



**Your on the
Street Reporter**



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Name Calling I: Populism and Populist

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January 30, 2021

From *Oxford Languages*, here is a definition of *populism*: “Relating to or characteristic of a political approach that strives to appeal to ordinary people who feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elite groups.”

Oxford Languages also defines a *populist* as: “A person, especially a politician, who strives to appeal to ordinary people who feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elite groups.

An Elitist with Populist Proclamations

This article avoids the controversy surrounding the pros and cons of Donald Trump’s presidency. Instead, we discuss the words populism and populist as stated above as they pertain to the man.

The word *elite* is used in these definitions. I surfed the Internet and retrieved several more definitions and explanations of populism and populist. The word elite or a similar word is included in most of them.

If there is a man who is in the elite status of America, it is Donald Trump. He is immensely wealthy, owns a Boeing 747 airplane with non-populist seating (Figure 1). He names skyscrapers after himself, and forgoes taxis for his private collection of vehicles when not using presidential cars (Figure 2).

Many people think of Mr. Trump as a populist, and he promotes himself as such. To his credit, he has supported the common citizen, the ordinary person, in many of his programs. As examples: reviving unions, trying to rescue the steel industry, curtailing illegal immigration to save blue collar jobs---to name three.

Critics claim his populist oratory is self-serving with much of it leading to the benefit of the “elites,” such as reviving a moribund steel industry to preserve the jobs of highly paid executives. Millions of citizens believe otherwise.

I believe Donald Trump is an elitist and has been an elitist all his life. For reasons only Trump can know, he espouses many populist sentiments. Perhaps he believes in them, perhaps not, but anyone (a Biden, Trump, whoever) spouting forth populism while residing in the upper ten percent in wealth of America’s citizenry is confusing to the thoughtful citizen.²

Under most circumstances it just does not happen. To do so places the person in contradictory roles about how that person lives his/her life. It can be done, as Bill/Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett demonstrate.

However, these individuals became populists only *after* fighting their way into the ranks of the elite. It is no fault of these Americans---Buffett, the Gates---to have accomplished what they did in their careers. It’s the American way and justly admired by Americans.

Nonetheless, for grinding up the ladders of life, the idea of an *elite populist* is a contradiction. Unfortunately, sizeable segments of American citizens ignore this reality by lauding, even adulating, Trump’s populism. They might want to consider that the man has spent

¹ Unless noted otherwise, photos are courtesy of Google. Photo on cover is courtesy of <https://www.gettyimages.com/photos/populist?family=editorial&phrase=populist&sort=mostpopular>.

² Various examinations of Biden’s tax returns conclude he has a net worth of approximately \$9 million. Other reports state a net worth of \$10 million places a family into the top 1 percent of wealth.

his entire adult life, not as a populist, but as a real estate mogul. But they seem not to care that Trump's real estate ventures were rife with his dissing the common worker and blue-collar contractors.

Not once in his life did Trump have a populist spoon in his mouth. The spoon was silver.

That fact is not the man's fault, but to put on populist facades while maintaining and expanding his non-populist (even anti-populist) empire should be a worry to all Americans, populists and real estate moguls alike.



Figure 1. Mode of travel: Elitist or Populist?



Figure 2. Residence and Automobile³: Elitist or Populist?

³ “Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud: This Rolls-Royce is believed to be one of the first cars owned by Trump and remains to this day a personal favourite for him. More recently, he's been seen driving about in an up-to-date Phantom (writer's note: written before becoming the President). A Silver Cloud's value in today's classic car market stands anywhere between GBP20,000-90,000, depending on its condition and history. (Image: Carkeys)” Personally, this writer is suspicious of a man calling himself a populist who wears white shoes and a white sports jacket draped over his shoulders. Looks pretty elite to me, not to mention the Rolls-Royce.

Photo and quote is from: <https://www.financialexpress.com/auto/gallery/donald-trump-car-collection-motorcycle-made-from-gold-orange-county-choppers-lamborghini-rolls-royce-mercedes-benz-tesla-cadillac-maybach/photos/863022/3/>.