
Perspectives On International Political Economy: Labor and Environmental Standards Should Be in World Trade Organizations?

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ABSTRACT

The concept of sustainable development and environmental protection are among the main objectives of the World Trade Organization. For this purpose, the labor and environmental standards of the World Trade Organization are also included in the agreement. In 1994, the World Trade Organization Trade and Environment Committee was established in this context, and international organizations joined it. So, in this paper analyze that labor and environmental standards should be in a Trade Organization unbiased way.

This study examines the complex rhetoric surrounding the incorporation of labor and environmental norms into the World Trade Organization (WTO) structure. The phenomenon of trade globalization has profoundly affected the interdependence of economies, prompting inquiries into the ethical aspects of international commerce. Incorporating labor and environmental norms into the World Trade Organization (WTO) has emerged as a central topic of controversy. Advocates contend that incorporating such measures is paramount in promoting sustainable growth, guaranteeing equitable labor standards, and addressing global environmental deterioration. However, integrating these standards could impose economic constraints, impede the free trade flow, and even result in the adoption of protectionist measures. This study explores multiple viewpoints, evaluates the possible consequences, and evaluates the practicality of integrating labor and environmental concerns within the World Trade Organization (WTO). This study makes a valuable contribution to the continuing discourse surrounding the development of a more inclusive and responsible international political economy by assessing its effects on economic growth, social justice, and environmental sustainability.

Keywords: Labor Values, Prices, Income Distribution, International Political economy.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of international political economy emerged in the 19th century. International political economy studies the economic interactions of political organizations or political actors and the impact of processes between economic institutions on domestic politics. IPE examines how the international system is formed, what roles state and non-state actors play

in this process, which actors win and lose, and how the system affects the domestic and foreign policies of states. Its primary emphasis is divided into three categories: mercantilism, liberalism, and structuralism. The pioneer of mercantilism is Alexander Hamilton (1757–1804). The origins of this idea date back to the 16th century. It is an idea that seeks to promote national prosperity. It thus promotes the economic independence of nations. Later, with the movement toward economic liberalism, the idea of liberalism emerged. Its pioneers were Juan Bautista Alberdi, José María Luis, John Maynard Keynes, and Adam Smith. Economic liberalism developed for 300 years. It argues that the state should keep its hands off the economy and deal only with simple tasks. In together, structuralism was introduced by Karl Marx and advocates ideas such as workers' rights and class struggle. IPE's research interests include exchange rates, welfare policies, international trade, and integration broadly defined.

The intensification of globalization has ushered in a new era of interconnectedness, transforming the landscape of international trade and prompting critical reflections on its ethical dimensions. In this context, the integration of labor and environmental standards within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO) has emerged as a central point of contention. The surge in cross-border trade and investment has brought unprecedented economic benefits, but it has also raised concerns about the social and environmental consequences of unchecked market forces.

As global supply chains expand, the conditions of labor and the impact on the environment have come under scrutiny. Instances of labor exploitation, poor working conditions, and environmental degradation have sparked a growing demand for an international regulatory framework to address these issues. Proponents argue that the WTO, as a key player in shaping the rules of global trade, should play a role in establishing and enforcing standards that promote fair labor practices and environmental sustainability.

However, opposition to the integration of labor and environmental standards within the WTO exists, with critics contending that such measures could potentially stifle economic growth and impede the principles of free trade. Concerns have been raised that incorporating these standards might pave the way for protectionist policies, hindering the efficiency of international markets.

Amidst these divergent perspectives, a comprehensive examination of whether labor and environmental standards should be included in the WTO is imperative. This study seeks to navigate through the complexities of this debate, evaluating the potential benefits and drawbacks, and contributing to a nuanced understanding of the role the WTO should play in shaping a responsible and equitable international political economy.

METHOD

The method used in this article is the quantitative method. The data from the written materials specified in the references were used. This research paper also makes use of secondary data. That is to say, the question of whether international political economy should or should not conform laborers' rights to the standards of the International Trade Organization has been reorganized with reference to previous research papers written in this context. The results thus present the debate on this issue in an interpretative way. The reason for using the secondary data method is to develop an alternative perspective by extending previous studies on this subject with secondary data. Thus, a broad approach was developed. Utilizing the method of social constructionism, it is intended to examine the general cultural conflicts and sociology of nations from a theoretical perspective. In this research paper, it is aimed at observing the interaction of workers with the conditions in which they live and with society in terms of working conditions and how it leaves an impression about workers in the world. With this approach, instead of creating a certain way of thinking about working conditions, it is intended to develop different perspectives by making this issue controversial. It encouraged different tendencies and different ideas and ways of thinking, with consequences.

DISCUSSION

The aim of International Political Economy is to utilize research in economics at the international level. International political economy encourages researchers to do so and promotes methodological diversity. The economic situation of a country is an indicator of its independence. It is a point of view informed by the social sciences as well as economic history. Moreover, the international political economy is closely related to international relations and political science. Another level of analysis that the international political economy focuses on is the interstate level, which considers the relations between countries. The main problem here is to analyze how the balance of power (economic, political, military, etc.) between states affects their relations or shapes international organizations. It has been discussed how other countries' successful economic performance, which has allowed them to play a more active role in international organizations in recent years, will affect relations between rising powers and other countries, or how a project will affect the economic, political, and military balances in other countries and beyond, and how a country's relations with many countries will be shaped on this basis, informed by the social sciences as well as the economy over historical time. Another level of analysis that the international political economy focuses on is the interstate level, which takes into account the relations between countries.

So, the international political economy focuses on interest groups between countries. In other words, what matters here is the impact on international politics. Thus, the development of countries that are good for the World Trade Organization was in question. According to this development, for example, the World Trade Organization published a

declaration in July 2022 with these purposes, such as the official dialogue on trade in environmentally sustainable plastics. According to this, there was work on sustainability, and there were goals on sustainability in terms of the environment and life in the aquatic and terrestrial environments. The World Trade Organization's work in this sense has already gained momentum since 2017, and there are issues such as the loss of biodiversity, the exploitation of marine resources, and the plastic trade. It is aimed at promoting environmentally friendly trade. The World Trade Organization's aim has been to promote the development of a green economy in underdeveloped countries, and it has in the past established the Aid for Trade Campaign. Trade and environmental development agreements are included in the World Trade Organization.

When we examine the agreements of the World Trade Organization, there is no complete and definitive agreement on trade with the environment. However, measures have been taken regarding the environment and trade, and related cooperation is also carried out. Labor standards in the World Trade Organization also cover areas such as how workers should be treated, child labor, the minimum wage, workers' rights, and workers' safety. In 1996, in Singapore, the International Labor Organization set out the role of the World Trade Organization to address these issues in labor standards. Although there was a worldwide consensus on this, there was no such agreement in the World Trade Organization, and it brought with it discussions on labor standards. In 1996 and 1999, discussions on labor standards had already gained momentum.

The conditions in each country are different. Accordingly, the minimum wage and cultural and social conditions vary and are determined by the government of each country. The World Trade Organization is already in consensus all over the world on certain other issues that everyone agrees on, such as child labor and equal opportunities for women. But there is no need to add a separate article on trade and the environment. Because this could lead to a problem of national sovereignty. Keeping working conditions universally the same limits the rights of countries to determine their own labor and economic policies. It may also make it difficult for developing countries to meet industrial costs. Of course, some conditions are accepted by all countries, but the environmental and commercial characteristics of countries are a matter for the government of that country. Because not all countries are on an equal footing.

In conclusion, the World Trade Organization is doing the right thing with respect to the understanding of international sovereignty. According to constructivist theory, the role of societies in relation to each other is already evolving for both material and ideational reasons. Each society and environment have a certain way of life and conditions. According to the report published by the International Trade Organization, there are seven factors that affect working conditions. These can be listed as follows: physical environment, work intensity, quality of working time, social environment skills, development expectations, and earnings. (International Labour Organization, 2019) Being physically exposed to many risks is common, especially in countries with low financial status. This brings many problems to the square. Intense working hours are also among the other factors. It reduces both the quality of production and the efficiency at the working level. Another problem is

that women work for less pay than men, which manifests itself in different lines of work and different working conditions. These are situations that governments can develop and set their own social, sustainable, climatic, physical, and material conditions.

CONCLUSION

Since the approach of the World Trade Organization in setting out the basic standards already depends on the wishes of the countries, this will provide incentives to non-member countries on the environment and trade since the World Trade Organization takes measures against non-member countries. The World Trade Organization could provide incentives to countries instead of adding a specific clause on trade and the environment. It could also provide technological and financial support to developing countries to improve their labor standards. Grants or projects could be created for this. It can also work with families to prevent child labor. It can also depend on whether the products produced in foreign trade are produced in a socially appropriate way. Improving the quality of work around the world is a key concern for every government. Because each country has both similarities and differences between the expectations and the gains that these expectations provide. These include areas such as work intensity, working time, education, the financial situation of the country, and physical and social conditions. Thus, in order to improve the quality of work, governments need to apply certain policies to their citizens, both in terms of sustainability and in terms of certain conditions for workers.

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