

When the leader is female: Understanding Populist Representation

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Populist Representation is Resilient

- It can be as effective that programmatic representation.

... But why?

Why do people choose to grant power to these leaders and not others?

- “The conventional view of representation suggests that the represented come before the representatives. (...) But this view is not the only plausible one in the political domain, where the principals are made up of collective bodies. The principal is represented, or even exists, only because someone provides representation by claiming to speak on their behalf.”
- “Representation manifests itself, first of all, as a performative act.” (Mastropalo 2017: 61)

Representation is Created through Verbal and Visual Discourse

1. Verbal: a **narrative *myth*** with a ***hero*** and a ***villain, damage and redemption.***

Embodied

2. Visual: the ***body of the leader.***

Populist Body:

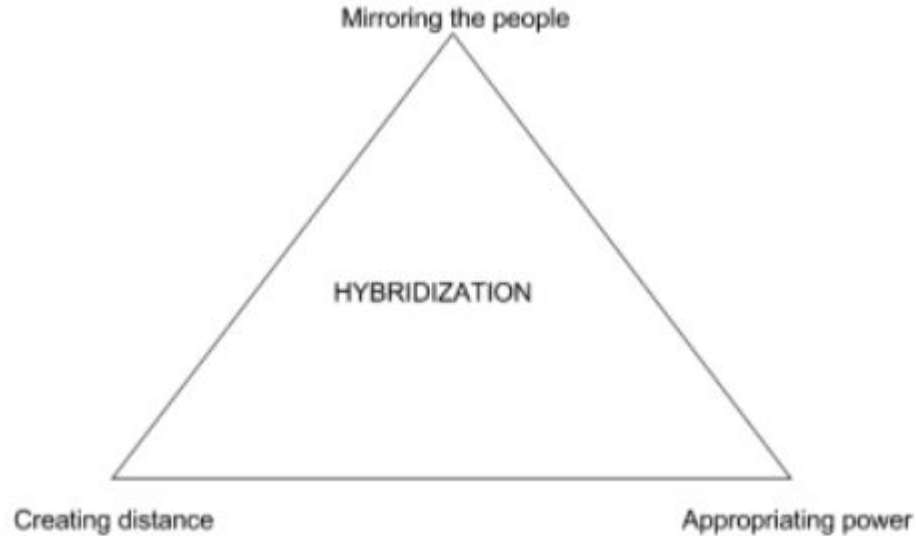
Synecdochal Representation

Populist linkage: the **'bodily synecdoche'**: the leader's body is the part that 'makes present' the whole (the people).

Yet this act of 'making present' is always incomplete.

It is situational and context-dependent.

The Triad of Synecdochal Representation





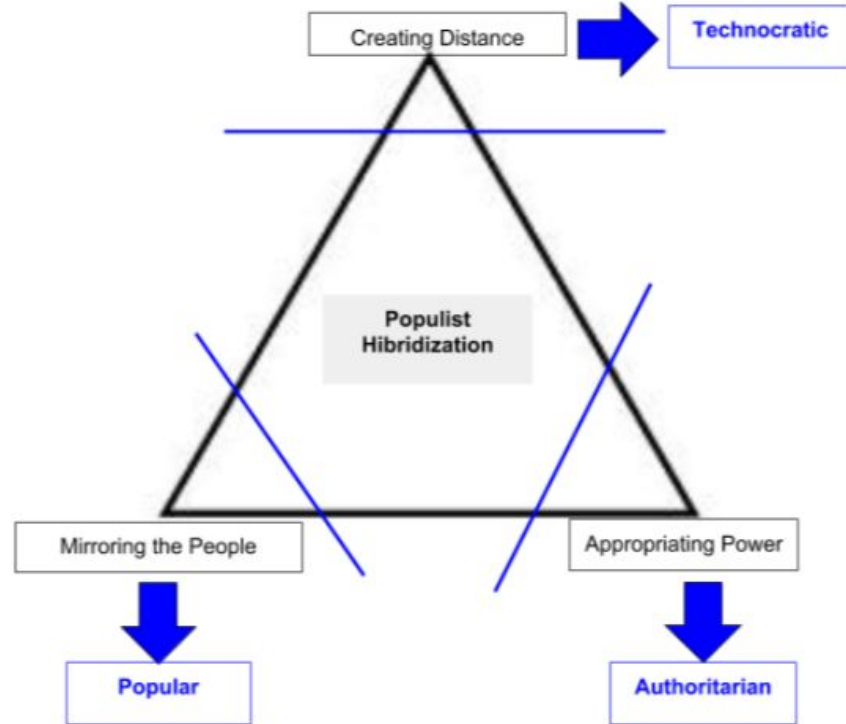
The body of the leader performs:

- Closeness and distance.
- Belonging to and transcending.
- Power and humbleness.
- The “high” and the “low”

... through
hybridization



The “others” of
populist
representation:
technocratic
and popular



The 'Strongman' Model of the Populist Politician



Carlos Menem



Hugo Chávez



Donald Trump

“Flaunting the low” (Ostiguy 2017)

Performing Technocracy

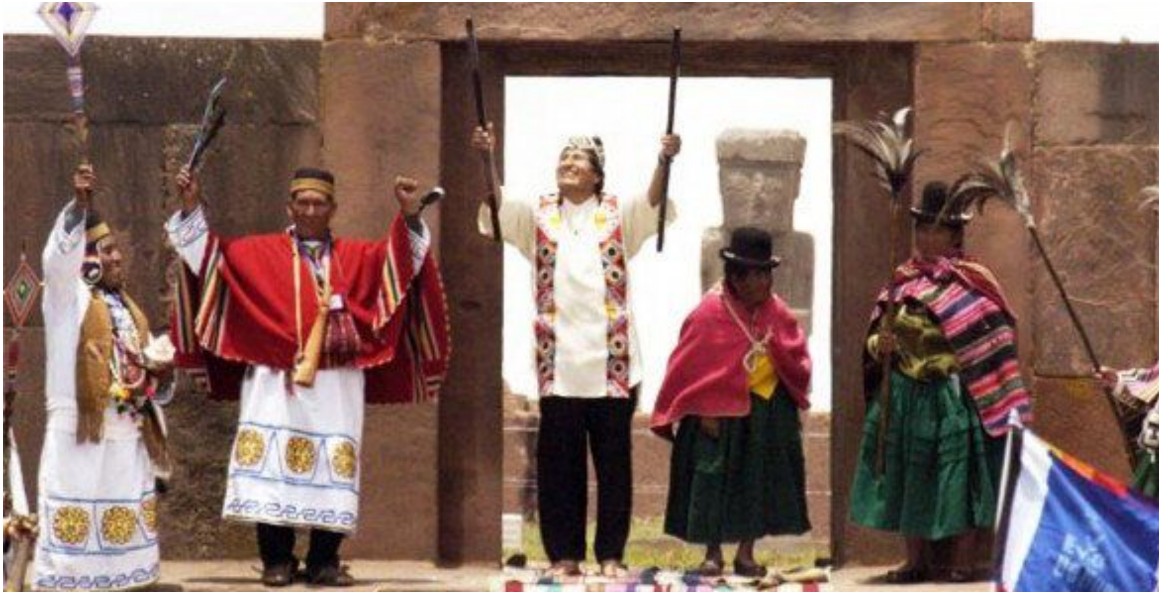


Alejandro Toledo -
Perú



Michelle Bachelet -
Chile

Evo Morales



Hybridizing the low and the high

Cristina Fernández de Kirchner



Claiming the “high”

Conclusions

- The creation of populist representation is achieved through an **active work of synecdochal hybridization.**
- **Hybridization is always local, situated, contextual, and malleable.**
- **Ideology** and **policy preferences** are embedded in the active choice of what symbols to display.
- Populist representation is mythical: it is based on a *narrative* with a hero, a villain and **a struggle for redemption.**