

# Review of: "Unraveling Populism: Senator Fraser Anning and the Australian Political Landscape"

Srikrishna Ayyangar<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Azusa Pacific University

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This article provides a description of the emergence of a right-wing politician in Australia, akin to the rise of Pauline Hanson, as a populist figure inspired by and akin to the rise of Pauline Hanson. The article itself is well-written with eloquent language and such. It can also be an interesting case because very little of Australian politics is represented in comparative literature. Populism in Asia is also perhaps as pervasive now as it is in Europe and the Americas, and it is important that we are able to provide comparative insights that can critically contribute to contemporary theoretical frameworks. But pervasiveness also risks conceptual stretching, and it is in that vein of caution that I make some comments below on the article.

1. The article clearly relies on his own work, and there are no other references! This is very strange and, to any scholar, reviewer, and potential reader, a big flag. It is normal practice to cite and provide references so that one gets a sense of what kind of contribution this scholarship aims at making.

2. The author argues that a mix of nativism and entrepreneurialism (anti-statism) comprises the populism of Manning that thrusts him into the national political arena. It is important to distinguish populism from ideology. I would think that populism is a pre-ideological sort of idea that rests on the foundations of establishing a connection with the people, either through ideational 'empty signifiers' or through the strategic appeal of a politician. Such a connection appeals to a latent populist attitude among the people. Once the connection is established, the programmatic content follows subsequently, providing a deepening of the connection. I say this because the author seems to conflate the ideology with the populist connection. To understand the populist, it is important to first establish how the connection was made, and then extend the argument by identifying the ideological signifiers that legitimate the connection. Ideological conviction by itself is a much larger idea that need not lend itself to a populist connection, as such convictions can provide voter linkages either programmatically or as clientelist connections as well.

3. Some understanding of contemporary populist theory and which approach the author thinks fits with the case may be important to consider. What this is a case of is important to explain. Merely leaving it as yet another instance of right-wing populism is of little scholarly value unless the identification of a politician as such a type is consequential to something else.

