

What Is A State?

READING ITEM 3

Globalization and the Changed Role of State in International Relations

This reading item is based on the Chapter 3 [*The State as an Actor of International Cooperation. Globalization and the Changed Role of State in International Relations* written by Zsuzsanna Fejes] of the book *Interstate Relations* (Szeged, 2018), edited by Anikó Szalai - Zsuzsanna Fejes and Márton Sulyok.

INTRODUCTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

*Globalization intensified during the past century and it did not only transformed economic and social processes, but also the state's position and role in the emerging world order as consequence of the Westphalian peace built on the sovereign equality of nation-states, on non-intervention and on the binding principles of international law.¹ Nowadays, in the 21st century, we cannot speak only about states themselves, they have to be placed in the international and global world order, in which, besides the states, **non-state (economic and social) actors** have also gained ground, having a significant influence on the different (subnational, supranational, transnational) levels of interstate relations. Consequently, all the actors of the global world order ended up in a close **interaction** with the state and with each other, which created their **interdependence**.*

Learning outcomes

- 1. Understanding how globalization influences states and statehood*
- 2. Understanding the key challenges of 21st century globalization faced by the states*

Keywords: *globalization, changed state roles, sustainable development, climate change, human rights, interstate relations, international relations, global world order, international crime, migration*

Necessary time: 2 hours

¹ TAKÁCS 2008, 163.

1.4. Possible Interpretations of Globalization

New methods and analytical frameworks have emerged regarding globalization processes, and new perspectives have been developed in international literature.

*One of the most wide-spread definitions of globalization comes from Thomas Friedman, who considers it as “the inexorable **integration of markets, nation-states and technologies** to a degree never witnessed before – in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations and nation-states to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper and cheaper than ever before.”²*

Anthony Giddens sees the essence of globalization in the increasing **intensification** of worldwide **social relationships** and describes it as a process in which places many miles apart have such close bonds, which results in an event occurring at one place of the world has a simultaneous effect at another place of the world, influencing events there, and this interaction is mutual.³ Globalization therefore means “*the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life*”.⁴

According to other approaches, globalization is essentially a **power-economic process**, in which the most powerful actors of world economy intend to unify and universalize economic and political rules. In this process, they keep their own interests in mind, they try to define the legal and regulatory framework, and they conduct their activities through the most important international institutions.⁵

Karen Mingst describes globalization as the growing political, economic, communication and cultural integration of the world, in which the following **challenges** present themselves to the states:

- 1) **Politically**, the state faces such global issues that **governments cannot solve on their own**.
- 2) **Economically**, the interconnection of states and financial markets becomes more and more unclear because, with the appearance of MNCs and with the internationalization of production and consumption, states **are unable to maintain** the regulation of their own economic policies.
- 3) **In the field of communication and culture**, with the spread of new technologies, the flow and use of information **can no longer be controlled by the states on their own**.⁶

² FRIEDMAN 1999, 27. Cited by MINGST 2011, 264.

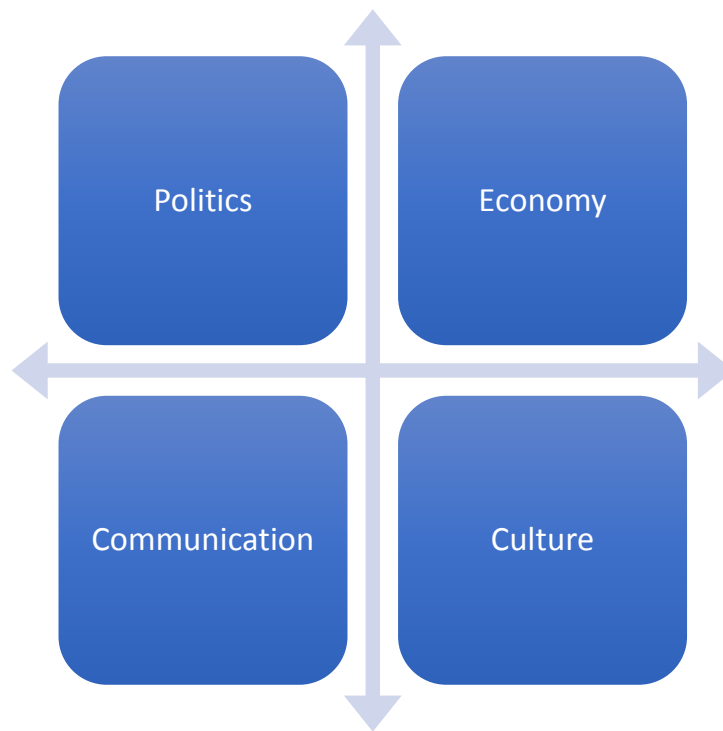
³ GIDDENS 1990, 64.

⁴ MCGREW – HELD – GOLDBLATT – PERRATON 1999, 2.

⁵ VERESS 2009, 401-416.

⁶ MINGST 2011, 145-146.

1.5. The Impacts of Globalization on Statehood – Theoretical Approaches



In analyzing globalization processes, the following questions arise: (i) **how they affect state power** and state involvement; (ii) which are the most important changes faced by the state.⁷

POLITICS

In the global force field of the second half of the 20th century such political and economic structures have emerged that are not created on a territorial basis, and even though states may become members, nevertheless they are often made up of public and private actors. The most important feature of these structures is that they **cross national borders**. They can be created at local, regional, national and supranational levels, while they remain the core elements of the international system. Their specialty is that they prevail beyond the state and the national territory, by 'reaching over them', they influence global politics and economics. Thus, actual political control is transferred out of the control of the nation state, which brings about the **weakening of territorial nation-states** (deterritorialization).⁸ For this reason, a lot of people see the greatest threats and impacts of globalization primarily in the erosion of national self-determination and of state sovereignty, as in **the placement of decision-making outside of the respective countries**.⁹

⁷ PIERRE 2013, 1-37.

⁸ PONGRÁCZ 2016, 14.

⁹ SZILÁGYI 2009, 65-69.

ECONOMICS

In the economic sense, the process of globalization is the process of shaping the **world economy** into an organic system, the essence of which is that economic relations and affairs extend to more and more countries and territories, while their (often asymmetric) interdependence intensifies and deepens – also starting to erode more and more the frameworks of national economy. With this, naturally, the actual scope and power of government policy diminishes, while the legitimation of supranational “governing mechanisms” becomes the task of nation-states.¹⁰

As Paul Kennedy writes: the supranational tendencies weakened the independence and role of the state, and no adequate substitute was created, which could have replaced it as a fundamental unit responding to the change in the world.¹¹

COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

The effects of globalization increase the role and influence of external, international factors not only in politics and in economy (as seen above) but also in other areas of social life. In the era of globalization, the emergence and organization of **social networks and processes** exceed territorial-based power, whereupon it is increasingly difficult to clearly distinguish domestic affairs from foreign affairs. In cyberspace, the digitalized world connected through electronic networks, numerous functional institutions and places are created, which enjoy the benefit of being extraterritorial, if you will, within the borders of sovereign states, which renders states unable to control the flow of information.¹² The proliferation of the use of the Internet has played a significant and determinative role in this process, by facilitating communication between the actors of international relations and by making possible the monopolization of the possessing information. This process is closely linked to the internationalization of civil society, the emergence and strengthening of the so-called **global civil society**.¹³

According to *Samuel Huntington's* seminal work (*Clash of Civilizations*) the most important international fault lines developed alongside the respective civilizations, and the sharpest oppositions will also be determined by the different **civilizations based on cultural and religious identities**. In this process, globalization, regionalization and the loss of cultural identity also refer to the decline of the influence of the nation-state level, meaning the weakening of national engagement. The author uses the term global ‘turmoil’ to describe the upcoming situation, characterized (in his view) by the collapse of governing power, the disintegration of states, the intensification of ethnic, religious and tribal conflicts, the internationalization of mafia-type crime, the flood of tens of millions of refugees, and the multiplication of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, the spread of terrorism, the frequentation of ethnic cleansing and genocide.¹⁴

¹⁰ SZENTES 2002, 710-713.

¹¹ KENNEDY 1997. 130.

¹² BAYER 2013, 380.; CASTELLS 2005, 152-206.; EGEDY 2017, 188.

¹³ ANHEIER – GLASIUS – KALDOR 2014.

¹⁴ HUNTINGTON 1997

Robert Gilpin, however, posits that serious attacks affect the nation-state not only from the outside, but also from the domestic environment. *“Within many nations, **the politics of identity and ethnic conflicts is challenging the integrity of states**, as ethnic and regional groups seek independence or at least greater autonomy. Yet it is important to understand that the Kurds, Palestinians, and many other groups all want nation-states of their own; they do not wish to eliminate nation-states but to divide present nation-states into units that they themselves can control.”*¹⁵

Besides presenting the above globalization challenges affecting the state, it must unquestionably be pointed out that, on the one hand, the process of globalization does not have the same intensity everywhere and, on the other hand, it is an extremely complex phenomenon that cannot be traced back to a single dimension, thus cannot automatically be interpreted either as political or as economic, nor as cultural homogenization. Although the process **goes beyond national borders, it does not eliminate the significance of the territorial principle** or endanger the concept of the sovereign state emerging as a result of the Westphalian system.¹⁶

1.6. The Changed Tasks of the State in the Global World Order

Globalization does not impact the state in the 21st century in the aspects that were presented in the previous chapter, but also significantly transforms the place and role of state in international order, revealing new issues to and tasks to be solved by the states.



¹⁵ GILPIN 2004, 362-363.

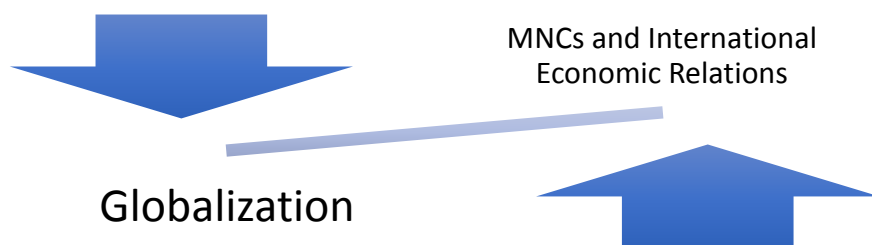
¹⁶ EGEDY 2017, 264.

A. World Economy – The State’s Economic Engagement

After WWII, up until the early 1960s, the establishment of interstate relations aimed at avoiding war and creating peace. The primary and most important actors in this ‘network-building’ were the states. From the 1960s and the 1970s, however, the emphasis was placed on the relationship between states and the market. For states, the most important challenge became how economic goals can be achieved through state policies and vice versa: how can the economy contribute to the strengthening of public (state) positions and of policies. As a result, **economic relations between nation-states** intensified, resulting in the widening of trade, investment and financial transactions, **exceeding the framework of national economy**. This was reinforced by the rapid strengthening of the development of information technology, enabling the rapid and efficient bridging of physical distances. Thus, states have not only formulated political objectives, but economic measures and processes have become increasingly more emphatic (on the part of states) in the system of interstate relations.¹⁷

After WWII, MNCs emerged reaching beyond state frameworks in an increasing number, characterized by not having their own production or service facilities (or those, which they control) in their home state (where they are seated), and having the headquarters of decision-making and the place of their actual operations in different countries. MNCs act on a global scale, but their (economic, employment and environmental) impacts affect the local level, so their decisions have a significant impact on the economic policies of nation-states.¹⁸

*With the emergence of **economic globalization**, the expectations for **the economic responsibility of national governments** have increased. By the 21st century, the three macro-regions: North America, Western Europe and East Asia (global triad) account for more than 80% of the world’s industrial production and total exports, while China produces significant growth, but the development of Japan in the Pacific Region and of the “Four Asian Tigers” (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore) should also be emphasized.¹⁹ Without such an expanding and systematized world economy, interstate relations cannot be interpreted in their entirety at present. World economy significantly impacts the national economies of each state, which then influences the states’ domestic policies. This interaction is valid vice versa, it is mutual.*



How National Economies are Superseded?

¹⁷ MINGST 2011, 263.

¹⁸ EGEDY 2017, 210.

¹⁹ Ibid. 198.

B. The North-South Development Gap – Demographic and Health problems, Protection of life

Globalization of the world economy had many advantages and opportunities for development for all states of the world, but it also had serious consequences: it generated **global inequality and a development gap** between the **core and the periphery** of world economy, between **the North and the South**.²⁰

***The North** comprises the majority of the world's industrialized countries, while **the South** consists of less developed, developing countries.²¹ The name North-South refers, beyond geographic aspects, to such serious global inequalities as population problems, starvation and drinking water shortages, because of which the Southern countries urge dramatic changes in the system of interstate relations.²² This, in turn, also expands traditional state tasks and increases the responsibility of the international community (including each state) towards developing countries.*

Since **population growth** is not evenly distributed, one of the most dramatic consequences of the backwardness of the South is the proliferation of population problems, as the demographic rates of the developing world are much higher than those of the developed world. Countries with a high population growth rate need to find a response to this problem, and this places states in a major moral dilemma (e.g. birth control). In the context of population growth, **starvation, spread of diseases and epidemics** are waiting to be resolved in less developed countries. Nevertheless, economic and social globalization make individuals and communities living in other states vulnerable worldwide to infectious diseases and epidemics. This made it clear that the demographical problem, the preservation of human health and the protection of life by public goods **not only affect the given states**, but also their neighboring countries, and thus becomes the **problem of the international community**, affecting the whole world.²³ The WHO was created by the UN in 1948 for manage such problems.

At the same time, we must see that for the 21st century, within the third world (more or less treated as a unity), a much deeper differentiation is under way. The developing countries of Latin America and Africa paint two very different pictures, while some of the East Asian countries, also called 'developmental states' (as the above-mentioned Asian Tigers, Malaysia, and Thailand), have made promising progress and with their active state engagement, via a market economy. Building on their own civilizational and cultural character, they became successfully industrialized states through prioritizing education policy. At the same time, the third world has 'failed states' such as Afghanistan, Somalia and

²⁰ GOLDSTEIN –PEVEHOUSE 2014. 21-23.

²¹ The delimitation of the North-South and the distinction between developed and less-developed/emerging countries appears in the European Commission report, spearheaded by Willy Brandt, West German Chancellor in 1980. EGEDY 2017, 220.; The Human Development Index (HDI) is applied at international level for measuring and comparing the human development of each country.

²² EGEDY 2017, 220-234.

²³ MINGST 2011, 312-315.

Libya, which are unable to perform basic state functions, but many overpopulated Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan also show signs of such decline.²⁴

C. International Movements, International Crime

Problems of the developing world, poverty and starvation, as well as internal destruction trigger newer globalization phenomena as they reinforce **migration and emigration** at the center of attention today. Further new state tasks are outlined in this context, e.g., in administrative issues regarding those affected by migration, in facilitating their social integration and in overcoming linguistic barriers.

At the same time, the migration process can spectacularly amplify the emergence of new illegal labor markets, the rise of illicit markets, and the various forms of smuggling and international crime. Globalization facilitates the commission of crimes by providing for rapid communication and finding flexible networks through technological development, while electronic financial systems also offer opportunities for new types of abuse. **Reducing the growth of international crime** is one of the most pressing challenges of our days and it appears as a task to be solved by the states. States cannot handle these challenges on their own, the changed state responsibilities lie in international cooperation and joint action, in the harmonization of electronic systems; however, unfortunately, the states can often hardly find solutions on their own level to problems arising from bureaucracy, difficult procedures and from the lack of communication between agencies.²⁵

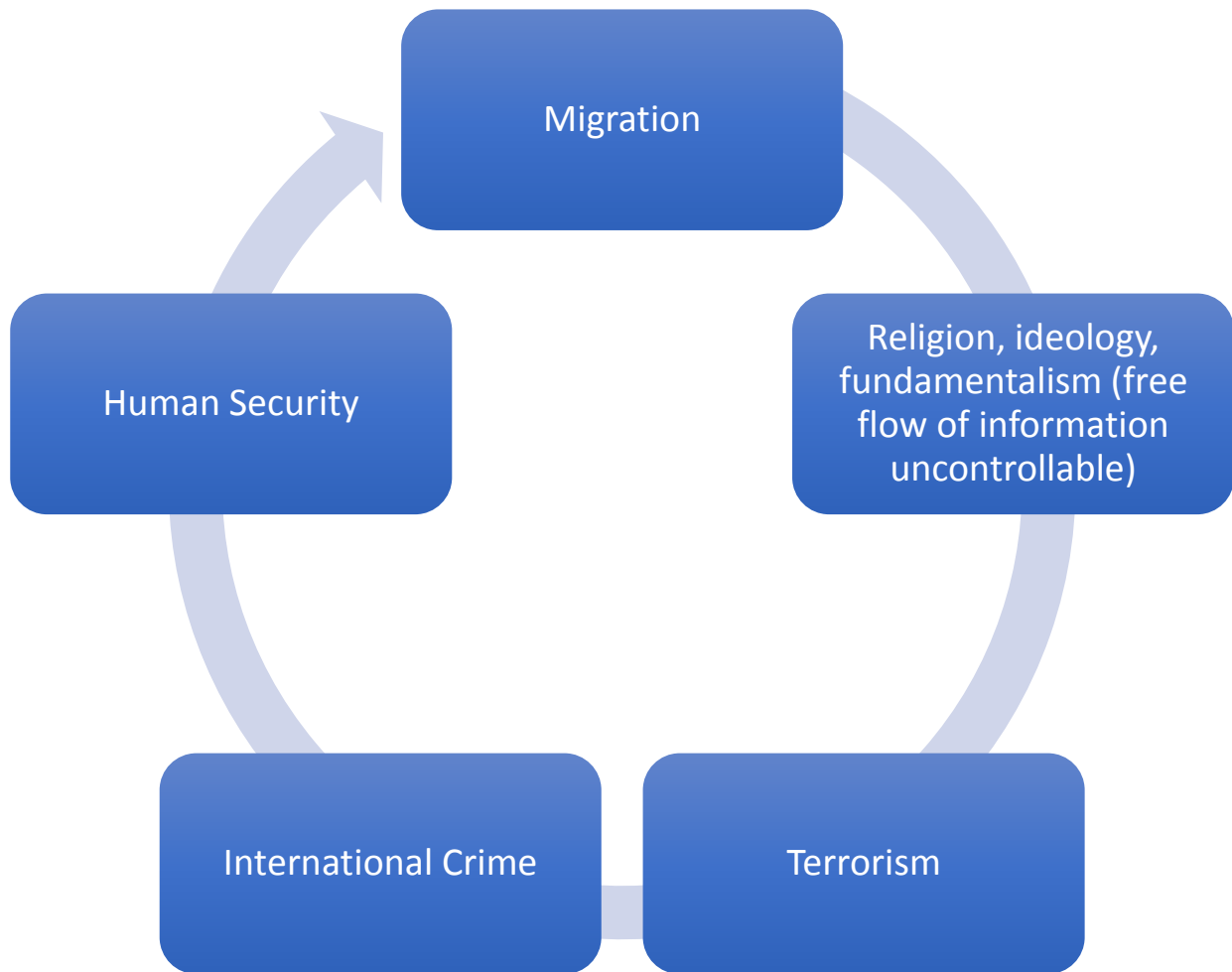
*The **emergence of movements intensified based on religion and ideology**, the **rise of Islamic fundamentalism**, world-wide **terrorism** and the **management of relevant security policy challenges** constitute new types of global tasks. Cultural differences separating the state political communities now rather have religious and cultural characteristics than ideological ones, and these impact the international system. The content of the state's former external functions (instead of the state's defense and security) increasingly shifts towards **human security**.²⁶ At the same time, the global communication and technological revolution, as described above, led to a new interpretation of geographic space, and eliminated the former interpretations of space and time through mass media networks, virtual and cyberspace. States are not able to influence or **control the free flow of information and ideas** by traditional means, thus, they shall fight against new challenges regarding control over their citizens (and those who stay within national territory).*

²⁴ EGEDY 2017, 235-236.

²⁵ MINGST 2011, 146.

²⁶ EGEDY 2017, 77-78.,189., 249.

The Dynamics and Cyclical Nature of International Migration on Changing State Functions



D. The Protection of Environmental and Natural Resources, Climate Change – Sustainable Development

By the 21st century, humanity faced that economic growth reached and at some points exceeded the limits of the Earth's load bearing capacity.²⁷ Earth's natural resources are finite and states shall face the problem that conflicting interests appear often in connection with economic development (market laws), **environmental protection** and resource management, harmonization and reconciliation of which often falls back into the lap of states.

Environmental pollution does not respect state borders, while containing it is the task of individual states, even if it does not directly affect their territories. In the 21st century, such a definite environmental problem is **global warming**, causing extreme weather conditions, resulting in **drinking water shortages**, and it may cause **ozone depletion** and tearing directly threatening every living organism.²⁸

²⁷ Ibid. 238-239.

²⁸ EGEDY 2017, 240.

Guaranteeing sustainable development is listed as a new, 21st century state task.



Sustainability means the elaboration of such strategies that support change but do not destroy the environment and spare reserves, while guaranteeing that future generations can also benefit from their advantages.²⁹ In the spirit of sustainable development, the UN convened the first World Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, than it held several similar international environmental conferences and international legal documents were born (Rio de Janeiro, Framework Convention on Climate Change 1992, Kyoto Protocol 1997, Johannesburg 2002, Copenhagen 2009; Paris Agreement 2015). While more than 200 international environmental conventions are in force today, the extent of progress in resolving the ecological crisis is relatively small.³⁰

The issue of environmental protection is closely linked to the **ensuring the right to a healthy environment** belonging to the third generation of human rights, which also appears as a new task of the state (and of the international community) and directly affects the quality of our individual and collective lives.

²⁹ MINGST 2011, 310-311.

³⁰ EGEDY 2017, 244-246.

CHALLENGES OF GLOBALIZATION OVER THE MODERN STATE

- 1) *The governments of the respective states more intensively take note of the fact that they have narrower possibilities to enforce efficient regulation in the global force field;*
- 2) *The relationship of governments and citizens becomes looser, thus the influence of states on their citizens decreases;*
- 3) *The state is less and less able to perform its tasks independently; state functions shall be accomplished increasingly through international cooperation, while*
- 4) *The need of states to establish and to build relations with one another and efficiently manage these relations increases more intensively; finally*
- 5) *The number of those international non-state actors increases more intensively and permanently, who possess more and more rights formerly pertinent to the purview of state sovereignty (e.g. legislation) and who try to control globalization processes.³¹*

Questions for Self-Check

1. *What kind of interpretation possibilities has the concept of globalization?*
2. *How does the role of the state change in the globalizing world?*
3. *What are the challenges for the state in the 21st century international order?*

³¹ HELD 1991, 196-235. Cited by PONGRÁCZ 2016, 13.

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