

Bibliographic note

BENSON, Sophie Elisabeth. *Populist Trends in Republican Presidential Nomination Acceptance Speeches*. Mater thesis. Charles University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Sociological Studies and Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism. Supervisor prof. Mgr. Anna Shavit, Ph.D.

Abstract

Populist rhetoric was quantified in all US Republican presidential nomination speeches between 1968 and 2020 utilizing Paul Taggart's model of Populism as an index to discern the viability of populist rhetoric as an effective campaign strategy in light of the shrinking core demographics of the Republican Party. The data found underscored the 2013 Growth and Opportunity Project conducted by the Republican National Convention (RNC) that the core demographics of the RNC were shrinking in electoral relevance and that the RNC was not persuasive with demographics that existed outside of their core constituency. This research showed that while populism is an everpresent phenomenon in RNC campaign rhetoric it is not sufficient in compensating for the depleting electoral strength that once guaranteed definitive electoral victories. Additionally, neither the degree of populism recorded in the speech nor in the audience response thereto correlates to the electoral outcomes. While populism is a powerful rhetorical tool it remains too volatile and unpredictable, making it a poor choice of campaign strategy. In effect, this index is valuable as a retrospective tool to study the intricacies of the national mood at the time of the election, but it is not a predictive tool regarding electoral outcomes.

Keywords

Populism, Campaign Rhetoric, Republican, US Politics, Presidential Campaigns, US Elections

Klíčová slova

Populismus, předvolební rétorika, Republikáni, politika, USA, prezidentské kampaně, Volby v USA

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