WORLD PUBLIC FORUM –
DIALOGUE OF CIVILIZATIONS
ANTHOLOGY

With prefaces by
Vladimir Yakunin, Jiahong Chen, and Adrian Pabst
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The Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute (DOC) is an independent platform for dialogue that brings together diverse perspectives from the developed and developing worlds in a non-confrontational and constructive spirit.

The DOC’s goals are to forge shared worldviews through dialogue and to contribute to a fair, sustainable, and peaceful world. In view of these goals, the DOC believes that globalisation should have humanity, culture, and civilisation at its heart.

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Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute gGmbH
Französische Straße 23
10117 Berlin
Germany
+49 30 209677900
info@doc-research.org
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List of Contributors

Positions are mentioned as at the time the contribution was made

Akeel Bilgrami
Johnsonian Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University
and the Director of Columbia’s Heyman Center for the Humanities,
India–USA

Jan Breman
Professor, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Joseph Camilleri
Professor of International Relations at La Trobe University, Australia

In-Suk Cha
UNESCO Chair in Philosophy, Former President of the International Council
for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (CIPSH), Seoul National University,
Korea

Jiahong Chen
Research Fellow, Peking University, China

Alessandro Colombo
Professor of International Relations, University of Milano, Italy

Alexis Crow
Associated Fellow, International Security Program, Chatham House,
United Kingdom

Fred Dallmayr
Packey J. Dee Professor in the Departments of Philosophy and Political
Science at the University of Notre Dame, USA

Henri Favre
Director of Research Emeritus, The National Center for Scientific
Researches, France
Come Carpentier de Gourdon
Convener of the Editorial Board of the World Affairs Journal, India–France

Joseph Grieboski
Founder and President, Institute on Religion and Public Policy, USA

Yang Guorong
Professor, East China Normal University, China

Jagdish Kapur
President of the “Kapur Surya Foundation”, India

Andrei Kazmin
Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Sberbank (Savings Bank of the Russian Federation), Russia

Hans Koechler
Professor of Philosophy, University of Innsbruck, President of the International Progress Organization, Austria

Maria Brittes Lemos
Professor, State University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

George McLean
Professor of Philosophy, School of Philosophy, Catholic University of America, USA

Manuel Montes
Chief, Policy Analysis and Development Branch at Financing for Development Office of United Nations DESA, USA

Adrian Pabst
Head of School of Politics and International Relations, University of Kent, United Kingdom

Vladimir Popov
Professor, New Economic School in Moscow, Russia

Peter Schulze
Professor, Georg–August University, Gottingen, Germany
Jomo Kwame Sundaram
Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development in the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs, USA

Strobe Talbott
President of the Brookings Institution, USA

Peter van der Veer
Professor, University College at Utrecht University, the Netherlands

Immanuel Wallerstein
Senior Research Scholar, Yale University, USA

Vladimir Yakunin
Chairman of the Supervisory Board, Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute; Head of the Department of State Governance, Faculty of Political Science, Moscow State University, Russia
INTRODUCTION
The theory and practice of interaction among civilisations has become all the more necessary and relevant in the present world. In our preface, we will touch upon the basis of the dialogue of civilisations paradigm. This basis proved its worth in the activities of the World Public Forum ‘Dialogue of Civilizations’, an international non-governmental and non-profit organisation, which has been active since 2002 and has matured into what is now the Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute. The main ideas and concerns of World Public Forum participants are presented in the contributions gathered in this Anthology.

The original idea of the World Public Forum was created by a small group of people from Greece, India, Russia, and the US, as an immediate reaction to the global issue of reconstituting the unipolar system of global cooperation. This emerged in the midst of deep-running and worldwide socio-economic transformation, as a search for an alternative to the US-centred post-Second World War accord with its tendency to suppress nation-state identities not willing to yield to the guidance of a single hegemonic power.

Since 2002, the World Public Forum has brought into practice the idea of a ‘dialogue of civilisations’, first expressed by Iranian President Mohammad Khatami at the UN in 1998. The World Public Forum began to act as a large-scale intellectual forum aiming to prevent the worst possible scenario – the degradation of humanity and the clash of civilisations in the form of a new world war. Today, the strategy of dialogue has become a regular practice in the field of international relations. The language of the dialogue of civilisations has become an integral part of international communication and is now recognised at the level of intergovernmental organisations such as UNESCO, the G20, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, among others.
From the very beginning, the World Public Forum has stood for support of multilateral worldviews, recognised the natural diversity of civilisations and their equality, and consistently developed its methodology and practice. This attitude has enabled the taking of steps towards a coherent world picture with no ideological bias, which, in our opinion, is absolutely necessary for the further development of humanity. The World Public Forum has always firmly maintained the position that representatives of civilisations, e.g., civil societies, NGOs, and individuals, can carry out efficient dialogue, whereas governments of nation-states can only exercise diplomatic negotiations.

This Anthology consists of texts that represent the development of the Dialogue of Civilizations initiative, from its origins founded in the work of the World Public Forum to the establishment of the Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute. This volume features texts of World Public Forum founders and contributions of authors who have formed the dialogue of civilisations expert community. This collection reflects the basic concepts and ideas of dialogue of civilisations in their original form, as they were presented and discussed at various gatherings of the Rhodes Forum.

A quest for dialogue of civilisations

From the works of American professor Francis Fukuyama we know that the world was offered a discussion on the ‘end of history’. This was not anything new or unusual. Similar discussions were held before the First World War. What was proposed was the creation of a project determining how the future global community should live, and what kind of people would live in this ‘determinate’ future.

But we want to start with one, illustrative example, namely, the study of Leonid Hurwicz who won the Nobel Prize in Economics for his work on the so-called game theory and incentives. Professor Hurwicz argued that modern economic development has led to the lack of direct production and market dependence. Modern businesses do not base their development strategies solely on market mechanisms and therefore are not governed by free market laws. The incentives required for economic development have to be taken from some ideal model of an ideal society, the outlines and the nature of which have not been determined yet.

The current stage of global development should be reflected and confirmed by a system of social institutions. We understand ‘development’ as a complex of all the changes that politically determine a political system’s qualitative modification. It is necessary to set new goals and establish
relevant institutions and instruments to achieve these goals. Economically, this also implies the establishment of a goal-setting system and the formation of an entire socio-economic structure in order to ensure the well-being and prosperity of society as a whole and its individual citizens. At many World Public Forum sessions, reputable experts formulated the idea that nowadays the common yardstick for measuring states and their economic efficiency – namely GDP growth – is at least rather misleading. One should think about the actual results of economic policy through the development of society in terms of living standards, health protection, education, culture, technical innovation, and security.

As far as institutions are concerned, one mainly speaks about public worldview, ideology, the economic system, the political system and the law, which are the systems by which opinions are expressed and discussed, approving and implementing decisions taken. Depending on analytical tasks, these institutions can be expanded to include various components.

In our view, the aim of political and social institutions is to provide all members of society with an opportunity to perform any purposeful activity possible in the given community. In other words, a system of institutions allows individuals to perform worthwhile activities, carry out their work, set goals, achieve results, define the laws and values of life, and, most importantly, share their achievements with others.

In accordance with a theory of change towards inclusive and solidarity-based development, founded on the dialogue of civilisations paradigm, the state should, in turn, serve the following purposes:

a) establish and maintain a balance of existing institutions to ensure the consistency of effective social development;
b) enforce appropriate wealth redistribution within society to ensure adequate resources to achieve society’s development goals.

Within one single civilisation, the state can usually successfully cope with the legitimisation of both the participants involved and the very form of productive dialogue. In the field of international relations, the situation is aggravating dramatically. The legitimacy of a decision reached through any form of the dominance of a single player or a single state is not always justified in the eyes of others. Moreover, we can say that beyond the process of dialogue, its legitimacy is uncertain. In fact, economically and politically powerful states are tempted to impose their own rules, that is, to exercise their diktat, under the guise of ‘dialogue’. We refer to this as ‘dialogue’ with inverted commas.
In search of balanced development

We believe that a balance of global development perspectives can be defined only within a dialogue among representatives of different civilisational identities.

The activities of the World Public Forum prove that dialogue among the representatives of different civilisations is a special way to create an open and inclusive human community. Such a community is transparent and involves parties representing not states, but societies and peoples in the process of decision-making.

Dialogue is aimed at collectivity, i.e., the mutual recognition of ‘others’ – others around the world, others in the community, other civilisations, other human beings, etc. – as equal carriers of the universal human nature and spirit.

In this context dialogue can be understood as:

1. communication among people, representing different civilisations, aiming to achieve mutual understanding and to generate balanced views on possible future outlooks;
2. the joint search for practical solutions to existing and emerging challenges;
3. the creation and support of specific dialogue spaces and practices, capable of hosting and debating different opinions and worldviews in a peaceful and non-controversial manner.

Today, the ability to make dialogue happen as a basic type of human interaction and human communication makes dialogue a new asset, a new institution in the field of international relations.

How to define a ‘civilisation’

It would be natural to ask, ‘what is a civilisation?’ Any theoretical definitions, especially those pretending to be fully accurate, could significantly distort the essence of what is being defined.

There is no single or widely accepted scientific definitions of this concept. The translation of the Latin Civitas means ‘community’, ‘city–state’. This is the way the very first Roman citizens were referred to as members of
the Roman community. This designation was introduced to differentiate the actual citizens from the rest of the population. The idea of ‘Civil law’, the body of laws of a state or nation regulating ordinary private matters, emerged during the heyday of Ancient Rome.

However, it was in Ancient Rome that a new meaning of Civitas began to develop: city dwellers, citizens, those who owned private property, appeared in the eyes of all others as more cultured, more cultivated, in other words, more ‘civil’. Later on, ‘civil’ took on the meaning of ‘civilised’.

This created a certain confusion; many academic conceptions confuse ‘civilisation’ and the quality of being ‘civilised’. A great disservice came from some of the French Encyclopedists, who opposed advanced forms of human development with barbarism.

France’s aristocratic milieu, prior to the French Revolution, identified the words ‘civilise’ and ‘civil’ as a reflection of decorum that developed as part of the conventions of the nobility. Subsequently, ethical norms became the topic of Norbert Elias in his On the Process of Civilisation (2006). He wrote, “Strictly speaking, there is almost nothing which cannot be done in a ‘civilized’ or an ‘uncivilized’ way; hence, it always seems somewhat difficult to summarize in a few words everything that can be described as civilisation”. Elias noted that the idea of civilisation is portrayed in the self-consciousness of the West.

It is widely considered that the term ‘civilisation’ was first used by the Marquis de Mirabeau in his treatise Friend of Mankind, dated 1756. The French philosophers defined ‘civilisation’ as a society founded on principles of reason, morality, and justice.

The associations given to the term had to set ‘civilisation’ against ‘unenlightened populations’. Therefore, one of the definitions of the word preserved its moral and enlightened function.

The Russian historian Lev Gumilyov introduced the concept of ‘passionarity’ to describe the genesis and evolution of ethnic groups, which during different historical times passed through stages of birth, development, climax, inertia, convolution, and memorial. Gumilyov assumed that different ethnic groups, united by similar mentalities, merged into ‘super-ethnoses’, which in turn acted as the main subjects of interaction on the stage of global history. These super-ethnoses were comprised of different peoples, with different ideological, cultural, and religious characteristics, and could have been regarded as what we call now the civilisations.

The American historian Lewis Morgan described the history of humanity as a process from savagery to barbarism, gradually shifting towards civilisation.
The confusion of ‘civilisation’ with the ‘state of being civilised’ became gradually popularised colloquially and in daily life. A ‘civilised man’ is still understood as ‘cultured, well-mannered, educated’, while the expression ‘to become a member of the civilised nations’, actually means to become a developed country.

We believe that it is wrong to qualify ‘civilised’ in qualitative terms, as in ‘more or less civilised’. A clearer classification would be ‘industrialised’ or ‘technologically advanced’ countries. The concept of ‘civilisation’, rather simplistic when it first saw the light, has changed throughout history with new connotations.

**Civilisation and culture**

There is a tradition in the West of differentiating civilisation and culture, and similarly a tradition of considering civilisation from a cultural perspective. Hence, Oswald Spengler considered civilisation in terms of cultural decline, saying, “The Civilisation is the inevitable destiny of the Culture ... logical sequel, fulfilment and finale of a culture” (1922).

German and – subsequently – Russian philosophers believed that Christian civilisation represented a peril to its own culture, and to the culture of those it attracted into its own orbit. From a philosophical point of view, culture determines the dimension of the humane in humans, an individual’s evolution as a social being.

The contraposition of civilisation and culture is seen in the conflicts of a civilisation’s advancement generated by coercion, wars, the destruction and loss of cultures, estrangement and exploitation, and the disparity of the wealth of some and the poverty of others. In the sense of Lev Gumilyov’s theory, the super-ethnoses in themselves contain a variety of differing cultures and religions, which without proper dialogue and peace-making mechanisms are prone to rising confrontations and clashes. The only civilisations capable of resolving the global issues confronting humanity are those that have placed spiritual-cultural and moral values at the top of their priorities, such that they appear solid and unified.
Clash of civilisations

Samuel P. Huntington, a longtime professor at Harvard University, in his much talked about book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), put forward a very detailed and descriptive definition of the concept of civilisation. Huntington saw cultural affinity as an attribute of civilisation that included language, history, religion, and customs.

He believed that every individual knows to which civilisation they belong; a civilisational identity is essentially a part of an individual’s personal identity. Huntington identifies ‘civilisation’ with ‘cultural integrity’; a civilisation represents a unique, unfailing, homogenous cultural entity. He empirically acknowledged that contemporary countries that he sees as belonging to Western civilisation, are far from homogenous culturally. But their multiculturalism, he believed, is a dangerous disease.

Huntington identified the world’s main civilisations as: Sinic (Chinese), Japanese, Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, Orthodox, Western Christian, Latin American, and possibly African. These civilisations represent tangible communities with tangible dividing boundaries between them.

Huntington’s thesis on the clash of civilisations raised lively discussions in the academic and political spheres of various countries. Many critical assertions were voiced. This is possibly the most influential International Relations book published after the Cold War. Huntington believed that civilisations are capable of functioning as nation-states. He brilliantly introduced a new pyramid of world politics. That the forecasts set forth in his book foreboded the events of 11 September 2001 confirms that the need to seek an explanation for these events remains most important.

However, focusing the reassessment of civilisations solely on the concept of the clash of civilisations is rather restrictive. Huntington stressed the unitary nature of civilisations but accepted that there are a few proper behavioural standards in the presence of multiple civilisations. Liberals apply the opposite reasoning. They believe, unlike Huntington, in the existence of various cultural realities within a single civilisation. They can hardly reject the idea of a single behavioural standard from an international and inter-civilisational perspective. This can be seen in the extensive discussions about proper management standards, property rights, and market transparency.
Civilisational interactions

The academic discourse on the interaction of civilisations is focused on four ‘major’ themes. The first one is comprised of some interpretations of interaction based on the disclosure of global and local discrepancies between various cultures and religious practices. The second theme revolves around the ‘plurality’ of civilisations, their multidimensionality, particularities, and fundamental irreducibility to a common denominator. The third theme is linked to the interpretation of individual inter-cultural interactions of people on micro-regional and macro-regional levels. The fourth theme is centred on the interaction of various civilisations based on moral-spiritual fundamentals.

Modern day multiculturalism, as encountered in Europe, is a policy of open doors with regard to other cultures, religions, and traditions. New sources of conflicts have surfaced, one civilisation has permeated another one, and fault lines now exist within the borders of a civilisation. The big question is whether this is a clash within one civilisation, whereby two civilisations are in conflict within a single territory.

Differing concepts of civilisation

The Russian philosopher Nikolay Danilevsky is rightly considered the founder of the civilisational conception of history. According to his theory, the major players in world history are not governments or specific countries, but historical-cultural communities, which he categorised as “historical-cultural types” (1869). Danilevsky pursued the idea of discontinuity in relation to the world historical process and the existence of many independent, original civilisations. He formulated regularities in the development of historical-cultural types and deliberated about the time span of a civilisation as a relatively short period of flourishing in spiritual activity with respect to each historical-cultural type, which rapidly drains its strength. Nevertheless, Danilevsky thought that no civilisation common to all mankind existed or could exist, because this is an unachievable ideal and something that could only emerge through the consistent and joint development of all historical-cultural types.

The philosophical-historical paradigm had a major impact on present-day geopolitics, which is founded on an idea of the world as a constellation of civilisations. Furthermore, the geographical boundaries of civilisations determine the natural boundaries of influence of great powers. Geopolitics
is a kind of geographically construed politics, an intermediate science that focuses on political events and endeavours to provide them with a geographical interpretation. The civilisational method removes any limitation and artificiality from geopolitics, supplementing it with essential and substantial value. It provides humanity a specific role in interpersonal relations and the development of local and global cooperation strategies. Thus, we must consider the category of ‘civilisation’ essentially from a geopolitical perspective. Let us mention a few concepts in order to better grasp this concept.

**Culturological**
Max Weber, and then Arnold Toynbee, both thought of civilisation as a socio-cultural phenomenon, restricted to some specific spatio-temporal criteria, but founded on religion. Toynbee, in his multivolume work, *A Study of History* (1934–61), put forward a detailed classification of civilisations, having singled out Orthodox Christian (Russian) as a separate type, and formulated an original theory of their genesis as a “Challenge and Response”.

**Sociological**
The concept framed by David Wilkinson regarding civilisations from a sociological perspective is particularly interesting. It rejects the idea of civilisation as a society, which is defined as a homogeneous culture. He believes that cultural homogeneity is not a characteristic of a civilisation – it can perfectly be heterogeneous.

**Ethno-psychological**
Civilisational criteria are sometimes seen as cultural and psychological denominators of given nations. This concept of civilisation equates to a national character, a nationality. This concept was thoroughly elaborated by Lev Gumilyov.

**Geographical**
Those that support a geographical concept of civilisation believe that a crucial impact on the nature of a civilisation is the geographical environment of a specific nation, which essentially influences the forms of cooperation of individuals, gradually changing their nature by its activities.
Defining civilisation in the dialogue of civilisations paradigm

In the practice of the World Public Forum, we developed and used quite a pragmatic short definition: *civilisation is a community of people with a historically developed culture and a settled way of life, spiritual values, and law.* Thus, a civilisation features specific ideals, development goals, and a set of values governing the relations between people in a particular community through a system of laws. World civilisations comprise all earthly people and the civilisational communities to which they belong, and all of this together represents a complementary, interrelated single entity.

For our Anthology we would like to suggest a development of this definition: *civilisation is a cultural-anthropological community of people that emerges and flourishes in a particular geographical location and in specific ecological and climatic conditions.* A civilisation is defined by certain common characteristics: it consists of different (including assimilated and small) ethnic groups; it features common language and epos, ethical and moral standards, and cultural traditions; it has an articulated legislative system, common spiritual and religious sets of values, a certain level of technological advancement, and a socio-economic formation. The representatives of one civilisation share a common history and one level of social and political development.

A civilisation is an entity open for development, capable of breeding and reviving its identity, and of withstanding the challenges of time. By constantly renewing itself and upholding the potential existence of individuals, a civilisation is in a constant communion with the world; it dialogues with the world. The nature and character of inter-civilisational interaction is constantly evolving.

The structure of a civilisation

A civilisation is a complex, multi-layered system of paramount importance. Its structure can be represented in the shape of a multi-level civilisational pyramid.

At the summit of the pyramid is the *spiritual sphere* – this represents the civilisational values transmitted from one generation to another. It is what distinguishes one civilisation from another.

Below this is the *socio-political system*, which determines the forms and methods of unifying and differentiating people into major social
groups, ethnic and national identities, political activities, and the makeup of the public sector. This system mutates regularly as a result of wars and revolutions.

The third level from the top is the *economic mode of production*. The composition and character of this level is somewhat related to the next level below, the *technological mode of production*, which comprises means of labour, instruments of labour (machines), buildings, structures, and transportation venues.

The base of the civilisation pyramid comprises the *population* – its quantity, growth rate (birth rate, mortality, natural growth), family make-up, age/sex composition, migration flows, requirements for and level of satisfaction in terms of quality of life.

However, there is an additional level under this base consisting of nature and ecology, which impacts on a civilisation’s modus operandi. The size of its territory, climatic conditions, population density, the provision of various natural resources, pollution, and ways of meddling in the biosphere’s processes are all related factors.

Each of the pyramid’s levels fulfils a specific function with its own structure. They interact and constantly transform, and mature, thereby establishing essential laws of harmony. Breaching this law of harmony, especially during transitional eras, lowers the efficiency of the civilisational system.

### An inverted pyramid

The world today represents an enormous stage where new opportunities and challenges keep surfacing. We can clearly see the outline of a global adjustment in international relations and world order. New leaders and development centres are forming, ushered in by new political and economic strongholds.

We proceed from the premise that today’s entire political system is an inverted pyramid; the economy is no longer its foundation and cannot warrant political stability. Idealised policies have taken precedence over the economy. Another important trait of the crisis is the prevailing impact of foreign policies and globalist factors exerting a radical effect on the stability of political systems.

The current form of globalisation is essentially an ideological globalisation. Globalism declares a universal ideological uniformity, giving birth to two globalisations that are destroying today’s world: one economic
and the other military–political. Globalisation in economics, and other fields, is a multipronged and inherently contradictory phenomenon with numerous backward and forward linkages. The fundamental risk that arises from the current form of globalisation is the creation of a political project intent on weakening nation–states in the interest of a single economic and political power centre. We can see that the refusal of taking into consideration factors like civilisational identity and inter–civilisational diversity increases political instability.

The Yalta-Potsdam system

It is only in the early twenty-first century that we realised a key fact: the Yalta–Potsdam system, which existed from after the Second World War up to 1991, was endowed with great flexibility and stability. It provided a viable status quo, not only in world politics, but domestic policies functioned securely in most countries. Steadiness implies equilibrium. The global balance of power enabled political stability across the world.

Those that supported its dismantlement in the hope of obtaining an absolute advantage and consequently annihilating any possible opposition, miscalculated under the illusion of possibly obtaining their own unflinching stability. The present situation in world politics is far from the expectations of the so–called winners of the Cold War after 1991.

Following the dismantlement of the USSR and collapse of ‘Real Socialism’ back in 1991, the stability of world politics seemed guaranteed. In 1989, Francis Fukuyama, having proclaimed the “End of History”, stated that “the universalization of liberal democracy in the West is the final form of governance for humankind”. Huntington coined the phenomenon of “Third Wave Democracy” (1991) – the mass spread of Western style democracy throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The Western powers’ victory seemed logical and natural, in a certain way even ‘technically’ impending. It seemed secured by an ideally well–configured economy, finely tuned political systems, and efficient mind control. The inertia of such reasoning proved extremely strong. The new ‘technocratism’ triumphed – an approach to resolving political and social conflicts. The transferral into politics of war game–theoretic analysis in its original form, dating back to the Cold War, was based on the concept that humans were egocentric rational machines seeking their own satisfaction. Taken at face value, this thesis germinated extensively thanks to a fashion for technocracy, formalisation, and utilitarianism.
New technology was creating a favourable environment: scientific and technical progress, especially Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence. This was destined to exclude individuals, and hence populations, from decision-making algorithms. This ‘programming’ was thought to serve the common good.

There was no conscious understanding back in the 1990s that this factual emasculation of the political field, the spread of a neoliberal consensus, was a serious danger, stoking substantial consequences for political stability. Western democracy’s major power base has historically been a bipartisan system, based on the rivalry between two major parties, liberal (deemed right wing) and social democratic (deemed left wing). Their programmes conveyed the interests of two somewhat equivalent social groups, proprietors and hired workers. This made it possible to balance the socio-economic and political interests within a country. In addition, the existence of the Soviet system and communist parties played an additional role as a consolidating factor. The major bourgeois parties, regardless of their divisions, stood in solidarity in confrontation of any perceived threat. The emergence of a global economy, the propagation in the West of its post-industrial model, and de-industrialisation all undermined the social foundation of stability.

The West’s middle class, which formed the backbone of the liberal democratic system during the entire post-war period, started falling apart. The practically unprecedented personal financial vulnerability of workers in the post-industrial economy should be seen as a major social and economic factor.

The modern world

Geopolitical theories on the future of the world based on moulds from a single factory are showing rather obvious signs of failure. The sociologist Zygmunt Bauman spoke about the necessity of “creating social factories of solidarity and mutual trust” and “rehabilitating mutual social and individual responsibility” (2014).

The modern world is an infinitely complex organism that cannot be governed from a single ‘office’. Such attempts were made in the past, are being made, and will most probably continue to be made. This manifests itself in the political sphere as an aggressive and coercive expansion of the liberal-democratic model, which appears very distant from the characteristic development of each specific nation, region, or civilisation. The main reason
for its failure is the so-called human factor, the ‘humane in humans’, which cannot be counted or pre-set, regardless of technological advances.

The considerable potential conflict in today’s international relations was created by the circumstances above. The ideological antagonism between communism and capitalism was streamlined following the collapse of the USSR. In the economic arena, it was redesigned as a system based on the presumption of the permanent capacity of the United States’ economy and its absolute right to dictate. These base concepts have destabilised the overall situation in the world and consequently its political systems.

There are two possible world scenarios presently being considered: either global solidarity – a refusal of hegemonic aspirations, a united goal of integral development refusing unipolar domination – or an assured collapse into a global abyss. The first scenario is the only one that can potentially surmount the unfolding global crisis.

We can assert that there are clear signs that many countries (the BRICS, the SCO members, and others) are lately beginning to explore new alternative models of globalisation. New parallel trends are taking form across the world, governments are beginning to create alliances and joining forces in major integration projects based on financial and cultural relationships. The emergence of regional integration unions is becoming a worldwide tendency, whereby regionalisation is replacing globalisation.

The old economic model for regional intergovernmental cooperation must be replaced by a new development paradigm characterised by transparency and security, diversity, and mutual respect. This can safeguard humanity from hopeless confrontations and antagonisms, and generate new motivation and possibilities for global stability and an enhanced quality of life.

The world can be a source of diversity consisting of several pluralistic and multi-structural growth centres, based on countries with a high level of geographical localisation, even without common boundaries.

The dialogue of civilisations paradigm for humane content of cultures and peoples

Post-modernism, entertained by Western powers as an alternative to a ‘clash of civilisations’, does not measure up to a paradigm of civilisational dialogue. A dialogue comprises distinctions between the values and norms of Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Judaism, and stimulates peaceful strategies of coexistence and productive cooperation.
The West, during the early stages of globalisation, introduced high levels of wellbeing and social security for citizens, and after the Second World War successfully developed institutions and social practices to counter possible nationalistic threats. Western organisations are involved in ecological initiatives to lower pollution and prevent dramatic climate change. Western countries are building a common security architecture, which addresses the challenges of international terrorism. We know of charitable institutions in the West that contribute to humanitarian initiatives in Africa. Substantial work is done in countering transnational organised crime and illicit drug trafficking. All these and other activities reflect the basic values of human society in every civilisation and provide solid foundations for the development of a dialogue of civilisations, one which involves mutual understanding, compassion, and readiness to assist to those in need.

The dialogue of civilisations paradigm, realised in the practices of the World Public Forum, is in our opinion, the very social form of international cooperation, which can presently release the universal human content of cultures and peoples. Peace in relationships among nations and peoples depends on how accurate and coherent the mechanisms for building mutual understanding and trust between the parties of dialogue are.

**The practice and activities of dialogue of civilisations**

The practice of dialogue of civilisations is in fact a way of building the global community. It combines the positive human potential of existing civilisational identities, state structures, social and economic features, as well as cultural and historical diversity.

Activities in the framework of the dialogue of civilisations paradigm are primarily aimed at engaging representatives of civil society in a networked dialogue community to develop proposals on how to resolve the major challenges of global development.

The world is being persistently offered two options. Either to join the forces that have designed and developed a neoliberal model of the world and offered everyone the values of a global armament-protected consumerist society (a term coined by the late World Public Forum co-founder Jagdish Kapur) as a panacea, or to perish in the chaos of world wars, economic disasters, and environmental cataclysms.

In this situation, for all parties interested in a joint and coherent future, there is a third option. Since 2003, representatives of different civilisations
from all over the world have gathered together at the Rhodes Forum in Greece. This has become a practical confirmation that the way of trans-cultural discussion and inter-civilisational communication is a possible and viable alternative to overcome the contemporary tensions and discord. A joint approach is an adequate means to correct and recast existing global disorder and pioneer a way for greater prosperity for humanity. An essential feature of this activity is that a universal sense of shared humanity is released and revealed, becoming an effective development factor. We would like to once again emphasise that revealing universally shared humanity is a process of complementary development for all civilisations and ethnic cultures.

We are witnessing the rapid development of new Information and Communication Technologies. Hence, a new feature of global politics has appeared – citizens in different countries become instantly involved in social and political processes via communication networks, while biased information is spread through new media (blogs, tweets, etc). New actors emerge onto the political arena, and manifest their civil, social, religious, cultural and political identities in very specific ways. This makes a civilisational approach to modern political development and the application of a dialogical paradigm in practice important and relevant.

The dialogue of civilisations paradigm supports the concepts of civilisations and cultures as living and constantly reshaping entities and provides a practical way to build vibrant, open, and constructive interaction among them. Although this is definitely a subject of everyone’s interest, the dialogue of civilisations is only accumulating the potential for implementation. This refers not only to theoretical postulates, but to practical implementation. To our mind a real basis for the creation of a genuine civil society across different civilisations would be the increasing significance of concerned people using their individual roles and positions in society to further the cause of inter-civilisational dialogue, and the involvement of young people. The main purpose of the dialogue model is to find and ‘release’ the basic shared humanity by creating a community of regenerating civilisational and cultural identities.
REFERENCES


Fostering Balanced Civilisation for a Humane World

Jiahong Chen

“The discovery of the common spirit is as important as the discovery of nature.”

Edmund Husserl

Since its first Declaration 16 years ago in 2003, the World Public Forum Dialogue of Civilisation has remained true to its initial vision and mission: “Dialogue of Civilisation for a Humane Order”. In this highly provocative and prophetic declaration, three co-founders – Indian entrepreneur and visionary Jagdish Kapur, business leader and philanthropist Dr. Vladimir Yakunin, as well as the American businessman of Greek origin, Nicholas F.S. Papanicolaou – precisely captured the key problems of our age and defined the goal we should achieve. They concurred that the aims of the WPF are to:

1. Bring together a broad cross-section of public, religious, academic, and political figures for the establishment of a “Dialogue of Civilisations”.

2. Glorify fundamental civilisational, spiritual values and achievements and reinforce inalienable human rights.

3. Search for an alteration of the material world, where we live, where our modern civilisations exist.

4. Meditate and provide peaceful, non-violent, and orderly solutions that will stimulate the imaginations of the world, to direct a trend towards a humane future for all.

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2 https://doc-research.org/2017/02/dialogue-civilizations-humane-order/
5. Start civilisational projects, which embrace all aspects of material, cultural, and spiritual growth.

Since then, WPF has steadily worked towards their initial goal each year. It has successfully become an emblem on the topic of Dialogue of Civilisations. On 1 July 2016, 15 years after its founding, the WPF announced its transformation into an international think-tank. Dr. Yakunin, the chairman of the DOC Supervisory Board, declared that, “The World Public Forum and the DOC Research Institute have been working for the last 15 years to prove that instead of a clash, there should be other ways forward to establish a world of peaceful existence and non-violent development. The newly established think-tank will develop and catalyze all of the dynamism of civil society, in the processing of comprehending our world and forging practical responses to our most pressing challenges” (Yakunin, 2017). For such a goal, the purposes of the WPF Anthology will be threefold: 1) to map out the comprehensive and dialectical dynamics between the liberal approach and the civilisational approach in fostering the progress of humanity, 2) to use historical and philosophical thoughts to solidify the civilisational approach in theory and methodology, and 3) to contribute to enriching human theory and practice.

The current world order is imperfect. From theory to practice, people so often claim the existing problems arise from the clash of civilizations (Huntington, 1996). However, since our problems are most commonly observed when humans cross national and civilisational boundaries, they should be investigated within the whole human civilisation. That said, human civilisation as a whole is losing its balance from the inside. The disorder of the world is generated from the imbalance between spiritual and material civilisations rather than between Western and Eastern civilisations. To better grasp the problem, we propose that the view of unbalanced civilisation has more explanatory and analytical power than the clash of civilisations discourse. This is because this view can chronologically examine the dialectical dynamics of civilisation to discover its historical features and predict inevitable future trends; more importantly, this view allows us to shift the focus from conflict to balance and underlines the importance of rebalance over time.

The imbalance of civilisation is manifested in the alienated relationships of humans to nature, society, and the world, which is caused by the abuse of human rationality/freedom as a result of the Liberal Approach. Liberalism strives to give people various freedoms. However, it has stripped people of
an essential freedom: to critically use rationality; this has resulted in various crises. Everyone deserves a decent life – ideally, to grow from a biological person to a social, political, economic, and cultured person to, ultimately, a civilized, ecological, rational, free individual. Therefore, we call for a humanistic approach and continue to promote a civilisational approach over a liberal approach, which is deeply flawed in regard to the progression of humanity.

Accordingly, we define the Civilisational approach as the highest level of humanistic approach, as a dialectical process of recovering and using human self-sufficient rationality (freedom). It is a path for pursuing material conditions and the spiritual meaning of life, and for developing balanced civilisations for the generations to come. This preface seeks to:

1. illustrate the macro, historical characteristic of humans’ relationships, changing from I and Thou to I and It to pursue I and You relations in response to the materialized mentality that has come to dominate our era

2. understand from an epistemological point of view why the liberal approach has failed – how human rationality has been absurdly used as an instrument that contributes to crises of humanity, civilisational imbalance, and world disorders

3. explore from an ontological perspective how the humanistic approach could recover self-sufficient rationality to integrate secular liberal values with humanistic values and coexist peacefully.

4. Provide the civilisational approach with a substantial and consistent theoretical and practical foundation based on the grand humanistic theories, including Karl Marx’s Practical Humanism, Hans-Georg Gadamer’s Hermeneutics, Edmund Husserl’s Phenomenology, Chinese Ren and Mind Theory, and others.

We want to analyze how dialogue of civilisations, as an enlarged humanistic approach, may help recover our self-sufficient rationality and build a balanced civilisation as a whole. A balanced world order will enhance the cultivation of humanity. Dialogue of civilisations means expansion, not only in the economic and political spheres but also in the humanistic one.
I. Historical Dynamics: I-Thou, I-It, I and You

Each historical era has its own dynamics, dilemmas, and mission. It takes time and space to develop a global view of civilisation: to present the historical problems within a holistic framework; to enlarge local historical problems to the great historical height of all humankind; and, finally, to project the great history of all humankind to a small geographical space. Only when all groups establish stable and organized social relations in this larger space can they coexist as the balanced organism of human civilisation. Therefore, fixing the current world order means rebuilding the balance of civilisation as a whole and fortifying the base upon which all beings’ relationships will sustainably coexist. Historically, the basis for world order is constantly changing. In retrospect, we can see that Western history has developed its central focus based on theology, metaphysics, science, humanism, and – finally – the economy and technology. As such, the basis for organizing the world order and relationships has changed from beliefs in God to faith in scientific truth, technology for advanced living, and material profit.

It is obvious that human history has evolved from I-Thou to I-It relationships. From ancient times in each civilisation, religion has played an important role in cultivating humanity. Sadly, after thousands of years, humanity hasn’t progressed as expected but is becoming fragmented and alienated. The movement of reform in Christianity that aimed to raise everyone up to the highest levels of religious devotion has in fact caused a move towards secularisation (Taylor, 2007). In a secularised world, the disciplined and reformed rational self replaces the vulnerable, porous self. It is assumed that a well-organized society will be built upon human rationality and a modern moral code. In other words, rational codes organize the social order, and meaningful human relationships are prescribed in these codes. It has taken 500 years for human beings to witness Western society shift from a context in which it was almost impossible not to believe in God (circa 1500 A.D), to an environment where believing in God is simply one choice of many (post - 2000 A.D.).

The Enlightened 18th century believed in an upward line of human progress, which should result in the intellectual and moral perfection of humanity. Carl Schmitt states that such a line moves between two points: “from religious fanaticism to intellectual liberty, from dogma to criticism, from superstition to enlightenment, from darkness to light” (Schmitt, 1993). He observes that the dynamic of such change can be seen in the process by which the former central domain becomes neutralised and ceases to be the central domain. On the basis of the new central domain,
everything “moves in the direction of neutralisation and minimalisation” (p. 89). Since technology itself remains culturally blind, no conclusions can be drawn from the central domains of spiritual life (p. 92). What is missing is the spiritual relationship that should be built and bonded upon.

With these “developments”, in an age of economic or technological progress and to the extent that anyone is still interested, humanitarian-moral progress appears as a by-product of economic progress. In The Dialectic of Enlightenment, Horkheimer and Adorno explain why humanity, instead of entering a truly human state, is sinking into a new kind of barbarism (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1987). When the task of taking care of humanity has been transferred from the Personal God to the Impersonal Modern Moral Code, human subjectivity has been seemingly enhanced but is actually paralyzed. Martin Buber captures the essence of such a problem in his sharp analysis of how the I and Thou relation has become the I and It relation in the so-called progressive society (Buber, 1996). Today, we can witness how the ‘I-It’ relationship has manifested in often-controversial, if not destructive, ways. Humanity is facing a crisis that includes the “one-dimensional mind”, a mind that largely ignores the potential for authentic human relationships with the natural world. As a result, the world has lost its focus on bringing everyone to a higher realm of spirituality and lies in a disoriented state. The physical world developed rapidly and almost fully, but a humanised world has yet to be seen. How has this happened?

The liberal approach has failed:
Exploring from an Epistemological perspective how human rationality has been absurdly used as an instrument that contributes to alienation, civilisational imbalance, and world disorder

1. Knowledge and value
The pursuit of truth/knowledge and the creation of value are two major themes of epistemology. The principle of truth refers to the recognition of the world, which aims for objectivity and unity. The principle of value remolds the world according to people’s needs, and pursues subjectivity and diversity. The two need to achieve dialectical balance and unity. Human rationality composed of logos and soul is supposed to be used for such unity. Yet the liberal approach takes rationality only as an instrument for advancing scientific and material knowledge, hindering such unity. We must recognize
that the current social, political, and economic models are based on a Western-centred ideology developed from “Enlightenment mentality”, and that contemporary tensions exist between religious and humanistic logics on the one hand and secular liberal rationality on the other. When human rationality has been used narrowly only as an instrument, imbalanced civilisation occurs and crises abound.

When British philosopher Francis Bacon announced, “Knowledge is power”, he likely did not expect the expansion of knowledge to cause the diminishing of values and the loss of balance in human civilisation. As Kant famously voiced, “There are two things, the more I think about them and the longer I think about them, which are filled with my sense of surprise and seriousness, which is the starry sky above me and the moral law in my heart.” He then says, “so I had to suspend knowledge to make room for faith”. By explicitly rejecting the suggestion that the question of progress can be solved by appealing to experience found in the moral character of man, he tries to make humanity reason with itself to set up rules for nature and morality. Likewise, David Hume once asserted, “to be” cannot generate “ought to be”. This is a stunning assertion. As Ludwig Wittgenstein agreed, knowledge is not enough to establish the meaning of life because instrumental rationality lacks spirituality. Again, for Kant, the highest moral code is that the human being is not a means(instrument) but an end.

Knowledge may tell us what is right, but spirituality tells us what is meaningful. The abstract natural sciences can barely foster our subjectivity and recognize the significance and value of human beings as a whole. In their Dialectic of Enlightenment, Horkheimer and Adorno (1987) trace subjectivity itself out of the struggle against natural forces. For them, the central problem is the detachment of science from practical life. This caused the self-destruction of Western reason as grounded in a historical dialectic between the domination of external nature and society. Similar pessimistic analysis can be found in Huston, who states: “the trouble is that with the rise of modern science, the given has for all practical purposes been reduced to empirical reality and objectivity to knowledge thereof. However, human life cannot be reduced to this dimension” (Huston, 1989). We see morality crises caused by the slide into narrow objectivism. That said, the richness

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of human rationality shouldn’t be materialized and narrowed down to instrument only. When the world enters a secular age, it becomes even more important to maintain the pursuit of spirituality and freedom.

2. Rationality and freedom

The liberal world order strives to give people all kinds of freedom. However, it has stripped them of an essential freedom: that of critically using rationality. Two qualities are commonly considered characteristic of enlightenment thought: “rationalism” and “freedom” (Dupre, 2004). Indeed, the two are connected. People are born with freedom to use rationality. When we fail to use it, we lose freedom as well. In *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant states, “enlightenment means man’s release from his self-incurred tutelage”. 6 By this he means that humanity is an ideal which starts from animality and develops into rational humanity.

Like Kant, Hegel believes freedom is derived from the idea of Reason. Following Hegel’s logic, in *Reason and Revolution*, Marcuse (1993) explains,

we encounter here the most important category of reason, namely freedom. Reason presupposes freedom, the power to act in accordance with knowledge of the truth, the power to shape reality in line with its potentialities, the fulfillment of these ends belongs only to the subject who is master of his own development and who understands his own potentialities as well as those of the things around him. Freedom in turn presupposes reason, for it is comprehending knowledge alone that enables the subject to gain and to wield this power. Reason terminates in freedom, and freedom is the very existence of the subject.

For him, the power of reason – not the force of weapons – will propagate the principles of our glorious revolution. With this belief, enlightenment promises that “man alone has the power of self-realization, the power to be a self-determining subject in all processes of becoming, for him alone has an understanding of potentialities and knowledge of notions of reason” (p. 9). However, Marcuse’s famous critique of one-dimensional Man is the perfect illustration of the impact of instrumental rationality on humanity caused by the new modes of social control. These include technological rationality, administration and bureaucracy, the capitalist state, mass media, and

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consumerism. Freedom is on the retreat in the realm of thought as well as in that of society. As the Enlightenment could not fulfill its promise, the comprehensive reflection of critique is now in order. In *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel deems the Enlightenment an alienation from one’s own natural subjectivity.

### 3. Technology and subjectivity

The West has indeed developed mature theories of humanism, from the formation of subjectivity in modern humanistic theories to the deformation and deconstruction of subjectivity in postmodern anti-humanistic discourses, and towards the reformation of inter-subjectivity in the global multicultural milieu. Studies on subjectivity then become a philosophical and theoretical trend, as evidenced by Kant’s human subjectivity (*What is Enlightenment?), Nietzsche’s historical subjectivity, Heidegger’s existential subjectivity (*Letters on Humanism*), and Wittgenstein’s self-enclosed, cultural linguistic social subjectivity. However, in reality, moral subjectivity was never established. What we observed was an expanded instrumental individualism disguised as subjectivity.

In his analysis of the relationship between subjectivity and technology, Marcuse states, “In this technological world, the previous metaphysical concept of subjectivity, which postulates an active subject confronting a controllable world of objects, is replaced by a one-dimensional technical world where “pure instrumentality” and “efficacy of arranging means and ends within a pre-established universe is the common principle of thought and action.” It is one-dimensional and has become a *universal means of domination*. If we go a bit further, we can see that such domination results in the various types of subjectivity and shows the abuse and deterioration of human rationality.

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7 Kant, I. 'What is Enlightenment?'. From Modern History Sourcebook. http://www.fordam.edu/halsall/mod/kant-whatis.asp. For Kant, Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one’s understanding without guidance from another.

4. Weak subjectivity and strong subjectivity

Moving beyond the question of what true humanity is to the question of how we cultivate humanity so as to realise true subjectivity, we find ourselves confronting a basic dilemma in developing human subjectivity. When one relies on external sources for guidance, which we shall call “weak or passive subjectivity,” one tends to submit in blind obedience to authorities and loses the very subjectivity and humanity one seeks to develop. Take the previously mentioned relationship between technology and subjectivity, which typifies blind obedience in pursuit of self-realisation. Weak subjectivity also manifests in various forms of fetishism, ranging from ancient worship of manmade objects to modern materialism, the pitfalls of a materialised subjectivity.

Those who have weak subjectivity do not always consciously choose that path. Louis Althusser argued that ideology transforms human beings into subjects, leading them to identify as self-determining agents, when they are in fact shaped by ideological processes (Althusser, 1971). Pierre Bourdieu (1991), through analysing concepts such as cultural capital and habitué, sought to grasp how objective structures tend to produce structured subjective dispositions. Michael Foucault (1984) explored the discursive social practices that influence the formation of human subjects and the ways in which external forces of control are internalized. Similarly, Paul Ricoeur’s (1981) “anticipatory structure of understanding”, Raymond William’s (1978) “structures of feeling”, and Ludwig Wittgenstein’s “background” (1953) all sharply illustrate how and why subjects internalise the socially constructed conditions surrounding them. All these analyses disclose the weak subjectivity that human beings have been falling victim to unknowingly.

In contrast, strong subjectivity, which doesn’t rely on any external forces, overcomes the self-abasement and blind acceptance of authority. But it has its own risks of losing direction and ending up in nihilism or self-asserted righteousness as well. In asserting one’s own strong subjectivity, one increases the likelihood of making others’ subjectivity passive. Even worse, one increases the likelihood of creating conflicting subjectivities. Thus, neither weak nor strong subjectivity is helpful in fostering true humanity.

From the preceding analysis, we see spiritual malaise along with the social, economic, and technological modernisation of the world. Even worse, we can hardly see ourselves as a complete person. While Epistemology can unveil how the liberal approach contributes to instrumental rationality, world disorder, and civilisational imbalance, ontology can explain why the humanistic approach is needed to integrate truth and value by recovering our self-sufficient rationality.
II. Humanistic Approaches: Exploring from an Ontological View the Possibility of Recovering Self-Sufficient Rationality

Upon hearing the word “Ontology” many may think that it is a topic solely for philosophers to ponder and that it is not relevant to common life. We would argue that Ontology is not only relevant to philosophers but that, because knowledge of rational speculation, self-reflection, logical reasoning, the pursuit of truth, and living with meaning is important, it is relevant to everyone. Historically, there have been many ontological explanatory frameworks such as the world originated from God(s), Human Rationality (Rene Descartes, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, and so forth), Human Experience (David Hume, John Locke...), A Priori Faculty (Immanuel Kant...), Human Condition (Ludwig Wittgenstein...), and Dao and Human Heart (Chinese Philosophy). We believe that the self-sufficient rationality is the true ontological basis of harmonious coexistence among all relationships.

Admittedly, human beings are complex and complete. We are individuals, subjective on the one hand but holistic and objective on the other. Such complexity is captured by Hannah Arendt (1992) as she states, “whenever Kant speaks of man, one must know 1) whether he is speaking of the human species and its progress; 2) or of the moral and rational being, and an end in himself; 3) or of men in the plural as actual inhabitants of the earth, whose true end is sociability”. Kant illustrated the three realms of humanity’s existence and development, which are seemingly contradictory but indeed consistent with each other. Firstly, humanity is subject to history, which prompts us to understand the characteristics of major historical periods in which humanity either progressed or backtracked. Secondly, human beings are subject to laws of practical reason and end with the individual since the very ethical origin situates inside of each one of us. A rational being should not be treated as an instrument but as an end. Kant’s critique of pure reason can help us understand that the expansion of instrumental rationality is indeed the root cause of the current crisis of humanity. Thirdly, humanity can be developed and perfected only when there are social encounters among people, society, and the world. Both Arendt and Kant agree that human beings are self-sufficient in nature, but to actualize such nature is an unfinished project.

Only when man leaps from the realm of instrumental rationality to the realm of true free will can the humanistic rationality, no longer subject to external material constraints, be transformed to reverse these alienated relationships. Each civilisation contributes to such transformation. The
common recognition is that the very original nature is complete in itself, which is the ontological condition for human beings’ values to coexist. Such condition lies in the core of major civilisations, named as free will in Kant’s critique of reason; practical materialism in Marx’s humanism theory; hermeneutics in Hermeneutics; transcendental consciousness in Husserl’s Phenomenology; existence in Heidegger’s Existentialism; benevolence (仁) in Confucianism; mind and buddhata in Buddhism, and so forth. All of the above empower people’s rationality to eliminate external (material) constraints so that free will can be unleashed. In addition, harmonious relationships should be the nature and dialectical manifestation of self-sufficient rationality. The following major humanistic theories illustrate such efforts and achievements, which have made the civilisational approach a solid theoretical and methodological foundation.

1. Classic theories on rationality and harmonious relationships
Plato’s famous Cave allegory implies that for most of us, our soul (rationality) dwells in the darkness of the cave. People orient their thoughts around the blurred world of shadows. For him, the CONVERSION of the soul is not to put the power of sight in the soul’s eye, which already has it, but to ensure that instead of looking in the wrong direction it is turned the way it ought to be, named the Idea of Good. According to Plato, the relationship between the individual and the State is naturally harmonious since the state grows out of the inner harmony of individuals. Likewise, Aristotle’s theory of human nature and theory of ethics illustrate the social and political nature of the human being. The basic characteristic of a political animal is, “One cannot live a solitary life but live also for parents, children, wife, and in general for his friends and fellow citizens, since man is sociably by nature.”

Whereas Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas all see an innate harmony in the conversed human rationality and its harmonious relationships with the State accordingly, Thomas Hobbes holds the relatively more realistic view that our “state of nature” is fundamentally egotistical in that we are concerned chiefly with our own survival and identify goodness with our
own appetites.\textsuperscript{13} Hobbes’ assertion illustrates the fact that most of the time human beings fail to use rationality appropriately and indeed lose freedom as a result. Rousseau was concerned about the realization of human freedom from social domination.\textsuperscript{14} Kantian rationality itself is claimed to be universal in the way “One has to Act only on that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law”.\textsuperscript{15} Obviously, there are tensions in such an assertion. Hegel’s great contribution to solving tensions and to achieving harmony among people lies in his concept of the “dialectic”.\textsuperscript{16} According to him, Moral duty derives from the requirement of identifying a person’s individual will with the universal will. “Morality is therefore an element in the dialectic process: the thesis is the abstract right of each individual; the antithesis is morality, for morality represents the duties that the universal will raises as limitations to the individual will” (Stumpf & Fieser, 1988). The dialectic process in this ethical sphere is constantly moving towards a greater harmony. All of these classic thinkers hold to the idea that the humanistic approach liberates rationality from repressions.

2. Marxist Humanism humanizes the relationships among human, nature, and others

Traditional ontology is about nature, discussing “what is the world” and whether the world is material or spiritual. Natural science has improved people’s lives but has also led to the dehumanization of human relations. Marxism is committed to a grand, humanistic world outlook. Marx’s human theory is not based on abstract natural science materialism, but on human perception. For him, sensibility is the foundation of all science. Perceptual practice does not refer to alienated labor but to rational free life activities.\textsuperscript{17} Regarding the relationship between man and nature, Marx argues that, on the one hand, Man is born in nature and that through meaningful labor contributes to the completion of nature. Man therefore determines the meaning of nature. On the other hand, nature is born to man with its purpose


\textsuperscript{14} Rousseau, J. ‘Discourse on the Origin of Inequality’. In The Selected Readings of Western Original Works (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1989), vol. 2, 73–79


to make human beings achieve completion. So, man and nature have become irrevocably intertwined. Thus, the unity of subjectivity and objectivity is embodied in the affirmation of human perceptual practice.

Similarly, like nature, others are just another person’s own. The relationship between I and others reflects a relationship between I and nature, which is called sociality. Marx argues that the essence of a human being is the sum of all social relations in its reality. Perceptual activities are essentially social activities that include Man, Nature, and the world. In a world of Alienation, we should resume these perceptual activities to restore the full richness of human beings. With the help of sociality, man and nature, subject and object, individual and society, and thinking and existence are all connected in a dialectical and humanistic relationship.

3. Hermeneutics unfolds the ignored meaning of rationality in history

While in ancient time theology was used to explain the state of the world, in the modern era it has been substituted by natural science. The common problem of both theology and natural science is that they can hardly fully explain human beings as a whole. Hermeneutics believes that human history is built on the consciousness of freedom. So, history is an objective process embodied in the spirit of many people. The “interpreter” is to find hidden meanings and spirit. Therefore, Hermeneutics is a methodology for humanities, a non-instrumental manifestation of human self-consciousness for the correction of the instrumental one-sidedness of natural science that obscures the presence of human beings as a whole. Hermeneutics as Ontology reveals that human beings are subjective, objective, and holistic, and that the integration of natural science and humanities is possible because their common foundation is humans’ authentic existence. Therefore, Hermeneutics is aimed at constructing a meaningful truth upon the basis of natural science from history and practice; Phenomenology aims to surpass the premise of natural science and give a complete meaningful world. Clearly, both of them criticize natural science from their own scientific traditions.


4. Phenomenology defines the self-sufficient rationality as the complete structure of free consciousness

In light of the problems of Western rationality, Husserl’s phenomenology aims to rebuild Western rationality and the spiritual world of human beings. In its critique of natural scientific concepts, Husserl argues that all thorough naturalism has three characteristics: the naturalization of consciousness, the naturalization of all concepts, and the naturalization of all ideals and norms. Further, in an attempt to open up space for human creation, phenomenology finds a transcendental self that has subjective initiative, inter-subjectivity, and objectivity. By adopting this view, it determines that all concepts are commonly shared among all human beings transcendentally. It is said that only through transcendental inter-subjectivity can we achieve coexistence. At the same time, this pre-structure of consciousness enables the unity of opposites between subjectivity and objectivity. Transcendental phenomenology emphasizes that intuition is a non-instrumental observation that can eliminate the repression and alienation of human nature caused by the ever-expanding instrumental rationality. The greatest contribution of Phenomenology is that it can empower rationality to pursue the meaning of human life. Since human beings embody creativity, meaning is always to be reconstructed over the course of time.

5. Existentialism further unleashes pressure for human rationality to grow

Kierkegaard, the representative of Existentialism, reserved the term “existence” for the individual human being. For him, each person is a particular example of the universal conception of Humanity. Sartre’s amoral subjectivism does not prevent him from claiming

When I choose in the process of making myself, I choose not only for myself but for all people. I am therefore responsible not only for my own individuality but I am responsible for all people. When we chose this or that way of acting, we affirm the values of what we have

chosen and nothing can be better for any one of us unless it is better for all. We are in the world of subjectivity. I am always obliged to act in a situation that is in relation to other people”.

All the above thinkers, from different perspectives, have explored the essence of human nature, the basis of morality, and how dialogical subjectivity can be established by recovering our self-sufficient rationality.

6. Ren and mind: Non-instrumental rationality

The contribution of Chinese culture to the World is its humanistic spirit, which aims to establish the moral subject. In an ideal Confucian society, human relationships are largely non-instrumental (Roger & Rosemont, 1998). Confucian humanity takes a loving filial relationship as the basis and strives to maximise the relational potential of things, others, and ultimately the world through Ren (仁), the highest human virtue. Ren’s personal, social, and cosmological traits constitute the non-instrumental essence of Chinese culture that pursues the balanced values between freedom and responsibility, rights and obligation, individuality and community. In addition, influenced by the cosmological foundation of the Book of Changes, another major school of thought, Daoist philosophers like Laozi and Zhuangzi argue that humanity exists together with the Dao of heaven; thus there is no ontological distinction between good or bad, self or other. One should overcome these artificial distinctions and follow the ever-moving Dao. It is in the following of the Dao that human nature becomes one with others – and heaven and Earth. The Buddhist tradition believed that everything is empty in nature. Humans should not attach themselves to any (material) thing since any attachment is an attachment to one’s self-created illusion. By letting go of one’s cravings one can relieve oneself from suffering and enter the state of nirvana, a state of full sufficient rationality, or the ultimate liberation.

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III. Inter-Civilisational Dialogue Approach: Synthesis As Highest Level of Humanistic Approach for Rationality to Flourish

To understand the current crisis from epistemological and ontological perspectives is to find the rooted reasons that have caused humanity’s crisis. All these grand theories focus on human beings as end but not as means. Marx’s human theory takes perceptual practice as the essence for human existence and identifies nature as the organic part of human beings. Hermeneutics peers back through history and rediscovers the ignored humanistic meanings and values; Phenomenology defines the self-sufficient structure of human consciousness and the initiative way to “observe” truth; Existentialists asserted more directly that existentialism is humanism. Asian Ren and Mind theory unravels non-instrumental rationality. All aim to recover and activate human full rationality to deal with ever-worsening alienated humanity and human relationships.

1. Civilisation as a whole provides the largest potentiality for rationality to grow

The grand humanistic theories provide the civilisational approach with substantial and consistent theoretical and methodological foundations. That said, based on them, a civilisational approach is an extension and synthesis at epistemological and ontological levels to further enlarge and empower human rationality. We envision that the theory of dialogue of civilisations, in terms of time and space, can provide the largest potentiality for rationality to actualize its fullness. This can be thought of in the same way as great thinkers uncovering the idea that natural world and history were born to man and serve a “purpose” to make human beings become whole and complete. To follow this logic more precisely, we can say, indeed, that civilisation which combines nature, history, society, and the world was truly born to man and propels human development. In this sense, the concept of civilisation is equivalent to “history” in hermeneutics, “intuitive appearance” in phenomenology, and “nature” in Marx’s humanism theory but has a much bigger scope to empower humans’ subjective initiative. From its inception, civilisation has been the manifestation of humanity. The pace at which humans make progress indicates the level of civilisation. When we observe rationality narrowed down to instrument, we see the imbalance of civilisation and vice versa. The two are the same at the epistemological and ontological levels.
2. Dialogue as dialectic methodology for transforming relations from I-it to I and You

Theoretically and practically speaking, dialogue is not a new concept. From its etymological underpinnings to the philosophical perspectives of thinkers, dialogue is understood as a dialectic methodology that can be traced back to ancient times. For Socrates, maieutic – what Plato later called dialegesthai – is the art of midwifery. Through dialogue, Socrates and Plato wanted to help others give birth to what they themselves thought anyhow, to find the truth and morality in their doxa (Stumpf & Fieser, 1993). For Martin Buber, Dialogue is also a methodology, but for Authentic Encounter transforming relations from I-it, a relation of subject-object to I-You, and a relation of subject-subject. That means human encounters engage in dialogue with each other, with the world, and with You. You is the heir of mind, reality, spirit.

Dialectic methodology deals with self-controversy and finds ways for new unifications. Just as Socrates’ dialogue formed a great transformation in the West that prompted later generations to establish a huge idealist system, dialogue at civilisational levels is an enlarged dialectic methodology. Therefore, the major issues it should investigate should not be limited to the conflicts between Western and other civilisations; rather, it should analyze the imbalanced development between spiritual and material civilisations within human civilisation as a whole. This explains why the dialogue of civilisations can transcend national and regional boundaries, races, classes, and so on. Specifically, by a dialectic way, it should enable rationality to move beyond instrumental self-controversy to achieve innate self-sufficiency, the essence for creating a global balanced civilisation.

3. Civilisational approach for balancing material and spiritual civilisations

The discovery of the common spirit is as important as the discovery of nature. In this age, we have benefitted from the material advancements but have also suffered from the spiritual loss. To balance material and spiritual civilisations, we must use our self-sufficient rationality to transform the traditional subject-object epistemological relationship into the inter-subjectivity and coexistence relationship. When we use full rationality, our subjective action leads to objective results. In other words, by using rationality, our particular action embodies universal meanings. That said, we are born with self-sufficient transcendental conscious structures for unifying the divergences between subjectivity and objectivity, material and spiritual spheres, because they are just the two sides of the dialectical
dynamics that enable mutual inclusion and transformation. The self-motivated establishment of “dialogical subjectivity” on the one hand opens up one’s spiritual subjectivity to the external world, and on the other hand internalises the material world into one’s moral subjectivity. The former is an infinite expansion of the objective world in front of the subject, while the latter is an unending development of the subject’s realm of spirit, value, and meaning, which is in the process of continuous reconstruction.

Civilisational approaches for building a balanced material and spiritual civilisation can enhance the integration of cultural, economic, and political development. In his famous thesis, *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Weber employed a cultural perspective to explore the reason why capitalism could only develop in a Western country. This indicates that cultural values should be seen as the essential driver behind economic development. To elaborate on this perspective, there is now consensus that different cultures should be able to develop their own path of modernity. Thus, the role of culture can be leveraged to generate, lead, and balance social, political, and economic development.

4. Civilisational approach for fostering Community of common destiny

The purpose of perceiving the power of epistemology and ontology, broadening and deepening the dimension and depth of self and the world is determining the root causes of our existing crises. Throughout history, human beings have developed our subjectivity either by being co-creative with other people, by being coexistent with the world, or by becoming one with some cosmic or transcendent being. Dialogue of civilisations aims to fully recognize the power of rationality to make a meaningful existence in all dimensions and to extend our inner power beyond our immediate being to reach the ultimate realm of life, which is the unity of all things, including others, society, nature, and the world. Through inter-civilisational dialogues we can surpass the narrow vision of nation-state and spread positive internal energy to the world to build a community of common destiny. To carry us forward, we urgently need what Dr. Yakunin emphasized: “values of openness, reciprocity, and mutual trust from the bedrock of unbiased dialogue” (Yakunin, 2017). They are internal, non-instrumental, and eternal. History has shown us that the worst situations often make for the best opportunities for improvement because we human beings have a natural ability to foster a humane world and also have an innate passion to pursue life’s meaning and spiritual sublimation.
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Dialogue of Civilisations
Discourse in Contemporary
International Relations

Adrian Pabst

“Men are not tied to one another by papers and seals. They are led to associate by resemblances, by conformities, by sympathies. It is with nations as with individuals. [...] The writers on public law have often called this aggregate of nations a Commonwealth.”

Edmund Burke

Introduction: geopolitics and ‘geoculture’

Is there a resurgence of civilisation and culture in contemporary geopolitics? If so, how to conceptualise the role of civilisational and cultural factors at the interface of geography and global politics today? ‘Resurgence’ is different from ‘return’ because culture never went away and was always present in geopolitics. But in recent times there is a growing prominence and visibility of cultural issues – from debates on the geopolitical signification of migration and its impact on identity (Allen et al., 2017; Bouvet, 2015), via the iconoclasm of the self-styled Islamic State and its destruction of world cultural heritage sites at the crucible of different civilisations (Noyes, 2013), to the invocation of culture in the confrontation between democracies and authoritarian systems (Zakaria, 2007; Mishra, 2017).

Cultural traditions have long shaped conceptions of power, identity and borders in a world that is defined by much more than inter-state relations and diplomatic exchanges. Just as the fixed conditions of geography and climate shape the more variable element of human agency (Kaplan, 2012), so too cultural customs of language and narrative that underpin identity affect the way people perceive given geographical conditions (Guzzini, 2013). Civilisation and culture, like geography, can either divide or connect people in different countries: for example, the Mediterranean can be seen as
a connector between southern Europe and northern Africa or as a dividing line between former imperial powers and their erstwhile colonies, and the same applies to Eurasia when it comes to relations between Europe and Asia. The current backlash against the liberal model of globalisation (Stiglitz, 2002) and the liberal world order (Nye, 2017; Niblett, 2017; Pabst, 2019) is increasingly driven by ‘geo-cultural’ concerns over issues of fundamental fairness and identity, such as the growing gap between rich and poor within and across nations or the predominance of Western norms and rules in a world of rising non-Western powers (e.g. Kupchan, 2012; Flockhart et al., 2014; Stuenkel, 2016; Silvius, 2017). In short, ‘geo-culture’ refers to those civilisational values and cultural practices that are shared across different national territories and help to shape both geo-political and geo-economic actions.

This chapter will explore two related phenomena. One phenomenon is the geo-cultural tension within the liberal world order and the liberal sphere of influence that is defended by Western ‘great powers’ led by the USA. The other phenomenon is resistance to Western geo-political, geo-economic and geo-cultural domination by non-Western powers such as China and Russia, which define themselves as civilisational states with their own spheres of influence. The paper’s chosen focus will be the contest of values and competition in ideas and influence between Russia, China, the USA and the EU in Eurasia where rival spheres of influence intersect and collide.

By ‘spheres of influence’, the chapter refers to a ‘great power’ conception of international order and influence on its constituent countries (Hast, 2014). Order and influence encompass geo-political, geo-economic and geo-cultural factors involved in projecting influence beyond state borders. Geo-politically, ‘great powers’ try to stabilise volatile neighbourhoods – often disparagingly referred to as ‘backyards’ – as illustrated in different ways by US actions in Central and Latin America, China’s recent reassertion in the East and South China Sea, Russia’s presence in the wider Caucasus and Central Asia, or the EU’s intervention in the Balkans and Libya. Geo-economically, ‘great powers’ seek to secure natural resources and market outlets – whether through international trade, or state-driven infrastructure investment (Beijing’s ‘One Road, One Belt’ project), or the extraction of natural resources.

Geo-culturally, ‘great powers’ tend to pursue a ‘civilising mission’, spreading certain ideas and institutions shaped by their own values and historical traditions. Examples include (1) US Wilsonian idealism after 1919 and the spread of democracy by both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ power (e.g. Mead, 2017); (2) the EU’s projection of normative power by syndicating its values...
in the European neighbourhood (Manners, 2002; Celata and Coletti, 2016); (3) Moscow’s project for a ‘Russian world’ (Russki mir) aimed at the countries in the post-Soviet space (Zevelev, 2014, Laruelle, 2015; Petro, 2015); (4) China’s neo-Confucian project of harmonious development in the ‘Middle Kingdom’ and its orbit (Bell, 2000; Yaqing, 2011).

In each case, civilisational and cultural values are key to the self-definition of major countries and the way they seek to project power as part of their respective sphere of influence. However, there are three different models of ‘great power’ sphere of influence that the chapter discusses. The first model is based on the idea of the nation state defined by geographical boundaries and national governance structures, which can nevertheless have wider appeal because of the universal values the nation embodies – the (supposed) universality of American values and hence the exceptional character of the USA (Kagan, 2003; Bacevich, 2008; Pfaff, 2010). The second model is based on the notion of ‘civilisational state’ defined by culture as well as ethnic and familial relationships. The role of the state is to defend by representing not just homeland populations but also diaspora communities, as in the case of contemporary China (Qing, 2012; Fenby, 2014) and Russia (Laruelle, 2016; Saunders, 2016; Toal, 2017). The third model is based on the idea of a cultural commonwealth defined by an association of nations and peoples around certain cultural and political values, for example the European Union with its focus on promoting democracy, human rights and civil society (Zielonka, 2006 and 2008; Milbank and Pabst, 2016).

1. Globalisation and the cultural tensions within the liberal world order

1.1. Globalisation and geo-culture

Amid the ongoing backlash against the effects of globalisation (Stiglitz, 2002), there are economic as well as socio-cultural concerns that shape the resurgence of anti-establishment populism and atavistic ethno-nationalism: the growing inequality between rich and poor within nations (Milanovic, 2011; Piketty, 2013) as well as the threats to the settled ways of life of those who are ‘left behind’ in an increasingly globalised economy (Rothkopf, 2008; Milanovic, 2011, Freeland, 2013). Thus growing global interdependence is not turning the world into a vast cosmopolitan monoculture. Rather, there is a bifurcation at work: some degree of cultural homogenisation in relation to the spread of an originally American consumer and entertainment culture.
(e.g. Jameson, 1992; Caldwell, 2012), but also a surge in social fragmentation, a proliferation of struggles for devolution and self-determination, as well as a renewed focus on national culture and identity (Juergensmeyer, 1993; Cooper, 2007; Krastev, 2016). All this gives greater prominence to cultural factors that are part of the economic-political forces associated with the dominant models of globalisation and liberalism (Emmott, 2017; Luce, 2017).

Globalisation and its discontents encompass geo-economic, geo-political and geo-cultural elements. Geo-culture can be defined as a set of ideas and institutions that are shaped by specific cultural values and traditions, for example Wilsonian idealism after 1919 and the spread of US-style democracy by both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ power (Nye, 1990, 2004, 2011; Mead, 2017), or the above-mentioned contemporary Chinese and Russian responses to the dominant liberal order. These responses focus not just on the geo-political and geo-economic dimensions of US domination (Luttwak, 1990, 1993) and Western spheres of influence (Laïdi, 1999) but also their underlying geo-cultural factors. First of all, hegemony in the sense of a predominant great power, which generates a governing ideology (for example neo-liberalism) and dictates the societal character of subordinate states that constitute the hegemonic spheres of influence, has cultural roots (Arrighi, 1994). The hegemon usually uses both geopolitical and geocultural means to expand markets and protect domestic politics from the impact of capital flows and commodity exchange (cf. Wallerstein, 1974, 1980, 1989, 1991, 2011). Culture is key to hegemony, as it can become an instrument in the extension of state power, as with certain aspects of ‘soft power’ and democracy promotion (Nye, 1990, 2004, 2011), but also the expansion of global capitalism – including the creation of a worldwide consumer culture based on the value of ever-greater individual choice (Bauman, 2007). Globalisation is promoting an economic model and a culture of mobility and mass migration that provoke a backlash against the underlying liberalism.

1.2. Liberal world order: political civilisation vs cultural civilisation
A new narrative has taken hold among the ruling classes that Eastern autocracy is the main challenge to the Western dominated international system. The aggressive axis of Russia and China appears to be bent on destroying the liberal West (Niblett, 2017; Ikenberry, 2018). But the liberal world order is under unprecedented strain from within. The Iraq invasion, the global financial crash, austerity and the refugee crisis that was partly the result of Western destabilisation in Libya and Syria have eroded public confidence in the liberal establishment and the institutions it controls (Emmott, 2017; Luce, 2017). Brexit, Donald Trump and the populist
insurgency that is sweeping continental Europe mark a revolt against the economic and social liberalism that has dominated not just domestic politics but also the main model of globalisation. Of course the ascent of authoritarian strongmen – from Putin via Xi Jinping and India’s Prime Minister Modi to Turkey’s President Erdogan and now Brazil’s leader Jair Bolsonaro – is a major menace to liberal hegemony but the principal threat is internal and it is civilisational (Pabst, 2019).

Liberal internationalism, the ideology of Western domination, is based on the twin idea that the West is a political civilisation and that it represents the vanguard in the forward march of history towards a single normative order (Ikenberry, 2009). In Ikenberry’s words, the liberal world order “is also distinctive in its integrative and expansive character. In essence, it is ‘easy to join and hard to overturn’” (Ikenberry, 2010). But this political civilisation with its tendency towards cartel capitalism, bureaucratic overreach, unfettered globalisation and rampant individualism is undermining the cultural civilisation of the West. Part of its legacy is the post-war model of socially embedded markets, decentralised states, a balance of open economies with protection of domestic industry (Ruggie, 1983, 2003) and a commitment to the dignity of the person enshrined in human rights. This legacy rests on a common cultural heritage of Greco-Roman philosophy and law as well as Judeo-Christian religion and ethics, which in different ways stress human dignity and a free space between the person and the state. Today those principles are under threat from the forces of liberalism (Deneen, 2018). In the name of supposedly universal but in reality narrowly liberal values, the Clinton administration adopted as its civilising mission the worldwide spread of American-style market-states and humanitarian intervention. After 9/11 left-liberal governments like Tony Blair’s New Labour curtailed civil rights and waged endless foreign wars. In recent months the French President Emmanuel Macron, the model of Western progressives, has led a crackdown of the gilets jaunes protesters that threatens fundamental freedoms of speech, association and public demonstration. The liberal world order cuts off the Western civilisational branch on which it sits.

There is thus a paradox at the heart of the West. Compared with China and Russia that define themselves as civilisational states, the West is the only community of nations founded upon political values of the self-determination of the people, democracy and free trade. These Western principles were first codified in the 1941 Atlantic Charter signed by Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt and then enshrined in the post-1945 international system, which expanded at the end of the Cold
War (Ikenberry, 2011). Yet the West as a political civilisation and the liberal world order which it underwrites erode the cultural foundations of Western civilisation – undermining public institutions and stripping them of their animating purpose. ‘Liberal civilisation’ thereby weakens the West’s ability to confront both internal and external threats such as economic injustice, social dislocation, ecological devastation, resurgent nationalism, Islamic terrorism and hostile foreign powers.

The very cultural forces liberalism unleashes – such as identity politics, aggressive secularisation and a cosmopolitan contempt for patriotism – hollow out Western folk culture and high culture in favour of a globally exported pop culture. This is reflected in the title of Thomas Friedman’s (1999) book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization* in which he argues that technological progress and impersonal economic forces make globalisation a necessity that would bring people fashionable brands (Lexus) and liberate them from local traditions (olive tree). Capitalist culture, especially in the United States, is homogenous, despite the extraordinarily diverse origins of its population. It deals in abstract, generic and kitsch ideals: ‘it’s amazing to fall in love with a blue-eyed blonde, it’s sad to grow old and best to try to avoid it’. This kind of low-grade US culture is accessible to all, but it is corrosive of particular cultures around the world and universal ‘high culture’ too. For this reason, people outside the US resent it even as they consume it (Caldwell, 2012).

As a liberal civilisation, the West since 1989 has mutated into what Robespierre called ‘armed missionaries’ who seek to recast reality in their own self-image. Nations are seen as egos writ large that desire nothing but to adapt to the imperatives of globalisation and a world without borders or national identities. This revolutionary avant-garde not only de-legitimizes the common cultural customs and beliefs of people. It also embodies a middlebrow bourgeois ‘closing of the mind’ that ignores all the intellectual, literary and artistic achievements which make the West a distinct civilisation. In this sense the liberal West is its own *first* enemy.

Perhaps the greatest threat to Western civilisation comes from intellectual inertia. The historic inheritance of the West is either dismissed as reactionary or glorified as the apogee of historically sanctioned progress. Lazy binaries such as globalism versus nationalism dominate the political discourse when the reality of neighbourhoods and nations is far more complex. Both the new tribes of ultra-liberals and anti-liberals practice poisonous propaganda that replaces critical debate with a demagogic manipulation of the masses. We are in the midst of a culture war within the West that undermines the principles of liberality – free inquiry, free speech, tolerance for dissent and
respect for political opponents – on which Western civilisation depends for its flourishing (Milbank and Pabst, 2016; Deneen, 2018). The West lacks self-belief as the liberal world order unravels and with it Western claims to the universal validity of its values.

2. Civilisational states and cultural commonwealths

2.1. Civilisational states

It is commonplace to assume that China and Russia are national states as they can be defined in terms of a circumscribed territory with a dominant nation and the institutions of modern statehood. However, in both countries the nation-state model is associated with the West and its promotion of supposedly universal values, which are seen as Western liberal values that do not reflect the distinct character of Chinese and Russian civilisation. Russia and China can be described as civilisational states in the sense of states that embody, defend and promote a certain civilisation with a focus on ethnic, cultural and ideological identity and cohesion. One reason for characterising them in these terms is because this is part of their own self-understanding and captures the way their political leadership – past and present – sees their own country and the differences with the West (Campbell, 2015; Light, 2015; Linde, 2016):

The most fundamental defining features of China today, and which give the Chinese their sense of identity, emanate not from the last century when China has called itself a nation-state but from the previous two millennia when it can be best described as a civilization-state: the relationship between the state and society, a very distinctive notion of the family, ancestral worship, Confucian values, the network of personal relationships that we call guanxi, Chinese food and the traditions that surround it, and, of course, the Chinese language with its unusual relationship between the written and spoken form (Jacques, 2011).

This is not to suggest that the idea of civilisational states is objectively true or has greater legitimacy than the nation-state model. In fact, both are characterised by internal tensions and contradictions. The nation-state oscillates between protecting national sovereignty and projecting power and influence over the sovereign affairs of other countries – hence the
relevance of the concept of spheres of influence in analysing the actions of nation-states such as the USA. Similarly, the civilisational state is based on culture, ethnic and familial relationships, which are meant to encompass communities both at home and abroad (diaspora), but which may not have the wider appeal that the term ‘civilisation’ often implies. This raises questions about whether Chinese or Russian civilisation can attract many non-Chinese and non-Russian people.

These questions arise from the way in which China’s and Russia’s current political leadership use the concept of civilisation in order to strengthen their own legitimacy and their state both at home and abroad. President Xi Jinping links the historical legacy of Chinese civilisation with a certain story about Chinese identity today – what he calls the ‘Chinese dream’. In a speech to UNESCO in the early years of his Presidency, he said:

The Chinese people are striving to fulfil the Chinese dream [which] is about prosperity of the country, rejuvenation of the nation, and happiness of the people. It reflects both the ideal of the Chinese people today and our time–honored tradition to seek constant progress. [...] In the Chinese civilization, people’s cultural pursuit has always been part of their life and social ideals. So the realization of the Chinese dream is a process of both material and cultural development. As China continues to make economic and social progress, the Chinese civilization will keep pace with the times and acquire greater vitality (Xi, 2014).

The Chinese dream is nothing new. It flows from a millennia–old history that each generation inherited from the previous one and transmitted to the next. The core meaning of this history is what Xi (2014) calls the yearning “for a world of great harmony in which people are free from want and following a high moral standard”. Therefore he argues that China will only attain the promise of the Chinese Dream if it puts in place a model of balanced development (the ‘Beijing consensus’ of state capitalism as opposed to the ‘Washington consensus’ of market capitalism) and combines material with cultural progress. If this can be achieved, then China will be able to take its rightful place among world civilisations:

As we pursue the Chinese dream, the Chinese people will encourage creative shifts and innovative development of the Chinese civilization in keeping with the progress of the times. We need to inject new vitality into the Chinese civilization by energizing all cultural elements
that transcend time, space and national borders and that possess both perpetual appeal and current value [...] In this way, the Chinese civilization, together with the rich and colourful civilizations created by the people of other countries, will provide mankind with the right cultural guidance and strong motivation (Xi, 2014 [my italics – AP]).

Here are the roots of Xi’s conception of China’s sphere of influence – a civilisational state whose culture transcends “national borders” and is of both “perpetual appeal and current value”. This vision underpins China’s soft power policy of establishing over 700 Confucius Institutes that are embedded in many universities across the globe, national editions of the official newspaper The China Daily, as well as the news agency Xin Hua and China Central Television with its multi-lingual programmes. In other words, China is engaged not simply in geo-politics and geo-economics but also in geo-culture. Like Western countries, it pursues a civilising mission, which it calls ‘global harmony’ (Campbell, 2015). This Confucian ideal not only binds domestic politics and international relations together (Bell, 2000; Qing, 2012); it also expresses a certain Chinese exceptionalism (Zhang, 2011) that gives rise to an idea of international order and influence beyond national borders – i.e. the possibility of becoming a hegemon with a sphere of influence. Unlike Western colonialism, China’s leadership will embody the ‘Way of Humane Authority’ that reflects the country’s peaceful rise and its long history of opposing ‘foreign barbaric foes’ (Callahan, 2010; Qing, 2013; Curtis, 2016). So the form which the Chinese geo-cultural sphere of influence takes is that of a ‘harmonious world order’ in which Beijing aims to play a pre-eminent role. In his speech at the opening ceremony of the 19th Communist Party Congress of China, Xi (2017b) put it as follows: “It will be an era that sees China moving closer to centre stage and making greater contributions to mankind [...] The development of China is no threat to any other country. No matter how much China has developed, it will never seek hegemony or expansion”. In other words, the Chinese civilisational state preserves China’s unique model based on cultural characteristics without striving for some unipolar domination over the rest of the world.

For its part, Moscow also appeals to the idea of civilisational state as a source of legitimacy and a greater Russian role in geopolitics. In his annual ‘state of the union’ address in 2012, President Vladimir Putin (2012) declared that “for centuries, Russia developed as a multi-ethnic nation [...], a civilisation-state bonded by the Russian people, Russian language
and Russian culture [...], uniting us and preventing us from dissolving in this diverse world”. And in remarks to an audience of Russian and foreign experts in 2013, he defined Russia as a ‘state-civilisation’:

Russia – as philosopher Konstantin Leontyev vividly put it – has always evolved in “blossoming complexity” as a state-civilisation, reinforced by the Russian people, Russian language, Russian culture, Russian Orthodox Church and the country’s other traditional religions. It is precisely the state-civilisation model that has shaped our state polity. It has always sought to flexibly accommodate the ethnic and religious specificity of particular territories, ensuring diversity in unity (Putin, 2013).

Seen in isolation, these words appear to be statements about Russian history and culture. However, President Putin has linked this reading of the Russian state to the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) – his flagship foreign policy project since returning to the presidency in 2012 (Sakwa, 2016), which is an expression of Russia’s sphere of influence. Indeed, in the same remarks to the group of experts he described the EEU as a project that combines unity with diversity – almost like an extension of Russia:

The Eurasian Union is a project for maintaining the identity of nations in the historical Eurasian space in a new century and in a new world. Eurasian integration is a chance for the entire post-Soviet space to become an independent centre for global development, rather than remaining on the outskirts of Europe and Asia. I want to stress that Eurasian integration will also be built on the principle of diversity. This is a union where everyone maintains their identity, their distinctive character and their political independence. [...] We expect that it will become our common input into maintaining diversity and stable global development (Putin, 2013 [my emphasis – AP]).

Like President Xi, President Putin believes that the liberal values associated with the West are not universal and do not capture the civilisational identity of Russia and the neighbouring countries in the post-Soviet space. Russia’s self-definition as a civilisational state provides the Kremlin with a justification to intervene in the affairs of the ‘near abroad’ on grounds of a shared civilisation (Linde, 2016; Tsygankov, 2016). This is based not just on historical grounds but also the continued presence of so-called ‘co-patriots’
— people of Russian descent who have ties of affinity with Russia and have been left outside of Russian borders since the dissolution of the Soviet Union (Linde, 2016).

These are not new themes in Russian geopolitical thinking. Already in 2008, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov spoke of the ‘civilisational unity’ of all the lands that used to constitute the Soviet Union and before that the Russian Empire (Lavrov, 2008a and 2008b). In the same year the then President Dmitry Medvedev laid claim to a ‘sphere of privileged interest’ (Medvedev, 2008), which for him translates into an obligation on the part of the Russian state to defend Russian people abroad. There are some subtle yet significant differences between these two statements of Russian foreign policy. Medvedev put the emphasis on ‘zones of interests’ rather than ‘spheres of influence’. Foreign Minister Lavrov, in contrast, is much closer to President Putin’s accentuation of civilisational ties that underpin Russia’s role in the ‘near abroad’ – a sphere of influence in all but name. Far from being merely semantic, the former is about Russia’s more specific and identifiable interests that are non-exclusive with other countries’ interests (Trenin, 2009) – such as the mutual benefits from trade or good neighbourly relations. Meanwhile the latter is both all-inclusive and exclusive: first of all, it is coterminous with an idea of international order in which Russia is a ‘great power’ alongside the USA and China; secondly, within this order Russia exercises influence over countries in the post-Soviet space that encompasses geo-political, geo-economic and geo-cultural aspects and excludes other powers, notably the USA and the EU.

2.2. Cultural commonwealths

By contrast with the nation-state model of the USA and the civilisational-state model of China and Russia, the EU can be conceptualised as a ‘cultural commonwealth’ – an association of nations and peoples bound together by certain values rooted in a common history and a shared culture (intimated by Edmund Burke in the passage quoted at the outset of this chapter). The EU is more than a free trade area but less than a sovereign state. It is an international organisation sui generis with a unique political system made up of overlapping jurisdictions, hybrid institutions, polycentric authority and multi-level governance whereby its members pool national sovereignty in some areas while retaining it in others (Hix, 2005; Zielonka, 2006 and 2008). This begs the question of what the EU is. One way of conceptualising it is in terms of culture rather than the traditional characteristics of modern statehood or the features of transnational markets. In a report entitled ‘The Spiritual and Cultural Dimension of Europe’ published in 2004, a
reflection group composed of European statesmen and intellectuals in Europe suggested the idea of ‘cultural complex’:

Europe itself is far more than a political construct. It is a complex – a “culture” – of institutions, ideas, expectations, habits and feelings, moods, memories and prospects that form a “glue” binding Europeans together – and all these are a foundation on which a political construct must rest. This complex – we can speak of it as European civil society – is at the heart of political identity. It defines the conditions of successful European politics and the limits of state and political intervention (Biedenkopf, Geremek and Michalski, 2004, 9).

Like the nation–state model and the civilisational–state model, this model of a ‘cultural commonwealth’ is ambivalent insofar as the promotion of civil society extends to neighbouring countries – through a myriad of external programmes from the EU’s Neighbourhood Policy to the EU’s Eastern Partnership. Here one can also identify a sphere of influence in the sense that the EU links economic aid and political support to the promotion of specific values, including human rights, democracy and the importance of civil society. On that basis the EU as a whole (both the member states and the community institutions) projects power well beyond its boundaries, seeking to syndicate its legislation and values across its wider neighbourhood and beyond (including the contested Eurasian space). A key difference is that the EU does not define itself with reference to being a single nation (as for the USA) or a whole civilisation (as for China and Russia) but rather than an association of nations and peoples committed – at least rhetorically – to certain cultural values. One reason why a focus on culture matters is because it is indispensable to a better understanding of geopolitical dynamics in Eurasia where the Chinese, Russian, US and EU spheres of influence intersect, as the next sub-section shows.

3. Rival civilisational norms and spheres of influence in Eurasia

Eurasia is once more moving to the fore as a crucible of geopolitics (Sengupta, 2009; Frankopan, 2015). In a long tradition dating back to the earliest Western geopolitical thinkers Halford Mackinder (1904 and 1919) and Rudolf Kjellén (1916), the Eurasian space can be seen as the heartland of global geopolitics where the fate of empires old and new is determined.
This focus on land power rather than sea power led Mackinder (1919, 132) to formulate the dictum for which he is best remembered: “Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland. Who rules the Heartland commands the World–Island [Eurasia]. Who rules the World–Island commands the World”.

In one sense Eurasia can be considered as the chessboard of the world where a new ‘great power’ game is in full swing and rival spheres of influence collide (Brzezinski, 1997; Bedeski and Swanstrom, 2012). But in another sense Eurasia can also be considered as a bridge between East and West – a continental connector from China via Russia and the Middle East to Europe and the Atlantic West, including North America (Diamond, 1997).

In either case there are not only geopolitical and geo-economic drivers but also and perhaps increasingly geo-cultural forces at work, which are not captured by the ‘end of history’ thesis of a global convergence towards Western liberal democracy (Fukuyama, 1989 and 1992) or by the ‘clash of civilizations’ between the West and ‘the rest’ (Huntington, 1993 and 1996). Rather, the contemporary contest over power in Eurasia highlights the cultural dimensions of the rival spheres of influence, above all China’s neo-Confucian ‘One Belt, One Road’ initiative and Russia’s creation of the Eurasian Economic Union as a concrete expression of the ‘Russian world’ (Russkiy mir). In both cases, the current political leadership of China and Russia view their civilisational-state model not just in instrumental terms as a means to greater political power and economic wealth, but also as an alternative to the US nation-state model and the European cultural commonwealth, which are associated with liberal values that are seen as sources of instability and in decline.

China’s ‘One Road, One Belt’ project aims to bring about profound economic and political changes in Eurasia and Africa based on certain ideas about Chinese culture, civilisation and world history along the Silk Road. It rests on a broad framework of what Beijing describes as cooperation and connectivity, which encompasses the coordination of policy, the pooling of investment and people-to-people bonds (Xi, 2014). Far from simply enhancing economic prosperity and political power, China deploys heritage diplomacy in order to help rebuild a rich cultural legacy that is supposed to connect present Chinese society to its past and also draw other peoples into China’s wider orbit – including 34 UNESCO world heritage sites. This is part of fostering Chinese civilisational identity at home and abroad, which reflects Beijing’s strategy of using culture as a source of international influence – for example the Silk Road programme as an attempt to achieve the first rank in the global table of UNESCO heritage properties by preserving over 500 sites and thereby overtaking Italy. Therefore culture is a reason
in its own right and it also serves the purpose of further extending China’s sphere of influence. This sphere is rooted in, and deepens, a long history of cultural interactions between China and other countries in Eurasia, and it operates as bridge between heritage sites, which directly align with trade and foreign policy ambitions.

From Beijing’s point of view, the Silk Road programme offers key neighbouring countries a place in an expanding Sino-centric network of power, wealth and status: one cultural corridor linking China with Mongolia and Russia; another Eurasian land corridor all the way from Beijing to Brussels; yet another corridor consolidating ties between China and Pakistan with its strategically important port of Gwadar close to the Persian Gulf. Based on the Neo-Confucian idea of harmony (Bell, 2010), the Chinese leadership wants other countries to find points of cultural connection through the rebuilding of share heritage sites led by China, which is a way to pursue regional influence and forge ties of loyalty. Both by land and sea, the ‘One Belt, One Road’ initiative with its focus on Silk Road heritage diplomacy is a multi-annual project of fostering both institutional and interpersonal bonds that tie other cultures to Chinese civilisation.

The stated ambition of the Chinese leadership is not simply to project geo-economic power and military might but also to create what President Xi (2014 and 2017b) has called a ‘Community of Common Destiny’ that is non-hegemonic precisely because it rests on new international structures (such as Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization) that are not dominated by Western powers. As China demands a role that is commensurate to the size of its military and economy in shaping this region, one way to conceptualise this growing assertiveness is in terms of a civilisational state at its centre and an expanding sphere of influence that focuses on non-Western culture as a pole of attraction to other Eurasian countries – including Russia, Mongolia, the five Central Asian republics, Pakistan and Afghanistan. In short, geo-culture complements geo-politics and geo-economics by aiming to bring about a more permanent realignment away from the USA and Europe towards China.

Up to a point, the Kremlin lays claim a role on par with that of the USA in a multipolar world and is engaged in consolidating links with countries independently of Western institutions. Key to this project is the idea of ‘Russian world’ (Russkiy mir) that consists of all Russian-speaking peoples inside and outside of Russia’s borders. The word ‘world’ is used in the sense of a civilisational space (Greek or Byzantine ‘world’) with a dominant civilisation at the centre and a concentric circle of peripheries with diverse degrees of political loyalty and economic integration (Laruelle, 2015).
*Russkiy mir* is a geo-cultural notion that underpins a geopolitical imagination of Russia’s global standing on par with other ‘great powers’ – as a distinct civilisation with which different regions of the world have diverse links.

Like China’s invocation of Neo-Confucian ‘harmony’, *Russkiy mir* is both an end in itself (Russia’s self-understanding and projection of a specific Russian voice in geopolitics) and a means to a greater projection of power (a legitimation for maintaining and fostering a sphere of influence in the ‘near abroad’ and beyond). As a result, *Russkiy mir* reconnects the country with its pre-Soviet and Soviet past and suggests an unbroken continuity in Russian history of which the civilisational state is the ultimate guarantor. The creation of the *Russkiy Mir* Foundation in 2007 and its cultural centres abroad is a concrete expression of this vision and of the Kremlin’s efforts to promote both Russian language and culture across the globe, as is the establishment in 2008 of *Rossotrudnichestvo* – the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation. Both were responses to the so-called ‘colour revolutions’ in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004-05) and elsewhere – defeats for the Kremlin that prompted a geopolitical rethink in the form of military modernisation and public diplomacy around a reinvigorated sphere of influence (Saari, 2014), anchored in the EEU. From the Kremlin’s point of view, this is the most promising way of countering growing Chinese influence in Eurasia and interventions by the US and the EU while being open to working with any of them in ways that make Russian an indispensable ‘partner’.

This view shapes the Kremlin’s strategy of dealing primarily with other ‘great powers’ beyond its ‘sphere of privileged interest’, which acts as a buffer zone against unwanted foreign meddling in wider Russian affairs. First of all, the USA when it comes to the Iranian nuclear deal; secondly, Iran and (more recently Turkey) in relation to the civil war in Syria; thirdly, Germany, France and to a lesser extent Italy concerning the conflict in Ukraine (not least because they belong to a certain continental European tradition that is much more Russophile than Anglo-Saxon Europe with its allies in Poland and the Baltic States).

Finally and most importantly, the EEU is a way for Russia to strengthen ties with China on a shared agenda of countering what the leadership of the two countries view as US unipolarity. Both oppose the liberal world order and US (and to a lesser extent EU) interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states through a policy of sanctions and regime change. Moscow and Beijing also want to weaken and ultimately overthrow Western domination of
international organisations by advocating new rules that reflect both the interests and the values of non-Western countries. Their respective sphere of influence is both a buffer zone against Western meddling and a forward position from which to project more power based on conservative cultural visions, which are markedly different from the West’s liberal agenda in terms of traditional values of family, patriotism, respect for the authority of the older generation and the state, as well as indigenous religion.

However, there are also tensions between Russia’s and China’s spheres of influence. One source is power in the Eurasian heartland of the Central Asian republics where Moscow views the growing Chinese presence with some suspicion while Beijing defends what it sees as legitimate political and economic interests precisely because of historical cultural ties. That is why China has opened Confucius Institutes in Russia, Ukraine, the Central Asian countries and the South Caucasus. So far Russia retains her pre-eminent position but Moscow fears that the demographic decline and China’s long-term plan will limit and even push back the Russian sphere of influence. The other source of tension concerns the international order. While Moscow has engaged in a more confrontational course against Western economic sanctions and military interventions, Beijing continues to prefer a more gradualist approach. So far the Sino-Russian cooperation is based on mutual interests and a broadly shared anti-liberal agenda, but over time the shift in the global balance of power in favour of China could trigger a Russian response – even a pivot back from the currently more Eastern to a previously more Western outlook. The point is that Russian’s self-identification as a European–Eurasian civilisational state and Chinese’s self-understanding as Neo-Confucian civilisational state encompass spheres of influence that collide not just with those of the USA and (to a lesser extent) the EU but also with each other. Eurasia may not be Mackinder’s ‘World-Island’ from which to rule the globe, but it is once again coming to the fore of global geopolitics.

Concluding remarks: contested spheres of influence in Eurasia

This chapter suggests that culture is central to the resurgence of spheres of influence in contemporary geopolitics. The argument is twofold. First, the Western-dominated liberal order rests on a sphere of influence that promotes specific liberal values – whether the nation-state model represented by the USA or the cultural commonwealth formed by the EU. Second, non-Western countries such as Russia and China oppose liberal culture in the name of their
own civilisational–state model, which is based on a claim to embody unique cultural, ethnic and familial relationships that encompass communities both at home and abroad. In the case of each model, the sphere of influence is not simply a means to greater geo-economic and geo-political power but also an end in itself – the affirmation of a geo-cultural identity that gives rise to a distinct voice in the world. On the Eurasian continent, these rival spheres of influence intersect and collide – both between the Western liberal and the Eastern conservative civilisations but also between Russia and China where rival identities and narratives compete for loyalty from Central Asian and South Caucasian states.

The argument of this article helps to chart a number of avenues for further research. One such avenue is to develop the conceptualisation of rival models by exploring whether the nation-state model and the civilisation-state model are compatible with the cultural commonwealth model. For example, are the USA, China and Russia cultural commonwealths to the extent that they are highly geographically, ethnically and culturally diverse – and their regions are analogous to nations in the European case? Another avenue for further research is to compare cultural and public diplomacy across a number of countries that have ‘cultural’ spheres of influence – Russia’s Russkiy mir, France’s Francophonie, Spain’s Cervantes institutes and Ibero-American community as well as the British commonwealth. Yet another avenue is a close analysis of rival spheres of influence that collide along cultural and religious lines, including China and India, the EU and Turkey, Russia and Turkey as well as Iran and Saudi Arabia. Just as sovereignty is a matter of degree, so too spheres of influence come in many shapes and forms, and their role in contemporary geopolitics deserves more scholarly attention.

REFERENCES


THOUGHTS OF THE WORLD PUBLIC FORUM FOUNDERS
During the millennia of its existence, Greece has become the motherland of a large number of initiatives, breakthrough ideas, and traditions that belong to the heritage of mankind. Such ideas continue to persist today, fostering dialogues between peoples and civilisations. I believe that the present forum, which has gathered representatives from different parts of the world, can give a new, powerful impulse to the continuation of the history of mankind. It may strengthen our shared hope that our grandchildren would not have to reproach us for our egoism and for our living by the day.

Fate has ruled in such a way that the present generations of people on planet Earth have to answer some key questions: will our history come to an end, will humanity reach a finish line, or will it prepare itself for a new leap forward for a higher qualitative stage of its eternal life?

It is impossible to make the world happier by means of violence, via advertising or public relations campaigns. This goal cannot be achieved even by voluntary denial of national identity in the name of an ostensibly more elaborate and efficient model of existence. Any effort to create a new utopia, another ‘golden dream of humanity’, would be merely an empty attempt. The tragic experience of the last century tells us that such an attempt will inevitably bring new disasters to the human community.

We are choosing another way and another technology – a technology that can be called humane in the full and highest sense of the word, and one that has, throughout the course of history, been simplistic yet the most refined. This is the way of a dialogue – the dialogue of the people, the dialogue of civilisations.

I would like to emphasise that participants of the Rhodes Forum imply by ‘dialogue’ something more than simply listening and exchanging ideas. By starting a dialogue, people, nations, and civilisations embark down a path of common analysis – not only of collective issues but also of individual
problems. They do not merely discuss them; they also implement common projects. These approaches are not born of an egoistic desire to survive or to become rich; they represent a strenuous path of mutual support and compromise, the path to justice and common welfare!

Only in this way can we, the present generation, fit into the context of this historical time.

This, first of all, means that we must retrieve the enormous experience accumulated by our predecessors to tap into the world’s wisdom, hitherto left unclaimed.

Placing matters in a historical context enables us to better understand our as-yet unborn offspring and, most importantly, allows us to avoid many mistakes that our offspring would have to pay for.

Creating the future is in the very nature of man. And one of the ultimate goals of our dialogue is to elaborate upon a prospective way of life in the future. This way should reflect a high and positive image that is at once desirable and attainable.

Humanity has always been strong in its hindsight. Each time after a major or world war, there comes an understanding that disorder should be prevented. Thus emerged the institutions of the world order: the League of Nations was established after WWI, and the UN after WWII.

These established structures primarily used intergovernmental agreements along with political and economic mechanisms of their implementation. The crisis in the activity of these international structures was rooted in their philosophy, the implementation of which relied solely on intergovernmental contacts.

Many influential forces, who claim that the principles and mechanisms of international legal and institutional regulation created in the mid-20th century are hopelessly outdated, have arbitrarily discarded them. Instead, these forces proclaim the right of one country or a group of countries to independently decide who and what has the right to survive in this world – and what does not and should thus be eliminated. The origins of such claims are obvious. With the disintegration of the USSR, the old world order based on a balance of forces was destroyed, creating a vacuum that needed to be filled.

In the long term, however, such an approach will transform the world into a pyramid whose top will be overtaken by the strong ones who have assumed the authority to judge and punish, while those subject to judgment and punishment remain at its bottom. We witnessed such examples when Yugoslavia was bombed and Iraq’s sovereignty was annihilated.

The philosophy of the Rhodes Forum propagated today is not an alternative to the development of state structure and human order. Under
the New Human Order, we can realise strengthening of the organised activity of public institutions while making such activity more creative and raising the aims and functioning mechanisms of the states and inter-state relations to a level of universal justice and well-being.

Today, the salient task is to make the process of human order a targeted one from the start and to identify adequate means of implementation for this purpose. The times of maximal aspirations and political ambitions have passed: when the strong had the right to impose their life standards and values on the weak, while the weak felt they had the right to resist the expansion by all means – even the most sophisticated – with complete disregard for norms, rules, or conventions. The world founded on such a basis is egotistical and spiritless. We have no right to let this dangerous standard of relations be exported into the future.

The world is one – this formula expressed, a long, long time ago, has today acquired a true technological meaning. Modern telecommunications have removed the spatial constraints of human interaction. Business technologies of the 21st century have rendered business activity a truly global affair. Ideological borders hampering the movement of people, goods, ideas, and tastes have been eliminated. Collectively, this phenomenon is called globalisation. The niche of each culture, each country, and even each person in this globalised world depends on the structure, rules, and values of this worldwide human ‘hive’.

An objective glance at this structure and trends does not inspire optimism.

Increasing technological might and aggregated material wealth does not result in increased happiness and well-being. In the third world, it is borne out by poverty and disease, while in developed parts of the world it is evidenced by a growing incidence of mental illness, suicide, proliferation of drugs, and consequences of a lack of internal well-being.

With the global confrontation of socialism and capitalism now over, the extent of armed violence has not declined, nor has the threat that it may acquire global dimensions. On the contrary, conflicts have become more diversified and hence less manageable. Mankind has been subjected to unheard-of terrorist attacks in both scale and cruelty. The world has come to bear witness to retaliatory actions, often no less cruel.

Scientific progress has failed to stop the destruction of the human habitat or the undermining of its natural bases for existence. Thousands of scholars, publicists, and clergy of all religions have referred to these alarming symptoms, but nothing changes; or rather, changes have been for the worse. Thinkers, philosophers, scholars, and writers from different countries of
the world, representing practically all existing civilisations, agree that the contemporary world, based on the principles of rationalism, is suffering from a humanitarian, moral, and value crisis.

Compared with the development of science and technology, almost nothing has happened in the development of man and his human component. Contemporary man has become the pinnacle of a rationalistic form of development – nothing more, and is sometimes less moral and spiritually poorer than, for example, the ancient Greek.

The failure in the moral and spiritual development of man, and the crisis in the values of rationalism, practicism, and utilitarianism, are some of the most serious challenges of today.

At the same time, it is evident that no modern civilisation, however developed and powerful, can cope with the burden of responsibility for the totality of mankind. The prospects of human order, based on the hegemony of might, are easily predictable. Not a single superpower in world history has succeeded in retaining its leadership forever. The mere attainment of hegemony generates a desire to overthrow it, and such a coup will occur sooner or later. In our contemporary world, this fight for hegemony is fraught with danger of the self-annihilation of mankind.

Mankind’s most important and valuable asset is its diversity. Civilisation on the planet Earth is not a homogenous affair, but a constellation of local civilisations, and each of them – as part of the human whole – shines with its own light. Without any of these stars, our world would be different, incomplete, and crippled.

Try to imagine the world without Russia, or without Jordan, or without China, or without Europe – without any other unique part of humanity’s whole…. Humanity’s spiritual treasury would become poorer without each of these cultures and civilisations. What kind of chaos would ensue in the entire system, formed out of thousands of architectonic, political, economic, and humanitarian relations?

These prospects are not the result of mere theoretical exercises. For several centuries, the concept of civilisation per se has been interpreted as a synonym for the notion of the West. Many continue to interpret it this way today. Maybe this is the root of many roadblocks to a harmonious human race.

There are quite a few politicians and theoreticians who wish to see the world without Russia; they write and speak about it. And there are people dreaming about the world without the U.S.

Of course, the individuals and groups nursing such dreams are marginal, displaced to the periphery of spiritual life. But there are other, more real and
hence powerful dangers to civilisation diversity. What I mean is a creeping unification of culture, often occurring in a manner unnoticeable to us, as a consequence of globalisation. In some instances it is a side effect; in others, it is one desired and expressly pursued by a nation or nations. A way out of this crisis, which seeks to eradicate other cultures, can only be found through joint international efforts that include all civilisations and cultures.

Strictly speaking, that is precisely why a dialogue of cultures and a dialogue of civilisations are necessary – a dialogue that enables us to engage public forces and to draw upon the civic, spiritual, cultural, and humanitarian potential of humanity or different civilisations, peoples, and so on. Such a dialogue should under no circumstance lead to the levelling eradication of diverse cultures of the world. It is a fact that only the highest achievements of a national culture can attain the status of world values. It is not at all surprising that it was precisely the people working in the field of culture who stood up against the excesses of globalism.

We are not going to propose a global alternative to existing mechanisms of world communication; our efforts are designed to expand them and enhance their importance and efficiency. We are not aiming to speak louder than state leaders. But we see that the efforts of public institutions and state diplomacy, unsupported by a dialogue of the international civil society institutions and peoples, sometimes appear helpless and disoriented vis-à-vis these new threats.

We believe that the existing substitution of truly international, intercultural, and human relations with narrow political ones is wrong. In these efforts, we intend to work toward reinstating the upset balance and to tap into new, hitherto inadequately drawn-upon resources.

Such resources undoubtedly exist. Today, a developmental model, which may be called an egotistic and rationalist one, dominates the world. This means that the underlying motivation for decisions and actions at all levels is egotism (personal, group, national, and civilisational), while the key – if not the only – instrument of implementing decisions made is pure rationalism. Under this paradigm, spirituality and morality become harmful constraints to the freedom of unchecked rational decisions. As frequent objects of mockery as ‘fruitless philosophising’, ‘complacency’, and something ‘not of this world’, spirituality and morality have been displaced to spheres isolated from practical life.

The growing material and technical potentialities of mankind should not increase threats and crises but should instead lead to ‘greater happiness’. To this end, it is necessary to recognise that spirituality and morality are not harmful constraints to pure rationalism; rather, they are
important instruments for achieving the sustainable development of man and mankind, an important resource of homo sapiens. An egotistic and rationalist paradigm of development should be complemented by one based upon spiritual and moral values as a prime motive and criterion of any decisions and actions.

We have the right to counter civilisational imperialism and forcible globalisation with civilisational integration — a movement toward a new, jointly created and voluntarily adopted system of values, guidelines, and objectives, serving as the basis not of a disunited world, but of one that is harmonious and certain of its future.

From the rational world to a spiritual one, this is the vector of our movement.

I would like to say at this juncture that a spiritual world is not an alternative to a rational one. We do not place an anathema on the fruits of progress; we regard the spiritual world as a new quality, the next stage in the evolution of human society.

The transition from a rational world to a spiritual one also does not mean a substitution of certain rational values with others. We, champions of the dialogue of civilisations movement, participants in the Rhodes Forum, should continue to reiterate our stance to the world. All ultimatums, juxtapositions, ambitious statements, and uncompromising positions constitute extremism and forcible globalisation; they lead to a dead end, leading toward the death of human civilisation on Earth!

We include in the concept of a New Human Order, in the formula ‘from a rational world to a spiritual one’, the creation of a set and hierarchy of life values and criteria that will mutually enrich and develop.

Our philosophy is the development of a new system of relations and interdependencies of culture and politics, economic benefits, material benefits, and social justice, of a determination and toughness in combating evil, and of making compromises in searching for the conditions of a collective life.

We – scholars and politicians; the clergy; representatives of the public; the cultural, financial, and technical intelligentsia; citizens of Earth – should help our respective governments and ourselves to achieve the highest goals of our efforts. We should help influence the institutions of our states, the businesses, and technical progress developers – these are goals of life, of re-gaining the moral high ground of progress and the future of our grandchildren!
In fact, we are speaking about the development of a new paradigm for mankind’s development, about searching for novel approaches to human society’s development, based on spiritual and cultural components of individuals’ lives and society as a whole.

We act on the premise that today’s world is far from perfect, needs improvement, and may and should be nobler and more humane.

Today, mankind is in a situation that calls for changing the structure and essence of relations that have existed among men and countries over the last centuries. Let us see that, for the first time in the history of civilisation, information is no longer God-sent for each individual.

Based on technological achievements, supported by the proponents of persistent consumerism and rationalism, information has now become a commodity!

Nowadays, knowledge and intellect, achievements in culture and art are sources of economic benefits, but not of intellectual wealth. Attempts have been made to turn humanness, good, and even the right to life into commodities.

Today’s problems are so complex and multifaceted that the efforts of experts in various fields and professions are needed to address them: scholars, thinkers, those in creative vocations, journalists, and the clergy. Only together can we untie this knot, step by step, to move toward cultural, spiritual, and human integration.

We must search for and find solutions. New and constructive ideas are needed.

This, in my opinion, is the calling of the Rhodes Forum. It is envisioned to become a universal international site where ideas are generated, designed to address the global issues of today. Speaking metaphorically, we are being called upon to find a way to establish an equilibrium between the most advanced science and technology achievable by contemporary man and the ‘idyllic green pastures of rural republics’ filled with a lofty humanistic sense about which Mahatma Gandhi dreamed.

In practice, such a combination mandates a fundamental transformation of public awareness of modern symbols and values, of educational systems and incentives, of directions of applying energy resources and all other meaningful manifestations of modern society’s life.
Even a cursory glance enables us to identify promising areas for our search, for our efforts in a dialogue of civilisations:

- technogenic and transgenic threats;
- new opportunities and new challenges in the information age;
- a formula for a modern understanding of the world;
- calamity zones, covering entire regions and even continents;
- and many others.

I am sure that here in Rhodes, these and other issues have become and will continue to be the subject of our scrutiny.

Among them is, without a doubt, the impending threat of the depletion of non-renewable resources, many of which may run out in the foreseeable future. It is becoming increasingly evident that this society of stark materialism and supercharged consumption will sooner or later face resource constraints, and the rational, material, and technogenic world is headed for a deadlock. Even the ‘golden billion’ countries will eventually face a shortage of development resources.

We should also consider that natural resources are unevenly distributed among countries. Evidently, if the system of international law is destroyed (such trends became clearly manifested during the Iraq crisis), this factor may become an incentive for new wars and a fresh ‘division of the world’.

There is likely no need to prove to anyone the extent to which notions such as development and the environment are interconnected. Development – and even more so, sustainable development – is possible only to the extent it is allowed by the environment.

However, this problem has another meaningful aspect. In the course of preparing the Rhodes Forum, our colleagues have raised the issue of ‘vital resources for mankind’. What do they have in mind?

First of all, this means that resources should be subjected to an economic estimate. Fresh air, water, and the entire environment represent kinds of ‘natural assets’. They are present in any commodity, as is the ecological component. But if these assets exist, there should be some return from them. The latter should be a sort of natural or ecological rent or fee that mankind is prepared to pay for preserving the environment. Obviously, the rent should be paid by those countries that excessively and negatively affect the environment of the whole planet. On the other hand, the rent should be received by countries where the environment offsets the anthropogenic effect of their own country and of others.
In this regard, we believe that the rent can be sent under some agreement to those countries trying to overcome their backwardness or to solve problems of the modernisation of excessive exploitation of natural resources.

For example, we can talk about the African continent. A similar mechanism could be applied in Brazil to prevent felling forests of the Amazon River.

Practically speaking, there are two modes of decreasing our vital resources: exhausting fumes into the atmosphere when burning fuel and expanding human activities at the cost of nature.

The Kyoto Protocol marks an attempt to resolve some of the problems pertaining to harmful exhausts into the atmosphere. Such a protocol (or protocols) are necessary for cases of unlimited economic expansion at the cost of nature. This will help to resolve the problem of rampant depletion of natural deposits that are so vital for Russia.

At the same time, in our opinion, the vital resources of humanity are not solely represented by natural resources.

This notion should include not only natural but also economic, financial, and technological elements as inseparable components. This raises the notion of ‘vital human resources’, a comprehensive principle, bringing together all requisite sources of human survival and development. The transnational economic, technological, and information interrelations in the modern world have shown that many countries and cultures produce resources that are vital for all mankind. It is true that they produce and efficiently use the labour force, which can easily be taught some rare professions and later demonstrate creative skills. Some cultures and civilisations can widely reproduce the human intellectual potential for which there is such high demand. Other territories of this planet, and the peoples populating them, are unique in their ways of reproducing and retaining ecologically important resources. As we apply different approaches to assess the value of different resources for the sake of preserving and developing civilisation from a rational position, it becomes clear that the answer cannot be provided by the ideology of a ‘consumer society’.

We support quite a different approach to the problem of fair allocation of vitally important resources of the Earth, pooling the commitments of regions that have natural deposits and technologically backward countries. One cannot live without new technologies (e.g., in medicine) just as one cannot live without fresh water. On the other hand, such a complex understanding of vital human resources will make it possible for mankind to move forward more successfully in search of new sources and resources of human development.
Naturally, this is one of many questions that requires a unique, creative approach that can emerge from the dialogue of civilisations.

The world movement, the ‘Dialogue of Civilizations’, has been developing for a number of years. UNESCO declared 2001 the year of the ‘Dialogue of Civilizations’; in 2002 in Moscow, Chelan, Damascus, and again in Moscow, representative conferences were held under the ‘Dialogue of Civilizations’ framework. A representative meeting on inter-religion dialogue was held, nearly parallel to our forum, on the initiative of Kazakhstan President Norsultan Nazarbaev. The topic is quite urgent. Mankind is seeking an adequate response to the emerging threat. New mechanisms are necessary to effectuate the answers arrived at in practical life.

We believe that our forum may represent a step toward creating such mechanisms. Perhaps we will manage to agree on actions, as a result of which groups will emerge that differ in size, composition, and orientation of their activities. These groups shall be united by their desire to supplement existing state and inter-state mechanisms of rational management by the spiritual–ethical potential of mankind to aspire to goodness and justice. These groups will do their best to make politicians and businessmen abide by their corporative and personal interests when making decisions and by their ethical sense of responsibility. This will be the responsibility of the global capital for a satisfactory solution to social questions in one country and in the whole world. This will be the responsibility of politicians for maintaining peace and appropriate standards of human personality development, not only for the ‘golden billion’ but for all citizens of Earth.

Practically, there are quite a few groups of this kind in the world: ecologists, pacifists, people associated with charities, patrons of the arts, religious communities, and creative unions. Our task is to form a world network coordinating their activities so all of them, and all of us, can understand that we form – or will one day be able to form – a global civil society, united in its aspirations to peace and justice.

It would be best if our conclusions and recommendations could be addressed to international organisations and the governments of different countries. I believe that only in this case can the intellectual elite hope that their efforts will have some practical effect and move us closer to the aim we have in mind.
It is five years today since the World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations” started its work. For the last few years, the Forum’s activity has been aimed at creating an atmosphere of trust in the world based on dialogue generally recognized as a productive way of cooperation among differing civilisations of our common world.

It is beyond any questioning that humankind on Earth constitutes one global community. Every human being, irrespective of origin and cultural orientation, has a certain feeling of belonging to this community, which evidently guides our lives and comes out in our souls and the things we choose to do.

At the same time, we are born into a certain ethno-cultural background, and every individual’s belonging to the united community is formed depending on his or her cultural identification. Ethno-cultural identity, as the factor determining our world outlook, serves to open up the world and people’s values in multiple processes of differentiation and actualizes itself within universal communality by offering its own ideals of human perfection.

On the other hand, it is not infrequent that the very multiformity of ethno-cultural ideals of perfection, together with what everyone knows about their being and how this existence is realized, might cause uncertainty and risk. And there is no lack of evidence to pinpoint: inter-confessional wars, environmental threats, economic systems incompatibility, and so forth.

So, in the light of present-day challenges, there emerges a question: Is it at all possible to retain prospects of sustaining life on Earth for the whole of humankind? The answer is to be found in another logical modality – precisely where the world’s community ought to recognize a pressing need to assume full responsibility for organizing efforts aimed at, at the least, averting humanmade disasters that are forecast as inevitable.
In my opinion, every civilisation is founded on its own values. Nevertheless, we ought to proceed from the assumption that an important part of it is common to all humankind principles of existence.

In the process of self-assertion, a civilisation is concentrated on obtaining self-consciousness in order to be able to declare its will to the outer world.

However, in crucial moments of development, when there arises a necessity to confirm or reform its own hierarchy of values, a civilisation demonstrates its spiritual connection with the world community by sharing fundamental principles in its aspiration to be known, recognized, and included as an equal (inclusion principle) in the global process.

Aimed at revealing and thoroughly renewing civilisational contacts, Dialogue of Civilisations is called upon to show its all-human core by creating new opportunities for universal interplay.

In the meantime, the contemporary state of the world community gives a lot of evidence of inter-cultural tension, which is growing everywhere.

It is noteworthy that this trend, compared to that in previous human history, can be characterised, on the one hand, by rapid growth and the spread of new technologies. Unfortunately, these processes are not always positive, as they are often accompanied by imposing alien socio-economic and cultural standards upon receiving cultures.

On the other hand, the innovation expansion tends to renew chronic conflicts of colonial times, causing new clashes in the most diverse life spheres of the world community. Consequently, analysis of the current situation would require taking into consideration both of the mentioned and apparently connected trends.

Meanwhile, any civilisation running its normal – that is, natural – course of growth finds itself in a process that results in the use and assimilation of the benefits of world development and in achieving prosperity on the basis of other civilisations and peoples’ interaction. The process is certainly accompanied by every specific civilisation’s self-determination, which, in humanitarian terms, actually is the evolution of its identity.

It is clear that civilisations assimilate earthly blessings at their own levels and in their own ways. But, undoubtedly, progress of any civilisation makes a unique contribution to universal development and essential complementarity of these participations, which, in turn, builds up completeness and diversity of the world’s historic scene.

But when a civilisation or culture tries to insist on the exclusive privilege of its achievements and definitions, the fruitful complementarity of development gets broken.
Thus, instead of integration and cooperation, hegemonic globalisation would insist on forcing into practice the supposedly universal achievements and standards of some as the development goals for others.

This concept of globalisation can prolong its existence only through the use of a whole set of coercion methods, from economic and cultural compulsion to direct military intervention aimed at destroying those who resist.

In other words, ‘objects’ of globalizing pressure are made to live on some ‘alien’ basis, complete with its own definitions and laws, that is, in an ‘alien home’ possessing a right to restricted use of ‘public’ property.

Forced, under these conditions, to legitimate alien values, transform its culture, and change its own social and economic structure, a civilisation “drops out” of the natural growth process and ceases to participate in global development. As a result, it actually loses its dignity and, in the end, forfeits the right to sovereign participation in the global dialogue.

At the same time, the initiators of this globalisation mode also suffer losses as they, precisely to the same extent, get off their natural development course. This occurs because, for the sake of a transient result, they get intensely involved in spreading short-term doctrines instead of designing prospects for their own development in the atmosphere of partnerships with others, thereby triggering a stagnation mechanism at home.

Besides, it is common knowledge that in pursuing marginal purposes and values, various minority communities make use of the disarray in international norms. In this way, they succeed in reaching legitimacy and implementation of their special requirements, thereby devaluing principles of international as well as inter-civilisational ties.

Such trends and developments are obviously a main source of the growth of civilisation tension.

To illustrate this point, one can turn to Francis Fukuyama, who argues that the crisis which Western Europe is facing must be related to the problem of identification. Minorities living in Europe, he says, Moslems above all, demand that society provides their identity, which is to be different from that of the other part of society. Fukuyama is also convinced that today there is no one single philosopher seriously working on the problem, let alone making efforts towards obtaining a thorough understanding of the crisis.

For a theory maker and highly experienced political scientist, the statement does look like a remarkable revelation! However, present-day developments in the world show that the global community can no longer wait for the results of academic research; any arbitrary faultless theory can only be verified by successful and demonstrative practice.
It is precisely this practical activity that for the last few years the Rhodes Forum has been involved in, trying through the most effective instrument – which dialogue really is – to place the principles of partnership, neighbourliness, and cooperation at the service of the world community.

We are aware of the fact that the growth of civilisation tension is an objective process. It signals world development problems that have been piling up in connection with the conflicting interplay between cultural identifications and identities.

These conflicts would inevitably and systematically emerge until each and every civilisation is given an opportunity to articulate and offer its own responses to the challenges of the present, and to assert and stand up for its own position.

The normal condition for realizing this right is involvement in the dialogue, which places these wills and desires within a real, rather than virtual or theoretic, space and time needed to advance the natural process of global development.

It is solely through a dialogue, and its content and timeliness, that civilisations gain their own paths of evolution and assimilate the common human substance and benefits of the world culture.

Within this process, each civilisation is able to realize its dignity and a sovereign right to participate in the world’s community orchestra.

Now, taking into consideration the work organization format at the Forum, please allow me to briefly introduce to you the following agenda of the Jubilee session.


If we come to consider the activity prospects of our Forum, then the main strategies should look as follows:

- setting up expert think tanks (associations, networks) that would be involved in defining matters of a clash between one or another civilisation;
- singling out the most important problems of culture, politics, economies, and related spheres that urgently need dialogical expertise;
- engaging in expert evaluation of the interaction among legal, political, and public institutions in the dialogue format;
- working out guidelines and parameters to diversify socio-economic, cultural, and education systems to better prepare them for integrating in order to realize the full potential of world development.

All the questions on the agenda are related to the civilisation approach to harmonizing inter-civilisation development based on the ideals of dignity, fairness, and equitability.

At present, the term “dialogue of civilisations” is frequently used as a “slogan”, a stylish label, by the use of which various structures are trying to reanimate their obsolete ideas and programs. This sort of speculative washing out of the meaning of “dialogue of civilisations” is unacceptable. It is necessary to focus attention on its special features in order to make it possible at the up-to-date level to include in the agenda other specific points, and also to demonstrate the effectiveness of our approach to a variety of international life spheres.
The events that have been unfolding during the past three decades have yet to be thoroughly analysed from a factual point of view to arrive at a scientific assessment. But even today, it seems quite apparent that the world as a whole has entered another, colossal stage of sociopolitical and economic transformation. Actually, this is the conclusion drawn as a result of a decade of work by the World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations”.

Many in the world today have come to realise that the pathos and efforts (at times overly excessive) by those purporting to create a global world with a new economy – with new politics and a new democratic structure of the world community in its Anglo-Saxon vision – have proceeded from the idea that it is possible and even necessary to rapidly implement progressive transformations of human life irrespective of its civilisational context. However, it is not as simple as that. Willingly or not, these initiators have overlooked the human community’s capability to undergo dynamic change in several directions; more than that, it is rooted in historic experience accumulated through unique cultural and religious practices, traditional values, and customs of different civilisations that keep various forms of spiritual and material life intact. We can thus address the fundamentals of historical processes or, to put it another way, the civilisation constants that must not be ignored when speaking about observing basic philosophical laws of ‘unity and conflict of opposites’ and ‘denial of denial’ in the process of constructing a more progressive, democratic, humane, and integrative future.

The tumultuous conditions that characterise the present-day world system reveal a distinguishing feature that political scientists and public dignitaries only began mentioning at the end of the 20th century. Crises in international politics and in the world economy, devastating local and world
wars, and widespread public discontent and catastrophes have occurred in the past; however, they were not accompanied by such a threatening growth of inter-civilisation tension.

Excessive pressure and aggressive penetration by the West into traditional Muslim regions have led to the first political reaction in the world to the destabilisation of inter-civilisation relations, as evidenced by the emergence of the Declaration of the Islamic Symposium held in Teheran in 1999. In that Declaration, representatives of the heads of state and government in the Organization of Islamic Conference called for establishment of a dialogue among civilisations to promote conditions for a more in-depth examination of and solutions to many international problems. The Declaration also mapped out several constructive vectors and problems requiring international discussion to this day.

At the turn of the century, the President of Iran, Mohammad Khatami, stressed the need to launch a new project that could compete with and counteract the ideology of mistrust, enmity, and confrontation among civilisations. This initiative, aimed at promoting dialogue as well as mutual understanding and cooperation among civilisations, was supported by the UN General Assembly, the 53rd session of which proclaimed 2001 the Year of the Dialogue among Civilizations. Within the framework of such a dialogue, President Khatami suggested that “from an ethical perspective, the paradigm of dialogue among civilizations requires that we give up the will for power and instead appeal to the will for empathy and compassion. Without the will for empathy, compassion and understanding there would be no hope for the prevalence of order in our world. We ought to gallantly combat the dearth of compassion and empathy in our world. The ultimate goal of dialogue among civilizations is not dialogue in and of itself, but dialogue towards attaining empathy and compassion” (Khatami, 2001).

Khatami talked about the fundamental principles that should underlie this dialogue: equality and mutual respect among the parties involved, to be expressed in readiness to “listen to” each other, mutual tolerance and good will. In his view, a genuine dialogue is incompatible with such concepts as “subjugation” or “cultural domination”: “In order to provide natural unity and harmony in form and content for global culture and to prevent anarchy and chaos, all the parties concerned should engage in a dialogue in which they can exchange knowledge, experience and understanding in diverse areas of culture and civilization” (Khatami, 2001).

Thus, this project intended to foster a dialogue among civilisations emerged not as an antagonist of the theory of ‘a clash of civilizations’, although it was proposed in polemics with the latter, but as a constructive
model to create a new paradigm in international relations – a paradigm aimed at achieving such goals as ‘overcoming the tragic state of today’s world’; liberating humanity from wars, violence, and exploitation; counteracting moral degradation; and meeting the challenges of environmental disasters.

The Clash of Civilizations by Samuel Huntington spurred widespread public response. His book became a worldwide bestseller at the end of the 20th century. The publication turned out to be an attempt to lay the groundwork and even table a manifesto about the inevitability of a war of civilisations – something along the lines of Hollywood scenarios in motion pictures about wars with aliens from other planets. However, Huntington’s concern about the stability of world civilisation had more serious and deeper roots.

To fully understand this, one has only to look at another study penned by this author. This work deals with challenges to ‘American national identity’ and threats of the degradation of a civilized identity in the US period. Here we are talking about Huntington’s book Who Are We?: The Challenges to America’s National Identity. Huntington (2004) wrote that America is becoming the world... that the world is becoming America... Cosmopolitan? Imperial? Nationalist? He further held that Americans must make their choice – a choice that will shape the destiny of the nation and of the world.

Therefore, it seems evident that the American author and participants in the Islamic symposium have both expressed the same concern about the present state of inter-civilisation relations. A common problem facing the West and the East lies in the following: as we witness growing imbalances in the political and economic spheres after the end of World War II, the community of states has reached a borderline beyond which, if they do not stop in time, there may come the onset of destruction and devastation of the very foundations of the civilized structure of the world. And what lies in store for mankind beyond the existing limits of the civilized world is something we can only speculate about.

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher once metaphorically remarked that civilisation was but a thin skin. The political essence of that statement came to the surface during the Yugoslavia crisis. It was then that ‘the Iron Lady’ promised to ‘bomb’ the obstinate Yugoslavs ‘into the Stone Age’. That threat was promptly carried out. Bombing raids and armed interventions have since become, in Western politicians’ views, a nearly legitimate means of ‘bringing to their senses’ those who do not agree with Western ways of democratising societies and liberalising economies in their countries. Here, indeed, we witnessed the implementation of ‘the rule of binding precedent’ that is so highly valued by Britons. Today, 50 years after the crucial Caribbean crisis, we can once again witness such a turn of events. However,
under present-day conditions, a simple agreement by the leaders of two superpowers to end confrontation is no longer enough; what is needed is a responsible and effective dialogue.

What are the practical principles for organising this interaction as a dialogue? For ten years already, the active practical work by the World Public Forum has been built on the foundation that a dialogue, in itself, is the basic principle for interaction among civilisations and one that paves the way to harmonisation of international relations.

A prime prerequisite aimed at the practical launching of ‘a dialogue of civilisations’ has always been acceptance of a number of conditions that work in tandem to afford the dialogue a civilisational character and corresponding atmosphere. Such conditions are inclusiveness and openness (i.e., being open to and including all participants); respecting the dignity of every and all participants; participants’ responsibility for the civilisation identity they represent; and trust of the stands taken by participants in the dialogue. No less important are conditions of full representation of the civilisation’s stand in the dialogue and, at the same time, the rejection of in absentia assessments of any third stands in the event no consent has been given. It is similarly important to recognise the actual role of nongovernmental structurers of civil society in advancing the ideas of dialogue. Nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) have a historical mission and can bring the dialogue of civilisations paradigm to life while governments (and their official bodies and representatives) can only conduct negotiations, protecting the so-called ‘national interests’ of political elites.

In this sense, the Dialogue of Civilizations has direct bearing on the activity of international NGOs (INGOs):

- INGOs may discuss civilisation foundations with local NGOs within the framework of the dialogue regimen;
- INGOs may speak out against civilisation foundations of communities, and outside the framework of a dialogue with the given communities, they may conduct their activities on the basis of an arbitrary extramural assessment of civilisational nuances of these or those communities.

Recent decades have offered glaring examples of harsh and even brutal clashes in different parts of the world. In 2012, we are witnessing an armed conflict in Syria; disturbances in the Islamic world triggered by the emergence of the film *Innocence of Muslims*; the suppression of Christians in a number of Islamic countries; ongoing pressure that several Western countries are placing on Iran; tension between Sudan and South Sudan; and conflict in
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The clashes have been and are continuing to emerge because, in the life of human communities, there is considerably more natural consecutiveness than we initially thought. To disregard civilisational values deprives us of hope to create a favourable image of the future and to establish just governance in the world community. It is high time that the architects of accelerated global change relinquish their ‘juvenile mediocrity’ and penchant for simplicity if they wish for their objective to fit with the goals of human society.

A civilisational approach to history has been a reality for some 150 years; however, the study of history still proceeds, as a rule, along a linear paradigm inherited from the Renaissance epoch by Hegel and Marx. Civilisation is viewed, in the given case, as a finite concept denoting the whole of mankind in its historical development, a synonym for the concept of ‘culture’. Yet there is another way of interpreting civilisation that is more acceptable in the contemporary civilisational paradigm, where civilisation is viewed as an aggregate of separate plans of historical development that have emerged on a particular national-territorial soil – in this sense, we speak about Greek, Roman, Chinese, Indian, Russian, and other civilisations. It is precisely such an understanding of civilisation that is more in demand today for analysing the peculiarities of the world, which we can label a ‘multi-polar’ world.

The life of the world community and processes of international interaction by no means thrive through some kind of fusion or ‘mixing’ of culture into ‘something national in form and international in content’. Least helpful for the development of the world community is political ‘coercion of understanding and respect’. The interchangeability and substitutability of cultures and civilisations to suit political interests or certain doctrinal ambitions will lead the development of civilisation to a dead end.

B.S. Yerasov, a Russian scholar, has written precisely about the absurdity of conducting civilising activity by coercion under the flag of democracy and liberal economics. “How much simpler are constructs that assert the possibility of ‘changing civilizations’ and ‘becoming a normal society’. How many societies, in history or the world today, would pass this psychiatric test? And what does it take to ‘change civilisations’ ‘extremely rapidly’?!” (Yerasov, 1994, p. 58).

The coherence of world civilisation and the potential for integration, on the contrary, presume that diverse cultures and civilisations will be preserved. First of all, each civilisation must preserve its identity within a furiously changing contemporary world and make its contribution to the common treasure house; otherwise, the word ‘common’ will become meaningless. Second, preserving any identity currently means creating
a certain civilisational infrastructure for interaction and dialogue, which exerts an organising and ordering influence on the interacting civilisations.

To quote Yerasov (1996) again, “It is not the clash of civilizations that threatens world relations, but precisely the weakening of civilisational principles, encouraged by the West, which asserts that [its] system takes priority. This leads to the destruction of civilisational regulators”.

The degree of disparity among models of a decent existence in today’s world, which is undergoing a crisis stemming from simplistic approaches based on economics, is just as high as in the first years following destruction of the system of political confrontation. In a certain sense, from 1917 until the end of the 1980s, there was a dipolar bloc arrangement in which nation-states, like molecules in chaotic motion, were partially oriented under the influence of a field. This was the exact cause of polarisation; in other words, it fairly gently defined the model of international behaviour.

Then, nearly instantaneously, most of the players in international relations were forced to begin to orient their own independent projects of development to comply more strictly with the stringent laws of the world market economy. Some succeeded in this kind of self-sacrifice, whereas others could not. Bipolar coexistence could not be preserved under such tough competition. Only a dialogue could avert such a development of events.

An upsurge of liberal economic foundations in this world system has placed on the agenda the question of long-term strategies to guarantee the preservation of statehood, freedom, and the very survival of the entire system of inter-state and interpersonal relations that have taken shape over millennia. It seems to me that projects with a civilisational grounding have the greatest potential to reach consensus through dialogue, regarding the basis of a more stable and just world order.

One of the consequences of the contemporary world’s geopolitical problems is the rise of processes through which the cultural domain is becoming more archaic and barbaric. Society itself, first and foremost, is subject to becoming archaic through a process of simplification and a declining degree of complexity in its basic formative agencies, transpiring within the context of a growing role for simple, primary types of social relations, mostly ethnic relations.

The core of barbarisation is a process through which peripheral peoples and areas of habitation lose their connection with advanced centres of civilisation. Both at the outset and in the last years of the 20th century, these processes of increasing archaic patterns and barbarism had several dimensions: “the political, through the reestablishment of authoritarian or semi-despotic regimes; the social, through the continued propagation
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and strengthening of local caste and clan structures; and the civilisational, through the destruction of the common spiritual and institutional bases for the integration of a diverse population, and the strengthening of ethnic separatism” (Yerasov, 1996).

It appears that the deeper roots of today’s condition of the world order, which is close to chaos, lie in the initially paradoxical-seeming interconnection and mutual influence of two opposing ideological matrices, which maintained the 20th-century world in a bipolar, tense state of equilibrium. This meant balancing on the brink of conflict, through which the two competing systems nonetheless managed to avoid fatal clashes. The positive side of that balancing act cum competition cum opposition, skilfully regulated by both sides, was several decades of peace along with scientific-technological and sociopolitical progress that brought excellent results (e.g., conquering space, the disarmament programme, and the WMD non-proliferation policy). Another necessary element of this two-pole world order was the so-called ‘Third World’, which marked a true opportunity for modernisation and managed to assert its interests after many centuries of colonial subjugation. However, the interests of the majority of such countries and peoples had practically no protection under the conditions of unipolar globalisation.

The destruction of the world order built by these two competing systems essentially shifted all the world community’s problems into the transit zone of inter-civilisational relations. Within this ‘space’, everything acquires specifically involutorial and regressive valuation characteristics of civilisational identity, namely expressed in the emergence of archaic slogans and appeals to combat ‘axes of evil’, ‘Islamic fundamentalism’, the Iranian nuclear threat, suppression of democracy in Russia, and so forth.

The world cannot stay poised indefinitely in a state of strained equilibrium, fraught with the threat of tension and conflict. The world needs a future with greater certainty and predictability as well as the foundations for long-term relations, based not only on pragmatic interests but also on profound spiritual aspirations.

We are now witnessing the destruction of illusions of the unipolar world before our very eyes. In this situation, it is important for us to understand that a transition to the new realities of a multipolar world will not happen by itself: once illusions are destroyed, the desire to preserve unipolar influence in the world will remain.

It seems to us that a way out of the dead end of the collapsing ‘ideology of globalism’, in addition to preserving the real content of the integrative processes of world development, is to be found, above all, in the primacy of
international law in a polycentric world. The problem of the form in which this will occur can be resolved through dialogue. But it is absolutely obvious that its foundation must finally include acknowledgement of the unique historical and cultural features of various civilisational images throughout the world.

What is especially important today is to foster mutual understanding among peoples in the humanitarian and public spheres. We are witnessing the conclusion of spontaneous globalisation; the outcome of that epoch seems to call into question the conviction that there exist some absolutely universal forms of humanistic values.

If we speak about the concept of ‘democracy’, we see a general tendency toward the formation of democratic regimes that do not much resemble, for example, those in North America. There, the very idea seems to have already passed through a process of total devaluation to become a commodity that can be sold, bought, or rammed into some standard commodification of democracy. If we speak about human rights, it is worth listening to the opinion that the institution of a formal set of civil rights and freedoms at the national level should promote implementation of the conception of human dignity suited to the civilisation in question. In any event, human rights should not suppress or contradict the conception of human dignity upon which a given civilisation is based and which constitutes its human essence.

Yet these different versions do not, in my view, suggest that the world is entering a period of values relativism; they only imply that the world is entering a time of true civilisational diversity. And we ought to recognise this and learn to live in this reality.

In conclusion, I would like to refer to two quotations:

“The United Nations itself was created in the belief that dialogue can triumph over discord, that diversity is a universal virtue, and that the peoples of the world are far more united by common fate than they are divided by their separate identities,” said UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, one of the initiators of the dialogue of civilisations, in 2001. “What history should teach us also is that alongside an infinite diversity of cultures there does exist one global civilization in which humanity’s ideas and beliefs meet and develop peacefully and productively. It is a civilization that must be defined by its tolerance of dissent, its celebration of cultural diversity, its insistence on fundamental, universal human rights, and its belief in the right of people everywhere to have a say in how they are governed. It is a civilization that we are called on to defend and promote as we embark on a new century” (Annan, 2001).
“The standard of international law is not the homogenization of social and economic relations, but the creation of a framework for the existence of multiple social and political experiments. We know that a number of economic and social experiments have been politically discredited or outlawed in the past. We need to create a new order that precisely defines this multiplicity,” said Alfred Gusenbauer, former Federal Chancellor of Austria, in his speech to the Yaroslavl Global Policy Forum on 9 September 2010.

In our view, only a broad public movement can engender practical progress toward the objective of broadening the domain of dialogue and transforming it into an effective international process.

This talk has touched on the basic principles upon which the World Public Forum’s Dialogue of Civilizations relies in its work toward achieving consistent and peaceful intercultural interaction among different nation-states and societies.

If conclusions are to be drawn on the basis of what has been said here, two tendencies are worth noting. In the scientific and political spheres, there seems to have already crystallised an objective understanding about a dominating paradigm in the world today that the ‘post-industrial globalised’ development of the world is limited and has exhausted itself. At the same time, however, the desire to preserve the status quo in favour of the outgoing paradigm presents diverse challenges for the entire world community. Here we are talking about a tendency to slowly replace the given paradigm by forces in the West and, first of all, by the U.S. with a paradigm of ‘total domination’ in the newly formatted world ‘armament protected consumerism’ (as defined by Jagdish Kapur).

Today’s multipolar world has largely been shaped by two basic theories: the clash of civilisations and the dialogue of civilisations. Moreover, the financial and economic crisis was precipitated primarily by a crisis of a certain social type of organisation and of the liberal model of economic growth; this crisis has since triggered global transformations in all areas of civilisation, society, and mankind. From our perspective, it is the optics and tool chest of the Dialogue of Civilizations – as they have been created and developed over the past ten years – that make it possible to diagnose inclusive societies correctly together and to chart pathways to possible scenarios for their development.
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From the moment it came into being, the World Public Forum (WPF) took a stand of supporting and upholding a contemporary, pluralistic vision of the world. The WPF strongly called for the natural development of the multitude of civilisations formed on the basis of the mutual supplementation of diverse but responsible approaches that could lead to a viable coexistence of different nations and peoples. The WPF left no stone unturned in terms of upgrading methodologies and practical means to promote a dialogue among civilisations. It is precisely such a stand that can bring us closer to understanding not an engaged, not an ideologised, but an all-inclusive ‘picture of the world’ without which, in our opinion, further advancement of humankind will be nearly impossible.

The assumption that a clash of civilisations was inevitable was tabled during discussions about the development of the world community at the end of the 20th century. During the past 25 years, this assumption has been emphasised and magnified by its powerful backers into a ‘no-other-alternative’ idea concerning a clash among civilisations. This idea about a conflict between different cultures, ethnic groups, and nations within the geopolitical arena is being played up by such backers as the absolute truth, as the foremost determining factor behind the global transformations taking place in the world today. However, I must note with a sense of regret that the political system in the West is wielding a declining potential for conflicts and armed confrontations in various regions as a pretext for developing its own peace-making initiatives and roadmaps with respect to states and civilisations, proceeding from the principles and tasks of ensuring its own military and economic supremacy. This holds true in terms of intensifying armed conflicts in hot spots around the globe – in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, countries of Latin America, and now, Eastern Europe. This also holds
true vis-à-vis all peoples and leaders that do not ‘fit into’ the American-centric, ‘strong-muscle’ model of the world. In real politics, NATO-member countries tend to lean towards using the presumed inevitability of conflicts prompted by religious, ethnic, and national ‘fault lines’ as a direct pretext for armed intervention in critically-important-to-them regions of the planet – all of which point to an obvious failure of such policy. In any case, this is one such policy that we understand as ‘an art of permitting’, not waging outright war.

Huntington’s theory, which so strongly shook the world community, was actually based on drawing a parallel between ‘civilisations’ and ‘cultural identities’ in different regions of the world. Huntington described interaction between civilisations as emerging because of differences in cultural identities and political contradictions that ultimately brought about military–political conflicts. Huntington’s thesis was immediately and unconditionally picked up by most of the political elite in ‘the triumphant West’. This theory was actively cited in discussions about the world’s development at the end of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st century, although the author himself had never asserted that all existing forms of interaction among civilisations in the world arena could be described only via ensuing conflicts. His ultimate objective was the following: with the help of an academically informed theory, to inspire discussion to formulate and adopt such political decisions that would, to a large extent, account for the significance and importance of state and other institutions of interaction or cooperation.

However, in interpretations of ‘the clash of civilisations’ that have already passed through the ideological ‘meat-grinder’, we can see that the West’s usurpation of the moral–political content of present-day international relations has transformed into outright militarism. Several Western experts, such as Lee Harris, an American author, presumed that the West, in general, was the fullest manifestation of civilisation as such than any of the other civilisations. Therefore, in light of such a deliberate over-exaggeration throughout history, it was precisely the West that became the target of attacks by barbarians. Moreover, the nature of barbarianism is such that it does not recognise rational causes: terror and terrorism have no political goals or objectives, only if we do not count killing for the sake of it. It turned out that the enemies of the West were not some historical-political category but ‘a gang of merciless people’ who had embarked upon ‘a bloody and merciless cycle of violence and wars’ back through the dawn of history. In this context, the civilisational mission of the West was to fight these enemies and to crush them.
The logic of that interpretation of inter-civilisational interaction fell within the framework of supporting peace-making initiatives intended to reduce violence, whereas ‘the clash of civilisations’ was viewed as a process that transformed all parties involved. These transformations prompted the need to impose priority guidelines on a global level to establish dominance over barbarians. For example, within the inter-civilisational space of interaction between the individual, society, and state, we have witnessed the consolidation of such values as tolerance, individual freedom, governance based on consensus, and rational cooperation – values that form the nucleus of contemporary Western civilisation.

In the ideological discourse about methods and mechanisms of interaction among civilisations, this nucleus of values remains unchanged – civilisations are defined as cultural monoliths or entities. However, if doubt is cast upon the basic values of Western civilisation, then this is done exclusively for the purpose of restoring unanimity in their interpretations; that is, to implement cultural-political unification so as to suppress the entire variety of cultural, historical, and religious experiences of the world’s civilisations. This explains the enmity of the West towards everything defined as a culturally, civilisationally different way of thinking. What is more, the ideology of multiculturalism that has flopped in Europe, with its figuratively primitive linear model of interaction among cultures, still presupposes that newcomers will swiftly adapt themselves to European values and Europeans, in turn, will adopt the lifestyles they need. It is our firm conviction that linear ‘multiculturalism’ not only fails to strengthen European culture as an entity but also becomes an instrument for transferring ‘the clash of civilisations’ into Western civilisation, which may lead to its self-destruction.

It was certainly no coincidence that thoughts and ideas about a possible dialogue among civilisations in a geopolitical platform first appeared in the East. Western civilisation seemed to have excluded other civilisations that possess another nucleus of values from the platform of adopting responsible geopolitical decisions. The two-in-one task for ‘the dialogue of civilisations’, which WPF supported and developed, was aimed at the following: on one hand, to determine and define the civilisational code and vector of development of each civilisation; and on the other, to identify basic civilisational trends and predominant tendencies in global development while emphasising the equality of sides calling for inter-civilisational cooperation and finding common approaches to resolving global and trans-civilisation problems. In the latter case, we are talking about changes typical to all local civilisations, each of which possesses adaptive peculiarities that ensure protection of their identities and mechanisms of heritage continuity.
Here, the WPF had in mind not only positive changes (i.e., transformations connected to uncovering the civilisation potential of different peoples and cultures) but destructive processes as well. In the ranks of destructive processes, it is possible to single out factors either weakening a civilisation’s identity or having a conflicting nature, thus leading to inter-civilisation clashes along with factors giving rise to inter-confessional strife. It is now more timely than ever to identify conflict-generating factors; we are increasingly witnessing how centuries-old civilisation differences are being used to attain goals unrelated to the destinies of peoples and civilisational peculiarities but that have direct bearing on the redistribution of resources and the struggle to gain world markets.

It is important to consider the civilisational nuances of individual countries as well as global trends common to all civilisations. This also pertains to efforts for their coordination and harmonisation, which allow for estimation of the political, economic, and social risks and threats emanating from uncoordinated global mega-trends for development and local vectors in national strategies. What is even more important is making use of the national approach to strategic planning – in both the medium and long term – because every political decision has its own value. Therefore, it is essential that any decision, even the most significant and fateful, does not damage civilisational diversification and inter-civilisational concord.

The objectives and means of a dialogue of civilisations extend far beyond the framework of scientific and research interests. This is because maintaining peace among countries and peoples depends on how efficiently and precisely the work of mechanisms is geared towards establishing mutual understanding and promoting a trustworthy atmosphere among parties in dialogue – be they inter-state institutions, nongovernmental organisations, transnational corporations, or individuals. The conditions of an open, mutually respectful, and equitable dialogue are chief factors determining the efficacy of cooperation and partnership among civilisations. The conflict of interpretations is related to transforming the assumption of a conflict as the driving force behind world transformations into an idea of a no-alternative clash, becoming a kind of handbook for the world powers regarding how to behave in the world arena. It must not hinder the creative peace-making work in international politics – all the more so since, even without that, this platform resembles a minefield: on the geopolitical world map, we have witnessed time and again that the leading role is played not by opposing interpretations but by conflicting interests among major political players.
As a result of transforming an incorrectly understood idea about ‘a clash of civilisations’ into practical strategies for shaping foreign policy at the state level, the Western world – and first of all, the US – is being steered to achieve the objectives of global financial oligarchs and has recently precipitated a global destabilisation of the situation in the Islamic world. The optics of a dialogue of civilisations enable us to see not a civilisational fault line passing through the counties of the western area of the Middle East and North Africa, but instead an artificially created conflict that has been foisted upon one of the most important world regions by another civilisation. This is nothing but a persistent and aggressive implantation of a model of subservience to a singular ‘nucleus of values’ upon those civilisations that differ in principle from the West. Yet, if the classical geopolitical schools try to single out any responsible subjects striving to uphold their civilisation identities in this region, then the processes unfolding in the Islamic world can be explained by existing theories. This is a global post-modern situation in which the interests of might, power, and influence in the international arena are beginning to determine the world agenda and dictate conditions for establishing a singular platform of values for all states and civilisations. Armed conflicts in Iraq and Libya, along with the sharp and impulsive growth of activities by terrorist organisations such as ISIL, are not the result of a natural historic processes; they are an artificial modelling of well-rehearsed action following the implementation of aggressive geopolitical projects according to clear-cut orders and objectives.

If our Forum’s hypothesis about the transformation of interests of the global financial elite is accepted into the practical policy of states on a global geopolitical platform, then – in the absence of adequate mechanisms for promoting dialogue between all interested parties – the current no-alternative hegemonic path of development for the world community can only lead to a global catastrophe. More than five years ago, Professor Immanuel Wallerstein addressed a Rhodes Forum session and compared the chaos of armed conflicts and the international mood in economics and ecology to a blizzard on a glacier, effectively depicting mankind as a traveller in a major snowstorm. “Tread very cautiously, check each step that is taken – for we may fall into an unexpected crevice,” the American sociologist advised. Today we can see all the crevices and destruction foisted upon the world community. What shall we do in such a situation after this global chaos? And are we so sure that this is not just another lull before even more catastrophic destruction?
From the world’s point of view after global chaos, post-modernism, which the West has framed as an alternative to ‘a clash of civilisations’, is an obvious loser to the paradigm of mutual cooperation among civilisations that considers myriad values forming a foundation for building countries that adhere to the norms of Islam, Orthodoxy, Buddhism, Judaism, and Confucian philosophy. It is understandable why, in spite of its power, the West has been unable (or has not wanted) to do away with terrorist organisations such as the Taliban or ISIL. The actions of terrorist organisations fit into the shortcomings of the security architectures built in the West many decades ago. If the Taliban began to publicly demolish world heritage artefacts, then ISIL is only repeating these actions today. But what is most unexpected is that these developments fully correspond to the post-modernist project; they merely reproduce the same system of describing and understanding the global statistical reality. From this perspective, the strategy of war that demoliishes valuable and actual foundations of local cultures and civilisations has demonstrated its efficacy in implementing the West’s aggressive policy towards the East.

However, within a senseless vacuum, such a policy boomerangs against its creators, bringing back to them their own fruits: systemic destruction of the values that ground their cultures, traditions, and religions. Having launched its new intervention on the basis of an idea, the West now sees its own destructive social technologies in a back-lash from the East. And herein lies the root cause of the ensuing global disorder and chaos: the world has found itself in an unnatural situation where a war is being waged against everyone and in which only the more cynical are surviving, but in reality, they are random actors in the world process.

At the second Rhodes Forum held more than ten years ago, we warned that in the history of international relations, epochs of uncertainty were always accompanied by growing tension, use of force in arriving at decisions, and resorting to destructive political strategies. We were viewed as idealists in those times when uncertainty triggered amazement and hope to bring clarity to the new features of impending world transformations. However, the world was changing, and the Forum changed along with it. Today, we can speak of the future with confidence because after global chaos, faced with a rampaged picture of the world, we can clearly see how globalisation, under the aegis of a single world power, poses a real threat to the existence of a multitude of peoples with their own original cultures. All this has given rise to strong opposition as a post-modernistic type, as a general movement of left-wing, right-wing, and nationalist forces. Within this movement lies the possibility of rallying the world’s forces to unite
their efforts in economy, sociology, medicine, engineering, and technology to offer a worthy response to the challenges of our times and to pursue a more just and humane world order.

In such circumstances, what can and must be done by a public forum? What can be the role of esteemed scientific experts and various public communities in light of such obvious mistakes by the founders and practitioners of globalisation affecting the world systems that create scientific disciplines and even threaten the very idea of a civilised world? As a modest international nongovernmental organisation, how should we react to the negative consequences of mass migration that form the basis of a new model of a global world as an economic requirement for each one of us and for our children?

The WPF ‘Dialogue of Civilizations’ tabled answers to these questions in its first Rhodes Declaration, pointing out that “...understanding of short and medium term objectives of world development would require a search for new cognition models needed to find an adequate response by different civilisations to the challenges of the time. The essence of this response is in defending the human freedom to develop within the frame of their own culture and territory, their own resources and needs. An innovative civilisational project, which embraces all aspects of material, cultural, and spiritual growth is required.”

The WPF can remain a worthy and generally acknowledged platform for the free and democratic presentation of our critical opinions on formation of a global world order to propose local initiatives aimed at ‘fixing’ world systems, the sudden destruction of which threatens to plunge us into the chaos of a new world war.

We may continue to publish our books – and here, I would say many books have been published. We may even backdate our authorship of long-term forecasts concerning errors in neoliberal approaches to all aspects of human life – errors that were clear to us when we were founding our intellectual-public movement.

The leadership of the Forum proposes another way. As always, this proposal is accessible to us and has largely been extended thanks to our efforts in drafting ‘a civilisation map of the world’. I shall cite but one example to support my thesis regarding the depth and seriousness of such an approach under current conditions. As Peter Katzenstein pointed out at the 6th Beijing Forum in 2009: “the internal pluralism of civilizations is reinforced by the larger context in which they are embedded. That context is not the international state system or international markets, frequently deployed concepts that suffer from excessive sparseness and abstraction.
It is instead a global ecumene – a concept that describes a universal system of knowledge and practices. This global ecumene expresses not a common standard, but a loose sense of shared values entailing often contradictory notions of diversity in a common humanity. This loose sense of shared values centers on the material and psychological well-being of all humans. ‘Well-being’ and the rights of all ‘humans’ are no longer the prerogative or product of any one civilization or constellation of civilizations or political structures or ideologies. Instead, technology serving human wellbeing and norms of human rights are processes that have taken on a life of their own and provide the script for all civilizations” (Katzenstein, 2013).

By supporting this manner of thinking, we propose to create, on the basis of the discussion platform of the WPF ‘Dialogue of Civilisations’, a new world think-tank. The task of such a think-tank will be to elaborate a proposal and then to test a specific pilot project to promote unified world (regional) development – a project that does not destroy the civilisational foundations of the peoples of the Earth and the existing more-than-unfair system of redistribution of the gross world product; a project that ensures a new economic system without wars or unilateral domination; a project that can check global oligarchs’ barbaric exploitation of the advantages of international development in the interest of preserving and funnelling their revenues by forming ‘supra-national’ special conditions and guarantees for themselves.

The Wall Street Consensus cannot continue the forward development of human civilisation or ensure long-term guarantees for the existence of the human race; with strange stubbornness, it is leading the world towards protracted, if not endless, regional conflicts as one of the ‘new realities’. The WPF can counter all this via a profound study of current and prospective regional and world processes. The new think-tank, by leveraging 15 years’ experience, can join the small number of organisations that have realised the dead-end nature of the current model of globalisation and are now devising scientific–practical foundations to propose another way: the way of development rather than a statistical assessment based in GDP growth parameters or on some other singly chosen parameter. To a certain extent, we have already made some progress in this direction. While working on the philosophical and economic basis of the Trans-Eurasian Belt of Development Project for many years, we leaned heavily on ‘the dialogue of civilisations’ as the basic and natural process of world development. A similar project involving this type of development is the new ‘Silk Road’ as well as projects of trans-African railroads and those developing social spheres, science, and education in Latin America.
The contemporary concept of stable development recently proclaimed at the United Nations can be implemented only by determining initial conditions for such development; its specific economic and social achievements in the fight against poverty, disease, ignorance, and resource shortages for entire nations and continents; and the material and other resources necessary for all of humankind. By coming to such a conclusion, we have moved forward from our ‘civilisation map of the world’ as the most adequate reflection of a present-day intellectual structure that can practically correspond with the logic of a responsible pragmatic utilisation of the potential for development over much of the Earth’s mainland.

On the basis of this methodology, we must establish a Scientific-Analytical Research Centre; we must develop the network structure of the WPF itself. It is necessary to involve all forces of civil societies in comprehending the present-day picture of the world, in all its tectonic and extreme risks, to find a peaceful way out of dead-end inter-civilisational development.

We must erect a barrier to inculcating in the public’s mind various images of ‘the Enemy’ and universal ‘Evil’, maliciously attributed to Abrahamic religions, and especially Islam.

I would like to conclude my presentation with the words of the ancient philosopher Lucretius, who said, “Man is mortal, but mankind is immortal.” Only in comprehending the objective commonness of the diversity of civilisations and their equality in the face of time can we identify an alternative to destruction and catastrophe.

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For the last few years, there have been a number of ‘dialogues of civilisations’ in which people from many cultures, countries, and continents were represented. But no concrete ideas or understandings emerged, as there was only a vague notion of the need to harmonise diverse cultures and religious traditions; neither the objectives to be realised nor the pathways by which to approach them were clearly defined.

Culture

Culture is the dynamic aspect of human society, representing mental, intellectual, and spiritual attainments and their outer expressions in aesthetic forms, rituals, social behaviour, and complex thoughts through symbols. This is a process of personality development, a dimension beyond nature, out of which emerges ethics, morality, and spiritual life. This is a type of software with which civilisational forms can be constructed. This marks the beginning stage of civilisation, and when it becomes frozen into civilisation, this heralds the start of its decline.

All development from the beginning of the 16th century onward was the product of cross-fertilisation of the European mind with Greco–Roman culture. Greek thought entered Europe and gave it a new vision of humanism and secularism. This brought the Renaissance. Long before, similar cross-fertilisation of cultures and religious traditions transpired in Asia; a harmonious interaction and integration of cultures occurred between India, China, and southeast Asia. Great monuments, temples, and aesthetic expressions of these are spread over much of the Asian landmass.
Civilisation

Civilisation represents the crystallisation, on a larger scale, of the preceding culture’s deepest and greatest thoughts – an advanced stage or system of human social development; an organic succession from culture; a lifestyle derived from petrified stock forms created by the parent culture. It is essentially uncreative, culturally but in style, efficient in its mass organisation, spreading over a large surface of the globe before finally ending in a universal state under Caesarian rule. Many cultures of Asia, the Turkish Sultans, and Rome's Caesarian culture developed as civilisations. And in time, they passed into history.

Conquests and colonialism exploited other nations and cultures. Now, to bring other societies into a consumerist orbit via exploitative economic globalisation, the unipolar system is systematically attempting to pulverise religious, philosophic, aesthetic, and scientific structures of other societies. They are thus disrupting their social evolution, sparked by their own psyche, cultural resources, economic needs, and compulsions – hence the emergence of a more orderly and harmonious civilisation of their own. Yet the reculturation of other societies into a consumerist mode has become a planned but unstated objective of globalisation whose ultimate objective is to pool people from diverse cultures under a single civilisational model.

A dialogue of civilisations

Thus, a ‘dialogue of civilisations’ in reality is transformed into a dialogue for universal acceptance of the ‘consumerist paradigm’ – a monotheistic glorification of power and pelf and the negation of pluralistic prerequisites for a dialogue. In this process, culture and civilisation become interchangeable because all cultures are expected to graduate to the same civilisation.

Our dialogue must therefore be unfettered by the constraints of a global paradigm for a single civilisational model and should instead be in the spirit of a humane order. It should be free from the limitations imposed by market forces and outside the fear of visible brutality by those who do not believe in a dialogue.

During the colonial period, denigration of indigenous cultures and reculturation of the colonies was part of the colonial powers’ armour. A similar process of falsification of self-evident truths and the use of controlled media and diverse rating agencies are now being employed to promote exploitative globalisation with all its consequences of vast economic disparities.
The loss of national sovereignty and ethnic, religious, and cultural identities is playing a highly disintegrative role in many cultures and nations.

A dialogue structured on the convergence of diverse and often mutually diverging cultures cannot inspire new visions out of the quagmire of a consumerist culture under the protective umbrella of weapons of mass destruction. The visionaries of civilisational conflicts expressed this in terms of ‘the West versus the rest’. And the West has been redefined as Anglo-American oligarchies and their fundamentalist support system along with some client states. The illusion is that through a process of rapid reculturation, highly diverse cultures will converge into a single civilisational form built on American style democracy, human rights, and a consumerist culture and entertainment. Now this role model is seriously bruised by the consequences of a consumerist culture based on economic policies.

Modernisation of the world system does not herald Westernisation or, more aptly, Americanisation of the sociocultural institution everywhere. But to avoid the imposition of this possibility while ensuring development, it seems imperative for different cultures and religious traditions to relate to the shifting idiom of new sciences and then forge sustainable linkages of deep interconnectivity between science, spirituality, and social phenomena.

Racial discrimination and religious intolerance are ripping apart stable societies. The events of 9/11 have further aggravated these trends, which have become a pretext for fighting terrorism. Even intra-religious disputes are being instigated to serve power-enhancement objectives. A dialogue can gainfully explore the real reasons behind aggregating conflicts. The genesis of these conflicts may well provide deep insights into the complexities of the present world’s environment.

Another issue that has become significant is the sovereignty of nations in a globalising world. The unipolar powers have assumed the divine right to intervene with preemptive strikes on any nation which, in their opinion, challenges or threatens their economy or security. This has introduced another dimension to the entire issue of sovereignty as the will of one power or the other.

Culture has deep spiritual underpinnings and in many ways reflects the personality of peoples and nations. The convergence of diverse cultures into a single consumerist civilisation, which has materialised out of entirely different social cultural and techno-economic parameters, will be an attack on the sovereignty of nations and lead to an erosion of their national and cultural identity. ‘Vasudev Kutumbakam’, or ‘the world is a family’, was the vision projected by the sages of India millennia ago. This vision included
all bio, animal, and human life as an ecological affirmation. But pressures for globalisation around a consumerist paradigm and its consequences have rendered it paramount to explore new possibilities for human social arrangements – and these must be innovated through a mutual understanding amongst diverse cultures.

Cross-cultural influence in history harmonised diversity to create a new synthesis. Mahayana Buddhism from India brought peaceful integration with Chinese culture. Persian literature had a profound influence on Islam. The influence of Greek philosophy and Christian theology sparked the Renaissance in Europe; similar interactions between Indian and Chinese culture brought about a cultural synthesis in Indo-China.

Neither culturally nor in terms of resources and ecology can consumerism in its present form be viable in most Asian and African countries. Yet with the belief that the drifting consumerist paradigm can be re-energised, these developing countries are being forced into its orbit through globalisation. The conflict of civilisations is being employed as a search for faultlines in cultures to engineer racial, ethnic, and religious conflicts and to extend control and domination to further the politico-economic objectives of the unipolar system. The need for diverse cultures to seek pathways to their own civilisational potential are being checkmated. And an exploitative market economy, with all its implications, is being enforced through economic pressures and threats of violence.

The need for a dialogue presupposes the presence of diverse cultures and recognises their equality and distinction. But from our past experience, it would appear that all dialogues are directed into the frame of a single civilisational model en route to a consumerist paradigm of the marketplace – a market that is, in organisational, financial, and weapons terms, completely dominated by the unipolar system. It is only through an appreciation for and deeper understanding of other cultures and via reciprocal relationships that a fruitful dialogue can effectively contribute to the advancement of each culture so as to awaken, encourage, and inspire another. Market forces have thus far remained totally insensitive to other cultures because of an unstated intention of prosleytisation, which has stunted the growth of a culture of peace and harmony.

We must therefore reflect on the potential for creating an environment in which all cultures can seek their own civilisational social arrangement. From there, each culture can contribute to the greater good of the human family and collectively search for new values – for freedom, justice, compassion, and human rights and duties toward a humane order. A genuine dialogue is indispensable for intercultural communication and humane formulation.
as well as to integrate political rights with social, economic, cultural, and community rights. Limitless consumerism and waste, coupled with extreme forms of deprivation, generate different perceptions of human rights, responsibilities, and duties. Only through the understanding and balancing of this reality can a cross-cultural dialogue be meaningful.

The basic human quest

A humane system of development cannot evolve without an understanding of the basic human quest or an understanding of the meaning and purpose of life. While the quest can differ from one community, ethnic group, or nation to another, most of these quests are legitimate in their own context, environment, and psychic state to deliberate their own paths toward realisation. Whether such a reality is characterised by the attainment of wealth or power, aesthetic excellence, supramental achievement, or spiritual realisation, for each path there are ethical and moral constraints and value structures, both individual and societal.

The acquisition or enhancement of wealth and power is conditioned by its own limitations and negations in terms of resources, ecology, and the surrounding cultural and psychic state. What we are witnessing around us are the consequences of excessive human greed and lust for power along with containment of the human quest within a consumerist or power mold. This in turn curbs all ethical and moral constraints, making the process autonomous. Therefore, the issue before us is how to create a value structure that would link the greatest advances (e.g., in the physical and biological sciences) with spirituality to overcome the intervening ghost of wealth and violence. In surmounting these limitations and structuring a stable system, we must return to certain fundamental truths of the cosmic reality, namely its unbroken continuity and orderliness.

This path of upward mobility of human consciousness, toward a limitless human potential, cannot be made a hostage to any interests. The basic understanding and constraint is that limited material cannot be made unlimited, just as unlimited potential for the expansion of the human psyche and consciousness cannot be constrained. A reversal of this understanding of the cosmic reality is always destructive in its consequences. As has been historically proven, all materially overextended and spiritually dwarfed systems implode under their own contradictions.
In reflecting on any stable and humane system, with the capacity to ceaselessly transform itself under the shifting idiom of scientific knowledge and levels of supramental and spiritual realisation, we must reconnect with some fundamentals of the cosmic reality.

Our planet Earth as a part of the cosmic reality

In our ever-expanding cosmic universe, planet Earth is in perpetual, cyclical movement within the solar system.

Most of us recognise that we belong to a larger cosmic reality, but we are not mindful of this in our actions on our planet. As a reminder, we are a part of the cosmic universe – an infinitesimally small part. But amidst the conduct of human affairs, we always forget this reality. And this is just to remind you of such forgetfulness and its consequences.

This unalterable movement follows eternal laws that govern the cosmic reality and cover the entire cycle of life – all physical and biological on this planet. The climate follows the same inescapable rhythm, without which all life will come to an end. And in this vast theatre of life, every creative and positive action at the physical level also comes under a negative balancing force. Every energy transformation or change of form, whether material or physical, expansion or contraction, is subject to entropy or loss of ability to perform useful work.

In practical terms, while the size of the Earth is constant, its cyclical movement within the solar system (and all physical and biological processes and changes on its surface) are governed by eternal laws and operate within cosmic orderliness. These self-regulating physical forces oscillate between the positive and negative and seek their own balance. The larger the oscillations, the greater the neutralisation and loss of ability to perform useful work and the lesser the order within the human system – a condition similar to our present state. But the spiritual can reach out for the infinite, as the spiritual and the supramental are free from these cyclical processes and have unlimited potential for expansion to relate to the consciousness level of the ever-expanding universe.

History deals with the irreversible dimension of time. Physical science and mathematical laws deal with space and the domain of the inorganic and lifeless. Scientists delve into space to understand nature outside of man and the outer world of nature. Philosophers ponder the mysteries of time and history.
The linear movements of time and history on our planet are superimposed on the perpetual movement of unalterable cyclical processes which, within the cosmic system, govern all life – physical, biological, and ecological – as a synthesis of the cyclical and linear interpretations of history. Historical processes move along linearly or in a spiral. We may emphasise the cyclical or linear aspect of evolution at one time, while at another the linear may simply spin off into nothingness in history, leaving the residual, positive, and spiritual to support upward movement in the spiral. Time is not repetitive, and spiralic repetition never takes place. Increment and expansion occur at every turn – eternal return as well as eternal expansion and growth.

These momentary events (in terms of the cosmic continuity of time and history) are governed in the same way as genes, conditioning humans, animals, and biology. Similarly, societies, nations, and power structures cannot escape their own cyclical rhythm, which governs their life cycle. The closer the cycle is to the cosmic rhythm, the longer the life cycle and the capacity to expand; the farther the cycle shifts from the cosmic rhythm, the wider the negative oscillations and the more rapid the breakdown. The Roman and other empires developed their own gene structures and could not escape decline.

Some of these empires passed into history as negative and destructive forces and as victims of physical and social entropy, unsung. Others were left behind in the treasure house of the human spirit and psyche – powerful, supramental, spiritual, and aesthetic, residual forces on the spiral that inspired and brightened pathways of the coming generations. Greece is one such example for its contribution to the Enlightenment and Renaissance in Europe. And this linear movement of time and history spirals or aggregates from time to time into great social experiments.

The cyclical wheel of historical evolution has operated on the path with unfailing regularity. The rhythm is essentially biological in that great human societies develop like spiritual organisms in their own rights and die when the souls depart.

Hegel expressed our linkages with the cosmos that condition all life on our planet and comprise a part of that cyclical rhythm, saying, “The changes that take place in nature exhibit only a perceptually self–repeating cycle. Only in those changes that take place in the region does anything new arise. The true significance of history is linear not in cyclic repetition. From time to time it superimposes on the cyclical condition of our future. And for this supramental conditioning, spiritual larger human conditioning is necessary. We cannot escape the cyclical rhythm, by imposing responsible
and humane conditioning. We can transform the basic structure of linear
definition.” We must interrelate the vibrant culture of Asia with the
good and necessary feature of technological civilisation, or we shall find
ourselves in a rapid decline through its excesses.

Linearities of history (i.e., time) act on the cyclical universality of the
phenomena (human and biological) that exist in a positive or negative
manner and thus help to maintain balance; the aggregate of the two becomes
part of the cyclical process. The movement of the spiral has been upward
throughout millenia. The overbearing negative aberrations of history’s
linearability can be spun off into oblivion or drawn into the cyclical orbit
because the material has limited potential for expansion. But consciousness
can be absorbed in the infinite consciousness of the ever-expanding
universe, becoming part of the spiral’s upward movement.

The market forces on our planet are intervening in nature’s cyclicity
at the level of our basic life support system – air, water, food, climate, and
the biological reproductive systems of plants, animals, and humans. Most
dangerous amongst these is the disruption of the climatic cycle, including
the deforestation of rainforests and other forests. Large-scale air and water
pollution, coupled with the generation of carbon and other pollutants that
disturb heat balances in climatic cyclicity, bring flooding, drought, heat
waves, forest fires, and cyclones. Transforming nature-evolved qualities of
genetically modified foods, and especially altering the reproductive properties
of seeds for profit, can have long-term consequences for bio systems and
humans. The consumption of such foods, at the basic energy building-block
level of natural systems, can have many unintended consequences over time,
including interfering with the human reproductive system.

‘Human cloning’, under the pretext of alleviating human suffering, may
become a device to design humans who will unquestingly accept their roles
in society as consumers and obediently abide by the definition and logic of
the marketplace to serve the interests of its beneficiaries.

We must therefore give back to creative individuals the freedom, dignity,
and functions to look beyond the interests that consumer society has usurped
for profit. This way, episodic events will not be transformed or escalate into
the ultimate tragedy.

When all the parameters of materiality, philosophy, culture, and
spirituality interact harmoniously in a social organism – and when
materiality is conditioned by the needs, resources, and priorities within
a cultural frame – the linear movement of time and history has limited
oscillation and the systems have a long life span because they do not disturb
cyclic processes and are in harmony with nature.
High-consumption societies represent the final stages of a consumer society, where the restraining and qualitative elements of culture and spirituality have been marginalised, have little interaction, and are out of sync with consumerist development. This result evokes wide oscillations within the system. Due to rapid change, interventions into the cyclicity of natural processes bring consequences related to the climate, social conflict, and unrest because of a wide income differential. Above all, the breakdown of ethical and moral order and moronisation of the population are used to ensure humans’ acceptance of accelerated consumption. All these and many other considerations of violence within the system have brought about widening, erratic, and uncontrolled oscillations aggregating negative forces with a potential for a breakdown.

There are different types of systems: a developed system with adequate but receding interaction with the restraining influences of culture and spirituality, often subjected to wide oscillations due to interventions or influences from larger systems; and developing systems with latent but strong cultural influences, low-level economies, and wide oscillations due to outside influence or intervention.

Oscillations in a developing system are basically uniform but disrupted by external interventions from globalisation processes that occur from time to time under the protective cover of a life support system, such as that offered by the World Bank, I.M.F, and financial agencies of the unipolar power system on a rampage.

Thus, oscillations emerging from different world systems and countries do not synchronise or harmonise and are in fact neutralising positive forces, thus either pulling the world’s financial and production system downward or evoking large-scale violence, terrorism, and unrest.

In other intermediate systems and timeframes, the situation would rest between these two extremes.

Hence, there is neutralisation of positive and wide oscillations of the international system to the point of breakdown along with broad oscillations due to influences or disorder transmitted from larger systems.

There are many disruptions due to variations in commodity prices, instigated conflicts for regime change, or the control of natural resources by larger powers.

As we can see, millions of these cycles are at work within our cosmic universe. And these are all an expression of the need for orderliness on our planet Earth. This process has existed from the beginning of the universe and will continue long after we have lived through a million lives. Some countries have chosen to disconnect our planet from that rhythm of life.
and set our lives on a path where the external is more important than the internal. In fact, they have not only begun to deny this within their own system but are also persuading others to believe that this alone is the truth. They have thus set in motion disintegrative forces that are undermining our life and our orderly and humane existence on this planet.

By intervening in the rhythm of the eco-system, and in the human psychic frame of the mind–body relationship that is the very basis of life, we are opting out of a state of expanding cosmic balance and placing the entire planet and its citizens in the midst of forces that no one can control.

But even more dangerous and far-reaching in their consequences are weapons of mass moronisation and the psychic deformation of the entire populace. These issues subvert the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong and inject into children’s psyche that violence is the only logical means of human discourse. By massive worldwide media projection of these techniques, the inner sensory containment of wants – and even more, the loss of awareness to see alternative means of happiness, inner peace and harmony, styles of life, or human relationships – is being subverted.

Therefore, a ‘dialogue of civilisations’, while accepting the diversity of cultures and more than one civilisation, must reflect on this irreversible damage to the processes of human evolution.

A new philosophy of life

“Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey
Where wealth accumulate and men decay…”

Oliver Goldsmith

Before we can explicate a new philosophy for the future, we have to extricate ourselves from the consumerist quagmire of violence and waste to explore the many untraversed pathways that can help us resolve various conflicts of the present to open new possibilities for the future.

First and the foremost is human beings’ place in this new social arrangement. In the consumerist scheme of things, humans’ place has been usurped by money, and those who acquire it are judged by its aggregations; they have no value without it. As wealth aggregates amongst a few, as deprivation expands, human life is devalued. We must first restore this position, and the entire scheme of things at present will have to change – it is not to denigrate wealth but rather its place as the measure of man. “I am it, the supreme,” say the Upanishads.
Then there is the conflict of individual subordination to the community and the intrinsic superiority of the human; it is important to accept both. At certain levels of social arrangement, the interest of the community should be supreme; in other cases, man is the innovator, the creator of value and consciousness who can move the community forward.

Then we come to the concern about the direction of future human life. Should it be directed to material progress in the existing world, or should we seek avenues to a suprarational world that will bring humans to a higher consciousness? Or should we seek an ecologically sustainable material existence (including sustainable resources) for all and simultaneously integrate these efforts with a spiritual quest to some new humane future?

All throughout millennia, India’s concern has been with Eternity; India’s timeless Brahman, and China’s time-bound ethical Tao.

“Look backward to let the past guide the future”
Tao

Cosmology and spirituality point toward eternity, history, science and development. Spirituality and materiality are inseparable, so the concepts of eternity and time would need a new synthesis, which a cultural dialogue between India and China could provide.

“Obviously, until such major conflicts are resolved, humanity can have no single purpose, but progress will be fitful and slow”
Sir Julian Huxley

There is thus a need for an understanding and search for a new philosophy of life. It is also necessary to order human affairs, which make power incorruptible and compassionate, and provide a meaning and purpose to life that goes beyond acquisition and consumption or the aggregation of material possessions, wealth, and power. We have to search for and connect with traditions that can provide interconnectedness of all phenomena as well as linkages with the constantly evolving idiom of new sciences. But above all, we need unobtrusive and non-aggressive plural pathways toward spiritual freedom, as all attempts to suppress them marks the subversion of freedom, speech, and humans’ future.

Such a philosophy of life can only be realised through the eternal unchangeable laws of nature that govern all life. No one – I repeat, no one – can escape these laws. A cosmic ontological foundation of the political order is also necessary.
The happenings of the recent months of the 21st century have brought to the fore the frustration and anger of hundreds of millions of people worldwide who are actively protesting against the economic, cultural, and spiritual consequences of the consumerist paradigm. There are billions of people waiting to be inspired by new ideas and who are frustrated with our failure to respond to these challenges. Unless a new philosophy for development becomes available, the present paradigm and new hidden agendas will continue to hold sway – and exploitation built upon shopping and entertainment as principle cultural expressions and accompanying violence will persist. Three major negative forces – economics, religious fundamentalism, and terrorism – will thus continue to undermine humans’ future. The divide between materiality and spirituality will continue to widen. And the prevailing polarised power structure, with an agenda to destroy all that is superior in other cultures, will continue as an affront to the concepts of equality and freedom.

Our fundamental tasks in search of humane order are therefore to unveil the truth, contain negative forces, strengthen positive forces, and establish an orderly process or a new Dharma for a humane order.

There is a need to define the criteria for a new paradigm.

a) Fulfilment of basic needs for all rationally or justifiably comparative living styles for all, which should be positively sustainable for a long time and in a dynamic state.
b) Human actions must conform to natural laws – a spiritual force for an ethical and moral development of materiality.

During the 20th century, through the release of vast negative forces, great damage has been done and continues to be done to the human system. Nothing can be realised instantly through peaceful means; we can only direct new trends toward a more desirable state by exercising common will of many nations who can checkmate the negative and release positive forces, without any hidden agenda of their own. And the time scale for bringing about such a change at the micro level will vary from one nation to another with potential advantages for those expressing a lesser commitment to the prevailing paradigm of ‘armament-protected consumerism’ and with less social and cultural damage to their system.
What is a humane order?

The first and paramount responsibility of the state has always been and continues to be (to seek to ensure processes for) satisfaction of the minimum basic needs for food, habitat, health, education, employment, and clean air and water. While retaining a secular frame within multiethnic and multi-religious societies, there is a need to evolve a common set of values unfettered by rigid religious dogmas but conditioned by eternal spiritual reality within all humans along with a set of humanistic values related to emerging new sciences.

The structure of poverty cannot be dismantled through the intensification of unbridled consumerism and socially coerced choices for high consumption; it can only be transformed through local and regional action in rural communities or vast urban slums with low-energy, employment-generating but appropriate technologies that can be linked with existing technological infrastructure. Such communities must also conduct agricultural activities with minimal use of chemical fertilisers, pesticides, and herbicides along with optimised use of low-energy agricultural production and processing equipment. Integrated horticulture, fish breeding, animal husbandry, dairy products, forestry and tree-planting activities, and health services can contribute vastly to generating employment and slowing the rural urban movement. Road building and cooperative housing represent additional employment-generating activities.

Health services should be structured around holistic integrated medicine, including the most advanced techniques coupled with traditional and preventive medicine. These services should also incorporate physical, mental, and spiritual conditioning through meditative therapies and yoga.

Education is a comprehensive process of preparing young people to be responsible members of the community, performing any one or more of the functions within a society. Apart from basic education, there has to be an understanding of the various social and technical functions such as health services, cooperative functions, schoolteachers, communication services, water management, and servicing of agricultural equipment. There should also be ethically and morally based cultural and entertainment activities. In fact, village or local community schools should be integrated, self-contained, multipurpose organisations teaching and performing an array of functions to promote personal and community welfare, hence training youth to be responsible members of the community and the larger human family.
rather than mere consumers at the feet of a consumerist society. Alone, we can break the stranglehold of a consumerist infrastructure of greed, lust for power, violence, terrorism, and illusions of human domination.

Additionally, there should be a basic infrastructure for human development with wide-open pathways and an institutional framework for those willing and competent to voluntarily seek wealth, power, and urban life. But the basic human purpose should be to provide an ethical and moral foundation for any or all spheres of human activity – be it a scientist, a yogi, or simply a wealth seeker. But they must all function within an eternal value structure. Higher levels of consciousness through spiritualisation can be a factor of restraint in the midst of excessive media-forced choices for high consumption, which are becoming established norms and avenues for success within the consumerist system. Social organisations structured on an ethical and moral foundation have a much larger life span and are less ecologically destructive or likely to betray humans' future.

But this does not mean that these new values have to be created; these are an integral part of most religious traditions and are even more deeply ingrained in indigenous or remote tribal cultures and rural communities everywhere. The movement of technological society and its expansion to the present state of 'armament-protected consumerism' has taken place within a growing 'value vacuum'. And in this process, under the cover of democracy, human rights, and globalisation, it is intervening in and undermining the value structures of other societies through propaganda networks and mega-violence. We have thus become hostages to the relentless promotion of these processes, and material rewards and honours are bestowed upon their promoters and accelerators. Human values are now measured in monetary terms and frequently expressed through the market’s fluctuating list of billionaires. These devices are also being introduced into the developing world, thus upstaging traditionally revered sages and the wise.

An entire generation of children, youth, and the alienated are being subjected to violence and sex and are being transformed from citizens into computer-programmed consumers of goods and services. They are also being psychologically conditioned to accept violence as the only instrument to solve problems. How else can we explain the manipulated acquiescence of an entire people in raining death and destruction on innocent men, women, and children of other nations as an expression of power and interest?

The realisation of a positive new direction requires the awakening of the psyche of nations through non-violent, inspirational techniques like the Gandhian Salt March to break the unholy cycle of violence and forces of
moronisation toward a rearrangement and equalisation within inseparable human materiality and spirituality. Even the core of matter is not solid but made of basic energy building blocks and a form – a vibrating spiritual entity that can restore the cosmic connection of our planet. Only actions oriented toward the welfare of all within a community a country or the world can ensure continuation of the linearity of time and history for any period.

To transform our present state of vast economic differentials and deprivation, senseless desire for acquisition and consumption, and use of mega-violence and terrorism into a just, compassionate, and humane order is a difficult task.

It would require patience, sustained action, and sacrifice to approach problems of a vast magnitude and face challenges posed by powerful vested interests. But we are in the midst of a time for change, and some suggestions for action are presented here.

1. The material, cultural, and spiritual consequences of the paradigm of ‘armament-protected consumerism’ are unacceptable because these represent

   a) the aggregation of wealth amongst a few and the deprivation of billions;
   b) serious disturbances to the eco-system;
   c) a unipolar power structure aiming for a single civilisational model for all diverse cultures, which is unsustainable and cannot lead to humane order; and
   d) a total breakdown of ethical and moral order.

2. We should define the criteria for a new paradigm with a clear understanding that the material and spiritual are inseparable and each have value.

   a) Satisfaction of the minimum basic needs for all – food, shelter, health, education, work, and a clean environment (air and water);
   b) cultural and spiritual expansion;
   c) culture is the dynamic aspect of human society
      – “When it weakens, decline begins...” – A. Toynbee
   d) “When truth behind religion is discovered, its discovery alone will end the clash of civilisations...” – Swami Ranganathananda
   e) “Truth is one, sages call it by different names...” – RgVeda-1-164-46
f) all values are spiritual;
g) cooperatives can play pivotal roles in cultivating a spirit of partnership and involvement in the creation of employment, removal of poverty, and distribution of wealth in economically deprived sections of the community. There are many success stories in India, including Operation Flood, which made India the largest milk-producing country in the world. Food carriers of Bombay, Lijjat Papad, is an all-women, highly successful cooperative effort.
h) The Gandhian concept of trusteeship of the means of production and wealth, where owners and promoters regard themselves as trustees of the people. This brings us back to ethical and moral order and inseparability of the material and the spiritual.

The above and various other permutations and combinations are possible in different social environments to progress toward the economic aspects of a humane order.

3. Checkmate the negative forces (the most powerful first); the rest will fall in line. There are socially many negative forces that have evolved around the paradigm, but perhaps one of the most important is the illusion of prosperity through the explosion and circulation of financial wealth far beyond the growth of actual wealth. Its unregulated movement and aggregation with a few persons in fewer countries has distorted economic development along with manipulation and exploitation of the poor and weaker regions worldwide. This strikes at the very heart of humane development, and no programme of minimum basic needs can be sustained in this environment.

4. Support positive forces, wherever – forces that encourage ethical and moral constraints, alleviate suffering, and provide education and employment. Examples of socially responsible individuals, rather than names of billionaires, should be publicised.

5. Define a new philosophy; a complete philosophy represents a synthesis and harmonisation of our external actions on the physical or material plane and an inward spiritual quest that brings ethics, morality, and higher values to a society. Unless the new values take shape, the old will persist or enter a value vacuum. The psycho-spiritual maturity of old Eastern, Pagan, and tribal cultures has a great deal to offer in unveiling truth and our cosmic connection or relationship with nature.
6. Respect the sovereignty of nations and their human, religious, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identities and civilisational evolution.

7. And in conclusion, I wish to ask a question of us all.

- Can we have a peaceful and humane order without sacrifice?
- Can we make this sacrifice to bring about transformation?
- Or do we wait for an Armageddon or, even worse, a cosmic dissolution to change the human direction?
Since entering the 21st century, there has been a rising crescendo of economic discontinuities and shifting balances of power, increasing cultural and religious confrontations, and terrorism. We are engulfed in a state of chronic insecurity and deepening gloom. Old techniques of force and domination are being employed to resolve problems belonging to another age. The beneficiaries in a system of globalised deprivation and selective aggregation of wealth do not realise the chaos being created by the simultaneous fragmentation of cultural, religious, and political entities and economic globalisation. This has become a major contradiction of the 21st century; all its consequences are visible. Therefore, one of the most important contributions from those dedicated to addressing civilisational issues through dialogue is to help remove (or set aside) the physical and metaphysical roadblocks that are frustrating all efforts towards a humane future.

Science & spirituality

Before the middle of the last century, classical Newtonian science and Einstein’s theory of relativity were challenged by Werner Heisenberg when he introduced what came to be known as the ‘uncertainty principle’. His principle implied that scientific quantities and concepts do not have an absolute independent meaning and are conditioned by experiments and those who perform them. This stance undermined the cherished belief that science can reach for reality within an existing understanding.
There was a linear connection between science and the emerging social structures, institutions, and limitations that gave shape and direction to the 19th and 20th centuries. First came economic changes followed by political institutions and entire processes of industrialisation.

When Einstein’s theory of relativity unveiled other parameters and linkages, it became necessary to increase human understanding beyond the concept of Newtonian science and establish another support system (i.e., supramental on a spiritual scale). This is when problems began, born out of a disconnect between science and spiritual meditative techniques to realise greater advances in the physical sciences and extend them beyond uncertain parameters. The uncertain sciences are thus bereft of amoral and ethical constraints. The human process that has dominated the science-driven 21st century is also without such limitations, and we are recklessly advancing towards material horizons without resolving the uncertainties of science. We are witnessing the collapse of high-rise pyramids of affluence in an insecure and turbulent world.

Research continues, and attempts are being made to propose new concepts compatible with the present state of physics and cosmology. We must seek the power of understanding through elevation of the human mind to penetrate the barriers of scientific uncertainties and the disorderliness, violence, and injustices of material development.

**Need for multipolarity**

There are more than 200 entities we call nations, hosting a wide array of ethnicities, cultures, and religious traditions. Everything in the biosphere is plural, and out of that plurality emerges a wonderful world of great diversity, religious traditions, thought, and beauty. And these diversities develop identity through synthesis. When we say a person is an Indian, it creates an image in our mind of poverty, the country’s spiritual traditions, cultural sensitivities, and even a man like Gandhi who, stick in hand, walked 100 miles to the sea to break an unfair British Colonial Salt Law and in so doing awoke and freed a nation from British colonial rule. “Die for what you believe in,” he said, “do not kill others for your beliefs.” Similarly, many European countries offer diverse images of great sacrifices, culture, art, literature, sciences – even the great socialist revolution in Russia, Confucius in China, and the universal Buddha, which now belongs to many countries.

All these contribute to the great treasures of humankind.
Many of these problems have arisen in the process of building a unipolar power structure for economic development, culture, and religion. Divisive forces have drawn a dangerous line between rich and poor. Instigated cultural conflicts are creating an ethical, religious, and gender-based divide. The increasing violence of globalisation is catalysing unrest worldwide. Yet perpetuity is structured on peace and orderliness. We must therefore begin re-thinking to approach the human future with new instruments of peace and non-violence. The message to oppressors should be clear: they can attempt and possibly succeed and destroy, but they will not realise their objectives of exploitation and domination, which constitute the principal aim.

Once this message is clear, we have some chance of reducing violence, which is becoming a part of our lives. Another factor, which emerges from planning a long-term strategic non-violent approach, is a human approach related to the psyche of the oppressor and the oppressed. But for violence, which is now becoming the norm where the aggressor has no contact with victims, an appeal to human compassion will not work; the only hope is to rise above our personal interests and create a coalition of peace-loving visionaries of the future.

This will continue to be part of non-violent strategy and action. But the aggressor will have to answer for a purposeless waste of human resources and human life to a coalition of peace-loving nations, sworn not to use weapons or violence except in self-defence and to protect the weak and deprived.

Ecology

Approaches to competitive, high-energy development have transformed our planet into an ecological death trap. Natural disasters wreaking widespread devastation are becoming a daily occurrence. It is nature’s warning to reconsider our development strategies and save younger generations from becoming overly committed to sensual development and desensitised to human suffering; the continuation of such policies will close all avenues towards a humane future.

Eternal and ancient tribal civilisations arranged their life’s flow in accordance with natural processes. They worshiped the forces of nature and sought the protective blessing of the angry Gods and Goddesses of Katrina, tsunamis, and earthquakes. And we, the custodians of modern civilisation, call them uncivilised and have been systematically interfering with natural
phenomena, thus bringing the wrath of nature upon hundreds of millions of deprived people without recourse for protection and help. This is a civilisational failure.

Human mind

The tragic forgetfulness of the ethical and moral needs of sustainable civilisations is injecting the poison of violence into the human mind. This is being mortgaged to the media, sense devices, and the violence they promote, thereby taking us away from the eternal values and diverse synchronicities that govern the dynamics of the cosmic force that conditions our lives.

Value structure

To protect the operative paradigm for development – indeed, for its very survival – we are promoting and strengthening a value structure that is in disharmony with natural laws that are an inseparable part of the human body and mind. Such a structure is part of nature’s diversity, but with a consciousness that expands and determines human creativity and destiny. It gives humans sensitivity and psychic instincts so as to enable them to function in harmony with natural processes. It is subject to pleasure and pain and continuously expands creative potential.

All this is being altered by the media under the compulsion of competitive forces of the so-called ‘free market’, which is being transformed by power currents of conflicting interests and egos. Seeds are being planted for ethnic, religious, and civilisational conflicts while numbing the minds of hundreds of millions of young people, some of whom are our future leaders. These potential leaders of the 21st century are being desensitised against poverty, genocide, and terrorist killings of innocent women and children. To make this more effective, media images are being shifted to vulgar displays of luxuries. Young people are then expected to make a choice.

With rising levels of human desensitisation, we are nearing a point of no return. Disturbing images of human insanity are becoming visible in many countries, thus endangering the entire human future.

The tragedy is that the practice of luxury, its unlimited manifestation and profession for self-assurance, and qualifying as a celebrity are all being promoted as part of the human future. But the only effect is further deepening of the crisis.
Therefore, the liberation of the human mind from indiscriminate tightening of the shackles of warped values should be an important element in any dialogue of civilisations.

Money as the final reference point

Whether you are a financial oligarch, professor, artist, author, or even a religious teacher, the quality of your work or contribution to society is judged in terms of your ability to garner financial wealth. Even wisdom and art have a financial reference point. Human creativity in science, as well as in art, has become linked to the marketplace. Countries within countries are thus taking shape – one for the top 1% of the population and others for the rest, laying the foundation for future tragedy.

The denial of moral law and psychic transformation of youth, through these sense-based values of affluence and their desensitisation to eternal values, is leading the entire human race to the proliferation of violence in the human mind. All this is done in the name of progress and is one of the principal reasons for growing chaos. The pomp and power of external wealth always ends in human deformity. As has happened in the past, a search for singularities without multipolar unity in diversity will only cause civilisations to conflagrate.

People have lost their awareness of the sacred; the entire spirit of sacredness has been transferred to meaningless, material, and physical aspects of human beings. With a return to the eternal values reflected in every aspect of nature, dialogue will only be a means of recourse when violence no longer appears the sole option.

Let us step back and see the unity and interconnectedness of all phenomena on our planet. When a tribal leader in Brazil touches a stone in a ransacked rainforest, he is pleading for the protection of his sacred places.

A new vision

Through a dialogue between diverse religious and cultural traditions, we need to evolve a new human vision. The multipolarity of this vision will end discrimination between different traditions and recognise their contributions to the eternal values and foundation of the entire human civilisation.
Each nation, in terms of its physical and human resources and the intensity of its religious and cultural traditions, should develop its own vision on the basis of its needs and desires.

The harmonisation of diverse nations, beginning with larger nations with a human vision, can start a new process of globalised world diversity, peace, and harmony.
Introductory Note

Dialogues of civilisations are for the sustenance of the eternal and perennial processes of evolution and the continuity of cultural streams. The harmonization of diverse cultures can only be realised through civilised means. The natural and orderly flow of these multi-dimensional processes can be disrupted due to external factors. When this occurs, the inbuilt feedback mechanism – which self-corrects, reorganizes, and restores the continuity of the evolutionary processes – is aborted. This also applies to all of the socio-politico-techno-economic and ecological parameters within the planetary and human system.

For the first time in human history, all of these self-organizing processes are facing interference on a global scale. Unless corrected and restored, this not only poses a grave threat to human civilisation, but also to the totality of the inseparable interconnectedness of all natural phenomenon that are being fragmented. Consequently, a multitude of problems are proliferating in every sphere of human activity; unilateral, thoughtless, and violent remedies are adding to these problems. The Upanishads say, “The solutions to problems rest at levels higher than the problems themselves”. The extensive external growth that is spreading horizontally must be balanced by an intensive inner growth. To seek the truth, we need a holistic approach that will bring out the inner commonness that lies at the core of human civilisation. Such an approach will also strengthen the compelling centrality that is the essence of human interconnectedness, where the positive core of energies rests. This needs to be integrated and harmonized with perennial wisdom which goes beyond science and materiality.

The instruments we have crafted as the wonders of our civilisation are leading to social and economic disintegration, ecological disruption,
and a breakdown of the ethical and moral order and sacrifice of human transcendence. The cultural restraints built into diverse cultures are being monoculturised by the fundamental forces of monotheism and unilateralism. These display the illusive glories of hegemonism and the ceaseless enlarging of these illusions.

The higher reaches of civilisations, through increasing consciousness, are pathways for the realization of the infinite cosmic reality for our finite planet. The evolving continuity of diverse cultures must be harmonized with contemporary issues through civilisational dialogues carried out within a framework of acceptable universal values. Adherence to eternal truths and values, along with flexibility on the temporal and regional, will help sustain new social arrangements for cultivating an ideal human state. A fundamental basis for a dialogue of civilisations can only be the ‘Human Future’, not the future of the ‘marketplace’. Such a dialogue must also presuppose a plurality of cultures and a desire to seek more harmonious and sustainable possibilities within diverse material and metaphysical arrangements. The absorption of new knowledge, not only external and material but also internal and spiritual, must also be presupposed in the dialogue.

The success of such an effort would need the awakening and transformation of the individual and global consciousness. The human psyche is molded by culture. That is where we must start. The present levels of extensive growth with multidimensional crisis points offer no possibilities for further conquest of nature. Nor do they offer expansion of the current paradigm by force of arms or by new economic means. Conquest, colonization, and consumption – or, in other words, the ‘market’ – in their present form are no longer sustainable. We did not choose the “Armament Protected Consumerist Paradigm”. But the entire world is suffering its consequences and still living with its illusions. And the meaning and purpose of human existence are being subverted in the name of progress.

The purpose of the dialogue is to safely transit from the present human state of encircling gloom towards more stable, just, and sustainable human arrangements. Only in this way can the highest human potential be attained and a balance achieved between horizontal extensive material growth and intensive inner growth. Stability of the human system cannot be assumed, nor can large-scale confrontations be avoided, without cultural transformation. Also required are raising the level-of-consciousness problem created by short term mechanistic thinking and exploitative mindsets, with multidimensional crisis points.
Now psychosocial compulsions for survival are overtaking the illusion of wealth and power worldwide. Thus, the new shape of human progress and the future of human evolution will not be determined by the survival of the strongest but the survival of the weakest. Therefore, to maintain the continuity and sustainability of the human system from this point of time, many great challenges will have to be faced wisely, fearlessly, and resolutely. For this, the decade of 2010 – 2020 will be the most crucial.

**International security and hegemonic trends**

Terrorism, or its threats with hegemonic intent as an instrument of social policy; its domination over other countries; and its involvement of increasing numbers of people worldwide is assuming grave proportions. There is also an unorganized sector of terrorism that has been formed under the pretext of retaliation against tyranny, deprivation, genocide, or religious and racial hatred. Its victims are the innocent and the helpless, targeted in their homes and in places of work, worship, education, and relaxation. Its perpetrators are emotionally disturbed, and spiritually alienated, individuals and nations. The increasing frequency, diversity, and intensity of terrorist acts is becoming one of the greatest threats to the peace, security, and stability of the human order as well as the disruption of the human psyche and sensitivities.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destructions carries with it the potential to damage life and the genetic structure of all biological existence on this planet. To the frightening diversity and lethality of nuclear weapons are being added depleted Uranium, biological, psychological, tectonic, space, and climatic weapons. Socio-economic weapons employing silent techniques are being used to establish the economic and social vulnerabilities of nations and their planned destruction. These are already in use and in stages of advanced experimentation. During the last some decades, most of these weapons have been employed by one country against the other.

In such an environment and with this mindset, it has not been recognized by some nations that the self-destructive potential of these weapons is as great as damage caused by other means. The interconnectedness of all phenomenon in nature gets reflected in a rebound on the user in one form or the other. Without total disarmament including surreptitious proliferation, the diversity, numbers, and lethality of weapons will continue to expand, exponentially enlarging the threat of paralysis or the destruction of human civilisation.
The urge to dominate and to preempt through violence the resources of the planet Earth must be contained and curbed. The victory with superior weapons and wars as in the past will stimulate the armament race, with total destruction and victory for none.

From the later part of the twentieth century, along with the large-scale expansion and globalisation of the “Armament Protected Consumerist Paradigm”, there has been a considerable enlargement of both human extravagance and deprivation. Ethnic and religious tensions, violence, terrorism, and regional wars – with the looming breakdown of the global financial architecture – are further aggregating a state of protective desperation and threat to human civilisation.

With global consciousness of the causes of the present human condition and the support of the world’s deprived people, victims of hunger, genocide, and terrorism alone can assure and help to transform the state of the present crisis.

There is an urgent need for the will to change and for a coalition to promote the peace of nations, along with courage to stand up to save human civilisation.

There is also an urgency to raise global awareness of the consequences of the use of weapons of mass destruction. The collateral damage often far exceeds the targeted damage as, for instance, in the case of depleted Uranium weapons. Radiation poisoning can spread to far-off places, and the effects are already visible in Iraq, Serbia, Kosova, Afghanistan, and adjoining countries. Behind the nuclear fixation hides an entire range of more sinister weapons of mass devastation, genocide, and suffering. The world is spending a trillion dollars a year (half by one country alone) on weapons of its own destruction.

The process of research, production, storage, distribution, and installations of these weapons continues unabated. There is a need for increased awareness that all the phenomenon on our planet are interconnected, and that these weapons carry the potential for self-destruction of the user. There is the potential for radiation transmission of diseases, the extension of earthquakes, effects on weather or space weapons, and rebound of economic harm to other countries.

To escape the unintended cataclysmic potential and the destruction of the millennia-old aggregations of human civilisation, there should be a global awareness and revolt against all categories of weapons of mass destructions. The greatest challenge is to bring about not just total denuclearization but to forbid research on and production and trade of all weapons. These do not just inflict targeted and collateral damage but also interfere with and destroy
the self-correcting and regenerating capacities of the human species and
the planetary system. They should be regarded as not just a crime against
humanity but also the cataclysmic demise of planet Earth.

There is a need for a coalition of peace supported by the awakened
consciousness of humanity aggrieved by the multi-dimensional excesses of
the armament-protected consumerist paradigm. And the colonial mindsets
of exploitation and destruction.

A total ban on all instruments of mass destruction under international
multi-polar supervision and regulation is called for. This would include
provisions for the victims of such aggression, support for those committed
to economic justice, and cultural and civilisational harmony.

To give a determined expression to the cry of the terrorized human soul
is one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. That historic moment of
time is now.

Towards an integral humanism

Reductionism of the Newtonian Science and Cartesian separation, while
accelerating the speed of science, technology, and production processes,
broke apart the basic metaphysical and scientific linkages which are an
inseparable part of an established order. It also fragmented human society
along ethnic, religious, and racial lines, and legitimized colonialism,
monotheism, mono-powerism, mono-culturisation, rulers and the ruled,
the rich and the poor, capitalism and socialism, enemies and friends. This
situation has been sustained through conflicts with increasingly lethal
weapons.

Over the last two centuries, through hundreds of smaller conflicts, two
world wars, and the displacement of millions of lives, the human structure
has evolved into its present state, with weapons of mass destruction,
designer diseases, and terrorism. And above all has been a vanishing human
identity and the human descent towards an uncertain future.

Through the millennia, perennial wisdom was enshrined in the
interconnectedness of all cosmic phenomenon and, consequently, of our
planet (in a ubiquitous, all-pervasive sea of energy) defined differently
in different cultures. Similarly, ‘contemporary new sciences’ posit an
all-pervasive energy field called quantum vacuum or zero point energy, a
random ambient, fluctuating energy that exists in empty spaces.

This has consequences both for animate and inanimate existence,
providing an even more complex picture of nature. This oneness and
interconnectedness of all phenomenon obligates a holistic approach to our planetary vision. Such an approach would focus on displacing the forces which are diminishing humans through the frequent fragmentation of the human heritage cultivated over the millennia, and its confinement in a monetary straitjacket for the glorification of a means of exchange. And, thus, it would aim to stem the tide of the breakdown of human civilisation.

All human advancement is catalysed by evolving human consciousness as it relates to the sciences for the evolution of material and psychosocial consciousness. This, in turn, is deeply influenced by the sights, sounds, and experience of evolving symbols and the values of new economic forces, “Armament Protected Consumerism”, the “Bretton-wood model of financial architecture”, controlled discourse, and supporting media. The selective targeting of youth for psychic commitment to the new idioms of culture and values distorts the true meaning and purpose of life all the way into the human future – body, mind, and soul.

There is an urgent need to understand the linkages and to articulate the roots of the problem, enlarging the orbit of human and global consciousness to a point from which a new social architecture becomes visible. And to contain the paralysis which is now rapidly setting into the human system.

Both dogmatic adherence to the market and religious fundamentalism are battling for the human future on Earth and in heaven, and it is the large mass of humans who are the victims.

Cultures and civilisations are a process of continuity and creativity and are never absolutes. All their parameters must continuously evolve and harmonise to create a stable state, as communication networks catalyze these in the social sphere. But while the quantum sciences are projecting a new vision of interconnectivity, the material developmental process is still being governed by Newtonian-Cartesian fragmentation and separation.

Therefore, we must transit to the human-centric processes of development. These should be based on ‘consumption’ or the satisfaction of the minimum basic needs for all, rather than ‘production’ at any cost, irrespective of the concerns for ethics, justice, ecology, and reason. Attempts were made during the early part of the 20th century to start a movement of humanism as a ‘life stance’ that included some great names of physical, biological, and social science. However, the movement did not take off at the psychosocial level.

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To define the new parameter of human-centric development it would be necessary to place the New Humanism between ecological concerns and spiritual realization. This would be done by means of an ‘Integral Humanism’, in which ecology provides the physical and resources constraints, while spiritual growth and consciousness curb the expansion of unsustainable consumerist growth. Religions will provide the pathway to spiritual realization.

A holistic vision of the interconnectedness of new science beyond Newton and even Einstein has to be integrated with the Oneness of the Universe and the cosmic reality. ‘Integral Humanism’ would provide a new vision to contain fragmentation of the inseparable unity of the cosmic and planetary, physical, and metaphysical processes. It would also help humankind move on to the pathways of a holistic vision for the realization of the highest human potential: material, mental, supramental, and spiritual.

This would call for the outright rejection of the Newtonian-Cartesian fragmentary view of the inseparable cosmic reality. Also, it would place an integrated human being on to the path to the search for the meaning and purpose of life. And realization of the true human destiny.

**Satisfaction of the minimum basic needs of all**

For the satisfaction of the minimum basic needs of all, it would be necessary to make these more manageable. And this will only be possible within a cultural frame and economic and ecological sustainability. This would require new levels of awareness with new values, perceptions, and priorities. All life systems have to vary from region to region. The transition from the present consumerist paradigm must be protectively relatable in a concrete form. Planetary consciousness must be awakened to a new order, because the present system is becoming increasingly sensitive to change with resulting violence, political conflicts, terrorism, wars, economic vulnerability, financial volatility, and cultural conflicts. There is an uncontrolled pursuit of wealth and power on one side and widening dimensions of an explosive reaction to an unbearable acute poverty on the other.

“Land, air, and water are the gifts of God and no one has the right to own these”, said a Saint. Most of these gifts have been cornered by consumerist interests. This has led to the wasteful use of land and water, deforestation, and environmental pollution, all of which endanger the entire human life support system. It was the wealth of the soil which created civilisations. And now its misuse is destroying it.
All traditional communities produced their own food, to provide for their own needs and to exchange supplementary needs to feed others. This all took place within ecological constraints and a sociocultural framework. But external interventions altered natural processes to secure the marketplace through genetically modified foods and profit-based production. This was supported by refusing to recognize the holistic nature of the cosmic and planetary processes and laying waste the bounty of nature.

So, the starting points of human welfare, nature, and culture have all been disrupted.

The satisfaction of basic human needs will obligate the preservation of natural processes through diverse cultural frames.

**Basic needs**

**Food, Air, and Water.** This would require the deceleration of high-energy, technology-intensive agriculture, and of the wasteful use of water.

The promotion of animal proteins, which increases energy and decelerates water use. The lack of holistic, ecological, energy, water, and chemical-based policies in food production of the land is responsible for environmental degradation, draught, water shortages, and food famine.

To this is now being added the production of biofuels from food products.

**Shelter.** Diversity of habitats relates to the environment and the factors of weather, heat, cold, rain, and wind. Traditional architecture followed natural needs.

The urbanisation of populations and lifestyle compulsions has shifted trends to high-energy, high-technology, and environmentally incompatible constructions. This has hastened the processes of Earth warming and left hundreds of millions of people unsheltered.

**Health.** This is a nature-related activity. For all diseases in nature there is a remedy in nature and these were understood by traditional societies.

Lifestyle and profit-related transformation of the health system has narrowed health care to the upper crust of the population and made it a part of the consumerist growth system.

Designer diseases like AIDS and those emerging from the biological warfare laboratories have added another dimension to human suffering and the profits of the multinational pharmaceutical companies. When diseases are created for mass killing and genocide, there is no cure. If at all,
there is drug-based survival with maintenance with drugs known to the inventors of the disease.

There is a growing awareness of the need to shift to holistic and nature-based remedies. Some rapid progress is being made in countries like India.

**Education.** For what? Is it to create a consumer or machine or computer operator?

The real purpose of education is to realize the highest human potential – physical, mental, supramental, and spiritual. This guides humans on to the paths of sanity, restraint, and elevated consciousness to protect the planetary system and to seek a larger cosmic consciousness.

At present, education is a facilitator of the production, services, and consumption processes. An entire generation of young people is being caged into a ‘money syndrome’, laying waste and transforming the entire human potential into profit.

**Employment.** The choice and preparation for employment now rests with the shifting needs of the financial system.

Decentralized methods in agriculture and other land-based low-energy technology tools provided nature-related potential for employment within an immediate environment. This accommodates needs and personal attributes, as well as social concerns and aesthetic and cultural expression.

The creation of vast income differentials and of high-cost lifestyles within planned, waste, and inflationary systems has accelerated the pace of urbanization, mega energy, and intensive pollution, creating and promoting a crime-generating environment.

The market, with all its monetary symbols and values, has taken centre stage in economics. Whosoever wants to operate has to accept the total packet of implied conditionalities of the “Armament Protected Consumerist Paradigm”, including the arms, selective high-cost employment, and inbuilt unemployment at the mercy of the system. Thus, the unilateral system has transformed the entirety of human life into a marketplace.

**Ecological reconstruction**

The fundamental processes of nature are multi-dimensional and vastly complex. Science studies aspects of these complexities. Quantum science is establishing the unity, unfragmentary nature of the organic conception of reality. While we have positioned ourselves in a material world, the universe
is becoming visible as a spiritual reality. Unprecedented human intervention in the planetary environment has upset the delicate balances which sustain the biological survival of the planet.

Billions of years of continuity and cosmic interconnectivity became a crucible for the evolution of consciousness. Reckless exploitation of non-renewable resources of energy, forests, and waterways has brought our planet to the verge of ecological disaster. For the expansion and preservation of short-term power and material gain, human survival on planet Earth is being sacrificed. What we are concerned with is not the future of the ‘market’ but that of human civilisation. This is, therefore, an internal problem with vast external ramifications. Cosmic reality is a holistic, dynamic, unified field of linkages where everything is interconnected. We are mindlessly disrupting and fragmenting this interconnectivity.

The traditional societies worshipped the powers of nature and tried to stay in harmony with them, while the so-called modernization and secularization processes are not only uprooting their faith but destroying their sacred places and an entire system of life sustainability and harmony.

The operating paradigm has preempted their gifts of God – of land, air, and water – with which their lives had a seamless interconnection. And they have become the victims of the profit syndrome, with minimum protection. And as the system expands, it is destroying environmental sustainability and population stability. These are now attempted through genocidal techniques. There has been a disruption of the environment and, consequently, a food chain breakdown and the asymmetry of weather, floods, droughts, and cyclones. And all of this has been caused by the subversion of the self-correcting mechanism, both within the human and natural systems.

The restoration and sustenance of the planetary and ecological system is a very complex task. On one side it involves the orderliness of the cosmic forces which are beyond human control, and on the other the increasing and globalizing human commitment to environmentally unsustainable processes, beyond the self-correcting and self-generating limits of natural process. More and more of these processes are approaching irreversibility. This would affect the entire planet and pose a threat to Earth’s life support system.

This is the most far-reaching of the complex challenges of the 21st century, which cannot be faced without a global consciousness of the consequences of failure and the need for a global cooperation for its realisation.
Quest of a New Human Order of Peace and Justice

Jagdish Kapur
Speech at the Eighth Session of Rhodes Forum, held in Greece on October 7–11, 2010

Search for truth

Our search for knowledge through the sciences (for the outer) and religious beliefs (for the inner) is a search for truth, while the search for a new paradigm is also a search for truth through the outer human. The search is about how our past actions have brought us to our present state, and how our present actions will determine our future. However, the unanswered question before our quest can be resolved concerns the image of the future, which must define a set of parameters (values and constraints) that should guide us towards that future. This is the purpose of this search.

The need for eternal cosmic orderliness for the human

Our planet Earth is an infinitesimally small part of the cosmic universe, and the orderliness of this universe is guided by eternal forces of infinite magnitude. Human affairs on this planet can only be conditioned by the same orderliness whose constraints govern transcendent reality. In an attempt to understand the vastly complex infinite cosmos, scientists fragmented those parts of reality that they could perceive into smaller and simpler units until their nature became evident. Religions and traditions alone can provide the pathways to the inner human.

This process of fragmentation of the scientific order was also reflected in the societal order, through the separation of the material from the spiritual and rapid development in the material realm without limitations or ethical or moral constraints. The new sciences transformed the very idiom of science and established the interconnectivity of all phenomena, showing that these two orders, spiritual (inner) and material (outer), must move synchronously.
The logic and compulsions of uncontrolled material expansion and the interests of colonial oligarchies coincided in a manner that liberated the new sciences from the compulsive constraints imposed by technological vulnerability, the speed of change, and disorders in an uncontrolled socio-politico-techno-economic state. We have been thus brought to our present state of chaos and disorder. The processes that brought this about continue unabated, and the controllers insist on their continuity.

**Preservation of the status quo**

The preservation of the status quo concerns the maintenance of the dominant position of the oligarchies of the unipolar system, despite the mounting compulsions of mass deprivation and poverty. Now the economic and financial breakdown has made the present situation more complex and dangerous at the same time. This has also made science, religion, philosophy, and aesthetics subservient to financial considerations.

All living beings and forms are expressions of cosmic laws. The notion of cosmic laws was expunged from the socialist system and has also been banished from the marketplace. New scientific discoveries have been repeatedly trying to establish that there is no reason to believe that the truths discovered in yesteryears will always remain valid. Similarly, revelations frozen in time from another age and another environment cannot address all the concerns of our era. And yet an alternative paradigm based on science perceived through a higher level of consciousness is considered a threat by both material and metaphysical systems. Hence, there is an urgent need to transcend these self-imposed limitations in order to approach our dilemmas from higher levels of understanding of our present situation. This includes both metaphysical and physical issues and the concerns of the growing numbers of victims of deprivation worldwide, which lead us to seek a new definition of human rights and the right to a dignified survival for all. Profit-motivated breakthroughs tampering with the biosphere and the human genetic structures are posing a threat to all life and in particular to human nature and human dignity. This hierarchy of values will also assign a high priority to ecological security and enshrine a deeper commitment to moral and ethical concerns and spiritual beliefs.
Unchecked self-serving power by the oligarchies

But what we are witnessing today is the exercise of unchecked self-serving power by the oligarchies within a unipolar system. Planning is being done for a new human order, with a unidirectional compass and a road map in which all roads lead to a closely held fortress of oligarchies.

Under the cover of globalisation, an anarchical situation is emerging. Most countries, particularly those in the developing world, are being threatened or overwhelmed by some of the effects of the parameters governing this paradigm, especially those with ecological consequences.

The present system is forcing the pace of globalisation, while simultaneously fragmenting the politico-socio-techno-economic parameters to make the world more controllable. This widening schism has resulted in an uncontrolled drift of the human system. The mechanism to put the new world order together with weapons of mass destruction and to resort to overt and covert actions is failing due to the forced and self-propelling processes of fragmentation.

But the search for a new paradigm is a search for truth and implies the need to re-harmonise what has been fragmented for profit. In terms of the new sciences, the dualistic thinking does not correspond to the structure of reality, and material reality cannot be equated with total reality. The infinitesimal cannot be equated with or challenge the infinite.

However, in the marketplace, the resting place for the operating paradigm where currency reigns supreme, the things that cannot be sold, exchanged, or marketed have no value in principle. So our real selves have no value.

Simultaneously pressure is being exerted with a monotheistic fervour to force widely diverse ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural groups, entities, and nations into consumerist lifestyles and cultural mores. All influence and power is being appropriated by the hegemony of a unipolar system whose structure is visibly becoming unsustainable and which has reached a destructive and aggressive stage of “armament-protected consumerism”.

This is not only a crisis of immanence because those who order our world by controlling the pinnacles of science have chosen, or are unable to relate to, the imperatives of the new sciences. These new sciences reveal the transcendental interconnectedness of all phenomena and call for bringing socio-economic parameters in synchronicity with the instruments of the new sciences. Even more serious in human terms is the fact that our rulers are forsaking their own capacity to relate to the shifting idioms of science, because other factors, such as intuitive ones, are involved.
Thus, the consumerist and secular world view that is being propagated and the institutions that are being created emerge from a fragmented view of reality in line with the old sciences. These are becoming increasingly inadequate and fragile because of their inherent contradictions as well as their incapacity to comprehend the role of higher human dimensions, cultures, and spirituality as important vehicles for human evolution. Our ruling ideologies are thus missing the connecting link, which brings together the material (outer) and the spiritual (inner) human.

**Central focus for development**

Liberate the Human as the central focus for development. And for this, the dominant forces need a submissive population “moronised” to unconditionally respond to their messages without exercising their own will. The media is also playing its own role in bringing about such an order.

Similarly, the powers that be cannot see the deeper connections that make us a part of a common infinity, of a large complex system, integrated in a highly sensitive way. So by destroying the environment, we are destroying ourselves.

**Hurdles to change**

We are rapidly arriving at a point of no return. And, either the success or failure of the paradigm in its present form will have far-reaching consequences for the flow of life on this planet. If the paradigm continues to dominate, it will strengthen further the hold of narrow oligarchies. This hold will be supported with the acquiescence of local elites in the developing world in collusion with a few countries of the developed world. It will lead to an ever-widening disparity in wealth and increasing deprivation, instability, and terrorism. It will also bring about environmental disasters and make the damage to the life support system of the planet irreversible.

If, on the other hand, the “consumerist paradigm” implodes through aggregating contradictions, without alternative social arrangements, it would – as in the case of the Soviet Union – leave the economic infrastructure and cultural mores of many nations, including the United States, in shambles.

During the Soviet revolution, the slogan raised was: “Workers of the world unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains”. Yet the Soviet system broke down because it was structured solely on science and materiality.
There was no cultural or spiritual strength, nor a psychic force within the system to recreate a new paradigm of social welfare, distinct from armament-protected consumerism. The world has once again been brought on the same path, though with some structural variations. This is also true of China and India.

In the unipolar system there is an implied slogan: “Elites of the world unite; you have all to lose outside the system”.

The entire world community, whether affluent or dispossessed, has to take a stance now on the state of this planet and life for future generations. What is at stake is not just democracy or human rights or the market; what is going up in flames is the entire life support system. And what are being created are vast areas of human, moral, and material misery, which no sophistry, jugglery of figures, or media promotions can explain away.

**No challenge will be tolerated**

Our choices are rapidly narrowing and, instead of a search for new cooperative architecture, the unipolar system has declared in no uncertain terms that no other state or a group of states shall be allowed to challenge its position of domination and the policies that it entails. Any state which is even perceived to have that potential will be destroyed through pre-emptive action. Translated into paradigmatical terms, this means that the infrastructure of power, finance, technologies, and arms – with its record of habitual resorting to violence and readiness to inflict economic and environmental devastation on others – is planned by the unipolar power system to remain permanent and to be regarded as the only viable human state, to be loved and cherished by all.

Thus, the unipolar power will pre-empt and eliminate any attempt to change this situation with its superior economic and military power. Or, in other words, the interests of the oligarchies of the unipolar system are sacred and unchallengeable.
Inability to grasp the new science adds to the dilemmas

It is obvious that no human system based on an extravagantly authoritarian and unstable value structure can lead us towards a sustainable future. Apart from the personalised excesses it allows, the unipolar power system is inherently structured on the qualified and shifting understanding of reality for the unifocal attainment of material goals and the subordination of mental, aesthetic, and spiritual attributes to the accelerated realisation of this illusion. This model of life on the planet has been driven to the stage of self-immolation, because of its inherent inability to raise the level of consciousness sufficiently even to grasp these dilemmas.

The world of yesterday marked by colonialism and gunboat diplomacy died with the Second World War. The world of today, structured around an armament-protected consumerism, is in a deep crisis brought about by its physical and psychic excesses. And not all the weapons of mass destruction and media excesses can now transform it into the globalised preserve of the unipolar oligarchies. A new, more just, and sustainable order has to emerge.

When the market system begins to decline and stock markets nosedive, as is happening with many of the sectors of the economy such as information technology, ground transport, civil aviation, banking, and financial institutions, the ability of the economy to support its unipolar superpower infrastructure also begins to decline. Free markets, especially transnational corporations, begin to decline and often survive only because of state subsidies and protection. While the infrastructural foundations of the unipolar consumerist armament system are being forced under state protection to avoid bankruptcy at the same time, pressures are being mounted on countries worldwide to privatise and denationalise key sectors of their economies. This means that while monopolies and profits are private, the losses are public.

Attempt to create a multipolar world

Unable to cope with the growing pressure from the unipolar superpower system, nations in many parts of the world have begun to seek integrative relationships or alliances to safeguard their national identities and economic and security interests. A multipolar world system has thus begun to re-emerge. The National Security 2002 pronouncements by the unipolar system, which carry the threat of pre-emptive strikes against any nation
or group of nations, are sending shockwaves amongst thinking people worldwide. This is also likely to catalyse a psychological drift away from the delights of the marketplace, and further depress the world economic system.

Science and technology can provide the means to create an infrastructure for human material welfare but cannot provide a meaning and purpose of life. A civilised existence can only be realised through the containment of human wants as part of a process of broader development of consciousness, culture, and spirituality, and, above all, the social welfare and satisfaction of the minimum basic needs for all.

The market system is designed to engender new wants to keep the system going. It has thus become hostage to limitless growth in production and consumption. It is also forced to control world resources and markets while transforming cultures within the process of modernisation to bring these in tune with the needs of the consumer system.

Many nations still retain the potential to restructure their economic institutions within the larger fourfold framework of human development of science–materiality, philosophy, culture, and spirituality, so that economic processes are contained within the larger search for the meaning and purpose of life. This is ingrained in the psyche of the people in many cultures and will help rebuild their economic infrastructures on secure cultural foundations.

The present world economic turmoil centred in the unipolar world is caused by the illusion of getting rich quickly and is also due to the role of the oligarchies acting as suction points of the world’s wealth.

A substantial proportion of the devotees of the marketplace survive because of the subsidies or protection of their respective governments or international institutions, while millions of unemployed roam the streets fuelling violence and terrorism.

India, for instance, is one of the few countries with a mixed economy. This guaranteed that the basic framework of the economy remained in the public domain, while encouraging private initiatives for the satisfaction of basic human needs. This duality, however, as in other countries, has come under pressure for change towards an open market economy.

From the present moment in history, the Gandhian model of culturally and economically secure rural republics and a sane and responsible mixed economy may well be the developmental role model in the twenty-first century for our beleaguered developing world, trapped by the mystique of a dream-world of consumer delights.

We have just emerged from the most violent century in human history and now stand at the crossroads of history, with the largest arsenal of weapons of mass destruction and many irresponsible nations ready to use them.
There is vast aggregation of deprivation and suffering in our world. The present paradigm has become a hostage to its own excesses and there is a compulsive need for change, which may call for the total reorganisation of human affairs. In order to outline future directions, it is necessary to seek answers to an entire range of complex questions, such as:

**Where do we go from here?**

**Economy**

The breakdown of the USSR, and its planned economy, is now history. But the search for a new paradigm raises a question: Is a planned economy still a possible basis for future development? In this context, how do we view the success of the economic development efforts of the People’s Republic of China?

Debt-based market economies create an illusion of wealth but sooner or later countries find themselves in a situation of unbearable indebtedness, leading to the collapse of production systems and infrastructure, leading in turn to large-scale deprivation and suffering. All available data from official sources point to the rapid deterioration of the world financial system, including some of the world’s largest economies such as the United States and Japan.

Can the free market economy in its present form be the basis for a sustainable development model? Can pressures for economic privatisation be justified despite the growing unsustainability of financial, infrastructural, and industrial organisations worldwide, many of which need state intervention to survive?

Does this imply that we should re-examine the policy of the “marketisation” of the economy and convert to a system which ensures individual freedom and private enterprise while controlling the commanding heights of technology and industry to protect the common people from the unchecked influence of oligarchic interests? Could the harmonisation of free socialism and a regulated market economy outside the clutches of armament-protected consumerism be an answer to all the world’s people developing together?

The recent upsurge in terrorism is in many ways related to the promotion of the concept of inter-civilisational wars to serve politico-economic objectives.
Energy and Ecology

Greenhouse gas emissions and other major environmental factors are creating momentous disruptions in the planet’s climate, causing large-scale suffering and deprivation, particularly for people without social safety nets. How can the use of fossil-fuel based energy be limited and attempts to control oil and gas resources by the force of arms be contained?

Is there a need for a mechanism of international trusteeship to ensure the conservation and equitable distribution of non-renewable assets at reasonable prices?

New and renewable sources of energy imply a decentralisation of the way of life. These can, therefore, play an important role in rural areas for low-energy, low-technology development. These however, would have minimal uses where high-energy, high-technology, centralized, and intense energy sources are required.

The armament-protected consumerist society is increasingly moving towards concentrated energy sources. Any change in the paradigm to approach the problem of deprivation of more than two-thirds of the world’s population and climate change can only be realized through self-sufficient rural communities. Renewable sources of energy, contrary to the general belief, have serious limitations both in the quantity and quality of resources to create a twenty-first century version of armament-protected consumerism. It is likely to become unnecessary with the possible emergence of a new value structure of a containment of the “material” and an expansion of the “inner” (spiritual) amongst humans, as well as a limitation or reduction of wants with a greater emphasis on culture and religion.

In the interim, for a shift from fossil fuels to nuclear power, the latter is emerging as an energy source of choice to sustain the last stages of the present paradigm. But our crisis is multi-dimensional: ecological, material, and human. In decentralised development, mega nuclear power plants would be wasteful and irrelevant and would negate new lifestyles. The need is for the development of 100 MW or smaller self-contained, sealed nuclear units to satisfy the energy needs of decentralised communities, beyond renewable energies. These units will benefit hundreds of thousands of such communities around the world. These plants will be socially relevant, designed for the Thorium cycle, and widely dispersed in time for the replacement of fuel rods.
**Culture, Science, and Spirituality**

One of the most significant phenomena of the last several decades has been the worldwide breakdown of ethical and moral orders across the entire spectrum of human activity.

Can this state of affairs be modified through a few changes in laws, or will the solution come from a major qualitative social transformation? What is the role of culture and spirituality in the endeavour to achieve broad-based, all-round human development?

Can a human welfare system respecting the needs and priorities of diverse cultures be preserved under a unipolar superpower system? How and in what form could a multipolar system emerge to meet these imperatives?

The emergence of the European Union is a healthy development. Likewise taking into account the commonality of cultures and religious traditions in Asia, there is a need for cooperation among nations within the region on a broad-spectrum socio-politico-techno-economic plane.

Science and technology can provide an infrastructure for material welfare but cannot provide a meaning and purpose for life. A civilised existence calls for the containment of wants within the broader development of culture and spirituality. There is a need to restructure economic institutions in the larger framework of fourfold human development. The consumerist paradigm has become hostage to new wants in order to keep itself afloat through the limitless use of goods and services. This, in turn, requires the control of world resources and markets and the transformation of cultures to ensure their subservience to the consumerist system. The current endeavour to denigrate and transform other cultures, to make them fall in line with the consumerist paradigm, is exhibiting destructive consequences.

Societies are sustainable only if and when all relevant parameters such as science and material concerns, culture, and spirituality are adequately integrated within the human system. The trivialisation of the subjective or qualitative elements in civilisation is causing terminal damage by destabilising it and triggering conflicts everywhere.

We have to go forward with the new sciences, expanding yet contained within a cyclical thought process in an interconnected universe of unbroken continuity. All human attributes must converge to achieve the same central goal with equal energy and not be subservient to material priorities.

At this critical crossroads of human destiny, India and some other countries can make an important contribution by showing the critical pathways and correct entry points into the spheres of eternal harmony.
The faculty of consciousness reveals to both the scientist and the sage the joy of new and true perception. This is the super-mind which is radically changing human beings in their capacity to observe, measure, and perceive the true notion of creation.

“Fearlessness alone brings victory”, said a famous sage. And Gandhi showed a way to freedom through non-violent means in a violent world.

With a will, we can do it again. We can blaze a trail towards a sustainable human future – without arms, through dialogue. We at the World Public Forum are prepared.
Who are We? What is the World Public Forum – Dialogue of Civilizations?

Fred Dallmayr
Speech at the Ninth Session of Rhodes Forum, held in Greece on October 6–10, 2011

At this plenary session, and with an eye toward our 10th anniversary next year, it seems appropriate to ask, “Who are we? What are we trying to do? What is this World Public Forum? What kind of organisation is it?” Now, on a purely formal level, these questions can easily be answered: we are a nongovernmental organisation (NGO) concerned with and committed to the cultivation of a global public forum in the context of a ‘dialogue of civilizations’. So far, so good. But what kind of commitment is it? What does the title ‘World Public Forum’ really entail?

Let me proceed ex contrario; that is, by indicating what the World Public Forum (WPF) is not. We are not a government or a governmental institution, although we maintain friendly relations with many governments. Nor are we an inter-governmental organisation, like the UN, UNESCO, or WHO – although we often support the agendas of these organisations. Like all NGOs, we operate on the level of civil society, specifically a global civil society, and we are concerned with everything that touches the public life of the world’s community. This is how we differ in principle from the World Economic Forum and the World Social Forum. The point is that basically all issues can touch public life: private or family issues; economic issues; cultural and religious issues; and educational issues, including the education of the young generation or ‘youth’.

Continuing on the topic of what we are not: we are not a political party, either on the left or the right. We do not run election campaigns, and we do not sponsor candidates for political office in any country. There are other things we are not: we are not a business or a corporation. We are not assembled for economic gain; if anything, WPF is a not-for-profit organisation. This does not mean that we do not have many economists and business leaders participating in WPF – and they are always welcome and appreciated.
We are also not a strictly academic organisation. We are not a history association or a sociological association or a British or American political science association. This does not mean that we do not have historians, sociologists, political scientists, and other academics in our midst – and we welcome and appreciate their presence. However, our purpose is different. The associations I mentioned exist basically for academic and career objectives: for the promotion of the study of history, sociology, or politics and the career advancement of practitioners in those fields. We do not promote careers or serve narrow professional interests.

Nor are we a church, religious organisation, or religious sect – although we have many religious people and members of the clergy in our midst, and we welcome them. We do not promote religion or any kind of religious stance, nor do we oppose religion or associated beliefs. Our concern is rather the question, “To what extent do religions or religious beliefs further or obstruct a viable public life in the world?” This is a legitimate question in a global public forum.

Finally, we are not a social club existing simply for members’ enjoyment – although of course we hope that members or participants enjoy our conferences as well as each other’s company. Thus, we are not a sports club, a bowling club, a bridge club, or even a purely philanthropic association like the Shriners in America.

So, this leaves the question: what and who are we, if we are not all these things? Here I must return to the commitment I mentioned at the start: the commitment to a ‘world public forum’ in the context of a ‘dialogue of civilizations’. Again I ask, what kind of commitment is this, if it is not a professional or career commitment, not a religious or clerical (church-related) commitment, a ‘not-for-profit’ commitment? Well, it can only be a moral or ethical commitment – a commitment to a world where public affairs are settled not by brute force, warfare, and military might but by reasoned discourse amongst participants in a public arena; a commitment to the prospect of a ‘dialogue amongst civilizations’ in contrast to the ‘clash of civilizations’. Such an ethical commitment does not come easily; it must be cultivated and nurtured deliberately, from early childhood to adult life, and in all societies and walks of life. It also requires strength of character and a sense of responsibility. It requires us to stand up and speak out if brute force and military might take the lead and threaten to undermine social justice and peace.

Thus, our forum is bound to be troubled by political, economic, cultural, and religious crises as they flare up around the world. In such instances, our stand is to discourage or oppose rash, reckless, or violent ‘solutions’ in
favour of calm, peaceful, and ‘dialogical’ efforts to settle disputes with an aim of reaching the greatest possible justice for all sides. The standard or goal of dialogue in WPF is not discussion for discussion’s sake, but rather the achievement or at least approximation of peace with justice.

To give some examples: WPF is concerned with the current situation in the Middle East which, as we know, can (unless contained) proliferate into a monstrous conflagration. We are troubled by stalled ‘peace process’ in that region and a lack of dedicated efforts to resume the process. We are also deeply troubled by the designs for military intervention and externally engineered ‘regime change’ in some countries – designs that violate international law and frequently have the flavour of neo-colonialism and imperialism. In taking this position, we stand in the venerable tradition of the ‘World Committee against War and Fascism’ of the 1930s (provided we define ‘fascism’ for our purposes as aggressive unilateralism) – a committee that included such famous intellectuals and writers like Maxim Gorky, Bertrand Russell, Albert Einstein, John Dos Passos, and Romain Rolland.¹

But, of course, it is not sufficient to view WPF as merely standing in opposition (‘against’); we also stand ‘for’ something. And what we are most intently for is a world community in which societies and civilisations interact in the spirit of mutual respect and dialogical cooperation. Implicit in this positive outlook is a commitment to the self-determination of peoples, to the entitlement of peoples to search for self-rule and self-government in their own ways. To put it differently, we support striving for democracy through democratic (not military or violent) means. Such a pursuit can only be an ethical one and the resulting democracy only an ethically nurtured democracy. The character of this goal has been well captured by philosopher John Dewey, who described as one of the crucial qualities of democracy the endeavour to foster ‘the habit of amicable cooperation’ or to cultivate the common good.

What does this habit mean or involve? Again Dewey answers: “To take as far as possible every conflict which arises—and they are bound to arise—out of the atmosphere and medium of force, of

¹ As Romain Rolland wrote in 1936, “I am a pacifist, I am also an antifascist. . . . Every fascist movement is based on a murderous ideology of racism or dominating imperialism, which leads to wars of conquest and the enslavement of other countries and other peoples.” See Rolland, “Lettre adressée par Romain Rolland aux intellectuels et la jeunesse bulgare” (July 12, 1936), in Archives Romain Rolland (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale); quoted in David James Fisher, Romain Rolland and the Politics of Intellectual Engagement (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2004), p. 195.
violence as a means of settlement into that of discussion and of intelligence means to treat those who disagree—even profoundly—with us as those from whom we may learn, and insofar, as friends.”

Dewey also offered a passage that could have been written by Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr.:

A genuinely democratic faith in peace is faith in the possibility of conducting disputes, controversies and conflicts as cooperative undertakings in which both parties learn by giving the other a chance to express itself, instead of having one party conquer by forceful suppression of the other—a suppression which is none the less one of violence when it takes place by psychological means of ridicule, abuse, and intimidation instead of by overt imprisonment or in concentration camps. (Boydston & Axtelle, 1969, pp. 239–240)

For the past 9 years, many of us in WPF have tried to live up to this ethical code and to foster the ‘habit of amicable cooperation’ — perhaps often too timidly, too weakly, too ambiguously. Now is the time to make a resolution for the future: to take to heart more fully the meaning of ‘WPF–Dialogue of Civilizations’ and to commit ourselves more resolutely to its translation into reality. If we do this, I am convinced, the world will be a better place to live in for all of us and for our children and grandchildren.

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The purpose of the paper is to discuss alternative models of global politics, with particular attention to the so-called “dialogue of civilisations”. The question I want to raise is: What is meant by dialogue as an alternative model of global politics, and how does dialogue add a new dimension to global politics? The answer is that dialogue opens the prospect of a “lateral” cosmopolitanism, and that this prospect is predicated on interdependence and on the cultivation of lateral ethical responsibilities – oriented towards the vision of a global “good life”. The discussion concentrates on three main issues. First, how does the dialogue model differ from other familiar models of global politics? Second, how in particular does the model differ from the conception of a “world state” or world government? And last, what are the concrete political connotations of the model? Specifically, does it have “conservative” or “progressive” implications?

Alternative Models of Global Politics

From a historical perspective, global politics has been dominated chiefly by two models: empire and inter-state rivalry. Ancient history, both in the East and the West, is replete with examples of “empire” or at least strong imperial ambitions. Digging deep into the past, we find records of a Sumerian Empire, as well as of Assyrian, Babylonian, and other Mesopotamian empires. Particularly impressive – stretching over several millennia – are the records of the Egyptian Empire, which left its imprint on many subsequent developments. Of even greater longevity was the Chinese Empire in the Far East. Turning to the “Western” world, we find the examples of the
Macedonian Empire and somewhat later of the Roman Empire. In all these cases, “empire” designated the effort to provide an efficient, more or less centralised administration for major segments of the then-known world.

Empires, of course, are not confined to ancient history. During the Christian Middle Ages, we find the Byzantine Empire and the Holy Roman Empire. As we know, these Christian structures were challenged by the rise of Muslim empires: first, the Ummayyad and Abbasid caliphates and, later, the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires. There is no need here to talk about familiar modern Western analogues: the Spanish, the British, the French, the Portuguese, and other empires. What characterises all of these, again, is the attempt to impose a uniform and more or less homogeneous structure, in “top-down” fashion, on vast expanses of territory (despite occasional concessions to regional or local customs and traditions).

As can readily be seen, the dialogue model clashes with imperial structures or arrangements. Especially when seen as linked with “lateral” cosmopolitanism, the model resists the emphasis on uniformity and top-down control. Following the religious wars in Europe, a new model emerged in the West: the model of interstate rivalry, also called the “Westphalian” system. In terms of this model, nation-states live in their mutual relations in a “state of nature”, which (in the language of Hobbes), is a state of overt or latent warfare due to the absence of a superior arbiter. The justice or propriety of the claims of nation-states is ultimately decided by armed force – despite the slow emergence of an always fragile “law of nations” seeking to impose legal rules on the arbitrary conduct of states. During modern times, the Westphalian system has steadily extended its sway from Europe to the rest of the world. The school of international “realism” (so-called) is firmly wedded to this model and counts among its devotees politicians and experts around the world.

It is evident that the dialogue model cannot subscribe to the Westphalian paradigm. What the dialogue model appreciates is the decentralisation effected in that paradigm, that is, the replacement of a monistic top-down structure with lateral relationships, and an emphasis on regional, national, or ethnic freedom or autonomy. Where the dialogue model parts company is in the conception of autonomy – which, in the Hobbesian-Westphalian paradigm, boils down to the pursuit of selfish interests (national interests, security interests), usually without any regard for lateral ethical responsibilities. Here the dialogue model insists on the close linkage of independence and interdependence or, differently put, on the linkage of freedom and ethics or autonomy and civic virtue. The question is how ethical interdependence can be cultivated in the modern context.
World State, Global Government

I turn here to the second issue mentioned above. The perceived need to foster interdependence and to overcome the pitfalls of the Westphalian system has prompted many scholars to seek refuge in the conception of a world state or global government. For many or most of these scholars, the idea of a world state does not involve a simple return to traditional forms of “empire”. Most of them do not favor heavy-handed or monolithic global structures; in opposition to top-down modes of imperialism, they advocate a “democratic” world state or world government, where “democratic” means the active participation of people around the world as “world citizens”. The so-called “anarchy” of states is overcome here through the establishment of global political institutions capable of effective global policy-making.

How should one respond to this global agenda from a dialogical angle? Clearly, devotees of dialogue must appreciate the stress on global interdependence and the endeavor to curb the pointless rivalry among states, which, in our time, may issue in a global nuclear holocaust. Moreover, one needs to emphasize that dialogue is not in principle opposed to political structures and institutions. What is at stake is a matter of emphasis. In the absence of ethical cultivation and transformation, the global world state is likely to follow in the footsteps of the modern nation-state which (in Max Weber’s terms) has become a soul-less machine or an “iron cage”. In the absence of the dialogical fostering of civic responsibilities, world government is likely to function as a totalizing super-bureaucracy smothering freedom and difference – and this despite well-meant “democratic” rhetoric or intentions. As it happens, my dialogical reservations concerning world government are supported by Kantian philosophy, and especially by Kant’s famous treatise on “Perpetual Peace”. As will be recalled, Kant in that treatise proposed a “peaceful (or pacific) federation”, a “foedus pacificum” which would link together states or political entities while respecting their integrity, autonomy, and diversity. Thus, Kant’s proposal sought to correlate freedom and moral responsibility with political autonomy and public ethics, which is precisely also the aim of the “dialogue of civilisations”.

Let me cite a central passage from “Perpetual Peace”. Reason, Kant says, absolutely condemns war as a test of rights and sets up peace as an immediate duty. But peace can neither be inaugurated nor secured

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without a general agreement between the nations; thus a particular kind of league, which we might call a *pacific federation* (*foedus pacificum*) is required. It would differ from a *peace treaty* in that the latter terminates one war, whereas the former would seek to end all wars for good. This federation does not aim to acquire any power like that of a state, but merely to preserve and secure the *freedom* of each state in itself, along with that of other confederated states, although this does not mean that they need to submit to public laws and to a coercive power which enforces them, as do men in a [Hobbesian] state of nature[^2].

This is surely an admirable statement – and one which can be endorsed by proponents of dialogue, although the latter would wish to recast the proposed federation as an alliance not so much of nation-states as of broader civilisation and cultures.

I have in the past endorsed such a loose, multicultural alliance under the label of an “un–managed”, or perhaps un–manageable but certainly non–coercive, public community. My inspiration there came from Jean–Luc Nancy’s book *La Communauté Désœuvrée* (of 1986), translated (awkwardly) into the title *The Inoperative Community*. The idea here is not a community where nothing works or functions or where nobody works. Rather, the idea is that of a community which is not centrally organised or managed and whose initiatives cannot be subsumed under a totalizing structure. In an essay published in 1998, titled “An ‘Inoperative’ Global Community”, I tried to extend Nancy’s idea to the global political arena. As I wrote in that essay, the centralisation or monopolisation of power is clearly Nancy’s main concern: “In the face of the prevailing economic, military and technological concentration of power, the chances of political democracy on a global scale are placed in jeopardy. ...The notion of an ‘inoperative community’ is meant to serve as a bulwark against both a totalizing globalism (dominated by hegemonic powers) and the surrender of politics to the relentless self-interest of antagonistic agents (be they states, corporations, or private individuals).”[^3]


Partisan-Political Implications

The last point I want to address concerns the political, meaning partisan-political, implications of the dialogical model. I can be relatively brief on this issue, because it is somewhat tangential to my presentation. In an essay published earlier this year (2009) titled “Mapping Alternative Models of Global Politics”, my friend and our chair Raffaele Marchetti compared the dialogue model with three other paradigms labelled, respectively, “neo-liberalism”, “cosmopolitanism,” and “alter-globalism”. The first is basically an economically driven market model, the second a universalist Enlightenment-type model, and the last a kind of anti-globalisation model. He finds four main features characterising the dialogue model. First, there is the assumption of a pluralism of cultural frameworks (in opposition to both neo-liberal and Enlightenment universalism); secondly, this pluralism requires “equal treatment” among cultures and between members of civilisations; and thirdly and fourthly, respectively, the model presupposes mutual good will and non-violence (Marchetti, 2009, p. 148).

I do not have much quarrel with this portrayal, except for a few minor and some major points. Minor points: Marchetti claims that “cultural frameworks are irreducible to each other”. This holds only to a certain degree. “Irreducible” cannot mean incompatible or incommensurable, because this would vitiate or nullify the possibility of dialogue. It would also vitiate good will and non-violence. Thus, there is not a radical separation but rather (what the scholastics called) a “compossibility,” or (what Derrida called) a “différance”.

The essay also makes two other stronger claims: namely, that the dialogue model is based on a top-down exchange between “cultural elites” and that it is hence basically “conservative”. With all due respect to my distinguished colleague, I find that these claims are simply wrong. Dialogue across boundaries – across the boundaries of languages and cultural traditions – cannot in any way be restricted to cultural elites. Anyone who tries to move across boundaries has to try to “understand”, that is, employ some hermeneutical skill, and this skill is exercised primarily through dialogue, namely, question and answer. This is by no means a privilege of elites but a challenge for everyone, including democratic citizens. Grass-roots diplomacy, or citizens’ diplomacy, is predicated on this kind of endeavor. Actually, all human learning is based on this premise. For this reason, I also do not see why dialogue should be called “conservative.” Learning across boundaries is often quite disruptive – disruptive of old habits and ingrained
prejudices. To the extent that the dialogue model is connected with good will and non-violence, that is, the promotion of peace, I think the model is actually quite “progressive’ and even visionary. Ultimately, it stands in the tradition of Kant’s vision of perpetual peace.

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I want to thank the organizers for inviting me to this meeting. The idea and goals of this meeting are deeply congenial and important to me. As some of you know, I published two years ago a book titled *Dialogue among Civilizations*. In that book I tried to pinpoint the basic meaning and the preconditions of such a civilisational dialogue. With your permission I shall come back to some of the points made in that book later.

The book was published in 2002, which means before the war launched against Iraq in 2003. We are presently living with the consequences of that war: constant escalation of violence, brutality, mayhem – certainly the opposite of anything we might mean by “dialogue”. I am not saying that the Iraq war is the source of all the violence in the world. But I would claim that this war – launched without United Nations approval and in violation of international norms – aided and abetted and even contributed to the militarisation of global politics and the spreading of a global “culture of violence”.

The Iraq war is intermingled with, and placed on top of, another more amorphous violence: the so-called “war on terror(ism)”. This is a curious “war” because it is waged not between traditional nation-states, but by states against networks of non–state actors, and sometimes by mercenary non–state actors against other non–state actors. To this extent, the “war on terror” resembles in many respects less a traditional war than a global civil war where state boundaries are blurred.

Richard Falk, the international law expert, has ably exposed the dilemmas of the present world disorder in his book *The Great Terror War* (2003). As Falk correctly states, contemporary terrorism needs to be understood as “political violence that is deliberately aimed at civilians and civilian society, whether perpetrated by political movements or by states”. What has happened in the wake of the Iraq war is a contamination...
of traditional interstate warfare with global civil warfare – resulting in what Falk calls “The Great Terror War”, which has overtones of the “great Armageddon”. In Falk’s stark language, this war “has been so far conducted as a collision of absolutes, a meeting-ground of opposed fundamentalisms, and reenactment of a cosmic struggle between good and evil”.

Some analysts stylise this struggle as a “civilisational struggle”, a struggle of “good civilisation” (ours) against the barbarian “axis of evil”. The task of “good civilisation” is to civilise the barbarians or, if this proves impossible, to eradicate them. One recent author uses as a subtitle of her book: “The Burden of American Power in a Violent World”. This is the familiar language of “white man’s burden” and of “civilising mission”. (Curiously, in that book, the fight against al-Qaeda and the second Iraq war are amalgamated under the label “Just War Against Terror”.)

Clearly, “civilising mission” is far removed from “dialogue among civilisations”: “mission” is unilateral and monological whereas “dialogue” presupposes that both sides not only talk but are willing to listen and to learn. My point here is: we have a huge surplus of “war talk” and “mission talk” in the world, and a huge deficit of civilisation or “civilisational dialogue”.

In early August of 2004 the writer Salman Rushdie spoke to an international PEN conference in New York City. I am not going to defend everything Rushdie has ever done, but what he said at the PEN meeting was right on target.

I want to start by saying that I don’t think any of us who are at this event delude ourselves about terrorism. Terrorism does exist. In this city of all cities, we know that. We know when it exists, what it has done, what it tries to do. We know it exists and must be fought. I don’t think any of us would question that. (But) How we fight it in my view is going to be the great civilizational test of our time. Will we become our enemy or not? … Will we become intolerant as our enemy is intolerant? Or will we not? Will we fight with different weapons, weapons of openness and acceptance, and seeking to increase the dialogue between peoples rather than decrease it? This is a big test …

It seems to us, to PEN, to many of us in the last month that we are not passing this test very well.

This is also for me the big test today. As I see it, the big issue is whether we can develop a counterweight to the dominant culture of violence, of terrorism, and of counterterrorism. Can we develop a politics aiming at the welfare, the well-being, or “eudaimonia” of peoples in this world, instead
of a mere politics of domination and warfare? Can we develop a politics promoting the good in people everywhere, rather than merely controlling or eradicating perceived ills? Can we have a global civilisation, rather than global civil war?

If we desire civilisation, then we have to promote dialogue among people, rather than unilateralism and one-sided superpower politics. We need to promote a “World Public Forum”, a global public sphere where all voices (or as many voices as possible) can be heard. This was the basic aim of my book Dialogue among Civilizations. As I indicated there, a precondition of dialogue is a willingness not only to talk, but to listen to others, to respect others in their difference.

Willingness to listen implies first of all listening to the grievances others may have against us, injustices that may have been committed in the past, modes of colonial domination or oppression, of dispossession and disrespect. Dialogue remains blocked as long as there are festering traumas, complaints which cannot be aired, injustices which are not addressed. Here we need something like a global “Truth and Justice Commission” (which hopefully can become a global “Truth and Reconciliation Commission”). This has to be part of a World Public Forum.

Next, we need to listen to material needs, to economic hardships or deprivations. Here the enormous issues of the North/South division need to be addressed. This includes problems of world hunger and growing poverty (mainly in the South). Under the aegis of neo-liberal restructuring and privatisation, these issues have been shunted aside (and even aggravated). We need a World Economic Forum, not along the neo-liberal lines of the Davos meetings but rather a Forum attentive to the complaints and needs of the “World Social Forum” (started in Puerto Alegre).

People, of course, live not by bread alone. At least as important as listening to material needs is respectful attention to cultural and religious traditions, beliefs, and practices. Disrespect or vilification in the regard can lead to the deepest sense of hurt, to injuries inflicted on people’s basic self-esteem and human dignity. Injuries of this kind can be committed by agnostics or “liberals” who disdain all religions and (alien) cultures. But today they are most often inflicted by “fundamentalists,” who attach absolute value to their own beliefs or traditions while denigrating all others as inferior or part of an “axis of evil.” In this domain, we need a “World Educational Forum” devoted to cross-cultural or multicultural global education, to the global exchange of intellectuals and students, and to the translation of literatures across borders. To some extent, UNESCO already plays the role of such a Forum, but it needs to be strengthened and expanded. In the religious
domain, *inter-faith dialogues* are a crucial need in our time: dialogues among Muslims, Christians, and Jews, but also between the so-called “Abrahamic” religions and the religious and cultural traditions of Asia (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism) and Africa. To some extent, the idea of such a dialogue is institutionalized in the “Parliament of the World’s Religions”, which met first in 1893 in Chicago, was revived in 1993, and since then has met at regular intervals. No doubt, more institutional avenues are needed in this domain.

Next to, and in addition to, the mentioned dimensions of the World Public Forum we also need a “World Political Forum” or, rather, a series of global political fora. In this respect, the United Nations is, of course, the most important functioning institution. The limitations of that institution are well known. However, rather than critiquing and bemoaning limitations, we should (in my view) embark on the task of strengthening and also remodeling the institution. In this regard, I agree with Richard Falk, David Held, and others on the need to *restructure* the United Nations, making it more responsive and perhaps more democratic.

Changes here might include a restructuring of the Security Council from permanent to rotating membership, the addition of a global parliament or people’s assembly (possibly as a second chamber to the General Assembly), and the creation of an International Criminal Tribunal (with no exemptions granted to any member state). Richard Falk also sponsors the creation of an Economic Security Council (with balanced North/South representation). To counter terrorist threats, my friend and colleague Robert Johansen has recently proposed the establishment of a permanent *United Nations Emergency Service* which could be deployed within 48 hours in case of need. Added to these global political institutions, we need to strengthen *regional institutions* – to some extent along the lines of the European Union. In an article, “Lessons of September 11”, I have urged the consolidation of regional institution (such as OIC) as a means to localise and contain outbreaks of violence and to maintain rules of civility.

All in all, the World Public Forum as sketched here is meant to provide an antidote to the growing militarisation of the world and the dominant culture of violence. (Resisting militarisation also means resisting *proliferation* – but such resistance must be multilateral, not unilateral).

Basically, the “*dialogue of civilisations*” presupposes the persistence of civilisations (not the unleashing of terror wars). To this extent, the primary need globally is to civilise humankind.
At this concluding session of our Forum, I want to reflect a bit with you on the past and on the future. First the past: We have been celebrating here the tenth anniversary of the World Public Forum – Dialogue of Civilisations. And indeed we have reason to celebrate and to be proud. We have accomplished much. We have advanced from a relatively small and little-known organisation into a large and globally recognized Forum where major issues of the world are discussed in a spirit of cooperation. Much of this is due to the tireless work of our Founding President Yakunin and his executive team. But most of the credit goes, of course, to you – the members and participants of our Forum.

So, we have now ten years: ten years of learning, of experimenting, of dialoguing. But I want to suggest to you that the spirit of our endeavour is much older than ten years. It is indeed an animating spirit, an inspiration and longing of humankind through the centuries. In a short essay I wrote titled “Who Are We?”, I referred to an organisation which existed almost 100 years ago, between the two World Wars. It was called “World Committee against War and Fascism.” Now, if we mean by “fascism” an aggressive, military unilateralism wedded to monologue, then we stand for and against the same thing: against militarism and aggressive war, and for multilateral and dialogical cooperation, and peace. The Committee at that time included such famous intellectuals and writers as Maxim Gorky, Bertrand Russell, Albert Einstein, John Dos Passos, and Romain Rolland. This is the tradition, I believe, in which we stand. Of course, there are also other traditions and sources of inspiration. There is the inspiration which comes to us from the former President of Iran, Muhammad Khatami. And there are the older traditions of Mahatma Gandhi, of Erasmus, of Bartolome de Las Casas, of Francis of Assissi.
However, instead of gazing further at the past, I would like now to look to the present and the future. I do not have to tell you: we live in an extremely turbulent and dangerous time where the world is threatened by multiple hazards: a major war (possibly a “nuclear winter”), financial chaos, and environmental disaster. We need courage and strength to carry on our work. In our Opening Session, we heard a statement or an appeal by one of the most courageous intellectuals in the world today: Noam Chomsky. He recently published a book titled *Making the Future: Occupations, Interventions, Empire and Resistance*. I have written some reflections on the book which I want to share with you. In the book, Chomsky repeatedly uses the phrase, “The Owners of the World.” The phrase means, of course, that some people “own” or “possess” the world, while all the rest are possessed or rather “dispossessed.”

To highlight the meaning or the edge of the phrase, I start my reflections in a completely different register. As you know, the German poet Goethe wrote a collection of poems titled *West–Eastern Divan*. It begins with these lines: “To God belongs the Orient/to God belongs the Occident/Northerly and Southern lands/Peacefully rest in His hands.” These lines, which actually resonate with some verses in the Qur’an, announce a peculiar kind of belonging or ownership. The entire world – we are given to understand – “belongs” to God or (we might say) is divine or sacred at its core. However, “belonging” here does not denote a proprietary possession because it does not exclude, disown, or expropriate anybody or anything. On the contrary, by virtue of an enormous largesse or generosity, all beings are first of all empowered, enabled, or “en–owned”; they all share in ownership as recipients of a gift.

Goethe’s lines came to my mind when reading the essays assembled in Noam Chomsky’s recent book. One of the opening essays is titled “We Own the World.” Commenting on the usual debate between hawks and doves in American foreign policy, Chomsky points to the underlying premise accepted on all sides: “The entire debate can proceed without absurdity only on the tacit assumption that ‘we own the world’”. With specific reference to the war in Iraq, Chomsky lifts up for consideration a discussion in Washington focussed *not* on the rightness, justice, or legality of the invasion, but simply on the most promising method for success, especially for stopping “the flow of foreign fighters across the borders” – where the term “foreign fighters” excludes Western troops. The “tacit premise” underlying this debate and virtually all public discussion about Iraq, Chomsky says again, is that “we own the world.” Do owners not have the right to invade and destroy a foreign country? Of course they do. That is a given. The only question is: Will the invasion “work” or will some other tactic be necessary?
By contrast to Goethe’s lines, the ownership referred to by Chomsky thus is predicated not on largesse or generosity but on exclusive privilege and domination. In our time, the privilege enjoyed by the owners extends from the geopolitical and military to the technological and economic-financial domains. In the latter domain, the privilege manifests itself in the gulf separating the “haves” from the “have-nots,” the opulently rich from the poor and destitute. A major contributing factor to this widening gulf has been neo-liberalism, with its corollaries of financial deregulation and outsourcing of costs. As Chomsky comments, referring to the economic meltdown of 2008–2009: “Two major elements were financialization (the shift of investor preference from industrial production to so-called FIRE: finance, insurance, and real estate) and the offshoring of production.” The resulting concentration of wealth, he adds, yielded greater political power [for the rich], accelerating a vicious cycle which has led in America to extraordinary wealth for a fraction of 1 per cent of the population while for the large majority real incomes have virtually stagnated.

In the geopolitical domain, the interests of the “owner” states are backed up by massive military power, an immense arsenal of weapons (including nuclear weapons), and a far-flung network of military bases and installations. In the pursuit of their interests, owners do not hesitate to launch unilateral wars of aggression and even “preemptive” wars (in clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations to which they are signatories). One example of such aggressive warfare was the attack on Iraq – which was a disaster for the Iraqi people. As journalist Nir Rosen observed in an article titled “The Death of Iraq”: “Iraq has been killed, never to rise again. The American occupation has been more disastrous than that of the Mongols, who sacked Baghdad in the 13th century” (precisely, in 1258). So, again, the tacit assumption shaping international conduct seems to be “We own the world.” What does it matter what happens to others? They are “unpeople,” to borrow the term used by British diplomatic historian Mark Curtis. The American philosopher Judith Butler, in her book Flames of War, has written about “ungrievable people.”

As is well known, the Iraq war was only one facet of a much larger geopolitical strategy which is still unfolding. Washington Post correspondent Robin Wright has introduced the notion of “Cold War II” – a phrase picked up by Chomsky (with some qualifications). One aspect of this new Cold War is the ratcheting up of military spending (with the leading “owner” state spending as much or more on military armaments as the rest of the world combined). One favourite phrase used by hegemonic leaders is that “all options are on the table” – where these options include not only defencive
strategies but also aggressive and pre-emptive forms of warfare disguised as defensive. (As if there were no international law, no United Nations, no rules of the game). In the case of other military technologies, the defensive rhetoric is entirely dropped in favour of near-random violence. A prime example of such mayhem is remote-control warfare by means of “drones,” which results in the near-indiscriminate killing of “militants” and civilians (and which recently has rightly been denounced as a “war crime”).

As everyone knows, a major catalyst for a possible transition to “hot war” today is the conflict over Iran, especially its nuclear aspirations. On this issue, the drumbeats of war are reaching deafening proportions, with constant invocations of a “red line” and “all options on the table.” Yet, there is a perfectly sane and reasonable option on the table, namely, the establishment of a nuclear-free zone. As Chomsky observes in an essay titled “Containing Iran,” Iran scarcely poses a military threat to the West. Moreover, any potential threat might be overcome if America “would accept the view of the great majority of its own citizens and of Iranians and permit the Middle East to become a nuclear-weapons-free zone, including Iran and Israel, and U.S. forces deployed there.” This idea was actually endorsed by Security Council Resolution 687 (of 1991), which called for a zone “free from weapons of mass destruction and all missiles for their delivery.” To be sure, in the Western pursuit of geopolitical aims, Iran is only one obstacle, with the much larger obstacles being Russia and especially China.

Seen as a whole, Chomsky’s book is a wake-up call; it presents a grim picture of a world in the possessive grip of military, financial, and technological privilege. Possible antidotes are also mentioned. One such antidote is genuine (not militarised) “democracy promotion,” based on the insight that “a functioning democracy at home holds promise for a simple recognition: that we do not own the world, we share it.” At the end, Chomsky pleads for a “large, active, popular base” which could become “a major force in global society and politics.” But he also recognises that organising and educating such a base cannot mean “telling people what to believe”; it also means “learning from them and with them,” that is, listening and dialoguing. Only if this is kept in mind can we “set society on a more humane course,” and contribute to a better future.

This, of course, is precisely the premise – not the tacit assumption, but the explicit assumption – of our World Public Forum: namely, that we strive for justice in the world through dialogue of civilisations and peoples. Let us re-dedicate ourselves to this goal and hope that, at the end of the next ten years, the world will be a more just and peaceful place in which we and our children can live, not as owners but as partners.
III

BASICS OF DIALOGUE OF CIVILISATIONS THEORY
Where is the World Heading?

Immanuel Wallerstein
Speech at the Fifth Session of Rhodes Forum, held in Greece on October 10–14, 2007

Where is the world heading in the next decade or two? There are two arenas in which we can anticipate very great turbulence – the geopolitical arena, and the world-economy. Let me address each in turn. The relative decline of U.S. geopolitical power is now being acknowledged by almost everyone. Barack Obama’s election will not change that. Indeed, it will underline it, in that it will make clear that even a more intelligent, more multilateral foreign policy can at most keep U.S. decline from becoming still more precipitate, not reverse it.

We have moved into a truly multilateral world, in the sense that the real geopolitical power of relatively weaker states is suddenly much greater. Look at what has been happening this very year in the Middle East. Turkey is brokering long dormant negotiations between Syria and Israel. Qatar brokered successfully a negotiated truce between fiercely opposed factions in Lebanon. Egypt is seeking to broker negotiations between Hamas and Israel.

The Palestinian Authority has resumed negotiations with Hamas. And the Pakistani government has entered into a de facto truce with the Taliban inside the zones bordering Afghanistan. The significant thing about each of these actions is that the United States was opposed to all of these negotiations and has simply been ignored – without any serious consequences for any of the actors.

Who are the major players in this multilateral division of real effective geopolitical power? Alongside the United States, which does remain of course a major player, we find the two other loci of the North as we have known it since the 1970s – the west-European subset of the European Union and Japan. But in addition, of course, there is now Russia, China, India, Iran, Brazil (as the putative leader of a South American bloc), and South Africa (as the putative leader of a southern Africa bloc).
What is happening is that there is an immense amount of jockeying for alliances, with a great deal of internal debate in all these zones about the optimal partners and a great deal of uncertainty about what they will decide. In addition, there are a large number of other countries unsure of how they should maneuver within this situation. I think of Poland, Ukraine, Korea, Pakistan, Egypt, Nigeria, Mexico, Canada, and no doubt others. As soon as I list all of these, one can see that we are in a very new geopolitical situation, quite unlike that which the world has known in a very long time. It isn’t quite total anarchy, but it is certainly massive geopolitical disorder. It no doubt makes many governments nervous, and sends them in search of a more stable set-up, which precisely increases the harshness of their internal disagreements about policy options. Look at the debates within Iran or Poland right now, to cite just two examples. Look indeed at the debate that is developing within the United States, and which I believe will become still more intense (and tense) beginning in 2009.

Now put this geopolitical disorder alongside the present acute uncertainties about the world-economy. Any reader of the world financial press cannot but be struck by the sharp disagreements among the pundits and among the big players on the world market about what will happen next, and therefore what they should do. How far will market shares plunge? Is inflation a real threat? Where is safe ground?

There are a series of real issues. There is first of all the issue of currencies. We have lived, ever since 1945 at least, in a dollar-stabilized world. The decline of the United States, in particular its decline as a dominant locus of world production, combined with the overstretch of its debt – governmental debt, entrepreneurial debt, and individual debt – has caused a serious decline of its exchange rate, one whose end point is unclear but is probably still lower, even much lower, than it is at present.

This decline of the dollar poses a serious economic dilemma for other countries, particularly those which have placed their increasing wealth into dollar-denominated bonds and stocks. These countries are all torn between wanting to sustain the United States as a significant purchaser of their exports and the real losses they are incurring in the value of their dollar-denominated assets as the dollar declines. It is obvious what is happening. They are all slowly delinking from the dollar, with an emphasis up to now on the “slowly.”
But as with all financial exits, the issue for the holders of assets is timing – neither too early nor too late. There is always the risk, the high risk, of sudden panic – a virtual “run on the bank” with of course devastating results for whoever is thirty seconds too late and even more devastating results for the United States – its government, its enterprises, and its citizens/residents. All of us are holding our breath.

But then what? Will some other currency replace the dollar as the reserve currency of the world? The obvious candidate is the euro. It is not sure whether it can play this role or even whether European governments wish it to play this role, although it is possible that it might have this role thrust upon it. If not the euro, might we have a multi-currency situation – one in which the dollar, the euro, the yen, possibly the yuan and the pound are all used for world transactions? The answer here is a bit akin to the question of geopolitical alliances. It would not quite be total anarchy, but it would certainly be disorder, and the world’s governments and producers would be feeling most uncomfortable - not to speak of the world’s pensioners.

Currency however is far from the only issue. Many large countries have seen large increases in both their productive output and their level of consumption. Take only the so-called BRIC countries – Brazil, Russia, India, and China – who harbor something like 60% of the world’s population. The increase in their output and consumption levels has led to an incredibly increased demand for energy, raw materials, food, and water. Suddenly the prices in all these domains have escalated wildly, since demand has been outpacing supply by a wide margin.

Something has to give. We could have a major worldwide inflation, as the prices of all these commodities continue to zoom upward, fueled by speculators. We could then have massive protectionism, as governments sought to safeguard their own supplies by limiting any and all exports. As we know from past experiences, this could create an erratic vicious circle. Or we could have massive shortages felt here and there, resulting in high mortality rates and serious additional environmental catastrophes.

Governments assaulted by reduced real revenues, and under pressure not to increase taxes to compensate, might cut back seriously in the three key domains of education, health, and old-age pensions. But these are the three domains that, as part of the democratization of the world over the past two centuries, have been the key demands that publics have made of governments. Governments unable to address seriously the maintenance of these three forms of social redistribution would face a major loss of legitimacy, with very uncertain consequences in terms of civil uprisings.
Now this entire short-run negative picture is exactly what one means when one says that the system has moved far from equilibrium and has entered into a state of chaos. Chaos, to be sure, never goes on forever. Chaotic situations eventually breed their own resolution in what Prigogine and Stengers called ‘Order Out of Chaos’ in the English title of their classic work. As the authors emphasized, in the midst of a bifurcation, there is creativity, there is choice, but we cannot be sure what choices will be made.

The question for the world today is just that: what shall we choose, how shall we choose, and how may we try to achieve the result that our choices shall prevail. The world left had a vertiginous rise in the nineteenth and especially the twentieth century. It mobilized support on a vast scale and very effectively. There came a moment in the post-1945 period when it seemed to be succeeding everywhere and in every way. The tone of triumphalism dominated the spirits of all its supporters.

Then came the grand disillusionments. There were so many. The states where the antisystemic movements came to power in one way or another were in practice far from what the popular forces had expected and hoped to institute. And the irreversibility of these regimes turned out to be another illusion. I will not review for you here the many causes of these disillusions and the many ways in which the erstwhile mass support for these movements dissipated. You can all recite them.

By the early 1990s, triumphalism had totally disappeared amongst the world left, to be replaced by a widespread lethargy, often a sense of defeat. There were few who were still ready to mouth the formulas, the *langue du bois*, the certainties of thirty years earlier. Indeed, triumphalism had changed camps. Suddenly, we were assailed from the right by the theme of the ‘end of history’, by Mrs. Thatcher’s slogan of TINA – ‘there is no alternative’ to the only choice available, neo-liberal globalisation.

And yet, as we know, the triumphalism of the world right fell apart as well, most spectacularly in the utter fiasco of the neo-con assertion of a permanent U.S. imperial domination of the world. In the five years since 2003, George W. Bush’s proclamation, amidst fake pageantry, of ‘mission accomplished’ has become a stale joke. From the Zapatista uprising of 1994 to the successful closing-down of the Seattle meeting of the World Trade Organization in 1999 to the founding of the World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre in 2001, a reignited world left is now on the world scene again.

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The real question is what kinds of political actions can be meaningful in the middle-run of the next thirty years that will tilt the struggle over the choice in the systemic bifurcation in the direction of a better world-system, one that is largely democratic and largely egalitarian. I am struck by the degree to which in this so-called globalized world, the insistent popular demand is more control at the local level by popular forces.

This demand for devolution of real decision-making is to be found in the push of indigenous movements for ‘pluricultural’ states. It is to be found in the demands of landless workers not merely for access to the land but for self-sufficiency in food production. It is to be found in the demand of groups composed of persons of alternative sexual practices to get the states out of the bedrooms in every possible way. It is to be found in the demands of industrial workers in industries undergoing the threat of employers to ‘run away’ to gain control of their own plants and continue their functioning even if the level of profitability is low. And it is to be found, most of all, in the insistence of women to achieve genuine autonomy in all the myriad aspects of their real lives.

One might think that this was some resurrection of classic anarchism. But it really isn’t, since almost all of these pressures are acted out less by fighting to destroy the state than by seeking to make the states somehow truly less relevant in their lives. These thrusts are not those of ‘bomb throwers’ but of builders.

We are living in a chaotic world environment. Chaos is a big whirl, with great fluctuations. It is very difficult therefore to see clearly. It is a bit like trying to make our way forward in a major snowstorm. I’ve never been in a truly blinding snowstorm. But I imagine that the survivors are those who both use something like a compass to know in which direction to walk and also look at the ground inches in front of them to make sure they do not tumble into some hole. The compass is our middle-run objectives. The ground inches in front of us is the politics of the lesser evil. If we don’t do both, we are lost. Some people survive snowstorms, and some do not. Let us debate about the direction of the compass, ignoring the states and ignoring nationalism. Let us nonetheless engage with the states and nationalism in the short run, so that we avoid the crevices. Then we have a chance of survival. Then we have a chance that we will achieve that other world that is possible.
One of the key factors of the present global instability is the so-called “global war on terror,” which was unilaterally launched by the United States – with large-scale use of force against Iraq and Afghanistan and subsequent regional destabilization. This development has led to an escalation of tensions at the global level and may have undermined efforts at civilisational dialogue for a long time. The global financial crisis has injected further volatility into the international system and has significantly weakened the leading Western power’s strategy of ‘reshaping’ the global order according to its own ideology and in conformity with its interests. The shifting balance of power we are witnessing today may also be due to an ‘imperial overstretch’ of that country’s military and financial capabilities.

The political and military developments triggered by the events of 2001 and the subsequent economic instability may have accelerated the development towards a multipolar world order in which national sovereignty will acquire a more important role than during the transitory phase of political unipolarity when – immediately after the collapse of the cold war’s bipolar order – the great powers in the Security Council rallied around the United States as global hegemon. An important aspect of multipolarity is the emergence of the ‘global regions’, which may create a counterbalance to the strategies aimed at the perpetuation of global hegemony. If the multilateral philosophy of the United Nations Organization is to survive the next decades, the world organization – and in particular the decision-making procedures in the Security Council – will have to be reformed along regional lines.
Shortly before the collapse of the Cold War’s bipolar order, a British historian reminded a concerned international public of what he described as iron law of history, namely that great powers may trigger their own demise by what he characterized as “imperial overstretch” (Kennedy, 1987). While Paul Kennedy, analyzing the shifting power balance during the last five centuries, had predicted (in 1987) the decline of the Soviet Union and a relative decline of the United States, most pundits in the Western world thought that he was proven wrong, as regards the United States, when – shortly after his assessment was published – the Eastern bloc collapsed (in 1989) and, two years later, the Soviet Union imploded; this development left, it was said, the United States as the only superpower, as global hegemon.

However, as we know by now, the euphoria over the supposedly “new” world order, proclaimed by President George H. W. Bush after military victory in the Gulf war of 1991 (for details see Koechler, 1993), was premature and the celebration of what some had referred to as the (almost mythical) status of “hyperpower” was proven a false, indeed totally misleading, reading of history. The very developments that were interpreted as refutation of Paul Kennedy’s thesis eventually triggered a chain of events that led to the “only remaining superpower’s” getting entangled in a web of power projections which are most adequately described as “imperial overstretch” and which may ultimately prove the correctness of the historian’s original assessment.

Naturally, great powers have always been in a state of denial as far as the sustainability of their predominant position is concerned. Unexpected “victories” in the global power game have almost always produced imperial hubris. Accordingly, a country seeing itself as global hegemon will proclaim that it will not accept a competitor’s eventually reaching strategic parity, not to speak of superiority. This was the constellation in which the U.S. administration had defined the country’s security strategy in the wake of the events of the year 2001. This kind of geostrategic approach was

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tantamount to a “political denial of reality” whereby the lonely superpower at the dawn of the third millennium – like all its predecessors over the last two millennia – tried to arrest the course of history, or to eternalize a beneficial power constellation.

We will now briefly try to reconstruct the developments that have brought about a second shift in the global power constellation – after the first tectonic shift that followed the events of 1989 – and we shall subsequently analyze the developments since the prematurely declared “New World Order”, which may eventually lead to a global rearrangement of power relations along multipolar lines.

In the early 1990s, triumphalism took precedence over sober analysis of the new geopolitical constellation resulting from the sudden, and unexpected, end of bipolarity. Commentaries in the U.S. and Western Europe in particular were full of praise of a newfound “unanimity” among the permanent members of the Security Council, which allowed the world organization, and for the first time since its foundation, so the pundits said, to carry out its mandate of collective security – after decades of paralysis due to the mutual “veto blockage” during the period of the Cold War. The Gulf war resolutions of 1990–1991 were quoted as examples of what can be achieved if there exists a sense of common purpose among the veto-wielding members.

However, the unanimity which enabled the Council to act according to the priorities set by the “only remaining superpower” was hollow, artificial and, thus, short-lived. Under the shock of the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and with its imminent disintegration in sight, the Gorbachev-era Soviet Union did not carry the weight necessary to confront the United States; nor did the People’s Republic of China consider it opportune to challenge the proclaimed “New World Order” by a behaviour (namely use of the veto) that would have been “punished,” by the superpower of the moment, as obstruction of the Security Council’s mandate of collective security.

This was the background against which the United States was able to get endorsement for a “war authorization resolution” that allowed it to use “all necessary means,” or to act at its discretion, to bring to an end Iraq’s annexation of Kuwait. Under the cover of this resolution, not only Kuwaiti sovereignty was restored, but also Iraq’s civilian infrastructure was destroyed to the extent the intervening power – together with her “lesser” allies – considered appropriate, i.e. conducive to her strategic interests in the region. That the use of armed force was backed up by punitive sanctions
(which were equivalent to a medieval siege), which resulted in the death of up to a million of innocent civilians, has demonstrated to the entire world that, when it comes to the aim of securing strategic supremacy, a triumphant superpower accepts no limits, neither in terms of the means used nor in regard to moral principles. Under conditions of unipolarity, whether actual or perceived, the arbitrary exercise of power, including the dubious privilege of a use of force with impunity, is the rule rather than the exception.

The unipolar constellation during the 1990s nurtured, on the part of the self-declared victor of the Cold War, an “anything goes” mentality – encouraging the major global power to effectively act unilaterally (as in the case of the Gulf war coalition of 1991), but with the full authorization of the United Nations Organization as embodiment of multilateralism. In the short period in which the former rival superpower of the U.S. and, subsequently, that power’s successor state, the Russian Federation, did not make use of its procedural rights under Art. 27 of the UN Charter, the illusion of omnipotence grew on the part of the dominant global player. In the prevailing atmosphere, the U.S. was able to use the Security Council to get endorsement for the (legally questionable) creation of a war crimes tribunal with territorial jurisdiction for the former Yugoslavia, which enacted a New World Order–version of victor’s justice according to which mostly personnel and leaders of “adversarial” countries were prosecuted, while the conduct of NATO officials – some of whom were accused of large–scale violations of international humanitarian law during the Kosovo war – was not even investigated. Carla del Ponte’s admission in her recently published memoir speaks volumes and needs no further comment.

The unanimity among the great powers in the Security Council effectively came to an end when the United States – in unison with her NATO allies – decided to attack the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia without authorization.

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2 For details see the author’s analysis: Ethische Aspekte der Sanktionen im Völkerrecht. Dr Praxis der Sanktionspolitik und die Menschenrechte. (Studies in International Relations, XX.) Vienna: International Progress Organization, 1994.

3 On the legal problems of this tribunal see the author’s MEMORANDUM on the Indictment of the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the President of the Republic of Serbia and Other Officials of Yugoslavia by the “International Tribunal for Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991.” International Progress Organization, Caracas, 27 May 1999, at i-p-o.org/ yu-tribunal.htm, last visited on 3 October 2009.

4 “I quickly concluded that it was impossible to investigate NATO, because NATO and its member states would not cooperate with us. (...) I understood that I had collided with the edge of the political universe in which the tribunal was allowed to function. (...) It was impossible to go on politically without undermining the rest of the tribunal’s work.” (Carla del Ponte with Chuck Sudetic, Madam Prosecutor. Confrontations with Humanity’s Worst Criminals and the Culture of Impunity. A Memoir. New York: Other Press, 2009, pp. 60f.)
of the United Nations Security Council (in 1999). The New World Order’s first war of aggression made two contradictory facts obvious:

a) The power of the global hegemon was not any more strong enough to prevent the opponents from withholding their consent in the Security Council, which meant a first crack in the post–Cold War edifice of unipolarity;

b) nonetheless, the most powerful member in the Security Council felt emboldened enough “to go it alone,” namely to engage in a unilateral use of force, in outright violation of the United Nations Charter, and without apparent fear of repercussions. In a much more dramatic fashion, this modus operandi was again applied in the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003. Although, in that instance, influential NATO allies did not join the “coalition of the willing,” the “only superpower” tried to use this war of aggression in order to reshape the strategic constellation in the Middle East and, through this measure, to eternalize U.S. hegemony at the global level. As we know by now, this geostrategic design proved unsustainable; it has indeed been one of the factors that triggered a shift of the power constellation away from the unipolar model and towards a new multipolar order.

In order to understand the “ideology” that underlies a global power’s actions such as those of the U.S. in and against Iraq, we have to be aware of the circumstances under which the war of 2003 was prepared, and of the events that preceded it. A pattern of deception, and subsequently self-deception, has characterized the actions taken by the invading country prior to March 2003. An edifice of false accusations (about Iraq’s possession of arms of mass destruction, links to the so-called “Al-Qaeda” organization, etc.) was constructed, and the UN Security Council was presented with entirely false statistics and forged documents – in that by now infamous appearance of which then Secretary of State Colin Powell later said that it is a “blot” on his record. It has become public knowledge that Iraq was attacked under more than one false pretext.

What must not be overlooked, however, is that all these “imperial” disinformation activities were preceded by the colossal and tragic events of September 11, 2001. Only a few days after the attacks, calls for the invasion

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of Iraq were heard in the United States; and immediately after the tragic events the U.S. succeeded in the Security Council to get endorsement for a war against Afghanistan, which was launched shortly thereafter. A large-scale media campaign about the supposed threat Islam and Islamic civilisation poses to the West and Western civilisation accompanied the military preparations for and the conduct of wars first in Afghanistan and later in Iraq.

It is to be recalled that up to the present day no comprehensive investigation of the events on that day has been undertaken and no indictment has ever been issued by the FBI against the person officially named as the main instigator of the crimes of September 11, 2001. Whatever the reasons for this prosecutorial inactivity may be, there exists no undisputed public account of the sequence of events that led to the tragic incidents on that day. The report issued by the United States Congress offers no convincing explanation in any way since it completely omits important facts such as the collapse of the WTC 7 building. In the absence of credible measures of criminal investigation and prosecution by the competent authorities of the country directly concerned, a colossal effort would have to be undertaken to ascertain the facts, something which is beyond the scope of our analysis and, frankly speaking, beyond any individual’s capacity.

What we have to be aware of, however, in this geopolitical analysis is the fact that these events led the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to invoke – for the first time in its history – Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which contains provisions for collective self-defense. According to media reports in late 2001, former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, when asked about this unprecedented step, said that he would support collective action by the NATO countries if there were irrefutable proof that the events were indeed an attack on the United States.

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6 "The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area."

7 "Proof had to be delivered that the September 11 terror attack came from abroad. [Yet,] that proof still has not been provided." (Transcribed and translated from German.) Schmidt reportedly made the statement on German television on 10 December 2001; see the Webster Tarpley segment in the video by Barrie Zwicker, “The Great Conspiracy: The 9/11 News Special You Never Saw" (2004) at http://www.filestube.com/source.html?url=http://rockthetruth.blogspot.com/2009/06/great-conspiracy-911-news-special-you.html. (N.B.: The author cannot independently verify the veracity of the claim.)
It is a historical fact that, subsequently to these events, the “international community” was effectively “taken hostage” for a campaign that the United States initially characterized as “global war on terror” and which it justified by reference to the events of September 2001 although no undisputed record has been presented of these events, neither in the Security Council nor to the United States public. Notwithstanding the lack of full knowledge about the actual causes, all UN member states were expected to rally behind the United States in a mythical global war “against evil” which, according to its rationale, can never be ended.

The developments on the fronts in Afghanistan and Iraq will by now have made obvious even to the most naive observer that it is impossible to define the criteria of victory in those conflicts, not to speak of the chances of “recreating” the political make-up of these two countries and the balance of forces in the wider regions of the Middle East and Central Asia, a goal which – if we pay attention to Zbigniew Brzezinski’s earlier comments (Brzezinski, 1997) – may anyway have been the undeclared long-term strategic aim behind those military adventures.

Contrary to the (declared as well as undeclared) goals of these effectively unilateral operations – the Security Council blessing for the operations in Afghanistan is vague and disputable, – what has been achieved is the destruction of the political order in the targeted countries and a large-scale destabilization of the affected regions. The invading country and her, by now, deserting allies appear to have no clue as to how to remedy the situation and stabilize the polities, which they had first dismantled. With “victory” nowhere near and the road to a face-saving way out, or “disengagement,” effectively blocked, the meaning of Paul Kennedy’s notion of “imperial overstretch” has been demonstrated to the entire world: the simultaneous conflicts in two regions have put a severe strain on the conventional military capacities of the intervening countries and have become an increasingly felt burden on the U.S. economy in particular. In Central/South Asia, the spilling-over of the war into nuclear armed Pakistan has revived a scenario of an even wider conflict with a much larger destructive potential. In spite of frantic efforts at readjusting the respective military strategies and doctrines, conventional strategic wisdom has failed.

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At the same time, the country that pursues a military effort not only on the two above-mentioned fronts, but also – because of the nature of the “global war on terror” – virtually everywhere and perpetually, has been at the center (and origin) of the most serious economic crisis since the Great Depression. In the eyes of the international public, the United States has in fact not been able to ensure the stability and sustainability of the global economy for which, especially since the end of the bipolar world order, it had proclaimed the basic principles and over which it had claimed effective leadership. The United States had indeed prescribed principles of economy and finance that were proven not to be sufficient to guarantee stable economic exchange, neither domestically nor at the international level.

Combined with the global financial and economic crisis, the military adventures in distant regions of the globe – continents away from the region of the Americas – have triggered a process of erosion of the unilateral power constellation that prevailed since the end of the Cold War, and have substantially weakened U.S. power in a multidimensional sense. This development will not only affect the country’s military superiority, but its claimed leadership position in the economy as well as in the socio-cultural domain; above all, a power that slips into a situation in which “the emperor has no clothes” loses its leadership qualities in the eyes of the international community and, accordingly, will lack the moral authority on which any claim to global leadership is to be based.

(II)

The two parallel developments – on the military and economic fronts – may signal the end of global unipolarity in essentially two different respects:

a) the exhaustion of resources due to what has been characterized as “imperial overstretch,” and

b) the mobilization effect resulting from the overbearing “thirst for power” that was expressed in the claim to global hegemony. Countries that – under the slogan of “newfound unanimity” – were expected to subordinate themselves to the dominant power did gradually realize that their status as sovereign nations cannot be sustained in an essentially unipolar framework of power relations, and that neither the security nor the economic well-being of their populations can be ensured under such conditions.
Thus, the “imperial denial of reality,” or the illusion of omnipotence, has brought about a constellation in which a “reality check” has become unavoidable for the country that saw itself as the guarantor of an – apparently short-lived – unipolar system, idolized as “New World Order.” History teaches us that overbearing power eventually, and inevitably, produces a reverse effect; it provokes and steadily invigorates resistance to the respective hegemonial claim. It appears to be in the very nature of power that it ignores conventional wisdom and does not draw on the collective memory of nations. However, so the saying goes, those who ignore history are condemned to repeat it. This exactly describes the situation in which the second major shift of the global power constellation since World War II appears to take hold.

As we have noted earlier, UN member countries, and especially permanent members in the Security Council, have been pushed to realize their own potential (in terms of realpolitik as well as their statutory rights) when confronted with the crass assertion of hegemonial power in a unipolar context; their political survival instincts have actually been sharpened because they increasingly became aware that national sovereignty, and with it the freedom to act as a member of the “international community,” will be continuously eroded in each and every instance when the hegemonial power is allowed “to get away” with unilateral action, including the use of force. As demonstrated in the cases of the Yugoslavia–Kosovo war of 1999 and the Iraq war of 2003, other great powers were eventually prepared to make use of their statutory right under Article 27 of the Charter, thus denying those unilateral actions the semblance of legality. Those countries gradually began to define and assert their interests in a multilateral framework, insisting on respect of the UN Charter’s principle of sovereign equality and on the reactivation of the world organization’s system of collective security, something which had been impossible under the conditions of the unilateral order.

If we look back at the developments since the collapse of the “East bloc,” the “unipolar moment” may not have lasted longer than a decade. The euphoria over a supposed “New World Order” and the prematurely declared “End of History” (Fukuyama, 1989) eventually proved counterproductive from the perspective of the self-proclaimed victor of the Cold War. Contrary to what had been hoped for, these proclamations contributed to the emergence of a new awareness of the “virtues of multipolarity,” namely of the fact that unipolarity can neither ensure a just nor a stable global order. Because of the inherent tendency towards an arbitrary use of power, it may, as we know by now, even lead to a state of global anarchy in the long term.
During the era of East–West bipolarity, Hans Morgenthau had already made the point that the most stable international order is guaranteed by a multipolar balance of power (Politics among Nations..., 1985).

Parallel to the reassertion of sovereignty and of national interests on the part of the real international community – namely all the member states of the UN, and not only a few self-proclaimed leader nations that want to prescribe the standards to be applied by the “rest” – was a gradual process of regionalization in the context of conditions that have been described as “globalisation,” but in actual fact meant the claim of essentially one country to global hegemony. Not least because of the experience with the detrimental effects on regional stability and security of unilateral wars and of the instrumentalization of the United Nations Organization for coercive measures against “non-obedient” countries, many states began to realize that they could not confront a global hegemon “in splendid isolation.” The formation – or strengthening, where those existed – of regional groupings has become an imperative of a policy that is aimed at safeguarding sovereignty and freedom of action in a volatile situation which is characterized by the absence of a balance of power. As the fate of countries targeted by coercive measures, including the use of force, that were instigated by the most powerful country has made painfully obvious, smaller countries have virtually no space to act in a unipolar environment.

The UN Charter’s guarantees of the right of individual and collective self-defense under Article 51 mean nothing in a situation that is characterized by a drastic imbalance of power relations. As has also been recently demonstrated in the economic domain, the interests and long-term viability especially of a smaller polity can be better protected, or ensured, if that country is part of a regional organizational structure. If such a country has to act entirely on its own and without co-ordination with regional partners, it may easily fall victim to the age-old political tactic that is described in the maxim “divide et impera!”, and it will definitely not be in a position to protect its population in a credible and efficient manner. As recent (post–Cold War) history has demonstrated, the alternative is often one between occupation and regime change on the one hand and “surrender” to the political demands of the empire on the other.

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It is an irony of history that the process of regionalization we have described here may eventually bring about the end of the global order the consequences of which it was meant to protect against: the greater the number of regional groupings of states and the more efficient and sound their organizational structures, the weaker will the unipolar power structure become. Regional organizations will indeed be the cornerstones of a new multipolar balance of power – a goal that, so far, has been beyond the reach of the United Nations Organization. For obvious reasons, the world organization has been unable to accommodate the global regions in the decision-making processes in the Security Council.

By now, it has become common wisdom that the United Nations Charter effectively perpetuates the power balance that prevailed at the end of the Second World War, which means the de facto exclusion of large regions of the globe (especially Africa and Latin America, but also in Asia) from decision-making in the Security Council. Thus, the only universal organization of inter-state relations is effectively out of tune with the emerging new power balance at the global level. This process not only leads away from the “unipolar moment” of the 1990s and the bipolar power struggle of the Cold War, but also from the concert of powers that had initiated the establishment of the organization in 1945. The over-representation of Atlantic countries in the Security Council (with three out of five permanent members) is a relic of a bygone era that cannot in any way be justified under today’s geopolitical conditions – and that further delegitimates the organization as an agent of global order, not to speak of “global change,” and as guarantor of the international rule of law.

At this point in time, the process of regionalization – which has been accelerated due to the “unilateral excesses” in the absence of a balance of power – cannot be reversed. Apart from the new dynamic this development brings into the global power equation, allowing again a rearrangement of inter-state relations along multipolar lines – something which was originally envisaged in the UN Charter, if one reads the “Purposes and Principles”, – this development could indeed provide the decisive impetus for a structural reform of the United Nations Organization. Since the end of the Cold War, the author has called for a reorganization that recognizes the emerging

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multipolar balance of power (Koechler, 1991). In the case of the Security Council, this would mean the redefinition of permanent membership in such a way that the global regions are equally represented. The exclusion of large areas of the globe with huge populations from decision-making in the fields of international security and peace is a constitutional monstrosity that will further contribute to the organization’s becoming irrelevant unless the reform talk of the last decade produces tangible results. There will be no way around the thorny issue of a redivision of power in the Security Council, a measure of reform that must reflect the constellation at the beginning of the 21st century, and not the one that existed at the middle of the last century.

Integrating the global regions will not only save the United Nations Organization from the fate of irrelevance; such a process may contribute to the badly needed “reinvention” of the organization on the basis of its founding idea – namely to provide a framework of collective action for the common good of mankind on the basis of the sovereign equality of all member states.

Since the end of the Second World War, UN member states have formed regional organizations for different kinds of purposes such as cooperation in the fields of security, economy, and culture – something which is also acknowledged, even encouraged (as far as security arrangements are concerned), in the United Nations Charter (Chapter VI). Depending upon the goals set by the member states, those entities have reached different stages of organizational density and political maturity. Some have been phased out in the meantime, others have merely been functioning under parameters set by powers from outside the region. However, in the bipolar era until the end of what has also been called the East–West Conflict, all ambitions and activities of regional organizations were overshadowed, and often marginalized, by the struggle for control over spheres of influence between that era’s two superpowers. Memberships in regional and inter-regional organizations were often overlapping. Simultaneous membership in regional and superpower-affiliated organizations (such as NATO) had caused numerous conflicts of interest due to potentially contradictory obligations and loyalties. As in the case of the then European Economic Community (EEC), this also created a serious credibility and identity problem, something which has not been resolved even under the new organizational parameters of the European Union after the end of global bipolarity.

Under conditions that are characterized by the failure of one of the most ambitious unipolar projects to date, namely the Bush (I + II) eras’ “New World Order” and the related blueprint for a “New American Century,” regional organizations have acquired new and crucial importance. The emerging balance of power will most certainly be structured along regional lines. The outcome of this realignment of power relations – in terms of the multipolar order of the future – will also be determined by the specific organizational structure and political outlook of these entities. Certain organizations have been established with a strictly regional, “inward-looking”, scope; those entities aim at assisting the member states to successfully compete under conditions of a globalized economy. Some organizations include among their goals issues of regional security and counter-terrorism. Other organizations transcend the framework of mere interest politics at the regional level towards the definition of a global mission or outlook that gives the co-operation between the countries of the respective region a wider meaning and geostrategic dimension. This is definitely the case with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) whose Heads of State, at their summit in Yekaterinburg on 16 June 2009, have declared that the member states are open to a dialogue that facilitates “the building of a more just world order” (Yekaterinburg Declaration..., 2009). In their joint declaration, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan have put special emphasis on the newly emerging balance of power. In Article 1, they state that “[t]he tendency towards true multipolarity is irreversible,” adding that “[t]here is a growing significance of the regional aspect in settling global problems.”

The reemergence of multipolarity and the shift in the balance of power from the Euro-Atlantic region towards the East and countries and regions of the Global South have also been evident in the meeting of the leaders of the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China) that was held simultaneously with the summit of the SCO in Yekaterinburg. The co-ordination of efforts between the two groupings has not only implicitly established the important linkage between regionalism and globality, indeed the aspect of global responsibility, but has cemented the redivision of global power.


14 Ibid.

relations on the basis of intra- and inter-regional cooperation.\textsuperscript{16} In their declaration, issued on the same day as the SCO declaration (16 June 2009), the BRIC leaders have made clear that their concerted efforts are not merely determined by the politics of the national interest, but are ultimately directed at the establishment of a just global order. Underlining their “support for a more democratic and just multi-polar world order based on the rule of international law, equality, mutual respect, cooperation, coordinated action and collective decision-making of all states”\textsuperscript{17}, the BRIC leaders expressed their support for a fundamental reform of the system of international organization on the basis of multilateral diplomacy.\textsuperscript{18}

The sovereignty of states cannot be preserved in a unipolar framework or in a system that, as in the case of the United Nations Organization, incorporates the power balance of an earlier era and, thus, will be increasingly marginalized because of the ever-widening gap between statute (Charter) and reality.

A multipolar balance of power will provide the framework for the respect of sovereign equality of all states (as enshrined in Art. 2[1] of the UN Charter) – and in a more adequate and stable manner than a system based on the rivalry between only two powers (as during the Cold War). In the same way as national sovereignty is actually strengthened, not absorbed, within a framework of regional cooperation, making individual states better prepared to compete in the harsh “globalized” environment, the existence of regional groupings of sovereign states on all continents will be an effective bulwark against the emergence of a new hegemonial power.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Advisor of the United States during the bipolar era, whose strategic considerations we briefly referred to at the beginning of this essay, may well have been aware of the unavoidable “imperial overstretch” under conditions of increasing interconnectedness and co-operation between newly emerging global regions, and of the resulting tectonic shift in global power relations. More than a decade ago,


\textsuperscript{18} See also their stated “strong commitment to multilateral diplomacy with the United Nations playing the central role in dealing with global challenges and threats” and their reaffirmation of “the need for a comprehensive reform of the UN” in Art. 14 of the Declaration, loc. cit.
when commentators still celebrated the American empire, he wrote in an analysis of U.S. geostrategic imperatives in Central Asia: “In the long run, global politics are bound to become increasingly uncongenial to the concentration of hegemonic power in the hands of a single state. Hence, America is not only the first, as well as the only, truly global superpower, but it is also likely to be the very last” (Brzezinski, 1997).

If the current trend towards multipolarity proves sustainable – and all indicators point in that direction, – Brzezinski’s prediction may come true much earlier than he originally anticipated.

REFERENCES


Some fifteen years ago, Francis Fukuyama argued in a much commented paper ("The End of History?", *The National Interest* no 16, 1989) that the globalisation process was ineluctably leading to the generalization of political democracy and, as a consequence, to the “end of History” in the Hegelian meaning of the phrase. In a less teleological perspective, Samuel Huntington (*The Third Wave. Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman, 1991) observed at the same time that economic growth resulting from the liberalization of commercial exchanges and financial flows triggered a “third wave” of democratization all over the world. More cautious than Fukuyama, Huntington admitted however that such a wave could be followed by a counter-wave, but, just like Fukuyama, he had apparently no doubt that other waves of democratization would occur in the future and that, sooner or later, liberal democracy would become the universal political regime.

My purpose is not to determine whether or not History is going to its end. Neither is it to discuss the alleged relationship between the implementation of economic liberalism and the advent of political liberalism. More modestly, I would like only to point out what, in the current process of globalisation, constitutes a challenge or even a threat for democracy in the countries where the democratic regime has been set up for a long time, and what represents an obstacle to democratization in countries with a totalitarian, authoritarian or semi-authoritarian type of political regime. The empirical data that support my presentation basically derive from Europe – a region I live in, at least part of the year – and from Latin America – a region I have been studying as a sociologist for more than four decades.

Three effects of what is commonly called globalisation seem to have a more or less serious negative impact on democracy and democratization.
They are:

1. the social polarization;
2. the cultural heterogenization; and
3. the externalization of decisions. Let’s examine them one after another.

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**The Social Polarization**

The Roman republic was based upon a mass of small-holding peasants who were ready to take up arms and defend the democratic institutions. The idea that democracy implies the existence of a large middle sector between the rich and the poor had previously inspired the Clysthenes’s political reforms in Athens.

In modern societies, it can be observed that democracy is more stable and works better when the middle classes are large and when the disparity of social and economic status is kept within certain limits. These limits vary from one society to another. The American democracy, for instance, tolerates a greater disparity of status than most of European democracies do. But any democratic society oughts to see that the social and economic differentiation of the citizens does not pass beyond the threshold of what is tolerable.

Now, as a consequence of globalisation, the middle classes tend to decrease in size, while the wealth of the wealthy and the number of the poor tend to increase. The developed societies and the emerging countries, in which the middle classes had steadily grown till the 1970’s, become more and more polarized today. The structural adjustment policies, the industrial restructurations and the curtailing of State bureaucracies conduce to the expulsion of part of the middle classes to the lower classes and to the fall of part of the lower classes down to unemployment, precariousness or exclusion.

Such a phenomenon affects Europe and, much more strongly, Latin America. It explains the emergence of new movements which are usually called “populist” in default of a better word. These movements express in different ways the frustrations of the individuals in downward social mobility and in a situation of social insecurity or exclusion. In Europe, the populist movements represent perturbing political players in the democratic game, which can be more or less altered. In the first round of the 2002 French presidential election, the candidate of the Front National eliminated
the candidate of the left, so that the socialist and communist voters had no other choice than that to give their ballots to the conservative candidate in the run-off.

In Latin America, a traditional land of populism, the new populist movements endanger the democratic institutions. With the support of a majority of the Venezuelans, Hugo Chavez and his Bolivarian revolution swept away the two-party political system that had been working democratically for fifteen years in Venezuela. It is worth reminding that the Fujimori’s coup d’État which suspended temporarily the Peruvian democracy in 1992 was approved by around 80 % of the Peruvians. The Venezuelan and Peruvian cases show that populism may lead to the re-establishment of authoritarianism through perfectly democratic procedures.

The Venezuelan case also reveals that the political divide between chavistas and antichavistas does not correspond neither to an opposition between social classes nor even to an opposition between the rich and the poor. Antichavismo gathers together the business elite and the unionized workers (who have stable jobs), while chavismo regroups the precarious workers, the unemployed and subemployed, and the excluded. It is the degree of social precariousness or of social security, more than the level of income, that determines the adherence to one or another faction.

The Cultural Heterogenisation

The social counter-reforms that the globalisation process induces tend to empty the national community of its meaning. The national State is compelled to renounced its redistributive function, at least partially. The goods and services that it placed at the population’s disposal, financing them by the tax system, are now put in the market, and they become less accessible to certain social groups or categories. The loyalties that the State received in return for the redistribution it carried out become weaker. As the national solidarity no longer fully operates, the social groups and categories that feel injured or abandoned try to organize themselves at a subnational level, on a regional, ethnic and/or religious basis, assuming sometimes new identities which claim specific rights.

In Europe, such demands have mainly a regionalist characteristic. Many of them may be answered through the implementation of a policy of regionalization, that is, making over some State prerogatives to the regions. It is possible that a region uses its new powers in order to create its own State apparatus and to open up a way from autonomy to independence.
Then, regionalization would lead to the decomposition of the nation into its constituent units. But democracy would not necessarily suffer, as the split of Checoslovakia and even the much more dramatic desintegration of Yugoslavia attest.

Things go differently in Latin America where the identity claims are strongly expressed in ethnic and cultural terms. Since the 1980’s, the Indians first, then the Blacks struggle for the recognition of collective linguistic, cultural, economic and political rights, putting forward a tradition anterior to the arrival of the Whites in the Americas – a tradition that they pretend to be the sole and direct heirs. Some Indian organizations consider democracy an element of the Western culture and they contrast it with an indigenous system of government which would be supposedly better. The answers of the Latin American governments to the demands of the Indian population – or to the organizations that represent them – have been in some way positive. Today, thirteen Latin American countries are constitutionally defined as multicultural. The Colombian constitution of 1991 grants extended collective rights to the Indian and Black communities and it goes very far in the setting up of a multicultural society. However, the Colombian Indians represent only 1.8% of the total population of the country. In other Andean countries (Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia) and in Mesoamerica (Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras particularly) where the Indian population is proportionally much larger, the institutionalization of multiculturalism raises problems that can hardly find a democratic solution.

How can democratically coexist populations that appeal to different and sometimes conflicting historical and cultural traditions, and that conceive differently the way to govern themselves? Is compatible with democracy the grant of collective rights to segments of population that pretend to constitute peoples? Does not democracy presuppose a culturally homogeneous public space within which the contending political actors share the same values, identify themselves with the same history, and are willing to prepare a common future?

In the 19th century, democracy developed in societies that were becoming nations, that is, in culturally more and more homogeneous social formations. The democratization process and the nation-building process evolved jointly. What kind of democracy is possible today in societies that globalisation tends to denationalized and to make culturally heterogeneous? Can democracy and nation be dissociated?
The externalisation of political decisions

Globalisation forces the State to cut down its networks and its apparatus, and to limit strictly its interventions in the social and economic fields in which it had expanded from the 1930és as a consequence of the Great Depression. The withdrawal of the State is less perceptible in the United States because State networks and State apparatus never proliferated there as much as elsewhere. But it is notably felt in Europe, where the Welfare State is progressively dismantled. And it is even more strongly felt in Latin America, where the withdrawal of the State was took place in haste and confusion during the debt crisis of the 1980’s. In some Latin American countries, the State did not contract: it properly collapsed.

As a consequence, any democratic government disposes of much less room to make decisions and it is not always able to carry out the policies it has been voted for. The German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder was certainly not elected to make the Hartz laws, and he would not have made these laws, had it not been the external constraint. The Brazilian president Luis Inacio “Lula” da Silva, the leader of the left-leaning Workers’ Party, implements the same economic policy as that of his predecessor – a policy which is designed by the International Monetary Fund. In other words, the public debate remains fully open in the democratic countries; all the political choices remain theoretically possible; but, in fact, a lot of fundamental political decisions are dictated from outside.

The incidence that the external constraint exerts on the making of political decisions tends to induce the citizens to scepticism about the functioning of democracy and even about democracy itself. The citizens feel that politicians do not take their vote into account, do not keep their electoral promises, and finally betray the popular will once they are in power. Such a feeling lead to electoral abstentionism, or it drive voters to support the “populist” movements we have already talked about.

As a matter of fact, governments are losing control over the political decision on behalf of transnational actors which are not accountable and which escape any democratic check. These actors can be classified into four categories:

The transnational corporations (industrial, financial, commercial, et.). They multiplied during the last twenty years. At the same time, they considerably grew in size through mergers and acquisitions. Their balance sometimes exceeds the budget of many countries. The financial power they accumulate gives them a strong bargaining position relatively to
governments. The relationship they maintain with the political power is still poorly known. *The Manchurian Candidate*, a Jonathan Demme’s film recently released in the United States, which tackles the question, belongs to the realm of fiction, but certainly not to that of fantasy.

**The NGO’s** (humanitarian, environmentalist, etc.). They are the “goodies” of globalisation, but they do not always deserve the image they enjoy in the public opinion. The NGO’s are not clearly distinguishable from transnational firms, because they are also transnational firms. They do not produce goods, they do not sell services, but they produce and sell causes (human rights, basic education, protection of the rain forest, and so on) in the market of charity. And they commercialise these causes using the same methods of marketing and advertising. Usually, they work in social and territorial spaces from which the neo-liberalized State has withdrawn. But sometimes they encroach on government authority and they contribute to the weakening of the State. In today’s Bolivia, more than one thousand NGO’s of any nationality and religion, control real fiefs. The meddling of NGO’s in the internal affairs of the countries to which they are supposed to bring relief is often criticized, sometimes with good reasons. In Mexico, the *zapatista* insurrection would have ended years ago, if it were not supported by a large number of foreign NGO’s.

**The mafias.** They take a growing importance, mainly thanks to the liberalization of financial flows. The Latin American drug networks now have their own Research and Development department that recently created a genetically modified coca plant which is much more productive. Facing the mafias, the State is often in a weak situation, and some governments ought to come to terms with them in order to meet the demands of the multilateral financial institutions. At the end of the 1980’s, the Peruvian government was under the necessity of opening new offices of the central bank in the coca zones and of collecting and laundering the coca money in order to escape bankruptcy. At the same time, le Peruvian president swore to the American ambassador that everything was done to fight the drug traffic.

**The terrorist groups.** They also became transnational. They often operate in connection to the mafias. We just mention them.
It seems that globalisation ushers mature democracies in a zone of turbulence and that it puts serious obstacles to the democratisation process in countries with non-democratic or semi-democratic political regime. As a matter of fact, the future of democracy would be more secure if globalisation were regulated and if the transnational actors were strictly placed under democratic control. Such a regulation presupposes an agency invested with a democratic legitimacy beyond all question. The idea of a sort of world government in possession of this legitimacy may seem utopian. However, it is less utopian today than it was in the 18th century, at the time of its first expression. Let’s remember that some utopias have been, not empty dreams, but more or less accurate anticipations of the future.
The global condition is one of heightened vulnerability. National boundaries are increasingly porous. States are finding it harder and harder to run their economies and defend their borders. As the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, Bali, Madrid and London have demonstrated, wealth, power and nuclear arsenals offer little guarantee of protection.

The word global is now a cliché. So are such terms as global village, global economy and global culture. We are often told that we live in an era of globalisation. In the words of Roland Robertson, the world is fast becoming a single place (1992). Others speak of an emerging global consciousness. Globalisation has become a subject of discussion among corporate managers, scholars, policy-makers and citizens alike. Yet, there is no consensus on its meaning, its origins, or even its long-term implications.

Globalisation is in some ways as old as capitalism itself, yet it points to a new historical phase (Higgott and Payne, 2000). The contemporary world is one in which a number of seemingly distinct processes are occurring more or less simultaneously, and acquiring a global reach, often in highly interconnected fashion.

In a rapidly globalising world high consequence risks (Beck, 1992) have become integral to the functioning of society. The global condition is one of heightened vulnerability as much for states as for groups and individuals. One need only think of the effects of financial crises, nuclear accidents, oil spills, ozone depletion, global warming, or terrorist attacks. If there is one characteristic that distinguishes contemporary life it is the globalisation of insecurity.

If this reading of events is at all accurate, then a number of difficult questions suggest themselves: What challenges does the globalisation of insecurity pose for political theory and practice, for the way societies organize themselves, for the way people participate in society and in the
decisions that vitally affect their future. What are appropriate ethical and institutional responses? And what of the role of the world’s great civilisations? Before turning to these questions, it may be useful to probe a little more deeply into the dynamic of globalisation.

**Global Social Change**

Contemporary social change is global in character. The last three centuries are perhaps best described in terms of the closely interconnected transformations associated with secularisation, industrialisation, urbanisation, the geographical extension of market relations, and, paradoxically enough, nationalism and bureaucratisation. All these trends have now assumed global dimensions.

In what sense is social change global? First and most obviously in the space it occupies. Boundaries, whether underpinned by law, culture, or physical force, have not withstood the tidal flow of change. National and other boundaries may persist, but territorially based authority has become increasingly problematic (Prakash and Hart, 1999, p. 172). Indeed, globalisation is best understood as a codeword for the internationalisation or even transnationalisation of economic practice (technical innovation, production, trade, finance), security practice (understood in its hard or conventional sense as military or physical security), and cultural practice (understood primarily as transnational flows of people, ideas, images and messages).

Second, social change is global by virtue of the norms or principles (e.g. free trade, comparative advantage, modernization, economic growth, universal human rights, global commons, collective security, humanitarian intervention) that states and non-state actors invoke to explain or justify their conduct. Third, the function of social change has been to create a global architecture of power, in which production, distribution, and communication are increasingly structured by international networks and strategies. Fourth, many of the agents of social change, including transnational corporations, professional associations, and social movements have developed objectives, structures, policies, and patterns of socialisation that are international in scope and ethos. This is now true of terrorist networks as it is of environmental organisations.
Though diverse actors are now integral to a rapidly globalising world, the transnational corporation (TNC) continues to play the most conspicuous role. By 1998, close to 70 percent of global trade was controlled by just 500 TNCs, one-fifth of all foreign-owned assets in the world were in the hands of 100 TNCS, while a mere one percent of TNCs accounted for half of the total foreign direct investment (FDI) in the world. Of the 100 largest economic actors in the world, only half were states; the rest were TNCS. UNCTAD’s World Investment Report 2000 estimated that the number of TNCs in 1999 had risen to 63,000 parent firms with approximately 690,000 foreign affiliates. Though the huge global conglomerates are comparable in scale to national economies, most TNCs are much smaller, concentrating on one or two production lines or a small cluster of related products.

Notwithstanding the diversity of transnational economic actors, two generalisations are possible. First, the transnationalisation of business is accompanied and sustained by the technological revolution, especially in transportation and communication. Freed by technology from territorial constraints, capital moves to those places wherever wage levels, rents, taxes, and government regulations and incentives offer the prospect of higher profits.

Secondly, within the global architecture of power and wealth the decisions of governments and inter-governmental organisations are increasingly reliant on the resources, expertise, ideas and strategic preferences of corporations, and on the think-tanks, forums and media outlets, which they control. A striking example of this trend is the rising influence of the World Economic Forum and its regional affiliates, which regularly bring together senior figures of the corporate world, political leaders and a sprinkling of international civil servants, economists and other experts.

The Rise of Transnational Issues

States, even relatively powerful ones, seem less and less able to perform the various functions on which their legitimacy ultimately depends, namely physical security and economic well-being for their citizens. As a consequence, states have, since 1945 and particularly since the early 1970s, found it necessary to shed at least partial functions to a range of subnational, supranational, international, and transnational organisations. Nowhere is the contemporary predicament of the state more strikingly evident than in the areas of financial and environmental policy. The predicament becomes acute in circumstances where the state confronts ecological disorders that
have their origins outside its domain (e.g. transboundary pollution); or where it is compelled to navigate powerful economic forces over which it has at best limited control (e.g. developing states beset by high and rising levels of foreign debt).

Environmental degradation in its various forms, the overt and covert proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and of the materials used in their manufacture, the licit and illicit international arms trade, the increasingly dangerous spread of light weapons, drug trafficking, piracy, large and often unforeseen population movements, including refugees, internally displaced people, guest workers and legal and illegal immigrants, all these are an integral part of the emerging macropolitical agenda (Camilleri and Falk, 1992: 148 - 151). They have one common characteristic: they all in different ways and to different degrees exceed the institutional capacities and resources of states. They call into question the usefulness of traditional notions of national interest and national security when dealing with the globalisation of insecurity.

The picture painted here is well known and the subject of extensive documentation (Dent and Peters, 1999; Bello, 1999, Chossudovsky, 1997, Oxfam, 1995). Economic insecurity is the condition of a very large fraction of humanity. Such insecurity, however, is not confined to the so-called least developed economies. As the financial crises that have afflicted Mexico, Russia, South Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand during the 1990s graphically illustrate, transitional, industrialising, and even industrialised economies can fall victim to the ravages of financial volatility. The high levels of capital flows to South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand during the first half of the 1990s (estimated at $93 billion in 1996) were reversed almost overnight: an inflow of $96 billion in 1996 was followed by an outflow of $12 billion in 1997. The reversal of short-term capital flows was followed by a succession of bankruptcies and business closures, widespread shedding of jobs, sharp falls in real wages, and drastic cuts in health and education budgets.

Economic insecurity is in most countries inseparable from social insecurity. Its most obvious manifestations include job and income insecurity, including the casualisation of labour, the dismantling or curtailing of welfare provisions, the failure of the health system to deliver essential medical services and supplies, the inability to adopt effective preventive strategies to deal with the HIV/AIDS pandemic (almost 6 million new infections in 1998). The cumulative effect of these pressures on everyday life is to reduce life prospects and opportunities not only in a
material sense, but just as importantly to stunt the development of human energies, intellectual creativity, and emotional fulfilment. Before long the insecurity assumes a cultural dimension.

Indigenous cultures become stifled as they are increasingly deprived of the material and social conditions necessary for self-expression. All the more so as one of the dominant features of a rapidly globalising world has been the sustained one-way flow of images, symbols, and cultural practices from the hegemonic centre (the rich West, especially the United States) to the periphery (the vast majority of societies in Asia, Africa and Latin America). Global media networks and communications technologies have become the conduit for the transmission of imported tastes, fashions, and standards encompassing every facet of everyday life. The intrusiveness of Coca-Cola, Nike, McDonald’s and Hollywood is but the outward expression of a much deeper cultural malaise and insecurity that afflicts economically and technologically dependent societies.

There are, of course, other dimensions to insecurity. We need only think of the fears and anxieties that are the inevitable by-product of the illicit trade in drugs, women, weapons and laundered money. The deregulation of capital markets, advances in information and communications technology, and cheaper transport have to varying degrees stimulated or given added momentum to the traffic in women and girls for sexual exploitation, people smuggling in its various guises, and the trade in light weapons. Transnationally organised networks sustain rising levels of criminal and pathological behaviour which enmesh not only its primary victims but ever expanding layers of society, including highly placed elements in government, police and the judiciary.

Closely related to all these forms of insecurity are the tensions and rivalries, which set one community against another. Personal, social and economic insecurity sets the stage for political polarisation, based on race, ethnicity or religion. It is worth noting that of the 61 major armed conflicts between 1989 and 1998, 58 were intra-state conflicts. The phenomenon, sometimes inappropriately referred to as failed or collapsed states, points precisely to the generalised state of personal insecurity and the inability of fragile local and national institutions to cope with the ensuing pressures. The much greater frequency and scope of UN and other forms of multilateral intervention in intra-state conflicts are the inescapable consequence of this trend.
Insecurity in its various dimensions is not the preserve of the South. Industrial restructuring and financial deregulation have resulted in severe social and economic dislocation in many parts of the North. Responding to the pressures of global competition, governments and corporations have pressed for the deregulation of the system of industrial relations, including more flexible employment policies that have translated into less secure jobs, substantial retrenchments, and a relaxation of occupational health and safety standards.

Despite sustained attempts by European governments and the European Union to maintain acceptable levels of economic growth, unemployment in Europe stands at 35 million. It is hardly surprising that in times of social and economic anxiety, and in the face of rising numbers of guest workers, refugees and asylum seekers, racism and xenophobia should become increasingly visible in the streets and politics of many European countries. If to this we add the mounting fears of environmental degradation, terrorist attack, and the losing battle against rising levels of drug abuse, the heightened and seemingly pervasive experience of individual and collective anxiety becomes readily understandable.

We may safely conclude that human insecurity is deeply troubling, not in the sense that it is a novel phenomenon but that it poses a normative and institutional challenge of critical proportions. As a submission to the UN’s Independent Commission On Human Security so aptly put it:

The insecurity generated by the globalisation of the political economy has two sides, it is increasing the demand for security and decreasing the availability of supply in the public goods indispensable for the satisfaction of human needs, indispensable for their basic security (Open Letter forwarded in September 2001 by Professor Kinhide Mushakoji on behalf of 40 leading international scholars).

The emphasis here on insecurity is deliberate, for it reminds us that security is primarily not a physical condition but a state of mind. That is precisely the nature of the terrorist threat. The terrorist has succeeded well before he strikes, if his past actions and utterances have managed to produce fear, panic, and a combination of counter-terrorist measures that are at best costly, and at worst likely to prolong the current state of uncertainty. What is critical to security is the maintenance of a social order, which is convivial and predictable enough to inspire confidence in the future.
The Contribution of the Dialogue of Civilisations

Globalisation, as we have noted, is an elusive, confusing and contradictory phenomenon. With the collapse of communism no credible alternative to global capitalism is in sight. There is as of now no international agency or political movement that can exercise effective leadership in interpreting, much less guiding, economic and political change. There is no simple or single solution to this predicament.

In response to the uncertainties and complexities of the present conjuncture, numerous ideas and initiatives have been proposed since the end of the Cold War as an ethical and political compass for the journey ahead. Particularly useful in this regard are the concepts of human security and democratic governance. Human security rightly draws attention to the diverse sources of insecurity and to the need to devise responses that can help to construct and sustain a legitimated world order, one which sufficiently resonates with the deeper needs and aspirations of its members to inspire confidence in the future. This approach has enormous practical relevance as much for the international community as for local and national communities. At the same time, in a rapidly globalising world, it will be increasingly necessary but also feasible to democratise the institutions and mechanisms which will make vitally important decisions about the future. This is why the reform of institutions has become such a critical issue – institutions at all levels: local, provincial, national, regional and global. In this context, the rather limited achievements of the recent UN summit was bound to be a source of widespread disappointment.

But if we are to develop a much more encompassing and integrated approach to the multiple sources of human insecurity, and if we are to build institutions that citizens can trust and in which their voices can be heard, what intellectual and cultural resources can we call upon as we approach these daunting tasks? It is here that the dialogue of civilisations may have a great deal to offer. It may in fact hold an important key to the future.

Dialogue across cultural and religious boundaries is not, of course, a new idea. It is now well over a century since the 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago, brought together representatives of eastern and western spiritual traditions. Today it is recognized as the occasion that formally launched inter-religious dialogue in the modern period. The Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions (CPWR), which officially dates from 1988, was established as a centennial celebration of the 1893
Parliament. The 1993 Parliament adopted *Towards a Global Ethic: an Initial Declaration*, a powerful statement of the ethical common ground shared by the world’s religious and spiritual traditions.

The dialogical agenda has since gained considerable momentum with several national and international centres making civilisational dialogue a focal point of research, education and advocacy. These include the Institute for Interreligious, Intercultural Dialogue, the International Interfaith Centre (Oxford), the Global Dialogue Institute, the International Movement for a Just World (Kuala Lumpur), the International Centre for Dialogue among Civilisations (Tehran, the Centre for World Dialogue (Nicosia), and the Toda Institute for Global Policy and Peace Research (Honolulu and Tokyo). Other important institutional developments have included the establishment of the World Council of Religious Leaders and the World Conference of Religions for Peace. More recently, the UN General Assembly adopted in November 1998 a resolution proclaiming the year 2001 as the Year of dialogue among civilizations. In November of that year, the General Assembly adopted the *Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilisations*, which has in turn given rise to a great many governmental and non-governmental initiatives.

Most recently, the Spanish Prime Minister launched the idea of an ‘Alliance of Civilisations’. The proposal launched in partnership with the Turkish Government has now been endorsed by the UN. Any such initiative is to be welcomed, to the extent that it advances the idea of dialogue. However, several considerations, as we shall see, need to be kept in mind:

The impression, perhaps wrongly, has been created in some quarters that the ‘Alliance’ initiative is designed as a response to the problem of terrorism. There is much more to the dialogue of civilisations than the issue of terrorism. Important as terrorism may be, it is but one of the symptoms of the present crisis of insecurity – and the treatment of causes is at least as urgent as the treatment of symptoms.

Some actors, at least, may see in the ‘Alliance’ proposal an opportunity to promote their particular counter-terrorist strategies. It will be necessary for this worthy initiative not to be derailed in this way.

The word ‘Alliance’, sincerely intended though it is, may itself be an unfortunate choice. Alliance is a word that we normally associate with military threats, certainly with enemies. Alliances are formed to counter a common enemy. In these perilous times, it may have been more appropriate to speak the language of peace than the language of war.
However, the ‘Alliance’ project unfolds – it is pleasing to see that at least some of the most eloquent and active exponents of the dialogue of civilisations are among those invited to join the UN Secretary-General High-Level Group – it will be critically important that the philosophy and practice of dialogue be sustained and strengthened in the years ahead.

The Alliance initiative envisages in its terms of reference a number of useful areas of inquiry and advocacy, but is insufficiently directed to the comprehensiveness of the global crisis of insecurity.

Let me, then, develop in greater depth what I believe to be the holistic contribution of the dialogue of civilisations, and which I hope will be central to the WPF initiative. First what is envisaged is a prolonged and dynamic interaction between cultures, aimed at promoting an approach to world order which can grapple with the globalisation of insecurity and the divisions which it mirrors and reinforces. In such interaction all traditions, not least the Islamic, Hindu and Confucian worlds, must be accorded full respect. They must be accepted as major poles of cultural and geopolitical dialogue. Such a project needs to appreciate the specificity of each culture, while contributing to an evolutionary process that builds on commonality but more importantly strives for synthesis.

For all their differences, these axial traditions share a sense of the dignity of human life, a commitment to human fulfilment, and a concern for standards of ‘rightness’ in human conduct (Muzaffar, 1999, 25–31). Common to all of them is the notion of humane and legitimate governance, although the criteria used to measure of legitimacy may vary considerably from one tradition to another. There is, one may reasonably conclude, sufficient common ground between these religious and ethical world-views to make possible an on-going conversation about human ethics in general, and political ethics in particular (Friedman, 1999, 32–55).

Needless to say, each of the civilisational currents and cultural formations has its own unique features, but such differences need not be inimical to normative discourse either within or between the major civilisational traditions. All of the world’s major religious and ethical traditions (e.g. Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Confucianism and secular humanism) have in any case experienced over time a multiplicity of influences, both indigenous an external. In many societies they have furiously interacted with each other and have in the process contributed to the slow but steady transformation of norms and expectations. The emerging inter-civilisational dialogue may benefit as much from difference as from commonality.
The contribution, then, of civilisational dialogue to the contemporary crisis must by definition be multi-faceted. Six dimensions merit special attention.

Dialogue can provide a richer and more varied conception of political community and humane governance by establishing a closer connection between human rights and the range of human needs, not least those of the disadvantaged (hence the emphasis on social and economic justice).

It can offer a more holistic understanding of the human condition by establishing a closer connection between rights and responsibilities and between the individual and the community.

It can help to situate human rights within a larger social context so that their application is not confined to individuals as disaggregated atoms but as members of larger collectivities, and of the international community as a whole, hence the emphasis on the rights of peoples not only the right to self-determination but the right to a healthy environment, the right to peace, the right to food security, the right to share in the common heritage of humanity.

The fourth dimensions flows from the preceding three but has an importance of its own. Dialogue cannot be based on domination or notions of superiority. We in the West cannot approach the task of dialogue with the presumption that the West enjoys a monopoly on the definition of human needs and good governance. The Western liberal model and the particular view of progress on which it rests cannot apply universally across time and space. Human rights and governance standards may be universal in scope at any one time, but how these standards are defined and applied is likely to change over time.

In dialogue the emphasis must be on respectful communication and interaction. The development of a world society must proceed by way of negotiation and involve all of the parties concerned.

In many ways our challenge is to practise a dialogue that appreciates and celebrates the diversity of our civilisational inheritance. Indeed, one of the valuable spin-offs of such a dialogue is that it forces the participants to hold their respective traditions up to critical examination, to rediscover the fundamental ethical impulse which sustains that tradition and to consider ways of adapting it to the new circumstances of our epoch. Civilisational dialogue works best when it fosters a profound soul-searching within as much as between civilisations.
To put it simply, inter-religious and intercultural dialogue can help articulate a new internationalism that goes beyond mere economic or technological interdependence, and subjects economic and political orthodoxy to ethical scrutiny.

Civilisational Dialogue:
Its Contemporary Function and Significance

But how are we to approach the dialogue of civilisations? How are we to apply dialogical principles in the present geopolitical and geocultural context? Here, it may be helpful to draw attention to two influential voices which have in different but converging ways helped to place the dialogue of civilisations on the intellectual and political map. They have much to tell us about the way forward.

The first is Mohammad Khatami, the fifth president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a religious scholar steeped in the study of philosophy.

For Khatami, dialogue is the common search for truth. Dialogue cannot therefore obscure or evade the differences that separate its participants, which is why for him the act is one in which listening is at least as important as speaking. Dialogue is the encounter across cultural, religious, philosophical, ethical, civilisational boundaries, in which each participant listens to the other, becomes open, even vulnerable to the other. In this sense, dialogue engages the participant in a journey of self discovery:

It is only through immersion in another existential dimension that we could attain mediated and acquired knowledge of ourselves in addition to the immediate and direct knowledge of ourselves that we commonly possess. Through seeing others we attain a hitherto impossible knowledge of ourselves. Dialogue among cultures and civilisations, rests upon rational and ethically normative commitment of parties to the dialogue. [It] is a bi-lateral or even multi-lateral process in which the end result is not manifest from the beginning (Khatami, 2000).
What, then, are dialogue’s normative foundations? The recurring themes in Khatami’s numerous speeches on the subject suggest the following key elements:

a) the dignity of human being – made possible only through will to empathy and compassion – as the measure of world order;
b) the refusal of politics without morality;
c) the notion that ideas and values, embedded in cultures and civilisations, are an important determinant of political behaviour;
d) the sense that intellectuals, poets, artists, scientists and mystics, precisely because they have the capacity and authority to articulate the large questions of human existence, have a unique role in civilisation dialogue.

Many questions remain unanswered: Who participates in this dialogue? What are the modalities of dialogue? What is to be the role of states and governments in the dialogical process? There is nevertheless one idea, central to Khatami’s conception of dialogue, which merits attention. In his celebrated 1999 speech at the University of Florence, he offered the following juxtaposition of East and West:

Orient, which even in an etymological sense signifies the process of imparting direction and order to things, can beckon Europe and America to equilibrium, serenity and reflection in the context of an historical dialogue. If deeply understood in their Eastern connotations, equilibrium and serenity lie beyond both the Dionysian and Apollonian extremes of western culture. The age of reason is an Apollonian age while romanticism is the opposite pull on the swing of the same pendulum (Khatami, 1999).

Khatami’s exposition takes us back to the question of what is to be the discursive framework that guides the post-Cold War era. For Khatami dialogue among civilisations is designed specifically to address the fault line that separates Orient and Occident, a fault line that has a long history, of which the present difficulties between Islam and the West are but the most recent, perhaps geopolitically most troublesome manifestation.
Another influential voice that merits attention is that of Tu Weiming, perhaps the foremost Confucian thinker of our time. Born in February 1940 in Kunming, China, he grew up and was educated in Taiwan and is now Professor of Chinese History and Philosophy and of Confucian Studies at Harvard University (Tu Weiming, 1985a, 1985b, 1999, 1996).

A recurring theme of Tu Weiming’s intellectual contribution is the modern transformation of Confucian humanism. Confucian values, he argues, remain highly relevant to modernity and are evident in contemporary social practices, at least as principles of societal organisation. These include:

a) the role of the state in the management of the market;
b) social civility as the key to civilised mode of conduct (law is useful but not enough);
c) the family as the foundation stone of social civility;
d) civil society as the indispensable nexus between family and state;
e) education as the key to civil society;
f) self-cultivation understood as both goal and process.

Confucian societies retain many of these values even as they embrace the fierce competitiveness of the West. The reason is not hard to fathom: modernisation and modernity are shaped by cultural forms rooted in tradition:

Traditions in Modernity are not merely historical sedimentation passively deposited in modern consciousness. Nor are they simply inhibiting features to be undermined by the unilinear trajectory of development – on the contrary they are both constraining and enabling forces capable of shaping the particular contour of modernity in any given society (Tu Weiming, 1999).

For Tu Weiming, these traditions constitute the critical elements of sustainable dialogue.

What can Confucianism bring to such a dialogue? Here is where Tu Weiming is at his most illuminating. He draws attention to what he calls the ‘ecological turn’ of neo-Confucian thought, and in particular to the contribution of three modern Confucian thinkers. Qian Mu (1895–1990), Tang Junyi (1909–1978) and Feng Youlan (1895–1990) based in Hong Kong, Taiwan and China respectively. In their critique of the enlightenment and the discourse of modernity, they take us, he contends, beyond aggressive anthropocentrism and instrumental rationality, and pave the
way for an inclusive cosmological and humanist vision that transcends the either/or mode of thinking in favour of a non-dualistic understanding of the continuity of heaven, earth and humanity.

The theme is a highly instructive one, for it offers another path to East-West dialogue. Placed in this context, it is not hard to see why Tu Weiming sees the long-term stability of the Sino-American relationship as likely to depend on China widening the frame of reference offered by its own civilisation. For its part, the United States which has hitherto functioned principally as a teaching civilisation may have to acquire more of the qualities of a learning culture. Put simply, Tu Weiming suggests that we may be entering a ‘second axial period’ in which all the major religious and ethical traditions that arose during the ‘first axial period’ are undergoing their own distinctive transformations in response to the multiple challenges of modernity. It is possible that such reassessment will make possible, through a process of mutual learning an ‘anthropocosmic’ worldview where the human is embedded in the cosmic order. This period of transition is the ‘dialogical moment’, the beginning of a new history that is simultaneously global and plural. Such a moment, Tu Weiming tells us, can flourish when ‘the politics of domination is being replaced by the politics of communication, networking, negotiation, interaction, interfacing and collaboration’ (Tu Weiming, 2001).

Despite the vastly different cultural and ideological backgrounds from which they spring, influential voices have emerged calling for a distinctive approach to world order, sharply at variance with western triumphalism or imperial discourse. This approach lends itself to the following propositions:

- Dialogue, that is encounter with the other, is the path to self-discovery and is therefore a profoundly transformative process;
- Dialogue can proceed only with the renewal of tradition against the backdrop of modernity;
- The dialogue of civilisations proposes first and foremost the dialogical encounter between East and West;
- Such encounter will involve a new synthesis constituted of both differences and commonalities;
- The dialogue of civilisations offers a particularly promising cultural underpinning for a new conception of global citizenship and governance;
- The encounter of civilisational insights should inform and even guide the political processes of states, but also the international rule of law and the constantly expanding network of regional and global institutions.
One other observation is highly relevant. Dialogue is no simple or easy remedy for the world’s current ills. If the philosophy and method of dialogue are to be applied to the theory and practice of citizenship and the wider normative framework governing state conduct, this will inevitably involve a good deal of pain. For citizens and the various communities to which they belong (as well as states themselves) must come to terms with the difficult task of reconciliation. Many communities have suffered from past violence, some continue to suffer today. Yet, we also know that many of these same communities have been the perpetrators of violence. Reconciliation will require citizens and authorities of different communities to share their stories, to listen to one another’s experience of pain, to confess past wrongs, to acknowledge collective responsibility for righting the wrongs of the past. Civilisational dialogue can become a force for healing to the extent that it nurtures a radical ethic in the evolving organisation of human affairs. The strong have to cultivate the virtue of humility.

In this unfolding transitional moment, the initiative is likely to lie as much with civil society as with the state – though there is a great deal that states can and must do. If we as members of civil society (locally, nationally and transnationally), are to address the immense challenges of the next several decades, we will need to participate in a dialogue of global proportions – global not simply in geographic terms, but global in the sense that it cultivates a ‘global spirituality’. This will be a dialogue tailored to a new conception of citizenship that puts an entirely different complexion on unity and difference, and allows them to coexist, illuminate and reinforce each other.

The obstacles to such a project are obvious and daunting. Yet the opportunities for moving forward may be greater than is often assumed. We are in fact witnessing the emergence of a new kind of universalism, and the slow, at times erratic but unmistakable diffusion of power. Despite periodic setbacks, we are seeing the increasing universality of the UN system, as measured not only or even primarily by the number of member states, but by the increasing participation of a wide range of non-state actors, the widening scope of consultation, and the UN’s steadily expanding agenda and forms and techniques of involvement. Increasingly, the world’s global and regional institutions are in practice, if not in theory, rethinking the centrality of the principle of sovereignty. Mirroring and reinforcing that tendency is the embryonic development of a global civil society, which is giving rise to new processes of global communication and co-operation.
A new universalism, nurtured by the dialogue of civilisations, may also facilitate the growth of a multipolar system in the United States is joined by Western Europe, Russia, China, Japan, India and possibly an Islamic coalition in defining the priorities of the international agenda. A dialogical universalism, attuned to the cultural, religious and philosophical plurality of the world, may be better able to handle the North-South divide, whether on issues of trade, debt or environment. It may in time give rise to a global reform coalition that includes a number of states and their agencies, international organisations, knowledge communities, and the rapidly expanding groups, movements and networks that comprise civil society. Participants in the dialogue of civilisations must stand ready to reimagine the future and so transform the present.

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Identity, Secularism, and the clash within civilisations

Akeel Bilgrami
Speech at the Ninth Session of Rhodes Forum, held in Greece on October 6–10, 2011

There is some reason to worry that Samuel Huntington’s messianic vision of a ‘clash of civilizations’, even though it seemed to many of his commentators to be based on a rather superficial understanding of various parts of the world, might become a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy as a result of the military schemes and actions of the present US government and its coterie of advisers. What seems the best hope against the prophecy being fulfilled is the fact of a quite different kind of clash, one within the civilisations of which Huntington writes. Let me focus on Islam in particular, since it is so much the focus of current events and thinking.

Reflective and knowledgeable people acknowledge and often assert that most Muslims are not absolutists or ‘fundamentalists,’ to use the more misleading term. Even the president of the United States said so repeatedly in waging wars against two countries with predominantly Muslim populations. Most Muslims, even when they are devout, have no particular absolutist vision of their creed. That is to say, they have no particular desire to perpetrate atrocious (and self-defeating) acts of terrorist violence in Islam’s name, no particular desire to live lives observant of the last detail of Shariah laws, no particular desire to live under the tyrannies of oppressive governments that impose the strictest of Islamic ideologies upon them, such as for instance in Saudi Arabia or Iran. And finally, though they may often justifiably conceive of the West, and especially America, as a political and economic threat to them (because of its sometimes naked pursuit of corporate interests, its support of Israeli occupation and expansion in Palestinian territory, and its cynical support over decades of Islamic fundamentalist groups whenever that suited its geopolitical interests), unlike the absolutists, they do not particularly reject, as a religious threat coming from ‘infidels,’ the various ideas and freedoms entrenched in Western political practice.
The clash I have in mind, then, is between the values of these Muslims and those of the absolutists, whom they far outnumber. That brings me to the theme of my paper: It is right, I think, to describe this clash within Muslim populations as a clash between secularists and absolutists. Let me explain why.

A few years ago, the journalist Christopher Hitchens gave an interesting lecture on secularism at Columbia University. Inevitably, the question of Islam came up. I raised a point during the discussion and in his response he made the extraordinary claim that the very category of a ‘moderate Muslim’ was incoherent, that it was doubtful that you can have religious convictions and not be given to fundamentalist tendencies and sympathies. I don’t think he was especially picking on Islam. This was a reaction to religion in general, familiar from a robust British intellectual tradition stretching from Bertrand Russell to Richard Dawkins. So, thinking he must have something more subtle and plausible in mind, I asked him a question that I thought could not possibly get an affirmative answer: “It seems to follow from what you have said that it is impossible to have genuinely secular societies until everyone, or at any rate most people, are irreligious – but you don’t mean that, do you?” He said, “Yes, I do.”

If he is right, then it is quite wrong to describe the ‘clash’ of values in the way I just did, as a conflict between the secularist and the absolutist. If he is right, then we are not likely to have genuinely secular societies virtually anywhere in the world for a very long time.

But he is wrong. The term ‘secularism’ today, whatever its origins and history of use, describes only a political doctrine, a doctrine about how citizens, even citizens who are devout people, agree to live and try and flourish in a polity that is not governed by religious principles and practices. This of course means that they may have to give up strict adherence to some elements of their religion – those that aspire to a political relevance and that clash with familiar liberal laws. To be prepared to do so is the mark of what I was calling ‘ordinary’ or ‘moderate’ or ‘non-absolutist’ Muslims. Since everyone acknowledges that such Muslims considerably outnumber the absolutists, the prospect of secularism, soberly understood along these lines, is in principle far better than Hitchens’ view suggests.

This is not to deny that a great deal of very difficult and important effort is needed to realise that prospect. But whatever the needed effort is, it does not amount to what Hitchens has in mind, i.e., bringing about a society of unbelievers, attractive though that might be for atheists like Hitchens and myself.
What needs to be done depends on how we diagnose the moral psychology of Islamic politics today in different parts of the world. Hitchens is perhaps led to his conclusion – of a somewhat heavy-handed ideal of an irreligious conception of the secular – because of a certain powerlessness and even unwillingness on the part of ‘ordinary’ Muslims to confront the absolutists. Though I do not on this basis come to his conclusion (because to do so is premature and does not dig deeply enough), I do have the anxiety and disappointment that many of us feel when we see most ‘ordinary’ Muslims sit silently by while the much smaller group of absolutists gets the limelight. The right response to this no doubt troubling phenomenon is not to give up on the very idea that a practicing Muslim can be secular; it is rather to try and diagnose why the ordinary Muslim is sitting silently by, why he or she is not more critical of the absolutist with whom he or she shares so little by way of ideology and ideal.

Before taking up that question, it is worth noting first the manifest relevance here of an elementary link between arithmetic and politics. If most Muslims everywhere (including Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan) are not absolutists, it seems remarkable that these non-absolutist voices are not heard as the representative voices of Islam, wherever it exists. It is remarkable that the much smaller group of absolutists seems more central to the image and the voice that Islamic nations project.

Since an explicit rationale of democratic politics is that it calibrates representation with numbers, the failure of democratisation in these societies is one obvious diagnosis for this remarkable discrepancy. We know that in elections in Iran and Pakistan the fundamentalist parties never get anything close to a majority. In Pakistan, whenever there have been elections, they do not get even 10 percent of the vote. In fact, it is a perfectly safe generalisation to say that fundamentalist Islamic parties meet with very little success in democratic elections everywhere in the world, unless they have been persecuted or suppressed, such as in Algeria.

The problem is slightly different in countries where Muslims are a minority, such as in India (or for that matter, Britain), and where there are functioning democracies. In these countries, the state (responding for political reasons to possibly disruptive pressures from an aggrieved and aggressive interest group) generally pays far greater attention to absolutist Muslim voices than to the vastly more numerous (but relatively muted) voices of moderates. In this circumstance, absolutists implicitly become the voice of the community, and exercise an influence quite disproportionate to their numbers.
Here, by the nature of the case, the arithmetic points to a slightly different political diagnosis. Since these are democratic nations with all the formal apparatus of a democratic state, what is evidently needed is not merely a democratic polity, but far greater democracy within the Muslim community, which will allow the absolutist voices to be shown up for what they are: a shrill but unrepresentative minority.

What forms such democratisation should or could take within minority communities in democratic states like India and Britain is a complex question with no easy and obvious answer. It is a subject that is unduly neglected in political sociology and political theory.

Still, democratisation itself will be hard to achieve – whether within Muslim minorities in democratic countries like India or in Muslim countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia – unless moderate Muslims are able to come out of their shells. To do so, they must become much more openly critical of the fundamentalists, with whom they share so little.

But criticism of fundamentalist Muslims by moderates has to date been relatively muted, largely, I think, because of a deep-seated moral psychology: As a result of a long colonial history, with its detailed subjugations and attitudes of condescension, and as a result of continuing feelings of helplessness in the face of what is perceived as American domination and Israeli occupation and expansion, even moderate Muslims feel that to criticise their own people in any way is letting the side down, somehow capitulating to a long-standing history of being colonised and made to feel inferior.

This suggests that there is yet another clash that is pertinent, a clash of attitudes and values, not this time between moderates and fundamentalists, but a clash internal to the psychology of moderates themselves. Most moderate Muslims are torn between their dislike for fundamentalist visions of their religion and societies on the one hand, and, on the other, their deep defensive feelings of resentment against forces that they perceive to be alien and hostile in one colonial form or another for a very long time, forces that have often supported the fundamentalists when it suited their political agendas.

This second layer of internal clash within Islam is a vital factor in understanding the scope for a secular Islam. There can be no scope for secularism if this conflict in the hearts of moderate Muslims is not resolved in one direction rather than another – that is, if they do not find a way to overcome these defensive feelings of resentment. Without overcoming them, they will not be able to take the creative and assertive steps necessary to oppose the absolutists – and no amount of democratisation of Muslim
societies will help to subdue the fundamentalists unless the moderates are confident enough to launch that opposition.

There is no space here to elaborate in any detail what it would take to overcome such a defensive cast of mind. But it is a form of convenient and self-serving obtuseness on our part to think, as some do, that addressing the issues that give rise to this defensive resentment is irrelevant and unnecessary. It is perhaps true that it will not affect the fundamentalists to address these issues – but even that is questionable, since they (including Osama bin Laden) have openly declared that these issues are central to them.

But, in any case, it is not primarily the fundamentalist who needs to be addressed. It is the far more ubiquitous moderate who needs to be convinced that criticising his own people and his own stultifying silence in the presence of shrill revivalist Islamic voices is not simply the handing over of ultimate victory to forces of long-standing external domination.

The cruelty of wars, of bombings, of occupations, of expansionist settlements, of embargoes and sanctions, of support of corrupt elites, does nothing to convince them of this, does nothing to give them the necessary confidence – nor does the often transparently exploitative pursuit of Western corporate interests in these regions. They only encourage and increase the defensiveness.

It is extraordinary that humane and intelligent people do not see this quite obvious point. Even someone like Salman Rushdie, who has come around to saying that his brilliant, irreverent writings about Islam were intended not to merely ridicule the fundamentalist conception of Islam but also to give encouragement to the moderate Muslim opposition to the fundamentalist, goes on to support two wars that have done everything possible to undermine any motivation that a moderate might have in forging that opposition.

But all this is to take up matters that are current and controversial, and I did not want this essay to be primarily polemical. The diagnostic points I am making are much more general. To put them in summary, I have been arguing: 1) that there is an implicit clash within Islamic societies between moderate and fundamentalist Muslims, and sheer arithmetic suggests that democratisation (including intra-community democratisation) in Muslim societies will help end this clash in a secular direction; and 2) that resolving a second, quite different sort of clash by paying humane attention to the very specific sort of internal moral and psychological conflict that the moderate Muslim faces may be a necessary and prior condition for resolving the clash between secularists and fundamentalists.
Why is it that political positions such as Huntington’s and Hitchens’ are blind to these more subtle clashes, which should be the basis of any effort to defuse the more portentous clash that they predict?

I suspect it is because of a line of thought that goes something like this: Populations that identify themselves with Islam could not possibly resolve these clashes along these lines, because to do so would be to give up on that identification with Islam, to give up on Muslim identity.

As I said at the outset, if these conflicts were resolved in the ways I think possible, then moderate but nevertheless religious Muslims would have to oppose the fundamentalists and therefore relinquish some aspects of their religion. They would have to relinquish certain ideas about relations to non-Muslims, ideas about gender relations in institutions such as marriage, divorce, alimony, etc., and commitments to censorship and punishment of blasphemy. But to do so, it will be said, would be to give up on one’s Muslim identity, to cease to see oneself as a Muslim.

This line of thought is based on a numbingly false picture of cultural identity that fundamentalists would like to encourage. But a person’s identity is not given by a checklist, such that if every item is not checked off one loses one’s identity. Identity is simply not a codified phenomenon in that way. It is fluid and malleable and survives enormous amounts of revision and erosion, as we all know even from Muslim societies in many parts of the world today. The idea that if one gives up a Shariah law about blasphemy or alimony, or even a customary religious practice such as purdah, that one is ceasing to be a Muslim altogether is an egregious misrepresentation of what it takes to be a Muslim. I know any number of Muslims, not deracines like me but religious people, whom it would be a travesty to count as anything but Muslims, and who have altogether shed these offending convictions and practices. To say that they don’t count as having Muslim identity is to assume a conception that only an absolutist would affirm. Huntington and Hitchens, therefore, should worry a bit that their views here are too perfectly of a piece with the absolutist’s.

Since there is scope for misunderstanding here, it is important to state that the point I have just made about identity not being codifiable should not be confused with the quite different and much more glib idea of what is sometimes called ‘hybridity’ or ‘multiple identities.’ There is a tendency, mostly in contemporary literary theory, to say that in a world of post-coloniality and large-scale immigration, there are no identities, only cultural flux that dissolves notions such as ‘self’ and identification with religion and other forms of cultural belonging.
Of course, the idea that we all have multiple identities is a banality. Who can deny it? But it’s not an idea that could possibly overturn the plain fact that in many historical and social contexts, for quite specifiable functional reasons, some of these multiple identities loom much larger for us than others, and abide for much longer than others. What makes the picture of constant flux and hybridity (or, to use Salman Rushdie’s wonderful word ‘chutneyfication’) so implausible is that it cannot accommodate this plain fact, and actually finds it theoretically misguided to try to do so.

The notion I am invoking is not hybridity at all, but a lack of codification in one’s understanding of identity, which can allow for revision of commitments and values without the necessary loss of identity. The only thing that such an idea shares with hybridity is the negative goal of repudiating the essentialism of primordial and immutable conceptions of identity. But to achieve this goal, it posits not some postmodern conception of an incoherent psyche produced by immigrant or postcolonial experience, but rather a quite different neo-Hegelian idea – of a psyche informed by an internal conflict of values. These conflicts, which are engendered by historical or even sometimes by personal encounters, do not altogether dissolve notions of self and identity. Rather, they become the occasion for a community’s (or individual’s) internal deliberation and negotiation, which will sometimes, though by no means always, produce a new identity. Identities, conceived and shaped in these ‘dialectical’ rather than ‘hybrid’ terms, are hard won; they reflect the constitutive relationship that history and experience have to the self and its moral psychology.

But to return from these more theoretical reflections to the central point of this paper, which they are intended to make possible: There is much scope for Muslims retaining their identity as Muslims, even as they de facto shed this or that aspect of their faith. It has already happened in many parts of the world. That is to say, there is much scope for them to acquire an increasing and cumulative secularism even within their commitment to Islam. But they will find it very hard to do so if we do not cease to gear our rhetoric and political agendas to the ideal of a ‘clash of civilizations,’ and focus instead on these clashes within Islamic civilisation itself.
IV

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE, INSTITUTIONS AND SECURITY
The End of Transformation and the Reshaping of European Security: Challenges, Contradictions and Prospects

Peter Schulze
Speech at the Seventh Session of Rhodes Forum, held in Greece on October 8 – 12, 2009

The Problem

The prospects of cooperative security seemed favorable for a few years after the Cold War ended in Europe. However during the nineties up to today a rather strange disparity evolved in Europe. Even though the end of the Cold War was the precondition for the transformation of most countries of the former Soviet orbit to achieve some degree of sovereignty, democracy, a market economy and stability, the development of a European peace order vanished from the agenda.

However, while the specter of a great war disappeared, conflicts in the space we call “Europe in-between”, i.e. the sphere between the European Union and post-Soviet Russia, are still unsettled and carry an explosive potential. Developments such as those in the Balkans, in Kosovo and Georgia recently have increasingly called this into question.

And at the same time as Europe as a whole entered a period of integration and economic, technological and political cooperation, the lack of the security dimension became apparent: Europe still requires a coherent strategy for peace and security.

However, twenty years after the collapse of the division lines in Europe, it is distinctly more difficult to deal with regional conflicts on a cooperative and multilateral basis, or to reach a consensus on arms and arms control. And to the extent that the number and intensity of conflicts are increasing, the dangers of escalation are growing. Stability and peace in Europe are under threat.

It happens more and more frequently that situations and developments are perceived quite differently by the states concerned. This applies particularly, though not exclusively, to a number of EU countries and Russia. What to one party appears to be a natural and legitimate reaction is perceived by the other as aggression – the classic security dilemma.
Yet the current treaties and institutional mechanisms available for dealing with such asymmetries of perception are proving less and less effective and appropriate.

The consensus which brought the bipolar system down was lost during the 1990s, and accordingly chances to build a new peace order on the agreements reached with the Charta of Paris 1990 were not pursued.

This situation has given rise to widespread disquiet in many European countries, both at state level and among non-governmental organizations. There are also various ideas and proposals of differing scope and provenance concerning how peace in Europe can be made more secure. But these ideas and proposals must be examined, consolidated, and developed. In particular, there must be a purposeful debate on the planning and concrete implementation of a multilateral cooperative security system in Europe — in short, a new European peace order.

New Situations Require New Responses

The focus of this paper will be on the major changes in the international situation. These include, on the one hand, changes in the prevailing threats since the 1990s, which necessitated the extension of the security agenda to encompass the political, economic, social, and environmental dimensions. On the other hand, the shifts of power in the world order due to the emerging countries must also be taken into consideration: so far, these shifts have been reflected only sporadically in the governance architecture and the international negotiation agenda. The central question is what is therefore needed for a cooperative security system in Europe that takes these transformation processes properly into account? Three things require particular consideration in this connection:

**The changed role of the EU/Europe**

The EU has the potential to play an important role in the formation of the future world order. Although it already possesses suitable political instruments Europe is often prevented from acting by internal conflicts of interest. As a result, the EU is in danger of falling short in the development of a common foreign and security policy (CFSP). Key threats in this regard include failing to clarify its relations with the USA and Russia and to reduce the tension between these two countries, as well as to decide what role the EU will play in Zwischeneuropa [“middle Europe”, or Europe in-between], that
band of countries stretching from the Baltic Sea to the area between the Black Sea and the Caspian. The countries in this region are too weak to elude the influence of their larger neighbors; they are caught between Russia and the EU and constitute a field of conflict in which Europe, the USA, and Russia will continue to clash if they are unable to find ways of dealing with conflict and reaching consensus.

**The changed role of Russia**

Undoubtedly, Russia’s international role is no longer the one played by the Soviet Union in the Cold War. But at the same time the country ceased long ago to be the pawn on the chess-board of international politics, as it was in the 1990s, and is now clearly a major global player. The growing and increasingly conflictual dissension between NATO and the EU on the one hand, and Russia on the other reflects a glaring asymmetry of perceptions that must be addressed. The Russian side has offered a number of proposals to this end.

**The changed role of the USA**

The emergence of new powers such as China, India, and Brazil, among others, is bringing in its wake a far-reaching realignment of global political power, not least the relative diminution of the importance of the USA. As a result, there is a growing discrepancy between the USA’s unaltered leadership claims and its ability to lead. The effects of the global financial and economic crisis can only make things worse. Crucial in this respect is ensuring the cooperation of the emerging powers and creating the requisite institutional conditions. The new US administration to all appearances is keen to play a constructive role in this and to employ more strongly multilateral mechanisms for the purpose. Initiatives towards a new European peace order could also benefit from this – they have no prospect of success without constructive US participation. A European security system that seeks to “contain” or oppose Russia is equally inconceivable.
The Charta of Paris, the End of Bipolarity and the Decade of American Hegemony: Setting the Course for the 1990s

As paradoxically as it may sound to guarantee peace and security in the future for the whole of Europe, it seems inevitably to look back into the past. We need to look at the turning point of the outgoing 20th century when the USSR as an empire vanished together with all of her military, economic and political organizations.

Left behind, without the raison d’être, simultaneously the military block of the west, NATO was thrown into an identity crisis. However, even before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a peace order for the whole of Europe was drafted, i.e. the Charta of Paris which then still took into consideration the persistence of the Soviet Union. NATO overcame its identity crisis, developed a new raison d’être as the sponsor of sovereignty for central and east European countries. The projection of stability, democratic and market reforms were the order of the day.

In the wake of such development, Western powers forgot about the Charta of Paris. Instead the two waves of NATO-enlargement to the East started to roll.

Let me remind you about some basic principles of the Paris Charta, basically a document for a peace order of Europe:

„We confirm our confession of the peaceful settlement of disputes. We decide to develop mechanisms to the prevention and solution of conflicts between the participating nations. Now, because the division of Europe comes to an end, we will aim at a new quality in our security relations, based on unlimited mutual esteem for the freedom of decision making. Security is indivisible, and the security of every participating nation is connected inseparably with that of all others. Hence, we undertake to work together with the strengthening of trust and security as well as by the support of the arms control and disarmament.“ ...“We want a Europe, from which emanates peace, which is open for the dialogue and the cooperation with other countries and is ready for the search for common answers to the challenges of the future.”
With the decision for NATO enlargement the Charta of Paris lost its relevance. Instead a dichotomy developed in the 1990s. The western, trans-Atlantic alliance started to define itself as the ultimate reinsurance against the imponderabilities possibly resulting from the Russian process of transformation (unpredictability of Russian domestic policy, economic decline, social impoverishment of large sections of the population, expected political polarization, if not even separatist fragmentation of Post-Soviet Russia). This new acquired purpose rendered to NATO a new legitimacy, i.e. above all, a new right to exist which was extended by the end of the 1990s when the second and/or third round of the Eastern enlargement was decided. The systemic crisis of Post-Soviet Russia during the 1990s changed the threat perception fundamentally in comparison with previous ones concerning the Soviet Union’s military might. And although no military menace was ascertained by transatlantic circles, or was held likely, the alliance proceeded down the path of strengthening its military power.

Of course this development was perceived from Russia as an attempt of exclusion. It promoted emotional and irrational protests among the new Russian power élites, while the trans-Atlantic community deliberately neglected or cast aside such grievances. No doubt, Russia was the match ball of international politics during the 90s. And not without reason the slogan of a “world without Russia” circulated in Washington. From the beginning of the 1990s until the Iraq war 2003, the USA were the hegemonic actor in the international state system.

Changes in the International System and their Geopolitical Repercussions on Europe

The geopolitical decline of the USA can be explained by many factors. The demise was a rather gradual process and did not start very sudden at the beginning of the new millennium or with the Iraq war altogether. Already the bipolar system was characterized by a very specific asymmetry which had developed between geostrategical abilities of military power projection on the one hand and the loss of US economic competiveness in industry and even in some sectors of high technology. However, during bipolarity, geostrategy dominated the agenda and the US was unchallenged as the hegemonic actor within international regimes, such as the WTO or the IMF, or NATO and other global alliances. Besides, it was in the interest of her European and Asian allies to grant the USA the role as the leading military power in the respective political blocks. On the other hand, Washington
did not interfere with the steady increase of the economic potential of her European and Asian allies. Already during the 1980s the leading role of the US dwindled, and apart from the defense sector, the economic supremacy of the USA what forced back subsequently. The US lost her leading international competitive position.

The financial and economic crisis which started in early summer 2008 seems to question even more the leadership quality of the USA in the trans-Atlantic alliance. To stem against such trend the new Obama-Administration is putting political emphasis especially on security issues and tries to pursue a multipolar and cooperative approach. However, the direction of such course is not settled yet due to rising opposition of right wing forces and the predominance of social and economic problems. The US seems to be in limbo, trapped in various possible options of development: First, a cooperative, multipolar approach in security and foreign policy would stress a stronger reliance on trans-Atlantic allies; or Second, a new edition of an isolationist course could result in the renaissance of selective global policies as we have seen them latest during the 1970s.

The European Union as a Geopolitical Factor

In this context we can only look at the European development. To formulate it directly, with the breakdown of the Soviet Union the raison d’être for the presence of American troops in Europe was weakened. This issue is lingering on. It did not leave the European agenda. Nonetheless splits among European countries prolong the life span of US troops in Europe, and likewise hinder the development of a sovereign European foreign and security policy.

However, the war on the Balkans proved the decisive inability and lack of consensus among European member states to formulate a common position. Such inability prolonged the process of clarification and decision making in regard to the EVSP. In addition, the disparate interest in the EU and in NATO started to get even more complicated by the end of the 1990s. The entry of the Central European countries as members of NATO and the EU distorted the process even more. Their unequivocal and unreserved adjustment of security interests and foreign-policy aims focused on the USA. NATO was reactivated again and simultaneously images about a common European security policy moved into the background. In particular the Central European countries, the former states of the Warsaw Pact, maintained their Russia phobia and defined the USA as the only security guarantee against Moscow. The dismissal of the European constitution in 2005, followed by
the temporary postponement of the Treaty of Lisbon, added new barriers to the EVSP as a project of a geopolitically united Europe, articulating its interests, even further.

However, in spite of all these setbacks and unfulfilled foreign policy and security projects, the EU is not any more the EC of the 1980s of the past millennium. The EU has been transformed more unwillingly into a geopolitical actor and has announced its interests and role particularly in “Zwischeneuropa”, i.e. the Europe between the EU and Russia, ever since 2004. The territorial space, we call Zwischeneuropa runs from the Baltic Sea down south to the area between the Black and the Caspian Sea. Not that a new edition of the “Great Game” stands in a queue again. But the question remains open who will control this space with all its energy resources and with its strategic location for transport routes at last? It seems to be obvious, that the countries of Zwischeneuropa are too heterogeneous and are too weak, and, in addition, also do not have the political will to provide collectively for stability, well-being and security. As a result, Zwischeneuropa oscillates between two poles, namely the European Union on the one hand and the Russian Federation. This situation describes a vicious circle which is hardly to be broken without conflicts. The very existence of both wing powers exerts influence on domestic politics of each country in this area. And equally both external wing powers are put under pressure by even those domestic powers they helped to create or to support in their quest for increasing their own interests or influence. The result is domestic instability, political strife and polarization of elites. They shift constantly the existing status Quo, or threaten to dissolve it.

For some time Brussels follows a specifically eurocentred foreign policy orientation which tries to introduce primarily normative and political elements in transformation processes of Zwischeneuropa. Both sides acknowledge this space as the most dangerous and most exposed region between Russia and the EU. In a twist of history, the highly volatile and instable situation of Zwischeneuropa put a question back on the agenda again which was permanently avoided since the last two decades. Namely, the crucial question what relationship should exist between the EU and Russia. Should it be a relationship between equal partners or do we look again at conditions of dependency, in which one side tries to dominate the other by pointing to values and norms. Or do we have arrived at a situation in which the former relationship has been reversed, that economic and especially energy interests dominate now the nature of their relations? Or do we encounter a very paradoxical situation, that despite intensified and growing economic interests and a strong
consensus between functional elites on both sides the political dimension seems to be decoupled from the economic reality, introducing ideological and conflictious elements.

Each of these options is of course projected into the political realm by interest group within the member states of the EU, and by factional strife among the Kremlin’s power groups. And, besides, some of these options absolutely reflect the interests of the old leading block powers. Especially the US does not want to deviate by no means from the fundamental equation which held so successfully Europe in check during the era of the Cold War—needless to say that in the same taken a Cold Peace was guaranteed by the system of mutual destruction. Anyhow, during the period of bipolarity all contacts of Europe with Moscow have had to run through Washington. Now, the conditions and the base of American hegemony have disappeared and further dwindle: And the question, which Europeans not dared to put forward for nearly half a century is on the table: Which role can Europe play in this interim, which is defined by the slow demise of US hegemony and the growing power of other global regions in world politics? The very same question needs to be answered by Moscow.

As before in history, the very fact emerges to the surface that the relation of the European Union to Russia becomes the vital question for the whole European region. Overcome both geopolitical actors, i.e. the EU and Russia, the present state of an atmospheric ice age and the danger of a shutdown in their relations, even solutions could be found on the base of common aims and interests for Zwischeneuropa. Solutions, which do not reflect goals of influence but are guided by common aims of responsibility and therefore accepted by all actors. However, to achieve such goals the pressure must be taken out of the present situation. Simultaneously, long-term concepts must be discussed commonly to minimize dangers of disadvantages and exclusions. If this does not succeed, the polarizing influence of the external powers will tend to increase, and Zwischeneuropa could become the location of clientele conflicts as they are adequately still from times of the Cold War in recollection.
Russia as a European Power Factor: The Debate on Zwischeneuropa and the Eurasian Temptation

Since beginning of the new millennium Russia has returned as an actor of the international system. The primary aim of both terms of office of the Putin presidency was the restoration of state authority and the consolidation of the political system, in order to regain the capacity to act politically and shape the society. To achieve such goal, all those forces which embodied up to now the columns of the power in the Yeltsin’s system had to be pushed out. At the end of Putin’s second term in office we can diagnose that the political stabilization were concluded and deformations from the Yeltsin’s system were removed to a great extent. Regional power groups and the oligarchy are integrated into the vertical of power; the Russian state has regained his capacity to render decisions. This does not imply that the Kremlin uses the new authority rationally, effective and aim-supporting to follow the path towards modernization, as the main goal of Russian politics. But at least priorities of state activities have been named as opposed to the preceding decade.

The very fact that security, stability and material well-being of the country depend to a great extent on high public revenues whose sources lie, however, beyond the controlling power of the Kremlin, indicates on the one hand the immense vulnerability of the Russian economy on price trends at the world market. But, on the other hand, this dependence also makes state control about these resources a basic condition for the stability of the current ruling system par excellence. Therefore it was only a logical step to expel foreign investors from as strategically defined branches of industry. Such policy as well as taking back some privatizations from the Yeltsin era followed a decisive ruling logic. The present results of Russian economic policy emanated from a very conservative financial policy which was approved by western states. The fights against inflation and for currency stability were primary goals. Within a decade the country has been led out since 2000 from a state of complete stagnation and systemic crisis and has joined the 10 leading international economies. This development has left marks in the formulation of Russian foreign affairs and security policy. And obviously some negative side effects are present and visible among the country’s expert’s circles. To put it mildly they are ruled today by a different consciousness than still in the last decade.

Moscow does not search the confrontation with the West. But Moscow wants to win back what got lost with the breakdown of the USSR and above all in the Post-Soviet period: Recognition as an international great power
which is involved in the creation of the new world order equally besides the USA and Europe. While no new menace is intended Russia still aims at a revision of the international order. This, although there is no notion or concept in Russian expert circles, how the new world order should look alike. Further more, there is no consensus within the foreign policy and security establishment. It is certain only that the present order is not accepted with the USA as a global hegemonical power. Against the American claim to hegemony in the international state system the amorphous counter figure of the multipolar revision of the international system is put. However, the US are not ready or willing to give up or change the hegemonical position voluntarily. On the contrary, the USA are about to include Zwischeneuropa in her sphere of influence. A side effect of such goal would be the permanent weakening of all efforts to strengthen a European pillar in NATO order to achieve operational authority for the EVSP.

Resulting conflicts and controversies from such policies are as obvious as the search for allies. This is a basic premise of interest–led real politics. Therefore the Kremlin steps in the footprints of the former Soviet Union and tries to reanimate alliances that were forgotten a decade long. But Moscow also tries to build up carefully new alliance constellations which still seemed inconceivable a few years ago. As an example the Shanghai Coordination Organization/SCO would be pointed out which encloses so difficult and complicated state groups like Russia, China, the Central Asian states, but also India, Pakistan and Iran want to enter or participate. Functions and intergovernmental arrangements still dominate the base of the cooperation. Institutional are not in sight and are not planned.

The common responsibility for peace and security in Europe

The Caucasus conflict, as before the ‘alarm call’ (Lawrow) of the Russian president in the Munich security conference in 2007 have contributed to the perception of the problem that there cannot be a „business as usual“ while the marching in step of the third round of the NATO–east enlargement is still visible. Unless, all consequences that two hostile camps emerge in Europe are accepted and the idea of a peace order is shifted to the Saint Nimmerleinstag.

If one does not want such a development, the relation of the EU to Russia automatically comes into play on the one hand. On the other hand, the question of the flexibility of NATO is thrown up, and furthermore the political role of the EU in Europe is again on the agenda. Now both sides
have to come to terms with the real changes which happened in the suite of the last ten years in international politics, above all, however, in the whole of Europe. More still, they are forced to sketch concepts or strategies how to deal with each other which up to now either were absent or, however, deflected by general phrases. Finally, the west should see that the Post-Soviet era, when Russia was a match ball of western politics, is over. However, the often tense efforts of Moscow to return in the concert of international powers with provoking actions, need to be addressed in the Kremlin. Obviously, they cannot be misinterpreted as a relapse in times of the Cold War, but they arm Russiaphobia in Western circles. During the Putin terms of office the domestic and economic conditions for an interest-led foreign policy have been laid. The state has attained his authority and capacity again, the political system is consolidated and the political power elite, just as whether it fits western politicians or media, can build on a relatively high society legitimation. A Post-Soviet power élite has originated which formulates self-confidently and relatively unimpressed from western influence her politics aims. Needless to add, that those goals are not based on geostrategical weapons as it was the case during the Cold War.

The following options for a future security and peace order in Europe are conceivable:

**The NATO Russia committee will be revalued and/or Russia becomes a member of NATO**

Already once, in the beginning of the 1990s conceptions arose in Moscow to lead the country into NATO. They were blocked in 1994 when the decision for NATO eastern enlargement was taken. This option is not from the table, only the conditions and options for such a move will not generate from European member states. The coalition against the international terror in 2001 offers here an interesting analogy of “informal alliances”, a policy the USA also applied in the Iraq question with NATO.

This option could be reached as a process in the long term. Meanwhile a step by step approach is more conceivable, i.e. a gradual increase of consultation and decisions mechanisms in the context of the NATO Russia Committee. This construction does not correspond to the Russian images of a formal contract between NATO and/or EVSP/EU on the one hand and Russia and/or OVKS (organization for collective security), on the other hand. However, this construction carries a high level of confidence and trust, because it keeps the trans-Atlantic dimension alive and incorporated. Trust and reinsurance
are essential for the smaller countries of Europe, and only outside actors like the USA can step in and guarantee security for those European member states. In addition, first not much would change in the immediate future; Secondly the USA remain as a partner and counterbalance in the alliance, thirdly the idea of a strengthened European pillar would be put finally into action, and fourthly this arrangement could meet the superior strength of Russia. This option would contribute to an extremely relaxed security situation in the whole of Europe.

Another variation which maintains actually the USA in her dominating position within the trans-Atlantic alliance and, so to speak, accepts Russia as a counterbalance actor cannot lie in the interest of the EU. Since such a construction would grow into a security condominium between the USA and Russia, and the EU would not be able to act as the third equal actor. Such construction would reanimate, indeed, at another level and in other quality, the conditions of the bipolar era again.

**The EU and Russia are to Conclude Contractual Arrangements for Peace Preservation in Europe**

The EU and Russia agree on common peace politics which militarily rests on the EVSP. The EVSP does not put up own military contingents, but operates according to the old double hat construction, namely to use integrated parts of NATO. These military contingents are integrated with Russian units under a common high command. If necessary new institutions are to be created which focus on political consultation and mechanisms for decision making.

A similar procedure could be developed with the OSCE. In such a case, the EU and Russia agree on a set of common peace politics which rests politically on a revalued and reformed OSCE equipped with decision-making powers. Within the scope of peace-protecting and peace-making duties which are to be defined in very precise and narrow terms, to leave no loophole for or pretext for interventions in the internal matters of the member states institutions can be created which provide e.g. common threat analyses etc.

Difficulties will arise in all conceived variations from voting procedures and mechanisms. The fact that such constructions need, moreover, a considerable basis of mutual trust to be discussed publicly, is absolutely clear. Hence, it was and is also fateful that questions of the common
European security possibly against rocket attacks from other regions, have more contributed to European disunity. Instead of looking for a comprehensive solution which would have had to incorporate of course the Russian proposals, a very shortsighted US-proposal was favored and pushed through. But maybe political developments in the USA open a renewed possibility to come to a co-coordinated and conflict-reducing solution which could support one of the above mentioned variations or similar variants.
Political Religion in the 21st Century

Peter van der Veer

Speech at the International Conference "Europe in the 21st Century: Crossroads of Civilizations", held in Prague (Czech Republic) on May 4–6, 2004

Introduction

The Fall of the Berlin Wall marked the end of the Cold War tripartite division of the world. On the ruins of the Berlin Wall old ideas of civilisation with strategic consequences have newly emerged. According to Samuel Huntington (1993: 22), “the great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural...The fault lines between civilisations will be the battle lines of the future”. Huntington took the title of his essay, “The Clash of Civilisations?” from an observation made in an article about Muslim politics by the leading Middle East–expert in the U.S., Bernard Lewis. It is obvious that for both Huntington and Lewis the essential civilisational border is that between Christianity and Islam, although Huntington takes pains to also delineate fault lines between Orthodox Christianity and Western Christianity as well as to pay some attention to the ‘Confucian’ civilisation of China, as well as to Japanese civilisation, Hindu civilisation and a few others. Islamic civilisation is the old enemy of the West from the Crusades onwards and the seemingly unending Israel–Palestine hostilities, the rise of so-called Islamic fundamentalism, as well as the threat by openly anti-Western governments in Iran, Iraq, and Libya, made it the appropriate successor of the evil empire of Communism.

1 In 1990 Bernard Lewis had given a talk, entitled “Islamic Fundamentalism” as the Jefferson Lecture of 1990, the highest honor accorded by the U.S. government to a scholar for achievement in the Humanities. A revised version was published under the title “The Roots of Muslim Rage” in the Atlantic Monthly (226, 3, September 1990). John Esposito (1992: 173, 174) has this to say about the article: “It reinforces stereotypes of Islamic revivalism and of Muslims and predisposes the reader to view the relationship of Islam to the West in terms of rage, violence, hatred, and irrationality......The title, “Roots of Muslim Rage”, sets the tone and expectation. Yet would we tolerate similar generalizations in analyzing and explaining Western activities and motives? How often do we see articles that speak of Christian rage or Jewish rage?”
The success of Huntington’s article and his subsequent book (1996), which develops his argument at greater length, can be explained by the timeliness of a rethinking of America’s geopolitical role after the collapse of the Soviet empire by an important theorist of International Relations. It is fascinating to see that the collapse of the Soviet Union has not resulted in a triumphalist mood in the USA, but rather in a gloomy, declinist vision which predicts that in the early decades of the next century the ‘age of Western dominance’ will be over and power will have to be shared increasingly with core states in other civilisations. Regardless of this immediate American context, however, Huntington raises important questions about the role of civilisations and religions in the international order of the 21st century which are worth reflecting upon.

Our reflections have to start with the question: what is a civilisation? A famous definition has been given by the 19th-century anthropologist E.B. Tylor: “Culture or Civilisation, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. In this definition one can find a universalist aspect and a particularist one. The universalist aspect stresses that every human being acquires something called civilisation, while the particularist aspect distinguishes different civilisations belonging to different societies. This definition attempts to be neutral, but the concept of ‘civilisation’ is in its long history developed to distinguish the civilised from the uncivilised. In the words of Norbert Elias, “this concept expresses the self-consciousness of the West. One could even say: the national consciousness. It sums up everything in which Western society of the last two or three centuries believes itself superior to earlier societies or “more primitive” contemporary ones. By this term Western society seeks to describe what constitutes its special character and what it is proud of: the level of its manners, the development of its manners, the development of its scientific knowledge or view of the world, and much more” (Elias, 1994: 3).

Elias connects the emergence of the concept of ‘civilisation’ to the rise of national consciousness in Europe and argues that there are great differences between the English and French use of the word, on the one hand, and the German use of it, on the other. The connection between the rise of the nation-state and the emergence of the concept of civilisation is premised on the demise of what Benedict Anderson (1991: 36) has called “the great transcontinental sodalities of Christendom, the Islamic Ummah,

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2 The most successful spokesman of this declinist vision in the U.S. is Paul Kennedy (1993).
and the rest”. It is ironic that the term ‘civilisation’ that Huntington uses has only emerged when the social and political significance of civilisations had declined in the process of the making of national states. This makes it immediately clear that the relation between civilisation and nation-state is a complex one that Huntington, deliberately but wrongly, ignores.

Huntington does away with the application of the term ‘civilisation’ as a universalist Western standard to judge societies and emphasizes the lack of universal standards and the existence of essential differences between civilisations that have their own normative standards. In his view there cannot be a universal civilisation, since the central elements of any civilisation, language and religion, do not show any sign of developing into one universal language or one universal religion (Huntington, 1996: 57). Huntington also rejects the traditional view of modernization theory that modernization means Westernization (ibidem, 78). He chooses thus for the particularistic option in his use of the term ‘civilisation’ and ends up with a set of irreducibly different, but modern civilisations which together make up the world order. While Huntington is obviously right in noticing the fatality of linguistic diversity which prevents the emergence of a universal language, he ignores the importance of the nation-state in creating national languages. Civilisational languages like Latin and Sanskrit have been replaced by national languages. Perhaps Arabic can still be seen as an example of a civilisational language, but even there one can discern important national differences in the spoken language. Moreover, Arabic is the language of the Koran, but not by the same token of Muslim civilisation, since most Muslims do not command Arabic.

Huntington sees religion as a central defining characteristic of civilisations (p. 47). He correctly notices the failure of secularization in many societies, but he pays no attention to the function of religion in the creation of national cultures. He argues that modernization, in many cases, did not bring the death of religion, but its resurgence (p. 97). The term ‘resurgence’, like the term ‘revival’, however, is problematic, since it suggests the return of something that was on its way out. Especially, when the revival is said to be largely caused by the “psychological, emotional, and social traumas of modernization” (p. 100), I feel that we bring the old modernization theory back in through the backdoor. By further arguing that the revival of non-Christian religion is directly related to anti-Westernism Huntington connects his theory of civilisational difference with the widely-felt fear for Islamic fundamentalism (pp. 100–101).
My main objection to Huntington’s argument is that by emphasizing civilisations at the expense of nation-states he gives no interpretation of why and how the role of nation states in international politics will change and that he ignores the connection between religion and nationalism. It is the analysis of this connection which leads to a better understanding of so-called fundamentalism and the resurgence of religion. In the next section of this chapter I will examine the role of religion in the development of national cultures. In the third section I will look at the possible decline of nation-states as the result of globalisation and at the role of transnational religion in this. Finally, I will come back to Huntington’s theory of the clash of civilisations in my conclusion.

Religion and the Nation-State

The emergence of the European nation-state is commonly seen to depend on three connected processes of centralization: “the emergence of supra-local identities and cultures (the ‘nation’); the rise of powerful and authoritative institutions within the public domain (the ‘state’), and the development of particular ways of organizing production and consumption (the ‘economy’)” (Grillo, 1980:1). According to Ernest Gellner’s influential theory of nationalism, national culture has by definition to be secular, since economic and cognitive growth are only possible when the absolutist claims of the earlier agrarian (namely, preindustrial) age are replaced by open scientific inquiry (Gellner, 1984:77, 142). For Gellner the historical process is clear both in Europe and in the rest of the world: a society can only develop into a modern nation-state when it becomes secular. In a later book he qualifies his point of view by arguing that Islam defies the secularization thesis (Gellner, 1992:18). I would suggest, however, that Christianity itself defies the thesis in the history of Western Europe and the United States, the empirical core of secularization theory.

Let us take Britain and Holland as two prime examples of the results of the Protestant reformation and of modern nation-states, as they emerged in 19th century Europe. It should be evident that the social significance of religion increased during the industrial and political transformation these societies went through in the 19th century (Wolffe, 1994; van Rooden, 1996). It is precisely the mobilization of large groups of the population for the political goals of democracy which makes religion such a useful resource. The evangelical movement in the 19th century has played a crucial role in the transformation of populations into a modern public, necessary for the
modern nation. As I have argued elsewhere, religion has been central to the development of modern institutions, such as democracy, in many Western societies (van der Veer, 1997).

The secularization of British and Dutch societies did not take place in the 19th century as a result of the industrial revolution or the rise of the modern nation-state, but, for a host of specific historical reasons, only in the twentieth century and then in periods so different from each other that it defies universal explanation by a secularization thesis. Britain secularized gradually from the early decades of the twentieth century despite a short resurgence during the Second World War, while Holland only secularized in the 1960s. It should be observed in passing that the USA, a major modern nation-state, offers a different picture altogether, in which secularization is very uneven and religion continues to have a strong public presence even today. The continuing strength of American Christianity appears to be largely the effect of the aggressive recruitment patterns of religious organizations which have not (as yet) been as successful in Western Europe.

In a recent book Jose Casanova (1994) has tried to save the secularization thesis in a modified form, despite its failure to explain the historical developments outlined above. He points out that there are three elements in the secularization thesis which have been taken to be essential to the development of modernity. First of all, there is the increasing separation of religion from politics, economy, science. Secondly, there is the privatization of religion within its own sphere. Thirdly, there is the declining social significance of religious belief, commitment, and institutions. Casanova argues that only the first and the third element are crucial to modernity, while the element of privatization is not. In a number of case studies of Western secular societies he shows that public and political manifestations of religion do occur without threatening the basic requirements of modern society, including democratic government. In short, Casanova’s perspective allows us to avoid the generalized negative response to the politicization of religion in many parts of the world. He argues, convincingly, that in some cases the work of modernization is done by religious forces rather than by secular ones.

A major element in Casanova's theory, then, is to distinguish, as it were, between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ religions. Good religions are those that further the construction of civil society and bad religions are those that try to undermine it. This is not so easy as it seems, though. Casanova's case material is all about Western Christianity and it might well be possible (and even likely) that different religious traditions have different views of what ‘civil society’ entails, what public debate amounts to, and certainly what
role religious arguments should play in public debate (Asad, 1998). Casanova seems to disregard the possibility that people who argue from non-Christian religious standpoints might have very different views about authority, free debate, and civil society than those who argue from an Enlightenment tradition of secularism. He also seems to disallow the possibility that state-society relations are very different in different parts of the world and that the public sphere is accordingly also different. At least that is to me what ‘bad’ religions seem to be about.

It is precisely at this point that one should recognize that theories of secularization, modified or not, only deal with Christianity in the West, that is Western Europe and the United States of America. Secularization theory then is a particular argument about the changing place of Christianity in modern Western society and not about religion as such. It is hardly applicable to the history of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and most other religions. In the latter cases the empirical question about the social significance of religion in terms of church attendance and membership cannot even be raised, since there are no churches. The organization of religion, the place of religion in society, the patterns of recruitment, and indeed the religious traditions are so different that not only secularization theory itself, but also the empirical and theoretical problems which are derived from it in the context of Western Christianity, become hard to address. The question, therefore, is not whether Muslim or Hindu or Buddhist societies secularize, but what the role of religion actually is, how it is organized, what it supports and what it opposes. Since most societies in the world have adopted the nation form, it is important to see how religion shapes the national cultures involved and vice versa. It should be clear that as much as in the European and American case religion and politics belong together in non-Western societies. In the latter case religious politics is often condemned as ‘fundamentalism’.

The fact that non-Christian religions tend to have a public role is not what disturbs Western observers, since they are more or less aware of that role in their own societies. It is the unfamiliar nature of non-Christian religious arguments in the public sphere, especially about gender-related issues and human rights, the violence involved in some of the disputes, and the threat they seem to pose to secularists and the secular state which are disturbing. The general term used for ‘bad’ religious politics is ‘fundamentalism’.

The term ‘fundamentalism’ was first used in the United States in 1920 to designate a broad Protestant movement in defense of biblical literalism. Especially after the Iranian revolution of 1979, however, it has gained wide currency among journalists and politicians to designate a wide variety of religious movements in the world. To say that this broad application of
the word 'fundamentalism' is a journalistic invention does not weaken or depoliticize it. It is a crucial term not only in the media coverage of world politics, but also in the creation of world politics itself. A powerful language or discourse is not something one can choose to accept or reject; it can be critiqued and deconstructed, but that will not make it go away.

The greatest enemies of ‘the open society’, for whom the language of utter rejection and condemnation is used, are located not in the West, but in the Rest. If they are found in the West they are from the Rest. Mostly, they are ‘fanatic Muslims’ which threaten the status quo in the Middle East, where, since Western industrial societies have vital interests in the production of oil. Not all Muslim fundamentalists are enemies, though. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Pakistan, but also the militant groups in Afghanistan fighting Soviet imperialism are often exempted from the strong, condemning tone used for Sudan and Iran as well as for the militant groups fighting the state in Egypt, Algeria and Palestine. A crucial characteristic of ‘fundamentalism’ is therefore that it is anti-Western. Another is that it is against the secular state. These two characteristics are often conflated in the notion that these are movements which see the secular state as an alien, western phenomenon. The ‘fanatic muslim’ serves as a template to talk about other fundamentalists, such as the Sikh Khalistanis and Hindu nationalists in India.

Since the term ‘fundamentalism’ is in common usage to describe religio-political movements, a clear definition should be given, so that the term can be used in social theory. A recent endeavor to give such a definition and develop a theory of the phenomenon has been made by Martin Riesenbrodt (1994), a Chicago-based sociologist who compares the emergence of modern fundamentalism in the United States and Iran. Riesenbrodt argues that fundamentalism is a social phenomenon that occurs during rapid social change, is marked by a profound experience of crisis, and tries to overcome that crisis by a revitalization of religion and a search for authenticity. This revitalization is characterized by what he calls a ‘mythical regress to the revealed and realized order’ and authenticity is realized in ‘rational’ fundamentalism by a literalist reading of sacred texts and in ‘charismatic’ fundamentalism by the experience of a gift of grace. Further, he argues that fundamentalism implies a rejection of the world, but that can take the form of either fleeing the world or mastering the world by forming a political party or religious movement, or secret society. Riesenbrodt’s central thesis is “that fundamentalism refers to an urban movement directed primarily against the dissolution of personalistic, patriarchal notions of order and social relations and their replacement by depersonalized principles” (p. 9).
He asks for attention to the ideology of these movements as well as to the movement’s carriers, defined as social units formed in a particular ‘sociomoral milieu’, that is by the coincidence of several structural dimensions. This, then, is a theory of social transformation and the response to that by social movements of a particular type.

Riesebrodt’s definition and theoretical approach is subtle and fairly typical for the sociological approach to fundamentalism. It is very similar to the guiding ideas behind Chicago’s huge, multi-volume Fundamentalism project, under the directorship of Martin Marty and Scott Appleby. This project covers Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Confucian fundamentalism in a great variety of societies, ranging from the USA to China, and Italy to the Andes. The idea is that fundamentalism is a global phenomenon in so far as it is a response to global processes of social transformation. One could say that it provides sociological support to the journalistic, and geopolitical notion of fundamentalism.

Riesebrodt’s theoretical framework, like that of Marty and Appleby, is in fact not very different from modernization theory, focusing on processes like urbanization, industrialization, and secularization. Their opinion seems to be that fundamentalism or politicized religion is a successful defense all over the world against modernity and shows the failure of secularization. Huntington, by and large, accepts this understanding of the ‘resurgence of religion’. As I have argued above, this approach fails to explain religious and secular developments in the West, and is, even in a modified form (as proposed by Casanova), inappropriate for the analysis of such developments in non-Christian societies.

In my view the understanding of the ‘bad’ politics of fundamentalism depends crucially on an analysis of processes of state formation which is the dominant factor affecting the location of religion in society. This is definitely not to say that the state is the determining factor which can explain everything, but rather that we have to examine the historical process in which the relation between state and society gets defined to understand the shifting place of religious institutions and their hold on their constituencies. These processes are different in different parts of the world and we should not expect a one-dimensional, unilinear story of modernity to emerge. What we need is not only an analysis of the transformation of religion in the modern period, but also an analysis of the rise of secular institutions and the role of secularism as a modern ideology in them.

In a number of contemporary, non-Western societies we have to acknowledge not only that religion is a public affair, but that there is also a more or less aggressively interventionist secular state, supported by a
secularist elite and a secularist army. I am thinking of Islamic societies, such as Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, Pakistan, but also of India, whose population is in majority Hindu. Our analysis of Islamicist and Hindu movements in these societies has to take the role of the secular state in account without adopting the uncritical, normative stance that the secular state is by definition progressive, since it brings secular modernity. The so-called fundamentalist movements can be understood, to an important extent, as responses to secularist interventionism both in the public and the private sphere (van der Veer, 1994). This kind of state that was put in place in most cases by colonial powers is directed at the material and moral transformation of entire populations.

The politico-religious movements do not so much defend a traditional society against those interventions, but creatively try to interpret religious tradition as to come up with alternative models of societal transformation. It is essential to see that these movements are not conservative or reactionary, but aim at a far-going transformation of society and desire to control the state for that purpose. In these societies a struggle between secularist movements and religious movements takes place over the control of the state apparatuses. This is a violent struggle in which often a secularist army is pitched against terrorist groups. It is a violence that tends to upset us more than usual, because these are civil wars in which actors are religiously motivated. Since most of these societies have experienced "the West" in the form of colonial power and because the postcolonial secular state is so much the institutional heir of the colonial state anti-secularist movements are at the same time often radically anti-Western. Nevertheless, the struggle in which fundamentalist groups engage is by and large internal to specific nation-states despite sporadic terrorist attacks against airliners or office buildings in the West.

An uncritical support of secularists in Non-Western societies by Western powers can only support the idea of an unholy alliance between secularists and ‘the West’ and will do much to destabilize the relations between the state and Muslim immigrants in Western societies, especially in Europe. It would be good to take a step back and examine what the struggle between secularists and fundamentalists in these societies is really about and to what extent there are viable alternatives to the Western construction of the public sphere and civil society which these movements try to develop. One of the questions to be asked is what we understand democracy to be, since there can be no doubt that these movements are deeply involved in the democratic revolution in their societies, in which more and more people become involved in the political process. The extent to which the Iranian Revolution
of 1979 has furthered democratic participation of the population comes only as a surprise to those who believe that democracy is alien to Islam.

If we look at Muslim politics (or, for that matter, in South Asia at Hindu or Sikh politics) it is striking to what extent religious politics is framed by nationalism. In itself, this is not different from the Western, Christian cases. An important difference, however, does lie in the fact that in the period of the formation of modern nationalism in British India and the Middle East the state was controlled not by compatriots, but by Western, Christian colonizers. In these societies the colonial state adopted often a neutral, secular stance in order not to provoke resistance on religious grounds. The crucial religious and cultural difference between colonizers and colonized, however, profoundly influenced the interpretation of religion and secularism as basis of anti-colonial independence struggles.

More than in Europe and the USA secularism became a major ideology, carried by elite groups, rather than the result of the gradual decline of the power of religious organizations or of the radical separation of church and state. Secularism (often combined with socialism), carried forward by leaders such as Nehru and Nasser, continued to be an elitist ideology in societies which were characterized by strong religious commitments. Since both the independence struggle and the postcolonial building of nations depended on mass politics the mobilization of religion could never be avoided. What we see therefore in many societies in Asia and the Middle East is a religious nationalism which confronts a secular nationalism. To speak of a religious resurgence in the last few decades is therefore a misnomer, since religious politics have never been removed from either independence movements or postcolonial national politics. Even secularists like Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, had to use religion as a political resource, just as Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, could not reach the masses without the mediation of ‘Mahatma’ Gandhi.

To acknowledge the direct linkage between nationalism and religion immediately problematizes Huntington’s civilisational essentialism. There is a great number of nation-states in the world which have conflicting interests. The great geopolitical conflicts in this century, the First and Second World War, have been largely between co-religionists, belonging to different nation-states. The violent conflicts in the Muslim world are also between co-religionists: Iraq against Iran, Iraq against Kuwait, Pakistan against Bangladesh. Moreover, these conflicts were based upon national interest, not upon religious difference. If the connection between
nationalism, the nation-state and religion is as strong as I have argued here, the question comes up to what extent it would be affected by a supposed decline of the nation-state due to contemporary processes of globalisation. I want to address that question in the next section.

Religion and Globalisation

Nation-states operate in a global context, or, as Balibar (1991) puts it, in a worldsystem of nation-states. Despite all the arguments in liberal, economic theory about Free Trade, anti-Protectionism and the like, modern economies are national economies within a capitalist worldsystem. Similarly, nation-states interact in transnational bodies of world politics, such as the United Nations. In that sense, nation-states have always been globalized, or, perhaps more precisely, have existed in dialectical relation with global processes. This conventional wisdom has over the last decade been challenged by a growing literature on globalisation and transnational processes. In this literature attention is given to the speed with which production and consumption is globalized, and with which transnational migration is on the increase. According to Roger Rouse (1995) there has been a shift from multinational corporations which integrate more or less self-contained production and marketing facilities in a number of different national sites to transnational corporations that take a single production process and redistribute it across sites in different areas of the world. The latter is only possible thanks to a huge improvement of communication technologies which has taken place over the last decade. Similarly migrants increasingly do not move from one nation-state to the other, but maintain more and more complex networks of linkages between sites. They live, so to say, in many places more or less simultaneously. These phenomena lead a number of theorists of globalisation and transnationalism to suggest that they indicate a crisis of ‘the national’ and force nation-states to adapt to ‘the transnational’ (Appadurai, 1996; Hannerz, 1996). One way of interpreting Huntington’s move to the civilisational level is precisely to relate it to the perceived crisis of the nation-state.

It is hard to deny that we witness in our times a significant increase in the speed and frequency with which people, goods, information move across the boundaries of states. The question is to what extent and in what direction that fact transforms or replaces people’s identification with their national culture. If 95 percent of the population increase will be in the poorest regions of the world one does not have to be a prophet of doom like
the journalist Robert Kaplan (1996) to predict that migration to the rich regions of the world has only just begun. Contrary to what one might think, however, migration may reinforce nationalism rather than weaken it.

According to Eric Hobsbawm (1987) mass emigration played an important role in the emergence of the later phase of European nationalism. The half-century before 1914 witnessed the greatest international migration in history. This migration produced nationalism in two ways. It created xenophobia among the people already well established, both the middle and working classes, in the countries of immigration. This led to forms of nationalism that emphasized the ‘defence of the nation’ against the threatening immigrant. We can see something similar happening today in Western Europe and the USA. The imposition, through xenophobia, of a negative identity certainly also enhanced nationalist sentiment among migrants. The element of romanticization that is present in every nationalism is even stronger among nostalgic migrants, who often form a very rosy picture of the country they have left. Benedict Anderson (1992) refers to an aphorism of Lord Acton that ‘exile is the nursery of nationality’ to emphasize the political importance of migrants in the formation of what he calls ‘long-distance nationalism’. The example Hobsbawm gives is that of Thomas Masaryk signing an agreement in Pittsburgh to form a state uniting Czechs and Slovaks, since Slovak nationalism was more alive in Pennsylvania than in Slovakia. The transformation Anderson sees from the exile nationalism of the late 19th, early 20th century to the transnationalism of today is that migrants do not return to their countries of origins to participate in nationalist struggles, but support them from abroad. The transnational networks established thanks to the new possibilities of communication are put to the use of nationalist causes.

What role does religion play in the dialectics between national and transnational? World religions, by their very nature, of course transcend national boundaries. It is true for Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and to a lesser extent, Hinduism that they have a message for mankind. They have, traditionally, been organized in a globalizing fashion to further worldwide expansion or, to put it in religious terms, missionization. Nevertheless, as I have argued in the previous section, religion has been used in a great many cases to build national cultures. The tension between the national and the transnational is therefore not at all novel for religions.

What can be argued, however, is that the transnational element in religion gets new possibilities thanks to the growth of transnational migration. In fact, we do see the flourishing of large transnational religious movements, such as Pentecostalism in Christianity, the Tablighi Jama‘at in
Islam, and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad in Hinduism. Interestingly, it is the Muslim movement which is, contrary to what Westerners would expect, avowedly apolitical and not aligned to nationalist politics. Worldly affairs do not matter directly for it. Its view is that the world will improve when every Muslim simply tries to be a good Muslim by fulfilling one's duties. However, as I have argued elsewhere (van der Veer, 1994) this stance does have political consequences. Its message is for migrants a perfect defense against assimilation. In that sense the movement may come up strongly against the policies of some states. Despite the ubiquitous discourse on the universal community of Islam, the 'umma', there is a clear tendency of localization, of becoming involved in the politics of the nation-state in which one lives (Eickelman and Piscatori, 1996: 149–150).

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad, on the contrary, has explicit political aims and is deeply involved in Hindu nationalism. It is directly allied to the Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party). It is highly successful among Hindu migrants in the USA, the Caribbean, Britain, and South Africa or, better, wherever one finds Hindu communities in the diaspora. The Pentecostalist movements, finally, are often deeply involved in the politics of national culture in the societies in which they are active. There is no evidence that processes of globalisation and transnationalism impair the contribution of religion to the various nationalisms in the world.

**Conclusion**

In Huntington’s view future conflicts in the world will be between civilisations. The Gulf War which took place just before the publication of Huntington's Foreign Affairs article could be taken as an example of such a civilisational war between the Muslim civilisation and the Western (Christian) civilisation. At close examination, however, it immediately shows the pitfalls of a civilisational interpretation of world order. In fact, the Gulf War completely divided both the Arab world and the Muslim world. Islamic arguments were used to support Iraq and they were used to support Kuwait and Saudi–Arabia. For many Muslims it was a sorry sight to see the secularist Saddam Hussein trying to use Islam for his purposes. Only when there was a massive build-up of U.S. troops in Saudi–Arabia popular sentiment in the Muslim world reverted to its standard anti-Americanism, which has as much to do with America's role in Israel as with anything else, and made Hussein into an unlikely Muslim hero standing up against American hegemony (Esposito, 1992: 194–195). Governments, however, such as those
of Morocco, Turkey, and Egypt, continued to support the Western alliance. It is not that Islamic issues did not play a role in the Gulf War, but that neither the causes nor the unfolding of it can be explained by them.

If the civilisational approach is so weak in explaining conflicts of the recent past, why did Huntington’s theory get the attention it received? It is perhaps illuminating to examine the use that has been made of civilisational ideas, such as those of Huntington, in Europe. Huntington writes about the West in Atlantic terms, joining the U.S. and Western Europe, but it is in Europe and especially in the Mediterranean region where the civilisational borders between Islam and Christianity are drawn.

When the Wall fell the discussion about the future of Germany was held between ‘Wessies’ and ‘Ossies’, forgetting – as usual – that Berlin, the new capital of unified Germany, is the third largest Turkish city in the world after Ankara and Istanbul. What indeed is the place of Turkey and that of Turkish citizens who reside in Western Europe? Is the border between Muslim Turkey and Christian Greece the significant one for a unified Europe and is this border internally reproduced as a boundary between secular Christian citizens and religiously-minded Muslim residents? An affirmative answer to this question seems to be the implicit message of a recent summit of European Christian-democrats under the leadership of the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl. These Christian politicians want to deny Turkey membership of Europe since it does not belong to Christian civilisation.

We have here the long-standing competition and enmity between Christian Europe and the Ottoman Empire, of which the Bosnian war, the Bulgarian troubles, and the tense relation between Greece and Turkey are the historical offshoots. It is fair, however, to remind oneself of the fact that there has not been an Islamic military threat to Europe since the defeat of the Ottomans at the gates of Vienna in 1683. On the contrary, European powers have colonized large parts of the Ottoman empire in the 19th century. The struggle has been won by the Western powers and it has led to the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire and the formation of a modern, secular nation-state Turkey. Nevertheless, the old question of the colonial period emerges again, but now in the metropoles of the former colonizing nations. Are people of other race, other religion capable of reaching the endpoint of civilisational evolution, European modernity? To what extent can Muslims become modern; to what extent can they be equal to modern Christians? What we have here is a tension between the universal principles
of the Enlightenment and their rootedness in Christian civilisation. The Christian-Democrats want to put the struggle between secularist and fundamentalist Muslims in Turkey outside Europe without engaging the fact that that struggle also takes place within its own global cities.

The relation of Turkey to the Western world is a question that can also be raised in Atlantic terms. Turkey is part of NATO and in 1995 NATO’s Secretary-General Willy Claes declared that Islamic fundamentalism was the enemy that had succeeded communism and that NATO was entering strategic alliances with cooperative, secular governments in North Africa and the Middle East to stem the tide of this new danger to democracy. In such a view, different from the current Christian-Democratic one, there is a clear acknowledgement of the fact that secularists in Turkey (backed up by the army) have to be supported in their choice for secular values. But the NATO chose to act exactly as Islamicists argue that the West does, namely propping up so-called secular governments (often with a reputation of corruption) against which large groups in the population revolt. A narrow definition of secular versus religious politics which ignores a large part of Western Europe's political history prevents Europe to make a sharp analysis of what is going on in the Mediterranean area. Every support of corrupt secularism only fuels the Islamist struggle. One often forgets that when one speaks about Europe and the Mediterranean area one is dealing with a postcolonial situation. The dirty war in Algeria today has been preceded by a dirty war with France in the fifties. Nobody can be surprised about Algerian bombs exploding in the Parisian metro, just as nobody can be surprised about Irish bombs exploding in the London subway. These wars do not respect the borders of nation-states nor the civilisational borders between Europe and the Rest, since these borders have never been respected before in the colonial period.

Western Europe is also an interesting case for examining the effects of transnational migration and globalisation. In marked distinction from the U.S. Western European nation-states do not define themselves in terms of immigration. On the other hand they have started upon a long process of European unification to facilitate the flow of goods, persons, and money across its borders. While the internal borders of Western Europe become less important, Europe’s external borders gain in importance, especially with regions from which Europe fears large-scale immigration.

The end of the colonial era has brought large groups from the former empires into the metropole. By and large, they went to their ‘own’ metropoles, remembering those who were already there that their countries had indeed been metropoles of larger entities. These were citizens settling in
the metropolitan part of the former empires. Besides that, Western Europe attracted labour migrants from the mediterranean area. As long as these were Southern Europeans, Spanish or Italians, there was little objection in the host societies, but Turkish and Maghrebian immigrant labourers became much more easily subject of political debate. In the 1960s postcolonial and labour migration became politicised and in the 1970s Europe witnessed a whole range of measures, restricting immigration and restricting access to citizenship.

Migration from Islamic countries is one of the political issues most alive in Western Europe. Despite all the political rhetoric in especially France and Germany the presence of large groups of Muslims, as in an earlier period large groups of Jews, is a fact that will continue to disrupt any civilisational illusions one might have about the Christian West and the non-Christian Rest. The struggle is really for the acceptance of the stranger without desiring to obliter ate him either by assimilation or by multiculturalism. There are differences in the world and, as Montaigne already observed, “each calls that Barbarism what is not his own practice”. To live with each other's barbarism, without violence, in one and the same multicultural society is the challenge of the 21st century.

Although the issue of multiculturalism is not straightforwardly examined in Huntington's book, it does seem to motivate his entire project. As he puts it at the end of his book in the following, revealing passage: “Some Americans have promoted multiculturalism at home; some have promoted universalism abroad; and some have done both. Multiculturalism at home threatens the United States and the West, universalism abroad threatens the West and the World. Both deny the uniqueness of Western culture. The global monoculturalists want to make the world like America. The domestic multiculturalists want to make America like the world. A multicultural America is impossible because a non-Western America is not American. A multicultural world is unavoidable because global empire is impossible. The preservation of the United States and the West requires the renewal of Western identity. The security of the world requires acceptance of global multiculturality” (Huntington, 1996: 318). This ideological message deals with a real issue, faced not only by the United States, but also by a great number of other societies, namely multiculturalism versus cultural assimilation. This issue cannot be solved, however, by projecting multiculturalism out of domestic politics onto the stage of world politics.
REFERENCES


Good morning to all of you,

I think it is very much in the spirit of these proceedings that some of what I have to say this morning will be subject to discussion and indeed to debate. There is only one issue on which I would presume to speak for everyone in this chamber and only because I’m the first one after him to take the podium, and that is to express admiration and thanks to Mr. Yakunin for his role and bringing us together and for making this conference an important annual global event. I too am departing from my text there, Vladimir.

I’ve been asked to address the question of President Obama’s foreign policy. And I’d like to do that beginning by relating that topic to the theme of this conference, the dialogue of civilisations.

There are of course many civilisations in the world today and quite a few of them represented in this room, and there had been many more civilisations throughout history. None can quarrel with the idea that different civilisations should be in dialogue with one another. A proposal to that effect was put forward by Ayatollah Taskhiri countryman, former President Mohammed Khatami in the year 2000. Not long after that, dialogue of civilisations was adapted by the United Nations as a motto for the year, and this for irony was 2001.

It’s worth recalling that both President Khatami and the United Nations promoted the dialogue as an alternative to and a remedy for the clash of civilisations – that phrase had been popularized by one of my countrymen, the late Samuel Huntington.

He divided the world into nine distinct and fundamentally incompatible civilisations: Western, or Judeo-Christian, Orthodox, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, Chinese, Japanese, Latin American, and African.
Note that the first five categories treat religion as the defining characteristic of civilisation. Yet we are holding this conference in the country that gave birth to the idea known in Greek as \textit{oikoumene}. It was adapted by Alexander the Great as he spread his realm from Gibraltar to the Punjab. \textit{Oikoumene} is sometimes translated as ‘a sense of communion with all the peoples of the known world’ and it is of course the root of the ecclesiastical term \textit{ecumenical} – that word too in its clerical sense is well represented here today.

Another feature of the Alexandrian era and of this region was the Greek ideal of cosmopolitanism, which the dictionary defines as a manner of thinking and living that incorporates an appreciation of the prospective of diverse cultures. Many of you here today are infinitely better versed than I am to address this hapax.

But I feel that I can relate them to the character and the world view of the 44th President of the USA. Barak Hussein Obama is among the most ecumenical and cosmopolitan leaders we have ever had in our country. He is remarkably and perhaps uniquely suited to be a leader in a globalized world. His life, his name, his personal heritage and his foreign policy instincts – all bear the imprint of at least three of the nine civilisations on Huntington’s list: Western, Islamic, and African. And he has exposure to several others as well. Not coincidentally he has actively acted campaign for the White House outside the United States. I am referring to his speech in Berlin a year ago, July. In that speech and in others in Cairo, Ankara, Prague, and last month at the UN General Assembly in the G20 summit in Pittsburg he hammered away at the theme of common security for common humanity, which might be paraphrased as common security for a single civilisation.

What President Obama is now trying to do is to translate this in the policy and diplomacy, but he is having a very hard time doing so. We are at a suspenseful and dramatic period in American politics. President Obama is at a pivotal and I would say a perilous moment in his presidency. The outcome of that moment can determine whether his administration last one term or two. And that very fact that such a question even arises is in itself quite stunning.

Eleven months ago, right after the US election, all of you along with millions of others around the world watched the extraordinary phenomenon of \textit{Obamamania} in my country. And yet this summer you watch the bazaar sequel \textit{Obamaphobia}, often in the form of this rather bazaar protest rallies called town meetings. You heard fever about socialism, communism, Nazism taking over a country called \textit{Obamanation}. What started as a fringe movement is now showing up along what I would call the right bank of the main stream.
That’s in part because it derives energy from two factors. One is mounting opposition to the rescue and stimulus package that Mr. Obama feels is required for economic recovery. The other is widespread deep-seated resistance to the increased role of government in American life. Both these fears are fuelling the current debate over health care reform. Now because Mr. Obama’s party has a majority in both houses of Congress, he will probably still be able to sign a health care bill into law. Nonetheless, without doubt, he has been weakened not just by the legislative war over the health care bills content, but also by the ugly partisanship that has eaten into his previously strong base among political independents.

Now health care is a U.S. domestic issue, but it is associated with the wave of antagonism against the President, which has foreign policy implications. It is made it harder for him to muster support at the home front for what needs to be done abroad, but certainly includes managing the challenges that he faces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Both those military entanglements are inherited from President George W. Bush, but as Commander-in-chief President Obama now owns them.

In addition, there are two other issues in the same general neighborhood. One is the delicate and high stakes negotiation – I’d like to think even dialogue – going between the United States and the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. And the other is the Arab-Israeli conflict in the effort to do something about it.

Both these constitute tests of Mr. Obama’s skill as the nation’s diplomat-in-chief. And as though they were not enough, the US along with its allies and partners in North-East Asia notably including the Russian Federation are coping with a defiant belligerent nuclear-capable North Korea. And as though that is not enough – and Mr. Yakunin referred to this in his opening remarks – the US like every government in the world is trying to cope with the great recession, a truly global crisis of seismic dimensions with two epicenters: one on Wall Street and the other in Washington. Each of these tasks requires of the President of the United States immense amounts of political skill, political will, and a willingness to draw down his political capital.

Yet I am still not finished with the list of tasks that he faces. In fact the two I have not mentioned supersede all the rest in their magnitude and in their urgency. The most consequential and urgent of those is climate change. The other, a close-second, is the unraveling of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. These two mega threats are existential in nature, that is they threaten if not the survival of our species, than the survival of the human enterprise in its current form. In other words, our civilisation.
In the case of climate change we have to take steps now to stop the increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, so that the consequent increase in the average temperature of the planet does not reach the level of two degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels.

Now, in the spirit of openness and dialogue and listening to each other that Mr. Yakunin called for in his opening remarks a few minutes ago I must register my own strong view on that subject. It has been suggested that there is still an open question of whether the climate and the planet are warming or cooling. I believe it is not a matter of dogma, but a matter of empirically demonstrated scientific fact that it is warming. And if we are to argue about the facts, we will lose precious time in doing something to change a trend that is scientifically indisputable. The current trajectory on what we find ourselves would have us reached that threshold of two degrees Celsius climate temperature increase in the planet some time around mid-century. And that is not just a number picked out of the air — two degrees Celsius. It is almost certainly a tipping point for a perfect storm of irreversible and catastrophic consequences.

Now on that other mega threat, nuclear proliferation. There we have to find ways now, of capping the number of nuclear weapon states on the planet at nine. That’s already four more than the five the nuclear non-proliferation treaties were meant to put in place forty years ago. If we do not put on a new cap now, we could in the next decade or so find ourselves living on an Earth with twenty-five or more nuclear weapon states. And that would be a very dangerous place. It’s already the case that all nine of Sam Huntington civilisations either have a bomb, have had a bomb in the past, or are seeking a bomb. And all nine civilisations are also represented in the ranks of the top greenhouse gas emitters.

When I say that we have to make a breakthrough in addressing these mega threats now, I mean taking major decisive effective action in the next five or so years. And that means during the Obama presidency, if in fact it lasts for two terms.

One of President Obama’s favorite words — also word Mr. Yakunin used in opening the conference this morning — is responsibility. President Obama recognizes that the United States as the no 1 emitter of greenhouse gases and the most powerful nuclear weapon state on the planet has a unique responsibility for turning the corner on both climate change and proliferation. But here is the road and it goes back to American domestic politics. In both cases — climate change and proliferation — Mr. Obama’s ability to take the necessary action requires cooperation with and acquiescence of the United States Congress. Why? Because he needs legislation to implement executive
branch policy. In order to take a meaningful step towards mitigation of climate change, he needs for the first time in our country to put a price on carbon emissions.

By the same token and order to show leadership on non-proliferation, he needs the United States Senate ratify two treaties – a new strategic arms treaty with Russia, currently in the final and I think very promising stages of negotiations – and a comprehensive test ban treaty which the Senate rejected ten years ago and which Mr. Obama plans to re-submit next year.

Those are going to be very, very tough debates. He may win them, but if he does, it will be at the price of some compromise with powerful senators who are skeptical about both imperatives, pricing carbon and taking significant steps towards eventual disarmament, senators who will do everything they can to weaken if not neutralize the measures taken. In order to secure passage of a carbon pricing bill and ratification of two new nuclear treaties, the President is going to prove himself a master of politics as the art of the possible. And that means making deals and not rushing the process. As a result, on climate change the world may have to wait until after the Copenhagen summit in December to see what the United States is willing to commit to. And that combination of delay and uncertainty will be seemed by many at home and abroad, especially in Europe, as falling short of high hopes for Copenhagen.

Copenhagen is right around the corner, not one of President Obama’s favorite destinations these days, I might add.

The world obviously should do its very best in Copenhagen. But we should not expect too much of what can be accomplished in one meeting and thus set ourselves up for a self-fulfilling failure. We made that mistake in Kyoto. Let’s not do it again, a decade later, half way around the world. Dealing in an effective and timely fashion with climate change is going to require doing the best we can through international targets and binding limits attained in multilateral forms and put into treaties. But it also means bilateral agreements of the sort towards the United States is working on with China and will also be seeking with India as well as unilateral initiatives by individual countries and for that matter individual cities.

President Obama has said repeatedly that dealing with climate change requires an all-hands-on-deck effort. He might add all hands on all decks, at all levels of governance, from the local to the national, to the regional, and to the truly global. But always keeping in mind that the stakes are indeed global, universal, and ecumenical. All this takes us back to what I was saying at the outset about the two connotations of the word civilisation.
Civilisations are born, they grow, they prosper, they have dialogues and wars between and among themselves, and then they die to be replaced by others.

We are in the part of the world that is rich in mementos of long deceased superpowers: not far to the North is the Parthenon, not far to the South are the pyramids, and of course about fifteen minute’s ride we can join the millions who over the centuries have imagined what it was like when the harbor was guarded by the Colossus of Rhodes, a ghost of a long-dead civilisation, called the Dorians.

The point is mortality of civilisations plural has been as much a fact of history as the mortality of individuals, as a fact of human life. But the possible mortality of civilisation singular is something new to contemplate, yet contemplate it we must, including what comes out of this conference. It should be part of the new paradigm that Mr. Yakunin has suggested. And let’s hope that by contemplating it, we will concentrate our minds on urgent need to muster the national and international will to assure the survival of civilisation as a whole.

Thank you very much.
Exclusion and Globalisation in Historical Perspective

Jan Breman

Speech at the First Session of Rhodes Forum, held in Greece on September 3–6, 2003

The notion of exclusion

Our point of departure is the concept of exclusion defined as the lack of access to full participation in mainstream society in economic, political, social and cultural terms. As has been pointed out in the introductory papers, exclusion conveys a sense of denial or loss. Our emphasis is on the relationship between globalisation and exclusion: to what extent is globalisation instrumental in overcoming or, alternately, aggravating situations of exclusion? In order to reach meaningful answers to this question, it is necessary to understand both phenomena in a historical perspective. Exclusion is certainly not of recent origin and cannot only be related to the acceleration in the process of globalisation during the last quarter of a century. At the same time, the structure of inequality at the transnational level can only be understood by analysing the historical trajectory of globalisation.

The condition of exclusion under which people work and live is often operationalised in terms of poverty and inequality. The first dimension refers to lack of assets. Given the absence of means of production such as land or other forms of capital to gain income, large segments of the economically active population have to sell their labour power to make a living. Poverty becomes particularly acute if a) the price of labour is close to or even below the level of reproduction and b) if unemployment or underemployment is rampant because the supply of labour is structurally much higher than the demand. It often happens that these two factors are interdependent. Exclusion from means of production can lead to exclusion from means of consumption. In those cases marginality and vulnerability take the shape of a pauperised existence.

There are various dimensions to exclusion which do not necessarily overlap. In an economic sense exclusion refers to the inability to be engaged in gainful employment which yields enough income for satisfying basic
requirements. In political terms exclusion implies lack of access to sources of power, the inability to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes from the household level upwards. In a social sense exclusion is equal to denigration, the loss of respectability and dignity in the eyes of self as well as of others. Discrepancy between these three dimensions provide room for interventions which might help to bring about inclusion. Suffrage, the one-man-one-vote principle, which became universalised after decolonisation in South and Southeast Asian societies, increased the political leverage of social classes which in previous generations had remained without voice. To that extent the introduction of democracy increased the room for manoeuv for underpriviliged people – for instance agricultural labourers in India – stuck at the bottom of rural economy and society. Experience has shown, however, that a democratic framework is not a sufficient condition for inclusion.

When the various dimensions of exclusion reinforce each other a pattern of accumulated exclusion arises which is difficult to tackle. Just like the category of the super- or ultra-poor which has been distinguished in recent literature, it might make sense to identify an underclass of the super-or ultra-excluded. Characteristic for such situations is that the various dimensions of vulnerability conflate in a state of segregation, i.e. a kind of separation from mainstream society which also has a spatial connotation.

Poverty is not necessarily identical to exclusion. People may suffer from deprivation but if they are not in a position to relate their own circumstances to conditions in which other people live there is no reason for them to feel excluded. Globalisation as a process has certainly helped to extend social horizons and to increase aspirations. The new means of communication that have emerged make it easier for people to relate the (inferior) quality of their own life to the (superior) standards which other people, nearby or far away, enjoy. Relative deprivation is, thus, of enormous significance in the definition of exclusion. In the same way, in equality is not a sufficient condition for being trapped in a situation of exclusion. Of course, social systems for which hierarchy is the organizing principle, are characterised by a skewed distribution of property, power and prestige. But can people positioned at the bottom of such societies automatically be characterised as the excluded? In the earlier literature on caste order in South Asia the conventional opinion was to define such categories in terms of exclusion: the out-castes, all those living beyond the pale, etc. In sociological term, however, these categories were very much included since their presence as well as the economic services they performed were required for the higher castes to retain their purity. The meaning of exclusion is to be denied value,
to have no constructive role to play in economic or non-economic terms, to be in excess to demand. Social systems based on the norm of equality, on the other hand, do not easily tolerate exclusion. If for some unforeseen reason people have stopped being included, the prevalent reaction is to facilitate their return to the included fold. In the world at large, and this also has to do with the process of globalisation, there seems to be a trend from exclusion towards inclusion, if not in practice than at least as a social ideal that deserves universal promotion. Exclusion in the sense of being denied the right to have access to inclusion, may have lost whatever legitimacy it earlier had.

To juxtapose exclusion in opposition to inclusion is detrimental to our understanding of both. As in all variations on the concept of dualism, focusing on the contrasts help us to understand that in real life the essence is on what lies in between. It would help to look at the exclusion–inclusion divide not as a fixed polarity but as a continuum, a sliding scale which is subject to changes over time. What needs to be added here is that also the awareness of exclusion, or for that matter inclusion, is not static but dynamic. Questions to be raised are not only exclusion from what and by whom but also since when. Finally, as important as the perception on exclusion by the excluded is the perception of exclusion by the included. What are the overt and covert scripts for keeping the excluded part of mankind hidden from becoming visible?

Globalisation and the promise of inclusion: a critical reappraisal

Wallerstein’s seminal work on the emergence of the world system addresses many biases in the interpretation of globalisation as a recent phenomenon. For all his criticism, however, this sociologist seems to agree that the development path followed in the third world is essentially a repetition of the transformation process that took place in the Atlantic societies during the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. His analysis suggests a transition in the last few decades from agrarian–rural economies to industrial–urban economies. His scepticism mainly concerns the sustainability of the capitalist mode of production at the global level.

His point of departure is the liberation of growing quantities of labour from their captivity in agriculture and their subsequent influx in other economic sectors. With reference to this ongoing trend Wallerstein speaks of deruralisation which during the last half century in particular has
dramatically changed the earlier composition of the global economy. A much
greater part of mankind, also outside the first and already highly developed
part of the world, has been pushed out from the primary sector of production
(Wallerstein, 2000: 261–2). The shift that has come about should not be
understood, in my opinion, as basically indicating a repetition of the same
process of urban–industrial restructuring which in an earlier epoch came
about in the North Atlantic basin. The exodus from the village economy in the
third world does not mean that the swelling numbers of migrants succeed in
settling down in urban locations. Although in sheer size of population the big
cities have grown more rapidly than ever before, large contingents remain
on the march between town and countryside as well as between different
economic sectors. Such patterns of labour circulation are irrespective of
distance, sometimes linking place of origin and destination within one
country or stretching in other instances across continental boundaries. The
incessant flow and perpetual rotation are related to employment regimes
marked by either self–account work or waged labour, in the latter case more
often based on casual rather than regular contracts. The need for highly
flexibilised labour market behaviour coincides with payment for tasks which
require little or no skills and schooling. Such are, in sum, the conditions
characteristic for a wide range of activities in the informal sector of the
economy.

The optimistic statement made by Wallerstein is that having become
accustomed to this non–agrarian work, regardless of the variable need for it
which results in bouts of unemployment, in the end leads to a higher wage
level. For the labourers engaged in this mode of existence the experience
they thus gain is the take–off for their next transfer to the formal sector
of the economy. ‘Even where there are large numbers of persons who are
technically unemployed and deriving their income, such as it is, from the
informal economy, the real alternatives available to workers located in the
barrios and favelas of the world system are such that they are in a position to
demand reasonable wage levels in order to enter the formal wage economy.’
(Wallerstein, 2000: 262)

Is his conclusion also justified for the workforce made mobile in town
and countryside of the region in India on which my fieldwork over the years
has increasingly concentrated?

My negative answer has been extensively documented in Footloose
Labour; Working in India’s Economy (Breman, 1996). Although the income of
informal sector workers outside agriculture indeed tends to be somewhat
higher than the wages earned by agricultural labourers, a clear majority of
the former households have still to survive on per capita incomes of less than
one US dollar per capita per day. This means that the people dependent on informalised employment are in most cases firmly stuck below the poverty line. According to a somewhat more lenient definition of deprivation, i.e. allowing not only for bare subsistence but also for cost of e.g. for housing, medicare, education and a modicum of leisure, this level is fixed at a per capita amount of expenditure of at least two dollars per capita per day, not incidentally but regularly. Such existence in ‘comfort’ is quite exceptional outside the realm of the formal sector.

The ‘discovery’ of the informal sector in the urban economy at the beginning of the 1970s went together with the assumption that this zone functioned as a waiting room in which the army of migrants originating from the hinterland could adjust themselves to their new habitat before making their way up to the formal sector where they find higher qualified, better paid, more secure and protected jobs. On the basis of my recurrent empirical and local-level investigations in both India and Indonesia I conclude that cases of such upwardly mobile trajectories are difficult to find. A series of policy reports in the 1970s and 1980s, commissioned mainly by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), drew attention to what was called the informal sector problem, suggesting measures and regulations to upgrade work and life conditions of the working poor in third world countries. The same type of analyses and the remedial schemes that accompany them are still being written. This benign strategy, however, has been gradually replaced by the opinion that labour markets in poor countries are in need of more and not less flexibilisation. From this direction comes the suggestion to abolish what is called the unfair and unjust privileging of labour in the formal sector of the economy. The protection of a small but powerful vanguard of the workforce should stop and, for the sake of stimulating growth of employment, governments are exhorted to facilitate the free interplay of market forces. In the same line of thinking there is no room for introducing state-initiated schemes of social provisions.

These were the recommendations made by the World Bank in a major policy document. I have discussed the substance and recommendations of the World Development Report 1995 in a critical review (Breman, 1995). A similar argument maintaining that the informal sector is the solution rather than the problem argues that what looks like poverty, defined as lack of property, on closer inspection is a misrepresentation of capital formation that does take place, as a matter of fact on an impressive scale in the informal sector of the economy. I strongly disagree with this appraisal, which is partly exaggerated and partly misleading (Breman, 2001).
I now return to the analysis of Wallerstein based on the assumption that world capitalism is in an acute and even terminal state of crisis. The ongoing expansion of this mode of production is, according to this sociologist, frustrated by an economic reversal caused by a substantial fall in the profit margins. The resulting pressure implies a squeeze on the accumulation of capital which always has been the organizing principle of capitalism. The investments needed for broadening and deepening markets are drying up. The first of the three factors responsible for the economic turn-around has already been mentioned: rising wages all over the world which make it impossible for capital to ‘run away’ to regions still ‘underdeveloped’ where the cost of labour is much lower. Capitalist entrepreneurs can no longer adhere to their tested strategy of continuous relocation of production but have to confront directly the demands from informal sector workers for more reasonable incomes. The catchment zones of reserve labour in the globalize hinterland, which until now seemed so inexhaustible, have at last been incorporated in the market economy and, after passing through a phase of being socially uprooted and politically in disarray, finally managed to strengthen its bargaining position vis-à-vis capital and exert upward pressure on wage levels. From the point of view of labour interests this is actually a fairly optimistic assessment which I find difficult to tally with the sustained poverty of the lower strata in rural and urban India. To an even lesser degree I have seen these people entering the formal waged economy as is suggested by Wallerstein (2000: 261–2).

Do the profit levels of capital show a declining trend because of the two other factors discussed by him? Those refer on the one hand to the rising inability of private companies not to include waste removal and cleaning up the environment in their price of operation and on the other hand the increase in taxation needed for public expenditure. To start with the first source of pressure, the emergence of the ecological movement would imply that firms nowadays have to bear themselves the cost of purification of land, water and air. In the areas of my research in South and Southeast Asia such a decisive swing to private accountability would be extremely difficult to discern. The strategy of free enterprise to externalize these costs of pollution seems to go on unabated as far as yet. The reluctance of the average state in the third world to take strong action against environmental degradation signals, in my opinion, the raw and untamed nature of capitalism in the global periphery. In those large parts of the world consumer organisations and other non-governmental agencies have been able to build up much less space for exercising public pressure than in the prosperous core zones of capitalism on which Wallerstein seems to rest his case.
A third source of pressure lies in the steady intensification of taxation. Capital is subject to the demand for public security and is, moreover, not any longer in a position to go on blatantly denying popular claims for better education, health care and lifetime insurance. In Wallerstein's judgement the urge to make these concessions stems from the need to legitimize state action for thus far underprivileged segments of the population and the concomitant realisation among the more well-to-do that such gestures are unavoidable for the sake of further political stability (Wallerstein, 2000: 263). Again, in the course of my empirical research in West India for the last four decades I have not come across the fear either among politicians or the bourgeoisie that the lower social strata pose a serious threat to law and order. Living up to their reputation, gained in an altogether different setting, as 'les classes dangereuses.' The denigration of the labouring poor, which is the dominant attitude in mainstream society, is not tempered by the idea that there is a hidden repository of countervailing power down below waiting to become mobilised against intolerable exploitation and exclusion.

There is neither a sign of growing support for a more rigorous system of public taxation nor of a shift in the balance of power leading to a more equitable distribution of wealth. The fiscal crisis of states hinted at by Wallerstein (2000: 264) has certainly nothing to do with an intolerable burden of taxation to which the non-poor are subjected. For the masses on the vast subcontinent of South Asia the opposite case could be argued: states which are both unable and unwilling to appropriate a reasonable portion of the value added to capital in the process of production or even to exercise adequate control over the ways in which capital is spent. Consequently, no social safety nets are introduced which would help to minimize the vulnerability of poor people while also expenditure on public housing, education and healthcare are much lower than what is minimally required for substantially improving the life standards of informal sector workers.

My conclusion is that the squeeze of capital in the global economy, operationalised by Wallerstein in sharply falling profit rates, does not take place in the setting of my sociological investigations during the last forty years in India. Nor have I found evidence of a stagnation in the accumulation of capital. According to me, it would be easier to plead in favour of the contrasting thesis, i.e. an acceleration in capital formation which remains outside the reach of national or transnational governance. Capital has become significantly more volatile between countries and continents but the ways in which it is manoeuvred around has not been accompanied by growing
control or even transparency. To give one example, there is a serious dearth of information on the scale of private financial transfers to many regions in Asia and, conversely, from these lands to other parts of the world.

Freeing capital of official regulation is paralleled by a concentration of the surplus resulting in a progressive tilting of the balance between the haves and the haves–not. I would reject the suggestion that my findings have no other validity than for the sites of my fieldwork in Indonesia and India. As a matter of fact, Wallerstein is very much aware that the trend towards polarisation has not really halted.

The record of post–‘revolutionary’ regimes has been that they have not been able to reduce worldwide or even internal polarisation to any significant degree, nor have they been able to institute serious internal political equality. They have, no doubt, accomplished many reforms, but they promised far more than reforms. And because the world system has remained a capitalist world economy, the regime outside the core zone have been structurally unable to ‘catch up’ with the wealthy countries.’ (2000: 265).

In view of this unequivocal statement his prediction of a terminal crisis is all the more surprising. Without rejecting the term as such, I would like to give it a meaning different from the one he has put forward. In my perception the true crisis of world capitalism seems to be the stubborn and pernicious unwillingness to enable a very substantial part of mankind to qualify themselves both as producers and consumers for full and fair participation in the regimen of capitalist activity. The formalisation of labour – in the sense of higher wages, job protection and social insurance, all essential ingredients for a more dignified lifestyle – remains absent. The inevitable result is that the much needed improvement in bargaining power for the labouring poor does not materialize which is a precondition for a structural rather than conjunctural market expansion.

Mine is an uncomfortable observation which, moreover, does not square easily with the notion that capitalism, more than any other mode of production, is based on the logic of rationality. Are prosperity and democracy for a minority of the world population in the long term really compatible with the exclusion from these ‘goods’ of a larger part of mankind condemned to live in dire poverty and subordination? In a comprehensive socio–historical analysis de Swaan has elaborated on the reasons why and the lines along which the national elites in the North–Atlantic basin ultimately decided to admit the labouring poor to mainstream society. At the end of his treatise the warning comes that the processes of collectivisation and civilisation which shaped this societal transformation, for various of reasons but to a
large extent also because of the reduced role played by government, may not be repeated on the basis of a similar proceeding on a global scale (de Swaan, 1988: 257).

Quite rightly Wallerstein has pointed out that people everywhere in the world are taking back from the states the role of providing for their own security (Wallerstein, 2000: 265). My comment is that this trend not to surrender the right to exercise violence might have more to do with aggressive than defensive purposes. In other words, such inclination could find its inspiration not in the fear of unruly behaviour of the poor but rather demonstrates elite determination to resort eventually to untamed brutality in order to consolidate individual or collective gains made and even to widen the gap further by not giving to but taking from the poor. After all, a major trend in the process of globalisation is not the alleviation of misery at the bottom end but the progressive enrichment at the top end.

I disagree with Wallerstein’s assessment of a terminal crisis of the world capitalist system. One can indeed conclude that a crisis is going on, but the one I discern has not to do so much with falling rates of business profitability but with the hesitancy of capitalism to deepen markets by increasing the purchasing power of the segments of mankind living in poverty and in that manner to help to put an end to their state of exclusion in terms of both production and consumption.

Colonialism as failed development

From the late eighteenth until the mid-twentieth century colonialism held a large part of the people in the conquered territories captive in an agrarian-rural mode of production which remained largely non-capitalist in nature. In more general terms it could be argued that the global economy as it arose in the colonial era became structured in terms of severe and increasing inequality. While in the industrialising and urbanising West the hierarchical shape of society lost legitimacy with the waning of the traditional agrarian-rural order, colonialism was the expression of a new patterns of inequality, founded on principles of discrimination and racism, at the transnational level. The Indian sociologist Andre Beteille drew attention to the paradox that Western societies were acquiring a new and comprehensive commitment to equality at precisely that juncture in their history when they were also developing in their fullest form the theory and practice of imperialism (Beteille, 1983).
Due to population growth and as a result of colonial policies a huge mass of landpoor and landless peasants congested at the bottom of the Asian economies. In the countries of South and Southeast Asia, which are the focus of my paper, the landless segments varied from little less than one-fifth to not much more than one-third of the total rural population. Did late-colonial policy cause a greater concentration at the foot of the agrarian hierarchy? It is clear that the gradually increasing population density which became noticeable towards the end of the nineteenth century and continued during the first half of the twentieth century, was of direct influence on the diminishing size of the peasant enterprise. It is more difficult to establish whether there was a mass drop on the agrarian ladder whereby numerous landowners degraded first to tenants and then to landless labourers. During the last century-and-a-half of colonial rule the variety of sources of employment in the rural economy probably increased very little or even decreased. The latter in particular is said to have occurred in regions of South Asia where, according to the de-industrialisation thesis, i.e. the loss of artisanal production organised as home industry, pressure on employment in the agricultural sector increased further. At any event, a reverse trend showed little if any progress. In other words, there was little sign of any advance by industrial capitalism which had absorbed the surplus peasant proletariat made redundant in the European rural economy. Insofar as new industries were established in the colonial metropoles of Asia, rural labour was admitted only on a partial and conditional basis: that is to say, non-working family members had to remain in the village and the labourers themselves were only tolerated in the urban milieu for the duration of their working life. This also applied to the army of landless people who were recruited as coolies for the mines and on plantations in the Asian hinterlands or were even shipped overseas. Once the contract period had expired most of them were sent back home or to a destination that passed as such (Breman, 1990).

The compression at the foot of the agrarian economy cannot have escaped the notice of the colonial authorities. In general, however, they made little effort towards redistribution of land ownership in order to free peasant production from its perpetual stagnation. An exception to this non-interventionist policy was the introduction not of a ceiling but of a floor in access to agrarian property in a region of Java just before the 1920s. Under that reform, land was taken away from marginal peasants and added to acreage in the hands of their better equipped co-villagers. The stated objective of this experiment was to strengthen the position of the established peasantry. Transition from the marginal to the landless class, so ran official
opinion, would enable those who had thus been totally liberated from the means of production to become more flexible on the labour market. Since their tiny plot of land had in any case been inadequate for their subsistence, the measure was said to have been taken for their own good (Breman, 1983: 39–71). In this respect, the opinion of the colonial authorities appeared to run parallel to the suggestion made by Kautsky, among others, that marginal peasants were actually worse off than free wage labourers. This apparently plausible assumption is not confirmed by my own fieldwork-based research in the countryside of West India and Java. On the contrary, my findings show that the owners of even a small plot of land have a major advantage over landless households when migrating away from the village and agriculture to find additional employment and income elsewhere.

A survey of conditions in late-colonial Asia suggests that it was especially the combination of economic and demographic change which led to progressive land impoverishment. To put it in another way, land ownership at the village level continued to be concentrated largely among a fairly small upper class of peasants, and a growing portion of the agrarian population was denied access to holdings other than as tenants or sharecroppers. The landless class increased further. Adequate and reliable statistics with which to support this quantitative shift in the class structure of the peasantry, are difficult to come by. In practice, moreover, it is problematic to distinguish between the class of small landowners and that of agricultural workers. With regard to the latter, Daniel Thorner commented in his well known analysis of the agrarian structure in India in the mid-twentieth century that families in this class may indeed have tenancy rights in the soil, or even property rights, but the holdings are so tiny that the income from cultivating them or from renting them out comes to less than the earnings from field work (Thorner, 1976). His observation shows clearly that, to understand the process of (pseudo-) proletarianisation in rural Asia, it is imperative not to suggest a sharp divide between land-poor and landless but to see them as extensions of one another. It then proves that, in the densely-populated regions of agricultural production at the end of colonial rule, they together comprised half to about two-thirds of the peasantry. Speculations, with all their uncertainty, about the quantitative shift in agrarian stratification under colonial rule must not divert our attention from the qualitative change which came about in social relations of production. In other words, at the end of colonial rule, life as an agricultural worker had become moulded along new lines. That change, and the increasingly capitalist nature of the rural economy in the post-colonial era, had significant repercussions.
Changes to the landless existence in the transition to a capitalist regime

Rural development policies adopted after independence in the mid-twentieth century were characterised by a growing trend towards capitalism in agriculture. The much-discussed Green Revolution, which gained momentum towards the end of the 1960s, and which amounted to the systematic introduction of a modernisation packet consisting of high-yielding seed varieties, fertilisers and pesticides, credit, new technology, agricultural extension services, and better water management, is illustrative of that approach. In contrast to East Asia immediately after World War II, the transformation was not preceded by a drastic re-distribution of agrarian resources. Where large landed estates still existed they were abolished and tenancy relationships were reformed, with the objective of encouraging the capitalist stature of a well-established class of owners-cultivators in India, usually members of locally dominant castes. This class in particular was charged with the thrust to increase production and productivity into effect, as has been reported by a long series of commentators over the course of time (to mention just a few: Wertheim, 1964; Myrdal, 1968; Byres, 1991). Hardly surprisingly, these analyses also point out that the shift in the rural balance of power which accompanied the development strategy, caused further deterioration in the already existing vulnerability of sharecroppers and agricultural labourers. Myrdal, who saw no other solution to the agrarian impasse which in his view characterised the Asian drama, advocated a restrained form of rural capitalism. The idea he propagated was:

*to give a small plot of land – and with it a dignity and a fresh outlook on life as well as a minor independent source of income – to members of the landless lower strata.* Even in the most densely populated countries of the region it would be possible to give the landless at least small plots on acreages that are now uncultivated waste. In some cases land is available for the landless in the vicinity of existing holdings. The existing pattern of cultivated holdings need not be seriously disturbed – in some places it would not need to be disturbed at all. (Myrdal, 1968, II:1382)

As we now know, little if anything of this modest recommendation has been put into practice. Resources held in common, insofar as these still existed, were rapidly privatised and usually came into the hands of the landowning elite. In Indonesia, when pressure increased for the new Agrarian Law to be implemented, which had ultimately been passed in 1960 as a consequence of the political climate of populism in earlier years, the military coup of 1965 put an end to efforts initiated from below to introduce
some structural improvement in the position of marginal and landless peasants, who included the majority of people living in Java’s countryside (Breman, 1983).

My conclusion is that the capitalist-directed agricultural development policy executed in the post-colonial era has further exacerbated the vulnerability of life at the bottom of the rural economy. Although the initial sombre reports on the massive expulsion of labour as a result of rationalised and mechanised cultivation methods proved untrue, the expansion of agricultural employment as a net effect of the Green Revolution has not kept pace with the growth of the Asian rural population.

The World Labour Report, published annually by the International Labour Organisation, shows that self-employment in agriculture gradually but steadily is making place for waged labour. It would be premature to explain this trend purely as a sign of progressive proletarianisation. The replacement of own or family labour by hired workers is also due to the emergence of a different life style, causing even middle-sized landowners to prefer to exercise supervision over agricultural work for which outside help is hired. This trend has been a contributing factor to the creation of a rural labour market in the capitalist sense.

The continuing and abject poverty of the great majority of landless is due to the fact that the supply of labour far exceeds its demand. The scenario devised by national policymakers after Independence anticipated the outflow of the surplus proletariat towards the urban economy, there to be absorbed in the army of industrial workers. In the former colonial countries of Asia, however, the expansion of large-scale industry has been far slower and above all far less labour-intensive than had been planned. Opportunities to escape to the cities are therefore limited, as we shall see later, while emigration overseas is an equally unrealistic option. People are quite ready to leave their home country, but for the Asian rural surplus there is no New World where they could settle, as had been the case for the proletarianised mass from Europe a century earlier. Potential emigrants nowadays carry the label of ‘economic refugees’, a term whose strongly negative import signals that this ballast in the home economy is not welcome anywhere else in the world. My concluding observations are, firstly, that Asia’s rural proletariat emerged from the colonial era as a class of far greater size than in rural Europe when agriculture still formed the most important source of employment; and secondly, that the sluggish course followed by the industrialisation process since the mid-twentieth century, in combination with a population growth that has only recently started to decline, has drastically intensified the pressure on life at the bottom of the rural economy.
It would be incorrect, however, to deduce from the developments outlined above that the nature of the landless existence actually signifies a continuation of the labour regime that began to take shape towards the end of colonial rule. Capitalist dynamics subsequently became of dominant significance in the countryside, causing drastic changes in the social relations of production. The transformation derives from three interconnected processes. The first is diversification of the rural economy. Agriculture has lost much of its significance in the employment pattern in the countryside due to growing demand for labour in other sectors such as agro-industry, infrastructural works (roads, canals, houses, and other construction activities), trade, transport, and all branches of the service sector. Such diversification has naturally not occurred everywhere to the same degree, but the trend in that direction is unmistakable. Sometimes this concerns employment of the last resort, in an effort to seek redressal for the growing under-utilisation of labour in agriculture. Greater than the desperate flight away from agriculture, however, is the stimulating effect exercised by real growth in peasant production on other branches of the economy. In the villages of West India where I did my fieldwork, these dynamics have had the result that the majority of landless can even no longer be classified as agricultural labourers. In these localities as well as in the state of Gujarat at large, working in the fields is no longer the predominant source of employment and income for the landless. Work at the bottom of the rural economy is characterised by occupational multiplicity. From being an agrarian proletariat, this class has re-moulded itself into a more general rural proletariat.

Economic diversification has been accompanied by large-scale mobilisation of labour. Work away from agriculture usually also signifies work outside the village. Although the drift towards towns and cities has become far greater than in the past, the majority of migrants have little chance of settling there. They accumulate in the informal sector which is the greatest reservoir of employment in the urban economy. The formal sector has shown hardly any expansion and absorbs little if any of the unskilled labour which continues to move in from the rural hinterland. The informal sector is not a transit zone towards a better and settled urban life, but functions as temporary abode for labour for which demand fluctuates strongly and which, when no longer needed, is pushed back to the place of origin. It is not departure and arrival that define the migratory chain, in a way which reifies the division between two separate economic circuits, but a continual to-ing and fro-ing of transients which seems to characterise not the rupture but the linkage between rural and urban labour markets. On the
part of this circulatory workforce there is no lack of willingness to commit themselves unconditionally to an industrial way of life, as E.P. Thompson seems to suggest at least for the initial phase (1991). It is much more a question of sheer impotence, caused by lack of economic and physical space, which prevents the army of newcomers from establishing themselves as permanent urbanites, working their way up to become fulltime rather than incidental and floating industrial hands.

Labour not only circulates for shorter or longer periods between village and town. It also does so, and often in far greater numbers, within the rural milieu in the search for work either in or out of agriculture. I have devoted a number of publications to this phenomenon of intra-rural labour mobilisation, stressing the connection between long-distance seasonal migration on a truly massive scale and the breakthrough towards a more pronounced capitalist mode of production (Breman, 1985, 1994, 1995).

Diversification of the rural economy and strongly increased labour mobility are in turn connected to a third change in the essence of landless existence with far-reaching consequences, namely, the casualisation of employment. The peasant economy shows a tendency for permanent farmhands to be replaced by daily wage earners; more in general, employment for an indefinite period has been replaced by short-term labour contracts based on the hire-and-fire principle. This modality also facilitates the replacement of locals by aliens, with the advantage for employers that workers coming from elsewhere are usually cheaper and more docile, submitting themselves to treatment as a commodity. Moreover, they can be engaged or dismissed according to momentary fluctuations in supply and demand. In contrast to earlier practice, labour is paid principally or even exclusively in cash, and payment-in-kind of all sorts of perquisites not only for the labourer but also shared by household members, has come to an end. Another important factor is that, rather than pay their workers per day or per year, i.e. on time rates, employers now much prefer to pay for piecework or to contract-out the task that needs to be done. Does this mean that production relations have been cleansed of pre-capitalist elements? To some extent but not completely. After all, labour’s prerogative to hire itself out at any moment and for the highest possible price is subject to many restrictions. For example, acceptance of a cash advance frequently entails a contract which immobilises labour power, while employers also defer wage payment as a tool with which to ensure that the required labour, until the moment of dismissal, continues to be supplied. Nevertheless, the lack of freedom caused by such bonding mechanisms differs essentially from the servitude which characterised the coercive regime to which agricultural labour was
subjected in the past. `Neo-bondage' is the term which I recommend for the practices used by present-day employers to assure themselves of sufficient and cheap labour power.

Having dealt with the historical features of the state of exclusion in which large segments of the rural population came to live and work under colonial rule in South and Southeast Asia, I shall in the final part of my paper present two case studies which discuss how, in a context of globalisation, increasing vulnerability can result in a situation where people are excluded from employment and income necessary for a life of minimal stability and dignity. Both are local-level profiles and based on anthropological research carried out between 1997 and 2002 and both illustrate that exclusion can be a process in which people are sliding down from a better position which they earlier occupied in economy and society at large. The first report discusses what has happened to rural labour in West Java when, in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis, their level of employment and income went down. The second profile is on urban labour in the city of Ahmedabad. The closure of more than 50 corporate textile mills led to the dismissal of about 100,000 workers who used to be employed on formal sector conditions. After the loss of their jobs they had to find a new living in the informal sector of the economy as self-employed or casual wage labourers. These two profiles, one rural and one urban, are meant to show where, how and why poverty turns into immiserisation and takes the shape of exclusion.

Dynamics of exclusion in rural Java

The crisis which hit the economies of Southeast Asia in 1997-98, and Indonesia more than any other country, gave rise to instantaneous and fierce debate. Early on, an alarming increase in impoverishment and unemployment was predicted. The Minister of Manpower then in office went on record saying that 22% of Indonesia’s total workforce would be unemployed by the end of 1998. Backed by official statistics, produced by the Central Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik, BPS) on the basis of calculations that had never before been disputed, the ILO regional office estimated that the combination of wage stagnation and high inflation might cause 37% of the population to fall below the poverty line by mid-1998, with a further spurt to 48% before the end of that year. In comparison to the all-time low of 10.1% reported for the period before the start of monetary crisis (krisman, in local parlance) in mid-1997, this implied a three to fourfold jump in the incidence of poverty. It was an acceleration that threatened to undo much that had been achieved in raising the standard of living for all and sundry since the mid-1970s. The ILO further
argued that lack of improvement in household incomes and the likelihood of more price rises might even result in two-thirds of the population dropping below the poverty line in 1999. Other international agencies produced more conservative appraisals or forecasts, vehemently rejecting the ILO’s doom scenario. In February 1998 the World Bank conceded that absolute poverty might eventually rise to 17%. A year later, a Bank-commissioned study reported that the poverty rate had gone up but only marginally so. Subsequent reports suggested that the lower income classes in particular were actually quite successful in coping with the crisis. The received wisdom was that krismon had a sharper negative impact on the urban than the rural economy; secondly, it hit the better-off harder than the poor; thirdly, it reduced waged work in the formal sector of the economy while employment in the informal sector expanded. My opinion differs on almost all these scores. For a start, official statistics on economic growth and equity prior to mid-1997 underestimated the magnitude and intensity of the poverty that still existed throughout the country. I would agree with the assessment that a quarter of the population of Indonesia were unable to meet basic needs even before the crisis. Secondly, krismon has caused not only much more misery and loss of employment but has further widened the divide between the poor, whose numbers have rapidly swollen, and the non-poor. Thirdly, the coping mechanisms with which people who have sunk below the poverty level can deal with life’s vicissitudes have been exaggerated out of all proportion. Fourthly, notwithstanding some signs of improvement in terms of employment and poverty levels, the crisis is by no means over.

The impression that deprivation under Suharto’s New Order regime had become a residual problem found in rather remote pockets of the archipelago, which essentially lasted because these backward parts happened to be beyond the reach of government programmes, was in line with the late-colonial myth that suggested that poverty was closely bound to so-called ‘minus areas’. In contrast to such geo-ecological exceptionalism, I would posit that poverty has remained widespread in Suharto’s Indonesia, including rural Java. Without a shadow of doubt, the landpoor and landless have managed to dignify their lifestyle and these gains were reflected in a better quality of housing and the possession of consumer durables. However, the existence of working-class households has always remained precarious. The dynamic ratio between productive and non-productive members has made all the difference between living slightly above or below the poverty line. A category of supra-poor could be identified even before krismon began to make its impact. These were the people who had no labour power or were unable to use it fully: the old, the physically or mentally handicapped, and widowed
or divorced female heads of households in charge of young children. The New Order regime kept a great deal of misery carefully hidden behind its propaganda statistics. The incidence of poverty was also understated in the reports of the World Bank and other international agencies.

Major segments of the working classes living close to or in a state of poverty have shared only marginally in the benefits of economic growth. The gap that already existed between the elite and the subaltern classes in East Cirebon and North Subang, the two villages of my anthropological fieldwork, has widened further. Contrary to the cherished policy view of rural society on Java as a communal-oriented social order based on patronage and reciprocity between strong and weak, our perception of the processes at work is that polarisation and exclusion should be emphasised.

Similar stark contrasts in levels of welfare, however, can be found within the countryside. More noticeable than the reduction of deprivation in the landpoor and landless milieu is the newly gained wealth of the rural elite. That affluence is expressed in the conspicuous lifestyle of a fairly small cluster of notable households among whom most of the village’s capital assets, both agrarian and non-agrarian, are concentrated. Little light has been shed on the size and identity of the orang kaya baru, a privileged social formation owing the elevation of its members to their role as local agents of the New Order regime, which has consistently opted for a ‘betting on the strong’ development policy. The old colonial myth of ‘village elders’ who acted as representatives of people with no voice of their own, the masih bodoh, became a lever with which a base of legitimacy was created for the exploitation and suppression of subaltern classes in the countryside. Progressive landlessness in the recent past was not merely a consequence of ever-increasing demographic pressure on agrarian resources, but also of the fact that many households were excluded from cultivating land. The Basic Agrarian Law introduced in 1960 was never implemented. In fact, this effort to ensure the more equal distribution of land by imposing a ceiling to ownership became a bone of contention which ended in the military takeover of 1965. It is against this background of a progressive divide between rural rich and rural poor that we need to understand the impact on village Java of the economic crisis which started a few years before the end of the last century.

In both villages of fieldwork the search for livelihood opportunities outside the locality has become inevitable in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The solution has been found not in departure in order to settle down in other rural areas or in urban destinations. The structural, rather than seasonal, redundancy in the rural economy has led to large-scale
labour nomadism. It is a pattern of migration that has necessitated young males above all to leave home for variable periods, unspecified in advance but lasting for several weeks or months. They usually go to a wide range of work-sites in or close to urban growth poles. Greater Jakarta and the satellite townships that circle it, Jabotabek for short, act like magnets for a massive army of circulatory workers from far and wide in the hinterland of Java. Only a few men and women from both villages have managed to gain access to the formal sector of employment in the urban economy. This is true even of the simplest form of factory work, which may not offer much in the way of protection against the vicissitudes of fate, but at least provides relatively fixed employment with regular working hours and a reasonably steady income.

Most of the migrant labourers from the two villages are unskilled and therefore have little chance of finding regular, reasonably well-paid work. Because they are only employed as cheap and casual labourers, they cannot bring their families to settle permanently in the city. The costs of even the most minimal accommodation and subsistence would simply take up nearly all of their earnings. The state of flux is therefore not a first stage in the transition from rural-agrarian to urban-industrial employment, but is more structurally inherent to the conditions under which they continue to live. They are destined to shuttle back and forth interminably, leaving their families in the village. These circular migrants are concentrated in a number of occupational niches. The majority of the men who migrate work as unskilled labourers in the building industry, others make a meager living as petty traders and street vendors. Of late it has become quite common for young women to sign up with recruitment agencies for a two-year contract to work as a maid in Saudi Arabia or Malaysia.

Most members in the new generation have turned their backs on agriculture not only because of its declining importance in the village economy, but also because of a clear preference for an urban-industrial way of life. The prospects for attaining that cherished life-style more fully in the near future have largely been frustrated by krismon. Young people from the better-off households prepared themselves for the leap forward into the formal sector economy by getting a secondary education and vocational training. Even in earlier, more prosperous times only a few were successful in finding regular and well-paid work in the somewhat elevated echelons of the economy outside the village. Now that the chance of acquiring such work has as good as disappeared, these youngsters seem even more hesitant to join the labour process. So far, parents have shown remarkable restraint – especially where boys are concerned – in accepting this unwillingness on
the part of their children to earn a living. The reluctance is in effect a protest by these educated young people against having to perform work for which they consider themselves to be overqualified on the basis of their, actually quite modest, level of formal schooling. Their contemporaries from the landpoor and landless households that constitute the large majority of the village population cannot allow themselves such luxury. Economic distress forces them to seek paid employment from an early age. Any aspirations they themselves or their parents may have had for the continuation of their education after primary school often have to be abandoned in the face of shrinking household budgets. Consequently, the new generation will not have the opportunity to raise the status of their working life above that of their parents. It is almost a foregone conclusion that they will end up joining the lowest echelons of the informal sector in the countryside and in the city, performing low-paid and irregular work for a constantly changing series of short-time employers. The prospects of any improvement in the lot of these migrant workers are more pessimistic than optimistic, even now that the worst of the recession is over.

There can be no denying that the large segment of circular migrants from both villages who constitute the floating mass of working people at the bottom of the urban economy have been hit heavily by *krismon*. At the end of 1997, practically all building activity in Jabotabek came to a halt and the *kaki lima*, the street vendors operating at their own cost and risk, not only lost their customers, but the sharp increase in the price of their raw materials reduced their profit margins. Having become redundant in the informal sector, many were forced to leave. This led to an exodus of the army of labour nomads that had flocked to the cities in the heyday of the Asian miracle, but who had failed to establish themselves permanently in the urban environment. Many of these sojourners instantly dismissed from their casual jobs have been unable to reintegrate fully or even partly into sectors of employment at home. They have responded to their structural redundancy in the village economy by continuing to undertake sorties to the city areas with which they had grown familiar in search of work, with varying degrees of success. Other segments of the working population in the rural hinterland that continued to depend on means of agrarian and non-agrarian subsistence have also suffered, particularly households with little or no means of production of their own. According to our calculations, loss of work and welfare resulted in a contraction of by least a quarter of the gross village product of East Cirebon and by at least a sixth in North Subang between mid–1997 and 1999. There have been some indications of a slight economic recovery from mid–2000 onwards, but
this good news seems to be based more on the success of efforts to control inflation than growing employment or a rise in real wages. For the time being there is not much factual evidence of recovery in the substantially diminished standards of living.

There is little thorough empirical or comparative inter-sectoral research to support the conclusion that workers in the formal sector have suffered more from the crisis than those in the informal sector. It is founded on the assumption that elasticity is one of the most striking features of informal economic activity and that the men and women who are forced to eke out a living in this sector will therefore continue to do so during hard times. From this viewpoint, the informal sector expands and contracts like the tides. The reassuring message is that the enormous reserve army of labour knows best itself what it should do and where it should go – in terms of both location and sector – in response to a temporary surplus in some or all areas of economic activity. This theory does not, however, hold up in practice. After being sacked on the spot, most circular migrants from East Cirebon had little other choice than to retreat from their employment niches in the metropolitan economy. The same was true for these labour nomads from North Subang. Back in the village their plight can be described as a state of limbo, characterised by a mixture of concealed and open unemployment.

We also contest the often-voiced claim that *krismon* has had the greatest impact on the prosperity of the non-poor, and that the position of those without property has not worsened to any significant degree. Once again, there are insufficient reliable and comparative figures to defend or dispute this biased assertion. On the basis of our fieldwork we conclude that, as a consequence firstly of loss of employment and secondly of the rising prices of basic necessities, poverty did worsen after the outbreak of the crisis, expanding to embrace two-thirds of the inhabitants of both villages by the start of 1999. We estimate that the households with no or very little property that make up this large majority receive only a fifth of all the income generated. Of particular concern is the advanced degree of exclusion in which the underclass of the ultra-poor – around a quarter of all the inhabitants – find themselves.

The expulsion for the time being of many migrant labourers from the lower echelons of the urban economy after the outbreak of the crisis expressed the failure on the part of the state to provide basic support to this industrial reserve army. With political unrest gathering momentum policy-makers and politicians were afraid that this redundant mass was about to fulfill its historic destiny as *la classe dangereuse*. Its expulsion from the urban environment was justified with the argument that, once back in
their villages, the migrants would be able to benefit from the traditional mechanisms of social security that had tenaciously survived in the agrarian-rural milieu. During our fieldwork, we found no evidence to support this brand of wishful thinking which is so popular among politicians and policymakers. There is no reason to assume that the situation that we encountered in North Subang and East Cirebon – advanced monetisation of the local economy and the hegemony of contractual relations – was an exception to a general pattern in which the organic principles of what is obstinately referred to as the traditional Javanese culture could still be identified.

We found no evidence that the wealthy upper-class households were prepared to spend even a minor part of their surplus to mitigate the misery of their less fortunate fellow villagers. Nor are there any collective arrangements designed to counteract the (increasingly) unequal distribution of wealth. Contractual relations have gradually replaced the former patron-client transactions, in which the wealthy would pledge assistance and protection in exchange for the labour and loyalty of the poor. Under the New Order the elite no longer needed the dependence inherent in the system of patronage to bolster their superiority. The orang kaya baru themselves, however, increasingly became ‘clients’ of those in authority at district and subdistrict level. In exchange for their support in preserving the social order based on social inequality and political exclusion, they were rewarded by their patrons in the form of preferential drawing rights on the resources of the state.

Would it be possible to detect a culture of shared poverty among the people coping for survival at the congested base of rural society, in an effort to distribute the available work and the income as equally as possible, through collective action and mutual solidarity? In neither of our two research localities did we find institutionalised arrangements to tie in one’s fate with households in similar circumstances. As we have seen, during the New Order era, there was no social and political space in which an awareness of common interest could develop among the landpoor and landless classes. The sustained strategy of fragmentation is most likely one of the main reasons why the outbursts of protest that accompanied the deepening crisis did not develop into open and violent class warfare.

In our view, another reason why this did not occur was the increasing opportunity for escape to the urban growth poles. The rapid expansion of employment niches, at shorter or longer distances away from home, helped to lower the pressure building up in the rural economy. Large masses of migrant labourers flocked to these growth poles from the hinterland of Java without making a definite break with their milieu of origin. As a result
the bond with the village remained intact, but it has been weakened. The constant mobility of these circulatory workers, most of whom belong to the subordinated classes, has made them less susceptible to the economic and social power of village elites. This is expressed in a recalcitrance that is a source of irritation to both rural employers and officials. Having become street-wise in the urban economy, the labour nomads enjoy a reputation for being demanding and less malleable than their classmates who remain stuck in the villages. In mobilizing opposition from below in support of the process of political reform, greater account will have to be taken than before of the ‘floating mass’ of the people and, moreover, in a much more literal sense than when the term was coined by the powers that be during the Suharto regime.

The very many households that play a marginal role in the economic process have little more to fall back on during times of crisis than their own resilience. They of course ask for and receive help from those around them, particularly close kinsmen and immediate neighbours. But given the fact this assistance also comes largely from other poor households, such transfers are limited in scale, regularity and substance. To alleviate the economic distress of those most severely affected, the government could in the end not avoid introducing what it had consistently tried to neglect: a social safety net. This scheme, intended as a temporary solution only, produced little in the way of concrete results. Even the emergency food relief and public works projects, aimed at the poorest of the poor, largely benefited others than those in the ill-defined target groups. The local authorities in North Subang and East Cirebon defended their decision to distribute the emergency provisions to all the villagers by saying that everyone had equal rights to government support. It is our conclusion that this argument, too, was a logical consequence of the political and bureaucratic myth of the village as a community.

The crisis in Indonesia has stopped being a purely monetary-economic recession and has escalated into a far-reaching disruption of society as a whole. The political instability and the threat to national unity may jeopardize all chances of economic recovery for many years to come. Reforms will only have the desired effect if, at the same time, the people are given more say in all matters affecting the quality of their lives. The proposals to shift the focus of political and administrative activity from national to regional level must be assessed in this light. These plans are at an advanced stage and a start has already been made with their implementation Without guarantees that the very weak bargaining position of the rural poor will be strengthened, the devolution of political and executive power will result
only in a legitimation of the informal supremacy of the district and village elites. It is the old principle of ‘betting on the strong’ that has always been at the forefront of Indonesia’s development model.

The colonial theory of dualism saw an irreconcilable opposition between two economic systems in rural Java, caused by the penetration of capitalist forces of production and their clash with a static precapitalist society. The main criticism of this dichotomy of stagnation versus dynamism was that it had its origins in foreign domination. Later versions of the same dualistic model – firstly of city against countryside, and then of the formal and informal sectors in the urban economy – proved to be just as much a product of their age, enjoying popularity in analyses of the development process in the second half of the twentieth century. The current debate on inclusion and exclusion within the context of the globalisation of political economy can be seen as a new variant of the old theme of dualism. The scale enlargement in terms of production, consumption and distribution has a strongly differential impact on the social classes that become, actively or passively, involved in the global transformations. Since the fall of Suharto, Indonesia has taken the first hesitant steps towards the transition to a civil society based on a democratic order. The progress made on this route will depend largely on whether the far-reaching social exclusion of the subaltern classes will take a turn for the better at the start of a new century.¹

The process of informalisation in Ahmedabad

The majority of the workers, dismissed from their permanent jobs when more than 50 corporate textile mills closed their gates during the last quarter of the twentieth century, ended up in the informal sector of the city’s economy. These ‘new poor’ have come to join the already enormous army of workers who have never known a different kind of life. How many people actually suffered a genuine deterioration in the quality of life? The various publications come up with different figures for the number of mill workers who had secure jobs and lost them. My own estimate is that this happened to approximately 85,000 workers who were sacked from the early 1980s onwards. Already in the decade before the mill closures the management of these enterprises had reduced the size of the workforce in permanent employ. Labourers who reached the age of retirement were not replaced

¹ The full report has been published as a monograph, coauthored by G. Wiradi: Good Times and Bad Times in Rural Java; Case Study of Socio–Economic Dynamics Towards the End of the Twentieth Century. KITLV Press, Leiden 2002.
at all or at best by casual hands who never qualified for full protection by industrial legislation. Some tasks in the process of production were also contracted out to jobbers who had to bring their own work gangs which remained unregistered in the factory records. Out of an estimated total of 85,000 with regular contracts who got dismissed during the last two decades of the twentieth century, somewhat more than ten per cent may have left the city after being made redundant. Wherever they went, usually back to their place of origin, these drop-outs only in rare cases succeeded in getting access to similar jobs in the formal sector of the economy. Their future was as dark as for the large majority who decided to stay on in Ahmedabad. Another ten per cent – most of them belonging to the technical or administrative staff in the mills – were able to find jobs of more or less equal income and skill. Apart from this small segment which somehow managed to consolidate their formal sector status all the others, in my calculations not less than 75,000 workers were eased out into the informal sector, a transfer which implied a dramatic downturn in their fortunes.

If we take the composition of the household as the basis for determining the impact of the mass redundancies in Ahmedabad, we can say that on a conservative estimate at least 300,000 people – the workers themselves together with the members of their households – were directly affected by the negative consequences of the dismissal of the major breadwinner from the secure jobs they held in the textile mill. And in addition to these main victims petty trade, services and transport in the mill localities suffered from the drastic loss of income of the mill households which made up a major part of their customers. With the total population of the urban conurbation of Ahmedabad rising from 2.5 million in 1981 to 3.3 million in 1991, the mill closures directly affected not less than one sixth of the city’s inhabitants, an undeniably significant proportion And even that was not the end of the story. As a result of the influx of households expelled from the formal sector, the already fragile existence of workers in the informal sector came under greater pressure than it already was before. It is clear that competition for work has led to much tension and conflict both in residential areas as well as at work sites.

For the former mill workers, the initial refusal to accept that the mills had closed for good was replaced by a realisation that there was no other option than to look for work elsewhere. The search for new employment was driven by the need to provide for their families, and this period of transition was
marked by great insecurity. There was no time and little financial breathing space to recover from the loss of their jobs at the cotton mills. Many could not keep their heads above water without borrowing money from relatives or moneylenders or by asking for credit from shopkeepers. They did this in the belief that, if the mill did not reopen, at least they could look forward to payment of their savings and other money owed to them by their former employers, including their redundancy pay. Those among them who finally did receive their money, considerably less than what they were entitled to, had to use it to pay off the loans and other debts they had run up to survive the period of unemployment.

A little less than one third of the ex-mill workers considered themselves unemployable after their dismissal. Half of them gave their age (over 50) as the main reason for not going back to work, while a fifth put it down to failing health. The rest said that they were willing to work but were unable to find a job. It would be a mistake to take this difference in motivation for their actual behaviour too literally. Age and ill health may be valid arguments to stop working, but few people who find themselves suddenly unemployed at the bottom of the economy can afford this luxury. It is only possible if other members of the household compensate for the loss in income. In nearly all cases, this proved to have been the case, and was the reason why those who claimed to be still seeking work in vain could continue to do so. Unemployment is therefore a flexible concept, determined by what is considered suitable work at any given moment. The final choice, and whether this in turn is eventually revised in the last resort, depends on the balance between the availability of work – conditioned by factors such as the nature of the work and how heavy it is, regularity the pay and the other terms of employment – and the extent to which the obligation to acquire income for the household can be delegated to other members. The starting point in the search for other work was always the same: the desire to find a job that as far as possible offered what the mill provided. The absence or inaccessibility of such employment explains why in most cases it took so long for former mill workers to find a new occupation. The period of idleness was necessary to allow them to adjust their aspirations to a much lower level. As mentioned above, this adjustment was more difficult for some than for others, while a significant group refused to take a step back at all.

The former mill workers would prefer to find work with a permanent contract, but the security and protection provided by such a status ended when they were made redundant. The closest they come to that now is an unwritten and even unspoken contract in which employer and employee agree by implication to continue the relationship until the contract is
terminated. This is the basis on which workers are taken on by factories or workshops as wage labourers for an indefinite period, or as guards by companies that specialise in security for industrial premises, offices or residential quarters. As long as the work they do fulfils the requirements of the employer, they can be sure of a job. But they can derive no rights from this employment. Casual labourers, who are taken on daily or until a job is done, are in an even more vulnerable position. This arrangement is standing practice in the building industry. These people assemble early in the morning at one of the many labour markets – it may be a road junction, a square or a bus station – where they wait for the jobbers and subcontractors to come and recruit the labour they need. Sometimes, a relative, neighbour or friend might have asked them to tag along as an extra hand or told them to report directly to the building site. This meeting of supply and demand is not based on legally valid terms of employment and the covert agreement is very vague and fluid.

More numerous than these regular and casual wage labourers are those who are self-employed, working on their own account. Three of the most common occupations in this contingent are rickshaw drivers, street vendors (of cloth and garments, food and drinks, crockery, vegetables, etc) and repairmen or recyclers of waste materials. Others work at home, making garments, paper, toys or plastic articles, etc, on a subcontract basis. Although they are without doubt economically active, they find it difficult to say what their main occupation is. This is also because many of them have to be engaged in several trades to earn enough to keep their heads above water. Then there are those who are active only occasionally. They work on some days and not on others, depending on the demand for their services. They are not overly active in seeking work but do not refuse it if it is offered to them.

The ex-mill workers are now employed in jobs that typically require a far lower level of capital investment than the work they performed in the mills. If mechanised power is involved at all it is in the form of simple machines (a rickshaw motor, a sewing machine or other simple equipment (for repairing clocks and watches, radios, bicycles or household articles) or craft tools for producing handmade commodities (leather goods, furniture, ambar charkha, paintbrushes, etc.). Only the weavers in the powerloom sheds work on the same machines that they used in the mills and which have been sold to the owners as scrap. The skill level outside the industrial sector of the economy is much lower, and it is especially in these branches – small-scale trade, transport and services – that a large proportion of the former mill workers have ended up. Many of them have lost the skills that they learned in the
mills. On the other hand, the work now demands much greater physical effort. Complaints from construction labourers, pedal rickshaw drivers, cart pullers, head porters and ambulant street vendors about being exhausted at the end of the day must partly be seen in the light of the fact that they now work far less with machines.

The work in the mills had a daily rhythm of eight hours, leaving enough time to spend with the family, do household chores and engage in activities outside the home. This is now completely impossible. On paper, the powerloom workshops are supposed to operate according to a three-shift roster. As everyone knows, however, the working hours are split up into a day shift and a night shift, each lasting ten to twelve hours. The employers will not take anyone on for less. More is of course always possible. If someone does not turn up for work, a member of the previous shift can simply work another ten or more hours. Home-workers can decide for themselves how many hours they work, but the pressure to earn more by starting early in the morning and working until late in the evening is great. Often all the members of the household play some part in the production, leaving very little leisure time for them to spend together. Others who work in the open air at their own expense can determine the length of their own working day. Street vendors offer their wares long after night has fallen and have to be up and ready to replenish their stocks at the break of day. Lastly there is the not inconsiderable number who have to spend part of the day or night doing a second job to supplement their low income. The former mill workers have to cope not only with much longer, but also much more irregular, working hours. Although they used to work in three eight-hour shifts, the shift schedule was drawn up in advance and they were paid extra for overtime. Such bonuses are a thing of the past and the regular cycle of their working lives has been replaced by erratic and unpredictable interruptions and long periods of idleness during which they are not paid. The fact that they show up for work is no guarantee that they will actually be employed on any particular day. It is often uncertain whether the working day will begin at all and how it will develop, while the workers are expected to adapt themselves to these large and often unpredictable fluctuations. Free days and leave have become a luxury and are never paid.

More than any other criterion the enormous drop in income illustrates the degree to which the quality of life of the former mill workers has deteriorated. The weavers who now earn their living in small enterprises do the same work, but for much lower pay. Nor can they always be sure that there will be work for them. Most ex-mill workers who earned a daily wage of between Rs 90 and 100 at the time of closure – at eight hours a day, six
days a week, this amounted to between Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 3,000 per month – nowadays earn less than half of that, while a sizeable minority have to make do with less than a third of what they earned before. The fall in income is so dramatic that other members of the household are forced to work. The wage brought home by the man of the house was sufficient to allow these customs to be observed or imposed, but after the closure of the mills there was no longer the financial freedom for such sensitivities. Home-working allowed Muslim and some Hindu women to take an active part in earning income for the household without them having to break the social code for public behaviour. Sewing and embroidering clothing, making incense sticks and rolling cigarettes are prime examples of activities in which all household members, particularly women and children, can take part. But in many cases, women and children also are forced to engage themselves in work outside the house. They are employed in garment ateliers but may also have to seek work as domestic servants. Collecting paper and other waste (such as scrap metal or empty plastic bottles), which has a low status and earns very little, is the speciality of dalit women and girls.

In some of the households of former mill workers, the shortage of income has sometimes become so acute that impoverishment has given way to outright pauperisation. The household members can no longer afford to buy the basic necessities to survive. But even in the much larger numbers of households where the fall in earnings has been less severe, it is still hard to make ends meet. As a result of the gap between income and expenditure, the proportion of the household’s budget that has to be spent on food is much larger than before and many have been forced to cut back on both the quantity and quality of their daily food consumption. The tradition of celebrating family events with lavish meals and new clothes has been abandoned and little or no money is left for the purchase of consumer durables. Although the lifestyle of the industrial workers allowed for few comforts, the large majority of ex-mill workers are connected to electricity and water supply, and two-thirds have a toilet in or close to the house. A bicycle and a table or ceiling fan are relatively normal and the majority have a radio and a sewing machine. A little under half still enjoy the luxury of a television set or a pressure cooker, purchased in better times. But many have had to sell such valuable possessions, and even more are no longer able to repair them if they breakdown. About half own the house they live in. The remaining rent their homes for around 100 to 150 rupees per month. Although many of these tenements are located in what now have become slum districts, this does nothing to impair their value for those who live in them. The quality of the dwellings has, however, suffered across the board, as the residents find
themselves unable to afford even the most basic of repairs, for example to roofs or walls. And rent that was formerly well within their means has now become an almost unbearable burden.

A greater threat to the wellbeing of the former mill workers and their families than the deterioration in their food intake is the loss of their right to free or cheap medical care. In the past, they were members of the Employees State Insurance Scheme, set up by the government in 1948 for employees of public and private-sector enterprises. ESIS is funded from contributions by employees and employers, while the government also gives a sizeable subsidy. Under the statutes of the scheme, the workers’ families are eligible for medical services, which are provided cost-free. ESIS has its own hospitals and neighbourhood clinics, where its own doctors see patients and prescribe medicines. When workers retired or were unable to go on working due to disability, the insurance cover continued for them and their wives, but those who lost their jobs for other reasons were automatically excluded from the scheme. To their great anguish and resentment, this is what happened to the mill workers when they were dismissed. The benefit that the workers derived from their membership of ESIS was much greater than the contribution they paid into the fund and represented not less than 10 to 15 per cent of their salary. Now that they are no longer insured they try to rely on self-help and only call in low-grade doctors and quacks if they have no choice. These practitioners, who are often not properly trained, charge much more for a consultation or an injection than the insurance scheme. And for the treatment of stress and other mental problems that arose during and after the redundancy period there is neither the money nor the professional expertise.

The future of the new generation of children is in jeopardy because their schooling is cut short. The parents can no longer afford to invest in improving the life chances of their offspring. Primary school attendance is not much affected but the impact on more advanced education has been much greater. Apart from the fact that the cost of intermediate and vocational schooling far exceeds the household budget, the labour power of youngsters is a much needed source of income that has to be tapped at an early age. As a consequence, the level of knowledge of the new generation when they enter the labour market at very young age is often lower than that of the mill workers when they started their working lives many years ago.

Former mill workers also worry a great deal about their children’s life partners and the cost of marriages. Looking for suitable candidates is time-consuming and assumes that the parents have the opportunity to deliberate carefully on their choice. Financial considerations play a decisive role in the
negotiations, which aim to secure the best candidate at the lowest price. In the absence of a reasonable dowry, gifts of money and commodities with which the arrangement is sealed, girls in particular are forced to accept partners who would never have been eligible before. A lower status, not only for the individual but for the whole family, is the price that has to be paid.

Building up reserves needed at times of crises is now completely out of the question. And setbacks occur more often and with greater intensity than before the mill closures. Initially, the workers could use their redundancy benefits, but these varied greatly in size and many received nothing at all. How was this money used? A small minority managed to deposit at least part in a savings account, and were resolved not to eat into it until the time came for which it was intended – usually for house purchase or future repairs or for the marriage of sons or daughters. A much larger number indicated that they had to use the money to pay for medical care, urgent home repairs or the repayment of debts. By far the largest share was spent on day-to-day expenses since, with the difficult adjustment to a lower level of income, this was the only way that the households could meet their recurrent needs. Clearly this situation, in which expense exceeded income, came to an end when the reserves had been exhausted. Redundancy payments were far less than most of the workers were entitled to and, moreover, were paid in instalments over an extended period. This explains why workers could not resist the temptation to spend the money as it came in. Most of them therefore clung to their previous way of life and spending pattern for much longer than they were able to afford.

The dramatic fall in the standard of living of the former mill workers undermined their self-confidence. After the shock of being expelled from the mill came the discouraging experience of looking for a new job, accompanied as it was by the loss of skill and a much lower wage. We heard how the men were completely at a loss in the early days following their dismissal. They would not talk for days on end and refused to take food. Their loss of vitality was so great that even the lightest of physical activity was seen as too exhausting. Some stayed at home, others left the house early in the morning and came back late at night, refusing to disclose where they had been or what they had been doing. This state of shock easily led to health problems which had previously received little attention. Such ailments were used as an excuse to avoid helping with the daily household chores. ESIS medical records show an increasing number of patients in the industrial neighbourhoods with heart problems and high blood pressure. The greatest demand was for social care and psychological counselling, but this was not covered by the insurance. Social relationships within the family suffered.
Husbands and wives quarrelled, often leading to violence on the part of the man, and sometimes even vice versa. Tensions also increased between parents and children. According to primary and secondary school teachers in the industrial neighbourhoods, children had become unruly and ‘difficult’, had problems concentrating and complained about troubles at home.

No visitor to Ahmedabad can fail to observe the sprawling slums on the east bank of the river, which have spread rapidly over the last few decades. A large segment of the city’s population is cramped together in these deprived quarters, exposed to environmental degradation and excluded from the most elementary civic amenities. There is a close link between living in a slum and working in the informal sector of the economy. The tall chimneys marking the industrial landscape have disappeared and the factory compounds, for a century or more congested work-sites with people constantly milling around, are vacated and deprived of their economic significance. The new wastelands, filled with the rubble of demolished buildings, which now dominate this part of the city are no longer surrounded by working class neighbourhoods. The lack of steady employment and a sharp fall in incomes have transformed these habitats of the former mill workforce into slum localities.

The alienation of the ex-mill workers from mainstream society is expressed in their reduced access to public services and institutions, including those that are intended for each and every citizen of Ahmedabad. This state of exclusion is accompanied by a loss of control over the conditions that determine the quality of their lives now and in the future. Market discrimination in how they live and work reinforces the acute sense of deprivation and ensures that they do not enjoy equal opportunities to improve their situation. Members of stigmatised groups naturally seek contact with their own kind – Muslims, dalits and other social minorities exposed to discriminatory practices, both individually and collectively – for mutual support and protection. A life of dependency, however, goes hand in hand with restricted choice and downward mobility. Indebtedness forces the former mill workers to sell their own labour power and that of other household members and to settle for a lower wage in exchange for an advance payment. Such dependency restricts other options and investment in forms of horizontal solidarity which cut across primordial loyalties. There is an impelling need to retreat into their own communal niche and to stay aloof from other social segments.

The retrenched textile workers are not the only inhabitants of the industrial districts to have suffered from the collapse of the large-scale textile mills. The impact on petty trade, services and transport in the
mill areas has been enormous, because demand for the services of a wide variety of shopkeepers, street operators and craftsmen came predominantly from this leading segment of the working population employed in the formal sector of the economy. Many of their customers have become their competitors. The influx of households expelled from the formal sector has put even greater pressure on the already fragile existence of workers in the informal sector. Competition for work has led to much tension and conflict in both residential areas and the workplace. The process of levelling down to the bottom has become manifest in the spread of squalor and has helped to create an atmosphere of undiluted depression.

**Grades of vulnerability**

From early morning until late in the evening the chalis and side roads are crowded with people. The large majority are males of all ages, lying, sitting or standing in front of their houses or hanging around in small clusters. They take to the streets to kill time because there is not much else for them to do. Women who are not engaged in outside work tend to stay at home. Not only because of a code of conduct which does not allow them to move about freely but also because they are more busy than their male partners with all kinds of household chores and to make their labour power productive with gainful employment.

Few labourers in the informal sector of the economy succeed in working more than twenty days a month. Street vendors seem to be the most susceptible to seasonal fluctuations, which prevent them from achieving a fixed rhythm of work. On days when it is raining, cold or very hot, there is less demand for their services and they have to face a considerable drop in income. Daily wage earners are similarly affected. On such days, they will go to the various labour markets in the city where workers are hired early in the morning, only to be turned away. It is the same story at the building sites, where they seek work as unskilled hands. It would, however, be incorrect to attribute the unpredictable nature of work in the open air purely to inclement weather. It may also be interrupted by public holidays, or by disturbances of the public order, such as riots or political tensions. Seasonal swings in the city’s economy, caused by not so transparent flows of industrial and mercantile capital in the informal sector, have a greater impact on the mass of workers in this sector than on their counterparts in the better-regulated formal sector. Not much is known about the nature and effects of these cyclical and erratic trends. They also affect home-workers, whose way
of earning a living is completely concealed from public view. The fact that they are apparently available for work at all times does not mean that they have work all the time. The delivery of raw materials is irregular, the power supply is unreliable and contractors pass on fluctuations in demand for the end product without the slightest scruples.

The large amount of time not spent in gainful work does not mean that this vast reserve army enjoys the many and erratic hours of non-activity at their disposal. Leisure used to be a familiar notion that grew out of the pattern of regular employment in the mill. When they were not on night shift the men would congregate in small groups after the evening meal and sing devotional songs or just engage in small talk together on street corners. Going alone or with the whole family to the Sunday market on the riverbank or to visit relatives living in other neighbourhoods were favourite outings during the weekend. These days are gone. Although there is more ‘idle time’ available now, there is neither money nor energy to enjoy it as leisure.

Not all workers who have lost their mill jobs have fallen below the poverty line. There are those who do not have to rely solely or predominantly on the sale of their unskilled labour power. These include the owners of petty means of production – such as motorised rickshaws, handcarts or street cabins – or of parcels of land or small buildings in the slum areas, who not only use this property themselves but rent or lease it out. Although the percentage of workers having access to various forms of petty capital should not be exaggerated, their households are certainly better off than those who have no means of production themselves. At the opposite end of the spectrum, there is an extremely vulnerable segment of ex-mill workers who, because of ill fortune or disability, are alienated from both means of production and consumption. The households to which they used to belong have broken up. There are instances of men deserting their wives and children, unwilling to provide for them any longer, but there are also cases of men being thrown out of their houses soon after losing their jobs at the mill. Such people, the ultra-excluded, roam the streets as lost souls, begging and afflicted by acute pauperisation. They depend for their irregular and inadequate meals on ramroti, centres of free food distribution run by religious charities.

Slum life is not only characterised by signs of want, deprivation and neglect. The closure of the mills has also led to a shrinking of public space in the settlements surrounding them. Places where people used to meet their workmates and others with different social identities are nowadays difficult to find. Certainly, in the past too the mill hands used to spend most of their time off in or around the home, mainly within the confines of the particular communal circle to which they happened to belong. Life-cycle events or
religious festivals were public functions which were largely celebrated in the open. The neighbourhood schools run by the municipality were a point of contact where children not only demonstrated the skills picked up within the intimacy of family life on how to deal with ‘others’, but where they also made friends from the other side of the fence. People living nearby were invited to share in the food and fun, even if they observed other customs themselves. There were clubs which gave training in wrestling, boxing and other sports to all comers, irrespective of their caste or communal background. And the spectators at the matches were equally mixed. The reading rooms set up by the TLA throughout the industrial districts were also important meeting places. Classes were held in the mornings and evenings to teach adults and those who had dropped out of school at an early age how to read and write. Later on many of these centres were taken over by the Labour Welfare Board, an official agency set up under the auspices of the municipal government. In recent years several of these places have closed down for lack of funds. The municipal corporation decided to cut down on social expenditure and the clientele has dwindled. Apart from the inability of the clients, men as well as women, to pay the very modest fee charged for the various courses or for the crèches where toddlers can be left a few hours each day, they have also lost their appetite for spending ‘free’ hours in constructive activities. Their time is eaten up in search for work or just remaining ‘idle’. Venturing out in mainstream society has become an option which many households in the milieu of ex-mill workers can no longer afford.

The fallacy of parallel development

A paradigm which has dominated post-colonial development literature in the second half of the twentieth century suggested inclusion as a historical trend encompassing more and more people in different parts of the world. This particular brand of wishful thinking suggested that the process of transformation as it had taken place in Western economies would be repeated at the global level and in the end would give shape to the kind of industrial–urban society that had initially emerged on both sides of the Atlantic ocean in the northern hemisphere. No doubt, that historic trajectory had been difficult to predict when it first got started. Towards the end of the nineteenth century there were strong doubt that the underclasses in westerns societies would be able to accommodate themselves in the new industrial society that was being constructed. The doctrine of social Darwinism was based on the assumption that not all poor people could or,
for that matter, should be raised to a life of human dignity. In the struggle for survival only the fittest in the process of natural selection would be able to qualify themselves for a better future. As against the deserving poor, kept in waiting as a reserve army of labour, the non-deserving poor were labelled as a burden to themselves and to society at large. This sizable segment of the poor was blamed for their own poverty. Having nothing useful to add, their very presence was considered to be a risk to social stability and cohesion.

The subsequent inclusion of also these marginalized people in mainstream society was the outcome of a highly labour intensive process of industrialisation. The low level of technology, although rapidly increasing, allowed for the insertion into the workforce of households pushed out of the agrarian-rural economy. What became rephrased as the social question, conditioned on the one hand by growing assertiveness from below and on the other hand acceptance among higher classes that the cost of exclusion might be higher than inclusion, had its origin in an expanding economy which required the labour power of the masses living in poverty. There is no clear indication that this development scenario which took place within the framework of the nation state is a century later replicated at the transnational level. On the contrary, the enormous gap between non-poor and poor people is still widening.

The assumption of parallel development explains why in the post-colonial era politicians and policy makers have gone on record saying that ‘soon’ or in ‘the foreseeable future’ people would no longer have to live in poverty. While they might have conceded that the fight against deprivation would take time and was dependent on all kinds of pre-conditions, they did not state that bringing increasing numbers and ultimately all people above ‘the poverty line’ was something that could not or even should not be contemplated. A well-known example of that mode of thinking was the idea of ‘trickle down’ which promised that people with few or no assets were eventually going to benefit from the process of economic growth.

In line with the notion of inclusion as a historical trend, the British sociologist T.H. Marshall specified various dimensions of the process of inclusion and ranked them in a sequential order: first granting legal rights which extended the rule of law to all citizens, next the granting of political rights which proclaimed universal suffrage and promoted the participation of all in a democratic framework, finally the granting of socio-economic rights which found its apex in the welfare state (Marshall, 1975).

There have been episodes in the recent history of developed societies which seemed to signal that the trend towards inclusion can be abruptly halted or even reversed, i.e. a slide back into exclusion. The world economic
recession in the 1930s exposed may people in the industrialised countries again to a situation of vulnerability which they found difficult to accept, precisely because of their improved wellbeing in the preceding decades. In 1933 a book was published, entitled *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal*. It was an empirical study of the effects of long-term unemployment. The book became one of the classic works of social scientific literature on the significance of the loss of paid employment for working-class households in an industrial society. The setting of the study was a small community on the outskirts of Vienna which had one large textile mill and not much else by way of economic activity. After cutbacks in production and working hours in the late 1920s, against the background of the economic crisis which affected the whole of industrial Europe, the mill closed in 1930. This meant the end of what was essentially the only source of employment in this rural township. With the complete workforce made redundant, no less than three-quarters of the local population, 367 of the 478 households, found themselves in a situation of acute and stark poverty. In summing up their findings the authors spoke of *Die müde Gesellschaft* (The Tired Community). This subtitle to their study expressed the feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness that overwhelmed these people. Only a small proportion of the population managed to stay in paid work, in the service sector outside the village, and a number of older people received a pension. The study describes the response of the affected households in subsequent phases: how they proceeded from initial resolve to resignation, going on to despair and finally apathy. The social psychological approach illustrates how these people lost their sense of time and how the daily routine, which is so important for a meaningful life, was eroded. Outside the household, there was a noticeable increase in isolation, a declining involvement in the world outside, institutionally and organisationally, together with symptoms of envy and suspicion instead of mutual help. The tenor is clear: a process of marginalisation, a shrinking of the psychological space, leading to alienation. The portrait demonstrates how tempting it is to hold the poor themselves accountable and responsible for the state of exclusion in which they are made to live.

How did the dismissed Austrian workers survive in those years of crisis? Certainly not through being able to find paid employment but by partially retreating into self-sufficiency. They grew vegetables or bred rabbits on a small piece of land rented to them by it the mill or the local council. Much more important than these modest contributions towards imposed autarky, however, was the state unemployment benefit which they received every fortnight. The economic cycle of the households affected by the mill closure revolved around this paltry payout. The benefits were funded
from contributions by employers, workers and the local authority and the
total accumulated in the years leading up to the closure meant that there
were enough funds to last for 20 or 30 weeks. After that, the former mill
workers were eligible for the lower benefits provided by a government dole.
Sporadically, such as on religious holidays, the municipality or charity
organisations would with food packages. In the early 1930s the welfare
state in Europe was still under construction. It would not be expanded
and completed until well after the end of the Second World War, but the
foundations had already been laid in the early years of the twentieth
century. When the economic crisis struck in the early 1930s, governments
in the industrialised part of the world responded to the sudden onset of
unemployment and impoverishment with relief programmes. These took
the form of both financial support and job creation by commissioning public
works. It is precisely this kind of public schemes which, in the free market
driven policies towards the end of the twentieth century, have been lacking
or soft-pedalled in the global fight against poverty.

The essence of my argumentation in the pages above has been that past
experiences are relevant for defining, analysing and solving the dynamics
of inclusion–exclusion in what is called the developing world. In order to
promote incorporation into mainstream society and to forestall a return with
a vengeance of the doctrine of social Darwinism in the globalise economy, the
deeply skewed balance between capital and labour will have to be redressed.
Such a corrective policy needs to be carried out at the transnational, national
as well as local level and requires a) capital redistribution (land reforms in
the first place); b) employment creation and job security and c) the provision
of social welfare, concretised in terms of health, housing and education.

The huge disparities that have been created in today’s world cannot
be undone without connecting the mechanisms of inclusion to those of
exclusion. As e.g. Seabrook has argued, it seems to be the object of official
political discourse to suppress any such connections. “The easiest alibi,
as always, is to blame ‘nature’, drought, over-population, the spread of
the desert; when it is our own nature that is deeply implicated, above all
the nature of our society and its development, which has succeeded in re-
creating a lasting sense of impoverishment out of the very riches it has
accumulated, and has made us believe that the simple goal of sufficiency for
all represents for us, the rich, not emancipation, but a terrifying loss not to
be contemplated” (Seabrook, 1985: 175).
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Breman, J. (2001). A turn for the worse; the closure of the Ahmedabad textile mills and the retrenchment of the workforce. The Wertheim Lecture 20001. Amsterdam School of Social Science Research, Univ. of Amsterdam.


The narrative of the universal International Organizations such as the United Nations, the language of the foreign politics of the main states (beginning with the United States), as well as the conventional wisdom of International Relations Theory, all insist on the words “global” and “globalisation”. Therefore, the war against terrorism is held to be a “global” war, the alliance which is (presumed to be) fighting it, a “global” alliance, the norms and principles of international life, “universal” or “human” rights, the would-be governance of political and economic international relations, a “global” governance.

Like any image of the world, this widespread cadence is significant. But what is worth discussing is whether this image reflects a reality or an ideological project; whether globalisation is growing in international political relations as it is in economic international relations or, instead, the post-bypolar system is disassembling again in a network of separate geographies, each with its own rules, borders and powers structures; whether the quest for globalisation does represent a progressive and optimistic image of the future or reflect a crisis affecting the present – if not, paradoxically, a nostalgic vision of the past.

Actually, what we are witnessing is just the opposite of a process of political globalisation; rather, the demise of the two concrete forms which it has been taken all along the 20th century. The first and most apparent is war. In any historical context, war suggests the point at which the political and strategic interdependence among actors reaches its limit. In Paix et guerre entre les nations, Raymond Aron went so far as to identify the possible extension of war with the actual extension of international system: “I call an international system the ensemble constituted by political units that maintain regular relations with each other and that are capable of being implicated in a generalized war”. In such a definition it is not difficult
to recognize the legacy of the two World Wars of the twentieth century – “world” wars, precisely because they had reflected a process of globalisation rooted not only in the economic but also in the political and strategic domain, and resulting both in common experiences (of suffering, fear and mourning) \(^1\) and in universal ideologies and (institutional) projects.

But Aron’s analysis basically focused on the last chapter of the western civil war of the 20th century: the Cold War. In Aron’s definition, it was just bipolarism which resulted in a true globalisation, a *monde fini*, as he put it:

“Since 1945 the international system has included the five continents, the whole of humanity. There is no event, in Korea or Laos, which does not make itself felt in the Soviet Union or in the United States. The diplomatic universe is like an echo chamber: the noises of men and events are amplified and reverberated to infinity. The disturbance occurring at one point of the planet communicates itself, step by step, to the opposite side of the globe” (Aron, 1966, p. 373).

With the end of the Cold War, this echo chamber has dramatically broken up. Although the political–strategic globalisation has been apparently revived by such labels as *global* war and *global* alliance against terrorism, the strategic and ideological continuity among the regions which make up the international system has actually been diminished by the collapse of the global conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. The political–strategic game in Europe is less and less similar to the Eastern Asian one, as well as this is less and less similar to the Middle Eastern, the African and the Central Asian ones. The degree of political, ideological and military diffusion of the relative conflicts is lowered by the difference of actors, stakes and symbolic capitals. Also the paramount indicator of the expectations on future – the trend of arms race – has started being different again in each region, according to their relative and more and more divergent expectations of war – decreasing in Europe, where the defence expenditures have never ceased to fall for fifteen years, while growing in East Asia, where they have never ceased to be increasing. The extraordinary continuity of the bipolar international system has paved the way to an international system, in which the different regions continue to be interdependent by virtue of

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economic and technological globalisation, but in which each region has started including different actors, different distributions of power, different conflicts and different languages again.

Nevertheless, a still more profound historical process also explains the tendency for political–strategic globalisation to progressively decline, instead of increasing, after the end of the Cold War. In fact, the end of the Cold War did carry with itself the definite collapse of the first and foremost form of political and juridical globalisation in the history of international relations: the agelong expansion of the European international society (Bull and Watson, 1984). From an historical point of view, the overthrow of Eurocentrism – which began to crumble at the end of the 19th century – is the fundamental event of the 20th century, as well as its main legacy. Nevertheless, the consequences of this epochal change were long hidden and, albeit partially, contained by the Cold War. As the last “Western civil war”, not only did it continue to make the world shaped by a conflict between two forms of Western universalism – liberal democracy and socialism. Paradoxically, the Cold War also maintained Europe at the centre of this conflict. In fact, while losing its role as the political and institutional centre of international politics, Europe has always been the origin as well as the major battleground of the strategic and ideological clash between the new centres, the United States and Soviet Union.

The end of the Cold War wipes out this shadow of centrality too. On the one hand, for the first time in history Europe turns out to be an ordinary region in a global international system – whereas, in the past, when Europe was an ordinary region, there was not a global system, while, since a global system did arise, Europe has always been its centre. On the other hand, the end of Eurocentrism results in the collapse of the concepts and institutions that Europe had matured over the course of the previous centuries and upon which it had founded its very concept of universalism. It is here, and not in an historical fate of “clash of civilisations”, that the conflict upon the Western legacy is rooted. All the constituent elements of the European and Western quest for political and legal globalisation are drawn into it: the position of supremacy of the West and its right to determine the content (political, economical and cultural) of international order; the Western monopoly on the concept of humanity and the forces authorized to defend it; the very concept of international politics as politics among states, and the constituent separation of internal and international politics.

This dual crisis of political globalisation opens a struggle for succession, which makes way for contrasting results. Globalisation may be revived both in the strategic and in the ideological domain, or a situation may arise in
which the main actors, basic interests, cultural languages and power balances return to be permanently different in each region. The so-called “global war against terrorism” may reveal itself to be a good substitute for the Cold War, or turn out to be just a nostalgic mask of strategic globalisation. The quest for a democratic global governance may survive its original Western footprint, or reveal itself to be the beginning of a new (albeit abstract) Great Game of Western Universalism\(^2\). The crisis of the international society of states may result in a new global society, or pave the way to the collapse of the fundamental norms and principles of international life (beginning with the norms and principles aimed to limit war) (Bull, 1977; Schmitt, 1950).

Although it is not possible to foresee the outcome of this process, the contrast between globalism and pluralism is likely to become the main issue of the 21st century – while being the concrete fundament of the more superficial conflict between unipolarism and multipolarism.

**REFERENCES**


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\(^2\) See, for example, the strong critique of the radical global centralism delivered by an Indian writer, Rajni Kothari, who declared himself “averse to the hollow sounds of comfortable, angry men from the Northern Hemisphere, hopping from one continent to another in a bid to transform the whole world – the latest edition of the white man’s burden” (R. Kothari, *Footsteps Into the Future: Diagnosis of the Present World and a Design for an Alternative* (Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1974, 10).
DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMICS AND NEW SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE
The Tendencies and Prospects of World Economic Development

Andrei Kazmin
Presentation at the First Session of Rhodes Forum, held in Greece on September 3–6, 2003

A brief outline of the current tendencies in world economics

At present the world economy is developing under the influence of such basic long-term tendencies as:

- Globalisation of the world economy;
- Transformation from a “commodities economy” to a “services economy”;
- Accelerated economic development of countries with low and medium income levels.
The following tendencies and processes presently observed in the world economy may be regarded as objective signs of globalisation:

**Growth in the scale of international trade in goods and services (globalisation of commodity and commercial services markets).** In 2002 the overall volume of the world export of goods and services came to 7,962 billion dollars or 24.8 per cent of the overall world GDP, whereas in 1990 the volume of the world export of goods and services totalled only 18.7 per cent of the GDP (Figure One).¹

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Growth in the scale of transborder investment (globalisation of capital markets).

Between 1990 and 2001 the gross annual inflow of foreign capital increased from 10.3 per cent to 21.6 per cent of the overall world GDP, totalling nearly 6,700 billion dollars.\(^2\)

In 2001 the net inflow of direct foreign investment in all countries of the world totalled 735.1 billion dollars or 2.4 per cent of the overall world GDP as against 0.9 per cent in 1990 (Figure Two).\(^3\)

**Figure 2**
Dynamics of the net inflow of direct foreign investments in all countries of the world, per cent

\(^2\) The World Bank, World Development Indicators 2003.

\(^3\) UNCTAD, FDI/TNC database.
Growth in the number and volumes of international mergers and take-overs.

Whereas in 1990 the sum of transactions concerning international mergers and take-overs came to 150.5 billion dollars (0.7 per cent of the overall world GDP), in 2001 it totalled 594 billion dollars (1.9 per cent of the GDP). The number of transactions concerning mergers and take-overs grew from 151 in 1990 to 601 in 2001.

**Figure 3**

Dynamics of the overall world volume of transactions concerning international mergers and take-overs

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Growth in the scale of the activity of mixed capital companies at national markets.

Whereas in 1990 mixed capital companies accounted for seven per cent of the overall world GDP, in 2001 their share came to 11.3 per cent of the GDP (Table One). The share of foreign-invested companies in the overall world export of goods and services grew from 27.6 to 34 per cent.

**Table 1**
Some indicators of the activity of mixed-capital companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Volume in current prices (billion dollars)</th>
<th>Average annual growth rates, per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>2541          5479       18517</td>
<td>16.9 10.5 14.5 34.1 15.1 9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross added value</td>
<td>594           1423       3495</td>
<td>18.8 6.7 12.9 15.2 32.9 8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent of the overall world GDP</td>
<td>5.1           7.0        11.3</td>
<td>— — — — — —</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall assets</td>
<td>1959          5759       24952</td>
<td>19.8 13.4 19.0 21.4 24.7 9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent of the overall world GDP</td>
<td>16.7          28.2       80.4</td>
<td>— — — — — —</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume of export</td>
<td>670           1169       2600</td>
<td>14.9 7.4 9.7 1.9 11.7 0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent of the overall world export</td>
<td>29.8          27.6       34.0</td>
<td>— — — — — —</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of workers (thous.)</td>
<td>17987         23858      53581</td>
<td>6.8 5.1 11.7 20.6 10.2 7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By way of reference: Overall world GDP</td>
<td>11726         20421      31047</td>
<td>11.5 6.5 1.2 3.0 4.0 1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall world export of goods and services</td>
<td>2247         4231        7640</td>
<td>15.8 8.7 4.2 3.8 11.5 -3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strengthening of the role played by transnational companies in world economics.
Whereas in 1990 the overall added value produced by 100 of the world’s largest transnational corporations accounted for 3.5 per cent of the world GDP, in 2001 their share rose to 4.3 per cent of the world GDP.\textsuperscript{5}

The following factors represent objective signs of the growing dominant role of the services sector in world economics:

Continuing change of the world GDP structure in favour of the services sector.
Whereas in 1990 the services sector accounted for 60 per cent of the world GDP, in 2001 it reached 66 per cent. (Figure Four).\textsuperscript{6} The services sector is even more important for the economy of the major developed countries: in the United States it accounts for 73 per cent, in France and Britain – 72 per cent, in Italy and Germany – 68 per cent, and in Japan – 67 per cent. In the developing countries this indicator is yet substantially lower: in China it is 34 per cent, India – 48 per cent, Russia – 56 per cent, and Brazil – 57 per cent.

\textbf{Figure 4}
Structure of the Production of the Overall World GDP, per cent

\textsuperscript{5} UNCTAD, World Investment Report 2002.
\textsuperscript{6} World Development Indicators 2003.
Growth of the share of services in the overall volume of the world export of goods and services.

Whereas in 1980 commercial services accounted for 15.2 per cent of the world export of goods and services, in 2002 the share of the services in the overall volume of the world export reached 19.3 per cent. (Figure Five)\(^7\).

Moreover, in the structure of the world export of goods there is a clear tendency towards a growing share of high added value products (high-tech products), while the share of primaries and agricultural products is steadily going down. (Table Two).

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Table 2  
The share of some types of products in the overall volume of the world export of goods, per cent  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of products</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural products</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food products</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural raw materials</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products of the mining industry</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ores and minerals</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-ferrous metals</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial products</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>74.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron and steel</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical products</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other raw materials for processing</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machines and equipment</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor vehicles</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunication and office equipment</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other types of equipment and transport</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other consumer goods</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3  
Growth parameters of the overall world GDP in 1970–2001  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average annual increment, per cent</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard deviation, in proportion</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: International Monetary Fund. World Economics Outlook Database
Changed dynamics of world economic growth

The tendencies towards globalisation of the world economy and strengthening in it the dominant position of the high-tech products and commercial services sector have had a stabilizing effect on the dynamics of world economic growth.

During the 1970–2002 period there was a clear tendency towards lower average annual increments of the overall world GDP (Figure Seven). Furthermore, there was less variation in the annual rates of economic growth (Table Three).

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8 International Monetary Fund. World Economics Outlook Database.
The above fact may be explained by two reasons directly related to the two world economic tendencies considered earlier.

First, *increased integration of the national markets of the world’s major industrial countries (the locomotives of world economics) has lessened the dependence of the world economy on changes in the situation at each of these markets*. The reverse side of this process is the rapid saturation of the major developed countries’ markets, which entailed a considerable decrease in the rates of consumption of goods and services. The level of consumption at the markets of the major developing countries is still rather low and it cannot ensure the high growth rates of the world economy. Meanwhile, it is precisely the growth of consumption in these countries that the long-term prospects for world economic growth are associated with.

Second, *in the services sector, which is dominant today, the rate of profit is objectively lower than in most branches of industry (extractive branches above all)*. This circumstance is due to the low barriers for entering businesses and, as a result, the high competition in the commercial services sector. Therefore, as the share of the services sector in the world economy increases, the general rate of profit in business goes down, which means lower growth rates in world economics. At the same time, the services sector is less affected by price fluctuations at the world markets of energy resources and raw materials, as well as fluctuations in the cost of capital (interest rate) – owing to its relatively low capital intensity.
The immediate prospects of world economic development

Despite the evening up of the dynamics of world economic growth, it still has a cyclic nature, the length of a cycle being from seven to ten years. The last cycle began in 1991 and ended in 2000. The year 2002, with its minimal growth rates (1.2 per cent), must have been the start of a new cycle. At present we are living through its first phase characterized by mounting rates of world economic growth.

According to the forecasts of the World Bank, in the 2003–2005 period the rates of world economic growth will reach 2.3–3.2 per cent, showing a tendency towards higher growth rates in the volumes of world trade; interest rates at the world capital markets will begin to go up (Table Four). The developing countries will continue to show accelerated growth rates. However, the main reason for the brightening of the world economic situation will be the growth of investment activity by corporations of the non-financial sector in the presence of a high level of consumer spending in the world’s major industrially advanced countries (primarily the United States).
Table 4
Forecast of the main indicators of world economic development in 2003–2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of products</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth rates of the overall world GDP, per cent</td>
<td>1.9*</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including such regions of the world as: Countries with a high income</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD countries</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries of the Euro zone</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing countries</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries of East Asia and the Pacific Region</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries of Europe and Central Asia</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries with transitional economies</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries of the Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries of South Asia</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries of Central and South Africa</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth rates in the volume of international trade, per cent</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average price of oil (OPEC basket), dollars per barrel</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual interest rate of six-month deposits in US dollars, per cent of the annual rate</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual interest rate of six-month deposits in Euro</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Estimate of the IMF

It is rather difficult to forecast longer-term prospects because of a large number of political and economic uncertainty factors capable of influencing the state of the world economy and the tendencies of its development.

At the same time, it is necessary to single out the main processes which may influence world economics in the medium and long term.

Key factors of world economic development in the long term

It seems possible to single out two main factors which will have a decisive influence on world economic development in the long term.

The first factor is the shaping of conditions for the exchange of the developed countries’ capital and technologies for the natural and labour resources of the developing countries. These conditions were to become the cause of a stiff struggle and to determine the composition of the competing forces. Indeed, despite the certain positive dynamics of the last few years, the gap in these production factors between the developed and developing countries still remains enormous.

In 2001, for instance, the so-called G-7 countries had 75 per cent of the aggregate (world) assets of the banking system, 75 per cent of the capitalization of the world share market, 83 per cent of the total capitalization of the debentures issued, and two-thirds of the monetary stock.

A similar concentration is observed in the development of new technologies and knowledge. Thus, the G-7 countries account for over 77 per cent of the international patents registered in 2002 and over 50 per cent of the patents issue to non-residents. In all, the countries of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) account for over 90 per cent of the patents registered in the world.

On the other hand, in countries with low and medium incomes the demographic situation is such that in the next ten years the concentration of population there will reach 85–86 per cent, whereas in the G-7 countries it will be only slightly over 10 per cent. Most importantly, the developed countries will have to tackle the problem of ageing population and a shortage of manpower, while in the developing countries there will be a surplus of young people of employable age.

Furthermore, the developed countries have a shortage of natural resources, above all energy resources – that is another factor of production. The G-7 countries have only 3.3 per cent of the proven reserves of oil and 5.1 per cent of gas. The corresponding figures for the OECD countries are
7.2 and 9.5 per cent. According to estimates, the economic growth, along with an increase in the population, may lead to a 50 per cent increase in the demand for energy in the next 15 years.

The disproportion in the distribution of the production factors will, in our view, exert a decisive influence on the tendencies of world economic development. States will try to make the best possible use of the available resources and to minimize the negative effect of the deficit. Such a situation entails both advantages and disadvantages. The task of determining the acceptable terms of exchange will influence to a great extent the creation of various formal and informal coalitions, the attainment of a compromise on disputed issues and mutual concessions or, on the contrary, it will lead to one side pressuring the other. In any case, both sides have their arguments which will have to be reckoned with, and a civilized dialogue between countries, taking their respective interests into account, will be the sole condition for attaining world economic growth.

That disproportion will make itself felt on the second most important factor of world economic development – international trade – as a consequence of exerting influence on the division of labour. For the majority of the developing countries expanding their export is the only possibility to achieve accelerated rates of national economic development. For most of them the capacity of their national markets is insufficient to ensure a stable growth in the long term. The necessary impetus for their development could be ensured if they managed to enter the world market. But this is extremely difficult to accomplish. The WTO mechanism, which is supposed to facilitate world trade, often does not cope with this task. Negotiations on further liberalization of the terms of trade and investment have lately proceeded with great difficulty; it is getting more and more difficult to achieve compromise; more and more often countries introduce protectionist measures and are in no hurry to adjust the internal terms of trade in accordance with the decisions taken. Moreover, trade in services has been playing a progressively greater role; this tendency is also highly concentrated: the developed countries (the United States, the 15 EEC countries and Japan) account for over 65 per cent of the world export of services. The proportion of traditional goods in the world export is steadily shrinking.

All that makes for stiffer competition at the world market, restricted possibilities to step up the export of goods and services, the need of obtaining large investments for the development of the national economy and ensuring its growth in the long term.
A choice between liberalization of the national economy and ensuring national security

Stiff competition at the world market for attracting capital and using new technologies makes it necessary for recipient countries to liberalize their national economy. This finds expression, in the first place, in the unification – adjusting in accordance with norms required by the investors – of many national institutes (general legal environment, including observation of property rights and organizing the functioning of markets, banking legislation, etc.) according to schemes employed by industrially advanced countries, holders of capital.

This tendency is of a dual nature. On the one hand, the unification of institutes results in lower transaction costs regarding both the inflow of capital and broader participation in world trade. On the other, there must be a sort of borderline beyond which the possibility of national government to conduct independent (from holders of capital) policy is weakened, while the country’s economy becomes more vulnerable, more open to hostile actions, which makes national producers less competitive.

A similarly dual role is played by the extension of international standards to the products and services which, on the one hand, make the terms of world trade, the division of labour and the movement of capital easier, and, on the other, negatively affect the competitiveness of local producers, who have to accept “alien” standards. At the same time, international standards are a form of protectionist policy on the part of states which are already using these standards, since their introduction requires sizable outlays.

In all probability, it is precisely the negative aspects of unification (actually, liberalization of the national economic conditions) that hold back the development of the process of multilateral liberalization of foreign investments taking place within the WTO framework. On the contrary, until lately the liberalization of investment flows has been developing on a bilateral – not multilateral – basis. In fact, by the start of the year 2000 the number of bilateral agreements in the sphere of foreign investment reached practically 2,000 compared with 180 in the early 1980s. By concluding such agreements selectively and providing for mutually acceptable terms, states strive to avoid taking inordinate risks capable of damaging their national security. For many countries their main investors have always been (and remain) countries with similar cultures and common history, language, and national composition of the population. Such is the case concerning investments in China from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore; in the countries of Eastern Europe from Germany, France and Italy; investments
from Spain play an important part in Latin America (especially in the banking sector); the economy of Israel depends on such inflows to a large extent.

Therefore, national security issues play an enormous role in matters of making a country’s economy open, attracting foreign investments, and admitting non-residents to its market, and, as a consequence, in matters of trust and predictability of partners’ actions. In all probability, at a certain stage this will be a factor holding back world economic development.

Regional economic integration – a means of utilizing the advantages of globalisation while preserving national distinctiveness

The processes of the unification and standardization of national institutes (as well as the liberalization of the world economy as a whole) are of an objective nature, and, more likely than not, will ensure the success of world economic development. In conducting their policy national governments must take that into account. However, the process of overall globalisation and formation of a single economic space is a matter of a long-term prospect, which ought to be dealt with gradually through drawing closer and mutual understanding of each other’s unique experience.

Today, we are witnessing ever more clearly a process born by globalisation and called regionalization. In our view, this process is now unfolding, and it will increasingly influence world economic development. Despite the concern shown by the WTO, the number of regional integration groupings registered in that organization is steadily growing: over 200 of such groupings have already been registered (more than 100 of them have been registered since 1995). There are reasons to believe that this process will continue in the future. The low level of the capitalization and development of the financial systems of the developing countries, just as of their economy as a whole, will impel them to regional unification – to creating a common economic space, financial systems (recall the Russian Federation and Belorussia) and regional stock exchanges, common supervisory bodies, and those for regulating the securities market, insurance and banking, etc.

Intraregional integration has intensified in recent years. In the ten years from 1991 to 2001 the proportion of the domestic export in the overall volume increased as follows: among the APEC members – from 68.2 to 71.8 per cent, NAFTA – from 42.1 to 55.4 per cent, ASEAN – from 21.2 to 23.4 per cent, MERCOSUR – from 10.9 to 17 per cent, and ANDEAN – from 6.9 to 11.3 per cent. In the EU countries the proportion of the domestic
export has somewhat decreased: from 66.2 to 61.9 per cent. However, the level of their integration still remains very high – that’s in the first place; in the second, this is most probably the result of the de facto extension of the European integration zone to the CEE countries. Next year, following the unification of the latter, the said proportion is expected to grow (the share of the domestic export in the CEFTA countries also went down – from 16.1 to 12.2 per cent).

And so, it may be supposed that most probably, the way to world integration lies through the strengthening of regional integration groupings. This way may enable the less developed countries to achieve success in their economic development. By joining their efforts they may be able to minimize risks associated with hostile actions by other countries and ensure the preservation of their own national culture and identity.

**Specific cultural features of nations – a factor of world economic development**

Prominent among the factors favouring regional unification is not only the factor of regional nearness but also (and even more so) the factor of cultural, historical and civilisational nearness (although quite often all these factors are closely interlaced). As pointed out earlier, this makes it possible to minimize the risk of impaired trust in opening markets and during other globalisation processes. *If a country cherishes its national culture and preserves its distinctions, this may be regarded as an important advantage in its favour when it wants to enter a globalized world market.* The preservation and cultivation of all the best possessed by a people or a civilisation, taking national distinctions into account in reforming national institutes – all that can serve as a kind of nontariff barrier, a factor of protection against hostile actions. At the same time, the process of cultures drawing closer together is unavoidable, and so it is necessary to borrow and assimilate everything the best from the experience of other civilisations. Some of the Asian countries have demonstrated how successful such a policy may be. Also, it is necessary to learn to make one’s own cultural experience accessible to the world community.
And whereas for the industrially developed countries the main objective factor of exporting their own standards and attitudes to business practice (which can well be regarded as part of their culture) is financial capital, for the developing countries such a factor is people. It is precisely people as a labour resource that will remain the main carrier of the cultural values of their country (or their civilisation) and that the developed countries will have to reckon with in their policy.

The factor of migrating labour resources assumes increasingly great importance both for the developed and developing countries. It may be mentioned that the earnings foreign workers sent home in 2002 totalled 80 billion dollars. This sum is second only to that of direct investments attracted by the developing countries (143 billion dollars), but unlike the latter it has a stable tendency to grow.

**Conclusion**

And so, we may conclude that the further growth of the world trade and economy as a whole at the expense of lower transaction costs, standardization and deepening the division of labour will have definite limits. The further growth of the world economy is possible only if there is a mutual integration of cultures and if new forms of cooperation are elaborated, which would make it possible to take into account the multiform nature of the world economy and culture.
Can North, South, East and West agree on the type of international economic system that is most conducive for development?

The purpose of this paper is to explore trends in economic relations between the North and the South: how the world economic order changed in the past, whether it became more or less friendly to developing countries and to consider scenarios for the future.

We start by examining opportunities for developing countries to replicate the East Asian model of rapid growth and to catch up with the West. It is argued that not all developing countries can easily replicate Chinese model, which was based on the strong institutional capacity of the state. East Asia, MENA, and perhaps South Asia have better chances than Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Former Soviet Union. Next, we analyze the diverging interests of the North and the South with regards to the economic policies and international economic architecture and explore the possibilities for a compromise – a new world economic order that would benefit both the rich and the poor countries by creating the best environment for the catch up development of the world periphery.

If China itself continues to grow successfully, and if at least some other developing countries replicate the East Asian growth model successfully, this could alter the balance of forces in the global economy and create support for the reforms than are beneficial to developing countries. The paradox, however, is that the more the Southern countries succeed in bridging the gap with the North, the less they would interested in creating favorable
conditions for the development of the other countries that are falling behind. What is the potential for cooperative development strategies among emerging and low income countries, in a more East-West type of modality? What kind of international regimes would be conducive to convergence in development levels?

**Introduction: trends in North-South economic relations**

In 1500 the ratio of average per capita income in the North and the South was approximately 1:1, in 1900 it increased to 6:1 and stayed at this level in the next 100 years (if China is excluded, the ratio actually increased). It may well be that in end of the 20th century we have reached a tipping point and in the 21st century the gap between the North and the South is going to narrow (Figure 1,2).

After the WWII the colonial empires collapsed, many developing countries started to assert their economic independence (nationalization of resource industries). Since the first oil price shock in 1973 and before the collapse of the USSR in 1991 the South on balance was able to bend the rules of the international economic game in its favor. However, after the collapse of the USSR and before 9/11 terrorist attack “Washington consensus” policies became important conditions for access to external finance for many developing countries. After 9/11, as a consequence of abundant financial liquidity provided to the global economy spurring growth, it appears that developing countries once again managed to enjoy improved terms of trade (through the increase in resource prices) and, for some of them, to pursue many growth-conducive policies in spite of the pressure of the West. As in previous episodes, this period of salubrious commodity prices has now ended with onset of the global financial crisis.
The USSR in the 1930s–60s was the first major non-Western country to experience successful catch up development and to narrow the gap with the West, although afterwards (1970–80s) the gap stopped narrowing and later (1990s) widened. Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore in the 1950–80s were the only states that successfully caught up with the West and became developed countries. In several recent decades a similar process is underway in Southeast Asia and in China. Together with the recent acceleration of growth of India and some other developing countries it could mean that we have reached a tipping point in the Great Divergence and that from now on the world would experience gradually the global convergence in the level of income.
The “less than expected” consequence of China’s rise is the creation of favorable conditions for the catch up development of all countries of the South. The result may be the bridging of the gap between the world rich and the world poor, the West and developing countries. Even in the last two decades of the XX century this gap in fact was widening for all developing countries as a group, if China is excluded (Wade, 2004). Now, in the XXI century, the rise of China would make the dirigisme-based model of catch up development not only attractive, but also legitimate, and will create new international economic climate favoring such a catch up.

New export oriented growth model a la East Asian tigers seems to be successful and it is not based on Washington consensus. It includes, but not limited to:

- Building strong state institutions capable of delivering public goods (law and order, education, infrastructure, health care) needed for development
- Gradual market type reforms
- Export-oriented industrial policy, including such tools as tariff protectionism and subsidies
- Macroeconomic policy – not only in traditional sense (fiscal and monetary policy), but also exchange rate policy: undervaluation of the exchange rate via rapid accumulation of foreign exchange reserves

This model is now an object of imitation, consciously and unconsciously, depending on their national political arrangements, by many developing countries. We may well witness “the triumphal march” of the Chinese model in the South. If so, it would also become increasingly obvious in the process of successful catch up development that the previous policy of the West recommended and prescribed to the South (deregulation, downsizing the state, privatization, free trade and capital movements) was in fact hindering rather than promoting their development. As the strength of the South increases, it can and will push for changes in international economic relations that are more conducive to its catch up development.

The new world economic order, a popular demand of the South in the 1970s – 1980s, after the first and the second oil price shocks, may be back in the agenda of North–South negotiations with the rise of China. “Democratization” of international economic relations – that is, the adoption of the rules of the game favorable for the development of the South, together with the proliferation of the new Chinese growth model in the developing world, has the potential of making globalisation “good for the poor”.

Can the global South replicate the East Asian catch up model\(^1\)

**Literature review.** As evidence of inadequacy of the market-driven development strategy mounted, the critical role of domestic institutions in societies being able to implement and exploit such a strategy became evident. The problem was that development success is intimately related to institutional development and there was a need to isolate the impact of institutions itself at different stages of development and institutional capacity. In a paper, entitled “Colonial Origins of Comparative Development”, Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson (2001) applied an astute indicator for instrumenting the institutions variable – mortality rate among settlers in the colonies of major European states in the 19th century. Their underlying assumption is that in locations of high mortality rates (such as Gambia, Mali, Nigeria which had mortality rates hundreds times higher than Australia, Bahamas, Canada, Hong Kong, New Zealand, US), the settlers would not bother to set good institutions in those countries. It is also claimed that the local population were largely immune to the diseases that were mortal for the newcomers, so settlers’ mortality rate would not directly affect economic growth, but only via its impact on institutions. Under these assumptions, settlers’ mortality rate can be help resolve the endogeneity problem (institutions \(\Rightarrow\) growth \(\Rightarrow\) institutions) and to properly estimate the impact of institutions on growth. The empirical conclusion was that, after controlling for the impact of institutions, the geographical location does not really have an impact on growth.

From a contrasting view, Rodrik, Subramanian and Trebbi (2002), in an article with a self explanatory title “Institutions Rule,” examine the impact of three basic factors on growth – geography (proxied by the distance to the equator and regional dummies), trade openness (the share of trade in GDP) and institutions. The difficulty, of course, is that all three factors are inter-linked and that institutions and trade openness not only influence growth, but depend on growth themselves. To estimate properly the contribution of each factor, they instrument institutions with the settlers’ mortality rate, like Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson (2001), and instrument the share of trade in GDP with the predicted share of trade (from gravity models). Then, after giving a “fair chance” to the geographical variable to compete with the instrumented variables of institutions and trade openness, they conclude that “institutions rule”, i.e. the impact of the institutions is most crucial.

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\(^1\) This section is based on (Popov, 2009).
Institutions are largely, but not totally, determined by geography, and in turn they determine the trade openness and growth. The direct impact of geography on growth (apart from the impact through institutions) turns out to be insignificant.

The difference with the straightforward geographical determinism approach is thus obvious, but there is another important difference with the Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson (2001) approach. Rodrik, Subramanian and Trebbi (2002) believe that geography, in particular settlers' mortality rates, is a good predictor of institutional quality, but not the major cause of it. The genesis of institutions is a complex process with many determinants and finding an appropriate econometric instrument is not the same as finding the proper explanation. Rodrik (2004) explains the difference with the following example: the variation in GDP per capita in countries that were never colonies is no less substantial than among colonized countries – here Ethiopia and Afghanistan are at the one end of the spectrum and Japan at the other end with Turkey and Thailand lying somewhere in between. What accounts for the different quality of the institutions in this non-colonized part of the world?

**Genesis of institutions.** A different interpretation of the genesis of the institutions in colonized and non-colonized countries is the continuity perspective. All countries had traditional community structures in the past; everywhere before Reformation, under the Malthusian growth regime, the law of the land was what we would now call “Asian values” – the superiority of the interests of the community over the interests of the individuals.

Colonization of Sub-Sahara Africa, South America, and to a lesser extent – South Asia led to complete or near complete destruction of traditional (community) structures that were only partially replaced by the new Western-style institutions. Among large geographical regions, only East Asia (EA), Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and to an extent South Asia (SA) managed to retain traditional community institutions despite colonialism. It could be hypothesized that those countries and regions that preserved traditional institutions in difficult times of colonialism and imposition of Western values retained a better chance for the catch up development than the less fortunate regions of the world periphery, where the continuity of the traditional structures was interrupted. The transplantation of institutions is a tricky business that works well only when tailored to the local traditions,
in a way that does not interrupt the institutional continuity (Polterovich, 2001). Otherwise it leads either to complete elimination of the local structures (US, Canada, Australia) or to non-viable mixture of old and new institutions that is not very conducive to growth, such as in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and Latin America (LA).

If the institutional capacity of the state is taken as the ultimate expression of institutional capability and if such capacity is associated with the ability of the government to enforce rules and regulations – the state being normally defined as having the sole legitimate authority to inflict violence – a natural, inverse, indicator of institutional capability is the murder rate. Crimes are registered differently in different countries – higher crime rates in developed countries seem to be the result of better registration of crimes. But grave crimes, like murders, appear to be registered pretty accurately even in developing countries, so the international comparison of the murder rates is well warranted.

It took Western countries 500 years to bring the murder rates from about a hundred to just several (1 to 3) per 100,000 inhabitants (Figure 3). Even in the 17th century, murder rates in Western Europe generally exceeded 10 per 100,000 of inhabitants – more than in many developing countries with the similar level of GDP per capita today. In fact among developing countries today we find two major patterns – low murder rates (1 - 3 per 100,000 inhabitants) in Eastern Europe, China and MENA countries (Figure 4), and high murder rates (15 - 75 murders per 100,000 inhabitants) in FSU, Latin America and Sub-Sahara Africa (Figure 5). India (5.5 murders), South East Asian countries (about 10 murders, with the exception of Philippines, where the rate is 21) fall in between the two groups. The argument is that countries that preserved collectivist institutions (East Asia, MENA countries, India) were able to retain the institutional capacity of the state, whereas countries that eliminated these institutions while only partly replacing them with individual responsibility system (FSU, Latin America and Sub-Sahara Africa) paid a high price in terms of diminished institutional capacity. Eastern Europe (with the exception of FSU states) could be the exception that proves the rule – it went through the period of low institutional capacity – high murder rates in the 15 - 17th century, like Western Europe (although direct evidence here is lacking – all observations for Figure 3 are from Western Europe – England, Belgium, Netherlands, Scandinavia, Italy)².

² Another anecdotal evidence on the strength of the collective institutions in East Asia, South Asia, MENA countries is the virtual absence of urban slums (Pomeranz, 2006) and homeless children, which are found in abundance in LA, SSA, FSU.
Another evidence of the cost of breakdown in institutional continuity comes from data on income inequality in pre-modern societies. The destruction of communal, collectivist institutions that was first carried out in Western countries in the 16 – 19th century was accompanied by the increase in income inequality. The available data (Milanovic, Lidert, Williamson, 2008) suggest that in England, Holland and Spain in the 18th century, the Gini coefficient of income distribution was at a level of 50 and even 60 (Figure 6) – an extremely high level according to today’s standards and, most probably, according to the standards of the distant past (about 40 in Rome in the 1st century and in Byzantium in the 11th century – (see Figure 6).

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3 Overall trends in homicide rates, all pre-modern local estimates and four national series. Note: All 398 local estimates from the History of Homicide Database; national series for Sweden, England and Wales, Switzerland, and Italy.

4 In England and Wales the Gini coefficient increased from 46 in 1688 to 53 in the 1860s (Saito, 2009).

5 Very high income inequalities in low income countries mean that a lot of people find themselves in extreme poverty, below the subsistence level, leading to high mortality.
Figure 4
Murder rate in countries with less than 1.5 murders per 100,000 inhabitants in 2008

Figure 5
Murder rate in countries with over 15 murders per 100,000 inhabitants in 2008

Institutions and inequality. Income inequality patterns in developing countries are quite consistent with the dynamics of institutional capacity: in SSA, LA, the Former Soviet Union (FSU), where institutional continuity was interrupted and institutional capacity weakened, inequalities increased and remain high today. Regressions, linking pre-statistical Gini coefficients of income distribution to per capita GDP, population density, urbanization and colonial status (plus some variables to control for differences in data quality) suggest that colonialism increased inequalities greatly: colonies had Ginis nearly 13 points higher than non-colonies (Williamson, 2009). In LA countries, the Gini increased from 22.5 in 1491 to over 60 in 1929 (Figure 7). On the contrary, India, China and Japan in the 18th and 19th centuries had a more balanced income distribution (Figure 8, Pomerantz, 2000; Saito, 2009). In MENA, EE, India and East Asia (especially until the 1990s) Ginis were noticeably lower (Figure 8). Income inequalities, of course, go together with weak institutional capacity, as measured by the murder rate (Figure 9).
Figure 7
Predicted inequality in Latin America 1491–1929

Source: Williamson, 2009

Figure 8

6 These are not the actual Ginis, but predicted Ginis reconstructed using the regression equation mentioned above.
To summarize, there are two ways to escape the Malthusian trap:

1. eliminating collectivist institutions and allowing for the costly increase in income inequality and letting the savings/investment rate to rise at the very early stage of development at the expense of the consumption of the masses;
2. maintaining collectivist institutions and keeping the income inequality relatively low until slow technological progress and the rise in productivity allows the start of capital accumulation at a pace surpassing population growth rates.

The first way was taken by countries that are now called Western and was associated with dramatic social costs in 16 – 18th century. Moreover, it was imposed on part of the developing world in the 19 – 20th century during the era of colonialism. In the developing world this Westernization attempt created institutional vacuum – traditional, collectivist structures were destroyed, whereas the new modern institutions did not take root, which led to even greater costs than several centuries before in the West. We argue that this model was essentially the content of the economic reform efforts disseminated (and in many cases domestically embraced) throughout the developing world and post–Communist countries after 1980 under the rubric of structural adjustment programs of the Bretton Woods institutions.

**Figure 9**
Murder rate in 2002 and Income Inequality, 1990–2005

Source: WHO, WDI
On the contrary, those developing countries that managed to resist the Westernization of their institutions and to preserve institutional continuity as well as relatively low levels of inequality (East Asia, the MENA countries, possibly India\(^7\)), even though did not gain much in terms of economic growth before the mid 1900s, were better positioned to take advantage of growth opportunities as soon as natural increases in productivity allowed escaping the Malthusian trap. The other countries that destroyed their egalitarian institutions prematurely (replicating the Western path) experienced tremendous declines in institutional capacity and rise in inequalities. In India, China and SSA, this path was associated with periodic mass famines, which did not happen before colonialism due to a more even distribution of limited food resources through the community institutions\(^8\). In more developed LA countries, the growth rates in the 20th century did not allow a narrowing of the gap with the West (Argentina, a developed country in between the two world wars, even fell out of the club after the Second World War).

In short, the premature dismantling of collectivist institutions, even when it permitted overcoming the Malthusian trap, did now allow for sustainable growth in the long-run. “The frequent claim that inequality promotes accumulation and growth does not get much support from history. On the contrary, great economic inequality has always been correlated with extreme concentration of political power, and that power has always been used to widen the income gaps through rent-seeking and rent-keeping, forces that demonstrably retard economic growth” (Milanovic, Lidert, Williamson, 2007). Post-1980s economic liberalization programs in developing and transition economies became the occasion not only for significant increases in inequality but also the intensification of rent-seeking and rent-keeping. Structural adjustment programs in modern Philippines, the second country after Turkey to have acceded to such an approach which eventually underpinned all official development assistance (ODA) programs

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\(^7\) In India, the original caste system embodied institutional capacity. The caste system is, of course, also sustains unequal social structures.

\(^8\) “... Even before the onset of the Victorian famines, warning signals were in place: C. Walford showed in 1878 that the number of famines in the first century of British rule had already exceeded the total recorded cases in the previous two thousand years. But the grim reality behind claims to “good governance” truly came to light in the very decades that Ferguson trumpets. According to the most reliable estimates, the deaths from the 1876 – 1878 famine were in the range of six to eight million, and in the double-barreled famine of 1896 – 1897 and 1899 – 1900, they probably totaled somewhere in the range of 17 to 20 million. So in the quarter century that marks the pinnacle of colonial good governance, famine deaths average at least a million per year” (Chibber, 2005). In China famines claimed 8,000 lives a year in 1644 – 1795, 57,000 – in 1796 – 1871, 325,000 – in 1871 – 1911, and 583,000 – in 1911 – 1947, during the Republic. 1876 – 79 famine alone took at least 10 million lives, twice as much as all famines since 1644 (Xia Mingfang calculations cited in Pomerantz, 2006).
from OECD countries, confirmed and exacerbated the squandering of social surpluses in a social milieu of democracy, unequal asset and political distribution, and weak state capacity (Montes, 1989).

Here lies a major threat to China’s seemingly flawless development path – growing inequality in income distribution (Figure 10). Unlike in the initial years of economic reforms (1979–85), inequalities have been growing since the mid-1980s, exceeding the level of Japan and South Korea and even the level of Russia, and approaching Latin American and African levels.

**Figure 10**

[Graph showing income distribution in China and Russia from 1978 to 2006.]

The number of billionaires in China is also growing fast: in April 2007, according to the Forbes list, China had 20 billionaires (Figure 11); in April 2008, before the collapse of stock prices, this number doubled, and reached 40. This was still below the Russian number (53 in 2007 and 87 in 2008), but if the trend continues, China may replicate Russia in the “privatization of the state” pattern.
Conclusions. One group of developing countries that willingly and unwillingly (colonialism) transplanted Western institutions (LA, FSU, SSA) ended up with high income inequalities and an apparent inadequacy of institutional capacity. This group of countries might be ill-suited to adopt the Chinese growth model – they do not have the institutional capacity that is at crucial prerequisite for keeping the income inequalities in check and reaching consensus for channeling funds for development.

On the contrary, the second group of developing countries – regions that has never really departed from the collectivist institutions and preserved institutional continuity (EA, India, MENA) – succeeded in maintaining low income and wealth inequalities. This second group of countries may have stayed in the Malthusian growth regime longer than others, but once technical progress allowed them to exit from the Malthusian trap, their starting conditions in terms of institutional capacity turned out to be better than in the first group. It is this second group of countries that is ready for the adoption of the Chinese growth model – they have not lost their strong indigenous institutions that ensure government ability to enforce rules and regulations and to maintain low income and wealth inequalities.

If this interpretation is correct, the next large regions of successful catch up development would be MENA Islamic countries (Turkey, Iran, Egypt, etc.) and South Asia (India), whereas Latin America, Sub-Sahara Africa and Russia would be falling behind.
There is, of course, nothing automatic about this forecast. In fact, it is not clear whether China itself would be able to stick to the East Asian growth model like Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan did before: income inequality is already high in China. Because inequality keeps rising, it threatens to undermine the Chinese consensus about the growth model and institutional capacity of the state. There is still a possibility, however, that China will continue to grow, finding the way to halt the rise of income inequality, and that Chinese growth model would be successfully replicated by South Asia and MENA countries. Under such a scenario, there would be important implications for world international economic relations.

The interests of the South

A large body of literature has emerged in recent years which question the universality of recipes for economic reform. In the mainstream literature, this literature, quite simply, states that what may be good for developed countries is not necessarily good for countries that are farther away from the technological frontier and are catching up with developed nations. A simple enumeration of the areas where market type reforms are found to be detrimental for less developed countries is quite impressive: free international trade and migration of skilled labor, elimination of subsidies to producers and promotion of competition, liberalization of capital flows and deregulation of domestic financial markets. The general conclusion of such studies is that developing countries should not embark blindly on market friendly policies/reforms, even if the latter has proved to be beneficial in more advanced countries. On the contrary, in other areas, such as the protection of intellectual property rights, Western regulatory requirements are perceived to be too constricting for poorer countries.

In addition, there are studies that question the fairness of applying the Western pattern of tradeoffs between different development goals (wealth, education, life expectancy, equality, environmental standards, human rights, etc.) to less developed countries. Policies that prohibit child labor, for instance, may be an unaffordable luxury for developing countries, where the choice is not between putting a child to school or into a factory shop, but between allowing the child to work or to die from hunger. The marginal cost of adopting stricter government regulations in such areas as environment and human rights (reproductive rights, work conditions and
safety standards, children’s and prisoners’ rights, and even political rights) in developing countries in terms of deterioration of other developmental indicators (life expectancy) may be prohibitively high.

The argument in both cases is that most Western countries 100 years ago did not have either *laissez faire* markets, or today’s strict standards of protection of environmental and human rights. Advocating these standards in less wealthy parts of the world, and even threatening developing countries with economic sanctions in case they refuse to accept such standards, the West, whatever the good intentions may be, *de facto* undermines the competitiveness of poorer countries and preserves their backwardness. There are even accusations of a double standard (when the West was industrializing, it was not maintaining these standards) and “kicking away the ladder” (after the West got rich through exploitation of colonies and child labor, it does everything to slow down the growth of “the other world”; Chang, 2002).

In this section we provide a brief survey of some studies that analyze why particular policies/reforms that work in Western countries may be less conducive to growth and to achieving other developmental goals in developing economies.

**Industrial policy and protectionism.** Fast growing countries are usually more involved in international trade – have higher and faster growing trade/GDP ratios (Figure 12). In addition, there is a correlation between the share of investment in GDP and the share of export in GDP – countries which export more, invest more as well (Figure 13). However, fast growing and more intensively trading nations are not always and were not always more open to trade (with low tariff and non-tariff barriers) than their less globalized competitors.
Figure 12

![Figure 12: Increase in the ratio of exports to GDP and average annual growth rate of GDP per capita in 1990-99, %](image)

Figure 13

![Figure 13: Average share of exports and investment in GDP in 1980-99, %](image)

The debates on whether free trade or protectionism is more conducive to growth are as old as economic research itself. In the 19th century, although detailed statistics does not exist, there are some powerful examples, suggesting that the growth-promoting nature of free trade is not obvious: China after the Opium Wars had to open its economy to international trade completely, but GDP per capita in 1949, when the communists took power, was at the same level as in 1850; 100 years was lost for growth despite pervasive openness. Recent empirical studies (Rodriguez and Rodrik, 1999; O’Rourke and Williamson, 2002; O’Rourke and Sinnoit, 2002; see for a survey: Williamson, 2002) found that there is no conclusive evidence that free trade is always good for growth: whereas protectionist countries grew more rapidly before the WWI, they exhibited lower than average growth after the WWII.
It appears that the impact of trade protectionism on growth depends on the level of development (distance to technological frontier) and on the quality of institutions. Cross-country regressions identify the thresholds in per capita GDP and institutional indicators that separate positive and negative influence of trade protection on growth (Polterovich, Popov, 2005, 2006)⁹.

Two recent papers (Acemoglu, Aghion, Zilibotti, 2002a, 2002b) propose some theoretical explanations for these stylized facts, arguing that the impact of trade protection on economic performance depends upon the distance from the technological frontier – the larger the productivity gap between the country in question and the most advanced (Western) economies, the more likely that protectionist policy, by encouraging investment into “catch-up” pattern of development, would be beneficial. The authors actually extend these principles to a number of other policy areas (promotion of vertical integration and imitation of technology versus indigenous R&D – the larger the distance to the frontier, the greater the returns from vertically integrated companies and from reliance on imported technology).

The debate, in fact, is even more general – it is about the impact of industrial policy in a developing economy, not only about trade protectionism, which is no more than just one tool of industrial policy (Memis and Montes 2008). Whereas for developed countries industrial policy may be of little use, for countries that are catching up, appropriate (often export-oriented) industrial policy promises high returns. The rediscovery of economic analysis before the structural adjustment era is part of a revival of industrial policy:

In his famous essay, Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective, Gerschenkron argued that relatively backward economies, such as Germany, France, Belgium and Russia during the nineteenth century, could rapidly catch up to more advanced economies by introducing “appropriate” economic institutions to encourage investment and technology adoption. He emphasized the role of long-term relationships between firms and banks, of large

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⁹ Regression equations have the general form: \[ \text{GROWTH} = \text{Control Variables} + P(a \cdot bX), \] where \( P \) is the policy variable, for instance, degree of trade protection, and \( X \) is per capita GDP and/or institutional indicator, for instance, government effectiveness. There is a threshold level of per capita GDP and/or the quality of institutions: before this level is reached, the impact of particular policy on growth is positive, after it is exceeded, the impact turns into negative. The same principle holds for other policies, discussed further, such as accumulation of foreign exchange reserves, import of FDI, import of technology and labor force (Polterovich, Popov, 2005, 2006).
firms and of state intervention. Underlying this view is the notion that relatively backward economies can grow rapidly by investing in, and adopting, already existing technologies, or by pursuing what we call an investment-based growth strategy. If this assessment is correct, the institutions that are appropriate to such nations should encourage investment and technology adoption, even if this comes at the expense of various market rigidities and a relatively less competitive environment (Acemoglu, Aghion, Zilibotti, 2002a).

With respect to rapidly growing countries of East Asia, this argument was made in the World Bank Development Report “East Asian Miracle” (WDR, 1993), but the issue is by no means settled and the controversies continue. So far there has been only 5 countries that managed to transform themselves in the second half of the 20th century from developing into developed (Japan and the four Asian tigers — Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan); all these countries relied heavily on various industrial policy instruments, including protectionism.

World Trade Organization (WTO) rules limiting increases in protection of domestic markets, except for special circumstances, may thus actually be destructive for developing countries, even setting aside for the moment the most damaging cases, such WTO recognition of agricultural subsidies in Western countries. In an OECD (2000) estimate, these subsidies amounted to $14,000 per farmer a year in the European Union (EU) and to $20,000 per farmer in the US, which made it simply impossible for the farmers from developing countries to compete with the heavily subsidized agricultural products from EU and the US. EU support to agriculture was equivalent at that time to double the combined aid budgets of the European Commission and all 15 member states. Sugar production costs in Europe were among the world’s highest, but the EU was the second largest world exporter due to subsidies to European producers allowing them to sell sugar at three times below the international price (Bailey, Fowler, Watkins, 2002). Overall, according to a World Bank estimate, rich countries spent more than 300 billion a year in agricultural subsidies, which exceeded by a factor of six total ODA of rich countries and was roughly equivalent to nearly 2 per cent of GDP in PPP terms of the developing countries.
Foreign exchange reserve accumulation. Fast growing countries often have undervalued exchange rate parities (that is, *ceteris paribus*, a lower ratio of domestic to US prices), which is often achieved through a rapid accumulation of foreign exchange reserves (FER) (Figure 14). As a result, there is a positive correlation between the accumulation of reserves, the share of investment in GDP and economic growth (Figure 15). It has been shown that for developing countries an overvaluation of the exchange rate is detrimental to economic growth (as indicated by the positive impact of exchange rate undervaluation in standard growth regressions (Dollar, 1992; Easterly, 1999)). Rodrik (2003) believes that large real exchange rate devaluations have played a big role in some of the more recent growth accelerations, notably in Chile and Botswana, although not in East Asia. As National Development Strategy Macroeconomic Policy Note (2007) suggests:

“Exchange rate policy, then, is not simply a tactical matter of getting–prices–right, but may turn out to be a strategic matter of a deliberately undervalued exchange rate, maintained over a period of time, to provide an entry into the world market for differentiated manufactured goods. Several Asian countries have used such strategic exchange rate policy to promote manufactured exports. Similarly, the build–up of the Chilean boom of the 1990s was clearly preceded by a weak exchange rate policy in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

A competitive exchange rate is seen today as an essential ingredient of dynamic growth and employment in developing countries. It allows domestic firms to benefit from rapid growth in international trade and attracts international firms searching for the best location for their worldwide sourcing of their goods. This may also have positive spillovers for domestic technological development, and lead to a process of learning how to produce with the best technologies available, and with the best marketing tools for the global economy. Furthermore, a competitive exchange rate means that spillovers of export production on other domestic sectors are enhanced, as exporters find it more attractive to buy the inputs and services they need domestically. In a world of reduced trade barriers, import–competing sectors see a competitive exchange rate as their major (and perhaps only) source of protection.”
Empirical evidence suggests that the accumulation of foreign exchange reserves (FER) contributes to economic growth of a developing economy by increasing both the investment/GDP ratio and capital productivity. The discussion and interpretation of these stylized facts is offered in (Polterovich and Popov, 2004). First, FER accumulation causes real exchange rate undervaluation that is expansionary in the short run and may have long term effects, if devaluations are carried out periodically and unexpectedly. Second, real exchange rate undervaluation permits taking full advantages of the export externality and triggers export-led growth. This is sometimes called the “exchange rate protectionism” and quantitatively is considerably
more important than conventional trade barriers. Third, a FER build up attracts foreign direct investment because it increases the credibility of the government of a recipient country and lowers the dollar price of real assets. This third mechanism can operate even with the exchange rate overvaluation, if benefits from FDI inflows exceed costs of not fully utilizing the export externality.

In practical terms, there are no formal limits for the accumulation of reserves by developing countries, but “exchange rate protectionism” can result in “beggar-thy-neighbor policies” – obviously all countries cannot exercise these policies at the same time. China did not devalue yuan versus the dollar after the 1997 Southeast Asian currency crises mostly on political grounds. China bore an economic cost, since its exports were competing with ASEAN exports in Western markets, for the sake of preventing further collapses in the exchange rates of its neighbors and promoting East Asian solidarity. If China devalued its currency, it is possible that exchange rate protectionism of developing countries might have provoked conventional protectionism in the West. The Plaza Accord of 1985 involved the coordinated efforts of major Western countries to appreciate their currencies against the dollar in order to reduce the US trade deficit; as a result, the Japanese currency appreciated from 240 yen to the dollar in 1985 to below 100 yen in 1995.

**Imitation versus innovation and protection of the intellectual property.**

To what extent should a developing country on the technology transfer from the West, and what should be its own innovation efforts? Is there an optimal strategy to shorten the distance in technological levels from more developed countries? What should be the regime of technology transfers that maximizes welfare? As Figure 16 suggests, research and development (R&D) expenditure as a per cent of GDP appear to increase with the growth of GDP per capita, but there is no apparent link between the level of development and net transfer of technology.

The current dominant wisdom is that that intellectual property rights have to be protected in support of private innovation. TRIPs (trade related intellectual property) rules that resulted from WTO agreements require the protection of patents for no less than 20 years and the protection of copyrights for no less than 50 years. There are several reasons, why these rules impede growth in developing countries. First, stricter protection of intellectual property rights.

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10 As Larry Summers once observed: "A ten percent decline in the dollar exchange rate is equivalent to a ten percent tariff on all imported goods and a ten percent subsidy for all exported goods (The New Republic, 25 January, 1988, p. 14). By comparison, the Smoot–Hawley tariff of 1930 in the US raised duties an average of only 6 percent on the prices of imported products (Faux, 1988)."
the intellectual property rights is a double-edged sword: it stimulates innovations by rewarding the inventor only at the price of inhibiting the dissemination, application and adaptation of the invention. Many authors have cast serious doubt upon the usefulness of stricter protection of intellectual property rights (Chang, 2001; Boldrin, Levine, 2002; 2008). Sakakibara and Bransletter (2001) studied the 1998 Japanese patent law reforms and did not find any evidence of its positive impact. These and a number of other results “…raise the possibility that strengthened intellectual property rights have led to the socially wasteful accumulation of defensive patent portfolios.” (Sakakibara and Bransletter, 2001, p. 99).

Figure 16

There are many alternative approaches in achieving the social purpose of encouraging private innovation, alternative social arrangements, beyond the prevailing method of granting monopoly use to the inventor. One can imagine, for example, the following alternative regime of intellectual property rights. All inventions are registered by the state, but enter the public domain not in 20 years, as it is the case today, but immediately. The inventor is rewarded by the state – the reward is proportionate to the volume of output created in the first 20 years from the use of the patented technology. The reward to the inventor is paid either from the government budget or from a separate non-budgetary fund (possibly from proceeds of licensing the patent by the state). Resident firms can use the technology free of charge, whereas non-residents pay for the patent to the state. The inventor in this case is rewarded, but not at the expense of slowing down the dissemination of his innovation.
Second, even if there is a need to protect intellectual property rights, there is no reason to force developing countries to protect them as strictly as developed countries do. In countless global pronouncements, the accelerated development of the poor countries is an accepted priority for the world and for the rich countries in particular (since it reduces the threat of terrorism, for example). There seems to be a consensus among economists and policymakers that the transfer of technology to the poor countries is the most efficient way of assistance. Yet, the TRIPS disciplines are undoubtedly limiting the transfer of technology to the South.

Acemoglu, Aghion, Zilibotti (2002a) present a model in which the experience of new managers is most important factor for imitation activities in investment-based growth, whereas their talents are crucial for innovation-based growth. In the model, the technological level is given by the level of the pre-existing technology plus the weighted technological change due to imitations/innovations. If the distance to the technological frontier is large, the economy would be better off giving managers long-term contracts that would lead to investment-based growth. But, once the economy approaches the technological frontier and innovation yields greater returns than imitation, long-term contracts for managers lead to a development trap, suggesting that, at a certain future point, the lifetime employment system for managers should be replaced by the competitive selection.

It has been suggested that trade negotiators are “captured” by industry and that intellectual property policies can become overprotective even if trade policy negotiators are equally concerned with all domestic interests, those of both consumers and producers, because intellectual property is the only available tool by which cross-border externalities can be recaptured by the innovating country. To a trade policy negotiator, profit earned abroad is unambiguously a good thing, and the consumers’ surplus conferred on foreign consumers does not count at all (Scotchmer, 2003). Whatever the reasons, the TRIPS regime is making it more difficult for the poor countries to develop not only in economic, but also in social terms. Copyrights hinder the dissemination of information, knowledge and culture, whereas patents on pharmaceutical products limit the ability of the poor countries to fight diseases and decrease mortality. It is only in cases of national emergency, such as the AIDS epidemic in South Africa, that drugs can be purchased/produced with no regard to patent protection.
Third, even if there is a need for protection of intellectual property rights in developing countries, there is no reason to link it to the trade liberalization agenda as it is currently happening within the WTO. The activities of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), which was founded in the end of the XIX century, has come under the domination of developed countries, undertaking technical assistance in implementing Western approaches to intellectual property protection, though recently the development agenda has been reintroduced in its working agenda through the efforts of developing countries. However, the enforcement intellectual property protection is undertaken and introduced within the WTO framework through TRIPS. While Western countries are in the minority and have less leverage on developing countries in WIPO, in the WTO developing country access to Western markets is linked to the protection of intellectual property rights.

Developing countries thus find themselves between a rock and a hard place: either retain access to Western markets with little or expensive transfer of technology, or use of technology with no access to the Western markets. Meanwhile, to the extent that trade expansion has an intrinsic value for developed and developing countries, holding it hostage to the protection of intellectual property does not seem to be a rational policy.

Total losses of Western companies from piracy were estimated by IIPA (International Intellectual Property Alliance) at $16.4 billion in 2007, ($2.9 billion – China, $2.7 billion – Russia) (Methodology, 2008). However, losses of developing countries from the implementation of TRIPs are several times higher, i.e. piracy compensates only for a fraction of what developing countries are losing from TRIPs. Michael Finger, former chief of trade policy research in the World Bank, estimates that through the TRIPS Agreement, developing countries have taken on as a legal obligation a cost of $60 billion per year, but there is no legal obligation in the agreement on any member to provide anything in exchange (Finger, 2002). A World Bank report (2002) estimates that the net annual increase in patent rents resulting from TRIPS for the top six developed countries in this field will be $40 billion (with the top beneficiaries being the United States with $19 billion, Germany $6.8 billion, Japan $5.7 billion, France $3.3 billion, United Kingdom $3 billion and Switzerland $2 billion). Developing countries that will incur major annual net costs include South Korea ($15.3 billion), China ($5.1 billion), Mexico ($2.6 billion), India ($903 million) and Brazil ($530 million). In addition, there are financial and human resource costs for administering and enforcing IP laws and policies, requiring legal reform, enforcement agencies
and legal expertise that have to be borne by developing countries. By way of comparison, ODA of Western countries to developing countries is only a little more $100 billion.

The costs of TRIPs for the global South are high because developing countries are mostly importers/users of intellectual property. Out of 120,000 patent applications in 2004 (WIPO statistics) US residents accounted for 35 per cent, Japan 17 per cent, Germany 12 per cent, France and UK 4 per cent, whereas all developing countries accounted for only 6.3 per cent (Shashikant, 2005).

**Competition policy and the role of integrated (large) companies.** Acemoglu, Aghion, Zilibotti (2002b) argue that vertical integration allows companies to appropriate rents resulting from investment into production and scale (imitation is automatic, whereas innovation requires investments), but creates a managerial overload which discourages innovation. Outsourcing of some production activities mitigates the managerial overload, but creates a “holdup” problem, causing some of the rents of the owners to be dissipated to the supplier. The result is that far from the technology frontier, imitation activities are more important, and vertical integration is preferred; closer to the frontier, the value of innovation increases, encouraging outsourcing. One can apply a similar logic to the horizontal integration and to the size of the company in general. The argument then would be that larger companies enjoying greater scale economies are more suited for imitation, whereas at the innovation stage there is a tradeoff between costs resulting from managerial overload / lack of specialization and benefits from scale and scope.

The only successful examples of the catch-up development to date, the aforementioned five East Asian countries (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore), are well-known for limiting competition and focusing state support on large companies. In Japan, four major zaibatsu, powerful family-based merchant groups that were transformed into holding companies in the Taisho period (1912 – 26), controlled 25 per cent of capital in industry, trade, finance and transportation in 1945 (the 10 largest zaibatsu 35 per cent of capital). In 1945 – 50, the American occupation authorities tried to dissolve zaibatsu, transferring their shares to the Holding Company Liquidation Commission that sold them to the new owners with nominal compensation to the former owners, but this policy was basically rolled back at the start of the Korean War that generated a US need for supplies from Japanese industry. The major pre-war zaibatsu (Mitsui, Mitsubishi and Sumitoto) reemerged in the form of reorganized business groups, whereas companies that were part of other zaibatsu entered new business
groups centered around banks. By the late 1980s, six major business groups accounted for about 15 per cent of the value of shipments of all non-financial corporations (Lee, 1998), less than in 1945, but still considerably more than in other large countries.

In South Korea in the 1970s, rapid growth was going hand in hand with the increase in the share of monopolistic and oligopolistic markets. The share of the 50 largest companies in total manufacturing shipments increased from 34 per cent in 1970 to 38 per cent in 1982, but later dropped rapidly to 30 per cent by 1989. The share of the 30 largest chaebols in manufacturing shipments was 32 per cent in 1977, 40 per cent in 1984 and 35 per cent in 1990. Similarly, the share of markets classified as monopolistic went up from 8.7 per cent of total shipments in 1970 to 16.3 per cent in 1977, but then declined to 8.5 per cent by 1989. Lee (1998) believes this temporary increase in concentration ratios can be expected in a small economy at initial stages of development.

Industrial policy by its very nature tends to limit competition, often making it unfair to small entrants, but it may well be reasonable to pay such price at a stage of catching up with the technologically advanced countries. Not only vertical integration may be good for imitation, but also larger companies due to scale economies have greater potential for both imitation and innovation and better prospect for competition in the world markets.

In countries where the private sector is mostly involved in trading activities or has limited capacity to absorb technology, the role of state enterprises in industrial development would be indispensable (Memis and Montes, 2008, Chang, 1996).

**Deregulation of financial system.** Though in recent decades, the two kinds of systems of corporate financing and control – the Anglo-American (market-based) and German-Japanese (institution- or bank-based) – were converging rather than diverging, substantial differences still persist (Popov, 1999). *First*, in Japan, Germany and other continental European countries, several major shareholders, normally banks, typically hold a substantial portion of total equity, whereas in Britain, U.S. and Canada stock ownership is much more dispersed. In sense large shareholders, i.e. stakeholders, in the German-Japanese system have a more secure and stronger control over companies: hostile takeovers and leveraged buy-outs reflect the absence of the insiders control on management and are common in the U.S., but not in continental Europe and Japan. *Second*, in the Anglo-American system corporations rely more on internal sources of funds, and hence are more independent from large banks: in 1970 – 85 these sources
accounted for over $\frac{3}{4}$ of total investment financing in the U.S., Canada and the U.K. as compared to 52 – 71 per cent in France, Germany, Italy and Japan. *Third* difference between the two types of financial system – the share of external financing provided by banks is usually greater in continental Europe and Japan, whereas American companies derive more funds from sales of securities. In the U.S. and Canada, bonds, short-term securities, and shares provide funds the equivalent of 50 – 75 per cent of sums borrowed from banks, in Japan and continental Europe, less than 30 per cent. Finally, *fourth*, as of 1996, the banking system in the U.S. is much less concentrated than in all other Western countries, the latter being dominated by the “big three” or “big five” largest banks (Gilson, 1996).

Overall, in market economies, bank credits and equity financing complement rather than substitute for each other: normally, the larger the bank credits, the higher the market capitalization (Figure 17). It has been shown that both greater stock market liquidity and a deeper banking system contribute to higher rates of capital accumulation and economic growth independently of each other (Levine, 1996; see also Singh, 1998, for the review of these studies)\(^\text{11}\). Moreover, in developing countries, greater stock market liquidity is linked to a rise in the amount of capital raised through bonds and bank loans, so that corporate debt–equity ratios rise with market liquidity (Levine, 1996). Nevertheless, it is meaningful that in Japan and in most West European countries, market capitalization is two and more times lower than total bank credits, whereas in the U.S., UK, Netherlands and Switzerland, as well as in some developing countries (Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, Chile, Philippines) market capitalization is roughly comparable with total domestic credit provided by the banking sector (Figure 17).

\(^{11}\) Some studies seem to suggest that stock market turnover (but not market capitalization) is a more important variable in explaining better performance of firms than bank credit/GDP ratio (Demirguc–Kunt, Maksimovic, 1996).
Normally a financial system based on a strong securities market is considered to be more flexible and better suited for risky projects. Banks do not enjoy the position of strength vis-à-vis non-financial corporations, the latter relying mostly on internal sources of financing (undistributed profits + depreciation), whereas external sources are less important and include mostly sales of securities, not bank credits. The result is that there is no bank monopoly on financing: even when banks refuse to finance particular project, it may still be carried out through other means. In the US at least, as amply demonstrated by the ongoing financial crisis, even when bank financing is provided, the location of risk moved decisively outside of the banks, through vastly expanded securitization of bank loans.

In contrast, the Japanese (European) model implies that banks and financial institutions are in a position to influence investment decisions of non-financial companies. Both models have their advantages and limitations: the American model is usually perceived as a more competitive one, whereas the Euro-Japanese model - as the one that allows for a reduction of risk, bankruptcies, and instability (but at a price of not undertaking too many risky projects).

Basically the difference between the bank-based and the security-based financial system is the difference between the centralized and decentralized systems. The centralized institution-based system is superior for mobilizing financing for large-scale long term projects that will yield results only some time in the future, but is not so well suited for the evaluation and financing
of millions of short and medium term risky projects. The decentralized securities-based system puts a price tag on every project (pricing them in the stock and securities markets\textsuperscript{12}), but the risk is being born by investors themselves, not by intermediaries (banks).

Many emerging market economies took special measures to promote the development of stock markets and some of them even tried to limit the credit expansion of banks by putting an emphasis on equity financing. Thus, the principal transactions bank and credit control systems introduced in South Korea in 1974 sought to encourage direct financing of large corporations through public offerings of shares while holding down borrowing from financial institutions (Nam, 1996).

But differences in capital markets and financial systems across countries reflect not only economic outcomes – the competition between institutions, in which the most efficient institutions survive – but, at least in part, politics, history and path dependent evolution (Black, 1990; Gilson, 1996; Roe, 1994; Popov, 1999). In emerging market economies, the share of external financing is typically very high – over 50 per cent or much higher than in mature market economies. The share of equity financing in total external financing is also high – over half of external financing, or over 1/3 of the total financing, which again is much higher than in Western countries. For instance, in Jordan, Korea, Mexico, Thailand, and Turkey the share of equity financing alone in 1980–88 was in the range of 40 to 70 per cent, and in India, Malaysia, Pakistan and Zimbabwe in the range of 14 to 35 per cent.

A high share of external and equity financing in developing countries is probably associated with the transformation of traditional business entities into joint-stock companies (“corporatization”). When this happens, the original owners can retain control of the company even after selling as much as half of its shares to outsiders; in practice this provides the unique opportunity to finance the bulk of their new investment from external sources for a number of years. Similarly, in the U.S. and other Western countries, equity financing was also very high at the end of the past century and the beginning of this century, when the same kind of transformation occurred (Ciccolo, 1982; Taggart, 1985). In British industry in the inter-war period, new issues of debt and equity were generally comparable with capital investment in tangible assets for most of the time, and the share of equity exceeded that of debt in total external financing (50 to 90 per cent) (Thomas, 1978).

\textsuperscript{12} The financial crises has exposed fatal weaknesses in the ability of these markets to properly reflect the risk-return qualities of funded projects in the prices of financial assets.
It has been argued (Singh, 1997) that stock markets and the Anglo-Saxon type market for corporate control are too heavy a burden to bear in developing countries, since share prices are very volatile and encourage speculation rather than long-term investment. Other scholars (Calvo and Kumar, 1993) claim that at early developmental stages, it was typical for equity financing to play an important role in developed countries (beginning of the century) as well as in developing countries (now). To obtain equity capital a company should not necessarily possess an equivalent base of assets as security or a history of past dividend payment. Hence, newly emerging enterprises and industries tend to rely to a greater extent on equity financing rather than on debt. As Thomas (1978) shows, in Britain in between the two world wars, new industries, like oil, vehicles and aviation, tended to use equity finance, whereas traditional heavy industries, such as iron and steel and shipbuilding, relied more heavily on debt borrowing.

Once again, here, as in other areas institutional arrangements that are appropriate for one stage of development may hinder growth at another stage and in different circumstances. It may also be the case that due to the path dependent nature of development replacing less efficient (but functioning and leading basically to the same outcomes) institutional arrangements with more efficient ones is not justified because of adjustment costs.

Moreover, it is often the case that the policy to increase reliance on equity and bond finance has been motivated by the intention of mobilizing private external finance and accompanied by policies to remove capital account controls. The resulting surges in capital flows, independent of external trade in goods and services, have often induced exchange rate movements that disrupt domestic real sector production and export development in emerging markets. The unstable and short-term nature of such financing often do not justify the cost to the real sector of removing capital controls.

**Liberalization of capital flows.** Fast growing developing countries often, but not always, experience significant net inflows of foreign direct investment (Figure 18). However, there are important exceptions: Japan and Korea during their rapid growth. It is widely accepted that the inflows of FDI that are not volatile and that are often the most efficient channels for the new technology transfers, are good for developing countries.

As Polterovich and Popov (2005; 2006) show, FDI inflows into countries with poor investment climate do actually more harm than good. First, there is the damage caused by self-selection of: if the investment climate is bad, foreign investors come mostly for short term profit and/or resource projects, in which the transfer of technology, the main benefit of FDI, is at
best limited. Second, foreign investors do not reinvest profits in countries with poor investment climates, so that the outflow of profits immediately outweighs the inflow of FDI. Third, purchases of companies in countries with bad investment conditions do not necessarily lead to an increase in total investment because the inflow of FDI is often completely absorbed by an outflow of short term capital. The worse the investment climate of a country, the larger may be losses from FDI, and hence, greater regulation of FDI by the state required.

**Figure 18**

With respect to portfolio and especially to short-term capital flows, the balance of costs and benefits is even less clear. There is no evidence that the free movement of short term capital promotes economic growth (Stiglitz, 2000; Griffith-Jones, Montes, Nasution, 2001; Singh, 2002). Whereas the conventional wisdom before Asian 1997 currency crises recommended full liberalization of capital accounts, today’s consensus, if any, leans towards the understanding that costs associated with free short-term capital flows (volatility) are too high, while benefits are not obvious (Montes, Popov, 1999). The IMF has admitted that forcing developing countries to open their

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13 FDI positively influence growth in countries with good investment climate and negatively – in countries with poor investment climate: \( y = \text{CONST.} + \text{CONTR. VAR.} + 0.02 \times FDI (ICI \leq 80.5), \) where \( y \) – annual average growth rate of GDP per capita in 1975 – 99, \( ICI \) – investment climate index in 1984, \( FDI \) – average foreign direct investment inflow as a % of GDP in 1980 – 99. The threshold investment climate index is very high – about 80%, which is basically the level of developed countries. Only a few developing countries (Botswana, Hong Kong, Kuwait) have such a good investment climate (Polterovich, Popov, 2005; 2006).
markets to foreign investors could increase the risk of financial crises. “The process of capital account liberalization appears to have been accompanied in some cases by increased vulnerability to crises,” the fund said in a report (Prasad et al. 2003) prepared by a group, including its then chief economist, Kenneth Rogoff.

**Migration.** The most significant remaining restrictions and barriers in the world economy today are not those on international trade and capital flows, but in the movements of people across national borders. “[I]f international policy makers were really interested in maximizing worldwide efficiency, they would spend little of their energies on a new trade round or on the international financial architecture. They would all be busy at work liberalizing immigration restrictions” (Rodrik, 2001).

Compared to 100 years ago, the world economy is much less globalized today in terms of the free flow of labor. From 1850 to 1914, migration from Europe to North America (arguably a North to North movement) involved about 60 million people, whereas the South to South migration may have been even larger (Williamson, 2002). It means that annual migration flows in early 20th century, right before the first world war – about 2 million people a year – were actually no less significant than now in absolute terms and about 4 times more intense (as a proportion of the population) than now. Suffice it is to say that the US population in the 19th century was growing at about 1 per cent a year due to the net inflow of migrants, while in the 1990s only 0,3 per cent. The pressure for migration, however, has not decreased; differences in wage levels in 2000 ranged from $32 per hour in Germany to 25 cents in India, whereas the progress in the means of transportation and communications obviously reduced the costs of migration dramatically. To put it differently, the decrease in the international migration in recent 100 years is due primarily to the tightening of the immigration control by Western countries.

In the neoclassical Heckscher-Ohlin framework, the free movement of labor, capital and goods are substitutes, in the sense that the each of the three can lead to the reduction of wage differentials between the North and the South. There is really no purely theoretical argument which can justify free trade without at the same time justifying free migration (Hammond, Sempere, 1999). To explain why it is to the benefit of Western countries to support free trade and to oppose free movement of labor at the same time, one has to look at the gains from selective immigration of skilled workers (“brain gain”) or at the cost of public goods and redistributive policies in the rich countries (Wellisch and Walz, 1998; and Schiff, 1998).
In a dynamic framework, high rates of labor force (population) growth can slow down the growth rate of GDP per capita in a modern growth regime as suggested by the Solow model; at a given savings/investment rate, higher labor force growth requires more investment into the creation of jobs for the new entrants, means less investment into the deepening of the capital/labor ratio. Mass migration in the pre–World War I years from Europe to the New World explains totally the convergence in wages that has occurred; in the absence of mass migration, wage gaps between Europe and the New World would have risen from 108 to something like 128 per cent, when in fact they declined to 85 per cent (Williamson, 2002).

It may well be that mass emigration from Europe played a crucial role in the transition to the modern growth regime from a Malthusian regime. The latter was characterized by the growth of population that was “eating up” all the potential increases in income per capita resulting from technological change (Galor, Weil, 2000). When technological progress accelerated in the 19th century, but the population growth rates still remained high and growing (0.6 per cent in 1820–70) because the demographic transition has not yet occurred, mass migration to North America helped to alleviate pressure on the scarce resource – land, and to avoid diminishing returns (Pomeranz, 2000). The other, more traditional explanation of the economic success of the West (criticized in Pomeranz, 2000) also assigns a non-trivial role to emigration; the early elimination of serfdom in Europe made free labor more expensive, which in turn stimulated the development of labor-saving technologies. Without mass emigration to America and other offshoots, labor in the Old World would have remained less expensive. Today the inability of developing countries to “export” unskilled labor to the West may be keeping them in a demographic trap where all available investment are spent on creating new jobs for the rapidly growing population.

There is a negative relationship between growth rates of per capita output and population growth rates, as predicted by the Solow model (Figure 19). Nevertheless, some East Asian countries (Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand) were able to increase output per capita by over 4 per cent annually in 1960–99 with very high population growth rates (2 to 3 per cent a year). High population growth rates are due to both – high rates of natural increase and high net immigration (Figure 20). Thus, international migration does not help to equalize population growth rates by countries; there is no link between rates of natural increase and rates of migration inflows (Figure 21).
Figure 19

Figure 20

Figure 21
In short, the North and the South may have conflicting migration objectives: the former is interested in attracting migrants who are highly endowed with human and other forms of capital, and restrict entry of migrants with limited endowments; the latter would like to stem the flight of human and other forms of capital, and would prefer free emigration of unskilled labor as a partial solution to poverty (Schiff, 1997). Bhagwati and Hamada (1974) proposed a tax on emigrants, with that tax levied by the receiving (developed country) party and transmitted in one form or other to the sending (developing) country. This tax cannot be levied by developing countries unilaterally without violating freedom of movement, so there is not much they can do without the cooperation of the West. A number of international organizations that deal with migration issues (the non-UN International Organization for Migration, the World Trade Organization, the UN’s International Labour Organization, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs) have made no progress toward a North-South multilateral arrangements to promote freer movements of people and compensation for brain drain.

Aid. One measures of the willingness and readiness of the West to accommodate demands of developing countries is perhaps the amount of Western assistance (aid) to development. While significant proportions of the populations in Western countries have been known to express their support for contributing to poverty reduction in the developing countries, ODA flows are more directly explained by geopolitical trends (Figures 22, 23 and 24). Figure 22 indicates the long-term rising trend in ODA through the Cold War, and the clear leveling off between 1990 and 2002, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of East-West competition; as a proportion of GDP, ODA collapses with the end of the Cold War, then begins to recover as coincident with 9/11 terrorist attack in 2001 and a renewed commitment to achieve the historical 0.7 of GDP target mostly by European countries after the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey in 2002. With the end of the Cold War, Europe begins to assert its own identity in multilateral economic cooperation, and appears to have found the most convenient venue in development aid. Figure 23 utilizes oil prices as an indicator of the political strength of the South, as the significant

14 The other effect of migration that is usually omitted from the theoretical analysis is remittances of migrants to their home countries. Around 2000, the amount of remittances by migrant workers to their countries of origin ($80 billion, according to the World Bank) exceeded the total official development assistance of all Western world ($50 billion a year).
source of raw materials required by industry, relative to the North. The original discussion of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) emerged in the 1970s when commodity prices tilted the relative power temporarily in favor of the South. Figure 23 also marks off the fall of the Soviet Union as a turning point in relative ability of non-Western countries to have their voices heard in global economic governance. The increase in the growth rate of ODA in the NIEO period ends with the collapse of the Soviet Union and resumes after the September 11 attacks in the United States.

According to the United Nations Millennium Campaign, “since the inception of aid (overseas development assistance) almost 50 years ago, donor countries have given some $2 trillion in aid. And yet over the past year, $18 trillion has been found globally to bail out banks and other financial institutions. The amount of total aid over the past 49 years represents just eleven percent of the money found for financial institutions in one year.” (Nuti, 2009).

Aid is an over-researched issue, recently impelled by Easterly’s (2006) pessimism, drawing on numerous studies that do not find a correlation between aid and growth and development.

**Figure 22**
Foreign assistance may reflect the attitude of the West towards developing countries and in turn their relative power, but does not seem to be an important factor promoting development. Arguably, ODA is less important than possible gains from any of the following reforms: elimination of Western agricultural subsidies; more benevolent attitude of the West towards trade and exchange rate protectionism of the South; loosening of the IPR regime for the South; allowing freer international migration of low skilled labor and
efforts to stop brain drain from the South; control over the capital account and over FDI; recognition that the reduction of pollution should be done primarily by the West and that per capita pollution in the South can be as high as in the North; understanding that labor, environmental and human right standards in the South could differ from that in the North.

In fact, there is no instance of a country which permanently overcame underdevelopment due to foreign assistance. Moreover, countries that managed to achieve high growth rates were mostly net creditors, not net borrowers; their current accounts positive, i.e. they were saving more than they were investing (Figure 25).

**Figure 25**

**Average annual growth rates of GDP per capita and average current account as a % of GDP, 1960–99**

\[
y = 0.68^* \text{Ycap} + 0.12^{***} \text{CA} + 0.05, \\
(1.80) \quad (3.44)
\]

\[N = 91, \quad R^2 = 0.23, \quad \text{robust standard errors, T-statistics in brackets below, where}\]

\[y – \text{annual average growth rates of per capita GDP in 1960 – 99, %,} \]

\[\text{Ycap} – \text{logarithm of per capita PPP GDP in 1975,} \]

\[\text{CA} – \text{average current account to GDP ratio in 1960 – 99, %}\]
Global Imbalances (Capital flowing upstream). The liberalization of capital accounts spread rapidly through the developing world in the 1990s, punctuated only briefly by the Asian financial crisis in the latter years of the decade. In the context of the Feldstein–Horioka puzzle, a puzzle because contrary to theory domestic savings have been the main source of domestic investment even among countries with relatively open capital accounts, the developing country policy choice of a determined attempt to rely on external financing is ironic. Open capital accounts do not naturally increase the probability of external funding for domestic investment. In fact, the international flow of funds has been going in the opposite direction, away from developing and transition economies.

In the wake of the Asian crisis, which had demonstrated particularly to East Asian countries the inadequacies of the multilateral reserve system and its inequitable procedures in resolving imbalances in capital flows, developing countries as a group have been providing net financing to the global economy, reflecting a situation in which capital was flowing from the poor to the rich countries (Figure 26). Many countries, particularly in East Asia, accumulated international reserves to be able to service external obligations in the event of another crisis without having to resort to International Monetary Fund (IMF) adjustment methods which had proven to impose all the adjustment on developing countries’ public authorities’, with very little of the burden falling on developed countries and the international private sector, in a crisis whose roots lay in the often foolish search for investment destinations of large financial companies in the major financial centers (Montes and Popov, 1999).

Figure 26
Net Financial Flows to the Developing and Transition Countries
Moreover, in the desperate period immediately following the onset of the Asian crises, these programs imposed changes in administrative and legal procedures, consistent with reducing the capability of the state to intervene in economic outcomes based on best practices in the West, threatening institutional continuity and the organic evolution of social arrangements.

While financial crises are endemic to finance-led capitalist regimes, the global scope of the ongoing financial crisis results from the inadequacies of the multilateral system, exposed by the Asian financial crisis, but unaddressed internationally since then. The existing reserve and payments system requires the country providing the currency for reserves to operate trade deficits to ensure steady injections of global liquidity consistent with increases in the volume of international trade. The enormous deficits of the US economy in the last eight years were fueled by domestic expansion of credit for US household demand,15 sustained by funding from developing countries building up their reserves to keep the IMF at bay.

With the onset of the crisis, a process of “rebalancing” has started but at enormous human cost. The reduction in the negative financial transfers from developing countries is being driven by collapsing demand, employment and incomes in both developed and developing countries. Inadequate coordination in public sector stimulus packages among the developed countries will unduly prolong the recovery in global economic activity. In the developing countries, the precipitous downward adjustment of export sectors are imposing severe and potentially long lasting hardships on women and the poor. Public sector revenues in developing countries have fallen sharply as a consequence of the fall in exports. A more orderly and, in human terms, less costly reduction of international financial transfers from rich to poor countries would require faster demand growth in developing countries. However, most developing countries have limited monetary and fiscal space to maintain domestic demand. This space is being further constricted by the crisis and by programs with the customary deflationary content with the international financial institutions.

Stabilization of resource prices. The period of strong growth in the developing countries (UNDESA World Economic Situation and Prospects, 2007), particularly in the Africa, in the last decade characterized by high commodity prices is sufficient proof that the stabilization of the international prices is a key element of a development-friendly international economic

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15 At a rate higher than the potential increase in their income earnings, so that even in purely financial terms the US expansion was not sustainable.
system. Discussions and initial efforts in commodity price stabilization in the 1970s within the rubric of the New International Economic Order were not successful, though there has been a revival of interest in 2008, before the global financial crisis and in the wake of the global food crisis (UNCTAD 2008). Attention has once again shifted away from this issue, but significant exporters of gas and crude oil, especially in the context of international discussions on climate change, might be able to restart efforts in this area.

**Environmental and labor standards, human rights.** According Kyoto protocol, quotas for pollution would be allocated to particular countries proportionately to 1990 levels of emission of polluting gases, not in proportion to the population. The implicit assumption is that rich countries, just because of their higher productivity, are entitled to produce 50 times more pollutants per capita than say African countries, even though rich countries has already produced a disproportionately high share of total pollution during last two centuries.

In addition, there appears to be an Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC), an inverted U-shaped relationship between income and CO₂ emissions (Panayotou, Peterson, Sachs 2000); according this view, in early stages of development, capital accumulation results in rising emissions; its contribution to emissions rises as the country industrializes, but falls and becomes negative in the post-industrial age (Figure 27). This may be due to the use of cleaner technologies in all industries of Western countries, but this may result from the “pollution-haven” effect that asserts that the downward sloping part of the EKC is due to the spinning-off of polluting products to developing countries through trade and foreign investment. Present-day industrial countries were experiencing a more than proportional increase in CO₂ emissions as income was increasing during 1870 – 1910, just as do many developing countries today (Figure 27). During 1910 – 1950 almost all industrial countries had made the environmental transition to less than proportional growth in emissions.
What is clear is that developing and developed countries find themselves at different sides of the EKC. Developing countries are still at the stage when income growth, structural change, capital accumulation and trade all contribute to rapidly increasing CO₂ emissions (Panayotou, Peterson, Sachs (2000). Hence the requirement that emissions be limited to a certain percentage of the level of 1990 imposes a particularly heavy burden on developing countries. Even the requirement to cut emissions per $1 of GDP to the level of developed countries should be considered unfair because it deprives the developing countries of a chance to follow the same industrialization path that was once followed by the West. Paying a greater share of their GDPs for the environmental cleanup than the Western countries once did, less developed countries would have to sacrifice other developmental objectives, such as growth, health, life expectancy and literacy of population.

Similar arguments can be made with respect to labor standards (safety, child labor, etc.) and human rights protection in general. No matter how noble the goal of eliminating child labor is, not all the means are good to achieve the ends. Increases in mortality due to the reduction of income resulting from the prohibition to use child labor may be a too high price to pay.

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Figure 27
Emissions of CO₂ per capita and GDP (PPP)

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16 Democratization under poor rule of law is also associated with high costs – weakening of institutions, increase in the share of shadow economy, worsening of macroeconomic policies, slowdown of growth and instability of democratic regime, especially in resource abundant countries (Polterovich, Popov, 2007; Polterovich, Popov, Tonis, 2007; Polterovich, Popov, Tonis, 2008).
A proper evaluation of the tradeoffs between the developmental goals requires the self-awareness of the historical origins of the very norms by which such evaluations are made (Kitching, 2001).

**Conclusions.** On balance, there are quite a number of areas, from trade policy to industrial organization to exchange rate management, where complete deregulation and reliance on market mechanisms is harmful for developing countries even though it pays off for countries operating closer to the technological frontier. On the contrary, in other areas, such as the protection of intellectual property rights and migration controls, state intervention that is optimal for Western countries (TRIPS, limits on unskilled labor flows) turns out to be sub-optimal and even ruinous for developing countries. Thus, ideally, reforms in developing countries should not require following Western patterns. However, in an interdependent world “good policies” for developing countries, whether its trade protectionism or control over short-term capital flows, in most instances cannot be pursued unilaterally, without the co-operation of the West or at least without some kind of understanding on the part of the rich countries.

On top of that, the relative importance of different developmental goals in poorer countries is by no means the same as in the rich part of the world. When living standards are low, the marginal returns from the improvement of these standards are high: spending additional $1 a day can take one person out of absolute poverty and save her from starving to death. In these contexts, increases in consumption are often preferred to the cleanup of the environment, to improvement in work conditions, and even to strengthening of human rights and democracy.

Attempts to impose on developing countries policies and “rules of the game” that are beneficial to Western countries are likely to be self-defeating, widening of the gap and increasing tensions between the world rich and poor countries.
Is the NWEO coming? Possible scenarios

What would be the future trends in North-South relations? The total GDP of the South is already higher than that of the North; direct military intervention into large developing countries today is hardly possible; some countries (East Asia) do pursue policies that allow them to change the rules of the international economic order in their favor and to narrow the gap with the West.

The rise of China, if continues, would become the turning point for the world economy because for the first time in history the successful economic development on a major scale is based on indigenous, not Western-type economic model. Because Chinese growth model became so successful in ensuring catch-up development, there is no surprise it becomes extremely appealing in developing world. The attractiveness of the Chinese model of economic growth today could be compared with the popularity of the Soviet model of catch-up development in the “third world” in the 1960s. With the collapse of the Soviet model, the Chinese model became the logical and natural heir to that model – not a centrally planned economy, but by no means a model of a liberalized market economy that is recommended by the advocates of Washington and even post-Washington consensus.

In addition, the rise of China has the potential to provoke a profound reform of the thinking (the “software”) underpinning the world economic order and international relations. Trade protectionism, industrial policy, undervaluation of the exchange rate via accumulation of foreign exchange reserves (also, as argued, a variety of export-oriented industrial policy), control over the international capital flows (not only short-term, but FDI as well) can become legitimate tools of the catch up development. There may be new regime of protection of intellectual property rights and technology transfer, new regulations for international trade in energy and resources, new rules for international migration, new agreements about cutting emissions of pollutants (reconsideration of Kyoto protocol), etc.

Moreover, the principles of international relations can change radically as well. While “Beijing consensus” may not yet be a rigorous term (Ramo, 2004), but it is clear that the Chinese approach to international politics (no interference into domestic affairs, no military interventions, no trade embargoes) provides the developing world with the real alternative of building relations with other countries. China rejects the use of force, embargoes and sanctions in international politics nearly as a matter of principle. Even in its relations with Taipei-China, China was always pushing for wider economic and cultural exchanges, which Taiwanese authorities
have resisted. The new rules of the international relations may (1) explicitly limit the use of force only to cases of severe violations of non-political rights (i.e. mass repressions, hunger, ethnic violence, etc.) and prohibit the use of force against liberal authoritarian regimes (just for the sake of “establishing democracy”) and (2) prohibit unilateral military interventions (without the authorization of the UN). The new world security system would most probably imply the reform of the UN, including the Security Council – giving larger voting rights to countries of the South, developing R2P – responsibility to protect interventions and the extension of the mandate of international courts, among other things.

As was argued previously, however, not all developing countries could pursue Chinese style policies conducing to growth and they are by no means united in pushing for the reform of the world economic order. Some developing countries (SSA, LA, Russia) lack the necessary conditions for successfully replicating Chinese growth model. Besides, China itself may not be able to preserve this model: the crucial prerequisite of this model – low income inequality – is quickly disappearing in China itself.

In its own region, China has been seen as a significant competitor for investment and export markets. In an earlier period, Japan, as the most advanced economy, had been involved in transferring economic operations in which it was losing comparative advantage to other Asian economies, which allowed them to move up the technology ladder – the so-called “flying geese” pattern of regional development. China could play a critical role in cooperative regional strategies in industrial development and initial indications point to an important potential role for China (Memis, 2008). In the current economic crisis (as in the previous crisis in the region), China’s role is generally seen to be positive. It has implemented a stimulus package quantitatively larger (in terms of own-GDP) than developed countries. As the quintessential export-dependent economy, China’s main markets for its output are in the West and there is a limit by which its own stimulus can help its neighbors which are the source of components for exports for now drastically diminished final consumption in the West.

China is one of the G20, a self-selected country grouping, which has been the forum of choice of the United States, in particular, in concerted responses to the global financial crisis. While the G20 is replacing the G7 as the pinnacle of global decision-making, the influence of the non-G7 countries in channeling G20 actions in non-G7 directions is not evident. The G20 participation of non-G7 countries such as China has been a platform for pressure on these countries to contribute to crisis response responses congenial to G7 interests, such as the funding the expansion of the resources
of IMF for crisis lending with the customary Washington conditionality to non-G20 countries, turning the crisis into a further Western opportunity.

As a rising economic power, China could bide its time to take its rightful place in an unreformed global governance system, a particularly feasible strategy if China transforms itself fairly rapidly into a developed capitalist country, joining the side of the North in the debate on the new world order. Or China could still revive the Southern position on the reform of international economic relations after it catches up with the West, which would strengthen the bargaining position of the South. If Chinese growth slows down and China stays a developing country for a long time, it will have all reasons to take a Southern side in the North-South dialogue; the global South in this case has good chances to unite itself in order to get better conditions in relations with the North, but it may not have the necessary economic weight to push its agenda forward.

China would be an important, but not only player, in skirmishing over reforming the world economic system which the global financial crisis has intensified. In June 2009, for example, Russia convened the first summit of the “BRIC” group of countries (Brazil, Russian Federation, India, and China) in Yekaterinburg where the question of an alternative reserve system was famously discussed, among others. The increased role of regional groupings, such as those that potentially Russia, Brazil and South Africa could play a significant role in strengthening, are potentially important pillars in a new world economic order. Trade and investment flows among the South have been growing faster than North-South trade, though until the current crisis Northern markets for final consumer demand were indispensable. Southern markets can only replace Northern markets with faster growth in their domestic demand, which would require a decisive redirection from the low wage export-driven strategies of the faster growing developing countries.

The feasibility therefore of a new world economic order is contingent not only the outcomes of North-South engagements but depends very heavily on the ability of the South to self-organize in creating new structures and funding the accompanying secretariat functions to support them, to expand East-West economic and political interaction unhindered by Northern limitation and to seize the initiative in undertaking less export-dependent growth strategies so that they can pursue their industrial upgrading and replace dependence on Northern markets and technology. A key agenda of such self-organization is the expansion of efforts, in the UN, in the Bretton Woods institutions, and others to reform international rules and arrangements so that the world order facilitates, instead of obstructs, national development efforts.
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A comparison of the last quarter century to the previous two decades – the 1960s and 1970s – reveals that economic growth slowed during the last quarter of a century compared to the previous period, often referred to by “Keynesians” as the Golden Age. Slower growth has had different effects on different segments of the world’s population, but has nevertheless led to greater inequalities, in part because of the withdrawal of the state. It has also meant a slower pace of poverty reduction. On the other hand, some countries of the South, particularly in Africa, have recently experienced some resurgence of growth. Despite that development, inequality continues to persist, particularly within countries.

**Figure 1**

Chart 1 shows the gap between the share of per capita income in the 20 richest countries and the per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in the 20 poorest countries has grown since the early 1960s.
Figure 1 shows the gap between the share of per capita income in the 20 richest countries and the per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in the 20 poorest countries has grown since the early 1960s.

**Global inequality and poverty.** The phenomenon of jobless growth has spread, while much of the debate about reducing poverty still does not take serious account of the employment consequences of economic liberalization. The current discourse on trade liberalization sharply contrasts with the debate six decades ago when the International Trade Organization (ITO) was proposed to complement the two Bretton Woods Institutions.

Ambiguous trends in global inequality in recent years are attributable in part to international measures of inequality, which use average per capita incomes weighted for population for countries, and therefore do not capture intra-country income distribution. China’s population size and very rapid rate of growth in the recent period has tremendously affected measures of global inequality. Once China is taken out of the picture, there is a very clear upward trend in such inequality measures. Income per capita of developing countries has generally fallen behind, except for Asia. However, when one takes out China, even the rest of Asia does not show much progress. There has also been a huge collapse of income in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe since in the 1990s.

Figure 2

Figure 2 shows the huge contrast in consumption in the wealthiest countries compared to the poorest.
Does inequality matter? Until the middle of this decade many commentators focused on poverty, not inequality. This, however, has changed somewhat since 2005 with publications by the United Nations and the World Bank, which have refocused attention on inequality. The United Nations own contribution was a more critical analysis of The Inequality Predicament in the 2005 *Report on the World Social Situation* (RWSS), issued prior to the World Bank’s 2006 *World Development Report*.

There are serious problems with the measurement of inequality and poverty. For instance, the World Bank fairly arbitrarily and for reasons of convenience chose a one dollar a day poverty line, with 1993 as the base year. Indian economist Surjit Bhalla has argued that the World Bank has exaggerated poverty in the world to keep itself in business. Amartya Sen has warned that money–metric measures of poverty can be misleading; instead, we should look to other ways of measuring needs fulfillment.

**Figure 3**

Figure 3 shows income distribution by country and by class.
These different definitions have correspondingly different understandings of what constitutes pro-poor growth. The World Bank would argue that any kind of trickle-down would constitute pro-world growth. As long as the poor are not worse off, that would be considered pro-poor growth. Nanak Kakwani has suggested that the poor’s share of income should increase faster than for others for growth to be considered pro-poor. Others like Woodworth and Simms have argued that for growth to be pro-poor, the poor’s share of total growth must increase more than their share of the population.

Poverty trends have changed very significantly, particularly in the last two decades of the twentieth century. The table captures some of the trends. Most progress in poverty reduction seems to have been in East Asia, whereas in much of the rest of the world, there has been little progress in reducing the number of poor, in spite of improved growth rates in some parts of the world.

Poverty is important for many reasons and a blight on human existence. Also, there is a very strong likelihood of conflict occurring among the poor. There is a strong relationship between the likelihood of civil conflict recurring and the depth of poverty.

Where do the existing inequalities come from? Angus Maddison has looked at trends in average income inequality over the last two millennia. Today’s inequalities are of fairly recent origin, beginning about five centuries ago and accelerating about two centuries ago with the Industrial Revolution due to increased growth in some parts of the world and consequently, greater divergence and unevenness in development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Percentage living on &lt; $2 / day in 2001</th>
<th>Change in proportion and number of poor people between 1981 and 2001</th>
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<td></td>
<td>percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Europe + Central Asia</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>77</td>
<td>-9</td>
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The Industrial Revolution was made possible by significant transfers of capital from the Indian subcontinent and the West Indies. John Hobson, at the beginning of the late nineteenth century, identified the new imperialism with significant capital transfers from the centres of finance capital, particularly through the City of London to the rest of the world.

The period after the Second World War saw accelerated growth, not only in the North but also in the South, as a consequence of policies pursued after the war. Thus, the century and a half of divergence was reversed after the Second World War, in part as a result of decolonization, the beginnings of import substituting industrialization and efforts at agrarian reform and rural development.

A difficult and complex transition period began with the end of the Bretton Woods system, from around 1971. Increased fuel prices led to recycling petrodollars, resulting in very low real interest rates which, together with high commodity prices, made it possible for relatively high investments and growth to occur in much of the South.

The divergence between North and South continued to close in the 1970s. This period was one of high growth, but also high inflation in many parts of the world, especially in Latin America. The high growth in East Asia, which had already begun in the 1960s, also accelerated in the 1970s. Africa – the last region of the world to obtain independence – was probably most adversely affected because its import substituting industries had less time to become internationally competitive because decolonization was so recent. The 1970s also saw analytical counter revolution, as the 1970s stagflation in the West resulted in the rise of now liberal ideology and the decline of “Keynesian” economic policy influence.

There are major challenges for the future of economic development prospects. First, in the course of the twentieth century, the terms of trade have been moving against developing countries in at least three ways. The prices of primary commodities declined against manufactures during the 20th century. Second, the late Arthur Lewis noted the much greater decline of tropical agricultural prices in contrast to temperate agriculture. Third, developing country-manufactured export prices have declined compared to manufactured exports from developed countries. One contributing factor could be the strengthening of intellectual property rights. A consequence is what Jagdish Bhagwati has acknowledged as immiserizing growth.

Developing countries have also experienced the adverse effects of trade liberalization and international financial liberalization. In the last 5 to 10 years, many earlier advocates of international financial liberalization have come to acknowledge that “financial globalisation” is not necessarily in the
best interest of development. The claim of advocates that capital would flow from the capital-rich to the capital-poor has not materialized, except very temporarily in East Asia before the crisis of 1997–1998. Instead, there has been a net flow of capital from the capital-poor to the capital-rich; it is like opening a bird cage, expecting more birds to fly in than to fly out.

The second claim by advocates of financial liberalization is that the cost of funds would be lower. While it is true that the cost of funds has been low in the last few years, there is no evidence to suggest that it has actually declined because of financial globalisation rather than due to other factors. The third claim is that volatility and instability would be reduced. While some old sources have declined, new sources of even greater volatility and instability have been introduced in their place – as is clear in the international financial turmoil experienced recently.

The evidence suggests that most foreign capital has very little, if any, positive developmental consequences. Arguably, some may actually undermine development for reasons which are now pretty well documented. Domestic financial liberalization, which is often considered a necessary counterpart of international financial liberalization, often has deflationary macroeconomic consequences, deprives Governments of counter-cyclical instruments and also undermines developmental financial institutions and more inclusive financial initiatives.

**International economic governance.** The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was originally conceived as an international financial cooperative with a governance arrangement akin to corporate governance – one dollar, one vote – with a modest provision for basic votes shared equally by member countries. In 1944, there were 44 members who shared 11.3 per cent of total votes, known as the basic books. IMF membership now is 184, while total basic votes have declined to 2.2 per cent. The recent offer by the outgoing IMF MD countries to developing countries is to double this from 2.2 to 4.3 per cent.

The World Trade Organization (WTO), at one level, is ostensibly a far more participatory and democratic organization. WTO was created slightly over a dozen years ago, following the failure to create the ITO in 1948, to succeed the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) as a temporary compromise, which lasted almost half a century of negotiations. Many of those rounds recognized that there are winners and losers from trade liberalization, and that losers need to be compensated and trade liberalization should be voluntary, not coerced. However, the same principle was never applied at the international level.
This has turned out to be the fundamental problem with WTO, which they are trying to overcome with the “aid for trade” initiative. Three features have made it a far more problematic institution than its predecessors. First, there is no longer the option of choice. As a member of the WTO, a country basically makes a “single commitment”. It is an “all or nothing deal”. Second, a whole range of new issues have come into play. Trade-related investment measures came under discussion and trade-related intellectual property rights are more important at WTO than at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Third, the dispute settlement mechanism is biased towards those countries with the legal and other resources to be able to pursue trade negotiations and dispute adjudication.

Very modest concessions have been made to developing countries so far despite labelling the Doha round developmental. Most benefits would accrue to developed countries, and even among developing countries only a few would benefit significantly from trade liberalization. Some ostensible benefits are actually quite misleading. For example, India is supposed to benefit from agricultural trade liberalization. In fact, India has seen over a thousand suicides of farmers suffering from usurious debt compounded by problems of crop failure. These problems will only become much more onerous with lower prices of food coming in from abroad. Urban consumers would benefit at the expense of farmers and their families.

There is now a broader consensus about the need to respect national policy space, about the need for countries to be able to devise the institutions and policies in their best interest. This is now the most important common underlying issue affecting economic development being negotiated on a number of different fronts.
Alternatives for Political and Economic Organisation in the New Century

Come Carpentier de Gourdon

Speech at the Eighth Session of Rhodes Forum, held in Greece on October 7–11, 2010

With the relatively recent eclipse of the Socialist–Communist ideology and the ongoing structural crisis of Capitalism, mankind has left behind the theory of the ‘End of History’ as defined by Francis Fukuyama (1992) in his paean for Liberal Globalised Democracy on the Anglo–Saxon model as the Summum Bonum.

Instead, we have entered an era of great doubt and uncertainty with regard to the political and economic systems which should be adopted, both at the national and international levels and a number of theories and practical models are competing for acceptance. Unsurprisingly, many of those formulas are inspired by current advances and achievements of science and technology in ‘frontier areas’ but others hark back to ancient religious teachings and cultural traditions while others still try to create a blend of the old and the new for the future.

It is convenient, therefore to divide those politico-economic frameworks into three broad categories: the modernist or technocratic, the archaic (as distinct from the conservative because it is not always clear what one wants to conserve: sometimes it is the present at the expense of the legacies of the past) and the archaeo-futuristic.

All those three sorts of system or model claim to be pragmatic though they generally refer to an ideology in explicit or implicit terms. All state that they are grounded in or at least tailored to human nature even when they allege they are inspired by a divine message.

It should also be pointed out that the borders between those categories are not sharply defined as they appear to be. Indeed modernism and archaeo-futurism naturally overlap as much as the latter borrows from tradition but no traditional system, even a ‘fundamentalist’ one can ignore scientific and
economic developments completely in practice just as no modernist theory is devoid of inputs from cultural heritage with which, sooner or later, it makes accommodations in order to become viable.

In the following we will make a rapid survey of some of the major, influential or innovative systems that are being implemented or proposed in various parts of the world, in the wake of the disintegration of global or super-capitalism (Robert Reich, 2007) that gradually took shape during the 20th century and which Bob Woodward calls Jungle Capitalism.

A. Modernism

The Beijing model
The most potent, though not the most popular rival to the collapsing Washington Consensus is surely the peculiar Chinese combination of state-owned and private enterprise under the efficiency-seeking guidance of the National Party apparatus. China presents many features of a technocracy in which politics is in the service of economic performance and prosperity. Even in the USA, various economists and social scientists have paid grudging tribute to the PRC’s achievements and seemingly irresistible rise to the top of the global pyramid.

Though the Beijing Model is obviously specific to Chinese historical, demographic and cultural conditions, it nevertheless holds at least some valuable lessons, and especially for developing nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America, especially since in effect a sort of 2G if not a G2, a partnership fraught with rivalry, is forming between Washington and Beijing under the pressure of their growing financial, commercial and industrial interdependence.

An interesting aspect of China’s statute is that, contrary to some traditionally democratic or semi-democratic polities which now tend, under the influence of economic and social factors (such as high unemployment and the threat of terrorism) to lose many of their democratic attributes and liberties, China is gradually opening up under the influence of globalising technologies, an inevitable and rapid opening to the outside world and spreading prosperity so that it projects a picture of hope, in keeping with the belief of its leadership that freedom must be gradually learnt when a sufficient level of public literacy and stability obtain.

China offers at least a partial response to the question that Elton Kessel (World Affairs, Vol. 14, no. 3, Autumn 2010) has formulated as “Is it...possible
to surgically remove dangerous aspects of capitalism while preserving its basic structure?” which entails, in his view, controlling the “animal spirits” that drive an insufficiently regulated economy into cycles of boom and bust in which “irrational exuberance” (Greenspan) is followed by depression. The other question is of course whether China can free itself from the totalitarian structure that Friedrich von Hayek identified as the nearly inevitable corollary of socialism.

As noted by Lucio Caracciolo (in Nomos & Chaos, 2009 – 10) the PRC still has to build a specific “global brand” for its evolving politico-economic system that includes elements of Manchesterian Capitalism, State planning and social mobilisation that are reminiscent of Fascism, if we consider that definition objectively, absent the moral stigma which has been attached to it for historical reasons.

Beijing will have, sooner or later, to devise a cultural message clearly understandable and attractive to the outside world if it is to export successfully its ‘magic formula’ as an alternative to the still dominant Western model.

One attempt in this direction is the “circular economic model”, first defined by the US economist K Bohrtin in the 1960s and refined in German industrial and economic state policy. It is being implemented in ruling circles of the PRC in order to strike a balance between material development and environmental restoration and maintenance, according to the principle enunciated by the ancient statesmen Lu Buwei of the Warring States Period (c.475 BCE–221 BCE). In 2008, the 4th session of the 11th National People’s Congress passed the Circular Economy Promotion Law and on May 29th, 2010, the Fifth Circular Economy Development Summit Forum was held in Beijing and it outlined four growth modes within that overall model which the PRC wishes to promote on a worldwide basis as a sustainable formula for the future of mankind.

Post-democratic aspirations
In some affluent countries which have come to take a certain amount of freedom for granted, as in North America, Western Europe and East Asia (mainly Japan), the pervasiveness of advanced communication technologies has made it possible to envision and even experiment with certain forms of “direct democracy” mediated by the Internet and its many offshoots.

It is significant that in most of those states, popular participation in the ballot box-based electoral process is usually low or very low, mainly because it is not regarded as very important in view of the fact that people’s expectations from their representatives are limited, partly because they
are regarded as relatively powerless to change existing institutions and partly because real power is generally believed to lie with big business and the state bureaucracy. As a result, many people are tempted to seek local, decentralised governance, mediated through the cell phone and the personal computer as a high-tech reincarnation of the age-old village assembly.

In the economic domain, local self-government is taking roots in a number of smaller communities in Europe and North America due to the failure of many banks and of the increasing problems associated with credit and debt in areas affected by high unemployment and falling incomes. A number of economists are championing the recourse to local currencies, community-owned banks or even a universal “real resource” based currency, to be called Earth according to James Robertson of the New Economics Foundation (*Creating New Money: A Monetary Reform for the Information Age*, London, 2000).

For instance, Ellen Brown in an essay entitled Escaping the Sovereign Debt Trap (*Web of Debt*, 2010, www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va?aid=20473) advocates the creation of people’s banks, backed by the wealth and credit of a country, such as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia established by a Government Bill in 1911 as an instrument not to amass sovereign debt but rather to extend sovereign credit. It logged a very successful service record to the young country until it fell to the privatisation drive of the 1990s.

Some states of the USA still have such banks which have protected them in large measure from the present credit crunch and moves are afoot to create new ones, in the face of determined opposition from the transnational private banking lobby, determined to protect its monopoly under the aegis of the Basel Bank of International Settlements. Reclaiming the power of emitting money for the legislative arm of government is part of a proven strategy to prevent the massive depressions recurrently brought about by the financial consolidation and centralisation of globalised super-capitalism bent on keeping a stranglehold on the economy through the leverage of debt.

However, it is far from clear that local management systems can be efficiently coordinated on a larger scale according to the same principles and, given that many problems and resources are global or at least require cooperation on a national, multi-national or global level, there is a clear need for an overarching superstructure or mechanism which will certainly have to be aided by advanced technology but cannot be reduced solely to technology.
Colin Crouch’s *Post-Democracy* (2004, Cambridge, UK) observes that democracy and modernisation both follow a parabolic trajectory so that the latter often goes hand in hand with a slow decay of the former which then turns into what Adrian Pabst calls “post-ideological managerialism” based on a “Centrist Status Quo” and possibly later into an *inverted totalitarianism*.

**A new scientific socialism – national or global?**

This third option within the Modernist perspective consists in taking stock of progress in natural and social sciences in the last hundred years to revise and refurbish the basic principles of Marxism in order to avoid the pitfalls which doomed both the Soviet and the Maoist regimes in the last century and build a truly user-friendly and functional socialist (or why not, communist?) system with a human and ecological face. Many proponents of this new *avatar* have freed themselves from the old anti-religious phobias of their predecessors and speak of integrating the ‘otherworldly’ needs of mankind into the equation, recognising that spuriously scientific materialism is outdated and untenable in our age when science and spirituality are converging in many areas and when preserving the environmental balance has become a priority higher than industrial productivity, even in the eyes of Leftists.

However, one of the pitfalls of much socialist thinking even today is that it fails to take into account the drastic and irreversible changes brought about in the global economy by new manufacturing and communication technologies which make it impossible to recreate the industrial oligopolies of the past, as Kessel (*ibid.*) points out. Thus trying to restore the great, labour intensive manufacturing firms to their former glory in the affluent societies of the North is doomed to fail in the face of competition from poorer high-growth nations, against which protectionism is not a viable option in the long term. The rust-belt socialism of the 20th century must give way to a still vaguely defined ‘green socialism’ that must primarily address self-employed people, small entrepreneurs and innovators.

Although in the USA, the Democratic administration of President Barack Obama has grudgingly taken over the majority of the stock of major insolvent companies and banks, thereby practicing a form of ‘temporary (and probably failing) limited socialism’ in the judgment of his Republican critics; Europe is probably the continent most hospitable to a revived socialism at present, firstly because of its long experience with the welfare state and generous system of social protection and secondly as a result of its bitter present experience with the crisis caused by the excesses of ‘casino capitalism’ since, in the words of Hans Koechler, “the states gradually gave way to powerful,
but unaccountable vested interests at the transnational level” (World Affairs vol. 14, No2, 2010). Jeff Faux has described this process from an American standpoint in his 2006 book The Global Class War.

It was indeed in Vienna, Austria in 1979 that the International Progress Organization called for shifting “the emphasis from having to being and from consumption to quality of life”. In the opinion of the socialists and of all those who reject the concept of “making a gain out of money itself and not from the natural object of it” (ibid.), the speculative basis of minimally regulated liberal capitalism is “a misunderstood notion of individual freedom”.

B. Archaism

The previous school of thought leads us into the realm of older, simpler and more stable societies in which harmony, re-distribution and balance are held in higher esteem than growth, change and material accumulation, to the extent that many aspects of scientific and technological progress may be shunned in order to preserve the modest but familiar, low-stress quality of life that many yearn for.

Archaism may be regarded as true conservatism because it regards the past as the sole reliable repository of knowledge we can draw from. In the view of archaicists such as Thoreau, Tolstoy, Liang Shu Ming and Mahatma Gandhi, science and technology must be regarded with suspicion, even when some of their discoveries are adopted because they are not really relevant to the core human condition and its permanent genuine needs and aspirations. Therefore, they tend to amount to a distraction rather than provide real solutions.

Archaicists focus on the deepest problems affecting man and are more concerned with the ways of dealing with them than with the visible result of the remedy being applied. They hence emphasise the need to provide food, clothing and shelter to all but, along with and above those demands, they look for collective and spiritual wellbeing which they define as independent from the provision of superfluous amenities through scientific progress and capital intensive industry. On the contrary they regard harmony with nature and within society as a critical factor in ensuring happiness and health and don’t want it to be compromised or neglected in order to provide a more comfortable, affluent and idle lifestyle to a section or even the majority of the population.
Most ecological philosophers and social activists belong to that school of thought but none of them has quite shown how our highly complex global society on its heavily inhabited planet can transition to a mainly rural low-energy state without going through a massive – almost ‘Extinction Level’ – crisis.

In order to prevent a collapse of the supporting mechanisms of mankind, such a transition would have to take place very gradually, over several decades during which the current rush to industrialisation, urbanisation and greater consumption would have to be reversed and at present no human agency is powerful enough to mandate and enforce such a change of course.

If we leave out the extreme choices made by some minorities to return to a pre-industrial existence, thereby reverting to the condition still experienced by hundreds of millions in Asia, Africa and Latin America, we will find that attempts to recreate some conditions of the past are carried out at two levels, that of states trying to recapture lost greatness, from both nostalgia and necessity and that of smaller entities inspired by charismatic and influential thinkers who draw from a national or universal spiritual and political tradition.

The resistance of nation-states and the return of empires
Various authors have noticed that while nation-states, some of them quite recent, are fighting the dominant trend of globalisation and world federalism in order to keep their hard won liberties, there is a revival of some of the age-old empires that ruled most parts of the world in previous centuries. In China, the USA, Russia, Brazil, Indonesia and India the two notions: nation and empire, are almost inseparable due to historic and geographic realities, such as size and physical, ethnic and cultural diversity but those continental states are threatened by fissiparous tendencies in regions that claim to have a distinct national identity justifying independence.

Other powers, such as Germany, Turkey, Spain, Mexico, Australia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Algeria and Egypt have inherited imperial legacies which are getting a new lease of life from present geostrategic factors, often at the expense of weaker neighbouring states. For instance, Turkey, with a large population, dynamic economy and an assertive foreign policy founded on national pride is extending its influence over smaller nations which it ruled during centuries, from Bulgaria, Bosnia and Albania to Syria, Iraq, the Palestinian territories, the Caspian region and the Central Asian Turkic republics. Likewise Iran benefits from the destruction
of Iraq and subjection of its Gulf Arab neighbours to the USA as well as from the disintegration of Afghanistan and eclipse of Pakistan to project its power over the Middle East, West and Central Asia.

There is little doubt that the USA is a not-so-original sort of empire with a global outreach and an increasingly heterogenous population, though it mainly extends to the North and Central American ‘homeland’ and to Latin American where it is however receding. The ethnic plurality of this formerly mainly Anglo-Germanic Imperium enables it to send ‘proconsuls’ and military commanders ancestrally hailing from the areas where they are deployed (such as Indians in South Asia, Chinese and Japanese Americans in the Far East, Slavic Americans in formerly Soviet lands and Latinos in South and Central America) as most Caesarian states (i.e., Ancient Persia, Rome, Russia, Germany and Spain) did in the past.

As for the European Union under German-French leadership, it tends to assume the shape of a post-modern, neo-medieval empire if we are to hear Adrian Pabst in an as yet unpublished 2010 article, with “…overlapping jurisdictions, horizontally diffuse sovereignty and vertically arranged, concentric circles of integration”.

Thus those ancient empires are renascent, though in a modern form which Pabst defines as marked by – more or less – bureaucratic capitalism and authoritarian plutocracy. The independent or more or less autonomous nations or states which are either outside or within those empires are in turn struggling to enforce their writ, no less centralised and bureaucratic (we can think at random of Croatia, Belarus, Georgia, Serbia, Taiwan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay or Honduras) on territories and people which they regard as inalienably theirs.

In both empires and nations there is a strong archaic component which is not on the wane but rather threatens to trigger many long-term or recurrent, low or high intensity wars, of the kind recently or currently seen in Georgia, North Western Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan and Turkish Kurdistan, to name only a few.

**Ideological frameworks and political utopias**

Political and economic projects and blueprints that hark back to old models are multiplying and at least some are gaining strength. In particular, the vision of an Islamic Khalifate embracing much if not most of the Muslim majority areas is providing a powerful incentive for hundreds if not
thousands to take up arms in a ‘holy war’ while countless others provide active or passive support. More limited and realistic is the campaign behind the spread of Islamic financing and banking from Europe to the Americas and East Asia.

In years to come, Islamic political and economic concepts and practices will remain a force to be reckoned with and a serious effort must be made in all societies to engage in a dialogue with their promoters in order to avoid increasing recourse to extremist goals and violent methods which have already created a situation of dangerous confrontation in many parts of the world.

While the rise or rather the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism is controversial, due in part to a long history of inter-religious wars, the growing strength of Hinduism as a source of political and economic principles and institutions, in India and in other countries where there is a Hindu presence, is to be seen mostly as a factor of stability and tolerance, just as the return of Confucianism and Buddhism in China has a moderating and humanising influence on the harsh legacy of Maoism as well as on the state-driven capitalism embraced by the Communist Party.

Christianity, which for centuries decisively regulated and shaped political and economic institutions when the sway of its followers was nearly universal, seems to be in an advanced state of decline; especially in Europe which has not been able to agree on the notion that it is the seat of a historically Christian civilisation.

The United States, where Christians, and particularly ‘born again’ Protestants or Evangelicals are the most numerous and yield considerable clout, is also secularising fast, as a result of ideological and technological transformations that partly reflect the rapid influx of other religions and ways of life. The supremacy of consumeristic materialism has played havoc in recent decades with the Old American Bible-based creed which has also, paradoxically been challenged by a dominant Jewish agnostic lobby that does not always hide its hostility to Christianity and its preference for an atheistic or at least multi-cultural society devoid of religious identity.

Russia is perhaps the only major state, on the level of a world power, which acknowledges the founding role of its national Church because even the USA has no official denomination and equally recognises many different forms of ‘Bible-based’ faith while Britain, Germany and Brazil are drifting away from their traditional state creeds in the name of agnosticism, pluralism and individual freedom.
C. Archaeo-futurism

Under that label, seemingly coined by French futurist and ‘dissident thinker’ Guillaume Faye, we can regroup all those socio-political and economic projects which borrow from the past and try to integrate it with the current realities and especially the scientific and technical breakthroughs that are reshaping reality in an transformed planetary and intellectual context. Thereby we can also avoid the pitfall into which the votaries of ‘deep ecology’ fall, by becoming biocentric to the point of sacrificing the survival of civilisation and even most of the human species to the supremacy of wild and unspoilt nature.

Archaeo–Futurists can claim to be true realists since the present is nothing but the immediate end-result of the past which constantly absorbs the future. Thus we have no choice but to blend what we have kept or wish to retain from before with what is coming into our lives that we cannot or do not wish to reject.

Bill Joy, the inventor of Java, wrote in a widely commented article in Wired Magazine (April 2000) that three technologies are the most critical and the most threatening for our future: biotechnology, nanotechnology and robotics. Indeed in the decade that has almost passed, they have made phenomenal advances and a country like Japan, for one, has focused much of its R&D on the promises enshrined in those three very young disciplines. Their synthesis can lead to the creation of entities that will be both machines and living beings on a gigantic scale as on a microscopic one.

Even more than transforming our biosphere, they are already beginning to transform us, physically and mentally and many are predicting the birth in the coming years of an Internet of Things – as an outgrowth of the Internet of Data that is coming of age – which we have trouble conceiving because it would entail the ability to ‘manifest’ or create all sorts of goods, and not only services, on demand through the wizardry of nanotech.

Clearly for people who will be more than human in a partly non-natural, synthetic and virtual world, new political and economic forms of organization will have to emerge since ours are already proving inadequate.

Jan Amkreutz (in World Affairs, Vol. 14, no. 3, Autumn 2010) writes of reality being replaced by “digality”, the virtual universe of our creation and of electronic bytes replacing or at least controlling genes as we can not only read the DNA code of life but write it as well, following the pioneering demonstration carried out by Craig Venter and his team. What system of governance will be suitable to the post–human creatures that our grandchildren, if not our young children are likely to become?
A sobering but not unrealistic observation is that some of the greatest beneficiaries of many of the newest technologies are the organized crime organisations which are challenging states and supra-national ‘official’ bodies when they don’t merge with them through a noxious symbiosis which produces Mafia states denounced by leaders as diverse as President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan and President Felipe Calderon of Mexico.

Less visible but perhaps even more powerful are some secret organisations ensconced in many of the most influential nations where they claim the loyalty of certain financial, political and intellectual elites. There are legitimate questions about the real role and objective of the secretive but not secret Bilderberg Group which has become the subject of some unflattering media coverage but more elusive and ominous is the so called Octopus, alleged to be at the heart of the largest supra-national criminal syndicate in the world, the “black network” referred to in the Interpol report on the BCCI scandal and described in the 1994 ATLAS Report of the Belgian Gendarmerie on the financial investigation into the Camuele case. There is also extensive literature on the Masonic group which is supposed to sponsor the Anglo-Saxon Plan for continued global domination, described in various report of the investigative Project Camelot as an heir to Cecil Rhodes’s secret Inner Circle of the Round Table Organization which was (and still is) at the heart of the Rhodes Foundation.

There is hence a real prospect for the future global society being dominated by certain cartels controlling, through the most advanced technologies (the so-called ‘fourth stage of money laundering’), the drug, gambling, arms and prostitution industries on a universal scale and vying for even greater power through the covert selective or indiscriminate resort to economic, biological and genetic warfare (through nano-bio-agents) with the likely complicity of some states, already under the control of what Prof. Peter Dale Scott defines as the Deep State, vividly portrayed by Joan Perkins as a “criminal hidden ruling structure” in his book Confessions of an Economic Hitman (2004).

On the other hand, the turbo-capitalism described by Edward Luttwak in his 1999 book produces high-tech’s “super-tycoons” like Bill Gates, Craig Venter, Steve Jobs, Sergei Brin or Larry Page who are more powerful and richer than many states, like the independent warlords of yore.

Whether humans rise to a post-human condition or become truly human, depending upon the definition we give to ‘humanity’, the fact is that we will have to answer the rhetorical question posed by Amkreutz (ibid): “what do we do with the institutions (and constitutions) our fathers founded on “self-evident” natural principles”? He proceeds to point out that digality will
“...render Left and Right meaningless and create a new reality which transcends both capitalism and socialism”, as geopolitics will be absorbed in noopolitics “which is about mindsets, not territories”. That new reality would require some form of economy of communion, as the basis for the kind of associative democracy being experimented in some regions of Italy, Portugal and Latin America.

Amkreutz is not being optimistic about this; he simply takes stock of current and predictable developments and concludes that we need to build interactive digital realities through web-enabled peer networks if we wish to mediate successfully the artificial universe of our making. That may be too technical a recipe for most people to understand but in effect it translates into glocal politics and economics, based on political ecology, striking a balance between the individual and the community and rising above the fatalistic reading of history to invent reality as we wish it to be and no more as we are told it must be by past precedents.

It is here that archaeo-futurists make a number of interesting proposals drawn from ancient precepts and forms of social organization in diverse societies. While the Hindu social philosopher D D Upadhaya defined an Integral Humanism rooted in the traditional Vedic and Upanishadic vision of man and the cosmos, the Bengali 20th century thinker P R Sarkar defined the “ethics for a new humanism” in his book The Liberation of Intellect (Kolkata, Ananda Marg, 1972) and articulated the rules of what he called a holistic Proutist Economics (for PROgressive Utilisation Theory) in his Discourse on Economic Liberation (1992).

In the West, EF Schumaker was inspired by both the western Christian tradition and Buddhist Economics on which he wrote a famous essay in 1966 and which is currently being championed by various social reformers as far apart as Sri Lanka, Bhutan (with its ideal of Gross National Happiness or GNH as a corrective to the quantitative myopia of GNP idolatry), Vietnam and Japan.

More recently the Finnish philosopher Sirkka Heikkonen (Prometheus Revisited in Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum, Societas Scientiarum Fennica, Helsinki, 2000) draws inspiration from the Roman philosopher Seneca to advocate transcending our exploitive civilisation to enter an age of Epistemological Expansion according to the Stoic formula for achieving the synthesis between the state of nature of our origins and the utilitarian science-driven mechanisms we have established.

Thus Seneca’s precept: sequere naturam can acquire a new meaning in the contemporary epistemic context and provide a “philosophical basis for the
information society according to the principles of sustainable development” (Heikkonen) whereby we would become real humans or truly sapiens by setting moral progress, and not the accumulation of wealth and power, as our foremost goal, in the awareness that as the Roman sage said, increasing knowledge of the world in order to realise our real or essential nature is the source of the highest happiness.

In Russia and the Central Asian area, the concept of a noospheric civilisation connected to the “universal, cognitive, semantic field” is being actively promoted, even at government level by followers of V I Vernadsky and V P Kaznachev such as Prof. L. Gordina, author of From Biosphere to Noosphere (www.newhumanity.org.ru) and organiser of the World Forum of Spiritual Culture under the patronage of the Presidency of Kazakhstan. The goal is to bring together spiritual traditions and ecological-cosmic awareness and practices for building a better global society.

Conclusion

The world is undergoing an intense transformational process, as it is becoming what digital engineer Jan Amkreutz is calling “world 3.0”: a digital virtual reality mostly made by us according to which we not only decode but recombine and modify the ‘natural’ reality, whether in the physical local universe or in our own brains and bodies.

In this changed and constantly evolving inner and outer framework, we have no choice but to adopt the tactic of transurfing, or learning to control and change reality as described by Russian quantum physicist Vadim Zeland (Reality Transurfing I (2008), II and III), in the awareness that, as Howard Bloom has demonstrated in the Lucifer Principle (1997) and Global Brain (2000), ideas are indeed real creatures or living beings (like viruses) which actually select their time and their (human) vehicles or spokesmen to manifest at least as much as we (appear to) choose them, perhaps only because we are “seeded” and incited by them to form cooperative associations. The notion of inception, explored in the 2010 film of that name by Christopher Nolan is very descriptive of what happens in the mind–world.

Bloom begins Global Brain by laying out his chief contention: “Networking has been a key to evolution since the Universe first flared into existence” so that cooperation – underestimated by Darwin – and not competition, is key to evolution. Socio-political communities will be organised primarily around shared intentions and interests, less on the basis of ethnic origins or territory according to him.
Terry Patten in an article published in OpEd News (www.opednews.com, August 21st, 2010) has outlined what he calls the Bodhidharma Strategy to pave the way and gradually build a new global framework in the spirit of Integral Politics.

He breaks it out into three steps: 1 – “Become Bodhidarma”: developing leadership abilities and honing one’s powers of conviction, 2 – Help create enlightened solutions as “spare parts” for the practical problems and crises we are facing and 3 – “Gain the Emperor’s ear”: Work yourself into positions of influence as a decision-maker, teacher or adviser. Thus each and all of us can gradually bring about and facilitate the transition to a new world order.

The past is as much in us as the future, both in a latent form as memory or as potentiality. The Portuguese term saudade bridges those two infinites, both constantly expanding in an open matrix, when it is defined as the “nostalgia of what will be”.

Our responses to the challenge and riddle of Becoming will hence be necessarily archeo-futuristic and in that sense, only those who live in the remote past (in the eternal “Once upon a Time”) are contemporaries of all future to come, not as eccentric figures of a conceited and rapidly obsolete avant-garde but as watchers – Egregori. Cosmocratores – of the Eternal Now of Being and Non-Being, known and recognised as One.
How to Create a Stable Society in the Emerging of Globalisation

Yang Guorong
Speech at the Sixth Session of Rhodes Forum, held in Greece on October 9–13, 2008

Today, the human society seems to be undergoing a significant change. The scope of practice goes more and more beyond the localization in different sense; though the various conflicts never disappear in this world, yet it is evident that the connection in human community becomes much closer than before. This tendency, no doubt, makes it possible to investigate the human situation as a whole. How to create an appropriate condition in which all people can develop their inhere potentiality and demonstrate their internal values as human being in the age of globalisation? This is a crucial issue that confronts us. Here I would like making a couple of points from the perspective of Chinese philosophy.

As implied above, when observing the world today, we can notice an unique phenomena with double sides: on the one hand, some kind similarity in human life seems to become more and more obvious: from economic activity to aesthetic taste, from political strategy to the style of daily life, it is easy to find something in common; on the other hand, different cultural traditions not only still exist but also continue to exert their influence on various areas. What this phenomenon highlights is the issue of relation between plurality and the universality. It is no doubt that global society needs universal value principles to secure the justice, democracy, freedom, and so on. However, it does not mean that we can ignore the difference and plurality of cultures. In the history of civilisation, different nations create multiple cultures, which, as the common treasure of human kind, also constitute the necessary resources for further development of civilisation. Here we need distinguish harmony from sameness, this distinction has noticed and emphasized by Chinese philosophy for long time. Sameness imply the exclusive, which will eventually lead to empty and abstract state of being, while harmony entails the tolerance to plurality, and consequently endows culture with both rich sources and the characteristic of actuality.
As mentioned earlier, history today has gone beyond the localization; human kind acquire real possibility to develop world culture in substantial sense, which will be rested on not single tradition or value system, but the unity of various cultural resources.

Associated with the harmony, we are confronted with the relationship between identity and recognition. Identity here means to accept and conform to the universal value principles, which is indispensable for rational global society; recognition means, in turn, to recognize the value and significance of manifold cultural tradition. The former can be understood as a demand to particular nation or cultural tradition, while the later is a demand to international community or society. For individual or particular cultural tradition, the key issue is to identify with universal value system, avoid isolating with the common trend of world culture; for global society, the essential problem is, in turn, to find out and respect for the value of different nations and cultures.

In philosophical sphere, we are faced with similar problem. There are various philosophical traditions in history; among them the most significant division, of course, are Western philosophy and Eastern philosophy. In the pretty long historical period, those traditions develop almost independently, with no substantial influence upon each other. However, in the age of globalisation, responding to the emerging of world culture, philosophy itself also need to go beyond single line. In the long time before, it is hard for philosophers with different tradition to know with each other; fortunately, this situation has totally changed now: History has let different philosophical traditions disclose themselves to others, and consequently make it possible for philosophers with different tradition to learn from each other. In other words, history has provided us with both necessity and possibility to deepen and broaden philosophy by examining and employing multiple philosophical resources. What this tendency leads to is, in the profound sense, the world philosophy, which will appear, at the same time, as the fusion of different philosophical tradition. It, of course, will be undergoing a long historical process, but now we can at least see the beginning of this journal.

The possibility to create world culture based on various resource reveals, in some extent, certain social hope. People in every historical stage have their own hope, and it is same in our age. This is probably one of the reasons why philosophers, likes Bloch, Rorty, talk a lot about the hope. Hope contains various aspects. On the metaphysical level, hope roots in possibility of the world: It is possibility that constitute the ontological ground of hope; on social cultural level, hope takes social ideal as its contents, which points
at the better human life in politic, economic, ethical, and so forth; on the
dimension of time, hope leads to the future, which means go beyond the
current or present situation.

View from history, modernization often accompanies with or go towards
secularization, and one of the features of secular society is staying away from
ultimate concern; satisfied more or less with the situation or condition that
already exist. On the contrary, hope gives people dynamic horizon as well as
the future direction. For human being, there would be no future if there were
no hope. In this sense, hope seems to serve as both guiders the drive: It is
guider, since it show people the aim and goal and lead them towards there; it
is drive, since it push people improving their life condition.

Surely, hope alone cannot change the world. To turn hope into reality,
we need pay attention to social practice as well. Philosophically, when a
human being begins to examine a thing, the following questions will always
be asked: “What is it?” “What does it mean?” “What should it be?” The first
question mainly concerns the features of the thing; the second, its meaning
to the human being; and the third, the necessity and way to realize such a
meaning. Both the last two questions relate particularly to the issue of value
and practice. The practical dimension of humans’ relationship to the world
is well expressed in the understanding of Dao in Chinese philosophy. On the
one hand, Dao could be understood as laws of the world and hence represents
the features of “beings-in-themselves.” On the other hand, Dao could also
be seen as the way of beings, namely, the way being relates to humans and
hence represents “things-for-us” since the way of being involves not only
the being of the object but also the being of humans. In other words, the Dao
implies both “isness” and “oughtness”, and the later point to the practice of
changing and improving the world. When we consider how to turn the hope
into reality, this perspective is no doubt worthy of notice.

In brief, as historical state of human society, the world in which we now
live is faced with various issues which must be consider and resolved, and we
need social hope to remind of us not simply confining ourselves to certain
social condition, while the dimension of practice demand further to transmit
hope into reality. The human society will lost its internal drive and guider
to create better world without hope, however, hope alone may only wait for
something passively; it will be become pure utopian without social practice
rested upon reality. The more reasonable approach here is to unify the social
hope and social practice.

Hope and practice involve both area of individual and that of society, the
latter two, in turn, are embodied in private sphere and public one. Generally
speaking, from the very beginning, the life of human being has manifest its
double meaning in these two dimensions, which essentially did not separate from each other. When we observe the human life in the emerging age of globalisation, both sides need be taken into consideration.

From the public perspective, the issue firstly involves the various social institutions. It is no doubt that to create a democratic, just, and liberal society, we need highlight the political organization, legal system, economic order, public space, and so on. Modern society has established manifold institutions, organizations, as well as the common space of communication among people, which secure the social order from one aspect. Associated with division of labor, there are different interest group and various social relationships in society; it is almost impossible to attain social solidarity and avoid social conflict without necessary social institutions.

However, what institutions embody is mostly the impersonal forms and procedure, in other words, it mainly manifests the external structure of society. If we focus merely on this side, we will apparently fail to catch the whole picture of human life. It is true that every person is being with others, and it is equally true that as concrete being, each person has his own individual and internal world. Historically, Chinese philosophers make much profound investigation of individual meaning horizon or spiritual state, which are with particular significance to person. Individual meaning horizon or spiritual world contain the personal understanding to the world, self-confirmation to the value of existence, awareness to the ideal of life. What this horizon or state displays is the whole being of person, which not only confine itself to the sphere of mind, but also demonstrate itself in actual process of practice. In the every day life, the meaning horizon or spiritual state provide people with particular significance of the world; in the moral sphere, this state exist as authentic virtue, which makes it possible to turn knowing what is good into practicing goodness, and consequently bridge the gap between knowing and doing.

Different from political, legal and economic institution, which first of all discloses the public area, the internal world, which contains particular meaning and significance for individual, mainly point at private sphere; both of them are indispensable for concrete and positive life of human being. However, as Rorty has noticed, contemporary philosophers often merely emphasize one of them. For instance, philosophers like Rowels; Habermas are, in some extent, exclusively focus on the public sphere, while these like Heidegger, Derida, on the contrary, concentrate firstly upon private one. In these kinds approaches, the human life and human society seem lost their concrete feature, and appear merely as one-sided state.
As matter of fact, public sphere and private area, social justice and individual spiritual world of being are equally important for human life. In the process towards global society, we need to notice social justice and social order; similarly, we cannot neglect the pursuit of the internal meaning of being.

In the age of globalisation, the connotation of concept of society is significantly extended: what we are faced with is not merely nation or local domain, but between nations or inter-states as well. Consequently, the issue of justice also extends from nation to inter-nations. Corresponding to this fact, there appears the issue of so-called global justice.

Justice, in its origin meaning, is referred firstly a virtue concerning the relationship among individuals and between individual and society. In history, however, philosophers often interpret justice from different perspectives. For instance, in his republics, Plato understands the justice as the harmonious order between the different elements of the soul, or between the different classes of society. Comparatively, Aristotle seems to pay more attention to the distributive justice, and this approach is echoed, to some extent, in John Rawls' theory of justice.

What, then, is the substantial meaning of global justice? Roughly speaking, there are double connotations in this conception. In the first place, global justice is associated with the relationship among states or nations, and in this sense, it is often employed as the same concept as that of international justice. But if we observe the issue deeper then we may find that global justice also involves the relationship among people. It is plain that in the latter sense, this concept is, at the same time, connected with so-called universal ethics. Thus, therefore, global justice inherently contains two dimensions: one is overlapped with international justice, and the other shares something in common with universal ethics. Put it in other way, the first dimension is the states-focused one while the second is that of the people-focused.

For convenience, we may consider the second dimension firstly. On this side, the global justice implies that the people in all states or nations should share the equal rights, that is, they are supposed to be treated equally and fairly in relevant spheres such as politics, economy, culture and the like. This may be, as it were, one of the reasons why John Rawls selects and applies the concept of the law of peoples instead of that of international law when he investigates the justice in international affairs. The foundation of law of peoples consists in giving priority to people even in dealing with the international affairs. From this perspective it follows that global justice means, among others, to respect people's right to improve their economic
welfare, politic position, education situation, and so on, no matter they are in which state or nation. In other words, if we try to carry out the principle of global justice thoroughly, then we surely ought to treat people in different states or nations equally. However, historically, in dealing with the international affairs, the priority is often given to state-interests. The evident instance in this aspect is that while the countries, especially the developed countries, always commit that they will take care the welfare of people in their own state equally, they never really do the same to the people in other country, especially developing country. Ironically, even in this case these countries can still claim that they advocate global justice. Here we may find certain tension between universal ethics and global justice: By principle, the universal ethics implies that the same norms should be applied to the people in all states with no exception. Though, however, global justice and universal ethics have something in common in the sense that both are connected with the peoples, yet the former seems to fail to carry out the principle of universality and equality throughout.

Now let’s turn to the first dimension of global justice, i.e., the states-focused one. Similarly, the issue here is also pretty complicated. As mentioned earlier, associated with international law, global justice points to, at the same time, the relationship among states. Generally speaking, the substantive connotation of justice consists in recognizing and respecting for people’s rights. In other words, the justice means in general that every person has the right to be treated equally or fairly. As the employment of justice in the domain of international affairs, global justice implies that every states or nation, be it poor or rich, small or large, should be treated equally and fairly. Economically, it means that each country can share equally the natural resources, market, and the like, and politically, every state should be given rights to participate the relevant dialogue or discussion on international affairs, and express their owe opinions in international community as well. Unfortunately, this also is the certain kind utopian ideal which never be really realized in history. In reality, what we often see is rather the reversed situation. Both economic resources and political power are always dominated by a few powerful states, and for the rest parts of the international community, the right to speak in international affairs is often merely symbolic. This situation shows that there is still a long way to go in realizing the global justice.

Nevertheless, there is another side of global justice in the international affairs. When connected with the relationship among states, global justice is also manifested in the rational or fair international order or world-order. As pointed out above, one of the primary meanings of justice is associated with
order, and we have seen, in the case of Plato, justice means the harmonious order between the different elements of the soul, or between the different classes of society. In the similar sense, global justice aims at the fair or rational order between different states or nations. By “fair or rational” here we principally mean that which will be helpful to attain what Kant calls “perpetual peace”. As the embodiment of global justice, the fair and rational order in international community is manifested in various ways, including such as mutual benefit in economic sphere, fair distribution of resources, the necessary balance of politic power and military force, reciprocal respect for culture equality, and the like. To attain these aims, the fundamental issue is respecting mutually national sovereignty among states. It is probably in this sense that Kant emphasize, when discussing perpetual peace, that “no independent nation, be it large or small, may be acquired by another nation by inheritance, exchange, purchase, or gift”, and “no nation shall forcibly interfere with the constitution and government of another”. Associated with the perpetual peace, the respect for national sovereignty shows, at the same time, its fundamental meaning in global justice by guaranteeing the fair international order.

It is obvious that at the level of fair order among states, the conception of global justice is no doubt quite thin, however, this conception seems to contain certain practical significance now. As asserted earlier, there are two dimensions in the issue of global justice; one is the people-focused, and the other states-focused. The latter itself possesses two levels, i.e. equal rights between states and fair order among states. As we have seen, on the people-focused dimension and the rights aspect of states-focused one, global justice is mainly demonstrated as some kind value-orientation. It seems that, up to now, the regulative function of global justice is connected largely with rational international order, and what it shows is limited and thin conception.

However, from perspective of hope, we ought surely not to confine ourselves to the certain scope. In the emerging age of global society, a strong or thick concept of global justice should be committed and pursued by international community. The justice in this sense will cover all meaning in both the dimension of people-focused and that of states-focused. Though it may be a long journal to turn this hope into reality, yet we have no reason to give up.

Finally, I would like to point out that in the emerging age of global society, it is necessary for us to pay special attention to wisdom. Historically, the primary or origin meaning of philosophy is to pursue the wisdom. Different from knowledge, which mainly focuses on the particular object or particular
field, wisdom goes beyond the particularity, and understanding being and world as a whole. In the realm of wisdom, human being can also reach his or her innate unity, self-integrity, and concreteness, which will guide the process of both knowing and doing in various ways. However, associated with the domination of scientific or instrumental rationality, it seems that wisdom is, in some extent, forgot by people gradually, even philosophy itself also become certain knowledge or special discipline, which display often the particular interest as well as the particular skill. By contrast, globalisation shows more and more the tendency to make world as the whole, which consequently demand the perspective beyond the separation and particularity. Here wisdom demonstrates its essential significance much more than before. It is apparent that we need overcome the forgetfulness of wisdom, and return to the perspective of wisdom. As matter of fact, all the points that I made above eventually lead to this conclusion.
VI

CULTURE, RELIGION AND IDENTITY
Dialogue of Civilisations: Diversity of Cultures and Intercultural Relations

Maria Brittes Lemos
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The given article presents reasoning on the subject of the necessity to elaborate new paradigms so that the Dialogues between peoples and civilisations turn into reality, exercising them on the basis of respecting different cultures and intercultural relations.

The process of globalisation has made us face the necessity to reinterpret the used paradigms, because the arisen contradictions in interethnic processes and intercultural clashes have accelerated further. The variety of cultures in the modern world has complicated the process of communication with the “others”, put into demand more respectable and tolerant approach so that the “difference” would not become an obstacle in establishing good relations between the people, and turning the aspiration for the open Dialogue into reality.

The modern world is an époque of doubt and uncertainties, making us think of Thomas Mann’s statement. In the year 1914, as the World War I broke out, he told a friend of his, that “the war brings ablution, deliverance and huge hope”. Peter Gay supplements this assertion, focusing attention on the fact, that “beyond this phrase the age-old bourgeois civilisation was sensed, which related hatred, violence and the aggressive instincts with trepidation. Moreover, they even were canonized”.

In the continuation of his reasoning Gay stresses, that “aggressive impulses consist not only of visible display of the hatred and destructive actions, but also include human aspiration to control the surrounding vital space, implementing towards end social, aesthetic, politic and technical inventions”.

All these questions, regardless of their importance, often remain overlooked in the modern world, in the society of people, who consigned to oblivion the value of contact and the value of Dialogue – all that traditional culture societies had left to us.
In order to receive an opportunity to revert to Dialogue of civilisations considering their cultural diversions and peculiarities of the intercultural contact, we must emphasize some aspects to destroy the limits of obscurantism with ethnocentrism and ignorance of difference cultures as its breeding grounds.

Norberto Bobbio offered a theoretical elaboration that can contribute to the discussion of the examined issue, in particular when the author touches upon the definitions of “equality” and “freedom”.

Bobbio considers that equality, as well as freedom is a general and empty concept, and if it is undefined and lacks semantic content, then it fails to express anything. And now we address the concept of “freedom”. Those, who say this word, must give a clear-cut answer to at least two questions: a) freedom for whom? b) freedom regarding what? Having answered these questions, it becomes clear, that freedom for “masters” is not the same as for slaves; and that freedom regarding oppression is not the same as freedom regarding consumption. There is no difference in the ways of putting the questions on equality and oppression. They are stated as follows: a) equality between whom? b) equality regarding what?

Reasoning from the above-mentioned preconditions, we can draw a conclusion that the civilisations could carry on a Dialogue and give their arguments, observing the differences and keeping in mind “who the other party of the Dialogue is” and “what the relation to the subject of a Dialogue is”. Therefore, the notions “equality” and “freedom” can be discussed by different interlocutors belonging to different societies. Nevertheless, they have to know what they are going to discuss and whom their Dialogue is destined for, i.e. one should always treat the culture of his/her interlocutors with understanding and respect.

Other questions may be raised as well, for instance, what must be done to enable a Dialogue between peoples, taking into account that the main difficulty is the interpretation of cultural differences. Every society has its own specific forms of thinking and ways of activity. The culture of every society has its own structure, shaped in accordance with its own paradigms, with the denoted limits of permissible and interpersonal restrictions. The language is the main barrier for contacts, further come religion and other categories, such as the historic references, originality, memory, imagination.

Such definitions, as “other” and “alien” remain mysterious, complicated for complete comprehension. The words differ in meanings and sense. The lexical translation is not enough, a word must gain its form and substance, i.e. reflect the integral culture.
The above-mentioned barriers are invisible, but still they may suddenly appear as a response to a threat from a foreign element. The roots of resistance, originality and feeling of ‘membership’ may sprout at any moment, and the consequences may be abrupt. This may result in the rise of the resistance movements. The Dialogue between civilisations, remaining possible, confronts the difficulty of comprehension of the variety of cultures as well as the intercultural contact. In the opinion of Braudel, this obstacle lies at the level of a long-lasting cultural structure. The changes occur slowly and almost imperceptibly. The possibility of overcoming the barrier appears only in the course of time under condition that other paradigms become available.

Researchers have always been mesmerized by a search for civilised explanation of such phenomenon, as the behavior of social groups, their differences and similarities. Bourgeois writers of the 19th century were obsessed with the thought of finding answers to these questions. We can typify this behaviour by the example of Charles Holmes, representative of the 19th century bourgeoisie. He understood that hatred is one of the feelings, allowing aggressive emotions to free themselves from the civilisational restrictions. He became aware that even the well-taken hatred may come down to pathology. Holmes realized that he was the interlocutor of the epoque, when the major part of aggressive actions was both punished and permitted. Such behaviour of the Western society was indicative in the meaning when private nature matters had to be settled through violence, and not through Dialogue.

Regarding this Goethe remarks that in the beginning of the 19th century “the state is only concerned with firm protection and property safety: The matter of legality is not in its interest”. As an evidence for that, one can examine draconian measures of punishment in England regarding those, who misappropriates other’s property. No Dialogue may be carried on with the “other”. Cultural and social differences were neither considered nor multiplied, penetrating into the new civilisations.

Together with that, the punitive measures of impact and questions, related to the distinction in cultures, were approved by society, from the ruling elite up to less privileged groups of it. The latter applied the same methods as the powers that be.

The dominating groups believed in necessity of punishment for supporting order in society, even if at times it provokes brutal disturbances. The Dialogue was neglected and society was ruled by the power of punishment.
In relations between violence and punishment there was no place left for a Dialogue between civilisations. The number of both, inner and external clashes multiplied. The interests of the Western Christian civilisation confronted with the interests of other civilisations, proceeding with the deeds of expansionists, directed against the enslaved peoples. The stronger came out against the weak, ethnocentric societies – against the original.

Dialogue between civilisations was reduced to discussion between pacifists of different nature, not having reached enough scale to sweep away insurmountable obstacles in the form of ‘differences’. Therefore, those societies that aspired to reaching the environment of a Dialogue as much as possible, witnessed their leaders being exterminated. Brute force of repressions strapped forward to protect the interest of dominating groups. The leader was turning into mythological hero, and the Dialogue – into “mental” rhetoric.

However, despite all these hardships, the need for a Dialogue between civilisations remained in demand, which didn’t occur by chance, as there exists a belief that violence and destructions do not unite civilisations, but rather inflame hatred and generate destructive revenge.

The process of globalisation makes societies face the necessity of reinterpretation of the applied paradigms, since the conflicts and contradictions become more acute, and the process of co-existence under conditions of cultural pluralism requires better understanding. Then the ‘difference’ will cease being an obstacle in the society, but it will turn into one of the forms of co-existence. We must get along together peacefully despite any contradictions.

Guiddens notes that one must get along together with the ‘difference’ that changes society and demands its reconstruction. New models of co-existence, introduced to establish such Dialogues, collide with the paradox of intercultural relations: in peoples’ ethnocentrism, in the difficulties of a fight against differences, in discrimination and the prejudices that occur in the minds of every society that lives in this modern globalised world.

Multiculture has become a challenge for the acting paradigms. The nations have turned into multiform milieu, in which different cultural systems interlace, and the originality, still preserved within the wide groups of people, mainly in the less successful, differs from the ethnical view, multilingual, presenting emigrants with different culture.
Different social systems, nations, cities and even other ethnical societies serve as a guiding line for understanding the new original societies that arise as a result of people’s social cooperation, co-existing in the same social space. Aspiration for a Dialogue between civilisations is the embodiment of societies’ ideals, united by different cultures for the sake of constructing an indivisible world, relevant for all distinctive specific values of every civilisation.

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Human beings inhabit the same planet and they do so sometimes in harmony and sometimes in conflict, but the fact of the matter is, they coexist. All human beings are born into a particular community, inheriting a language, a culture, and ways of interacting with other members of the community. And here they connect to each other as fellow beings and develop their individuality through the various modes of coexistence, that is, using Fink’s categories, through love and hatred, domination and subjection, work and play, and death. It is through these modes of coexistence that our understanding of self, society and nature is developed.

The modes of coexistence cited in the above are not models or blueprints as to how human beings might develop in an ideal way. They are simply descriptive of what humanity is. They are intertwined and bound together in all cultures and the lives of all of us are also bound in them in the most intricately experiential and complex ways. Nevertheless, no matter how these modes of coexistence are manifest, they are intrinsically the same in every society. A child first learns love in the bosom of the family, as love unites mother and child. Hatred might, perhaps, first come in the form of sibling rivalries and moves to quarrels with neighbors, and these often lead to loss of lives through destructive death. To avoid this heart-aching calamity humans learn to find ideal ways to peaceful coexistence among themselves.

The family unit works together but their subsistence mainly depends upon community and the unit works with its neighbors as well. Together they hunt, till the land and harvest crops, build dams, temples, towns, cities, states and lastly civilisations of complexity and magnitude. After long day’s hard work, family and neighbors come together to share food and drink at the evening table. There they drown the pains of the body, thus lifting the spirit. Drinking invites them to sing and dance life’s burden into oblivion.
In every culture the idea of play is a universal conception. In play, the make-believe is brought into a status of reality. The capacity to imagine and to create alternative realities is uniquely human. Through play we learn the true meaning of the freedom of self-expression.

It is human life itself that is expressed in these modes of coexistence. For example, love discloses to humans the meaning of unity and peace whereas hatred that of violence and destruction. Work certainly reveals the magnitude of our potentialities and the relevance of cooperation for the survival of humanity. And these meanings formed through various modes of human coexistence constitute the basic structure of intersubjective understanding among individuals and groups. As individual subjective meanings are formed through intersubjective communication and interaction, those meanings are in the community domain and are thus shared and understood by others in the community. It is through these meanings that people communicate, argue, agree, and give reasons and make definitions and so on.

Biologically and genetically, each of us is unique, so different from one another that even an infant is predisposed to show preferences and to have certain propensities, talents and dislikes. It seems that we are arranged so as to play different tunes. We are always aware that we are different from one another even when we compare our similarities. The self-reflecting human being may be solitary, but the ontological structure dimension of the individual subject coexisting with others decidedly demonstrates that to be an individual is to be social and that an antithesis of either alone or collective is groundless. One can say that to be human is to be rational, but rationality derives from societal interaction. Only in association with others does one’s individuality come into being. Dewey maintains that “Selfhood is not something that exists apart from association and intercourse” (The Theory of Moral Life, p.63). It is only in community that individuals progress in intellectual capacity, in observation, imagination, judgment, and invention (Democracy and Education, p.297).

Even when we find ourselves in different cultures and societies, we find the modes of coexistence, love and hatred, domination and subjection, and work and play, and death, functioning there in daily life. Because this is so, adapting to strange situations is possible. Normally, we begin our life in the family and start out from our homes to the neighborhood. Perchance, we venture even further to new surroundings, and then, home again. Sometimes, of course, we embark on journeys to entirely unknown and strange worlds. It is through repetitions of leaving home and returning again that the different worlds we visit become ever more familiar, ever more like home.
When we find ourselves in a strange environment, we at once see what is different from our home world. But we also see what is similar and as we come to negotiate with what is similar, we also come to accommodate what is strange by virtue of how it fits in with what we recognize as similar. The similar is easily taken into our existing schemata of orientation, which itself widens with the acceptance. In that widening, we are able to reckon with the strange and accommodate it into our schemata as well. This process is generally called cultural assimilation. Its end result is that we finally are able to think and act in the manner of the other, interacting with the reality of the other’s environment as if it were our own. I sum, what was once strange and unfamiliar is transformed into something comfortable and familiar. By way of this assimilation, the boundaries of our individual home worlds become constantly widened as the strange world we encounter become absorbed and transformed into our own home worlds. This phenomenon I call “the mundialization of home”. What effects the mundialization of home is the mediation of common elements found in both the schemata of orientation of the home world and that of the strange world.

The links between the home world and the alien are the modes of human coexistence. The world at large which includes the home world and the strange world of the other is social and cultural, a place wherein human beings interact in thought, feelings and actions in intertwining modes of coexistence. All communicative acts, in family, school, office, business, factory, arts and politics are interacted, enacted and transacted with the modes of coexistence. And within this experiential structure, humans traverse a multitude of different worlds. We are worlds-experiencing, worlds-constructing and reconstructing beings. Today, in this age of globalisation, as never before in the history of human kind, we have arrived at the mundialization of the home world.

A new lifestyle brought about by easy movement of capital, technology and workforce across national borders through global economy and rapid progress of telecommunication is emerging across the globe. It recognizes no cultural boundaries for we see it and hear of it in London, Paris, Berlin and Moscow. The list goes on. Young white-collar workers in Beijing and Seoul cruise around cyberspace all day long. At noon, they take a quick bite at fast food counters, and in the evening they watch videos and listen to CDs. They don’t have to be Englishmen and Russians to understand Shakespeare and Dostoevsky. They comprehend mental anguish and moral dilemmas of Hamlet who avenges his father’s murder and Raskolnikov who kills a much hated, parasitic pawnbroker. Educational and technological advancements
worldwide have made this converging trend in lifestyle possible for young people nearly everywhere on the planet. They tend to think alike, feel alike and behave alike in many pervading areas of life. Their preferences in cuisine, music and entertainment seem to be almost homogeneous. Never again can anyone quote Kipling’s “East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet” as if it were a truism. The flow of exchanges between and among East, West, North, and South is constant.

In truth, no culture of any folk or nation is indigenous. Culture is always a culture of cultures. It is a complex of many cultures and always in a state assimilation of other cultures which contribute toward its unity. Culture is nearly always in the state of instability because it is always transcending its boundaries and confines. With the accelerating globalisation this flexible nature of culture will eventually lead to a global consciousness of multi-identity of all individuals and groups of the regions of the planet, which in turn should resolve intolerance of differences, mutual suspicions, and animosities among peoples of all localities and regions of the planet.

It is clear that the establishment of a cultural common ground for mutual understanding is certainly a necessary condition for founding the world in which we can live together in peace and harmony. It is an essential prerequisite. However, it also is clear that this mental common ground can be swiftly overridden by particular interests within national boundaries. As we see workers, capital and technology easily going over borders, we also see the most of the populations of the countries in which this is happening carry on with their lives within their borders. Their interests remain intact and so conflicts arise in terms of the newcomers and their priorities, Indeed, to many, it seems a situation in which the differences of the other have launched an invasion into their home world. This sort of problem is but one of many posed by the current global economic globalisation. Rational thinking is necessary for their solution. Fear, suspicion, violence, and scapegoatism are among the factors to be addressed and abated through the power of rational thinking. The truth of the matter is that the very survival of humankind today depends on cooperation. The economic crisis which the world is currently experiencing manifestly demonstrates all nations and peoples are so inextricably interrelated and so deeply interdependent on one another that peaceful resolution of conflicts of interests appears to be the prudence required for the well-being of all humanity.

The notions of human dignity and human rights have become today part of the internationally standardized democratic ideas that have come to represent the interconnectivity of global survival: to wit, no human being has the right to exercise his or her rights at the expense of
another’s. Of course, this idea of human rights is by no means universally accepted. Nonetheless, over centuries of mundialization processes, it now encompasses every corner of the earth. Transforming globalised ideas into our own schemata and making them our own is accomplished through transculturation, which is mediated through the elements in our culture’s conceptual schemata that are compatible with elements in the conceptual schemata of another culture.

In fact, the mundialization process takes place by virtue of transculturation through the medium of which such ideas such as freedom, equality, social justice and human rights are now coming to pose as the real essentials of democracy world wide. All nations and peoples of East and West need to see these ideas as being constitutive of our interpretative schemata for understanding political and social reality.
Cultural Dialogue in Western Security and Defence

Alexis Crow
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“Men are not tied to one another by papers and seals. They are led to associate by resemblances, by conformities, by sympathies. It is with nations as with individuals. Nothing is so strong a tie of amity between nation and nation as correspondence in laws, customs, manners, and habits of life. They have more than the force of treaties in themselves. They are obligations written in the heart. They approximate men to men, without their knowledge, and sometimes against their intentions. The secret, unseen, but irrefragable bond of habitual intercourse holds them together even when their perverse and litigious nature sets them to equivocate, scuffle, and fight, about the terms of their written obligations.”

Edmund Burke

Norms, values, and an internal cultural dialogue

Today, I wish to discuss the potential for cross-cultural dialogue on security and defence in the West. Firstly, I will discuss the prospects for an internal cultural dialogue based on norms and values, and secondly, I will discuss a new framework for an external cultural dialogue as the West seeks to cooperate with other countries and organisations outside its borders.

I specifically define the West in terms of a geographical and value-based identity, comprised of countries and institutions (NATO and the EU) which fall within the North Atlantic area. With regard to values, Voltaire’s description of Europe (which we can extend to the wider West) is particularly useful: the French philosopher described the land as ‘...kind of great republic divided into several states, some monarchical, the others mixed...but all corresponding with one another. They all have the same
religious foundation, even if divided into several confessions. They all have the same principle of public law and politics, unknown in other parts of the world." Both Burke and Voltaire wrote of Western values derived from a common historical experience of Christianity: for example, the ‘value of human life,’ the ‘sanctity of person,’ ‘respect for property’ and the rule of law. Yet many of those values that have come to be Western find their origins in the Enlightenment, and hence can be termed ‘post-Christian’ values. These include democracy, religious tolerance, freedom of press, and market economy. In examining past historical experience, and indeed in regarding the West in its present guise, these values are neither allocated nor bound by the state. For in Easton’s words, the state is not responsible for the ‘authoritative allocation of values’, and as such cannot reconcile the distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal for its peoples. Rather, the values that unite the peoples of Western societies designate what Charles Taylor calls a space of ‘common meaning’ which transcends territorial boundaries. For those populating the North Atlantic area, it is these values which enhance life, and underpin NATO and the EU as institutions. Although they may be shared by other countries around the globe, these values are by no means universal.

And it is my principal claim that a much needed cross-cultural dialogue within the West rests upon an understanding of the distinction between norms and values. This concept is taken from the late Philip Windsor, a British strategic thinker who wrote several magisterial pieces at the end of the last century – one of them titled ‘Cultural Dialogue in Human Rights.’ In it, Windsor ponders the prospect for cultures with different values to maintain a dialogue on the oft-divisive issue of human rights. Via the philosophy of Hegel and Nietzsche, he determines that different cultures can have an earnest debate, provided they respect the other’s values, and recognise the distinction between a value and a norm. He wrote, ‘All cultures depend on translating certain underlying values into the norms of social behaviour.’ A norm is therefore defined as the cultural expression of a value. In contrast to the English School or Constructivist understanding of a norm, norms within the context of a cultural dialogue are not regulatory, though they are related to behaviour. Specifically, in terms of NATO and the EU, its members share certain Western values, and ‘normatise’, ‘operationalise’, or enact these values in different ways. There is not one set of norms to which these countries ascribe; rather, we use the term ‘norm’ to denote the expression or interpretation of a shared value. Significantly, societies express many different norms over different periods of time.
Specifically in terms of cultural dialogue, norms are *culturally* determined, and thus not especially affixed to particular states or governments. Norms do not always refer to specific nations: indeed, there are many divisions within states themselves\(^1\). For example, France under Nicolas Sarkozy has been decidedly more ‘Atlanticist’ in its defence and security policy, even rejoining the Integrated Military Command Structure of NATO. Such a decision was perhaps unthinkable during President Chirac’s tenure, and was unsurprisingly met with sharp resistance by senior military staff who sought to prioritise France’s military concerns as affairs of the EU/ESDP rather than of NATO. Yet Sarkozy’s move was a particular ‘normatisation’ of a value at that time. Let us also take for example US President Barack Obama’s campaign promise of closing the detention centre at Guantánamo Bay: though Obama’s decision marked a decisive break from that of the George W. Bush Administration – and hence a different interpretation of a value – he has met much resistance from the US Senate in attempting to carry out that promise. Thus, despite Obama’s reversal of particular norm, the present expression of a value has now trumped that earlier norm\(^2\). The potential for such sharp national divisions thus illustrates the fallacy of Kagan’s now (in)famous depiction of war-mongering Americans from ‘Mars’ and peace-loving Europeans from ‘Venus’. Though there is some validity to Kagan’s generalisations, there are in fact nuanced differences within America itself, and certainly amongst Europeans, and as demonstrated above, within European states themselves.

Thus determined by culture – as opposed to fixed to a particular state – norms are fluid, dynamic, and rest upon an understanding of *becoming*, rather than *being*. Windsor’s entire conception of cultural dialogue assumes that cultures are in a dynamic state of *becoming* rather than in a fixed state of being. Extended to the West, NATO allies and EU member states recognise that though they share common values, they will fluctuate in their

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\(^1\) Thus one might say that nations themselves are in a constant state of becoming. As Nietzsche observed, "What gets called a 'nation' in Europe today (and really is more a *res facta* than *nata*— every once in a while a *res ficta et picta* will look exactly the same —) is, in any case, something young, easily changed, and in a state of becoming, not yet a race..." Nietzsche, F. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Similarly, Edmund Burke wrote, ‘But common-wealths are not physical but moral essences. They are artificial combinations, and, in their proximate efficient cause, the arbitrary productions of the human mind...I doubt whether the history of mankind is yet so complete enough, if ever it can be so, to furnish grounds for a sure theory on the internal causes which necessarily affect the fortune of a state.' Burke, E. From *Letters on a Regicide Peace*.

\(^2\) What values are being expressed here? One might say that the W. Bush Administration’s original decision was an interpretation of the value of national security, and Obama’s reversal was a normatisation of the value of civil liberty. The opposition he has met from the Senate – Democrats included – is thus another interpretation of the value of national security. See Ward, A. and Demetri Sevastopulo. ‘Blow for Obama Plan to close Guantánamo.’ *By Financial Times*, 21 May 2009.
interpretations of those values. As is demonstrated in the previous examples, these norms change over time, not only from government to government, but also within political parties themselves. Certainly within the West, debate about differing interpretations of shared values is inevitable. Yet because cultural dialogue assumes that all cultures are in a constant state of becoming, members can flexibly engage in that dialogue. Indeed, much of the past discord within the West (such as the rancour over Iraq) is a result of disagreement about norms, yet these norms will change over time, and such discord can eventually be overcome. Again, the recognition of a distinction between norms and values is of the utmost importance. Societies in the West have in common a constitutive set of values, which are of a fixed nature, but precisely where they differ is in the ‘normatisation’ of those values, which is of a dynamic character.

Security in a world of risk

Why is this dialogue even important? It is precisely because of the character of the current strategic environment that societies engage in a cross-cultural dialogue on security and defence. Primarily, Western societies define security in terms of risks rather than in terms of threats, and hence in terms of the future, rather than in terms of the present. Rather than seeking to eliminate a tangible threat, one attempts to prevent a future scenario from occurring. Risks are nebulous, hard to define, and often transnational in origin and in scope: consequently, rarely can one actor successfully manage a risk acting in isolation. Moreover, in a world of risk, those who seek to cooperate on security and defence are not unified by a common existential threat – on the contrary, they face a disparate strategic agenda filled with many security risks such as nuclear proliferation, energy security, cyber-war, Somali piracy, state failure, international terrorism, and economic collapse. If Western countries are to successfully cooperate on meeting these challenges, then they must engage in a cultural dialogue. Although these actors may not always identify a common risk (such as Saddam Hussein’s potential to employ weapons of mass destruction), or indeed agree upon the appropriate instruments used to manage that risk (military, diplomatic, or economic sanctions), a revaluation of their constitutive values provides a common and steadfast ground, or framework for dialogue and debate.
Beyond the West: the universal vs. the international

As Western societies seek to manage transnational security risks, it has become increasingly clear that they must engage with countries outside their borders, if these risks are to be successfully challenged. Yet the old framework of relations – according to which Western countries sought to impose their values and experience of becoming on other societies – is not only outdated, but it is also fundamentally flawed. Whether via the processes of imperialism, de-colonisation and modernisation, a declaration of universal human rights, and democracy promotion by force, Western countries (and institutions) often assume that others wish to share their seemingly universal values. However, I staunchly argue that the West cannot impose its values on those societies who do not wish to share them. Such an action is not only detrimental (and often dangerous) to Western interests, but it is also impossible. If indeed these values are to take root, this must be an endogenous process – coming from within – rather than one of external imposition. Thus, as it seeks to manage risks, the West acts internationally, but not universally. It must act outside its geographical borders if it is to manage risks to its security, but it cannot engage with others upon the assumption that its values are universal. In such a way, cultural dialogue within the West provides its countries and institutions with a new framework of relations with its global partners – hopefully one which is a welcome replacement to days of yore.

There is a further question of whether countries can agree on a very basic definition of rights – what some scholars refer to as a ‘minimalist’ ethics – such as the right to life. This – I think – is an opportunity for discussion and debate.
Freedom of Religion and Belief is the Foundation to Global Religious Cooperation and Harmony

Joseph Grieboski
Speech at the Second Session of Rhodes Forum, held in Greece on September 29 – October 2, 2004

Religious liberty, in the full sense of the term, is the first human right. It is, therefore, a liberty that should not be confined to the private sphere only. The famous American clergyman John Witherspoon – the only cleric to sign the Declaration of Independence stated in a May 1776 sermon what may be considered a philosophy of religious purpose in America: “It is in the man of piety and inward principle, that we may expect to find the uncorrupted patriot, the useful citizen, and the invincible soldier. God grant that in America true religion and civil liberty may be inseparable and that the unjust attempts to destroy the one, may in the issue tend to the support and establishment of both”.

Religions play an integral role in contemporary global affairs and are increasingly being perceived with a sense of urgency. Open forums (such as this one) bringing together representatives of religious groups to discuss the centrality of the role of religion take a great importance. Good things happen in history when the will of believing people is channeled and directed towards the ideals of freedom, justice, and equality for all, in a spirit of openness, honesty and reconciliation – all necessary components in a true dialogue of civilisations.

Human rights and religious freedom need to be the basis of a new political ideology of harmony and mutual understanding which needs to take shape and become the energizing concept for public action in this twenty-first century. This forum, for example, can provide for the elaboration of such a concept, one tempered through renewed debates and the continuous exchange of ideas.

In Central Asia, China, the Indian sub-continent, the Middle East and elsewhere, the actions of religious leaders and institutions serve to empower radicals by encouraging threatening behavior hostile to religious freedom.
For this reason, incidentally, it is vitally important that governments around the world nurture environments of free expression so that moderate views may predominate.

Where freedom of religion and belief is protected by governments, promoted by religious believers and institutions, and valued by citizens, religion-based violence, repression, and terrorism will not take root. In this sense, freedom of religion is an antidote to terrorism, especially religion-based terrorism, because it encourages a theological and political awareness of the need to accept the “other”. To discriminate against religious beliefs, or to discredit religious practice, is exclusion contrary to respect for fundamental human dignity that will eventually destabilize society by creating a climate of tension, intolerance, opposition, and suspicion not conducive to social peace.

A religion’s recognition of the necessity of freedom of religion and belief indicates the theological centrality that every individual has value and worth. In truth, religious freedom is at the heart of the basic beliefs and theologies of every major global faith. For a body of faith to be defined as a religion – rather than as a belief system or spiritual system – it holds that it has a monopoly on Truth and Salvation. As the Roman Catholic Church stated prior to the Second Vatican Council, Extra Ecclesiae Nulla Salus – “Outside the Church there is no salvation”. If a religion believes – as they all do – that Truth exists, they must also recognize that in order to grasp that Truth, an individual must be free to pursue it. Without the theological freedom to pursue Truth according to the dictates of one’s heart, mind, and conscience, an individual is the victim of religious tyranny and not of true religious devotion or fervor.

All men are bound to seek the Truth, especially in what concerns God and His Mandate to Man, and to embrace the Truth they come to know. It is upon the human conscience that the obligations fall and exert their binding force. The Truth cannot impose itself except by virtue of its own truth, as it makes its entrance into the mind at once quietly and with power. Religious freedom, in turn, which men demand as necessary to fulfill their duty to worship God, has to do with immunity from coercion in civil society.

The human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits.

The right to religious freedom, as enunciated by the Second Vatican Council, “has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person as this
dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself”. This right of the human person to religious freedom is to be recognized in the constitutional law whereby society is governed and thus it is to become a civil right.

It is in accordance with their dignity as persons – that is, beings endowed with reason and free will and therefore privileged to bear personal responsibility – that all men should be at once impelled by nature and also bound by a moral obligation to seek the truth, especially religious truth. They are also bound to adhere to the Truth, once it is known, and to order their whole lives in accord with the demands of Truth.

However, men cannot discharge these obligations in a manner in keeping with their own nature unless they enjoy immunity from external coercion as well as psychological freedom. Therefore the right to religious freedom has its foundation not in the subjective disposition of the person, but in his very nature. In consequence, the right to this immunity continues to exist even in those who do not live up to their obligation of seeking the truth and adhering to it and the exercise of this right is not to be impeded, provided that just public order be observed.

Freedom of religion is arguably the right most intimately connected to human dignity. Human beings are characterized by the capacity to reason, by a conscience formed through intellect and experience, and by the power to act on reason and conscience. As such, every person is “hard wired” with a thirst to know the truth about the origin, nature, purpose and destiny of mankind.

Accordingly, to protect religious freedom is to protect the right to seek that truth, and the right peacefully to live and worship in accord with it, both individually and in community with others. (Religious freedom also protects those who believe the search for truth, and the moral imperatives that ensue, involve not only rights but also binding obligations.) Religious freedom goes to the core of what it means to be human and what it means to say (as does, for example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) that human beings possess an intrinsic and inviolable dignity.

A guarantee of religious freedom also supports the other fundamental rights necessary to all human persons: because it is grounded in the universal dignity of the human person, religious freedom encourages other related rights. A government that denies the right to freedom of religion and belief is far more likely to deny other rights central to human dignity, such as freedom from torture or murder. The reverse is also true. Freedom of religion and belief is also closely connected to other civil and political rights necessary to democracy.
Without freedom of conscience, there is no freedom of speech, as believers cannot communicate among themselves about their most fundamental beliefs; there is no freedom of assembly, as like-minded believers cannot meet to share their beliefs and worship their Creator; and there is no freedom of the press, as believers cannot print and share their beliefs with others. Religious individuals and groups need and deserve freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and the right to be secure in their homes from unwarranted government intrusion.

In many countries with religious minorities, the most that is thought to be achievable is a commitment to religious tolerance. True religious freedom, however, is more than mere tolerance. It constitutes an embracing of universal human dignity because of – rather than in spite of – one’s religious convictions.

The great project of the 21st century is to encourage and empower religious communities — especially Muslims — who have this view, i.e., that adapting to non-Muslim religions within Islamic societies is not a compromise of Islam but a deepening and clarifying of it. Islam wields a sword. Shall it be only the sword that thrusts outward to cut off the ears of its perceived enemies, or the sword that pierces inward to cut out that which tears at the truth of Islam?

The great tragedy of today is that the torch of sacrifice and truth in Islam – and I dare say all faiths – has been snatched from the hands of those who should bear it aloft, and is instead carried high by the enemies of truth and freedom. The so-to-say “fires of apostolic zeal” alive and well in all faiths has been stolen from the altars of God and now bum as an inferno in those who grind the altars into dust. We are in fact destined for another war, but not the clash of civilisations to which is so often incorrectly referred. We are destined for a war against false freedoms – civil and religious – which endanger our true and divine freedom.

This cannot, however, be limited exclusively to Islam, as other religious traditions are susceptible to the kinds of intolerance that lead to violence. We see this, for example, in the recent rise of Hindu nationalism in India, and growing religious tensions in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East.

We see before us an ongoing regression and devolution of religious rights globally. Most dangerously, we are sadly observing many former havens of freedom and religious expression becoming new and subtle arenas for religious discrimination. The bill passed by the French National Assembly to ban the wearing of religious garb is an example of this new and potentially dangerous trend.
European democracies such as France, Belgium and Germany ought and must be models for states seeking to develop into full-fledged democracies; instead we find China citing France’s actions against minority faiths as a justification for its own treatment of the Falun Gong and Christian and other groups. Governmental actions of this kind by European democracies limits and restricts the rights of all people from practicing their beliefs according to the dictates of their consciences, and serves as a dangerous model for other states worldwide.

The exercise of the right of religious freedom cannot be considered a dispensation granted by the state to its citizens or residents. Additionally, the assurance of this right cannot be deemed an exception. Therefore, it is atypical that more limiting legal or administrative procedures should be implemented with regard to religious beliefs and institutions than those for which the juridical system provides its organization in general. It is very important to emphasize that freedom of religion must not be confused with freedom from religion. A policy of secularism should not be promoted in any way as a cover for unintentional intolerance and atheism as a state policy.

Almost five years ago, the United States led NATO into a war to liberate the peoples of Kosovo-Metohija from the oppression of Slobodan Milosevic’s regime. Five years later, Kosovo’s Serbian Orthodox have become second-class citizens in their own country, deprived of their basic human rights. Under the eye of tens of thousands of NATO troops, including Americans, over 115 churches and monasteries have been leveled – more than half dating back to the Middle Ages; priceless frescos and icons have been desecrated; monks and priests have been attacked as they walk the streets of now-ethnically pure Albanian cities and towns.

The situation is intolerable and it is happening under international watch. Two-thirds of the pre-war Kosovo Serbian Orthodox population has been cleansed from the province, their homes burnt to the ground. And thousands have been murdered. Those Orthodox who remain live in ghettos, segregated from the mainstream of Kosovo society. No one has been held responsible for this human rights catastrophe.

Inaction on our part as religious believers makes us moral accomplices to these crimes. Ignoring the honors in today’s Kosovo empowers those who oppose democratic values of religious freedom in places like Afghanistan and Iraq to stand up to us – as believers – and this we cannot allow.

In August of this year (2004) I led a delegation of American religious and religious freedom leaders to Kosovo and Metohija. This was the first such visit by Americans since 1999. It was necessary for these leaders to witness the suffering of serbs and orthodox in Kosovo. Among other things,
the delegation decided to “spiritually adopt” all churches and monasteries that have been damaged or destroyed – over 150. American churches will provide money, resources, materials and volunteers to renovate and reconstruct these churches in cooperation with the international community and under the leadership of my dear friend bishop Artemije.

Even here in Greece we have seen the state’s interference – in some case with the blessing of the majority faith – in the rights of minority groups to practice their beliefs according to dictates of their mind, heart, conscience.

Greece is the only European Union (EU) country to ban proselytism in its constitution, and the only EU country to have been condemned by the European Court of Human Rights for a lack of religious freedom. So far as the overall legal situation of religious freedom is concerned, there has been since 2001 no significant improvement. The Orthodox Church, Judaism and Islam are still the only groups considered by the law to be a “legal person of public law”. Recently the Roman Catholic Church in Greece, after a court decision, received legal status and was in 2003 invited by the Ministry of Education and Religion to take part in a dialogue on its legal status. The Catholics do not want the status of “legal person of public law” and would prefer Greek law to be changed to bring it into line with the situation in other EU countries.

Other religious communities, such as Evangelical Protestants and Jehovah’s Witnesses, who are mainly composed of ethnic Greek citizens, are considered to be “legal persons of private law”. This means that religious minority communities, because of their classification as private entities, cannot be corporately represented in court, and cannot as communities possess or inherit property. Under the Constitution, all persons living within the Greek territory are said to enjoy “full” protection to practice the religion of their choice. However, the Constitution still, despite the European Court of Human Rights judgment, prohibits proselytizing (Article 13) and stipulates that no rite of worship may disturb public order or offend moral principles.

Under laws 1363 from 1938 and 1672 from 1939, which some Greek religious believers consider dictatorial, recognized or “known” religious groups are required to obtain “house of prayer” permits from the Ministry of Education and Religion in order to open places of worship. It should be noted that this permit constitutes the only (albeit indirect) way in which the state recognizes a religion. But since the “Manoussakis” judgment of the European Court of Human Rights, issued in 1996, applications for a house of prayer permit are accepted by the Ministry of Education and Religion. It seems that the administration has understood the message of the Court
better than Greek legislators have. By law the Ministry may base its decision
to issue permits on the opinion of the local Orthodox bishop, and the police
have the right to prosecute religious communities who operate or build
places of worship without a permit.

However, religious freedom in Greece today still depends on factors
such as the opinion of the predominant religion. One example of this factor
affecting the building of a church is the case of the Evangelical Free Church
of Filiatra, on the Peloponese peninsula. Although the Ministry had given its
permission (A3/20109/13-3-2002), the local Orthodox bishop objected to
this by declaring the need to prohibit illegal proselytism (“Eleftheria” daily
newspaper, 12 April 2002). This opinion of the Orthodox bishop leaves the
legal situation of these Protestant believers still unclear.

The independent administrative authority, the “Citizen Attorney” or
Ombudsman, has significantly contributed to the protection of religious
minorities (report no 5979.2.2/24-04-2002). But local police still have
the authority to prosecute minority religions that operate or build places
of worship without a permit, although this has not happened in the last
two years. However, it is still common practice for the police to bring the
adherents of minority religions for identity checks to police stations. In a
2001 ruling, the Cassation court judged (Decision no 20/2001) that the law
which requires a prior administration permit to operate a house of prayer, is
not in violation of the right of religious freedom (article 13 of the Constitution
and article 9 of the European Convention of Human Rights). Only a small
minority of the judges had the opinion that this preventive system was in
breach of both the Constitution and the Convention.

Rejection of religious freedom also places a prodigious – and perhaps
even fatal – obstacle in the way of successful democratic governance, a
point closely related to the internal stability and sustainability of a given
nation. The danger is greatest with new and aspiring democracies, but
cannot be ignored in established polities. For example, the continued
political success of India – the world’s largest democracy – is contingent in
part on overcoming the threat posed by Hindu extremists to that country’s
tradition (if 50 years can make a tradition) of religious tolerance. Nor can
the problem of Kashmir be treated exclusively (by India, Pakistan, or the
United States) as a politico-strategic issue, without taking into account the
need to address the crucial matter of Hindu-Muslim intolerance.

In new and aspiring democracies, the stakes are even higher. We
are witnessing a struggle over the value of religious freedom today in
Afghanistan and many of the post-Soviet nations of Central Asia. Each is
lurching at one speed or another in the general direction of democracy,
but all are in danger of assuming that democracy amounts to little more than a sterile proceduralism of party organization and secret ballots. In fact, as long experience in the West has shown (and, indeed, may need to be relearned in Western Europe), democracy requires a moral framework of universal principles in which it can operate. If that framework is an intolerant interpretation of Islam, democracy will come aborning just as surely as it will flounder from a framework of secular intolerance.

It is very important to emphasize that freedom of religion must not be confused with freedom from religion. A policy of secularism should not be promoted in any way as a cover for unintentional intolerance and atheism as a state policy.

Moreover, protecting religious freedom presents a foundational challenge to governments that, for whatever reason, seek to ally with a particular religious tradition in order to suppress others. Overcoming this problem, as much as any economic, ethnic or political factor, will determine the success or failure of Russian democracy, as Russian leaders struggle with the temptation to suppress non-Orthodox religious minorities in seeking the political support of the Russian Orthodox Church. The same dilemma assails leaders in Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia and most other European countries that languished under the Communist thumb during the Soviet period.

Other “lingering-Communist” countries, such as China and Vietnam, in which no particular religious tradition underpins culture, view with alarm the growth of religious observance that appears to attend and hasten the demise of Communist institutions. The result is often harsh repression as those governments try to manage and control religious fervor and even alter faith traditions perceived as “foreign” and therefore threatening, such as Roman Catholicism in China. Both China and Vietnam have used the heightened international (and especially American) concern over terrorism to justify attacks on “splittists” and other erstwhile security threats such as Protestants in the Vietnamese Central Highlands, the Buddhists of Tibet, and Uighur Muslims in Northwest China.

Promoting freedom of religion and belief globally is vital to the national security of each and every state in the world, as well as to international security, in two ways. First, it promotes democracy and therefore strengthens internal and regional stability, and encourages economic prosperity. Second, it helps fight the war on religion-based terrorism. I am not aware of a single regime in the world that both respects religious freedom and poses a security threat to the U.S. or any other state.
It is indeed a fine and fragile balance that needs to be maintained between a state’s secular nature and the positive role of believers in public life. To avoid such a twist is as necessary as it is to prevent the misuse of the concept of freedom. This corresponds, among other things, to the demands of a healthy pluralism and contributes to the building up of authentic democracy.

As Pope John Paul II recently stated, “When States are disciplined and balanced in the expression of their secular nature, dialogue between the different social sectors is fostered and, consequently, transparent and frequent cooperation between civil and religious society is promoted, which benefits the common good”.

A systematic and systemic discrimination and persecution of any minority, particularly a religious minority, create security, economic, and social consequences for itself, its neighbors, and the international community. The estrangement of one sector of a state’s population by the government or by another segment of the population with the government’s active or passive support establishes resentment and alienation among those groups.

Religion-based discrimination and persecution by a government, actively or passively, serve to create a security dilemma for said state among its neighbors, and may escalate to raise the attention of other interested states and international organizations.

Social and political tensions and conflicts created by feelings of inadequacy potentially lead to coercive measures and imposition of tougher laws. One such law is now in place in France, and is under consideration in Germany, Belgium, and other states as well. There could be no real power in laws that so many religious believers will resent or will try to circumvent. Alienating people and making them feel unwelcome is not the solution. The government has a responsibility for the common good, social peace and coexistence within the state. Consequently, it has the duty and responsibility to guarantee these rights and benefits by respecting pluralism.

Such feelings of isolation, separation, and inadequacy – created by inequitable social, economic, educational and other standards based solely on differences in religion – in addition to actual incidents of state-sponsored or supported persecution, are cause for entire migrations of targeted peoples. Such migrations create internal displacement and potential refugee issues for neighboring states.

Mass movements of populations across borders potentially become a security threat to states neighboring a religiously repressive state. This can grow to be a true security dilemma if the religiously repressive regime chooses to use force against religious minorities. While the situation in
North Korea is horrific all the way around, the treatment of North Korean refugees by Chinese authorities provides an adequate example of concern for such an issue.

The security dilemma caused by a lack of religious freedom is amplified when religious repression and lack of religious freedom serve as an impetus for acts of violence and even terrorism by targeted religious minorities. These acts against the government are not and can never be justified, but may seem to the perpetrators as the only recourse to a regime that represses their fundamental rights. Denial of the fundamental right of religion freedom can indeed directly impact the state’s own security. The respect of every expression of religious freedom is, therefore, an effective means for guaranteeing security and stability within a state.

In today’s world, where terrorism is the new evil empire and religious extremism the threatening political ideology, these words of President Ronald Reagan hold as true as they did when he spoke them in his March 8, 1983 speech to the National Association of Evangelicals: “The real crisis we face today is a spiritual one; at root, it is a test of moral will and faith….the source of our strength in the quest for human freedom is not material but spiritual, and because it knows no limitation, it must terrify and ultimately triumph over those who would enslave their fellow man”.
Globalisation and Cooperation Between Religion: Challenges and Opportunities

George McLean
Speech at the Third Session of Rhodes Forum, held in Greece on October 5–9, 2005

In recent weeks we have heard much of storms that can overwhelm entire cities. In an analogous sense it can be said that we live now in the midst of “a perfect storm”, that is, a time when mega forces combine in a uniquely destructive manner.

These factors include (a) an emergent and heightening awareness of cultural and religious identities, and (b) their intersection in a newly unipolar global context. What turns this into a storm is that (c) it is ruled in terms of a Hobbesian materialism in which justice is simply the hegemonic power which enslaves all.

The response calls for self-transcendence in order to respect others, their freedom – both cultural and religious – and their dignity. This has always been the message, if not the consistent practice, of religion. We must assure then that religions enable the global interaction of cultures to advance in terms of mutual respect and collaboration. And if cooperation between religions now becomes a central concern, in what ways can they respond?

The perfect storm

Heightened Self-Awareness of Cultures and Religions
Here in Rhodes it is especially appreciate to note the distinctive role in world civilisation played by Greece and its philosophers. In search of orientation for public life, and this at a time when Athens had just killed its own Socrates, Plato set out in an objective direction in search of separated ideas or forms which could serve as stable points of reference. This was radicalized in the Enlightenment’s exclusive commitment to what was known clearly and
distinctly – all else being placed under doubt or symbolically smashed as an idol. By 1900 this work, at least in physics, was considered by Alfred North Whitehead, to be essentially complete.

There remained, however, another frontier, namely, not the external and objective, but the world of interior self-awareness. To put its emergence under a microscope we could note how at the same beginning of the 20th century the Protestant Jan Masaryk, who was to be the founding father of Czechoslovakia, sent off to Vienna the young Jewish scholar, Edmund Husserl, with two gifts. One was the small gift of a writing case; the other was the huge gift of an introduction to the Catholic Professor, Franz Brentano, who was steeped in that long tradition of scholarship regarding the interior life of the Spirit which evolved from Aristotle’s notion of intentionality through the early days of the Church. As structured with the help of the Islamic and Christian scholarship in the high Middle Ages and nurtured in the spiritual explorations of Ibn Arabi, Teresa of Avila and Orthodox theology of the mystical life, this religious tradition enabled Brentano and Husserl to shed new light on the spiritual self-awareness that is human self-consciousness.

We should note that this is not a matter of seeing particular beings, either objects or even subjects. What breaks into human consciousness is neither God as creator nor oneself as creature. Rather, it is existence as the proper effect of God’s work of creating and man’s creative shaping of this into distinctive cultures in a field of human solidarity. By the turn of the millennia this had become the new focus of human awareness. It has two implications: one is cultures and hence multi-culturality, the other is religion and the interaction of different faiths.

**Culture.** First, the emergence of being via, and as, human consciousness engages intellect, will and imagination. It is a matter first of human freedom, that is, of self-determination and self-responsibility. It is also a matter of human self-creation, for it is most properly a matter of disposing or shaping one’s being in the very process of its reception.

Second, this creative shaping of one’s life means setting orders of preference, i.e., values, as to ways of living and seeking fulfillment. Thus some peoples, as in the Orient, may prioritize harmony and organize their life accordingly, whereas others in the West may give preference to competition

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1 Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, IV; *Meditation on First Philosophy*, I.
2 Technically this came to be termed “phenomenology,” a “bringing to light”.
and order their life quite differently. This entails further the development of corresponding virtues (strengths or capacities) in order to be able to realize these values. Together a people’s combination of values and virtues orders their life in a distinctive manner and thereby constitutes a culture or way of cultivating the soul. This is the way in which life can be lived and the young can be raised to be proper members of their community.  

Third, as carried out by peoples long separated in space, who through time have faced their own specific set of historical challenges, this has generated distinctive overall ways of life and senses of identity. These are the distinctive civilisations bound together by blood and soil, history and culture, which Huntington has called “the largest we”.

Today we are fated to live with this new awareness or consciousness of the reality of our cultures, not only as something in which we find ourselves or which is imposed upon us, but which through our history we have created and for which we as peoples are responsible. Culture in this sense is then the cumulative freedom of a people, their most characteristic self-realization. Conversely, the total weight of the responsibility for having so implemented and shaped our being bears down upon our consciousness as upon that of no generation before – which Milan Kundera calls “The Unbearable Lightness of Being”. Bearing this burden is the new challenge of life in our multicultural world.

Religion. Moreover, if culture is awareness of God’s creative gift of being and our overpowering responsibility for shaping it, then it is but natural that we thank God for this gift, seek his help in bearing our burden, and live in founded hope that a faithful life will lead to fulfillment in his love. As all of this is the essence of religion, with this increasing awareness there is as well an intensification of religious self-consciousness. Indeed, in these new phenomenological terms Paul Tillich would point to God precisely as man’s “ultimate concern”.

We can conclude then that the emerging attention to human subjectivity entails increasing awareness of our cultural and religious identities.

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Globalisation as Interface of Cultures and Religions

There is a second component of our perfect storm, namely, the new and newly intensified interaction of the many cultures and religions. Much is said of the new level of economic unification as we move from a bipolar world of multiple economic systems to one that is unipolar. Not only epidemics, but financial strengths and weakness move swiftly across the world.

This, however, remains in the external or objective order. Much more central to our self-identity and interaction are the developments in the inter-subjective order of communication via the media. The same images are shared simultaneously in living rooms world-wide. Their content can be unifying or divisive, inspiring or degrading. In which terms will this economic and political unification will be managed?

Neo-Conservative and Neo-Liberal Approaches to Globalisation

The two components noted thus far could both be positive and constructive. We must consider the third component which turns all this into the present storm into which the world has been descending rapidly since the turn of the millennia. This is the Hobbesian republic of selfish men and women in which rights stem from brute force. Again, we might return to ancient Greece to see that in Plato’s *Republic* there figured not only Socrates’ search for virtue, but Thracymicus’ despair of a self-ordering polis and his call not for freedom and responsibility, but for order imposed by force: justice is “nothing else than the advantage of the stronger;” justice is the dictate of power, there is no other? Indeed Leo Strauss would take this to be the hidden but true position of Plato, as did his students who seized control of all the levers of political and military power in the emergent years of the global millennium. Their project was a new world order imposed by a hegemonic power to which all would be subjected, that is, enslaved.

Not incidentally others would rightly see this to be an attack not only on their present freedom, but, as seen above, on the cultural identity they had generated as the sum of the meaning and dignity of their life. Moreover, as religion is basic to culture, it could be expected that religion too would inevitably be drawn into the vortex, generating vapors of crusade and jihad.

If this be so then the task of humankind now is to heal this third factor. But how this can be done is not immediately apparent, due not only to the neo-conservative ideology noted above, but perhaps even more to the long and pervasive effects of liberalism and neo-liberalism.

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Globalisation and Cooperation Between Religion: Challenges and Opportunities

Liberal democratic theory emerges from the English nominalism of the late Middle Ages according to which all consists of single atomic realities united, if at all, only externally. It is marked by the corresponding empirical and hence material horizons of early modern thinkers, typically Hobbes for whom man is “short, brutish and mean”, and natively engaged in a war of all against all for scare resources.

The contemporary liberal theory of the late John Rawls develops a set of principles for the ordered operation of such a system. Supposing these atomic individual its first requirement is to establish a completely undetermined field for their political interaction. This requires, he would say, the removal of all cosmic, integrating visions behind a veil of ignorance in order to enable a free market for the competition of ideas.

First as a carry-over from the economic order, this places man under money. Second, as a religion is a basic coordination of thought and value in order for political discourse to be open. Religion too must be removed from the public square and placed behind that veil of ignorance. As a result “liberal democracy” comes quickly to describe itself as “secular democracy”, terms which become easily interchanged. It is true that all religious are welcome to carry on their work in the private sphere. But whenever the courts must rule on matters of education, family on personal relations the religious contribution foundational to the culture must be decisively excluded. Progressively life sinks to an atheistic level.

Neo-liberalism since the 1960s has compounded the issue, for it focuses not on individual liberty but on the blind forces of the free market. To these material forces are attributed quasi divine prerogative for they are not to be questioned or interfered with; their operation may be harsh at times but will always achieve the broadest economic good for the largest number of people. Freedom then is not for persons or even nations, but that the workings of the market be untrammeled. One might well cry out in the words of the ancient prophet: “take away, Lord, this heart of stone and give me back a heart of flesh and blood”.

It is here that the importance of religion becomes newly manifest. If, as we saw, the potential beneficence of the first two components of the perfect storm are compromised by the third ideologies of neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism then where is the countervailing force to be found? The threat as seen above lies in liberalism’s assumption of total autocracy for the individual, which neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism direct to the selfish pursuit of power and profit. Liberation from these perduring fascinations requires a new horizon which enables one to control and shape these pursuits. Such an horizon must transcend our material reality and
situate this in a broaden and higher context of human and social goods and purposes. It is this religious context which makes human freedom possible and hence restores to human subjects the initiative to shape their cultures. As religiously based these in turn have a number of characteristics essential to our times.

First, each culture is unique and hence diverse from all others. As a culture is created by the free self-determination of a people it is unique to that people, and like each act of freedom it is the responsibility of this people and could be done by no other. Each culture is the distinctive manner in which a specific people realizes its life or esse according to its own formative decisions and commitments, for which that people is responsible.

Cultures then are unique inasmuch as each people realizes its life or being, not as an univocous instances of the same specific type, but in its own existentially proper manner. Cultures are shaped over time not only by their circumstances, but even more by their freedom in making their own decisions and commitments. It is crucial to the exercise of human freedom then that the cultural uniqueness of each people not be compromised, but rather maximized. There must be no dismissal of human creativity, no lobotomy of peoples in search of a common or universal least-common-denominator. The real challenge now is rather to be able to live fully our unique and distinctive identities in this newly global context.

Second, similarity in the diversity between cultures. This lies paradoxically in the effort of each people to live its own proper culture in its own way. Where before philosophers spoke of an abstract, universal and univocous nature (e.g., rational animal), now however it is possible to take account from within also of the long exercise of freedom by a people in their concrete circumstances. The nature according to which we live is not a generic freedom, but the actual cumulative freedom that has constituted our culture as the pattern in terms of which we see, judge and act. Similarity in these existential terms is realized not by diminishing or compromising our distinctive identities or cultures, but in living them to the full.

Third, complementarity between cultures. The unity here is one of complementarity between diverse cultures. As each acts according to its nature, all reflect in their own way the One or divine which is unlimited, infinite and hence unique. In Plato’s terms all else are limited effects, participations or images of this One. But if each is a limited yet unique manifestation of the One they must, in turn, be complementary one to the other.
Fourth, convergence of cultures. This relationship must moreover be one of convergence. Living is a matter not of theory, but of teleology. As noted above, all are not only from the One by the efficient causality of the creator, but also are in pursuit of that One as goal and Omega: each culture, in pursuing its own unique and limited perfection, pursues more ultimately the one, infinite perfection which it imitates. Thus all cultures are convergent in that each in its own distinctive manner tends toward the same infinite divine perfection. This dynamic pursuit of perfection is the way Iqbal contrasted the more theoretical, detached and distant work of philosophy to religion, which he pictured as active, engaged and uniting one with another.

The aspiration of religion soars higher than that of philosophy. Philosophy is an intellectual view of things; and as such, does not care to go beyond a concept which can reduce all the rich variety of experience to a system. It sees reality from a distance as it were. Religion seeks a closer contact with Reality. The one is theory; the other is living experience, association, intimacy. In order to achieve this intimacy thought must rise higher than itself, and find its fulfillment in an attitude of mind which religion describes as prayer — one of the last words on the lips of the Prophet of Islam.7

Metaphysics is displaced by psychology, and religious life develops the ambition to come into direct contact with the ultimate reality. It is here that religion becomes a matter of personal assimilation of life and power; and the individual achieves a free personality, not by releasing himself from the fetters of the law, but by discovering the ultimate source of the law within the depths of his own consciousness.8

Implications for living together in a multi-cultural and multi-religious world

A first implication of the recognition of culture as the cumulative freedom of a people is that all structures for living together must avoid domination or suppression of this freedom, any reduction of the other to either a clone or a client. Rather, others are fellow free and creative humans; all are pilgrims on the path of development as peace and justice. This is the search for ever more full participation in truth, goodness and beauty. It entails a number of cautions regarding things to be avoided, while revealing a number of principles and conclusions.

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7 Iqbal, Reconstruction of Religions, ed. M. Saeed Sheikh (Lahore, Pakistan: Iqbal Academy and Institute of Islamic Culture, 1984), p. 143.
8 Ibid., pp. 48-49.
It cautions against:

a) pseudo generosity, based on the supposition that what one people has worked out should be imposed upon all others;
b) pseudo stability, which for a limited time can come from overwhelming power ruthlessly applied;
c) pseudo peace, that comes from suppression as practiced in the so-called realpolitik.

Instead, for living together it is necessary to recognize:

1. that all are created equal and therefore free
   • and hence that peace lies in the mutual pursuit of human fulfillment;
2. that the human person is essentially relational
   • and hence that our futures are so bound together as to require mutual recognition, respect and cooperation; and
3. that peace can be had only from the free pursuit of harmony
   • and hence that in a global age “blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall possess the land”.

From this we can draw the following principles for life in a multi-cultural and multi-religious world.

• that the understanding and skills for responding to, and cooperating with other cultures must supplant ideological aggression;
• that the only real safeguard is not closure upon one’s own protection, but openness of heart to the existential concerns of others and to the cultures they have struggled to create; and
• that the true realpolitik is that imaged by Isaias, namely, all peoples each on their own pilgrimage and all converging on the one holy mountain where God will be All in all.

Hence the hope and task of this new century is that, as we approach the Divine center and in so doing draw closer to one another, we will be able to appreciate the hymns that are the cultures and religions of other peoples, raise our voices together, and unite in a great symphony of peace and praise.
VII

RHODES FORUM DECLARATIONS AND STATEMENTS
DECLARATION
DIALOGUE OF CIVILISATIONS
FOR A HUMANE ORDER

The World Public Forum (WPF) has been constituted to bring together a broad cross section of public, religious, academic and political figures for the establishment of a “Dialogue of Civilizations”.

This was the outcome of a series of discussions held this year in Moscow and St. Petersburg (the Russian Federation), in New Delhi (India), in Tehran (Iran), in Prague (the Czech Republic), Athens (Greece), and Vilnius (Lithuania).

The aim of this dialogue is to discuss and elaborate such forms of the world community existence that could reinforce fundamental civilisation values and the inalienable human rights, that would capable of meeting the global threats and challenges.

The participants of the Forum reflected that the present world order, the established system of international relations and its acting institutions do not provide complete implementation of the pressing human needs in security, in justice and in the qualitative improvement of life. This has lead to expansion of enormous areas of human deprivation, to promotion of senseless desire for consumption and acquisition, to persistent attempts through the use of information technologies to bring not only economies, but also cultures, spirituality, moral and ethical norms to a single common denominator.

The participants of the Forum have paid special attention to the irreversible damage to the Institutions of International Peace and Security, due to unjustified use violence against sovereignty, security, and culture of other nations which results from the lopsided structure of the world.

To transform this state of affairs into a just, compassionate and a humane order, would require patience, sacrifice, and sustained action to approach these problems of vast magnitude.
The satisfaction of the minimum basic needs for all — food, habitat, health, education, work environment, air and water, should be the first priority for all people of all countries, for all the time. Yet the material, cultural and spiritual consequences of the currently imposed paradigm of reckless consumption and its global spread become less and less acceptable because they serve the accumulation of affluence of a few countries and a small group of people while leading the vast part of the mankind to impoverishment and deprivation.

Ways should be found to break the unholy link, which generates internal and external compulsions to consumption, acquisition and aggregation as the driving force the New Global World Order. Society should glorify spiritual values and achievements. A cultural and spiritual counteroffensive is a need of the time.

Different indigenous cultures evolve into different civilisations. Therefore, the process of induced reduction of diverse cultures as a part of globalisation into a single civilisation model is detrimental to the process of human evolution. A dialogue of faiths and cultures can freely and creatively evolve only in the absence of a threat of cultural diversity being absorbed and assimilated into a single global standard.

The present globalisation fixed on material sphere and conducted in the interests of a small group of the rich developed countries without any ethical, moral and value limitations, conducted without consideration for the interests of poor and developing countries can be detrimental for the future of humanity. The New Global World Order forged by the unipolar power structure is a challenge to the true concept of human dignity and equality and is an affront to the freedom and sovereignty of nations.

So much damage has already been done to the human system, and it is being backed by so much military power that this state of affairs cannot be transformed instantly. We have first to meditate, seek peaceful non-violent and orderly solutions which will fire the imaginations of vast society of the people worldwide, to direct a trend towards a humane future for all. But the time scales for change will vary from one nation to another with the possible advantages for those with lesser damage from the present paradigm.

To seek long-term perspective requires a prophetic vision. But understanding of short and medium term objectives of world development would require a search for new cognition models needed to find an adequate response by different civilisations to the challenges of the time. The essence of this response is in defending the human freedom to develop within the
frame of their own culture and territory, their own resources and needs. An innovative civilisational project, which embraces all aspects of material, cultural and spiritual growth is required.

The search for that humane future must evolve to an alteration of the material world, where we live, where our modern civilisations exist. Otherwise humanity will forever continue in a state of rapid drift towards an Armageddon.

The present Forum is just a beginning of a large process that brings people and nations belonging to different civilisations closer to each other.

The participants of the Forum have unanimously decided to continue the serious discussion about the destiny of humanity that started on the island of Rhodes. This discussion should become a substantial factor of the international situation. Practical implementation of the stated goals can be achieved through a series of joint projects especially in cultural, educational and ecological spheres.

The participants and delegates of the Forum have decided to establish a permanently acting International Coordination Committee (ICC) of the World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations”.

The Rhodes Forum calls public organizations, legislative and executive bodies of governments, academic institutions and research centers, scholars and thinkers to widely discuss our proposals.
The World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations” met for the second time in Rhodes (Greece), 29 September – 2 October 2004, gathering several hundreds intellectuals, practitioners, public figures, NGO’s activists, religious authorities, representatives of means of communications, business leaders from over 40 countries.

In these times characterized by a spreading of a cult of violence, when we have an overemphasis on war talks and a deficit of peace and justice talks, the Forum reaffirms the commitment to dialogue among civilisations as an antidote to the looming clash of civilisations.

The dialogue involves the recognition of the dignity and integrity of different cultures and human identities, and opposes any form of hegemonic domination and cultural standardization.

The dialogue recognizes the values of different traditional religious and cultural traditions and condemns the abuse of these values for power political purposes.

In an effort to strengthen these commitments the Forum concentrated on the following themes: globalisation and the need for humane global governance; culture and identity in world politics; the new generation in search of values; and the role of religions within the dialogue of civilisations.

On the theme of globalisation, the discussions concentrated on the need to develop a plural and democratic form of global governance as a counterweight to unilateral domination and the unregulated rule of market forces.

On theme of culture and identity, the focus of the discussion was on both preserving the integrity and multiplicity of cultural traditions and preventing the decline into extremisms and militant confrontations.
On the theme of the new generation in search for values, the participants recognized the need to bridge the gulf between tradition and modernity and to encourage dialogue between generations.

On the role of religions within dialogue of civilisations, the discussions concentrated on the need to strengthen interfaith encounters and contribute to the consolidation of ongoing inter-religious dialogues.

The Forum believes that in pursuing these goals we can advance the positive role that public opinion movements can make to global peace and progress.

The Forum also recognizes the need for broad information support to disseminate the dialogue of civilisations and to influence the current political systems in recognizing the value of dialogue as opposed to hegemonic oppression and terrorism.
Participants of the Forum have stated by common consent that the goal for which the World Public Forum was created that had been proclaimed in the 2003 Declaration of Rhodes has become even more relevant than ever before. New representatives of different civilisations, countries and nations join the Forum for the implementation of this goal. This year representatives of Europe, Asia, North and Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and Australia have taken part in the work of the Forum.

Today one can contend that the World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations” is acquiring the features of a network community working all over the world on the basis of different models of civilisations.

It should be noted that not only the scope of the Forum participants has increased; the range of the discussed themes has also expanded. We now pass from the in-depth study of the most burning problems of the dialogue of civilisations to systemic work and concrete steps.

The third session of the Forum was focused on the problem of integration and self-determination civilisations at the brink of the 21st century. Participants of the discussions noted that modern integration has encompassed all spheres of contemporary public life: economy, politics, education, culture, science and even the newest technologies. It is the basic element of globalisation, which on the one hand, brings nations closer to each other, establishes new connections between people from all the continents that had been unthinkable only a decade or two decades ago, an on the other hand, it leads to further cleavages, it increases the gap between the poor and the rich nations. Hence, there is a need of find ways and mechanisms to change the currently domineering globalisation model. It may be substituted by a model that would allow to harness the benefits and fruit of globalisation for the benefit of all nations and civilisations.
The participants have expressed concern over the state of affairs in the areas of tension and international conflicts: they insist on the need for a persistent search for a stable and lasting peaceful resolution.

It was emphasized during the work of a special section on stability and security in the Middle East, the Balkans and Central Asia that there is a need for constant monitoring of the processes that play the crucial role for the future of these regions. It was stated that the encounter and interaction of civilisations in these regions of the world already had evolved in a contradictory way. The processes of development in these regions have not been logically implemented and are in the state of flux; therefore, they will be subjected to external and internal pressures in the foreseeable future.

Discussions of the role of religion in the contemporary world have stated that religions more actively influence the public processes, surpassing the domain of private live. The task of the Forum is seen as creating conditions for believers to freely construct their own lives – both private and public in harmony with each other and with the secular part of society. The positive impact of religious communities, their dialogue and cooperation with each other, with the state and society should be freely evolving in the sphere of education, human rights protection, mass media as well as in the other public processes.

A central role in the development of the dialogue of civilisations is played by culture and arts. Multiplicity of cultures represents not only the realities of the contemporary world a value of itself; it has an intrinsic impact on the development of inter-civilisational integration. It may be regarded as its key element. The inter-cultural dialogue based on the principles of national cultural identity preservation is the most efficient and humane way of inter-civilisational understanding and interaction.

Special emphasis in the Forum was paid to the inclusion of the representatives of young people in the process of dialogue of civilisations. Forum participants favor the need to create conditions and possibilities for the young people from all countries to become the most active participants in the construction of a more just and harmonious world. The younger generation has the right to being heard by the world community.

Participants of the third session unanimously state that harmonization of inter-civilisational relations, the development of a functioning network community, in order to create a world order based on dialogue, are necessary.
The Fourth session of the World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations”, which took place in Rhodes, September 27 – October 1, 2006, brought together over 500 participants from more than 50 countries of the world, united by their desire to implement in practical terms the idea of “bringing closer people and nations, belonging to different civilisations”, recorded at the Rhodes declaration in 2003.

The participants note with satisfaction, that following the decision of the Third annual Forum the process of registration of the international non-government organization World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations” has been successfully completed.

Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus and representatives of other faiths and world views have come together to reaffirm that cooperation free of traditional cultural and political barriers is, indeed, possible.

The work of the Forum resulted in the following conclusions:

Today, when inter-confessional, inter-ethnic and other conflicts have become increasingly more abound all over the world, the work of the Forum has testified again to the fact, that today’s world cannot be comprehended and changed in a constructive way without recognizing the key role of civilisation factors in international relations.

Neglect of civilisation aspects in solving vital problems of the world brings destructive consequences both for our contemporaries and future generations.

On the basis of this understanding the Forum concentrated its work on discussing main issues of the inter-civilisation agenda.
Discussing political problems of interaction between different civilisations, the Forum stressed the importance of national states, which notably influence decision making process related to the most important tasks of the world development.

Discussing issues of the dialogue of religions, the Forum participants noted implicit dangers of exploiting religious feelings of believers for political purposes, and pointed out the need of affirming the role of religion as a factor of peace, constructive work and unity.

Discussing social consequences of global migration, the Forum noted that migration processes have transformed into one of the frontline areas of inter-civilisation cooperation and integrated efforts of all civilisations in developing norms and regulations for peaceful coexistence of people of different cultures, religions, races and communities.

Discussing top priority issues of socio-cultural integration, the Forum participants pointed out the need of recognizing the value of different cultures and the importance of resisting any attempts to impose discrimination and uniformity. The Forum participants noted the positive role of intercultural dialogue in developing constructive forms of political discussions and economic cooperation, in expanding the space for public interaction between representatives of different civilisations.

Discussing the diversity of modernization patterns for the Middle East, the Forum participants pointed out the absence of a common model for the development of the region that could significantly reduce the conflict potential in the Middle East. At the same time the participants mentioned a number of positive aspects that may de-block the current political situation in the Middle East in the near future.

Discussing the fates of the young generation in today’s world, the Forum participants emphasized the need of teaching young people the skills of dialogue at the earliest possible age and the importance of enabling them to participate in inter-civilisation dialogue, remaining at the same time heirs and representatives of their own civilisation. The participants specifically indicated the necessity to make the young generation immune to any phobias and ideological clichés, focused on the rejection of the Alien.

The Fourth Rhodes Forum stressed the necessity of broad cooperation between leading international political organizations, public entities, religious figures, different research centers in order to promote initiatives of the Dialogue of Civilisations to set values of inter-civilisation dialogue against different forms of violence, suppression and terror.
The mission of the World Public Forum annual session “Dialogue of Civilizations”, Rhodes Forum 2007, is to make the world community clear about the idea that instead of chaos and destructive tendencies in the world today accompanied by dubious attempts of separate communities to offer themselves in the role of saviors of the world from perish, it is quite possible to see global development as a process of building up a united civilisational space. This could allow, through dialogue, to harmonize inter-civilisational relationships, widen the system of religious contacts, form the structure of regional dialogue aimed at settling critical problems of mutual existence. All of these positive initiatives could help to design integration systems in different spheres of human activity and provide for inter-subsidiarity of opportunities of human self-perfection in various areas of people’s lives.

Rhodes Forum is called upon to express public concern upon disintegration tendencies in the life of the world community and, also, anxiety about attempts to guarantee privileged development of some at the expense of others.

Rhodes Forum, together with other friendly public organisations, positions itself at a new level as instrument of forming a united civilisational space of international relationships. Namely, the instrument able to help diverse public groups come out with and co-ordinate their interests and positions, thereby fully participating in the global development.

Rhodes Forum 2007 claims, that it is precisely this level of inter-civilisational contacts which allows to sort out current problems and blind alleys of social-political life, create a fair order of legal relations and appropriate conditions for a human being’s growth irrespective of his/her ethnic or cultural origin.
DECLARATION

We, the participants of the 6th Rhodes Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations” held at the Greek Island of Rhodes from October 9 to 13, 2008:

Bearing in mind the deliberations and results of the five previous Rhodes Forums as well as of several regional conferences under the auspices of the World Public Forum – Dialogue of Civilizations that contributed to a permanent process of a vibrant dialogue among the representatives of civil society from different countries;

Bearing in mind the role of the public initiatives and efforts to find appropriate solutions for the resolution global challenges;

Stressing that the dialogue between civilisations is the dialogue between individuals and public organizations;

Recognizing the role of the Kronstadt Initiative of 2002 in creating and supporting “the regular holding of the World Public Forum which could become a deliberative and consultative body uniting various social organizations to represent the public interests of their respective countries in this social process”;

Reaffirming the intentions of the co-founders of the World Public Forum – Dialogue of Civilizations, Vladimir Yakunin, Jagdish Kapur and Nicholas Papanicolaou and the members of the WPF society to support the United Nations activities in the area of dialogue among civilisations worldwide thru initiatives of civil society.
Hereby declare

1. Establishing control over the present situation: new peaceful initiatives

1.1. The situation in international relations is deteriorating steadily and, in its impacts, dramatically. Confrontational debates are held instead of dialogue in the spirit of mutual respect.

1.2. Civil society and its organizations have to contribute to confidence building among nations, religions and civilisations by promoting and supporting peaceful solutions of international conflicts and emphasizing the desire of the people for peace, stability and security. Civil Society should play a major role in these circumstances.

1.3. We appeal to the leaders of the world to refrain from cold war rhetoric and to return to a climate of constructive dialogue which brings together all available forces to face the global challenges and to find common solutions for the greatest threats to mankind.

1.4. States and International Organizations should therefore further develop legal principles and rules and their effective implementation for the resolution of conflicts on the basis of respect of civilisational (human) dignity.

1.5. Leaders and nations should voice resentment of the use of military force, except in cases stipulated by the UN resolutions, and reaffirm the complete ban on the use of weapons of mass destruction. States and International Organizations should commit themselves to support peace operations, including peace support and enforcement operations conducted in support of diplomatic efforts to establish and maintain peace.

1.6. The international community must find ways to find common responses to global and regional challenges respecting the equality of nations as well as the right of each civilisation to self-determination.

1.7. Fruitful dialogue should lead to partnership of all nations in order to jointly fight terrorism, to take all possible measures against climate change, to bridge the poverty gap and to overcome dangerous imbalances.
2. Economic partnership to overcome the financial crisis

2.1. The present condition of the global economy confirms the need to discard the principle of unipolarity, not only in politics but also in the international economy, bearing in mind that 2/3 of the world population lives in poverty and hunger.

2.2. We consider regional economic cooperation important and necessary, to avoid a situation where one economy is the dominating one and problems of this economy can hurt the whole world.

2.3. New communication technologies, including audio, video, printed press, multimedia and the Internet provide new economic opportunities as well as the opportunity of closer cooperation between civilisations, which serve as the basis for the intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

2.4. We underline the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility and Public Private Partnerships in a new World Economic Order, since the ultimate target of all economic activities should be the well being of human beings and not the agglomeration of capital.

2.5. Constantly rejecting the predatory aggressiveness of consumerism, our societies should overcome this prevailing trend after the obvious failure of the ideologies of communism and capitalism. The permanent desire for more consumption would lead to a global system of beneficiaries of consumption and the victims who would have to satisfy this desire.

2.6. We firmly believe in the responsibility of the richer countries to bridge the poverty gap. Poverty of whole nations is endangering regional and global stability. We consider the use of the Kyoto agreements for commercial trade-offs amoral, when developing countries are deprived of development perspectives. The conclusions of the 6th session indicate the inevitability of a world economic order, based on the multipolarity in this era of globalisation.

2.7. We firmly express our appreciation for new forms of financial business such as social business, ethical funds, environmental funds and all types of ethical banking, in particular Islamic banking.

2.8. We encourage “historical and cultural” tourism one the one hand as a mean to foster economic development and on the other hand as a means of learning more about other civilisations and cultures. This means also that tourism has to respect traditions and customs of the host country.
3. **Education – the key to dialogue and mutual understanding**

3.1. The World Public Forum – Dialogue of Civilizations is therefore an active partner of UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. We support the global dissemination and sharing of information and knowledge – helping all civilizations to build their human and institutional capacities for the sake of a better and peaceful future.

3.2. We work for a sustainable world with just societies that value knowledge, promote a culture of peace, celebrate diversity and defend human rights, achieved by providing *education for all*. As underlined by World Public Forum’s conference at Carleton University Ottawa, Canada, education serves as a “Dialogue Model of Social Development”.

3.3. But today there is not only a big gap in the world economy, but following the same dividing line there is also a huge gap in education which leads to a vicious circle – no economic resources, no education, no education – no economic development. We therefore want to support the UN millennium goal that, by 2015, all children complete a full course of primary education.

3.4. We stand for the establishment of schools for the dialogue of civilizations, which would promote social skills, cultural and religious tolerance, the study of other cultures, respect of the right of the “alien” (if it does not contradict the norms of the local civilization).

3.5. We emphasize the importance of adult learning and education in a very fast developing world. If the gaps in economy and development should be narrowed it will be necessary to give everybody the chance to keep his or her knowledge and skills up to date.

4. **Believers of different religions united for peace**

4.1. The world religions constitute a unique pool of wisdom and desire for a better co-existence of mankind in friendship and peace. But no one possesses the “ultimate truth”. Dialogue and cooperation between the world religions, their believers as well as their leaders, is therefore essential to achieve their common goals, which are better relations among people and enhanced respect for the divine creation.
4.2. To achieve greater unity among mankind, dialogue, cooperation and common actions of the world religions should be promoted at all levels, not only among leaders, but also among believers, in particular where they share the same neighbourhood.

4.3. A prerequisite for mutual respect is knowledge about each other. We therefore suggest that the world religions work together for the elaboration of a common curriculum for teaching about the other religions. This will ensure respectful information on the one hand and avoid misunderstandings, while wrongful stereotyping and hatred will be avoided.

5. A legal basis for a just world order

5.1. In an increasingly interconnected world progress in the areas of development and security must go hand in hand. There will be no development without security and no security without development. Both development and security depend on respect for the rule of law.

5.2. The foundation of the United Nations Organisation back in 1945 was in important step towards justice and legally based international cooperation after the catastrophe of World War II and as a response to the barbarism that initiated this tragic experience.

5.3. Interstate relations should therefore be the supreme place of dialogue among civilisations and nations, the ultimate instance in international law and the only source of law enforcement at the international level. WPF “Dialogue of Civilizations” is a platform for public support of these activities.

5.4. Human rights and human dignity are indispensable and indivisible. They are based in the common heritage of all civilisations and religions and in traditions and moral values of societies around the world. No civilisation and no nation has the right to monopolize the system of human rights. Each member state of the United Nations has committed itself to implement the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in accordance with its civilisational traditions and societal values.

5.5. WPF supports the Millennium Declaration of the UN, which reaffirms that each nation has the right to choose how it is ruled, and through the who rules it. This has to be achieved thru the self-determination of peoples and nations. It can neither be imposed from outside nor can it follow a single model.
6. Migration – not a danger but a chance for the dialogue of civilisations

6.1. Migration trends are linking different civilisations. This calls obviously again for the dialogue of civilisations to ensure that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society, a principle the International Migration Organization is committed to.

6.2. The root causes of contemporary migration can be found very often in armed conflicts, in extreme poverty, in racial, ethnic or religious discrimination and in natural disasters (more and more connected to climate change). This underlines once more the need of dialogue, not only on migration, but on its root causes.

6.3. We appreciate the work of the International Migration Organization which brings together all interested parties, states of origin, of transit and of destination of migration. But still a lot is to be done. Daily tragedies suffered by migrants in many parts of the world, e.g. in the Mediterranean, exploitation of illegal migrants as a cheap work force, racial, ethnic and religious discrimination of migrants, rising xenophobia in many countries, all call for action.

6.4. Through dialogue, also within the societies concerned, conditions for a humane and orderly migration should be prepared. Immigrants have the right to keep their identity as well as to be integrated in the host country’s society with due respect to the culture of the recipient nation. This requires the effort from both sides. Natives should also have the right to maintain local traditions as well as self-identification vis-à-vis immigrants.

6.5. Education to dialogue and integration is not a one-way-street. Therefore awareness of traditions, customs and religions of major migrant groups in the main stream of the host country’s society is essential for a successful integration without tensions.

7. Culture and arts – fertile soil for dialogue of civilisations

7.1. Each civilisation has its specific expression in arts and culture which contributes to its distinctive character. But at the same time the arts and culture of a civilisation can attract the people belonging to other civilisations and traditions and build bridges between people of different civilisational background.

7.2. Literature, music, architecture, archaeology, fine arts as well as theatre and film are valuable tools of dialogue.
7.3. Interaction between artists and cultural institutions of different civilisations contributes to better mutual understanding. Such interactions as cross-border exhibitions and guest performances are fostering the dialogue of civilisations.

7.4. We highly value the freedom of expression and the role of the media in developing a better society. At the same time we want to remind the media of their responsibility to contribute to better mutual understanding thru fair and unbiased reporting, and not to fan the flames of confrontation. We appeal therefore to the mass media, to refrain from provocation and direct or implied insults of other civilisations and religions.

8. Conclusions: Intercultural dialogue as a platform for global development

8.1. Facing increasing tensions in international relations, dangerous tendencies to seek military instead of political solutions, and to ring back cold war rhetoric, we are firmly convinced that the world needs dialogue instead of confrontation, partnership instead of ruthless competition.

8.2. All civilisations are committed to respecting human dignity and the indispensable fundamental rights of each human being, but also of each nation and of each civilisation. International relations as well as national legislation should therefore be based on the principle of equality of human beings and of the civilisations and of nations built by them.

8.3. The financial crisis which started in the United States and has spread to the whole world needs efficient means against virtual economy. We support the idea of international financial markets supervision and trans-national taxes on speculative profit. This depends on mutual trust among the nations which can be achieved through true dialogue.

8.4. Taking into consideration the complexity of the global system, and in particular, current economic and social turmoil, the participants of the Forum recommend to the co-founders to launch a special taskforce to foresight and analyze medium – term socio – economic and political development with the aim to support the statutory activities of the Forum.
8.5. We appreciate the creation of an internet network of the World Public Forum – Dialogue of Civilizations and invite all those who are interested in promoting the dialogue to join this network.

8.6. We pay tribute to the laureates of the International Prize “Dialogue of Civilizations”, who contributed substantially to the development of the philosophy of dialogue and its implementation in practice.

8.7. Despite all obstacles, despite all recent deterioration in international relations, despite the current financial crisis, we are convinced, dialogue will prevail over confrontation, we will overcome the reigning culture of clashes and violence and replace it by greater cross-cultural understanding and partnership between societies and civilisations. We, the participants of the 6th annual session of World Public Forum – Dialogue of Civilizations will continue to work for these goals, for a new humane world order!
We, the participants of the 7th Rhodes Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations” from October 8 to 12, 2009

Recalling the results of the previous six annual conferences of the World Public Forum – Dialogue of Civilizations on the Greek Island of Rhodes,

Reaffirming the firm commitment to the “Dialogue of Civilisations” concept for the solution of today’s pressing issues,

Underlining the rich heritage of mankind through cultural and religious diversity,

Emphasizing that mutual understanding and respect is not only the guarantee of an open society at national, but also at regional and global level,

Bearing in mind that respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, is a prerequisite for international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character,

Underlining that human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, gender, language or religion, are based on the principle of equality among all human beings and all nations,

Noting that globalisation brings greater interrelatedness among people and increased interaction among cultures and civilisations,

Underscoring that globalisation is not only an economic, financial and technological process but that it also presents the challenge of preserving and celebrating the rich intellectual and cultural diversity of humankind and of civilisation,

But also recognizing that global threats, like terrorism, climate change, financial and economic imbalances, migration flows, and the poverty gap between and within nations are still waiting for global responses,
And last but not least being concerned, that in international politics abrupt setbacks towards traditional and conservative models of confrontation can be seen,

Hereby declare:

RHODES DECLARATION 2009:

1. New Developments in International Relations

1.1. Unable to find solutions for international and regional conflicts some players in international relations turn back to confrontational behaviours of the past. But these models would lead just deeper into the crisis.

1.2. We therefore reiterate our appeal to the leaders of the world to refrain from any cold war rhetoric and to return to a climate of constructive dialogue which shows humane responsibility and brings together all available forces to meet the global challenges and to find common solutions for the greatest threats to mankind.

1.3. International relations and international co-operation must take into account that main impulses of international development are not anymore coming from the traditional centers but have been gradually shifting to emerging economies.

1.4. States and International Organizations should commit themselves to co-operation based on mutual trust in order to overcome the global crisis which is by far not only an economic and financial one but to a large extent a crisis of a society which lacks of values and well understood responsibility.

1.5. Civil society, non-governmental organizations, non-profit institutions, international, regional and national foundations should play a bigger role in the establishment of the “Dialogue of Civilisations” culture in international relations. We therefore welcome the gradually enhanced participation of NGOs in international organizations like United Nations, UNESCO, ISESCO, Council of Europe, League of Arab States, Asia – Europe Foundation, Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation and others.

1.6. Civil society and its organizations have to contribute to confidence building among nations, religions and civilisations by promoting and supporting peaceful solutions of international conflicts and emphasizing the desire of the people for peace, stability and security.
1.7. Discussing the situation in the Middle East we urge the parties concerned to use the windows of opportunity for establishing peace. There is no military solution to the conflict; it may only be resolved on the basis of historic compromise providing for mutual recognition and respect for each other’s legitimate rights and interests. Israelis and Palestinians should get together in Moscow for an international conference under the auspices of the Quarter. This may open the road to peace.

1.8. In Iraq and Afghanistan, one the homeland, the other the crossroads of ancient civilisations, dialogue between the different ethnic, religious and social groups should lead to the ownership of the two nations of the own affairs and in particular of their own future in peace, stability and self-determination.

1.9. We also emphasize that the debate on Iran’s Nuclear Program should be carried out in the spirit of dialogue of equals and with the aim not only of non-proliferation but of global reduction of nuclear arms.

1.10. Territorial integrity and safeguarded national independence shall be the guide lines for the solution of the above mentioned conflicts as well as for strengthening democratic stability in Lebanon and for the solution of the Darfur crisis.


2.1. The global economic and financial crisis has not ended yet. It is obvious that this crisis cannot be fought with the traditional economic and financial tools only.

2.2. In particular protectionism does not work; on the contrary it is worsening the consequences of the crisis. The way different nations structure their economies within the globalised market probably matters less than we like to think. Therefore we need more, not less international economic cooperation.

2.3. International economic cooperation must be based on mutual interests instead of raw national egoism and shift from global domination to the balanced multi-polarity including the new emerging economies.
2.4. The ultimate target of all economic activities should be the common good of human beings and not the agglomeration of capital. The focus of economics should be on the benefit and the bounty that the economy produces, on how to let this bounty increase, and how to share the benefits justly among the people for the common good.

2.5. We need new ethics in economy instead of prevailing consumerism on the one hand and unbridled free-market capitalism which culminates in so-called share holders values on the other.

2.6. Managers have to responsibly safeguard the interests of shareholders, co-workers, customers and the society in which they operate and to manage their enterprises in good faith, guarding against decisions and behaviour that advance any own narrow ambitions but harm the enterprise and the societies it serves.

2.7. A new economy will need managers who run their enterprises in good faith, guarding against decisions and behaviour that advance their own narrow ambitions but harm the enterprise and the societies it serves. Special attention should be paid to corporate ethics.

2.8. We welcome the call of many religious leaders for ethics in economy and in particular that of Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical letter “Caritas in veritate” for a civil economy re-embedded in civil society that transcends the old secular dichotomies of state versus market and left versus right.

2.9. We also express our appreciation for new forms of financial business like social business, ethic funds, environmental funds and all kind of ethic banking such as Islamic banking and others.

3. Education and Innovations – Foundation for Sustainable Development

3.1. Education is the main and essential mechanism of social development by means of nurturing and formation of a personality aimed at achievement of unanimity and civilisational dialogue. However, the growth of civilisational tension and destruction of the global public order formed after the World War II give evidence of the crisis in the dominating educational model and the necessity to search for the possible “way out”.

3.2. We are in the middle of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and urge all nations to intensify their efforts in the frame of this programm.
3.3. The World Public Forum – Dialogue of Civilizations is an active partner of UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and has reaffirmed its agreement of cooperation with the organisation. We support the global dissemination and sharing of information and knowledge – helping all civilisations to build their human and institutional capacities for the sake of a better and peaceful future.

3.4. We affirm that education should be made available to everybody regardless of class, religion, gender, race and cultural origin. This education should empower the students to achieve responsible citizenship. Special attention should also be given to open-mindedness, an important prerequisite for entering a dialogue.

3.5. The present crisis leads to more discrimination, xenophobia and racism, both within and between societies. These problems should be addressed in an education aiming at empowering the young generations to identify and challenge instances of these phenomena.

3.6. It should be our responsibility to make the moral aspects of life clear for the youth; we should urge the young generation to cooperation and mutual interchange of spiritual values, to a constructive dialogue, founded on the grounds of common to all people moral, unacceptance of the destructive informational influence and violence propaganda and rejection of any forms of discrimination.

4. World Religions Facing Tradition and Modernization

4.1. Particularly in times of a global crisis the world religions can play an important role in stressing spiritual and humane values, reminding people of their responsibility for the common good and counteracting a way of life which is only determined by more profit and more consumption.

4.2. Religions can play this important role even better when they engage themselves in a fruitful dialogue with each other and demonstrate that the spiritual values are their common legacy and therefore common values of mankind.

4.3. All world religions are confronted with a tension but also an interdependence of tradition and modernization. Religions can help people to stick to valuable traditions on the one hand and to accept modernization on the other by underlining that not the form but the substance and the spirit are important.
4.4. We encourage leaders and believers of all religions to continue their dialogue and cooperation, to work for mutual knowledge and respect and contribute hereby to the development of a better and more peaceful world without conflicts and crisis.

4.5. We appeal to believers as well as to non-believers to learn more about religions and in particular about the beliefs, customs and traditions of believers of other religions who live next to them in order to better understand and to respect them.

5. The Contribution of the Youth to Dialogue for Peace and Justice

5.1. The young generations in many countries grew up not only with all means of modern technology unknown for their parents and grandparents but also without the dividing lines of the cold war. Therefore they are technically as well as politically prepared for dialogue beyond traditional borders and for networking with young people all over the world.

5.2. But we shall not forget also millions of young people who have not yet access to modern communication tools and are therefore excluded from the global information community.

5.3. Opportunity should be offered to young people to cross boundaries and to break barriers (not only geographical ones, but also social, cultural etc.) and to be educated to a spirit of openness.

5.4. Dialogue cannot start but early enough. International youth exchange is one of the best practices for mutual understanding and respect. We encourage governmental as well as nongovernmental organizations and institutions to promote and to organize youth exchange.

5.5. Material incentives may be not good tools to promote immaterial values. Young people need examples and best practices how to live guided by the eternal values and ideas for a better world. The consumerist paradigm should be overcome.

5.6. Service to community is such an opportunity to experience values and ideals. Local projects can reinforce identity and serving the community will offer satisfaction through the social impact.

5.7. Sharing the experience from serving the community through World Wide Web will enhance dialogue and encounter of young people.

5.8. Young people from conflict areas should be offered places to meet and to discuss their common interest in peace and reconciliation.
6. Global Mobility

6.1. Migrants and foreign communities are not to blame for the current economic crisis, indeed they can help work us out of it.

6.2. Civil society, the private sector, associations, religious entities and local governments have a crucial role to play in mobility policy and practice, alongside with central governments.

6.3. In order to optimize the advantages of international human mobility and to deal appropriately with increasing pressures and challenges, governments should take steps to facilitate international human mobility in legal and orderly channels, whether temporary or permanent, according to their national needs.

6.4. In addition to central governments and international organizations, civil society, the private sector, associations, religious entities and local governments play a crucial role in encouraging better understanding of human mobility as a positive factor and in working together to improve conditions for Diaspora communities through public debate, advocacy and the provision of services; the role of these institutions should be encouraged.

6.5. The international community should devise credible mechanisms to monitor the impact of the economic and social crisis on mobile populations, especially during the recovery and reconstruction phase.

6.6. The international community as a whole should work to expand the application of information technology to international human mobility in order to assist Diaspora communities and those who provide services to them.

6.7. The private sector and large corporations in their long term plans should seek improved symmetry between the emerging demand for skills and orderly arrangements for the supply of workers and professionals.

6.8. New tools should be created and mobilized to catalyze private sector activity and foster meaningful public-private partnerships. The Association for International Mobility is an essential and constructive instrument. Other civil society institutions could equally make positive contributions.
6.9. The World Public Forum – Dialogue of Civilizations is well on the way to institutionalizing the debate on human mobility and should continue to provide a platform for discussion on human mobility and should foster the adoption of constructive measures by states and societies. It should cooperate more closely with bodies such as UNESCO, ISESCO, ALESCO, and others.

6.10. We must never forget that the foreigners among us are “messengers of civilisation”.

7. Culture and Arts – Fertile Soil for Dialogue of Civilisations

7.1. Recognition of national and cultural particularities is the most effective and human way of resolution of ethnic conflicts, one of the main elements of inter-civilisational interaction practices.

7.2. Literature, music, architecture, fine arts as well as theatre and film are valuable tools of dialogue and artists are excellent messengers between civilisations.

7.3. Interaction between artists and cultural institutions of different civilisations contributes to better mutual understanding. Such interactions like cross-border exhibitions and guest performances are fostering the dialogue of civilisations.

7.4. We highly value the freedom of expression and the role of the media in developing a better society. At the same time we want to remind the media of their responsibility to contribute to better mutual understanding through fair and unbiased reporting and not to fan the flames of confrontation. We appeal therefore to the mass media, to refrain from provocation and direct or implied insults of other civilisations and religions.

7.5. We welcome the founding of the “WPF DoC Media Award” which will honour outstanding promotion of dialogue among cultures and civilisations and mutual understanding in the media.

7.6. An expert group in the framework of World Public Forum – Dialogue of civilisations should gather renowned cultural workers and mass-media representatives in order to develop intercultural dialogue practice.

7.7. The diversity of writing systems as well as richness and diversity of human speech is an important heritage of world cultures. In spite of the differences all civilisations look upon writing as a divine gift, a road towards some higher spiritual occupation and transformation.
7.8. At the same time the problem of literacy for millions of people still exists.

7.9. We need new cultural policies, coordination of efforts, information, preparation and realization of programs and decisions in order to secure in the future the integral civilisation diversity of writing.

8. Conclusions: Dialogue of Civilisations as a Platform for Global Development

8.1. Like the participants of the previous six World Public Forum – Dialogue of Civilizations conferences on the Greek Island of Rhodes we are convinced that all civilisations, nations, peoples, religions have much more in common than what may divide them. Therefore dialogue will prevail over confrontation.

8.2. Convinced that the current global crisis emerged in particular because many of the decision makers forgot their responsibility for the common good we call upon the leaders in politics, business, culture, education and religion to work together in creating a common humane responsibility for sustainable social stability.

8.3. We commit ourselves to the spirit of Rhodes which is the spirit of equality of all human beings and of mutual respect which should be reflected in good neighbourly relations at local level as well as in international relations and cooperation.
We, more than 450 participants from 57 countries meeting for the 8th Rhodes Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations” from Oct. 7 to 11, 2010, to discuss timely problems related to the formation of a world order in the emerging conditions of a multilateral world, declare:

In the short historical timeframe of 20 years the world community has witnessed a consecutive disintegration of two systems of global management – a bipolar equilibrium and a unipolar hegemony. Now the world is going through a multidimensional systemic global crisis that is determined by an antagonism between finance and the “real” economy. The financial economy does not only produce goods and services but besides the notorious bubbles it also contributes to the so-called “grey capitalism” where immense profits escape from taxation (and therefore from the contribution to the common good), from state control and even jurisdiction. The collapse of the financial economy occurred because it is totally inadequate to a world order in which the intrinsic values of human life, society and nature should be present in equal measure.

The inadequate and painful rise and fall of the financial economy has had a negative impact on the development of the world economy. In particular the gap between rich and poor has not only failed to narrow; on the contrary, it has increased, and this is accompanied by an overall drop in the level of social support in many developed countries. In addition, humanity has been confronting the consequences of man-made global warming. New tensions in geopolitics may be the result unless a new culture of dialogue will prevail.

So we emphasize the challenges of global climate change and the social challenges of the world community that has historically been constituted on the basis of mutually augmenting values of different civilisations.
A sustainable and prosperous global economy needs to pursue the common good, in which profit making is compatible with a fair society and a sustainable environment. We cannot rescue and reform national economies or the world economic system without the participation of governments and parliaments. By contrast with neo-liberal market fundamentalism, what is required is a new civic covenant between states, markets and civil society.

The failure of markets, institutions and morality during the current financial crisis highlights the need for an ethical, moral and spiritual framework. Strengthening the role of the family will help address problems related to demographic decline, family break-up and the closely connected disintegration of human society.

The independent Rhodes Youth Forum that preceded our conference was freely organized by the young people themselves in a spirit of dialogue. It showed the importance of shared values such as solidarity, family, morality and responsibility for a fairer and more peaceful society.

The world does not need any new ideologies that purport to possess absolute truth. Mankind needs plurality, mutual respect for diversity and fruitful co-operation among equals.

Our conviction is that there is no financial way out of the financial crisis. Rather, the world is ready for a multilateral and multilevel social and political dialogue of civilisations that promotes a fair post-crisis world order.

As usual, we the Forum invite all those who consider themselves capable of supporting our efforts in discussing and building the future of the world to participate in the Forum’s agenda and to be active members of the dialogue network community.
We, more than 600 participants from about 70 countries meeting for the 9th annual session of the WPF “Dialogue of Civilizations”, declare:

RHODES DECLARATION 2011

We have met in a year of key landmarks: 10 years after the declaration of the international decade of dialogue of civilisations and cultures, 10 years after the barbarism of 9/11 and the challenge to all civilisations, 20 years after the end of the confrontation between East and West and 50 years after the first manned space flight that provided a unique window on our shared globe:

We met for the first time without our co-founder, the Indian humanist and futurist J.C. Kapur, who guided our work with his thoughts, summarized in the following quote:

“The political structure of the future will be substantially different from that of today. It will be more decentralized, multi-cultural and multi-faith, which has been frequently mentioned during our forum for 9 years. The main conflict is emerging and will keep emerging in the field of religion. The path of humanism, self-realization and religious faith based on millennia-old revelations, confront the technocratic paradigm and the progress of human thinking. This will be the essential conflict of this century”.

The ninth session of the World Public Forum was dedicated to the following questions of global development: the modern economy, the role of international political institutions, the values of education, the preservation of family in the 21st century as a key to resolving the main problems of
humankind and as the natural source for human revival, the role of mass media in today’s world and youth movements.

The discussion also focused on such burning issues as the recent changes in the Arab world, the role of civil society in overcoming the consequences of the crisis, the prospects of various integration projects, cultural aspects of the inter-civilisation dialogue with the example of such civilisations as the nomads of Central Asia, the African continent and the Russian world.

We reaffirm our commitment to the previous Rhodes declarations and confirm our quest for maintaining plurality for mankind, mutual respect for diversity and fruitful cooperation among equals in dignity.

The current crisis highlights the limits of the neo-liberal model of “globalisation”. A sustainable and prosperous global economy needs to pursue common good, in which profit making is compatible with a fair society and sustainable environment, in particular on the national and regional level.

The Rhodes community can raise and address new questions that are to be discussed internationally. In this dialogical manner, it is ready to serve as a public laboratory of ideas and good practices for shaping the future. In this light, the WPF makes the following concrete proposals:

1. It commemorates the memory of the prominent Indian public thinker J.C. Kapur and supports the annual Kapur international lecture on the most important issues of the dialogical community

2. It calls on UNESCO and other leading international organizations to continue their support for international programs in the field of dialogue among civilisations and cultures

3. It appeals to the people and the authorities of Syria to organize an open public dialogue between the representatives of different groups of society without the use of force, extremism and undue external interference

4. It suggests that the lack of responsible global strategic thinking and comprehensive research in the social and political sciences as well as the degradation of education systems everywhere requires a larger scale of research and expertise in the process of modeling and constructing the future

5. It emphasizes the role of the media to foster the dialogical culture and to refrain from any manipulation.
In the age of global crisis, it is paramount to question the dominant political, economic and social models that have brought about an unprecedented centralization of power and concentration of wealth. The prevailing paradigms have pitted individuals and nations against each other. Cut-throat competition and short-term private profit for the few have taken precedence over cooperation and the plural search for the common good. Crucially, cultures and civilisations have been either sidelined by the main national and international institutions or else they have been bracketed altogether out of the picture.

The global crisis that is still unfolding calls for an analysis and treatment not of its symptoms but instead of its root causes. Indeed, the origins of the current crisis are not merely financial or economic but can be traced to values, ethical imperatives and global objectives that the world’s leading players pursue. From this perspective, the dialogue of civilisations assumes a particular significance.

The World Public Forum – Dialogue of Civilizations therefore reaffirms its firm commitment to the concept of “Dialogue of Civilizations” for solving today’s pressing problems and for creating a path towards a more humane world. 550 participants from 65 countries gathered for the 10th time in Rhodes (October, 3 – 8, 2012) to debate innovative ideas and transformative practices.

The rich heritage of mankind in terms of cultural and religious diversity and traditional values is not an obstacle but an asset for responding to the challenges of globalisation. Mutual understanding and respect is the guarantee of an open society not only at the national but also at the regional and the global level. Globalisation brings greater interconnectedness among
people and increased interaction among cultures and civilisations. There is no place for a messianic view of proclaiming that only certain values are advanced and thus are more universal.

Respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is a prerequisite for international cooperation in order to solve international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian order. The right of countries and peoples to their own identity and historically formed societies should be respected by governments as well as by governmental and nongovernmental organizations both nationally and internationally.

Human dignity, natural human rights and fundamental freedoms for all – without discrimination as to race, gender, language or religion – can only be based on the principle of equality among all human beings and all nations.

Dialogue between civilisations requires the involvement and leadership of national elites. Without such interactions elites lose their legitimacy. In order to engage in fruitful dialogue, prevent conflict and contribute to peaceful settlements, elites need to reach agreements on mutual respect, recognition of international arbitration and the right of peoples to non-interference in their own destiny. A world with robust civilisational foundations that is conflict-free and more prosperous can only be polycentric. At its best, humanity is a family of free nations that practices the same language of dialogue and can attain mutual understanding.

Geo-politically, the pursuit of global peace and justice requires a shift from a hegemonic to a post-hegemonic world order. The world needs to move from the ‘old geopolitics’ based on rivalry between states, the single-minded pursuit of national interest, and the employment of ‘hard’ military force to a ‘new geopolitics’ based on interaction between cultures and civil societies relying on ‘soft’ ethical norms and traditional values to achieve global harmony and cooperation.

Geo-economically, the search for shared prosperity and both ecologically and socially sustainable development is incompatible with the current configuration of economic life, which compels nations and individuals to compete with one other for access to private trade and investment. Instead, companies and countries should be encouraged to compete among themselves based on building advantages in efficiency and sustainable capacities to contribute to the common good. In particular, stable and sustainable growth
requires a diversified economy and a balance between large corporations, small- and medium-sized enterprise and family businesses. The WPF promotes the alternative of building a variety of solidarity economies, all of which recognize that the fundamental purpose of any economy is the provisioning of dignified, meaningful, and productive lives for everyone. This framework recognizes the diversity of economic systems and allows societies to draw from each other’s material, technological, and cultural resources, according to their level of development. An enlarged dialogue among civilisations and cultures is indispensable for agreeing on new global rules and arrangements that promote solidarity economies across the world.

Ecologically, the planet faces devastation due to human activities that are linked to the global economic system. A variety of traditions, including indigenous and aboriginal people as well as world religions, can help attain objectives such as safeguarding the earth based on responsible stewardship. Changes in laws, regulations, institutions and structures are necessary to translate individual ideas into concrete common action. Some of the key priorities include a greater sharing of the world’s resources, greater social responsibility on the part of businesses, harnessing environmentally sustainable ways through mass communication and social media as well as new conceptions of land and land ownership.

In terms of the family, inter-civilisational dialogue can only be fruitful within respect for the natural unchanging values of humanity – the sacredness of human life from conception to natural death, the importance of traditions for development, the holiness of motherhood, the role of fatherhood, the recognition of man as a social creature, and the value of family for the continuity of the generations. Therefore, a basic civilisational constant is the “Natural Family” based upon the union of a man and a woman, through marriage for the purposes of building a vital home economy and binding the generations. Even in modern society, more than 70% of economic goods and services are still produced inside the home but not counted in measures of national output. Therefore, strong, stable families with a mother and father in the home, contribute to a healthy global economy, generate social capital, help maintain a culture of peace, and provide a unique opportunity to address all of the major problems including poverty, violence, education and healthcare found in contemporary society. The Natural Family as recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) is a “sine-qua-non” condition for survival and sustainable development of all nations and civilisations, and the basic and integral condition for demographic well-being.
The WPF welcomes the discussions of the Youth Forum, which was held just before the 10th Rhodes Forum. In particular, the WPF supports the roadmap for youth initiatives until 2021 that was agreed by the participants of the Youth Forum.

Bearing in mind the importance of education for inter-civilisational dialogue, the WPF will create a charter of dialogical learning that combines the principles of mutual understanding with educational practices. Both primary and secondary schools around the world that adopt and implement this charter will receive the status of ‘School of Dialogue’, which is certificated by the WPF. This builds on the experience of schools of dialogue initiated by WPF in Russia and the other CIS countries and seeks to promote it worldwide.
The contemporary world is dominated by various forces that threaten humanist principles and a plurality of ways of life. A pervasive hegemony is imposing unilateral standards masquerading as global values irrespective of cultural diversity. Persistent injustice exacerbates both poverty and inequality within and between peoples and nations. Mankind faces the specter of regional escalation that could lead to global confrontation. The continual domination of financial capital poses a growing menace to democratic life. Populists and extremists are on the rise. An impoverished materialism is undermining cultures, societies and spiritual traditions around the globe. All these threats derive from a lack of genuine dialogue that prevents all the civilisations of the world from contributing to the common good.

The World Public Forum – Dialogue of Civilizations reaffirms its fundamental commitment to the concept of “Dialogue of Civilizations” for solving today’s pressing problems and for developing sustainable strategies towards a more humane world. 450 participants from 60 countries gathered for the 11th time in Rhodes (October, 2 – 6, 2013) to debate fresh ideas to fix the world.

We are committed to a peaceful resolution of conflict and critical engagement on the contentious issues of our time.

We support international efforts to uphold and extend the conventions on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

We condemn any attempt to instrumentalise religious division for violent, geopolitical ends and we call in particular for constructive Sunni–Shia dialogue.

We call for urgent action to end the persecution of minorities across the world, including Christians in the wider Middle East.

We emphasize the role of ethical principles in organizing both businesses and the global economy.
We affirm the importance of the voice of civil society in domestic and international affairs.

We propose the adoption of the platform of ‘Trans-Eurasian belt Razvitie’, an open partnership involving different stakeholders with the aim of generating an infrastructure revolution for social development.

We promote the contribution of marriage and the family to society and the economy, including family businesses and small- and medium-size enterprise.

We encourage inter-generational dialogue and the participation of young people in public life.

We strive for a more environmentally stable future that preserves biodiversity for the sake of future generations.

We believe in the enduring importance of education and lifelong training, notably vocational skills.

The World Public Forum as a public movement calls on movements of good will to join the WPF “Dialogue of Civilizations” in the pursuit of these goals.
The Presidency of the World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations” is deeply concerned about the recent deterioration in global affairs and about structural trends that jeopardise both humanity and nature. Of even greater concern is the unprecedented and utterly irresponsible reaction to this development by the global financial oligarchy, which seems to be the only beneficiary of the crisis and the current onslaught.

The Presidency of the World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations” strongly opposes the aggression against sovereign nations and peoples, the mass killing of innocent civilians, indiscriminate sanctions against the citizens of other countries, the intellectual and moral suppression of natural forms of human behaviour, mass surveillance programmes as well as the wholesale destruction of humanity’s social ecology, which has been elevated into the new norm.

In our view:

• the systemic crisis that proves that even the analytical value of the neo-liberal globalisation paradigm has exhausted itself, not to mention its predictive power. The rise of inequality above any reasonable limits in so many developed and developing countries is a compelling example of its inadequacy;
• the extreme increase in the scope and intensity of injustice in the world, which is especially evident on such diverse continents as Europe and Africa;
• the contradictions on the Eurasian continent remain unresolved in the current global crisis. They have contributed significantly to dramatic events in recent years, most tragically in Ukraine where the disruptive effects for the wider Europe and the world are most evident;
the global financial oligarchy is trying to establish a new transnational class to secure its own geo-economic and geo-political domination within the framework of a New World Order, which is portrayed as necessary, normative and inevitable.

Faced with this situation, the Presidency of the World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations” sees no other alternative than to use all its powers and resources more pro-actively in order to support public efforts against the threat of global confrontation or even war and to work out new, sustainable socio-economic models. These models, which put the interests of humanity centre-stage, will inform the emerging theories and practices aimed at transforming the world.

We think that the “dialogue of civilisations”, underpinned by a rigorous conceptual basis, is the only way to achieve the goal we set 15 years ago, namely to enable us to assess the risks and threats to human civilisation and thereby to establish a world order that will ensure the survival of society, mankind and future generations.

As an international Non-Governmental Organisation, we will set up several WPF programmes and initiatives, and encourage by all possible means the practical and responsible participation of the members of the Rhodes Forum and the Dialogue Family in the following activities.

1. The project on the Schools of Intercultural Dialogue developed by the WPF should become a visible reality for more countries and nations. The WPF will support its expansion both geographically and generationally, and it seeks to apply the project’s principles and standards to existing educational systems.

2. The WPF – sharing the view that adult responsibility exists in any civilised social system – will work out its policy towards the youth in order to ensure their right to access to education and best practices of “dialogue of civilisations”. The existing programme of digital courses of dialogue of civilisations that has been implemented for three consecutive years will get significant support from the WPF in order to foster cooperation with leading universities.
3. The WPF will seek to translate the concept of “dialogue of civilizations” into plausible public policies by instituting a dedicated WPF Dialogue of Civilizations think-tank, which could also serve as a global hub for the theory of dialogue. Its main task will be to ensure intellectually that the dialogue of civilisations is not hijacked by manipulative forces.

4. The WPF will support all responsible efforts to oppose the violation of humanity’s social ecology as well as to defend traditional practices and ways of life.
Meeting for the 13th time on the island of Rhodes that is a crossroads of civilizations, this year’s Rhodes Forum gathered once again people from over 60 nations representing a variety of cultures and traditions. All the participants were united in their commitment to search for new ways of overcoming the contemporary global disorder – the immense human suffering as a result of military conflict, economic crisis, social dislocation and environmental destruction. By sharing novel ideas and experience from around the world, the Forum debated alternatives beyond the dominant ideologies and power systems. Key to this is the recognition that current chaos is neither necessary nor normative and that a spiritual humanism can transcend the logic of inequality and violence in the direction of justice and peace.

The World Public Forum Dialogue of Civilizations (WPF-DoC) has always defended the irreducible diversity of civilizations and supported pluralistic ideas at the service of inter-cultural and inter-civilizational dialogue. Based on a fifteen-year tradition, the Rhodes Forum seeks to offer a rich and rigorous analysis of the world as it is – outside of conventional categories that fail to capture the lived experience and reality that confronts people across the globe.

After 1945, the creation of the United Nations was at a heart of a concerted effort to provide for all nations a future without war. 70 years later we are deeply concerned by the persistence of old conflicts and the occurrence of new wars. Amid a shift from more tangible threats to more nebulous risks, there is a growing fusion of physical force (including new instruments such as drones and robots) with subversive tactics (like disinformation, “cyber warfare”, irregular forces, deception). This evolution towards hybrid warfare has the effect of blurring the lines between the military and civilian spheres, state- and non-state actors as well as regular and irregular tactics.
Hybrid warfare represents the contemporary version of ‘total war’, which aims not only to achieve military victory but also to undo the political and social systems of states. As such, it precludes efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement through dialogue between the warring parties and destroys the very fabric of a world order based on the co-existence of sovereign nations.

During the 2015 Rhodes Forum Special attention was paid to West Asia and North Africa (WANA). Wars are raging in at least four countries in the region, tens of thousands of people have been killed, and millions more have left their homes in fear for their life. The rise of terrorist outfits such as Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and Jabhat al-Nusra – targeting Muslims and non-Muslims alike – suggests that the world is facing a battle against barbarism, not a clash of civilisations. Fighting the barbarians who slaughter innocent men, women and children is a battle for civilisation – for ancient ways of life, ancestral homeland, millennia-old traditions and different faith communities such as Oriental Christians and the Yazidi who confront an impossible choice: forced conversion, expulsion or death. We are convinced that such and similar conflicts cannot be solved by military means alone but require political settlements that reflect cultural realities. We echo Pope Francis’ recent words that “war only brings destruction and multiplies suffering, while hope and progress can only come from peace. The concerned parties should broaden their horizons beyond the immediate interests and use international law and diplomacy to resolve current conflicts”.

This spirit also extends to other spheres such as the economy, society, and nature where a neo-colonialist system and mindset underpin the practices of exploitation that we are seeing around the world. What is required are new models of inclusive and equitable development that can lead to prosperous future – individual fulfillment and mutual flourishing. Therefore the objective of economic, financial and developmental policy should be shared prosperity for all – not just small global and national elites. This was the aim of the UN’s Millennium Development Goals and the underlying holistic strategy, which now also includes a greater emphasis on ecological resilience. Unfortunately, international organization that should play a key role in this process too often fail to foster sustainable economic growth or to create sufficient jobs. We call upon them to lend to the real economy, particularly to micro-, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and to individuals who either live in abject poverty or struggle to make ends meet.

We are also concerned about a policy of creating a society of individuals who focus only on satisfying their selfish desires and ignore the needs of others or the fate of the planet at large. We stand in solidarity with all those
who consider the family to be a fundamental social and cultural institution that is the basis for human flourishing and civilisation – as set out in the 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the constitutions of more than 100 countries as well as reflected in the holy scriptures of various religious traditions.

In the course of six plenary sessions and five workshops, the Rhodes Forum debated both current affairs such as the migration crisis and long-term issues such as European security, the importance of digital media, the network of schools of dialogue, as well as the cultures, history and future of China and Russia.
The Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute (DOC) is an independent platform for dialogue that brings together diverse perspectives from the developed and developing worlds in a non-confrontational and constructive spirit.

The DOC’s goals are to forge shared worldviews through dialogue and to contribute to a fair, sustainable, and peaceful world. In view of these goals, the DOC believes that globalisation should have humanity, culture, and civilisation at its heart.

The DOC addresses three key themes:
• Cultures and civilisations: Promoting understanding and cooperation among peoples, cultures, and civilisations, and encouraging harmony beyond differences.
• Economics: Examining inclusive, innovative, and just development models that work for all.
• Governance and geopolitics: Developing policy proposals for international actors and exploring new diplomatic avenues.

doc-research.org