

Why Globalization is the Greatest Thing Since Sliced Bread



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It would be incredibly difficult to spend a day in modern America without encountering or utilizing a good that was manufactured in China. From the clothes Americans wear, to the cars they drive, to the phones they're glued to: there is one commonality. They began their life in China, and they will end their life here in America. This fact is a result of the economic interactions between the United States and China that have intensified since the turn of the century. Innovations such as the internet, the airplane, and the telephone have hastened the creation of a "borderless" world. This borderless world manifests itself in a number of ways, but one of the most visible is the results of globalization.

Narratio

Globalization is "the creation and expansion of economic and social connections among people and organizations around the world," ("Globalization"). The varying populations of differing cultures have traded and established cultural and economic links for centuries. On continents across the globe, ideas and goods have been exchanged since before the Middle Ages. During and after World War II, a number of international organizations were created to establish economic and political cooperation globally. Recently, globalization has advanced at an increasingly rapid pace. The internet has been a major force in the increased pace of globalization- speeding up communication. Business has been another major force, expanding to reach markets even on the most distant continents. Globalization has two clear sides: those who believe it helps business and those who believe it causes nothing but harm.

A process that encompasses the whole globe, Globalization helps people increasingly view themselves as a piece of a global society. Those in industrialized countries, people and businesses alike, often benefit far more than those in developing countries, ("Globalization").

Regional free-trade zones have been set up by several nations, removing numerous tariffs and other economic barriers to beneficial activity. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was created by the United States, Mexico, and Canada in 1994. The United States, Japan, and Europe are often headquarters for transnational corporations, notably a few wealthy industrial nations that can work to advance the transnational corporations' interests.

A subject of intense debate- the trend towards globalization- has sparked massive public protests. An especially polarizing issue, NAFTA, caused large numbers of people in Mexico to rise up in protest in January 1994 when it went into effect. In Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa have also seen fierce demonstrations and worldwide strikes.

A wide range of opinion exists when it comes to what should be done about globalization, "including economic, cultural, and political connections," ("Globalization"). Supporters argue that the free-trade policies lift restrictions on commerce that generates millions of jobs and reduces poverty. One aspect of globalization, known as intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations, even intend to put "an end to war between nations," ("The United Nations"). Opponents argue that free-trade harms local businesses, only benefiting a few potential interests. Although some would argue that globalization negatively impacts smaller countries, it does in fact have wide-reaching economic and cultural benefits.

Confirmatio

Globalization is an important global process because it is economically beneficial. In recent years, free trade and international economic cooperation has come under the unrelenting fire of politicians. In an article published in *The World Economy*, author William Overholt argues that "protectionists," or those with an anti-global trade stance, are "on a crusade to build

new barriers around America.” In actuality, economic globalization has enabled significant advancements to the global job market. Globalization has “expanded the workforce participating in the modern economy,” to include otherwise underdeveloped regions, such as “Eastern Europe, China, and India,” (Overholt). Upward socio-economic mobility can only be achieved through hard work. These opportunities are now achievable in regions as far as the Himalayas thanks to economic processes are nearby as the Phoenix area.

An enormous caveat of protectionist doctrine is the attribution of “virtually all manufacturing job losses to competition with China,” (Overholt). The reality is thus: just a few years ago, it took 40 hours of man labor to construct an automobile. In 2017, it takes only 15 hours. This higher efficiency work has translated into the demand for less workers. Overholt states that “both China and the United States have lost manufacturing jobs due to rising productivity, but China has lost ten times more.” These staggering realities do not bode well with a politician’s agenda- and therefore, are frequently covered up by dramatizations of the steel industry and images of Detroit. “The protectionists never mention the jobs created and saved by globalization,” (Overholt). Efforts of partisan conflict to obscure real facts are terrifying, and a part of why it’s so important to have all the pieces to the puzzle.

Former President of the United States, Barack Obama, stood on a podium in Athens, Greece, a country wrought with economic failure and instability, and uttered these words: “We cannot sever the connections that have enabled so much progress.” Taken out of context, one would be hard pressed to realize the connections he speaks of are the connections that have been established by economic globalization. The European Union may be in a state of peril, but so are the globalized freedoms established by the Obama administration- threatened by the incoming Trump administration. An experienced, career politician, Obama understands what economic

globalization truly means. “The current path of globalization demands a course correction,” Obama offered to the distraught Greek people. He explained to them that the economic disparity felt by Greece must be handled by the whole world. Obama understands the importance of true economic unity in the modern world, and the role globalization plays in the future.

Not only is Globalization economically beneficial, it is also culturally beneficial. Samir Moussa, “a global nomad” shares that globalization has “[exposed him] to these different cultures and languages... to the value and diversity we have as a human race on this planet.” Having spent much of his life travelling to Columbia and Lebanon, the birthplaces of his parents, Moussa has experienced a wide range of cultural customs. His story isn’t unique. The increased globalization of culture has allowed families with diverse backgrounds to share their histories and experiences with one another. This development is invaluable to people like Moussa, who need to bridge language barriers in order to attend familial gatherings.

Cultural globalization is immeasurable, because cultural globalization isn’t a tangible or quantifiable thing. If globalization is the exchange of goods and ideas, cultural globalization is the exchange of ideas. The westernized world has introduced the ideas of woman’s rights to the Middle East and Asia, and the east had, in the past, introduced the ideas of Buddhism and Hinduism to the west. No one individual or organization can dictate the value of these contributions, or “cultural intensification” as Wikipedia calls it. The history of cultural globalization is as old as the history of the world, and the benefits are correspondingly intertwined around the history of humanity.

Refutatio

One cannot argue against cultural globalization. It is the silk road, the iPhone, the potato, domesticated dogs, the Christian religion. It is what makes humanity what it is. Cultural globalization is the very lifeblood of human society. More integral than economic success or political prowess, culture is the foundation upon which all else is built.

Nevertheless, opponents draw proverbial lines in the economic sand that paint the free market economy, and thereby, globalization processes, in a negative light. Arguments such as the decentralization of American industrialization, and thereby, rising unemployment rates being caused by globalization provide fuel for an anti-globalization fire. Although it may be true that unemployment rates are on the rise, there is no factual evidence that suggests a correlation between increasing interconnections and increasing unemployment. Globalization certainly creates jobs, seeing as, “The booming economies of India and China—the Elephant and the Dragon—have lifted 200 million people out of abject poverty in the 1990s as globalization took off,” (Overholt).

The argument against globalization is based not on fact, but in fallacious reasoning taking the form of generalizations. Dots are being connected that do not exist. By creating jobs for hundreds of millions, globalization has undeniably helped the economy more than it has hurt it. By blaming globalization for the maimed factors of the modern world economy, politicians and policy makers create an undeserving scapegoat. Unemployment factors can be created by just about any other conditionality, ranging from the weather- the Dust Bowl of the 1930s- to widespread political corruption- the late 19th century Gilded Age. It cannot and will not be caused solely by globalization and the sharing of information on a global scale.

Although there are a number of viable and even concerning issues regarding globalization, one simple fact remains the same. Globalization is an ongoing and uncontrollable process. A process that creates jobs and fosters socio-economic connections- benefits that are undeniably vital in an ever-changing world. It is now, more than ever, important to understand media bias and political motivations on the matter of globalization. Actual information and facts outshine generalizations and misinformation. Staying informed about hot button issues such as globalization will allow the American public to make informed and positive decisions regarding the future of the country. So yes, although your shoes may be made in China, your rice grown in India, and your jewelry mined in Africa, think about the people behind those products. The beneficiaries of the global interconnections. The children, weaving colorful tapestries in villages, the women pressing bricks in Indonesia. Your business provides them with opportunity. Globalization can grant them a better life.

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