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Introduction

The Twentieth Century witnessed the emergence of globalisation and the twenty first century is expected to take humanity further on that path. The chapter defines and explains the concept of globalisation, and analyses it as a political, economic, cultural, and technological phenomenon. Characteristics and perspectives of globalisation are discussed. Globalisation's positive and negative effects are explored. Pro-globalisation and Anti-globalisation standpoints are also analysed with the positive and negative effects of globalisation being scrutinised. Finally, the impact of globalisation on education, generally, is examined with focus being given to its import in the Third World, including Zimbabwe. By and large, the chapter investigates globalisation in the context of the values and main ideas of international/global education.

The Concept Globalisation

Globalisation has enjoyed various definitions. Held et al (1999: 16), define globalisation as:

“A process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organisation of social relations and transactions – assessed in terms of the extensity, intensity, velocity and impact – generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power”.

By ‘flows’ the authors refer to the movements of physical artefacts, people, symbols, tokens and information across space and time, whilst ‘networks’ is used to refer to ‘regularised or patterned interactions between independent agents, modes of activity or sites of power.

Nsibambi (2001:134), defines globalisation as a process of advancement and increase in interaction among the world's countries and peoples facilitated by progressive technological changes in locomotion, communication, political and military power, knowledge and skills, as well as interfacing of cultural values, systems and practices. What should be noted in this definition is that globalisation is not a value-free, innocent, self-determining process. It is an international socio-political-economic and cultural permeation process facilitated by policies of governments, private corporations, international agencies and civil society organisations. Globalisation, essentially seeks to enhance and deploy economic, political, technological, ideological and military power and influence for competitive domination in the world.