

Ch. 30 - Class

# The Globalization of World Politics

An introduction to  
international relations

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# Globalization and the post-cold war order

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## READER'S GUIDE

This chapter explores the nature of the order that is developing in the period since the end of the cold war. It asks whether, and in which respects, that order is distinctive. It also asks whether globalization is the defining feature that sets it apart from earlier patterns of order. After distinguishing between various types of order—international, world, and global—the chapter sketches out the main ingredients of the contemporary order. These extend well beyond the traditional domain of international military security. The argument then addresses the forces that helped to bring the cold war to an end and asks if these remain as a point of continuity between the old and the new. The trend towards globalization is considered as one of these. It is accepted that globalization both contributed to the demise of the cold war and is a feature of the contemporary order. The chapter ends by suggesting that globalization is a condition that reflects changes in states, not just between them, and that what is distinctive about the present order is the continuation of a system of international order, the constituent units of which are globalized states.

## Introduction

This chapter is concerned with two key questions. The first is whether or not there is now a discernible and distinctive pattern of order in the post-cold war world and, if so, what are its principal elements. The second is whether or not this order should be defined in terms of globalization.

A decade into the post-cold war era, it is timely to address the question whether there is, in fact, such a thing as a newly emergent order. Is there a pattern of international politics sufficiently distinctive to mark it off from that in existence prior to the end of the cold war? Implicit in this is the need to devise a description of the present period that tells us something substantive about how it functions. This goes beyond the indeterminate chronological label 'post-cold war' since that informs us merely that it followed on where the cold war left off. To understand our present period, we need to know more than that it was the phase that came after the cold war.

The second question directs attention to whether contemporary order can be captured by the imagery of globalization. There is, of course, intense debate as to the precise meaning, novelty and extent of globalization. But that some kind of transformation is underway is scarcely in doubt, even if commentators are unable to agree on the significance which should be attached to it, or on whether the changes are to be welcomed or not. But if some degree of globalization is occurring, is this simply one aspect amongst many others of the post-cold war order? Or is it so central to understanding the nature of the present order that we can define the order in terms of it? Is the contemporary order above all a globalized order and what might this mean in practice?

Serious study of the post-cold war order remains literally, and for obvious reasons, in its infancy. We are still too immersed in living it to have any real sense of perspective; because we do not know how it culminates (c.f. what we call 'the inter-war period'), it is not an 'enclosed' period with a determinate ending and we consequently find difficulty in assigning

specific characteristics to it. While there have been studies aplenty of individual aspects of this present order (ethnicity, identity, peacekeeping, humanitarian intervention, globalization, regionalism, economic transition, democratization, integration, financial instability, etc.), we still lack the makings of a grand evaluation of its essential nature.

In analysing the contemporary order, we need to be mindful of how much greater are the demands upon, and the expectations about, the international order today than previously. In earlier periods, the interest in the international order was largely 'negative', and lay in ensuring that no threats were presented by it. Given present high levels of integration and interdependence, the interest is now 'positive' as well, as the international order is a much greater source and provider than hitherto of a range of social goods. The international order can deliver information, economic resources, human rights, intervention, access to global social movements and international non-governmental organizations, and permits the sharing of an abundance of cultural artefacts. Many of these 'goods' may be regarded as unwelcome intrusions, but they may also be desired by and useful to governments, and/or peoples, around the world.

## Key points

- It is difficult to make out the characteristics of the contemporary order.
- Because we are in the middle of it, it is hard to get any sense of historical perspective.
- Our understanding of, say, the inter-war period is coloured by how it ended but we do not yet know how our present period will 'end'.
- We can see that international and transnational connections are a very important element of contemporary order because of currently high levels of interdependence.

### Box 30.1 Elements of discontinuity and continuity between cold war and post-cold war orders

Cold war		Post-cold war
	<b>Discontinuity</b>	
Soviet power in E. Europe bipolar competition rival ideologies global security integration military security as high politics		dissolution of Soviet Union unipolar peacemaking supremacy of liberal capitalism greater regional autonomy national identity as high politics
	<b>Continuity</b>	
	Some security structures, e.g. NATO economic globalization human rights reaction against secular state multiple identities environmental agendas poverty in South	

## A typology of order

At the present moment, thinking about order is being pulled in a number of different directions. At the one end of the spectrum, it continues to be largely state-centred and to consider traditional models of order such as the structure of the balance of power, the polarity of the international system, and the current forms of collective security. At the other end is a widening agenda of order that encompasses the relationship between economic and political dimensions, new thinking about security, debates about the consequences of globalization, the role of human rights, the impact of environmentalism, and strategies for human emancipation. Clearly, in these various analyses, a number of differing, and potentially competing, conceptions of order are at work.

This was nicely illustrated in the early 1990s when then US President George Bush spoke about his vision of a New World Order. In an address to Congress on 11 September 1990, Bush outlined

A new era—freer from the threat of terror, stronger in pursuit of justice and more secure in quest for peace, an era in which

nations of the world . . . can prosper—a world where rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle, a world in which nations recognize the shared responsibility for freedom and justice, a world where the strong respect the rights of the weak.

Individually, these goals might all be highly desirable but the troublesome question is whether they all fit together into a consistent whole and, where some elements are in tension, what priority is to be assigned amongst them. Underlying the elements of this vision, we can distinguish competing conceptions of order. Some derive from traditional state-centric models and emphasize stability and peace amongst states. Others take the individual human being as the unit of account and construct order in terms of rights, justice, and prosperity.

This draws our attention to a number of semantic distinctions important to any assessment of the contemporary order. Are we to judge the degree and effectiveness of order solely as an aspect of the interstate system and thus speak of international order? Or are we to widen the discussion and consider order in terms of its impact on individual human lives and

### Box 30.2 Key concepts (1)

**collectivization of security:** the tendency for security to be organized on a multilateral basis, but without the institutional formality of a fully fledged collective security system.

**concert:** the directorial role played by a number of great powers, based on norms of mutual consent.

**global governance:** the loose framework of global regulation, both institutional and normative, that constrains conduct. It has many elements: international organizations and law; transnational organizations and frameworks; elements of global civil society; and shared normative principles.

**globalized state:** the notion of a particular kind of state that helps sustain globalization, as well as responding to its pressures. The distinctive feature of this concept is that the state is not 'in retreat' but simply behaving differently.

**international order:** the normative and the institutional pattern in the relationship between states. The elements of this might be thought to include such things as sovereignty, the forms of diplomacy, international law, the role of the great powers, and the codes circumscribing the use of force.

**internationalization:** this term is used to denote high levels of international interaction and interdependence, most commonly with regard to the world economy. In this context it refers to the volume of international trade and investment and to the organization of production. The term is often used to distinguish this condition from globalization as the latter implies that there are no longer distinct national economies in a position to interact.

**liberal rights:** the agenda of human rights that is driven largely from a Western perspective and derived from classical liberal positions.

### Box 30.3 Key concepts (2)

**minimum order:** a view of international order that is concerned with peace and stability, rather than with the attainment of other values, such as justice.

**multipolarity:** a distribution of power among a number (at least three) of major powers or 'poles'.

**multilateralism:** the tendency for functional aspects of international relations (such as security, trade, or environmental management) to be organized around large numbers of states, or universally, rather than by unilateral state action.

**order:** this may denote any regular or discernible pattern of relationships that are stable over time, or may additionally refer to a condition that allows certain goals to be achieved.

**primordialism:** the belief that certain human or social characteristics, such as ethnicity, are deeply embedded in historical conditions.

**state system:** the regular patterns of interaction between states, but without implying any shared values between them. This is distinguished from the view of a 'society' of states.

**triads:** the three economic groupings (North America, Europe and East Asia).

**unipolarity:** a distribution of power internationally in which there is clearly only one dominant power or 'pole'. Some analysts argue that the international system became unipolar in the 1990s since there was no longer any rival to American power.

**world order:** this is a wider category of order than the 'international'. It takes as its units of order, not states, but individual human beings and assesses the degree of order on the basis of the delivery of certain kinds of goods (be it security, human rights, basic needs or justice) for humanity as a whole.

aspirations and thus talk of it as **world order**? Such a distinction is widely noted in the literature. But what are we to make of the introduction of the concept of globalization into the analysis? Does globalized order signify the same as world order or something different? An attempt will be made to answer that question in the final section of the chapter.

Theoretically, the result is that the search for the definitive elements of the contemporary order proceeds within quite separate frameworks. The first direction from which these issues have been approached is the broadly realist one. This concentrates upon the structure of the post-cold war system, especially upon the number of **Great Power** actors and the distribution of capabilities amongst them. It defines order largely in terms of the operative security structure within the system. It spawned a debate in the early 1990s about the polarity of the post-cold war system, and whether a return to **multipolarity** might herald the erosion of the stability generated by the cold war's bipolarity.

The second line is broadly liberal in derivation and focuses upon regimes and institutions towards one end of its spectrum, and a variety of norms and values towards the other. Its central claim is that patterns of integration and interdependence have become so deeply embedded in the cold war period, albeit for strategic and geopolitical reasons, that they now have a self-sustaining momentum that precludes any return to war and autarchy. Since complex systems of **global governance** have been spawned in the interim, these regimes will survive the collapse of the 'realist' conditions that gave rise to them in the first place.

A third line is the one that adjudges order in terms of its achievement of human emancipation. The evidence from either of the two former approaches is thereby deemed inadequate to the task. The mere facts of stability amongst the major powers, or the institutionalization of relations amongst the dominant groups of states, tells us little of importance about the quality of life for most inhabitants of the globe. If it is true, as writers like Ken Booth (1999)

argue, that governments are the main source of the abuse of human rights, we can scarcely learn anything about a human rights' order by studying their activities.

The fourth line of exploration is via the literature on globalization. This is not the place to rehearse the complex arguments about the nature of globalization in general (see Ch. 1). This chapter simply asks whether, or in what sense, globalization may be thought to constitute a form of order or not. Must we speak of globalization as a process without an end-state, or can we legitimately speak of a globalized world order as a distinctive political form? The latter view is clearly set forth, for instance, in the suggestion that the contemporary western state conglomerate, collectively, constitutes an 'emergent *global state*' (Shaw 1997: 503–4). Globalization, to this extent and with whatever qualifications, represents an incipient political order.

### Key points

- When we speak of order, we need to specify order for whom—states, peoples, groups or individuals.
- International order focuses on stable and peaceful relations between states, often related to the balance of power. It is primarily about military security.
- World order is concerned with other values, such as justice, development, rights, and emancipation.
- A pattern of order may advance some values at the expense of others. There is often a tension, for example, between state-centred concepts of order and those that promote individual values. For instance, policies of the balance of power might lead to assistance being given to regimes with bad human rights' records.
- A key question about globalization is whether it supercedes all ideas of international order, or whether it can be incorporated into more traditional ideas.

### Box 30.4 Typologies of order

	Units	Characteristics
<b>Globalized</b>	global system	end of national polities, societies, and economies
<b>International</b>	states	concern with agenda of sovereignty and stability
<b>World</b>	humanity	concern with agenda of rights, needs, and justice
<b>Globalized international</b>	globalized states	agenda of managing relations between states penetrated by global system but still distinguishable within it

## The elements of contemporary order

### The 'social-state' system

Initially, there is the basic nature of the contemporary **state system** itself. The state system is 'social', first, in the sense that states at the start of the century perform a range of social functions that distinguish them from earlier phases of the state system. The great revival in the political credibility of states, from its nadir in World War II, is attributable to the largely successful undertaking of this task. While states are not all equal in the ability to deliver these functions, most would now list responsibility for development and economic management, welfare and social planning as desirable roles for the state, even where effectiveness of delivery is variable.

It is 'social' also in the second sense that there are pressures for emulation within the system and this tends to reinforce common patterns of behaviour, and similar forms of state institutional structure. Historically, states have emulated each other in developing the social and economic infrastructures for generating military power. Now this task has broadened as states seek to adopt 'best practice' in terms of economic competitiveness and efficiency. They also face the social pressure to conform to certain standards of civil rights and this has permitted a measure of dilution and delegation of the state's exclusive jurisdiction over its own domestic affairs. In consequence, some of the key rules of the state system

(sovereignty, non-intervention) are undergoing considerable adaptation and this gives the contemporary state system many of its complex and ambivalent qualities.

### Identity and the nation-state

A second feature is the multiplicity of issues about identity that have become prevalent in the 1990s. These revolve around contemporary forms of nationalism and are subject to contested assessments as to whether they represent a 'new' nationalism, or a reversion to a pre-existing **primordialism**. But the state is both challenged and reinforced by a welter of additional crises of identity—tendencies towards apparently new forms of political community driven by ethnic separatism, regional identities, new transnational projects, new social movements, and the return to culture/religion. Clearly, the key question here is the extent to which these are wholly new tendencies or represent some kind of historical atavism. The **politics of identity** at the turn of the millennium itself impacts on the social nature of the state as it raises explicit questions about the **nature of citizenship**—who is to count as a citizen, and what is the nature of the contract between state and citizen (see Ch. 29).

It must not, however, be imagined that all issues of

identity have emerged only in the aftermath of the cold war. For example, it could be said that there has been a widespread reaction in much of the developing world against what has been seen as the imposition of a modernizing, westernizing and secular form of state. The revolution in Iran in 1979 is a case in point and cautions us not to assume that 'identity politics' were invented only after the end of the cold war.

### Polarity and the collectivization of security

A key area of concern remains the primary attributes of the contemporary security order. This addresses the debates about the present distribution of power, and whether that distribution should be assessed as being **unipolar**, bipolar, multipolar, or some kind of hybrid of them all. A key determinant of the present security order relates to the role of the United States and its willingness to become involved in general order-maintenance. The impression given during the past decade is that this is highly variable, with the US role in Kosovo standing in marked contrast to its unwillingness to become engaged in, say, Rwanda.

More generally, there are several general contemporary trends towards '**collectivization**' of security (as distinct from collective security properly speaking). These cover the various forms of **multilateralism** in security, the role of coalitions, the rise and partial demise of peacekeeping and peace enforcement, and the trend to (as well as limits of) interventionism. There are analysts, such as Mary Kaldor (1999), who argue that fundamental restructuring in the nature of organized violence is taking place. Such conceptions are important as they link the discussion of violence to the other elements of order and treat it as a dynamic problem—rather than a static view that 'war is war is war'. Violence then becomes symptomatic of changes in other social spheres, rather than simply a structural constant produced by the 'anarchic' state system.

### The organization of production and exchange

Another prominent dimension is the political economy of the present order. Central to the theme of order is our assessment of the degree of stability within the international trading and financial systems. The former remains beset by disputes between the world's three great trading groups or '**triads**', while the latter shows periodic signs of undergoing meltdown, most recently during the financial turmoil that afflicted the East Asian economies towards the late 1990s. This economic order is partially managed by those elements of governance institutionalized in bodies such as the IMF, World Bank, and WTO. But the economic order penetrates more deeply than these obvious, and superficial, instances of it would indicate. The full effects of the '**internationalization**' of production can be appreciated only by taking into account cognate aspects, such as military production, environmentalism, social welfare, human (and specifically child) rights, and gender inequalities within the economy and in processes of development.

### Multilateral management and governance

A remarkable aspect of the order is the highly dense and complex network of contemporary forms of international governance (regimes, international organizations and INGOs). These cover most aspects of life including developments in legal (human rights, war crimes), environmental, and economic regimes, as well as in the core peacekeeping activities of universal organizations like the UN. To what extent can we sensibly refer to the emergence of elements of international governance? What is its potential for further development? Are current regimes dependent on the underlying power structure of western dominance and reflective of western preferences, and how sustainable are they given the value and cultural diversity of the present world? These issues link the discussion directly to the next element of order, since much of this regime base is emerging at a regional level.

#### Box 30.5 Elements of order

##### Structural elements

polarity  
multilateralism  
regionalism  
two worlds

##### Purposive elements

social-state  
identity  
economic order  
liberal rights

### Regionalism

The development of contemporary regionalism is another key to understanding the emerging order (see Ch. 23). This takes various forms, including economic (trading regions), security (role of bodies such as NATO), and cultural. The intensification of regionalism is occasionally viewed as a refutation of trends towards globalization but is more plausibly regarded as an aspect of globalization, rather than evidence against it. The fact that a number of regions feel the need to develop regional institutions is itself a manifestation of globalization, in the same way that the universal spread of the nation-state, as the principal political form, was earlier a product of globalization. Nonetheless, there are interesting questions about the significance of regionalism for the post-cold war order, such as the seemingly greater degree of security autonomy 'enjoyed' by regions since the end of the cold war, and the role of regions in constituting new forms of identity. There is perhaps a paradox that, with the loss of cold war constraints, regions now have greater autonomy—while, at the same time, levels of interpenetration and globalization indicate diminished possibilities for regional insulation.

### The liberal rights order

Arguably, this is the feature with the most striking continuities to the cold war period, and in contrast to the pre-1945 world. Human rights programmes have become a conspicuous feature of post-1945 international politics, largely in reaction to the catastrophic experiences of the period before 1945 (see Ch. 28). This theme was a paramount aspect of the cold war period itself and was again highlighted with

the collapse of the Soviet bloc, since that event was portrayed as a major step forward in extending the liberal order. In this respect, the focus on **liberal rights** is another element of continuity between the two periods, rather than a concern that has materialized only since the demise of the cold war. Indeed, it is often argued that it was the growth of concern with rights in the former Eastern Europe that had a corrosive effect on the maintenance of authoritarian political systems within the region. However, and as commonly noted, the post-cold war order is paradoxically under pressure precisely because of its seemingly greater potential for universalism (which evokes forms of resistance).

This relates directly to wider questions about the future of democratization. This is of momentous import for the future stability of the international order and touches on a series of inter-related issues: about the status of democracy as a universal norm; the current experience with democratization; the pressures upon democracy arising from globalization (and hence the appeals for cosmopolitan forms of democracy); and the future of democracy as a source of inter-state peace and stability (see Ch. 29).

### North–South and the two world orders

Any examination of the contemporary order must give a high profile to the apparent gulf within it, separating the experience of the industrialized North from the increasingly marginalized South. Some see the tensions to which this gives rise as undermining the prospects for longer-term stability (see Ch. 26). Are North–South relations more stable now than in the previous eras, or do they remain precariously



rooted in inequalities of power, massive gaps in quality of life, and incompatibilities of cultural values? Does this divide threaten the durability of the post-cold war order or must we simply recognize it as a key component of that order, and for that reason understand it as an element of structural continuity with its predecessors?

As against this image of two monolithic blocs of North and South, other analysts insist that such a conception is now out-of-date. The impacts of globalization cut across states and not just between them, yielding complex patterns of stratification that defy easy classification into North and South. How accurate is it now to speak of two such orders, or is there much more diversity than such crude dichotomies tend to imply?

### Key points

- Order is shaped by the changed nature of states and of the tasks they perform.
- There are complex questions about whether the

## Is there a post-cold war order?

On the basis of the above assessment, is there then a discernible post-cold war order? That there is any such order has already received some vociferous denials. What is entailed by the concept of 'order' assumes, at the very least, some notion of an international system, even if its purview extends well beyond that. System is a necessary precondition for an order while by no means sufficient for it (Bull 1977). However, at least one historian has denied even the minimalist presence of an international system in the 1990s:

Thus, for the first time in two centuries, the world of the 1990s entirely lacked any international system or structure. The very fact that, after 1989, dozens of new territorial states appeared without any independent mechanism for determining their borders—without even third parties accepted as sufficiently impartial to act as general mediators—speaks for itself. Where was the consortium of great powers which had

end of the cold war has released a new agenda of nationalism and national identity or whether these issues have been present all along.

- Security is increasingly being dealt with on a multilateral basis even when this does not conform to classical 'collective security' models.
- The global economy is primarily shaped by relations between the three key groupings (North America, Western Europe and East Asia) and managed by a panoply of Western-dominated institutions.
- There are dense patterns of international institutions in all functional areas.
- There are strong trends towards regionalism but they take different forms in various regions.
- Matters to do with human rights have a much higher profile than in earlier historical periods.
- The gulf between rich and poor is wider than ever and this questions our ability to speak of a single order for all.

once established, or at least formally ratified disputed frontiers? (Hobsbawm 1994: 559)

Hobsbawm's judgement is made with reference to a traditional Great Power international system. Arguably, he goes beyond the requirements of a system *per se* and confuses this with an effective Concert of Great Powers, a particular form of system. The contention that there is no international system at all would otherwise appear extremely difficult to sustain.

Nonetheless, others share his scepticism, but base it upon the perceived absence of order, not just of system:

Despite the growing salience of the single term, globalization, to characterize much of our current 'post-cold war moment', the term refers to seemingly contrary processes, including integration and fragmentation; diffusion and con-

centration; and localization and transnationalization... The current relative thickness and diffuseness may indicate that it makes a lot less sense to talk now about any overarching international order. Instead, the possibility that a variety of orders are operating in different domains, regions, or even localities should be recognized. (Latham 1997: 205-6)

Any attempt to unravel these issues in the context of the present era confronts a complex of historical issues. Historically, the core problems relate to the elements of continuity and discontinuity embodied in the post-cold war world. The argument that the present order is distinctive relies implicitly upon an assumption of discontinuity: it is the break with the past that lends the period its unique qualities. However, any claim of this nature is highly problematic. It needs to be reconciled with the counter-argument that some of the very forces that eroded the salience

## Globalization and the end of the cold war

There is a tendency to regard the degree of globalization as a consequence of the end of the cold war. This is especially so with regard to the geographical extent of globalization. Areas of the world that were formerly excluded from the full force of global capitalism, global communications and global cultural intrusions are now more integrated into these networks than at any previous time. In that sense, the main effect of the end of the cold war has been precisely to break down the barriers that previously held globalization at bay, at least in so far as the 'second' or 'socialist' world was concerned.

Not surprisingly, many commentators see the 1990s as being characterized by the intensification of the processes of globalization, particularly with regard to financial integration. The global financial order is now virtually universal in its reach, as is the influence of its principal institutions such as the **World Bank** and the **International Monetary Fund**.

On this reasoning, it is the ending of the cold war that has allowed the further spread of globalization and we can therefore regard the scope of globalization as a point of difference between the cold war,

of the cold war remain as defining qualities in the world created in its wake. It would be naïve to imagine that the pressures which led to the collapse of the cold war structure would, in turn, have immediately dissipated when their work was done.

### Key points

- Some commentators question whether there is any basis to the post-cold war international order.
- Others suggest that there are many separate orders, rather than a single overarching one.
- To resolve these issues, we need to determine how much changed with the end of the cold war. Are there important elements of continuity with the previous order?

and post-cold war worlds. Unfortunately, there is a danger in such an analysis. The problem is that to regard globalization as simply the consequence of the end of the cold war is to neglect the extent to which globalization may also have served as a cause of its end. In this case, globalization may mark a point of continuity, rather than discontinuity, between the two periods.

In a wider sense, the danger with such a procedure is that it neglects other dimensions of continuity such as in the structure of power (Waltz 1993) or in American foreign policy (Cox 1995). But the prime example does relate to issues of globalization (Clark 1997) or more generally, to the construction of a liberal capitalist order (Ikenberry 1999). What is the historical evidence for this type of argument? Its principal element is the view that globalization grew out of the core of Western capitalist states that formed during the cold war, and became such a powerful force that it finally both weakened one of the cold war protagonists, namely the Soviet Union, but also made the point of the cold war increasingly irrelevant. As regards the Soviet Union, what dam-

aged and eroded the effectiveness of the USSR as a military power was precisely the fact that it was not integrated into financial and technological sinews of global capitalism. As regards the logic of the cold war as a whole, the existence of a hostile Soviet bloc was a crucial element in the integration of the Western system. But by the 1980s, this system was effectively self-sustaining and no longer required an external enemy to provide its *raison d'être* or its dynamic for growth. In this sense, the Soviet Union had become redundant as far as the needs of the dominant western system itself were concerned.

If globalization was both an element of the pre-existing cold war system, but also continues now, in more intensive and extensive forms, as an element of the contemporary order, it needs to be seen as a point of continuity between the two periods. The logic of this, in turn, requires us to concede that the present order is not *sui generis* as it contains within it elements that were present also during the cold war. This suggests that the contemporary order should not be understood as wholly separate from that which preceded it. But if globalization is the element that binds both together, is it the key to understanding the present order? Is it the defining quality of today's world?

The claim that globalization defines the essential quality of the present order has been denied for a number of reasons. Most generally of all, if globalization is seen as a long-term historical trend—with various waves—then to interpret the present order in terms of globalization does not say enough about what is specific to it alone.

Beyond this, globalization has been described as the dystopic absence of order: negative qualities appear in abundance but without any seeming coherence. The clearest example is provided in Falk's description of globalization as 'a constellation of market, technological, ideological and civilizational developments that have nothing in common'. Moreover, he adds for good measure, 'there is little, or no, normative agency associated with this emergent world order: it is virtually designer-free, a partial dystopia that is being formed spontaneously' (1997: 125). Even at the most basic level, globalization seems not to constitute a 'minimum' order of the kind that has traditionally underpinned international society (Bull 1977). It has no common

### Box 30.6 Interpretations of globalization and the end of the cold war

'The end of the Cold War division into competing world orders marks a crucial substantive and symbolic transition to single-world economic, cultural and political orders.' (Shaw 1999: 194)

'America has ceased to be a superpower, because it has met its match: globalization—a globalization which, moreover, it helps to promote despite not managing to master totally its meaning.' (Laidi 1998: 170)

'Globalization is the most significant development and theme in contemporary life and social theory to emerge since the collapse of Marxist systems.' (Albrow 1996: 89)

'Globalization and globalism were thus the product of specific historical conditions in the last three decades of the twentieth century.' (Cox 1996: 34)

'Globalists continue to maintain that there are big, *fin-de-siècle* transformations under way in the world at large, which can be laid at the door of something called globalization. This new era—popularized as "a world without borders" and symbolized by the dismantling of the Berlin Wall—ostensibly came into its own where the cold war left off.' (Weiss 1999: 59)

institutions fulfilling minimally agreed societal functions. The essential point is made in the claim that globalization 'is a state; it is not a meaning' (Laidi 1998: 6).

Another version is the sociological appraisal of disorder resulting from the absence of overall control associated with globalization. The general claim is that 'no one seems now to be in control' (Bauman 1998: 58). 'Globalization is not about what we all wish or hope to do', it has been said; 'It is about what is happening to us all' (Bauman 1998: 60). The present situation lacks order, on this reasoning, because it is devoid of human intention or agency.

All of these arguments suggest that globalization is inadequate as the conceptual basis for understanding the contemporary order because of what globalization does. It is too varied in its effects, and so

lacking in purpose and goals, that we cannot visualize an order constructed on that basis. Indeed, the main theme of these writings on globalization is to draw attention to just how disorderly is the process of globalization. But a different form of argument can be made also on the basis of what globalization is, not just what it does. This will be set out in the next section.

### Key points

- Globalization is often portrayed as an effect of the end of the cold war because this led to its further geographical spread.
- At the same time, globalization has to be understood as one of the factors that caused the end of the cold war. It was the Soviet Union's marginal-

ization from processes of globalization that revealed its weaknesses.

- Accordingly, globalization is an element of continuity between the cold war and post-cold war orders and the latter cannot be regarded as wholly new.
- A variety of authors are sceptical about the claim that globalization is the hallmark of contemporary order.
- One of the reasons is that, as a long-term historical trend, globalization is not specific to the end of the twentieth century.
- Globalization embodies a range of often competing values.
- Globalization is too much outside our control to form an order. We are its objects rather than its subjects.

## An international order of globalized states?

These are all plausible objections to globalization as the defining element in contemporary order. What they collectively miss, however, is that globalization by itself is unable to define the total condition of international order. Globalization could be taken to represent the mainstay of order only if it superseded all traditional elements of the international order itself. But if globalization is an addition, but not a substitute for, an international order, then it is scarcely surprising that it is not adequate to the task of providing us with the key quality of post-cold war order.

The point can be taken further. If it can be convincingly held that globalization is not some process over and above the activities of states, but is instead an element within state transformation, it is not unreasonable to develop on this basis a conception of the globalized state. Globalization does not make the state disappear but is a way of thinking about its present form. By extension of the same logic, globalization does not make redundant any notion of international order but instead requires us to think about a *globalized international order*. In short, what is

required is a notion of international order that would be based on the emergence of the globalized state. Only when this has been set in place will we be able to assess the extent of the order that currently prevails.

Some of the confusion enters the debate about globalization by the tendency to see it as exclusively something pertaining to the environment in which states find themselves. Globalization is presented as a claim about the degree of interconnectedness between states, such that the significance of borders, and the reality of separate national actors, is called seriously into question. There is no denying that this is part of what globalization signifies. But what such a one-sided interpretation leaves out of account is the extent to which globalization also refers to a 'domestic' process of change within states. Thus regarded, globalization can equally be understood as an expression of the profound transformations in the nature of the state, and in state-society relations, that have developed in recent decades. These lead us to think in terms, not of the demise or retreat of the state, but about its changing functionality: states still

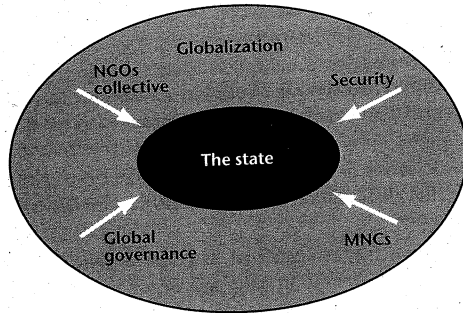


Fig. 30.1 Structural view of globalization as state form

exist but do different things, do some things less well than they used to, but also have taken on new responsibilities in exchange.

The extension of this argument is that, even in an age of globalization, there remain both states and a state system. While, as noted above, the idea of international order is more limited than that of world or global order, the suggestion that globalization refers (at least in part) to a condition of states invites us to develop a theory about the nature of international order appropriate for globalized states. We need to face the seeming paradox that there can indeed be an international order of globalized states. To be sure, this does not address all issues of order, but it still engages with a number of significant aspects of it. For example, one key respect in which states have become globalized is with regard to the provision of human rights, since they are by no means the sole providers of such rights. To the extent that this is the case, the recent attempts by the international community to articulate a modified practice of non-intervention, thereby to allow for some modest degree of intervention on behalf of human rights, can be understood as the quest for a set of ground rules—an international order—appropriate to the nature of the 'new' globalized states that form its membership. In a word, the principles of international order are not developed simply as rules governing the relations between anonymous 'billiard balls' but are a natural outgrowth of the kinds of creatures that states are in process of becoming. The mistake then is to imagine that globalization signifies the end of all projects for international order,

when what in fact is underway is the reconfiguration of the principles of international order to reflect the new realities of globalized states.

### Key points

- Globalization is often thought of as an extreme form of interdependence. This sees it largely as a change in the external environment in which states find themselves.
- The implication of such analyses is that states are now much weaker as actors. They are in retreat or becoming obsolete.
- If this is the case, ideas of international order would be much less relevant to our concept of order
- But if globalization is considered as a transformation in the nature of states themselves, it suggests states are still central to the discussion of order: they are different but not obsolete. This leads to the idea of a globalized state as a state form.
- In this case, there is no contradiction between the norms and rules of a state system and the existence of globalized states.
- This international order will nonetheless have different norms in recognition of the new nature of states and their transformed functions. Rules of sovereignty and non-intervention are undergoing change as symptoms of this adaptation.

## Conclusion

In short, we now face a **hybrid situation** in which states share a host of responsibilities with both inter-governmental organizations and a multiplicity of non-governmental and transnational actors. Formerly, the function of the international order was largely to cushion and protect the states so that they might go about their business as the principal providers of social goods to their citizens. This situation is now vastly more complex. Much of that provision (economic goods, monitoring of human rights, access to information, security, and so on) originates beyond the individual state itself, and indeed in non-state components that fall outside the jurisdiction of the international order narrowly conceived.

This does not, however, mean that the international order has become redundant. It means sim-

ply that it needs to be redesigned to take account of the new division of labour between states, global networks, and the rudimentary forms of global governance. As long as states persist as important sources of political agency, they will construct a state system with its own rules and norms. It is this that we regard as the essential basis of the international order. Currently, the identity of states is undergoing considerable change, to the extent that we can describe them as globalized states. But these globalized states still coexist within an international order, albeit one that now differs from its recent historical forms and is currently seeking to develop a set of principles to reflect this transformation. The quest for a post-cold war order is the expression of this uneasy search.

### QUESTIONS

- 1 Is the post-cold war order still an international order?
- 2 How important an element in the contemporary order is the condition of globalization?
- 3 How would you distinguish between an international and a world order and which is the more important framework for assessing the contemporary situation?
- 4 In which respects are the 'identities' of states undergoing change?
- 5 How would you define the polarity of the contemporary international system?
- 6 Is global governance a significant element of today's order?
- 7 Is regionalism a contradiction of globalization?
- 8 Is the prominence of democracy and liberal rights convincing evidence of the impact of globalization?
- 9 Can globalization be considered the basis of the present order if its impact is so variable on different regions, states, and individuals?
- 10 Is the idea of an international order of globalized states contradictory?



## GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

## International order

- Bull, H., *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1977), esp. Part 1, provides the standard introduction to this issue from an international society perspective.
- Vincent, R. J., 'Order in International Politics', in J. D. B. Miller and R. J. Vincent (eds.), *Order and Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) gives a useful commentary on Bull's position.
- Cox, R., 'Social Forces, States, and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory', in R. Cox with T. J. Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) is an alternative to the 'English School' approach and steps outside the state-centric framework.
- Hall, J., *International Orders* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996) takes an historical overview of distinctive international orders.

## New world orders and the post-cold war world

- Clark, I., *The Post-Cold War Order: The Spoils of Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). The most recent guide to the debates about the post-cold war period, viewing it as a kind of peace settlement.
- Williams, A., *Failed Imagination? New World Orders of the Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998) discusses the historical precedents for new orders during the twentieth century.
- Leaver, R., and Richardson J. L., (eds.), *Charting the Post-Cold War Order* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1993). The material on the post-cold war order is voluminous but piecemeal. This is an early attempt at an overview.
- Sellers, M., (ed.), *The New World Order: Sovereignty, Human Rights and the Self-Determination of Peoples* (Oxford: Berg, 1996) is a study around the theme of self-determination in the contemporary order.
- Kaldor, M., *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999) develops an argument about the changing nature of war in the new order.
- Paul, T. V., and Hall J. A., (eds.), *International Order and the Future of World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) offers an up-to-date overview of the general issues of order after the cold war.

## Globalization in the present order

- Clark, I., *Globalization and International Relations Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) develops a theoretical account of globalization in terms of state transformation.
- *Globalization and Fragmentation: International Relations in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) places the contemporary debates about globalization in historical perspective.
- Held, D., McGrew, A., et al. (eds.), *Global Transformations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999) is a detailed study of contemporary forms of globalization.
- Holton, R. J., *Globalization and the Nation-State* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1998) offers an accessible introduction to this general topic.
- Weiss, L., *The Myth of the Powerless State: Governing the Economy in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998) is a sceptical portrayal of the economic aspects of globalization.
- Archibugi, D., Held, D., and Kohler, M., (eds.), *Re-imagining Political Community: Studies in Cosmopolitan Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998) surveys the impact of globalization on democracy and ideas of community.

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