

# The relationship between globalization and populism: Will globalization promote populism?

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**Abstract:** This study delves into the intricate relationship between globalization and populism, specifically exploring whether globalization acts as a catalyst for the rise of populist movements. Analyzing the waves of globalization and employing a case study of France, we demonstrate that economic and cultural aspects play pivotal roles in fuelling populism. The rise of far-right leader Marine Le Pen serves as a poignant example of how globalization impacts job opportunities and contributes to societal discontent.

**Keywords:** Globalization; Populism; Economic inequality; Cultural clash; Far-right movements

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## Introduction

Globalization is an inevitable trend in contemporary society. As technology and science develop, the integration of economics, culture, and community gradually becomes a phenomenon. Although globalization brings plenty of benefits, such as travel mobility, free trade, and international education, it also has some features that negatively affect other aspects. With globalization deepened, other negative problems arose, such as climate change, terrorism, and migration. Populism on the far-right wing increases simultaneously.

In recent years, populism has become a global topic. Particularly in Western countries, populism spreads quickly. Various populist movements appear, such as anti-EU demonstrations in Greece, Brexit in the United Kingdom, and Pegida in Germany. The slogan of these movements usually focuses on domestic people and opposes immigrants from other countries, especially Muslim immigrants. Moreover, populism occurred on a large scale in Western countries and caused social unrest.

Globalization and populism interact with each other; in particular, globalization positively affects the appearance of populism. The following will briefly introduce the definition and relationship between globalization and populism, then use France as a case study.

## 1. The concept of globalization and populism

To explain why globalization promotes populism, relative concepts must be defined. Globalization also deemed “hyper-globalization,” means integration in most fields, not only economics but also culture and politics. Simply speaking, it is interconnected and interdependent. Giddens (1991) UNITED KINGDOM”, “ISBN”: “978-0-7456-7711-8”, “publisher”: “Polity Press”, “publisher-place”: “Chichester, UNITED KINGDOM”, “source”: “ProQuest Ebook Central”, “title”: “The Consequences of Modernity”, “URL”: “http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liverpool/detail.action?docID=1184142”, “author”: [ { “family”: “Giddens”, “given”: “Anthony” } ], “accessed”: { “date-parts”: [ [ “2022”, 12, 8 ] ], “issued”: { “date-parts”: [ [ “1991” ] ] }, “label”: “page”, “suppress-author”: true }, “schema”: “https://github.com/citation-style-language/schema/raw/master/csl-citation.json” } believes that events occurring thousands of miles away intensify global social relations and vice versa. Transnational firms, which account for 25% to 30% of global production, 70% of international commerce, and 80% of global investment, are a rising part of the global political economy (WTO, 2021). Globalization has three waves: the first is in the colonization era, the second is in the Industrial Revolution, and the last is in technological development. Three waves of globalization benefited Western developed countries. Davos (2018) believes that the current era represents the fourth wave of globalization: artificial intelligence. China is rising quickly, and other emerging economic countries are subsequently following, yet Western countries are leaving behind. So, populism appears with globalization.

The definition of populism is debatable, but most scholars believe it is an ideological trend. As per Edward Shils (1956) “author”: [ { “family”: “Shils”, “given”: “Edward” } ], “issued”: { “date-parts”: [ [ “1956” ] ] }, “label”: “page”, “suppress-author”: true }, “schema”: “https://github.com/citation-style-language/schema/raw/master/csl-citation.json” } , populism is a kind of public discontent against the order imposed on society by a governing elite that is considered to hold a monopoly on power, property, breeding, and culture. Populism may also be based on

three other ideas: first, that “the people” are sovereign and superior to their rulers; second, that there should be a direct line of communication between “the people” and their government; and finally, that “the will of the people” is affiliated with justice and fairness. Canovan (1999) concentrated on the distinctions between movements and parties under the label “populist.” Huber and Schimpf (2017) provide a strict definition of populism, a call to action, a criticism of the ruling class, and the notion that politics ought to reflect the “public will.” Since populism has an exclusive nature, its adherents seldom consider the entire globe while making decisions. They think other nations and individuals are their foes who will interfere with their advantages.

## 2. Globalization fuels populism

Globalization will strengthen populism and have negative consequences. How globalization fuels populism embodies two fields: economics and culture (Rodrik, 2021). In terms of economics, due to economic inequality among countries, people in countries with trade deficits feel deprived and dissatisfied. Then, they accuse outsiders of stealing their jobs or lowering their wages and incomes. Many Western academics, including Kalinowski, believe that East Asia’s trade surplus contributes to global economic imbalance (Kalinowski, 2015) Japan and Korea – are playing an increasingly important role in governing the global economy. Their global political rise is frequently discussed in binary terms in which the ‘realist’ assumption of inevitable conflict between rising and declining powers is contrasted with the ‘liberal’ assumption of the region’s growing integration into international institutions. This article offers an alternative explanation for East Asia’s global political role by shifting attention to the internal dynamics of the East Asian development model. This ‘second image’ interpretation of international political economy focuses on the ways in which domestic political economies influence international negotiations and institutions. Furthermore, this article departs from a focus on national political economies and considers the global role of the East Asian model of capitalism as such. At the empirical level, this article investigates the role of East Asian G20 members in international macroeconomic coordination and in reducing global economic imbalances.”,“container-title”:”International Politics”,“DOI”:”10.1057/ip.2015.18”,“ISSN”:”1384-5748, 1740-3898”,“issue”:”6”,“journalAbbreviation”:”Int Polit”,“language”:”en”,“page”:”760-778”,“source”:”DOI.org (Crossref. For example, the widening trade gap between China and the United States is increasing, and the US maintains a trade deficit. Besides, globalization benefits the rich and the incumbent while harming the poor and the middle class. The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer because of capital flow. Therefore, globalization will inevitably exaggerate the class conflict in society. The middle and lower classes will be irritated, resulting in a form of social radicalism.

From a cultural perspective, not only are immigrants suffering culture shock, but domestic people also think immigrants influence their jobs and welfare. Because Islamic immigrants have different religious beliefs and lifestyles, Westerners will experience cultural conflicts. The perceived differences between Islam and the West have been exaggerated by increased communication and interaction between the two religions (Huntington, 1993). Domestic people believe their income has decreased due to economic inequality and the euro crisis. Low-income people will look at the competitors who take over their jobs. Then, outsider immigrants will be the target of populism. In France, immigration increases domestic support for far-right candidates. Other countries have similar outcomes.

Therefore, populism is emerging because of economics and culture in the context of globalization. Globalization frustrates the domestic people, and then populism occurs. Populists begin to backlash against the challenges of globalization and even oppose globalization. There have been more and more voices that prefer de-globalization and regaining independence.

## 3. Populism in France

Populism is fuelled by the context of globalization, which can be seen in France. By studying far-right Marine Le Pen, a recent political star with a long quest for power, insights about populism in this country can be garnered. In democratic countries, every domestic person has the right to vote, and election outcomes can reflect popular opinion. In France and most Western countries, the rise of right-wing populist parties is a trend. So, vote data, electorate composition, and election manifestos can show that populism occurred in France due to globalization.

Since the 21st century, the deepening of globalization has brought changes to the industrial structure of France and other European countries. The service industry and high-tech industry have gradually replaced agriculture and traditional manufacturing. At the same time, as many immigrants move in to compete with residents for low-skilled jobs, many local low- and middle-income groups lose their job op-

portunities, resulting in a “sense of deprivation.” On the other hand, the refugee crisis has brought further shocks to Europe, exacerbating its economic woes. Europe’s mainstream political parties, which support globalization and EU integration, often do not offer good solutions, and far-right populists echo some popular voices.

Marine Le Pen, as a firm populist, gradually gained popularity. She is a French politician who presided over the National Rally faction of the National Assembly and ran for three French presidential elections. Le Pen advocates her party’s historical policies, particularly emphasizing strong anti-immigrant, nationalist, and protectionist measures. Speaking of immigration, she believes that France needs to “de-Islamisation,” including a limitation on legal immigration, a ban on ritual slaughter, and a restriction on circumcision. Regarding economic policy, Le Pen is a trade protectionist who believes in economic nationalism, adding trade barriers to protect domestic workers, favoring government intervention, and opposing globalization. In 2012, Marine Le Pen received 17.90% of the vote, 21.3% in 2017, and 23.15% in the first round of the presidential election in 2022. Despite Le Pen ultimately falling to Emmanuel Macron in the second round of the 2022 presidential election, she received 41.45% of the vote in the second round of the race. As a result, Le Pen’s popularity percentage increased significantly.

The sociology of voters in the 2022 election is intriguing, according to Ipsos data (2022). A clear victory for Emmanuel Macron was forged on the vote of the oldest: 59% of the votes cast were in the 60–69 age category, and up to 71% were among voters over 70 years of age. Regarding professional classes, 77% of Macron voters are executives, 59% are in the intermediate professions, but 67% of Le Pen voters are workers, and 57% are employees. That means most Macron supporters are upper-class and wealthy business owners, while most worker classes support Le Pen. In addition, Marine Le Pen’s base has widened considerably compared to 2017, with 11 points gained among workers (56% in 2017) and employees (46% in 2017).

Individual policy preferences can cause electoral outcomes, which means voting for populist parties or candidates increases. Most people’s voice stems from the party programs and candidate ideologies. Emmanuel Macron had beaten Marine Le Pen in all income categories in 2017 but was just ahead of the lowest category in 2022. Despite the victory, the meritocracy Macron represents is losing its edge. The French believe that globalization with increasing immigration will take their jobs and lose “France first.” The competition has intensified, and French discontent has grown. More than two-thirds of those who say they are “satisfied with their life” voted for Emmanuel Macron (69%), but nearly 80% of those who are not voted for Marine Le Pen (79%).

#### 4. Conclusion

France’s political circle reflects populism against globalization, and the political movement is not isolated; many other like-minded countries are under globalization. For example, with the newly elected president of Italy, Giorgia Meloni, in 2022, and the previous US president, Donald Trump, populism is spreading among Western countries.

Even if some people oppose globalization, it is an unavoidable trend in the global village to integrate economy, culture, and even politics. Globalization, on the other hand, fuels populism and escalates regional conflicts. People oppose globalization, vote for the far-right party, and conduct social movements. So, under globalization, how to benefit from it and decrease populism is a challenge for all countries.

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