



### Paradoxes of Populism

Troubles of the West and Nationalism's Second Coming

By *Ulf Hedetoft*

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### A study of the rising popularity of populism and the misconceptions surrounding it

Populism may come across as little more than an extreme form of national belonging—nationalism run wild so to speak—a case for national psychologists or a kind of collective pathology. However, as so often, appearances are deceptive. “Paradoxes of Populism” argues that the far-from-random similarities with ordinary manifestations of nationalism should be approached not as a venture into the classical structures of nation-states and identities, but as a disruptive and destabilizing consequence of some of the constituent elements of sovereign nation-states becoming eroded and prised apart by contextual global processes and their agents. Hence, populism in all its varieties—and there are many, as the book demonstrates—is riddled with even more paradoxes and inconsistencies than mainstream nationalism itself—confusing causes and appearances, realities and fantasies, and turning the world inside out. The age of populism is truly the Second Coming of nationalism, and it has come with a vengeance. Its advent, however, happens in the background of real problems for millions of ordinary people in liberal-democratic states. This book sets out to engage with these real-world challenges as well as their political and cultural interpretations in the populist fantasia.

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