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**CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF POPULISM CONSIDERING THE CURRENT
TRENDS IN GLOBALIZATION**- Aneesh Singh¹**Abstract**

This essay rigorously dissects populism in the context of current globalization trends. Populism has emerged as a potent political force in recent times, disrupting established democratic institutions and norms worldwide. Concurrently, globalization has continued to shape the interdependence of economies, cultures, and civilizations, presenting global nations with both opportunities and challenges. The study delves into the intricate connection between globalization and populism. Globalization has fostered economic expansion and cultural exchange, but it has also triggered disruptions and dislocations, which have contributed to social unrest and grievances that populists often exploit. The research elucidates how globalization processes intersect with populist agendas, either amplifying or diminishing their appeal, through the examination of case studies from diverse locations, such as the rise of populist leaders in Europe, America, and Asia.

Additionally, in an era of growing interconnectedness, the article assesses the consequences of populist movements for political stability, democratic governance, and international cooperation. It examines how populist politicians handle international issues, including trade, immigration, and climate change, and the effects of their policies on local and global politics. The study concludes by providing insights into possible approaches for resolving populism's root problems while maximising the advantages of globalisation. It highlights how crucial it is to have inclusive economic policies, foster social cohesion, and fortify democratic institutions to thwart populist narratives and advance sustainable development in an increasingly interconnected globe.

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Introduction

In a world where populism prevails, international law and globalisation are in danger. This statement itself illustrates that the idea of populism will leave no stone unturned to pull down the rise of globalisation. Populism can be analysed broadly, yet it precisely means the "people's voice". The concept of populism is old and revolves around the basic demands of people and how they can be highlighted. A populist government could be called an authoritative government that is rigid in the political style it propagates to the masses. Benjamin Moffitt has narrated the phenomenon not as a fixed ideology like liberalism and socialism but rather as a political style that lies in how it is practised.² In this reaction paper, my approach is to narrow down the concept of populism's impact on today's globalising world.

When we talk about Populism as a political practice, we rightly understand the concept of fixating on changing the current conditions of the political setup as it is elite-dominant, and the same is said to be harmful to democracy and its components. Populism conceptualises a society with two distinct, antagonistic factions in the future: "the pure people" and "the corrupt elite." In today's world, international law plays a significant role in binding various nations and bringing about a pluralistic functioning approach.

Impact of latest populist ideologies in a Globalizing World

Populism, as a concept, tends to target international law and bring down its policies, which includes the potential to disrupt the established norms and standards. It is based on specific communication strategies that aim to get public attention by breaking certain conventions that are currently in order. The recent significant examples of the rise to populism are the Brexit Referendum, which was done on the idea of desire to reclaim control over immigration and national sovereignty from international institutions³ and the 2016 US elections of Donald Trump as the US President, who gave controversial statements on the policymakers of International Law

²Pranjal Gupta, "Rise of Populism and Emerging Challenges to Globalisation" Kalinga Institute of Indo-Pacific Studies (May 8, 2024) <https://www.kiips.in/research/rise-of-populism-and-emerging-challenges-to-globalisation/>

³Iakhnis, E., Rathbun, B., Reifler, J., & Scotto, T. J. (2018). "Populist referendum: Was 'Brexit' an expression of nativist and anti-elitist sentiment?" *Research & Politics*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168018773964>

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that indicates that the populist idea is that globalisation lacks any legitimacy and the makers of International law are some elitists who have barely been in touch with the ordinary people and are neglectful of their needs. To further explain this, the example that seems appropriate is of how the US political party, during elections in 2016, used populist slogans, and their speech included the words "we people" and "us" as a mark of emphasis to lure the ordinary people into the idea of mass unification and change by taking away the power from the elite which was said to be the prevailing problem. The concept of Populism is an underlying concept of Sovereignty; hence, the said examples can be used to illustrate the idea of human rights violations within their borders. Coming to a narrow understanding, populist governments picture international law as a law of coordination and reject its agreements based on numerous factors.

Moreover, it is intriguing for a lawyer to understand the relationship between the rise of populist political setup, its impact on globalisation, and the structural change in international law. International law is based on multilateralism, international institutions, and a community structured around shared interests. On the other hand, the populist government believes that there should be no room for compromise when it comes to the inclusion of ideas and points of view from diverse groups; therefore, it negates all these concepts. Firstly, it negates multilateral agreements and promotes bilateral or unilateral contracts, even to the extent of going against the WTO. One of the significant examples of this is the Trump administration's dismissal of multilateralism. Countries like Hungary, Venezuela, and Turkey have made bilateral agreements that have affected the multi-national interconnectivity of globalisation.⁴ Similarly, populism impacts international institutions by dismissing their establishments and showing withdrawal or threat of withdrawal from the signed agreements with the global institutions. An example of this could be the notice of denunciation by Venezuela from the American Convention on Human Rights (ACHR) in 2012.

Dynamic Articulation of the ideology of Populism

Further, we understand that populist policies will likely create tension regarding universalism and international solidarity. The idea of favouring particularisation and more emphasis on "us"

⁴Prof. Kristian Humble, *Populism and the Threat to International Law*, MDIP (2022)
<https://doi.org/10.3390/laws11030050>

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specific ideology can be a threat to the global community. One example of this could be the words of Former National Security Advisor to President Trump Herbert R. McMaster and former Director of the National Economic Council Gary Cohen, where they emphasise that the world is not a "global community". Protectionist policies like tariffs and trade barriers are frequently supported by populist beliefs to insulate home sectors from international competition. Although these regulations could provide short-term protection for regional businesses and jobs, they might impede general economic growth and interfere with global supply chains, raising consumer costs and decreasing trade internationally. The preservation of historic cultural values and national identity is frequently emphasised by populist ideologies, which also reject or demonise any perceived external challenges to these values. The concepts of cultural variety and global connection may be challenged if this results in a rise in ethno-nationalism and cultural isolationism. Populist leaders frequently put national concerns ahead of multilateralism and international collaboration. This can make creating cooperation and collective action harder, undermining global attempts to solve urgent issues like economic inequality, pandemics, and climate change.

Discussing the dire impact of populism on globalisation, we see that it has posed challenges such as protectionist economic policies, immigration restrictions, erosion of trust during distressful times, etc. Factors like wartime trust, immigration, and financial strategies are the basis of globalisation and promote interlinking between nations to a path of progression. The immigration challenges imposed by populism are a concept of right-winged populism, as we see that right-winged ideologists are against the free immigration policy, and they constrain the same to a possible end.⁵ Hence, these challenges threaten globalisation and the "Universal Welfare State" concept.

Conclusion

In conclusion, populism is a broad concept based on rigid ideas and an anti-pluralistic approach. Globalisation, on the other hand, is a different phenomenon, which includes the interlinking of nations, taking institutes together, and promoting the concept of diverse trust and policy making.

⁵Duane Swank, Hans-Georg Betz, *Globalization, the welfare state and right-wing populism in Western Europe*, (2003) *Socio-Economic Review*, Oxford Academic(1) <https://academic.oup.com/ser/article/1/2/215/1681023>

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We learn that a populist government's attitude towards international law fluctuates between a structural approach and a rhetoric-based principled opposition that, if implied, would significantly alter the nature of international law and might even lead to de-globalization. Populism has a narrow perspective towards growth and change and is based on cherry-picking policy preferences, which is the opposite of globalisation. As an integrated net of nations, we should have resources for mutual development, a path made by international law to grow globalisation. The fact that populist governments pose a fundamental challenge to international law and its institutions and necessitate international lawyers to consider what needs to be preserved and what should be altered is something we should be concerned about.

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