

# GEOPOLITICS AND GLOCALIZATION: EDITORIAL

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Nowadays, from a geopolitical point of view, the main question seems to be how to recognize the actual strategic interests of a country when they are the result of the interdependence between states in the current world order. A “glocalist” perspective may suggest that we should not look at countries and states, but at local political realities (such as cities) and super-national cultural identities (such as civilizations).

What complicates the analysis is the fact that both cities and civilizations do not have an absolute definition, since they are both the result of ever-changing networks of people and words, fluttering all around the world and modifying the meanings and the values of human actions. Moreover, local political behaviors clearly contribute to changing civilizations just as each civilization (defined by a coherent worldview of values) influences behaviors in local political realities. As stated by Hans Köchler, “the rapid development of technology, in tandem with the global pursuit of economic interests, has made interaction (encounter) with the ‘other’ a structural fact of society” and “one of the major challenges of our time will be whether civilizations can agree on a set of meta-values on the basis of mutuality” (Köchler 2020: 6-7). In the current global environment, the interaction between different and often incompatible value systems has the potential to create conflict either for ideological reasons or for the use of culture as a tool to legitimize conflicts (where in fact diverging economic interests are the cause). Only the agreement on a set of meta-values can open the field for a new dialogue between civilizations.

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To enhance this dialogue, nowadays we have new tools such as the Internet. But as noticed by Luke Munn (2020), what was once viewed as a borderless realm is becoming “balkanized”, splitting into nationalized parts. Each country increasingly sees the Internet as its own Internet, a sort of national space to be regulated and shaped. There are several technologies – such as data localization, Internet shutdowns and Internet filtering – able to realize this national purpose: Internet as an extension of territory. But even China can be the example to show that these online territories have permeable borders. In two different directions, pro-government activists are able to jump across the firewall in order to attack individuals threatening the stability of their motherland and, at the same time, individuals are able to scale the firewall in order to express solidarity with democratic movements and to undermine the political boundaries established by their nation. This may demonstrate the porosity of Internet territories, providing a portrait that goes beyond the dichotomy between the borderless and balkanized realms. This may also support the hope that the dialogue among global identities could be nevertheless improved through the Internet. As Mehdi Mozafari (2020) underlines, the main question concerns the compatibility of the current global system with a world made up of a plurality of civilizations (where civilization is defined as world vision and historical formation). We see, however, that under the process of globalization – of which the Internet is part – the system of local identities and loyalties is gradually supplemented with the system of multi-identity and multi-loyalty.

Everything is changing and it seems that globalization is creating a multipolar global order. Washington, Moscow, Beijing, and the European Union are increasingly challenged by other emerging political powers. We are seeing fundamental changes in the power constellation of international players and the international order is characterized by a chronic regional and global instability and a dramatic decline of its previous easy governance. Those changes are also affecting Europe and could determine opportunities to establish a peace order for the whole of Europe.

The year 2020 could be the moment of truth for the European Union. The so-called “sovereignty” populist parties, which showed up in recent years in Europe (and not only), are for Europe more symptomatic of the illness than the illness itself. In fact, we noticed a process of Nation-States castling a little everywhere in the world, due to a reaction to some negative effects of globalization. In Europe, national selfishness proves that the communitarian policies of the European Union are not so communitarian. Either the European Union’s decline is underway or 2020 will be remembered as its turning point year.

More generally, as emphasized by Peter Schulze (2020), the central question is whether the emerging multipolar order can provide security and welfare for the international community. The opposite possibility is to see policies based on national interests, undermining opportunities for confidence-building and trust among the driving forces (not only the countries) of the globalization process.

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