


## RISING RIGHT-WING PARTIES IN EUROPE: GLOBALIZATION AND MULTICULTURALISM

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to explain the concept of globalization and to examine its social, economic, and political impacts. One of the factors affecting the issues of nations and nationalism is the extraordinary acceleration of the globalization process in recent years and the impact this acceleration has had on the mobility of people. The connection between this globalization process and the concept of international migration strengthens each other more with each passing day. International migration significantly influences changes in the political order. We can associate globalization with almost every topic, such as trade, education, politics, science, football, or music awards. On the other hand, multiculturalism begins with acknowledging the significance of culture and cultural identity. Secondly, the consequences of this migration issue in Europe will be examined, and the European Union's migration policies will be analyzed historically. The decline in trust in EU institutions regarding migration, disagreements among governments, and the question of how beneficial a long-term migration policy would be pose significant challenges for the European Union. Finally, how the rising far-right movements in Europe have left an impression on both domestic and foreign policies, and how far-right parties with anti-EU and anti-immigrant stances have reacted to these migration policies will be examined.

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## 1. Introduction

First, the aim of this study aims to explain of the concept of globalization and to examine its social, economic, and political impacts. In today's world, we face the consequences of wars and migrations that have taken place over centuries. It is possible to say that Europe is experiencing unprecedented ethnic diversity. For instance, considering that more than 10% of the population in some countries like Sweden is foreign-born, it is a fact that this process cannot be reversed (Held, 1999: 485). Secondly, the process of radicalization will be examined to establish the connection between multiculturalism and terrorism in the globalized world.

The consequences of this migration issue in Europe will be examined. The study will explore the reasons behind the influx of migrants to Europe, such as whether they come for better living conditions or for personal safety, and where they are coming from. This study aims to explore the impact of migration to Europe on both domestic and foreign policies, and to address the question of the effectiveness of EU migration policies through a historical analysis.

The reactions of far-right parties that are anti-EU and anti-immigrant to these migration policies will be examined, along with their own political stances. Through data analysis, this study will examine the political influence of far-right parties and assess the role globalization has played in fueling the rise of the far-right in Europe. Finally, in light of the findings, the study will aim to introduce new questions to the literature regarding the future of the European Union.

In the literature, Mark Almond examined the migration crisis in Europe (1992), while Topçu defined the phenomenon of globalization and migration and analyzed EU migration policies (2019). Additionally, there are many studies contributing to the literature on the increasing far-right movements in Europe. The aim of this study is to analyze the efficiency of EU migration policies while exploring the connection between globalization and migration. On the other hand, the current vote shares of rising far-right parties in response to the migration issue will be empirically analyzed, and their stances on the EU and anti-immigration will be examined to expand the literature.

## 2. Globalisation

The concept of "globalization" has been criticized for being Eurocentric or merely a form of Western modernity, as it emerged as a result of modernity in Western Europe. However, some writers argue that globalization began with the discovery of America in the 1500s. The end of the Cold War and the reunification of East and West Germany in 1990 accelerated the pace of globalization. As a result of globalization, innovations arise, including increased interdependence, a rise in multidimensional migrations worldwide, and the gradual erosion of domestic politics. It is an undeniable fact that migration and colonialism have accelerated cultural exchange, whether positive or negative (Pooch, 2016, p. 17-21).

One of the factors affecting the issues of nations and nationalism is the extraordinary acceleration of the globalization process and its impact on human mobility. This process increases both temporary and permanent movements within state borders and intensifies them to unprecedented levels. Between 1999 and 2001, approximately 4.5 million people entered the fifteen countries that joined the European Union (Hobsbawm, 2007, p. 87-88).

Societies have been more affected by political globalization, which focuses on the increase of regional and international governance mechanisms such as the European Union and the United Nations. These institutions bring together nation-states through common decisions they make to regulate the global system (Giddens, 2014, p. 23).

In short, globalization can encompass many issues. We can relate almost every topic, including trade, education, politics, science, football, or music awards, to globalization. In a globalized society, migration includes not only displaced persons due to wars but also types of migration such as labor migration and brain drain. The connection between the globalization process and the concept of international migration is becoming stronger every day.

## 2.1. Globalization and Economy

Economic globalization generally refers to the spread of international trade and investments. This has led to the rapid growth of economic organizations, the development of foreign trade volume, and the advancement of market economies. With the collapse of the Bretton Woods system, transactions in the foreign exchange market significantly increased, rising from \$15 billion in 1973 to over \$1 trillion in daily transactions today. Approximately 40% of world trade is conducted by multinational corporations, highlighting the dominance of developed countries in global trade (Aktel, 2001, p. 197-198).

While the increase in foreign trade volume, market development, and rising interdependence due to globalization has positive aspects, it also means that the entire world is affected in times of crisis. The best example of this is the oil shock of 1973. The success of the neoliberal economic programs implemented in the United States and the United Kingdom in mitigating the effects of the 1973 crisis also played a significant role in the spread of a strong globalist wave across Europe (Arman, 2021, p. 145).

Another event impacting the world economy was the crisis of 2008. Banks, in order to secure more financing from the early 2000s, began to transform risky mortgage loans into debt securities and started securitization. Meanwhile, investors tried to earn more income by purchasing these securities sold by banks at low-interest rates. However, as homeowners failed to pay their mortgage loans, the value of the securities derived from these loans rapidly declined, leading to a collapse (Polat, 2018, p. 178-191). During the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, European countries with already high levels of public debt implemented a series of rescue packages for the economy, sharply increasing their public debts and leading to the European Debt Crisis.

Germany quickly recovered from the crisis due to its strong position in the manufacturing industry, unlike many developed countries. Spain, despite having a very low debt ratio, fell into a debt crisis due to its real estate bubble. Greece emerged as one of the countries most affected by the crisis for various reasons. The country was on the brink of bankruptcy due to its high budget deficit and public debt stock. Significant conflicts occurred between the Greek public and the Greek governments due to the policies implemented after the crisis, and scenarios of exiting the EU were

discussed in the country (Çelik, 2021, p. 1619-1629).

## 2.2. Social Effects of Globalization

Globalization, in a sense, refers to the encounter and interaction of different cultures and lives, leading to transformation (Topçu, 2019, p. 53). Within nation-states, citizenship is typically divided into various categories. These categories include native-born full citizens, immigrants who have become naturalized, resident with legal status and asylum seekers. Similar distinctions can also be observed at the international level. In this context, categories may include American citizens, citizens of developed countries, and those from industrializing and newly developed countries. Being a citizen of a country that ranks high in the international citizenship hierarchy can make it easier to attain a higher status in other countries as well (Castro, 2018, p. 125). This situation can create significant disparities in income distribution or an unequal environment.

The process of globalization has unlocked unprecedented opportunities for humanity, especially in areas such as the economy, technology, and information exchange. However, it has also given rise to numerous challenges across various dimensions. Issues like environmental degradation, global justice, terrorism, and migration are just a few examples. Migration, whether orderly and regulated or irregular (including asylum seekers, refugees, and undocumented migrants), presents significant challenges within the framework of global relations (Görgün, 2017, p. 1325). For instance, the Arab Spring, which began in Tunisia in 2010, rapidly spread to Yemen, Jordan, Algeria, and Egypt, significantly affecting these countries. Arab regimes, which did not want to be held accountable, feared the rapid spread of street protests made possible by the increased use of social media in their countries (Sorenson, 2011, p. 25-26). The ease of communication brought about by globalization allowed events to escalate quickly in Arab countries, contributing to the acceleration of migration movements as a result.

It was thought that migrants would assimilate in the countries they moved to after being separated from their homelands. However, globalization has added a new dimension to this situation. Globalization has facilitated communication between migrants and their homelands. Furthermore, migration is increasingly becoming a political issue, in addition to being a social situation. It significantly impacts the changes in international migration policy (Topçu, 2019, p. 58-59).

With the acceleration of the globalization process, it is possible to say that migration movements have also increased in parallel. Globalization may compel people to migrate by making them observe that better living conditions exist in another country. The easier communication facilitated by globalization, the ability for people to travel easily from one end of the world to another, and changes in government policies due to global events, or conversely, an event occurring in any country that affects the world, can all contribute to increased migration.

### **2.3. Political Globalization**

With the process of globalization, there has been an attempt to redefine the relationship between society, the state, and the individual, leading to a weakening of the sovereignty of nation-states. This change has encompassed a broad spectrum, from the understanding of citizenship to the organization of states, from localization to the increasing effectiveness of civil society (Aktel, 2001, p. 199).

Regional institutions are the ones that have had the biggest impact on changing the political landscape of the world. The European Union (EU) has turned Europe from post-war disarray into a situation where member states may pool their sovereignty to handle common challenges. It is astounding to observe how fast the EU has progressed since 1945, even though many continue to question the EU's legitimacy. The nation-state is not going to disappear as a result of this change in international politics. Rather of displacing the traditional world of nation-states, the multilateral revolution overlays and modifies it (Held, 1999, p. 488–499).

Another development that has contributed to the weakening of the nation-state structure is the increase in the number and interactions of supranational institutions. The establishment of the European Union, which began efforts for economic integration in the 1950s and represents a unified European initiative, is a prime example of supranational structuring (Doğruluk, 2021, p. 116).

In the international environment where geographical boundaries are becoming increasingly blurred, the quest for security and threat perceptions are also undergoing a qualitative transformation. The globalization process, which involves the erosion of borders between countries in technological, political, economic, and cultural terms, has

led to the "negative" effects of a self-centered and individualistic market culture in traditional societies (Ağır, 2015, p. 108-111).

### 3. Multiculturalism and Terrorism

Throughout history, almost every society has been multicultural in some form. However, the ways in which states have responded to this cultural diversity have varied. Some states have actively worked to maintain their multicultural makeup, while others have chosen to ignore it, or even attempted to eliminate subcultures in pursuit of a homogenous society. Multiculturalism begins with acknowledging the significance of culture and cultural identity (Barn, 2011, p. 59).

Despite this, multiculturalism has faced growing criticism. For example, former German Chancellor Angela Merkel once claimed that multiculturalism in Germany had failed (Weaver, 2010).

On another note, although there has been a long and complicated history of trying to reach a universal definition of terrorism, a certain level of agreement has been reached. However, this consensus has often been achieved by sidestepping the question of what terrorism truly entails. A definition that closely resembles that of terrorism can be found in the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. Although the convention does not provide a direct definition of terrorism, it criminalizes the financing of any act intended to cause death or serious harm to civilians or non-combatants during armed conflict. If such an act aims to intimidate a population or to pressure a government or international organization into taking or avoiding certain actions, it falls under the scope of terrorism (Douglas, 2014, p. 46-47).

To better understand the roots of terrorist actions, Moghaddam's staircase theory can be examined. Some individuals begin their journey on the ground floor, seeking to improve their living conditions. These individuals do not perceive themselves as terrorists or as supporters of terrorist ideologies. At this stage, they are mainly influenced by opportunities for social mobility and having their voices heard. As they move to the second floor, they become exposed to messages that blame external enemies, such as foreign powers, for their struggles. On the third floor, some individuals adopt a moral framework that justifies terrorism. Gradually, they distance

themselves from the dominant moral values of their society, embracing the belief that "the ends justify the means." Those who continue climbing reach the fourth floor, where they adopt a rigid "us versus them," "good versus evil" mentality, believing that attacking the perceived forces of evil is entirely legitimate (Moghaddam, 2009, p. 375).

In conclusion, in today's globalized world, a connection between multiculturalism and terrorism can be observed through the lens of radicalization. In a culturally diverse society, individuals – particularly immigrants – may experience identity crises, feelings of alienation, and difficulty integrating into societal norms and values, which can generate tension. Additionally, societal dynamics, such as the majority group imposing its values on minorities, can lead to increased polarization, the emergence of extremist groups, and in some cases, terrorism (Keleşoğlu, 2021, p. 41).

### 3. Migration Situation in Europe and EU Migration Policies

The migration issue in Europe primarily concerns migrants from the South, many of whom are political refugees fleeing wars or persecution in their home countries. The three countries that most applicants come from are those that have experienced civil wars, such as Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Most "economic migrants," on the other hand, come from various regions in Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe in search of a better life (Joris, 2019: 7). In 2022, there were approximately 4.25 million legal migrants living in Europe (European Commission, 2022).

In terms of the European Union's immigration policies, the "Schengen Agreement," which was signed in 1985 by the five European Communities' members – Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands – is regarded as the first product of intergovernmental collaboration. This pact strengthened oversight at external borders while gradually easing regulations at the signing states' common boundaries. Furthermore, the 1993 Maastricht Treaty is noteworthy for having both granted authority to EU institutions in this field and anticipated intergovernmental collaboration in these subjects. Consequently, efforts in the field of migration and asylum policies began to intensify at the Community level. Finally, one of the most striking changes in the structure of EU migration regulations is attributed to the Lisbon Treaty, which was signed by member states and came into force on December 1, 2009. In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Lisbon



Treaty, measures have been adopted to develop a universal migration approach in cooperation with other countries, while considering the needs of the labor market to create a common policy among member countries (Güleç, 2015: 85-89).

Although the Schengen Agreement provides the possibility of free movement and seeks to maintain unity in Europe, it also requires significant responsibility for controlling external borders. Furthermore, it is possible to state that the European Union has acted balanced in migration matters after the Lisbon Treaty. However, the policies implemented should not remain legally limited, and the sentiments of the local population are also important.

Research indicates that the attitudinal effects of migration are largely dependent on the countries migrants come from and their skills. Migrants from the Middle East (including North Africa) create approximately three times more negative redistribution countereffects compared to other types of migrants. It has also been concluded that the skills of migrants shape the attitudinal responses of locals regarding both formal education and professions in the labor market. Looking at welfare policies that vary at the local level, they may be insignificant in some countries (for example, France) but carry more significance in others (for example, Sweden or Germany) (Alesina, 2019: 1-2).

The EU's expanding role in managing new migration flows has sparked concerns among citizens, while overall public support for the EU remains relatively low. Fewer than 50% of EU citizens report having confidence in EU institutions. In contrast, there is a significantly higher emphasis on national institutions. For example, 68% of citizens believe that the party that wins national elections holds considerable importance, compared to only 58% for those participating in European Parliament elections. New migrants may become targets for rising public frustrations associated with increasing globalization and economic interdependence among nations. The Dutch government has urged the EU to implement much stricter migration legislation. Reports from 2011 underscored some of the Dutch government's efforts to alleviate public concerns regarding the EU's migration policies and the issue of high unemployment (Pietsch, 2015: 50-54).

The decline in trust in EU institutions regarding migration, the existence of disagreements among governments, and the question of how beneficial a long-term migration policy would be pose significant challenges for the European Union. Particularly during times of economic distress, the local population may point to

migrants, leading to the rise of anti-immigrant right-wing parties.

## 5. Rising Right-Wing Movements in Europe

The first and most significant success of Euroscepticism came in 2005 with the rejection of the European Constitution in the referendums held in France and the Netherlands. It is possible to observe the most notable rise in votes for authoritarian political parties in Europe starting from 2008. Parties such as the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), the Sweden Democrats, the True Finns (PS, Sannf), the Movement for a Better Hungary (JOBBIK), and the UK Independence Party (UKIP) have seen increasing vote shares in both national and European Parliament elections, shaping the politics of today. The 2014 European Parliament elections were a complete victory for authoritarian populists. UKIP's success in the UK, where it became the first party outside the Conservatives and Labour to win the election, as well as the doubling of votes for the National Front in France and the Danish People's Party, demonstrated the power that authoritarian populism had reached (Arman, 2021, p. 41-46).

The Alternative for Germany (AfD) stands as Germany's foremost far-right party, established in 2013 and recognized for its nationalist, Eurosceptic, anti-immigration, pro-Nazi, and Islamophobic agenda. Since September 2016, the party has gained a foothold in 10 of the country's 16 state parliaments. Although the AfD is not the only populist movement in Germany, its rhetoric has been adopted by the Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West (PEGIDA). While the AfD is frequently viewed as anti-Semitic, PEGIDA is overtly anti-Islam and exhibits racial discrimination. However, both parties share the common belief that "Islam does not belong to Germany" and continuously assert that multiculturalism has failed in Germany (Najimdeen, 2017, p. 61-62). In the recent local elections, the AfD emerged first in Thuringia with 32.8% of the vote and second in Saxony with 30.6% (Cole, 2024).

The success of a far-right party in local elections in Germany after 1945 can be considered a historical achievement for the party. Since 2016, the AfD has been successful in elections, and its significant impact shortly after its establishment raises questions about its position in future elections.

The far right populist ideas of Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front party were closely associated with against the Semitism, anti-Islamic attitudes, Euroscepticism,

and anti-immigration views. Compared to his daughter Marine Le Pen, Jean-Marie Le Pen was unable to make the party as popular. Marine Le Pen has greatly refined and renamed the party, while inheriting her father's legacy. The anti-globalization, anti-EU, and anti-immigration stances of the French National Front are similar to those of other populist groups in Europe. It has never been secret that Marine Le Pen and her party despise Islam (Najimdeen, 2017, p. 62–63). In the first round of France's unexpected two-round general elections, the National Rally (RN) received 33 percent of the vote, according to the latest election figures. The left-wing New Popular Front (NFP) alliance received 28%, while President Emmanuel Macron's centrist Together bloc garnered 21% of the votes (Henley, 2024).

In the Netherlands, former Prime Minister Mark Rutte, who served four terms, announced that he would step down due to ongoing debates within the coalition government regarding immigration (Boztas, 2023). In the recent elections, Geert Wilders' party, the PVV, which is anti-EU and anti-Islam, won more seats in the Dutch parliament than any other party (Slawson, 2023).

It is essential to understand how these parties institutionalize good and evil by creating a "rescue narrative" or a "moral panic across Europe." For example, National Front leader Le Pen refers to immigrants as "invaders" who "represent a burden." Geert Wilders, leader of the Freedom Party, went even further, calling them "filth." The words chosen by these leaders have a singular purpose: to dehumanize and demonize migrants (Akbaba, 2018, p. 210).

Although 45% of citizens seem to support the idea of the EU being a simple international organization that provides economic benefits, the fact that opposition to immigration has reached 63% shows that the issue of immigration has become a challenging matter for the EU. In this regard, three countries stand out: Poland, Hungary, and Croatia. Positioned between moderate right and authoritarianism on the political spectrum, are Hungarian Civic Alliance, the Croatian Democratic Union, and the Law and Justice Party in Poland are the ruling parties in these countries (Arman, 2021, p. 150).

As part of its "Eastern Opening" policy, Hungary has publicly increased its reliance on Russia for energy and financial support under Orbán's rule. One of the most powerful figures in the EU, Orbán advocates for a "Europe of nation-states" that prioritizes the return of authority to national capitals over further integration or "closer unity." Even though Hungary gains from being a member of the EU, it is

frequently perceived as a country that threatens the Union's unity and cohesiveness, creating problems rather than strengthening the EU or supporting the European project. This trend is not unique to Hungary; it is also noticeable in member states like Spain, Italy, Greece, and Cyprus that are experiencing serious financial and economic crises (Végh, 2016, p. 72-73).

Looking at Italy, by 2018, the Northern League (NL) had become a right-wing party focused on sovereignty issues. The party expressed anti-immigrant and Eurosceptic positions while showing antipathy toward variously defined "elites." The party frequently used the slogan "Italians First," echoing positions adopted in other regions of the Western world. In the 2022 elections, Giorgia Meloni declared victory, stating that exit polls had given a clear majority to the right-wing coalition, thus positioning her to form the most right-wing government since World War II. Meloni led one of the six founding member nations of the EU and became the first female prime minister of Italy. She also served as a role model for nationalist parties throughout Europe (Giuffrida, 2022). Following the emergence of a video on January 7, 2024, showing hundreds of people giving fascist salutes at an event in Rome, Italian opposition leaders called for Giorgia Meloni's right-wing government to ban neo-fascist groups (Giuffrida, 2024).

In addition to the rising far-right movements in other European countries, the elections in the European Parliament are also significant. In the 2024 European Parliament elections, populist right parties achieved surprising successes not only in France but also in Germany and Austria. Nevertheless, pro-European center parties appear to have managed to maintain their positions in a set of outcomes that would complicate the EU legislative process. In France, Emmanuel Macron called for sudden general elections after Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally party suffered a crushing defeat. In Germany, the AfD made significant gains (Rankin, 2024).

## 6. Conclusion

The process of globalization has undoubtedly had both positive and negative impacts on migration movements. Countries that have adapted to globalization have implemented various policies to integrate incoming migrants and have made efforts for them to be a part of the integration process. In addition to labour, they have also opened their doors to migrants who can contribute to the education sector. It is

possible to say that trade volumes have increased due to globalization and migration movements.

On the other hand, alongside the aforementioned positive effects, the negative aspects have become more pronounced in the twenty-first century. The local population often believes that job opportunities are being taken away by incoming labor. Moreover, the idea of multiculturalism and living alongside different communities can raise concerns among locals about losing their culture and identity. Countries believe that international migration will also increase trade volumes. However, it is a harsh reality that illegal activities such as smuggling may occur along migration routes, and that members of terrorist organizations could use these routes, leading to the potential for significant attacks if security is compromised.

Economic stagnation, low employment rates, and declining living standards can be linked to the rise in support for right-wing parties. Far-right parties may target migrants based on these issues. When we look at the rhetoric of Geert Wilders, it is evident that he aims to target migrants in a very aggressive manner. His goal is to dehumanize them and use derogatory language, and despite the public backlash, he can still garner support from the right. The recent election results in the Netherlands, where Geert Wilders' party came in first, are a prime example of this.

Generally, it can be said that far-right parties have been increasing their success rates year by year. A significant achievement for these far-right parties is that the European Conservatives and Reformists Group, led by Meloni, secured 78 seats in the European Parliament, surpassing Renew Europe. After the success of the far-right party in 2022, Meloni's ability to showcase further success in the European Parliament in 2024, combined with the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy, suggests that she may achieve significant success in the next elections as well.

In France, the left coalition won the most seats but failed to achieve a majority, while the far-right also experienced success in the European Parliament elections. The upcoming general elections in France are particularly intriguing. It can be said that Le Pen's party, with its anti-EU and anti-immigrant stance, will shape the political landscape in France and will play an important role in future elections during a period when the far-right is gaining strength.

In Germany, the success of a far-right party in local elections for the first time since 1945 is a symbolic and historically significant event. In light of this information,

it can be observed that the increasing populist rise in Germany may have an even more substantial effect. Additionally, attention must be paid to AfD's position in the next election.

The rise of the far-right in almost all European countries should not be limited to anti-immigrant sentiments; anti-EU sentiments also pose a significant issue in Europe. Many far-right parties are no longer advocating for European integration and instead wish to return to their nationalist roots. The question of how these far-right parties will shape their policies regarding the European Union after obtaining a significant majority in the future is another matter. With European skepticism rising even now, the question of whether a dissolution could occur within Europe in the future could be a new area of research.

As a result of the findings, it is possible to observe a decline in trust in the European Union. The EU needs to approach the issue of international migration not only from a political perspective but also socially and economically. Furthermore, the EU's reaction to the concept of terrorism associated with international migration is also receiving backlash from far-right parties.

### **Disclosure statement**

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