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**Article — Published Version**

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Global Constitutionalism

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*Suggested Citation:* Koch, Cédric M. (2021) : Varieties of populism and the challenges to Global Constitutionalism: Dangers promises and implications, Global Constitutionalism, ISSN 2045-3825, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Vol. 10, Iss. 3, pp. 400-438, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2045381719000455>

This Version is available at:  
<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/218882>

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# Varieties of Populism and the challenges to Global Constitutionalism: Dangers, Promises and Implications

Cédric M. Koch

## **Annex A: Cosmopolitan Neoliberal Populism: Peru's Alberto Fujimori**

Fujimori portrayed the 'elite' political establishment in Peru as morally corrupted and unfit for governing, acting in favour of 'personal elevation' and at the service of 'blind ideology' rather than advancing 'concrete solutions to the concrete problems of the people' (Fujimori, 1990: 1–2). He called for a 'moral renewal in the political leadership of our homeland' to curb 'corruption which encroached on the state and from there extends to society as a whole', undermining 'credibility of institutions' and leading to 'great fortunes [being] amassed under the protection of power' (ibid.: 2). Exploiting their association with the economic crisis of hyperinflation raging since 1988, leftist politicians were accused of ineffectiveness and corruption: Fujimori railed against the '*partidocracia*' and its 'irresponsible squandering of abundant and valuable material resources in external markets' and negative effects of 'old distortions like economic concertation [as well as] the way that the state intervenes in the economy' (ibid.: 3). The 'immense deficits that the outgoing government has been accumulating' were accused of worsening the 'disastrous epidemic' of inflation and berated as 'easy exit [...] policies of momentary expansion of incomes and consumption, without support in productivity and investment' (ibid.: 5-6). Their clientelist policies and support of organised labour was displayed as evidence of favouritism to insiders of the formal economy, 'sowing a climate of high speculation in which the most benefited are the big economic powers and those losing most are the large dispossessed masses' (ibid.: 5).

In opposition to this political class, Fujimori portrayed himself as an outsider, emphasising his disconnectedness from the identified elites, claiming instead 'the humility of just another Peruvian, [committed to] being "a president like you"' (Fujimori, 1990: 1). He drew on his Japanese heritage to align closer with the indigenous and '*mestizo*' population and distance himself from the richer and Europeanised coastal parts of society, appealing to 'the people of Peru' as the 'inhabitants of our pueblos jóvenes [informal settlements], the peasants of our coast, mountains and jungle, the popular businessmen which with sense of nationalism have supported Peru, as well as an important sector of progressive professionals loving the country' to whose collective destiny he claimed to be 'committed before any subaltern or dominant interests' (ibid.). Similarly, he emphasised his image as a self-made man, officially referring to himself as 'Engineer Alberto Fujimori', lauding 'work-based culture' and 'honesty as the norm of life [which] was the currency of the ancient Peruvian civilisation', claiming to represent a 'true and objectively honest government' (ibid.: 1-3).

In terms of political ideology, he emphasised the political inclusion of his own political base, 'the impoverished people who cannot continue being the silent witness of illicit enrichment of those who

turned the state into an object of personal or group looting' (Fujimori, 1990: 2). For instance, he declared that 'one of the most important tasks will be the authentic recognition, guarantee and defence of territorial, political, cultural, economic and human rights of the aboriginal peoples of the Amazon' (ibid.: 7). More broadly, he proclaimed 'in the spirit of full participation which inspires us' to wish to 'channel popular concern into government decisions', proposing a 'law of popular participation to integrate public opinion on the formation of policies and norms of the central government' (ibid.:4). Fujimori also claimed to advocate women's and children's rights, promising to 'take concrete actions in [women's] favour that seek to establish equal terms with men' as well as ratifying the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (ibid.: 9). More broadly, he portrayed 'human rights policy the basis of all our government action' and proposed a national commission for human rights to ensure adherence to them (ibid.: 10).

Additionally, he advocated for adhering politically to the demands of international actors such as financial markets, the World Bank and the IMF, eschewed by the previous socialist governments for meddling in Peruvian affairs (Weyland, 1996). He promised to 'insert Peru into the international financial community' and 'restore relations with international organisations in the financial, banking and trade areas [...] in an environment in which the local and foreign investors will have equal opportunities in accordance with international legal principles' (Fujimori, 1990: 4).

As regards economic ideology, he advanced a neo-liberal vision: Fujimori's campaign slogan of 'honesty, technology, and work' was used to evoke hopes in a 'new work culture [which] will create the necessary conditions for a better market order, the equitable distribution of wealth and, finally, a true social market economy' by relying 'only on the creative work of the Peruvian man' (Fujimori, 1990: 3). Further, he advocated creating 'an environment that encourages foreign investment in Peru' (Fujimori, 1990: 4), demanding an end to 'excessive bureaucratisation' in public administration allegedly limiting 'management capacity and productivity' (ibid.: 7). Additionally, Fujimori proposed 'restructuring' state companies 'with the goal of increasing efficiency and profitability', instead of 'parasitic bureaucratism and [...] production encouraged exclusively for political purposes' (ibid.:5) while offering support to more entrepreneurial 'micro, small and medium companies [...] as] the axis of a social economic and development strategy' (ibid.: 6).

In sum, Fujimori thus can serve as an illustrative case of neoliberal cosmopolitan populism. He antagonised the coastal elites of Peru and left-leaning economic policies for allegedly causing the vast inflationary crisis devouring productivity gains of honest, hard-working Peruvians marginalised in the informal economy. Beyond freeing the 'pueblo' in neoliberal ways from overburdening state intervention and regulation and increasing the participation of disadvantaged groups in society and policymaking, he also encouraged political integration beyond the state, courting foreign investments and international institutions alike.

### **Fujimori's challenge to Global Constitutionalism (GC)**

Cosmopolitan populists like Fujimori complement their anti-elitism with an emphasis on a transnational notion of 'the people'. Accordingly, his challenge did not discursively undermine liberal principles of global constitutionalism but sought to strengthen transnational political rights and rules-based multilateralism. As such, Fujimori advocated in favour of international human and investor rights as well as for respecting the authority of institutions guarding the global financial and monetary order.

Notably, such populism contests in favour of quite a distinct normative vision of global constitutionalism: neoliberal cosmopolitans mainly seek to enshrine market principles and individual rights beyond the state, in contrast to neo-socialist cosmopolitan versions which favour binding politics through democratic rules of popular sovereignty at the international level. In contrast to contemporary cosmopolitan populism of DiEM25, neoliberal versions à la Fujimori thus supported mainly the liberal pillars of GC, without calling for more majoritarian decision-making beyond the state.

Historically, these neoliberal cosmopolitan types were prominent mainly in the context of the 1990s and are rarely found outside of developing countries with presidential systems and experience of inflationary crises associated with left nationalist economics (Weyland, 1996). However, neoliberal cosmopolitan populist appeals have been identified as more influential in Anglo-American cultural contexts where limited government and individual (economic) freedom is more highly prized (Bonikowski & Gidron, 2015; Laycock, 2005; Moffitt, 2017; Sawyer & Laycock, 2009).

In contrast, this type appears rare in established liberal democracies where redistributive welfare state politics are broadly popular. Fittingly, however, Silvio Berlusconi's challenge in 1990s Italy may exemplify a partly cosmopolitan neo-liberal challenge. In opposition to regular inflationary pressure associated with left-leaning fiscal policy and overwhelming clientelism in corruption-ridden Italian politics, his Forza Italia party presented a neoliberal and partly cosmopolitan message of deregulation and fiscal austerity to integrate with the Eurozone and modernise the country in line with (neo-) liberal principles of market integration and rules-based multilateralism (Zaslove, 2008: 327–328). Some of the historical conditions thus aligned with those in the Peruvian case to render a neoliberal and partly cosmopolitan challenge electorally successful. At the same time, however, Berlusconi campaigned together with the anti-immigrant Northern League (known as Lega today) and the extreme-right National Alliance and as such clearly did not present a fully transnationally inclusionary vision in line with principles of international human rights (Donovan, 2001).

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