

A stylized world map is positioned at the top of the cover. The continents are depicted in a dark red color, while the oceans are a deep blue. The map is centered on the Atlantic Ocean, showing the Americas on the left and Europe and Africa on the right.

NEXUS JOURNAL

THE RISE OF FAR-RIGHT POLITICS: IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL ECONOMY

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CHAIR'S NOTE

This second journal issue of the academic year is dedicated to examining one of the most urgent and deeply consequential developments shaping contemporary politics: the rise of far-right political movements and their far-reaching implications for human rights, democracy, and the global economy. Under the theme "*The Rise of Far-Right Politics: Implications for Human Rights, Democracy, and the Global Economy*", this edition offers a critical analysis of how these movements are reshaping legal systems, institutional norms, and economic policies around the world.

This issue is structured in *three main sections*, each offering a distinct lens through which to understand the challenges posed by far-right ideologies.

The first section, *The Impact of Far-Right Politics on Human Rights*, explores how far-right policies affect immigration and refugee rights, as well as the consequences for freedom of speech and media pluralism in democratic societies. The articles in this section interrogate the legal and ethical dilemmas that arise when national security is prioritized at the expense of international human rights commitments.

The second section, *Institutional Safeguards and Legal Challenges in the Face of Far-Right Politics*, investigates how constitutional and legal frameworks respond to authoritarian pressures. It examines the effectiveness of constitutional safeguards and the critical role of judicial independence and the rule of law in resisting democratic backsliding.

The third and final section, *The Economics of Far-Right Politics*, turns to the economic narratives that fuel support for far-right movements. Contributors assess how protectionist policies, economic nationalism, and anti-globalist rhetoric shape both domestic and international economic landscapes, often in ways that deepen inequality and disrupt global cooperation.

Through this tripartite structure, the issue aims to provide a comprehensive and interdisciplinary understanding of the far-right's growing influence and the legal, institutional, and economic tensions it provokes.

We hope this edition contributes meaningfully to ongoing conversations and research on how democracies can respond to these challenges.

We wish you a thoughtful and engaging read!

Alma-Cristina Onaie, Chair of NEXUS Journal 2024-2025



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DISCLAIMER

All Articles within this issue are academic works and have been fact checked.
There are further perspectives not highlighted within this edition.



The Impact of Far-Right Politics on Human Rights

LAW AT THE BORDERLINE

HOW EUROPE IS REWRITING REFUGEE RIGHTS

By Goda Bendoriūtė

1. INTRODUCTION

“

We are taking measures to make the Netherlands as unattractive as possible for asylum seekers”

”

-Marjolein Faber, the Dutch Minister for Asylum and Migration

During the last few years, a wave of right-wing policies has swept across Europe. These policies, often driven by nationalist ideologies, have increasingly prioritized national security over international human rights commitments, particularly in the context of **migration**. This shift has led to significant challenges for **refugees and asylum seekers**, with far-right politics influencing the way these individuals are treated. This article will explore and compare the impact of right-wing policies on refugees' and asylum seekers' rights in **Italy** and the **Netherlands**. Italy was chosen due to its role as a major entry point for refugees arriving from the South and its increasingly restrictive migration policies, while the Netherlands represents a case where traditionally liberal approaches are shifting towards more restrictive measures.

This article will analyze the **compliance** of these policies with the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), examining their specific provisions and the implications for the legal protections of refugees and asylum seekers in both Italy and the Netherlands.

2. MANAGING MIGRATION BEYOND BORDERS: ITALY'S RECENT POLICY SHIFTS

“Citizens are asking us to stop illegal immigration because it causes insecurity, lack of integration and an inability to guarantee the rule of law”

-Prime Minister of Italy Giorgia Meloni

Under G. Meloni, Italy has adopted several right-wing policies concerning refugees and asylum seekers. This section will explore the **Italy-Albania** agreement and the **Cutro Decree**, analysing their compliance with human rights standards.

The Italy-Albania agreement was signed on **6 November 2023** and opened two migrant centres in Albania. According to the agreement, people rescued at sea by Italian ships, including asylum seekers, will be held there during asylum reviews or while awaiting deportation. The agreement, therefore, aims to **externalize asylum processing and deportation procedures to the Albanian territory while maintaining Italian jurisdiction over the centers**. It has, however, been criticized for the incompatibility with human right standards and the Refugee Convention.

Firstly, as emphasized by Amnesty International, the agreement results in automatic detention without individualised assessment, **violating art 5 of the ECHR**. Moreover, the agreement could also indirectly violate the principle of non-refoulement under **art 33 of the Refugee Convention**, as it could be practically difficult to ensure that asylum seekers will not be returned to unsafe countries. For instance, if a refugee seeks to challenge their deportation, it remains unclear which jurisdiction would have authority over the case, risking deportation to persecution and enabling indirect refoulement through procedural gaps.

In addition to this externalization, Italy has also introduced the Cutro Decree (2023), which further **restricts the rights of asylum seekers within Italy**. The Decree is an Italian law that modified provisions of Art. 19 of the Consolidated Immigration Act. It extends detention (up to 18 months), accelerates border procedures, and it restricts humanitarian protections by eliminating family/private life grounds for "special protection" permits and prohibiting their conversion into work permits. The removal of private and family life as the ground for special protection raises serious human rights concerns, particularly under **Article 8 of the ECHR**. In the case of *Jeunesse v. Netherlands*, the ECtHR confirmed that states must carefully weigh immigration control objectives against the right to family life by conducting **individualized**

assessments. Some of the relevant factors include the length of the person's residence, the best interests of any children involved, and the strength of social connections like employment and community ties. The court noted that while these criteria are not decisive, they must be afforded a significant weight. By **eliminating the possibility for case-by-case evaluations**, the Cutro Decree risks leading to arbitrary decisions, undermining the essence of Article 8 ECHR

Both the Italy-Albania agreement and the Cutro Decree aim to tighten migration controls, with the former externalizing asylum procedures to Albania and the latter increasing detention and restricting humanitarian protections within Italy. While the Italy-Albania agreement focuses on outsourcing asylum processing, the Cutro Decree emphasizes domestic legal changes that limit individual assessments of refugees' rights, raising concerns about their compatibility with human rights protections.

3. A HISTORIC SHIFT: THE NETHERLANDS' STRICTEST ASYLUM POLICIES

“

We cannot continue to bear the large influx of migrants to our country. People are experiencing an asylum crisis

-Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof. ”

Under the current right-wing coalition, the Netherlands has pursued some of Europe's strictest asylum policies, framing migration as a **national security threat**. The government's "strictest asylum policy ever" includes plans to opt out of the EU Migration Pact, end state-funded housing for rejected applicants, and limit family reunification¹². For the purposes of this article, the focus will be on two key measures: the **extension of the naturalization period** and the **introduction of the two-tier asylum system**.

The UNHCR has raised concerns with respect to the first issue, noting that extending the term for naturalization to 10 years could violate **Article 34 of the Refugee Convention**, which mandates that naturalization should be facilitated as quickly and affordably as possible¹³. By significantly prolonging the waiting period, the Dutch policy risks making permanent integration harder to achieve, thereby undermining refugees' ability to fully participate in society and enjoy long-term stability — which is what Article 34 seeks to promote.

The newly introduced two-tier asylum

system further complicates matters; it divides refugees into **Status A** (full rights for those facing individual persecution) and **Status B** (temporary protection with limited family reunification for those fleeing generalized violence), creating unequal treatment. Despite the possibility to appeal, **overburdened** asylum agencies and a growing backlog of 51,000 pending cases (as of 2024)¹⁴ risk rendering remedies ineffective. The Dutch two-tier asylum system's restrictions on family reunification for Status B holders mirror the ECtHR's condemnation of discriminatory practices in *Hode and Abdi v. UK* (2012). In that case, the Court ruled that denying family reunification to refugees with temporary status violated **Article 8 ECHR** (family life) and **Article 14** (non-discrimination), as distinctions based on immigration status lacked objective justification. Similarly, the Dutch system's creation of hierarchical protection categories granting full family reunification to Status A refugees while limiting it for Status B holders introduces arbitrary differentiation. Likewise, the Dutch system's differentiation between Status A and B refugees contradicts **Article 1 of the Refugee Convention**, which does not distinguish between the types of persecution or categories of refugees. While the Convention itself focuses on persecution, it establishes a universal framework for refugee protection that does not allow for arbitrary distinctions based on the nature or origin of the threat.

By creating a two-tiered system, the Netherlands designates some refugees as 'more deserving' than others, contravening **Article 3** guarantee of non-discrimination and jeopardizing the fundamental principle that all individuals fleeing persecution are entitled to equal protection and rights.

The extension of the naturalization period and the two-tier asylum system in the Netherlands, like Italy's restrictive migration measures, highlight a shift towards more exclusionary policies that raise significant concerns regarding the protection of refugees' rights under international law.

4. COMPARISON AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Both Italy and the Netherlands illustrate Europe's right-wing change in migration policy, yet their approaches diverge in scope and method while converging in their erosion of refugee rights. Italy's externalization strategy (Albania centers) and prolonged detention (Cutro Decree) directly threaten **non-refoulement** (Article 33 Refugee Convention) and **family unity** (Article 8 ECHR). The Netherlands, by contrast, enforces exclusion by creating two classes of refugees and making integration harder through the 10-year naturalization rule, breaching the Refugee Convention's principles of non-discrimination (Article 3) and support for

integration (Article 34). “We are taking measures to make the Netherlands as unattractive as possible for asylum seekers,” said Marjolein Faber, the Dutch Minister for Asylum and Migration. But as these harsh policies continue, it is worth considering: *at what point does making a country ‘unattractive’ cross the line from protecting borders to denying basic human rights?* While the shift to right-wing policies concerning refugees can be justified by aiming controlled migration, the individual situation of a refugee should be assessed more on a case-by-case basis. The Cutro Decree's restrictions on humanitarian protections, the two-tier asylum system's limitations on family reunification, and the Italy-Albania agreement's externalization of asylum processing all create barriers for those fleeing persecution and violence. Instead, governments should consider the unique circumstances of each case, ensuring that those with genuine protection needs are not denied access to safety. When policies prioritize deterrence over dignity, the very foundations of international refugee protection risk collapsing – *not by force, but by political choice.*

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FAR RIGHT MOVEMENTS, MEDIA FREEDOM, AND THE EROSION OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

By Selena Tare

INTRODUCTION

The freedom of speech and free press are some of the foundational liberties in modern democratic societies. These rights are enshrined in all the major human rights instruments, like art 19 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR). These rights protect people and institutions by safeguarding their ability to safely express, disseminate and receive information without unjust interference. However, in recent years, there has been a rise of far-right political movements worldwide, which has presented a significant **challenge to these freedoms**.

Through media manipulation, spreading misinformation, attacks on journalists, and creating hostile political climates, these movements often undermine the very freedoms they pretend or claim to defend. This article will delve into the **far-right movements impact on media freedom and the freedom of speech**, and look into the grander implications for democratic governance when disapproval is silenced.

1. DELEGITIMIZATION, DISINFORMATION, AND MEDIA CAPTURE

Far-right movements try to **discredit traditional media outlets** by portraying them as biased, corrupt, or belonging to a liberal elite. This rhetoric affects public trust in media outlets, particularly among conservative groups.

According to the Pew Research Center, **89% of consistently conservative residents** in the United States showed deep skepticism towards mainstream media outlets. This skepticism, fueled by political actors and internet echo chambers, encourages the rejection of accurate reporting and the adoption of alternative narratives that are not supported by evidence. These campaigns undermine the media's

critical function as a **public watchdog**, eroding public accountability and allowing far-right movements to consolidate power unchecked.

Discrediting the press is merely the first step of the strategy. Far-right actors also often utilize **social media sites** to spread misinformation. Platforms such as Facebook, X (previously Twitter), and YouTube are designed to encourage participation, and research has shown that emotionally charged or sensationalist content is more likely to trend. The algorithms they use **value popularity above accuracy**, and this has enabled the rise of misinformation ecosystems that bypass traditional editorial controls. Disinformation campaigns are not only the result of user activity, but they are often organized efforts aimed to sway political opinion and create division. For example, the **Oxford Internet Institute** discovered that during the **2016 US presidential election**, Russian-linked troll farms and fake accounts utilized social platforms to sway American voters by amplifying far-right voices, anti-immigrant rhetoric, and conspiracy theories.

This pattern was repeated during the **UK's Brexit referendum**, as the pro-Leave faction used similar strategies, like microtargeted commercials based on psychological profiling, to sway public opinion. These campaigns paint mainstream media as a part of a **globalist conspiracy**, thus undermining traditional sources of information. By destroying public trust in mainstream

media and institutional sources of truth, far-right movements have set off a **feedback loop** in which their own disinformation becomes the primary lens through which political reality is perceived.

2. LEGAL INSTRUMENTS AND REGULATION SUPPRESSION

Far-right governments often use **legal and institutional means** to silence and suppress independent media. These techniques enable regimes to justify this repression as lawful regulation. In **Hungary**, for example, the Media Council, founded by the Orbán government which is wholly staffed by party loyalists, has been used to cancel licenses, impose fines, and deprive opposition media of government advertising, which is a crucial source of revenue. The Council wields **disproportionate control over editorial content** by using ambiguous legal rules to penalize outlets that deviate from state narratives. This has created a **chilling effect**, where self-censorship is frequent, particularly among smaller outlets.

Poland has charted a similar course. The Law and Justice Party (PiS) has promoted a "repolonization" agenda aimed at reducing foreign ownership of media outlets, in the name of national sovereignty. Public news networks have been transformed into propaganda tools, while independent media outlets are facing increased **financial and legal**

pressure. These actions are not isolated, but rather part of a broader pattern of far-right regimes using their governmental authority to destroy media pluralism.

The consequence of these legal and regulatory efforts is the **limitation of the public sphere.** As fewer channels remain genuinely independent, political discourse becomes dominated by a single narrative, one which works to legitimize the ruling party while demonizing its opponents. Thus, legal suppression works as a **mechanism for censorship** but also as an **indoctrination tool.** The damage is not limited to journalism only, but also to the democratic principle of informed consent.

3. HOSTILITY TOWARD JOURNALISTS AND THE CHILLING EFFECTS

Far-right movements often escalate their attacks on the press by directing **public anger towards journalists.** This animosity comes in many forms, ranging from public condemnation and defamation, to physical violence, and state-enabled surveillance. Far-right politicians label journalists as "enemies of the people," "traitors," or "foreign agents," dehumanizing and discrediting them in public eye. This kind of rhetoric normalizes violence against journalists and encourages supporters to see press freedom as a threat rather than a protection mechanism.

According to the **2024 World Press**

Freedom Index, far-right politicians verbal attacks have usually lead to increased **violence** against journalists. Journalists have been beaten, imprisoned, or even killed simply for reporting on corruption or human rights violations in nations where far-right populism has gained traction, like Brazil and the Philippines. The use of the **Pegasus spyware** against investigative journalists in Hungary, shows that surveillance is being weaponized in order to intimidate and silence opposing voices. These events are not isolated, they follow a consistent **pattern** across countries where far-right forces have gained political power.

The **psychological toll** on journalists must not be understated. Many experience constant internet abuse, doxing, and threats to their families and friends, causing some to abandon their work entirely. The end result is the **destruction of press freedom** not just through censorship, but also through **fear.** Journalists become afraid to investigate and report on politically sensitive issues, allowing corruption and abuse of power to continue unchecked. This **self-censorship** undermines the medias role as a government watchdog and allow further establishment of authoritarian tendencies inside the state system.

4. DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING AND THE NORMALIZATION OF EXTREMISM

The suppression of media freedom is more than just a sign of democratic deterioration, it is often a early indicator of **authoritarian control**. According to political research, restrictions on press freedom are one among the **earliest indications of autocratization**. As governments diminish press independence, they also begin to take apart other democratic institutions like courts, electoral commissions, and civil society organizations. **Hungary's Orbán administration** has served as a case study in this progression. Since 2010, it has methodically controlled state bodies, changed electoral laws, and eliminated opposition parties, all this beginning with control over the media. This pattern is consistent with Levitsky and Ziblatt's larger theoretical framework in *How Democracies Die*, which claims that authoritarian governments are increasingly relying on legal, slow methods of institutional erosion rather than direct coups or violence. When the media is silenced or co-opted, citizens lose access to different perspectives and as a result are unable to make proper informed decisions, which **threatens the legitimacy of democratic elections**. In this sense, media independence is not a minor concern, but rather a **pillar of democratic governance**.

Furthermore, far-right control of media outlets is used to normalize and spread xenophobic, racist, and exclusionary ideologies. When anti-immigrant or anti-muslim ideas are repeated in state-aligned media, they start to shape

public opinion. This dynamic has major implications. The Christchurch mosque attacks in New Zealand were linked to far-right online networks that spread and celebrated these ideologies. These platforms, operate with **no oversight**, allow hate speech to spread unchecked, and lead to **radicalization and bloodshed**. The normalization of extremism undermines the democratic ideals of **plurality and equality**. It divides society into groups, legitimizes political violence, and make way for repressive legislation in the name of national security. As a result, protecting press freedom is more than just protecting speech, it is also about **protecting the fundamental values that support democracy**.

5. CONCLUSION

The growing influence of far-right movements is setting out one of the most significant modern threats to media freedom and democratic governance. **State suppression destroys democratic institutions** by undermining traditional journalism, spreading disinformation, manipulating legal frameworks, and fostering hostility towards opposing voices. The international legal framework, including **Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** (ICCPR), provides protections for the freedom of expression. However, **enforcement is often inconsistent**, especially when governments themselves are the perpetrators.

Legal recourse through the European Human Rights Court, digital literacy programs, or international journalistic cooperation opens **the way for resistance and resilience**. Defending these freedoms is not merely about protecting journalists, it's also about defending a foundational pillar of democracy itself. *The loss of free press is not simply a political crisis, it is also a civil emergency.*

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FAR-RIGHT IDEOLOGY AND HUMAN RIGHT ADVOCACY

HOW THE EXISTENCE OF ONE CONTRADICTS THE OTHER

By Alicja Skołysz

The rapidly growing support for far-right political movements poses a threat to human rights, viewed as an innate legacy of each and every human being. The cornerstone of modern civilization, expressed by the respect for the most fundamental traits of existence, such as dignity, equality, and autonomy is being **used in a radicalized political debate as a tool instead of a universal virtue**. By relying on the central characteristics of far-right ideologies, namely nativism, populism, and authoritarianism, group leaders are capable of applying the impact of those traits to the current socio-economic landscape and thus **exploiting the perceived weaknesses of the globalized world**. The aim of this article is to examine how the underlying concepts of far-right political ideology stands in exact opposition to the universal nature of human rights, and thus how their coexistence is intrinsically impossible.

Nationalism poses as a defining feature of far-right movements. It aims at

emphasizing its own political fraction's exclusionary nature in relation to all others who do not exemplify the praised national ideal the group represents. The criterion of inclusion is based on **nationality**; however, it is also often **widened by the ethnic or religious ties** that tend to further unite the members of the given political group. Therefore, such a movement primarily originates from the separateness emphasizing the clash between those who correspond to their vision of belonging and all others who dissent from what is desirable. The group's anti-immigration attitude appears to be an **inevitable consequence of their underlying philosophy**. Since nationalism differentiates people and perceive them through the lens of national indicators instead of universally acknowledged humanity, it openly opposes the universal nature of human rights's. In order to legitimize xenophobic positions, far-right movements evoke relative **natural law**

theory, which, while accepting the existence of certain values inherent to humans at large, reserves the effective enjoyment of those values only to a certain class of people. As a result, the party successfully unites its members under the **uplifting umbrella of shared national superiority** to which they are entitled against all others.

The same **social resentment** emphasizing certain power struggles is embraced by populism, another critical pillar of the radical far-right-wing agenda. Populist rhetoric thrives on fear of the imagined threat, which can be directly embodied by the **"Others"** (e.g., by accusing migrants of stealing jobs and resources) or indirectly fulfilled by the **"Others"** (e.g., by viewing the flow of foreign culture to undermine the devotion to national traditions). Unsurprisingly, with the rise in technological advancement, the world becomes more intertwined, and thus, the way in which the market and services operate alter dramatically. Migration expands, and without the sufficient degree of knowledge, seemingly **logical yet factually untrue correlations**, such as connecting migration flow with nationals' increased unemployment level, can be made and spread to those who wish to find an appeasement. By placing the burden of fault for one's own inability, people who are not fully integrated into society and the job market can pass their frustration on to the perceived **"Others"**. Charismatic leaders exploit this **psychological tendency** and provide

voters with **scapegoats** while also portraying themselves as defenders of vital values and reverence for order, which is all the more appealing during time of abrupt changes such as current technological revolution combined with increasing globalization. Radical parties violate **the right to equality** by unfairly **stigmatizing** a particular group of people and accusing them of being the reason for their supporters misery. Additionally, they **incite hatred** which manifest itself externally through the propagation of hate speech and violent acts, thus further breaching the right to life and security and non-discrimination enriched in international treaties.

On the verge of a change, there is always a group of people who are **unwilling to accept the dynamic of societal development**. Traditionally established norms undergo transformation, challenging the most primal human needs: the need for safety. A diminished sense of control and the consequent longing for assurance creates a perfect ground for authoritarianism to flourish and attract supporters by promising them **order in exchange for obedience**. Authoritarianism **subjugates** citizens so that they are no longer treated as separate, individually worthy beings but as a part, a building block designed to serve something greater than themselves,—**the state**. In such a system the **idea of human rights completely dissolves** because the inalienable virtue of being a human becomes worthless. As the state begins

to distantly embody the pride, strength, and worth of all its nationals **collectively**, the meaning the phrase "human rights" once projected is transferred into the reinforced notion of the state, rendering the former redundant. The **anthropomorphized state** forces people to conform and abide by the guidance of a strong leader who both reflects the nation's will and the state's assumed authority. It is therefore apparent that the **loss of political, social, and moral autonomy of humans gravely endangers some of the constitutional foundations of liberal democracies**. Rule of law, upheld by the right to fair trial and equality before law as well as the right to self-determination cannot be exercised if there is no individual agency.

The **paradoxical trend** seen in the variety of far-right political affiliations is their growing reconceptualization of human rights language used to legitimize inhumane approaches. Taking advantage of virtue, the far-right parties most condemn, or even on which condemnation the system itself is built, allows us to more closely examine the striking contradiction between those two. Radical movements frequently emphasize the **Western roots of human rights concepts**, arguing that they should be applicable solely to the European community capable of appreciating them. Such an approach is often brought up to strengthen the anti-immigration narrative; however, it seems to fail during the **LGBTQ debate** when the far-right's contempt towards

equality is adopted even against people of Western origin. Nevertheless, placing limitations on the personal scope of human rights would defy the purpose of the Declaration, whose universality is already emphasized in the title. According to the internationally recognized methods of interpretation, a declaration must be understood and applied in a manner that respects the essence of rights ensured; therefore, limiting its reach to a certain class of founding people would **violate its initial generality**.

The mutually exclusive nature of far-right-wing affiliations and human rights stems from their diverse ideas of what or who should be placed at the center of protection. **Radicals objectify the core of human rights by using it at best as distorted means to a dehumanizing end**. What human rights treat as their most precious subjects—who is entitled to perform an action—radicals disregard as the sole **object** through which an action can be performed. It is absurd for the far-right movement and human rights to coexist since the former's demands for belonging nullify the universality that human rights are supposed to protect. They cannot grow together without corrupting one another's fundamental principles, thus the cultivation of one must necessarily abolish the other.

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Institutional Safeguards and Legal Challenges in the Face of Far-Right Politics

CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS AGAINST FAR-RIGHT POLITICAL PARTIES

By Andreea Cucu

When forced to witness a worldwide rise (in number and power) of extremist ideologies and corresponding parties, one cannot help but turn to **law** in order to seek ways to prevent such parties from gaining power and popularity. Numerous national systems seem to have adopted a **Constitution** that is meant to prevent extremist groups from existing and functioning in a way that goes against democratic values. This article seeks to dive deeper into constitutional safeguards against extremist actions and organizations, by **comparatively** analysing examples of such constitutional provisions in distinct national systems.

One of the most direct constitutional responses to extremist parties is their **formal prohibition**. This is possible under **art 21(2) of the German Constitution** ("Basic law"), stating that parties whose activities "abolish the free democratic order" or "have this as their goal" are unconstitutional. The unconstitutionality of parties is also a solution against extremism under the

Romanian Constitution, art 40(2): "The political parties or organizations which, by their aims or activity, militate against political pluralism, the principles of a State governed by the rule of law, or against the sovereignty, integrity or independence of Romania shall be unconstitutional." The Iberian states also contain provisions that allow for the dissolving of a political party in cases of breaches of democratic values, as mentioned not in their national Constitution, but in **separate codifications of Party Law** (art 18(a) for Portugal, art 10(2) for Spain), which are part of constitutional law in the broad sense of the concept. Similarly, Italy's **Scelba Law** prohibits the reorganization of the fascist party.

An essential consideration is the **authority** responsible for determining the unconstitutionality of a political party. Usually, the institution invested with the power to proceed in such a way is the **Constitutional Court**, at the request of another national body.

In Germany, there have been several instances of this happening, *inter alia*, the prohibition of the Socialist Reich Party in 1952, of the Communist Party in 1956, and the recent suspension of state funding of Die Heimat party (formerly the National Democratic Party for Germany) in 2024. Aside from reasons linked to **democratic values**, the **rule of law** and **political pluralism**, undermining the national territorial integrity can also be a ground for declaring a party unconstitutional, as was the case in 2023 when the Șor Party was banned in the Republic of Moldova.

Another constitutional mechanism employed by some states is the **limitation of civil rights when such rights are being made use of in ways that interfere with democracy**. In that sense, **art 18 of the German Basic Law** regulates the forfeiture of basic rights – such as the freedom of expression and that of assembly – by the Federal Constitutional Court in order to protect free democratic order. A further example of this can be seen in the **Indian Constitution**, which enables the state to restrict individual rights where such restrictions are legal and “reasonable” (art 19). The landmark case of Chintaman Rao vs The State Of Madhya Pradesh (1950) serves as jurisprudence for interpreting the term “reasonable” to mean “not arbitrary or of an excessive nature”. Limitations of the right to be elected have also taken place recently in Romania, where the Constitutional Court has rejected Călin

Georgescu’s application to once again run for President on the grounds that his ideology is extremist.

At a European level, **the ECHR and the ECtHR** have played a critical role in delineating the permissible scope of **limitations on fundamental rights**, establishing, among other aspects, that a restriction of the freedom of speech is a legitimate limitation in cases of hate speech, and that rights which are not absolute can be interfered with by the state in situations of national crisis (**art 15**), for the preservation of democracy. Such interference is also legal if prescribed by clear and foreseeable law, in pursuit of a legitimate aim and necessary in a democratic society, under the exceptions stated in articles mentioning each right, in cases regarding liberties that are not absolute. The ECtHR, similarly to some Constitutional Courts (like that of India), has the **jurisdiction to decide on complaints on the infringement of Civil and Political Rights** (art 32) under the conditions stated in articles 34 and 35. In that sense, the limitation of rights in the European continent is, to some extent, uniformized by the Convention and its judicial body.

Despite the existence of these constitutional safeguards, many countries continue to face **challenges** in curbing the growth of extremist movements. In some states (like Germany and Romania), this is partly because the Constitutional Court cannot have jurisdiction **if a case has not been brought by another body**;

but even in cases where such action has been taken by the Constitutional Court, the **effectiveness** of these proceedings is disputable. Such was the case with Moldova's Șor Party, whose former members continued to be active politicians operating under new parties, since the initiative to ban said individuals from being involved in politics was declared unconstitutional by the same Constitutional Court. Moreover, in the public eye and among supporters of extremist ideologies, extremist politicians whose parties were prohibited or whose freedom of speech was limited in order to protect minorities are sometimes perceived by their supporters as **victims of state overreach**, thereby gaining symbolic status within those groups and contributing to social unrest and political polarisation, sometimes mirroring the destabilising effects associated with extremist parties. This was the case with Romania's political situation for the months following the 2024 Presidential election, where voters mobilised in protest, citing what they perceived as an infringement on their democratic rights, though officially deemed unconstitutional by the Romanian Constitutional Court.

This raises a critical inquiry: *are extremist political parties a cause of radicalization, or a reflection of pre-existing extremist sentiments within the electorate?* The answer is certainly not absolute and may even vary, according to the circumstances of the case at hand. While the issue does not

lend itself to absolute conclusions, constitutional safeguards offer a meaningful mechanism for the defence of democratic order when tailored appropriately to specific socio-political contexts.

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JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE AND THE RULE OF LAW UNDER SIEGE

EXAMINING HOW JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE AND THE RULE OF LAW SAFEGUARD DEMOCRACY AGAINST FAR-RIGHT ENCROACHMENT

By Julia Bożyk

“

Morality cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. Judicial decrees may not change the heart, but they can restrain the heartless.

”

- Martin Luther King Jr.

INTRODUCTION

In the current era of ascent of far-right populism across democracies all over the world, **two legal principles** have emerged as pillars upholding democratic systems: judicial independence and the rule of law. For the better part of the 21st century thus far, these principles have slowly become **taken for granted in Western democracies**, as the region stabilised and the political trends moved towards liberalisation.

However, in the mid-2010's a shift towards the far-right began spreading on a large scale. Whilst in the following years the trend continued, it was followed by a sudden and short-lived shift to progressiveness in the early 2020s, only to give way to an even bolder, more extreme version of the populist far right movement, which does not shy away from autocratic rhetoric. Consequently, the **principles of judicial independence and the rule of law** are increasingly being tested by political actors seeking to consolidate power and undermine democratic norms.

This article will explore the crucial role judicial independence and the rule of law play in **safeguarding the democratic order**, and the consequences arising in situations in which the political system works against these principles. It will examine the challenges faced by the judiciary in Poland, the United States, and Germany. Each of these case studies offers a different perspective on the struggles faced by the judicial branch in the current political climate, and their varied outcomes depending on the legal culture and history.

1.DE-NEUTRALISATION OF THE COURTS

Poland's political trajectory in the past decade offers a striking case of how far-right populism can threaten judicial independence. In 2015, the **Law and Justice Party (PiS)** came to power, winning both the Presidential election and the absolute majority in the parliament. This put them in **incontestable control of both the executive and the legislative branches**, thus making the judiciary the only remaining branch capable of maintaining checks and balances.

Starting in 2015, PiS introduced numerous **controversial judicial reforms**, many of which would soon be sidelined in the face of a greater scandal, but nevertheless had a discernible impact on the quality of work of the judiciary and disrupted the rule of law. Some of these reforms **include** lowering the retirement age of the Supreme Court judges, forcing many of them into early retirement. Another would be the establishment of the Disciplinary Chamber of the Polish Supreme Court, which, in the European Court of Human Rights' judgement *Reczkowicz v. Poland*, was found **not** to be **"a tribunal established by law"** under Art. 6(1) ECHR; despite this, the Chamber retained disciplinary authority over judges, effectively subjecting the judiciary to the control of the ruling party. These reforms, notwithstanding their importance, faded into the background when the Constitutional

Tribunal Crisis - also known as the **Rule of Law Crisis** - began in December of 2015, and continued to escalate with every year. During the Crisis, PiS used their control of the executive through the President and the absolute majority in the Parliament to install a **2/3 majority of pro-PiS judges** in the Court, and eventually replace its President as well. This destroyed any notion of judicial independence, and turned the Constitutional Tribunal into a **"puppet court"** used to push a specific political agenda instead of maintaining impartiality and upholding checks and balances.

The absence of judicial independence led to the EU questioning the effectiveness of application and enforcement of EU law and the rule of law, eventually culminating in the Commission referring Poland to the Court of Justice of the European Union under art. 7 of the TFEU. In a series of *Commission v. Poland* rulings, **the CJEU consistently ruled against Poland in the rule of law proceedings**.

The resistance also came from the **lower courts**. Many judges refused to comply with politicized rulings and appealed to EU law, exemplifying how judicial independence can still endure. This path of legal resistance was not marginal - as of January 2025, the ECtHR has approximately 700 cases on its docket concerned with the breach of the right to an "independent and impartial tribunal established by law". The proceedings are currently adjourned until November 2025 in

order to give the Polish Government time to adopt general measures outlined in the *Wałęsa v. Poland* judgment.

A decade on, Poland has begun the strenuous process of **reversing the damage that was done to the judiciary under the rule of PiS**. The process is riddled with difficulties, as the party still holds power in the executive through the current President, and the presidential election looms on the horizon. The Rule of Law crisis demonstrates the vulnerability of judicial systems when checks and balances are eroded and the consequences of failing to protect judicial independence: a judiciary that becomes a tool of the ruling party rather than a check on its power.

2. THE UNITED STATES AND THE QUESTION OF EFFECTIVENESS

The U.S Supreme Court, fairly balanced in political makeup, is currently facing a different challenge to its role in the system of checks and balances - **a Government undermining the very authority of the Court's judgements**.

The U.S. judiciary benefits from **strong institutional protections** such as lifetime appointments for federal judges and a long-standing tradition of separation of powers, making it more difficult for the executive to exert direct control over the judiciary. However, the past decade has revealed vulnerabilities.

The **rapid appointment of three Supreme Court justices during President Trump's first term** heavily shifted the ideological balance of the Court, raising concerns about impartiality. Despite this, the Court has occasionally ruled against far-right positions, suggesting that the rule of law still holds supremacy over political views, regardless of the external pressures.

One of those cases is the judgement in *Noem v. Abrego Garcia* - a rare 9-0 unanimous ruling, where partisan divide was set aside for a case that was perceived as crucial to the rule of law and democracy. The Court deemed the Trump administration's deportation of Mr. Garcia as unconstitutional, and upheld a lower court judges' order for the Government to facilitate Mr. Garcia's return to the United States so he could be awarded the due process he was constitutionally entitled to. Despite that, the ruling was largely ignored by the administration.

The **lower courts** have also shown strong resistance - but so is the reaction from the government in light of this pushback. The Government's movement against the judiciary reaches beyond the Supreme Court - on April 26th 2025 the FBI arrested a Milwaukee county judge and charged her with federal felony - for allegedly helping an undocumented man avoid abduction by the ICE outside the courtroom. The current legal situation in the U.S. is highly unpredictable; however, it showcases the importance of an impartial judiciary.

3. THE PAST SHAPING THE FUTURE

Germany is a state that, despite also suffering from a rise in far-right sentiment, remains a stellar example of a **healthy system of checks and balances** based on judicial independence.

The commitment to judicial independence and the rule of law forms a central pillar of Germany's post-war legal architecture. It was largely shaped by the country's experience under **Nazism** and explicitly designed to prevent the re-emergence of far-right authoritarianism. When the 1949 Basic Law was created, ensuring separation of powers and a judiciary independent from political interference, Hitler's *Letters to all Judges* were still fresh in everyone's memory. With a powerful Federal Constitutional Court, Germany presents a **model of judicial independence embedded deeply within democratic identity**.

The Court has played a crucial role in curbing the influence of far-right politics, particularly in cases involving the **Alternative für Deutschland** (AfD), upholding laws that restrict hate speech and reinforcing protections against extremism in public institutions. During the most recent election cycle, as the AfD's rise to power continued, the Constitutional Court was further reinforced with legislation that was supported in a staggering majority vote of 600-69 in the Bundestag. The law will fix the number of judges, their terms

and maximum age, as well as enshrine the court's structure and the autonomy of its internal procedures and several other elements. It ensures that the Constitutional Court will remain independent and capable of fulfilling its crucial role in case of further democratic backsliding in Germany.

Germany serves as an example of **deep democratic entrenchment** and an understanding that an **independent judiciary is the backbone of a healthy democracy and protection from far-right encroachment**.

CONCLUSION

While Germany exemplifies a fortified legal system capable of resisting authoritarianism, the U.S. demonstrates both the strengths and struggles of an independent judiciary under political pressure. Poland's ongoing crisis, by contrast, serves as a cautionary tale for democracies of how fragile judicial independence can become when political actors undermine legal norms.

To safeguard democracy, states must not only preserve the formal structures of checks and balances and judicial independence but also **cultivate a legal culture** across all branches of government and the society at large that **defends** these institutions. Commitment to the rule of law remains the most effective defence against far-right encroachment.

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The Economics of Far-Right Politics

ECONOMIC APPROACH OF FAR-RIGHT POLITICS

WHAT IS THE ECONOMIC RATIONALE BEHIND FAR-RIGHT POLITICAL MOVEMENTS, AND HOW DO THESE IDEOLOGIES APPEAL TO ECONOMIC ANXIETIES?

By Anna-Raya Toncheva

INTRODUCTION

Radical right-wing parties have become significant political actors across many countries, challenging the status quo and blaming the incumbent parties for the economic downturns and political instability. Their narrative, often rooted with populist ideology, lies in these parties **rejecting the existing liberal democratic order**, claiming to represent the will of the “common people” against the corrupt political elites. Furthermore, they combine this populist rhetoric with strong anti-immigration and nationalist, often xenophobic stances. The prominence of these parties lies in their ability to shift the political landscape, and whilst their electoral gains may not win overall power, it pulls away from the mainstream center-left and center-right parties, thereby reshaping internal politics, namely the pattern of **coalition-building and policymaking**.

The Global Financial Crisis in 2008 and the failure of incumbent parties to address the rising economic inequality, created opportunities for new movements and **populist radical right** (PRR) parties gained ground for increasing their power. However, while they reject the current economic strategies, their stance on socioeconomic issues has been ambiguous, allowing them to frame their economic policy in **culturally resonant terms**. Nevertheless, financial conditions are not the only factors explaining the rise of PRR, as their appeal is also rooted in emotional and identity-based responses to perceived loss and economic grievances.

1. FAR-RIGHT RESPONSE TO CRISES

The rise of radical right-wing parties has always been tied to financial crises and economic inequality, as they receive a strong ground due to political

disruptions and instability. For instance, the **Great Depression** and the years after **World War II** were crises that gave rise to the first waves of far-right parties. The most recent wave started in the **2008 Global Financial Crises**, when the series of major economic and social

disruptions, namely the severe decline of GDP and the raise of unemployment rates, **weakened the trust in mainstream parties** and PRR gained a new political space. The supranational solution of the European Union to the crisis was heavily opposed by the parties with populist ideas, criticising the current government for failing to tackle economic inequality and undermining national sovereignty.

The **Covid-19 pandemic** is the most recent crisis that further established the position of the populist right-wing in governments' politics, where they are no longer the political challengers or outsiders, but the **major opposition or even the mainstream party**. There was no universal response to the pandemic, but it varies depending on the parties' position in the government. While some were in denial of the danger of the virus, namely U.S. President Trump and Brazilian President Bolsonaro, others were quick to point it out, **linking it to immigration and ethnic minorities**, such as the government of Viktor Orban in Hungary. Additionally, their responses differed on the **way** the government should address the problem. Many PRR argued that their mainstream party has not done enough to tackle the threats of the pandemic, and the same parties later on criticized the government implementing measures that are unconstitutional and anti-democratic. For example, in the **Netherlands**, where the government had more lenient policies, the right opposition advocated for more strict controls, such as testing

and mandatory use of face masks. This exemplifies the distorted and ambiguous responses to economic crises, ranging from neoliberal to protectionist views, remaining **central** to their appeal.

However, all right-parties have a clear agenda on the solutions to the global pandemic and preventing another one, namely by **not re-opening the borders**, as they view globalization and neoliberalism as the direct causes to the Covid-19 crisis. In doing so, they reinforce their far-right ideological opposition to globalization and the elites' failure to ensure national stability and economic sovereignty.

2. ECONOMIC AMBIGUITY AND VOTER PRIORITIES

Despite the conventional expectations that economic issues foster the prosperity of PRR, as it may induce feelings of political dissatisfaction, it is argued that the relationship between these parties and the economic situation is more **nuanced**. It is true that almost all voters want economic prosperity, which implies that voting behaviour can be influenced by economic conditions. However, it is important to take into consideration the issue salience, namely which issues they care about the most because it plays a crucial role in explaining why people vote the way they do. Moreover, **issue ownership** refers to the party that is perceived as more competent to

provide solutions to certain issues.

PRR parties traditionally owned the **immigration issue**, framing it as a cultural and national threat, thereby mobilising voters who view the issue as salient. However, they **lack** uniform economic policies and ideas, making them not seen as credible actors on economic matters. The views on economic matters have been **ambiguous** across populist right parties, with them starting off with neoliberal economic ideologies, such as resisting tax increases. As a result, during crises when the economy becomes the **primary concern**, voters are more likely to turn to parties perceived to own the economic issue, rather than PRR. Nonetheless, the rise of the PRR can be primarily attributed to the **increasing salience of the immigration issue**, as these parties base their political agenda on anti-immigration policies, making them the issue owner. For the past decades, the increased focus on immigration has created an **opening for PRR parties**, who have a consistent view on non-economic issues, arguing that immigration is the most pressing issue to be addressed. Therefore, they can appeal to people with **different economic preferences, but who perceive immigration as the most important issue**, increasing their ability to mobilise a wider range of voters.

3. ECONOMIC GRIEVANCES AND THE PRR VOTER BASE

Far-rights parties' primal support disproportionately comes from **manual workers and small businesses owners**. These are the voters who feel economically and culturally **despaired** and are perceived as the main **victims** of globalisation. Manual workers view themselves as the "losers" of deindustrialisation, due to educational expansion and technological development, leading to shrinkage in the manufacturing sector. Furthermore, small business owners are disadvantaged from globalization, as they are unable to compete with big corporations. What binds them is the perceived sense of loss of control and status.

While both of them have left-wing stances on socioeconomic issues, such as lower taxes, the right-wing appeals to them with **cultural and identity-based values**. While economic grievances provide a strong reason for manual workers and small business owners to vote for these parties, such voters also share policy preferences and ideological beliefs that align with the PRR platform. One key idea is their strong **anti-immigration policies**. These low-skilled workers and small businesses owners may view immigration as a direct threat to their livelihood, because of the perceived labour market competition and pressure on wages. As a result, immigration becomes not only a cultural

issue, associated with national identity, but also an economic issue for them, namely fear of job replacement.

Additionally, many of these voters hold **authoritarian and nationalist ideologies**, which align with those of the PRR. Therefore, the combination of economic grievances, cultural anxiety, and authoritarian values creates a strong foundation for the PRR's appeal.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, while the rise of PRR parties can be attributed to crises and economic downturns, their **ambiguous views on socioeconomic issues** makes them unattractive for voters who perceive economic issues as salient. These parties frame immigration as their **primary**, while capitalising on the economic fears of voters, particularly those who feel at a disadvantage due to globalization and deindustrialisation, such as manual workers and small businesses owners. PRR parties use the **combination of economic and cultural anxieties**, such as economic inequality and perceived nationalistic values to resonate with their supporters, enabling them to grow influence in shaping the future discourse across countries.

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IMPACT ON DOMESTIC ECONOMIES

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAR-RIGHT ECONOMIC POLICIES?

By Patricia Meka

ABSTRACT

Donald Trump's re-election as the US president in 2024 has **shaken** the global political landscape, with immense shockwaves throughout the world's economy and society. It marks another "triumph" for **far-right political ideologies**, which have significantly influenced domestic economic policy in various nations, including Italy, Poland, Hungary, India, and Brazil. Such movements and policies promote nationalism, economic protectionism, an anti-immigrant approach, social welfare cuts, and institutional disbelief. The article analyses and tries to shed light on the expected consequences of such far-right economic policies on domestic economies, also depicting the potential long-term effects on employment, social safety nets, and income inequality under far-right governance. The article finds that although far-right policies may serve as a prompt "answer" to **public discontent and economic anxiety**, they repeatedly lead to long-term adverse effects, including reduced competitiveness, institutional instability, labour shortages, and heightened inequality.

1. INTRODUCTION

The end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century have both witnessed a **surge** in far-right political movements across many countries, especially in Europe and Western democracies. Practically, populist radical right parties have been a **permanent** feature of Western European politics since the 1980s.

Typically, from the beginning of the twenty-first century, populist radical right parties **spread** like wildfire and became key political players in many European countries, gaining representation in local governments, national parliaments, and the European Parliament. The world economy has recently witnessed a growing shift toward protectionism and

economic nationalism. From Brexit to Trump's "Make America Great Again" doctrine, such "tectonic" shifts reflect deeper concerns about industrial competitiveness, job security, and economic sovereignty. Along with the UK and the USA, several other countries have also adopted these strategies to reassert control over domestic markets by protecting key industries and prioritizing **national welfare** amid economic globalization. Although such policies may achieve immediate goals, such as reindustrialization, job protection, strategic economic autonomy, and sustainable industrial and economic growth, they raise numerous **concerns** about efficiency, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability.

It is apparent that, nowadays, far right and populist parties have scored **substantial political results**. This trend extends beyond the European level, with populist parties positioned in the **top three** political forces in one-third of European countries. They have formed governments and are currently the top political movements in Hungary and Italy. Their success is often attributed to **economic and financial crises**. In practical terms, the **2008 Eurozone crisis** is an obvious source of blame for this phenomenon; a large body of literature suggests that economic malaise prompts support for far-right parties. But economic and financial crises alone are not the only cause for the rise of far-right political movements;

economic globalization has also created "losers" in domestic labour markets, laying the groundwork for populist backlash. Specifically, the disruptive effects of globalization, particularly in labour markets, have led to job losses in manufacturing sectors. In the case of EU countries and the USA, the lasting **economic decline of local labour markets**, due to import competition, contributed to a cultural backlash of rising nationalism and support for right-wing parties' anti-immigration stances. In this regard, far-right policies capitalize on this discontent by offering seemingly "simple" solutions to complex economic problems.

Most parties with robust anti-immigrant platforms in Europe are members of the far-right party family. Often rooted in nationalist, anti-globalist, and anti-immigrant rhetoric, they have increasingly **influenced their country's government policy**. Although such a political and governing mindset is part of a heated and ongoing debate on the domestic and international stage, it is causing long-term economic and social ramifications, domestically and globally. In technical terms, these (far-right) movements often emphasize national sovereignty and advocate for **reduced government spending and taxation**. They support protectionism over free trade and encourage deregulation at the expense of environmental and institutional safeguards. Additionally, far-right policies often claim to protect national interests, revive domestic

industries, and reduce fiscal dependency, typically by employing anti-immigrant platforms and stances. However, historical and current consequences for domestic economic systems are quite complex and multifaceted.

2. HOW DO PROTECTIONIST MEASURES AND NATIONALISTIC POLICIES AFFECT DOMESTIC MARKETS?

Historically, the world economy and international trade developed slightly away from free trade principles during the capitalist era, even when free trade champions like Adam Smith and Ricardo promoted *laissez-faire* and **free trade** as the most efficient way to allocate resources, maximize output, and raise living standards. Although Britain and the USA have long been viewed as champions of free trade, their historical economic trajectories and those of now-developed countries do not reflect such a reality. These nations (chiefly developed countries) employed **protectionist tools** during their own industrialization and only later embraced free trade after achieving global competitiveness. During the 19th century, both the United States and Germany implemented early protectionist industrial policies that

played a crucial role in fostering their domestic manufacturing sectors, which later emerged as global leaders. Additionally, according to Rodrik (2011), while free trade can increase growth and welfare, its benefits tend to accrue only when **certain conditions are satisfied**; therefore, countries like the United States, leading European nations, and successful East Asian economies industrialized behind a range of trade and non-trade barriers.

Protectionist economic policies may include tariffs, import quotas, local industry subsidies, and foreign ownership restrictions. The discussion about how protectionist measures and nationalistic policies affect domestic markets may be summarized in two directions: (1) **positive** and (2) **adverse effects**.

Regarding the positive effects, the protectionist measures and nationalistic policies may help in:

- **Safeguarding emerging industries from premature competition.** Governments can provide space for these sectors to mature, innovate, and scale up through tariffs, subsidies, and quotas. South Korea and Japan, for instance, used trade barriers in the mid-20th century to foster strong domestic manufacturing sectors.
- **Protecting jobs and employment in sensitive sectors.** In the US, steel tariffs have occasionally been used

to preserve jobs in the domestic steel industry. Similarly, agricultural subsidies in the European Union aim to support rural livelihoods and food security. Recently, Trump's "America First" doctrine has imposed a 25% tariff on imports of automobiles and certain automobile parts to revive the US auto industry and "restore fairness" in these trade relations through tariff equalization.

- **Promoting national security and domestic production, thus reducing reliance on foreign firms.** Nationalistic policies such as "Buy American" or India's "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" emphasize strengthening local industries, with the aim of boosting national resilience, especially in sectors critical to public safety, like pharmaceuticals or defense. The key rationale here is to ensure self-sufficiency in critical sectors, like defense, aerospace, and technology. An industrialized nation can gain a comparative advantage in crucial industries by implementing protective regulations. Also, this nation may temporarily enact taxes and subsidies in that direction, which improves future growth opportunities, specifically when important economic sectors are actively supported.

As for the adverse protectionist measures' negative effects, the following may be mentioned:

- **Market inefficiencies.** By providing protection from global competition,

domestic firms gain an unfair competitive edge, chiefly in the domestic market, thus leading to fewer incentives for innovation, cost reductions, and quality improvement. Less competitive industries are less innovative, and less innovative industries are less productive. Tariffs probably weaken the incentives to innovate and come up with streamlined processes that keep companies on their toes and productivity high. Over time, this results in stagnant productivity and higher prices

- **International retaliation.** Specifically, in 2018, Trump's "America First" policy led to tariffs on Chinese steel and aluminium, prompting retaliatory tariffs and supply chain disruptions. The 2018–2019 U.S.–China trade war produced tens of billions in tariffs exchanged between the two nations, disrupting global supply chains and harming export-oriented industries on both sides.
- **Higher prices and reduced product variety for consumers.** Tariffs affect consumers in two main ways. First, they increase the cost of what they buy when the added cost, which companies pay as a tax to the federal government, gets passed on to consumers. Second, they might reduce the range of products available by making some imports unprofitable. In the long run, this reduces consumer welfare and can even contribute to higher inflation. Such measures mostly affect

lower-income households, as they spend a greater portion of their income on goods whose prices rise due to tariffs.

- **Investment priorities' distortion.** Rather than channelling resources into competitive and high-growth sectors, governments may overinvest in politically favoured but uncompetitive industries, resulting in waste and inefficiency.
- **Barriers towards foreign investments.** Restrictions on foreign ownership or regulatory barriers may discourage international investors by reducing capital inflows and technology transfer. Although protection policies aim to retain control over strategic sectors, the result can be slower economic growth and reduced integration into global value chains.

3. POTENTIAL LONG-TERM EFFECTS ON EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL SAFETY NETS, AND INCOME INEQUALITY UNDER FAR-RIGHT GOVERNANCE.

By prioritizing nationalist and protectionist economic agendas, far-right policies potentially worsen inequality, weaken social welfare, and adversely affect labour markets. Although such policies may serve as a prompt "answer" to public discontent and economic anxiety, they **repeatedly**

lead to long-term adverse effects, including reduced competitiveness, institutional instability, labour shortages, and heightened inequality.

3.1 EFFECTS ON EMPLOYMENT

The far-right policies' emphasis on immigration control may have **unintended labour market consequences**. Even if the growth in support for these parties is primarily driven by their anti-immigrant platforms, they may use their leverage to promote and implement policies in these **other areas** as well—and all of them have the potential to affect inequality between immigrants and citizens and also between other segments of society, for example, along gender or employment dimensions. It is a **proven fact** that immigration generally contributes positively to labour markets by filling labour shortages, diversifying skill sets, and increasing tax revenues. Far-right parties tend to portray immigration as a **threat** to national cohesion, security, and the living of their country's citizens. Far-right policies argue that immigrants **compete** for (primarily low-skilled) jobs with native citizens, they are a burden for public services, pose security and crime problems, etc., and the implementation of such policies in practice will, unavoidably, lead to labour shortages, particularly in aging societies like the USA and the EU. Such a radical approach, faced with insufficient inflows of working-age migrants, may challenge the economies of developed/rich

countries with continuously declining labour force participation and reduced innovation. This will threaten their long-term economic sustainability.

3.2 EFFECTS ON SOCIAL SAFETY NETS

When it comes to social safety nets, far-right policies and political parties favour a smaller government and support an overall **reduced welfare spending program, healthcare, and public pensions**. Such measures are justified as aiming to reduce various deficits. Especially in Europe, populist radical right parties combine nativism and populism in their economic agenda of **welfare chauvinism** and their foreign policy agenda of **Euroscepticism**. Welfare chauvinism results in a dualistic welfare system where native populations are prioritized, and immigrants face tighter eligibility criteria or outright exclusion. Following Brexit, the United Kingdom witnessed various welfare reforms enacted by Conservative-led governments. Such reforms included significant reductions in universal credit and housing benefits, which have excessively affected low-income and marginalized populations, leading to **heightened levels of food insecurity and homelessness**.

The erosion and persistent weakening of social safety nets, under far-right policies, can also compromise public health, education quality, and labour productivity.

In this regard, the reduced investments in the healthcare system and education sector limit **human capital development**, by impeding economic mobility and increasing the burden on charitable and non-governmental sectors.

3.3 INCREASING INCOME INEQUALITY

Under far-right economic governance, **income inequality** typically increases due to the cumulative impact of regressive tax policies, cuts to social spending, and deregulation of labour markets. Far-right policies primarily **advantage wealthier individuals** and corporations while diminishing the economic stability of lower- and middle-income families. The first Trump administration's tax cuts in 2017 primarily benefited large corporations and high-income earners, while offering limited relief to middle- and low-income households. Therefore, tax cuts have led to an increase in income inequality. The wealthiest individuals became wealthier while poorer individuals struggled and faced reduced access to essential services and benefits. The increasing income inequality fuels potential **social unrest and political instability**, which have apparent ramifications on investments and consumer confidence. It also complicates the whole macroeconomic environment and inhibits sustainable growth.

4. CONCLUSION

Protectionist and far-right policies often produce **complex and contradictory effects on domestic markets**. Although they may provide short-term support and evident results for domestic industries, by promising national economic revitalization and responding to factual socio-political pressures, their long-term implications and consequences may include reduced economic inefficiencies, strained labour markets, consumer welfare, inequality exacerbation, diminished global competitiveness, and less innovation. Policymakers and governments must seek to **balance** the need for economic sovereignty with the benefits of global integration and globalization by crafting policies that stay away from reactive nationalism and protect vulnerable sectors without compromising the country's overall economic drive.

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