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Nationalism in the Context of Globalization

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Introduction

To understand the connection and consequences between nationalism and globalism, I will start with a basic definition of nationalism. According to Websters Dictionary, nations that are focused on national, not international goals, are nationalistic. A nation comprises the same language, customs, and traditions.

Some scholars have argued that nationalism has historical roots. People have been bonded by ethnicity and politics from ancient times. Others consider nationalism as a modern phenomenon due to industrialization, democratization, and modern technology. Jonathan Hearn¹ from the University of Edinburgh has argued that some states are more homogeneous than others and they have strong senses of nationalism while others can adjust better to diversity or multiculturalism.

Globalization refers to global economy, free trade, cheap labor, and markets. There are different opinions about the beginning of globalization. In his article *Nationalism and Globalization*, Jorgen Osterhammel identified three schools that have equal support for explaining the beginning of globalization.

The History of Nationalism and Globalization

One school placed the date for the commencement of globalization in the 13th century, during the period when Mongols conquered the largest territory in Eurasia. Others considered the discovery of America as the time of globalization. The third school focused on industrialization, that is, when modern technology started after World War II, with the creation of transnational institutions such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and others. It is during this period that nationalism from Europe spread around the globe.² The same authors point out that globalization can include integration and fragmentation simultaneously. When nation states struggle to build their power, they use resources outside their border; thus, they become more aggressive and get involved in economic, military, and competition with other states.³

¹ Hearn - page 8

² Osterhammel - page 695

³ Osterhammel - page 696

Saraman V. Zala, author of the article *Globalization and the Nation State*, states that globalization includes the following: intensification of political, economic, and cultural connections; the triumphs of American values in economics and politics; and the technological revolution. He argued that because of globalization, the big corporations are not accountable to officials of the countries they use, and this would negatively impact the economy of the less developed country. At the same time, nation states have less authority and the borders of nations become irrelevant. Thus, a decision taken in the United States might affect people from a different country and might create riots of local groups who pressure their government to take actions to protect them. Third World countries must adapt to the regulations set by the supranational institutions which might not be in their national interest. As a result, Saraman V. Zala indicated, the social, political, and cultural aspects of globalization are strongly connected and when you buy an object, you buy the image, too. He stated:

When we buy a product, we buy it not only because of its perceived inherent qualities or use but also because of its image. An advertisement is not something that tells you something about the product only, of course it does, but it is also a product itself. A possible consequence of this is that somebody else's image could become my choice.⁴

That would mean that culture becomes economic and what is economic becomes culture. The advertisement is a product.

The Effects of Globalization

Part of globalization is mass immigration. Countries like United States, Australia and Argentina became nations due to immigrants. The United States set up institutions to accommodate the foreigners. There was not a single method to deal with large scale immigrations. Some of the steps adopted were assimilation, integration, or isolation. By the end of the nineteenth century, the new countries tried to deter immigrants coming from Asia, claiming that they are inferior to the whites, and they might undermine the civilized people from Europe.

After World War II, there was devastation in Europe and a great shortage of labor, due to the absence of millions of men who had lost their lives fighting. Western countries were competing for workers. Great Britain used workers from its empire. Other countries, including France and Germany, often used their former colonies for cheap labor. One source of laboring people was Turkey and thousands moved to Germany. They did not intend to live there for good but for financial reasons, it was more advantageous to settle in Germany.

⁴ Zala - page 265 (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41856588>).

When the first recession hit the Western countries, many immigrants went back to their original countries. However, when another recession occurred, this time, most of the immigrants remained in Europe. One group particularly targeted today in Europe are the Muslims. With high unemployment and discrimination, many immigrants from the Middle East have turned to religion; others have become radicalized. Many terrorist attacks have taken place in Western Europe over recent years, and this has strengthened the idea that all Muslims are potential terrorists. September 11, 2001 was a turning point for the way the Europeans have tended to look at their Muslim neighbors. In essence, large segments of public opinion in Europe have turned against the Muslims.

Thilo Sarrazin, a German politician and author of *Germany Does Away with Itself*, complained that the Turks are taking over Germany, with a higher birth rate. “I don't want the country of my grandchildren and great-grandchildren to be largely Muslim, or that Turkish and Arabic will be spoken in large areas, that women will wear headscarves, and that the daily rhythm will be set by the call of the Muslims”.⁵

The Benefits of Globalization

Some Westerners have begun to question the benefits of immigration. On the positive side, some demographers point to the low birth rate of Europeans. Thus, Reiner Klinholtz, Director of the Berlin Institute for Population Development, has stated:

Even if Germany could increase its annual net migration rate back up to the levels of a few years ago (100,000-200,000), the population would decline by twelve million by 2050, a “bloodletting” similar to emptying Germany's twelve largest cities.⁶

That means that contemporary governments must now find a way to provide assistance for a substantial number of elderly people. One route involves immigrants. They tend to be younger than the natives and they contribute to the economic growth, including support for the increasing number of elder people. The demand for workers to care for the elderly will skyrocket in the next decades, and immigration may help reduce the economic tensions on governments and societies.

Others have claimed that immigration is not necessary. More and more women are working. People are living longer and tend to work past retirement age. Also, immigrants are more likely to be unemployed, these individuals argue, and that will deplete the welfare funds. Moreover, they argue, a lot of immigrants prefer to live in communities with people from their own countries, and this lack of integration may lead to fragmentation of a nation.

⁵ Global Researcher- Europe's Immigration Turmoil - page 6

⁶ Global Researcher- Europe's Immigration Turmoil - page 6

Many Europeans believe that Muslim culture is in contrast with the values of the Enlightenment. Many immigrants have refused to integrate, these voices say. Anti-Muslim sentiments have been growing stronger in recent decades. Far right groups were taking advantage of Islamophobia and have made immigration the main point of their campaign. Their supporters appear to be afraid that their culture will be diluted or disappear totally. For example, Thilo Sarrazin has claimed that Muslim immigrants to Germany “are dumbing down” society and are coming to Germany for that country’s rich welfare benefits.⁷

The economic factor has become a very important aspect of the contemporary surge of Islamophobia in Europe. Some current citizens express concerns that mass immigration would invade their country and their houses. Although many Europeans do not express their opinions freely, for fear of being accused of racism, there may well be a “silent majority” that supports the far-right groups. Further, those with low education are afraid that their companies will be relocated to countries where the labor force is cheap. Those with high education are afraid of competition emanating from foreigners, as part of globalization.

As a result, far right groups in Europe have produced a new concept. This is “exclusionary populism,” a restrictive notion of citizenship which holds that democracy is based on a homogeneous community. It argues that only citizens of long standing are full members of civil society and that a society's benefits should only accrue to them.”⁸ These groups demand the expulsion of unemployed refugees, and they call for deportation of all asylum seekers whose applications for residency are rejected by the authorities. This idea has gained a toehold, becoming a major issue in support of the purported national culture, and its advocates seek to protect what they see as Western values. Without doubt, this claim is yet another consequence of globalization.

Adapting Due to Globalization

The social and cultural changes characterized by uncertainty due to globalization have created, among men especially, a longing for security, a remembrance of the traditional family structure, with the role of the woman as mother and wife. This is what Judith Newton has stated about that historical memory:

The globalization of capitalism, economic restructuring, corporate downsizing, falling wages, the entry of married women into the labor market, the restructuring of domestic life by the dual incomes — which middle class families now require, constitute foundational challenges to the gender order by organized feminism and gay liberation in the United States and abroad.

⁷ Global Researcher - page 6

⁸ The Growing Threat of the Radical Right - page 77

Additionally, the critiques of white, middle class, heterosexual masculinity by identity movements on every front all have contributed either to the erosion of primary bread winning as the foundation of dominant masculinity in the United States or the production of a related delegitimation of patriarchy on a global scale.”⁹

These developments, economically and politically, the supranational tendencies, have created a lack of confidence in representation of people by the establishment. Mikhael Minkenberg and Martin Schain examined the ideology of the far-right parties and wrote, “The nationalistic myth is characterized by the effort to construct the idea of nation and national belonging by radicalizing ethnic, religious, cultural and political criteria of inclusion/exclusion and to condense the idea of nation into an image of extreme collective homogeneity.”¹⁰

Political elites can benefit from nationalism. They can use the concept to gain support for their political agenda. Their goals may include additional territory, the control of natural resources or just overall benefits from the existence of conflicts. For these leaders, national interest becomes a priority for the survival of the state and the population would do what is necessary to protect their nation. Extreme nationalism can lead to war, along with discrimination against certain groups who are labeled the “enemy of the people” that cannot be trusted.¹¹

With all the consequences of globalization, including those mentioned above, one may wonder if globalization has a net positive or negative effect. It has losers and winners. In his article *The Truth about Globalization*, the author Timothy Taylor presents the benefits of globalization. For instance, he mentions the enhanced flow of goods and financial capital as investment in different regions has increased dramatically. Countries with elevated level of international trade have usually low unemployment. However, the new forms of technology, plus international competition, have caused the relocation of many workers or the efforts to re-training them. Although this is beneficial for the big corporations, to have a flexible work force, it is perhaps detrimental to the workers who are forced to adapt to new conditions. Competition does not generate wealth for everyone. Additionally, many believe that globalization is all about American culture. Local cultures are dissolving. Third World countries are particularly vulnerable to globalization.

Recent events, particularly the war in Ukraine and the worldwide epidemic of Covid 19, show that the process of globalization has slowed down as proven by the rise of anti-globalist movements, extreme nationalists, and Brexit. We have seen heightened rivalry by two, perhaps three, great trading blocks for world domination.

⁹ Growing Threat - page 87

¹⁰ Right Wing Extremism - page 163

¹¹ The Violent Consequences of Nationalism - page 846

It may be argued that the globalists of recent years totally underestimated the recurring power of nationalism, the desire of the people to preserve and defend their recalled traditions against the assault of the West. David Brooks, an opinion columnist, succinctly stated the impact of these developments when he authored his article entitled *Globalization is Over: The Global Culture Wars Have Begun*.

Many people around the world look at our American ideas about gender roles and find them foreign or repellent. They look at our fervent defense of L.G.B.T.Q. rights and find them off-putting. The idea that it's up to each person to choose its own identity and values is one that seems ridiculous to many, unfortunately.¹² Some human rights are not accepted by everybody and in many parts of the world these are perceived as an imposition of the West on their own local customs. Attempting to implement Western democracy around the globe could lead to instability, and potential disruptive effects. The younger generation in Asia and the Middle East are more likely to adopt innovative ideas, values, but the older generation is more reluctant to change.

Philip Legrain is more optimistic about globalization. He argued the point in his article entitled *In Defense of Globalization*.¹³ There he wrote that the process goes both ways, there is strong influence from the immigrants on the Westerners and a strong influence of the Westerners on the immigrants.

So, it is difficult to determine definitively if globalization is very good or bad. Many people will be influenced by new ideas, values, and beliefs while others will find cultural differences too great to overcome. However, it is a revolutionary process, one that is going to continue, and it will take time to establish honest communication between the newcomers and the current citizens.

Consequences of Globalism

Nation states will continue to play a key role in directing transactions, setting limits, regulations, tariffs, and barriers to trade. In an article entitled *Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation State and the Case of Western Europe*, Stanley Hoffman maintained that Europe has opted for integration, but it is still divided. The various European nations have different political goals and there is rivalry among them.¹⁴ However, the major problems facing the world — climate change, epidemics, environmental issues — imply the need to find global models to solve them. Nation states alone cannot deal with them.

Multiculturalism is another consequence of globalization. Many have blamed it for the numerous terrorist attacks executed across Europe.

¹² Globalization is over - page 3

¹³ Defense of Globalization - page 248

¹⁴ Perspective from the past - page 620

The lack of integration of the new immigrants, the relaxed attitude of the police towards ethnic groups and their cultural traditions, even when they are in contrast with the laws of the country, have failed to prevent crimes, such as “honor killing” in the British Muslim community. Police “may be worried that they will be seen as racist if they interfere in another culture” surmised Diana Sammi, Director of the Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organization.¹⁵

Some leaders in different right wing or conservative parties, such as former French President Nicholas Sarkozy, former British Prime Minister David Cameron, and former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, were all somewhat skeptical of multiculturalism during their time in office. They did try different methods to encourage integration, like the building of mosques, enhanced language training, making use of the host country facilities for purposes of assimilation, and adhering to national requirements while assisting immigrants who sought to be allowed to stay.

These methods did not aim to separate the ethnic groups, but to recognize and manage diversity. However, the result was disappointing to some extent, because some right-wing Germans continue to believe that their country is being overrun by immigrants and they argue that Muslims cannot integrate successfully. In the United Kingdom, David Cameron blamed multiculturalism for “division, and fomenting terrorism.”¹⁶

Two specialists on the subject of European jihadists, French political scientist Oliver Roy and the American counter-terrorism expert, Marc Sageman, have claimed that the reason for the radicalization of some young Muslims is a combination of the lack of ties with their own communities, a lack of job opportunities at home, and the force of outside influence. Even though they are born in a Western country, these young people are still considered by some to be foreigners. Thus, they may turn to terrorist groups which provide them with a sense of belonging.¹⁷

Author H.E Baber points out the dilemma of multiculturalism. On one hand, the immigrants are encouraged to preserve their cultural identity and on the other hand, they are criticized for refusing to assimilate (Baber, 14). Multiculturalism should not be only about differences. Political theorist Bhikhu Parekh is against the idea that diversity means segregation. According to him, the goal of multiculturalism is to “borrow” parts of other cultures and then merge them together.¹⁸ This also means that people should be open and honest, able to communicate about other cultures.

¹⁵ Europe's Turmoil - page 21

¹⁶ Europeans Against Multiculturalism - page 5

¹⁷ Europeans against Multiculturalism - page 5

¹⁸ Vincent van Grondelle - page 5

However, it is also true that for many Europeans, especially right wingers, the presence of a massive number of immigrants, if they do not or cannot integrate, might lead to a backlash from current citizens who might feel that they will have to deal with the crisis on their own, and that their governments do not represent them anymore. Here is an additional point: Certain residents of the island of Lesbos, Greece, have reported that locals have been overlooked. In neglecting their concerns, the seeds have been sown for antipathy and intolerance towards refugees, sentiments exploited by an ascending right and echoed across Europe by fear-mongering politicians. By only focusing on the refugees and not on the local community who were just as much a part of the crisis, it created polarization.¹⁹

This indicates that an innovative approach towards multiculturalism is needed to include both accommodation for the refugees and a response to the concerns of the current citizens. Benefits should apply to both groups, natives, and immigrants. That would prevent a backlash from the extant white community.

Mike O'Donnell, Professor of Sociology at Westminster University, outlines the negative aspects that he finds have characterized the philosophy of multiculturalism: it has emphasized differences between people instead of stressing commonalities. Further, he says to outlaw discrimination against the incoming minority groups, freedom of speech may be inhibited, and this leads to the constraints of so-called "political correctness." As a result, the unity of the nation is not advanced. On the other hand, Andrew Pilkington, the author of the article *In Defense of Both Multiculturalism and Progressive Nationalism*, has a different opinion. He has written that the people are very easily influenced by the political correctness zealots who have threatened the freedom of speech. It is necessary for there to be a genuine dialogue, and adjustments must be made by the government and the minority groups as well²⁰.

Conclusion

There is much research about the impact of globalization on people, but scholars have not yet agreed if the impact is positive or negative. One common conclusion is that globalization stimulates profound changes in values, religion, economy, and ideas. There will be winners and losers. Some states will prosper while others will not, and this may lead to inequality in the world. The international organizations that set up international norms have put pressure on nations to conform to these norms. What happens in a state is debated world-wide, as a result. Public opinion regarding events in various parts of the world is relevant. Tension arising between national interests and the regulations set up by international organizations might diminish the authority of the state. However, nation states will not go away.

¹⁹ Grondelle - page 11

²⁰ A Pilkington - page 274

Modern national states should not be based on cultural homogeneity. Diversity is the mark of the modern state. The individual will be rooted in traditions, but he will be part of the world community as well.

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