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**The Emergence of New Populism in Europe:
Future of the EU Block**

Shamsa Nawaz



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The Emergence of New Populism in Europe: Future of the EU Block

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Abstract

The society of Europe is being dangerously polarized. It is promoting pathologically political and religious phenomenon of populism. The populists are seen as largely democratic and positive sources of influence by some, while others consider them as an irrational mass movement. They are a cause of introducing instability, since populism questions the participative and transparent democracy as a political system. Moreover, the radical rights have been vitally able to seize a significant place in the elections held in Europe from 2014-2017. The governing coalitions have also been maintained by the radical rights in several countries. The case of Freedom Party in the Netherlands, Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and National Rally of Marie Le Pen in France, all are evident reflections on the rise of populism in Europe. In the midst of economic crisis, the issues of security and migration, the national identity issues and unpopular European decisions are assorted to encourage the reason. The attitude, or maybe the rhetoric, is designed to protect susceptible people from the affect of cutthroat bourgeois policies of the market. The populists generate simplistic and demagogical solutions. However, a mosaic of nations and their perceived traditions is idealized, instead of an integrated commonwealth or a supranational political system. Europe is looking to show more sympathy with the notions of identity driving origin from the tribal society. The lofty ideals of regional integration or globalization are rejected to make world-wide confrontation frighteningly evident.

Key Words: European Union, Populism, Political Parties, Globalization, Integration.

Introduction

On September 24, 2017, Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) celebrated its success, having secured 13% of the vote marking the entry of the open nationalist party in Bundestag in six decades.¹ Established in 1961, the party holds the most substantial presence of

¹ Safiya Bashir, "Merkel faces tough coalition talks, amid rise of AfD", *The Investment Observer*, September 25, 2017, www.theinvestmentobserver.co.uk

rightwing extremists since the Nazi era. Alexander Gauland, the AfD's top candidate while calling it a great day for the party said, "We will take our people and our country back."²

AfD was initially an anti-euro party of Germany. Its leaders later transformed it into an anti- immigration and Islam party which had a more popular appeal. The declaration of ban on minarets and its hard-line position has helped it win 13 out of 16 seats in the state parliaments since the last few years.³ Placed as high as on the lampposts the far-right remarks showing a woman in traditional Muslim dress next to the caption, "*Islam does not belong in Germany*,"⁴ has been the most common poster of AfD. It has significantly siphoned votes by harnessing the anti-establishment sentiment.

Earlier in France, the National Rally though lost majority votes, the pejorative political expression of Le Pen could gather 40 per cent votes amongst the voters aged between 18 and 24 in the French elections of 2017.⁵

The Geert Wilders of Denmark – who wanted to halt Muslim immigration, close all mosques and ban the Koran – led opinion polls of election 2017, but support appeared to wane in the last weeks of the campaign. His party scored second position in election results along with Rutte's VVD and the Christian Democrats (CDA), who triumphed by shifting to the right.

Similarly, the right-wing United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) of Farage campaigned for UK to leave the European Union

² Safiya Bashir, "Merkel faces tough coalition talks, amid rise of AfD." Op. cit.

³ Sarah Wildman, "Meet the far-right party that's bringing racism and xenophobia back to Germany", *Vox*, September 26, 2017, www.vox.com/world/2017/9/26/16360916/afd-german-far-right-racism-xenophobia

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ "French Presidential Elections: first round", *Reuters Graphics*, April-May, 2017, <http://fingfx.thomsonreuters.com>

for 17 years.⁶ Farage minced no words in speaking about the failures of the EU model, due to excessive immigration. Sudden demographic changes featured strongly in setting off his nativist backlash that has fueled far-right populism in his politics. His success manipulated the mainstream political parties to court his far-right party and shape policies from the fringes. The UKIP, polled between 10 per cent and 15 per cent in 2012 and 2013.⁷ Consequently, the pressure was exerted on the center-right Conservative Party to announce a referendum to determine the membership of EU.⁸ Brexit on June 23, 2016 was an obvious outcome.⁹ Similarly, Italy's populist parties also helped swing the results of the referendum held on December 4, 2015.¹⁰ They forced Prime Minister Matteo Renzi to resign.¹¹

Anxiety over identity and social change is yet another major concern. According to Professor Immo Fritsche, any positive definition of the German identity since the Nazi era and the projection of Nazi atrocities have been largely exaggerated. In fact, *Nazism* had been politically viewed and wrongly related to aggressive nationalism, national identity and national pride, particularly after the WWII.¹² This is making most of the Germans to rub against the atrocious act. At a rally in Dresden, a young AfD supporter regretted that unlike other countries, Germans were not allowed to have national pride due to distorted history.¹³ The AfD

⁶ Stephan Castle & Steven Erlanger, "Nigel Farage, Who Spurred 'Brexit', resigns as Head of UK Independence Party", *The New York Times*, July 4, 2016, www.nytimes.com

⁷ Rowena Mason, "How did UK end up voting to leave the European Union?", *The Guardian*, June 24, 2016, www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/24/how-did-uk-end-up-voting-leave-european-union

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Cas Mudde, "What the stunning success of AfD means for Germany and Europe". Op.Cit.

¹⁰ "Matteo Renzi's referendum defeat risks Italy political crisis", *BBC News*, December 5, 2015, www.bbc.com

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Amanda Taub, "What the Far Right's Rise May Mean for Germany's Future", *The New York Times*, September 26, 2017, [/www.nytimes.com/2017/09/26/world/europe/germany-far-right-election.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/26/world/europe/germany-far-right-election.html)

¹³ Philip Oltermann, "AfD politician says Germany should stop atoning for Nazi crimes", *The Guardian*, January 18, 2017,

adapted the anti-immigrants as a major concern for its supporters to strap up this desire¹⁴ against Mrs. Merkel since she decided to lift border controls. Already, approximately a million people have arrived in UK since 2015, out of which many of whom were Muslims from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁵

The European leaders should start accepting a new political reality alongside the intrinsically transnational issues of the 21st century. Populism is a movement, a revolt that has taken roots throughout Europe, including core EU nations like France and Germany.¹⁶ Conversing with the issues of climate change, migration, economic development, scientific and technological progress, and regional and global stability are certainly momentous. Yet, the resolution cannot be achieved by ignoring populism and pushing it behind fences or walls. The influence of far-right parties on politics is often much greater than suggested by the simple numbers.¹⁷ Moreover, about 25 per cent of the members of the European Parliament belong to populist parties, but they are mostly marginalized in the process of decision-making.¹⁸

Though, so far, rise of populism has partially affected the European society on the whole, yet the political foothold is significantly seen as an indirect impact. The fear of the populist competitors has prompted the mainstream political parties to

www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/18/afd-politician-says-germany-should-stop-atoning-for-nazi-crimes

¹⁴ Sabine Siebold, “Anti-immigrant protesters chant 'Resistance!' in German city after killing”, *Reuters*, August 30, 2018, www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-protests/anti-immigrant-protesters-chant-resistance-in-german-city-after-killing-idUSKCN1LF009

¹⁵ Sabine Siebold. “Anti-immigrant protesters chant 'Resistance!' in German city after killing”. Op.Cit.

¹⁶ John Henley, “How populism emerged as an electoral force in Europe,” *The Guardian*, November 20, 2018, www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2018/nov/20/how-populism-emerged-as-electoral-force-in-europe

¹⁷ Amanda Taub, “What the Far Right’s Rise May Mean for Germany’s Future.”Op.Cit.

¹⁸ Stefan Lehne, “Populism: the risks and impact on the European states”, *Carnegie Europe*, June 6, 2017, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/2017/06/06/populism-risks-and-impact-on-european-states-pub-71170>

prioritize nationalism for the security of the national interests as individual entity rather than adopting the supranational interests of the EU regional model. This obviously weakens solidarity among member states. The progress towards European solutions is more difficult. France, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands, for instance, have fallen prey to this phenomenon greatly. The losses faced by the mainstream political parties were far more than the successes of far-right parties in the elections.¹⁹ Already, the loss of faith in the mainstream parties has given advantage to the populist parties. In an article in the journal *Foreign Affairs*, Cas Mudde, a professor at the University of Georgia who studies populism, blamed the “undemocratic liberalism” of mainstream politics for the support it could have gained from the voters.²⁰

The populist parties cannot be absolved of igniting rebellion against representative democracy while advocating referendums in Europe. The denial of any in-depth rational political debate by anti-establishment forces have also thrived the pejorative culture. The mobilization of authoritarian tendencies in Eurosceptic thinking or in anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic rationale is more instrumental to narrow down the political dialogue to more defensive and protective national state. According to the American political scientist Francis Fukuyama, “populism is the label political elites attach to policies supported by ordinary citizens that they don’t like.”²¹

Hence, the politics in most European countries is going to be much more fragmented. Most of the fundamental reasons are associated with the alienation commonly experienced in the large parts of Western societies. They are basically transnational. The panacea for 21st century problems lies in unified cooperation. The existing political order of globalization is facing the anger of the

¹⁹ Dominika Hajdu, Marko Lovec, Christian Kvorning Lassen, Paul Schmidt and AndrásSzalai, “Nationalistic populism and its reception in Central Europe”, Newsletter, October 2018, <https://oegfe.at/2018/10/nationalistic-populism-2>

²⁰ Cas Mudde, “What the stunning success of AfD means for Germany and Europe”, *The Guardian*, September 24, 2017, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/sep/24/germany-elections-afd-europe-immigration-merkel-radical-right

²¹ Steffan Lehne, “Populism: the risks and impact on European State”. Op. Cit

losers from the system it has generated. Added is the frustration with traditional democratic politics which could provide space to the current wave of populism to sweep away the existing political order of Europe. To cushion the effects of global competition and its asymmetric tremors for vulnerable people suffering from economic distress require an international *rendevous*.

This paper is an endeavor to comprehend the phenomenon of populism and who the populist is in Europe? Why are the trends of the populist movements so perilously entrenched in the youth of Europe? How far the diversity in culture breeds insecurity to fodder populism? How would the liberal forces restrain resultant polarization in the societies of Europe to maintain the integrated model of EU intact? How would the currently practiced democratic system sustain itself?

Populism and Populists: A Theoretical Explanation

Common man is conveniently pulled towards any mode of political communication which embeds in populism. The ideal projected in populism is often contrasted against the “privileged elite”. The talk about the economic and social deprivation of the ordinary man through their common sense is magnetic.

The North and Latin American political history is a strong constituent of populism. It has earned varied explanation of the academic definition since 1980’s.²² Populism tends to be centrist in character which can shape itself towards either of the traditional left–right political spectrum in a rhetorical style to promote a variety of ideologies. The phenomenon views both the bourgeois capitalists and socialist organizers as unfair dominant forces. It, however, is contested in today’s German model. An increasing number of Germans contest their oft-repeated claim of opulence quite resolutely. In a study carried out by the German Institute for Economic Research, 40 per cent of Germans do not have adequate

²² Noam Gidron, Varieties of Populism: Literature Review and Research Agenda, *Working Paper Series*, Department of Sociology, Harvard University, https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/gidron_bonikowski_populismlitreview_2013.pdf

savings.²³ Despite Merkel's claims of steady economic growth, Germany has seen continuous rise in income disparity over the last few years with about 40,000 people classified as "super rich".²⁴

In fact, populist mass movements are considered irrational by some political thinkers since it generates instability into the political process. According to them, "populism facilitates populist identification and comparison."²⁵ For instance, Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell have defined populism as an ideology that "pits a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous 'others' who are together depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity, and voice".²⁶

Nonetheless, the term has been invariably used in an inconsistent manner. It has been mostly referred to the appeals of demagogy and catch-all politics of the common man while maintaining the contradiction. The example could be taken from the rise of AfD in Germany, which had shifted its politics from anti-euro rhetoric towards anti-Islam in this era of *Islamophobia* or euroskeptic themes. Demagogy is merely used to pejoratively empathize with the public so that the rhetoric could be generated across the political spectrum for appeal.

Moreover, it is also largely taken as an anti-integration movement in Germany which has gradually stigmatized the Union's politics. While German Chancellor Angela Merkel as the "Liberal West's Last Defender,"²⁷ *The New York Times*, however, greeted her

²³ Tobias lill, "If Merkel does not take action, the AfD could soon be leading Germany", *The World Post*, (Blog), www.huffingtonpost.com/tobias-lill/afd-berlin_b_12088776.html

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Nadia Marzouki, Olivier Roy and Duncan McDonnell (Edited), "Religion and Populism", *The Immanent Frame*, September 27, 2016, tif.ssrc.org/2016/09/27/religion-and-populism

²⁶ "We live in a populist age – but who are 'the people'?", *The Conversation*. August 9, 2018, Theconversation.com/we-live-in-a-populist-age-but-who-are-the-people-91793

²⁷ Samuel Huneke, "Does Germany hold the Key to Defeating Populism?", *The Atlantic*, March 29, 2017,

only a day after Donald Trump's elections. Chancellor Merkel had sought expiation for its sins committed in the past. She also responded forthrightly to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu when he tried to blame Muslims for the Holocaust in 2015, "we know that responsibility for this crime against humanity is German and very much our own."²⁸ This certainly is an exceptional approach of a pluralistic politics. Germany's desire of atonement is expressed on hundreds of monuments and memorials in Germany as well. Amongst all, Berlin's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, designed by Peter Eisenman, is viewed as the most impressive and pacifying.²⁹ Despite that, with the rise of jingoistic and xenophobic populism, Germany is also unfortunately placed in contradiction. It has pushed Merkel to alter her unpopular policy on migration.

The religion based mass mobilization to attain its own ends is yet another bothersome facet of growing populism drawing the world to the brink of polarization so fast. "The populist use of religion is much more about "belonging" than "belief," and revolves around two main notions: restoration and battle. This *restorationist* discourse is conditioned by a particular concept of culture as a set of codes associated with values and modes of a civil society evolved more emotionally. For populists, culture does not designate complex and historically embedded modes of producing meaning, memories, and social arrangements."³⁰ It is politically derived for a common appeal. Therefore, even the populists are also sometimes seen by some as largely democratic and a constructive force in the society.

Margaret Canovan considers the arguments of both these schools of thought as faulty. She has defined two main branches of modern

www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/03/germany-key-to-defeating-populism/520629/

²⁸ Samuel Huneke. Op. Cit.

²⁹ Paul Sullivan, "Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe", *AFAR*, www.afar.com/places/memorial-to-the-murdered-jews-of-europe-berlin

³⁰ Nadia Marzouki, Duncan McDonnell and Oliver Roy, "Religion and People". Op.Cit.

populism worldwide - *agrarian* and *political* - and mapped out seven dissimilar sub-categories:³¹

Monoculture Populism

- a. The radical economic agenda is of the Commodity farmer movements. The US People's Party of the late 1891 challenged the social ills that “Gilded Age” monopolists basically kindled.
- b. The rise of the East European Green who belonged to the Subsistence peasant movements.
- c. The Russian hard working peasants and farmers known as *narodniki* who were romanticized by the intellectuals and helped them build radical agrarian movements.

Political Populism

- a. The political participation through populist movements and the use of the popular referendum.
- d. A non-ideological populism by the politicians for the appeals of the common man to build coalition.
- e. Populism out of reaction. George Wallace harvested the White backlash over civil rights in 1968.
- f. The dictatorship promoted by the populists. Juen Peron introduced the ideology in Argentina in 1946.³²

The non-classified political parties generally avoid calling themselves as populists so that the factor can traditionally diminish the value of “populism” as a group.³³ Margaret Canovan in her study on *Populism* has observed that, “populists rarely call themselves

³¹ Sergiu Ghergina, Sergiu Miscoiu and Sorina Soare (edit.), “Contemporary Populism: A Controversial Concept and its Diverse Forms”, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle, 2013. P.5.

³² Sergiu Ghergina, Sergiu Miscoiu and Sorina Soare (edit.). Op.Cit. P.5

³³ “Economic Policy and the Rise of Populism – It’s Not So Simple”, The EEAG Report on the European Economy, CESifo, Munich 2017, pp. 50–66. www.cesifo-group.de/DocDL/EEAG-2017.pdf

“populists.”³⁴ They establish their own identity and differ themselves from those who are recognized as conservatives or socialists.

Similarly, populism has not been historically segregated to understand in terms of specific issues having socio-political and economic basis of discussions unlike the right-wing populists. This approach is more or less similar to the narratives of scholars like Ernesto Laclau, Pierre-Andre Taguieff, Yves Meny and Yves Surel who, “have all sought to focus on populism *per se*.”³⁵ Their treatment of populism is not taken as an appendage of other ideologies.

Democratic notions commonly multiply populist thoughts. Political scientist Cas Mudde has perpetually agreed with the observations of several researchers who believe that populism is inherent in the representative democracy since ‘the pure people’ are posit against ‘the corrupt elite’³⁶ in order to improve the vote bank. In United States and Latin America, populism has generally been associated with the left, whereas in European countries, populism is more connected to the ideology of rightists.³⁷ As a central tenet of populism, an unadulterated will of the people has a privilege to integrate easily with the teachings of both right and left. Though the pluralist society has a disadvantage of accommodating both the rhetoric and the populist ideologies yet, the leaders of populist

³⁴ Daniel Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell (edit.), “Twenty-Century Populism: The Spectre of Western European Democracy”, Palgrave Mcmillan, 2008.

³⁵ “Populism”, ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Populism.html

³⁶ Khurram Sajjad, “Populism: A real game-changer in Pakistan”, *The Nation*, August 8, 2017, <https://nation.com.pk/08-Aug-2017/populism-a-real-game-changer-in-pakistan?show=preview&c=18388168508>

³⁷ “How populism can be turned into an opportunity, not a threat”, *The Conversation*, May 24, 2018, theconversation.com/how-populism-can-be-turned-into-an-opportunity-not-a-threat-96934

movements in recent decades have claimed to be on either the left or the right of the political gamut.³⁸

Populism: Trends in Europe Post Elections 2017

The times of reclusive political strategies are gone and democracy as an appropriate political system is in question. Despite having commonality in people's strength for the sustainability of either populism or democracy, there remains a tension between the two. Analysts and the common man both fully understand their reference as 'power of the people' and the 'sovereignty of the nations'³⁹ respectively. The global economic poverty and terrorism have made the people cognizant of the imbalance in participative democracy. In the rife of globalization, the promises of rhetorical socio-economic rise has also not been able to address the gulf between the haves and the have nots. It was basically created during the technological revolution. The developed and the developing world are however equally suffering. Added are the migrant crisis and the loss of identity, which are increasingly causing disillusionment sensitively in the European Union. This has consequently contributed to the growth of electoral gains for the right-wing political parties particularly. Their policy spectrum in the recent elections was wide ranging from populist and nationalist thoughts to far-right neo-fascist rhetoric. The right leaning trends are more conciliatory towards Russian policies. The duo play of centre-left/centre-right, which dominated the European politics for long, is significantly challenged. Unlike the sociologists, in Europe, 'the right' mainly has the strategy to use the electoral channel to voice its discontent.⁴⁰

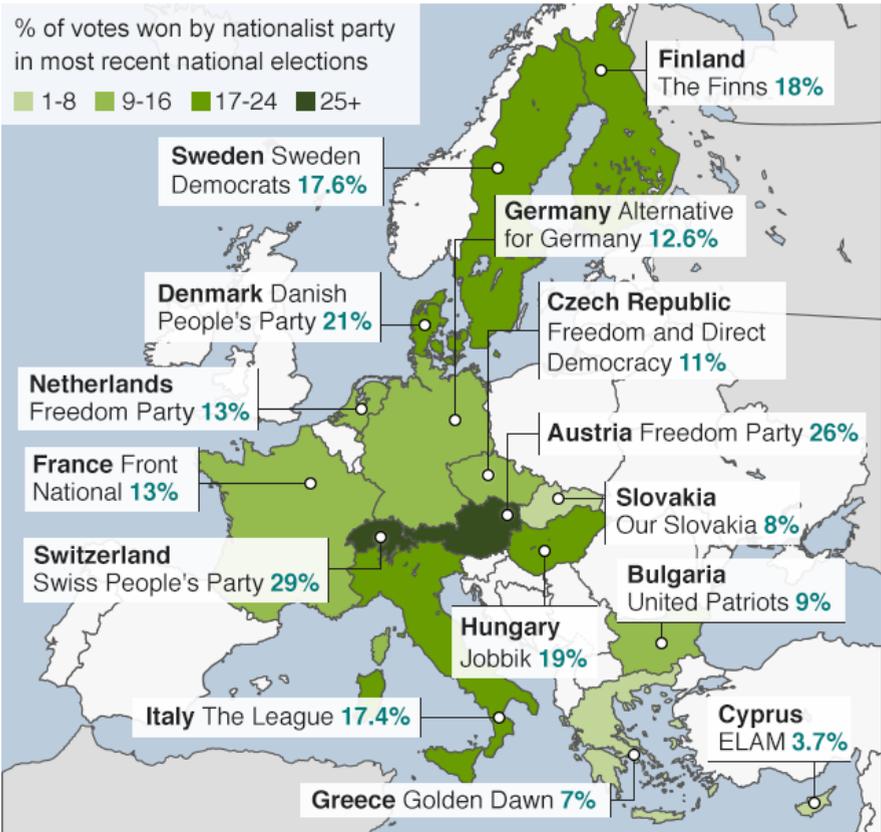
³⁸ Jon Henley, "How populism emerged as an electoral force in Europe", *The Guardian*, November 20, 2018, www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2018/nov/20/how-populism-emerged-as-electoral-force-in-europe

³⁹ Hüsamettinİnaç, "The Construction of National Identity in Modern Times: Theoretical Perspective", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 3 no. 11 (June 2013), <http://www.ijhssnet.com>

⁴⁰ Roy Kemmers, "Channelling discontent? Non-voters, Populist Party voters, and their meaningful political agency" *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology* 4, (2017) 4, www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23254823.2017.1339203

A study of the rise of populism by studying the election results held in Europe during 2014 to 2017 can help understand the phenomenon more accurately.

Rise of nationalism in Europe



In many countries nationalists got higher scores in European Parliament elections and opinion polls

Last updated: September 2018



Austria

In October 2017 elections of Austria, the People’s Party and the Freedom Party emerged as the big winners, with 32 per cent and 26 per cent of the vote respectively.⁴¹ Migration through the Balkans and the perceived threat to Austria from what the ÖVP leader

⁴¹ “The Guardian view on the Austrian elections: an old threat in a new guise,” *The Guardian*, October 16, 2017, www.theguardian.com

Sebastian Kurz regarded “political Islam” as a main play off due to which the right-wing parties have increased their share of vote by 13 per cent since 2000.⁴² Although common disapproval of the Trump’s policies is widely observed in the European countries, yet his victory has significantly accelerated a substantial acceptance of the populist and anti-establishment thinking. This partial acceptance of nationalist narratives has divided the European nations significantly. Votes for the insurgent far-right Freedom Party has increased as much as for the centre-left party of the Social Democrats which is originally the party of the establishment. Both got about 27 per cent.⁴³ As a result, politicization across Austria has intensely increased. Already, since the voting age is 16, populism as an extreme notion stands more chance to wriggle in,⁴⁴ just as the popularity of Le Pen who as far-rightist candidate has more appeal amongst the youth. Nonetheless, the overall defeat of far-right has stunned the political observers. The results of the presidential elections held in December 2016, has given hope to quite an extent since the far-right Freedom Party’s candidate, Norbert Hofer lost narrowly. Thus, the rise of populist theme is still gradual and can be stopped.⁴⁵

Netherlands

Similarly, Geert Wilders, as one of the most notable far-right political leader of the Netherland, leads the anti-European Union and anti-Islam ideology by his Party for Freedom. He finished in the second place and unexpectedly failed to win plurality in March 15, 2017 elections in the Netherlands.⁴⁶ Believed to have been

⁴² “The Guardian view on the Austrian elections: an old threat in a new guise,” *The Guardian*, October 16, 2017, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/oct/16/the-guardian-view-on-the-austrian-elections-an-old-threat-in-a-new-guise

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Zack Beauchamp, “Austria just decisively rejected the far right’s presidential candidate”, *Vox*, December 4, 2016, www.vox.com/world/2016/12/4/13833796/austria-presidential-election-2016-hofer-van-der-bellen

⁴⁶ Alissa J. Rubin, Geert Wilders Falls Short in Election, as Wary Dutch Scatter Their Votes”, *The New York Times*, March 15, 2017,

embittered by immigration and economic inequality, Mr. Wilders is one of the several European nationalist politicians who had appealed to the disillusioned voters to help him remove the Netherlands from the European Union.⁴⁷

Poland

About 39 per cent of the national vote in the 2015 parliamentary elections was cast in favor of Poland's right-wing Law and Justice Party.⁴⁸ It exploited the traditional Catholic values to motivate the voters. Economically vivacious, the 38 million residents of Poland are the largest nation in Eastern Europe.⁴⁹ They have been able to fetch the economic leadership since the recent past.

Jaroslaw Kaczynski was reprimanded by the executive branch of the European Union and President Obama both. He had failed to stand by the rule of law prescribed by the western democracy, yet Kaczynski restricted the public gatherings, strengthened the government control of media and curbed independence of the judiciary.⁵⁰ It was for the first time in the non-communist history of Poland that none of the country's left-wing or social democratic parties could qualify for seats in the Parliament.⁵¹ While remembering its communist history, Mr. Kaczynski said, "We can

www.nytimes.com/2017/03/15/world/europe/geert-wilders-netherlands-far-right-vote.html

⁴⁷ Russel Goldman, "Geert Wilders, a Dutch Nationalist Politician, calls Moroccan Immigrants 'Scum'", *The New York Times*, February 18, 2017, www.nytimes.com

⁴⁸ Jan Cienski, "Polish right sweeps parliamentary elections", *Politico*, October 26, 2015, www.politico.eu/article/polands-government-defeated-in-parliamentary-elections

⁴⁹ "Poland's economy", Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Jakarta, www.ms.gov.pl/en/p/dzakarta_id_a_en/economic_relations/economic_relations_podsekcja/polands_economy/polands_economy?channel=www

⁵⁰ Gregor Aisch, Adam Pearce and Bryant Rousseau, "How far is Europe Swinging to the Right?", *The New York Times*, October 23, 2017, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/05/22/world/europe/europe-right-wing-austria-hungary.html

⁵¹ Jan Cienski. Op. Cit

be proud of it. We will never have to be ashamed of ourselves, as we did many times in the past, through no fault of ours.”⁵²

Hungry

The right-wing Fidesz party of Viktor Orban, ran joint elections with the K.D.N.P. It is originally a Christian Democratic party. It won the last two parliamentary elections in Hungary to the worry of Western leaders for two major reasons:⁵³

- a. Orban’s increasingly authoritarian argument and;
- b. His opposition to the “very anti-Russian policies” in the West since it hurts Hungary’s economy.⁵⁴

Sweden

In a country synonymous with generous welfare and liberal immigration policies, the far-right anti-immigrant Sweden Democrats Party (SDP), doubled its votes by winning about 13 per cent in September, 2014. Sweden entered into a new era as its fragmented political mainstream scrambled. Though the center-left votes were enough to take power from the governing center-right alliance, yet neither bloc won a majority. The far-right SDP has its roots in white supremacist movement⁵⁵ and now holds the balance of power in the Parliament.

Greece

By winning 18 seats in 2012 and entering the Greek parliament for the first time, the neo-fascist Golden Dawn Party came to

⁵² Rick Lyman, “Right-wing Party roars back in Polish elections”, *The New York Times*, October 25, 2015, www.nytimes.com/2015/10/26/world/europe/poland-parliamentary-elections.html

⁵³ Gregor Aisch, Adam Pearce and Bryant Rousseau, “How far is Europe Swinging to the Right?” Op. Cit.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ David Crouch, “Sweden looks to exclude far-right from coalition”, *The New York Times*, September 16, 2014, www.nytimes.com/2014/09/16/world/europe/sweden-looks-to-exclude-far-right-from-coalition.html

international attention due to its extreme anti-immigrant views. The Party favors a defense agreement with Russia and believes that euro could turn out to be devastating for Europe.⁵⁶ In fact, on April 27, 2012, Mr. Samaras in his campaign speech portrayed its narratives more nationalistically that greatly resonated with Greeks. He believes that “the country’s loan deal represents a loss of sovereignty to Germany.”⁵⁷

France

An overtly used anti-Semitic and racist language, Marine Le Pen of The National Front has invariably used populist rhetoric. To promote her views against immigration and dissident stance on the European Union, Le Pen, during her election campaign of 2017, advocated for protectionist economic policies. She originally wanted to clip government’s benefits for immigrants, including health care,⁵⁸ which was a common concern of the French. She had also promised to reduce the number of immigrants drastically if elected. Most of the founding members of her party also included the former Nazi collaborators and members of the wartime collaborationist Vichy regime.⁵⁹ In February, 2015, Ms. Le Pen also tried to apprise her voters that “two totalitarianisms,” globalization and Islamism, want to “subjugate France.”⁶⁰ She depicted that as the world’s sixth-largest economy, France has more chances of getting encircled by devastation under the circumstances.⁶¹

⁵⁶ “Europe’s Rising Far-Right: A guide to the Most prominent Parties”, *The New York Times*, December 4, 2016, www.nytimes.com

⁵⁷ “New Greek Government Sworn-In on Thursday”, *Greek News*, June 24, 2012, <http://www.greeknewsonline.com>

⁵⁸ Adan Nossitter, “Marine Le Pen echoes Trump’s bleak Populism in French Campaign Kickoff”, *The New York Times*, February 5, 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/02/05/world/europe/marine-le-pen-trump-populism-france-election.html

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ John Burn-Murdoch, Billy Ehrenberg-Shannon, Aleksandra Wisniewska and Andrew, French Election Results: Macron’s victory in charts’, *Financial Times*, May 9, 2017, www.ft.com/content/62d782d6-31a7-11e7-9555-23ef563ecf9a

Le Pen reached to the second round of voting in France's two-stage electoral process in the spring elections of 2017,⁶² but could not make it to the final ladder.

Germany

Similarly, the far-right Alternative for Germany party (AfD) won about 13 per cent of votes and emerged as the third strongest party.⁶³ The party started its political journey mainly to protest against the euro currency. Its success is marked as first entrance of a far-right party in more than 60 years. It has won 94 seats to the Germany's parliament.⁶⁴ One of the reasons quoted to the win is the collapse of support for the country's mainstream political parties. They had faced the worst ever result in the post war era by losing more than 100 seats in the *Bundestag*.⁶⁵

Populism: Causes and Consequences

Europe is experiencing a resurgence of the right. The populist threat to Europe cannot be narrowly perceived by relating it to the modest election results of Geert Wilders, the victory of Le Pen, and the success of "Alternative fuer Deutschland" in Germany exclusively. The social, institutional, economic and political factors behind the surge of populism need painstaking dissection. The economic anxiety and xenophobia are other areas of concern as well. There is a noticeable decay in Western liberal set up to which resilience within the European society is ostensible.

Similarly, none of the above mentioned observations of the election results can be interpreted as a unitary phenomenon. Grievances, political constraints and opportunities are however a common denominator for the populists without missing on

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Amanda Taub, "What the Far-Right's Rise may mean for Germany's Future", *The New York Times*, September 26, 2017, www.nytimes.com

⁶⁴ Kate Connolly, "Germany faces first far-right party in parliament since 1960s", *The Guardian*, September 22, 2017, www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/22/germany-faces-first-far-right-party-in-parliament-since-second-world-war

⁶⁵ Ibid.

ideological reasons. Though, European political system has evolved while upholding the essence of participative democracy throughout. Yet, the perceived loss of culture and economic deprivation is more ambiguous for a common citizen; the younger and higher educated have identified it as a cause of rising populism. Immigration, integration and the policies on law and order are impacted the most. Traditionally, conformism or submission to traditional authority are commonly deterring the far-right social movements and challenge the existing authority. The populists are generally characterized as irrational and alienated due to their dogmatic and insecure interpretations. They are perceivably disconnected to particular values or policy preferences and are socially isolated. This has been contested by Klandermans and Mayer who concluded that radical right activists are socially integrated. They apparently are ‘perfectly normal people’.⁶⁶

The policy posture of populists and mainstream political parties has apparently led to the emergence of a new thought as is seen in most of the election results in Europe. Both the institutional as well as the organizational, as internal and external factors provide the fodder to breed the contradictory thought in this regard. The capability of the radical-right can only be challenged by the mainstream political parties to introduce the difference. An unbeaten and triumphant mobilization in the prism of constraints and opportunities can help provide political space to a new thought. This would largely depend upon the salience of the issue and its positioning. Meguid’s suggestion to adopt the restrictive positions on immigration and its eminence would eventually encourage populist thought particularly when mainstream parties would approve the policy also and popularize the thought for the populists. It is more likely to have a devastating impact.⁶⁷

The reliance of the populist movements on media is inevitable. Lack of financial sufficiency and organizational accuracy to get their

⁶⁶ Jasper Muis and Tim Immerzeel, “Causes and consequences of the rise of populist radical right parties and movements in Europe”, *Sage Journals: Current Sociology*, July 14, 2017.

journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0011392117717294

⁶⁷ Ibid.

message across to potential followers seed their dependency. So far, they have been able to generate electoral competition by triggering people who are politically disengaged. They immediately become passionate and involved in politics when the issues such as immigration and eurozone are highlighted through media. In Greece, for instance, non-compliance with the austerity demands by Germany helped earn the popularity for Mr. Samaras, who eventually used nationalist sovereignty at stake through social media.⁶⁸

Nonetheless, radical right populism also has a tendency to put constitutional foundations of liberal democracies at risk. It endangers pluralism and the protection of minorities. The result can cause damage to the very foundations of the European Union.

Conclusion

EU is a democratic endeavor. The preservation and fortification of the shared values of all the European traditions is basically the objective. Originally, in EU the social model is generated to respond jointly to globalization. It however needs restructuring of its core values in order to dissuade the negative impact of globalization.

Undoubtedly, the social *acquis* of the entire Europe, may it be due to the free movement granted by the open borders or in-flow of the immigrants, has to cover a massive ground. In fact, arrival of migrants has made it a security and economic intensive project by adding to the perceived threat of the European citizens. The direct financial impact on employment and wages, health amenities and education services is considered a major cause of concern. Similarly, the possible collision due to cultural invasion and other public goods like the preservation of language are all considered at presumable decadence due to the free population movement. The impact on the locational premium enjoyed by the citizens of host countries is already intensified. The immigrants are also provided with the accommodation. This is the reason that the fears about “native

⁶⁸ Ibid.

identity” dominate the public debate in Europe today.⁶⁹ Coming from the different ethnic, cultural and religious background, the immigrants largely pose a threat.⁷⁰

Hence, “homogenization” promoted by the centre or centre-to-left wing parties in order to accommodate the immigrants is taken as an undermining factor to wipe away national specifics and identity.

The far-right populists commonly advocate the arguments that are already uncomfortable with the transfer of national autonomy and decision rights to EU institutions and its constitutional body. Though, steps have already been taken for the European Border and Coast Guard and were officially launched in October 2016. Similarly, the European Defense Action Plan was initiated in December 2016 to contribute to developing European Security and Defense policy.⁷¹ A common migration, asylum and refugee policy is also under consideration. Yet, a democratic control over the national electorates is massively feared. The rapidly changing canvass requires speedy reflections to deal with the rights of immigrants. It has to coordinate between growth, social collaboration and political freedom amongst all member states.

Similarly, the trust in democratic institutions is already fading fast due to emerging financial crisis. The undercurrent of discontent is getting the boost due to unfair distribution of gains and burdens. The EU institutional settings and policies having more pro-market bias are viewed unhappily particularly by the lower middle and power classes. The Yellow Vest movement holds an impactful precedence. The consequent social impact is also neglected while adversely impacting the cooperation, co-existence, freedom and governability. The national, regional and local levels are all engulfed by the dread of repercussions.

⁶⁹ Marco Buti, Karl Pichelmann, “European integration and populism: Addressing Dahrendorf’s quandary”, VOXCEPR Policy Portal, February 22, 2017. voxeu.org

⁷⁰ Marco Buti, Karl Pichelmann, “European integration and populism: Addressing Dahrendorf’s quandary”, VOXCEPR Policy Portal, February 22, 2017. voxeu.org

⁷¹ Ibid.

The convergence of Pillars of Social Rights within the euro area is already in question. According to European Commission Fact Sheet insurance for jobless is not accessible for the self-employed in 10 member states. Almost a third of people on temporary full-time contracts in the EU are not eligible for the benefits given to unemployed, ranging from more than 70 per cent to less than 3per cent, depending on the member state.⁷² Lack of equal opportunities and access to the labor market are somewhat vexatious espoused with the working conditions which are already considered unfair. The social protection is inadequate and unsustainable. The peripheral states in the EU have frequently decried their worries.⁷³

Transparency and inclusiveness, while making the decisions could be a key to bringing stability, whether the decisions are strategic, political or economic. An ensured fair accountability must be conducted with a view that the lives of millions are affected by the activities of the European Union which cannot be trampled by the stroke of decisions by a few. The mainstream political parties need to avoid giving in to the populist theme of “blaming Brussel’ for all the impact of globalization in this transitional period of connectivity. Interdependency is inherent in growth. Similarly, EU needs to avoid overstretching into international politics. It has significantly given space to a paradoxical imbalance in its role as an emblem of human rights politics.

There certainly is no quick fix for the future. Rebalancing is very complicated in the EU integration. The north-south and east-west divide and schisms between the core and the peripheral member states in the backdrop of dying international cooperation, has significantly convoluted the Union model despite the strong system it represents.

⁷² “Delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights-Questions and Answers”, *European Commission Press Release Data Base*, April 26, 2017, <http://europa.eu>

⁷³ Ibid.



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