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History-Geography essay

“What is the role of governments in globalisation.”

Today globalisation is a wide-spread phenomenon, that essentially brings all the countries in the world closer and closer, interlocking them in a tight dependency on each other. There are many actors that make this act of globalisation happen, and governments are one of these actors. The question is though, how these governments impact the globalisation in the world.

One of the main factors through which globalisation is expressed is economy. It is the economy that benefits the most from globalisation with it's capacity to bring workers in, as well as capital and technologies. And in any given country, it's the government who has power over the local economy: it's the government who determinates the taxes, tariffs and quotas, fiscal policies. But even if the government does not have total power over the local economy, it can heavily influence it's development in their country, and even in nearby countries in some cases. The government can also develop trade policies, encouraging the actors on their local market to engage in international activities, as well as bringing investors into the country: the relationship between Transnational Corporations and the governments is a prime example of such activity. The TNC's are an enormous source of income to the country they come to, because they can heavily improve the local industries and bring crucial technologies required to improve further the economy of a given country, as well as granting the local population jobs, and even in some cases training and education. But they can't, and won't, come if they have no incentive to invest in the country. This is why the governments try to attract TNC's in their countries with multiple solutions: lowering taxes, developing and improving the infrastructure in the country, and generally improving the economical attractiveness of the country. Governments also can influence the state of their country's currency, as well as they can also lend money and give economical aid to other countries. Entering in trade unions is also quite common between governments, like the members of the European Union or the NAFTA. In both cases, thanks to the intervention of the government, trade has vastly increased between the members, vastly improving their economies and their impact on each other. But it is worth noting that in the EU's case, things go much beyond just trade between countries: the big majority of the members have removed travel restrictions, they actively help each other and they decide commonly their strategy and laws with a united Parliament in Brussels.

Although economy is one of the main aspects of globalisation, it is not the only factor in it: globalisation can be expressed in many other ways than the state of the local economy. In fact, if we look at the definition of globalisation, it says that it is a process by which the world is becoming increasingly interconnected as a result of massively increased trade and cultural exchange. That said, governments also have a significant power in the “cultural exchange”: on one part, they can participate in these cultural and social exchanges, such as the French “Conference de la francophonie”, that assembles the representatives of all countries that have French as their official language. Countries can also control and encourage population flows, like the European governments in 2004, when a big portion of the post-communist Eastern European countries have joined the European Union. At that time, the majority of the countries in the EU have closed their borders to the income of “polish plumbers” and other eastern Europeans, except a few countries like the United Kingdom. During that period, the United Kingdom faced an enormous wave of immigrants, especially from countries like Poland, Czech Republic or Slovakia. That wave of immigrants represent a massive population flow, importing large chunks of eastern European culture, especially the Polish culture and language into the UK. All thanks to the British government who didn't put any restrictions on the immigrants at that time: if they would follow the example of countries like France or Germany, things might have rolled out quite differently.

We can see that governments play a quite important role in globalisation, notably they are the ones who encourage it and “let it happen”, so to speak. If not for the governments initiatives, globalisation surely would progress at a much slower rate than it is today. They have recognised the numerous advantages it gives, so they are strongly pushing for it to increase the power of their country or their region.