



Globalization: Perspectives from Cultural Relativism and Modernism

Faryal Qazi

Student, BS-International Relations from National Defense University, Islamabad,
Pakistan

qazifaryal6@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Globalization has created major changes in how the world works and conducts its business, but it has also generated a debate upon the viability of cultural practices around the world as the world becomes more connected, and there's debate on if these differences strengthen the bond among the people of world or are they another chink in the armor. This paper attempts to explain the two dominant perspectives on changing cultural diversity, universalism and relativism to explain the challenges and opportunities globalization faces because of cultural diversity and unity, and tries to ascertain which approach would work best for the everchanging world of the future. Theories of relativism and modernism are applied, and the perspective of globalization is judged through the approaches of universalism and relativism to ultimately arrive at the conclusion that universalism is the way forward for globalization to progress.

Keywords: Universalism, Relativism, Globalization, Human Rights, Modernists.

Introduction

For centuries scholars and philosophers have been debating among themselves about moral values, liberties and rights of humans. But no one could ever reach a concrete solution. There have always existed alternate views about rights and morals of humans. Two dominant views in this regard are: cultural relativists under theory of relativism, upholding that realities and therefore morals vary from culture to culture. While second dominant and *more prevailing* view is universalism, upholding modernists values of natural liberty and rights of humans having global application regardless of time and space. In present times of globalization, where world has compressed unprecedentedly, and social interconnection has intensified. Both perspectives enjoy a special attention by scholars, because of the particular and unique way, they view globalization. This paper briefly introduces both of these theories and impact of globalization under Relativism and Universalism. Later, it also discusses current trends of universalism and relativism and argues that Kantian Cosmopolitanism may be a solution to problems of human rights and values.

Theoretical Framework

Modernism as a philosophical movement transformed intellectual approach of philosophers that changed western society for good. It gave rise to scientific methods in social sciences and encouraged use of rationality. These modern ideas had a profound impact on the enlightenment philosophers, which resulted in vital ideas of human rights, values and global application of them that changed West forever and transformed it as we see it today. In this regard major contributions by John Lock and Immanuel Kant are of key importance. John Lock gave his natural human rights which are possessed by all men by virtue of being humans these rights are: “life, property and liberty”. While Kant’s idea of ‘perpetual peace led to idea the of cosmopolitan society which is considered as an important idea in globalized world today.

While Relativism is a theory based on philosophical a viewpoint, that humans can understand and evaluate the beliefs and behaviors of other humans, in terms of historical and cultural context. This philosophical viewpoint is very ancient and is rooted in Greek philosophy that *happiness and reality vary from person to person*. An essential strand of relativism is cultural relativism and ethical relativism. Relativism is a critique of homogeneity and universality.

Journal of Peace and Diplomacy

In the context of research problem: “impact of globalization on modernist and cultural relativists” the theory of universalism under consideration of human rights and values, as given by modernists is considered. Which asserts that these rights have universal application and everyone should have them. And theory of relativism within bounds of cultural relativism is taken. Cultural relativism argues that every culture, its morals and values have their own particular context which must be accessed indifferently. They assert that there are no universal values and ideas that can encompass all the diversity universe has to offer and brings them on one page. Therefore, Cultural relativism and universalism is very relevant to our research problem. since cultural relativism offers a critique to globalization, while universalism takes strength from it.

Genealogy of Cultural Relativism

Relativism can be understood as the viewpoint from which humans can understand and evaluate the belief or access them, in terms of historical context as well as cultural context. It is a mostly used approach by anthropologists.¹ Two major variants in relativism in philosophy are ethical relativism and cultural relativism. Ethical relativism means that there are no universal moral standards, and it does not exist, there are diversities of moral practices. While cultural relativism can be defined as different cultures having different moral standards through which individualism can be understood and their values can be accessed. Even rightness and wrongness, evilness and goodness of an individual is determined by the cultural beliefs. It is both descriptive and prescriptive in nature.

Cultural relativism is ancient approach which dates back to ancient Greece during sophist’s’ period and later to German philosophers Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) and Hegel (1770-1831). Being a critique of enlightenment’s philosophy Herder argued that everyone has its own way of reaching happiness and has its own unique view of the world. He is famously known as the father of cultural relativism.

Cultural relativism is an idea against the ethno-centrism.² According to this idea, there exist not one moral code that is relevant in every situation. There always exist exceptions to the rule. In light of this idea, creation of moral codes and ethical values is up to the community, they design their own standards of morals according to their history, culture and

¹ Michael F. Brown, Cultural Relativism (The University of Chicago Press on behalf of Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research 2008)

² Dr. Caleb Rosado, ‘Understanding Cultural Relativism in a Multicultural World’ (Newbold collage, Department of Behavioral Sciences England, 1994)

Journal of Peace and Diplomacy

concepts of individuality. Thus, relativism promotes and attempts to preserve diversity of cultures and morals over homogeneity of human society and universal moral ethics.

For Relativists, homogeneity and universal moral ethics and ideas are foreign concepts and view them in the light of post-colonialism.³ They reason that these universal ideas are not absolute enough to address and encompass all the cultural and consequently all moral differences that exists today⁴. Therefore, in world characterized by diversity of cultures and ethnicities, cultural relativism provides best way to preserve individuality of an individual within its particular society.

In essence, this idea of viewing different cultures and thus, morals within the context in which it evolved provides guideline about living peacefully and with tolerance in this world. It can prove as an essential tool in dealing with ethno-centric problems which are really prominent in West. For instance, it can play a very positive and vital role in combating against the 'islamophobia' in France, where Muslim dress up and moral codes are challenged and judged every day. Relativism can also be useful against mitigating the tension among cultural communities of East and West, since it provides insight about understanding each other through each other's point of view.

However, there are many reservations against cultural relativists and consider them isolationists. They take in to account the idea of subjectivity in relativism, and question the practicability and legitimacy of this theory. They argue that relativists do not take in to account the fluidity of cultures. Which implies that cultures are dynamic and evolve and so the morals, norms, ethics and values.

Second critique, is that if everything and every act is justified under one culture or the other culture then it means that everyone is right. No matter whatever we do, no one outside our community can blame us or hold us accountable, where our community justifies our particular act under shared cultural norms and values. Therefore, the very idea of cultural relativism is more a pitfall than a tool against ethno-centrism. It is argued, that if there exist no intersubjective agreements and actions are justified through person's cultural point of view, then in the end communication will have no meaning and everyone will be isolated. This will capture us in the never-ending cycle of coercion by powerful, since cultures with no

³ Guyora Binder, Cultural Relativism and Cultural Imperialism in Human Rights Law, 5 Buff. Hum. Rts. L. Rev. 211 (1999).

⁴ Xiaorong Li, A Cultural Critique of Cultural Relativism (American Journal of Economics and Sociology, Inc. 2007)

Journal of Peace and Diplomacy

intersubjective agreement are bound to engage in conflict. Where in conflict, competing cultures will try to coerce other culture in order to prevail as one dominant culture, there is no way out. This cycle will continue, on and on.

In fact, cultural relativism is being questioned many times from within, many anthropologists view cultural relativism as limited approach in changing times and shifting world trends towards more integration and interconnectedness.⁵ Cultural relativism is not driven by morals and values but curiosity, therefore it is not compatible to make moral judgements⁶ Although, there has been observed a shift in the approach in the post -cold war period, there has been increased engagement with universalist's texts and trends. This shift largely occurred due to integration of remote cultures in the globalized system of world.⁷

Universalism: Critique of Universalism

Ideas of universal application of human rights and certain values emerged as a result of enlightenment philosophy, which was heavily inspired by modernist's ideas.⁸ Theory of universalism about natural human rights dates back to as ancients as Stoic philosophy. The stoics asserted that universe is governed by natural laws which are supreme and universal. This philosophical idea combined with enlightenment's idea led to naturally given human rights. Major contributors in these endeavors were: John Lock and his universal natural rights, perpetual peace and cosmopolitan society by Immanuel Kant, Hugo Grotius and the basis for modern international law has laid, Hedley Bull's idea of world society that is held together by shared norms (recent contributor) and on and on. But for relativists, these developments of universal ideas starting from Locke and onwards, were in particular cultural environment- in Western society, therefore assuming them as having universal application is absurd.

However, absurd or not the idea of universal human rights and certain universally shared norms emerged largely after WW2. where the world having witnessed the atrocities of humans against fellow humans, became enthusiastic about universal rights that would guarantee their peaceful life. while some optimists believed that west have more to teach from its lessons therefore, adopting its ideas had no harm. Hence, starting from WW2

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Mark Goodale, *Surrendering to Utopia: An Anthropology of Human Rights* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009).

⁷ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Global citizenship and the challenge from cultural relativism* (Department of Social Anthropology, University of Oslo, Norway 2017).

⁸ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2017

Journal of Peace and Diplomacy

onwards and especially after declaration of human rights, the popularity of classical anthropologists or cultural relativists largely decreased.

Universal declaration of Human rights in 1948 by United Nations marked a watershed in history of humankind and success of universalists. It also formed basis for international human rights law. This declaration of 1948 of human rights is about basic values that are shared between international community. it explicitly declares that human rights are universal, regardless of their cultural or national identity or the place they inhabit. some of the key universal rights as proclaimed in declaration are:

- Civil and political rights
- Right of social security: cultural, social and economic rights.
- Health and education

This declaration as expectedly, also formed point of contention between cultural relativists and universalists. The American Anthropological Association strongly criticized it for being ethnocentric and for not considering many different ways though which peaceful and just life can be obtained. For AAA, the declaration in hearing and view appeared to be as a ‘Western provincialism’ in human appealing garb. in this regard, relativists take post-colonial lens and view universalism as imperialism.⁹

After institutionalization of these human rights and many other universalistic developments many anthropologists with passing time, lost their dedication towards cultural relativism. Some of them saw cultural relativism as the hindrance towards extrication of oppressed masses.¹⁰ While for some the globalized world created a common place where the discussions about morality, rights and politics would be possible¹¹ besides many modernists argue that due to considerable amount of increased interaction among different communities, anthropology is bound to include matters of shared rights and values which in turn would create a lot of serious problems for cultural relativists. Modernists argue, that even the last of aborigines in Australia that have always maintained a traditional way of life now are part of the globalized world and enjoys the universal rights. native populations are now accustomed to cash and therefore prefer global communal living that has brought them prosperity, their

⁹ The Executive Board, American Anthropological Association. 1947. American Anthropologists: A statement on Human Rights. Blackwell Publishing on behalf of American Anthropological Association.

¹⁰ Wolf, Eric. 1982. Europe and the People without History. Berkeley: University of California Press.

¹¹ Worsley, Peter. 1984. The Three Worlds. Culture & World Development. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson.

Journal of Peace and Diplomacy

children started going to school, villagers became aware of their rights and in most areas in world they struggle to achieve them, for instance villagers in sub-continent. Hence in such an extensively interconnected world where now individual masses have whole heartedly accepted the universal human rights along with universal norms of trade and businesses, the cultural relativism serves no more than as a tool to study cultures independently where it also shows weakness because cultures itself are dynamic, unstable and unbounded.¹²

Alternatively, we have societies who struggles to adopt universal ideas and rights. Amazonian Indians are struggling to promote their rights and representation in international globalized world. women in patriarchal and cast based society struggles to escape it. for instance, women in India and Pakistan. African societies want to escape the oppressed and corrupt rule of their rich politicians. according to Thomas Ericksen Amazonian¹³ and African societies want *the 'spoils of modernity'*. not only because of the prosperity and luxuries modernity has to offer but also for the liberation from the shackles of *'totalitarian cultural traditions.'* with regard to this, universalists argue that when societies and communities themselves want to embrace the universal values and wish to become part of modern age then who are we to deny them these rights and stop them, in the name of cultural moral values and diversity.

Globalization's Impact on Relativist and Universalist Perspectives

Globalization has revolutionized the world we live in. The ways in which we conduct trade, share information, manage relationships and outright experience the world have changed so dramatically that they're undistinguishable from how these matters were conducted a few decades ago. But another issue that this very fast change in human experience has brought is that humanity seems to be stuck in the previous frame of reference. Although we have made great strides in all fields of human endeavor from science to arts to finance and politics, there is evidence to the fact that how we experience ourselves, the interpersonal relationships we foster and the culture we all live in has not had the ample time to grow and get in sync with the speed at which the world is moving.

Another observation is that our legal and moral understandings have had no idea all this time what to do. More often than not we have to face these shortcomings where the moral

¹² Hannerz, Ulf. 1992. *Cultural Complexity*. New York: Columbia University Press

¹³ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Global citizenship and the challenge from cultural relativism* (Department of Social Anthropology, University of Oslo, Norway 2017).

Journal of Peace and Diplomacy

principles and the on-ground realities do not line up. This problem is also exacerbated by the fact that some parts of the world have developed faster and with much greater efficiency than other parts of the world. This problem is evident when the discrepancies among how Western Nations have developed and how most other nations in the world have developed are studied and analyzed. This aspect of globalization and the critiques that it has brought upon itself because of this make globalization a feared topic among a considerable number of people in both societies. The differences have been so wide that a not insignificant amount of academic thought and literature have been utilized to study the perspective that is this process of globalization as good as it seems or is it a re-imagining of the extinct colonial thought and mindset. On the other hand, these problems have been termed by many as growing pains which will subside soon after reliable models and policies are implemented all around the world for fostering deeper interconnectedness through globalization and this is the framework in which the effects of globalization on relativism and universalism would be discussed.

Perspective on Relativism

Relativism by itself is a concept that does not sit well within the wider globalist thought. Relativists argue that the differences manifest among the world's cultures and viewpoints are valid and important and must be viewed in context with the time and place where they are found. As such relativism stands in stark contrast to the general Universalist framework upon which the ideas of globalization are based. Relativism argues for a broader understanding and acceptance of how things are in the world and posits that no culture or thought is above another and all must be. Relativism is a major issue in the propagation of globalist ideals because it destroys the interconnectivity that globalization develops among cultures. Identifying and recognizing cultures as their own distinct units, separate from other cultures around the world also recognizes and validates the differences among them. As such, the idea of a universal morality becomes almost impossible to implement.

Relativism as a threat to globalist values is nothing new, even at the very beginning of globalist ideals in the twentieth century, the American Anthropological Association objected to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, calling it Western in nature. Relativism's argument for individual freedoms and rights rather than rights and freedoms of communities is also at odds with the globalist viewpoint which calls for unification of value structures. Relativism is also helped by the fact that it is understood and accepted by the most common paradigm in International Relations, Realism. Realist thought has been very supportive of

Journal of Peace and Diplomacy

relativism because it sits squarely within the realist viewpoint that human beings are driven by self-interest and not morality. Hence if any universal moral standard was to be presented, it would be an exercise by more powerful states in the system to strengthen their grip on the weaker states from a pseudo-moralistic point of view. Such a system would not only dismantle anarchy present in the international structure but would produce in its place a system by which there would a perpetual group of civilized and uncivilized states. And by such a system the powerful states would not only get influence over weaker states but also ways to control their resources and output, but also right to intervene if any state objects, as the objection could easily be spun by the more powerful states as an attack against the accepted moral structure of the world. Such a scenario is not too difficult to imagine as similar situation developed near the Invasion of Iraq in 2003, when the Americans used dubious evidence in favor of Iraq's procurement of weapons of mass destruction and purported the viewpoint that it had a moral duty to intervene in Iraq as Saddam Hussain was a dictator and was actively repressing the people of Iraq. This approach was even criticized by lifelong realists such as John Mearsheimer because to him states were going down a very slippery slope by not adhering to power maximization and conducting their business with respect to that but to obscure moralistic reasonings that no one could understand and were as a result disintegrating the weak fabric that held the states together. To him the relativity of moralistic ideations for war were more dangerous for states as it would make foreseeing conflict and hedging against it absolutely impossible as states would not have any idea who may they be attacked by and when on basis of moralistic ideas.

Marxists hold a similar viewpoint to the generalization of morality among nations and development of a singular moralistic understanding. To them such a singular moral viewpoint undermines the problems faced by the Global South as the dominant moral viewpoint would be, and is, the one given by the Global North. They see it as another tool by the capitalist nations to further their agenda under the guise of morality. Because the introduction of the moral system purported by the Western nations also introduces Western capitalism with it. As such the nations who would give into such a system would not only be giving into a moral understanding different than their own but also to institutions and people who seek monetary benefit and exploitation of the resources of these countries under the guise of moral

enlightenment. As such a universal morality to them is a neo-imperialist agenda¹⁴ and a new take at the white man's burden.

Perspective on Universalism

Universalism has its roots in Post Great War liberalism, it stems from a time in which it was thought that the world had finally come to its senses and something like the horrors of the Great War will never happen again. The strategy to not let this happen was the use of institutions that would regulate relations between states. These institutions would at first try to keep the peace among the nations of the world through mutual discussion and if something were to go wrong, and conflict did erupt, these institutions would try to renormalize relations through discussions among the warring parties, and even if that didn't work, these institutions could call for international military intervention on behalf of the oppressed state. The League of Nations was to be this institution after the end of the Great War but it failed due to some obvious systemic errors and omissions in its mandate and structure. The League's first failure was the retention of the Entente powers which won the Great War, its mandate was vague and its decisions were recommendations and not hard and fast rules that states agreed to accept. As such the League was bound to fail and it failed spectacularly as the Second World War started with Germany attacking Poland and the United Kingdom objecting to this move. The Second World War lasted some six years and had a total death figure of some sixty million. The failure of the League was not lost upon the victors of the Second World War and hence after the war, a new international organization, the United Nations was developed to solve these matters peacefully in the future. The makers of the United Nations were careful to not let the same systemic mistakes from the League of Nations carry on into it, so they devised a moral document that states could agree to when they signed on the United Nations charter and hence were liable to a singular system of moral laws that they all had to follow. This moral document was the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Charter. These documents were the first real indication of universalist thought making its mark on the world stage. The documents were moral agreements that states had to follow if they wished to be a part of the UN and the greater international community and had to ensure that these moral obligations were met within their boundaries. Violations of the articles of the charter and the declaration of the human rights could bring about sanctions on the violating state and even military intervention from the

¹⁴ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, "Global Citizenship and the Challenge from Cultural Relativism," *Issues in Ethnology and Anthropology* 12, no. 4 (December 23, 2017): 1141, <https://doi.org/10.21301/eap.v12i4.7>.

Journal of Peace and Diplomacy

United Nations. But acceptance of the charter and the declaration brought with itself greater sway for a state on the world stage, greater chances of diplomacy and greater opportunities for trade and cooperation in other sectors. The Universalist ideas flourished in the early years of the formation of the United Nations as help was granted to the whole world affected by the brutalities of war and new avenues of cooperation opened among the various nations of the world. This cooperation even went so far as to start discussions on general disarmament of the nations of the world to make war and conflict even more difficult, But the progress stopped with the formation of the Iron Curtain and it remained stopped for fifty years until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1991, after which it again started to gain speed.

Universalism as an idea posits that human beings as a whole have shared values or could agree on shared values, common moral code to lead them better through life. Universalism because of this idea sits at the center of globalist thought, as a similar moral and cultural system would foster interconnectedness and interdependence more than trade, diplomacy, shared security etc. Universalism considers a universal identity of world citizen for everyone and as such all citizens are bound by their collective responsibility to one another. Universalist thought values cooperation and common effort over individual preferences and advantages, and strongly dismisses seeking individual gains at the price of suffering to the broader society or a subset of the society. Universalism has been instrumental in globalizing the world through institutions, trade and diplomacy. Universalism's emphasis on trade and interconnectedness brought on about the great increase in global wealth in the twentieth century and fostered standardization. The relationship between universal ethics and globalization has been that of a symbiotic feedback loop where both ideas flourish each other and increase the need of each other on the global stage. It can be argued that we're at a point where if we want to continue the ongoing interdependence between nations, we need a more universal framework of rules, morality and ideas to keep ourselves going in the same direction. There have been detractors to Universalist thought who think that such a policy cannot be implemented or work in the long term but the adherents to Universalist thought argue that there are moral ideas that are so common among nations that no one would argue against them. They also argue that with the passage of time and increased interconnectedness and interdependence due to globalization, we would see a merging of various ideas from the world into one universally relevant and acceptable moral structure.

Examples of EU and NATO involvement in Globalization

Universalist thought's global acceptance can be more accurately traced back to the global institutions formed after the formation of the United Nations on a similar model. Though United Nations itself has done much to promote Universalist ideas among the world, the institutions it hosts and the institutions that it works with have had similar if not more success. Such institutions include the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, both of which have been instrumental in propagating Universalist thought.

European Union was founded as the European Economic Community, it was to be an economic partnership among European nations to ease hostilities among each other by making each other interdependent in trade and to make Europe a unitary trading entity and hence more powerful than anyone else. But as the trade grew among European nations, so did the need of more commonality among themselves and that forced the EEC to lose its purely economic foundations and become much more a wide entity among the nations of Europe which would bind their social, governmental, economic, cultural identities and others. To this extent the European Union now mostly uses a single currency, shares commonality in cultural and everyday life through trade and standardization and has open borders for the citizens of Europe. It also forces states both new and older members to adapt to new social and moralistic viewpoints (such as human rights and climate change) and actively calls for the implementation of these viewpoints elsewhere as well, especially if the nations want to increase their trade with the European Union.

NATO has had a similar history, albeit limited because of its singular focus on defense. NATO was formed as collective security organization to defend Europe from Soviet and communist aggression. And at its core was also the binding moralistic principle that as all NATO member states felt the same about the threat from the Soviet Union, hence all member NATO states will participate and cooperate in defense if any one of them is attacked. Luckily NATO never had to use this provision during the Cold War but its moralistic intervention came about in 1999 when it started a campaign against the massacre of Bosnian Muslims in Former Yugoslavia.

Globalization's impact on Human Societies

Universalist thought mixed with globalization has turned the world into a much smaller place than it once was. That is the world is now interconnected enough to be termed as a global village where relations are so common and instant that it feels as if there aren't

Journal of Peace and Diplomacy

differences among states and distances separating them. Globalization also has brought on about advances in fields other than just diplomacy and trade. Though it has made them faster and more efficient, globalization has changed the way the world works. Where once goods had to be manufactured locally, now they are manufactured by hubs such as China and Vietnam; and then sold around the world. The process has become much simpler as multiple parties from all around the world can interact and develop a single product. The world is more integrated because of common regulations and standards that act the same all over. The rate at which technology is developed and cooperation is done in that field is something that hasn't ever been seen before. But possibly the most important contribution of globalization is in the field of world peace, where its effects are evident. Globalization has lessened the distances and differences among people and made them more interdependent. They are more understanding of each other's problems and more compassionate towards one another, their interdependence and shared values now force them to seek means other than brute force to conduct relations, and that is arguably globalization's greatest triumph.

Cosmopolitanism: a solution

With the phenomenon of globalization, the ethical dilemmas aggravate due to increasing effect that different communities and individuals have on each other. Because in an environment where awareness about suffering of 'distant strangers' seems so close then moral framework of Westphalia's sovereignty seems very inadequate, which gives very little heed to the sufferings of others living outside its borders. Therefore, according to majority views globalization provides strongest reason for application of universal standards.¹⁵

A possible mechanism for application of universal standards with wide spread acceptability is Kantian cosmopolitanism. Kant's vision was to establish war free world with universal community governed by rational cosmopolitan law. For achieving universal community, he asked to recognize every individual as moral equal and to be impartial of his or her personal claims. That is, treating humans as ends in itself will help us achieve our end.

Kant's idea of cosmopolitanism offers a middle ground between profound difference in cultures and societies. It offers a unique middle position between uniformity and particularism, a way of mediation among differences. It is important to note here is that cosmopolitanism is not a moral universalism, rather it entails mutual respect and recognizing

¹⁵ John Baylis, Smith and Owens, 'Globalization of World politics an introduction to international relations' (Oxford university Press 2014)

Journal of Peace and Diplomacy

and treating each other as moral equals. Since, it is based upon principle of mutual respect it leads to agreements and convergence in society. This particular idea is adopted at global level to advocate and advance human rights. With this, individuals and societies do not feel compelled about universal rights and norms, rather they feel a part of it-they are part of the change. In fact, according to some authors cosmopolitanism is different from universalism and relativism. It asserts the probability of common understanding among advocates of different cultures and moralities but without promising any absolute agreement and consensus.

Emerging trends of Universalism and relativism

There are countless events in history where human beings were denied from their rights and even now their rights are constantly being violated and mutilated. But at the same time, there have been untiring and consistent struggles to gain these rights and obtain lofty goals of better and peaceful human civilizations. In this respect Universal declaration of human rights served as the milestone for modern states and people for gaining better future with equal rights and representation. Remarks of UN High Commissioner about Human Rights are still relevant in this regard, '*Universal Declaration is strong and alive*'¹⁶ Many countries in world from Africa to Asia are still struggling for their rights and representation in the world.

United Nation's declaration of human rights in 1948 served as the driving force for African independence from colonial rule. Although these independent countries did not readily accept the charter, but they did draft their own charter for Human Rights in 1986 'African Charter on Human and People's Rights' which was inspired from United Nations. But exception to this was only one country that was South Africa; because subscribing to these Human Rights would disrupt its own actions of discrimination-the apartheid.

On the other hand, Ghana's President Nkrumah after adoption of these human rights declaration celebrated it with a huge crowd and delivered a speech in which he invoked 'equality justice and freedom for everyone.' Similarly, Congo also invoked these principles of Human Rights charter to gain its independence and now endeavoring to break away from traditional forms of life to gain advantage of globalized world. One of the locals while talking to UN's representative said that, "Africans must be free as other citizens in the world in order to enjoy basic liberties as set forth in United Nations declaration on Human Rights."

¹⁶ The Story of Human Rights: Booklet by United Nations 2011.

Journal of Peace and Diplomacy

Even in present day world the ideas of rights, freedom and justice as enshrined and codified in United Nation's charter are still the driving force for African Citizens. After attaining independence, they are now struggling for political rights and civil rights, and wish freedom from traditional forms of totalitarian rulers. Demonstrations and protests are not common in African countries like: Cameroon, Gambia, Niger, Gabon, Kenya, the DRC, Mali, Senegal, Madagascar, Togo and Tanzania. Citizens here are well aware of their rights and demand equal rights and justice. Since last couple of years' African citizens are demanding regime change to democratic form of governments. So that citizens may have greater political representations. In fact, many countries are now holding elections. In concluding remarks UN High Commissioner Ms. Bachelot remarked that 'in last seven decades' humans has taken 1000 steps ahead.' And this seems quite relevant and right today.

Same rise in support for universal rights and values is seen in Asia as well. There have numerous incidents in the year 2009 violation human rights and freedoms. For instance, hostilities against Muslims in Sri Lanka and in China, atrocities by India in Kashmir, China's extradition of Hong Kong, etc. However, with all these inhumane traditional tools of politics by governments, citizens of the very state and people across world through global civil society stood against these violations and denial of rights. Although in some cases these protests did not help in improving situation for the better but their stand against those denials really made the difference. There are a lot of incidents where the stand against such atrocities and denial got succeeded. For instance, in Malaysia their former PM Mr. Razak stood up against corruption. In Sri Lanka, their lawyers were successful in reverting orders on resuming the execution sentence. In Pakistan, the government first time gave serious focus to climate change and air pollution, while Maldives appointed two females as Supreme Court judge for the first time. In India, the caste system in patriarchal society is a very serious issue in the path of universal rights and values of humans. In recent years there are continues efforts by NGOs and civilians to come out of their culturally bound values and way of life. Alternatively, there are ASEAN countries that are making a lot of efforts to address human rights issues and to provide protection to vulnerable minority groups.

On the other hand, there seems to be some trends of relativism also. Throughout ASEAN countries especially, there are multiple incidents in recent years where governments adopt cultural relativist policies in order to affirm their control and grip over power. Issues prevalent in these countries are diverse ranging from freedom of press to religious freedom, gender equality to individual citizen's rights. In the year 2019, there have been continuous

Journal of Peace and Diplomacy

incidents where in ASEAN countries the minority religious factions were harassed and were threatened, while human rights activists were murdered or threatened.

In Thailand alone since 2001, about more than 35 human rights activists and members of civil society are murdered. While government remains clueless about the culprits of these murderers and is unable to fulfill its promises of protecting human rights. Same trend is seen in Myanmar, where human rights activists and constantly being murdered and are under threat from corrupt politicians and judiciary. According to some views, the reason behind all these threats and murders is that majority faction of these countries feel threatened by these human rights groups and religious rights groups. Then there is Vietnam, which is aggressively cracking down on religious and human rights groups. In India, it passed a law that discriminate against Muslims; cultural relativism is at its peak in India these past years.

On the other hand, there is Europe and America where discriminations against Muslims and non-Americans respectively, is acute. European countries view Muslims as a threat against their liberal values and freedom. While nationalism under Trump, where discrimination against Muslims and non-Americans and blacks is very high. There have been incidents recently where a black man was murdered by a police officer in America which sparked wide spread protests against the government and official authorities.

However, although the recent events in world reflect relativists polices by governments to reaffirm their control. On the other hand, there are also protests within states and outside states by civil societies against those actions. For instance, India's law discriminating against Muslims was widely protested by Indian and was also condemned internationally. Murder of black man by a USA's official also met with wide scale condemnation and critics on international level.

Conclusion

In the new constantly globalizing world, everything has changed, and more things will change as globalization progresses forward. In such an interconnected domain of human experience, differences in culture and morality will affect how the world gets along with itself and such differences will in fact create more divide among the people. This has terrible consequences ranging from petty diplomatic disputes to full scale war and subjugation of lesser power people through subjective morality. Hence, in the world of the future it is necessary that the world be united on a singular moral framework that most if not all nations

Journal of Peace and Diplomacy

of the world agree to. For this reason, the Universalist argument edges against the relativist one and would be quintessential to life and business in the interconnected world of the future.