Abstract. Globalization has been one of the most significant concepts of our time in terms not only of academic discussions but also of public debates. Accordingly, there has emerged a substantial literature in social sciences focusing on different aspects of it and utilizing different theoretical and methodological perspectives. This article presents a critical assessment of the literature on one aspect of the issue: globalization’s relationship to the nation-state with reference to Turkey. After a conceptual discussion of globalization in general, I first present the standard approach – that it has caused the ‘retreat of the nation-state’ – dividing it into three categories: economic, political and social-cultural. I then discuss various criticisms of this paradigm, finding neither of the two paradigms satisfactory, and thus present an alternative approach in the form of Michael Mann’s view of globalization, which is more comprehensive and adequate, arguing that the aforementioned relationship is multi-directional and multi-dimensional. In the second part of this paper, I discuss, from a macro-sociological perspective, the relationships between economic, political and cultural globalizations and Turkey as an empirical application of the alternative approach, taking the globalization of Istanbul as a case in point.

JEL Classification Codes: F01, F02.
Keywords: Globalization, Istanbul, the nation-state, Turkey

* Nurullah Ardiç, İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi, Sosyoloji Bölümü, İstanbul. E-mail: nurullahardic@sehir.edu.tr
1. Introduction

‘Globalization’ has become a hot topic in social sciences in the last three decades. Although it is used casually in everyday, and sometimes academic, language to refer to a single phenomenon, it is not a single, unified process. Rather, it has several dimensions. We can identify, following Keohane and Nye (1989), four main dimensions of globalization: economic (long-distance flow of goods, services, capital and its organization), military (long-distance networks of interdependence in which force is employed, including wars and threats), environmental (long-distance transfer of materials in the atmosphere and oceans and of biological substances that affect human health), social and cultural (movements of ideas, meanings, information, images and people). Scholars assume different definitions of the term globalization emphasizing different aspects of it. For this reason, there is little agreement in the literature on the nature of this process.

Some scholars stress the economic dimension identifying an economic integration on a global scale (see, among others, Beck, 2001; Sassen, 2001; Strange, 2001). The idea of the domination of the (capitalist) “world-economy” (Wallerstein, 1974) was once a favored topic in some circles. Other scholars emphasize the political integration of individual states as a primary dimension of globalization (e.g. Hirst & Thompson, 1996; Johnson, 2000; Krasner, 2001; Rosenau, 2001), while some focus on environmental degradation on a global scale (see Beck, 1992; Goldblatt, 1997). Still others stress the strictly cultural aspect (Smith 1990; Nash 2000; Appadurai, 2001; Herman & McChesney, 1997, 2001). Finally, some scholars see this process more broadly in ‘social’ terms as, for example, the intensification social relations across the globe (Giddens, 1990) and the compression of time and space reordering all spheres of social life (Harvey, 1989). Thus, it is safe to argue, following Andreas Wimmer (2001) who criticizes the epistemological foundations of ‘globalization’ as a singular concept, that this process is a multi-dimensional one involving different aspects and hybrid, uneven transformations.

---

1 Another form of globalization, the political one, that is, the large-scale movement of political ideas and systems, is included within the ‘social’ dimension in this schema. See Keohane and Nye (1989: 6).
There is also the issue of whether the process of globalization is ‘old’ or ‘new’. While such authors as Ash Amin (1997) and Susan Strange (2001) see it as a new phenomenon that emerged in the last decades of the 20th century, many scholars challenge this argument (see Wallerstein, 1974; Harvey, 1989; Drache, 1996; Mann, 2001). In this context, Keohane and Nye (1989: 7; see also Held 1995a) make a useful distinction between what they call “thick” and “thin” globalization, where the latter term refers to historically earlier, smaller-scale, less complex economic and cultural links involving small groups, such as the ‘silk road’, and the former refers to today’s highly complex and more intensive and extensive global relationships.

Contemporary ‘thick’ globalization also has implications for another product of modernity: the nation-state. For many scholars, globalization has been recently reducing, outflanking or undercutting the powers of national states over social life. It thus undermines the sovereignty and autonomy of nation-states all over the globe. In this article I will review the literature on the relationship between globalization and the nation-state as it pertains to three major domains of life (economy, politics and culture), presenting first the argument for the ‘retreat’ of the nation-state and then a critique of it in light of different theoretical approaches. In order to locate my macro-level empirical analysis a general picture of the debate on the relationship between globalization and the nation-state is necessary. I build my own analysis of the Turkish case upon the critique of what I see as a common mistake in these diverse approaches. I find the arguments on both sides of this issue inadequate in terms of presenting a satisfactory answer to the question of the ‘fate’ of the nation-state. As we shall see below, many of these views assume, regardless of their theoretical position, globalization as a uni-directional, almost coherent phenomenon, thus failing to recognize the subtleties and conflicting trends within this process. I present an alternative approach that comes to terms with this crucial aspect of contemporary ‘thick’ globalization and its relation to the nation-state.

2. The Standard Argument: The Nation-State Undermined

The title of a book published in mid-90s on the current political system is very telling: The End of the Nation-State (Ohmae, 1995). The standard argument concerning the impact of globalization on the nation-state holds that the process of globalization is increasing the integration of economies, polities, and cultures, producing a tendency toward uniformity and the domination of transnational capital, ideas, symbols and values on a world
scale thereby upsetting the ability of individual nation-states to regulate economic activity, to extract and redistribute surpluses, to harmonize conflicting interests, and to control political processes as well as cultural values and practices within national boundaries. In this context, Martin Shaw’s (2000:178) argument – that the salience of new global formations (“global society, economy and culture”) as defining frameworks increases while that of “national-international” frameworks decreases – is a typical example of this view.

Many of the scholars writing on globalization see it primarily as driven by economic imperatives, and accordingly, analyze its impact on the nation-state from a political-economy perspective. Yet, some of them still focus more on political than economic processes within this perspective. Ulrich Beck, for example, who sees globalization as the collapse of the “first”, “national” modernity, defines it as “the process through which sovereign nation-states are (…) undermined by transnational actors” (2001:101). Beck (1992) also argues that current environmental and nuclear risks and the responses to them are global in character, transcending the boundaries of the nation-state and creating a global, “risk society”. Consequently, he contends that, thanks to contemporary globalization, we now live in a “world society” where relationships are not determined by or integrated into national politics, and in a world in which a local event can affect any other thing around the globe along a ‘localglobal’ axis. However, there is no one single political hegemon, or “world state”, but a multiplicity of states led by “disorganized capitalism”. Thus, for Beck the driving force behind globalization is capitalism, which constitutes the basis of the argument for the dominance of economic globalization.

a) Economic Globalization and the State

Other theorists employ a similar perspective but give more emphasis on the economic aspect. For example, David Harvey (1989) argues, from a Marxist perspective, that globalization is part of the “flexible accumulation” which is a new form of capitalism characterized by post-Fordist production and social relations. According to Harvey, the state is now in a problematic position whereby it is forced to both regulate the activities of corporate capital in the national interest on the one hand, and attract them by creating a “good business climate” on the other (1989:170). This results in the empowerment of finance capital at the expense of the nation-state and organized labor. He also emphasizes the spatial re-organization of urban settings all over the world in the 1980s by the forces of the advanced capitalism as a primary (material) “condition of postmodernity.”
Likewise, Saskia Sassen (1991) argues that some “global cities,” New York, London and Tokyo in particular, which function as command points in the organization of world economy, are spaces for mobile capital and transnational corporations; and as such, they have more in common (culturally as well as economically) with each other than with the nation-states to which they belong. She contends that these global cities, operating as a “triad”, constitute a “transterritorial marketplace” and create the “new industrial complex” whereby the nation-state is greatly weakened due to the expansion in the volume of finance capital, the growth of trade in services internationally, and the “repatterning of direct foreign investment” which has been going on since the 1970s (1991:323).

Some scholars describe the ‘retreat of the nation-state’ in even bolder terms. Susan Strange (2001), for example, believes that globalization is predominantly an economic transformation where “the impersonal forces of world markets” (technology, finance capital and transnational actors) are responsible for “the declining authority of states” since World War II. Although she admits the fact that state intervention in the everyday life of citizens is increasing, and that nationalism and the desire for independent states are becoming more and more widespread across the globe, she nevertheless argues that the state’s intervention occurs in “marginal matters” whereas its authority declines in “basic matters” and that “most societies have to be content with the mere appearance of autonomy, with a façade of statehood” (2001:150). Her argument ultimately maintains the view of markets becoming ‘masters’ over states due to globalization.

Parallel arguments regarding the inability of nation-states to regulate their economies have been put forward earlier as well. Daniel Drache (1996), for instance, argues that due to the integration of domestic markets into the global economy, the national character of these economies is decreasing. More specifically, two economic processes are undermining the sovereignty of the nation-state today: financial transactions which, having a greater mobility and speed, are taking over the commodity trade, and the new employment structure where there is less need for labor (and employment) (1996: 48ff). However, he believes that the increasing power of capitalist actors has not yet fully undermined the (legal and political) sovereignty of
nation-states today. Whether political sovereignty is in decline is also closely related to the impact (if any) of global political order and the putative “global state.”

b) Political Globalization and the State
Some scholars focus on globalization in the political realm and its impact on the nation-state. David Held (1995, 1998) and Anthony McGrew (1997), for example, argue that both the autonomy and sovereignty of the nation-state have been weakened by globalization through various international and transnational institutions that have developed since World War II. Supranational institutions such as the UN, the EU, International Law and the IMF constantly undermine the Westphalian international order pluralizing sovereignty and displacing the autonomy of nation-states. Moreover, Stephen Krasner (2001) contends that nation-states have never been truly sovereign since 1648 and that the Westphalian model of nation-states as independent actors based on the principles of autonomy and territoriality has never been a norm. For him, the frequent violations of these two principles have served peace and stability in international politics based on interdependence.

In a similar fashion, Keohane and Nye (1989) argue that the world politics is characterized by “complex interdependence” where there are multiple channels of communication among international actors, including “interstate,” “transgovernmental” and “transnational” ones. Furthermore, they contend, there is no longer a hierarchy of issues topped by military security, which has instead been surpassed by a multitude of other issues. Thus, for them, multiple “channels of communication,” “agendas,” strategies of “linkage,” and relations transgress the domestic-international divide. However, they also note that the international political order is not static, and thus states may gain importance and/or may again privilege war-making and military force as the determinant of interstate relations – as the US has been doing since September 11.

2 Globalization’s impact specifically on the welfare state is also discussed in the welfare-state literature (e.g. Pierson 1996; George and Miller 1996; Koslowski and Follesdal 1997; Esping-Andersen 1996, 2000; Mishra 1999; Castles 2001). However, I cannot go into details of this debate here due to the limits of this article.
Furthermore, some scholars argue that interdependence is not limited to international relations but extends to all spheres of social life. James Rosenau (2001), for example, holds that we are witnessing the rise of “global governance” as a result of complex relations among technology, society and the capitalist economy, which in turn undermines the capacity of nation-states within their boundaries. He maintains that governance in the complex context of globalization is based on a network of non-hierarchical and interdependent “systems of rule” and accompanying “command mechanisms,” as exemplified by various NGOs that shape different aspects of the lives of the citizens of nation-states. Thus, globalization involves trends toward reduced “capacities for governance” at the nation-state level. For him, moreover, although capitalism is an important factor here, it is only one of several elements involved in the complex process of the weakening of the nation-state.

Similarly, Martin Shaw (2000) argues that globalization has resulted in the emergence of a “global state” (which is not reducible to the capitalist state) where the juridical sovereignty of nation-states is undermined. He identifies three types of state power: “the Western state, quasi-imperial nation-states, and new and proto-states.” This multi-dimensional “global layer of state power” involves an “authoritative framework” consisting of the “dominance of a single set of new norms and institutions, which more or less governs the various state centres” (2000:213). Unlike Rosenau’s (2001) rather pluralistic conception of a network of interdependent and multiple “control mechanisms” that create the “global governance,” Shaw’s “global state” is based on a hierarchical structure, with the Western state (or “Western-global conglomerate”) at the top and upon which the whole system is dependent. In a somewhat similar manner, Chalmers Johnson (2000) believes that globalization is also based on a hierarchical system involving the control of the world polity by one single hegemón: the US. For him, globalization is primarily a military process rather than an economic or a strictly political one, as the US hegemony is based on its military power. Other aspects of globalization follow from this, resulting in a new world order under the “military-economic dominion” of the US. Nevertheless, he argues that the American hegemony creates several other satellite states, with limited sovereignty, in the periphery.

c) Cultural Globalization and the State

Many of the scholars of globalization who employ a political-economy perspective ignore the cultural dimension of globalization. Among those who do focus on this dimension, there are contradictory arguments regarding
cultural globalization. The popular homogeneity argument holds that the world is sharing a more or less singular global culture. This is reflected in George Ritzer’s (1993) famous argument for the “McDonaldization of society,” and is understood as the expansion of predominantly American values across the globe. Edward Herman and Robert McChesney (2000, 2001) focus on the main agent of this expansion: the media. For them, media globalization is intricately related to capitalism as it pertains to global consumption patterns and popular culture through consumerism. From this perspective, the expansion of a global culture undermines the state’s ability to protect its ‘national’ culture, which is weakened by the global wave of consumer culture.

John Meyer’s (1999) culturalist argument that the nation-state is a cultural construct represents an interesting extension of this approach. He contends that the nation-state form is one of the myths of the “modern system,” and being replicated worldwide, is part of the global “world polity” which is itself culturally constructed. So, for him the nation-state is a product of a global “cultural order” rather than of local forces. He also argues that, due to the increasing “isomorphism” in world polity, institutional similarities among nation-states have been increasing since World War II, and that globalization erodes the autonomy of the nation-state but not its sovereignty (Meyer, 1999:138; see also Meyer et al. 1997: 157).

The heterogeneity argument, on the other hand, involves the idea that the “global culture” involves an increasing ethnic and cultural plurality and that the diversity of modern societies undermines the power of the nation-state from within, weakening its integrative functions and leading to a crisis of legitimacy. This new trend towards diversity is also related to the notion of multicultural citizenship (Koopmans & Statham, 1999), which leads “states [to] lose their monopoly over the idea of nation” (Appadurai, 1996:157). However, this view strongly rejects the idea of a single global

---

3 In the latest edition of his popular book, Ritzer recently said that he now prefers the term “the Starbuckization of society,” for Starbucks has surpassed McDonald’s in terms of representing the working mechanisms of the current economic system and society at large. I would prefer, however, the term ‘Coca Colonization’ in order to add a more normative twist to the concept, as Coca Cola has long been a symbol of cultural and economic colonization of the “south” (world’s periphery) by the “north” or the center.
culture, seeing it as a “speculative discourse” (Tomlinson, 1999). Likewise, Anthony Smith (1990) and Kate Nash (2000) reject the idea of homogenization arguing for the existence of a “postmodern,” global culture which is fluid, fragmented, hybrid and syncretic. Nash (2000:71-79) argues that Western culture, itself highly hybridized, has now become just one way of looking at the world among many, often conflicting, perspectives, which she calls its “relativization.” Nevertheless, from this perspective, heterogenization still undermines national cultures. Finally, the two disparate views are synthesized by Appadurai (2000) who argues that cultural globalization is both homogenous and heterogeneous at the same time; for it involves images, symbols and products that are highly homogenous across the globe, but these elements of culture are constantly contextualized, hybridized and re-shaped by the particularities of different localities. Still, for Appadurai this simultaneous process of homogenization and heterogenization is a major factor that weakens the nation-state by outflanking its hegemony over the “nation.”

3. The Counter Argument: Not so Fast!

The widespread belief that the process of globalization has been undermining the modern nation-state in economic, political and cultural domains has been challenged from diverse perspectives. However, nobody is denying the existence of globalization, nor its impact on the nation-state in contemporary society. Rather the critical dispute is usually about the degree to which this process has been influential, with the accounts by the proponents of the idea of the retreat of the state regarded as suffering from exaggeration (Mann, 2001:146). In what follows, I will review some of the main critiques of the idea of globalization curtailing the strength and capacities of nation-states in today’s world.

Immanuel Wallerstein’s (1974, 1979) “world-system” approach presents an interesting case in this context. Although he sees the current world-system as driven primarily by economic imperatives stressing the global character of contemporary capitalism, he nevertheless maintains the continuing significance of the nation-state. He argues that the world-system first emerged in Europe in the 16th century and dominated the whole world in the 19th, becoming now a single whole with different sectors consisting of “core,” “peripheral” and “semi-peripheral” countries (1979: 66ff). The dichotomy of “core” and “periphery,” which Wallerstein borrows from “dependency theory,” constitutes a major element of his world systems theory. There is a hierarchical and uneven relationship (or “division of
labor") between the two: “core” countries, mostly located in the “north,” have a high level of technological development, and produce and sell complex, expensive products whereas peripheral ones (in the “south”) supply raw materials and cheap labor. In between the two, there are “semi-peripheral” countries that function as both periphery (to the core) and core (to the periphery), countries like China, Brazil and those in Eastern Europe, including Turkey. Wallerstein also argues that the states in these three sectors are themselves economic actors, each of them being identical to “capitalist firms.” Nevertheless, he thinks that the current nation-state system is functional in a global economy, because, first, there emerges no monopoly of the political authority to curtail the interests of capitalist corporations, and second, nation-states serve the capitalist system by helping corporations with frequently needed “artificial restraints on the operation of the market” (1979:70). Moreover, the world-system involves a global division of labor based on a hierarchy of states, those in the core acting as “politico-economic guarantors” of the system (1979:162). Thus, for Wallerstein, although there is one single global economy, which was created by capitalism’s internal drive for constant expansion, there is also a multiplicity of nation-states which is useful for the survival of the system.

In a somewhat similar fashion, Peter Evans (1995) makes a case for the increasing power/influence of the nation-state in today’s economy all over the world. The nation-state’s role vis-à-vis the global economy is characterized by what he calls an “embedded autonomy.” Exploring the role of the state in economic transformation in three empirical cases – those of Korea, India and Brazil, the leading NICs – he maintains that the state provides an organizational structure, predictable rules and collective goods or infrastructure, and promotes economic growth and capital accumulation especially in what Wallerstein calls “semi-peripheral” countries. He thus argues that the state involvement in economy in the form of different roles (such as “custodian,” “demiurge,” “midwifery” and “husbandry”) is crucial for the development of national economies. Moreover, for him the situation of a national economy depends also on the “global context,” or the international division of labor since a state’s geopolitical position in the global system affects its internal politics and the welfare of its citizens. However, the relationship between the nation-state and the global context is
a mutual one, because state policies are also involved in determining a country’s position in the international division of labor.  

Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson (1996), starting from a very different point, come to the same conclusion. They challenge the idea of a global economy (seeing it as an alibi for both the New Right [neoliberalism] and the Left [neo-Marxism]) and maintain that nation-states are still the most powerful economic actors. They address two interrelated criticisms to theories of (economic) globalization. First, they argue, multinational corporations do not dominate world trade, but operate within three main regions: the Americas, Europe and the East Asia. Second, they contend that the Third World largely remains marginal in terms of trade and investment. They also conclude, agreeing with Wallerstein, that ‘globalization’ is not a new phenomenon but has been active since the 19th century. In fact, they even problematize the notion of globalization itself, arguing that the economy today is more international than global, due mainly to the fact that nation-states still have significance in terms of maintaining both their domestic economies and their economic relations beyond national boundaries (1996:10).

Another important issue within the globalization debate is its impact on the welfare state. The weakening of the latter as a result of different globalizing forces such as the increasing power of the IMF, WTI and the World Bank is a widespread assumption (e.g. Mishra, 1999). Paul Pierson (1989, 1994), however, argues that changes in the global economy played a minor role in the “retreat” of the welfare state; instead it is a product of three “post-industrial” endogenous processes: the relative growth of the (“less dynamic”) service sector that affects wage levels and welfare provisions, the expansion of “governmental commitments” such as providing health care, and the negative impact of population aging (1989:539-40). For him globalization has simply accompanied these “profound transitions” in the post-industrial era, and thus the decline in welfare state provisions “would clearly be with us even in the absence of trends associated with globalization” (1989:551).

4 In their empirical analyses, Weiss and Hobson have further supported Evans’ insights regarding the role of state on economic development. See Weiss and Hobson (1995).
Another account of the relationship between globalization and the nation-state is offered, from a broader perspective, by Anthony Giddens (1990) who sees globalization, like Beck (2001), as one of “the consequences of modernity.” For Giddens, the inherently expansionist dynamics of modernity create a tendency toward the globalization of its main institutions: industrialism, capitalism and the nation-state. Unlike Beck, however, he assumes that the nation-state system (of global governance) is an integral part of globalization in today’s late, “radical” modernity (1990:64). According to Giddens, this system will remain as part of the globalized modernity as long as it remains a universal form of the legitimate control of power, and as long as states maintain successful monopoly over the means of violence. Moreover, he argues, nation-states find it useful to cooperate with one another, which results in losing some control over their internal affairs (via international institutions such as the EU). This, however, provides them with greater global influence at the expense of autonomy. Giddens (1991:210-14) further argues that the late modernity has increased the significance of “life politics” as opposed to traditional notion of power (in the Weberian sense), which in turn has led to the individualization of politics (see also Beck 2001). The increasing significance of social movements and identity politics is one indication of this transformation. However, he argues a lá Mann (see below), this has not reduced the relevance of the nation-state, because its judicial and administrative functions still have some degree of significance in terms of life politics.

4. The Authority of the Nation-State: Rising or Declining?

I have so far presented main contours of the two paradigms within the debate on the impact of globalization on the nation-state. The first set of approaches see, from economic, political and cultural perspectives, the latter as undermined and outflanked by the former whereas the second set criticizes these views maintaining, from yet different perspectives, that the nation-state system is part and parcel of contemporary globalization and thus preserves its significance in the face of various globalizing trends.

These approaches, however, regardless of their position in the debate, largely ignore one crucial aspect of globalization: that of variation. Instead, many of them establish all-encompassing generalities that they claim hold true for the entire globe as a unit of analysis. Even if approaching the matter in skeptical terms or by emphasizing the systemic nature of the unevenness of the outcomes of globalization, most arguments in the
literature purport to be globally inclusive whereas the process actually involves different dimensions (I have identified three broad ones here). In fact, the process of globalization is not only multi-dimensional, but also multi-directional, involving different trends that are often in conflict with each other. This multi-directionality holds true in terms of globalization’s impact on the autonomy and sovereignty of the nation-state as well: some aspects of the nation-state have been weakened, others have not.

Thus, no matter which side of the argument one takes, a singular and linear understanding of the globalization process (whether it is predominantly economic, political or cultural) proves to be inadequate in the face of empirical variations among existing states. For example, economic globalization undermines some national states in the administration of certain aspects of their economies, but at the same time national governments function as a medium of the regulation of increasingly globalizing economic relations as well. As Held et al. (1999:13) note,

A plethora of recent studies (...) cast serious doubt on the idea that globalization effectively ‘immobilizes’ national governments in the conduct of economic policy. (...) Such studies have delivered significant insights into how the social and political impact of globalization is mediated by domestic institutional structures, state strategies and a country’s location in the global pecking order.

In this context, I argue that concrete instances of the encounter between the forces of globalization and nation-states need to be studied before asserting such across-the-board generalizations. To study those concrete instances an alternative theoretical approach that takes into account the notions of multiplicity of trends and variations within the process of globalization is necessary.

One such alternative account is provided by Michael Mann (2001), who argues that globalization has not ended the “rise and rise of the nation-state.” In Mann’s theory of social power, the state is an independent source of power (along with other three sources of power: ideological, military and economic; see Mann 1986: ch. 1), and since states vary greatly, globalization has a differential effect on them: “the nation-state’s rise has been global, but modest and very uneven” (Mann, 2001:139). More specifically, he addresses, from a political-economy perspective, four criticisms to the widespread globalization thesis (the first paradigm discussed above), making a distinction between ‘global’, ‘international’ and ‘transnational’. First,
parallel to Hirst and Thompson, he contends that contemporary capitalism is more transnational than global, and that it operates in three regions (rather than across the globe): Europe, North America and the East Asia (or, in short, “the North”), creating a “trilateral order” based on the nation-state system. Second, various global environmental threats put forward as an indication of globalization are actually created, and expected to be solved, by nation-states and other modern institutions. Third, new social movements and presumably global civil society, which are again seen as elements of contemporary globalization such as the ecology movements (see Beck, 2001), actually consist of mixed local-transnational movements and NGOs, and attempt to affect inter-governmental agencies based on national and “inter-national” (as opposed to global) networks. Moreover, the new social movements centering on the politics of identity usually operate within national politics and act upon governments, hence strengthening the nation-state system. Finally, against the arguments for ‘post-militarism’ and a ‘new world order’ without ‘hard geopolitics’ that are taken to be signs of the new globalization, Mann argues that although it is a fact that the North has dominated the world without war since 1945, and that some important actors such as Europe and Japan are “reluctant militarists,” militarism still exists in world politics, especially in the case of the United States which is a huge war machine. Thus, national and international networks are still significant in an era of “soft geopolitics.” Therefore, Mann (2001:146) concludes that, unlike the arguments put forward by the “enthusiasts” of globalization, there is no single global society or economy, rather the contemporary world involves multiplicity and variation. More specifically, he draws four conclusions in relation to the impact of globalization on the nation-state: (i) it has differential impacts on different states in different regions, (ii) some global trends weaken, others strengthen nation-states, (iii) some national regulations transform to international and transnational (as opposed to global) regulations, (iv) some trends simultaneously strengthen both the nation-state and transnationalism.

Both Giddens and Mann, as well as the proponents of economic globalization, however, leave aside the cultural dimension of contemporary globalization.
globalization. In this arena, I argue, in line with Appadurai (2001) above, that both homogenization and heterogenization are taking place simultaneously: on one hand, we are witnessing the expansion of Western (predominantly American) values, images and practices as well as commodities (such as McDonald’s, Hollywood movies, pop, rap and hiphop music, and the ‘culture’ associated with them); but on the other hand, we see their localization and transformation by the particularities of different contexts. We also see the heterogenization of Western culture (in its widest sense) itself through its mixing with other cultures as a result migration, ‘brain drain’ and tourism – the prime example being again the United States. Within this framework, it makes sense to argue that the authority of the nation-state has declined in some areas and – contra Appadurai – has risen in others. The mixing of values, ideas and images is usually perceived as a threat to national cultures with its transformative effects on, among others, political culture; but at the same time this hybridization of cultural elements often triggers a desire for the revival and consolidation of national cultures, a defense often undertaken by state institutions. That is why we (still) have a ‘Ministry of Culture’ and various government agencies associated with it, whose primary task is to ‘preserve the national culture’ (by sponsoring the development of ‘national’ cinema, literature, music, folklore, etc.), in many countries throughout the world, including Turkey.

5. Globalization and Turkey

Turkey has been undergoing a process of globalization politically, economically and culturally, particularly for the last two decades. The globalization of Istanbul is a case in point. Being the largest city in the Middle East and the Balkans, as well as the most cosmopolitan one, Istanbul has been undergoing the most intense form of globalization, gradually becoming a significant actor in the global economy, and one of the political and cultural centers in the world. It has recently been announced as the “European Capital of Culture” for 2010 by the European Union.

Istanbul has always been an important political, economic and cultural center throughout its long history. In the 20th century, although major changes began to occur in the final years of World War II, the turning point for Istanbul in terms of its globalization was the year 1980 when a new project of economic liberalization and structural adjustment was launched immediately after the military coup. This project was achieved, relatively successfully, by the efforts of the “reformist” Turgut Özal, first Prime Minister and then President of Turkey during the decade. Istanbul had a
privileged position in his liberal policies which were aimed at positioning it as a ‘global city’ in order to attract foreign capital (see Keyder and Öncü 1993). This development was part of a larger pattern of economic growth in Turkey during the 1980s: due to the impact of globalization, economic policies at the national level witnessed a major shift from a protectionist, import-substitution growth strategy to a liberal, market-oriented approach. This shift was underlined by the fact that the Turkish economy had been suffering from structural constraints in terms of growth. The solution to these problems according to the liberal government was to be found in the integration of Turkey’s economy to the world capitalist system. Accordingly, the major economic strategy of the 1980s and 1990s was based on an outlook that welcomed foreign capital and consumer goods as well as supporting the development of the retail industry (see Tokatlı and Boyacı 1998). This also led to the rapid growth in the number of multinational companies investing increasingly large amounts of foreign capital, particularly in Istanbul. This is indicated by the fact that 95% of firms receiving foreign capital were founded after 1980 and 75% of these are located in Istanbul (Tokatlı and Erkip 1998).

Moreover, the economic globalization of Turkey and Istanbul essentially fostered the growth of the service sector rather than the manufacturing industry. Although traditionally the leading sector in the economic globalization of Istanbul (as well as that of Turkey in general) was the textile industry, a large amount of the domestic and foreign capital concentrated in Istanbul began to be invested in the service industry and luxury consumption: the 1990s witnessed a sharp and rapid increase in the number of deluxe hotels, shopping centers and boutiques, department stores, fast-food chains (foreign, as well as Turkish chains), cafés, ethnic and world cuisine restaurants as well as private universities. There has also been an explosion in the entertainment sector: Istanbulites now have the opportunity to enjoy a countless number of concerts each year, annual international film festivals, classical music, jazz, opera, and theater, as well as sports such as international soccer and basketball tournaments, and the Formula 1 car race. In addition, they can choose from among more than twenty domestic and – through cable and satellite services – international TV networks as well as hundreds of radio stations, offering a vast variety of services from Turkish and foreign music to news, talk shows, and religious instruction. Finally, the Turkish printed media, especially glossy magazines, have recently exploded, and foreign language newspapers and magazines are widely available (Stokes, 1999).
A significant consequence of the globalization of Istanbul has been the transformation of consumption patterns, which has gone hand in hand with the rise of a new middle class. The members of this new class, the “yuppies,” who are usually well-paid and well-educated professionals, have an image associated with shopping and entertainment, high-tech devices, expensive cars, restaurants, “ultra-modern” office buildings covered with colored glass, and air travel. According to Öncü (1997), another ‘object of desire’ for these young professionals is a suburban townhouse or an apartment with the Bosphorus view. Consisting on the whole of young professionals, members of this group regularly go to the cinema, eat hamburgers at McDonald’s and Burger King,6 dine out in the evening, follow the latest fashions, meet each other in cafés, and typically own a cell phone. The yuppie image is also connected with such accessories as sunglasses, suits, hair gel, expensive perfumes, delicate make-up for women, and such new technologies as computers, DVRs, fast automobiles, and again, cell phones (Öncü, 1999). The rise of this new middle class has been concomitant with the “communication explosion” witnessed in Istanbul (and in Turkey in general) in the past two-and-a-half decades. A sharp and rapid increase has occurred in the consumption of communication technologies in the post-Özal era, in which the cell phone and the internet, as representatives of this transformation, have played a significant role.

While Istanbul is going truly global, other large cities in Turkey – such as Ankara, Izmir, Bursa and Kayseri – are following suit. This implies that Turkey is being further integrated into the global world economically, politically and culturally. Such a transformation naturally has some ramifications for the relationship between the Turkish nation-state and globalizing trends. In light of different approaches to the relationship between globalization and the nation-state discussed above, we can conclude that neither the view that the former completely makes the latter irrelevant, nor the opposite argument holds true. Rather one needs to have a more balanced view seeing this relationship as a hybrid one, whereby various global trends are simultaneously weakening the Turkish nation-state in some areas and strengthening it, or having no impact on it, in others within all three – economic, political and cultural – domains of social life. Studies

---

6 McDonald’s and Burger King are “yuppie” venues in Turkey as opposed to the US where their clientele consists more of lower and lower-middle class people.
focusing on any of these domains must therefore consider the multi-directional, as well as multi-dimensional, nature of this relationship.

Let us now briefly discuss the significance of this conclusion within the framework of the “crisis of the nation-state” in contemporary society, and within the context of the Turkish nation-state, in particular. The literature on Turkey’s relationship with globalization usually stresses a dichotomy between the two entities (e.g. Aksoy and Robins 1996, Yeldan 2001, Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey 2002, Rumford 2003, Keyman & İçduygu 2003, Atasoy 2005, Bilgin 2005). However, we see that the relationship between globalization and Turkey in political, economic and cultural areas is a hybrid, rather than one-way, relationship. We observe, for example, increasingly intense and more frequent interactions between Turkey and such supra-national institutions as the European Union (EU) and the IMF. This does not mean, however, that the Turkish state is in a ‘crisis’ due to this intensification in foreign policy. This is true even if one assumes, ignoring the distinction made by Mann and others between ‘international’ and ‘global’ institutions and relations (see above), that these institutions are the ‘agents of globalization’ as a uniform process. It is true that the recent legal and political “reforms” instituted by the AKP government in accordance with the requirements of the EU have to some extent weakened the civil and military bureaucracy in some areas. However, this does not mean that the “strong state tradition” in Turkey has disappeared: the Turkish state is still very powerful compared to many other countries in the world, a fact that can be observed in state-citizen relationships as well as in the fundamentally ‘étatist’ orientation of the judiciary. In addition, we might say that different nationalistic reactions to these reforms and to other developments in Turkey – such as the “ulusalcı” movement – as well as in the world in general involve an element of a “protecting the nation-state” reflex.

On the other hand, the intensification of Turkey’s foreign policy under the doctrine of the “strategic depth” (Davutoğlu 2001) has also increased its significance as a regional actor. Since 2003, Turkey has been pursuing a very active diplomacy in its troubled region as well as forging close relations with all of its neighbors based on its “zero problems” policy. Its active involvement in bringing peace to the Middle East and its role as mediator in several disputes, such as the one between Syria and Israel, have considerably changed its reputation as nation-state. As a result, Turkey has won a seat on the United Nations Security Council, has opened several chapters on its candidacy for the EU, and a Turkish diplomat was elected the
secretary general of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). All these have undoubtedly elevated Turkish nation-state’s profile as a regional (and increasingly global) political actor.

The political economy perspective, which is useful in analyzing the issue at hand, suggests that political and economic developments are intricately related to each other. As Keyman and Öniş (2007) argue, moreover, this is also true for the evolution of the post-1980 Turkish politics and economy, which felt the impact of globalization heavily. When we look at economic developments in Turkey, we see a similar picture in terms of the relationship between globalization and the nation-state. It is true that the Turkish state has to some extent been weakened as an economic actor by recent economic policies centering on privatization as a result of the resolutions and/or pressures of supra-national institutions, especially those of the IMF in the last two decades. Recent developments implying Turkey’s integration into the global capitalist economy have also marked this trend: for example, the Arbitration Treaty of 1999 maintains the authority of a third party in solving the potential problems that international capital might face in Turkey effectively by-passing the Turkish judicial system. All this has been paralleled by popular criticisms based on a neo-liberal discourse of a ‘clumsy state’ unnecessarily intervening into the economy. However, this is only true to a certain extent: Turkey is hardly a global market where foreign capital flows freely and multinational corporations operate without any restrictions as the power of bureaucratic mechanisms is still too strong to be easily challenged in this area. An indication of this is the fact that the volume of foreign investment in Turkey is still at relatively low levels compared to other ‘developing’ countries, despite its recent rapid increase in the last five years (see Directorate of Foreign Investment, 2007). Moreover, that the IMF has not been welcomed – except under pressure – by almost any government also indicates that the international economic system does not feel comfortably at home in Turkey. The recent interventions by the state into the market, in the form of confiscating bankrupt banks especially after the 2001 crisis, further prove that the role played by the state in Turkish economy is still significant.

Finally, when we focus on the recent developments in the cultural realm, we can make parallel observations. Although it is true that such fast-food chains as McDonald’s, Burger King and Starbucks have been increasing their market share and their visibility in the public sphere, bringing their own consumption habits and styles, the impact of this trend has largely been limited to large cities and the middle and upper-middle
classes. Moreover, this trend has facilitated the recent revival and expansion of different local/‘national’ alternatives such as döner, simit and lahmacun ‘chains’. Similarly, the print and visual media and such information and communication technologies as cell phones and the internet all involve both ‘global’ and local elements, implying the hybrid nature of their production and consumption, as seen in the rapid expansion of “internet cafés” and instant messaging. A parallel development is the hybridization in the “culture of music,” as in the case of the “türkü cafés” and of the widespread mixing of the arabesque style with popular music. These imply the presence of “glocalization” rather than a one-way relationship in the form of the invasion of one ‘culture’ (‘the Turkish culture’) by another one (American/Western culture).

In addition to these, it is possible to argue that some, especially the defenders of “high culture,” have always been sensitive to the ‘protection of national culture’, which is directly related to our topic. Furthermore, this protection is usually deemed to be the state’s duty, and is exemplified by the recent re-discovery of such ‘national treasures’ as Yunus Emre and Mevlana Celaleddin-i Rumi by the Turkish state. Similarly, the fact that such forms of art as classical music and ballet, considered a part of Turkish national culture, are currently under the protection of the Ministry of Culture ‘against the ruthless market conditions’ is another indication of this. The rise of popular nationalism especially since the 1990s and its frequent translation into the efforts to strengthen the nation-state is another element of this trend. Finally, it is well known that Turkish political culture has largely been state-centered since the beginning of the Republic, and it does not seem likely to go through a radical transformation in the near future.

Thus, in light of the foregoing critical assessment of the existing literature on globalization and the nation-state and the discussion of the Turkish case that the general argument for the ‘crisis of the nation-state’ as a result of globalization does not adequately explain the current reality – at least for the time being. Accordingly, I have argued that Turkey’s relationship with various forms of globalization in the last three decades must be seen in light of both domestic and global developments, including, among others, Turkey’s integration into the global economy, the securitization of global politics after September 11, its membership bid for
the EU, and the emergence of identity politics in the form of Kurdish nationalism etc. The multi-dimensional and multi-directional relationship between the two phenomena implies that globalization has been recently reducing, outflanking and undercutting the powers of nation-states over some domains of social life while in some others it has not had much impact, and in still others it has actually strengthened them – though it is also true that this last trend is weaker than the first two. For this reason, in spite of the fact that the nation-state is an unusual, and perhaps an ephemeral, form of political organization in terms of the long history of mankind (the dominant form of state before the 19th century had mostly been empire), it seems unlikely that this ‘unusual’ form will disappear in the near future. The zeitgeist is still – even if not fully – with the nation-state.

---

7 For a successful examination of the political and economic transformation of Turkey in the post-1980 period, which pays equal attention to both domestic and global factors, see Keyman and Öniş (2007).
References


Friend or Foe?

Globalization and Turkey at the Turn of the 21st Century


