

Globalization, Power and Authority. The Emergence of New Connectivities

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Preface

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Globalization, Power and Authority

Globalization can be viewed as a set of processes that derives from, but also transcends, the parameters on which nation-states and internationality are constructed. Such a view challenges the way in which structures of power and authority are configured in a Westphalian, state-centric perspective, as deriving from inside state borders and from the international interaction of states (Beck 2000; Scholte 2003; Strange 1996). For most nation-states and international institutions constructed around principles of egalitarianism and symmetrical interdependence, globalization implies less financial control, more political vulnerability, increased levels of (inter)dependence, new supraterritorial processes, and transnational networks. It also entails more pronounced hierarchies of power and new political cleavages between binary properties of state and government that, in an ideal way, belong closely together. One of these is the nexus between power and authority.

I concur with David Held and his colleagues (1999) who argue that globalization transforms "the spatial organization of social relations and transactions" and with Michael Cox's (1994) insistence that globalization makes "states into agencies of the globalizing world," rather than vice versa. As I have argued in earlier writings (Hedetoft 2003; 2004), a distinguishing feature of this global order is that even reactive forms of anti-globalizing measures need to take account of and often, despite their outspoken intentions, end up strengthening globalization. It should be added that globalization is not, and certainly no longer can be viewed as, merely the outgrowth of the invisible hand of the marketplace, of economic forces and financial flows. It is an increasingly controlled and politically engineered process of neo-imperial design and concomitant power struggles intended to control, constrain, and give direction to the ever more intense and multiple transborder dynamics which we rightly dub globalization. These processes deeply affect forms and substances connected with power, authority, legitimacy, and sovereignty (Grande and Pauly 2005; Hedetoft forthcoming; Wade 2003).

The important implication is that globalization, though undoubtedly a challenge to states, does not point us in the direction of a single world without states, without political borders, and devoid of national interests. Rather, it creates a new political, technological, and economic environment for state behaviour, a new set of power relations, and a new division of labour, within which states — according to the resources, influence, traditions, autonomy, and adaptability that they can muster — are left to cope as best they can (Baylis and Smith 1997; Gray 1999; Held et al. 1999). In some

cases, particularly developing countries, this is a negative experience of increasing inequality, poverty, or even bankruptcy. Many other states will learn to adapt (possibly benefit) or to cooperate along new lines (e.g., regionally or by means of new competitive parameters), while the most powerful — the makers and beneficiaries of globalization (whether state or non-state actors) — face a potential win-win situation (Campbell et al. forthcoming; Mittelman 2000; Williamson 1990).

Although globalization may well, in the long run, tend toward singularity and (more) global homogeneity, it is significant to recognize that states are positioned differentially in the global context. Globalization, therefore, has different consequences and implications for different actors, according to whether they are weak or strong, big or small, rich or poor, how they are positioned relative to the global centers of political and economic gravity, how much weight they are able to pull in pivotal international institutions, and how adequate and innovative state and corporate strategies are for dealing with global challenges (Hirst and Thompson 1996). Eduard Ponarin frames Russia in this context, stating that "[w]hile European countries associate globalization with good economic prospects, military security, and other advantages that may induce even the French to swallow the burger, Russians associate pro-western reforms with economic hardship and Russia's loss of global prestige" (Ponarin 1999, 3). Globalization from this prevalent Russian perspective, is clearly associated with a loss of power and international authority (Blum forthcoming; McAuley 1997). Ponarin's equation of globalization and Western political strategies, however, overlooks that Western states are themselves affected differently, and not always positively by global forces.

More often than not, such normative assessments, strategies of accommodation, and consequent outcomes are deeply embedded in the way they have been determined, shaped, or at least coloured by historical developments, (dis)continuities, and relations — both domestic and external, and both regarding the *longue durée* and more recent history (Hopkins 2002).

The model proposed in Figure 1 tries to take account of the most salient of these multiple factors of globalization. It rests on the assumption that key aspects of global pressures and reactive forms, and thus of the dynamics of power and authority, can be identified by analyzing reflexive relations between globalization and four national "nodes": sovereignty, mass/elite interaction, political history/collective identity, and security and threat scenarios. The four nodes can hardly be disputed as being at the core of national self-images and perceptions of independence, though it might be argued that they are not exhaustive. Even so, they — and their mutual and multiple inter-linkages — provide a useful matrix for delineating the major challenges that globalization represents to contemporary statehood and attendant structures of power and authority.



Figure 1: Globalization and the Dynamics of Power and Authority

Starting from the top, the most immediate victim of globalization is sovereignty. "Ultimate control" of the "state of exception" (Schmitt 1932/1996) is made increasingly difficult by transnational flows of money, capital, goods, and (to a more limited extent) people. Institutionalized legal or normative regimes of rights and values come into conflict with the exclusive authority of states within their own (no longer so) secure borders. Financial, technological, natural, and political resources on which sovereignty is predicated increasingly elude most states, which find themselves embroiled in ever more committal and ineluctable networks of (often regional) collaboration in order to cushion the blows of global pressures — the EU being a prime case in point (Grande and Pauly 2005; Hedetoft forthcomingb).

The levels and depths of what John Tomlinson has termed "complex connectivity" have reached a point where *de jure* and *de facto* sovereignty increasingly part ways, and where, in some cases, sovereignty is no longer an operative feature of nation-states. Instead, nation-states have to look for new avenues of influence, autonomous spaces of manoeuvre and collaboration,¹ and novel forms of governance (rather than traditional government) in order to pursue policy preferences that constantly need to adapt to, constrain, or benefit from an ever more present globalizing context. National interests and national sovereignty, but also power and authority, tend to become divorced from each other in this process. This is the case most acutely for small, weak, or vulnerable states, or states facing serious changes of international standing and recognition. On the other hand, more powerful states, notably the United States, are able to proactively impact, even engineer, globalization to match national preferences (Hedetoft forthcominga; Foot et al 2003; Wade 2003). Political globalization, therefore, is not an anonymous, almost invisible process beyond political control. It is increasingly an institutionally orchestrated and designed configuration of forces shifting the symmetrical structure of the international order toward asymmetry and hierarchy, distributing benefits and drawbacks unevenly, subdividing the world into weak and strong more clearly than before, and hence re-ordering the landscape of power in fundamental ways. Forms of dependence for some contrast with degrees of independence for others. Where many states have to seek compensation for the loss of sovereignty in new forms of autonomy, others find their sovereignty as well as their projected external power reinforced by globalization. This does not imply that globalization is necessarily a drawback for smaller and medium-sized states. They can certainly benefit, but whether they do so or not depends on minutiae of strategic adaptation to global centrifugal forces, over which they have little control (Campbell et al 2006; Cohen and Clarkson 2004; Katzenstein 1985).

Moving clockwise on the model, globalization threatens to intervene in the elite/mass nexus by producing increased levels and new forms of disaggregation and distrust between the two components, which cut both ways. Clearly, however, this depends on the forms of globalization that are most relevant to different states, on the modalities of trust or distrust preceding the "intervention" of global pressures, and on the forms of governance chosen by political leaderships in order to cope with globalization — choices invariably linked to the status of particular states in the international order. In general terms, however, the disaggregating effect of globalization pertains to the transformation process of traditional sovereignty discussed above. The more sovereignty and political control at the national level are diminished and constrained, the more political preferences and forms of collaboration at the elite level will be oriented toward transnational thinking and practices. The real scope for political choices by democratic national citizenries at the domestic level will also be narrowed. This tends to affect structures of authority in multiple ways. In terms of ontological security, it means that the trust electorates might place in elected leaders will be counteracted by the ever more conspicuous dependence of these leaders on global (i.e., extra- and supra-territorial) flows and decision-making structures in the fields of trade regulation, international security, migration control, or human rights. Leaders' increasingly active participation in such transnational processes may also

diminish this trust. Thus, the real or imagined feelings of living within secure, ordered, and separate national universes will tend to dwindle, and popular disenchantment with elites will tend to increase. Conversely, if trust and political confidence were already moderate before the global turn, these novel developments can add extra fuel to such sentiments.

On the other hand, the very same developments give rise to crucial forms of political reaction too — reactions which aim either to maintain the compact between government and population or to forge new, global signifiers of loyalty and identity, *inter alia* in the form of global (or regional) democratic practices and norms. The possible consequence of both these options is the creation of new horizontal cleavages, at the popular as well as elite levels, and, on aggregate, the uneasy co-existence of new (global), moderate (liberal), and traditional (nationally conservative) politics.

The most significant manifestation of these options is the flourishing of anti-globalizing, anti-immigrant populism where political actors deploy discourses of national cohesion, negative images of "the Other," historical myths of ethnic homogeneity, cultural interpretations of borders and sovereignty, and possibly policies of more or less radical ethnic purification as well. These political strategies often target disaffected and marginalized sections of populations, or at least sections that associate globalization not with new opportunities, but rather with a series of threats (to welfare, jobs, security, or culture). At the same time they will attempt to link traditional political leadership with suspect, non-national motives, or with sheer incompetence. The effect of both is neglect of the true interests and desires of the people. The prime object of such nationalist animosity — and evidence that political leaders have let the people down — is immigrants and refugees from Third World countries, who are visible, poor, often dependent on welfare benefits, and culturally different from "us." The immigration field has become a pivotal point for the symbolic politics of sceptical, sometimes quite ferocious anti-global sentiments and identity politics attempting to remedy a mass/elite nexus that is perceived to be falling apart at the seams and undermining a tight nexus between political authority and state sovereignty (Betz 1994; Hedetoft forthcoming; Laclau 2005). Whether or not such political strategies are successful — or to what degree — significantly depends on the context of political history and collective identity in individual countries. This is the third node of the model.

The dialectics between globalization and collective historical identity are anything but simple. If historical identity implies a confident political as well as cultural sense of homogeneity and solidarity — in other words, if we are talking about a "thick" sense of national identity — the challenges of globalization to sovereignty, territorial integrity, and democratic accountability can be offset or deflected by culturally and historically rooted sentiments of unity and the belief in future cohesion that these may trigger. This will particularly apply if states, even smaller and more vulnerable ones, are used to acting in and adapting to changing international circumstances, and if the continuity of historical identity is complemented by a tradition of accommodating and integrating differences. If, on the other hand, we are dealing with "thinner" forms of national identity, which have struggled to achieve cohesion and have been subjected to extensive social and political engineering in order to reach this goal (however temporarily), globalization may impinge in much more disruptive ways, opening old wounds and triggering new conflicts. The same happens where ethnic pluralism does not go "naturally" hand in hand with a sense of normative unity and political consensus, where multicultural strategies have been obscured by the imperial/colonial history of the state or have proved abortive/problematic for other reasons, and where the mass/elite nexus is tenuous.

In these (empirically often very different) cases, globalization may be perceived to represent a threat to domestic order, social welfare, or national security. The effects of such insecurity scenarios, however, are much less uniform. Globalization may lead to social and cultural cleavages and to

eroding or contested forms of authority. But, as discussed above, it may also lead to a new sense of unity, however short-lived, of either civic purpose (forward-looking — as in China) or ethnic myth (backward-looking — as in Russia). This unpredictability of effects and consequences also relates to the first, confident modality of "thick" national identity. In some cases this modality may negate itself and produce new divisions, more national scepticism and less consensus, if complacency or paranoid interpretations of global vulnerability stand in the way of a realistic assessment, and hence successful outcomes, of the threats and opportunities embedded in globalization. This in turn depends heavily on the perceptions of national security and the specific threat scenarios which are pervasive and agenda-setting in the public sphere — in other words, on the fourth node of the model.

Globalization is a major challenge to perceptions of national security connected to tight borders, territorial sovereignty, and independent defence capabilities — but also to vaguer notions of societal or human security and its implications of cultural well-being, ontological belonging, and political welfare. In this sense, the fourth node and its interface with global processes comprise the other three forms of dialectical tensions as well: security depends on sovereignty, on close mass/elite interaction, and on a perceived sense of historical identity. It straddles high as well as low, foreign as well as domestic politics, while at the same time resting on a foundation of self/other dichotomies, on certain perceptions of threat. This is not because globalization is the wellspring of threats and dichotomization, which are inherent in normal interstate relations. The interesting contribution of globalization is that it produces new threat scenarios by overriding or eroding some of the old interstate dichotomies — the *familiar* structure of uncertainty and threat on which discursive authority and political power are traditionally constructed. Since this kind of security is premised on the existence, but also on the political containment of "symmetrical" threats, the perceived new threats of globalization, somewhat perversely perhaps, consist in producing an environment that is seen to be unpredictable and in that sense uncertain rather than in producing indisputable dangers. It engenders "risks," in Ulrich Beck's (2000) and Mary Douglas' (1994) terminology, largely because it promises to eliminate old hazards, enemies, boundaries, and battle lines, replacing them with the "asymmetrical" Unknown of ethnic and cultural mixing, transborder economic flows, global communication, civilizational encounters, supranational hegemonies, Islamic extremism, natural disasters, and much more which people more or less indiscriminately associate with globalization.

These new insecurity scenarios are related to the endeavours of states to maintain themselves as discrete political and cultural units in circumstances that in many ways privilege a different mode of interaction than the traditional interstate system. This implies numerous reactions to globalization, as many as there are states, and as varied as their mutual differences dictate or facilitate (in terms of power, size, resources, composition, international integration, structure of the economy, or geo-political position). Whether to hem it in (new border controls), adapt flexibly to it (welfare strategies combined with liberal economics), redesign its flows (neo-imperial policies), or institutionalize it (managing the flows of people, capital, and commodities), states take advantage, in different ways, of the opportunities globalization offers while minimizing risks and maintaining core aspects of the familiar dichotomies of yore. By thus interpreting globalization in terms of threats and risk, globalization itself is impacted and given a certain structure and direction, but so is the structure of power. "Threats" and traditional security face the "risks" of border erosion and power diffusion. On the macro-scene of the new global context, this is complemented by the opposition between the reality of permanent, asymmetrical warfare and the promises of a new version of "hegemonic stability," when the world, we are meant to believe, has been thoroughly democratized.

Power and authority structures are thus impacted both in terms of the interaction between each of the four nodes and globalization, as well as the multiple ways that these four nodes connect with and

impact each other. For instance, the transformation of sovereignty is important for popular distrust of political elites, but also for new risk scenarios and security agendas. Historical identity co-determines to a large extent if and how the authority of states and political actors may be maintained in the age of global pressures. It also impinges on new formulations of sovereignty and autonomy. Mass/elite trust or distrust is crucial for possibilities for, or obstacles to, accommodating more open borders, accepting new risks, and channelling new pressures into new opportunities.

It was hinted above that, like relations between identity and interest, or populations and elected leaders, the two tend to become disjointed, one from the other, in this era of totalizing globalization. We now find multiple sites and processes characterized by power with contested, diminishing, or little authority and, conversely, authority with contested, diminishing, or little power. Examples of the former would be neo-imperial structures (pre-emptive intervention; Guantanamo); transnational networks of lobbyism, informal governance, or terrorism; international regimes and global institutions like the G8, the World Bank, and the International Organization for Migration; and private agencies vested with considerable power but little legitimate authority (global accountancy firms, investment banks, transnational corporations, or flight carriers in the area of "remote" migration control). Examples of the latter — authority without power — are small nation-states in areas like security, trade regulation, or migration flows; certain religious institutions and leaders (Muslim Imams in Europe, or (former) state churches in Scandinavia); charismatic public personalities (for instance, from the worlds of entertainment, sport, or fiction); and numerous NGOs, advocacy networks, and international institutions (Amnesty International, the International Criminal Court, or the European Court of Human Rights).

These examples are evidence of institutional disaggregations of power and authority attendant on globalization and its infringement of the national compact between these two components of statecraft and governmentality. The outcomes are varied and lend themselves to different normative assessments, but they are certainly far from simple or one-sided. While sometimes undermining or eroding state legitimacy and questioning many taken for granted assumptions about the structure of political life, these processes also open up, in the interstices, a political and cultural space for evolving substate autonomies, for the reclamation of transnational action by individuals and collectivities, and for the potential empowerment of marginalized groups (Mathews 1997). At the same time, we should not be blind to emerging reconnections of power and authority at the supranational and supraterritorial level, as evidenced by institutional developments in the European Union, by the NATO interventions in Kosovo and Afghanistan, by the global human rights regime, by certain formally democratic aspects of the World Trade Organization, and by other institutional features of global governance.

These new connectivities are still embryonic, and may be reversible in a system that is still predominantly state-centric with regard to political preferences, agenda-setting, identity structures, and *habitus*. Nevertheless, the dynamics of global power structures will tend to attract increased legitimacy and authority, the more they are institutionalized and the longer they endure. In addition, the dynamics of authority are such that they are predisposed to developing, even becoming, their own form of power, whether cultural, economic, social, political, or all of the above — a point vividly demonstrated by the contemporary impact of major world religions (Islam, Roman Catholicism, Judaism, Buddhism). Whereas it is difficult to predict the future direction of these reconnections and the attendant reorganization of power and authority in terms, for instance, of the public/private and interest/identity divides, what seems indisputable is that it is the combination and interaction of disjunctures and reconnections which constitute the real novelty of this problematic in the global era.

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Notes

1. I use "autonomy" to mean the freedom and space to govern and act, but in conditions ultimately determined by (an) extraneous agency/ies or set of forces. It is thus to be distinguished from legal and political sovereignty proper. In fact, it is quite possible for autonomy to increase while sovereignty

is eroded.

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