

# The subject of human rights and globalisation politics essay



The subject on human right and globalization are not easy topics to discuss, mainly because of different connotation and understanding of the terms globalization and human rights. Some scholars defined Globalization, as conceived process that turns the world into a global market for goods and services dominated and steered by the powerful gigantic transnational corporations and governed by the rule of profit[1]. In which scholars argue that all the human rights of the people in the world, particularly in the south mostly developing countries are critically endangered in this context scholars view globalization as posing new treats not adequately governed by existing international human rights[2]. On other hand, globalization is seen as turning the whole world into “ one global village” in which all peoples are increasingly unified and all the fences or barriers are detached, so that the world witnesses a new state of fast and free flow of people, capital, goods and ideas. In this context globalization is bringing prosperity to all the corners of the globe, and spreading human right and freedom as well as justice, human rights and globalization are then viewed as two topics mutually reinforcing and positive in improving human well-being.[3]The topic of Human right and Globalization are subject of discussion among scholars and policy makers in the world today, where there are clear pictures on how Globalization has positively contributed to the universality of human rights and created more potential for its promotion across the world, some scholars disagree with this assumption and argue that, to some instance globalization put human rights in danger. This paper examines the impacts of globalization and it achievement of human rights with focus it will explore the interaction linking the state and none states with the market to evaluate

the effects of globalization on the accomplishment of human rights standards in the world.

Working with the definition cited by Allan (2009), that sees Globalization as process that turns the whole world into “one global village” in which all peoples are increasingly interconnected and all the fences or barriers are removed, so that the world witnesses a new state of fast and free flow of people, capital, goods and ideas. One will say that globalization has positively contributed to human rights, as these processes allows non governmental actors to be involved with transnational social movement networks, increasing consciousness and information politics that have potential to address both traditional and emerging forms of human rights violation. Understanding this global village phenomenon allows scholars to look deeply on transnational integration and increased mobility has simultaneously strengthened the protection of individual rights and the dignity of individuals. At its core globalization is the interrelationships, interconnection, and interdependence of all the countries of the world. It is the spread of capitalism across the globe bringing with it both opportunities of business and a flow of capita. However, it is more than just free trade; the forces that allow businesses to operate beyond national borders allow activists, journalists, and scholars to work on a global scale. in this context, Globalization resulted in a significant loss of control and sovereignty for the state[4], its argued by Apodaca (2001) that “states no longer hold a control over the allocation of public goods and services[5]”, information is gained by everybody either through internet or international media, people get access to foreign information and this is believed to have contributed positively to

spread of human right around the globe[6]. While some nation states still restricts it citizens to access international news, like the case of china, scholars still argue that Globalizations has weakened government power to control people movements. In other word globalization has also lead to a noticeable empowerment of actors such as transnational corporations, civil society groups and intergovernmental economic organizations, and lead to a rapid development of human rights.[7]In short; due to improved technology, less government interferences, and free movement of people and goods, globalization increased media coverage draws the attention of the world to human right violations, which leads to improvement in human rights. As argued by Marquardt “ that globalization offers great opportunities to generate more universal observance of human rights, but it also poses serious dangers to the fundamental rights of the individual”[8].

Moreover, globalization is essentially a synonym for global business and is personified by three organizations: the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). These organizations are at the center of a great debate over the virtues and evils of globalization. There are many convincing arguments both against and in favor of globalization. For positive side, scholars argue that globalization of capital contributes positively to the universality of human rights as it permits a flow of capital to the most productive and resourceful business projects. This trend is believed to boost profits, which make the economy grow, which mostly results in constructive social goals, such as higher employment levels that improves living standards, education become affordable, lower taxes, and larger capital expenses on people, in areas such as health care which

play very significant role in improving human conditions. Globalization of capital in addition is believed to have remarkably developed and increased attention to women's rights and "incorporation of "women's human rights" into the human rights discourse" (Moghadam 2005). It has also created economical opportunities for women. Though, many of these opportunities are formed in sweatshops and low payment jobs. Nevertheless, they increase women participation in the economy, even if it is largely in the informal sector the potential demand of empowering women is increasing (Mae, Bayes et al. 2000).

Furthermore, supporters of globalization argue that, "while the state is the agent charged with the protection and promotion of human rights, it is also traditionally the primary violator of those rights".[9] Kind models of globalization recommend that the liberalization of markets reinforces human rights by encouraging growth and plunging the authority of the state. Without a doubt, a number of studies on human rights, defined as "physical integrity rights", do indicate a connection between economic development, conventionally calculated by GDP, and the higher attainment of human rights. The right to "personal integrity" is essential in that, the exclusive of these rights, no human can survive without being in panic for his or her life and well-being. Scholars have revealed that there is an elevated level of individual integrity infringements in underdeveloped countries. The free market or "liberal economic policies", it is believed, that it will not only promote development in poor countries but in addition it will uphold civil liberties and democracy. It was argued by Moore as cited by Apodaca (2001) that, "economic liberalization is also thinning the power of the governments

by removing capital out of the hands of the state and making it accessible for individuals to get financial resources, these are those individuals who search not just for legal protection but moreover greater influence in policies affecting them[10]." This demonstrates that globalization in this regard is privileging individuals and weakening abusive governments.

Scholars have been studying the issue of multinational corporations in connection to human rights, and the results seem to be more positive than one might expect. According to Richards and Gelleny's quantitative studies, there are key points that are identified to be positively influential to human rights specifically in Less Developed Countries (LDCs). First, property rights, is argued to be influential to investors who would prefer to invest in a nation where property rights are respected and where the rule of law is followed, that gives them the guarantee that their property and investments will be respected. Moreover, labour policies are additional concerns that most MNCs look at before investing as argued " MNCs evaluate labor and wage policies, which including as well the right of workers to organize, safety standards, social welfare policies and wage rate"[11]. Reputation is an additional point that is believed to be influential for investors, Richards and Gelleny argue that " companies may seek to improve their reputation by associating their product with improving human rights. Otherwise they may run the risk of being exposed to an embarrassing media campaign highlighting their connections to regimes that abuse human rights"[12]. Additionally to their findings, Richards and Gelleny discovered that countries where government respects open political participation and open media and freedom of worship and free movement of its people MNCs appear willing to invest.

There are known to be additional benefit of Globalization in connection to human rights, these including education and access to new technology, as its argue by Stiglitz that, “ globalization has reduced the sense of isolation felt in much of the developing world and has given many people in the developing countries access to knowledge well beyond the reach of even the wealthiest in any country a century ago”[13]. He further argue that foreign aid, is an additional aspect of the globalized world, which has brought benefits to millions, often in ways that have almost gone unnoticed, globalization in this way provide help for educational services for those who had no information for instance in HIV/Aids prevention, its helps in other projects that were ignored by nation governments.

In contrast, the benefits of globalization on human rights are not universal. As most scholars argues, Globalization has increased the gap of poverty, that makes the rich are getting richer and the poor are becoming more poorer. Those who reject the notion that Globalization contributed positively to human rights argue that: Globalization has led to exploitation of labor. Prisoners and child workers are used to work in inhumane conditions. Safety standards are ignored to produce cheap goods. These arguments are issues that one should take into consideration when debating the impact of globalization on human rights, as it provide us with evidence how inequality and poverty are measured and what the results of such measurements are. Additionally, those on the opposition to the benefit of globalization on human rights argue that the influence of the World Bank- and IMF and their structural adjustment policies that include privatization of the economy, has made Multinational Companies and corporations which were previously

restricted to commercial activities to have increasingly influence on political decisions of developing countries, this lead to governments inability to maintain social welfare in developing countries. As is argued by Dr Samir Naim-Ahmed that;

Since the Universal declaration of Human rights in 1948 many countries of the world , whether in the north or the south succeed in enhancing the implementation of human rights , particularly in the economic, social and cultural domains simply through policies of subsidizing food, housing and services such as health care , transportation , sanitation, culture and education . Many countries, particularly in the south made considerable achievements in the field of the right to work simply by taking decisions to protect local industries from competition and thus creating job opportunities for their population.[14]

Moreover, a scholar against globalization in relation to human rights like Alison Brysk (2002) argues that social rights and economic rights have been mostly abandoned both in terms of international recognition and policy implementation. He further argues that “ The recent phase of globalization enriched some but did not improve the human rights conditions for a large segment of the world population.”[15]It was further argued by Apocade that “ Labor rights and social services have been denied by the upward trend of neoliberal policies. Improvements in civil and political rights have been rough, mostly symbolic, and perhaps unsustainable. Especially since the attacks of September 11, 2001,”[16]national security and order have reemerged as values that are considered to be more important, and that can be maintained only at the expense of human freedoms. Measures taken by <https://assignbuster.com/the-subject-of-human-rights-and-globalisation-politics-essay/>



the United States and its allies in connection to their “ war on terror” show the fragility of human rights that were assumed to be well-established and secure at least in “ mature” Western democracies. Moreover, scholars argue that due to free markets and a rapid access to goods, Terrorists have access to classy armaments increasing their ability to inflict damage. As the case of Terrorists use the Internet for communicating which create more treat to the world?

Its has been disputed that, the strictness agendas imposed by financial institutions have some very unenthusiastic outcomes on the people living in developing countries, those against globalization argue that demands from global financial organization has formed perhaps the strongest form of reliance since the beginning of dependence. In order for a state to be eligible for financial support from global organizations, the government must approach its economic policies to meet the terms with the regulations and standards recognized by the main actors. Thus, states in required of credits give up their administrative power to global agencies such as the World Bank, the IMF, or the World Trade Organization (WTO)[17]. With Many MNCs having superior resources than many Third World states. Third World countries rely on those corporations for financial support, monetary flows, industrial transfers, and employment opportunities for their citizens.

Economic globalization thus exploits the developing world: cheap labor, minimal skill transmission, restrictions on technology transfers, and no long-term commitment to stay or reinvest in a country’s economy. Consequently, foreign capital reinforces and strengthens repression in developing countries. To attract or preserve foreign investment, governments must

lower business costs, thus suppressing labor demands and reducing corporate taxation rates. Moreover, Corporations are growing constantly the power of which must not be underestimated. For example, it can damage liberty with inhumane working conditions, child labor or the ruthless destruction of the environment and hence the fundamentals of life. The question as to whether and how such power is controllable raises explosive legal and economic issues.[18]

A more negative view of developing countries' integration into the global economy, often attributed to dependency or neo-Marxist theorists, holds that multinational corporation activity contributes to human rights abuses. It's argued that due to these conditions and the level of poverty in developing countries " many MNCs have larger revenues than many developing countries states. Third World countries are dependent on MNCs for trade, financial flows, technological transfers, and employment opportunities for their citizens. Economic globalization thus exploits the developing world: cheap labor, minimal skill transmission, restrictions on technology transfers, and no long-term commitment to stay or reinvest in a country's economy. Consequently, foreign capital reinforces and strengthens repression in developing countries. To attract or preserve foreign investment, governments must lower business costs, thus suppressing labor demands and reducing corporate taxation rates. It was argued by Apodaca (2001) that " due to weaknesses of governments, if government officials attempt to enact unfriendly policies, the result could lead to capital flight, loss of tax revenues, and massive unemployment. States may feel that they have no

option but to entertain MNCs if they want to increase their economies, employment, and tax revenues"[19].

The discussion on globalization and human right has lead scholars to look at the issue of culture and human rights, its has well provided topic of discussion that most policy makers seem to disagree on, the issue of The Western human rights approach which primarily focuses on civil and political rights to the effective segregation of economic and social rights. These arguments are based on what Pieterse cites " the conceived understanding of Globalization in sense that the world is becoming more uniform and standardized, through a technological, commercial, and cultural synchronization emanating from the west, and that globalization is tied up with modernity"[20]. Moreover, " the thrust of social and political rights believed to be a way to protect the individual from the unrestrained power of the state which seem to be different in Asia"[21], as it was cited by Apodaca that " political and civil rights, for Asian-values advocates, may be deferred until other, more pressing, economic rights are met". It was further argued by Apodaca that " to accelerate economic development and to maintain a stable political environment, a state may have to resort to authoritarian governing practices, often suppressing labor demands and political opposition[22]; this was a scandalous exposure in a 1993 declaration, Singapore's then Minister for Foreign Affairs Wong Kan Seng declared a cited by Apodaca (2002) that: " Poverty makes a mockery of all civil liberties. Poverty is an obscene violation of the most fundamental of individual rights. Economic growth is the necessary foundation of any system that claims to advance human dignity, and that order and stability are essential for

development.[23]” it was argued by Wong as cited in Apodaca (2002), “ if political and civil human rights are an obstacle to economic progress, they would not be accepted, and an overemphasis on individual rights would retard the process of development”. For many Asian leaders and policy makers, according to Apodaca “ economic rights are the most fundamental of rights, while political and civil rights are viewed as a luxury to be considered only once everyone is fed”[24]. In short, those against globalization in connection to human right argue that, the results of globalization are the way many people have been poor and for many countries social and political instability and chaos. They further argue that IMF has made mistakes in all the areas it has been involved in: developments, crisis management, and in countries making the transition from communism where it was believed that human rights were not respected to capitalism. The most divisive topic in rejection of globalization and human rights is structural adjustment programs which resulted to failure of most states that were hoping to benefits from it, in contrast it created a gape between the poor and rich. As the case of education in developing countries, where more social services are restricted by the by the IMF, health care as well are known to be been affected by the structural adjustment program. All these are known to have negative impact on human rights globally. While most scholars discuss the benefit of Globalization is sense of connection and creation of “ a global village”, a place where people from all over the world meet and move freely, one will argue that this is just a theory but in actual sense these movements of people are restricted by developed nations, people are not as free as it sound to get American visa, or European visa.

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In conclusion, Markowitz argues that globalization and human rights are known as wide conditional fields that hold expressive and descriptive power and as political, juridical, economic and cultural development and institutions. " Presenting promises of liberation from restraining national limits and substitute to caste, gender and a racial hierarchy, the discourse of globalization and human rights offers avenues for resisting local structures of power and asserting identity claims via supranational organizations and the state"[25]. While there are still resistance on how much is globalization improving human right , based on the above arguments one will still close this debate by stating that the situation of human rights has improved in general compared to previous centuries, where slavery was dominant, colonization was the leading mode and government were not democratic. For instance, due to globalization one can argue that the rights of women and children are seen to be better and recognized as well as safeguarded than in earlier times this might be associated as well to the need for development and the interconnection that globalization is promoting. Moreover, freedom of expression has been facilitated via internet where activists have chance to rise their voice freely (though this might not be easy in countries like china but there are seen to be improvement due to the globalized technology), freedom of religious belief is a very problematic problem due to the war on terrorism. Freedoms of movements is known to have improved in the last decades due to increasing technology, this allows human rights activist to move and get information easily that ever before. In addition, the modern means of communication helps in realization of person and people rights.