
ECONOMIC INSECURITIES AND POPULIST RESURGENCE: USA AND INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The resurgence of populist leaders in contemporary politics has significantly altered the democratic landscape, posing challenges to traditional political establishments and democratic processes. By exploring the delicate interplay of economic anxieties, populist ideologies, and nationalist rhetoric, this research sheds light on the mechanisms through which populist leaders exploit economic insecurities to consolidate power and gain the support of the people. Through a comparative analysis of the USA and India, specifically, this research aims to delve into the wider ramifications of this shift, particularly focusing on how economic anxieties among the population are exploited by these populist political parties and their leaders, such as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India and the Republican Party in the United States, to garner support for their political aims. This study endeavors to achieve important insights into the complex dynamics of economic anxieties, focusing on how these economic insecurities affect the overall democratic process within a state. The research aims to further the understanding and knowledge regarding populism and nationalism and how they are used to fuel rhetoric for populist leaders.

KEYWORDS

Economic Anxieties, Populist Ideologies, Nationalist Rhetoric, BJP, Republican Party.

INTRODUCTION

The 19th century saw the rise of nation-state creation, which is when nationalism as an ideology first became visible. It was defined by the aspiration of those with similar ethnic, linguistic, or cultural traits to form independent nation-states. As countries attempted to establish their identities and claim their sovereignty, this idea became intricately entwined with the notion of self-determination (Triandafyllidou, 2020). Nationalist feelings were strengthened by the two Great World Wars, when nations mobilized their people based on their shared national identity. However, nationalism started to be viewed differently after World War II, particularly with the emergence of the Cold War and was frequently connected to the concept of ethnocentrism.

International politics underwent a dramatic change with the conclusion of the Cold War. It was expected that this would bring about the advent of a post-national period in which transnational organizations and international collaboration would supersede nationalistic impulses (Lemke, 1997). This change, where national boundaries were loosened in favor of increased political and economic cooperation, is best shown by the European Union. Still, there were regional variations in this shift.

Contrary to post-national expectations, a return to nationalism was seen as the twenty-first century approached. Frequently departing from its 19th-century roots, this contemporary nationalism adopted a more defensive posture against immigration, globalization, and international collaboration (Mylonas & Tudor, 2021). This resurgence can be attributed, in part, to perceived threats to national identity and sovereignty from external influences.

Simultaneously, populism evolved as a distinct yet connected political force. Unlike nationalism, populism places more emphasis on appealing to the masses as a political strategy—often against a perceived establishment or elite—than on a common identity (Varshney, 2021). Modern populism has combined beliefs that emphasize the sovereignty of the 'people' with a return to 'traditional values'; to garner support, populism frequently employs nationalist rhetoric. The growth of organizations and populist leaders that promote nationalistic policies, notably in the areas of exploiting the economic anxieties of the people, and regarding immigration and foreign policy, is a direct outcome of this combination's enormous impact on political discourse.

International relations and political processes have been significantly impacted by the interplay and mixture of nationalism and populism (Copelovitch & Pevehouse, 2019). To comprehend how these ideologies affect, and are impacted within socio-economic contexts, the research aims to analyze and

investigate this ideological convergence and its expressions within modern politics. The research aims to primarily focus on analyzing the USA and India by examining how populist parties and leaders garnered support through exploiting the economic insecurities of the people. This study aims to analyze and understand the cause-and-effect relationship that exists, as a result of the exploitation of prevalent economic anxieties that exist. It further aims to explore the root causes of how this occurs, such as globalization, deindustrialization, and socio-economic conditions and also how nationalistic rhetoric misused by populist leaders gives path to this exploitation. It also aims to analyze how this impacts the overall democratic processes that exist within these societies.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

A growingly significant phenomenon that can be seen within modern contemporary politics, is the resurgence of leaders who are populist and employ populist means to achieve their power within democratic society. This has led to a notable shift within the political climate of the existing world. This shift has also led to the use of nationalistic rhetoric by these populist leaders to achieve their agendas.

This research aims to explore the wider ramifications of how this affects democratic processes and how exploitation of economic anxieties that are felt amongst the common people are used by these populist political parties and their leaders to garner support. The factors that influence the cause-and-effect relationship of these economic anxieties force us to examine the underlying root cause of these economic insecurities which include the rise of globalization, the impact of deindustrialization, immigration policies and such factors help manifest into support for populist leaders through their nationalist rhetoric. By addressing these concerns, the research seeks to provide insights into the dynamics between economic insecurities, populist ideologies, and democratic governance, specifically by analyzing the populist political parties within the USA and India.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to a more in-depth understanding and analysis of the intricately intertwined relationship between economic anxieties, populism, and also democratic governance. By examining and analyzing the political strategies employed by populist leaders -such as Narendra Modi from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India and

Donald Trump from the Republican Party in the United States- to exploit economic insecurities and mobilize support through nationalist rhetoric, the research can offer valuable insights into the dynamics that are responsible for shaping contemporary political landscapes in modern societies. The aims of this study are especially pertinent given the political environment of the modern day, where populist movements are becoming increasingly more and more influential in both domestic and foreign affairs. To address the issues raised by these movements, policymakers and political analysts should learn more about the part that socioeconomic considerations played in this shift. Furthermore, the study examines how populist tactics could alter political action and public opinion, and due to this it has broader implications for democratic processes. Taking everything into account, the study's importance is seen in both its theoretical advancements and its real-world applications. It offers a framework for examining the political tendencies of the current era, which may direct future studies and influence political tactics. This makes the study useful for scholars, decision-makers, and everyone else interested in the intricacies of contemporary politics.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW AND CASE STUDIES

The UNITED STATES: The Republican Party and Donald Trump

The history of American nationalism has been through the years, shaped by various ideologies and events. U.S. populist movements have evolved significantly over the years. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the concept of populism was largely associated with rural agrarian movements, that opposed big banks and railroads. In contrast, contemporary populism has shifted towards an anti-establishment sentiment, often characterized as being a direct outcome of globalization, through the use of anti-immigrant rhetoric and skepticism towards global trade and alliances (Massip, 2019). This modern evolution of populism tends to focus more on cultural and identity politics, diverging from earlier economic concerns. A critical examination of key speeches and political events reveals the nuanced ways in which populist and nationalist rhetoric has been employed. Campaign rallies, presidential addresses, and legislative debates have increasingly featured language that appeals to national pride, sovereignty, and a return to traditional values (Ekström et al., 2018; Kenny, 2017). This rhetoric often portrays globalism and multiculturalism as detrimental threats to the national identity. Public opinion in the U.S. shows a growing polarization, with increasing segments of the

population expressing support for nationalist and populist ideologies (Kulin et al., 2021). This shift is partly due to concerns regarding economic disparities, cultural changes, and perceived threats to national sovereignty. Kulin indicates a divide in attitudes towards immigration, trade policies, and international cooperation, reflecting the varied interpretations of nationalism and populism among the American populace.

Amidst the major shifts of globalization, the political landscape of the United States witnessed a transformative era marked by the rise of populist leaders like Donald Trump, of the Republican Party of the U.S. At the core of Trump's ascendancy lay a significant fusion of economic anxieties, nationalist rhetoric, and a recalibration of traditional political norms. This research endeavors to dissect the intricate relationship between the forces of globalization and Trump's ascent to power, delving into the nuanced rhetoric that fueled his rallies and resonated with disaffected segments of the populace. At the forefront of Trump's political arsenal were his rallies, where a radical reimagining of the U.S. Constitution echoed through the halls: not 'We the people,' but 'We my people' (Pilkington, 2018). By effectively using the concept of populism as a movement for and by the common people in contention with elites, Trump often does use populist rhetoric, for example, in his inaugural address he said, "The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer" (Louis Kriesberg, 2019). This rhetoric is carefully crafted and has been cleverly deployed, serving as the backbone of Trump's populist appeal (Louis Kriesberg, 2019). By meticulously studying the rhetoric permeating Trump's rallies, we can unravel the mechanisms behind the efficacy of his rhetorical potions, shedding light on the socio-political currents that propelled him to power (Pilkington, E. (2018).

Donald Trump strategically used these themes of economic anxiety during pivotal rallies in Janesville, Green Bay, and Milwaukee, highlighting the detrimental effects of trade deals such as NAFTA, China's WTO accession, and the TPP on American industries. These agreements ushered in an era of "hyperglobalization," characterized by unchecked economic integration that left many communities vulnerable to "trade shocks" (Rodrik, 2011). The flood of cheap imports wrought havoc on Wisconsin's manufacturing base and the Rust Belt, exacerbating inequality and insecurity (Rodrik, 2011). Trump's rhetoric resonated with disaffected voters, offering protectionist solutions to address the perceived failures of free trade (Krugman, 2019; Stiglitz, 2019). His ability to exploit economic grievances amidst the socio-economic upheaval of hyperglobalization underscores the complex interplay between trade policies,

economic insecurities, and political mobilization. This context elucidates how Trump capitalized on discontent to ascend to power, reshaping the political landscape of the industrial Midwest.

The impact of globalization on the U.S., especially on manufacturing, led to millions of job losses, with Wisconsin alone experiencing over 80,000 job losses due to trade deals like NAFTA and WTO (Kimball & Scott, 2014; Public Citizen, n.d.b). Economic insecurity caused by these trade shocks drove demand for conservative media and support for right-wing politics (Autor et al., 2020). Scholars like Rodrik argue that this economic anxiety fueled the rise of right-wing populism, evident in Trump's electoral victories (Rodrik, 2020). Trump capitalized on this sentiment through his rally rhetoric, tapping into economic grievances and framing himself as the solution to globalization-induced hardships. This research highlights the link between economic insecurity, political preferences, and the emergence of populist movements, shedding light on contemporary political dynamics.

INDIA: The Bharatiya Janata Party and Narendra Modi

In India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its leader, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stand out as key examples for exceptionally using the concept of populism to gain power. They've gained a strong following by addressing the concerns of ordinary citizens, especially regarding economic uncertainties and insecurities that have arisen as a result of globalization and the shifting modern world. As India faces changes and shifts like globalization and technological advancements, many within its populace feel unsure about their economic future. The BJP has managed to effectively tap into these concerns and anxieties, presenting itself as the answer to these challenges. This study aims to understand how the BJP, under Narendra Modi, has used these economic insecurities to gain and hold onto power, giving us insight into India's political landscape.

In analyzing the evolution of India's political landscape, particularly under the leadership of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Narendra Modi, a theoretical framework rooted in the intersection of populism and economic insecurities emerges. Historically, India's labor movement, predominantly centred within the public and organized institutions, faced limitations in collective bargaining and representation. However, despite these issues, the movement experienced great growth during the neoliberal era of the 1990s and 2000s. It was propelled by informal workers dealing with drastic economic uncertainties. The rise of the BJP and Modi reflects a strategic response to these economic insecurities.

Modi's leadership style and the BJP's political rhetoric have capitalized on populist appeals, tapping into the grievances of the economically disenfranchised. This has been particularly evident in Modi's emphasis on initiatives like 'Make in India,' aimed at attracting global manufacturing investment, and his promise of economic reforms to address unemployment and promote growth.

However, the BJP's approach to economic policy often prioritizes the interests of certain groups, such as industrialists, over the welfare of workers. The BJP's proposed labor law reforms, including the proposed changes to regulations on labor contractors and hire-and-fire flexibility, underscore the government's focus on facilitating business interests. These reforms, while appealing to industrialists and investors, may aggravate economic insecurities among workers, widening the already existing inequalities. (Barnes, T. (2018). *Indian Labour Movements under Modi.*)

A striking example of the way Narendra Modi uses populist appeal to exploit economic and insecurities and socio-economic and cultural fears within the Indian population can be seen through the example of the aftermath of the 2002 riots in Gujrat; where a tragic episode of communal violence took place that stemmed from the Godhra train incident. Narendra Modi was then the Chief Minister of Gujarat, and he strategically employed populist appeals to consolidate power and shape the political narrative during this tragedy. Reports indicate that Modi allegedly instructed the police to not intervene in the riots, allowing the Hindu rioters to publicly exhibit and display their anger and even providing them with weapons. This deliberate action that he allegedly took, contributed to one of the worst communal riots in Indian history, resulting in approximately 2,000 Muslim lives lost.

Modi's adeptness at harnessing populism in the post-riot Gujarat setting was facilitated by several preconditions conducive to foundational populism. India's decentralized governance system held significant powers in state governments, providing Modi with a platform to exert significant influence as Chief Minister. Furthermore, longstanding resentment among subgroups of the Hindu community towards the Muslim minority, which were fueled by historical tensions and perceptions of religious favoritism, created the most fertile ground for Modi's populist rhetoric. Throughout subsequent electoral campaigns, Modi accurately and skillfully managed to control the local narrative, employing attention inducing spectacles and modern communication techniques to disseminate his populist message. From traditional processions to innovative strategies like opening his own television channel and utilizing hologram

projections for public rallies, Modi aptly portrayed himself as the champion of Gujarati identity and the common man. This populist self-promotion resonated within the minds of the voters and contributed to Modi's electoral success, further cementing his image as a great leader capable of addressing the economic and cultural anxieties of the Gujarati population. (Heuer, V., & Hierman, B., 2018)

The BJP's emphasis on a masculinized Hindu culture and the promotion of Hindutva politics can be seen as exploiting economic insecurities by redirecting public attention towards nationalist and cultural narratives. This strategy helps consolidate power by appealing to a sense of identity and belonging among certain segments of the population. Additionally, the BJP's electoral victories across diverse states suggest a successful mobilization of support using these narratives. Socioeconomic factors like income inequality and unemployment may also intersect with these narratives, influencing public perceptions and responses to the BJP's policies. (Prasad, S. K., & Nooruddin, I, 2019).

This theoretical framework highlights the intricate relationship between populism, economic insecurities, and political power in India. By examining and conducting an in-depth analysis of the BJP's rise to power under Narendra Modi's leadership and its implications for economic governance and the related socioeconomic dynamics, this study aims to provide important insights into the overall broader relationship dynamics of populist politics and governance in contemporary India.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The rapid growth of populism within modern democratic societies has been an incredible progression within the overall political dynamics of the 21st century. This can be observed and illustrated through the rise of great populist leaders, such as Donald Trump (of the Republican Party) in the United States and Narendra Modi (of the BJP) in India. The vast web of intricate reasons such as economic insecurities, nationalistic rhetoric, antiestablishment sentiments, and factors like globalization and de-industrialization and how they have led to the growing rapid support for populist leaders and movements within these two great states.

In the United States, Donald Trump- who is the populist representative of the Republican Party, was able to achieve power and prominence through the use of employing populist rhetoric which was done through his use of exploitation regarding the economic anxieties of the population. These economic insecurities, which were a side effect of the changing trade policies that were

brought upon by globalization, spread fear and mistrust within the population, which he accurately was able to exploit for his gain. He used rhetoric that involved him positioning himself to be the protector of the “forgotten men and women”. This resonated with the voters who were skeptical and fearful about the changing economic dynamics that had resulted due to rapid globalization and de-industrialization (Louis Kriesberg, 2019). Furthermore, through using these populist strategies and also using nationalistic language, he was able to claim himself as the role of ‘champion’ of the ‘common people against a corrupt elite’ (Louis Kriesberg, 2019). Through these methods, he was able to alter the overall Republican Party’s ideological systems and also gather a very enthusiastic and strong supporter base (Rodrik, 2011; Krugman, 2019; Stiglitz, 2019).

India is the other prominent country that this research aims to analyze; in particular the role of Narendra Modi of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and how he also employed the means of populist rhetoric and strategies to gain and maintain his political power. Similar to Trump, Modi exploited the economic anxieties of the Indian population, and through this manipulation of the economic issues within India, Modi was able to gain support from the voters. He successfully employed campaigns that promised to improve the overall economic conditions within the country. Amongst these many economic reforms was the ‘Make in India’ initiative; this was a program that he launched to improve economic stability and boost nationalistic pride amongst the population (Barnes, 2018). Therefore, this illustrates that Narendra Modi was able to achieve great power by using these populist strategies by exploiting the socio-economic insecurities amongst the population and simultaneously engaging in nationalistic rhetoric to achieve his means. Modi presents an image of himself that is an ‘embodiment of the truth and identity of the common Indian citizen’ (Barnes, 2018; Heuer & Hierman, 2018).

This discussion therefore aims to analyze and explore the complex and elaborate relationship that is present within the ideologies and concepts of populism, economic insecurity, and nationalistic rhetoric. The socio-economic and political conditions that exist within modern democratic societies, help populist leaders like Donald Trump and Narendra Modi into gaining support and power.

The rapid growth that has been brought upon by globalization, and deindustrialization has led to a great impact on the economic environment of both democratic countries; the United States and India. Job polarization has increased as a result of this fast-paced globalization and the growth in global

technology. Due to this growing polarization of jobs, economic insecurities and mistrust have also risen amongst the general population of these states, which has allowed populist leaders such as Trump in the USA and Modi in India, to gain popular support. According to Sergei Gurev (2018), this has been most detrimental for the middle class as it leaves them most vulnerable. The reason he states this is that there have been job opportunities created between the high and low ends of skilled labor, leaving a gap of economic anxieties for the middle-class worker (Sergei Gurev, 2018). This has been important in furthering the economic fear within the citizens of these two great nations. This is extremely prevalent and can be observed within the rhetoric of the two populist leaders of Donald Trump and Narendra Modi- which have provided these leaders with the opportunity to exploit these economic issues by promising to promote the economy and protect the national interests of the citizens. In the context of the USA, the working class has experienced a sense of threat and anxiety due to the rapid loss of manufacturing jobs due to deindustrialization, and also due to the outsourcing of many jobs. Donald Trump was able to exploit these feelings of fear by appealing to the working class with promises of returning the United States to economic security and also furthering their state's national economic interest (Autor et al., 2020). Furthermore, Pierre Ostiguy and Kenneth M. Roberts explain in their research paper "Putting Trump in Comparative Perspective," that Trump's manipulation of the cultural and economic fears that were prevalent within the USA, played a key role in disrupting and leading to a shift in the previously existing traditional political system. Furthermore, Trump's policy which favoured protectionism- specifically his anti-immigration and nationalistic rhetoric- attracted blue-collar and working-class supporters. These working-class voters had previously traditionally aligned with the Democratic Party but were now aligning their interests with Trump who was from the Republican Party (Ostiguy & Roberts, 2024). They argue that Trump's presidency marked a departure from traditional party ideologies, particularly within the Republican Party, by capitalizing on economic and cultural insecurities. Trump's nativist and xenophobic nationalism resonated with the voters who were dissatisfied with the political correctness of liberal elites (Ostiguy & Roberts, 2024). This realignment of the political values and system demonstrates how economic insecurities and cultural anxieties can drive support for populist leaders, reshaping political landscapes. Thus, this illustrates how the economic anxieties resulting from globalization - such as job polarization, loss of manufacturing jobs to low-wage workers, and such socioeconomic factors have driven a

significant portion of the population to support populist leaders like Donald Trump.

Furthermore, Kriesberg (2019) effectively manages to provide us with a detailed exploration of Donald Trump and his populist goals and agenda and also helps us examine the implications that his populist narrative has on American foreign policy. Kriesberg explores how Trump's populist rhetoric is riddled with themes of both nationalism and protectionism and how these play a role in defining his overall narrative. This usage of Trump's effective narrative draws towards him a strong voter base that consists of the American population who feel as if globalization has threatened their interests. Therefore, Kriesber manages to aptly portray how Trump managed to appeal to the "forgotten" part of the population- claiming himself as a protector of their political interests.

In India, rapidly growing economic changes and technological advancements have heightened economic anxieties, which Narendra Modi has managed to exploit through initiatives like 'Make in India' to appeal to those who have been economically affected (Barnes, 2018). Barnes' analysis illuminates the BJP's role in leveraging economic insecurities and anti-establishment sentiments to consolidate power, which aligns closely with the research questions, emphasizing the nexus between economic anxieties and populist ideologies. By illustrating how Modi capitalized on these factors, particularly through populist appeals to diverse social classes and by exploiting the anti-corruption movement, the study offers pertinent insights into the mechanisms driving populist resurgence in India.

Moreover, this narrative also elaborates upon the relevance of socioeconomic dynamics - such as class divisions and perceptions of corruption. These are essential in shaping the path of populist movements, and therefore, contributing significantly to understanding the broader dynamics explored in the research questions.

A prominent theme that is echoed in Prasad and Nooruddin's (2019) exploration of the BJP's emphasis on Hindutva politics is the BJP's adeptness in leveraging anti-establishment sentiments and exploiting class divisions. Moreover, Ostiguy and Roberts (2014) also effectively discuss how populist imagery reshapes political alignments, further emphasizing the connection that lies between socioeconomic factors and dynamics and populist movements. This alignment with the broader aspects of the literature explored underscores the complexity of populist resurgence in India and its underlying mechanisms. Prasad and Nooruddin's work, in particular, highlights the catalytic role of

economic insecurity in fueling populist sentiments, offering valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of populist resurgence.

Furthermore, Ghatak (2020) examines the concept that economic uncertainty fosters perceptions of injustice, threatens economic security, and cultivates a desire for change among voters. This environment creates fertile ground for populist appeals since leaders vow to address economic grievances and challenge the already existing status quo. Similarly, Kumar (2020) also highlights the role of economic uncertainty in fueling disillusionment with the already established political parties and fostering a demand for a change in leadership. Both studies emphasize the mechanisms through which economic insecurities contribute to populist appeal, shedding light on the complexities of populist resurgence. These findings resonate closely with our research questions, which seek to understand the nexus between economic anxieties and populist ideologies. By expanding and delving into the intricacies of these mechanisms, Ghatak and Kumar offer valuable insights into the socioeconomic dynamics driving populist movements, enriching our understanding of the broader dynamics examined in our study.

This detailed examination of these factors sheds light on the complex nature of populist resurgence in India, offering valuable insights into its underlying mechanisms. This holistic approach enriches the analysis of Modi's rise to power and the broader implications for India's political landscape.

While unravelling the intricately intertwined dynamics of contemporary democracies, the studies chosen offer profound insights into the complex relationship between economic insecurities and the resurgence of populism. Brubaker's (2017) exploration of populism in the context of contemporary economics emphasizes the role of globalization in job polarization, which benefits high-skilled workers but leaves low-skilled workers vulnerable. Furthermore, Guriev (2018) further examines the disparities within modern leadership and how they ascent, as well as the confidence that various skill levels of voters hold for the government. This emphasizes the nuanced nature of populist support within diverse socioeconomic contexts. Roubini (2016) further affirms this as he attributes the Brexit vote and President Trump's victory to a populist as well as nationalistic backlash fueled by globalization, free trade, and also labor migration. Margalit (2019) explores the realm of how the role of economic insecurity has a key part to play in consolidating support for populist parties and also identifies economic concerns as a significant driving force behind the new wave of populism. Schäfer and Streeck's findings offer additional context for examining the motivations behind populist support

in both the USA and India (Schäfer & Streeck, 2017). Economic insecurities, such as job polarization and declining wages, can generate tension among certain portions of the population – this fosters a sense of dissatisfaction with the current status quo. This dissatisfaction may be channelled into fuelling support for populist leaders who promise to address these issues and concerns and protect the interests of the economically vulnerable. Similarly, Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser's work on "The Populist Zeitgeist" offers a detailed analysis of populism as a political phenomenon, exploring its underlying drivers and manifestations for democratic governance (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). Their research examines the cultural and socio-economic roots of populism and also emphasizes greatly the role of economic anxieties and nationalist rhetoric in fueling populist movements. Mudde and Kaltwasser provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between economic insecurities and populist ideologies.

This confluence of research illuminates the broader implications for our study's research questions. This emphasizes the importance of further exploring how economic anxieties, demographic shifts, and the rise of populist leaders intersect with one another. Their collective findings illuminate and expand on how economic insecurities, alongside broader societal changes, shape political dynamics. By integrating and analyzing these perspectives, we can further deepen our understanding of how economic concerns fuel populist narratives in modern democratic societies. Therefore, this detailed and thorough comprehension enhances our research and guides our analysis into the implications of populist governance on democratic systems.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we explored economic anxieties and how they contribute to the rise of populism. We observed the causation of these economic challenges and explored globalization and de-industrialization, job polarization and declining wages and how these impact the overall economic security within a country. The research aimed to analyze why populist movements and populist leaders, such as Donald Trump of the USA, and Narendra Modi from BJP in India, gained populist support by utilizing these economic uncertainties in their political campaigns. Through the examination of these different perspectives, we identified and discussed the key factors that we stated, to explain the growing appeal for populist movements.

Firstly, our research shows that economic insecurity is a major factor driving support towards populism. Globalization and technological advancements have

led to job polarization. This means that high-skilled workers benefit, while low-skilled workers face job losses due to outsourcing and automation, as can be observed through the research used in this study. According to Guirev, the reason he states for this is that there have been job opportunities created between the high and low ends of skilled labor, leaving a gap of economic anxieties for the middle-class worker (Sergei Gurev, 2018). As a result, many people feel left behind and insecure about their economic future. This insecurity makes them more likely to support populist leaders who promise to protect their jobs and improve their economic situation.

Secondly, we found that economic inequality also contributes to the rise of populism. The gap between the rich and the poor widens, and people feel a sense of unfairness and frustration. Barnes' analysis illuminates the BJP's role in leveraging economic insecurities and anti-establishment sentiments to consolidate power, which aligns closely with the research questions, emphasizing the nexus between economic anxieties and populist ideologies (Barnes, 2018). By illustrating how Modi capitalized on these factors, particularly through populist appeals to diverse social classes and by exploiting the anti-corruption movement, the study offers pertinent insights into the mechanisms driving populist resurgence in India. Populist leaders often tap into these feelings by blaming elites and promising to redistribute wealth. This appeal to economic justice resonates with those who feel disadvantaged and fuels support for populist movements.

Thirdly, our study highlights the role of demographic shifts in shaping political landscapes. Changes in population dynamics, such as immigration, can create fear and uncertainty among native citizens. Populist leaders often use anti-immigrant rhetoric to gain support from those who feel threatened by these demographic changes. An example that can be examined within our research is Ostiguy and Robert's research about Trump's policy; which favoured protectionism- specifically his anti-immigration and nationalistic rhetoric- attracted blue-collar and working-class supporters. These working-class voters had previously traditionally aligned with the Democratic Party but were now aligning their interests with Trump who was from the Republican Party (Ostiguy & Roberts, 2024). By making statements and claims to limit immigration and protect national identity, populist leaders attract voters who are anxious about cultural and social changes.

Our research aimed to analyze these factors in depth. According to Yotam Margalit, while the rise of modern populism can be attributed to a plethora of factors, they often converge around one common narrative: significant shifts

like globalization, technological advancements, or economic downturns that have reshaped employment landscapes- These shifts have resulted in widespread displacement and financial uncertainty. This narrative suggests that such transformations have weakened public confidence in traditional political structures, prompting those adversely affected to turn towards populist movements. (Yotam Margalit, Fall 2019)

While our study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. One limitation is the reliance on available data sources, which may not capture all aspects of the issue. Future research could benefit from more diverse and comprehensive data to provide a fuller picture. Another limitation is the complexity of the causes of populism. Economic factors alone cannot explain the phenomenon entirely, and other social, cultural, and political factors must also be considered. Lastly, our study focused primarily on economic factors, and further research could explore other dimensions, such as the role of media and social networks in spreading populist ideas.

In conclusion, our research highlights the significant impact of economic insecurity, inequality, demographic shifts, and political distrust on the rise of populism. By understanding these factors, we can better comprehend why populist leaders are gaining support and address the underlying issues driving this trend. Addressing economic inequality, improving job security, and restoring trust in political institutions are essential steps in countering the appeal of populism. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics and develop strategies to promote social and economic stability in the face of globalization and technological change. In doing so, we can work towards a more equitable society, reducing the appeal of populist movements and strengthening democratic governance within modern contemporary politics.

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