

THE RISE OF NATIONALIST SENTIMENTS AND THEIR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES IN THE PROCESS OF ADVANCED GLOBALIZATION

Robert Janik

Częstochowa University of Technology, Poland

Abstract

Since the period of the industrial revolution, the world has been subjected to the rapid processes of establishing new networks of contacts between individuals and organizations, particularly rapid in the area of communication, production, services and trade, resulting in economic development and enabling cooperation on an unprecedented scale in this area. Not all countries have benefited from these opportunities equally. As time passes, it becomes more and more visible that, beneath the surface of cooperation, there is a ruthless scramble for access to markets and the related opportunities to gain money and power under the guise of the globalization process. This is accompanied by the skepticism towards the effectiveness of the fair "free trade" and the search for forms of action ensuring the achievement of one's own, egoistic interests, also related to the increase in isolationist tendencies as well as nationalist sentiments in many regions of the world and having impact on the social and political as well as cultural sphere of the life of nations. These spheres include an increase in social and ethnic tensions and rising the question about the possibility of conducting fair trade and genuine international cooperation.

This situation also creates convenient opportunities to act for the populistically-oriented opponents of democracy, who try to "seduce societies" using the slogans of "national unity" and instill in them aversion to all those who do not share their vision of the world.

Keywords: globalization, economy, nationalism, fair trade, isolationism

INTRODUCTION

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the "Cold War" was accepted by most researchers of social history as a time when previous conflicts lost their significance, and a "new era" of relations between people began. Fukuyama's statement about the end of history gained popularity. In place of the old ideological antagonisms and the East-West conflict with "proxy wars", the new fields of action appeared, especially, in the area of economics, where capitalism, which emerged victorious in the competition with communism, triumphantly proclaimed the neoliberal thesis about the domination of the free market over all other types of economy. The term "globalization" has become fashionable and, even though it was known before, has been ascribed a new, largely ideological meaning, becoming a synonym not so much for the process of "the world coming together", but for the triumph of capitalism and neoliberal ideology. (Steger, 2009: 18)

One could also be under the impression that mankind, equipped with modern technical and communication means (including the Internet and mobile telephony), is heading towards building a "community", a kind of "global village" mentioned by Marshall McLuhan, based to a greater degree upon "economic internationalism" or "cosmopolitanism".

The period at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st one was a time of concluding various types of international "free trade" agreements as well as of strengthening global economic organizations such as the World Bank or the World Trade Center. (Fukuyama, 2007: 155-180) However, this "globalization march" soon encountered serious difficulties. The time after the "end of communism" was found to be a period full of numerous ethnic and national conflicts, whilst economic crises undermined faith in the effectiveness of the "free market economy". People also began to realize that it was ethnic conflicts which led to the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and the wars there became proof that this topic had not lost its relevance.

METHODOLOGY

The specificity of this research rendered it indispensable to apply the documentary research method and the historical-comparative method.

LITERATURE REVIEW/RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The issues discussed in this article have not been described holistically yet. There are many books on globalization and nationalism, but there is no comprehensive study of the phenomenon of the growth of nationalist feelings in the advanced process of globalization.

ETHNIC/NATIONAL SENTIMENTS IN THE HISTORY

Ethnic feelings associated with nationalism are rooted in the need to belong to the group and the search for security in the collective. This is observed in the case of insects and animals, e.g. ants and hornets show "specialization" which permits them to act in a strictly defined way for the benefit of their "organizational unit". One can find similarities in the behavior of humans, e.g. readiness to make sacrifices, sense of (compliance with) the rules of hierarchy or a sense of loyalty. The herd life of animals has also been associated, and from the very beginning, with some kind of identification with a given community. Depending on the species, there are common activities in the natural world which increase the chances of success in the "struggle for existence", and which are regulated by the ways of behavior typical of a given species. For this reason, it also seems justified to perceive this type of cooperation as part of defense mechanisms which permit society to function as part of a kind of "whole". Observing various forms of intra-species communication, biologists also notice the elements of mutual motivation among herd members to undertake various actions as well as the occurrence of "rituals", consisting of the sequences of behaviors comparable to expressing a "sense of belonging" in the human world. It is, therefore, not surprising that Aristotle, aware of the need for social interaction of humans, defined man as *zoon politikon* (ζῷον πολιτικόν), "a political/social creature". In this context, the ecological and biological trend of considerations on cooperation and competition deserves attention. A clear position in this debate was taken by the American ecologist Warder Clyde Allee, whose research proved that humans are gregarious creatures, intending to live in groups. People staying in communities cooperate and behave peacefully in natural conditions. The state of war, associated with the extreme forms of competition, is not biologically determined. (Kivits, 1994: 375-376)

Allee "ideological adversary" has been George Christopher Williams, another American scientist. In his opinion, humans are subject to "natural selection" at various levels of existence. This kind of competition plays an important role in the case of nationalism, which states that a specific ethnic groups are particularly deserving recognition and have the right to be successful. Supporters of nationalism are usually convinced that their ethnic group will emerge victorious of the competition and they are prepared by nature to win.

This concept is etymologically not quite correct because this type of feelings occur already at the clan or tribal level and not only at the level of the "nation", as the name could suggest. (Giddens, Sutton, 2021: 868-872)

Problems occur when in the case of applying it in relation to "love for the homeland" it is assumed that the willingness to sacrifice for the group may be associated with patriotism, while an attitude unfriendly towards others and favoring aggressive (unprovoked) attacks on others with nationalism. In turn, the attitude of non-identification, or "weak identification" with one's own ethnic group, and found in the sphere of "all of humanity", is associated with cosmopolitanism. It ought to be noted that ethnic sentiments are nothing new. Their origins appeared already in antiquity before the emergence of national states in the modern sense of the expression. They performed a number of functions, including mobilizing forces to fight opponents. Tapping into feelings and sensations to gain the favor of the masses is related to populism, which is, in turn, semantically related to propaganda. "Seducing societies" with the application of catchy slogans became a particularly effective method when mass media became more

important. Its value has been gaining importance in the course of the advanced globalization process when the possibilities of influencing public opinion increased immeasurably thanks to new generations of media, with the Internet as the forerunner. Occurring nationalism tries to perform both protective and integrating functions; it permits us to defend ourselves against foreigners by "closing ranks". It is expressed in a simple formula "to love everything that is ours" and to have a "negative attitude towards strangers" – or better "hate the others". Nationalism effectively resorts to demagoguery, trying to alleviate even the most difficult problems by spreading catchy slogans which usually carry a message which has no chance of being implemented. Such populism resorts to a "morally cheap ideological mixture", involving the application of simple psychological tricks and dividing people into "ours" (good) and "others" (bad). Divisions can be created in any way, with belonging to a specific ethnic group, religious group or sexual orientation can be an instance. It is difficult not to notice that this type of ideology is difficult to reconcile with the functioning of the democratic system. Among the theorists of nationalism in the West, one can find such figures as: Patrick Joseph Buchanan, considered an ultra-conservative and known for controversial anti-Semitic statements, Stephen Kevin Bannon, co-creator of Trump's political successes and one of the architects of Brexit, and a politician who actively supports the enemies of the European Union or Samuel Phillips Huntington, the author of the concept of clash of civilizations. (Huntington, 2002: 29-39)

NATIONAL STATES IN THE PERIOD OF ADVANCED GLOBALIZATION

As mentioned above, globalization was characterized, at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st one, by an evident weakening of the power of the nation state, increase in the importance of economic circles and international organization associating nation states. It ought to be noted that the nation state is, historically speaking, a relatively new creation, the symbolic beginning of which is related to the Great French Revolution. (Elias, 2017: 257-362) What is worth mentioning in this context the concept of Charles Tilly, who, drawing attention to the great success of the nation state, sought its origins in the military sphere. Analyzing the time period from the Middle Ages to the present, he concluded that progress in the military area was important for the establishment of a nation state; the dissemination of gunpowder and the creation of a mass army were particularly important (an instance would be Cromwell's "new type of army" or the French armed forces based upon duty to do military service applicable to all male citizens established in the course of the Great Revolution), which meant that only nation states equipped with a tax system providing funds to cover military expenses had a chance of effective action in the face of military threats. Considering Tilly's concept, it can be noted that, in the conditions of the modern world, the capabilities of even the most powerful nation states seem to be insufficient to effectively compete with arising challenges. An important role is played by powerful capital groups operating in many countries, which indispensably strive to operate in larger organizational units. (Giddens, 1993: 629-632)

In these conditions, the emergence of large transnational structures seems to be a logical response to the changes taking place in the world, which is inscribed in the logic of the advanced globalization process. A characteristic feature of the economies of Western countries is the serious debt of the public sector, which significantly limits the ability of individual governments to act. An extremely important aspect of the issue of globalization is the concentration of large amounts of capital in the hands of a small number of corporations and financial centers.

This became possible by purchasing "weaker" companies by "stronger" ones and merging enterprises and banks. The resulting behemoths have enormous economic power, and their share in the gross world product is constantly increasing. Some companies have financial resources greater than those available to many countries, and this fact seems to constitute a potential threat to democracy. The existence of private financial empires driven by lust for profit and independent of any external bodies often contributes to the destabilization of the economies of many countries; an instance is the activity of speculative capital. What is disturbing is the lack of transparency of stock exchange operations and the growing role of capital focused on short-term, quick profits. (Keynes, 1997: 147-164) Even though modern enterprises are international in nature, however, as a rule, due to their economic power, they have considerable influence also in their own home countries.

The accompanying "ideological additions", including the neoliberal slogans of "market freedom", in a situation when, in the face of negative phenomena for some social groups, e.g. farmers, became aware that international agreements concluded in the face of globalization means that some win whereas others are seen to fail as Gore Vidal might say. For instance, many poor social groups often did not belong to the beneficiaries of free trade. (Sachs, 2005: 51-73)

Among the effects of capital concentration, the growing social stratification on a global scale and the disproportions in the distribution of the wealth are of great importance. For instance, the lack of balance in income between people living in different countries is glaring. The phenomenon of social polarization seems to occur both in countries previously considered poor or "developing" as well as in the highly-developed ones. (Breznitz, Zysman, 2013: 107-127) Of course, the consequences of this state of affairs are much more dramatic in poorer countries, where the phenomenon of pauperization often means a "struggle for existence" in the literal sense of the word. However, there are many indications that, within the First World societies, there are also more and more cases of social exclusion and related negative phenomena such as an increase in crime and the spread of the consumption of intoxicating substances.

Free market practices also have their limitations, and there is hypocrisy in the acting of individual governments. (Akerlof, 2009: 97-106) When the economic interests of rich countries were threatened by free market processes, their authorities, out of concern for the interests of the companies operating in them, introduced prohibitive tariffs, protecting their markets against dangerous competition. Such actions are protested primarily by the poor countries of the Third World, which, moved by the injustice of the steps in question, often identify the processes taking place in the world aimed at the concentration of power and capital with the process of globalization. In this context, demands for fair trade appear.

It is worth noting that other political circles and social groups are also protesting against globalization, understood as the "degeneration of capitalism" (anti-globalism). These include left-wing groups – Marxist, clearly weakened after the collapse of the USSR and China's *de facto* departure from "Mao's way", anarchists and political circles close to social democracy. An important role has been played by the loosely associated Occupy Movement, which sought to combat the perversions of capitalism, and with whom Noam Chomsky is associated as well as all who feel threatened by the processes related to globalization. (Chomsky, 1999: 19-40)

The activities of this type of groups, combined with the actions of ecologists demanding, among others, that national governments and international organizations take effective actions to protect the natural environment, even though sometimes taking troublesome forms, are difficult to compare with the activities of nationalists who create social and political tensions and act to the detriment of international cooperation and democracy. All of these former groups are not nearly as harmful as nationalists, who have now begun to constitute a real threat not only to the "ideology of globalization", but also to democracy itself.

The fact is that globalization is older than democracy and participating countries do not indispensably must a representative system or choose politicians to govern them in elections.

However, the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century showed that globalization favored democratic processes. The current development is disturbing because it shows the growing power of nationalistic, authoritarian and autocratic governments, which, coupled with populism, seem to have an increasing influence upon the economic, political, military and cultural life of our planet. This affects also the globalization process, which is losing much of its previous momentum. In all this, the rise of nationalist sentiments plays an increasingly important role. There are also visible extreme forms of religious movements, emphasizing their soteriological exclusivity and sometimes identifying with the specific groups of humans. (Janik, 2022: 195-212)

DISCUSSION

After the end of the Cold War, democracy seemed to triumph in many countries of the world. However, gradually, tendencies to "undermine" the democratic system began to appear in some of them, and those who had joined the EU were not free of such trends. They were related to the globalization process, which, in turn, was associated with neoliberal ideology and seemed to be "irreversible". International economic organizations began to play an increasingly important role in it, and new agreements on international cooperation had been signed, especially those that enabled free trade. However, it soon was found that the implementation of neoliberal concepts did not satisfy everyone and that large sections of society began to bear the brunt the negative sides of globalization understood in this way, which meant that the words of its critics were lent ears by more and more people. It was realized that globalization is not 'a battle without tears'. (Bannock, Baxter, Davis, 2003: 161)

People began to realize that globalization does not mean either an absolutely peaceful process or an automatic and consistent tightening of contacts between various organizations in the world. In fact, it led to the creation of large structures as well as to the disintegration of others. In the past, it was wars and epidemics that played a significant role. The phases of creation were interrupted by those of destruction. This was accompanied by the creation of various international contacts, primarily along trade routes. (Janik, 2017: 16-24)

Considering the current phase of globalization, it ought to be noted that, apart from the undoubted technical progress, it is accompanied by an increase of the importance of the forces of the nationalistically-oriented right, which influence both politics and the economy. The main distinguishing features of autocratic or authoritarian systems are the concentration of all state power in the hands of an individual or relatively small group, ruling through a monolithically- and hierarchically-organized apparatus over society which has no influence upon appointing and overthrowing rulers. The systems in question often have a nationalistic and populist attitude to the globalization.

Even though, in the modern world, there is a tendency towards the formation of authoritarian or autocratic rather than totalitarian governments, attention ought to be paid in this context to the fact that the progressive technicalization of social life creates additional opportunities for the surveillance of the population, which, in the future, may render it possible to subject entire societies to total control.

Nationalism, together with populism, autocracy and authoritarianism, create a dangerous mixture, directed against democracy and the idea of development and bringing people closer together as part of the globalization process.

Nationalism and populism usurp the right to interpret the will of the people and demonstrate a high level of manipulateness, causing specific social reactions to selected stimuli. In populism, one could find a tendency towards "charismatic leaders" who are credited with "superhuman" properties. It is rightly associated with "demagoguery", which is attributed to achieving "easy results" by applying techniques that influence the human psyche. There is no shortage of tricks in the arsenal of nationalists, who appeal to the "will of the people." As a rule, they try to "seduce" potential supporters by applying, more or less effectively, simple rhetoric, sometimes connected with primitive slogans. One ought to not forget that nationalism often occurs in democracies and contributes to their weakening. It ought to be remembered that the so-called "strong-arm governments" are created especially where normal democratic mechanisms fail, internally destroying themselves with corruption, decision-making failure or lying to citizens.

Analyzing the activity of nationalist and populists associated with them, it can be concluded that they lead, among others to:

- inventing conspiracy theories;
- dividing people into better and worse;
- creating "scapegoats" and negative attitudes towards others;
- generating both regional and international tensions;

- aiming to confront "economic enemies", suspected of threatening their interests. (Andrews, 2021: 88-91)

Nationalism also indirectly contributes to inflaming religious conflicts and permits to hide and cover up the manifestations of social injustice.

The decline in the importance of the nation state corresponds to the separatist and isolationist tendencies visible in politics as evidenced by the withdrawal of Great Britain from the European Union, i.e. "Brexit". A significant role is currently being played in the world by "strong leaders", autocrats who resort to populist rhetoric, often with fascist undertones. This group includes, among others, Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping, Narendra Modi or Recep Erdoğan. (Rachman, 2023: 25-88; S.S. Montefiore, 2022: 1251-1255) Also, "strong Western democracies" have been found to be less than perfectly immune to populist attempts, as evidenced by, for instance, Donald Trump's rhetoric and the "storming of the Capitol" by his supporters in protest against the "stolen election." A special field of activity for various types of "strong men" is economic life. In this context, tensions between the US, China and Russia deserve attention.

Observing the significant adaptability of circles associated with nationalism, it ought to be noted that this involves a great threat. As a result of this camouflage, public opinion is presented a polite version of political extremism dressed in the guise of national virtues. This is undoubtedly the true face of this political direction. Nationalism, seen historically, has brought an endless series of the outbursts of hatred and wars, including the two world ones, and is the cause of the collapse of countries, e.g. Yugoslavia, where the seeds of ethnic fighting also took their toll. The destructive properties of nationalism also made themselves felt in the course of the advanced process of globalization.

FINAL REMARKS

Nationalism is intended to strengthen the unity of the nation and protect against social dissatisfaction – e.g. due to economic perturbations. Modern nationalistic demagogues have positioned themselves against globalization and seem to have an increasingly significant impact upon this process. Nationalism may appear as a form of the general theory of everything which tries to explain all real and imaginary problems applying a simple formula, namely: we are "good" and others are "bad". An important feature of nationalism, which renders it attractive, is the idea of "choosing" one's own ethnic group, e.g. to perform "great deeds". Nationalists' arsenal seems to be "inexhaustible" and its representatives are always able to find new "enemies" to keep themselves and their allies in a state of appropriate tension.

It ought to be remembered that, initially, (in the 17th and 18th centuries) the number of nations with the use of nationalistic ideology was limited; moreover, the largest of them, the British Empire, resorted to it quite sparingly, trying to create the appearance of "enlightened universalism". The situation in the world today is completely different; the list of countries resorting to nationalism as a "main" or "supporting" ideology is very long. The nation-building processes accompanying the post-colonial era have played, in this context, a significant role. This renders the threat we are currently facing much greater.

Invoking the "will of the people" under these conditions may be found to be a path to nowhere. The advanced process of globalization, despite its achievements, is not immune to the threats associated with the rise of nationalist sentiments. To make it resistant to threats, it is indispensable to increase the efforts of circles aware of their mission in various countries and to invest in the broadly-understood building of social awareness and sensitivity. We ought to try to give the process of globalization a "human face" by showing that it is associated with positive things for "an average man". (Stiglitz, 2016: 263-283)

As a result of the actions of nationalists, economic and political tensions arise. They are visible in the area of trade, for instance, in the area of price wars, customs barriers, sanctions imposed on competitors etc. Also, as a result, isolationist and authoritarian tendencies as well as the threat of military conflicts are intensifying in the world. This is accompanied by a "rhetoric of confrontation", bringing a reminiscent of the Cold War to mind. Everything indicates in the state of affairs that treating the ills of globalization, which undoubtedly exist, with the help of nationalism and populism is like putting out fires with gasoline or other flammable substances. In general, simple countermeasures which can help

against nationalist sentiments in the advanced process of globalization as well as against extremism from the right and left, ought to contain investments in social awareness and human well-being, this means in education, economy based upon social justice and reasonable social policy. It would be a pity if those who call themselves “defenders of democracy” could not be credited with appropriate showings in this field.

REFERENCES

- Akerlof G.A., Shiller R.J, 2009: *Animal Spirits*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Andrews K., 2021: *The New Age of Empire*. Dublin: Penguin Random House.
- Bannock G., Baxter R. E., Davis E., 2003: *The Penguin Dictionary of Economics*. London: Penguin Books.
- Breznitz D., Zysman J. (editor) 2013: *The Third Globalization*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Chomsky N., 2012: *Occupy*. London: Penguin Books.
- Chomsky N., 1999: *Profit over People*. New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Elias N., 2017: *The Civilizing Process*. Oxford: UK Blackwell Publishing,
- Fukuyama F., 2007: *After the Neocons. America at the Crossroads*. London: Profile Books.
- Giddens A., Sutton P. W., 2021: *Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddens A., 1993: *Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Huntington G., 2002: *The Clash of Civilizations*. London: Simon & Schuster Inc.
- Janik R., 2022: *Managerial, Social and Political Aspects of the Activity of Selected Religious Groups*. Częstochowa: Publishing Office of Częstochowa, University of Technology.
- Janik R., 2017: *Political, Economic and Managerial Reflections on the Globalization Process*. Częstochowa: Publishing Office of Faculty of Management Częstochowa University of Technology.
- Kivits T., 1994: *Eine kurze Geschichte der Psychologie*. Düsseldorf, Wien: Econ Taschenbuch Verlag.
- Montefiore S.S., 2022: *The World. A Family History*. London: Weidenfeld&Nocolson.
- Rachman G., 2023: *The Age of the Strongman*. Dublin: Vintage, Penguin Random House UK.
- Steger M. B., 2009: *Globalization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stiglitz J. E., 2016: *The Great Divide*. Great Britain: Penguin Random House.
- Sachs J., 2005: *The End of Poverty*. New York: Penguin Books.