Globalisation Essay, Research Paper

Globalisation Its definition and an explanation.

Definition:

Globalization is a process along four dimensions: economic globalization, formation of world opinion, democratization, and political globalization. This was rounded off with the assertion that changes along one of these dimensions (such as economic globalization) elicited changes among the other dimensions.

Globalization is a process that has been going on for the past 5000 years, but it has significantly accelerated since the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991. Elements of globalization include trans-border capital, labor, management, news, images, and data flows. The main engines of globalization are the transnational corporations (TNCs), transnational media organizations (TMCs), intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and alternative government organizations (AGOs). From a humanist perspective, globalization entails both positive and negative consequences: it is both narrowing and widening the income gaps among and within nations, intensifying and diminishing political domination, and homogenizing and pluralizing cultural identities.

Explanation:

Sometimes it’s difficult to swallow whole the talk that abounds about globalisation.

The internet may be spearheading a global communications revolution; fashion designers may embrace “ethnic” hues and styles; McDonald’s may spread its restaurants across the globe.

Beyond the front pages, globalisation is a reality that, for better or worse, touches our lives in ways most us never stop to think about.

Many would certainly say it was a good thing. Increased international trade has made us wealthier and allowed us to lead more diverse lifestyles.

But the legions of demonstrators now amassing in Prague for the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank disagree.

The coalition of environmentalists, anti-poverty campaigners, trade unionists and anti-capitalist groups see the growth of global companies as raising more problems than it solves.

The term “globalisation” was first coined in the 1980s, but the concept stretches back decades, even centuries, if you count the trading empires built by Spain, Portugal, Britain, and Holland.

Some would say the world was as globalised 100 years ago as it is today, with international trade and migration.

But the 1930s depression put paid to that. Nation states drew back into their shell on realising that international markets could deliver untold misery in the form of poverty and unemployment.

The resolve of Western states to build and strengthen international ties in the aftermath of World War II laid the groundwork for today’s globalisation.

It has brought diminishing national borders and the fusing of individual national markets. The fall of protectionist barriers has stimulated free movement of capital and paved the way for companies to set up several bases around the world.

The rise of the internet and recent advances in telecommunications have boosted the already surging train.

For consumers and avowed capitalists, this is largely a good thing. Vigorous trade has made for more choice in the High Street, greater spending, rising living standards and a growth in international travel.

And that’s just the tip of it. Supporters of globalisation say it has promoted information exchange, led to a greater understanding of other cultures and allowed democracy to triumph over autocracy.

But as the street protests against last November’s World Trade Organisation conference in Seattle proved, there is a growing opposition to the forces of globalisation.

Critics say the West’s gain has been at the expense of developing countries. The already meagre share of the global income of the poorest people in the world has dropped from 2.3% to 1.4% in the last decade.

But even in the developed world, not everyone has been a winner. The freedoms granted by globalisation are leading to increased insecurity in the workplace.

Manual workers in particular are under threat as companies shift their production lines overseas to low-wage economies.

National cultures and identities are also under threat thanks to the spread of satellite TV, international media networks and increased personal travel. In French cinemas, around 70% of filmgoers watch Hollywood movies.

At the heart of their concerns is the fact that huge trans-national companies are becoming more powerful and influential than democratically-elected governments, putting shareholder interests above those of communities and even customers.

Ecological campaigners say corporations are disregarding the environment in the stampede for mega-profits and marketplace supremacy. Human rights groups say corporate power is restricting individual freedom.

Even business folk behind small firms have sympathy for the movement, afraid as they are that global economies of scale will put them out of work.

But the mere fact the debate can take place simultaneously across countries and continents may well show that celebrated academic Marshall McLuhan’s global village is already here.