




# Global order and its enemies

MICHAŁ MOSZYŃSKI

Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Faculty of Economic Sciences and Management,  
Department of Economics, ul. Gagarina 13A, 87-100 Toruń, Poland

✉ [moszyn@umk.pl](mailto:moszyn@umk.pl)

 [orcid.org/0000-0003-1197-8744](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1197-8744)

## Abstract

**Motivation:** A series of crises have demonstrated the low resilience of the global economy to shocks and triggered a discussion about the possible end of globalisation understood as the unrestrained growth of mutual trade and business ties on a global scale. The emerging tendencies to shorten supply chains and block trade as well as calls for an active and strategic trade policy are contributing to the decay of the liberal global order built after World War II. The potential disintegration of the world economy into antagonised blocs and the conflict between the Western model of liberal democracy and autocratic regimes should be considered particularly dangerous. The above phenomena deserve the utmost attention, and the desire to understand them has provided inspiration for taking up this topic.

**Aim:** This study aims to define and interpret the concept of global order in both economic and political dimensions. In this context, two interrelated questions are addressed. The first one is about the character of the global order after World War II and the second one concerns the causes and consequences of its decay.

**Results:** The emerging disintegrative tendencies in the global economy and the anarchisation of international economic relations constitute a negative-sum game. Globalisation has allowed most countries in the world to achieve significant gains in wealth. The benefits that it provides to consumers are too great to be consciously abandoned in favour of an autarkic economic model. Capitalism seems to be able to operate under very different political regimes, hence — with all the differences between political models at the national level — it creates an effective platform for cooperation on the global stage. Nevertheless, the end of the “peace dividend” indicates that effectively preventing the danger of armed conflict by means of economic and military deterrence will be an important part of the future world order.



*Keywords:* global order; institutions; globalisation; economic integration; capitalism  
*JEL:* B52; F02; P10; P48

## 1. Introduction

The main scientific goal of the study is to define and interpret the concept of global order in the economic and political dimensions. The paper is divided into seven sections. The literature review in section 2 justifies undertaking a reflection on global order in both economic and political terms and encourages attempts to understand its nature, evolution and prospects. The research methods are briefly described in the section 3. To achieve the paper's objective, the subject is decomposed into two interrelated problem questions. The first question is about the nature of the post-World War II global order (section 4), while the second question concerns the causes of the decay of that order and its possible consequences (sections 5 and 6). The entire discussion is followed by conclusions (section 7).

## 2. Literature review: a diagnosis of the crisis state of the world

In the early 1990s, the end of the Cold War and the triumph of economic and political liberalism made it possible to formulate the famous “end-of-history” thesis (Fukuyama, 1992), and President Bush (1990) expressed hope for a “new world order” in which “the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony”, where “the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle” and where nations “recognize the shared responsibility for freedom and justice”. The link between the political and economic spheres was imagined as a deterministic sequence that involved forcing political liberalisation through economic liberalisation under conditions of globalisation (“change through trade”). It was hoped that the iron law of progress would operate and that Western-style global modernisation would gain momentum as incomes rose and the middle class became stronger. The opening up of China and its export-led growth strategy, the transformation of Russia in the first half of the 1990s and the political and economic integration of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe into Western structures all fitted into this pattern.

However, the great expectations that the world would embark on a path of geopolitical convergence have turned out to be vain as the competition between liberalism and autocracies has returned, and nation-states continue to be a source of nationalisms. Kagan (2008) figuratively described these phenomena as “the return of history and the end of dreams”. The US–China antagonisms and especially the war in Ukraine are reminiscent of the “clashes of civilisations” referred to in Huntington’s (1993) thesis.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, negative social, political and economic developments have been increasing in the liberal democracies of the West. According to Freedom House (2021), political rights and civil liberties around

the world had been improving for about three and a half decades from the mid-1970s onwards. However, this trend then reversed and indicators deteriorated for a decade and a half until 2021, which has been aptly described by Diamond (2015) as a “democratic recession” and more bluntly by Przeworski (2019) as a “crisis of democracy”. In several countries, democratically elected leaders have attacked liberal institutions, mainly the courts, non-partisan bureaucracies, independent media and other bodies that help limit executive power in a system of checks and balances, and their governments have been increasingly adopting authoritarian tactics. Poland, for example, fell by as many as 48 places in the World Press Freedom Index between 2015 and 2022 (Reporters Without Borders, 2022). As stated in the International IDEA (2021, p. VII) report, “more than a quarter of the world’s population now live in democratically backsliding countries. Together with those living in outright non-democratic regimes, they make up more than two-thirds of the world’s population.” This democratic backsliding has often enjoyed significant popular support, something that Appelbaum (2020) has referred to as the “Seductive Lure of Authoritarianism”, and Scheiring (2020), using Hungary as an example, as “The Retreat of Liberal Democracy”. The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded existing negative trends such as the increasingly technocratic approach to managing society in Western democracies and the tendency in many nonconsolidated democracies or authoritarian regimes to resort to coercion (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2022, p. 3). Today’s crisis of liberalism is reminiscent of similar breakdowns of this current of thought in past history, as addressed, for example, by Lippmann (1937) or by the ordoliberal Röpke (1942); it also brings to mind the well-known attempt to defend Western liberal values in the post-World War II era made by Popper (1945).

In the field of economics, the accumulation of negative phenomena that have shaken the European and, more broadly, the world economy since the global financial crisis (2008+) is substantial: the eurozone crisis (2009–2010), the migration crisis (2015), the referendum on the UK’s EU membership (2016) and Brexit, and the COVID-19 pandemic (2020+). The aforementioned shocks have fuelled a discussion about the end of globalisation, or at least its slowdown. Taking the dynamics of world trade (which clearly exceeded the growth rate of world GDP after World War II) as the most general measure of globalisation, it is fair to note that world trade collapsed during periods of crises but then quickly recovered. Since 2012, however, there has been a marked decline in the growth rate of trade. According to IMF (2022, pp. 137, 166) data, the average growth rate of world trade for the 2004–2013 period was 5.4 per cent, but for the 2014–2023 period, it was only 3.0 per cent. The corresponding figures for world real GDP are 4.1% and 3.0%. Direct investment halved over the 2016–2019 period (United Nations, 2022, p. 210), and in early 2022, just when it seemed to be starting to recover from the shock of the pandemic, the international business environment changed dramatically with Russia’s attack on Ukraine. Jens Stoltenberg (NATO, 2022) described Russia’s war

against Ukraine as a “game-changer” for the global order. The economic effects of the war extend beyond the region of conflict to create a triple crisis involving fuel, food and financial issues. The war has exacerbated supply-side problems related to the length of supply chains, as already outlined during the pandemic, and Europe’s dependence on Russian energy and rising commodity prices have accelerated inflationary pressures. Rising interest rates have threatened to undermine the sustainability of the public finances of indebted economies and stifle economic activity in the manner of the stagflation of the 1970s.

All of this is compounded by environmental challenges that make one wonder about the feasibility of sustaining the uninterrupted economic growth pursued in the past (the concept of degrowth) and by demographic problems, not only in developed countries but also in developing countries such as China.

This synthetic diagnosis of the current condition of the world makes it possible to speak of disorder, a state of a certain solstice or even a kind of interregnum: a time when — as the Italian historian Antonio Gramsci vividly described — the old order has already died and the new order cannot yet be born (Przeworski, 2019, p. 1; Streeck, 2016, p. 36). Kleer (2021, p. 34) sees these perturbations as a transition from one civilisation to the next, in this case from an industrial one to an informational one. Or perhaps there is simply a transition from one form of liberal order to another, with a new geopolitical configuration? Beck (2016, pp. XI–XII) concluded that the “metamorphosis of the world” is of such a profound nature that it cannot be compared to any previous “change in society”. The famous question raised a century ago by the German philosopher Oswald Spengler as to whether we are facing a “Decline of the West” can be echoed. In his view, civilisation represents the final stage of the duration of a particular culture. In this case, he meant the end of Western (European) culture.

Such processes *in statu nascendi* are not easy to interpret, and it is often only *ex post*, in a historical perspective, that they can be properly understood and classified.

### 3. Methods

The research is based primarily on a critical study of literature in the areas of political economy and institutional economics as well as social theory, with elements of history and political science. The analysis conducted in the text on the basis of these approaches is qualitative in nature, with occasional phenomena illustrated by macroeconomic data.

## 4. Global order after World War II

### 4.1. Global order: a liberal order?

As Kissinger (2014, p. 2) noted, “our age is insistently, at times almost desperately, in pursuit of a concept of world order.” In his view, the closest to this idea are the principles of the Peace of Westphalia, ending the Thirty Years’ War in 1648, on which the cooperation of modern sovereign states has been based. They include national independence, sovereign statehood, national interest and non-interference. The contemporary, now global Westphalian system — which is also called the world community — has striven to curtail the anarchical nature of the world (Kissinger, 2014, p. 3). The main principle of respecting the integrity of states has been violated by Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, which means a return to the rule of the law of the stronger.

Global order can be defined as an international arrangement of norms, laws and institutions that regulate the mutual relations of states. As one of its possible variations, a global liberal order consists of a set of rules and structures designed to promote democracy and human rights, encourage free trade and diminish war by fostering the pursuit of mutual gain and giving weaker countries a voice (Tierney, 2021, p. 116). The post-World War II global economic order, built by the US and its partners, brought unquestionable prosperity, stability and predictability for more than seven decades. It made possible the reconstruction and integration of Europe, the Japanese and Asian economic miracle and China’s long-term economic growth. Until the oil crisis of the 1970s, there had been no major global crisis, with armed conflicts being local in nature. The institutional backbone was provided by the organisations established in 1944, that is the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and in 1947, that is the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (later WTO), whose task was to facilitate international economic cooperation. On the international security side, the institutional architecture was complemented by NATO, founded in 1947. It is worth noting here that this order was largely constructed, not of spontaneous origin. The order was liberal in nature, although not in a pure form, as US policy often deviated from its stated ideals. In general, however, it was characterised by economic openness, reduction of tariff barriers, presence of multilateral institutions, security cooperation and promotion of democracy. As Kissinger (2014, p. 1) remarked, for most of the post-war period, the community of nations reflected the American consensus: “an inexorably expanding cooperative order of states observing common rules and norms”.

This order can be placed on a long trajectory of liberal modernisation, started by the Enlightenment and dynamised by the Industrial Revolution. The development of the West seemed to exhibit the logic of the iron law of progress, driven not only by science, discovery, innovation, reason and technology but also by appropriate institutions and policies. Economists searched for the right

“rules of the game” of economic life to ensure sustainable, balanced economic growth, prosperity and a life of dignity. A study of the vast literature on the subject leads to the conclusion that an indispensable set of rules for a functional economy must include private property, flexible prices and open markets. This core of liberal thought cannot be ignored in the construction of a market-based economic order and, in this sense, these constituents are universal — regardless of time and place (Moszyński, 2015, p. 200).

In the political dimension, Fukuyama (2014) argues that “a well-functioning political order must consist of the three sets of political institutions — state, law, and accountability — in some kind of balance.” The fact that liberal democracy meets these conditions does not automatically mean that it represents some kind of political universalism, but rather reflects the cultural preferences of people who live in Western liberal democracies. Of the nondemocratic alternatives, China poses the most serious challenge to the idea that liberal democracy constitutes a universal evolutionary model.

#### 4.2. The universalism of capitalism

Reflections on global economic order are difficult to detach from the political dimension. Order is based on principles and values, yet these are not understood in the same way everywhere. Wallerstein (2006, p. XV) points to the problem of the European universalism that the Western world adopts in relation to the sphere of values when explaining its policies, especially towards “developing” countries. As he points out, “the concepts of human rights and democracy, the superiority of Western civilization because it is based on universal values and truths, and the inescapability of submission to the ‘market’ are all offered to us as self-evident ideas. But they are not at all self-evident.” In fact, Wallerstein (2006, p. XIV) argues, “the struggle between European universalism and universal universalism is the central ideological struggle of the contemporary world”. While accepting these arguments and acknowledging the separateness of “world-systems” or “civilisations”, if only in the sense of Huntington (2006, p. 40ff), it is nevertheless important to note — on a global level — their cooperation in the economic field. After all, the Soviet Union traded with the West, just as China, India and South America do today. It seems, therefore, that the language of the market is more universal than that of politics, making it possible to think of a global economic order that is not limited to democratic regimes with market economies. As already indicated in section 4.1, the core of liberal market economy principles is relatively narrow, but the variety of forms that real-world economic models take proves that there is no one-size-fits-all kind of capitalism that is best for a particular time and context. The example of China demonstrates that hybrid models are possible, while Hungary, in a milder form, demonstrates the feasibility of specific forms of non-liberal state capitalism.

These considerations make sense for capitalism controlled at the national level by political power. However, completely different conditions are imposed

by global capitalism, as is aptly demonstrated by the well-known trilemma pointed out by Rodrik (2007, p. 200). His model describes the conflict between globalisation, national sovereignty and democracy. Rodrik believes that deep international economic integration (especially free movement of capital), an independent nation-state and democracy are not simultaneously achievable. The post-World War II world order, the Bretton Woods System, was a combination of the sovereign nation-state and democracy and was based on restrictions on capital flows. The increasing globalisation since the 1990s has forced states to introduce similar neoliberal measures and has resulted in the development of an ideal type called the “golden straightjacket”. The third ideal type — a combination of hyper-globalisation and democratic politics — implies a global democracy in which political control of the economy at the global level is possible. The institutions of global governance still do not sufficiently fulfil this condition, therefore a global political order is unlikely from the standpoint of this model.

## 5. Reasons for the decay of global order

Referring back to the discussion in section 2, the crisis state of the world can be interpreted as a certain qualitative change in the liberal world order, and perhaps even as its decomposition. Opinions on this are divided, and therefore the responses to the causes of this state of affairs will also be inconclusive. To cover the spectrum of discussion, let us cite the opinion of Deudney and Ikenberry (2018, p. 16) that “it is too soon to write the obituary of liberalism as a theory of international relations, liberal democracy as a system of government, or the liberal order as the overarching framework for global politics.” For these authors, the liberal vision of nation-states cooperating for security and prosperity is still valid, and the liberal world represents the “resilient order” that is difficult to overturn. German sociologist Streeck (2016, p. 35), on the contrary, is convinced of the failure of the globalist-neoliberal social project, which has lost the advantages of the global system of the three golden decades after World War II. Invoking Wallerstein, he sees the weakening position of the hegemon, the USA — the “heart” of world capitalism and engine of its evolution — as the source of systemic entropy. This is primarily about the decline of relative advantages, whether in economic, technological or demographic terms, in favour of Asia. While the military power of the US is capable of destroying threats, the causal capacity for the installation of pro-US and pro-capitalist regimes has declined (vide: Iraq, Afghanistan).

Two main lines of response to the question of the sources of weakness in global order can be proposed. The first one relates to the internal problems of developed countries and is based on the thesis that the institutions of the post-war economic order no longer ensure strong, sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The second argument, articulated by developing countries, is that governance structures do not reflect the actual distribution of economic

power in the modern world, and are thus inherently unfair (Goodman, 2017, p. 5).

The loss of stability in the international order and the deterioration in its performance can be interpreted as a loss of good institutional equilibrium. For Keen (2022, p. 23), a well-known critic of neoclassical economics, the root of the crisis state of the modern world is economists' and politicians' belief in a natural mechanism that pushes the world towards disequilibrium rather than equilibrium. It was not equilibrium but accumulating imbalance that caused the collapse of slavery, socialism and feudalism, and it is exactly the same with capitalism. Comparing reforms in Russia and China, he notes that it is the Chinese who have not succumbed to the religion of equilibrium and are introducing the reforms gradually, rationally and cautiously, which is why they have been hugely successful.

Exploring the sources of the problems inherent in the developed countries themselves, Fukuyama (2014) highlights that “the worship of procedure over substance is a critical source of political decay in contemporary liberal democracies.” The rigidity of institutions is responsible for the fact that when the circumstances change, “both law [formal institutions — MM] and procedural accountability are used to defeat the substantive ends that they were originally designed to serve.”

Zielonka (2018, p. x) goes back to the crisis of liberalism when explaining Europe's (and Western) multifaceted problems. In his view, liberal circles “spend more time explaining the rise of populism than the fall of liberalism”. The most frequent explanation of the liberals' current distress is the neo-liberal turn: classical liberalism and other more social streams of liberalism have been captured and perverted by neo-liberalism.

Rodrik (2018) explains the crisis of liberal democracy and the proliferation of populist movements by the friction between globalisation and democracy (see section 4.2.). Globalisation exacerbates social tensions, in particular by widening inequalities and flushing out the social norms that have been the glue of social cohesion. This creates fertile ground for nationalism, which political leaders cynically exploit. The escalation of this phenomenon can be seen in Russia, which has launched a nationalist war with the intention of destroying the Ukrainian nation (Acemoglu, 2022, p. 64). Also, it is worth remembering that wars have always had an outsized role in civilisational shifts (Kleer, 2021, p. 35). From the standpoint of Acemoglu and Robinson's (2019) well-known book, it is legitimate to argue that there is a risk of moving beyond the “narrow corridor to liberty” within which the state and the society control each other. A strong state controls violence, enforces laws and provides public services, whereas a strong, mobilised society is needed to control and shackle the strong state. Totalitarian states outside this delicate balance represent an additional destabilising force in the world order. The intentional actions of such states and their authorities with massive economic, military and political power are more likely to have a destructive impact on the world order than the actions



of other countries. While Russia has clearly defined itself as an enemy of this order, China seems to be more cautious in this matter.

The general backdrop of the excesses in question is the accelerated, disruptive technological change and increased complexity of the modern world. Humanity today is creating a “(world) risk society” in which there are many human-induced risks compounded by the process of modernisation (Beck, 1999). Since we are unable to address these themes more extensively, we would like to quote a brief description: “Chaos threatens side by side with unprecedented interdependence: in the spread of weapons of mass destruction, the disintegration of states, the impact of environmental depredations, the persistence of genocidal practices, and the spread of new technologies threatening to drive conflict beyond human control or comprehension. New methods of assessing and communicating information unite regions as never before and project events globally — but in a manner that inhibits reflection, demanding of leaders that they register instantaneous reactions in a form expressible in slogans. Are we facing a period in which forces beyond the restraints of any order determine the future?” (Kissinger, 2014, p. 2).

## 6. Consequences and perspectives

The erosion of global order as outlined by the processes mentioned in section 2 is conveniently described within the framework of the model developed by Brunnermeier (2021), who proposes to frame global order in two dimensions. The first dimension concerns the organisation of interactions between countries, that is whether they are established multilaterally or bilaterally, while the second dimension refers to the distinction between institution-based and outcome-based order. International arrangements may qualify for different categories within these two dimensions. For example, the multilateral Paris Agreement of 2015 is outcome-based (2-degree global warming), whereas the European Monetary Union is multilateral and rule-based.

The post-World War II global order was mainly based on rules and international organisations that provided a forum for coordinating and solving various problems. The advantage of this type of global order is that it promotes predictability in a complex world and mitigates unfavourable behaviour like tariff and currency wars. Larger countries have to abide by the same rules as smaller ones, which limits their power. However, this type of order is less flexible, making it more difficult to adapt to unexpected shocks. It may turn out that in a dynamically changing world, existing rules are not compatible with permanent change (Brunnermeier, 2021).

Through the lens of this model, we can therefore witness a shift from multilateral to bilateral order. A good example of this is Brexit, which has forced the UK to negotiate its relations with the rest of the world on its own. In addition, there is a shift from rule-based and institution-based order to outcome-based order, which will result in a further decline in stability and predictability. In a simi-

lar way, we can interpret the current situation as a transition from constructed to spontaneous order with chaotic and ad-hoc government interventions.

The coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent Russian aggression against Ukraine represent an important caesura for the global order. The earlier geopolitical constellation was described by a world of interdependence, with high costs of possible conflicts. Thanks to peace and security, international trade was guided by the principle of minimising production costs and stretching the global value chain, while security of supply allowed for a just-in-time policy. In contrast, the new geopolitical constellation is characterised by a desire to maintain the resilience of individual economies. The reorientation in the sphere of international trade involves greater consideration for the criterion of security of supply rather than cost reduction, with the just-in-time strategy being replaced by a just-in-case strategy and autarkic behaviour becoming increasingly prevalent in the production of strategic goods. It is worth noting at this point China's efforts to increase the scope of economic and technological self-sufficiency, undertaken officially since 2015 under the "Made in China" strategy. The aim of this ten-year plan of Chinese industrial policy is to develop domestic R&D activities, take control of global supply chains, substitute foreign technologies with domestic solutions and, ultimately, capture foreign markets for high-tech products.

All of this increases the risk of regionalisation of the global economy and formation of competing political and economic blocs in line with the "new systemic competition" paradigm (Apolte, 2019). Within this model of competition, liberal democracy is confronting an authoritarian, intolerant and neo-imperialist social model, just as it did during the Cold War. Today's despots freely resort to an authoritarian-aggressive, religious or national-imperialist style. For the West, this conflict means that it is necessary to reflect on the realm of values. In a keynote speech to the World Economic Forum in Davos, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said that "freedom is more important than free trade" and that the "protection of our values is more important than profit." According to him, an important lesson from Russia's war against Ukraine is that the West should not trade long-term security needs for short-term economic interests. He stressed that the war demonstrates how economic relations with authoritarian regimes can create vulnerabilities in areas that include energy (NATO, 2022). In a similar vein, one might ask what price the West is willing to pay to defend its values vis-à-vis the authoritarian China, although this debate is yet to begin (Riecke, 2022, p. 16). The economic sanctions imposed on Russia, ethically justified, are meant to cripple the Kremlin's ability to finance the war and impose clear economic and political costs on Russia's political elite responsible for the invasion. They are, however, a double-edged weapon, as the closure of economies, from an economic point of view, implies welfare losses for the majority of the existing participants in the exchange. A similar logic can be attributed to the US–China trade wars initiated under President Trump in 2018. In economic terms, the emerging disintegrative tendencies in the global

economy and the anarchisation of international economic relations constitute a negative-sum game. Globalisation has allowed most countries in the world, including major players in the geopolitical arena, to achieve significant gains in wealth. The benefits it provides to consumers would be abandoned in favour of a more autarkic economic model. Economic actors are paying the price in the form of global inflation and rising interest rates.

Nevertheless, the end of the “peace dividend” indicates that effectively preventing the danger of armed conflict by means of economic and military deterrence will be an important part of the future world order. The more convincing this deterrence is, the sooner mutual coexistence can be grounded on rules and isolation of economic systems can be avoided (Grimm, 2022, p. 64).

The use of trade policy as a geopolitical tool is manifested in the intensification of Western trade cooperation, such as the acceleration of the EU–Canada Free Trade Agreement (CETA), whose entry into force has been blocked for several years. Trade among like-minded people, based on values and a common understanding of the law, is not only easier but also more sustainable in the end (Münchrath, 2022, p. 15). Under the conditions of the new systemic competition, there is a retreat from the doctrine of “change through trade” and even its modification to “trade through change”.

If the existing global order is flawed but shows adaptability and functionality, and above all if there is no alternative to it, then reforms are the only sensible course of action. These may include improving the operation of international organisations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, for example improving the allocation of votes and positions of underrepresented countries. Another course of action could be to update and strengthen key principles of global economic order in a number of fields, including trade, investment and finance, or even to create them (Goodman, 2017, pp. 5–8).<sup>1</sup>

In which areas of world trade are global rules needed? A typical argument from economists relates to the phenomenon of market failures, for example unfavourable externalities such as beggar-thy-neighbour policies that lead to overall welfare losses. A second reason for international coordination could be the provision of a global public good, such as health or climate protection. As argued by Gates (2022, pp. 42–52), maintaining a global monitoring centre for the emergence of infectious disease threats under the auspices of the WHO would cost \$1 billion per year, a paltry sum compared to the trillions of dollars in losses caused by a pandemic. The large number of beneficiaries, the problem of coordination and the phenomenon of free-riding make it difficult to set up such a team. Meanwhile, this is one of the many fields of the world economy where desirable international policies are also in the interests of individual countries. One can point to areas where global regulation has not emerged, even

---

<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to discuss global governance reforms while leaving aside issues of economic and political power. Where is the power and who is supposed to change the world? It seems that public authorities will not become drivers of change because they do not keep up with trends. This problem requires a separate analysis.

though it has long been called for: the Tobin tax and regulation of tax havens, regulation of anti-competitive behaviour, digital economy, climate change.

Guidance on how to organise future international order is given by Acemoglu (2022, p. 64):

- Trade agreements should not be dictated by multinationals that benefit from artificially maintaining low wages and labour standards in developing countries.
- Trade linkages based on the cost advantages of cheap, subsidised fossil fuels should be rethought.
- Acceptance, or at least understanding, on the part of the West that it cannot fully influence the political sphere of its trading partners. This does not mean a lack of response to human rights violations, but the emphasis can be re-directed from official government policy to the wider use of civil society organisations such as Amnesty International and Transparency International.
- The West must take steps to enhance its own security and ensure that authoritarian and corrupt regimes do not influence its own policies.
- Western governments would gain credibility if they admitted the mistakes in their policies during the colonial and Cold War periods towards developing countries.

These recommendations can be supplemented with a conclusion that the politics has to accept the reality of different values and complexity of the world. Although many problems are interconnected, it is useful to separate controversial issues where possible in order to avoid blocking other solutions. Furthermore, it is worth recommending to avoid ideologising and to focus on practical solutions to a given problem, taking into account the local point of view. The peculiarities of problems in different regions of the world may be beyond the reach of global and centralised institutions such as the World Bank, hence the call for a diverse and variable composition of expert teams, an openness to innovation in the international forum. In this regard, it would probably be appropriate to adopt and accept a bottom-up approach rather than top-down rule-making and enforcement. Considering the regional and national context in relation to world order, it is worth recalling the reflection of Röpke (1959, p. 20), which has not lost its relevance: “The outlook is bad, however, if the nations strive for international order while at home they continue to pursue a policy contrary to what is required for it.” This allows the recommendation to be made to strain efforts in developed countries towards strengthening democracy and internationalism, rather than closing economies and creating economic tensions between the US and the EU.

## 7. Conclusion

The above considerations indicate that global order is a capacious category that cannot be easily operationalised and that a deeper understanding of it requires interdisciplinary studies. The change in the geopolitical situation and the crisis state of the world have spurred greater interest in the idea of global order, whether in the political or the economic dimension. The interpretation of the crisis phenomena justifies the conclusion that there is indeed a certain qualitative change in the global order. One could also ask whether a world order has actually existed or whether it has rather been — in the liberal version — limited to Western countries. Meanwhile, the relative power of the West is diminishing, and the Eurocentric perspective is losing relevance. At the time of preparing this text, a comprehensive answer to the question of what the future balance of power in the world will look like is not yet possible. A world with overlapping regional and interregional orders, able to cooperate and compete in different spheres simultaneously, seems likely.

The discussions surrounding the notion of world order are a continuation of the endless debate initiated by Kant around the question of whether it is possible for the international politics of states to be oriented towards peaceful cooperation within the framework of international law. A more recent iteration of this problem has been aptly described by Beck (2016) as “the question of how nation-states develop cooperation within the context of state sovereignty without losing their identity and finding answers to global challenges.” In the face of the clash of civilisations, Kant’s question remains open. Perhaps the West, pursuing Wallerstein’s postulate, should search more strongly for universal universalism in the realm of values and draw on the achievements of Oriental philosophy? Such intellectual reinforcement could come from the Chinese concept of *tianxia*, which offers an alternative vision to the current world order (Zhao, 2016). Fukuyama (2022, p. 154) argues that the principle of moderation, which he derives from antiquity, can be taken as the basis of a liberal society. This has already been argued by Röpke (1950) as *Maß und Mitte*. Given that this idea is also attributed to Confucius, one can see a common denominator in the realm of values.

From a Western perspective, which is apparently very difficult for us to abandon mentally, it is justified to conclude that the liberal approach is pragmatic: a given order exists because it works and solves problems, so relying on democratic governments, market-based economic systems and international institutions seems preferable to other alternatives when it comes to addressing the present challenges. According to Fukuyama (2014), it is not inevitable that history will end with the triumph of liberalism, but it is inevitable that a decent world order will be liberal. This is why it is worth facing up to its enemies.

## References

- Acemoglu, D. (2022). Was dem Nationalismus entgegenzusetzen ist. *Handelsblatt*, 1–3.06.
- Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J.A. (2019). *The narrow corridor: states, societies, and the fate of liberty*. Penguin Press.
- Apolte, T. (2019). *Der neue Systemwettbewerb. Wirtschaftliche Freiheit*. Retrieved 26.09.2022 from <http://wirtschaftlichefreiheit.de/wordpress/?p=26426>.
- Appelbaum, A. (2020). *Twilight of democracy: the seductive lure of authoritarianism*. Doubleday Books.
- Beck, U. (1999). *World risk society*. Polity Press.
- Beck, U. (2016). *The metamorphosis of the world*. Polity Press.
- Brunnermeier, M. (2021). *The resilient society*. Endeavor Literary Press.
- Bush, G.H.W. (1990). *Address before a joint session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf crisis and the federal budget deficit*. Retrieved 26.09.2022 from <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/public-papers/2217>.
- Deudney, D., & Ikenberry, G.J. (2018). Liberal world, the resilient order. *Foreign Affairs*, 97(4), 16–24.
- Diamond, L. (2015). Facing up to the democratic recession. *Journal of Democracy*, 26(1), 141–155.
- Economist Intelligence Unit. (2022). *Democracy index 2021: the China challenge*. Retrieved 28.09.2022 from <https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/eiu-democracy-index-2021.pdf>.
- Freedom House. (2021). *Freedom in the world 2021: democracy under siege*. Retrieved 26.09.2022 from [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/FIW2021\\_World\\_02252021\\_FINAL-web-upload.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/FIW2021_World_02252021_FINAL-web-upload.pdf).
- Fukuyama, F. (1992). *The end of history and the last man*. Free Press.
- Fukuyama, F. (2014). *Political order and political decay: from the industrial revolution to the globalization of democracy*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Fukuyama, F. (2022). *Liberalism and its discontents*. Profile Books.
- Gates, B. (2022). *How to prevent the next pandemic*. Alfred A. Knopf.
- Goodman, M.P. (2017). Current state and evolution of the global economic order. In D. Remler, & Y. Yu (Eds.), *Parallel perspectives on the global economic order: a U.S.–China essay collection* (pp. 5–11). Center for Strategic & International Studies.
- Grimm, V. (2022). Plädoyer für ein schnelles Embargo. *Handelsblatt*, 14.04.
- Huntington, S.P. (1993). The clash of civilizations. *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3), 22–49. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20045621>.
- Huntington, S.P. (2006). *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*. Simon & Schuster.
- IMF. (2022). *World economic outlook: April*. Retrieved 26.09.2022 from <https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/WEO/2022/April/English/text.ashx>.

- International IDEA. (2021). *The global state of democracy 2021: building resilience in a pandemic era*. <https://doi.org/10.31752/idea.2021.91>.
- Kagan, R. (2008). *The return of history and the of dreams*. Alfred A. Knopf.
- Keen, S. (2022). Nie da się żyć jak zawsze. *Polityka*, 27, 22–25.
- Kissinger, H. (2014). *World order: reflections on the character of nations and the course of history*. Penguin.
- Kleer, J. (2021). Mechanizmy przejścia z jednej cywilizacji do kolejnej. *Biuletyn PTE*, 2, 30–35.
- Lippmann, W. (1937). *The good society*. Little, Brown and Company.
- Moszyński, M. (2015). Zasady liberalnego ładu gospodarczego: uniwersalizm czy specyficzność. In B. Fiedor (Ed.), *Nauki ekonomiczne: stylizowane fakty a wyzwania współczesności* (pp. 190–202). Polskie Towarzystwo Ekonomiczne.
- Münchrath, J. (2022). Handel durch Wandel. *Handelsblatt*, 22.08.
- NATO. (2022). *NATO secretary general at Davos: “freedom is more important than free trade”*. Retrieved 26.09.2022 from [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_195753.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_195753.htm).
- Popper, K. (1945). *The open society and its enemies*. Routledge.
- Przeworski, A. (2019). *Crises of democracy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Reporters Without Borders. (2022). *World Press Freedom Index*. Retrieved 26.09.2022 from <https://rsf.org/en/index>.
- Riecke, T. (2022). Doppeltes dilemma. *Handelsblatt*, 29.06.
- Rodrik, D. (2007). *One economics, many recipes: globalization, institutions, and economic growth*. Princeton University Press.
- Rodrik, D. (2018). Populism and the economics of globalization. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 1, 12–33. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s42214-018-0001-4>.
- Röpke, W. (1942). *Die Gesellschaftskrisis der Gegenwart*. Eugen Rentsch Verlag.
- Röpke, W. (1950). *Maß und Mitte*. Eugen Rentsch.
- Röpke, W. (1959). *International order and economic integration*. D. Rediel Publishing Company.
- Scheiring, G. (2020). *The retreat of liberal democracy. authoritarian capitalism and the accumulative state in Hungary*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Streeck, W. (2016). *How will capitalism end: essays on a failing system*. Verso.
- Tierney, D. (2021). Why global order needs disorder. *Survival*, 63(2), 115–138. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2021.1905981>.
- United Nations. (2022). *World investment report*. Retrieved 26.09.2022 from [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/wir2022\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/wir2022_en.pdf).
- Wallerstein, I. (2006). *European universalism: the rhetoric of power*. The New Press.
- Zhao, T. (2016). *All under heaven: the tianxia system for a possible world order*. University of California Press.
- Zielonka, J. (2018). *Counter-revolution: liberal Europe in retreat*. Oxford University Press.

## Acknowledgements

Author contributions: author has given an approval to the final version of the article.

Funding: this research was fully funded by the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń.

Note: the results of this study were presented at the *5th Scientific Conference ,Institutions: theory and practice'* (15–16 September, 2022, Toruń, Poland).