

Tracing connections between comparative politics and globalisation

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ABSTRACT *This article focuses on connections between globalisation and comparative political analysis. Traditionally the latter is concerned with domestic political actors, especially states. Globalisation, on the other hand, emphasises the variable significance of a variety of border-crossing, including transnational, actors. I argue that since the end of the Cold War five key developments—a large number of new countries; widespread political changes, especially in the Third World; global entrenchment of capitalism; increasing regional economic integration; and the growth of transnational civil society—collectively underline the importance of globalisation for comparative political analysis. It is now difficult plausibly to argue that what goes on politically within countries is unaffected by globalisation. The article is structured as follows. First, I trace the traditional (domestic) concerns of comparative political analysis and argue that, because it neglects the impact of globalisation, it is analytically inadequate. Second, I examine four key aspects of globalisation: technological, political, economic and cultural globalisation, and suggest how they influence comparative political analysis. Third, to assess differing views of how globalisation affects domestic political–economic terrains, I examine competing arguments of the hyper-globalisationist, globalisation sceptic and structural dependency approaches.*

It is now difficult to pick up a serious newspaper or watch a current affairs programme on television without coming across the term ‘globalisation’. However, like several other expressions in common usage in political science—such as ‘democratisation’ or ‘democratic consolidation’—there is precious little agreement about what globalisation actually means for comparative political analysis. Part of the reason is that, while the concept of globalisation is not new, it is only since the end of the Cold War that the term has been under the analytical spotlight.

Webber and Smith (2002b: 15) note that ‘one of the most common descriptive labels of world politics in recent years has been that of transformation’. But the key question is *how*, politically, have things been transformed and *what* are the

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‘far-reaching processes of change that have been identified in global affairs’ (Webber & Smith, 2002b: 15)? *How* do these developments necessitate us having to change how we ‘do’ comparative political analysis? Five ‘far-reaching processes of change’ can be seen: 1) the large number of new countries; 2) widespread political changes, especially democratisation; 3) the global entrenchment of capitalism; 4) enhanced and more widespread regional economic integration; and 5) the development of transnational civil society. These five are important because they have had a global impact and, as a result, affect how we might understand comparative political analysis .

New countries

There are now more countries than ever before. In 1945 there were just over 50 members of the United Nations and in 2003 there are more than 190, nearly four times as many. While in the three decades after World War II nearly all new countries emerged as a result of decolonisation, since then there has been a significant breakdown of existing states as well as the emergence of many new ones. Since the end of the Cold War, new states have emerged from the dismemberment of federal entities, notably the USSR and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and from divisions of other countries—for example, in Africa (Ethiopia/Eritrea, Somalia/Somaliland) and the Middle East (incipiently, Israel/Palestine). During the same period various countries, including Liberia, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, effectively ceased to exist—perhaps temporarily—as *bona fide* sovereign states. In sum, as Migdal (1997: 210) notes, the death of old states—both ‘rock solid ones’, such as the USSR, as well as ‘flimsy reeds’, such as Somalia, Liberia and Afghanistan—resulted in numerous, often fragile, new states that were sometimes sources of both domestic and international instability.

Widespread political changes

From the mid-1970s democracy has spread to many previously non-democratic countries. From Southern Europe to Latin America and East Asia, by way of Eastern Europe, sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, numerous dictatorships and other blatant forms of non-democratic rule were terminated. This occurred within the context of Huntington’s (1991) now-famous ‘third wave’ of democratisation. At this time democrats were often able to exploit long-term structural problems of non-democratic—eg communist and single-party—regimes and work towards democratisation in their countries. However, some countries, suddenly released from the grip of authoritarian or totalitarian rule saw not development of democracy but, instead, political instability, often characterised in the Third World by nationalist, ethnic and/or religious conflicts.

The global entrenchment of capitalism

There was also the apparently universal triumph of capitalism. This development encouraged not only a questioning of the economic control of many states but

also a renewed focus on the economic and political ramifications of powerful transnational actors, especially powerful transnational corporations (TNCs), such as Microsoft, Macdonalds, Shell and Nestlé.

Regional economic integration

Partly as a consequence of many states' fear of the power of transnational capital, there were renewed attempts at enhanced regional economic integration. Examples include not only the European Union (EU), with its proposed augmentation of up to a dozen new member states in 2004, but also the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and South America's Mercosur. It is widely agreed that enhanced economic regional interaction, at least potentially, can have significant political consequences. For example, in the EU and to a lesser but still noteworthy degree in NAFTA and Mercosur, there are cross-border economic and political impacts on member states' domestic environments (Hay & Rosamond, 2002; Macdonald & Schwartz, 2002).

Transnational civil society

An 'anti-globalisation' movement emerged after the Cold War in response to a perceived accretion of economic and political power by both powerful Western countries and TNCs (Macdonald & Schwartz, 2002). While the anti-globalisation movement often appears both inchoate and unfocused, it is nevertheless an important example of transnational civil society (TCS) in action. More generally, in recent years, the growth and expansion of TCS was greatly facilitated by rapid evolution of a variety of transnational networks (Mittelman, 1994).

Taken together these five developments—new countries, widespread political changes, the global entrenchment of capitalism, enhanced regional economic integration and the growth of transnational civil society—suggest the analytical importance of globalisation for comparative political analysis. At the least they make it much more difficult to maintain the view that what goes on politically within countries is more or less independent of global developments. At the most they make it imperative to factor globalisation into political analysis. This is because, as Migdal (1997: 211) suggests, states around the world are now not only 'battered by global economic and information systems' but also, especially in the Third World, beset by various political and cultural challenges, including, 'virulent ethnic and tribal forces'.

Globalisation, comparative politics and international relations

Seeking to understand how globalisation affects domestic political outcomes necessarily brings us into the terrain of both comparative politics and international relations (IR). I start with comparative politics, before moving to an assessment of how globalisation is perceived in IR.

Comparative politics and globalisation

To illustrate how comparative political analysis traditionally perceives the impact of external actors on domestic political actors and systems, I focus briefly on two well regarded comparative politics textbooks: Hague and Harrop's *Comparative Government and Politics. An Introduction* (2001) and Sodaro's *Comparative Politics: A Global Introduction* (2001). Hague and Harrop's book, first published in 1981 but now in its fifth edition, has little to say in a sustained way about the impact of globalisation. Sodaro's book, on the other hand, seeks to factor in the impact of economic globalisation but pays much less sustained attention to other potentially important aspects, such as political globalisation.

The first edition of Hague and Harrop's book focused almost exclusively on countries' domestic political structures and processes. Twenty years later the most recent edition devotes some general attention to 'the state in a global context' and, in particular, to 'how relations between countries impinge on politics within them' (p 47). The 2001 edition features a 15-page chapter devoted to this theme (albeit a mere 5% of the book's nearly 300 pages). However, the remaining 16 chapters concentrate squarely on traditional comparative politics concerns, notably description and analysis of domestic structures and processes in a limited number of, mostly Western, countries. Thus the authors' concern is with, *inter alia*, how 'democratic' and 'authoritarian' governments work, and what is the comparative role of other state institutions, such as the executive, legislative and judiciary. In short, while the latest edition of Hague and Harrop's book states a concern with external actors, the relevant—short—chapter is not well integrated with the remainder of the book and does not, as a result, consistently inform the book's comparative framework.

Sodaro's (2001) *Comparative Politics: A Global Introduction* has a more sustained—albeit limited—interest in the analytical importance of globalisation. In the first part of the book the author attempts comparatively to factor into political processes the impact of economic globalisation. In the second part Sodaro and his collaborators provide nine case-study chapters that focus on established democracies (UK, France, Germany, Japan and Israel), transitional democracies (Russia, Mexico, Brazil, South Africa and Nigeria) and a non-democracy (China). However, while Sodaro's book is a useful addition to the corpus of comparative politics textbooks, it fails to investigate fully the impact of globalisation beyond economic globalisation, and thus misses the opportunity to provide a fuller, more rounded analysis. In sum, both Hague and Harrop and Sodaro offer useful comparative analyses of various kinds of countries yet neither seeks explicitly or consistently to factor into their analysis four key aspects of globalisation (technological, political, economic, and cultural) that we examine below.

For Sodaro (2001: 5), 'comparative politics examines political realities' in states 'all over the world. It looks at the many ways governments operate and the ways people behave in political life'. This suggests that his starting point for analysis is states and the (domestic) political environments within which they operate. States are judged to be analytically crucial for four main reasons. First, they are the 'natural' units of analysis. Second, they are confined political

territories, administered by national and sovereign entities. Third, they have distinct national economies and fourth, they encompass discrete *nation-states*. (This last point is theoretical rather than practical: as Willetts (2001: 358) notes, *nation-states*, in practice, do not exist. This is because the notion of nation-state is predicated on the existence of a single state within which are organised almost all members of a single nation without members of others being present. In the real world, such conditions are nowhere present.) Poggi sees the key contemporary challenges for states to be located in a global 'complex of economic, technological, ecological, and cultural structures'. These are important, he says, because they can 'ignore or deny the relevance of any state's territory' (Poggi, 1990: 117). Such a development would, at least potentially, influence an understanding of comparative political analysis, as it is concerned with domestic political systems, especially states, and what makes them tick.

However, it is important to be clear about what a 'state' is, and to note its two distinct meanings. For Willetts (2001: 358), a state can be either 'a community of people who interact in the same political system and who have some common values', or an institutionalised, sovereign entity that enjoys exclusive recognition from other such actors under international law. However, it is often pointed out that the traditional realist/neo-realist image of the state is now increasingly challenged by empirical developments. These include new—often transnational—ethnic, nationalist, and/or religious forces that can pose significant challenges to state power. For example, there is the potentially fragmentationist impact of Russia's war in Chechnya, as well as the impact of the 11 September 2001 attacks by al-Qaida on the USA. More peacefully, such challenges can also be manifested through movements towards regionalisation in North America, Latin America and Western Europe.

Thus, in traditional comparative political analysis, the state is nearly always perceived as the key *domestic* political actor. In this sense states were long ago perceived by Max Weber as possessing ultimate coercive power within defined internal borders, organised in and through 'the apparatus of government ... covering the executive, the legislature, the administration, the judiciary, the armed forces, and the police' (Willetts, 2001: 358). However, 'much modern theory of the state has assumed that its controlling power has dwindled, or' even, as Karl Marx believed, 'is destined entirely to disappear' (Bealey, 1999: 309). In this vein, Opello and Rosow note that 'most people live in states whose sovereignty is regulated and disciplined by norms of the international system and by the organizations of the global capitalist economy'. As a result, state sovereignty frequently seems circumscribed: 'military, economic and social forces call into question [its] territorial imperative, as well as the modern state's insistence on a politics of control from the center' (Opello & Rosow, 1999: 225).

But how, more precisely, does globalisation affect the competences and powers of states? Opinion about the impact of globalisation on states' and countries' domestic political structures and processes is often polarised. On the one hand, some believe that the concept of the 'national state' is now a hopelessly outdated construct. This is because, as Opello and Rosow (1999: 225) aver, 'present developments not only seem to be challenging the current forms of the state, but are also questioning the *possibilities of territorialized, sovereign power*'

(emphasis in the original). On the other hand, others contend that the state is actually holding its own, with transnational forces having only an intermittent and erratic impact.

For Sodaro, comparative politics is concerned primarily with certain domestic political actors, especially states, as well as various structures and processes:

- *Governmental institutions*. This is ‘how governments are structured and how they function’.
- *Public policy*. This is ‘processes through which governments interact with their populations in pursuing community goals’.
- *Elite and mass political behaviour, political ideologies and political participation*. Collectively, these are the structures and processes through which ‘political leaders and the population behave in politics and the ways they participate in politics’. It involves various mechanisms, notably: ‘elections, political parties, interest groups, and other modes of political activity’ (Sodaro 2001: 5–6).
- *Political culture* ‘refers to those worldviews and principled ideas—values and norms—that are often stable over long periods of time and, as a result, are normally taken for granted by the vast majority of a population’. In other words, political culture is part of the domestic structure that contains only those ‘ideas that do not change often and about which there is societal consensus’ (Risse-Kappen, 1994: 209).

Thus, the central intellectual question in comparative politics is how best to explain and account for the character of domestic political actors, structures and processes.

Consequently, comparativists normally start, sensibly enough, from the assumption that to acquire information it is necessary to compare the things that, demonstrably, have clear similarities. From there attention shifts to investigate reasons for any discovered differences. Critics have pointed to what they see as two general failings in this traditional comparative politics world-view. First, it pays insufficient attention to significant external actors which affect domestic political (and economic) outcomes. Second, it lacks concern with *governance*, a concept distinct from the narrower idea of *government*.

In relation to the first critique Smith (2000: 4–5) notes that comparative political analysis typically uses a certain conceptual framework that ‘downplays ... necessary and logical transnational connections between domestic political and economic structures and international politics’. Because comparative political analysis has traditionally and singularly been concerned with domestic factors, it finds it difficult to factor in external actors and how they affect domestic political (and economic) structure and processes. As Lane and Ersson (1994: 165) note, ‘in comparative politics the existence and impact of international regimes are hardly ever included in model building’. The difficult problem of how to enter state membership in international organisations into models of state stability and state performance thus remains unresolved—or even, in most cases, unacknowledged. To achieve progress in this regard, one would have to take into account a variety of international regimes, involving a

variety of state and non-state actors. Put another way, it is likely that, without attempting to include the results of the intrusion of a range of state and non-state actors into comparative political analysis, we are left with deficient analysis. In short, comparative political analysis traditionally pays little attention to external agents, other than when, intermittently or on an *ad hoc* basis, factors such as 'intervention, dependency, subversion and foreign aid' become important (Yilmaz, 2002: 68). Such elements are, however, typically perceived as relatively minor, semi-autonomous epiphenomena, often of (limited) interest only in relation to political outcomes in assorted developing countries.

It is important, however, to note that the impact of external actors on domestic outcomes is likely, in many cases, to be wider and deeper than traditional comparative political analysis would allow. As I shall outline, there is a variety of international and transnational actors—that I shall collectively conceptualise as 'globalisation'—which are important for fuller comparative political analysis. This is because globalisation, a multifaceted—technological, political, economic and cultural—phenomenon focuses attention on domestic 'political system[s], society, and the policy networks linking the two' (Risse-Kappen, 1994: 209).

The countries of the European Union provide a good example of the importance of including cross-border actors in comparative political analysis. All 15 current EU member states have democratic systems, characterised, *inter alia*, by (near) universal suffrage, regular 'free and fair', national and lower level elections. However, fully to understand what goes on politically in EU countries, and to see why outcomes differ from country to country, we cannot ignore regional cross-border actors. This is because, as Hay *et al* (2002) note, there is a collective relationship among EU member states characterised by 'dynamic relationships between transnational, international and domestic processes and practices' in Western Europe, the globe's 'most regionally integrated political and economic space'. That is to say, processes of government and governance within EU countries not only receive inputs from a key supranational institution—the EU Commission—but also from various political, social, religious, and business transnational actors. The importance of such actors can be seen when we turn to the countries planned soon to join the EU. From 2004 the current membership will be augmented by up to a dozen other countries, including Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Malta and Cyprus. To understand political outcomes—notably democratisation—and economic developments—such as marketisation—among several putative EU members we need to factor in the roles of various transnational and international actors. This suggests that to study political and economic outcomes comparatively in both existing and new EU member states we need to be aware that what emanates from within countries forms only part of the explanation. For a more comprehensive account, we need to augment this perspective to include what supranational, international and transnational actors do.

A second limitation of much comparative politics analysis is a lack of concern with *governance*, a concept distinct from the narrower idea of *government*. Typically, state institutions—the *structures* of government, such as the executive, legislature, administration, and judiciary—are understood in comparative political analysis to make and carry out definitive and collective societal

decisions. Yet the wider notion of *governance*—that is, the ‘process of making collective decisions’ (Hague & Harrop, 2001: 5) that does not *only* involve formal state institutions—is frequently overlooked or, at best, under-analysed. As Smith (2000: 4–5) notes, while comparativists often stray into the territory of party-politics when discussing domestic political systems, they often overlook other influential societal sectors that are not formal institutions. As with the cross-border agents noted above, such domestic actors include, *inter alia*, religious and ethnic organisations, women’s and human rights groups, and business associations. Such groups often interact with any relevant transnational counterparts. In sum, when they are seen to play a part in the process of governance, it is necessary to seek to factor into comparative political analysis the actions of significant non-state actors.

International relations and globalisation

To understand how globalisation influences domestic political outcomes necessarily brings us into the terrain of international relations (IR). Two competing theories of IR, realism/neo-realism and the ‘cobweb’ model, differ significantly on the issue of the autonomy of the state. On the one hand, the realist/neo-realist state-centric (‘billiard ball’) model of the international system sees the state as *the* key international actor, characterised by its relative autonomy, while non-state actors are often regarded as marginal. On the other hand, the cobweb model sees the state as ‘in retreat’ or even ‘obsolete’, with an array of cross-border, perhaps non-state, actors as analytically significant. In particular, small, relatively inconsequential states—of which there are, of course, dozens in the Third World—are seen as increasingly constricted—and thus rendered ineffective—by countless transnational connections and non-state actors. However, over the years, the intellectual influence of the cobweb model has fluctuated. It was widely deemed ground-breaking in the 1970s, before losing much influence in the 1980s, principally as a result of a deepening of the Cold War and the associated resurgence of the superpowers. After the Cold War the cobweb model reasserted itself—not least because of globalisation. In sum, the central concern of the cobweb conjures up metaphors like ‘the hollowed out state’ and ‘a borderless world’ and even raises for some the possibility—or probability—of the eventual extinction of the state (Opello & Rosow, 1999: 236). The assumption is that globalisation affects states’ domestic political arrangements so significantly that sovereignty is seriously reduced, with a significant diminution of the state’s ability to make definitive and binding political (and, by extension, economic) decisions.

How to bring together the concerns of comparative political analysis and IR specialists in order to arrive at a well rounded analysis? While such work is in its relative infancy, two interesting examples can be noted. First, there is the work of Douglas Chalmers (1993). Chalmers is interested in the impact of globalisation on the politics and political economy of Latin America. During the 1990s the growth in significance of cross-border actors influencing political and political-economic outcomes in many Latin American countries became clear. There was swift growth in the ‘numbers, types, scope and resources’ of such

actors. This reflected the post-cold war trend of globalisation. There was, in particular, the influence of pro-democracy actors—such as the government of the USA and non-state agents like the National Endowment for Democracy—and the pro-market liberalisation actions of TNCs.

Chalmers offers a potentially comprehensive model of how to bridge the gap analytically between comparative politics and IR. His main aim is to seek to explain and account for what he sees as the ‘internationalization of domestic politics’ in Latin American countries. He argues that certain ‘internationally based actors’ (IBAS)—notably, transnational corporations and foreign governments, especially that of the USA—are now a significant habituated presence in domestic political and economic environments in Latin America. They are ‘normal parts of the system’. This signifies a *de facto* ‘internationalisation’ of regional countries’ political and economic systems, as IBAS are 1) involved in countries’ ‘domestic politics over a period of time’; 2) ‘built into the political institutions’; and 3) ‘identified with international sources of power’.

A second author, Hakan Yilmaz (2002), suggests in a recent analysis of transitional political actors and their impact on domestic outcomes in Turkey that ‘the net result of the process of globalization has been the internationalization of domestic politics’. Using the work of Chalmers as his starting point, Yilmaz argues that, in effect, the IBAS in Turkey are having a significant political and political–economic impact. In sum, both Chalmers (in relation to Latin America) and Yilmaz (in relation to Turkey) emphasise the importance of various IBAS in influencing domestic political outcomes in what are, in both cases, transitional democracies. Their work represents a useful starting point in the process of building a comprehensive model of the impact of globalisation on domestic political arenas and is obviously potentially significant for comparative political analysis. But to take things further necessitates a prior step. It is necessary to examine what globalisation is, and various theories of globalisation, in order to comprehend the impact of globalisation on domestic political and political–economic outcomes.

Technological, political, economic and cultural globalisation

It is undeniable that globalisation is one of the most frequently encountered terms in debate concerned with politics, international relations and political economy. But to some globalisation is no more than an abstraction, a rather fuzzy and unsatisfactorily delineated concept. To be analytically useful, we need to be clear what globalisation *is*. Unfortunately, this is by no means self-evident and, consequently, the notion of globalisation remains contested terrain. To have analytical utility, globalisation must involve more than the geographical extension of a range of phenomena and issues—for which the pre-existing term ‘world-wide’ would suffice. And, as the history of imperialism and the growth of the world economic system over time indicate, geographical extensiveness itself is not a new phenomenon.

Historically, globalisation encompasses three distinct, yet interlinked, processes. First, largely moulded by European colonisation, a global states system developed from the 16th century. This produced forms of government and state

around the world based on Western models, whether presidential, monarchical or Marxist. Second, a global capitalist economy developed from the 16th century that served to divide the world economically into 'core', 'intermediate' and 'peripheral' areas (with each characterised by a certain level of industrialisation). More recently there have been major increases in cross-border economic interactions involving a variety of agents, stimulated in part by absorption of the erstwhile Eastern European communist bloc. The effect has been to produce what some see as a truly global capitalist economy. Third, both political and economic globalisation were underpinned by technological and industrial revolutions from the 18th century that significantly influenced global patterns of industrialisation and communications.

Do contemporary globalisation processes and relationships collectively amount to something qualitatively different compared with what existed before? And, if so, to what extent are they significant for comparative politics? To answer these questions, I start by identifying four important aspects of globalisation, before turning to an examination of how globalisation is currently theorised. Four facets of contemporary globalisation can be identified: technological, political, economic and cultural globalisation.

For Mittelman (1994: 429), technological, political, economic and cultural globalisation link domestic, international and transnational levels of analysis, via:

Spatial reorganisation of production, the interpenetration of industries across borders, the spread of financial markets, the diffusion of identical consumer goods to distant countries, massive transfers of population within the South as well as from the South and the East to the West, resultant conflicts between immigrant and established communities in formerly tight-knit neighbourhoods, an emerging worldwide preference for democracy. A rubric for varied phenomena, the concept of globalisation interrelates multiple levels of analysis.

Thus globalisation is a multidimensional process, informed by a significant intensification of global interconnectedness between both states and non-state actors. It also implies a diminution of the significance of territorial boundaries and, theoretically, of state-directed political and economic structures and processes.

Technological globalisation

For Woods (2001: 290), 'the technological revolution is a [key] aspect of globalisation, describing the effect of new electronic communication which permits firms and other actors to operate globally with much less regard for location, distance, and border'.

We can see the impact of the technological revolution in terms of political globalisation, especially democratisation. It is notable that various non-democracies, including China and most Middle Eastern and North African countries, did not democratise during the third wave (c1974–mid-1990s). The governments of such countries kept a tight grip on their countries' political systems, not least by their ability to control communications technology. This was a crucially important source of state domination over their citizens. The

intention was to maintain 'the autarchic isolation of people from wider international currents' (Clark, 1997: 21). Elsewhere, however, democratisation was often facilitated by the ability of both state and non-state actors to communicate, principally via electronic media, enabling ideas, programmes and capital to be speedily transmitted around the world. In sum, communications technology was often—but not always—an important factor in recent political changes—especially democratisation—with various media employed to transmit ideas, programmes, policy and capital from place to place.

Political globalisation

The political collapse of the USSR and its regional communist allies from the mid-1980s no doubt encouraged many people living under authoritarian regimes around the world to demand democracy. During the Cold War many Western governments, in the name of fighting communism, had turned a blind eye to some allies' poor democratic records. But when state communism in the former Soviet bloc collapsed both democracy and 'good governance' became key foci of their concern.

Understanding of political globalisation centres on what Mittelman (1994: 429) terms the 'emerging worldwide preference for democracy'. As already noted, during the 1980s and 1990s authoritarian regimes collapsed in numerous developing and former communist countries, to be followed in many cases by democratically elected governments. However, such political changes did not often occur solely as the result of spontaneous, fragmented efforts by individual civil societies and opposition political parties. In many cases they were also the result of the interaction of domestic and external factors (Haynes, 2001).

However, as Gillespie and Youngs (2002: 1) note, 'the complexities of the international dimension to political change ha[ve] been inadequately factored into studies of democratization'. During the 1960s and 1970s many comparative analyses of democracy were primarily concerned with the domestic circumstances of the first and second wave democracies clustered in North America and Western Europe. A key focus was the manner in which (primarily economic) modernisation and its outcome, associated restructuring of social and class alliances, was believed to have led to certain identifiable changes in domestic political structures, including democracy. Later, in the 1980s and 1990s, multiple democratisations occurred during the third wave of democracy. Attempting to analyse what appeared to be a new global trend towards democracy, comparative politics analysis sought to comprehend the multiple transitions from authoritarian rule not only by a focus on causation but also by examining likely outcomes: theoretically, consolidation of democracy would follow transitions from authoritarian rule. Most comparativists sought to explain democratisation by a primarily domestic focus. Of interest here were authoritarian states and pro-democracy civil society and political parties. The latter were the agencies whose tactical strategies, when successful, helped lead to the demise of authoritarian regimes and democratic transitions. Often, however, the role of external actors—states, intergovernmental organisations and international non-governmental organisations—were either ignored or viewed as marginal.

Some comparative analyses of democratisation outcomes now appear interested in the impact of external actors, in both country-specific and regional contexts. This reflects the fact that both Western governments and various international organisations, such as the EU, not only proclaim general and theoretical commitment globally to encourage democracy; they also increasingly ‘put their money where their mouth is’, recently developing strategies of political and economic conditionality. For example, recent accounts of comparative democratisation in Central and Eastern Europe often highlight such influence on democratic outcomes among the region’s countries. (For examinations of political and economic conditionality in various regions, see Yilmaz (2002) and Gillespie & Youngs (2002).) It is also well documented that such external agents—both governments and non-state actors—were important in recent moves to democracy elsewhere, for example in Africa and Latin America (Haynes, 2001). In sum, to understand recent democratisation processes in various countries we need to take into account external actors and their interaction with domestic agents. However, to factor in the influence of such actors presents a comprehensive challenge to conventional comparative political analysis, as it is traditionally mainly interested in domestic political agents and structures.

For example, three electoral outcomes in 2002—the victories of the leftist presidential candidate, Luiz Inácio ‘Lula’ da Silva in Brazil and of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey, as well as the entry into government in Pakistan of the Islamist alliance, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA)—exemplify the analytical importance of both domestic and external factors in political outcomes. The electoral victories of Lula and the AKP highlight opposition to what is often widely perceived in the Third World as ‘Western-dominated globalisation’. In both countries electoral battles were fought to a considerable degree on a common issue: the divisive social impact of economic liberalisation under the auspices of the IMF. However, Pakistan’s MMA was primarily concerned with another example of ‘Western-dominated globalisation’: the war on ‘Islamist terrorists’. The point is that, to explain political outcomes of recent elections in Brazil, Turkey and Pakistan, it is necessary to examine how and in what ways domestic and external issues interact. In sum, democratisation outcomes—the main manifestation of political globalisation—can be significantly affected by globalisation.

Economic globalisation

How geographically extensive is economic globalisation? Hirst and Thompson (1999) argue that economic globalisation is actually not global but a triangular phenomenon, of most importance to North America, Western Europe and Japan. In their view, as a consequence, economically more marginal regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Latin America, are comparatively little affected by economic globalisation. However, others suggest that the effects of economic globalisation around the world are clear and comprehensive: generally changed attitudes towards (neoliberal) economic development, notably in the mass of developing countries and post-communist countries (Schulz *et al*, 2001).

The concept of economic globalisation has three main components: 1) ‘the

spatial reorganisation of production'; 2) 'the interpenetration of industries across borders; and 3) the worldwide 'spread of financial markets' (Mittleman, 1994: 429). This, in turn, has various—political and social, as well as economic—connotations for people in numerous countries. These include recurrent fears over the stability of the multilateral trading order and the impact on jobs of the sales of national assets to foreigners consequent to privatisations of formerly state-owned assets. Like political globalisation, economic globalisation was facilitated by the demise of the Soviet bloc. Whereas the USSR had since the late 1940s developed a parallel non-capitalist economic system, its demise favoured the movement of capital, labour and goods across national boundaries while increasing international economic competition. Economic changes were also reflected in transformation of production systems and labour markets, and a general weakening of the power of organised labour to pressurise governments to enforce labour standards, such as minimum wage legislation.

There is much agreement that poor people's already weak economic position worsened as a result of economic globalisation (Held & McGrew, 2002). This perception is often linked to the impact of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), adopted in numerous transitional and non-democracies at the behest of the IMF. A common outcome of SAPs was a reduction of welfare programmes, disadvantaging many among the poor (Haynes, 2002; forthcoming). With the embedding of SAPs, both the IMF and its partner organisation, the World Bank, acquired much economic, developmental and political influence in affected countries.

Critics of SAPs allege that the reform programmes typically failed to kick start economic development. Recent research—from the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and various academic sources—indicates that: 1) poverty has actually grown in recent years; 2) most economic 'progress' has occurred in a small number of countries (some of them with large populations and unusual appeal to foreign investors); and 3) even in successful cases, many people are actually no better off, and may actually be poorer, than before (Haynes, forthcoming). The point is that externally encouraged SAPs are nearly universally judged to be seriously flawed development strategies that often lead to political dissent and demands for governmental change (see the above discussion of Brazil and Turkey). A wider ramification of SAPs and their impact is to highlight declining state control of national economies—and subsequent effects on national political arrangements—in many affected countries.

Cultural globalisation

The idea of cultural globalisation reflects a concern that 'Americanisation' or 'Westernisation' is significantly affecting many Third World and former communist countries' existing cultures. This can extend to an argument that an important aspect of cultural globalisation—Western-style liberal democracy and its associate demands for individualistic political and civil rights—is a Western phenomenon with little relevance to many non-Western societies. Another important aspect of cultural globalisation is global dissemination of identical consumer goods and American-style consumer culture. American-style con-

sumerism is said to erode particularistic cultures and values, replacing them with a culture of Disney, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Microsoft and Starbucks.

Spread by predominantly US-based transnational corporations, such 'Americanisation' is said to subvert many local cultures by encouraging people not only to buy American goods and services but also to adopt what are sometimes perceived as 'American' political norms, such as liberal democracy, and to claim individualistic rights. Some East Asian and Muslim countries have sought to meet the perceived onslaught of various aspect of 'Americanisation' by articulating defiantly anti-individualistic world views, focusing respectively on 'Asian values' and Islamism. Taken together—as they sometimes are (Huntington, 1996)—both 'Asian values' and Islamism are seen by some as representing a significant challenge to Western hegemony. In short, some influential constituencies in many East Asian and Muslim countries dislike the presumption that their own collective-orientated societies should supinely accept an imposed, individualistic 'Americanised' culture that undermines or destroys pre-existing communal values.

Theories of globalisation and comparative political analysis

Globalists and anti-globalists

While there is agreement that the four aspects of globalisation can be of analytical relevance, debate about their impact is sometime reduced to an overly simplistic level: is globalisation generally 'positive' or 'negative'? One group—the 'globalists'—expresses a generally 'positive' perception of globalisation. This view is in line with the belief, briefly prevalent in the post-cold war early 1990s, that a benign 'new world order' was then imminent. It would be characterised, *inter alia*, by enhanced international co-operation and progress on a range of peace and development goals, directed by but not restricted to the United Nations and regional bodies, such as the European Union. The aim was to address a range of perennial political, economic, social, developmental, environmental, gender and human rights concerns and injustices. In short, globalists believe that to address these concerns we need a range of dedicated state and non-state institutions and organisations. Progress would be enhanced by the inclusion of local groups and grassroots organisations from around the world, together comprising elements of a transnational civil society.

'Anti-globalists', on the other hand, declare a wholly pessimistic view of globalisation, seeing it as 'a force for oppression, exploitation and injustice' (Cook, 2001). Unwelcome consequences of globalisation are seen to include, *inter alia*, restructuring of global trade, production and finance to disadvantage the poor; migratory and refugee movements, especially in the developing world and the former Eastern European communist bloc; increasing international terrorism; burgeoning ethnic and/or religious clashes, especially within and between many Third World countries; and the recent rise or resurgence of right-wing populists in Western Europe, in, for example, Austria, France, Germany and the Netherlands.

Such politicians seek to exploit some local people's fears of an 'influx' of

foreigners as a perceived result of globalisation for their own political purposes. While they might be prepared to admit that global free trade theoretically has a good side—lower taxes and cheaper goods—for them this does not outweigh a less desirable outcome. This is a free(r) labour market and associated immigration, the consequence, they claim, of massive, uncontrollable population movements from the poor world—North and West Africa and Central and Eastern Europe—to the rich Western European world. (Whether such a movement of labour would actually be beneficial for European economies is rarely discussed.) Notable among the ranks of the anti-globalists are many conservative politicians and their media allies who claim that such population transfers result in often serious ‘conflicts between immigrant and established communities in formerly tight-knit neighbourhoods’ (Mittelman, 1994: 429). Such concerns frequently inform xenophobic populist propaganda, for example during Germany’s 2002 presidential and legislative elections. In sum, globalists see globalisation as the key to greater national and international stability and security, while anti-globalists see the opposite outcome.

While both globalists and anti-globalists differ fundamentally on what they see as the outcomes of globalisation, both believe that globalisation is having significant effects on domestic political and economic systems. But how significant? Cutting across the globalist/anti-globalist divide is a further issue: to what extent is globalisation a ‘non-negotiable, inevitable/inexorable process’ (Hay & Rosamond, 2002: 152), in the face of which states are helpless. Three sets of views can be isolated in this respect: the hyper-globalisationist, globalisation sceptic, and structural dependency approaches. I now examine briefly the views of each, before turning to an inspection of how various aspects of globalisation can be seen to affect comparative political analysis.

The hyper-globalisationist, globalisation sceptic, and structural dependency approaches

The hyper-globalisationist approach. Significant debate about globalisation began in the late 1980s, following the airing of the views of the mostly US business schools’ approach. This hyper-globalisation analysis took as its main theme the notion that the post-1970s, increasingly integrated world economy, posed a fundamental challenge to the sovereignty of the (nation-)state (Ohmae, 1990). The key hypothesis was that (economic) globalisation was a steamroller that would, in particular, compel Western European states to drop their Keynesian-style social democracy (Strange, 2003). The wider claim was that national adaptation to economic globalisation would require general state acceptance of both an advanced competitive imperative and of other neoliberal policy prescriptions. These would include significant labour market reforms to lessen costs by increasing labour and wage ‘flexibility’.

To the hyper-globalisationists economic globalisation was signaled empirically by: 1) the growing significance of TNCs; 2) major growth in foreign direct investment, especially in the advanced capitalist economies and among the East Asian ‘tiger’ economies; and 3) a globalisation of finance. These three developments posed a central challenge to the autonomy and independence of all states, with

particular pressure on both social democracy and broadly progressive regulation. Consequently, so the argument went, whether governments liked it or not, economic globalisation was resulting in the dominance of the competitive market order, and of the domestic political consequences of economic neoliberalism (Strange, 2003).

The globalisation sceptic approach. By the 1990s a powerful critique of the hyper-globalisationists had emerged, principally from the political left (Hirst & Thompson, 1999; Hay & Rosamond, 2002). The globalisation sceptics advanced two core propositions opposing the hyper-globalisationist claims. First, the social democratic nation-state with its Keynesian characteristics was not in terminal decline because of economic globalisation. Second, the hyper-globalisationist claim of *economic* globalisation was empirically incorrect, as it really only include the 'golden triangle' of North America, Western Europe and Japan (Hirst & Thompson, 1999).

In addition, Hay and Rosamond (2002) presented a powerful theoretical critique of the hyper-globalisationist view. This was that there was little or no role for agency when it came to economic globalisation. But, they argued, it was not a steamroller; instead, there was a more nuanced effect, with a role for various agents. Hay and Rosamond's critical analysis of the hyper-globalisation thesis was developed in relation to what they saw as Britain's (New) Labour government's unnecessary surrender to the neoliberal depiction of economic globalisation, but its ramifications are wider. In general, they emphasised the significance of ideas and discourse in helping determine accepted contours of the impact of economic globalisation on domestic political economies. For example, they argued that the UK's economic and welfare reformist policies since the early 1980s had taken place not under the *force majeure* of economic globalisation but because of the then intellectual hegemony of neoliberal political parties and social forces inside both state and civil society. In other words, there were not irresistible *structural* constraints on social democracy in the UK imposed by economic globalisation. Consequently, there was at least some scope to develop particularistic political-economic projects, such as those of Chavez in Venezuela and of Mahathir in Malaysia, which seemed to be able to 'flout' to some degree the supposed imperatives of economic globalisation *à la* hyper-globalisationists.

In sum, for the globalisation sceptics, economic globalisation is a force that to a degree can be resisted or moulded. It is best perceived as a 'contingent process or tendency to which counter-tendencies might be mobilized' (Hay & Rosamond, 2002: 152). This implies that economic globalisation neither inevitably implies the diminution of the welfare state nor disallows a 'social democratic' alternative to unalloyed economic liberalisation.

The structural dependency approach. Arguments denying the inevitability of economic globalisation's impact were followed later in the 1990s by further analyses based on a restatement and rearticulation of structural dependency theory (Coates, 2000; Radice, 1999). This suggests that economic globalisation is 'not merely a set of ideas and a dominant discourse' but instead an aggregate 'of structurally imposed imperatives rooted in material relations' (Hay & Rosamond,

2002: 152). The core of the structural dependency approach is a radical left view of the globalisation thesis. Largely concurring with the empirical claims of the hyper-globalisationists, the structural dependency view nevertheless rejects the inevitability of neoliberalism. In addition, it offers a critique of the positivist analysis via a deeper structural account of the capitalist mode of production (Strange, 2003). The structural dependency view claims that recent empirical weakening of reformist politics and political economy, not only in Western Europe but also via structural adjustment programmes in many Third World countries, is explicable by the rise to unchallenged global hegemony of emphatically pro-capital class forces. The structural dependency approach to globalisation makes two key conclusions. Post-cold war economic globalisation is 1) a set of ideas and a dominant discourse emphatically favouring capital; and 2) an assemblage of structurally imposed imperatives rooted in material relations (Radice, 1999).

Hyper-globalisationists, globalisation sceptics and the structural dependency approach differ significantly in interpretations of the impact and ramifications of economic globalisation on countries' domestic economic (and political) terrains. Nevertheless, there is agreement that we need to understand better the political and economic impact of significant border-crossing—state and non-state (transnational entities and international organisations)—actors. This implies that to account for contemporary political (and economic) developments within countries there is a need to bridge the analytical gap between what until now have been two quite separate spheres: comparative politics and international relations.

Conclusion: globalisation and comparative politics

I started this article with the presumption that the world had changed significantly after the Cold War. This was marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, the associated demise of the Soviet bloc and the consequential global emphasis on economic liberalisation and democratisation. Throughout the article I have argued that globalisation has significantly affected domestic political systems and political economies in countries around the world. As Webber and Smith (2002a: 6) note, the consequence is that 'all states [have] in some way ... been touched by the consequences of the growth of post-war interdependence and by the end of the Cold War'. The impact of globalisation is that countries and states are now subject to a multiplicity of external influences and must make policy in a world characterised by both imprecise and shifting power structures. I also suggested that, as a result, we urgently need appropriate analytical tools to explain the political impact of the intrusion of globalisation on domestic terrains. This obviously affects the realm of comparative political analysis.

But we cannot necessarily take the nearly 200 extant states as an undifferentiated mass in this regard. It might be useful to start from the premise that there are three broad kinds of regime types in states: established democracies, transitional democracies and non-democracies. I hypothesise that differing domestic political arrangements influences how globalisation affects domestic

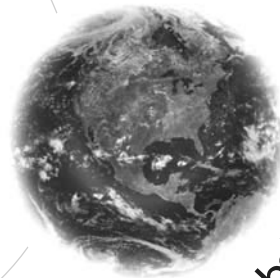
political actors, structures and processes. With such an analytical framework, it might be possible usefully to tackle the question of what globalisation implies for comparative political analysis, since it would be possible to factor into the analysis states' differing political characteristics. It is this task that I hope to accomplish in future research.

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