

Principles of the westphalian state system politics essay



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Since the end of the Cold War the term globalization has become an integral part of the discourse of nature of international scene. Globalization is commonly used in relation with contemporary deterritorialisation and global economic integration, and together with world order it implies that there is a shift in balance between the state sovereignty and the international authority (Lyons and Mastanduno 1995). This suggests that globalization is a new phenomenon resulting from the end of the Cold War. Furthermore it precludes the end of the Westphalian state system or at least puts it under pressure. I start this essay with the principles of the Westphalian state system, followed by the question: "When started globalization?"

Subsequently by a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Westphalian state system, I argue that globalization is new as a 'buzzword', but the process advanced together with the development of civilizations, and globalization questions the fundament of the Westphalian state system.

Principles of the Westphalian state system

In the sixteenth century the rising European empires encountered each other on the Eurasia continent, as well as in their colonies. Inevitably this resulted in numerous conflicts and wars. To end these conflicts and wars in 1648 the Peace of Westphalia was signed. This ended two major wars, the Thirty Year's War in Central Europe and the Eighty Year's War between Spain and the Dutch Republic. The charter of the Peace of Westphalia permanently organized Europe on an anti-hegemonial principle. Consequently this negotiated Westphalian settlement legitimized a commonwealth of sovereign states (Watson 1992). Sovereignty and authority of states are the two basic principles of the Westphalian state system. Sovereignty suggests that states

are equal in status, are not supposed to intervene with the internal business of other states, in principle a state has the right to do whatever they want on its territory, and the state has international recognition. The authority of a state is endorsed by free choice of political system, control over its territory and the people living on it, its taxing authority, its legal order and absolute monopoly of power (Krasner 1999). Therefore with the principles of the Westphalian state system a state can act in the international world of anarchy, and in this system the state is the ideal case congruency of government, people, nation and religion, thus of all social systems.

When started globalization?

By answering this question it can be determined if the end of the Cold War started globalization. Robertson started his work "Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture" with the phrase: "Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole." (Robertson 1992). In "Global Transformations" it is argued that globalization started around 9,000-11,000 years ago, when civilizations developed the capacity to engage in the long distance of power and even longer distance of trade (Held, et al. 1999). Above arguments imply that globalization is not new phenomenon, but it is related with the evolution of civilizations. Furthermore four historical periods of globalization are distinguished in "Global Transformations": pre-modern (before 1500), early-modern (1500 - 1850), modern (1850 - 1945), and contemporary globalization (after 1945) (Held, et al. 1999). Until the 1980s globalism, and subsequently the word 'globalization' generally figured little in conception in social life and the academic spectrum. When discussing

world affairs, nearly always the word ‘ international relations’ was used (Kofman and Youngs 1996). This is also acknowledged by Robertson: “ The process and actions to which the concept of globalization now refers have been proceeding, with some interruptions, for many centuries, but the main discussing of globalization is on relatively recent times.” (Robertson 1992). With the above arguments it is not possible to define an exact moment or historical event that triggered the start of globalization; however these arguments do demonstrate that the process of globalization started long before the end of the Cold War. Furthermore there is a remarkable resemblance in the historical periods of globalization and the evolvement of the Westphalian state system.

Quantitative analysis of the Westphalian state system

The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945 after the Second World War by 51 countries committed to maintaining international peace and security (United Nations 2013). Since the founding the number of states recognized by the United Nations has grown to 193[1]. The first peak caused by former colonies becoming sovereign states; this resulted in 59 new states recognized between 1954 and 1965. The second peak occurred after the end of the Cold War; this resulted in 38 new states recognized between 1989 and the present day (United Nations 2013). When I examine these 38 new states, the following distinction can be made 20 states are a direct result and 18 states are not a direct result from the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and Soviet Union. From these figures the following two conclusions are deduced. First, compared with the end of colonization, the Cold War only delivered a limited quantity of new states. Second, since the

end of the Second World War the steady growth in the number sovereign states, suggests that there is a profound reason for states to adopt the principles of the Westphalian state system.

Qualitative analysis of the Westphalian state system

The beginning of the sixteenth century is the conventional starting date for what has been called the ‘rise of the west’ (Held, et al. 1999) (McNeill 1963).

In this period the European peoples acquired the technology and power which eventually exceeded those of other civilizations and the subsequent creation of European global empires (McNeill 1963). In 1648, with the Peace Treaties of Westphalia, a new principle for a ‘states system’ was introduced.

The writers of the Napoleonic period were mainly responsible for giving the principles of the Westphalian state system currency (Bull 1977). The

Westphalian state system did not end the European wars during the early modern and modern periods of globalization; “it provided a paradigm for international relations.”

The era of classical globalization ended with the Second World War. Structural consequences of this war, exhaustion of the

old European powers, Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, and a new political order with the arousal of the United Nations,

oversaw an immense wave of decolonization, independence, and state

formation. Furthermore the dissolution of Soviet Union, gave way for a new mosaic in nation states (Held, et al. 1999). These states adopted the

principles of sovereignty and authority of the Westphalian state system.

Furthermore contemporary globalization after the Second World War

provoked deterritorialisation, global economic integration, and an

information revolution in the ‘western world’ (Brinkel and Rothman 2013),

that would fundamentally question the principles of the Westphalian state system. This process came to full speed with the end of the Cold War and the emerging of the information age at the same time. Buzan and Little argue, that the world is divided into a 'zone of peace' where the Westphalian/realist logic is of diminishing importance, but it remains substantially in force for thinking about much of the 'zone of conflict' (Buzan and Little 1999). This is striking articulated by Scholte: "with cruel irony, most new, postcolonial states (established in the time of accelerated globalization and the major rise of supra territoriality) obtained Westphalian sovereignty in name at the very moment that the principle ceased to be realizable in practice." (Scholte 2005).

In conclusion

In the period of early modern globalization, the Westphalian state system evolved from the Westphalian Peace Treaties in 1648. This system of sovereignty and authority provided the states with a set of principles by which they could act within the international world of anarchy. With the Second World War the period of modern globalization ended and a new era of contemporary globalization emerged. In the period of decolonization, and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, new states arose. These new states in the 'conflict zone' of the world, adopted the principles of the Westphalian state system. In the same period after the Second World War the process of deterritorialisation, global economic integration, and information revolution in the 'western world' or 'peace zone' would fundamentally question the Westphalian state system. Despite the word 'globalization' was not used until the end of the twentieth century, and coincidentally became a '

buzzword' with the end of the Cold War, the process is stimulated since early history by the development of civilizations. The end of the Cold War did accelerate contemporary globalization, but it is since the end of the Second World War that the Westphalian state system is under pressure.