The Global Populism Database v2.1

Codebook

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Note for Version 2.1
This version adds to previous versions by including speeches from Israeli prime ministers (1977-2022) and new Latin American presidents (2021-2023). Terms in the v2 dataset which have finished since 2022 (when v2 was published) have been updated to reflect their end. Also, uniform rules for classifying the “yearbegin” and “yearend” variables for each term have been implemented to ensure consistency within the dataset. To make analysis at the leader-term level simpler, this updated dataset is also provided in wide format. Lastly, we have begun including the rubrics for each speech, starting with the newest additions in this version. Subsequent releases of the GPD will provide more rubrics from past versions.

To receive training on coding populism, visit https://populism.byu.edu/training

Description

Starting in 2006, we began creating a dataset of populist discourse for political leaders using textual analysis of political speeches. The initial effort (Hawkins 2009) covered contemporary and historical Latin American presidents plus a few presidents and prime ministers from other regions. Since then, the database has been expanded several times to include more countries and time periods. After efforts in 2018-2019 as part of The New Populism project at The Guardian, we rolled out a combined version of our dataset called the *Global Populism Database*.[1] As more speeches have been analysed, updates have been made to the Database, culminating in this version (2.1).

The Global Populism Database (hereafter, GPD) applies a technique known as holistic grading which was designed by educational psychologists to measure diffuse, latent aspects of texts such as tone, style, and quality of argument. The technique, originally used to grade essays in the College Board AP exams, has coders apply an integer grade scale and a rubric to identify rough attributes of texts at each grade. Coders are then trained by repeated exposure to anchor texts, or texts that benchmark scores in the rubric (White 1985; Sudweeks, Reeve, and Bradshaw 2004).

In our rubric, texts are initially assigned an integer score between 0 and 2, listed below with their descriptions. Coders then use a tenths-place decimal scale (0.1, 0.2, etc.) to provide a finer, more precise grade, in which 0.5 rounds to a 1 and 1.5 rounds to a 2. . Listed below are the broad classifications of the three ordinal score categories.

> 2 A speech in this category is extremely populist and comes very close to the ideal populist discourse. Specifically, the speech expresses all or nearly all of the elements of ideal populist discourse, and has few elements that would be considered non-populist.
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> 1 A speech in this category includes strong, clearly populist elements but either does not use them consistently or tempers them by including non-populist elements. Thus, the discourse may have a romanticized notion of the people and the idea of a unified popular will (indeed, it must in order to be considered populist), but it avoids bellicose language or references to cosmic proportions or any particular enemy.
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> 0 A speech in this category uses few if any populist elements. Note that even if a speech expresses a Manichean worldview, it is not considered populist if it lacks some notion of a popular will.

The sample of texts is a quota sample consisting of four speeches for each term in office: a campaign speech (usually the closing or announcement speech), a ribbon-cutting speech (marking a commemorative event with a small, domestic audience), an international speech (given before an audience of foreign nationals outside the country), and a famous speech

[1] The bulk of data collection projects over the years were funded by Brigham Young University, Universidad Diego Portales, The Guardian Foundation, and the Comparative Populism Project at Central European University. For v2.1, we are grateful for the excellent research assistance of Ethan Johnson. We are grateful for his assistance but emphasize that the resulting measures and any errors in them are our own.

(one widely circulated that represents the leader at his or her best). Where many speeches are available, we rely on the most recent speech with at least 1,000 words (extremely short speeches are difficult to code).[2] Due to the occasional inability to locate adequate speeches, certain terms have only two or three coded speeches.

In our technique, each text is read and coded in its original language; whenever possible, each text is coded by at least two individuals in order to ensure intercoder reliability.[3] Coders do not share their work with each other until it is complete. Discrepancies of .5 or greater are subjected to a reconciliation session in which coders can adjust their scores if they demonstrate an error in coding, but otherwise differing scores are retained and averaged for a final score on each document. The four scores are then averaged (unweighted) to provide a single score for each leader.

The GPD version 2.1 has a total of 1,388 speeches coded, with a total of 2,64 grades assigned. For the 1,175 speeches graded by at least two coders, Krippendorff's alpha (interval-level) is 0.835, indicating high reliability. This means that we have confidence in the scores assigned by a single coder when a second was not available.

The dataset is disaggregated at the coder level, containing every single score given to each speech by each coder who evaluated it. The unit of observation is the speech-coder. The unit of analysis is the leader-term, meaning that four speeches are found for each president or prime ministers' term (say, four speeches for Obama I and another four for Obama II).

Full text of speeches

Finally, there is an accompanying folder with the full text of all speeches for which there is a text available. These are 1,305 in total. For the remaining 83 speeches, the texts are not available because of technical reasons, for instance when the speeches were coded from video or audio for which there is no transcription.

Some of the full texts were obtained with automatic speech recognition, using the YouTube automatic caption function, which has been shown to produce reliable transcriptions for quantitative text analysis models that rely on bag of words applications.[4] Moreover, a few of the text files were generated from image pdf scans through automatic optical character recognition (OCR), using the algorithm embedded in Google Docs.

All speeches are provided in a .txt format.

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[2] Consistent with previous findings (Hawkins 2009, Hawkins and Castanho Silva 2018), in the GPD campaign speeches seem to be the most populist, with an average score of 0.58, followed by famous (0.40), ribbon-cutting (0.19) and international (0.18).

[3] While we try to have two coders read and grade each speech, this is not always possible due to funding constraints or the lack of additional native speakers of the language; thus, in some cases there is only one coder. Individual coders still meet with the project coordinators to discuss the scores they assign.

[4] Proksch, Sven-Oliver, Christopher Wratil, and Jens Wäckerle. "Testing the Validity of Automatic Speech Recognition for Political Text Analysis." *Political Analysis* 27, no. 3 (2019): 339–59. doi:10.1017/pan.2018.62.

List of variables

Common

country

leader - name of president or prime minister;

party - party or political group to which the leader is affiliated;

lr - A categorical indicator with -1 = left; 0 = center; 1 = right. Our default indicator is the left-right indicator (dw) from the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (DALP, Kitschelt 2013), with party averages split into three categories: left if the party is at least 0.5 standard deviation below the unweighted mean of the dataset, right if it is at least 0.5 standard deviation above the mean, and centre if the party is in-between 0.25 standard deviation above and 0.25 standard deviation below the mean. For borderline cases (parties coded between 0.25 standard deviation and 0.5 standard deviation either side of the mean), we adjudicate using either the Chapel Hill Expert Survey for European Parties (Bakker et al. 2015) or the Political Representation, Parties, and Presidents Survey for Latin America (PREPPS) for Latin America (Wiesehomeier et al. 2019). For a small number of observations not included in any of these datasets, our coding relies on Variety of Democracy's V-Party Dataset (Lindberg et al. 2022). Because V-Party has no single variable for ideological placement, we combine the variables for economic ideological placement (v2pariglef) and support for LGBT social equality (v2palgbt);

president – binary: 1 if the leader is a president, 0 if a prime minister;

term - leader's term in office, ordinal;

startofterm - date of start of respective term;

yearbegin - year of beginning of term. Terms beginning in November or December are labelled as the following year;

endofterm - date of end of respective term;

yearend - year of ending of respective term. Terms ending in January or February are labelled as the preceding year;

wb_region - World Bank global region classification;

region - authors' own classification, includes the following options: North America, Latin American & Caribbean, Western Europe, Central & Eastern Europe, Middle East & North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, and East Asia & Pacific;

totalaverage - average populism grade for that leader-term; Arithmetic mean for all speeches by all coders for that leader-term;

Wide Format Only

campaign_file - name of the .txt file of the campaign speech (if available), which can be found in the “Speeches” folder;

campaign_# - Individual rubric score given by a single coder for the campaign speech; no score is denoted by “NA”;

campaign_average - average populism grade of the campaign speech for that leader-term. Arithmetic average across all coders for that speech;

famous_file - name of the .txt file of the famous speech (if available), which can be found in the “Speeches” folder;

famous_# - Individual rubric score given by a single coder for the famous speech; no score is denoted by “NA”;

famous_average - average populism grade of the famous speech for that leader-term. Arithmetic average across all coders for that speech;

international_file - name of the .txt file of the international speech (if available), which can be found in the “Speeches” folder;

international_# - Individual rubric score given by a single coder for the international speech; no score is denoted by “NA”;

international_average - average populism grade of the international speech for that leader-term. Arithmetic average across all coders for that speech;

ribbon_file - name of the .txt file of the ribbon-cutting speech (if available), which can be found in the “Speeches” folder;

ribbon_# - Individual rubric score given by a single coder for the ribbon-cutting speech; no score is denoted by “NA”;

ribbon_average - average populism grade of the ribbon-cutting speech for that leader-term. Arithmetic average across all coders for that speech.

Long Format Only

speechtype - type of speech: international, campaign, ribbon-cutting, famous;

speechnum - number of that speech for that leader-term;

codernum - coder identifier for that speech-leader;

rubricgrade - grade of that speech by that coder on the 0-2 populism scale;

averagerubric - average populism grade for that speech. Arithmetic average across all coders for that speech.