

Samuel Skipper

Assessing the Role of Globalisation in the Rise of New Right Attitudes in Germany and Italy



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Abstract

This research examines the role of the various processes entailed in globalisation in the rise of the New Right in Italy and Germany. The first section aims to clarify what is meant by the term globalisation, for it is more easily used than defined. Thus, several perspectives, such as those of the transformationalists and the hyperglobalists, are taken into account. Then, economic and cultural globalisation, considered to be the most influential forms of globalisation, are analysed in depth. The second part specifically examines the Italian and the German cases by analysing the political and ideological discourse of successful New Right cultural movements and parties, such as the Italian Northern League and National Alliance. This analysis explains the difference between the populist New Right and the extreme right, and how the rise of New Right parties can be linked with the strengthening of cultural and economic globalisation.

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Introduction

According to Kaldor in the current era a number of different political ideologies, such as cosmopolitanism, Europeanism, Islamic fundamentalism, capitalism, and nationalism are in competition.¹ Some of them are progressive and in favour of an increasingly globalised world, while others are nostalgic, ‘backward-looking’, and reject most of the current developments occurring that are inevitably transforming societies around the globe. The outcome of this competition between the various ideologies will determine the future of the international panorama.² One of the ideologies mentioned on which I will focus my attention in this paper is nationalism, or more specifically neo-nationalism, which can be defined as “nationalism in a globalised world of aggressive postcolonial and post-Cold War readjustment.”³ This paper will try to provide answers to questions such as whether neo-nationalism, which has often been considered out-of-date and as something of the past, is becoming a la mode again and whether it is being strengthened by the processes of globalisation. Indeed, the aim of this paper is to understand whether the New Right movements and nationalist populist parties in Western Europe, which base their entire political and ideological discourse on nationalism, have been growing stronger in the last two decades as a result of some of the developments the processes of globalisation entails (migration, free trade, cultural interconnectedness, political transnationalism, and Americanisation). These developments are pivotal in enhancing nationalistic sentiments, which often lead to xenophobic attitudes. To many, the future appears unpredictable, if not frightening, due to the ‘newness’ brought by the various processes of globalisation, which has transformed lifestyles as well as the economic and social contexts, often generating not happiness but misery. For many observers “the only true opponents of globalisation are the nationalists, who already for years denounce the ongoing process that has led to globalisation being a fact today.”⁴ As Hans-Georg Betz has tried to demonstrate, New Right populist parties have attracted “a sizeable portion of the Western European population; their deputies and

¹ Kaldor M., ‘Nationalism and Globalisation’, Nations and Nationalism Vol. 10 (1/2), 2004 p 162

² Ibid

³ Gingrich A. ‘Neo-nationalism and the reconfiguration of Europe’ Social Anthropology Vo. 14 No. 2 2006 p 200

⁴ CMtG (n.d) Nationalisten tegen Globalisering, available at: <http://www.strijd.be/platform.htm>
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