

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

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This paper demonstrates the basic ideological and discursive/stylistic orientations of a particular Australian politician, Fraser Anning, and argues that he is a populist and an economic nationalist. Leaving aside the association of Anning with populism for now - which is, as I will discuss below, highly controversial - I think the paper achieves to give a basic idea to the reader - even to someone like me who has no clue about Australian politics - about the position of Anning within the broader setting of Australian politics. Another achievement of the paper is highlighting the dilemmas of provocative political positions - like the one Anning embraced - in terms of electoral success: while such controversial and radical figures attract particular sectors of the electorate, they always push moderate voters away and deprive these politicians of the support of concrete majorities.

But from a theoretical point of view, the paper is far from being perfect. First, the paper does not speak well to the existing and ever-enlarging theoretical-conceptual literature on populism. The paper does not attempt to properly define populism, which always inevitably invites a theoretical-conceptual discussion. The readers of the text cannot really understand what the author does precisely think about populism. Does he think that it is an ideology, a rhetoric, a strategy, a style, or a particular set of policies? From the empirical evidence presented throughout the paper, I am inclined to think that it is hard to think of the figure of Anning as a populist from a perspective that proposes to understand populism as a (thin) ideology because, as far as I can understand from the evidence presented in the book, there is no sufficient evidence in Anning's discourse that demonstrates a kind of script that systematically juxtaposes "people" against the "elite." But the evidence in the text points out his "transgressive" and controversial style. Thus, Anning could be considered a populist due to his style. But when it comes to the ideology and policy positions he espoused, we should talk about a different phenomenon: Anning is a typical conservative-nationalist. We should not conflate populism with nationalism or conservatism. They may go hand in hand in some cases, but I do not think that it is the case in the figure of Anning.

I also think that the author does not properly discuss the relationship between populism and policy. This is another theoretical lacuna in the text which is certainly related to the general lack of conceptual clarity in the entirety of the text.

The paper is also very repetitive. For example, the author refers to Anning's controversial statement, including the expression "final solution," several times and reintroduces things he already highlighted frequently along the text. The text could have been much shorter and to the point.

It is also strange to see that the only reference in the text is the author's previous book on the very same topic. It seems

that this paper is one of the chapters of this book (this is why the author calls the paper “chapter” in the text), but when a chapter - or a combination of various parts of different chapters - of a book is published as a standalone article, it is not sufficient to cite only the book that contains all these parts and bits used in this standalone article. The author should have provided the reader with a full bibliography in this article too.