

# Progressive forms of governing in the usa



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Compared to the years before and during the world wars, the trend in the past century, internationally, has been a shift towards more progressive forms of governing. However, in the recent years, some of the key players of international governance, such as the United States and England, has become slowly more right-wing populist. The rise in populism could be seen as well be seen as a backlash against globalization. The populists gained their votes through the supporters who were discontent with the international economic integration, which, to them, took away the democratic rule of each state. In the countries as England and the United States, the populist movement is advocating the conservative ideals, making the politics in the countries more nationalistic, with their own nation's, and only their nation's, best interest at heart.

The populist philosophy is a loose set of ideas that share three core features: anti-establishment, authoritarianism and nativism. However, like many things discussed in this class, the definition for populism is very subjective and hard to define: it has to be defined under a wide umbrella, but specific at the same time. Though many has struggled to find the perfect definition, some of the characteristics that would constitute a certain action to be a populist belief or value is that populism is a political movement or program that champions common people by favorable contrast with the elite. Populism is usually thought of as a right-wing way of thinking, and a traditionalist's point of view, but it actually combines the elements of both the left-wing and the right-wing way of thinking as it opposes large businesses and financial interests, but it also is often hostile to established socialist labor parties.

In the United States and England, also all around the world, immigration is often looked down upon as immigrants are taking jobs from native people and slowing economic growth. Though these things are not solely the responsibility of one specific group of people, as a leader, it is always easier to blame one group and have the nation hate or look down upon them, rather than the leader themselves. In the recent years, there has been an obvious, sudden rise in support for populist parties. Some of the factors are the economic recessions of 2008, unexpected number of migrants arriving in countries over a prolonged period causing worries about control, culture and identity, and finally, a sense that the establishment has not been listening to the concerns of citizens, but simply pushes down its own interests. There are two theories that try to explain the growing support for populist parties: the economic insecurity perspective, and the cultural backlash.

In 2016, the unthinkable happened: the internationally known bigot, Donald Trump was elected as the president of the United States of America. All throughout the election campaign, he was taken as a joke, and no one had dreamt that he would ever win. However, Trump and his fellow administration had strategically fed off the hate many Americans felt with their previous president and the amendments that the former president, Barack Obama, put in place. Many of Obama's orders were very controversial, such his immigration executive orders, and as a result, split the nation into two. As controversial as his executive orders were, Obama's actions to allow immigrant workers would allow the growth of the nation rather than stagger it like many opposers believed. In the end, the opposing half were those that voted for Trump administration. Under the cultural

backlash theory, we can see that Trump runs the country through his rejection of “ political correctness” which appeals to the mythical “ golden past” which refers to pre-911, when terrorist attacks were in distant lands rather than on home turf. As we can see here, this nostalgia is most likely to appeal to older citizens who have seen changes in their cultural dominance and feels that their social value is being threatened, provoking the response of anger, resentment, and political disaffection.

Similarly, and almost simultaneously, England’s prime minister David Cameron stepped down from post, as if he was fleeing in disgrace. Cameron was the first prime minister of the United Kingdom to veto an EU treaty, in hopes to protect Britain’s financial sector, and the support began to grow amongst British voters to take a hardline stance against the EU. Along with the economic unrest in the eurozone and the ongoing migrant crisis, the support for Brexit only grew in number. To the supporters of EU, Brexit meant that Britain will regain full control of its trade and immigration policies. However, as Theresa May, current prime minister of England has stated time and time again, Brexit would be simply too costly for the British economy. Focusing on the cultural backlash thesis, yet again, many people could agree that the membership in the EU is economically beneficial, but to most of Britain’s citizens, that was not their main concern. They’re main concern was the cultural consequences. Brexit also looks at the time period before the EU when the parliament and the society were predominantly white Anglo-Saxon, and the working class provided well-paying and secure jobs. Similar to the case in the United States, the Brexit supporters seemingly are nostalgic.

Aforementioned, populists favor mono-culturalism over multiculturalism, and national self-interests over international corporation. By putting the nation's feeling of discontent towards the minority group of immigrants, the populist leaders are able to slip out of facing the actual problems and distress that the society feels. However, these movements change the international relations that each country has with one another by stopping the movement of people, which in turn stops the flow of culture, goods, and ideas, leading the state to be mono-cultural. With examples such as the Trump administration and Brexit, the recent trend points that the global shift is towards populist ideals. Though it could be said that the influence of populism is leading world to become small minded and only nationally interested, it is important to note that as the times change, so does the scope in which we view politics. The ideas that may be seen right-winged now, may have been seen neutral, or maybe even progressive in the years before. Similarly, the populist movements now, under a different scope may have been common in the past. Purely because internationally, the scope we view the international governance has shifted more to the left, the former neutral ideas, or slightly right-wing ideas seem like extremist ideas. It is possible that in a couple years, when researchers look back to this day in age, though we may believe to be living in a progressive time, with a shift in paradigm, these movements may be seen conservative, or maybe even too extremely progressive.