

Globalization and the Future of National State

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Abstract:

Globalization, understood as new forms of interaction between men and institution worldwide, under the growing impact of new technologies and the transformation of world politics, has a great impact on nation-states. There are several theories on the impact of globalization on national states – from the hyper globalist perspective, national states are obsolete; from a sceptical perspective, we still live in a world of sovereign states; from the transformational perspective, states are still important, but share power with other international and regional institutions.

Keywords: globalization, democracy, nation-state, human rights, economy, minorities and communication

Globalization can be understood as expanding, deepening and accelerating connectivity worldwide in social life (Held, McGrew et al 2004: 26). Time and space compress in intensity in a pace without precedent: globalization cannot be resumed as theoretical construction, it describes a new social reality. By new communication networks and information technology, globalization stimulates new forms of cultural identities, rediscovers and intensifies old ones.

The analyses of the globalization phenomenon are embedded in different epistemological approaches. We can follow modern structural approaches (systems, social and economic process and social structures are analysis units) and postmodern and postmodern or post structural approaches (focused on networks, structures, interactions) (Jones, 2011: 11). Globalization redefines the meaning of terms like space and time. It is associated with “deterioration”, because social interactions are detached from their original places. The phenomenon is discussed in multidimensional frameworks: local, national, regional, global. Most researchers agree that economic processes played the main role in the phenomenon of globalization. Notwithstanding, other factors are also important – politics, institutions, technology, culture.

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One important question is how deep is the impact of globalization, related to national cultures? From a hyper globalist perspective, globalization leads to world uniformization, under the impact of consumerism. Some of them are talking about Coca-Colonization or McWorldization, accusing the Americanization of world culture (Vlas, 2009: 96–100). The sceptical perspective puts in the spotlight cultural diversity and conflicts between civilizations, with a focus on anti-occidental resistance. The transformational perspective focuses on cultural intermission and the emergence of cultural hybridity (Held, McGrew et al 2004: 372–373).

Naomi Klein criticizes the globalization phenomenon because, by its mechanisms, it leads to a decrease in the quality of education and culture on-behalf of marketing. Globalization, for Klein, leads to mental space colonization (Jones, 2011: 214–215).

Grigore Georgiu (Georgiu, 2010: 183) distinguishes between two perspectives of globalization. The outside image describes cultural convergence paradigm, with a focus on homogeneity, synchronization and isomorphism. This paradigm promotes the ideas of integration and unity, is interested in universal values, ideas and attitudes. Critics show that this generous paradigm is in fact a way to legitimate the domination tendencies and geopolitical hegemony. From the inside perspective on globalization, Georgiu describes the “globalization” paradigm, with a focus on the differences between societies and the differences within societies (based on historic, ethnic, religious and linguistic nature), on the topic of cultural identities. Globalization is a new form of existence for identities and differences.

David Held (Held, 2000: 152–154) observes the rooting in ethno-history of cultures and national identities and concludes that they are unlikely to be crashed by the global mass culture. The national identities, the traditional values are still strong and persistent.

The critics of hyperglobalism argue that this perspective ignores the way cultural products are locally received, consumed and transformed. For them, different local communities take in a selective manner and have different perspectives on occidental mass cultural products. This is how hybrid cultures are born; the most obvious of them are the immigrants’ cultures. In conclusion, Held et al. consider that the real threat for all kinds of nationalist projects is an incipient cultural cosmopolitanism, which will challenge the idea of nation as main cultural and political community and will ask for the relocation of political power in other institutions than the nation-state. But the construction of an enduring multiculturalism within national states and the construction of an enduring cosmopolitanism in regions like EU are still difficult (Held, McGrew et al, 2004: 421).

Researchers like Samuel Huntington (Huntington, 2007) bring up a pessimistic perspective: the crash of civilizations. For him, globalization

is far from imposing Western values (democracy, human rights etc.), as Francis Fukuyama (Fukuyama, 1992) estimated. Huntington showed that Western expansion generates hostile and violent reactions. For Huntington, globalization brings up a competition of values, symbolic goods, besides the economic competition. He observes a growing interest for cultural identities, a phenomenon of rediscovery of local identities. Huntington predicted that civilizations would crash like tectonic plates. The devastating effects of international terrorism after 9.11.2001 created a prophetic profile for Huntington and offered arguments for this view. After all, as Held and McGrew observed, globalization cannot be seen as a linear and predictable phenomenon, but as a complex of phenomena, with unclear perspectives (Held, McGrew et al, 2002).

There is an open debate about the impact of globalization on the national state, the traditional framework for intercultural dialogue. The hyper globalists predict a fatal impact for national states, labelled as obsolete. A different point of view is that in fact, national states are those who control and encourage globalization, which means that the role and power of national states are far from being exhaust. The national state is adapting to a new reality, in a world that remains a national states universe.

Manuel Castells is well known for his theories on information society and society-network, focused on the impact of technologies on human life. For Castells, the market does not create global economy, the interactions between markets do, as well as governments and international financial institutions, which operate on behalf of the markets. The role of national governments still remains important. Castells is convinced that nation states are losing their power in certain fields, but they are not losing their influence on the global economy. National states lose power in important domains, like national economic politics, international politics, military and media. But at the same time, the states form new connections, become network-states and continue to influence global politics and economy, as part of these networks of power. In the globalized world, states are more likely to be strategic actors than sovereign entities (Jones, 2011: 81–83).

Arjun Appadurai is concerned about the impact of globalization on communication and culture (Appadurai, 2006). Inspired by Benedict Anderson's theory on imagined national communities in modern age, he showed how through the impact of new technologies, globalization leads to "deteritorialization", is dominated by "mediascapes" and "ideoscapes". Economic interconnectivity is essential for understanding the impact of globalization. Mediascapes (mass media in global cultural flux) changes people's perspectives on the world they live in, and are used, among others, to control the ideas about what a nation means. The

nation-state concept is under pressure and the hyphen between the two words becomes a sign of disjunction, not a sign of conjunction. In Appadurai opinion, ethnicity placed in “ethnoscape” is a global force, especially after the borders became less rigid. He enunciated the danger that majorities fear to become minorities, as the globalizations opens the possibility for volatile transformations.

David Held et al have a more moderate point of view, for them globalization is not an irreversible phenomenon (Held, McGrew et al, 2004). The national state remains an important actor in the globalized world, but the state shares the power with other actors, who become more active: international and regional institutions, multinational corporations, international NGO with global impact, terrorist organizations etc. Globalization encourages multiple identity formation.

At international level, globalization creates conditions for actors and institutions that undermine the national states traditional position, as a unique international actor. Globalization is associated with a new sovereignty regime, after the emergence of new and powerful non-territorial forms of political and economic organizations, such as multinational corporations, transnational social movements, international agencies of regulation (Held, McGrew et al, 2004: 33). Under the impact of globalization, national politics became international politics. The national state more often accepts to be integrated in regional and global structures; which means giving up on the full sovereignty or conducts to a new form of sovereignty. Because of governance and knowledge decentralization, we can distinguish between two tendencies: supra-nationality and devolution.

Paul Hirst and Graham Thomson challenge the “myth of globalization”. For them, the internationalized economy is not an entirely new phenomenon and most companies have national bases. The national and international levels are still separated and national states are still the dominant actors. The globalized economy is a system of subsumed national economies, rearticulated by international processes (Jones, 2011: 119–122). The nation-states change their role, cannot be conceived as autonomous actors, and their sovereignty is no longer determined by war. But even if the cultural integration diminished the states control over ideas, the states are still important, because they control their own territory. The states have new forms of sovereignty, because the states can propose, legitimate and monitor the governance and because are still the main source of law in their territories (Jones, 2011: 131–132).

Joseph Stiglitz thinks that economic globalization overcomes the political globalization. The well-known economist criticized the way globalization is conducted, especially because now the phenomenon

does not provide solutions for poor societies (Stiglitz, 2003). For him, globalization is controlled by and works for the rich states (the centre – periphery opposition is also commented by Immanuel Wallerstein). He suggested reforms for institutions like IMF, in order to help poor nations. For Stiglitz, globalization is equal to global economy globalization. The nation-states are weakened and, from his point of view, we have no international institutions, which can democratically lead the globalization process.

The transformation of nation-states and the evolution of international institutions have a great impact on majority-minority relations in multicultural societies. The minorities have new ways to demand national states politics towards diversity recognition, human rights and, more often, collective rights. The emergence of global civil society offers examples and tools for minorities who can easily express their specific demands. The fast flux of communication, the knowledge decentralization helps minorities groups to find profound arguments and techniques to promote their aspirations.

In the context of globalization, the communication explosion, the increased mobility, the impact and importance of environment problems, the development of human rights theories – phenomena that James Rosenau named *skill revolution* (Rosenau, 2006) – lead to the emergence of a new civil society that acts globally. Mary Kaldor thinks that global civil society is the interaction of groups, networks and movements who give voice to isolated individuals at global arena level (Held, Mc Grew et al, 2002: 560). The global civil society acts as agents between individuals and global institutions. The civil society promotes the respect for pluralism and diversity. Acting global, it contributes together with other actors to enforce high standards of respect for diversity in national societies.

Globalization is, in essence, a phenomenon associated with economic liberalism and promoter of democracy. It encourages phenomena that converge towards human rights recognition. Nowadays, every government, even an oppressive one, pretends to assure the respect of human rights. The general acceptance does not imply that all states respect the international norms. Even if a hyper-optimistic point of view on the worldwide respect for human rights cannot be sustained, we can see a lot of positive signs. David Held considers that the respect for individual autonomy and a wide range of human rights creates a new set of principles in international politics, and if those principles are respected, even the principle of state sovereignty will confine (Held, 2000: 128–129).

Gabriel Andreescu shows how the international treaties raised the individual at international law level (Andreescu, 2004: 48–49). The most

obvious transformation is the individuals' right to appeal to international institutions in charge with international treaties enforcement – the case of European Union and the European Court of Human Rights. In conclusion, the national states are still sovereign, but part of various networks and relations that bring a lot of restraints, including the right to use force on their own territory and their own citizens (Held, Mc Grew et al, 2004: 87).

Ethno-cultural minorities claims are closely related to human rights problems. Minority groups found strong arguments in human rights legislation. As human rights treaties are more often integrated as norms, specialized international institutions became moderators between national states and minorities, confining or transforming the sovereignty of national states.

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