



New Waves Of Nationalism

Definition

Nationalism is a shared sense of group identity and desire for political self-determination. It is generally described as having two forms: civic nationalism and ethnic nationalism. In the former, group membership is open to individuals who share in the principals and values of the nation. In ethnic nationalism, group membership is limited only to individuals who share the same ethnic, religious, linguistic, or similar cultural category. The following report shall focus on this latter form of nationalism as it has become more prevalent in the 21st century. and its exclusionary politics can result in humanitarian crises.

Key Insights

By 2030, nationalist parties and policies will be part of mainstream politics

Though not always able to win elections (either legislative or executive) outright, nationalist parties will become more mainstream. Wielding greater influence over the tone of political discourse, nationalist parties will be able to mobilize their populist support and apply pressure on governments to accommodate their priorities.

By 2030, nationalism will challenge the international order

The rise of nationalistic parties early in the outlook, will advance protectionism undermining initiatives to build greater economic and political integration. With major world powers focusing attention and resources domestically, support to supra-national institutions will be reduced.

Changes by 2030

➤ **Spread of nationalism**

Nationalism will continue to gain strength, as it has done since the beginning of the 21st century. Economic conditions will be a significant driver of this trend. The slowdown in the global economy will contribute to austerity and protectionist policies at the national level and create hardships for the middle and lower classes at the household level. Persistent or



worsening inequality levels will also contribute to feelings of resentment among the populous which can be exploited by the populist political narratives employed by nationalist parties.¹

The surge in nationalism will also be the result of demographic diversification. Past decades saw the unprecedented human migrations from refugees, economic migrants, and the establishment of border-free travel zones such as the Schengen. However, as a result ethnically homogenous communities have reacted to what they perceive to be as a loss of their cultural identity in the face of a changing demographic landscapes. Far-right nationalist parties will foster these feelings of fear and resentment of immigrants to bolster their base. Areas that have recently seen large influxes of immigrants will likely be hotbeds of nationalist support.²

➤ **Resurgence of sovereignty**

Nations will seek to reassert their sovereignty by withdrawing from international treaties and intergovernmental organizations. This will not mean the complete undoing of globalization, but its expansion may stall and in some instances retract. The European migrant crisis has fueled Euroscepticism over EU mandated refugee quotas.³ The Brexit campaign was also launched on the platform of reclaiming British sovereignty from the EU.⁴ In the US economic populism from the left and right in the lead up to the 2016 elections undermined President Obama's push to pass the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).⁵ Such growing distrust for international trade deals has also lead President Trump to call for the US to withdraw from NAFTA and the WTO among other multilateral organizations and agreements.⁶ The trend is also not limited to western countries with increases in nationalistic discourse gaining power in Turkey, India and the Philippines among others⁷. This trend towards states reclaiming aspects of their sovereignty from international treaties will continue in the coming decades and will reshape the international system.

¹ Shiller, R. J. (2016) 'What's Behind a Rise in Ethnic Nationalism? Maybe the Economy', *The New York Times*, 14 October 2016

² Beauchamp, Z. (2016) '[White riot: How racism and immigration gave us Trump, Brexit, and a whole new kind of politics](#)', *Vox*, September 19.

³ BBC (2016) '[Hungary PM claims EU migrant quota referendum victory](#)', 3 October 2016

⁴ The Economist (2016) '[Dreaming of sovereignty](#)', 19 March 2016

⁵ Francis, D. (2016) '[A Dismal Day for Obama's Desperate Push to Pass His Asian Trade Deal](#)', *Foreign Policy*, 6 October 2016

⁶ Rosenkrantz, H. (2016) '[Trump Could Legally Withdraw U.S. From NAFTA, WTO: Report](#)', *Bloomberg*, 19 September 2016. Retrieved on April, 2019.

⁷ Postel-Vinay, Karoline (2017) '[How Neo-Nationalism Went Global](#)', *The Huffington Post* (15/03/2017) Original article posted in French on [The Conversation](#)



➤ **Impediment to humanitarian action**

As a consequence of the resurgence of state sovereignty, humanitarian interventions will become more difficult. Governments will become more reluctant to allow international organizations, even humanitarian ones, to interfere in crises in their borders. There will also be a push for national NGOs to replace the work done by international NGOs based in foreign countries. Humanitarian crises will also become more politicized, adding greater complexity to their resolution and potentially leading to organizations to compromise their principle of neutrality in order to secure access.

Donor governments in countries with growing nationalist discourses could be inclined to reduce their foreign aid budget – reallocating the money to fund domestic programs. Though the funds allocated to overseas development aid are less than 1% of gross national income in the majority of countries (Sweden, the UAE, Norway and Luxembourg were exceptions in 2015)⁸ reducing the foreign aid budget is politically popular. As nationalist parties and policies gain influence there could be a reduction in foreign aid from traditional institutional donors.

➤ **Growth of separatist movements**

The growth of nationalism will spur separatist movements and ethnic conflict. Identification with the unifying principles of liberal democracy will weaken as individuals place greater emphasis on ethnic affiliation. This will continue in less developed countries that are recovering from colonial legacies and arbitrarily drawn borders. Additionally, though, the West will see a rise in independence movements such as has been the case with the Catalonians, Basque, Flemish, Scottish, and Quebecois.⁹ There will also be a rise in political, and sometimes violent, clashes as these groups seek to affirm their political aspirations at the expense of the existing state. Demonstrations and isolated incidents of domestic terrorism will become more common place.

➤ **Ethnic cleansing through the expulsion of minority groups**

The West is also likely to see more instances of ethnic cleansing. As nationalist parties come to power, they will “build real and imaginary walls to protect national cultural identities and economic interests from the perceived threats of Mexican, Arab or African immigrants pounding on their doors”.¹⁰ The extension of this political discourse is then that the only way to

⁸ OECD (2015) [Net Overseas Development Aid Data](#)

⁹ Renders, M. (2016) [‘The Balkanization of Europe?’](#) *Public Radio International*, 16 October 2016

¹⁰ Hadar, L. T. (2016) [‘Trumpism: When Nationalism Meets Globalism’](#), *The Huffington Post*, 15 March 2016



protect the nation from within these walls is through the expulsion of immigrants¹¹. In such instances, a culture of intolerance will grow where lawful citizens of minority groups will experience intimidation and hostilities that could pressure them to seek refuge abroad¹².

Controversy and debates

There has been an ongoing debate about which direction the world is moving, towards globalism or factionalism.¹³ The end of the Cold War was seen by many as ushering in a new age of international cooperation and prosperity, and the 1990s did witness unsurpassed levels of globalization. Others however warned that the world would return to sectarian conflicts, as people prioritized identity politics over neo-liberal economic gains, citing the First Gulf War and the breakup of Yugoslavia. Despite this, the globalists seemed to be winning the argument for the past three decades. However, the recent surge in nationalism after the financial crisis, conflicts in Iraq and Syria, and the resulting European migrant crisis, have rekindled this debate. Is this growth in nationalism a temporary reaction to these crises or part of a longer trend?

Tomorrow is already here

Europe has seen a sharp rise in support for nationalism following the financial and migrant crises. Jean-Marie Le Pen is often considered one of the founders of modern far-right nationalism in Europe, but in 2011, his daughter Marine Le Pen assumed leadership of his party, the National Front, and brought it into the mainstream¹⁴. In the 2017 election, the Front National made it to the second round of the Presidential election and though they lost by a wide margin, their proportion of votes has continued to increase¹⁵. The map below shows that nationalism is pervasive across Europe today, with far-right parties gaining increasing support in recent elections. Though, none yet have a majority government, their appeal has been dragging conservative parties further to the right as they now face competition on both sides of the political spectrum. While the UK Independent Party holds limited seats, they were instrumental in promoting the Eurosceptic Brexit vote.

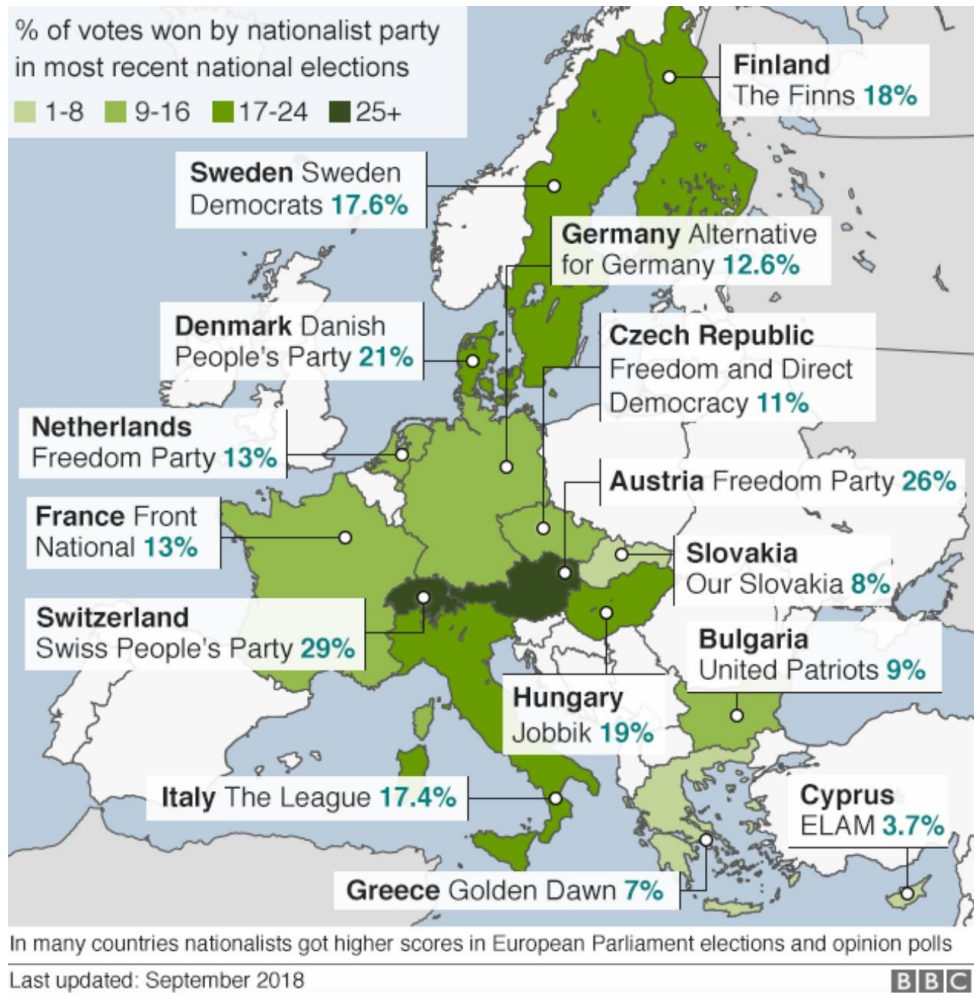
¹¹ LoBianco, T. (2015) [‘Donald Trump promises ‘deportation force’ to remove 11 million’](#), CNN, 12 November 2015 and The Economist (2016) [‘A rare setback for immigrant-bashing in Switzerland’](#), 29 February 2016 and Crouch, D. (2016) [‘Sweden sends sharp signal with plan to expel up to 80,000 asylum seekers’](#), *The Guardian*, 28 January 2016

¹² Faiola, A. (2015) [‘How do you stop migrants? In Hungary, with ‘border hunters’](#)’, *The Washington Post*, 1 October 2015 and Lyons, K. (2016) [‘Racist incidents feared to be linked to Brexit result’](#), *The Guardian*, 26 June 2016

¹³ Barber, B. R. (1996) *Jihad vs McWorld: Terrorism’s Challenge to Democracy*. Ballantine Books, New York. and Friedman, T. L., (2000) *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*. Farrar, Straus Giroux, New York.

¹⁴ The Economist (2011) [‘France’s far right: Le Pen’s daughter takes over’](#)

¹⁵ The Economist (2017) [Even if defeated, Marine Le Pen has changed French politics](#)



Source: 2016, 'Guide to nationalist parties challenging Europe', BBC

The election of Donald Trump also marks the growth in nationalist sentiments in the US. Much like in Europe, there is growing resentment among white, working class voters who feel that they have not benefited from globalization and that their traditional culture is under threat from a changing demographic landscape. Trump capitalized on these sentiments by promising to bring back manufacturing jobs and deport undocumented workers. This nationalist and protectionist message has upset the platform of the conservative movement in the country, which has favored neo-liberal policies, notably cooperation in international free trade agreements.

Asia has also seen a rise in nationalism, such as in the recent elections of Abe, Park, and Modi. Much of the trend in this region is attributed to an economic reaction against the



history of colonialism.¹⁶ The region has been largely free of major international conflicts since 1979, though three potential areas of conflict remain: Kashmir, the Korean Peninsula, and the East and South China Sea.¹⁷ The rising threat of an emergent China is the most dynamic of these and has spurred nationalist sentiments in neighboring countries, including Japan. Japan is now even considering rewriting its pacifist constitution put in place in the wake of WWII.¹⁸

In the less developed countries in Asia, a surge in nationalism could affect the implementation of humanitarian programs. A distrust of foreign intervention and especially condemnation are typical under such conditions. For instance, when criticized for his hardline policies on drugs, President Duterte of the Philippines responded, “if you think it is high time for you guys to withdraw your assistance, go ahead, we will not beg for it.”¹⁹ The possibility of a head of state rejecting all or most foreign aid for being criticized is a great concern when many people in the country are still dependent on external assistance.

¹⁶ Kingston, J. (2016) *Nationalism in Asia: A History Since 1945*, Wiley-Blackwell, Hoboken.

¹⁷ Kingston, J. (2016) [‘Asia and the threat of untethered nationalism’](#), *The Japan Times*, 10 October 2016

¹⁸ McCurry, J. (2016) [‘Japan could change pacifist constitution after Shinzo Abe victory’](#), *The Guardian*, 11 July 2016

¹⁹ Duterte, R. (2016) [‘Philippines: Duterte dares US, EU to withdraw aid’](#), *Al Jazeera*, 6 October 2016