The Paradox of Globalization and State Fragmentation
Since the Twentieth Century

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Abstract
This paper examines the process of globalization in relation to the Westphalia state system. The central focus of the paper is to investigate why nation-states are breaking up and ethnic nationalities are fighting for sovereignty and territorial authority in spite of all attempts to globalize the world and unify the international system. The paper most predominantly made use of secondary data and employed descriptive analysis. The findings reveal that globalization is not contributing to the withering away of nation-states and ethnic nationalities nor is it creating a new basis for their mutual co-existence in the framework of national (states) or regional communities. Thus, the paper concludes that it is not to be assumed that globalization will bring about the elimination of national or ethnic characteristics or cultures as they are persisting despite all universalization tendencies.

Key Words: Globalization; Nation-States; State Fragmentation; Ethnic Nationalities; Sovereignty; Territoriality

I. Introduction
Some scholars see the 'state' as an ancient institution going back to Greece and Rome and theorized by Plato, Aristotle and other classical philosophers (Alapiki, 2005). Others insist on the unique features of the modern state, with its extensive rule of law, citizenship rights, and broad economic and social responsibilities (Global Policy Forum, 2009). States exist in a variety of sizes, ranging from enormous China to tiny Andorra. Some states claim a long lineage, while others are of modern construction. In all but the short term, states are in a flux. This is because states expand and contract as military and political fortunes change. Some like Poland even disappear and re-appear later. Or they may be divided up (sometimes peacefully) by communities that prefer to go separate ways (as in Czechoslovakia). Others such as Iraq may be occupied or run as a colony or protectorate. States can also fail, i.e. when their governing institutions collapse due to
civil war or internal strife (as in Somalia) or because the state has little or no authority outside its capital city (as in Afghanistan and Pakistan).

There is, however, a somewhat unanimity among scholars that the modern state system started in 1648 when the Treaty of Westphalia, which brought the thirty-year war to an end, was signed. Though states, before then existed and entered into relations with each other, they were not sovereign states as their authority was restrained by the Roman Church and the Roman Empire (Dhanapala, 2001; Obi, Okolie & Obiekezie, 2005). But, the peace of Westphalia paved the way for the emergence of the nation-state system by recognizing that the Emperor no longer commanded the allegiance of its parts and that the Pope could not maintain his spiritual authority everywhere. Thus, the rulers of a number of countries such as England, France, Germany, Spain, etc, shook off the authority of the Pope in religious affairs and that of the Emperor in secular matters. Henceforth, the supreme authority (sovereignty) came to be identified with the state (see Treaty of Westphalia, 1648).

Over the years, the state – system has grown and prospered. Nation-states have waged wars on an increasingly destructive and global scale (World Wars I and II) among others. They have also assumed broad tasks of social and economic management (the welfare state). In all, their ubiquity was taken for granted. However, events in the last three decades have shown the state – system to be expanding. It remains the prime instance of popular sovereignty and central actor in international relations despite that the process of globalization seems to be retreating -weakening, shrinking and sinking it by undermining its territorial integrity, sovereignty and foreign policy machinery (Duru & Ogbonnaya, 2009).

Thus, this paper, seeks to examine the ubiquity of the Westphalia state system despite globalization's attempt to erode it.

II. Conceptual and Epistemological Issues

Though it could be simply taken for granted that the concept of the state should be known to all by now, convention dictates that we re-state it here especially within the context of our epistemological foci in order to justify whatever direction(s) our argument here will lead to.

Epistemologically, the term 'state' is derived from the Italian word, "lo stato", coined by Niccolo Machiavelli to describe the whole of the social hierarchy that governed and ruled a country. But over the years, the term has come to acquire more complex and sophisticated meaning. Using Machiavellian conception as a point of departure, Rasmussen (2001: 3), defines 'state' as "the supreme legitimate authority entrusted with the exercise of violent force over a group of people". However, conspicuously absent from this definition is the concept of territorial authority, yet the legitimacy and jurisdictional authority of the state is tied so intimately to this attribute that it cannot be ignored.

Globalization on the other hand, is a typical social science concept, so easy to use but so difficult to define in such a way that it can ensure in-controvertible acceptance. It was in recognition of this fact that Clark (1997: 6) writes that "the utility of 'globalization' as a theoretical concept is in dispute". Asobie (2001: 37) agrees with Clark. According to
him, "globalization is a contested concept. Its meaning is in contention. Its character is a point in dispute. Its history is mired in controversy". It is the position of this paper that the "controversy" and "dispute" surrounding the definition and meaning of globalization arise from the fact that scholars, analysts, international actors and policy makers who write, do so from different disciplinary backgrounds and standpoints as scholars, analysts and international actors.

Be that as it may, the vast majority of extant literatures on globalization present it as a characteristic of economic activity. For instance, Arzeni (1994: 175) defines globalization as "the integration and merging of national economies as a result of transnational activities of firms". For Dhanapala (2001: 2) globalization is simply a "largely commercial process involving rapid increase in the exchange of goods, capital and services across national frontiers". And from the World Bank perspective, globalization refers to "the deepening of economic integration among countries of the world" (World Bank, 2001: 1).

The merits of the above definitions notwithstanding, it is unhelpful to define globalization from the economic aspect in isolation. This is because globalization is much more than changes in international economic relations or building of a global economy. Consequently, we assert in line with Mittelman (2000: 6) that globalization means a historical transformation in the economy of livelihoods and modes of existence; in politics, a loss in the degree of control exercised such that the locus of power gradually shifts in varying proportions above and below the territorial state; and in culture, a devaluation of a collectivity's achievements or perceptions of them. From the foregoing, it can be asserted with a degree of certainty that globalization is a broad process permeating the whole world with far-reaching ramifications covering economic, political and cultural dimensions of contemporary life (Ibrahim, 2002: 2).

Equally controversial is the origin of globalization. But there is a somewhat agreement among scholars that globalization has a long historical process dating back to the "fifteenth and sixteenth centuries" (Walters, 1995: 4). Odock (2002) supports this view. According to him, the current widespread usage of the term globalization could be misleading if one does not appreciate the fact that it is a new concept fashioned to describe an essentially old process of the gradual incorporation of the world into a unified market that has been part of the worldwide expansion of capitalism in the past three centuries. Although other scholars such as Hoogvelt (1997:114) and Dhanapala (2002: 2) have asserted that globalization as a concept made its debut in western public policy circles in the mid 1980s, replacing terms like internationalization and trans-nationalization, they, however, agree that the process which it describes is not a recent phenomenon.

The state – system as was designed by the Westphalia Treaty is meant to function on the dual principle of sovereignty and territoriality – "centralized political units conceived in territorial terms and subject to no superior authority" (Holsti, 1992:39).

Thus the two core attributes of the Westphalia state – system are territorial authority and sovereignty. Applied to relations within states, sovereignty involves the belief that there is a final and absolute authority in society on the one hand. On the other hand, when sovereignty is applied to relations among states, it expresses the antithesis of
this belief, i.e. the principle that internationally, over and above a collection of societies, no supreme authority exists (Knutsen, 1992:3). These two attributes of the state differentiate the state from ethnic nationalities and nations.

However, if the state – system and classical international relations from Westphalia to the Second World War were built upon the doctrine of sure and certain frontiers marked by rivers, seas, mountains, hills or natural forests, globalization has developed on the questioning of these core attributes of the state on the one hand, and a search for a world without frontiers on the other (Macmillan & Linklater, 1995; Barnet & Mueller, 1974). The phenomenon of globalization as noted by these scholars has turned the whole planet earth into a “global village” such that every point on planet earth is in constant and close touch with the rest of the world. Thus, rather than constitute barriers to international or cross border transactions, national borders appear to have either become permeable, obsolescent or irrelevant to relations between individuals and groups living on different points of the earth. From the assertions made above, Odock (2006:327) concisely defined globalization as “the process of growing acceleration in interaction, exchange and communications as well as investment flows across the globe as a result of improvement in communications, military, production and transportation technologies.” However, even though many scholars have sought to emphasize this threat to the state – system posed by globalization, a number of other studies have shown that globalization actually stimulates forces of opposition and sows the seed of conflict and tension (Rasmussen, 2001).

III. Globalization and State Fragmentation
While it is taken for granted that a major feature of international relations since the twentieth century has been the increasing process of globalization which has not only completely transformed our commonly held notions of time and space, but has also turned the whole planet earth into a global village, it must as well be noted that there has equally been, especially within the same century, an obverse side of globalization, to wit: fragmentation and disintegration. Summarizing the twentieth century, Clark (1997:1) writes;

The century saw the creation of hitherto unattainable wealth but ever wider gaps in its distribution. Above all, the century was characterized by the greater interconnectedness of events on a global basis, while simultaneously being subject to political processes of rupture and disintegration: it has been an age of globalization and fragmentation.

Svetlicic (1996:81) also submits that the process of political disintegration is the other side of the same coin of the process of international economic integration. He further observes that;

With the globalization of the world economy, we are also witnessing the disintegration of old states and the emergence of new ones.

The difference between globalization and fragmentation is that whereas globalization denotes integration, interdependence, unilateralism, openness, and interpenetration, fragmentation expresses itself in many ways; autarchy, multilateralism, disintegration, heterogeneity, and separation. Ironically however, rather than integrate and unify the international political, economic and socio-cultural system, globalization stimulates forces of opposition and sows the seed
of conflict and tension. How is this done? According to Rasmussen (2001), over the course of the latter half of the twentieth century, the world has experienced a hitherto unprecedented growth in economic wealth, and an expansion of mass communication technologies. In the industrial age, Rasmussen continues, this would have tended to stabilize the national entities since it would have created a placid and culturally homogenized situation. But the effect in the post-industrialized world is the opposite. This curious contradiction, according to Rasmussen (2001), has been caused by the fact that with more than enough wealth at hand, and with the tolls of a new technology giving completely new means of interaction between minorities, the way has been paved for a resurgence of nationalist thinking so that all over the western world (and slowly, in the rest of the world), minority groups are creating states of their own.

In North America for instance, the Native American tribal groups are reclaiming their sovereignties, slowly but with increasing confidence. In Europe, minority groups long forgotten and thought to be wholly assimilated are stating their case for autonomy and/or independence. Examples such as the Czechs and the Slovaks of the former Czechoslovakia; Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia of former Yugoslavia; Eritrea, and recently, Southern Sudan, abound. The list is long and seemingly inexhaustive and where the situation is not mature for peaceful grants of their rights, the nations are taking their case to the "courts of appeal", that is, the battle field as witnessed in the horrors of the former Yugoslavia.

In 1918, the Slovenes joined the Serbs and Croats in forming a new multinational state, which was named Yugoslavia in 1929. Dissatisfied with the exercise of power by the majority Serbs, the Slovenes succeeded in establishing their independence in 1991 after a 10-year war. Even though Croatia which was part of the Union declared its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991 like Slovenia, it took four years of sporadic, but often bitter, fighting before occupying Serb armies were cleared from Croatian lands. The crisis occasioned by the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991 has remained one of the worst humanitarian crises the world over (Ekanem, 2006:308).

Another case in point is the defunct Czechoslovakia. Following the World War I, the closely related Czechs and Slovaks of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire merged to form Czechoslovakia. During the inter-war years, the new country’s leaders were preoccupied with meeting the demands of other ethnic minorities within the republic, most notably the Sudeten Germans and the Ruthenians (Ukrainians). After World War II, a truncated Czechoslovakia fell within the Soviet sphere of influence. With the collapse of Soviet Union in 1989, Czechoslovakia regained its freedom through a peaceful “velvet Revolution”. On January 1, 1993, the country underwent a “velvet divorce” into its two national components, the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Rasmussen, 2001: 4).

In Africa, Yeno (2002) describes the devastating disintegration of various states by ethnic nationalities trying to establish their sovereignty as fallout of the process of globalization. According to him, the immediate expression of globalization in the form of "unruly chaotic entities" on the African continent was an outburst of conflicts which increased in tempo and scope between 1989 and 2000. From Liberia, Cote d’Ivoire and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where high and low intensity internal conflicts plagued both the individual countries and the entire continent, to Burundi, Somalia,
Sudan and the Central Africa where an era of conflicts have been triggered by the Rwandan genocide which has directly created geo-political turmoil in the region, Yeno (2002) locates this spate of socio-political conflicts in the desire by various ethnic nationalities to establish their autonomy and sovereign states. A good case in point in Africa is Eritrea which was “awarded” to Ethiopia in 1952 as part of a federation. Ethiopia’s annexation of Eritrea as a province ten years later sparked a 30-year armed struggle for independence that ended in 1991 with Eritrean rebels defeating government forces; independence was overwhelmingly approved in 1993 referendum.

Another case study in Africa is Southern Sudan; the newest sovereign state in the world. While Sudan's recent history is a complex web of conflict, one thing stands out; the union of religion and identity has shaped the course of Sudan's institutions, international relations, and internal problems. What are now the modern states of South Sudan and Sudan were part of Egypt under the Muhammad Ali Dynasty, later being governed as an Anglo-Egyptian condominium until Sudanese independence was achieved in 1956. Following the First Sudanese Civil War, the Southern Sudan Autonomous Region was formed in 1972 and lasted until 1983. A second Sudanese civil war soon developed and ended with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005. Later that year, southern autonomy was restored when an Autonomous Government of Southern Sudan was formed. South Sudan became an independent state on 9 July 2011. On 14 July 2011, South Sudan became a United Nations member state. It joined the African Union on 28 July 2011. Nigeria is not left out. Since independence in 1960 the state has remained a federation where ethnic cleavages and rivalries are tearing the centre apart.

From the foregoing, it could be asserted that the unintended destabilizing effect of globalization may yet produce a world far more fragmented into states than the present one especially, since the breakdown of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the end of the cold war deadlock.

IV. Conclusion

Thus, we submit from the foregoing analysis that the process of globalization is not contributing to the withering away of nations, ethnic and/or tribal groups. Neither is it creating a new basis for their mutual coexistence in the framework of national (states) or regional communities. Even the much taunted concept of "global culture" that has so much tasked the intellectual capabilities of sociologists (Robertson, 1992; Giddens, 1990; Harvey, 1989) has a big question mark dangling over its head. Robertson (1992: 18) asserts that globalization involves "the development of something like a global culture". But the problem which arises from Robertson's development of a global culture is that culture must naturally be located and tied down to a definable physical space and many, such as Waters (1995: 256), doubt the viability of the notion of culture without any identifiable community.

It is therefore, not to be assumed, as Svetlicic (1996) has noted, that globalization will bring about the elimination of nation-states or ethnic nationalities and their characteristics or cultures. On the contrary, they are persisting in spite of all universalization tendencies.
References


