

**Abstract**

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**The Influence of Romanian Populism  
on the Political and Media  
Landscape. An Electoral History  
and Discourse Analysis (1990–2012)**

All major post-communist Romanian political populists were media-savvy, one-man-show personalities that used media as a vector of image to promote their disruptive anti-Establishment message. Romanian political populism always founded its echo chamber in media populism, forming a co-dependent symbiotic relationship. Moreover, if their electoral fortunes declined and their influence waned after their initial success, in an interesting twist, their lasting contribution was rather on the media landscape which in turn continues to shape mainstream political parties until present-day, thus forming an unseen circuit of influence.

Generally, unlike other Eastern European countries, Romanian political populists don't do so well in elections, however, they win rating points, as their real battleground and catapult is the media, namely TV channels. Its through media that they articulate and spread out their ideological program, and their electoral platform, relying not so much on their parties, as on themselves, active as a sort of locomotive for the latter, eventually losing the political fight, but they winning the

meta-political one, as they spread their ideas to a society towards which mainstream parties need to re-calibrate their message.

This presentation aims to explain the particularities of Romanian populist discourse, from 1990 to 2012, its form of manifestation and electoral history, what made the success and downfall of its promoters, what are its legacy for the current political landscape and how it exists today.