first moment, "allowed the political and social inclusion of large sectors of the population which were excluded". Then, "with the phase of institutionalization" Neo-Populism "caused an impact on the structures of liberal democracy". Finally, "a phase of disillusionment and political realism" did not take too long to emerge.

The multidimensional crisis that Venezuela actually lives constitutes an example of this evolution and a mirror of disillusion. A frustration that with the decline in oil prices became undisguised and appeared in Bolivia of Morales, leading Dahrendorf to affirm that the revolutions create as many problems as they solve.

At this point it is apposite to cite César Rojas Ríos (2014, p. 97), who, after pointing to Morales' positive points, identified the menace of the negative ones, covering four new problems: "the quality drop in democracy, the imbalance in the quality of governance, deterioration in institutional quality, and the mediocrity of the quality of society".

In the 30s, Populism appeared mainly due to economic crisis and the impossibility to continue the distribution of subsidized benefits that allowed to replicate the Roman bread and circus. In the 21st century, the financial crisis and the strong decline in oil prices have placed the Venezuelan government before the same deadlock.

What had been the main factor for the emergence of Populism changed into the basic element for the disintegration of Neo-Populism. Meanwhile, the patronage, the corruption and the bad management of the *res publica* did not fail to fulfill the role that the system attributed to them.

That helped Macri's victory in Argentina, marking a return to the power of the most conservative forces. The *Ola rosa* that had allowed the triumph of the left Neo-Populism started to faint. This Neo-Populism, in the Argentine case, was object of disparate evaluations. Peruzzotti (2017, p. 48), who cites two Argentine scholars who studied the phenomenon, namely Ernesto Laclau and O'Donnell, shows that they totally differ in the evaluation of the twelve years under Kirchner's leadership, because, while Laclau "sees kirchnerism as a deepening democratic experience", O'Donnell considers it "as an illustration of a defective version of polyarchy". Concerning this evaluation, Chantal Mouffe (2015)³ agrees with Laclau's opinion. She considers that kirchnerism is a source of inspiration.

These are the reasons for the decline of Neo-Populism in Latin America. All Populism, while it fights for the hegemony, has economic base and drives with an executive centralism that almost ignores the participation of the institutions. The State is seen as a factor of enrichment of the new elite and it is sustained through a wild distribution of benefits. In the initial phase, when the money is plentiful, the common people are not ignored. The bill of the messianism comes for payment later. It is a behaviour that the dictatorial systems also practise. In Bolivia, before Evo Morales' Populism, "the military dictatorships, and especially the first government of Hugo Banzer (1971–1978), distributed thousands of hectares of land in eastern Bolivia through fraudulent means, free of charge, and mainly as payment for political support" (Colque, 2014, p. 178).

The Neo-Populism is a centralism with no place for what Enrique Peruzzotti and Catalina Smulovit (2000, 2002) call social accountability. The centralized power does not appreciate the monitoring of its actions. It is in keeping with the synthesis of Adriano Moreira (2001, p. 153): the power is accustomed to hearing «yes» and it resents hearing «no», because "from the point of view of Political Science", the law is more an instrument of the Power than its limitation.

V. THE POPULIST REALITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

And how has Populism and its dynamics developed in the European Union? In first place, after fifty million died in the Second World War, Western

³ In an interview made by Eduardo Febrero published in *Página/12*, le 14 Juin 2015.

Europe realized false messianisms were not an assumed option in the West, and the phenomena, such as *poujadism*, that gave rise to the French National Front, became rare and socially little recommended.

Meanwhile, the European world view became dysfunctional, and the West Europe began to be rebuilt thanks to the Marshall Plan and the early forms of regional cooperation and integration, Populism was becoming more visible, though not presented as such. It corroborates the idea that Populism follows democracy as a shadow. It is not democracy's bastard, but a twin that is able to take advantage of the right moment.

Grossman and Saurugger (2006, pp. 85-86) consider that the fear of capture is an old fear, and the State is consequently afraid that the interest groups succeed in capturing a sector of public politics. The mainstream parties which consider themselves as the agents of democracy, resort to a blind inbreeding and they fail to understand that Populism is more than an epiphenomenon.

That is why the populist parties won the elections in three countries⁴ of the European Union and we see an increasing visibility, as the Index of Authoritarian Populism elaborated by Andreas Heinö of the Timbro Foundation shows⁵. Indeed, by entering in the zone of the Neo-Populism and by comparing the data collected in 2000 with those of 2016, we can verify that the number of countries where the rate of Populism tax rose – twenty-two -, noting that the increase was much higher in Hungary - from 9,6% to 66,4%, in Greece - from 9,3% to 57%, and in Poland - from 0,1% to 46,4%, that is, in three countries whose governments are presently led by populist parties - FIDESZ, SYRIZA and PiS.

In two of these countries – Hungary and Poland - the fall of the Berlin wall was followed by the opening up to democracy, but the new order was replaced by a disorder. In Greece, the end of the military dictatorship allowed a return to democracy, but the bad performance of the parties that ruled the country became a fertile ground for Populism.

In the remaining countries the growth of Populism was weaker, in spite of the increasing trends in Denmark - from 12,5% to 28,9%, in Italy – from 19,5% to 33,7%, in Spain - from 5,6% to 21,2%, in Bulgaria - from 1,4% to 17,5%, in Finland – from 2,1% to 18,2%, in Sweden - from 0,4% to 12,9%, in the United Kingdom – from 0,8% to 12,6%, and in Portugal - from 12,2% to 20,5%.

It is important to note that the recent elections in Germany and Czech Republic showed a strong increase

⁴ They are four after the 2017 Parliamentary Election in Czech Republic.

⁵ Andreas Heinö explains that «to measure influence two indicators are used. Firstly, the total amount of mandates. The index shows how many mandates are held each year by representatives of authoritarian parties. [...]The second indicator is participation in a government».

of Populism. In Germany, a new right populist party - Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) – founded in 2013, got 12,9% of the votes and entered into the National Parliament – Bundestag – where it has won 94 seats. It was the first time, after 1945, that an extreme right party won seats in the German Parliament. In Czech Republic, Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (ANO), also a recent right populist party, overpowered the Czech Republic's mainstream parties.

On the other hand, there was a decrease of Populism in eight countries, but only in two cases the descent was striking: In Slovakia - from 40,2% to 17,2% and in France - from 32,1% to 21,7%, even if the French electoral system – two round system - makes it possible to hide in the electoral results the manifestations of Populism present in everyday life.

All the other expressions of decrease had been almost residual: Cyprus - from 33% to 29,4%, Austria - from 27,4% to 25%, Romania - from 21,9% to 15,3%, Belgium - from 11,4% to 7,4%, Slovenia - from 4,4% to 2,2% and Luxemburg – from 3,3% to 1,6%.

As the Populism and the Latin American Neo-Populism are almost entirely the responsibility of the left, even if a careful analysis also reveals the existence of elements of the right, it may be interesting to know if the same happens in the European Union. That could permit testing the hypothesis of an influence or ideological continuity between the two realities.

It is a controversial issue because there are populist parties, like Podemos and Syriza, which do not accept the traditional division between left and right, considering it necessary to draw a new borderline.

This happens perhaps because of the mix in the populist parties' programs of elements from the left and the right. Indeed, it is possible to agree with the left on ecological issues or on issues of work insecurity, while supporting the ideas of the right concerning immigration or the decrease of taxes paid by the companies.

In the European Union, the use of the Index of Authoritarian Populism as a source shows the left and right Populism in twenty-seven countries, excluding Malta. One of them, Belgium, evidences a tie between right and left Populism. In the remaining twenty-six countries, the right Populism is dominant in fifteen: Hungary, Poland, Denmark, Austria, France, Finland, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Latvia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Lithuania, Estonia and Slovenia; while the left Populism imposes itself in eleven: Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Spain, Czech Republic⁶, Portugal, Romania, Germany, Croatia, Republic of Ireland and Luxemburg.

⁶ As it was already said, in Czech Republic the situation changed because ANO, a right populist party founded by a billionaire oligarch, Andrej Babis, won the parliamentary election in October 2017. The extreme right-wing Freedom and Direct Democracy also doubled its proportion from the previous election in 2013.

Assuming that in some States the predominance of one side of the spectrum does not invalidate the existence of Populism of contrary ideological drive, one can safely say that, contrary to what it is occurring in Latin America, the right-wing Populism predominates in the European Union.

However, the predominance of the right-wing Populism does not mean the inexistence of populist parties in the European Union that resemble the Latin American populisms. In the political discourse of the European left-wing Populism there is sympathy for the way of governing of some American populist leaders. The same happens with the rightist declarations of Marine Le Pen, Nigel Farage or Geert Wilders concerning Donald Trump. This can be a matter for subsequent research, because U.S.A., despite the increasing number of Hispanic population, does not belong to Latin America.

For the moment, it may be relevant to point out that Donald Trump's populist discourse was against the elite, and Hillary Clinton failed to show to the electorate that Donald Trump belonged to the elite as well.

Coming back to the left Populism, the sympathy that the Spanish Podemos and the Greek Syriza reveal for some manifestations of the Latin American Neo-Populism is connected with their adoption of the doctrinal post-gramscian line, even when the intellectual formation of the actual leaders cannot be compared to that of the past leaders. The university replaced the school of life.

On this doctrinal sharing we can say that the problems start when a populist party gains power. When Syriza's delegation was presented at the 10th Convention of a populist party which supports the present Portuguese Government, namely the Left Block, in 2016, it was booed, while in the previous meetings it had been warmly received.

Besides, Muller (2017)⁷ affirms that the idea of a progressive populism is mainly an American phenomenon. According to Baquero (2010)⁸, it results from the lack of confidence in the political institutions responsible for keeping the social contract. It applies also to the European Union as the regional integration imposes a sovereignty of service to the members, i.e., gives the community and the supranational institutions the possibility of taking decisions which belonged to the national organs. It is a change that is not acceptable to Populism and it allows the populist discourse an increasing media power.

Therefore, failures are justified not by one's wrong performance, but by internal and external boycott. The caste and its external allies are perceived saboteurs of the political action of the masses.

In what concerns the appreciation by some European communist parties, such as the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP), of the Populism in Cuba and in

Venezuela, it reveals that these parties have not felt, at ideological level, the URSS implosion. The new orthodoxy manifests the same behaviour of old orthodoxy, in keeping with what Gramsci wrote in a letter to the Communist Party of the URSS, denouncing the repression of the soviet regime against the left opposition.

The 15th Congress of the PCP witnessed 59 foreign delegations, including the Communist Party of Cuba, and 27 organizations sent greetings, including the Communist Party of Venezuela. For these totalitarian populist parties the appeal to the unity of the whole world proletarians is still relevant. This is a call that has not yet brought fruits for Populism, despite the existence of two clear populist groups in the European Parliament and the strong relationship among their leaderships.

We can also see that, despite the enormous potentialities of the Internet for an almost unlimited communication, the populist leaders, both in Latin America and in the European Union, prefer the monologue of their master's voice.

VI. CONCLUSION

I had questioned in the Introduction the title of my essay. At the end of this article I hope to have shown that despite the temporal or regional specificities of Populism, it can retain its singular form, without the need of being referred in plural. Moreover, the plurality represents a threat for a form of articulation of the discourse that, in its fight for the hegemony, tends to impose a single vision.

It is the same coin with two sides. Populism does not represent an ideology, but it admits ideological influences from the left and the right. That explains why some populist parties in Europe, including their prominent political leaders and analysts do not hide their sympathies for some populist models tried in other regions with ambivalent results.

In the colonial times, different metropoles adopted different approaches to their political motivations and strategic visions. It was the civilization for the English, the lights for the French and the religion and the pepper for the Portuguese.

Héctor Leis (2008, p. 35) defends that the South American populist leaderships adopted a *caudillesco* profile borrowed from the Iberian tradition and the influence of the *fascisms* (Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and German). This study confirms this reality, but it would not be correct to brand all four regimes univocally under fascism. A profile that helps to understand the mobilizing potential of a leader who appeals to people's feelings and emotions.

In the year that marks the centenary of Roberto Campos it seems timely to recall his vision focused upon two dangerous personalities for the consolidation of the democracy in Latin America, namely that of the

demagogue and that of the extremist. Granted that Populism is democracy's twin brother and that demagogic was the Greek term for Populism, it does not seem abusive to say that, in our times, there are many situations in which the demagogue and the extremist trend to merge themselves in the same person: the populist leader. If it is the lion that disguises the fox or if it is the fox that hides the lion, it makes little difference.

The reality extends beyond Latin America as demonstrated in this study. To get back yet once again to the significance of our title of this study, particularly in a context of opinions claiming that the European Union can only succeed in combating the right-wing populism if there is an intensification of left-wing populism, prudence suggests that we should distrust either. As Mounk (2017) affirms, while left populist "diagnosis of society's problems is often accurate, and their passion for economic justice genuine, their solutions are just as simplistic as those propagated by the populist right".

Moreover, the examples of the ruling populist ruling parties in the European Union show that when they belong to the right, like PiS in Poland and FIDESZ in Hungary, the Index of Democracy begins to fall. Till now, only one left populist party gained power in the EU, namely Syriza in Greece, but its discourse, as well as its action, have changed significantly. Many of its promises are forgotten. There is a big distance between dreams and reality.

Further research is required to analyze two new situations. One in Finland. The populist party, True Finns, accepted to participate in a ruling coalition, but when its new leader, Jussi Halla-aho, was elected, the twenty-one moderate MPs broke away in protest at his tough anti-immigration and anti-EU message. They called themselves New Alternative and saved the ruling coalition. The second case happened in Portugal, when populist parties lent support to the Government without participating in it.

Is the European Union facing a Post-Populist phase? For the moment, Populism is best viewed as a two-faced coin.

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