

Major forces of globalization



Globalization is a phenomena which influences everyday life as much as it does events happening on a world scale. Such a broad phenomena, which invests in every expect and spectrum of life, has more then one driving force, which all together create this global village, which has no precedent in any epoch of human history. Globalization is political, technological and cultural as well as economical.

Science and technology have been a major driving force behind Globalization. Our epoch developed under the impact of science, technology and rational thought, where religion and dogma where replaced with a more reasonable approach to practical life. Science and technological inventions changed the world and the way we perceive life.

Globalization has been influenced above all by developments in systems of communication dating back only to the late 1960s. The connection between different states around the world have accelerated in the past fifty years due to dramatic advances in communication and information technology. The velocity by which new inventions such as computers and internet became popular in few years all over the world shows the importance of these inventions and their contribution to this phenomena of globalization.

Development in information and communication technologies have intensified the speed and scope of interaction between people all over the world. Satellite Communication, Telephones, mobiles, fax machine, digital and cable televisions, electronic mail and internet have all helped to create this notion of globalization.[1]The internet is the faster communication tool ever developed. Widespread use of the internet and mobile phones is

deepening and accelerating the process of globalization. More and more people are becoming interconnected.

Nowadays with the information and images transmitted across the globe, we are regularly in contact with others who think differently and live differently from ourselves. This has brought a broader awareness of other cultures and also brought in influences from the outside world. This is seen by some as positive therefore they try to enhance such a development and as negative by others who try in every way to hinder and stop this phenomena. It all depends on one's perspective. Countries around the world have to come to terms with the fact that what happens in one country affects all the others.

Another impact of Science and technology is that of improving our quality of life making our homes and the world around us more comfortable but these achievements came at a cost. Things which improved our life have had also an negative effect. Global climate change and other hazards to the environment are a result of intervention on the environment brought about by development through Science and technology.

According to Anthony Giddens in his book Runaway World, the notion that with further development of science and technology, the world should become more stable and ordered does not reflect reality. Instead he states that the world “ Rather than being more and more under our control, it seems out of our control”[2].

- Trade and comers

Trade and comers are surely a driving forces behind Globalization. All countries with the exception of North Korea, trade significant proportions of their national income. A large percentage of world output is traded. Trade is a key mechanism for increase goods, moving goods, and increasingly services around the globe, and it is also central to technology transfer. It has connected domestic markets to international markets transforming domestic economies[3].

Trade involves more than simply the exchange of goods and services between separate economies since it suggests the emergence of worldwide markets for trade goods and services. This does not mean that all countries trade between them. Instead it assumes the existence of a trading system in which trade activity between any two countries may affect trade relations between the rest.[4]Trade covers the whole globe, where International trade barriers have fallen steadily, opening markets up to boarder range of products

The intensity that trade and comers has had on globalization is reflected in the creation of regularized exchange of goods at the interregional level. Trade has removed barriers to transport, costs or protection. Foreign products from one region may compete with domestic products from another region. Firms supply goods across the world and have to respond to competition from foreign firms.[5]Thus many national and local firms respond to world wide demand and face competition from firms based in other countries and regions.

The geo-political coverage of trade and commerce on a globalized level is debatable. Sceptics argue that countries gain only a small amount of their income from external trade. They also argue that a good deal of economic exchange is between regions rather than being truly world wide. The countries of the European Union for example mostly trade among themselves. The same is true of the other main trading blocks.[6] While those in favour of globalisation argue that the effects of trade and commerce can be felt everywhere and that global markets are indifferent to national borders.

The impact that trade and commerce has on the life of many people is reflected through the enormous diversity of products we have become accustomed to seeing in super markets. When you go to a supermarket you can find food from all over the world. This reflects the complex economic and social ties which link people and countries around the world. Trade has helped to generate connections which link people from different societies.

One must also take into consideration that trade and commerce do not have the same effects on the whole globe. The impact that trade and commerce has on one's life depends also from which part of the globe one comes. Free trade for example does not have the same benefits for all countries. Less developed countries are dependent upon a few products sold on world markets. This means that they are very vulnerable to shifts in prices as well as to technological change.

Most of the giant multinational companies are based in the US or come from the rich countries. In many lower developed countries, safety and environmental regulations are low or non-existent. Some transnational

companies sell goods in third world countries that are controlled or banned in the industrial countries for eg. poor quality medical drugs, destructive pesticide or high tar and nicotine content cigarettes. As Giddens said " Rather than global village, one might say this is more global pillage"[7].

- Political changes

Political changes occurring in the modern era have helped to shape this global village. After the second world war the western powers decided to create organizations which had to help them shape the post war period. This brought a rapid growth of international organizations, such as the League of Nation and its successor United Nations which were concerned primarily with the maintenance of international order, which helped the flourishing of comers and trade and technological innovation on a global sphere creating the necessary on which these could flourish. Institutions such as international monetary funds and the world bank also helped to maintain international economic order and promote economic development.

The Intensity which political changes have on Globalisation is reflected in the growth of international and regional mechanisms of government. The United Nations and European Union are two good examples of this phenomena. Both the EU and UN are two international organizations that bring together nation states into a common political forum. While the UN does this as an association of independent sates, the EU is more a transnational governance in which a certain degree of national sovereignty is shared by its member states, in order to reap the benefits of political and economic union at a regional level. " The EU states are bound by directives, regulations and court judgements from common EU bodies"[8]

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Globalization is also being driven by intergovernmental organizations and international non governmental organizations, NGOs. The IGOs regulate issues “ ranging from civil service aviation to broadcasting to the disposal of hazard waste”[9]. While NGOs with their independent work alongside governmental bodies make policies, addressing international issues.

Globalization, westernization or Americanization?. Some argue that globalisation in reality is Americanisation. America is the sole superpower, which dominates economic, cultural and military position in the global order. Infact most visible cultural expressions of globalization are American such as McDonalds, CNN, Coca-Cola.

No one can doubt that Globalization is led by the west, imprint of American political and economic power and that it is highly uneven in its consequences. But Globalization is not just the dominance of the west over the rest. Globalisation affects the US as it does the rest of the world.

Democracy in itself in a way is a driving force behind globalization, but at the same time Globalisation lies behind the expansion of democracy. Infact Democracy is currently spreading world wide.

The collapse of communist Russia made possible that former soviet bloc and its satellite states started moving towards western style political and economic system. They are not isolated from global community but are becoming integrated within it. The collapse of communism has hastened the process of globalization, but should also be seen as a result of globalization itself.

Soviet Communism with its state run enterprise and heavy industry could not compete in the global electronic economy. The communism ideology and control upon which communist political authority was based similarly could not survive in an era of global media. The soviet and the East European regimes were unable to prevent change.

The intensity that politics has had on this phenomena of globalization is reflected through the creation of transnational organizations and also from the transnational movement of money, where TNCs shift their investments from one country to another often in search of lower labour costs. Transnational movement of money can go rapidly elsewhere if governments pursue policies seen as threatening profits or weaken profits or weaken currency . This threatens government policies.[10]

The impact of politics on Globalization is also reflected in the creation of the phenomena of migration of labour. The widening gap between rich and poor countries accelerated the migration of people from poor countries to seek jobs and welfare in rich ones. This has created a greater ethnic cultural and religious diversity within nation states. This could threaten national identity and create conflict.

- Conclusion

The driving forces underlying globalization are various and all intertwined between them. They help us understand better the concept of globalisation and the effects these have on our lives, where globalisation is changing the way the world looks, and the way we look at the world. This can help us become more conscious of the problems the world is facing and help us

understand that our actions have consequences for others and that the world problems effect us as well.