

## ESSAY

## Foreign policy towards civilization megatrends in world politics

Radosław Zenderowski

Institute of Political Science and Public Administration, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Warsaw, Mazovia, 01-938, Poland

### Abstract

The aim of this article is to indicate and analyze three selected civilization and culture megatrends that can be observed in the contemporary global policy which are important not only to a state's foreign policy, but also to identities of particular states. Such analyses are preceded by: firstly, an indication of continuity and change of a state's foreign policy over centuries, and secondly, an attempt at defining megatrends and selecting a few key megatrends outside the civilization and culture area (such an area essentially refers to norms, values and ideas and accompanying social practices). The following research questions were posed: What is the continuity and changeability of foreign policy since the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century? What are megatrends? How selected megatrends affect and modify the international environment.

### Keywords

megatrends, world politics, civilization

**Corresponding author:** Radosław Zenderowski (radoslaw.zenderowski@gmail.com)

**Author roles: Zenderowski R:** Conceptualization

**Competing interests:** No competing interests were disclosed.

**Grant information:** The author(s) declared that no grants were involved in supporting this work.

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**How to cite this article:**

**For printed version:** Zenderowski Radosław. "Foreign policy towards civilization megatrends in world politics". *Stosunki Międzynarodowe – International Relations* 59, (2023): 246–260. Printed 2024. <https://doi.org/10.12688/stomiedintrelat.17705.1>.

**For online version:** Zenderowski R. **Foreign policy towards civilization megatrends in world politics.** *Stosunki Międzynarodowe – International Relations* 2024, 4:1 <https://doi.org/10.12688/stomiedintrelat.17705.1>

## Introduction

The aim of this article is to indicate and analyze three selected civilization and culture megatrends that can be observed in contemporary global policy, which are important not only to a state's foreign policy but also to the identities of particular states. Such analyses are preceded by: first, an indication of continuity and change of a state's foreign policy over centuries; and second, an attempt to define megatrends and select a few key megatrends outside the civilization and culture area (such an area essentially refers to norms, values, ideas, and accompanying social practices). The following research questions were posed: What has been the continuity and changeability of foreign policy since the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century? What are megatrends? How do the selected megatrends affect and modify the international environment?

## Foreign policy: Continuity and change

Foreign policy, understood as “organized and outward efforts of the state, subordinated to achieving its vital goals, which is expressed in shaping its external environment (creating and supporting beneficial relations and situations, preventing and eliminating unfavorable ones)”,<sup>1</sup> in its main part has not changed since the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, although some of its elements have been subjected to transformation.

What remains unchanged, though, is the essence of foreign policy, expressed in its purpose, namely the accomplishment of state goals concerning the external environment, achieved through peaceful or military actions. The main functions of foreign policies remain the same, although they may be ranked differently.

The elements that have changed significantly include foreign policy methods and techniques connected to the following factors:

- Pluralism of actors at the international stage and growing significance of non-state or supra-state entities; growing role of multilateral diplomacy; intensity of international ties and interdependencies
- The development of technologies enabling quick and mass trans-border communication, largely beyond state control, and associated mediatization (and tabloidization) of international affairs, as a result of which contemporary international policy is losing its art of (classical) diplomacy and relying on acting skills, aimed at playing on the feelings, emotions, and views of citizens deciding on the future of a particular political elite in a democratic state, its reelection, or loss of power.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Kuźniar, “Międzynarodowe stosunki polityczne,” in *Stosunki międzynarodowe – geneza, struktura, dynamika*, eds. E. Haliżak and R. Kuźniar (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2020), 112.

- “Socialization” of foreign policy, which used to be a domain of professional diplomats and is now frequently created by entities which *in the strict sense* are not state organs achieving foreign policy goals as defined in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations; the development of the so-called “public diplomacy” is the most important symptom of foreign policy socialization;
- Internationalization of matters that have previously belonged to specific policies of a state collectively presented as an internal policy category. The border between a state’s internal policy and its foreign policy is becoming increasingly blurred and dubious. An increasing number of issues that have traditionally been considered to belong to the domain of internal policy are agreed upon at the international level in the contemporary world. The process of European integration reveals the anachronism of the division into foreign and internal policies.

Changes in the methods and techniques applied in foreign policy, whose subject scope has significantly widened in the past few decades, account for the fact that some states are beginning to operate in a way resembling international corporations, which take care of their image and promote their products. However, it must be noted that major players in the international arena do not become international corporations; they only use specific tools typical of corporations to achieve their strategic goals, and these goals have not changed for centuries and are essentially different from the goals of international corporations.

It should be emphasized that foreign policy is defined differently in two main paradigms and trends in the theory of international relations: (neo)realistic and (neo)liberal. Both are based on divergent premises. Realists believe that constant conflict and pursuit of the interests of particular countries is a natural state of international relations, while liberals claim that it is cooperation through which all participants of international relations improve their security and accumulate resources. Realists assume that peace is a result of the balance of power and liberals; on the other hand, they believe that it is an effect of close relations between countries and their cooperation, especially in the economic dimension. Realists emphasize that a country’s security and prosperity can be ensured mainly by military power, whereas liberals claim that such security and prosperity largely depend on adherence to international law, closer cooperation within international organizations (which offer a place where interests can be negotiated), and economic cooperation, which brings benefits to all contractors.<sup>2</sup>

The above affects ways of perceiving the essence of a state foreign policy.

According to (neo)realists, foreign policy is “an intentional activity ‘oriented mostly at expanding the country’s autonomy and influence in the international

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<sup>2</sup> R. Zenderowski and B. Koziński, *Uwarunkowania polityki zagranicznej Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UKSW, 2015), 9.

environment« or »a process consisting in the clash of national interests of particular states””.<sup>3</sup> National interest is the superior category here, as it always comes before the interests of other participants, or even the interests of a group of countries. In relation to other entities, a state is a specific “rational egoist”. Its behavior in the international environment is mostly determined by the place it occupies in the structure of the international system (center, periphery, or semi-periphery) and a system of decision-making prevailing in the country.<sup>4</sup>

(Neo)liberals, on the other hand, perceive foreign policy as “a function of national attributes and orientation of a state” and “expectations of other participants of international relations”.<sup>5</sup> In the analyzed case, the supreme categories were international solidarity and universal values. They point out the coordination and conciliation dimension of a state’s foreign policy rather than its confrontational nature. A country’s behavior in the international environment is mostly determined by the interests of the international community, group of states, or other organized communities.<sup>6</sup>

In recent years, we have observed the growing importance of the constructivism paradigm in the theory of international relations. It states that “the majority or even all significant elements in international policy result from specific social conditions and historical processes rather than inevitable consequences attributed to human nature or society”.<sup>7</sup> In the ontological dimension, this paradigm opposes rationalistic paradigms (including realism and liberalism). Representatives of this school believe that, first of all, a particular foreign policy (that is, behavior of political actors on the international stage) is determined not only by material structures, but also, or even most of all, by normative and ideological structures. “While neo-realists emphasized the material structure of the balance of power and Marxists stressed the material structure of the capitalist world economy, constructivists believe that the system of common ideas, convictions and values are also structural and exert tremendous pressure on social and political actors”.<sup>8</sup> Second, constructivists believe that the identities of political and social actors determine interests

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<sup>3</sup> H. Morgenthau, *Polityka między narodami. Walka o potęgę i pokój* (Warszawa: Difin, 2010). Quoted after: T. Łoś-Nowak, “Polityka zagraniczna – stałe i zmienne komponenty procesu formułowania i realizacji,” in *Polityka zagraniczna: aktorzy – potencjały – strategie*, ed. T. Łoś-Nowak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Poltext, 2011), 45.

<sup>4</sup> Zenderowski and Koziński, *Uwarunkowania polityki zagranicznej*, 9.

<sup>5</sup> M.H. Smith, “Significant Change and the Foreign Policy Response: Some Analytical and Operational Implications,” in *Change and the Study of International Relations. The Evaded Dimension*, eds. B. Buzan and B.R.J. Jones (London: Pinter, 1981). Quoted after: T. Łoś-Nowak, *Polityka zagraniczna*, 45.

<sup>6</sup> Zenderowski and Koziński, *Uwarunkowania*, 9.

<sup>7</sup> A. Skolimowska, *Konstruktywizm w studiach europejskich* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza ŁośGraf, 2013), 172.

<sup>8</sup> C. Reus-Smit, “Konstruktywizm,” in *Teorie stosunków międzynarodowych*, eds. S. Burchill et con. (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 2006), 279.

as a result of actions, and that they constitute a basis for formulating interests in foreign policy. Thirdly, “constructivist claim that factors and structures influence each other. Normative and ideological structures may determine the identities and interests of actors, but these structures cannot exist if actors know little of such practices”.<sup>9</sup>

We should also mention the globalist (neo-Marxist) paradigm, which is interesting for our analysis. As opposed to the already discussed paradigms, it questions the reality of the political division of the world into relatively independent states, perceiving them in categories of the global division into the center (managed by capitalists) and peripheries (inhabited by contemporary precariat and alienated human masses). As a rule, the relations between the countries forming the center and those constituting the peripheries are tense and conflicting.<sup>10</sup>

The abovementioned paradigms of foreign policy differ, as they propose different perceptions of both the goals and functions of foreign policy. The key question we need to ask, even though it is omitted in debates on foreign policy and international relations for various reasons, is whether war as a vital element of strategy in foreign policy since prehistoric times has ceased to perform its function in international relations, or whether we have been calmed down and *nomen omen* – disarmed by the narration, particularly popular in the West since the 1990s—that war as an element of foreign policy has finally been put out to pasture.

For many reasons, this issue seems to be essential to understanding the essence of contemporary transformations on the international stage. *À propos* letting our guard down, it is worth recalling here some statements of outstanding figures from a hundred years ago, when Europe was experiencing the same climate as in the 1990s. In 1910, the president of Stanford University claimed that “In the future wars will be impossible, as countries will not be able to afford them. Books on war strategies will become obsolete, and human civilization will go beyond war reality. Economic interdependencies, bonds between intellectuals and trade unions, and capital flow will make war impossible”.<sup>11</sup> In the same year, Norman Angell expressed a similar opinion, who wrote in *The Great Illusion*: “War between superpowers is impossible due to a delicate network of interdependencies connecting the world of finance”.<sup>12</sup>

In summary, as far as its goals and functions are concerned, foreign policy has not fundamentally changed since the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century or even since earlier eras.

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<sup>9</sup> Reus-Smit, “Konstruktywizm,” 280, 281.

<sup>10</sup> Zenderowski and Koziński, *Uwarunkowania*, 10.

<sup>11</sup> J.S. Nye, *Konflikty międzynarodowe. Wprowadzenie do teorii i historii* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 2009), 26.

<sup>12</sup> N. Angell, *The Great Illusion. A Study of the Relation of Military Power in Nations to their Economic and Social Advantage* (New York – London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1910). Quoted after: N. Ferguson, *Potęga pieniądza. Finansowa historia świata* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2014), 300, 301.

However, the methods and techniques for implementing this policy, secondary to its goals and functions, have changed. Contemporary foreign policy differs from foreign policy implemented before the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (beginning with the Westphalian order established in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century). Before that time, foreign policy was identified with the diplomatic activities of the state. It was an art of communication between states rather than an instrument possessed by a diplomat, an artistic venture rather than an extremely complex and technocratic process that provided knowledge of the needs, interests, and goals of the state.

A question remains to what extent this allegedly archaic and barbarian method of foreign policy we call war has been disqualified not only through banning it in particular international conventions, starting with the Charter of the United Nations, and to what extent this tool has merely changed its form of expression, preserving physical violence as the essence of exerting pressure in international policy. I do not intend to start a discussion on third-generation wars, proxy wars, etc., but I would like readers to realize that this element of contemporary international relations, neglected for purely ideological reasons, should become an area of analysis for foreign policy decision-makers. This is even more true when we look at Europe and Poland as part of Europe from a global perspective. We can clearly see that our European view of foreign policy and the place of war as a tool allowing us to accomplish our goals differs diametrically from global trends. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that the pacifist narratives proposed by European Union (EU) leaders will somehow miraculously become “contagious” to the rest of the world. The idea of the EU as a “peaceful superpower”, unfortunately, has little chance to be implemented.

## The concept of megatrend

Megatrends can be defined as constant economic, social, political, and cultural tendencies, phenomena that emerge in the process of civilization development of societies, with various conditions affecting humankind outside national borders and continents, covering the whole globe, and determining the main directions and goals of human development.<sup>13</sup>

Megatrends are obviously connected with the processes of economic and communication globalization, which we have been experiencing since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They are only possible in advanced “network” conditions, enabling us to pass specific behavior patterns or facilitate long-distance transfer of large groups of people (with their culture and sensitivity to various issues) with all associated cultural, political, and economic consequences (*vide*: the phenomenon of mass migrations). Megatrends do not have to refer to new phenomena, as they are often expressed in the unique accumulation and intensification of particular phenomena.

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<sup>13</sup> *Podstawy nauki o organizacji. Przedsiębiorstwo jako organizacja gospodarcza*, eds. S. Marek and M. Białasiewicz (Warszawa: PWE, 2011), 389.

There are various “rankings” and lists of megatrends proposed by renowned scientific research centers, *think-tanks* and government departments. It is not my task to compare and analyze them here in detail, although it is obvious that most of them focus on strictly economic, environmental (natural resources), demographic, or technological megatrends, marginalizing or even neglecting cultural and civilization trends. For example, “Megatrends 2015” report written by EY company,<sup>14</sup> points at:

The degree of advancement of modern technologies and their omnipresence (social media, mobile appliances, clouds, big data, and growing demand for constant access to information affect all sectors in every place of the world).

– The Rising entrepreneurship, which, taking into account current technological solutions, means the possibility of offering global solutions without the need to invest millions. The EY report shows that inhabitants of Sub-Saharan Africa are the most entrepreneurial in the world (19% of all people aged 18–64 are entrepreneurs), followed by inhabitants of South America (19%), Asia (12%), and the EU (only 8%).

– Global marketplace. For the next ten years, the world economy will be shaped by developing countries, and the difference between them and developed countries will diminish. Two Asian countries, China and India, will become development leaders and, in 20 years, might become the biggest investors in the world. They will also become the most innovative countries (over the past five years, these countries have increased their R&D expenditure from 33% to 40%). The leading group also includes Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and Northern Africa.

– Urbanization processes. In 2015, 54% of the population lived in cities, and forecasts for 2050 stated that 66% of the world population will live in urban areas. The 70 largest cities in the world generate 57% of the global GDP. Cities in Africa are expected to grow faster. However, the five biggest metropolises in the world, Tokyo, New York, Los Angeles, London, and Paris—will maintain their key business and trade positions.

Raw materials and natural resources. The urbanization of the world and the growing population will result in a greater demand for raw materials and natural resources. In 20 years, we will have to produce 1/3 more energy than today; the biggest problem is still access to water (half of the world’s population may have problems with it).

– Health protection. Currently, healthcare expenditure is 10% of the global GDP. However, all countries in the world are facing the problem of growing

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<sup>14</sup> *Raport EY: Sześć globalnych megatrendów, które wywrą wpływ na społeczeństwa, kulturę i gospodarkę*, November 30, 2023, <https://infowire.pl/generic/release/294826/raport-ey-szesc-globalnych-megatrendow-ktore-wywr-a-wplyw-na-spoleczenstwa-kultura-i-gospodarke>.



treatment costs, and the aging society accounts for the fact that 75% of this expenditure is on the treatment of chronic diseases.<sup>15</sup>

One of the reasons why authors of megatrend rankings base them on strictly economic, environmental (natural resources), demographic, or technological factors is the issue of measurability, which is preferred in civilization focused on iconography and so-called hard data. Civilization and cultural processes elude most measurement tools by nature, although their presence does not arouse any controversy.

In the next part of this text, I would like to point at these megatrends, which significantly affect or may affect the shape of a state's foreign policy, which refers to the sphere of civilization and culture. It should be observed that the three megatrends selected by me do not constitute a complete list of civilization and culture megatrends, let alone a complete list of all megatrends.

## Civilization and culture trends as a challenge to a state: Foreign policy

### Integration and disintegration. De-ethnization and re-ethnization

**Integration and disintegration.** The processes of integration and disintegration in the contemporary world are, in fact, two sides of the same phenomenon. An American political scientist, Benjamin Barber, evocatively defines them in categories of a clash between “McWorld” and “Jihad.” Barber claims that both overwhelming civilization forces, Jihad and McWorld, simultaneously affect the world and clash in particular countries, as geographical boundaries do not exist for them. There is a dialectic relationship between rivalry and cooperation between both civilizations. “Jihad not only rebels against McWorld, but also cooperates with it; whereas McWorld not only threatens Jihad, but also revives it and reinforces it. They form their own opposites and they need each other”.<sup>16</sup> Both civilization trends, however, have one common and gloomy feature: they are hostile to a sovereign state and undermine its democratic institutions. Jihad destroys the state through fanatic attacks, tribal fights, and acts of terror. McWorld destroys the world through market globalization and blurring borders between states. In both cases, we can observe the same hostility towards the idea of a civil society based on a certain canon of virtues and values. Jihad wants a society based on blood ties and return to primitive tribalism. McWorld, on the other hand, wants to transform citizens into mere consumers, whose only motto in life is to maximize consumption (“I consume, therefore I am” as a dramatic paraphrase of *cogito ergo sum*). “Jihad implements bloody policy of identity, McWorld – bloodless policy of profit” – observed Barber.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Megatrendy, które zmieniają świat, June 12, 2022, <https://www.rp.pl/artykul/1195049-Megatrendy-ktore-zmienia-swiat.html>.

<sup>16</sup> B. Barber, *Dżihad kontra McŚwiat* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo MUZA, 1997), 9.

<sup>17</sup> Barber, *Dżihad*, 12.



**De-ethnization and re-ethnization.** According to some political scientists, due to the progressing integration and globalization processes, at least since the end of the Cold War confrontation, we should have expected the progressive erosion of an institution of a national state and the growing role of regions (inside the country and trans-border ones), as well as large agglomerations in social and political relations in contemporary Europe. Ethnic identifications were replaced by regional and other identities, such as professional identities or those related to performed social roles. This was a precondition for building the foundation of European society (nation) and the state. This post-modern vision of the development of social relations in Europe, and especially in the EU, which was to form a specific global avant-garde in the implementation of Kant's idea of *Weltbürgerium* is somehow reflected in reality, as we cannot deny that parts of large European urban areas, in which the growing percentage of EU citizens live, are cosmopolitan. Their advantage over the rest of the territory of an EU member state is still – in spite of the EU policy of supporting regions – of political (administrative) nature, though the most important thing is probably that they are places of capital (economic dimension), knowledge and information agglomeration and they are “networked” and internationalized. They also constitute strategic areas of expansion for international corporations, which are gradually increasing their power at the cost of the national state. Large urban areas are also attracting greater attention from the international public than national states. However, the inevitable cosmopolitanization and de-ethnization of large urban areas does not seem obvious if we consider the phenomenon of spreading ethnic and religious ghettos, which sometimes cover whole districts of cities in Western Europe and in which life is lived according to completely different rules than those deemed official. Due to replicated cultural patterns in material and non-material dimensions, some districts in Paris, Brussels, London, Amsterdam, and Vienna resemble the streets of Tunis, Marrakesh, Karachi, Tanger, and Sarajevo. This phenomenon was aptly described by Ryszard Kapuściński as “Third-Worldization of the West”.<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, we can observe an increasingly visible and opposite trend, although the increasing importance of ethnicity or processes of re-ethnization should be perceived in two dimensions: (a) indigenous and (b) immigration.

In the former case, the growing significance of ethnicity can be observed in the broadly understood province, that is, outside large urban areas (smaller towns and villages) or outside politically dominant regions (although in this case, this is no longer so unambiguous and obvious). National and ethnic identities (in the indigenous

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<sup>18</sup> R. Kapuściński, *Nie ogarniam świata, z Ryszardem Kapuścińskim spotykają się Witold Bereś i Krzysztof Burnetko* (Warszawa: Świat Książki, 2007), 180; R. Zenderowski and A. Rudowski, “Deetnizacja i reetnizacja państw Unii Europejskiej,” in *Państwo w Unii Europejskiej*, eds. J. Ruszkowski and R. Podgórzńska (Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, 2017), 258, 259.

European version) seem to be strong and equipped with a solid social base in the shape of political and cultural elites, which express the interests of particular national and ethnic groups. It should be noted, however, that depending on the EU region, the province places itself in opposition to the cosmopolitan urban area (mainly Western Europe) or to an urban area, which is the capital city of the “nationalizing” state (Central and Eastern Europe). In some European regions, we have observed the processes of ethnic revival over the past several years. This mostly concerns those states in which the policy of de-ethnization was conducted for many years and even for many generations, thus forcing the idea of a political nation that was to replace ethnic identities, civil (political) identity, and guarantee uniformity and territorial integrity of the state (*vide*: France, Great Britain, and to some extent, Spain).<sup>19</sup>

Moving on to the second dimension of the phenomenon of re-ethnization (the immigration context), we should note that one of the consequences of the Second World War and certain political decisions taken directly after it ended was a relatively high degree of ethnic homogeneity in the countries of Western Europe, and partly, also of Central Europe. Nevertheless, since the 1950s and the 1960s, following the migration of the workforce from Asia (mainly from Turkey) and Africa to West Europe (deficit of workforce caused by demographic losses incurred during the war), and then the de-colonization process, the ethnic structure of Western countries has gradually changed over decades. The first wave was composed of representatives of nations and ethnic groups that were culturally relatively close to host countries and, therefore, easily integrated and assimilated. In time, however, cultural differences between immigrants and the European indigenous population grew, while a high degree of spatial concentration allowed immigrants to function efficiently without any knowledge of the language of the host country. One of the consequences of the increasing share of immigrants in particular countries of the West is that “...[...] some groups of immigrants are increasingly demanding custom and culture autonomy, and sometimes excessive respect for their traditions”,<sup>20</sup> which can be seen in the already mentioned ethnic and religious ghettos, tolerated by local and state authorities, with separate laws that are *de facto*, though not *de iure*, valid in their territory (especially the Sharia law, which is fundamentally inconsistent with secular civil community). The phenomena described above will develop in the nearest future. This is due to the fact that the birth rate of indigenous populations remains very low. Entrepreneurs are raising concerns that without the “demographic prosthesis” in the shape of allowing new waves of immigrants, they will be unable not only to develop, but also to maintain

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<sup>19</sup> Zenderowski and Rudowski, “Deetnizacja,” 260.

<sup>20</sup> P. Szukalski, “Mapa etniczna i wyznaniowa Europy Zachodniej – przeszłość, teraźniejszość, konsekwencje na przyszłość,” in *Tożsamość europejska. Wielokulturowość i jej skutki w funkcjonowaniu państw europejskich*, Polska Akademia Nauk, Komitet Prognoz “Polska 2000 Plus”, “Sprawy nauki” (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo PAN, 2016), 19.

the current production, whose share in the global market has been decreasing each year to the advantage of thriving Asian economies, especially the Chinese economy.

## The growing role of religion and civilization identifications

Until recently, the contemporary theory of international relations went to great lengths to avoid the issue of religion as a factor in determining international order. In fact, it is fully justified to claim that it is meaningfully and intentionally passed over something that obviously affects the behavior of particular actors on the international stage and significantly defines their roles in international relations. At least until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we witnessed amazing “blindness” shown by an overwhelming majority of international relations theoreticians, or – which is more probable – tangible effect of the ideological treatment of a scientific theory, which prevented pragmatic analysis. It is heartening to see that in recent years, there have been some attempts (*nota bene*, very rare ones) at revising the role of religion in international relations.<sup>21</sup>

The return of religion to politics has become increasingly visible. Public opinion can be observed in the spectacular terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001. Shrewd observers of international relations discerned them long before the event. In 1964 Jawaharlal Nehru, a supporter of secular Indian state, died, and the “largest world democracy” was becoming more and more susceptible to religious slogans of Hindu nationalists, which also affected the foreign policy of India. A year later, Sukarno – Indonesia’s leader, who openly referred to communist ideology – was ousted from power, which allowed political Islam to gain an advantage over other ideologies. After the President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, was ousted, we could also observe a clear tendency to abandon the principle of a secular state. The defeat of the socialist Gamal Nasser in the war with Israel in 1967 meant that the socialist government of Egypt lost its central position in the Arab and Muslim world, which was taken over by Saudi Arabia, a country that strongly supported Wahhabism and initiated the establishment of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (1969). The collapse of communism in many parts of the world, an ideology that was the driving force of atheism in the world, resulted in a mass return to religion. In many countries facing the failure of communist ideology, communist leaders transformed into nationalists almost overnight and began their open flirtation with religion, the same religion they had fiercely fought in the past (e.g., the communists in the Balkans).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> R. Zenderowski, “Religia w teorii stosunków międzynarodowych,” in *Religia i polityka. Zarys problematyki*, eds. P. Burgoński and M. Gierycz (Warszawa Dom Wydawniczy ELIPSA, 2014), 546, 547.

<sup>22</sup> Zenderowski, “Religia,” 553–555; T.S. Shah and D. Philpott, “The Fall and Rise of Religion in International Relations. History and Theory,” in *Religion and International Relations Theory*, ed. J. Snyder (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 48–50.

It turned out that modernization, frequently accompanied by aggressive, secularistic propaganda and gradual separation of religion from natural resources, cannot eliminate religion from public life. On the contrary, in many cases, it was resistance to such tendencies that led to closing ranks and implementing reforms within particular religious institutions. Moreover, it should be remembered that democratization, being only partly an effect of modernization, in fact, expanded the scope of religious influence. The principle of religious freedom is generally observed in democratic states. Moreover, after the Second World War, because of mass migration, particular regions and states evolved from monocultural and mono-religious to multicultural and multireligious regions and states. For many immigrants, religion became the most important distinctive sign and an integral part of their identity, even when their parents were often indifferent.<sup>23</sup>

Analyzing the significance of religions in contemporary politics, especially in international politics, we cannot fail to notice the growing influence of Hindu nationalists in India, Muslim religious and political activists in formally secular Turkey, the growing importance of the Orthodox Church in Russia, conservative Christians in the USA,<sup>24</sup> and ultra-orthodox Jewish activists in Israel. An increasing number of Islamic countries have abandoned secular law and embraced Sharia Law (vide: Iran, Sudan, Somalia, particular countries of the Arabian Peninsula, Pakistan, Malaysia, and partly Nigeria). The most radical religious movements, such as Al-Qaeda, directly question the Westphalian principle of contemporary international relations, calling for the establishment of the new caliphate, a megastructure that will constitute a political base for a quarter of the global population, followers of Islam (*umma*).<sup>25</sup>

### Is the institution of a nation-state in crisis?

According to Charles Tilly, an American sociologist, historian, and political scientist, the process of shaping a nation-state started after 1500. In his opinion, a nation-state “differed from its alternative options in a few major points: (1) it managed a specific, compact territory; (2) it was relatively centralized; (3) it developed a new type of organization; (4) it systematically strengthened its position by aiming at winning monopoly in application of organized means of coercion on its territory”.<sup>26</sup> It is generally agreed that the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the key period

<sup>23</sup> Zenderowski, “Religia,” 554, 555; Shah and Philpott, “The Fall and Rise,” 48–50.

<sup>24</sup> E.O. Hanson, *Religion and Politics in the International System Today* (Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 124–140.

<sup>25</sup> Zenderowski, “Religia,” 555; D. Philpott, “The Challenge of September 11 to Secularism in International Relations,” *World Politics* 55, no. 1 (2002): 83.

<sup>26</sup> C. Tilly, “Formowanie się państw narodowych w Europie Zachodniej,” in *Władza i społeczeństwo 2. Antologia tekstów z zakresu socjologii polityki*, ed. J. Szczupaczyński (Warszawa: Dom Wydawniczy ELIPSA, 1998), 20.

in the history of nation-state institutions. Craig Calhoun emphasizes a certain paradox here: “No other era had placed greater emphasis on autonomy of nation states or on the possibility of defining large collective identities through the prism of a nation. It all occurred when the world became increasingly international, which was partly the cause of this phenomenon”.<sup>27</sup> It should also be remembered that whereas the institution of a nation-state has functioned in Europe for the past two or three centuries, in many regions of the world (for example, in Africa or the Middle East), it has been known only for a few decades.<sup>28</sup>

Many political scientists claim that the contemporary nation-state is in a deep crisis, explaining this with two parallel processes of delegitimization of this historical political formation. In the 1970s, Arnold Toynbee, an outstanding philosopher of history, predicted an imminent fall in the institution of a nation-state, and was by no means alone in his predictions.<sup>29</sup> Tomasz Żyro claims that “a nation-state is ‘stretched’ in two directions. It is stretched ‘upward’ by globalization and ‘downward’ by regionalization. Globalization questions the issue of national citizenship. Regionalization, on the other hand, stands for strengthening ethno-regionalism”. The quoted author poses a vital question: “where will this logic of a decomposing nation-state that no longer assimilates ethnic groups lead us?”. Żyro explains the growth of ethno-nationalistic moods with, *inter alia*, the disappearance of the universal message of liberalism”. A similar opinion is expressed by Anthony D. Smith, who expands this catalogue of grassroots disintegration forces, adding to immigrants who decline assimilation (more frequently defined in categories of violence) in their host countries. A large number of political scientists, however, refrain from announcing the end of the institution of a nation-state, which used to be trendy among those falling prey to globalization illusions. A nation-state, as Jürgen Habermas claims, is experiencing a crisis of its traditional form, and in many situations (mentioned by the already-quoted authors) cannot adequately react to numerous challenges related to economic, demographic, and cultural transformation. Nevertheless, Habermas believes that a nation-state will not disappear, but will be “recreated on a higher level” (*aufgehoben*).<sup>30</sup> Another, rather unlikely scenario is also possible, namely “the unification of the world under one global government.” Then “traditional states would play a lower-rank, municipal role, as territorial administration units”.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> C. Calhoun, *Nacjonalizm* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 2007), 34.

<sup>28</sup> S. Bieleń, “Państwa w stanie kryzysu i upadku?,” in *Państwo w teorii i praktyce stosunków międzynarodowych*, eds. M. Sulek and J. Symonides (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2009), 45.

<sup>29</sup> Bieleń, “Państwa,” 47.

<sup>30</sup> T. Żyro, “Nowy nacjonalizm w Europie współczesnej in *Religia – tożsamość – Europa*, eds. P. Mazurkiewicz and S. Sowiński (Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków: Wydawnictwo Ossolineum, 2005), 89, 96; A.D. Smith, *Nacjonalizm. Teoria, ideologia, historia* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sic!, 2007), 159–168; J. Habermas, *Uwzględniając Innego. Studia do teorii politycznej* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2009), 133.

<sup>31</sup> Bieleń, “Państwa,” 49.

On the other hand, observing the erosion of the Westphalian system (based on the principle of equality and sovereignty of states), Francis Fukuyama points out that one of the biggest problems is the emergence of a large group of so-called weak states for which the principle of sovereignty is not observed. He considers such states as: Somalia, Cambodia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Kosovo, Liberia or East Timor “the most significant threat to international order in the post-cold war era.” In his opinion, “weak dysfunctional states violate human rights, provoke defeats threatening the foundations of the existence of their citizens, generate huge waves of emigration, and attack their neighbors. After 11<sup>th</sup> September it became clear that they provide shelter for global terrorists, who can cause serious damage to the United States and other developed countries”.<sup>32</sup> The appearance of weak or failed states constitutes a serious threat to stable countries since they are unable to cut themselves off from negative consequences related to their existence. Moreover, there are a growing number of para-states, quasi-states, and states that are not recognized internationally (various terms are used to define them) in the international system.

## Conclusion

The common denominator of the three above-mentioned megatrends is the lingering question of individual identity, especially collective identity expressed in ethnic, religious, and national and state categories. In the contemporary world we can observe: firstly, processes of “deconstructing” traditional (national, civilizational) identities and attempts at replacing them with some sort of post-modernistic discourse, within which the category of identity is characterized with fluidity, volatility and contextual “discursiveness” (*vide*: some countries of the West). Second, for the past two or three decades, we have been observing processes of creating modern collective identities that bond primal – family and tribe identities on the basis of various political, religious, and civilizational ideas (*vide*: Central Asia). Third, there is no doubt that we are also witnessing the strengthening or the return to roots of traditional identities from the era before economic and political modernization, which in many cases is connected with the rejection of the idea of a secular state and the main principles of liberal democracy (*vide*: Turkey).

The co-existence of these three identity-forming processes in particular regions or globally will, in the nearest future, definitely cause serious turbulence in world politics, which, despite advanced technological processes condensing communication and information networks, has demonstrated some signs of return to some sort of modern tribalism, located on the opposite poles to liberal democracy and the idea

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<sup>32</sup> F. Fukuyama, *Budowanie państwa. Władza i ład międzynarodowy w XXI wieku* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Rebis, 2005), 109, 110.

of a secular state. We must also be aware of the fact that the concepts of *the West and the Rest* are currently gaining a new meaning, opposite to the original one.

**Data availability**

No data are associated with this article.