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## **POPULISM AND SOCIAL POLICY IN TRANSITIONAL SOCIETIES: STRATEGIES AND IMPACT ON MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND LATIN AMERICA**

### **Abstract**

Countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America that have undergone significant political and economic changes face new challenges in shaping social policy. Populist leaders in these regions often use social policy as a tool for gaining political support, targeting marginalized groups as part of their strategies. This paper analyzes various approaches of populist regimes in transitional societies and their impact on social policy, particularly toward marginalized groups. Through case studies from Hungary, Poland, Serbia, Turkey, Venezuela, and Brazil, the paper offers a comparative overview of populist strategies. The analysis includes a systematic literature review and a comparative analysis of empirical examples of social policy under populist regimes, incorporating a theoretical framework based on the concept of “welfare nationalism” and specific case studies. Findings reveal that populist leaders use social policy to strengthen political control and support, with varying approaches to marginalized groups depending on regional and cultural contexts. Transitional societies represent fertile ground for populist strategies that use social policy as a tool for political mobilization. This research highlights the need for more inclusive social policies to mitigate the adverse effects of populism.

**Keywords:** populism, social policy, transitional societies, marginalized groups, comparative analysis

### **Introduction: The problem and importance of studying populism and social policy in transitional societies**

In recent decades, populism has emerged as a global phenomenon, with a strong presence in political systems worldwide. In transitional societies, particularly in regions like Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America, populist movements and leaders employ social policy as a tool to garner political support and control

over marginalized groups. This phenomenon poses challenges not only to democratic values but also to the stability and sustainability of social policies, which are often essential for economic and social development in these countries (Stockemer, 2019). Transitional societies are characterized by political instability, economic inequality, and specific social problems, creating fertile ground for the development of populist ideas and policies. In such environments, populist leaders often present themselves as defenders of “ordinary citizens,” using rhetoric that targets elites, foreign influences, or specific social groups as the source of problems (Ketola, 2018). Social policy becomes one of the main tools through which populist authorities fulfill their promises, while manipulating social benefits to maintain political control. This manipulation particularly affects marginalized groups such as the unemployed, the elderly, migrants, and the poor, whose well-being is directly linked to government social programs. Studying populism in transitional societies is crucial, as it provides a better understanding of how populist governments shape social policy and the consequences of such an approach on social cohesion, institutional stability, and democratic processes. In countries such as Hungary, Poland, Serbia, Turkey, Venezuela, and Brazil, populist movements have reshaped social policies to meet specific political goals (Buxton, 2013). Understanding these changes is vital for developing more inclusive and sustainable policies that could mitigate the negative effects of populism on society.

### **Literature review and definition of key terms**

A considerable body of literature examines populism and social policy in transitional societies, exploring how populist leaders and parties utilize social policy to gain political support. Stockemer (2019) highlights that populism encompasses rhetoric and policies favoring “ordinary citizens” over elites, while Ketola (2018) introduces the concept of “welfare nationalism” as a method by which populist leaders target specific groups within the nation. This approach simultaneously supports dominant groups while marginalizing migrants or other minority groups, thereby reinforcing a sense of belonging among the domestic population. Additionally, social policy encompasses the range of policies that a state implements to promote the welfare of its citizens, especially those in disadvantaged positions. In the context of populism, social policy can become a tool for strengthening political control and redistributing resources to specific groups to ensure voter loyalty. Buxton (2013) analyzes how social programs in Venezuela are used as a means of mobilizing the working class through anti-elite discourse. Epstein (2017) further emphasizes that populist approaches in social policy aim not only at wealth redistribution but also at enhancing political legitimacy through resource control. Similarly, Fischer (2020) illustrates how radical right-wing populism employs social programs as a method to garner support among lower social classes in the context of neoliberal reforms. By

examining these sources and key terms, this paper investigates how populist governments in transitional societies utilize social policy not only as a redistribution mechanism but also as a tool for political mobilization and control. These studies suggest the need for developing more inclusive policies to reduce the negative impacts of populism on social stability and democracy.

### **Populism and social policy – theoretical overview**

Populism can be defined as a political ideology or strategy that emphasizes the conflict between the “ordinary people” and the “elite,” often utilizing simplistic narratives and polarizing discourse to mobilize the public (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). A key characteristic of populism is its appeal to the people as a singular moral category, contrasting with elites depicted as corrupt or incompetent. This rhetoric allows populist leaders to gain the trust of citizens, while social policy is used as a tool to bolster political legitimacy and control (Stockemer, 2019). In populist regimes, social policy often becomes an instrument through which promises of justice and equality are fulfilled. However, unlike universal models of social policy, populist approaches frequently use social benefits as a mechanism to secure the support of specific groups rather than achieving comprehensive social welfare (Buxton, 2013). This selective approach enables populist leaders to control resources and manipulate social programs to meet political objectives. For instance, in Hungary, Viktor Orbán has tailored social programs to conservative family values, utilizing social policy to reinforce traditional family values while simultaneously excluding support for marginalized groups (Lendvai-Bainton & Stubbs, 2020). Populism in social policy can take various forms, from right-wing nationalist populism to left-wing egalitarianism. In Latin America, populist leaders like Hugo Chávez in Venezuela directed social policy toward marginalized segments of society but with the aim of politically mobilizing the working class and reinforcing anti-elite rhetoric (Brading, 2013). In Central and Eastern Europe, right-wing populism employs social policy to promote nationalist values, often excluding migrants and minority groups from social benefits (Lugosi, 2018). These examples illustrate how populist leaders use social policy as a weapon in political battles rather than as a means of social justice.

### **Nationalism and social rights toward the concept of “welfare nationalism”**

The concept of “welfare nationalism” refers to a form of social policy aimed at specific groups within a country while excluding others, typically minority or migrant communities. This concept is increasingly prominent in populist regimes that use nationalist discourse to justify the selective distribution of social rights (Ketola & Nordensvard, 2018). At its core, “welfare nationalism” is based on the idea that social rights are privileges reserved for “true members” of the nation, while “others”

are excluded from these benefits. In this way, social policy becomes a tool for reinforcing national identity and legitimizing populist governments (Greve, 2021). In the European context, right-wing populists frequently use “welfare nationalism” as a strategy to garner political support by appealing to ethnic and cultural differences as grounds for resource redistribution. This approach is particularly pronounced in countries like Hungary and Poland, where national identity and conservative values are often invoked to justify the exclusion of migrants from access to social rights (Buzogány & Varga, 2021). For example, the Hungarian government has introduced welfare programs favoring ethnic Hungarians and promoting family values, while excluding migrants and members of other minorities from these programs (Lendvai-Bainton & Stubbs, 2020).

In Latin America, the concept of “welfare nationalism” manifests through left-wing populism, where resources are concentrated on national working-class groups, while foreign companies and elites are portrayed as “enemies of the people” (Buxton, 2013). Chávez’s model in Venezuela exemplifies how left-wing populism can leverage nationalism to shape social policy, securing support from the domestic workforce through redistributive programs directed at the national population, while foreign interests are depicted as threats to national sovereignty (Brading, 2013). Through “welfare nationalism,” populist authorities not only meet the needs of certain social groups but also foster a political identity anchored in ethnic or national belonging. This form of social policy promotes a sense of belonging among members of the dominant population while marginalizing or excluding those who do not share this identity. Thus, “welfare nationalism” becomes a means of political mobilization and control, enabling populist regimes to retain voter support through selective welfare programs.

## **Methodology**

### *Literature selection and database sources*

A combined approach of manual searching and the use of key academic databases, such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, Scopus, and EBSCOhost, was employed in selecting the literature. The search was conducted manually due to the specific requirements for identifying relevant studies on populism, social policy, and marginalized groups in transitional societies. This manual approach allowed for a deeper understanding and selection of the most pertinent sources, especially those dealing with empirical studies and specific case analyses. The search included keywords such as “populism,” “social policy,” “marginalized groups,” “welfare nationalism,” and “transitional societies.” The timeframe was limited to works published between 2010 and 2023 to ensure that the collected literature reflects current trends and the development of populist strategies in social policy.

### *Inclusion and exclusion criteria*

To ensure a consistent and adequate selection of sources, the following inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied when choosing studies:

#### *Inclusion criteria:*

Works published in peer-reviewed journals, academic monographs, and relevant conference proceedings.

Studies that directly investigate the themes of populism, social policy, and marginalized groups in transitional societies.

Empirical studies and case studies addressing populist strategies in social policy, including specific cases in Hungary, Poland, Serbia, Turkey, Venezuela, and Brazil.

Works that provide theoretical foundations, such as the concept of “welfare nationalism,” within populist regimes.

#### *Exclusion criteria:*

Studies that do not focus on populism and social policy or address related topics without a clear link to social policy.

Studies analyzing solely the economic aspects of populism without reference to social policies.

Works lacking sufficient data or methodological details.

Based on these criteria, over 45 studies were reviewed to select the most relevant sources, covering a wide range of theoretical and empirical perspectives. This number of sources provides enough diversity to cover key aspects of populist strategies in social policy across various regional contexts without overburdening the analysis.

### *Structure of comparative analysis and introduction of case studies*

The comparative analysis is structured to enable the comparison of populist approaches to social policy between Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America. Each of the analyzed countries serves as a specific example of how populist regimes utilize social programs to achieve political goals. In this way, the comparative analysis clearly presents the similarities and differences between populist strategies in different contexts.

#### *The case studies include the following countries:*

Europe: Hungary and Poland, where populist regimes rely on the concept of “welfare nationalism” to redistribute resources in favor of the ethnic majority.

Balkan Region: Serbia and Turkey, characterized by authoritarian populism, where social programs are tailored to the needs of dominant ethnic and religious groups.

Latin America: Venezuela and Brazil, where left-wing populism uses social policy as a means of mobilizing the working class and reinforcing anti-elitist discourse.

Through this comparative structure, the study offers a comprehensive analysis of how populism shapes social policy in diverse socio-political settings. The case studies allow for a deeper insight into the specific ways populist regimes in transitional societies use social policy as a tool for political mobilization and control.

## **Empirical analysis**

### *Analysis of populist regimes in Hungary, Poland, Serbia, and Turkey*

In the transitional societies of Europe, populism manifests through the expansion of social policies that primarily favor ethnic majorities and conservative social values. This approach serves as a tool for retaining political power by providing specific social benefits to certain groups.

#### *a) Hungary*

Under the leadership of Viktor Orbán, Hungary offers a paradigmatic example of right-wing populism with authoritarian tendencies, employing “welfare nationalism” as a foundational approach in social policy. These policies favor ethnic Hungarians through support for traditional family values and the promotion of birth rates among the ethnic majority (Buzogány & Varga, 2021). Specific programs, such as subsidies for young families, housing purchase credits, and tax breaks, are directed at the majority population, while minority and migrant groups are excluded from these benefits (Lendvai-Bainton & Stubbs, 2020). This approach to social policy serves to strengthen political support by linking national identity with social protection.

#### *b) Poland*

A similar model is observed in Poland, where the Law and Justice Party (PiS) has implemented a policy that merges social and national politics through programs like “500+,” which provides monthly financial support for each child (Buzogány & Varga, 2021). This program aims not only to improve family living standards but also to reinforce conservative values by promoting family structures as fundamental societal units. Social policies in Poland are used to mobilize the electorate, with the connection between social assistance and political loyalty becoming a pronounced way to retain support among conservative voters.

*c) Serbia*

In Serbia, populist politics use the rhetoric of national pride and economic independence as the basis for social policy, especially directed at the unemployed, elderly citizens, and other marginalized groups. This strategy aims to gain loyalty from socially vulnerable groups through selective forms of assistance that favor the dominant ethnic group (Orlović & Kovačević, 2019). For instance, programs such as financial aid for the unemployed or subsidies for local jobs are used to enhance the ruling party's political influence among workers and pensioners, thereby solidifying political control and support for the ruling elite.

*d) Turkey*

Under the regime of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey combines populism and authoritarianism through social policy directed at promoting the values of the conservative majority base. A focus on economic development, particularly in construction and infrastructure, is used to strengthen political support through projects that directly impact citizens' daily lives (Adaman & Akbulut, 2020). These policies are supported by rhetoric that emphasizes national identity and often targets specific social groups as a threat to traditional values. This social policy model allows the government to use welfare programs as a tool for political mobilization, while populist rhetoric polarizes society and simultaneously consolidates support among conservative segments.

*Analysis of populist strategies in Venezuela and Brazil*

In Latin America, left-wing populism utilizes social policy to promote equality and social justice, often accompanied by a sharp anti-elitist and anti-imperialist discourse. Venezuela and Brazil serve as examples where social policies have been employed as tools for securing political loyalty and strengthening the working class.

*a) Venezuela*

In Venezuela, under Hugo Chávez's leadership, the populist government implemented social assistance programs like the "Misiones" programs, which include free education, healthcare, and subsidized food products aimed at the working class and marginalized communities (Brading, 2013). These programs empower the working class and strengthen support among the poor, while the anti-imperialist discourse frames foreign corporations and national elites as threats to the country's sovereignty (Buxton, 2013). Through this approach, Chávez achieved high levels of political loyalty and mobilization via redistributive policies that radically redefined the relationship between the state and its citizens.

*b) Brazil*

In Brazil, particularly during the Workers' Party (PT) governance under Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, left-wing populism employed social programs like Bolsa Família to reduce poverty and improve social inclusion (Fleury, 2023). Programs like Bolsa Família, which provide direct cash transfers to low-income families, built a strong base of support among lower-income social groups. Through these programs, the government achieved substantial reductions in poverty rates, yet they were also used for political mobilization and to strengthen trust among voters. The Workers' Party's populist rhetoric targeted the wealthy and elite groups, fostering social capital among marginalized communities but also contributing to societal polarization.

This empirical analysis of populist regimes in Europe and Latin America highlights how populist leaders utilize social policy as a tool for mobilization and maintaining political power, yet approaches differ depending on ideological spectrum and regional context. In Europe, right-wing populism relies on the concept of "welfare nationalism," favoring ethnic majorities and conservative values. Examples from Hungary and Poland illustrate how social policy can become a selective instrument, redistributing resources toward the targeted population while leaving marginalized groups without support. This model rests on a strong national identity and promotes ideas favoring ethnic homogeneity, often employing rhetoric that portrays migrants and other minority groups as threats. In this way, social policy serves as a means to strengthen the ruling elite's political base while also diverting attention from economic and political issues (Buzogány & Varga, 2021). In Serbia and Turkey, populist regimes integrate social policy within a broader authoritarian framework, where traditional values and nationalism legitimize government policies. Social programs function as symbolic indicators of support for the "common people," while the political elite use state apparatus to control resources and channel social assistance to loyal social groups. The example of Turkey under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's regime emphasizes development projects and economic redistribution as a foundation for political support, while minority groups and opposition face restrictions on resource access (Adaman & Akbulut, 2020). In Latin America, left-wing populism uses social policy to promote economic equality and social justice, often paired with anti-imperialist rhetoric. In Venezuela, Hugo Chávez used social programs to support the working class and the poor, securing political loyalty from a large portion of the population while presenting foreign companies and elites as obstacles to public welfare (Brading, 2013; Buxton, 2013). Similarly, Brazil's Workers' Party employed programs like Bolsa Família to reduce poverty and social inequality, but also as a means to retain political support among the lower social classes (Fleury, 2023). These examples demonstrate how social policy becomes a tool for ideological and political mobilization, where dominant narratives are shaped by ruling parties, often through resource manipulation and control

over social programs. Similarities between European and Latin American populist regimes lie in their strategy of using social policy as a tool of political power and control. Whether it is “welfare nationalism” in Hungary or redistributive socialism in Venezuela, populist governments shape social programs according to the needs of their political base while marginalizing groups perceived as threats to their narrative. Thus, populist leaders and parties not only reinforce their position but actively reshape social policy to serve their political goals.

The empirical analysis suggests that the long-term sustainability of these policies is questionable. In the context of economic challenges, resource reductions, and increasing social inequalities, social policies favoring specific groups may destabilize the social fabric. This becomes particularly evident in countries where populist regimes use polarization and exclusivity as the basis of their policies. If the trend of selective redistribution and favoring certain populations continues, social cohesion may be disrupted, further complicating solutions to key economic and social issues in the future. In conclusion, social policy in populist regimes in Europe and Latin America functions as a tool of political manipulation and control, allowing leaders to appeal to the “common people,” yet often at the expense of social inclusion and fairness. These models demonstrate how populism can shape social policy in ways that meet immediate political needs, yet deepen social and economic divides, threatening long-term stability and inclusiveness in society.

## **Discussion**

### *Comparison of different approaches to populist social policy across regions*

The analysis of populist social policies in Europe and Latin America reveals two key strategies: an exclusive “welfare nationalism” model in Europe and an inclusive redistributive approach in Latin America. While both models focus on mobilizing certain social groups and strengthening political support, they achieve this through different ideological and institutional pathways, reflecting the specific historical, economic, and social contexts of each region. In Europe, right-wing populist leaders in Hungary and Poland use “welfare nationalism” as a means of strengthening ethnic identity and consolidating political loyalty within the majority population. Social assistance programs favor ethnic Hungarians and Poles, while systematically excluding migrants and minorities, further solidifying ethnic and social boundaries within society (Buzogány & Varga, 2021). In this model, social policy functions not only as a mechanism of social protection but also as a tool for institutionalizing and maintaining a nationalist narrative that supports the political elite. Examples like the “500+” program in Poland and family support policies in Hungary emphasize values that reflect a conservative family ideal and the notion of protecting ethnic purity and cultural homogeneity. In Latin America, populism manifests through

inclusive and redistributive policies aimed at the poor and marginalized communities, with the intent of reducing economic inequality and strengthening social justice. Programs such as the “Misiones” in Venezuela and “Bolsa Família” in Brazil are designed to provide basic social protection for the working class, with an additional focus on political mobilization through anti-elitist and anti-imperialist rhetoric (Brading, 2013; Fleury, 2023). In this case, social policy is used not only to address social issues but also as a tool for strengthening a political base that aligns itself with ideals of social equality and resistance to global capitalism. Thus, in Latin America, populism is associated with progressive and socially inclusive goals, although these objectives are often subordinated to political manipulation and the maintenance of power. These regional differences indicate the specific ideological functions of populism: while European populism uses nationalism and exclusivity to consolidate power among the ethnic majority, Latin American populism leans toward economic egalitarianism and social inclusion but with a dependence on state resources. In both cases, social policy serves as a means of political mobilization but with different ideological implications that align with the needs and values of populist leaders.

#### *Analysis of the effects on marginalized groups and social structures*

Populist social policies in Europe and Latin America generate specific effects on marginalized groups and broader social structures, ultimately shaping social relations and cultural norms. In Europe, the application of “welfare nationalism” has direct consequences for minority and migrant communities. These groups are often excluded from social programs or have restricted access, which further marginalizes their positions within society (Lendvai-Bainton & Stubbs, 2020). Ethnically targeted social policies increase the sense of exclusion and discrimination among migrants and minorities, while fostering a sense of unity and protection of national values among the ethnic majority. In the long term, this can lead to social polarization and heightened ethnic tensions, which destabilize society and threaten community cohesion. Especially when populist authorities use rhetoric that portrays minorities as a threat, social tensions become institutionalized, and the state strengthens its authoritarian profile. In Latin America, social policies targeting the poor and marginalized groups have positive effects in terms of poverty reduction and improved living standards, yet come with challenges of political dependency and control. Programs like “Bolsa Família” in Brazil directly contribute to reducing social inequalities, allowing impoverished families access to essential resources. However, dependency on state assistance can lead to political loyalty based not on active political engagement but on fear of losing economic benefits (Buxton, 2013). In this way, populist authorities in Latin America use social policy not only to address social issues but also to maintain political influence among voters. The impact

of this strategy on social structures can be twofold: while the living conditions of the poor improve, the potential for creating a dependency on the state may, in the long term, undermine the development of a politically active and economically self-reliant working class.

### *Broader implications of populist social policies*

Across both regions, populist social policies, whether inclusive or exclusive, polarize society along political and ethnic lines. European populism relies on ethnic exclusivity as a means of maintaining political power, while Latin American populism focuses on socio-economic redistribution as a tool for political mobilization. However, both strategies foster dependency among social aid recipients, whether through ethnic affiliation or class identification. These policies significantly impact social cohesion and stability: the European model risks deepening ethnic tensions and excluding minority communities from broader social structures, while the Latin American model potentially undermines economic growth and stability through reliance on state support. Furthermore, populist authorities use these policies to consolidate their positions on the political spectrum, reducing the space for pluralism and democratic participation. Thus, populism in both regions acts as a factor of social polarization, contributing to the creation of societies based on exclusive and dependent relationships with the state. This comparative analysis suggests that while populism may improve resource access for certain groups, its long-term impact on social inclusion and political stability remains questionable. In the European context, populist policies may erode social inclusiveness and provoke ethnic conflicts, whereas in Latin America, dependency on state assistance may hinder the development of a politically mature and economically stable society. This complexity of populist social policies warrants further attention and critical examination, especially in transitional societies prone to social divisions and economic challenges.

### **Conclusion**

This study offers an in-depth analysis of populist social policies in transitional societies in Europe and Latin America, illustrating how populism, despite ideological and geographical diversity, utilizes social policy as a tool for political mobilization, control, and social structuring. Fundamentally, the key findings reveal that populist leaders shape social programs in ways that maintain political power, often at the expense of social inclusivity, long-term stability, and democracy. In Europe, right-wing populism uses social policy to promote “welfare nationalism,” supporting ethnic majorities through conservative values while systematically excluding minorities and migrants. In Hungary and Poland, social policies aimed at the ethnic majority not only foster social division but also institutionalize discrimination, linking national identity with social rights (Buzogány & Varga, 2021). This approach

excludes specific communities from state protection and undermines the principles of social justice, potentially leading to long-term ethnic tensions and destabilizing social cohesion. Additionally, the focus on traditional family values, such as demographic measures to boost birth rates, serves as a political legitimacy tool for populist leaders who aim to reinforce an authoritarian model of governance. Conversely, Latin American models of left-wing populism, as seen in Venezuela and Brazil, use redistributive social policies as a means of mobilizing the working class and impoverished groups. Programs such as “Misiones” in Venezuela and “Bolsa Família” in Brazil provide immediate economic benefits to vulnerable groups, reducing poverty and promoting social justice. However, these policies foster dependency on state aid, increasing the risk of political manipulation. Although these programs reduce economic inequalities, their political instrumentalization results in social policy becoming a mechanism of political control, where social loyalty is maintained by fear of losing assistance rather than by an understanding of political pluralism and civic rights (Brading, 2013; Fleury, 2023). Ultimately, populist social policies reveal the duality of populism: while they offer immediate benefits to specific groups, they often exacerbate divisions, increase dependency, and compromise democratic principles. This study highlights the need for further critical analysis and inclusive policy approaches that balance citizen needs with stable democratic structures, fostering long-term societal inclusivity and cohesion.

### *Broader implications of populist social policies*

A crucial aspect in both contexts is the use of social policy to shape social relationships and values according to populist norms. European right-wing populism emphasizes strengthening ethnic boundaries and values that reinforce national identity, leading to a reduction in inclusivity and a potential increase in ethnic conflicts. Meanwhile, Latin American left-wing populism, through redistributive policies, creates an appearance of economic inclusion while simultaneously establishing dependency that undermines the economic ambitions and independence of marginalized groups.

Thus, both models illustrate how populism utilizes social policy as a tool to build social structures aligned with political interests rather than the actual needs of the citizens. In Europe, populist policies tend to deepen ethnic divisions, potentially leading to social tensions, while in Latin America, the dependency created by redistributive programs can limit the social mobility and empowerment of marginalized groups. These approaches serve political agendas but often fall short of fostering true social cohesion and economic independence.

### *Key conclusions and directions for further research*

These findings underscore that, while populism may temporarily improve the living standards of certain groups, its long-term effects often undermine the foundations of an inclusive society and democratic participation. In Europe, “welfare nationalism” may further deepen ethnic divides and marginalize specific groups, while in Latin America, dependency on state support may limit social progress and foster political loyalty based on economic insecurity. These conclusions highlight the need for further research in the following areas:

- **Impact of Populist Policies on Social Inclusion and Ethnic Relations:** Further exploration is required to understand how exclusive social policies in Europe shape ethnic and social relationships, particularly in societies where migrants and minorities have historically been marginalized.
- **Long-Term Social and Economic Effects of Dependency on State Support:** In Latin America, additional studies could shed light on how populist dependency affects economic development and civic responsibility, as well as how these policies influence citizens’ perceptions of their rights and obligations.
- **Analysis of Democracy and Political Participation:** Examining how populist regimes shape the perception of democracy through social policy could help explain why populism remains popular despite its authoritarian tendencies.
- **Comparative Analysis of Various Populist Regimes:** Comparative studies of other populist regimes across different regions can deepen our understanding of the mechanisms through which populism utilizes social policies, including potential consequences for global democratic processes.

In conclusion, populist social policies present ambiguous tools: while they provide immediate social benefits to certain groups, they often encourage political control and social polarization. A critical examination of the effects of these policies can aid in the development of more inclusive social policies that promote social justice, political freedom, and economic advancement without manipulating citizens for political gains. Further research can offer solutions for integrating social policies that balance citizens’ needs with stable democratic structures, thereby contributing to more inclusive societies worldwide.

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