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Political Science 450

Critical Assessment Essay

Human rights are essentially the basic needs that each human is entitled to just for being. This essay will elaborate on the idea of human rights and explore the history of how they came to be. It will also expand on the concept of globalization, the process of immediate global connections. The content under the frequently term will attempt to give a better understanding to the reader. Though a new term, the history of globalization will be expanded upon. Finally, the relationship between human rights and globalization will be laid out, highlighting the benefits and downfalls. This will all be done using the readings provided and referenced.

The idea of human rights is not exactly new. According to Weston, the term derived from two former variations of the concept. The first, natural rights, were understood to be the basic rights that each individual has as an inhabitant of the world, such as the right to life. These positive liberties eventually took on the name 'rights of man.' Acknowledging the disregard for women in this title, it was officially changed to human rights in 1945, following the rise and fall of Nazi Germany and the creation of the United Nations. However, Ishay believes that religion played a key role in constructing human rights. There are many crossovers such as 'thou shall not kill' and the 'right to life.' He believes that the only reason religion isn't widely accredited as the first construct of human rights is because the western conception of the rights doesn't see it as such. There is a trio of generational rights within the formal doctrine, which are agreed upon by Weston and Ishay. The first generational rights are civil and political which gained desirability following the English revolution and similar others. They emphasize the need for liberal individualism and negative liberties, accentuating political authority. The second regards

economic, social, and cultural rights, which became relevant during the outbreak of capitalism. The need for social equality due to exploited workers and colonials resulted in opportunities for equitable participation in and benefits of production and distribution of values. There is controversy over these rights, Ishay explains, as the socialist contribution is largely dismissed yet it played such an active role in shaping them. Socialists at this time were actively promoting social welfare rights and economic equality while liberals were sticking to freedoms. The last set of generational rights are solidarity rights. Following the rise and fall of the nation-state a desire for collective rights progressing toward a collective utopia were imperative. Demand for worldwide distribution of knowledge, wealth, and opportunity are necessary for a peaceful and balanced global environment. The combination of these three generational rights makes up the UDHR we know today. The liberties must be validated to be able to justify themselves as rights for all humans. The importance of universalism among the rights is essential and also the most difficult to do. There are five important characteristics that make human rights feasible for the entire population of the world. The first is the representation of both group and individual value demands. Also, each right must be possessed by all humans everywhere. Due to the incredibly progressive world we live in, the rights are never absolute. The portrayal of what 'should be' in human affairs is also a priority. Lastly, these rights protect fundamental needs, not wants or desires. To maintain credibility, it is necessary to never have ranking among the rights. Also regarding credibility, careful characterizations must be made to subside skepticism as these characterizations may not be understood by all as they are meant to. The terms of the rights are malleable but the end goal is always to provide the most culminated liberties for each human being as possible without imposing on the liberties of others.

Globalization has a variety of definitions and through a combination of each one, a true understanding of its meaning can be found. Steger creates a distinction for the term by dividing it in two perspectives. Globalization itself can be viewed as a process during which economic, political, cultural, and environmental interconnections around the world exist and lead to an integrated social condition, which he calls globality. Globalization is a new concept, however, Ellwood mentions its long past which often gets the blind eye. The process of moving slaves to the Americas was one of the first forms of globalization. Not a positive form but nonetheless a form. The transportation of crops to different farms or countries also displays the past of globalization. It was occurring on a much smaller scale at the time but it was still occurring. Steger states five characterizing aspects of globalization to help better define the controversial term. The first is the increasing of social relations which ultimately break down the traditional political, economic, cultural, and geographical boundaries thus globally intensifying the resulting relations. The second is the increase of social interdependencies. This includes the growing world market and world communication. Ellwood mentions one of the first examples of this characteristic, when Christopher Columbus sailed to the Americas and created a link between the new land and Spain. This example was, again, a negative form of globalization as it was full of coercion and murder. The third characterization can be viewed as the increase of extensity, intensity, and velocity among these global social exchanges and activities. The fourth is the active understanding by humans that globalization is happening. Ellwood brings an important debate to light, pondering the way in which it is occurring. Is globalization currently occurring in a way that is peaceful and friendly or are we doomed to fight for power and wealth? Addressing this question early on can hopefully bring to light the importance, worldwide, for maintaining a

peaceful globality. Lastly, globalization condenses the time and space aspects among social relations. These definitions help to better understand the meaning of globalization but there is still much to discover about it. There cannot be a universal definition because there is debate over almost every aspect of it. There is no definite impact, or trajectory outlined. The process is still happening and changes often. Globalization has to be taken day by day, updated when possible.

Globalization and human rights are inevitably related. Howard-Hassman describes globalization as the Second Great Transformation, in correlation to the first transformation from rural to urban living. He describes this second shift as the evolution from a socially based world giving way to a profit based one. This deviation is creating a larger separation between high and low class individuals. It is, of course, giving more power to the elites and, due to the growing disappearance of social priority, there is no obligation for them to help the communities they are taking from. Howard-Hassman talks about the Hymer Thesis which describes the eroding of national development via foreign investment. By the vast array of options available to obtain what is needed, the full development of countries can never actualize as there will always be somewhere quicker and cheaper ahead of them. Rodriguez talks about the deplorable outcome of the desire for cheap, quick worldwide workers. The jobs may be there for them but at what cost? Capitalism is a factor in democracy but social action is necessary for it to equate to respected human rights. Social action is absolutely necessary if horrific workplace conditions are to be stopped. The elites who purchase goods have no connection to the workers across the world as they don't need to in the global community. Pollis mentions the need for consolidation over fragmentation. He states the tension between globalization and state sovereignty due to the

market driven economy. The desire for labour rights can send buyers elsewhere, leaving the countries with even less profit and availability to deliver those rights. Thus human rights themselves can threaten state sovereignty. Smith suggested the need for a global governance which can project and resolve global development or lack of. Globalization has an inherently negative short-term impact on human rights. Though, long-term effects suggest that it may be the only feasible way toward world prosperity and eventually human rights and development.

Globalization and human rights are complex ideas. There is no straightforward way to talk about them as they contain so many complex implications. Together they have a negative short-term relationship with each other but through knowing this, a positive long-term one can be achieved. Through progressive social action, globalization and human rights can coincide harmoniously.

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