

Reflecting on the Non-Economic Perspective of the Jordan-United States Free Trade Agreement after 24 Years

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ABSTRACT

This paper questions the prevailing understanding of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) as primarily trade agreements justified by economic efficiency arguments. The argument made here is the research shows that FTAs are as much political as they are commercial arrangements. Since the prevailing literature justifies them primarily as effective economic tools, they are used to coerce developing countries to provide trading conditions that are not always in their favour. Developing countries are particularly disadvantaged by the imposition of trade terms in the name of economic efficiencies, which ignore the political aspects of FTAs. Therefore, this paper argues that it is time to review excessive economic analyses of FTAs and incorporate political and economic aspects into the scholarship. This is illustrated in this paper by analysing Jordan's entry into the FTA with the United State of America (US). The paper also argues that the Jordan-US FTA was motivated by the US geopolitical interests to emphasize Jordan's role in achieving peace and enhancing its importance in regional and international alliances in the Middle East region (ME). However, the strategic interests of the US in the region have changed, as the US administration's interest had shifted to the Arab Gulf region, which affected Jordan's importance in the region.

Keywords: Free Trade Agreement, Foreign Policy Tool, International Alliances, the United States of America and Jordan.

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