

Contemporary Globalization, New Intercivilizational Visions and Hegemonies: Transformation of Nation-States

Shmuel N. Eisenstadt

I. Introduction

Far-reaching processes of globalization that are taking place through the world which constitute indeed a very new distinctive development in human history – even if they share very important characteristic with earlier globalizations. Some of the specific characteristics of contemporary globalization are closely related to changes in the structure of international relations and hegemonic frameworks, as well as with new types of inter-civilizational relations.

2. Contemporary Globalization – Social Dislocations and Mutual Impingents of Societies and Social Sectors

The central core of the different characteristics of contemporary globalization has been first the growing interconnection between economic, cultural and political processes of globalization, each of these processes retaining its relative autonomy, but at the same time being closely interwoven with each other; the continual development of multiple world-wide international networks – all of which went beyond most of the earlier processes of modern globalization. In the economic arenas there took place the growing autonomy and relative predominance of “denationalized”, “deterritorialized” “global” capitalist, especially financial, forces; second, the disembedment of different segments of the workforce, especially those connected with the high-tec and financial activities – from existing economic organizations – i.e. firms; third, processes of far-reaching internal or international migrations – all of these being to a very large extent up to recently regulated by hegemonic American economic forces and by the contemporary neo-liberal ideology thereof – most fully epitomized in the Washington consensus.

However, one of the most distinctive characteristic of the processes of contemporary globalization in comparison with the “earlier” modern ones was not just the extent of the global flow of different resources, but the combination of these processes with the continually growing mutual impingement of different societies and social sectors throughout the world; and to continual shifts in the relative standing of different societies in the new global frameworks, giving rise to the possibilities of intensive confrontations between them. These processes were closely connected with the growing movements of hitherto peripheral, “local” non-hegemonic social groups and sectors to the centers of their respective national and international systems – and beyond them, often bypassing the trans-local institutions and public arenas, giving rise to growing discrepancies between different societies and sectors thereof. Concomitantly,

there developed discrepancies and inequalities between various central and peripheral sectors within societies and between them; especially between on the one hand those sectors which were incorporated into the hegemonic financial and “high tech” economic frameworks and on the other hand those which were left out and the far-reaching dislocations of many social sectors giving rise to acute feelings of dispossession. Among such dislocated groups it were not necessarily those from the lowest economic echelons – peasants, or urban Lumpenproletariat that were most important – but above all first groups from the middle or lower echelons of more traditional economic groups embedded in relatively hitherto secular social and economic frameworks or niches, and cultural frameworks; and second, as various highly mobile, “modern” educated groups – professionals, graduates of modern universities and the like. Of special importance in this context was the fact that many of the inequalities and dislocations that developed attendant on these processes of globalization both within different states and between them and coalesced with religious, ethnic or cultural divisions – adding a highly inflammatory component to the contemporary scene – constituting an important factor in the transformation of inter-civilizational relations in the contemporary scene.

These specific characteristics of contemporary globalization can be fully understood only in the framework of far-reaching changes in the structure of international relations and hegemonic frameworks that have developed in the contemporary scene.

3. Changes in the International Arenas and in the Constitution of Hegemonies – New World Disorder

The most important of the changes in the international arena was the continual disintegration of the “Westfalian” international order; second, the disappearance of the bipolar order of the “Cold War”; third, continuous shifts in the relative hegemonic standing of different centers of modernity manifest in shifts from European and U.S. ones, moving to East Asia and then back to the U.S. – and then possibly again to China and India; fourth, the concomitant growing competitions or contestations between such centers about their presumed hegemonic standings; and fifth, intensification of the contestations between different sectors and societies about their place in the international order – all of them contributing greatly to the development of “New World Disorder”¹; and to the increasing destabilization of many state structures – above all but not only in the different peripheries.

The development of such disorder was intensified by the demise of the Soviet Union and of the disappearance of the salience of the ideological confrontation between Communism and the West. On the international scene these developments – with initially at least only one Superpower, the U.S., remaining – but continuously weakening – politically and economically alike giving rise to greater autonomy of many regional and trans-state frameworks and within these frameworks to new combinations of geopolitical, cultural and ideological conflicts and struggles over their relations and hegemony, including indeed those between major existing

¹ Jowitt, Ken. 1993. *New World disorder: The Leninist Extinction*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

and emerging global powers – the US, the European Union, post-Soviet Russia, above all China and more lately to some extent also India.

Yet another crucial development in the international arena was that of intercivilizational confrontations with very aggressive components – most fully manifest after 9/11 2001, in the confrontation between Islam and the “West” – but incipient also in many other parts of Asia, as for instance in the discussions about Asian values. While these components seemingly constituted a continuation and transformation of the ideological confrontations of the Cold War, yet in part they differed greatly from those by not being constituted or regulated by specific – state – centers of power – but being much more dispersed and hence also volatile.

4. New International Actors and Patterns of Regulation

Side by side with the continual changes in the power relations in the international arena, new actors became prominent in the international scene, forcefully impinging also on the national centers. Among these were first of all various international agencies – the UN, and its various agencies and also various regional agencies, above all those of the European Union as well as other regional frameworks which became important in the international arena. Second was a plethora of new legal institutions such as the International Court and European Constitutional Court, as well as multiple new international networks – professional, legal, economic and regulatory (such as those of accountants networks). On the international economic scene it was the new international financial agencies – the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund created after the Second World War and in many ways controlled by the U.S., became very prominent, often pursuing American interests and ideologies but at the same time developing also as relatively independent actors and regulators of the international economic trends which ultimately would also challenge the interest of the U.S. Concomitantly, there developed a plethora of new international NGOs, associations, movements and political actors which acted beyond the scope of any single nation state and even beyond the more formal international agencies, and which focused on the constitution of new institutional spaces; on access to international agencies and arenas, on influencing their policies and those of the various states. Third, there developed also new arenas and agencies of international regulation or arbitration, be it of jurists, lawyers, legislators, accountants – taking away as it were many regulative functions from the states, as well as for the more formalized international institutions. These developments have been presented by some of the actors promulgating them as constituting at least kernels of new international civil society which transcends existing political boundaries. Moreover, many of these actors promulgated new principles of legitimation, the most important of these were those of human rights, which in principle transcend existing state boundaries and at the same time their carriers called state agencies to accountability, creating coalition with different trans-state, as well as “internal”-state political actors, and with new political movements, potentially effecting also the political dynamics of different states, including the authoritarian ones.

Their impact was also connected with far-reaching changes in the dynamics of contemporary – especially American – hegemony. On the one hand after the fall of the Soviet Union, the U.S. remained the only super-power, the only hegemony – especially in economic and military terms. But on the other hand, at the same time the hegemonic standing of the U.S. was challenged not only by various states, movements and social sectors, and very often weakened by the opposition to various unilateral policies promulgated by the U.S., and by the problems attendant on their implementation. Beyond this, and beyond the continual weakening – especially during the Second Iraq War – of its semi-Imperial hegemony, the U.S. was often also challenged in name of the very principles promulgated by it – and by institutions like the UN or World Trade the origins of which were created by the U.S. and which were structured according to the premises promulgated by it. Thus there developed a new historical situation in which the hegemon was challenged in the name of the principles promulgated by it and in the name of which it legitimized its hegemony and by institutions originally created by it – or in other words the hegemon lost the monopoly of its own legitimation, of the legitimation of the new global order with all these tendencies being intensified attendant on the world economic crisis of 2008–9.

5. New Political Formations – Transformation of Nation-States

All these developments entailed far-reaching changes in the distribution of power in the national and international arenas alike, generating many changes in the premises, structures and dynamics of political arenas, above all far-reaching transformations connected with growing processes of democratization throughout the world – in pluralistic and authoritarian regimes alike. They were all connected with the growing demands of broader sectors – for hitherto relatively greater participation or influence in the political frameworks of their respective centers or for the constitution of more autonomous social spaces, entailing far-reaching transformations of the political arenas. The core of these developments was a paradoxical combination of the expansion throughout the world of democratic ideology and institutions, with democracy of some kind – above all electoral one – becoming at least seemingly the only acceptable game in the international arena; and with, on the other hand, the weakening many of the basic institutions of representative democracy. The representative institutions became weakened as against the strengthening of different combinations of executive and judicial institutions; concomitantly there took place the weakening of political parties, the transformation of some of them into “cartel parties” as against the strengthening of populist tendencies and of intensive single-issue lobbying and continual contestation between them; the development of “segmented” sovereignty and of multiple heterogeneous, including internal as well as trans-state public spheres.

Indeed in most of the states there developed different patterns, to follow E. Grande's terminology – of fragmented sovereignty² with such fragmentation being continually reinforced by the growing diversity of modes of representation – beyond the electoral one.³

Concomitantly there developed a continual process of decomposition of the relatively compact image of the styles of life, of constitution of life worlds, of the image of "civilized man" which were connected with the promulgation of the original nation- and revolutionary state and program of modernity, as well as of different combinations, in different continually changing patterns, of many cultural themes and tropes brought together from different cultures around the world.⁴

6. De-Charismatization of the Nation State and the Weakening of the Institutions of Representative Democracy

These developments entailed far-reaching changes in the constitution of states – above all processes of de-charismatization and the concomitant weakening of the ideological and symbolic centrality of the hitherto predominant various models of the nation and revolutionary state promulgating strong homogenizing tendencies and of class-relations.

While the political centers of the nation and revolutionary states continue to constitute the major agencies of the distribution of resources as well as very strong and important actors in the major international arenas, the control of the nation state – even, to a smaller degree, of the different hegemonic centers – over its own economic and political affairs – despite the continual strengthening of the "technocratic" "rational" secular policies in various arenas, be it in education or family planning – was reduced with many global – above all financial – actors becoming very powerful. The weakening of the institutions of representative democracy has been connected with the growing de-ideologization of the major patterns of political struggle – in line with the "end of ideology" thesis; the concomitant weakening of the preceding conception of the political arena as the embodiment of the model of the original program of modernity. The political discourse has become increasingly focused on the one hand on ranges of specific issues, which were increasingly de-ideologized – and on the other hand there took place the intensification of politics of identity promulgating different types of group autonomy and rights, and the development of new public spaces in the media and in the educational institutions and in constitution of the spaces, in which different "minorities" – ethnic, religious, linguistic, regional groups attempted – within the broad, yet continually changing, frameworks of both the existing state national, as well as of international frameworks.

The nation and revolutionary-states lost also some of their – never total – monopoly of internal and international violence to many local and international groups separatists and

2 Grande, E. and Beck, U. (eds.) 2003. *Political Control and New Statehood*. Nomos: Baden-Baden.

3 Rosanvallon, P. 2007. *La contre-démocratie*. Editions du Seuil: Paris.

4 Eisenstadt, S.N. 2000. *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolutions. The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

other movements. Concomitant, at the same time, no nation-state or the concerted activities of nation states were able to control the continually recurring occurrences of such violence. They also lost their centrality and semi-monopoly over the constitution of the international playgrounds and of the rules regulating them. Above all the ideological and symbolic centrality of the nation and revolutionary states, of their being perceived as the major bearers of the cultural program of modernity, the basic frameworks of collective identity, and as the major regulator of the various secondary identities, became weakened and they have certainly no longer been closely connected with a distinct cultural and civilizing program.

7. New Types of Social Movements; Global Anti-Globalization Movements

All these developments were closely connected with far-reaching changes in the structure of one of the most distinct aspects of modernity – social movements.

One of the most important outcomes of these changes closely related to the processes of globalization that developed in this period in the institution of power in national and international arenas was the development of a great variety of modern but highly variable modern political regimes, many of them especially in the peripheries rather unstable ones, contributing to the world disorder.

While intercivilizational “anti-globalization” or anti-hegemonic tendencies combined with an ambivalent attitude to the cosmopolitan centers of globalization developed in most historical cases of globalization – be it in the Hellenistic, Roman, the Chinese Confucian or Hinduistic, in “classical Islamic,” as well as early modern ones – yet on the contemporary scene they become intensified and transformed. First, they became widespread especially by the new media throughout the world. Second, they became highly politicized, often promulgating fierce contestations formulated in highly political ideologies and terms; third, they entailed a continual reconstitution, in the new global context, of collective identities and contestations between them; and fourth, they promulgated new civilizational visions and reinterpretations, and new relations between modernity and the West.

One of the most important outcomes of these processes was the crystallization of far-reaching “reactions” and challenges to the premises promulgated by the homogenic centers of globalization and their predominant ideologies, above all indeed the neo-liberal, giving rise to paradoxically “global” anti- or counter-globalization movements and policies, attempting to create alternative patterns of globalization and often promulgating visions of clashes of civilizations.

These various “anti-global” movements became closely interwoven with the “new” social movements which developed from about mid-sixties, first in the West -starting with the students’ movements and then expanding throughout the world – which were the carriers of the transformed orientations and themes of protest and of the revolutionary imaginaire – transformations which have been often presented or perceived as the harbingers of far-reaching

changes of contemporary cultural and institutional scene, possibly also of the exhaustion of the entire program of modernity – with the common core of their being ambivalent attitude to the West and especially to the enlightenment components of the program of modernity – very often reinforced by the contradictions in American hegemony which we mentioned above.

These movements developed in tandem with the crystallization of new social settings and frameworks which also went beyond the “classical” model of the nation state, the most important of such settings being new – especially the Muslim, Chinese and Indian diasporas, new types of ethnic minorities like for instance the Russian ones which emerged in many of the successor states of the Soviet Union, and new virtual trans-state religious and national or ethnic national communities – and in close relation with their new transnational public spheres – in all of which have become continual components of the state and international scene.

The common denominator of many of these new movements and settings has been that they do not see themselves as bound by the strong homogenizing cultural premises of the classical model of nation state – especially with respect to the place allotted to them in the public spheres of such states. They contested the hegemony of the older homogenizing programs, claiming their own autonomous places in central institutional arenas – be it in educational programs, in public communications and media and very often are making also far-reaching claims with respect to the redefinition of citizenship and of rights and entitlements connected with it. All these developments entailed the “resurrection”, or rather reconstruction of hitherto “subdued” identities – ethnic, local, regional, and transnational – and their movement into the centers of their respective societies, as well as often also in the international arena or arenas.

But while the identities which are promulgated in these movements and settings are often very local and particularistic, they tend also to be strongly transnational or transstate ones – often connected with broader civilizational or religious frameworks, often rooted in the great religions – Islam, Buddhism, and different branches of Christianity, but reconstructed in modern ways. These dimensions were often brought together in new ways beyond the model of the classical nation state, with transnational ones such as for instance European Union; or with broad religious identities – many of them rooted in the great religions in Islam, Hinduism or Buddhism, or different branches of Christianity, but reformulated in new modern ways.

These movements and sectors have also become active on the international scene. Many of the separatist, local or regional settings, as well as for instance the ecological movements, develop direct connections with transnational frameworks and organizations such as for instance the European Union.

8. New Intercivilizational Relations – Anti-Globalization Tendencies; Global Confrontations; Attempts at Reappropriation of Modernity

All these movements entailed far-reaching changes in the intercivilizational relations, the central core of which was a markedly confrontational attitude to the West, to what is conceived as Western, and attempts to appropriate modernity and the global system on their own non-Western, often anti-Western, terms, but to a large extent formulated already in the terms of the discourse of modernity. They entail the radical decoupling of modernity from Westernization, and to take away from the “West”, from the original Western “Enlightenment” and even Romantic programs – the monopoly of modernity. This highly confrontational attitude to the West, to what is conceived as Western, in these movements closely connected with attempts to decouple radically modernization from Westernization; to take away from the West the monopoly of modernity, and to redefine it in their own terms, often above all in highly transformed civilizational terms, espousing new “civilizational” visions. These ideologies attempt to appropriate and reinstitutionalize modernity in terms of their own civilizational premises grounded in their respective Axial religions. Modernity is often reinterpreted, indeed highly reformulated images and symbols of civilizational and religious identity – very often formulated by them as the universalistic premises of their respective religions or civilizations rather than in those of European Enlightenment and Revolutions – although they are greatly influenced by the latter and especially by the universalistic and participatory traditions of the Great Revolutions.⁵

These reactions to globalization developed first as component of the continual constitution of ideologies, symbolic frameworks and living spaces, and second, on the level of policies. They were promulgated by different political agents, be it regional and local political organizations, by the numerous agencies and organizations which, as we have seen, burgeoned in this period, very often in close cooperation with social movements, many of which presented themselves as kernels of new international civil society.

Such attempts at the reformulation of civilizational premises have been taking place not only in these movements, but also in new institutional formations such as the European Union, in different local and regional frameworks, as well as in the various attempts by the different “peripheries” – as for instance in the discourse on Asian values, to contest the Western, especially American, hegemony, as well as to forge their own constitutive modernities. These reformulations of rules and premises have been also taken up by many developments in the “popular” cultural arena challenging the seeming predominance of the American vision thereof.

The combination of the far-reaching changes in the international arena and processes of globalization has given rise also to the multiplication and intensification of aggressive movements and inter-civilizational contestations and encounters, which became a seemingly permanent component of the new international intercivilizational scene.

5 Eisenstadt, S.N. 2006. *The Great Revolutions and the Civilizations of Modernity*. Brill: Leiden, The Netherlands.

When such contestations are combined with political, military or economic struggles and conflicts they can indeed become very violent.

Indeed among various anti-global movements, of special importance was the multiplication, extension and intensification of highly aggressive terrorist movements, which became closely interwoven with international and inter-civilizational contestations and encounters. Already in the first period of the post (Second) World War era, a central component of the international scene was the growth of revolutionary and terrorist groups and this component became even more central by their being interwoven with the crystallization of new international and intercivilizational orientations, new patterns of inter-civilizational relations. When these transformations became connected with increasing confrontations in many societies, both in local, as well as in global scenes and arenas, and with political, military or economic struggles and conflicts they can indeed become very violent – they may become a central player in connection with movements of independence of different regional contestations, to what G. Münkler⁶ has defined as non-symmetric wars, in contrast with the symmetric wars between nation-states in the framework of the Westfalian order, which became a continual component of the international order and in which such movements played a central role.

References

- Eisenstadt, S.N. 2000. *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism and Revolutions. The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eisenstadt, S.N. 2006. *The Great Revolutions and the Civilizations of Modernity*. Leiden: Brill.
- Grande, E. and U. Beck (eds.). 2003. *Political Control and New Statehood*. Baden-Baden: Nomos.
- Jowitt, K. 1993. *New World disorder: The Leninist Extinction*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Münkler, H. 2003. *Über den Krieg: Stationen der Kriegsgeschichte im Spiegel ihrer theoretischen Reflexion*. Weilerwist: Velbrück.
- Rosanvallon, P. 2007. *La contre-démocratie*. Paris: Editions du Seuil.

6 Münkler, H., 2003. *Über den Krieg: Stationen der Kriegsgeschichte im Spiegel ihrer theoretischen Reflexion*. Weilerwist: Velbrück.

Selbstbeobachtung der modernen Gesellschaft und die
neuen Grenzen des Sozialen

Peter, G.; Krauße, R.-M. (Hrsg.)

2012, XVIII, 318 S. 20 Abb., 19 Abb. in Farbe.,

ISBN: 978-3-531-19691-6