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## Globalisation and the Impact of Post-colonial Politics on Zimbabwean Education and Development

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### **Abstract:**

*The recognition of Zimbabwe as an independent state in the international system witnessed a positive transformation in the education sector. Having been under the bondage of its British colonial masters, the Zimbabwean education system has been racially skewed for some time as indicated by the colonial structure of inequalities. Fortunately, the attainment of independence by Zimbabwe saw its pronounced recognition in the global political order, which earmarked global financial assistance in Zimbabwe's educational sector although educational inequalities persisted. Through international organisations' assistance, the globalisation process has essentialised the education system of Zimbabwe though with some crippling effects. However, the major question arising is; to what extent has the independent government managed to address these challenges? In gathering information, the study successfully secondary data sources such as journal articles and other relevant scholarship. Findings of this paper indicate that the globalisation process is threatening the effectiveness of Zimbabwe's educational system. As such, this paper notes issues surrounding the Zimbabwean education system both from a positive and negative standpoint. The study concludes that post-colonial politics and globalisation negatively and positively affects the realisation of Education and sustainable development in Zimbabwe.*

**Keywords:** Post colonialism, Sustainable development, Globalisation, Education

### **1. Introduction**

In "the educational development in Zimbabwe" vast studies have been undertaken from different angles and standpoints. However, it seems the common thread that runs these studies focuses more on education as a human right and a public good, which this paper also appreciates. However, this paper goes a step further by looking at the impact of globalisation and politics on Zimbabwe's education and development. This is achieved through unpacking the impact of globalisation and politics from a historical point of view. This is arguable especially considering the manner which culminated in the involvement of Zimbabwe in the global social and political order. To this end, Zimbabwe as a Less Economically Developed Country (LEDC) was only involved in the global political and social order in the 16<sup>th</sup> century during the industrial boom that occurred in Europe (Buzan et al.2013). Logically, this was a means to exploit Zimbabwe's resources. As such, this paper agrees that the selfish interests of those "countries" in power obstinately stood in the way of progressive educational attainment in Zimbabwe directly and indirectly. Inevitably, this paper engaged the World Systems theory by Walter Wallerstein as a base of analysis and interpretation.

This theory of globalisation has a particular slant on disparity as a separate unit from growth in development and examines change in the global capitalist system (Peter 1979). The writers then point out the empirical educational problems common in Zimbabwe as evidenced by the capitalist arguments emphasized by Wallerstein. More importantly, the researchers or the study argue that the attainment of independence by Zimbabwe in 1980 resulted in yet another far-reaching discourse on educational reform in Zimbabwe. This is clearly indicated by the various radical educational reform processes and procedures. For instance, upon attaining independence the independent government instituted new pieces of legislation. Coupled with the wave of democratisation across the face of the earth, assistance towards Zimbabwe's education has been extended by International governmental organisations and Non-governmental organisations. This has, especially, strengthened Zimbabwe's education in terms of quality.

However, several arguments have also been raised regarding the exclusionary nature of some of these international organisations. This then justifies that politics is all about who gets what, when and how (Dwight 1950). All the necessary information regarding such conclusions shall be unfolded in this paper. Over and above, the main question answered in this paper is; to what extent has globalisation and politics affected Zimbabwe's education. In this regard, it shall be stressed that globalisation and politics are twin processes. The study therefore suggests that politics, especially international politics is inseparable from globalisation, hence, for the purposes of this paper the concepts are seldom explained as separate concepts.

## 2. Defining Globalisation and Politics (International)

This section specifically emphasises that globalisation itself informs politics as indicated by the dominance of the “big boys” in international politics. The question is; what then is globalisation amidst its influence on international politics. Generally, globalisation is conceived as the integration of the world socially, politically and economically. Globalization encompasses a range of social, political, and economic changes (Irani 2011). As a process, globalisation has dominated the world especially in the twentieth century. The end of the cold, has, especially essentialised the process. Whilst, it is conventional that globalisation involves the internationalisation of financial markets and the growing germanity of international organisations (Irani 2011), this article shall conceive globalisation from a political and social side of things since they have a direct bearing on education and development of Zimbabwe.

Politically, globalisation involves the interconnectedness of states in international decision making. The problem now is; how are these decisions arrived at? and who dominate international politics? At best, and from a political dimension, globalisation involves international interconnectedness which is mainly extended by states in a rationale manner. As the game theory emphasises, states always act in a rationale manner. This is mainly done to gain profits and benefits in the international arena (Hollan 2001). No doubt, it makes sense to understand that all treaties and conventions that qualify education as a public good, directly and indirectly draw their legitimacy from globalisation. This then means there is also globalisation of politics. However, it should be noted that at times there is exclusionary politics which is associated with the need for some states to maintain their political hegemony.

For purposes of this paper, politics is a process by which states make collective decisions. As indicated earlier on, these decisions may include and are not limited to treaties and conventions. However, it is not always the case that such collective decisions are win-win decisions as some parties always strategically position themselves for political reasons. As advanced through Aristotle’s thesis; human beings are by nature political animals (Aristotle 1984). Such a definition clearly shows that individuals and states always act in a rationale manner. To that end, the paper makes reference to the colonial system of education in Zimbabwe. During colonialism, only few Africans got the opportunity to access basic education and would only be allowed to learn practical subjects which benefited their colonial masters at the end (Atkinson 1972). The fact that black Zimbabweans of African ancestries were only taught practical subjects is indeed a true reflection of how the colonisers mathematically modelled their system of administration at the detriment of Zimbabweans. During that period education was only for the whites and not blacks.

### 2.1. Conceptual Framework-World Systems Theory by Wallerstein (1974)

This article is framed by the World Systems Theory. This is justifiable as the theory explains the world interconnectedness not only from a historical angle but also explains how states are linked to each other. According to Wallerstein (1976), back in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century the position of states within the global world system was determined by the political dominance of a country. This explains why, according to him, during that time, the core consisted of North Western Europe and the periphery consisted of Southern and Central America. In light of the above, it can be concluded that the position of Africa and Zimbabwe in specific within the global political system was in a mist. However, the birth of industrial revolution in Europe saw the need for raw materials by North Western Europe (Wallerstein 1976). World Systems Theory focuses on inequality as a separate entity from growth in development and examines change in the global capitalist system (Wallerstein 1976). This then begs the question: since Zimbabwe got its independence in 1980 what is its relationship with the outside world in light of education and development? Further, what is the link between globalization and politics and how is Zimbabwe socialized in this system?

### 2.2. Globalization and Pre-independence Politics on Zimbabwe’s education; A Brief Overview

The issue of globalisation and pre-independence politics on Zimbabwe’s education brings us to one aspect that many academics do not seem to adequately address. As highlighted earlier on, the need for raw materials called for the involvement of Zimbabwe in the global political order. At a later stage, this resulted in the colonization of Zimbabwe by Britain as propounded by the World Systems theory by Wallerstein. Though missionaries had already established some education centres before the eventual occupation of Zimbabwe by settlers, a real national education system emerged after Zimbabwe’s colonization in 1890. This education system was steeped and driven by racially inspired prejudices of white superiority and black inferiority. As such, we shall maintain that despite analysts flogging the impact of colonialism on Zimbabwean education and development, still, it is necessary to examine how globalisation and pre-independence politics have impacted the Zimbabwean education system.

While Zimbabwe, like her brethren throughout the continent, has continued to be lectured about how they are part and parcel of a global village, it is crystal clear that they have continued to reap very little in substance from their membership of the said global village especially during the colonial period. Even to date, the full operationalisation of the various conferences and conventions have not yielded much educational gains. The history of the relationship between Zimbabwe and the parts of the international community has amply indicated that colonialism was not only dehumanizing but also segregatory in terms of access to education by Zimbabweans of the African ancestry (Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture 2001). Even today, the problems that Zimbabwe face are embedded in the colonial system of administration.

Firstly, a more critical examination of colonialism demonstrates that globalisation itself was more of a political process rather than a development initiative. For example, under colonial rule and close to a century, a greater portion of the black Zimbabweans had literally had no say in the government policies and systems of administration which are the major pillars of politics (Zvobgo 1996). Ultimately, Zimbabweans were oppressed to the extent that the Zimbabwean education system was purely privatized, something which violated fundamental rights and freedoms. Due to the oppressive systems of administration no Zimbabwean was allowed in whites *only* schools. Further, a few private schools owned by the church would enroll one or two token blacks each year, if they

extended distinguishable academic performance source. In the same breath, only those few pupils with wealthy parents would be enrolled in the private schools (Zindi 1996).

In the context of technological innovation, it is generally agreed that globalisation results in technological importation and integration which is relevant to education and development. Unfortunately, this was not the case with the colonial era (Irani 2011). With respect to Educational state apparatus, technology was actually used to force indigenous Zimbabweans to align and conform to the British middle-class culture and socialization. Further, the British educational system dismantled African indigenous knowledge systems and other related cultural systems which were important for educational transformation. To indicate their brutality and oppressive laws and systems, the settlers did not seek to understand the culture and education systems of the indigenous people (Jenjekwa 2013). Rather, they proceeded from a sense of self-importance by refusing to acknowledge their own ethnocentrism which prefaced their misinformation and misconceptions about African cultural lives.

By extension, indigenous education and knowledge systems were deemed irrelevant and denigrated by the western colonial system, primarily through its educational and religious institutions (Zvobgo 1996). Although the African Indigenous knowledge systems in education were regarded and deemed as intuitive, subjective and oral or visual, they also have distinct advantages and contribution to the Zimbabwean education and development (Researchers' observation). For example, these systems sufficiently helped in the health delivery system of Zimbabwe. Even today, traditional knowledge systems also play a significant role in the health delivery system although they are not formerly recognized by the Zimbabwean law (Researchers' own observation). This invariably means that education itself should not be mistakenly regarded from a universal point of view. Further, the fact that African Indigenous knowledge systems were disregarded by the colonial masters and that the settlers did not appreciate indigenous epistemologies means that the colonialism itself was segregatory. From the foregoing, this paper concludes that the Europeans themselves failed to recognize that education itself should be comprehended and extended as a universal asset which can be cemented by many factors and cultural beliefs. To the researchers, western science derives its roots from Traditional Knowledge systems of countries from across the face of the earth. It is against these selective parameters that the researchers undertake an evaluation of the state of globalisation and post-colonial politics on Zimbabwean education and development.

### *2.3. Globalisation and the Impact of Post-colonial Politics on Zimbabwean Education and Development*

At independence in 1980, Zimbabwe inherited a two-tier racially structured education system which sought to protect the interest and domination of a White-male ruling class, while African education was designed to perpetuate and reinforce the subjectivity and subjugation of indigenous Zimbabweans by a small White kleptocracy (Kanyongo 2005). The socio-economic inequalities in human, financial and material resource allocation between the two racial groups were indicative of deliberate racial biases of the colonial governments. As a consequence, at independence education policies in Zimbabwe were a result of a conscious effort by the Government, to address the gross inequalities and imbalances which existed (Kanyongo 2005). The Government acknowledged that education was the key to socio-economic and political transformation. It also acknowledged that education was a basic human right, which played a pivotal role in combating ignorance, disease and poverty.

### *2.4. Examining the Impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes on Zimbabwe's Education and Development; a Brief Discussion*

Recognising the political methodology employed by the International Monetary fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), there is a general consensus that the Economic Structural Adjustments programmes adopted by Zimbabwe in 1991 had serious implications on the education delivery system in Zimbabwe. This paper notes that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) tacitly encouraged Zimbabwe to adopt structural adjustment programs in 1991 and abandon socialist policies source (Hill 2003). Whilst, the government of Zimbabwe adopted these economic "stimulating" measures in an effort to jumpstart the economy, many businesses close shop and competition dominated the Zimbabwean industry. Such a situation was quite telling on the parents as they could no longer afford to send children to school (Hill 2003). As such, we argue that these imposed measures were detriment to the education system of Zimbabwe. As that was not enough, the ghost of bottlenecking resurrected and many children dropped out of school (Hill 2003). With respect to globalisation and politics, it is empirically observed that these measures were silent political manoeuvres extended by the Bretton Woods Institutions (Researchers' observation).

More-still, it has been observed that as a result of the ESAPs, the Zimbabwean government was even spending more on debts repayments than on education. This also explains why, even today, the government itself fails to take charge of primary education. We also conclude that ESAPs had a horrifying impact on Zimbabwe's education and development especially considering how the per capita education spending fell (Jenjekwa 2013)

Other than the foresaid challenges, the economy of Zimbabwe continued to flop and this was even accelerated in 1997 when war cadres who are generally known as War Veterans demanded gratuities. Unfortunately, and to make matters worse, government paid them from unbudgeted funds (Hill 1997). Economically, inflation continued to rise and prices of goods continued to sky-rocket. This further threatened the capabilities of parents to send their children to school. Some few years later, the then government tried to correct the colonial injustices of land ownership by forcefully taking land from white farmers. In the process, some farm workers lost their jobs and the economy shrunk further. Consequently, there was a steep fall in educational standards and access to education (Jenjekwa 2013). To at least save the situation, government requested parents to pay teacher incentives. This somehow helped to solve the situation. Recognising that not all parents afford to pay incentives, the current government reversed the situation. However, this is severely compromising on standards.

### *2.5. International Legal Framework and Conventions Guiding Education as a Human Right; Assessment and Interrogation of Selected Conventions in light of Globalisation and International Politics*

The international context tells us about how globalisation impacts on Zimbabwe's education. As has been alluded to earlier on, globalisation also involves states acceding to various conventions, treaties and protocols. In a number of cases, international instruments are mathematically modelled to the extent that some states benefit at the expense of other states (Irani 2011). As such, this section seeks to interrogate how such international instruments enhance the realisation of education and development in Zimbabwe. As the cutting edge of human rights and democracy, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) sets out that education is a fundamental human right. For example, Article 26 of the UDHR states that everyone has the right to education (UDHR 1948). However, the paper notes that the clause is not clear and is silent about the extent to which these rights will be attained.

As one of the founding instruments of human rights and democracy, we believe that the UDHR was only crafted for the white population not inclusive of Zimbabwe as an African country. This is justifiable, especially considering that despite the existence of such an international instrument, black Zimbabweans were deprived their right to education during colonialism. Consequently, it can be argued that international law is not law and should be conceived as a litmus test for individuals to critically assess the government's commitments to fundamental rights and freedoms. This means a government can choose to flex or unflex its muscles in providing education (Researchers' observation).

To indicate its commitment in making sure that education is accessed by all people, the United Nations Educational and Cultural Organisation provided the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education in 1960. This instrument has been recognised as the key pillar in the actualisation of *Education for all* process (UNESCO 2011). Whilst, it is not possible to exhaust all the clauses of the UNESCO Convention, it can be generally emphasised that this convention was the first legally binding international instrument which sets out key elements of the right to education. Further, this convention seems to be unique as it prohibits discrimination in the arena of education and further stresses the principle of equality on education opportunities (UNESCO 2011).

To this end, Article 1(a) of the UNESCO Convention establishes that depriving any person or cluster of people access to education of any kind or at any level counts as an act of discrimination (UNESCO 2011). Unfortunately, the definition of "discrimination" in the article does not clearly mention discrimination based on race and ethnicity or even disability. Further, we argue that the term *level* itself is vague and not exhaustive to the extent that it does spell out the geographical dimensions relative to educational rights. More still, whilst this paper appreciates the educational emphasis put forward by this convention, it seems the convention was not legally binding as it claims. Further, several questions are levelled against this "legal" international instrument. Firstly, why is it that despite the existence of such an international legal instrument as it claims, a lot of people are still being discriminated in the educational fraternity? Secondly, why is it that despite the existence of such an international legal instrument on education, cases of school drop-outs are still prevalent in Zimbabwe?.....In the rural set-up of Zimbabwe, the rate of school drop-out is even dire. As such, the above compiled body of evidence warrants this article to maintain that the globalisation process itself is political and sidelines the principle of universal suffrage.

However, it will be academically pre-mature to totally argue that globalisation has affected Zimbabwean education as evidenced by some of its contributions to the Zimbabwean education. Firstly, whilst there seems to be an all-pervasive assumption that international influence has contributed to curriculum reform in Zimbabwe, this article stresses that international influence has extended financial help towards the education of Zimbabwe. Through Zimbabwe's membership to the United Nations and its specialised agencies such as UNESCO and UNICEF, the country's curriculum has brought in new programmes such as HIV/AIDS education and culture of peace. Such influence has even helped scholars and the generality of the populous to comprehend best practices in terms of HIV and AIDS prevention and mitigation (Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture 2001). From the above body of evidence, it is arguable to conclude that globalisation has indeed positively transformed the education system of Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, the external flow of aid to the education sector in the African region clearly reflects on how globalisation is an inclusionary process. For instance, between 2002 and 2008 alone, external aid extended to Africa increased from US\$1.1 billion to US\$2.6 billion in 2008. This was further necessitated by a series of international development agendas. As this was not enough, in 2000, the global community announced through the Dakar Framework for Action that "no countries gravely dedicated to education for all will be let down in their attainment of this goal by a lack of resources" (UNESCO, 2000). However, this paper notes that there is a political risk of over-reliance on development aid in some Sub-Saharan African countries and Zimbabwe included. Furthermore, this high dependence on foreign aid increases susceptibility to external conditions. The next section then examines the major steps taken by the independence government in ensuring access to education for all even in the midst of globalisation and international politics.

### *2.6. Efforts Put in Place by the Zimbabwean Government in Ensuring Education for All; Cases and Analyses*

Historically, before attaining independence, Zimbabwe (Rhodesia before independence in 1980) was faced with a colonial regime that had lost the last vestiges of humanity. As indicated before, access to education was privatised and only a few black Zimbabweans had access, even to, basic education. As such, this section aims to briefly examine how the independence government managed to address such injustices in light of the forces of globalisation and international politics. Not surprisingly, therefore, the independence government instituted new social policies and chief among them involved new educational policies and reforms. However, this paper still questions the neglect of educational rights in the Lancaster House Constitution. It is not clear why the independence constitution popularised land and governance issues without stressing educational rights, especially in its bill of rights (Adelman 1998).

All being said, the point is that the new government instituted progressive strides in liberally reviving the education system. As its immediate task, the independence government popularised access to education as a human right. In particular, clause 4 of the Zimbabwean Act of 1987 stresses that education is a human right. As part of its mandate and whilst not exhaustive of all matters, the new government banned all discrimination in all spheres of society and education is a case in point. Further, primary education was declared free (Jenjekwa 2013). The age limit for entry into primary school was waived so that those that had missed schooling by reason of the war could re-enter school. Whilst being appreciative of such reforms, the major overarching question still running in this paper is; How did the independence government managed to exhaustively recover its education system when it was just coming from war. Further, it would seem that the teachers who were recruited were under qualified thereby compromising the quality of education in Zimbabwe. This section is then followed by a discussion of the state and quality of the Zimbabwean education given the fact that Zimbabwe was just coming from war.

However, with the economic challenges which Zimbabwe faced after the year 2000, stratification in education provision re-emerged in ways reminiscent of the discriminatory colonial era education system. As of now the majority of urban and rural day schools, resettlement or so-called satellite schools, where the majority of Zimbabwean schoolchildren attend school, grapple with severe shortages of human and material resources and this has serious implications on access and quality in education (Jenjekwa 2013). The paper contends that unless government intervenes to arrest the ever-increasing gap in terms of educational quality and access between elite schools and ordinary secondary schools which cater for the majority of children, stratification in the provision of education will have telling consequences on national development in Zimbabwe. The situation is even dire in the rural areas of Zimbabwe.

For instance, it has been noted that one of the challenges crippling rural and resettlement schools is informed by the School Development Committee (SDC) members. Whilst the education Act of 1987, emphasises on the responsibility of developing schools with the operational machinery of parents, through such a committee it has been observed that in such type of communities, guardians are very poor to the extent that most of these parents have not received education themselves (Jenjekwa 2013). Obviously, such a situation advantages children themselves. In communities where parents are poor and might not have received education themselves, it is very difficult to entrust such parents with the education of their children (Jenjekwa 2013). This paper therefore concludes that, whilst the government has got the mandate to provide basic education for its citizens, the problem also lies with the family as the primary socialisation force. Perhaps, government through various means needs to infiltrate such communities and raise awareness.

### 2.7. Conclusion

From the foregoing, the inescapable conclusion is that globalisation and international politics are inseparable. For instance, whilst it was repeated that the positive bearing of globalisation on the Zimbabwean education started to flex its muscles at the turn of the twentieth century, it was stressed that prior to the attainment of independence by Zimbabwe, access to education by indigenous Zimbabweans was in a mist. For instance, the colonial educational system was racially skewed with only a few Zimbabweans coming from a good background accessing education. Likewise, even with its independence, Zimbabwe also depends on external donorship, something that is likely to result in dependency and the weakening of the Zimbabwe's education system.

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