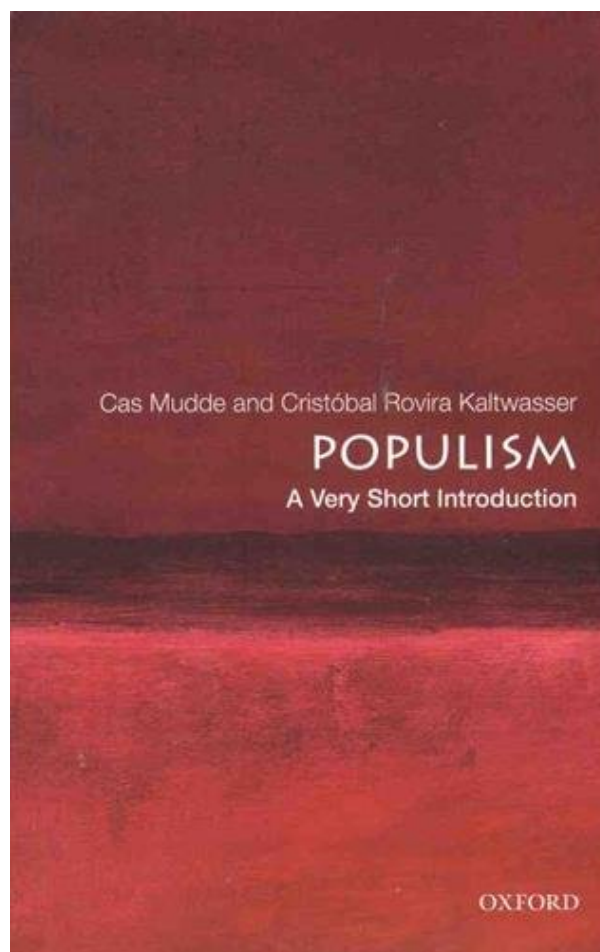
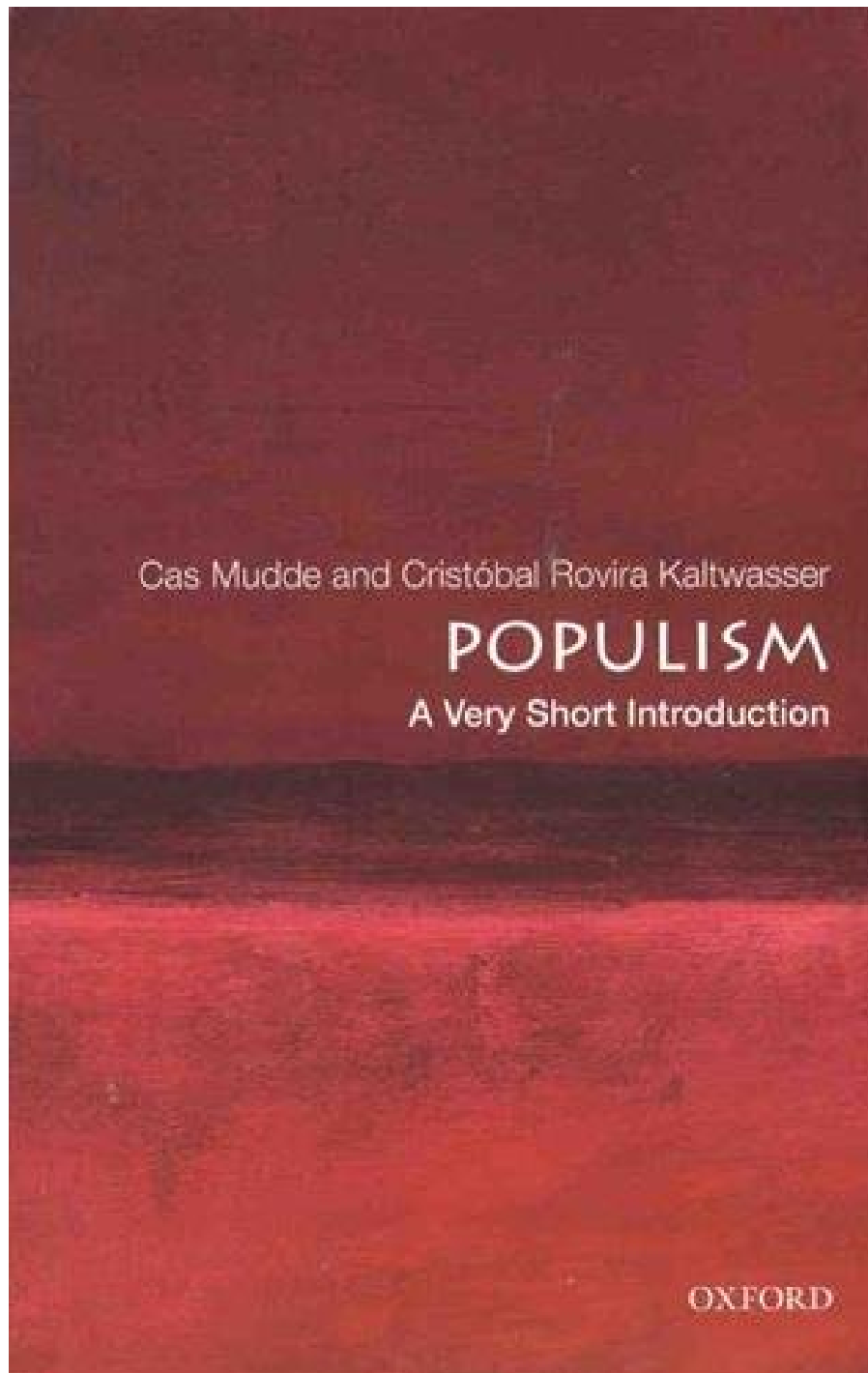


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POPULISM: A VERY SHORT INTRODUCTION (VERY SHORT INTRODUCTIONS) BY CAS MUDDÉ, CRISTÓBAL ROVIRA KALTWASSER PDF

Populism is a central concept in the current media debates about politics and elections. However, like most political buzzwords, the term often floats from one meaning to another, and both social scientists and journalists use it to denote diverse phenomena. What is populism really? Who are the populist leaders? And what is the relationship between populism and democracy? This book answers these questions in a simple and persuasive way, offering a swift guide to populism in theory and practice.

Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser present populism as an ideology that divides society into two antagonistic camps, the "pure people" versus the "corrupt elite," and that privileges the general will of the people above all else. They illustrate the practical power of this ideology through a survey of representative populist movements of the modern era: European right-wing parties, left-wing presidents in Latin America, and the Tea Party movement in the United States. The authors delve into the ambivalent personalities of charismatic populist leaders such as Juan Domingo Péron, H. Ross Perot, Jean-Marie le Pen, Silvio Berlusconi, and Hugo Chávez. If the strong male leader embodies the mainstream form of populism, many resolute women, such as Eva Péron, Pauline Hanson, and Sarah Palin, have also succeeded in building a populist status, often by exploiting gendered notions of society.

Although populism is ultimately part of democracy, populist movements constitute an increasing challenge to democratic politics. Comparing political trends across different countries, this compelling book debates what the long-term consequences of this challenge could be, as it turns the spotlight on the bewildering effect of populism on today's political and social life.

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Essential reading for the Trump era

By RBS

This is a highly informed and relevant account of a certain dubious species of political actor, the populist. I've read a number of books in the VSI series, and this is best I've seen so far. The text is lucid and engaging, so packed with useful information and descriptions that I found myself highlighting about a third of it and scribbling all over the margins. Though Trumpian politics feel entirely novel to many of us, this book gives us (Americans) a much-needed perspective on leaders of his typology who have cropped up all over the world in the last 40 years. A particularly helpful discussion concerned where populism fits within the broader landscape of liberal democracy, including the contexts in which populism has a de-democratizing effect by destabilizing liberal institutions such as the judiciary and the press. Finally, there is also analysis of the dynamics of the (relatively) leaderless grassroots populism movements including the American Tea Party and Occupy movements, and how such movements differ from leader-driven populism. This is essential reading for understanding our times.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Everything you always wanted to know about populism but were afraid to ask

By Lawrence Alschuler

Professors Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, both political scientists, have resolved a current controversy about whether or not populism is democratic. Much of their argument hinges on the distinction between “electoral” and “liberal democracy”. Populism supports electoral democracy, understood as majority rule and popular sovereignty (no higher authority than the will of the people). Populism opposes Liberal democracy which includes two additional principles: protection of (fundamental) minority rights and constraints on the “tyranny of the majority” by independent institutions such as constitutional courts. Many debates end here without considering the context of the political system. The authors point out that populism supports the transition to electoral democracy from authoritarian rule.

The authors define populism as an ideology that views society as divided into two homogeneous subcultures, “the pure people” and “the corrupt elite” and that politics should reflect only the general will of the people. Understood in this way, it becomes clear that populism opposes liberal democracy and pluralism. Left-wing populists often combine populism with a host-ideology, socialism, while right-wing populists often espouse nationalism, authoritarianism or nativism.

The authors find answers to the question, how do populists mobilize large segments of the population behind their ideology: by personalist leadership, social movement, or political party? The authors next ask what characterizes the populist leader: virility, charisma, ethnic identity, or outsider status? They ask an often-overlooked question: what accounts for the successes and failures of populism, both in opposition and in power?

Throughout this short book, the concepts and explanations are clearly presented and abundantly illustrated with cases, drawn especially from North and South America and Europe. I believe this book rightly will soon be recognized as the best introduction to the study of populism. (Lawrence Alschuler, author of *The Psychopolitics of Liberation: Political Consciousness from a Jungian Perspective*, 2007)

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