

## THE GLOBALIZATION OF POLITICAL PROCESSES. THE GEOGRAPHICAL VIEW

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## A GLOBALIZAÇÃO DOS PROCESSOS POLÍTICOS. A VISÃO GEOGRÁFICA

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### Abstract

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when distances have become shorter because of the development of communication networks, the world has undergone political, economic and cultural integration or, in other words, globalization. These processes raise many questions about the way geography influences global policy.

Historians think of globalization as one of the stages in the development of capitalism. Political scientists put the emphasis on the diffusion of democratic organizations. Economists note the process of trans-nationalization of financial markets. Cultural scholars connect globalization with the worldwide distribution of Western culture and way of living (Westernization). There are also informational-technological approaches to explain globalization – the appearance of global means of telecommunications.

In politics, globalization leads to weakening of the nation state and contributes to decreasing its sovereignty. A transformation of the nation state can be observed, but its indispensability does not decrease (despite increasing criticism). The contemporary state delegates more and more powers to influential international organizations such as the UN, NATO, IMF and the World Bank. That is why authors like T. Friedman and R. Keohan consider globalization a radically new phenomenon, leading to the gradual loss of the significance of nation states.

Very important are the different concepts connected with global conflicts. Samuel Huntington writes about the "clash of civilizations" whose theory opposes that of Francis Fukuyama about "the end of history". The role of the Western world in this conflict is also of great significance.

From the position of globalization, regionalism is a type of localism on a large territorial scale. Often, it has been described as a struggle between history and geography. The geographical approach to the problems is connected with the understanding that regional structures, together with global corporations, nation states and international economic organizations are the most important subjects of globalization. This makes the interrelations between globalization and regionalism an interesting field for research.

Each one of these competing and opposing globalizations ideologically and scientifically reflects particular dimensions of the ongoing processes at global level, which, by default, makes them objects of research in socio-cultural geography.

The main objective of the present research is to reveal the nature of globalization and its relations with world policy and geography on the base of existing scientific literature on the topic. Different research methods have been used, among which conceptual analysis, situation analysis, spatial analysis based on the civilizational approach and others. The ideas of main existing studies on the topic have been synthesized, analyzed and discussed.

The results of the research show that there are different points of view on the problems, some of which fundamental, others not so well known, and some even peculiar ones. Another result of the research is the explanation of two opposing processes – globalization and regionalization. An attempt has been made to include all these different points of view in the revealing of the nature of global processes and their relation to geography as one of their fundamentals.

**Keywords:** globalization, regionalization, civilizations, religions, concepts.

## Resumo

No início do século XXI, quando as distâncias se encurtam devido ao desenvolvimento de redes de comunicações, o mundo passa por uma integração política, económica e cultural, ou seja, um processo de globalização. Esses processos levantam muitas questões sobre a forma como a geografia influencia a política global.

Os historiadores pensam na globalização como uma das etapas do desenvolvimento do capitalismo. Os politólogos enfatizam a difusão das organizações democráticas. Economistas observam o processo de transnacionalização dos mercados financeiros. Os culturologistas conectam a globalização com a distribuição mundial da cultura e o modo de vida ocidentais (ocidentalização). Existem também abordagens tecnológico-informacionais para a explicação da globalização - o surgimento dos meios globais de telecomunicações.

Na política, a globalização leva ao enfraquecimento do estado-nação e contribui para a diminuição de sua soberania. Observa-se uma transformação do estado-nação, mas não a diminuição de sua indispensabilidade (embora as críticas sejam crescentes). O estado contemporâneo delega cada vez mais poderes a organizações internacionais influentes, como a ONU, a OTAN, o FMI e o Banco Mundial. É por isso que autores como T. Friedman e R. Keohan consideram a globalização como um fenómeno radicalmente novo, levando à perda gradual da importância dos Estados-Nação.

Muito importantes são os diferentes conceitos ligados aos conflitos globais. Samuel Huntington escreve sobre o “choque de civilizações” cuja teoria se opõe à de Francis Fukuyama sobre “o fim da história”. O papel do mundo ocidental neste conflito também é de grande importância.

Do ponto de vista da globalização, o regionalismo é um tipo de localismo em grande escala territorial. Foi descrito, frequentemente, como uma luta entre história e geografia. A abordagem geográfica dos problemas está ligada ao entendimento de que as estruturas regionais, juntamente com as corporações globais, os Estados-Nação e as organizações económicas internacionais são os temas mais importantes da globalização. Isso torna as inter-relações entre globalização e regionalismo um campo interessante de investigação.

Cada uma dessas globalizações concorrentes e opostas ideologicamente e cientificamente refletem dimensões particulares dos processos em curso ao nível global, o que, por defeito, as torna objetos de investigação da geografia sociocultural.

O principal objetivo da presente pesquisa é revelar a natureza da globalização e suas relações com a política mundial e a geografia com base na literatura científica existente sobre o tema. Diferentes métodos de pesquisa têm sido utilizados, entre os quais análise conceitual, análise de situação, análise espacial com base na abordagem civilizacional e outros. As ideias dos principais estudos existentes sobre o tema foram sintetizadas, analisadas e discutidas.

Os resultados da pesquisa mostram que existem diferentes pontos de vista sobre os problemas, alguns fundamentais, outros pouco conhecidos e alguns até peculiares. Outro resultado da pesquisa é a explicação de dois processos opostos – globalização e regionalização. Tentou-se incluir todos esses diferentes pontos de vista na revelação da natureza dos processos globais e sua relação com a geografia como um de seus fundamentos.

**Palavras-chave:** globalização, regionalização, civilizações, religiões, conceitos.

## 1. Introduction

Contemporary political development on global scale is characterized by processes of globalization, anti-globalism and the formation of a multipolar world.

Globalization is a process of worldwide political, economic and cultural integration and unification. Hence, we can distinguish between political, economic and cultural globalization.

The concepts about the nature of globalization are debatable. Historians consider it one of the stages of development of capitalism. Political scientists stress the spread of democratic organizations. Economists take into consideration the process of trans-nationalization of financial markets. Cultural scholars connect it to the general distribution of Western culture and way of living (Westernization). There

are also information technology approaches in the explanation of the globalization processes, connected with the emergence of global means of telecommunications.

The American sociologist C. Chase-Dunn (Chase-Dunn, 1999, p. 190) concludes that there are at least five distinguishable aspects of globalization:

1) *common ecological constraints*, part of which are “global threats, due to our fragile ecosystem and the globalization of the ecological risks”, and just in our days ecological degradation “began to operate on global scale” (p. 191);

2) *cultural globalization*, connected with two types of cultural phenomena: the spread of the individualized values of “western origin” towards all large groups of world population; adoption of individual rights and identity, as well as transnational efforts for protection of “human rights” (p. 191);

3) globalization of *communication*, connected with the new era in information technologies – “global communication facilities have the power to move things visible and invisible from one part of the globe to another whether any nation-state likes it or not” (p. 191);

4) *economic* globalization, which includes “globe-spanning economic relationships”. Its most significant manifestations are the “interrelationships of markets, finance, goods and services, and the networks, created by transnational corporations” (p. 192);

5) *political* globalization, whose nature is in “the institutionalization of international political structures” (p. 192).

The question about the birth of globalization is also debatable. Its emergence can be traced back to Antiquity, when the first empires expanded (the empire of Alexander III of Macedon, the Roman Empire, the Mongol Empire, the Ottoman Empire). They provoked the appearance of contacts among different cultures (civilizations) and civilizational regions. The differentiation of cultural-civilizational regions is connected with concrete borders, dominating cores and secondary political subjects. Their emergence is a result of the application of a civilizational approach in geographical studies.

The civilization region is a subjective and historically formed stable spatial system with specific social, cultural, economic and political characteristics. In contrast to geographic regions, dominant in their formation is the religion, as well as the way of living. Under the influence of social processes, regions are able to change their spatial configuration mostly on the structural level.

The strongest impetus was provided by the Great Geographical Discoveries, and that is why this period can be considered the real beginning of globalization. From the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century until the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Western civilization was predominant, imposing its own political and economic system, as well as its cultural and scientific paradigms on the other civilizations. This situation changed in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, after the end of the Second World War, when the world became bipolar (on the basis of the confrontation between liberalism and totalitarianism), and after the end of the Cold War, when it became multipolar.

The Cold War is a term that stands for the continuous tension and struggle between the Eastern Bloc, led by the Soviet Union, and the Western Bloc, dominated by USA and NATO, which started after

the Second World War and continued until the disintegration of the Soviet Union at the end of December 1991. However, this rivalry did not lead to large-scale direct fighting between the blocs. Thus, the term “Cold War”, which was made popular by the American political adviser, Bernard Baruch (Gerber, 1982).

In the Age of Imperialism, the European nations confronted each other because of the redistribution of their colonies and the widening of their spheres of influence. In the contemporary world, the struggle for spheres of influence continues, but with new means due to technological, social and economic innovations.

Globalization is closely related also to the process of decentralization of the subjects of government (power). In politics, globalization leads to the weakening of the nation-state and contributes to decreasing of its sovereignty. A transformation of the nation-state is observed, but not its decline (despite increasing criticism). On the one hand, the contemporary state transfers more power to influential international organizations such as the UN, NATO, IMF and the World Bank. On the other hand, with the decreasing of state intervention in the economy and the reduction of taxes, the political influence of companies increases (especially of large transnational corporations). Because of the easier migration of people and the free transfer of capital abroad, the power of the state over its citizens is also decreasing.

The main objective of the present research is to reveal the nature of globalization through its emergence, manifestation and interrelations with world policy and geography on the base of existing scientific literature on the topic. This includes clarification of globalization as a term and of other significant geopolitical concepts that have been already mentioned.

In order to achieve this objective, different methods of research have been used such as conceptual analysis to distinguish the different terms used in the research, situation analysis to highlight the relations between the contemporary development of world geopolitics, economics and the factors for globalization, spatial analysis based on the civilizational approach and others. The ideas of main existing studies on the topic have been synthesized, analyzed and discussed.

The research has been structured in four parts. The introduction explains the globalization as a process, traces its development in history and comments the political processes that have led to the globalization of the contemporary world. The second part emphasizes on Huntington’s future model of world conflict, which divides the world into eight civilizations, based on religion and traditions, and discusses the role of the West in this conflict. The third part discusses other significant geopolitical conceptions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, relating globalization to space, distance, borders, regions. Another very important focus of the research is on regionalization as a counterpoint of globalization. All the discussed concepts are by authors such as F. Fukuyama, T. Friedman, R. Keohane, K. Ohmae, A. Markusen, P. Tyanshansky, D. Kostitskiy, Z. Brzezinski, N. Dimov, P. Stoyanov, M. Grchich, N. Sluka and others, which has to show that the opinion on the topic of scientists from the different schools around the world have been taken into consideration. The final part of the research summarizes its findings.

## 2. Samuel Huntington and the future model of world conflict

One of the trends of the American geopolitical school is connected to the growing so-called “defensive consciousness”. According to this concept, regionalization leads to the loss of geopolitical domination of USA. A similar expression of this is the notion of “the clash of civilizations” by Samuel Huntington – an American sociologist and political scientist (Huntington, 1996), in which he questions Francis Fukuyama’s theory about “the end of history” by (Fukuyama, 1992). His monograph “The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order”, published in 1993, instantly became a futuristic bestseller. While Fukuyama suggests the total victory of liberal ideology has to be accepted as a main factor for world political development, Huntington considers this approach too optimistic. He states that at the end of the 20th century the geopolitical distribution of powers is determined by factors which are external to the framework of traditional confrontation between liberalism and authoritarianism. In particular, Huntington thinks that the main factor determining the economic and political development will be civilizations, which unite the states with similar social, cultural and religious values. Following the concepts proposed by the German philosopher and historian Oswald Spengler (“The Decline of the West”) (Spengler, 1918, 1922) and the British historian and cultural anthropologist Arnold Toynbee (“A Study of History”) (Toynbee, 1934-1961), Samuel Huntington states that “human history is a history of civilizations” (Huntington, 1996).

In his classification, Huntington determines *eight* civilizations: Western (based on Catholicism and Protestantism), Orthodox, Islamic, Hindu, Chinese (based on Buddhism), Japanese (based on Shintoism), Latin American (based on Catholicism and local Native American traditions), and African (in the process of formation based on local traditional beliefs). In most civilizations, but not all of them, there is a core-state, which has dominant and organizing role regarding the other states. Examples of this are the USA in the Western civilization or Russia in the Orthodox civilization. A key moment in Huntington’s theory is the idea that every civilization tries to keep its identity and, in many cases, to widen its sphere of influence, which during 21<sup>st</sup> century will ultimately lead to a number of conflicts in the zones of contact between the different civilizations (Huntington, 1996).

The French geographer J. Rufin (Rufin, 1992) developed further Huntington’s concept and created a new border between the North and the South (Fig. 1).

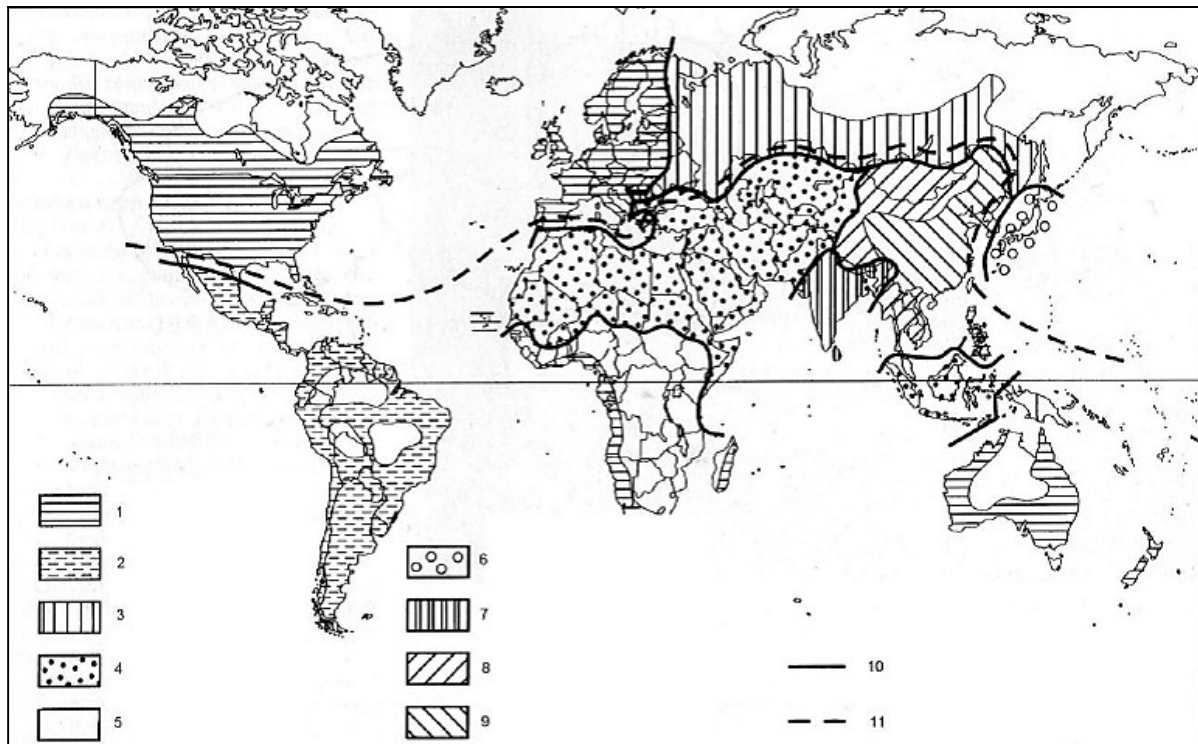


Figure 1 – Civilizations on the basis of religion according to Huntington and “the new limes” North-South according to Ruffin.

1 – Western-Christian; 2 – Latin American (variants); 3 – Eastern-Orthodox; 4 – Islamic; 5 – Tribal religions; 6 – Shintoism; 7 – Hinduism; 8 – Buddhism; 9 – Confucianism + Buddhism; 10 – Fault lines between Huntington’s civilizations; 11 – “The New Limes” between the North and the South according to Ruffin.

Source: Dermendzhieva et al., 2020, p. 36

The phrase “clash of civilizations” is not new and it was used during the Middle Ages as well as in the books by Basil Mathews “Young Islam on Trek: A Study in the Clash of Civilizations” (Mathews, 1926), by Albert Camus (1946) and Bernard Lewis (Lewis, 1990), among others.

Huntington starts with ratiocinations, studying the different theories about the nature of global policy in the period after the end of the Cold War. For him, the clash of civilizations is not the end (like in Fukuyama), but the development of history. The trends of the global conflict appear progressively in the civilizations (civilizational regions) he outlined. Wars like those following the disintegration of Yugoslavia, in Chechnya, as well as between India and Pakistan, are evidence of civilizational conflict.

S. Huntington considers that human rights, liberal democracy and free market economy were the only alternatives left for the nations in the world after the end of the Cold War. At the same time, according to him, Western beliefs in the universality of the values and the political system of the West are naive and the constant pursuit of democracy and “its universal norms” oppose even more to other civilizations. The West is self-confident because it has built an international system, introduced its own laws and given them substance in the form of the United Nations.

Huntington believes that there is a great shifting of economic, military and political power from the West to the other civilizations in the world. According to him, the eastern Asian Chinese civilization strengthens its positions in cultural terms and imposes its values regarding the West because of its fast economic growth. China tries to become again not only a regional but also a global leading power. The rise of China is one of the most significant problems and the most serious threats to the West. Huntington states that the liberal Western civilization is gradually losing its leading position, and at the same time, the significance of the Far East civilizations and the Islamic civilization is increasing, while the latter has the most aggressive anti-Western politics. The clashes are escalating at particular points along the “fault lines” between the civilizations, an example of which is the region of the Near and Middle East, where local military conflicts are constantly happening. The solution he proposes is for Western civilization to abandon its claim of the universality of its value system and its ambition to impose it on the other civilizations. In his monograph “Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity”, Huntington states that the flow of emigrants coming from poorer countries creates enclaves or islands in Western countries, inhabited by people with absolutely different cultures. Thus, “*the clash of civilizations*” gains internal geographical dimensions within certain countries (Huntington, 2004). According to him, the largest threat to the USA are the migrants from Catholic Latin America, who do not share the basic values of the Protestant Anglo-Saxon culture, and for the European countries such threats are the migrants from the Near East.

According to Huntington (1996, p. 78), the Islamic civilization has experienced its demographic boom, which undermines the stability of the borders of Islam, as well as internally, where fundamentalist movements become more and more popular. Civilizational conflicts are mainly between Islam and non-Islam. They originate from the beginning of the Muslim invasion in Europe – in the Iberian Peninsula, the Balkans and Central Europe. Today the clash “West – Islam” is the result of the current Islamic renaissance and demographic boom, combined with the rejection of the values of western universalism, that is to say, all civilizations must accept Western values. Islam has “bloody borders”, especially with the Chinese, Orthodox, Western and African civilizations. Huntington determines Russia, Japan and India are “swaying civilizations”, which can take either position against the West.

Samuel Huntington's ideas are widely criticized. This is mainly because he does not take into account the socio-economic factors, trying to reduce everything to cultural (religious) differences, simplifying the political picture of the world, dividing it into “good” (western) and “evil” (non-western, mainly Islamic) part. The opposition within Islam itself (Iraq – Iran, Syria – Egypt and others) does not fit in his concept. One of the most important intellectuals of our time, the American Avram Noam Chomsky, criticizes Huntington that his concept is an excuse for the USA to intervene anywhere in the world (“world gendarme”) (Chomsky, 1992). A number of authors oppose the concept of “the clash of civilizations” to the one of “the dialogue of cultures”. The Indian economist Amartya Sen underlines that diversity is a feature of most cultures in the world and the western civilization is not an exception (Sen, 1999).

### 3. Other significant geopolitical conceptions in the 20th century

Francis Fukuyama is an American sociologist, political scientist, political economist and writer of Japanese origin. He is most famous for his book "The End of History and the Last Man" (1992), which states that on global scale the distribution of the liberal democracies and the free capitalist market to the West is a sign for the end point of the sociocultural evolution of humankind and probably final form of human government (Fukuyama, 1992). His next book "Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity" (1995), however, showed the change of his position, that culture cannot be separated from economy. Francis Fukuyama claims that after the failure of socialism after 1989, liberalism was confirmed and nothing new can be expected (Fukuyama, 1995).

Apart from these theories, other concepts have appeared, such as "the end of Geography" (O'Brien, 1992) coming with the more and more globalizing world, as well as "the global village" after the internet and satellite telecommunications surround the world and "shorten" distances (McLuhan et al., 1992).

The concept of "the end of Geography" is criticized by some contemporary Bulgarian geographers. Neno Dimov (Dimov, 2000, p. 242) predicts that geographical characteristics such as distances and borders will always influence production, trade and consumption, as well as their efficiency. According to him, the contemporary globalization of economy is connected mainly with the more pragmatic, aggressive and efficiency usage of the comparative regional advantages in the planet for particular economic activity (Dimov, 2000). Petar Stoyanov also does not accept the concept of "*the disappearance of distances*" and "*the end of Geography*" claiming that it is not possible and that we should rather speak of a new construction of the "*society-space*" relations (Stoyanov, 2017).

The globalization as a phenomenon is complicated and controversial. Its description cannot be accomplished on the base of just one understanding. We are talking about many globalizations as objective trends and as theoretical and ideological models. They exist in reality and are object of study of the geographical science. There are dynamic relations among them, which we can determine as a clash, as an allusion to the famous "clash of civilizations" by Samuel Huntington.

It is a clash but of different character – it is not territorially separated on the planet like the civilizations, along the borders of which, according to Huntington, are happening economic, political and military clashes.

Since the phenomenon of globalization itself is supra-territorial, it represents a peculiar "compression of space", and the clash is among different types of intertwining "compressions of space".

The first one we define as ultraliberal globalization. From the point of view of social geography, the characteristics of the globalization model are of interest, which most completely corresponds to the interests of the powerful transnational companies that have long stopped perceiving state borders as obstacles, and have been transformed into cosmopolitan subjects. This changes the classic geographical notions of borders.



Authors such as T. Friedman (2007), R. Keohane (2003), D. Nye (2004) and others, perceive globalization as a radically new phenomenon, leading to the gradual loss of the significance of the nation-states.

According to Kenichi Ohmae, the brightest “hyperglobalizer”, a professor in social sciences at the University of California, author of the books “The Borderless World” and “The End of the Nation State”, the most distinctive part of our time is the breaking off with the past. He states that until around 2025, the nation-state will have disappeared and there will be up to 300 city-states or city-regions, which will replace the nation-states. They will get exceptional functions because they will enter directly the global economy (Ohmae, 1996). This we believe will lead to a new socio-economic geography and to a new culture of social groups, to a new cultural-geographic stratification of society.

Contemporary socio-economic and cultural research concerning both territorialization and classification, as well as the manifestation of dynamic processes of spatial character, have taken into account of the role of American globalization. Based on the unbalanced state of society in economic, military and ideological terms, its unipolar influence is at the basis of contemporary geographical analyses and prognoses.

The conditions of emerging competitive environments can also be seen in the Asianized globalization, whose geography has spread. This is connected both with the dynamic progressiveness of its economic indicators and with the existence of a competitive demographic potential regarding its quantity as well as its quality, mobility and adaptability to new environments. The rise of the Asian-centered cultural identity is of great significance not only for Asia. Hollywood culture, which floods the rest of the world, is relatively less prevalent there. There seems to be a reverse trend, which reforms socio-cultural relations, stimulates “the export” of culture in “new lands”. This leads to new sociocultural and geographical pictures of the world.

From a contemporary geographical view, Islamized globalization seems to be homogeneous in perception from the rest of the world, but it is heterogeneous at its genesis. It is probably the strongest argument against the imperfections of Samuel Huntington theses. This is because, in a geographical sense, it manifests itself “out of the system” and torpedoes the meaning of one of the most used concepts in geography – “the border”. The infiltration of a demographic mass with a different value system and way of thinking in a genetically alien flesh, leads to the formation of new sociocultural incubators within the “Mecca” of their creation – Europe. And raises insoluble problems to social geography up to this moment.

The ultraglobalist trend and vision of globalization is realized in a world of nation-states, traditions, identities, and interests. The reaction of this world is an attempt to keep the state structure with its functions, formed in modern times. It is based on an image of the statist-conservative globalization model, which perceives globalization not as an objective process, but as a work of cosmopolitan and powerful states, which are in position to block global dangers. This imposes responsible functions on geography as it is called upon to reveal not only the genesis of the dangers, but also the resources needed to prevent

them. As the basic scientific potential is outlined, the available theoretical-methodological instruments for extrapolation and prognosis result from ongoing processes, intertwining “compressions of space”.

Counterpoint to the ultraliberal and statist-conservative globalization is regional globalization. According to its supporters, there are fast processes of regionalization in the world, of encapsulation of separate regions. All socio-economic and cultural flows are oriented to the Europe, Japan, North America triad.

Vladislav Inozemtsev provides some data showing that the trends of self-encapsulation in the developed countries in socio-economic terms are intensifying (Inozemtsev, 2005).

In the contemporary conditions of the postindustrial society, he writes, there are some preconditions for globalization rather than their realization in reality.

Inozemtsev believes that “today there is an active development of the processes of internationalization, resulting in overcoming of the political and ideological division of the world and creation of new economic barriers. For the quality of the social development we will be able to speak only after the economic separation of the world begins to be overcome and this is possible if a new post-economic system of motivation is strengthened on a planetary scale.”

Another type of “compression” of space is alter-globalization. In social geography, it has a tangential role. Perceived as more democratic and humane, connected with social values, its manifestation is in the geographical sense related to the problems of cultural diversity, social rights, and the health status of society.

Very close to this is the socially-democratized globalization. Its manifestation is predetermined by its heterogeneous social substrate. Its main characteristic is connected with analysis of the geography of the social strategies and programs of social organizations and with the socio-geographical and politico-geographical assessment of the results of their activity.

Thus, the vision of social democratic globalization as socially regulated globalization is revealed.

Each one of those competing and rival globalizations, both ideologically and scientifically, as well as in reality, reflects certain dimensions of the ongoing processes at the global level, which by default makes them objects of research in socio-cultural geography.

From the position of globalization, regionalism is a type of localism on a large territorial scale. It is often defined as a struggle between history and geography.

As Jean-Marie Domenach rightly reminds us, despite the predominance of the geographical factors in the emergence of the EU and its similarity to the state of the Carolings, the idea for a united Europe did not come from Charlemagne, but was derived from European nihilism (Domenach, 1981).

In contemporary Western thinking, the region is a part of space, which is differentiated from the rest. It is a category, a product and it is described as a limited territory.

In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, “the region was seen as an open spatial system, which gets energy and information from the interaction between the social behavior and the territory. This open spatial system is

a whole of physical and humane elements, interconnected and intertwined in the same process, which is open to external interactions and opposes degrading processes.”

In the next period, the region is defined as a system or world, dominated and controlled by interactive networks and global flows. “The system is seen as a community of active elements, driven by a process, while the localization is perceived as the construction on a particular place or “rooting” of a particular activity on the territory. The localization in the region surpasses the knowledge of the identity of particular place and its forthcoming supporting development (combining and maintaining of the social policy and greater attention to the natural resources). The relation between the two categories is reflected in regionalization.” (Shishmanova et. al, 2013, p.460).

Regionalization is a classification of areas or identification of classes of spaces. Regional associations aim to minimize the deformations from the objective course of globalization, using the effect of the united society. United in regional structures, the states generate a system interest, materialized in a unified regional strategy. It can play the role of a corrective if it is orientated towards (Kabakchieva, 2021, p. 16):

1. Control of the capital markets in the region through introduction of adequate scientific methods;
2. Application of the system-structural approach in the assessment of the socio-economic viability and potential of the different structural elements;
3. Establishing of a well-grounded scientific approach in the revealing of its genesis. Nature and manifestation of the phenomenon of “import of instability” in economic, geopolitical and socio-cultural terms;
4. Regulation of the redistributive and protective function in the social and cultural policy of the separate states;
5. Development of anti-crisis models and prognosis of the cyclical nature of the peaks of the crises in the socio-cultural field.

The geographical approach to the issue is connected with the understanding that regional structures, together with global corporations, national states and international economic organizations, are the most important subjects of globalization. This makes the relationships between globalization and regionalism an interesting field for scientific studies and applied conclusions, and requires the clarification of the applied field of:

- The nature and the main characteristics of regionalism in the context of globalization;
- The subjects of regional integration, the common and difference between them and the subjects of globalization;
- The civilization-formatonal determination on the two simultaneous processes;
- The role of the state and the nation, of the development of culture and ethno-cultural processes in the formation and sustainable development of regional structures;
- The influence of the historical process and the formation of socio-cultural worldviews of a person of particular social groups in a limited social territory/space.

Regionalism is a peculiar way to preserve the exclusivity and uniqueness of the way of living, manners and behavior of the people from a particular area. Regional borders protect the social exclusivity of a society from the invasion and destruction by “the other” unified norms of social life.

On the one hand, regionalization in the modern world is an attempt for escape from unification and standardization and it is intrinsic to any society, regardless of its level of development. On the other hand, regionalization is a way of reducing the existing inequalities among the separate elements of the region and mainly between the center and the respective peripheries (Kabakchieva, 2021, p. 13).

In a narrow sense, the region as a category is defined as an economic community or cultural-historical area. In a broader sense, the concept is used to define a group of closely situated countries, which represent an independent economic and geographical community, as they have similar national composition and culture, and similar socio-political governance.

The largest spatial formations on the global scale are civilizational regions, historically developed on the basis of common cultural-historical characteristics.

Among the many definitions, it is worth mentioning the one by Ann Markusen (Markusen, 1987) from Minnesota University, according to which: “A region – this is a historically evolved compact territorial community, which contains in itself the physical environment, socio-economic, political and cultural environment, as well as a spatial structure which differs from the other regions and territorial units such as city and nation.” (Markusen, 1987, p.89).

The American researcher Walter Isard proposes an interesting pragmatic approach, according to which “as a definition the region disappears and lets us plunge only into purely spatial theorizing. It comes back only as a quality of the concept, necessary for us to substantiate our doctrines. In other words “the hierarchy of regions” is determined only by scientific issues and regions are determined by those problems, the studying of which we are interested in.” (Isard, 1962).

In German geography (D. Bartels, 1970, M. Sinz, 2005, and others), the concept of “region” is perceived as a superterm, including a number of fundamental features such as a certain territory, population, common historical existence, natural resources, a range of modern problems, etc. Thus, every scientist depending on his research position studies that aspect of the region, that he is interested in – economic, social, ethno-cultural, and so on.

According to E. S. Layserevich and S. B. Schlichter, “the region is a large space (in contrast to the area) and doesn’t coincide with the hierarchy of economic regions and administrative-territorial units” (Layserevich and Schlichter, 1999, p. 12). In defining region, there is more freedom regarding its range and borders. A system of criteria and quantitative indicators is used to determine the areas. In this sense, zoning is considered a classification and regionalization – as a typification.

In socio-geographic terms, regional analysis is also considered a methodological activity together with cultural landscape (Kabanskiy, 1999).

Often, the cultural landscape is perceived by the sense of the concept, formulated by P. S. Tyanshansky (Tyanshansky, 1915) and L. S. Berg (Berg, 1922) – a space devoid of emptiness, structured

by natural and cultural components of the earth's surface; in it every place has significance based on the its natural base and spatial position.

Carl Sauer defines cultural landscape as a result of interrelations between man and nature. He gives evidences for the adaptation of man to the environment, for the different ways of living (Sauer, 1925).

In social and cultural contexts, the region should not be perceived only as an object for observation and influence, but also as a subject developing its regional self-determination. It is a subject of will, actions, values, and norms (Kostitskiy, 1997). Considered in this way, the region requires an awareness of its internal, landscape-cultural definition, not of its external, subjective-administrative position.

The cultural-landscape approach to regional development stresses non-traditional activities and processes, which require the study of the perceptions of the society inhabiting the territory and its self-determination. This corresponds to the new phenomenological position about space – space of things, but also space of spirit.

The basis for adequate decisions on the local level is the study of perceptions of the regional subjects. However, it should not be absolute, because the region is one of the spatial forms of human life. Non-regional forms of spatial organization can also be found in the cultural landscape. In this sense, some indifference from the social groups to regional development can be explained.

In socio-cultural studies, territorial units should not be perceived as static and their structures as stable. The phenomena and processes in the regional structures can be understood through concepts such as non-linearity, open systems, self-organization, and irreversibility of development. Those who are in acute socio-economic and cultural crises have exhausted their internal development powers and need state or supranational stimulation. They cannot achieve synergetic effect, i.e., they have limited opportunities for perceiving the new and for evolution. This presumes practical, applied socio-geographical and cultural interventions regarding both their studying and the organizing and regulating of social regional processes.

According to the Finnish political scientist Pirjo Jukarainen, “in the term “regionalism” can be hidden different processes such as the movement for collective minority rights of different ethnic groups, separatism, decentralization of the states, transnational cooperation between neighboring administrative-territorial units, integration between neighboring districts and others.” (Jukarainen, 1997, p. 16).

Regionalism can be characterized also by categories such as the social cohesion of the coexisting ethnic language groups; mutual supplementation of production units within a particular territory; political solidarity, sharing of common values, connected with religion, historical traditions and culture, and many more.

The interpretations of the processes of regionalization and the related problems are diverse. It is often considered that the idea of regionalism emerged as a counterweight to the processes of over-centralization. For some authors, this is a process of consecutive changing of the territorial division of society and its normative regulating. The division usually takes the form of deconcentration (distribution of

the powers within the frames of the state system) and decentralization (discharging of the state center and creation of new centers of government within the frames of the state territory).

In the field of social geography, the principle of division takes the direction from centralism to autonomy of social behavior.

Deconcentration and decentralization are mainly of a socio-economic character, while centralism and autonomy of a socio-cultural character.

According to Zbigniew Brzezinski (Brzezinski, 1997), regionalism and globalization are treated as policy-driven processes rather than as spontaneous tendencies. Regionalism is an expression of historical necessity (Brzezinski, 1997). We see it as a form of manifestation of globalization, but in geographically limited areas, it is also a policy and an activity of a group of states. It is an instrument of the state for achieving the more distant goals of globalization, i.e., its accomplishment through regional groups. The core, driving force of the processes is the socio-cultural and economic potential of social groups.

The statement by the British writer and poet Rudyard Kipling is highly suggestive: "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet..." (Kipling, 1889, p. 3). Despite the growth of globalization and the universalization of (European and American) values, cultural variety has not disappeared. For example, the appearance of skyscrapers in Asia and Africa following American models does not mean that these continents will turn into an American civilization. Just like wearing European clothing did not turn Japanese, Chinese and other Asians into Europeans. They significantly preserve their cultural diversity through the other elements of culture – language, writing, customs, and way of living. If the West wants to keep its leading position, it should study other cultures in order to maintain a dialogue with them.

The American political scientist and sociologist Zbigniew Brzezinski (1928-2017), national security advisor to former US President Jimmy Carter, is the author of many books, including "The Grand Chessboard". It discusses the geopolitical power of the USA and the strategies through which it can be realized in 21<sup>st</sup> century. The author pays particular attention to the geostrategy of the USA in Eurasia and its main purpose is to spread its influence in the Middle Asia and the post-Soviet space (mainly Russia) (Brzezinski, 1997).

Brzezinski is considered a follower of H. Mackinder's ideas. He examines politics from the point of view of the confrontation between *maritime civilizations* (USA, Great Britain) and the civilizations of the land (the Heartland). The criticism of this concept is that naval forces have a decreasingly significant role in the contemporary world of transcontinental rockets, space and nuclear weapons. It is indicative that military-space forces were created in Russia in 1992. Russia and the USA have space forces since 2001 and 2019, respectively.

One of the prominent theorists of globalization, Zbigniew Bauman, studies its positive and negative effects on social life. Although he devotes considerable attention to substantiate "the deterritorialization" of space, he underlines the multidirectionality of contemporary global processes. "Globalization divides as much as it unites... Together with the emergence of the global dimension of business, of financial, trade

and information flow, a “localizing”, place-fixing process has been started. What appears to be globalization for some means localization for others. Mobility rises to the rank of supreme among the desired values, and the freedom of movement – a constantly scarce and unevenly distributed commodity...” (Bauman, 2005, p. 46). This means that globalization not only creates conditions for closer dialogue and rapprochement among cultures, but also leads to social-class differentiation.

In the monograph, “The Global Cities”, the geographers Mirko Grčich and Nikolay Sluka define globalization as a process of transformation of the Earth’s geographical envelope into a whole systematic organism. Thus, the geography of transnational companies does not overlap with national borders (Grčich and Sluka, 2006).

In the context of the globalization of political processes, there is the conspiracy theory of a New World Order (NWO).

One of the purposes is a society that will be created on the principle of the so-called “golden billion” (Kuzmich, 1994), in which “the most worthy” and “developed” nations are included. The others are expected to have service functions. The philosophy of such a concept determines the leading role for about 1.5 billion people, recognized as “the useful” part of the world population.

According to this theory, the world events are managed behind-the-scenes by a small group of people, “the world elite” (freemasons, royal families, The Bilderberg Group, The Committee of 300, The Rothschild family, The Rockefeller family, among others), who aim to create a world government with totalitarian control. A common theme of the NWO conspiracies is the existence of secret world elites, who influence key world events (public, political, historical, and even natural). The aim is the establishment of a unified world government and the abolition of sovereign states. Political and financial events are thought to be controlled by hidden organizations. In this sense, many historical and current events are seen as having been influenced or even guided in this way, with the suspicion of secret political meetings and decision-making processes. Hundreds of books appear every year around the world, trying to prove or proclaim the existence of a world conspiracy.

#### **4. Conclusions**

There are a lot of theories and concepts trying to explain globalization and to relate it to political processes in the world. Very important role in this discussion has geography, which tries to explain the connection between the mentioned processes on world scale on one hand, and political entities with their compound elements on the other. Due to the development of communications and technologies, the world becomes smaller, so we might say that geography and the geographical point of view also change in order to respond to the necessities of modernity. That’s why we have to rely not only on fundamental and well known theories and concepts, but also to new ones, and to look at them critically. The results of the research show that there are different points of view on the problems, and every one of them

complements the whole image. However, some of them can be grounds for the emergence of new theories in globalization and geopolitics. Other theories, although looking a little bit more eccentric, also find their place in geopolitics, and such is the recent example of the “golden billion” theory. An attempt has been made to include all these different points of view in the explanation of global processes and their interrelations. Another result of the research is that it explains the relation between two processes in the world, that take place together, although being absolutely different in nature – globalization and regionalization.

The main limitations of the research come from the immensity of the topic, which reflects all spheres of life and is of interdisciplinary character. Fundamental studies have been taken into consideration, as well as the point of view of scholars from different parts of the world in order to make the study more complex. However, it is not possible to include all the existing concepts, which might be a disadvantage of the present research.

Future researches can be focused on the development of the different aspects of globalization, their manifestation in world geopolitics and economy, the globalization-regionalization relations, and at the lowest level their reflection to everyday life. The trends in the development of new concepts should also be traced because they will supplement the existing researches and will provide the specificity of the problems. Last but not least, some of these studies, which can be considered fundamental, reflect the future of the world.

All the above-mentioned theories are influenced by different factors. Together with the development of communications and different global organizations, the world becomes smaller but the struggle for influence intensifies. And we should not forget that on the “Grand Chessboard” there are different types of figures – some are craving for world domination, while others are just trying to survive.

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