



ISSUE 06

2019

ITALY AS EMBLEM OF EUROPEAN NOSTALGIA

&
NO WHITE SAVIORS
&
CLIMATE INEQUALITY

Photo by: <http://www.repstatic.it>

vacanze rom

PECK • AUDREY HEPBURN

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È un film



Paramount

GREGORY



Photo by Karsten Wurth: The city awakes

1. Italy as an emblem of European nostalgia

Italy is increasingly considered the problem child of Europe. Currently, a lot of attention is paid to Italy's excessive debt, its deteriorating deficit and the EU sanctions it faces. But Italy has also become emblematic for other challenges that Europe is facing and that have changed the reality of Europe over recent years. These challenges entail two flows of people entering the continent, tourists and migrants, which have resulted in a different economy and political structure for multiple countries. Italy serves as a bellwether of what might await other European countries.

First, tourism has been rapidly changing Europe over the last years. Europe is the world's largest tourism market. Since 2008, overnight stays in European cities have jumped [57%](#). While this significantly benefits the economy, the flipside of mass tourism is increasingly tangible. This is especially true for Venice, the Italian city that is fighting Europe's worst [tourism crisis](#). In Venice and similarly affected cities, overtourism is causing problems ranging from [housing affordability](#) and [environmental degradation](#) to the [deterioration of local life](#). In the novel *Grand Hotel Europe* by the Dutch, Italian-based writer Ilja Leonard Pfeijffer, Venice is described as emblematic of the problems of mass tourism, as the symbol of a Europe that has turned into a museum, as an example of how Europe is living in and feeding off memories of the glorious past. Especially since Europe is rapidly ageing and burdening the young generations, the continent is literally becoming an old place to visit. The actual architecture of Europe is changing into an architecture of memory – with an ever-increasing number of museums, hotels, AirBnB apartments. Mass tourism, in the view of Pfeijffer, is problematic as it “tends to destroy what attracts it: authenticity.” As Italian cities are being transformed by the influx of tourists, a sense of losing one's

home, particularly in Venice, is becoming real for inhabitants.

Second, the ongoing migration crisis has changed Europe. While migration is rather a perceived threat than an actual threat to many countries, considering the [relatively small number of people actually entering the countries](#), it has had a devastating effect on the political establishment. The fear of a “tidal wave of migrants” has been used in election rhetoric, has damaged traditional parties and given rise to populist parties across the continent. Again, Italy is taking center stage in this altering political reality, as most who cross the Mediterranean enter Europe through Italy. The incoming migrants have unleashed a fear of globalization, revived a sense of nationalism, and even brought back [fascist sentiments](#). Migration was among the main themes linking the coalition parties of the new populist government. It has led to “Italy first” and anti-migrant policies such as refusing rescue boats permission to dock and persecuting NGO groups which aim to rescue migrants in the sea, as [happened](#) last month. Although job insecurity and unemployment may be of greater concern to Italians, migration concerns are easier to be capitalized upon by populist politicians, referring to a time that was better, without the presence of newcomers.

Italy's struggle with mass-tourism and the fear of migrants do not bode well for any other European country that fails to address one of the two challenges, further fueling populism, nationalism, xenophobia, and polarization. Already, overtourism is [considered](#) a serious problem for many European cities this summer and is only expected to increase in the next years. An [EU report](#) on overtourism found 105 areas in a state of overtourism already last year. Furthermore, [climate change will lead to new migration](#) to the continent in the future.

Possible implications:

- As a result, nostalgia for the old Europe is growing. The [Bertelsmann Foundation research](#) on France, Italy, Germany, Spain and Poland shows that 67% of Europeans believe the world used to be a better place, with Italy again leading with 77%.
- According to the writers of [Anglo Nostalgia](#), nostalgic nationalism is the current political malaise of Western countries, as it depicts the past in an idealized way while leaving out relevant details. “Make America great again” or “Italy first” are cries of “toxic restorative nostalgia”, capturing the economic pain of the left-behind, the fear accompanied with immigration, and the ambitions of a once-glorious country while not offering a future.
- Nostalgia might further trigger disintegration of Europe. Italy has become the main exponent of the anti-EU sentiment in Europe. Nowhere has support for the bloc [plummeted](#) as dramatically as in Italy.
- Voters inclined to nostalgia are typically politically right-leaning and critical of immigration, as 53% of nostalgic Europeans are convinced that immigrants “take jobs away”.
- Among young people, the Italians are also leading the nostalgia survey: 64% views the past in a better light than the present. As young Italians are struggling with unemployment and have no faith in the future, the young generation is [migrating en masse](#), even though they are desperately needed to rebuild the country.

RISKS MARKED ON THE RISK RADAR AS NUMBER 1: POLICY UNCERTAINTY, PROTECTIONISM



2. No white saviors

Development cooperation in Africa has been disputed for many years. In the book *Dead Aid* (2009), Dambisa Moyo defends the position that while foreign aid that addresses humanitarian needs caused by drought and conflict is helpful, most of the aid given to African countries is rather harmful. She lists the problems enhanced by aid, including corruption, civil conflict, shrinking of the middle class, and the instilling of a culture of dependency.

Increasingly, China's involvement in development projects on the African continent is criticized as [debt-trap diplomacy](#) or [neocolonialism](#) – mainly by Western voices. While the Belt and Road Initiative has faced scrutiny in countries such as Kenya, Ghana and has even sparked a legal court case in [Djibouti](#), [others](#) say that the Chinese projects in Africa are clearly beneficial to African countries. At the same time, however, a different dynamic is brewing concerning the presence of Western aid agencies, philanthropists and NGOs on the African continent. Although the U.S. and EU institutions are the [largest ODA donors](#) to African countries, these traditional development partners are increasingly being challenged.

Recently, multiple troubling cases of Western philanthropy have caught African attention. The latest “white savior” causing a storm of African disapproval is [Renee Bach](#). This young American missionary who gives treatment to children in Uganda has become the most famous example of Western volunteers doing more harm than good in the developing world. As she has no medical qualifications, she is held responsible for the death of multiple babies. Another recent [case](#) was that of the founder of a German NGO accused of abusing Ugandan children.

The revelations have given rise to organizations such as “[No White Saviors](#)”, to challenge the way development and evangelical work has traditionally taken place on the African continent. It actively criticizes the rise of “voluntourism”, ambitious young Westerners traveling to developing countries to solve problems without acknowledging the underlying complexity. Voluntourism focuses more on feeling good than doing good, critics say, leading to the rise of a whole industry set up to nurture these desires. The [business of voluntourism](#) has exploded over the past year, resulting in many more instances of misconduct.

Possible implications:

- These developments might lead to more critique of Western foreign aid on the continent. As young Africans are modernizing, moving to cities and are more connected than any generation before, voluntourism by their Western counterparts might face more disapproval in the future.
- The call to change the balance of power within development cooperation grows ever-louder, shifting the focus to more local leadership and [domestic resource mobilization](#) to decrease dependency on Western donors. The hashtag #Shiftthepower represents this trend of community philanthropy. The influence of Western powers, from foreign investors, development aid organizations, to even trade partners in African countries might face a backlash. This might disrupt partnerships and trade, such as between the EU and Africa.
- Next to the inefficacy of Western aid, the rise of China as a foreign aid power on the African continent has created an alternative to the conditionalities of the Western powers. It has turned the negotiating tables for the African countries. Western partnerships are challenged by this dynamic, as we noted [earlier](#). In the future, the West might be fighting even more competition to access the world's [fastest-growing economies](#). Foreign powers that have no history of colonialism on the continent might leverage this “soft power” and challenge the presence of Western powers on the continent. As Western countries remain dependent on raw resources from the African continent, this might pose a risk to them. For instance, Europe has an ongoing [trade deficit in raw materials](#) and depends largely on African exports.

RISKS MARKED ON THE RISK RADAR AS NUMBER 2: SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA, AFRICAN TERRORISM

3. Climate inequality

Climate change increases inequality. As recent [research](#) shows, global inequality is 25% higher than it would have been in a climate-stable world. The economic injustice of climate change has already been operating for 60 years, the study found by comparing different countries' GDP per capita between 1961 and 2010 and estimating what each country's GDP would have been without the effects of climate change. The report further points out that the primary driver is the parabolic relationship between temperature and economic growth: warming increases growth in cool countries and decreases growth in warm countries. As a result, besides the unequally distributed benefits of fossil fuel use, many poor countries have been significantly harmed by the warming arising from wealthy countries' energy consumption.

In the future, climate change will accelerate inequality as the greatest burden will fall on those in precarious or poor conditions. According to the [World Bank](#), with people in poverty largely uninsured, climate change will exacerbate health shocks (malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea, and heat stress). Climate change could displace 140 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America by 2050 and result in global crop yield losses of 30% by 2080. Furthermore, the effects of climate change will degrade infrastructure and housing, particularly affecting people living in unplanned or un-serviced settlements, writes David Wallace-Wells in his book *The Uninhabitable Earth* (2019). Finally, [authorities have a history of prioritizing wealthier](#) areas for protection, further endangering people in poverty.

Possible implications:

- As such, the UN [warns](#) that climate change will push 120 million into poverty by 2030 and thus risks undoing the last fifty years of progress in development, global health, and poverty reduction.
- In its latest report, the UN even warns of a [climate apartheid scenario](#), in which the wealthy have the financial resources to escape overheating, hunger, and conflict, leaving the rest to carry the burden of the effects of climate change.
- As a result of climate change, new "safe havens" will arise as hubs where climate change has led to better livability conditions, while other cities will further be threatened by floods, heat waves and extreme weather events and become unlivable, as we wrote [earlier](#).

RISKS MARKED ON THE RISK RADAR AS NUMBER 3: CLIMATE CHANGE / NATURAL DISASTERS, RISING INEQUALITY



RISK RADAR

EUROPE

JUNE 19

The potential political, sociological, economic and technological threats.

PRIORITY OF RISK

Is a determination of the likelihood of occurrence and the estimated impact.

NEW RISK



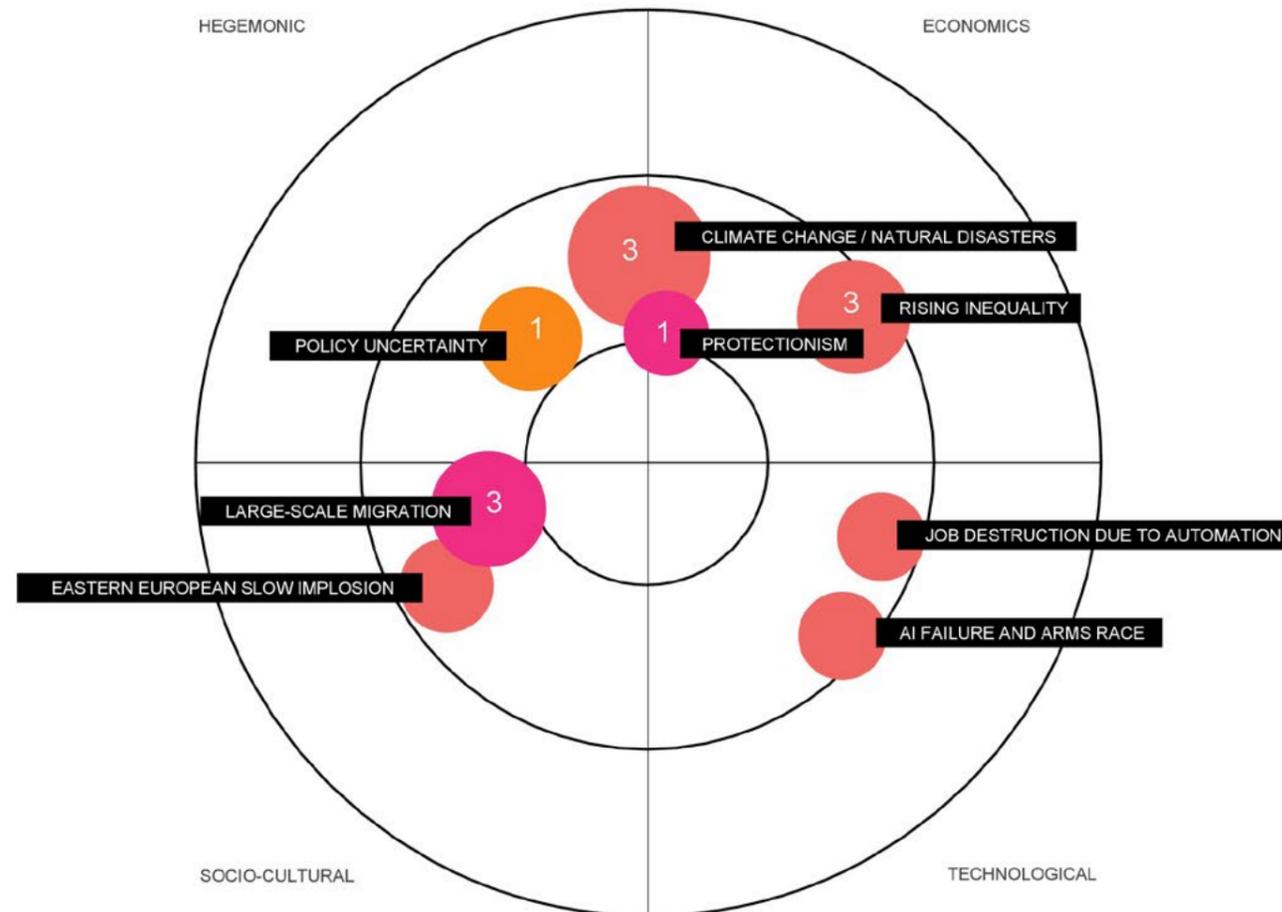
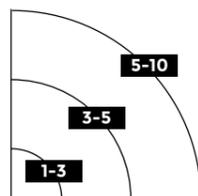
ESTIMATED IMPACT



LIKELYHOOD OCCURENCE



TIME HORIZON (IN YEARS)



KEY RISK SHIFTS

1. European nostalgia
2. No white saviors
3. Climate inequality

OTHER TOP EUROPE RISKS

- Deteriorating relationship Russia and the West
- Mental health issues
- Weak southern European economies
- Spread of infectious disease
- Unrest and regime change in the periphery of EU
- Pension Crisis
- Declining internet freedom
- Weak Southern European Economies
- Policy uncertainty
- Friction over Arctic Sea
- Anti-establishment parties come to power
- Terrorism
- Secular stagnation
- Global debt glut
- Digital Infrastructure Failures

RISK RADAR

WORLD

JUNE 19

The potential political, sociological, economic and technological threats.

PRIORITY OF RISK

NEW RISK



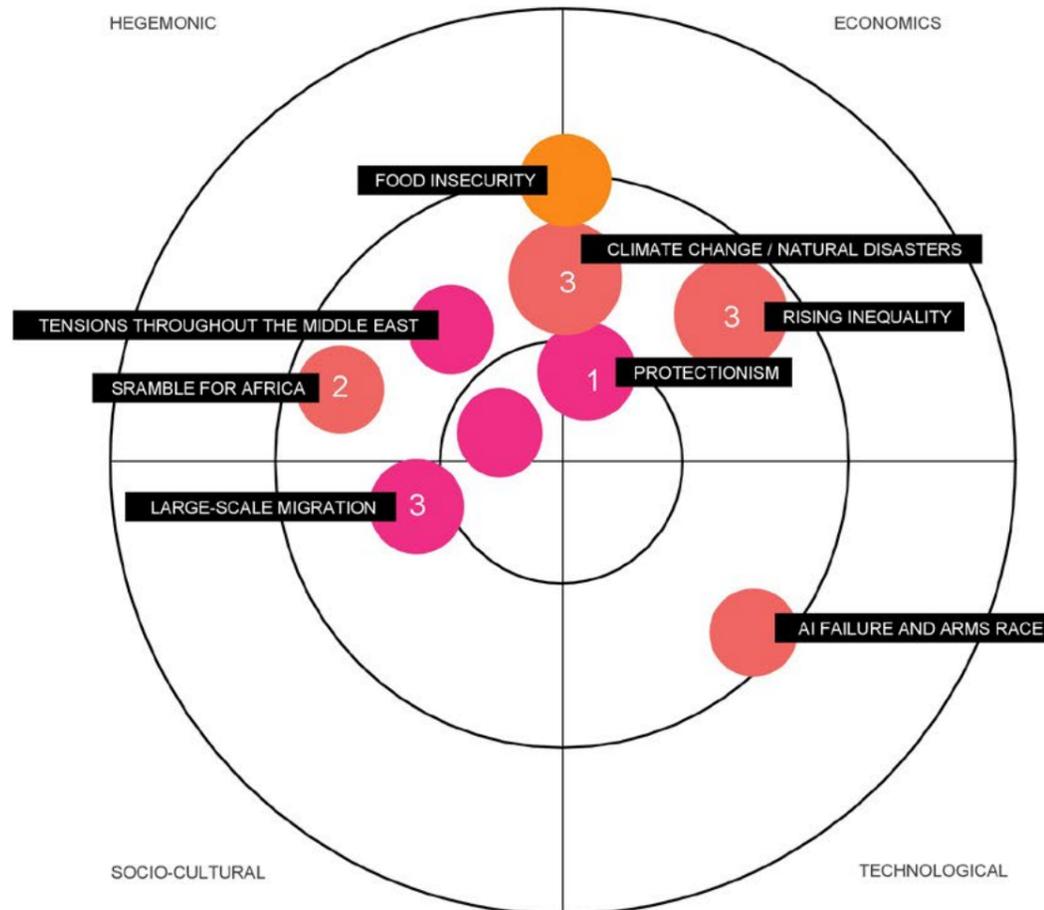
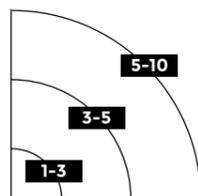
ESTIMATED IMPACT



LIKELYHOOD OCCURENCE



TIME HORIZON (IN YEARS)



KEY RISK SHIFTS

1. European nostalgia
2. No white saviors
3. Climate inequality

OTHER TOP WORLD RISKS

- Deteriorating relations Russia and the West
- Mental health issues
- EM insolvency
- Infocalypse
- Protectionism / reform LatAm
- Spread of infectious disease
- Competition South Pacific
- Pension crisis
- Global debt glut
- Implosion North Korean State
- Water crises
- Territorial disputes South China Sea
- African terrorism
- Friction over Arctic Sea
- Digital infrastructure failures
- Declining internet freedom



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