

## **Abstract**

For many years, the study of populism has been held back by the complex problem of framing a clear methodological schema. Some analysts have offered definitions or listed essential characteristics of populism, and others have found only dubious connections and weak similarities between different populist practices. Attempts to offer a general characterization of populism have been contentious. According to Margaret Canovan, the definitions formed ‘suggest affinities with ideological movements like socialism, liberalism or nationalism. But although all these other “isms” range over widely varied phenomenon, each gains a degree of coherence to identify themselves by the name, distinctive principles and policies’. However, ‘populism does not fit this pattern’.

This research aims to investigate the misinterpretation and misunderstanding of populism in Thailand by analyzing and comparing with the evidences and experiences of populism in Latin America. It also studies the relations between populism and democracy, which was understanding controversially among Thai scholars and policy-makers such as the then Deputy Prime Minister M.R. Pridiyathorn Devakula once stated that: “*The end of democracy is populism*”. Finally, the research tries to diagnose the possibility that populism can support and get along with democracy in the society.

**Keywords:** Populism, Democracy, Thailand, Latin America