

a Salazar diz-se que terá sido “indubitavelmente arrogante”, tendo assumido o bispo uma atitude de “pai severo” ou “orientador académico”, “animado de zelo político” (pp. 468-470).

Finalmente, onde aporta a análise de Meneses sobre Salazar? Na ideia de que “um sentido de missão pessoal e religioso” que teria comandado a sua actuação política. Porque, não o esqueçamos, esta pretende ser uma *biografia política*. Como em tantos outros momentos-chave do seu livro, é de novo a retórica do próprio Salazar a conduzir o investigador: “o presidente do Conselho disse a Christine Garnier: “Não creio no destino (...). Creio na Providência. É ela que, há tantos anos, me força a um labor contrário aos meus gostos” (p. 643). Convincente?

Permita-me, então, o leitor que eu proponha que nos perguntemos por que teve esta biografia tão boa aceitação.

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Mabel Berezin, Illiberal Politics in Neoliberal Times: Culture, Security and Populism in the New Europe, London, Cambridge University Press, 2009, 324 pages.

When one goes through the first pages of *Illiberal Politics in Neoliberal Times: Culture, Security and Populism in the New Europe*, one is led to believe that the book will present a novel argument about the rise of right-wing populism in Europe. However, the book reveals to be less innovative than is suggested. The strength of the theoretical arguments advanced at the outset of the book fades after the first two chapters and the empirical analysis of episodic events reduces the explanatory potential of the book. Although the book does not provide an innovative theoretical and empirical approach to populism in Europe, it does offer some interesting insights into the French case. Most of the book is devoted to this case, in fact, with some references to Italy and other western European countries. However, Central and Eastern Europe democracies, where populist parties are also highly successful, have unfortunately been left out of the book. The absence of a strong comparative dimension is one of its major weaknesses. In this regard, the reference to a “New Europe” in the title is misleading.

The first conceptual question that comes to mind when reading the title of the book is: What is the New Europe? The author defines the New Europe

as “an opportunity space primarily for individuals and groups who are able to compete in trans-European economic, social and cultural markets” (p. 7). This definition is not particularly innovative and does not identify what is new about Europe. A Europhile elite has existed since the second half of the nineteenth century. Although European cosmopolitanism and transnationalism were disrupted by the First and the Second World Wars, a group of Europhiles pushed for a European project shortly after the Second World War ended. With the end of the Cold War, the globalization of economies and financial markets, the growth of the tertiary sector, and the increased regulatory role of the European Union, this group has become larger, but it still represents a minority of the European population.

The second conceptual question that comes to mind when reading the title of this book is more substantive: Why is populism about illiberal politics? The answer to this question is by no means straightforward, since (il)liberalism means different things to different people. There are right-wing populist leaders and parties that claim to be heirs to a ‘liberal’ tradition (e.g. Silvio Berlusconi’s *Forza Italia* or Pim Fortuyn’s *List Pim Fortuyn*), even if their doctrine invokes ‘illiberal’ measures. At the same time most economic neoliberal tenets heralded and implemented since the early 1980s by the Thatcher governments in the United Kingdom or the Reagan and Bush administrations in the United States are in profound dispute with a traditional liberal democratic conception of the state and the role it should play in the economy. In other words, labels do not necessarily match political practice. To cut the argument presented by Berezin short, populism is about illiberal politics because it is against every principle that liberal democracy stands for: liberal democracy is about tolerance, populism is about condemnation; liberal democracy is about protecting minority rights against the tyranny of the majority, populism is about the power of the people (defined by some “common” identity traits); liberal democracy is elitist, populism is anti-elitist; liberal democracy is about the politics of negotiation and consensus-building, populism is about “just” politics... and “just” can never be wrong in the mindset of populists. With this conceptual difference in mind, it is possible to discern why populism relates to Euroscepticism and anti-globalization and why it has expanded in recent years, as discussed in this book.

According to the author, the emergence of right-wing populism is an unexpected historical surprise rather than the expected outcome of deeper social, cultural, and economic conditions. She argues that “The accelerated process of Europeanization that includes political, economic and cultural integration is the core trans-European context, I suggest, within which the right-wing populist moment emerged” (p. 8). This contextualization restricts the analysis of the emergence of right-wing populism to Europe or, more specifically, to the context of post-Maastricht European integration. What is

so peculiar about this context that makes it an historical mark in the study of right-wing populism?

When we speak about European integration we refer to a polymorphous and multilevel process and not a product. There is a certain degree of surprise in the way historical events unravel. Few political leaders saw the Irish no vote to the Lisbon treaty as inevitable. However, if there is one thing we have learned about the lengthy treaty revision negotiations, it is that the institutional progress of Europe is quite predictable and elite-engineered. Maastricht was no exception, and this is why it became an easy target for populists.

Traditionally, politicians have tended to ignore the role of public opinion in shaping support for or mistrust of the European integration process, backing or rejecting political decisions and putting pressure on actors. There were good reasons for keeping public opinion at bay in the initial stages of this process, the first and foremost being the fact that the EU was not conceived as an inclusive political project, but mainly as an exclusive technocratic, elite-based, functional solution to structural and macro-economic problems. When public opinion was not completely ignored or dismissed from this process, researchers and decision-makers alike always suggested that intergovernmental bargaining, elite preferences, or the actions of organized interests at the base of European integration took place under an aura of “permissive consensus”, a mixture of loyalty, blind faith, and apathy. During the process of ratifying the Maastricht Treaty, right-wing populist parties saw a window of opportunity to express their discontent about this *modus operandi* in Europe. In 1992-1993, the Danish “No”, the narrow French “Yes”, and the rejection of the treaty by the British Conservative rebels was the first serious challenge to Europe as a political project, in a period when it was moving toward its full political development (Moury and De Sousa, 2009). The reason why the 1992 Maastricht Treaty became an historical landmark, and not the 1986 Single European Act that prepared the establishment of a Common Market, has less to do with the contents of the treaty and more with the dynamics of globalization and European geopolitics.

The emergence of populism (and not just right-wing populism) following the Cold War is related to the perceived failure of national governments and the European Union to deal with the challenges of globalization at both the social and economic level (*transnationalism*) and the cultural and identity level (*cosmopolitalism*). What changed with globalization was the multifaceted sense of security that European countries were able to provide to their large middle classes: security of returns to their investments and savings, job security, health care security, domestic security, and security against external threats. Europe’s sense of amalgamated security community was shaken by external dynamics with an internal impact: the shock of global financial

markets, the transfer of labour intensive industries eastwards, the sequence of terrorist attacks on European soil, the intensification of illegal immigration and asylum seekers from neighbouring territories whilst most European states show an accentuated demographic decline, the rise of localism and in particular Islam as a political force as a reaction to the cultural homogenization promoted by a western-like globalization. Populism emerges as an illiberal reaction to these challenges of modernity, mostly from the insecure and impoverished lower and middle classes (Mughan *et al.*, 2003). Whether opposing Americanization, immigration, neo-liberalism, or the New World Order, “national populist groups are among the most vocal opponents of globalization” (Mudde, 2004).

In addition to these shifting gradations of the landscape, Europe is also facing changes in the nature of liberal democracies that can account for the rise of populism. With the weakening of traditional societal cleavages and the declining representative role of key political institutions, such as political parties and parliaments, liberal democracies have experienced a widening schism between the constitutional and the popular pillars of legitimacy (Mény and Surel, 2002). They have been challenged by the increased directness and personification of contacts and the lowering cost of transmitting different political messages. The dynamism and mediatization of contemporary democratic politics has made it necessary to convey clear, brief, and often superficial ideological or policy statements, which has in turn led to the rise of various populist tendencies.

In a context of governmental insufficiency to curtail the costs of globalization and crisis of representation, populists were able to pulse and aggregate a series of frustrations in their rhetoric to mobilize the disillusioned masses. The external shocks that stripped European nation-states of the sense of solidarity and sentiments of likeness that the author clearly outlines, such as the decline in welfare provisions, the growth of unemployment, the impact of globalization in local production systems, the increase of immigration from outside Europe, and the increase of urban violence and crime, offered propitious conditions for the rise of populism. As the author puts it, “When exogenous threats to the system occur, most people, independently of the ideological labels they espouse, are likely to retreat to ‘authority’, or, more colloquially put, pleas for law and order. The political party that exploits that commitment, whether left-wing or right-wing, is likely to garner electoral support.” (p. 34). The observation that the “losers of modernity”, i.e., those who have not been able to respond positively to the new challenges raised by the intertwined dynamics of European integration and globalization, are the big winners of the populist mobilization against these processes is not new (see for example Betz, 1994, 2002; Ignazi, 1992; Kitschelt, 1995; Mudde, 2004).

For the author, most political and sociological explanations of right-wing populism in Europe commit the same positivist fallacy: whilst trying to explain the dynamics of this phenomenon by using survey data that tap into political attitudes, voting behaviour, and party strategy, they are unable to explain why Europe is experiencing a right-wing populist moment right now. As the author underlines, not only “contemporary right-wing parties and movements do not match neatly onto interwar right-wing parties and movements” (p. 45), they have also been “a marginal feature of European politics for much of the post-World War II” (p. 37).

The alleged methodological reformulation proposed in this book is somewhat tautological or, at best, ill-explained. The author rejects the basic tenet of legacy theories that history will repeat itself, but then draws on path dependency theory to explain “the right-wing populist moment” whilst rejecting the deterministic tone of economic historians. The historical approach is central to the methodology adopted, but if followed only in a very loose manner. The author opts to look at “public political events” as “*templates of possibility*”. In other words, she focuses on an observable set of social relations and interconnections at the micro and macro level that “speak to collective resonance, present possibilities, and offer visions of possible paths — even if those paths are not pursued” (p. 56). Predicting the outcomes of observable attitudes and behaviour is not important to the author. What matters is how events are collectively interpreted and how such collective evaluation may alter future political actions. “Who interprets what, causing what impact?” is something that the author does not explain clearly to the reader. The author’s attempt to explain, in one paragraph, how and why events were selected is more confusing than elucidating. She states that “these events were not randomly chosen but rather manifested themselves as important in a flood of occurrences”. Without more clarification, the alleged methodological innovation seems like a narrative of episodes with little explanatory potential.

The author’s selection of the “top 3” events does not clarify why the French *Front National* is crucial to the understanding of the rise of right-wing populism in Europe. Why focus on France and not on Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, or the United Kingdom? With regard to the French case, the author concludes that the shift from European to non-European immigration is not the only explanatory variable for the success of right-wing populism at the ballot box. This conclusion is not novel. In a similar vein, the observation that Le Pen faces competition from Sarkozy and that less committed voters will be inclined to support less controversial candidates (p. 245) is not novel either. The neutralization impact of Europeanization in the French right is, nevertheless, overstated. The author argues that “the ramifications of European integration have moved the right’s issues into the mainstream of

French politics and diminished the political capacity of the extreme right” (p. 247). In reality, however, the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in the 2005 referendum, whether on the grounds that it would enforce a neoliberal economic model or as a threat to the French sovereignty and identity, was a victory of both the extreme left and right.

Moreover, the author’s claim that Jean Marie Le Pen’s actions in France have influenced Gianfranco Fini’s political choices in Italy (p. 57) is based solely on newspaper statements and not rigorously investigated (pp. 233-234). Her approach to Italian populism is superficial and does not seem to distinguish between different types or gradients of the same phenomenon. By ignoring the differences between the neo-fascist *Movimento Sociale Italiano* and its leader Gianfranco Fini, *Forza Italia* and its leader Silvio Berlusconi, and the separatist and xenophobic *Legha Nord* and its leader Umberto Bossi, the author overstates the impact of Europeanization upon the electoral mobilization strategies of these three populist players.

During the early 1990s, the *Movimento Sociale Italiano* attempted under the leadership of Gianfranco Fini to capitalize on popular discontent about domestic and European politics and developed a political discourse that largely resembled that of the *Front National*: anti-elitist, anti-systemic, and anti-European. This proved to be electorally unappealing. The Italian post-World War II political culture and social reality was not receptive to this type of rhetoric. Following the brief interregnum of Pino Rauti (1990-1991) and in response to the moralization climate paved by the *Mani Pulite* (clean hands) investigations, Fini began a requalification process of the *Movimento Sociale Italiano*’s *modus operandi*, political discourse, and electoral strategies. The new “justicialist” anti-corruption discourse produced better electoral results than the previous xenophobic one. In other words, in the case of *Movimento Sociale Italiano*, the Euro-scepticism of the early 1990s did not become synonym of Euro-reject. Bashing Europe was not a preponderant factor for its electoral success. The 1995 party congress was the turning point for the Italian far right party. The *Movimento Sociale Italiano* was officially dissolved and most of its ideological tenets were rejected. Its successor, the *Alleanza Nazionale*, still included most of its predecessor’s elites plus some figures from the dismantled Christian Democracy and Italian Liberals, following the implosion of the post-World War II party system as a consequence of the *Mani Pulite* investigations into political corruption scandals. The neo-fascist image of the party and its leader had been successfully recycled, partly because Fini’s leadership image was more associated to the *Movimento Sociale Italiano*’s role in parliamentary politics than to its street/protest actions. The *Alleanza Nazionale* was less threatening to the Italian electorate and did not raise the phantoms of the past; and Fini had successfully opted for a power strategy — in favour of power sharing,

consensus-building, and an intergovernmental Europe — rather than an anti-system, anti-party, anti-elite, anti-Europe stand, which is still identifiable in *Lega Nord*'s current electoral strategy. The author ignores the importance of the *Mani Pulite* investigations and the passage from the First to the Second Republic to this reformist process of the Italian right-wing populism.

In order to understand the rise of Silvio Berlusconi in Italian politics and how he has managed to survive despite failed political reforms, constant bad scoring in the economy, continuous corruption scandals involving him or his cabinet members directly, deliberate and unintentional international gaffes, and tempted constitutional reforms that make Italian contemporary politics better described as a “regime” rather than as a fully fledged democracy, one also needs to go back to the early 1990s and the crisis opened with the *Tangentopoli* (bribesville) allegations and culminating in the *Mani Pulite* investigations into illicit political financing. The post-*Mani Pulite* political landscape was one of complete distrust in the traditional party formations and party politics in general. The implosion of the nearly 50 year ruling Christian Democrats and the escape from justice of the former prime Minister — and Berlusconi's close friend — Bettino Craxi, had opened a political vacuum in the centre-right political spectrum and placed Silvio Berlusconi under a lot of pressure from the Milan attorney-general's office. In late 1993, Berlusconi begins to put in place an electoral support apparatus loosely based on football fan clubs: the *Forza Italia* political clubs. One year later, after the March general elections were announced, Berlusconi decides to *scendere in campo* (enter the playing field) by making his campaign announcement via a massive TV-release. Berlusconi's *Forza Italia* represents a new type of *tele-populismo* in a context of TV dominated political life or *videopolitica* as Giovanni Sartori coined it (1989). The leader's charisma appealed to a large number of discredited and less committed voters who felt sympathetic with Berlusconi's media constructed *qualunquism*. His image as a self-made, risk taking, pragmatic, ideologically detached, efficient, successful leader and an “outsider” of the system did not come naturally. He invested considerably in building his charismatic leadership, whilst consolidating his economic power through politics. His unique economic and media power helps to construct his charisma which, in its turn, enables him to bypass traditional representation mechanisms and empowers him to take illiberal measures — such as immunity laws preventing senior political figures from being taken to court on corruption charges — whilst enjoying continuous voter support.

The *Lega Nord* represents a third type of populism that Taguieff (2003, pp. 128-129) defines as protest populism, which began as a fiscal protest to evolve toward a chauvinistic, Islamophobic identity/cultural based protest. Both *Forza Italia* and the *Lega Nord* act within the framework of demo-

cratic politics, whilst rejecting its rules of etiquette and *modus operandi*. Contrary to the author's claim, it is the issue of immigration, more than Europeanization that triggers the illiberal discourse of these two new populist parties. The author argues that European integration has tamed Bossi's right-wing populism while highlighting Fini's nationalism (p. 247). The reality shows us exactly the opposite: Bossi is still one of the few Italian politicians who openly criticizes the European Union, demanding the withdrawal of Italy from the Euro Zone, advocating a "sovereign" monetary and fiscal policy, and opposing the implementation of the European arrest warrant in the name of *Padania's* territorial integrity. Fini, by contrast, has completely abandoned any nationalistic opposition to Europe and in that regard the *Alleanza Nazionale* has interiorized this political stance.

To conclude, the author's claim that Europeanization, as "a variant of globalization" (p. 36), is eroding the social solidarity and norms of reciprocity and trust upon which nation-states have been based, paving the way for a new era of populism, requires further theoretical elaboration and empirical support. Although *Illiberal Politics in Neoliberal Times* does not seem to offer a sound explanation for the rise of populism within the context of European integration, it is still a very interesting book to read, if only to understand the historical trajectory of the French *Front National*.

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Diogo Ramada Curto (dir.) **Estudos de Sociologia da Leitura em Portugal no Século XX**, Lisboa, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian/Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (MCT), 2006, 1036 páginas.

Categoria central em tantos discursos políticos e pedagógicos e, nessa medida, objecto repetido de medidas concretas (aos mais diversos níveis) com vista à sua modelação individual e social; designação sintética de práticas tão díspares, da fruição artística ao investimento educativo, da difusão colectiva de determinado texto à sua exploração individual; símbolo cultural da liberdade de pensamento embora também veículo fundamental da codificação e ordenação de comportamentos, a *leitura*, não obstante incontáveis valências, começa quase sempre por se nos impor como evidência. Em Portugal, como noutros locais, é na sombra do seu contrário — a não-leitura — que se projectam os contornos que socialmente melhor a