

Brexit means globalization is The rhetoric of the privileged and Capitalism will return ferociously as ever.

## Outline:

### 1. Introduction

Brexit as a historic rupture in geopolitics

Thesis statement

### 2. Conceptual clarification

a. Globalization

b. Capitalism

c. Globalization as elite rhetoric

### 3. Historical Context

a. Post WWII liberal order and rise of globalization

b. Globalization 1990 - 2008 was celebrated as inevitable

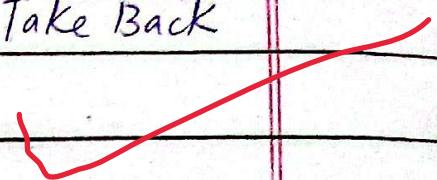
c. Financial crisis (2008) exposed weaknesses: inequality, populism and disillusionment

d. Brexit as part of wider global backlash.

#### 4. Brexit as rejection of globalization

a. Elite vs. Masses divide

b. Populist narrative: Take Back Control



#### 5. Globalization as the rhetoric of the privileged

a. Not for all

b. losers of and winners of globalization.

#### 6. Capitalism's ferocious return after Brexit

a. adaptation of capitalism

b. Push for deregulation.

#### 7. Irony of Brexit

a. Brexit's promises vs. realities.

#### 8. Theoretical perspectives

a. Marxist lens

b. Dependency Theory

- c. World-system theory
- d. Gramscian Perspective

## 9. Post-Brexit Consequences

## 10. Conclusion

Make a comprehensive outline .

Understand your topic of the essay proper.

Avoid unnecessary details .

No need to incorporate theoretical perspective in your essay

Properly take your stance and then support your arguments

Introduction is fine . structure of your essay is also fine

When Britain voted to leave the European Union in 2016, The world watched in shock as one of the greatest pillars of globalization appeared to crumble. The debate quickly emerged: was Brexit truly a revolt against globalization, or was it the beginning of a more ruthless capitalism? For decades, globalization had been sold as an irresistible force of progress, yet its narratives of equality and shared prosperity proved superficial - enriching the privileged few while leaving vast segments of society behind. Brexit became the backlash against this monopolization of benefits, exposing globalization as the rhetoric of the privileged rather than a universal reality. Ironically, however, far from dismantling capitalism, Brexit set the stage for its resurgence in a deregulated and untamed form. Unlike globalization, capitalism is not vulnerable to political rejection; it adapts, mutates, and thrives.

even in the face of upheaval. Brexit demonstrates that globalization may be politically contested, but capitalism is structurally indestructible, returning with greater ferocity once freed from institutional constraints.

When people speak of globalization, they often picture as seamless world where ideas, goods and information moves freely without any obstruction. It is the language of interconnectedness, connectivity and universality. Yet beneath its polished and baroque narrative lies a harsher truth: globalization has never been an equalizing force rather it promotes inequality between the various sectors of life. While it promised equality and universality, its benefits were highly selective acceding primarily to those already positioned to exploit global networks. The Oxford economist Dani Rodrik famously argued that, "globalization has created winners and

"losers," and the data confirms that - between 1990 and 2008, the global middle class rose, particularly in Asia, while incomes stagnated or declined for working classes in developed countries, fueling resentment that would rather crystallize in phenomena like Brexit.

Capitalism, by contrast, is less about lofty ideals and more about survival and adaptation. From the colonial roots to the industrial revolution, and later to the neoliberal surge of the 1980s, capitalism has thrived itself in various forms. Crisis that appeared to challenge its existence for instance Great Depression or the 2008 financial crash - ultimately became avenues for building capacity to reinvent itself. David Harvey's analysis of neoliberalism captures this resilience greatly, "neoliberalism has been about the restoration of class power." This implies that globalization has not rupture from capitalism,

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instead it is the darkest expression of capitalism - a stage in its ongoing evolution.

In this sense, globalization was never the neutral, benevolent force its rhetoric suggested. It was a carefully designed ideology, masking the uneven harsh realities of capitalism that <sup>had</sup> once told reinvented itself - only this time under the banner of borderless progress.

Brexit exposed the extent to which globalization's promises were the rhetoric of privilege, leaving behind those whose lives had been suppressed by the very system. Globalization's narratives told to empower them but reality was reverse; it only promoted those whose hands were already full of advantages and benefits.

The story of Brexit cannot be understood in isolation; it must be traced back to the trajectory of globalization

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itself. After WWII, the liberal international order was built on institutions like IMF, World Bank, and later the European Union to stabilize peace and cooperation among nations, designed to prevent conflict and promote free trade. The logic was quite simple behind this: interconnected networks would make war too costly and cooperation inevitable. As John Ruggie asserts it, this "embedded liberalism" combined economic openness with social protections. It laid the foundation for globalization as not merely an economic system but a political ideology of progress.

By the 1990s and early 2000s, globalization was celebrated as an unstoppable destiny. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Western thinkers declared the triumph of liberal capitalism - the belief that liberal democracy and global capitalism had become the final form of human governance. Free trade agreements, technological

devolution, and the expansion of EU reinforced this view. MNCs thrived and flourished, financial markets interconnected, and Britain positioned itself as one of globalizations' strongest champions.

Yet beneath this triumphal narrative, cracks soon appeared on the surface. The 2008 Global Financial Crisis marked a decisive rupture, exposing the vulnerabilities of hyper-globalized finance.

According to IMF, world output was projected to decline by 1.3% in 2009, that harmed working-class communities.

Similarly, it is true that in 2015, about 1% of the richest people had own many more times wealth than 20% of the poorest people - estimates suggest over 20 times more.

As Joseph Stiglitz argued in "Globalization and Its Discontents,"

"the rules of globalization have been written by the advanced industrial countries for their own interests." So, in this way, strategies are always devised in such a

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way, that favours only those who are the richest.

Brexit, then, must be seen as part of a broader political backlash against globalization. Across the Atlantic, Donald Trump's 2016 victory rode on the slogan "America First," rejecting multilateral trade deals like the TPP.

In Europe, right-wing populist parties emerged, mobilizing nationalist rhetoric against supranational governance. Moreover, Brexit presents itself as a revolt of the "left behind" against the global elite.

Brexit was fundamentally a reaction to the uneven impacts of globalization, especially in regions that bore the costs without seeing the gains. De-industrialization and outsourcing eroded the economic foundations of working-class communities in Northern England, Wales, and the Midlands.

Between the late 1990s, hundreds of manufacturing jobs disappeared, replaced by precarious

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service work. Real wages stagnated for nearly a decade after 2008; for those outside metropolitan cities, globalization was not a pathway to prosperity but a reminder of decline and exclusion.

In addition to this, economic disillusionment brought cultural and political frustration. Immigration became a flashpoint—not simply because of demographic change but because it symbolized a loss of control under EU rules. Brexit promoted national sovereignty, similarly, the slogan "Take Back Control" resonated precisely because many felt governance had shifted to distant institutions that favored cosmopolitan elites over ordinary citizens. London's financial sector flourished under globalization, while post-industrial towns felt abandoned. Therefore, Brexit was not just a policy choice—it was a revolt against a system perceived as designed by and for the elite, a rejection of globalization's narratives rather than its economic

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foundations.

Moreover, globalization was marked as a universal pathway to prosperity, but in practice it operated as a project driven by and for the powerful. Its promises of opportunity, connectivity, interconnectedness, and progress largely benefited Multi National Corporations, financial institutions in London, highly educated professionals, property owners and investors who get benefits from free capital movement, cross-border investments, cheap migration labor and access to international market. However, working-class communities faced job outsourcing and industrial decline. Noam Chomsky

famously noted that "globalization is really a code word for a set of policies designed to serve the interests of the powerful" and Britain exemplifies this divide. Furthermore, London rose as a global financial hub, leaving other regions in the North and Midlands-

dependent on traditional industries - added suffering of marginalized people. Deindustrialization, falling wages, and shrinking welfare provisions caused entire communities economically hollowed out.

The benefits of globalizations were concentrated among a privileged minority - rather than the whole.

Political leaders further concealed these inequalities, leaders like Tony Blair presented globalization as an irresistible and natural force, framing resistance as backward or irrational. This narrative depolitized the process and silenced legitimate critique, even though globalization was never neutral - it was a deliberate political-economic model to foster specific classes. As sociologist Anthony Giddens described it, globalization was a "runaway world," but one steered by elites rather ordinary citizens.

Consequently, Brexit became more than a referendum on the EU, symbolizing a

rebellion against the rhetoric and reality of a globalization.

So, if Brexit appeared at first to be a rebellion against globalization but it laid a pathway for capitalism to reinforce its roots more ferociously than before. Moreover, capitalism does not require any consensus or legitimacy, it rather adapts and strengthens its motives even its outer face is rejected. Brexit had become the reflection of capitalist's resilience. Brexit opened the doors of free trade, trade experimentation and capital flow, which only empowered those already advantaged and hurt the vulnerable more than ever. Almost immediately after leaving the EU, policymakers in London sought to distinguish Britain from its former partners by promising deregulation and lighter oversight. In 2022, Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng explicitly announced to sweep away all EU-based policies to promote liberation, yet the promised

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economic returns were modest: official estimates confirm that only 0.07-0.16% of GDP increased, and hardly the transformative boost imagined during the referendum campaign. The real significance of these deals was symbolic, serving as proof that the UK was open for business even if the gains flowed primarily to investors and multinational corporations rather than struggling communities.

In addition, the harder edge of capitalism's resurgence was visible in the erosion of Britain's industrial base. Manufacturing, once a pillar of working-class identity, had already been in decline, but Brexit accelerated its marginalization. Between 2007 and 2017, the UK lost almost 600,000 manufacturing jobs, a drop of nearly 17%. and by the mid-2020s, the sector employed less than 8% of the workforce. What was presented as national sovereignty in practice reinforced regional inequality, sharpening the very divides.

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The irony is striking, millions voted for Brexit in the hope of sheltering themselves from the excesses of globalization - cheap imports, lost jobs, insecure work - yet the outcomes were more disappointing. What crumbled in 2016 was not capitalism but the illusion that globalization was a fair, inclusive project. Freed from the institutional constraints of the EU, capitalism in Britain reassured itself with greater ferocity, widening inequalities and proving once again, capitalism is structurally indestructible, it mutates, adapts and transforms in various forms. What Brexit revealed in Britain was not unique, but part of a larger global narratives where globalization lost legitimacy and capitalism survived in new shapes. American President Donald Trump claims of promoting sovereignty and nationalism were merely framed narratives, Wall Street soared and corporate tax cuts entrenched society more deeply than ever. Germany sailed against

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migration, similarly, France against bureaucracy, but both need global chain network for growth and prosperity.

That's why, these movements appeared to be anti-globalization, but practically they only rebranded capitalism under nationalist agendas. Furthermore, they spoke the language of nationalism and protectionism, but their policies rarely favoured ordinary people and workers. Insecurities and struggles of those marginalized people remain unheard. Instead, they redirected capitalist flow in ways that preserved elite privilege while channelling resentment against supranational institutions.

To understand the paradox of Brexit - its rejection of globalization yet reinforcement of capitalism - one must turn to theoretical lenses that exposes the structural dynamics of the global

political economy. A Marxist perspective views Brexit not as rupture but as reconfiguration. As Karl Marx observed in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), "the bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production ... and with them the whole relations of society." Brexit exemplifies this: capitalism did not weaken when Britain left the EU, but redirected itself into new arenas — deregulation, financial speculation, and the intensification of inequality. Brexit seemed as a revolt against exploitation, in fact, was capitalism's ability to adapt and survive by creating fresh opportunities for accumulation.

Similarly, Dependency theory illustrates the illusion of Brexit's sovereignty. Andre Gunder Frank argued, "Under global capitalism, the periphery always enriches the core, ensuring that wealth flows upward rather than being shared." Britain's exit did not reverse

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this asymmetry; instead, it revealed that globalization had been less about universal uplift and more about privileging multinational corporations and universal elites. The rhetoric of "taking back control" was symbolic, but the structural dependence on global capital and supply chains remained intact, leaving ordinary workers vulnerable to the same inequalities that had fueled their disillusionment.

World-systems theory, developed by Immanuel Wallerstein, situates Brexit in the long durée of capitalist evolution. Wallerstein insisted that "the capitalist world-economy is a system that has no political center, but a multiplicity of competing states." Brexit has only shifted Britain's position within it: Once the epicenter of industrial capitalism, the UK now risks sliding towards a semi-peripheral status, increasingly reliant on economic ties with larger powers such as

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the US and China. This implies states can rise and decline, but capitalism demonstrates resilience, system reorganizes itself rather than collapses.

Finally, Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony explains why globalization was the explicit target of Brexit's populist revolt rather than capitalism itself.

Gramsci noted that hegemony creates common sense — a cultural and ideological consensus that sustains elite dominance and power. Globalization reinforces this hegemony; free trade, opportunity and borderless prosperity masked structural inequalities. So, Brexit punctured this discourse, exposing underlying flaws of globalization. Yet capitalism remained intact, for unlike globalization, it does not depend on consensus and legitimacy. Moreover, crisis consists precisely in the fact that old is dying and the new cannot be born. Brexit embodied this *interregnum*: the discourse of globalization was rejected, but no alternative

economic system emerged that can restrict flourishing of capitalist system.

Taken together, Marxist, dependency, world-systems, and Gramscian perspectives converge on a single insight: Brexit undermines globalization as an ideology but left capitalism as indomitable, adapting ferociously to new political realities.

Brexit was framed as the great rupture, a dramatic act of defiance against the political and economic logic of globalization. Millions believed that leaving the EU would restore sovereignty, protect jobs, and insulate communities against the turbulence of global markets. Yet the years revealed a deeper paradox. What collapsed was not capitalism itself but the illusion that globalization was a universal and equitable project. In addition, the aftermath of Brexit demonstrated resilience of capitalism, Brexit had opened the space for its resurgence in a harsher and more unrestrained form.

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To compact this, Brexit was less a revolution than a revelation. It revealed globalization as a hollow narrative masking elite interests, and it reaffirmed capitalism's ferocious capacity to adapt. What voters sought as liberation became instead a return to the very forces they opposed, only now more ruthless and less restrained. The lesson is sobering: nations can reject globalization as ideology, but they cannot easily escape capitalism's grip.