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The Rise of Nationalism: Lessons from Europe

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About the Grand Challenge

Inequality and exclusion are among the most pressing political issues of our age. They are on the rise and the anger felt by citizens towards elites perceived to be out-of-touch constitutes a potent political force. Policymakers and the public are clamouring for a set of policy options that can arrest and reverse this trend. The Grand Challenge on Inequality and Exclusion seeks to identify practical and politically viable solutions to meet the targets on equitable and inclusive societies in the Sustainable Development Goals. Our goal is for national governments, intergovernmental bodies, multilateral organizations, and civil society groups to increase commitments and adopt solutions for equality and inclusion.

The Grand Challenge is an initiative of the Pathfinders, a multi-stakeholder partnership that brings together 39 member states, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector to accelerate delivery of the SDG targets for peace, justice and inclusion. Pathfinders is hosted at New York University's Center on International Cooperation.

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Executive Summary

1.1 Nationalism is intensifying globally

In Europe, xenophobic, Islamophobic, and anti-immigration parties have remade the political map. In many instances, the Right no longer even campaign on conventionally free-market, pro-austerity politics; instead, they present somewhat eclectic and contradictory economic positions that are secondary to their overriding commitment to nationalist issues and fears.

Nationalism rests on dehumanising discourses that exclude racialized and migrant communities. These people are both denied basic compassion and ascribed principal culpability for assorted ills—be they economic, security, cultural, or social in character. Alongside the increasingly punitive approaches to migration based on these tropes are harsher pro-"integration" policies, as well as policies criminalizing "outsiders" who are routinely framed as a security threat.

1.2 Nationalism does not occur in a vacuum

The wider context, e.g., in Europe, is the post-Cold War collapse of left-wing alternatives. Governments shy away from economic intervention and social redistribution while their citizens are reconciled to a technocratic "market realism" and hence dare not believe in the redistributive or even service-provision capacities of the state. Amid this void, we have seen a sharp return to political preoccupations with questions of culture, symbols, and identity as framed through notions of national ethnic majorities.

1.3 Nationalist prejudice and fear has flourished in the political void of left or center-left options as credible features of contemporary political discourses

In turn, we see that class as a marker of legitimate victimhood has been adapted to stand in for nationalist concerns about identity and culture, as opposed to economic concerns about wealth and incomes.

1.4 & 1.5 The conflation of class and nationalist social conservatism connects to the global rise of "anti-elite" populism

Antiracist and equality rights won by minority communities are here misrepresented as elite concerns victimising the "ordinary" majority. This populism has been facilitated by established political actors and dominant media frames. These include anti-immigration and wider pathologizing concerns about Muslims, integration, and the "failure of multiculturalism." The wide political appeal of nationalist scapegoating—even directly or indirectly utilized by centrists—has thus emerged as an all-conquering political force.

1.6 Nationalist-populism must be situated within the broader context of the emergence of significantly powerful for-profit digital media platforms

There is evidence within these platforms of a tendency toward "de-democratising" effects. These can include the cultivation of sensationalist "echo chambers" that facilitate the amplification of mis- and disinformation particularly conducive to the foregrounding of nationalist prejudices. Accompanying this is the increasingly prominent censorship and intimidation of journalists.

Theorizing Nationalism

There are several factors why nationalism seems intrinsically fated toward these intolerant and insular prejudices:

— The sanctity of national identity is inherent to shared twenty-first century nation-state politics, given that the nation remains our most fundamental sense of political community.

— The nation-state model of modernity remains fundamentally reliant on the figure of the "other" (i.e., those who do not belong).

— The nation-state framework is negatively impacted by nationalist framings of victimhood and entitlement, as well as foregrounding a belief in the importance of cohesive unity as vital for prosperity and global success.

— Important historical shifts in the logics of racism mean racism and nationalism meet in powerful ways.

— Outsider and immigrant communities come to be portrayed as culturally incompatible and alien, as well as damaging to the national essence and wellbeing. This also leans heavily on racialised markers of religion—not least, Islam.

Recommendations

Governments, third sector organizations, and campaigners must forcefully make the case for immigration in cultural and humanitarian terms:

— Centrist politicians must resist the cheaper short-term political appeal of anti-immigration scapegoating.

— Instrumental and reductive economic arguments must also be resisted insofar as they undermine the dignity and humanity of prospective migrants.

Education

— Radical interrogations of national history via key institutions (not least, schools) are required in order to develop more literate and inclusive approaches to contemporary issues. This could be achieved by:

  — cultivating an enduring and empathetic public literacy regarding the exclusion and struggle of key minority and outsider communities; and

  — highlighting histories of shared past multiethnic struggles—creating an alternative historical record of solidarities and multiethnic internationalist identification and politics.

— There is an important related need to extend and/or defend higher education access and humanities and arts funding. These sectors have

historically been key to normalising both critical and inclusive perceptions of community and oppressed groups. Similarly, humanities-minded education opportunities, building on previous 'extra-mural' initiatives, should be facilitated within workplace, trade union and municipal level facilities.

Media

— Stronger regulatory oversight of private media platforms is needed, considering their now fundamental role in communications and information sharing. This will require cooperative transnational efforts to monitor and regulate the social media industry and infrastructure, possibly treating it as a public service or utility.

— Governance can also prioritize state and NGO funding for media outlets that profile underrepresented voices, as well as civil society organisations geared toward profiling local stories of inclusion and multiethnic "multiculture" and community making.

Facilitating greater political participation and localism is another priority. This requires:

— A much greater delegation of decision-making powers to local, municipal, and metropolitan levels of democratic authority. Such redistribution has the capacity to address the wider issues of perceived powerlessness and disillusionment that nationalist demagoguery attempts to exploit.

— Stronger metropolitan-level governance. City-level multiethnic interaction and density has largely resisted the steady advance of nationalist political parties. Delegating greater governmental power to cities helps to check the practical reach of xenophobic national policies. It also allows municipal politics to develop progressive and inclusive platforms of multiethnic and migrant-receptive environments and narratives.

— The nurturing of political engagement among and within local communities. Greater engagement will help these communities see the benefits of participation, countering the perceived disenfranchisement upon which nationalism feeds. Such efforts could also work collaboratively at a global or "transmunicipal" scale to further undercut sources of nationalist resentment.

— New trade union organising. This should be adapted to shifting economic circumstances characterised by short-term contract labour and fragmented managerial and ownership structures. It should also take into account the significant antitrade union legislation of the past two decades. Despite unions' checkered history vis-à-vis nationalism,[1] the decay of trade unionism has resulted in the decline of a space within which notionally internationalist and collective cultural organizing and political education could act as a brake on nationalist sentiments.

Climate

In contrast to the antinationalist potential of distinctly local politics, the planetary scope of the ongoing realities of climate breakdown allows progressive politicians to stage a political project of renewal and transformation that matches the scale of ethnonationalist politics. A politics of global green new deals (GND) and the general global dimensions of climate politics open new terrain for progressive antinationalist endeavors.[2] The more convincing of these acknowledge the planetary level of collaboration but also global accountability as determined by historical privileges.[3]

Democratic supranational cooperation

Key debates about how regional blocs might act collectively and pragmatically are overdue. These debates should be in line with wider social challenges that go beyond the terms of mere market cooperation and liberalization. The case for collaborative "confederal" sovereignties is more acute when considering the contemporary challenges of global markets and tech-led platform capitalism (e.g., debates concerning a global digital tax), the planetary scale of climate breakdown, and the borderless vectors of public health and pandemic risks.

From a developing world perspective, regional collaboration is desperately needed when confronting supranational issues concerning multinational corporations' (MNC) tax avoidance, MNC-led erosion of workers' rights and regulatory protections, and wider issues of debt cancellation.

1 Why Nationalism? Contextualizing the Global Rise of Nationalist Prejudice

1.1 All across the world, nationalism is intensifying

In Europe—where these authors are based, and the historical home of both the nation-state model and the nationalist ideologies intrinsic to that model of sovereignty—xenophobic, Islamophobic, and anti-immigration parties have remade the political map. Indeed, the political Right has currently consolidated electoral power not through active propagation of free-market themes characteristic of the late twentieth century (though they often remain committed to these), but through a harnessing of key nationalist themes. In fact, in many instances this Right no longer even campaigns on conventionally free-market, pro-austerity politics. Instead, they present somewhat eclectic and contradictory economic positions that are secondary to their overriding commitment to nationalist issues and fears.

Key here are the dehumanizing discourses by which typically poor and/or racialized minorities and "outsider" migrant communities are denied basic compassion while also being ascribed principal culpability for assorted ills—be they economic, security, cultural, or social in character.[4] Unsurprisingly, these political environments foster the electoral power of exclusionary Right and hard-Right governments. Such discourses also result in assorted state practices highly deleterious to already vulnerable communities. Examples are increasingly punitive approaches to migration; harsher pro-"integration" policies that curtail the cultural and civic rights of various targeted communities; and a suite of criminalizing policies against those from "outsider" backgrounds who are routinely framed as a security threat. Equally,

such political tendencies also agitate for the curtailment or reversal of certain gains in civic, migrant, and equality rights. Such revanchism not only targets key ethnicized outsiders, but also incorporates a wider remit that militates against the rights and political visibility of feminist, LGBTQ+, environmentalist, and even conventionally leftist social class movements. Here, the strengthening of nationalist sentiments yields a nostalgically nativist perception of a nationally coherent and traditional past that is under threat. This supposed threat hails not only from the excess presence of assorted minorities and migrant communities, but also from the social justice aims of those who advocate for marginalized groups.

1.2 The consolidation of nationalism's ascendancy does not however occur in a vacuum

Many wider contextual features have aided its revitalization. In Europe, a key context is the post-Cold War collapse of left-wing alternatives—both in a political sense as a diminished party-political presence, but also as a set of general public expectations about what governments can, or aspire, to do in terms of economic intervention and social redistribution. Disillusioned publics now rarely dare to believe in the redistributive or even service-provision capacities of the state, having been reconciled to a technocratic "market realism"[5] that assumes growing inequality gaps and deference to market actors are simply post-political realities of contemporary economies.[6] In the resultant void, we have seen a sharp return to political preoccupations with questions of culture, symbols, and identity as framed through notions of national ethnic majorities.[7] This gives rise to a politics of grievance amid perceptions of scarcer distribution and resources, but also in terms of notions of unfairness presented through ethnic claims.

In electoral terms, such politics appeals largely to the elderly in the West; but the hardening of nationalism[8] in China, India, and other Global South contexts is not quite the same. And in France, for instance, the National Rally are making strong inroads among some younger generations.[9]

Furthermore, again in electoral terms, in Europe such politics is often strongest in smaller towns, semi-rural settings, and 'post-industrial' provincial areas—although, paradoxically, the nationalist vote tends still toward those who are often reasonably secure in terms of property ownership and pension security. As such, it is the perception of marginalization, or the sense of being 'squeezed' from within a middle-class economic bracket, that fosters a receptive base for "patriotic" appeals to a promised return to former entitlements. Indeed,

the feeling that they have something to lose is likely what makes these constituencies susceptible to such seductions. Younger, less materially-entitled cohorts[10] are understandably less keen to maintain the status quo or harbor a comparable defensiveness vis-à-vis a mythical promise of past bounty.

1.3 The above connects to the misconceptions of the "working-class revolt" thesis that has gained popular analytic traction in explaining the rise of nationalist-populism[11]

This thesis routinely misreads the voting patterns behind the rise of nationalist-populist parties: in fact, it is still the middle classes alongside factions of the traditionally wealthy that represent nationalism's core electorate. Long-term class recomposition is often also ignored.[12] Increasingly, property wealth, indebtedness, and patterns of job security, precarity, and informal, temporary labor—often concentrated by age (below 50) and geography (large cities)—determine how social class is to be read.[13]

Assumptions about type of labor (e.g., manual/routine versus clerical/professional), level of education (nongraduates versus graduates), or geographic location (provincial versus metropolitan) are, moreover, anachronistic when explaining class. Instead, more historically tuned analyses of economic location reveal more complex understandings of today's class composition (as tied to asset wealth, income, debt and job stability) and the resultant class profile of nationalism's political appeal.

In prevailing political commentary, however, social class has been stripped of its economic definitions and remade into a racial/nationalist category where working-class/"left behind"[14] status is seen through national conceptions of authentic provincial identity. This results in a particular nationalist mythologisation of the iconic working-class subject and working-class politics. Consider here Blue Labour, an influential centre-left British grouping, and their insistence on a politics of "flag, faith and family" (i.e., "social conservatism") as the foundations of authentic class identity. This distorts how class is to be conventionally read: elderly property owners with stable pension incomes[15] are summarily read as working-class owing to either the type of work they engaged in or their provincial geographic location. It also excludes the shared if not more severe social class distress of those seen as immigrant outsiders, ethnic minorities,[16] or those often-younger populations generally located in large cities. In sum, nationalist prejudice and fear has flourished amid the

political void of left or centre-left options as credible features of contemporary political discourses. Meanwhile, class as a marker of legitimate victimhood has been adapted to stand in for nationalist concerns about identity and culture, as opposed to economic concerns about wealth and incomes.

1.4 Simplifying class authenticity to mean only nativist social conservatism reveals a wider connection to the global rise of what some call populism

These right-populisms capitalize on the sense of injured and abandoned majorities, restaging potent conceptions of anti-elite sentiment. Crucially, elites here are seen exclusively in terms of cultural and social values (i.e., social liberalism), as opposed to being read as concentrations of political power and wealth.[17] Elitism is regeared to represent those who ostensibly advocate for greater rights and compassion toward minorities and outsiders: racial, but also in terms of gender, sexuality, and even the urban poor. Also striking here is the reframing of antiracist and equality rights won by minorities as victimizing the "ordinary" majority, and antithetical to the majority's interests or dignity. A wider "zero-sum"[18] framing prevails, where minority and migrant rights are presented as deleterious to the "indigenous" majority in terms of such policies' symbolic resonance and the alleged "undeservingness"[19] of particular minority and migrant communities.

Furthermore, while populism is seen as a recent phenomenon, nationalist-populists have in fact exploited wider trends over the last two decades, led by established political actors and dominant media frames. In Western Europe, these centrist positions had already made anti-immigration sentiment and wider pathologizing concerns about Muslims, integration, and the "failure of multiculturalism"[20] a centerpiece of political discourse. Drawing loosely upon Pablo de Greiff's "Transitional Justice in pre-conflict contexts" schema,[21] we accordingly see that centrist actors have helped embed certain exclusionary norms of political representation and discourse—or, at the least, failed to engineer norm transformation. In other words, norms that legitimize key nationalist themes exploited by today's nativist parties were already embraced by centrist actors for temporary political gain.[22]

1.5 It is instructive to note that immigration and Islamophobia/anti-Muslim prejudice have emerged as the two key anchoring themes of today's nationalism in many parts of the world, and certainly in Europe

Importantly, both themes appeal across contrasting political traditions. Islamophobia aggressively fuses neoconservative tenets with more liberal sentiments, while anti-immigration sentiment draws upon neoliberal as well as historically left-wing and protectionist symbolisms.[23] This allows for far-reaching nationalist prejudices where migrants and Muslims are dehumanized in ways that present them as encumbering economic resources, but also undermining the cultural coherence of the majority who claim the nation. Such centrifugal "others" are also presented as security problems via disproportionate media frames of terrorism and crime. In turn, we see that nationalist scapegoating appeals to a wide spectrum of political concerns, traversing ideology as well as issues. It is due to this range that nationalism has emerged as an all-conquering political force, appealing across disparate constituencies and political leanings.

1.6 It is important to situate nationalist-populism in the digital media era

Private digital media, and its underlying concept of profit tied to enhanced circulation, has proven particularly conducive to the foregrounding of nationalist prejudices. Many media scholars argue that while the emergence of Web 2.0 information platforms ostensibly allows for greater public participation, the internal algorithms of these monopoly platforms (e.g., Facebook, YouTube, but also WhatsApp) tend toward certain "de-democratising" effects.[24] In other words, sensationalist "echo chambers" geared toward stoking majoritarian fears prove profitable for capturing content circulation (e.g., "the attention economy").[25] This underlying design aim of platforms—enhanced content traction amid a highly competitive environment of "informational saturation"[26]—also facilitates significant scope for mis- and dis-information to be amplified in ways that legacy media were historically more cautious about, or subject to more substantial regulation.

Another key media factor, as serially highlighted by Reporters without Borders (RSF),[27] is the increasingly prominent censorship and authoritarian intimidation of journalism. Nationalist-populist governmental intervention in

both media output and independent cultural institutions is an increasingly prominent danger, where free media and journalism is increasingly the focal point of alarmist slander. Here, attention given to underrepresented voices or progressive causes is impugned as antipatriotic and/or an elitist denigration of authentically rooted nativist conservatism.

2 Theorizing Nationalism

The preceding empirical context has proven relevant to the consolidation of today's ethnonationalist politics. A little wider conceptualization is however required to understand why nationalism seems intrinsically fated toward these intolerant and insular prejudices.

2.1 The nation-state model of modernity, and its constitutive attachment to national identity, remains fundamentally reliant on the figure of the "other" (i.e., those who do not belong)

This framing of sovereignty and political community is serially prone to anxieties about homogeneity[28] and also implies a heavy investment in cultural standardization (i.e., assimilationist) procedures and demands. The attachment to national identity also tends to foster recurring anxieties about historical continuity and the entitlement of the national majority—questioning, in turn, the validity of significant minorities' presence in the country and/or continuously asserting such minorities' fundamentally "guest" status. The nation-state concept of politics is thus prone to a fixation on national identity and majoritarian primacy and grievance—and necessarily externalizes culpability onto minority communities. In sum, the nation-state framework is fed by nationalist framings of victimhood and entitlement, along with foregrounding a belief in the importance of cohesive unity as vital for prosperity and global success.

2.2 Different but overlapping historical coordinates have cemented what we now know as the nationalism of the nation-state model: Westphalian, Romanticist, Modernist, and Postcolonial

All have converged on the shared twenty-first century tendency of nation-state politics to succumb to nationalist radicalisations.[29] Underlying the nation-state model is a privilege given to the sanctity of national identity. A set of popular framings around a population's political problems and prospective solutions flow accordingly from this underlying premise of how we understand our most fundamental sense of political community. These framings are galvanized by particular political actors once conducive external circumstances arise.

2.3 This connects to important historical shifts in the logic of racism—from biological conceptions of natural, even genetic assertions of inferiority ("scientific racism") to today's emphasis on "cultural/new" racism[30]

The latter stresses the allegedly cultural incompatibility between different communities as denoted by markers of race and ethnicity (including, for instance, racialized markers of religion—not least Islam). Such essentialist markers of racial difference are seen as corresponding to discrete cultural traits, values, and attitudes contradictory to the alleged cultural constitution of the majority population. Second, these putative cultural traits are presented in stereotypical frames that render the relevant racial minority culturally pathological (e.g., cultural deficits regarding propriety; tolerance of difference; work-ethic; individual responsibility; propensity to liberal norms; national loyalty; etc.). Racism and nationalism meet here in powerful ways: outsider communities, particularly through the lens of immigration, are presented as incompatible and alien as well as damaging to the national essence and wellbeing. This imbrication of race and nationalism has been captured by the human rights scholar, Chetan Bhatt, as the logic of racial "xenologies."[31]

3 Key Areas for Challenging Contemporary Nationalism

Having outlined the character of the threats of nationalism, following are some of the key areas in which it might be challenged.

3.1 Making the case for immigration remains vital, resisting in turn the cheaper short-term political appeal of anti-immigration scapegoating

As many economists argue, summarized in particularly efficient fashion in Peo Hansen's Modern Migration Theory,[32] those locations where nationalist scaremongering has been challenged have seen broader competences in political discourse and wider retention of socioeconomic and sociocultural benefits.

There is however a risk that such positioning may instrumentalize the dignity and humanity of prospective migrants. As such, the defence of migration needs to be made in cultural and humanitarian terms in addition to economic justification. A concerted political attempt is therefore needed—e.g., through citizens/denizens assemblies—to normalize the duty of wealthier and emergent middle-income countries to accommodate higher refugee intakes. First, this duty relates to the relative comforts of wealth, and therein the inevitable implication that wealthier economies are key destinations for those in search of a livelihood. Second, it also pertains to the historical terms of that wealth—be it colonial extraction or the globally interdependent nature by which wealth becomes concentrated in particular regions.

The presentation of such obligations can also be tied to alternative conceptions of the ethnical nation—where alternative claims to the country's ethical strength and moral vitality are staked. For instance, Angela Merkel's well-documented stance on the 2015 "refugee crisis" in Germany, despite her otherwise strong centre-right orientation, is instructive. The considerable political resolve displayed in her 'we can do it' ('Wir schaffen das')[33] stance risked major backlash, some of which did materialize. But by defending her position through a combined rationalization of economic foresight, moral responsibility, and appeals to more tolerant and hospitable conceptions of national pride, Merkel helped stabilize a situation which otherwise threatened a major upsurge in nationalist-populist extremism as represented by the newcomer Alternative for Germany party. It is also worth observing that attempts elsewhere by centrist actors to appease anti-immigration sentiment is proving politically futile: this accommodationist position has consistently yielded a further hardening of the demands of explicitly xenophobic parties, further cementing general anti-immigration attitudes.

3.2 A more long-term site of intervention concerns education

Independent reports on the importance of reform in British history curricula,[34] alongside wider lessons drawn from Germany's seemingly more self-critical and introspective conceptions of national history,[35] reveal that critical re-examination of national history via key institutions (not least, schools) is crucial. A historical memory that refuses the nationalist temptation to focus solely on its ethically virtuous, unified aspects nurtures a more literate and inclusive approach to contemporary issues. Such an approach helps cultivate an enduring and empathetic public literacy regarding the exclusion and struggles of key minority and outsider communities. It is similarly important to emphasize past histories of shared multiethnic struggle, creating an alternative historical record of solidarities and multiethnic internationalist identification and politics.[36]

There is an important related need to extend and/or defend higher education access and humanities and arts funding. It is widely evidenced that nationalist-populists are particularly hostile to these sectors, which have been historically key to normalizing both critical and inclusive perceptions of community and oppressed groups. It is also apparent that, in many contexts, the graduate-versus-nongraduate divide (which, as noted, is no longer a reliable proxy for contemporary class stratification) is a strong marker of nationalist electoral voting habits. However, older graduates differ from more recent "graduates

with no future"[37] in terms of developing less radically open political and cultural attitudes.

Worryingly, these sectors are already vulnerable to increasingly narrow short-termist governmental understandings of labor market skilling and economistic agendas.[38] But the economic reality of arts, social science, and humanities degrees is often otherwise: these studies foster complex literacy in the soft skills beneficial to the cultural, service, and innovation economy, and also yield major dividends in terms of mature civic citizenship. Similarly, parallel efforts to introduce humanities-minded educational opportunities within workplace and trade union settings should also be pursued, building on the influential example of post-war 'extra-mural' initiatives.

3.3 Stronger regulatory oversight of private media platforms is another key contemporary area

This requires a formal review of social media regulation considering its now fundamental role in communications and information sharing. This will require transnational cooperation toward efforts to monitor and regulate the social media industry and infrastructure—possibly treating it as public service or utility.[39]

Also, governance can better leverage the importance of state and NGO funding for media outlets that profile underrepresented voices and those civil society organizations geared toward profiling local stories of inclusion, multiethnic "multiculture," and community making.[40] Furthermore, it is important to avoid framing any funding of such cultural output within the terms of "integration" and "cohesion." Such terms can suggest negative connotations of a deficient "problem" minority being incorporated into a virtuous majority community.[41] Instead, emphasis should be given to shared bonds that arise spontaneously and through mutual interaction, proximity, and shared civic and political action, without the national identity/majoritarian community being afforded superseding preference or status.

3.4 Facilitating greater political participation and localism is another priority

This requires a much greater delegation of decision-making powers to local, municipal, and metropolitan levels of democratic authority.

It is again revealing that exclusionary New Right parties are typically oriented toward strong centralization and executivism. Greater jurisdiction for local governance with strong constitutional protection presents an attractive antidote. On the one hand, devolution or federalism has done little to stem the wider appeal of ethnonationalist resentment—indeed, it seems in some instances to reinforce it amongst majority regions.[42] On the other hand, the redistribution of political power and resources to the local level has the capacity to address the wider issues of perceived powerlessness and disillusionment among the populations enticed by nationalist demagoguery.

There are a range of experiments in these practices: the participatory budgeting of Porto Allegre, Brazil;[43] the radical municipalism of Barcelona enComú in Catalonia; and the vaunted "Preston model"[44] in the UK.[45] In these cases, local governance underpinned by genuinely participatory processes has helped to facilitate a tangible sense of "control" or power among the population. This empowerment works to counter feelings of hopelessness and depoliticization feeding the nationalist resurgence, which is built on an abstract vilification of "problems" posed by minorities and outsiders. In fact, some scholars have even suggested that "the centrality of the neighbourhood as the lived space of political socialisation makes it perhaps the most vital scale of articulation of anti-fascist politics and grassroots solidarities."[46]

Contiguous here is the wider case for stronger metropolitan-level governance. Large cities are typically where multiethnic pluralism and migrant concentration is most present. City-level multiethnic interaction and density has largely resisted the steady advance of nationalist political parties.[47] It is also said that city and even regional identities are often less invested in the abstract and romantic symbolism of nationalist identity, and are thus more open and practical in their definition of inclusivity. Delegating greater governmental power to cities therefore helps check the practical reach of xenophobic national policies. It also allows municipal politics to develop progressive and inclusive platforms of multiethnic and migrant-receptive environments and narratives. Alongside delegation of power to the municipal level must come the nurturing of political engagement among and within local communities. Enabling these communities to see the benefits of participation can counter the perceived disenfranchisement upon which nationalism feeds. Such efforts could also work

collaboratively at an international, global, or "transmunicipal" scale to further undercut sources of nationalist resentment.

A related theme is the need for new trade union organizing adapted to shifting economic circumstances. Such organizing should be geared to deal with short-term contract labor, fragmented managerial and ownership structures, and significant anti-trade union legislation of the past two decades. The dissipation of trade union power has curtailed a key avenue of individual political participation,[48] in turn further compounding the sense of powerlessness which fuels nationalism. Contemporary societies have yet to deal with the dissolution of the cultural role of trade unions within communities. Despite their checkered history vis-à-vis nationalism,[49] the decay of trade unionism has resulted in the decline of a space where notionally internationalist and collective cultural organizing and political education could act as a brake on nationalist sentiments.

3.6 Politics of green new deals

In contrast to the antinationalist potential of a distinctly local politics, the planetary scope of the ongoing climate crisis allows progressive politicians to stage a political project of renewal and transformation that matches the totalizing scale of ethnonationalist politics.[50] A politics of green new deals (GND) and the global dimensions of general climate politics open new terrain for progressive antinationalist endeavors.[51] The more convincing of these acknowledge the irreducibly planetary level of collaboration but also accountability, as determined by the historical privileges afforded and pathways required.[52]

Detractors rightly question the protectionist, tech-utopian, and market-reliant premise of many versions of GNDs, and the extent to which they promise liberatory potential on a global scale.[53] A more optimistic read might instead suggest that the only way to address climate breakdown is through the conjuring of a truly planetary—or, at the very least, antinational—collectivist solidarity.

The most fruitful efforts in this vein will address both the socioeconomic concerns feeding popular grievances, and measures to genuinely reverse climate breakdown. In Northern economies, this will entail answering a decline in services, lower purchasing power, and the crisis of overwork/lack of work with the building of low-carbon, ecologically sound infrastructures and job creation. In Southern economies, versions of "development" must allow for the decoupling of improvements in service provision and material conditions from

their typically associated increase in emissions. Such moves must however also look beyond a narrow focus on fossil fuels and instead be matched by efforts to redistribute power and resources, as mentioned in the previous section.

It is also important to note that, after a period of denial, extreme nationalist movements are now themselves being more explicit about ecological issues, ostensibly readying themselves for opportunities provided by the onset of climate collapse.[54] These actors cultivate attitudes receptive to survivalist hoarding and national fortification in order to encourage an anti-immigration econationalism. Where migration results from lack of access to resources, econationalists seek not a more even distribution of them, but rather a greater protection of "their own" alongside a shoring up of increasingly militarised borders. Naturally, such approaches are entirely futile for fighting climate change—but the simple fact of radicalised econationalist acknowledgement of climate catastrophe further sharpens historical openings for a politics of global urgency, "fair share" redistribution/global responsibility, and state-led economic investment in infrastructure and jobs.

3.6 Overdue key debates

Key debates are overdue about how regional blocs (e.g., the African Union and the European Union) might act collectively, pragmatically, and in line with wider social challenges that go beyond the terms of mere market cooperation and liberalization. An example would be the "Delorsean" Social Europe versus the Maastricht/Lisbon Treaty "marketized" vision of the EU.[55] Regional collaboration is desperately needed when confronting supranational issues such as multinational corporations' tax avoidance, MNC-led erosion of workers' rights and regulatory protections, as well as wider issues of debt cancellation. These issues are particularly crucial from a developing world perspective. There is also scope to make a renewed case for the pooled strength facilitated by intraregional harmonization: e.g., consider the practical if contentious maturity shown by the EU in pursuing collective "Eurobonds" in the economic wake of COVID-19, and also how the absence of robustly-funded global vaccine schemes has seen wealthier economies pursue a vaccine nationalism detrimental to the rest of the world.

The case for collaborative "confederal" sovereignties becomes even more acute when considering the contemporary challenges of global markets and tech-led platform capitalism (e.g., debates concerning a global digital tax), the planetary scale of climate breakdown, and the borderless vectors of public health and pandemic risks.

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