

Committee: SPECON (Special Conference on The Rise of Populism)

Issue: Populism as a response to globalization

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INTRODUCTION

During the 21st century globalization is at its peak and it only seems that it keeps getting stronger. The UN is proof that the international community can communicate better than ever. Additionally, a stark global market and multinational companies have been formed with technological discoveries happening regularly. All of these constitute outcomes of globalization, confirming the big impact the movement has already had on our lives.

While this phenomenon is taking place, we are also witnessing many populist parties gaining a lot of attention and occasionally power. In recent times, this has taken place in a number of countries from the Netherlands, where an anti-Muslim party won the second-largest number of seats in parliament in the latest elections, and France, where Marine Le Pen's National Front is stronger than ever before, to the UK and the Brexit outcome, the US where Donald Trump was elected President, using xenophobic rhetoric, claiming to "drain the swamp" and most recently Germany, where the right-wing populist AfD got elected into the Bundestag for the first time.

This sudden rise in populism is most likely to have an effect. Although it has not actually gained power in many countries, such as the Netherlands and France, this does not mean that the parties might not continue to grow and eventually, seize power. If that were to happen, the results would affect each and every one of us. These populist parties generally tend to follow protectionist policies, wanting to seclude their country and its people from the global community, arguing for stronger nationalism. Additionally, populist parties often cultivate dissatisfaction and frustration towards the "elite", ultimately causing more divide to the already troubled general public, hatred towards anything different, opposition to globalization, and sustaining racism.

What we are going to study in this guide is how the two movements are connected to each other. Globalization comes with quite a few drawbacks, especially when enforced in a sloppy way. These difficulties often endanger the social and financial security of the lower and

middle class of countries, making them feel that they are being treated unjustly, and in danger. This is when populist parties come in, by promising that they have solutions to these problems. Desperate voters support them, in order to express their frustration, or to just try something new. The bad economic climate of recent years and waves of immigration, often assumed to be linked to globalization, have given populists a solid platform, allowing them to spread fear, dismay and distrust and gain power.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Populism

The exact definition given by the Oxford Dictionary is that populism is “a political approach that strives to appeal to ordinary people who feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elite groups.”¹ It thus represents the urge to get rid of the establishment and/or the current government and policies in favor of one more aligned with the desires of the public. In doing so, populism and its rhetoric can be either right or left wing, with the former focusing on immigration, protectionism, nationalism and anti-globalization, and the latter focusing on social justice, as well as problems arising from capitalism and globalization.

Cas Mudde, a professor at the University of Georgia, has called it “a “thin” ideology that pits a “pure” people against corrupt elite”.² This ideology usually sides with other ideologies in order to support its causes, like nationalism, socialism, or even racism.

Whilst populism has taken on different forms since the Roman times, in recent times it can be traced back to the People’s Party in the US in the 1880s-1890s, which focused on working towards the benefit of the people, and especially the agricultural sector, siding with labor unions and opposing the emerging capitalism.

Globalization

According to the IMF, globalization refers to “the increasing integration of economies around the world, particularly through the movement of goods, services, and capital across

¹ Source: “Populism.” Oxford Dictionary, Oxford University Press.

² Source: Mudde, Cas. “The Problem with Populism.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 17 Feb. 2015.

borders. The term sometimes also refers to the movement of people (labor) and knowledge (technology) across international borders".³

Especially due to technological progress during the last three decades, the wave of globalization has become stronger than ever, transforming the life of all of us. However, whether this phenomenon is beneficial is considered highly controversial and the matter is increasingly debated.

Protectionism

Protectionism refers to government policies, such as trade tariffs and quotas that favor domestic producers and businesses over foreign competitors, disrupting global trade and bilateral trade relations. Thus, protectionism, not necessarily economic, runs contrary to the principles of globalization. This technique is often used by populist leaders, in order to please the people momentarily, especially producers and businesses who feel valued and financially secure. However, protectionism entails long-term consequences, such as higher prices, restricted choice for consumers, fragile businesses that require state support, possible reduced economic growth, as well as political ramifications internationally.

Demagogue

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a demagogue as "a leader who makes use of popular prejudices and false claims and promises in order to gain power."⁴ This is exactly the person who usually leads a populist movement: a charismatic figure, able to pinpoint and use to his advantage all the common misconceptions that appeal to uninformed voters. Usually a demagogue tends to divide the nation, making false promises and capitalizing on the hope or fear of his people. What he wants is to become a leader the fastest way possible, using legal methods. That is why the populist movement is a tool often used by such people.

"Mob"

The technique of populism, when used by demagogues, usually requires pitting the general public towards a race against the elite, as we established before. The misinformed and sometimes just uninformed, "brainwashed" public tries to take the people in power down, serving the demagogue that they believe will best represent them and their interest.

³ Source: Di Giovanni, Julian I. "Issues Brief - Globalization: A Brief Overview." *International Monetary Fund*. International Monetary Fund, 8 May 2008. Web. 27 June 2017.

⁴ Source: "Demagogue." *Merriam-Webster*, Merriam-Webster.

We often refer to that public as a “mob”, because it becomes exactly that; a large, angry crowd, fanatical about its beliefs and difficult to change them.

Less Economically Developed Countries

By Less Economically Developed Countries, or LEDCs we refer to countries that score low on the development index, on the Human Development Index, and generally have a very weak economy or/and industrial infrastructure. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has categorized countries in to LEDCs and EDCs. Other institutions like the IMF have also attempted to categorize countries, but for this study guide we are going to use the list of the UNDP.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Globalization is considered a phenomenon that rapidly builds up, forcing people to adapt with it. Every year, especially after World War II, with the creation of the United Nations, the invention of the internet and other technological advances that proved to connect mankind easily and effectively, globalization is only becoming more powerful decade by decade.

However, the last decade has proved to be an exception. If we take a look at the latest results of most elections, we can see that the decisions of the people reflect a populist backlash against globalization, calling for ending support of the global platform and focusing on their own country. In the sections that follow we will see how many say that the two movements are considered “inversely proportional”.

The Effects of Globalization

Globalization has many positive traits. It takes advantage of modern technology and focuses on improving it. That way the world is easier to connect, people living in entirely different continents can communicate in a matter of seconds. It is extremely important that globalization encourages and indirectly “enforces” this communication. These connections further help in making transactions easier and thus, helps the global market to grow, making the national and global economy (arguably) healthier, more inclusive and thus more stable. Expanding the markets is also a huge benefit for LEDCs⁵, which also get the chance to have a bigger role in the worlds’ transactions. Also, since we have frequent communication and

⁵ Less Economically Developed Countries

interdependence between states, unions (like the EU and the UN) are formed, so that ultimately there are less wars and conflict.

However, these positive effects also entail certain drawbacks that often cause opposition to globalization. More specifically, globalization rests on the principles of mobility-whether labor or capital- and comparative advantage. The latter implies that each country should do what it does best and import the rest, so that ultimately everyone can gain. However, this process often comes to hurt the producers that are replaced by imports, the labor that can't relocate to find a better job, or the countries that fall behind due to sharp competition. Thus for many, globalization can "make the rich richer and the poor poorer" whether on a national level or a global level, causing a division between national elites and the low and middle class, as well as the global elite and the global middle class. This uneven situation creates the feeling of an establishment, and a subsequent frustration towards it. People begin to feel that globalization serves the richer, a "new world order", ignoring the benefits that they have gained whether nationally or globally (ex. World peace). This feeling has only further grown in the aftermath of the global financial crisis and the subsequent economic slowdown, that have intensified the effects of globalization. More specifically, the income gap between low, middle and upper class has been intensified in recent years, giving rise to left-wing populism calling for social justice, and opposition to capitalism and globalization.

As mentioned earlier, globalization runs on and enables mobility across nations, particularly labor mobility and the subsequent waves of immigration. This also gives rise to a number of arguments used by populists, mostly right-wing populists, against globalization. More specifically, a strong impression has emerged globally that due to globalization jobs are allocated to candidates that require less money, usually to countries overseas or poorer people that come from these countries and are willing to work for less, i.e. that "they (the aliens) are stealing our jobs". This leads to xenophobia and racism, and forms the idea that the core principle of globalization is wrong. This is then used by demagogues, right-wing populists to win the crowds, usually using hateful, nationalist and/or protectionist rhetoric against both immigrants and LEDCs.

Right wing populism as a response to globalization also stems from the fact that it allows people to move across borders, thus with different cultures entering every country along with the travelers. This is not something positive for nationalists that are afraid that

their ideas, values and traditions will be lost due to the multicultural societies that globalization is trying to form. They feel afraid for their heritage and try to protect it, often using violent ways.

However, not only nationalists are affected by immigrants and refugees entering their countries. Not all travelers are healthy, so local families also become anxious when they see new illnesses attacking their country's population, illnesses that are much harder to combat, because the public does not have the necessary antibodies. These are even more reasons that different social groups begin to dislike foreigners in their countries, which is what globalization is representing. They begin vilifying the movement as a whole, ignore the benefits and start searching for a drastic solution.

Factors that fuel populism

In order for a populist backlash to erupt, there are some key elements needed. Every time that populism has broken out there have been some factors that analysts believe are always present in the states' society and are necessary for a populist leader to emerge. These are:

- A rise in immigration
- Feeling of corruption
- Inequality.
- Loss of individual identity
- Lack of faith in international/regional organizations

A Rise in Immigration

Globalization is supporting immigrants moving freely around the world, disregarding borders as much as possible. Consequently the outcomes of the movement, such as the European Union, are actively advocating for this, with the Schengen and other treaties. These treaties encourage economic immigrants to move abroad, in a wealthier country, by making travelling as easy as possible. This leads to many immigrants from poorer countries or even LEDCs pouring into wealthier ones, while searching for a better future. As we mentioned earlier, this feeds the "they are stealing our jobs" mentality, that many citizens of the healthier countries have. This mentality is only further fueled by the weak economic performance of countries in recent years. Poorer, frustrated citizens of these "wealthier" nations believe this is the only way to justify in some way their dire economic situation.

On top of that, the conflict in Syria has led to many war refugees seeking help and asylum in European countries. This leads to even more people in need of jobs entering these “wealthy” countries, intensifying the mentality that we mentioned earlier even more.

Feeling of Corruption and Inequality

The current form of globalization can have the tendency of making the rich richer and the poor poorer, something that we demonstrated in the upper sections. That kind of inequality is slowly crushing the middle class, making the distinction between the “mob” and an “establishment” extremely clear. This “unjust” feeling is making people angrier, making them feel that the establishment is actually the one responsible for their bad situation.

When an establishment is formed, the same group of people being in many positions of power, its members can actually do actions that they are not supposed to, in order to benefit, without facing any punishment. This phenomenon is called corruption. Transparency International recently organized a worldwide poll, which is considered the biggest one to ever ask for the public opinion about corruption. The results speak for themselves: one in four people have actually reported paying a bribe⁶. These small difficulties in the daily life of citizens are also helping the populist narrative, which an establishment that takes advantage of its power and people exists. There is no proof of actual corruption needed, the mere fact that an establishment exists leads people to believe that corruption is the only logical consequence.

Loss of Individual Identity

Through globalization large groups of people are moving all over the globe, exchanging ideas and beliefs. While this is a good thing, there is a danger that each country’s traditions and values will be forgotten. This threat is more apparent now than ever, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and the co-existence of multiple different cultures and religions in Europe. It is a challenge for the people and their leaders to ensure that immigrants are shown compassion, dealt with respect and in accordance with law and subsequently integrated into the Western society. Supporters of populism claim that the refugees entering have radical ideas and beliefs, partly due to their different religion and are increasingly using recent terrorist attacks in Europe as a means of further spreading xenophobia.

Lack of Faith in International/Regional Organizations

⁶ Poll: <https://www.transparency.org/gcb2013/report>

International Organizations, ranging from the UN to the EU and NATO have gained unprecedented prominence in the era of globalization. While these organizations have offered many benefits to their member states, like upgrading their facilities to EDC standards, or offering many international services (like the European Emergency Number, 112), they have certainly failed to assist or even address some situations.

Within Europe, populists mainly focus in the bad way that the EU is handling the refugees coming in their countries, some saying that it is failing to distribute them evenly between all member states, others claiming that the EU should not even accept them in the first place. That is one of the reasons that a big part of the British population asked for the BREXIT, reflecting the growing Euro-scepticism that prevails in Europe. Globally, populists in the USA and other “advanced” countries often express concern about the large benefits given away to LEDCs and consider International Organizations as facilitators of this process.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

USA

There has been unrest in the USA, especially after Obama’s term ended, with him being a big supporter of globalization. The next democratic candidate was Hillary Clinton, an ex-First Lady and Secretary of State. Choosing her as a candidate further fueled the feeling of establishment, as her main campaign promise was to continue ruling the way Obama did. Donald Trump was elected, claiming that he wants to hurt the elites, “drain the swamp”, thus reflecting the public outcry people wanted, the desire for radical change.

US President Donald Trump believes that the US is being taken advantage of by countries like China, which results into job losses, as well as expresses concern about the great number of immigrants entering the country because of the “American Dream”, drawing a causal link between globalization and such events, as well as recent terrorist attacks all over the world.

His slogan, “America First”, shows that he wants to use the technique of protectionism, in order to bring jobs back to the USA. He is strictly against globalization, he wants to build a wall between USA and the world; literally and metaphorically. That is why the US withdrew from the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), the Paris Climate Agreement and other “pro globalization” treaties. He wants to show to his people that they are a priority; he is not willing to make any “sacrifices” for the greater, global good.



Populist Donald Trump won the USA elections on November of 2016

UNITED KINGDOM

A similar situation exists in the United Kingdom that has in recent years been facing poor economic performance, growing current account deficits and high income inequality. This has led to frustration. The British people and politicians thirsty for power found their scapegoat and targeted globalization, the EU and the immigrants that come due to it in the country, in order to justify unemployment, low wages and poor economic performance, and bad markets. That is why the people began a movement called “BREXIT”, leading to a referendum held by James Cameron, which would decide whether the UK would stay in the EU. The people voted for BREXIT, leading to Cameron’s resignation. Many still say that it happened largely due to the EU’s immigration policy.

EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union has traditionally been an important supporter of globalization, operating on the principles of free movement of goods, capital, services and labour. It allows goods, people and capital to travel freely within its borders, through the Schengen and other treaties. Most of its members use the same currency, bringing their economies even closer and a greater prevalence of peace in the continent.

However, there is conflict in Syria. Due to the Syrian civil war, many refugees are fleeing to the EU. This is increasingly causing tension and fear within Europe, since 59% of Europeans are concerned about the possibility of increased terrorism in light of refugees’ influx. The EU has failed to give a definite plan on how to deal with the crisis. That is why many countries, like France and the Netherlands have begun showing racist tendencies, by supporting anti-Muslim parties, whose main campaign promises are to stop any refugee from entering and kick out anyone who has already entered. This is also one of the main reasons the UK voted for BREXIT.

Another reason for the rise of populism are the economic effects indirectly caused by globalization. Since the European Union offers a lot of benefits to the European people, it requires some funds to operate, with countries increasingly concerned about the volume and use of such funds. Globalization has brought these countries and their economies together, which has undoubtedly caused some problems. Ambitious leaders capitalized on these, with the help of empty promises. The populist movement is causing a tumult in the EU, with member-states questioning if it is even worth it to continue having that title.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
1992	The Maastricht treaty is signed, creating the EU as we know it
1993	The internet becomes widely used
1995	The World Trade Organization is formed, allowing international trade to rise
June 2016	The British vote for Brexit
November 2016	Trump is elected to office
January 2017	The US withdraws from the TPP
March 2017	The UK begins its EU withdrawal process
May 2017	The National Front, Le Pen's party, is the second most popular one in France for the first time
June 2017	The US withdraws from the Paris Climate Agreement
September 2017	AfD gets into the German Bundestag

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

The UN is one of the proudest supporters of globalization, as it is representing one of its most key principles. It brings countries together and encourages discussion. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, has advised the people through any platform he can about the dangers of demagogues, populists and the protectionist policies of some leaders. He has urged governments to follow the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

His advice helped to influence the French people as well, in order for them not to vote for LePen. In his last U.N. address President Barack Obama also openly criticized populism and tried to warn voters about the hateful policies of Donald Trump, like the wall between USA and Mexico he was promising at the time.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Even though populism has become strong all over the world, there are still voices that fight for globalization and against populism, rejecting the principles brought forward by populist parties and politicians.

There are also many public figures who have publicly spoken about globalization and its many benefits, like the UN secretary general, Antonio Guterres. He has made a speech condemning populists, saying that “losers of globalization” in rich countries have turned to nationalist agendas”. This trend undermines the willingness of countries to receive refugees in Europe, something negative for globalization worldwide. Former Mexican President, Vicente Fox Quesada, also expressed his frustration about Trump wanting to build a wall between his country and Mexico.



American citizens expressing their frustration towards Trumps' latest policies

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Both populism and globalization are distinct movements that have gained in prominence world affairs today, whilst being closely interconnected. Addressing the rise of populism as a response to globalization thus requires actions to be taken on different levels, from addressing the root of the problem and the disadvantage of globalization to eliminating the emergence and rise of populism as a response.

While globalization is a movement that is almost impossible to stop, world leaders and the UN need to find a way to “stay on top of the iceberg”, use globalization in a way that favors the majority of the people, so everybody can feel the great benefits.

In order for something like this to be achieved, we first have to try to tackle the negative effects of globalization, as a first measure to fight “bad” populism. This can happen through many ways. In order to battle the unemployment that often accompanies globalization, we should try empowering the educational programs of each country, especially for developing economies. Educated youth can always boost the economy, through entrepreneurship, consequently creating new jobs. Another big measure is to tackle corruption, by empowering agencies like Interpol, launching investigations for other scandals like the Panama Papers, giving the people a sense of justice in our societies. The WTO treaties should be enforced by the appropriate agents, because they are necessary for the confinement of monopolies and other unethical practices, which give more power to the rich and the establishment. In order for the middle class to be empowered, the difference between the rich and the poor to be erased, we need a better welfare state, helping the poor so they do not feel that they are taken advantage of. Also in order for each individual country’s identity to be maintained, we can add educational programs in school, or special lessons in the educational syllabus, where the country’s traditions, history and values are taught. Immigrants and their children can also be taught these in workshops.

Assistance should be given to the Syrian refugees pouring in the EU. A proper integration program to society, by teaching them the basic differences between the Western way of thinking and the customs of the vastly different civilizations through educational programs, and also some basic lessons of the language of the country they are in, so they can communicate with ease, through workshops or something similar, is deemed very important. We have to teach to both sides of the issue, both the refugees and the nationalists, that sacrifices should be made, in order for the people to coexist. Something like this can be achieved through educational programs or just awareness campaigns (festivals, documentaries etc.

In the meantime, it is imperative that we begin fighting populism itself. The basic premise is to not exclude populists or their supporters from debates and other mainstream political activities. Parties have to compete with them like with any other opponent.

“Muffle my voice and my whisper becomes a shout”. It is necessary that we never censor populist leaders, because this only makes it easier for them to convince their

supporters that an almighty establishment exists, easier for them to spread an unjust feeling to everyone. That makes them even stronger.

Because demagogues prey on the uninformed public, facts are the best way to combat populism. Actual numbers should be given to the news, graphs showing how globalization and immigrants are not the reason the economy is getting worse. The battle to fight the labeling of “fake news” to everything that doesn’t agree with populist rhetoric can be fought with enforcing some basic journalistic guidelines, or creating a worldwide treaty that sets a framework for journalists worldwide. This framework will guarantee that something is legitimate before it is published. That way there will be no excuses to call something “fake news”, dismiss it if it disagrees with you, a basic mechanism of the “mob” and their leaders.

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