

GLOBALISATION AS A POLICY OUTCOME

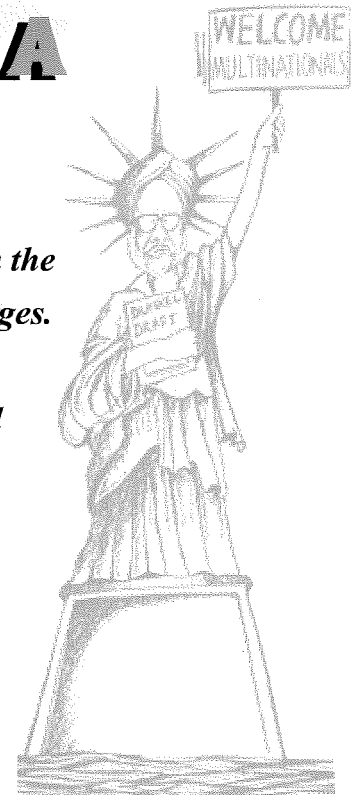
The major powers of the Western world have developed and maintain the processes of globalisation in order to sustain leading nation advantages. By defining the much used term globalisation precisely, and then assessing the competing transnational, state, individual, societal and cultural forces, we can identify the outcome of the process. While reinforcing the supremacy of national power bases, Third World, non-Western cultures and identities are eroded or under threat. Globalisation is in addition a useful excuse for political leaders to explain away the failure of particular policies.

Globalisation has become one of the most commonly used terms in international relations debates, but its meaning remains imprecise and its effects on both domestic and international politics are still disputable. Shortly after the Australian Labor Party lost federal power in early 1996, some former ministers blamed their shortcomings in domestic policies on what Gareth Evans described as 'the holocaust' of globalising forces. In late 1997, several commentators tried to explain the devaluation of the Asian currencies in terms of globalisation. But what specific implications does globalisation have for our daily lives? In what ways, if any, does it constrain or facilitate the choices of foreign policy-makers?

Before addressing these questions, it is important first to explore the meaning of globalisation. Is it an economic, political, cultural or social phenomenon? From the literature,

globalisation appears like a complex process which defies a clinical definition. For example, some analysts have suggested that it is basically a form of Westernisation and colonisation which can be traced back several centuries, while others have defined it primarily in terms of the movement of capital and other economic interactions, thereby equating it with economic interdependence.¹ Globalisation is sometimes viewed as the hidden force behind economic cooperation, free trade rules, and occasional turmoil in the international financial markets. Could it be all these things, or is it a term without a meaning? Hirst and Thompson have argued that some of the claims about globalisation such as high capital mobility or the existence of genuinely transnational corporations, are just 'myths'.²

In this article I regard globalisation as a term which describes the intensity and breadth of interactions



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within the political, technological, economic, social and cultural domains. It is a label utilised to describe multi-layered and multi-dimensional processes and phenomena, most of which are being derived from Western, and especially capitalist, values and practices. For example, thanks to improvements in information technology, globalisation refers to the processes through which social, political and economic relations can be sometimes instantaneous throughout the world and many of them may not be completely restricted by the states. Globalisation has also been equated with homogeneity, harmonisation, universalisation, and interconnectedness.³ As Smith and Baylis have observed, a 'globalised world is one in which political, economic, cultural and social events become more and more interconnected'.⁴ However, the emphasis is on the size, depth and speed of interactions.

While some analysts have suggested that globalisation has eclipsed, or is undermining, the state both within its territory and internationally, I argue that, to a large extent, globalisation has been created and maintained by the states.⁵ As Ian Clark has

¹ For a discussion of the Westernisation perspective, see, for example, T. H. Von Laue *The World Revolution of Westernization: the Twentieth Century in global perspective* New York, 1987, p.3.

² Paul Hirst & Grahame Thompson *Globalisation in Question* Cambridge UK, Polity, 1996, pp.1-17.

³ See Andrew Hurrell and Ngaire Woods, 'Globalisation and Inequality' *Millennium* 24, 3, 1995, p.447.

⁴ Steve Smith and John Baylis (eds), 'Introduction' *The Globalisation of World Politics* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997, p.7.

⁵ For a discussion on the diminishing role of the state see Philip G. Cerny, 'Globalisation and the changing logic of collective action', *International Organization* 49, 4, Autumn 1995, pp.595-25.

observed, globalisation could be seen as a symptom of 'wider political and economic policies' and 'the product of specific state policy choices'.⁶ This is not to deny that globalisation has had some effects on state behaviour. The disparate elements which are said to constitute globalisation, especially rapid changes in the technology of transport and communications, have made it necessary for policy makers to devise new ways of responding to both domestic and international problems. Globalisation is a modernisation and restructuring process which cannot be ignored by governments.

In an effort to explore some of the effects of globalisation, I have divided this article into three sections. The first examines the tensions between globalisation and identity, arguing that the process of harmonisation, which is embedded in globalisation, causes alienation, negates self-identification, and constitutes a security threat. The second section explores the relationship between globalisation, regionalism and the state. It argues that while globalisation has facilitated transnationalism and re-focused attention on the evolving nature of state sovereignty and security, it has not substantially altered the legitimate role of the state in domestic or world politics. The third section concludes by suggesting that globalisation is bound to increase because it promotes the interests of the major powers. I argue that states will remain the most important actors in world politics and that political leaders will often use globalisation as a scapegoat for their policy failures.

Threatening identity

Globalisation is by definition a threat to ethnic, regional, national or ethnic identities. This is largely because globalisation is often equated with universalisation and homogeneity, which cannot take place without altering the identities and interests of individual units in the international society. Moreover, as Jan Aart Scholte has argued, globalisation also "refers to processes whereby social relations acquire relatively distanceless and borderless qualities".⁷ Hence the common claim that the planet is shrinking or that the earth has

become a global village. For example, in the lead-up to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference in Kyoto, Japan, in December 1997, political leaders repeatedly made references to the 'shrinking planet'. However, if the earth is a global village, it is one where only some inhabitants retain their values, traditions, cultures, institutions, rituals and symbols. The so-called global village has been constructed by Western-derived forces, implying that the interests and

"The UN Charter proclaims that the organisation is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members, and that its primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security. . . . From this perspective, the UN is a guarantor of, not a threat to, state sovereignty.

values of non-Westerners are largely ignored in a globalising world.⁸

It is no wonder then that as the forces for harmonisation and universalisation grow, with the support of Western governments and Western based non-government organisations (NGOs), various non-Western societies and communities are striving to preserve their identities, symbols, and values. Thus, localisation, nationalism, and ethnic and religious revivalism have assumed significance partly because of the threat which universalisation and harmonisation pose to different cultures, institutions, standards, and interests. Localisation also implies regionalism, separatism, cultural

relativism, self-determination, heterogeneity, and identification with one's ethnic group. These defensive reactions by non-Westerners to some aspects of globalisation do not suggest that their identities and interests never change. They mainly signal that the globalising processes are enormous and too fast. Indeed, it is partly through the speed of its challenge to diversity and identity that globalisation constitutes a threat to security.

Identity as security

There is no universally accepted definition of security. For example, there are controversies around the use of the terms 'national' 'international' and 'global' security.⁹ Some analysts believe that in this era of globalisation, we should be talking of global security, rather than national or international security. Even among those who have adopted the term global security, there are differences over what should be emphasised. For example, in some parts the Third World, the state elites argue that global security is very often defined in terms of the national interests of the powerful Western countries, without taking into account the vital concerns of the weak Third World states.

In this article, I define security as the preservation of society's norms, rules, institutions and values. This definition includes the preservation of the society of states, as well as the structures, principles, values, norms and institutions traditionally associated with it. It also includes the protection of people from military and non-military threats, and the guarantee of basic needs and fundamental freedoms.¹⁰ Going by this definition of security, it is clear that globalisation constitutes a threat to security, because it implies universalisation and harmonisation, which ultimately mean that the values, institutions, rules,

⁶ Ian Clark *Globalisation and Fragmentation* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp.1-15.

⁷ Jan Aart Scholte, 'The Globalisation of World Politics' in Smith and Baylis op.cit., p.14.

⁸ I recognise that characterising globalisation in terms of Western values is simplistic, because some aspects of globalisation cause discomfort to many people in the West. However, globalisation is largely driven by the Western corporate forces.

⁹ See Helga Haftendorn, 'The Security Puzzle: Theory-Building and Discipline-Building in International Security' *International Studies Quarterly* 35, 1, 1991, pp. 3-17.

¹⁰ Samuel M. Makinda, 'Sovereignty and International Security: Challenges for the United Nations' *Global Governance* 2, 2, 1996, p. 154.

interests, and norms of some societies have to be sacrificed. Indeed, to the extent that globalisation implies the promotion of Western corporate values and standards, it effectively poses a threat to the survival and security of non-Western societies and communities which are interested in retaining or reviving some of their traditions. In this sense, globalisation would appear to sow the seeds of conflict.

As already indicated, security is concerned with the preservation of the identities, interests and institutions - political, economic and social - of different groups, communities, and societies. This is the position which many liberal minded and critical security analysts have taken. Those who have faith in the work of liberal international institutions, for example, regard globalisation as a useful vehicle for international stability and governance. However, realists have different ideas on how globalisation has impacted on security. While there are differences among realists, they generally define security in terms of war and peace, the survival of the state, self-help and the role of military force in settling international disputes. To them, globalisation has not removed international anarchy or the need for self-help; it has merely altered the way the states can address the continuing problems of anarchy. Realists acknowledge that globalisation has brought about enormous changes, but they believe the role of the state has not diminished. To them, the state remains as important as ever, and whether globalisation threatens the identities and interests of some societies or not, it has not altered the logic of power politics.

As I will argue later, the state remains the dominant actor in world politics, but a definition of security which is based solely on the state-centric military logic cannot fully address the problems posed by globalisation. As

it has been argued elsewhere, military capacity is one of the most important *means* by which states and the international society can protect their values, norms and institutions, but it is not an end in itself; security is the *end*. Military means are an instrument through which security can be achieved, but defining security solely in military terms confuses means with ends.

The attempt to define security as a non-military issue, or in terms of politics and identity, is not a post-Cold War phenomenon, as some people would argue. About two centuries ago, Carl von Clausewitz argued that war was fought for political reasons, and that 'the political object, as the original motive of war, will be the standard for determining both the aim of the military force and... the amount of effort to be made'.¹¹ Going by Clausewitz's argument, security should be regarded as the political objective in which identity features. For example, the recent civil war in the Balkans may have been influenced by numerous factors, but by and large it was a war about the preservation and promotion of certain identities and interests. The civil war in Sudan which has been going on since the early 1980s is basically about the clash between Muslim and non-Muslim identities. The Iranian revolution, which brought Ayatollah Khomeini to power in 1979, was first and foremost about the preservation of a certain form of Iranian identity and power structure, especially that pertaining to the role of the clergy in society. Even in Rwanda and Burundi, where the Tutsi and Hutu have killed each other in cyclical violence over the years, identity has been an important causal factor. Therefore, identity is very important in any security considerations, and the fact that globalisation constitutes a threat to some national, religious or cultural identities, makes it a destabilising factor.

Even during the Cold War, the East-West nuclear competition was driven by the interests of the political leaderships on both sides of the ideological divide to preserve their political, economic and social systems and identities. It was expressed most vividly in crude military competition between the USA and the Soviet Union, but Western Sovietologists believed that the primary objective of the Soviet national security policy was to protect the Soviet homeland and the gains of communism.¹² Similarly, the US and Western leaders were primarily concerned with preserving their political, economic and social ways of life. Thus security was principally about the political, ideological, economic and social stability, as well as the identity of the two antagonistic systems.

As US Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, has argued, the Cold War was a conflict "between competing concepts of how to organise the political and economic lives of individual human beings".¹³ The logic of this perspective can be reconstructed and be applied to the international society in the era of globalisation, namely that the purpose of security is to preserve the institutions, norms, rules, values, and symbols of the different groups and communities which constitute the international society. It is partly for this reason that globalisation, which is a form of Westernisation, appears to constitute a source of instability.

Westernisation and alienation

The factors which underpin globalisation, namely universalisation, harmonisation and homogeneity, are processes which are supported by the major Western powers and often reflect hegemonic Western ideas and interests. As already indicated, globalisation has been helped enormously by the rapid increase in economic interdependence and improvements in the technology of transport and communications, and the revolution in information technology. In one sense, globalisation appears to signify the intensity and depth of interactions among social movements, states, regional groupings and global organisations. However, it is also associated with the 'emergence' of the so-called

¹¹ Carl von Clausewitz *On war* edited by Anatol Rapoport Harmondsworth UK, Penguin, 1985, p.109.

¹² Michael McGuire *Military Objectives in Soviet Foreign Policy* Washington, DC, The Brookings Institution, 1987.

¹³ Strobe Talbott, 'The new geopolitics: defending democracy in the post-cold war era' *The World Today* 51, 1, 1995, p.7.

global values, institutions, and norms, which include important issues such as liberal democracy, individual liberties, free markets and particular forms of justice.

The 'global' values which are trumpeted under the banner of globalisation, were not arrived at through reflection and consensus in the international society. They are the norms, rules, institutions, and standards which have been promoted by the powerful Western countries for their own benefit. The promotion of these interests in the Third World has inadvertently been facilitated by non-state actors, and especially the NGOs, concerned with numerous problems such as human rights abuses, poverty, environmental degradation, and weapons of mass destruction. International financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have also played roles in broadcasting these 'cosmopolitan' institutions.

The non-Western societies and communities, as well as some groups in the West who have reservations about Hollywood and Wall Street type corporate values, view globalisation as a cause of alienation. I use the term alienation here to describe the situation in which some groups of people, communities and societies feel apathetic, detached, socially dislocated, powerless and normless in the face of globalisation. Alienation results partly from the differences in power, opportunities and advantages, especially between the West and many of the non-Western communities. These non-Western communities feel apathetic because they see themselves as outsiders in the global village. They feel they have been cast aside or defeated by the processes of harmonisation and homogeneity, and the global system as a whole. An international society in which many groups feel powerless and uninvolved is potentially unstable.

Non-Western societies' criticisms of universalisation have also been directed at the United Nations, which has been a very prominent and successful norm-setting organization. For example, sections of the Third World believe that the UN has been manipulated by the West and tends

to work to the detriment of non-Western values and institutions. Some of these criticisms came out clearly at the 1993 UN Congress on Human Rights in Vienna, where China and some developing countries described the concept of the universalisation of human rights as a conspiracy by Western governments to impose their values on non-Western societies. They argued that the standardisation of rights was a pretext through which the West sought to pressure non-Western states to change their political and economic systems and values.

However, the Vienna Declaration achieved a classic compromise by stating that 'human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated', while also recognising 'the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds'.¹⁴ It also stressed the 'mutually reinforcing interrelationship between development, democracy and human rights'.¹⁵

The 1993 Vienna Declaration underlined the clash of two principles of legitimacy, represented respectively by Western countries which supported the universalist perspective, and non-Western states which were relativist. Western countries dominate the international system politically, economically and militarily, and have the means to propagate their values more effectively than the non-Western states. As Samuel Huntington has argued: 'The West in effect is using international institutions, military power and economic resources to run the world in ways that will maintain Western predominance, protect Western interests and promote Western political and economic values'.¹⁶

Recent attempts to assert 'Asian values' are partly a reaction to

globalisation and Westernisation. There is no consensus among the people of Asia themselves as to what constitutes Asian values, but it is a label with which they seek to legitimise the retention of some of their traditions and institutions in the face of the Westernisation juggernaut.¹⁷ The concept of Asian values has also been exploited by political regimes which seek to maintain authoritarianism and contain the opposition within their societies. Similarly, the Islamic resurgence can be explained in terms of efforts by some Muslim societies to prevent the total erosion of their culture.

Occasionally, some radical groups have used the cover of this resurgence to engage in political violence. For example, the establishment of the Hezbollah (the party of God) in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley in the early 1980s by Iranian zealots, was partly based on the fact that the Shia Muslims in Lebanon were treated as second-class citizens both economically and politically. The result was more insecurity for foreigners in Lebanon and hostage seizures, which affected people from several Western countries. However, it is not only non-Western societies that fear the impact of globalisation on their interests and values. French government officials expressed serious concerns about the relationship between free trade and culture, particularly with regard to trade in audio-visual products. France was among several countries which criticised some aspects of the 1993 General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) Uruguay Round agreement, because of its potential impact on the survival of their cultures.

The State and globalisation

The struggles between universalist and relativist values often involve state representatives. Yet, claims continue to be made that globalisation has eclipsed the state. The test of globalisation's

¹⁴ UN General Assembly, 'Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action', A/CONF.157/23, 1993, p. 5.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.25.

¹⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, 'The clash of civilizations?' *Foreign Affairs* 72, 3, 1993, p.40.

¹⁷ For discussions of Asian values see Chris Patten, 'Asian Values and Asian Success'; Alan Dupont, 'Is There an "Asian Way"?' *Survival* 38, 2, Summer 1996, pp.5-12 and 13-33.

impact on the international system as a whole can be gauged by the effect it has on state behaviour. If globalisation has no significant effect on state behaviour, then its impact on the international system may be only slight. However, if it makes the role of the state anachronistic in some important public policy arena, or strongly influences the policy choices of state officials, then its impact on international society is likely to be significant.

Re-assessing sovereignty

States have traditionally been the dominant actors in world politics, and they still remain the primary influence on global affairs. Despite claims to the contrary, the states, and especially the great powers, still determine the environment in which other international actors operate. Even in the economic arena, it is the states that ensure that major international financial crises are averted, and if they do arise, states often take measures to try to minimise their impact. For example, it was the developed countries that organised financial rescue plans for Indonesia, South Korea and Thailand in 1997. It was also the states that liberalised international trade rules through various GATT rounds. It is also the states that provide the safe environment in which the media and other transnational forces operate. As Peter Dickens has argued, globalisation is directed by the states' policies.¹⁸ Even the most successful transnational corporations are dependent on secure political environments provided by the states.

However, this does not deny the fact that the role of the state might be shifting; the duties and rights of states have always shifted in response to changing international conditions. Even state sovereignty is an evolving institution which can be reinterpreted differently in accordance with the prevailing notions of security. Indeed, it is true to argue, as many analysts have done, that state sovereignty has increasingly been encroached upon

by numerous factors - both from within and from outside the state - in the past few decades. But, there is nothing new in this. Even the claim that sovereignty should apply to the people, rather than the government, of a state is not new. For example, as early as 1917, Harold Laski argued that sovereignty belonged to the people. In his own words: "The will of the state obtains pre-eminence over the will of other groups exactly to the point where it is interpreted with sufficient wisdom to obtain general acceptance, and no further... in such a view sovereignty means no more than the ability to secure assent".¹⁹

Sovereignty is often explained at two levels - internal and external. Internal sovereignty is a principle which legitimises internal political organisation and control, while external sovereignty is a mechanism for enhancing international security. Internal sovereignty revolves around three factors: population, territory and recognised authority. It is predicated on the principle that each state is free to pursue its domestic affairs without outside interference. Internal sovereignty, also known as empirical sovereignty, refers to not only the right but also the capacity to exercise control. However, this control is to be exercised with some degree of consent and legitimacy from society. Nevertheless, the processes described as globalisation have created opportunities for people to travel around the world more freely, and to engage in activities in many countries. This has effectively meant that the power which states exercise over those within their territories has diminished and people now appear to have multiple loyalties. However, it needs also to be recognised that such activities can take place only because the states have been willing to relax immigration controls. The implication this development has for security is that states cannot avoid consulting and cooperating with other states in efforts to maintain security internally.

As a mechanism for enhancing security, external sovereignty, also known as juridical sovereignty, is based on the notion that the territorial integrity of every state is inviolate. External sovereignty, which is about status rather than stature, highlights the legal identity of the state in global politics.²⁰ This legal status is underpinned by the principle of non-intervention, which was designed to help enhance global security. Non-intervention emerged as a response to the fear and uncertainty in what is regarded as an anarchic society of states.

There are several ways of looking at international anarchy in a globalising world. In one sense, it can be argued that anarchy is as strong as ever, and that military force remains an important instrument of international policy. Indeed, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 is a reminder that the logic of power politics is still relevant. Moreover, problems on the Korean peninsula are an indication that cheating in international relations remains a major problem. In this sense, power politics and the role of the state in world politics have not been diminished. From another perspective, Iraq and North Korea can be seen as isolated cases, and that international institutions and even NGOs are playing significant roles in global governance. From this latter perspective, anarchy and self-help would appear to have ceased to have the influence they have traditionally had on state behaviour.

The role of non-government organisations

The argument that the role of the state in world affairs is diminishing partly because of transnational forces is exaggerated and has no historical basis. The structures and activities of states determine the environment in which NGOs function. Transnational forces are, and have been for centuries, significant players in world affairs, but they are not taking over the functions of the state. The phrase 'transnational forces' here refers to multinational corporations, critical social movements and other NGOs which are based in one country but engage in activities in other states. Transnational forces include such corporations as Shell, IBM, Ford and

¹⁸ Peter Dicken *Global Shift* London, Paul Chapman, 1992, 2nd edn., pp.149-150.

¹⁹ Harold J. Laski *Studies in the Problem of Sovereignty* New Haven, Yale University Press, 1917), p. 14.

²⁰ See Alan James, 'Sovereignty: ground rule or gibberish?' *Review of International Studies* 10, 1, 1984, pp.1-18.

Coca Cola, which engage in international economic activities. They also include agencies which are concerned with human rights, the environment and humanitarian activities, such as Amnesty International, Greenpeace, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and Médicines sans Frontières. These organisations play increasingly important roles in world politics, interact with various governments, and can bring pressure to bear on states, but they are not accountable to the public.

A number of people have argued that due to globalisation, the planet, rather than the state, has become the focal point of human interactions. In other words, globalisation has been presented as a process in which individual human beings, their associations and NGOs are increasingly assuming prominent roles on the world stage. For example, the work of the ICRC and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), was crucial in persuading governments to accept the need to sign a treaty banning the use of anti-personnel land mines in December 1997.

There is nothing new about individuals or private organisations taking prominent roles in world affairs. Marco Polo, Christopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama, and Cecil Rhodes are just a few of the many who played important roles in world politics during their time. Moreover, it was a private corporation, the British East Africa Company, that colonised Kenya and Uganda before the British government got interested in Eastern Africa. It was also William Wilberforce and some evangelical groups that took the lead in the struggle to abolish the trade in slaves in 1807. So the idea that individuals and private organisations are taking leading roles in world affairs is not by itself an indication that the state has been, or is about to be, eclipsed. The difference between now and then is how the process has been assisted by the revolution in information technology, especially in the last quarter of the 20th century. Philanthropic organisations and multinational corporations in the late 20th century have been very

successful in exploiting the improvements in the technology of transport and communications.

Some of the critical social movements have the capacity to raise huge sums of money, have access to, and can manipulate, the media, and they can also lobby various governments around the world. There is no doubt that social movements and other environmental and humanitarian agencies have become extremely influential in international diplomacy. Indeed, NGOs can set international agendas and bring about changes to international norms. But, again, there is nothing novel about such activities. For example, both before and after World War II, the ICRC played a very important role in creating the modern international humanitarian law.

International history is full of examples of NGOs and individuals performing important global roles, but they did not take over the functions of the states and governments. What they did, and can still do, is highlight the issues and put pressure on the governments to take appropriate measures. Many NGOs operate with ease because they are not accountable to governments and are not subject to the constraints which the states are subject to.

Notwithstanding globalisation and the effects of transnational forces, states and their representatives still have the capacity and resources to determine when and how action can be taken to deal with particular problems. Transnational forces and individuals can use the media and other means to put pressure on governments to act, but the ultimate decisions will be taken by political leaders - at a national, regional or international level. Besides the NGOs, other pressures on states come from intergovernmental organisations, both regional and global.

Intergovernmental institutions

Globalisation, as one analyst has argued, "implies an awareness that the whole of humanity has to face a set of common problems that cannot

be solved individually".²¹ It can also be seen as embracing multilateralism, openness, and interpenetration.²² This suggests that dialogue, cooperation and consultation have become significant tools for dealing with the effects of globalisation. While these diplomatic tools may be associated with globalisation in the late 20th century, they have, in fact, been utilised for many centuries. What makes the situation different now is the fact that communication is easier and faster.

Cooperation and consultation can take place between two parties, but states have also found it necessary to establish regional and global organisations and networks for dealing with issues that require collective efforts. Although some commentators have claimed that intergovernmental organisations have eroded the role of the state, these networks and organisations are efficient and effective only because the states are willing to support them politically and financially.

The only universal organisation is the United Nations and its agencies. Although there have been claims that the UN undermines the sovereignty of some of its members, the reality appears to be different; in fact, the UN has hindered the erosion or even evolution of state sovereignty. The UN Charter proclaims that the organisation is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members, and that its primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security. The Charter sought to protect state sovereignty through two sections. Article 2(7) prohibited intervention 'in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state', and Article 2(4) prohibited the threat or use of force by any state against the political independence or territorial integrity of another state. From this perspective, the UN is a guarantor of, not a threat to, state sovereignty.

In the past five decades, the UN has been a major influence in world politics, especially in the field of

²¹ Montserrat Guibernau *Nationalisms* Cambridge UK, Polity Press, 1995, p.129.

²² Clark op.cit., p.1.

economic development and international peacekeeping. However, the UN has also been an arena for great power politics, and in the past few years, there have been claims that the Security Council, which is dominated by the five permanent members (USA, Russia, UK, France and China), has been mainly interested in pursuing the Western agenda. As John Mearsheimer has argued: 'The most powerful states in the system create and shape institutions so that they can maintain their share of world power, or even increase it'.²³ In this sense, it could be argued that the UN's performance has not reflected its universal membership.

In addition to the UN, states often work through regional organisations, most of which pursue specific political, economic or military objectives. Again, these organisations, many of which were established long before the term globalisation became fashionable, do not threaten the survival of the state. The exception might be the European Union (EU), which was established in 1957. The EU's original goal was economic cooperation, but it has since evolved into a multi-function institution with mechanisms for coordinating its members' domestic and foreign policies. The EU appears to have emasculated its member states to the extent no other organisation has done, but all these changes have been made by the states themselves.

The other major regional organisations in Europe include the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Western European Union (WEU). None of these organisations threatens the interests or identities of its member states. NATO is the primary military institution, which was established in 1949 specifically to deal with the perceived Soviet threat during the Cold War. With the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the USSR in 1991, NATO's rationale appeared to wane, but its members have sought to reconstruct

and expand it. Interestingly, the WEU, the OSCE and the EU also have security functions.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the best known regional organisations are the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), but again neither one poses a threat to the independence or identity of member states. APEC is a primarily economic institution, with a steadily growing membership. ASEAN was established in 1967 as an economic, political and cultural association, but it recently appended a security element, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1994. The ARF enables ASEAN states to maintain a regular dialogue with the US, China, Japan, Australia and other interested powers. The recent transformation of ASEAN and the creation of APEC in 1989, indicate a readiness by countries in the Asia-Pacific region to establish a collective framework for exploiting the benefits of globalisation.

In Africa, South America, and the Middle East, the main regional organisations - the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the Organisation of American States (OAS), and the Arab League - are primarily political institutions which pose no threats to the identities of their members. These organisations also often play mediating roles in regional conflicts. For many years, the OAU was also involved in the southern African liberation struggles, while the Arab League has consistently demanded the right of Palestinians to have their own state. In recent years, the OAU and OAS have expanded their agenda to include good governance, and have called on their members to respect human rights and carry out democratic reforms.

Conclusion

There is every indication that globalisation will increase. Western powers and the Western-based NGOs are likely to continue to promote the universalisation of values, rules and

institutions. However, the pressure for homogenisation will merely intensify the struggle for diversity, autonomy, and heterogeneity. The question of how to reconcile difference with uniformity, universalism with particularism, and globalisation with fragmentation, will remain central to policy makers at the national, regional and global levels. Political leaders will continue to determine whether or not to take action to deal with whatever problems their countries confront. However, it can be assumed that critical social movements and other transnational forces are likely to step up their efforts to try to influence the decision-making processes at national, regional and global levels. Political leaders will continue to determine policies that facilitate or frustrate globalisation, taking into account domestic and external pressures. But, at the same time, transnational forces will continue to lobby the states, regional organisations and the UN to try to influence those policies. It is this inter-subjective relationship between the policy-makers and the transnational forces that determines the character of globalisation.

However, the spurious assumption that states and governments are bystanders to globalisation, and that the real driving forces are the markets, suits many political leaders.²⁴ Government officials will often try to blame globalisation for their policy failures. They will claim that they were powerless to do much for their countries in the face of globalising forces. But, as always, they will claim credit for any positive results from globalisation. Whatever claims some academics, corporate leaders and state representatives may make, globalisation is an outcome of state policies. It is a reflection of the interests, values, institutions, standards, and rules of the major powers.

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²³ John J. Mearsheimer, 'The False Promise of International Institutions' *International Security* 19, 3, Winter 1994/95, p.13.

²⁴ See Hurrell and Woods, 'Globalisation and Inequality' *Millennium* 24, 3, 1995, p.448.