

POLAND AND GLOBAL THREATS

JERZY KLEER

Institute of Economics PAS

00-901 Warszawa, Nowy Świat 72, Poland

e-mail: jerzykleer@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: This essay seeks to present the specifics of global threats, as well as the reasons for them being universal in nature, and for their persistence. A certain classification of the threats is also engaged in. At the same time, an attempt is made to show the specific threats present – irrespective of their global counterparts – in different regions, and even in different states. The genesis and nature of the latter are demonstrated in a somewhat *ad hoc* manner by reference to the threats considered to face Poland. If the global threats are truly universal, and arise out of the changes taking place around the world in the last half-century (primarily around the twin phenomena of globalisation and the information revolution), a specific reverse kind of situation applies to decolonisation, plus the collapse of the communist system and the transformation into market economies that apply to formerly communist countries. Equally, some at least of the threats facing Poland may have even a longer history, given that they are very much influenced by past economic and political development, as well as the dominant cultural system.

KEY WORDS: global threats, threats facing Poland, civilisational crises, urbanisation process, demographic change, social capital, social and economic development.

FIRST REMARKS

This article's title requires a certain justification, from at least two points of view. The first question in need of an answer concerns the reasons for conceptualising threats facing Poland within such a broad context. Then there is also the matter of what kind of

new phenomena there can be that differ so much from past situations that they justify a new analytical approach, notwithstanding the fact that threats of one kind or another have always been present, as is clear.

Indeed, threats are and always have been part of the human condition, but there can be thought to be four new processes that may truly justify a new approach – and a new defining – of global threats, and Poland has also been dragged into these, if to differing extents and intensities.

The first of the processes referred to is globalisation, which has given rise to serious steps in the direction of unified rules for the economic game. The near-universal form of management has also come to be the market economy. And – what is more important – this has to a greater or lesser extent forced the economies of different states to open up, establishing conditions for relatively free flows, not only of goods and services, but also – more importantly – capital, and this not just in the form of credit, but also as direct investment. And what is yet more important is the fact that globalisation has given birth to new economic entities in the form of multinational and transnational corporations. The great significance these have is for example attested to when it is recalled that, as of 2012, the world's top 100 economies included 60 states, but also 40 corporations (Keys *et al.* 2013). This in practice means that the said corporations, via their branches operating in many different countries, can and genuinely do influence both the internal and foreign policies of states, and not always in a way that is of clear benefit to the latter.

In the second place, there is work in progress on an information revolution assuming an ever-greater scale and doing a great deal to change fundamentally the way the world is seen, as well as imposing new forms of linkage and changing conditions where management and governance are concerned. Of key significance here is a marked “diminution of the world” achieved both temporally and spatially, not so much in the physical sense as in a system of permanent and very rapid linkages between states, businesses, social and political entities, and individuals. Information is now propagated and disseminated at incredible, unprecedented speed, with economic transactions capable of being performed with equal rapidity. This has greatly accelerated technical and economic change, and also to some extent social and political change. This has happened and will not now stop happening, and it has negative as well as positive connotations and consequences.

And so to a matter that may well be the most important, of key importance – i.e. the ongoing changes in production and employment structure. Through to the 1970s, the world – or at least its most-developed part, operated within the framework of industrial civilisation paradigms. Since then, what has happened – and what has changed – has been very much the result of a knowledge-based (post-industrial) civilisation. A fundamental change from this point of view is the very rapid rise in the role services play in the generation of GDP (Szukalski 2014). Going even beyond that are the ever-greater contributions the virtual economy makes, in comparison with the real one, as well as attendant changes in employment structure (the emergence of Guy Standing's

“precariat”), and even social structure. The traditional capitalist class has broken down, just as has the traditional working class, and it is against such a background that many social and political tensions are emerging, often with disorganising consequences for the functioning of the state system.

A third process of considerable significance concerns civilisational crises, where the term is very consciously applied in plural, since there are at least two. The first of these is the aforementioned changeover to a civilisation based around knowledge, ostensibly at least, given that most of the world’s population experiences this as the destruction of an agrarian civilisation and abrupt move over to an industrial civilisation, with at-best superficial elements of the knowledge-based version.

Without going into too much detail, it is important to note the particularly important political processes associated with decolonisation and the abrupt end that was brought to the flirtation with communism. The consequence here was the emergence of more than 100 relatively sovereign states, most of which retained an agrarian civilisation that decolonisation and globalisation have since been wont to destroy, instead generating the foundations of an industrial civilisation, with those aforesaid elements of knowledge attached. In the countries involved, these processes are extremely diversified and progressing with differing intensities. Nevertheless, they are exerting a huge influence in their societies, and this is not only of an economic nature, but also works on mentality and politics, in some cases liberating numerous criminal acts and even acts of war. However, it is in fact typical for civilisational crises to be associated with processes of this kind. The history of previous epochs and crises for civilisation supply numerous examples that this is so.

And so finally to the fourth point we are dealing with, namely the population explosion that has almost doubled the number of people on Earth in just half a century, in association with a far-reaching urbanisation process not completed yet by any means, but already assuring that more than half of all the world’s people now live in towns and cities. Needless to say, the demographic change is very disparate from one region of the world to the other. While there are huge increases in population in both Africa and Asia, the increase is minimal in Europe, and the forecast for the next 50 years sees the continent’s population (or at least the ethnically European part of it) declining, with the proportion past productive age unprecedentedly high, at almost 30%.

The huge population boom away from the limited areas of population decline inevitably provokes migration out of areas with increasingly dense populations – which are mostly weakly developed and also prone to what are typically described as natural or environmental disasters, but are in fact ones inevitably worsened (and in fact made worse and worse) by human activity.

In the light of the above, it can come as no surprise that the simultaneous operation of varied circumstances with common roots can ensure the emergence of what are truly global threats. And, given the now-unprecedented scale, as well as the specific origin, it is indeed essential for a new approach and way of looking at the issues be adopted.

WHAT THEN ARE THE GLOBAL THREATS AND WHAT ARE THEIR MAIN FEATURES?

A threat always represents the disturbance of a state of relative equilibrium at the level of the individual, group, state or whole planet; and this is so in relation to both natural threats and those resulting from human activity in various spheres.

While the above definition looks to apply, irrespective of the period of history being considered, the contemporary situation is one that confers certain very specific features upon threats in the here and now.

Thus, contemporary global threats can be seen to have seven main features to distinguish them, as described below:

- The threats are universal in nature, which is to say they occur across the globe, albeit assuming different scope in different states;
- The threats in question are very intensive, in line with the acceleration of the overall rhythm of change, as well as the universal presence of interrelational elements that link states, different kinds of businesses, societies, individuals and groups;
- The threats are of a cumulative nature, which is to say that they originate in earlier features and characteristics of our world, but are now of a specific nature arising out of the fact that they are present at the same time, with there thus being a real possibility or even likelihood of linkage, overlap or mutual reinforcement;
- The threats in question are now unprecedentedly visual and visualisable, thanks to the instrumentation the information revolution depends on, not least TV and the Internet. Past threats were not like this, *inter alia* because, irrespective of how real or theoretical a threat may actually be, all societies can participate – with greater or lesser rationality – in the reactions to them;
- In connection with the above factors, there is an increasing lack of trust between individuals, between the employed and their employers, and – above all – between society and the state;
- As a result of all of the above factors, circumstances are ever more favourable for the appearance of new risks of different types that are capable of accumulating, being transferred to state and society alike, and across the whole world. The risks in question are largely resistant to advanced prediction or definition, not least because they can arise out of knowledge or ignorance or misunderstanding with equal facility, again thanks to the information revolution;
- Finally, a key feature of today's global threats is the element of fear – a factor now proving very effective in welding together a global community.

The process of presenting these general characteristics of global threats draw attention to the fact that these are as persistent as they are diverse. Nevertheless, it is possible to engage in a process of identification and classification that must of necessity fail to represent an exhaustive listing, given that there are still specific threats associated with the nature and level of development of different states around the world.

THE IDENTIFICATION OF GLOBAL THREATS

Leaving aside the aforementioned specific threats associated with particular countries or smaller groups thereof, as well as the equally specific threats arising out of the civilisational crises, it is possible to produce a very general division and allocation of threats into 3 groups (Kleer, Kleiber 2015):

- I. Threats of a global nature;
- II. Threats associated with systemic crises;
- III. Threats to survival.

A particular and specific property of the global threats concerns the real limits on possibilities for these to be marginalised, given the need for the kind of joint, concerted, agreed-upon action by all the world's states that can effectively be dismissed as a real possibility, pretty much out of hand. This is a reflection of states' extremely disparate interests, and the need for these to be precluded in both theory and practice to achieve consensus.

Even if no detailed characterisation of the above threats is engaged in, it would seem valuable to preface a consideration of the specific threats facing Poland by at least a mentioning and very general identification of the main threats present in the above groups, given that these relate to our country at least in the most general sense. Obviously, a Poland that is part of a globalised world is bound up in the threats that world faces, of which some have a greater or lesser impact on the possibilities for development, or at least the degree to which that development may be achieved with ease. At the same time, it needs to be recalled that the world is changing rapidly, and the nature of the different threats can either intensify or – eventually, after a longer period – become marginalised.

POINT I. FIVE TYPES OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE ARE CAPABLE OF BEING IDENTIFIED AMONG THE GLOBAL THREATS

In the first place, there is a lack of a cohesive world order in two fundamental segments of life, i.e. the political and the economic (Kleer 2014). This is linked with different economic levels and economic models, as well as with the very disparate political solutions that different states apply. After all, to this day, democratic systems are augmented around the globe by authoritarian ones, and even dictatorships.

In the second place, there is a trend – and indeed a worsening one, for globalisation processes to come into conflict with the interests of sovereign nation-states (Kapfer 2006). Today's state is a product of the Industrial Revolution, as well as profound change in the political circumstances that determine sovereignty. Globalisation demands the opening up of national markets, ensuring the imposition of certain supranational linkages, and making it necessary for the rules of the game characterising the world market to be heeded. Sovereignty is also being infringed in the political sphere, and

first and foremost as regards mentality, given the operation of the instruments associated with the information resolution (Boehme-Nessler 2009).

In the third place, globalisation and the information revolution bring with them rapid rates of change mainly, though not solely, in the sphere of the economy, given that behaviours are also changed, as are the relationships between states. The impacts are all the more serious given the different rates at which different groups in society absorb and accommodate the change in question. After all, changes in systems of behaviour (in some quarters in particular) are achieved much more slowly than changes of a technological or economic nature. Change in people's behaviour is mainly wrought through the educational system, as well as the cultural system, and the incompatibility alluded to here is extremely difficult to overcome in a short period of time.

In the fourth place, major difficulties are being experienced with the adjustment of society to the rate of change associated with the information revolution. This is not merely a reflection of the fact that mastery of a computer can prove particularly difficult for some, but also because information is conveyed to varying extents, and also because there are variant interpretations of the different processes ongoing in the world, and in one's own country.

Finally, in the fifth place, there are now new types of risk arising that were not known in the past, and against which the means of attack or defence remain unknown. Certain of these did appear sporadically in the past, albeit only in certain spheres of life. But knowledge of ways of avoiding them or combating them remains very deficient, while the number of such risks given birth to by an ever-more complex world is increasing all the time (Beck 2012).

POINT II. THE SYSTEMIC THREATS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH STATE INSTITUTIONS, AND THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY AND THE ECONOMY IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF GLOBALISATION

The first and most characteristic example is provided by the political and systemic crises taking place today in the majority of the world's states. The sources of this phenomenon need to be looked for in several areas, foremost among them being the lack of sufficiently cohesive societal ties of the type that globalisation has put in place in the sphere of economic linkages. Thus the political and systemic models present in different states differ markedly from those in operation in the economic sphere. This is not of course the only reason for the aforesaid crisis situation in the area of political systems (or models).

Another, no-less-important cause of the political crises is the nature – or more precisely the model – of the state that came into existence in the wake of the processes of decolonisation and systemic transformation. In most cases, the states newly emerged were not prepared mentally for the modern political model, with the result that most steered more or less consciously in the direction of authoritarian solutions. For their

part, the latter put barriers in the way of creativity in society, and hence the qualitative development of state functions.

In turn, in the world's most developed states – in a Europe that has had a democratic system in place for decades and has decided to call a European Union into being as a modern model by which integration might be achieved – a widespread current occurrence is the existence of significant eurosceptical groups questioning the basic legitimacy of the organisation's governing entitlements, suggesting that these should be abandoned, or at least replaced by much looser ties between members of the grouping.

A second, not insignificant manifestation here is the crisis afflicting the dominant economic model of capitalism. This particular crisis has numerous manifestations, of which only a few can be signalled here. Clearly taking pride of place is the ongoing discrediting of the Neo-Liberal model, at least in a large group of states. It is after all this model that is very much blamed for the 2007–2008 financial crisis, and its many and varied consequences since that time.

Another aspect of the crisis in the said model reflects the aforementioned emergence of large numbers of multinational and transnational corporations, which not only dominate the world economy, but are also ever-more inclined to intervene in the political and social aspects of the states in which their affiliates operate, to say nothing of their desire and ability to influence political life.

A particular dangerous feature of today's capitalist model – reflecting both globalisation and the information revolution – is the large and ever-growing rift between the virtual and real economies (Kleer 2011). This is not merely a splitting into two of that which functions in real life and that which is very largely service-related but also has numerous negative effects. For the division into spheres gives rise to a real-life division of the classes of capitalist. Distinguishable at this point is a group primarily associated with the financial sector as broadly conceived, which plays an ever more dominant role in the economy, not only of a given country, but of the whole world.

A third manifestation of the crisis afflicting the model of capitalism is far-reaching and ever-greater disparity of income, in the world as a whole, but also within countries. This phenomenon is very well known, and if I invoke it actively here it is in order to remind readers of two rather universal truths that are of key significance to any understanding of today's world. In the rules of the market economy it is written in, almost *ex deffinitione*, that there will be differences in income. At most there are models – like that of the welfare state – that see it as their task to limit the disparities. However, possible models also include the Liberal or Neo-Liberal ones that are actually responsible for globalisation. Equally, income disparities have a second fundamental basis that reflects the rewarding of creativity, innovation, technological progress, progress in medicine and so on, notwithstanding the fact that it is only very slowly that the living conditions for most people improve, in the cities especially.

Finally, the fourth manifestation of the crisis is the breakup of the traditional structure of the capitalist society – a complex problem with far-reaching consequences that is outlined in the following sentences. Basically, the class of capitalists has become divided into two groups, i.e. the traditional entrepreneurs operating in the real sector and the class of financiers associated with the banking sector, stock exchanges, etc. While the overall aims of these sectors remain similar, the ways in which they operate are disparate, often in collision with one another, and at times simply hostile to one another.

This type of division has had no less an effect on the class of employees, primarily as the services sector has expanded at the cost of industry, to say nothing of agriculture. Expansion of the services sector is mainly the result of the information revolution, but also of the mushrooming of cities. But now a huge new problem is the decline in employment based around contracts of employment (be they full- or part-time), in favour of temporary work, work based on junk contracts, and the unstable, zero-prospects kind of work defining the newly-appearing “precariat” grouping that is the inevitable, undesirable consequence of the services sector’s growth and dominance. There is no turning back to the old model now, and it can be assumed quite confidently that work on the basis of contracts of employment is increasingly a thing of the past.

If the above threats are interlinked on account of their permanent character, notwithstanding all possible modifications, then it also becomes obvious that there are numerous negative consequences ensuing from the systemic changes.

In the above remarks, I have focused mainly on the nature of the threats associated with the capitalist system. This is not to say that that system is lacking in any brighter side, but merely to recall that that side is not the subject of the present considerations.

POINT III. TO FINALLY REFER TO THE GROUP OF THREATS TO HUMANKIND’S VERY SURVIVAL

There are very many of these, with some being of a general nature, and others more specific. However, here I shall confine myself to 12 that are general in nature, but also have more important universal features and properties, which is to say that they have application to societies all across the globe.

1. Among societies there is an ever-clearer sense that security is lacking, at home and in the state resided in. What differs from group to group is the precise form this lack of security assumes.
2. Disparities in income are growing, leading to degradation of different groups in society, and all the more tangibly in the material sense and in terms of mentality, given the very visible nature of today’s social and economic processes.
3. The profligate, wasteful use of resources is assuming a specific character in the conditions of ongoing globalisation and the still-developing population explosion. This is manifest in the waste of human resources as regards the qualified and non-qualified workforce, as well as of course in wastefulness concerning raw materials and manufactured products.

4. A further manifestation of the overall process is uncertainty as to whether full-time employment will ever be held down, with all the consequences that has for the income necessary for a person's own existence and that of his/her family.
5. One of the key threats to the survival of humanity is that posed by destruction of the natural environment, as well as climate change capable of limiting existential conditions to a serious extent (Leggewie, Welzer 2012).
6. A phenomenon novel in terms of its scale at least is the destruction of the public sphere – as made most clearly manifest in expanding urban space, especially in regard to a lack of planning where that space is concerned.
7. A specific contemporary phenomenon is the mass migration of humanity originating mainly, though not solely, in Africa and Asia, given the conditioning based around civilisational crisis. In truth this is not a new issue, but the scale on which it is now taking place, especially in Europe and in the direction of the European Union, is sufficient to pose a serious threat.
8. A phenomenon characterising the last few decades has been the appearance of new economic and military powers whose rivalry is starting to pose a threat to world peace. The powers in question are arising mainly, though not solely, in Asia.
9. Another new phenomenon, at least in relation to scale, concerns increasing socioeconomic ills and sleaze seen to be afflicting countries. These assume various forms from terrorism, through increased criminality in society and public life, tax evasion, the presence of organised crime syndicates involved in drug smuggling and human trafficking, various kinds of fraud and corruption and inappropriate links between the worlds of business and politics.
10. The rapid growth of the human population globally has given rise to numerous ills and threats, among which particular significance needs to be assigned to shortages of food (and especially problems with its distribution) *in extremis* giving rise to famine in various regions. There is also a growing water shortage.
11. Megacities represent a new phenomenon characterising today's world, being agglomerations of more than 10 million inhabitants. While there were 9 of these globally as of 1990, there were 29 by 2015. The abrupt increase in size of such cities brings with it a host of problems, like the destruction of public space, numerous social ills that can reach plague proportions, and increasing tensions between inhabitants and the central authorities. On the other side of the coin, megacities may be key centres of science and culture, as well as economic powerhouses (*Megamiasta...* 2015).
12. A last key component to the threats referred to results from weaknesses in education systems and in scientific research, as set against the demand that the current information revolution is generating.

THREATS SPECIFIC TO POLAND

While it is true, as has already been noted, that Poland is subject to the influence of the global threats (given their universal presence and origin in globalisation and the market economy), that is not to say that each country faces these threats to the same degree. Rather the degree of exposure and “infection” varies quite markedly, being very much dependent on the level of development, which is in fact to say the sequence of events taking place over periods running into centuries, as well as the dominant cultural system. Each state and each society has its certain specific features exerting an enhanced influence when it comes to the internal “generation” of threats. Matters of the interrelationships between global threats and those pertaining domestically in particular can and usually do take various different forms, but this does not mean that they do not overlap and even operate in a mutually reinforcing way.

The threats listed below do not represent an exhaustive list of those facing Poland, and nor can they be regarded as arranged into a hierarchy or assigned values. But, while it is true that some of these have a longer history, the circumstances of globalisation and the crisis facing civilisation ensure that they now assume a different dimension to that present previously, potentially having even more far-reaching consequences. In those circumstances, and *ex ante* at least, it is impossible to determine whether the durability of the threats in question acts to strengthen or ameliorate them. It is probable that both solutions can be applied as an assessment is made.

The starting point for the presentation of the said threats is the systemic transformation instilled inevitably in one way or another into the changes induced by the information revolution and globalisation, also because there was a given moment at which Poland found itself in a completely new situation from the political, social and economic points of view.

The transformation taking place in Poland was a relatively peaceful one, and also very importantly a rapid one. The latter fact has not always been favourable to the country’s development, because a consequence has been **incomplete modernisation**. This connects with specific, long-term threats that can be formulated, and that require continued application of suitable solutions. There are many contributory factors here, but the ones to be focused on tend to concentrate in areas needing to be changed effectively – markedly modernised – if further development of a qualitative nature is to proceed with success, as it would obviously be desirable for it to do. There is need to recall that, in the circumstances of globalisation, not everything depends on decisions taken by state institutions, given that external conditioning is also of key importance, including (as public authorities fail – or elect not to – recognise) that deriving from private entities, operating especially in the commercial and educational spheres.

However, it is here most necessary to focus on areas more amenable to decisionmaking at the level of state institutions, and in many cases those with the status of Treasury-owned enterprises. These require serious, often qualitative, transformation if they are

to operate effectively and innovatively. But then, this is pretty much a basic condition for, and manifestation of, modernisation.

What I consider a matter of fundamental importance is the inadequate quantitative and qualitative development of social capital.

While it is true that Poland falls within the group of states in which a high proportion of the population has higher education, the quality of that education may not in fact be regarded as particularly high. This is especially true where skills in working together are concerned – a known phenomenon, and one that has already been described and documented in sufficient detail. Perhaps a more important component underpinning the inadequate development of social capital is the permanently underdeveloped state of the research and development (R&D) sector, for which the statistics put Poland among the last places in the hierarchy of EU Member States. The further development of any Poland that is to be a modern country cannot be based solely on imitation, as has been the case in recent decades. Rather, there must be a far-reaching mobilisation and utilisation of the potential residing in both enterprises and society as a whole.

What the problem boils down to is this: the development of social capital cannot take place in an abrupt fashion, in the way that progress in other fields can be achieved. A longer period is required, usually measured in decades.

A further threat, and one capable of being – and needing to be – resolved entails the further institutionalising of the public order.

In this place, the attention should be drawn to several key factors obstructing the process in question. These are: first, a particularly well-developed and thus far-advanced process of the bureaucratisation of state and local governmental institutions, of which a key manifestation is fragmented decisionmaking; as well as, second, the limited competence of the greater part of the administrative personnel; third, excessive politicisation of what should be the politically neutral civil service; and fourth, an insufficiently sensitive attitude to the citizen on the part of the public administration.

There are many sources of these negative phenomena, but if the historical causes are set aside, what is important is the lack of a civil service that would be independent of political power, as is in fact in place in many Western European countries.

Needing to be regarded as a key component of the modernisation process is the adaptation of the public sector to modern development needs.

This is particularly true when it comes to the underdevelopment of such key segments deciding upon the long-term development of the state as health protection, the aforementioned system of education, modern infrastructure, the counteraction of processes destructive of public space, concern for the development of personnel of high enough quality, as well as appropriate decisionmaking competences in the hands of local and regional government. The efficiency and autonomy of functioning of the judicial apparatus is also of key importance.

A second, in some sense derived threat resulting from the systemic transformation is the **hybrid nature of the economic model**. This reflects the presence in Poland of a far-reaching mixture of the market model and that of the welfare state. This can be illustrated by reference to the level of GDP accounted for by the expenditure of governmental or local governmental institutions, which oscillated around the 45% level in the years 1995–2014 (*Eurostat* data accessed 16.10.2015).

While it is true that economic models are never put into effect in pure form, there should at least be some kind of far-reaching cohesion. For there is not even a theoretical vision as to which areas the state should be responsible for and which should belong to the private sector. Without such limits being set, economic and social development will always encounter barriers, especially in economies with an average level of development and a dual nature, as in Poland. And from this point of view the economic and social model is not cohesive. One thing are the provisions in the Constitution and quite another the economic and social practice at a given point in the post-transformation period.

A third key threat not confined to Poland concerns **disparities relating to income, and in society in general, which can prove particularly threatening in the circumstances of very visible economic and social processes**.

While the disparities in Polish society do not look excessive by the standards of other countries, they have emerged over a very short period of time, with this aspect making it look all the more significant, not only because it is so very visible, as has been noted, but also because the borders in the EU are open, making an awareness of differences from one state to another possible, but also allowing much better-paid work to be taken up elsewhere.

A fourth threat with particularly dramatic future consequences is the **ageing, and then the gradual decline, of the population**. This is a process difficult or in essence impossible to reverse in the medium term. It is not a problem specific to Poland, but rather one that concerns many European states. Nevertheless, this is a very serious matter from various points of view. Forecasts already made suggest that there will be 38 375 000 people in Poland by 2020, 37 168 000 by 2035, and 34 904 000 by 2050. Ageing of that population will have been taking place all the while, such that a post-productive age (65 and over) will characterise 18% of the population in 2020, 23% in 2035, and 29% in 2050 (Strzelecki 2014).

A downward population trend as such will be accompanied by a decline in labour resources, to the point where problems with financing pensions become simply massive, even in the near future. This is an extremely difficult problem to resolve in itself, and all the more so if the further aim is to ensure some kind of ongoing homogeneity of society.

An example of a threat of a different kind is provided by **permanent intra-cultural dispute**. This is mainly manifested in the lack of skill at reaching a compromise characteristic of the main political groupings, but also of different groups in society. This is to some extent the legacy of the 19th century, which was dominated by Romantic thinking and had little time for rationalism – which was to a great extent a phenomenon associated with the middle class. A further reason reflects a lack of the philosophy and

learning that capitalism was elsewhere able to bring to bear. The loss of statehood brought about by the Partitions of Poland left a situation in which there was no adequate shaping of a clear vision regarding the functions a modern state was supposed to play, and what appropriate interactions between the state and the citizen were supposed to look like.

This is overwhelmingly the consequence of Poland's dominant cultural system, which has at various times thrust to the fore components that limit developmental processes and manifest themselves in a weak rhythm as regards change under the influence of technological progress and especially an external environment that is subject to very rapid change thanks to globalisation, and especially the information revolution.

The lack of skill in reaching compromises above and beyond political or ideological divisions, e.g. in the name of the overriding interests of the state as a collective emanation of the citizens, is something that poses a major, and rather persistent, threat.

A somewhat similar problem, at least one with a very similar foundation, is the **attitude to what is different**, the attitude in question being primarily characterised by a lack of goodwill or even enmity. Over ten years of participation in the EU context has not changed that much in this sphere, and current problems with refugees and the increased threat of terrorism only increase the level of hostility. It will prove hard to separate this matter from the issue of the civilisational crisis referred to above, and closure of the borders, plus the creation of an autarchic model will not represent any kind of solution favourable to development, qualitywise development in particular.

* * *

This brief and somewhat generalised review of both global threats and those more specific to Poland makes it clear that the progress over the upcoming decades may well face numerous barriers to both social and economic development. The discovery of some kind of rational *modus vivendi* thus represents a basic requirement to be set before the forces in charge of leading the country's development.

REFERENCES

- Beck U., 2012, *Spoleczeństwo światowego ryzyka. W poszukiwaniu utraconego bezpieczeństwa (Society of global risks. In search of lost safety)*, Wyd. Scholar, Warsaw.
- Boehme-Nessler V., 2009, *Das Ende des Staates? Zu den Ausmerkungen der Digitalisierung auf den Staat*, Zeitschrift für öffentliches Recht, no. 64, 280 pp.
- Eurostat, accessed 16.10.2015.
- Kapfer S., 2006, *Multinational Corporations and the Erosion of State Sovereignty*, Brigham Young University.
- Keys Tracy S., Malnight T.W., Stoklund Christel K., 2013, *Corporate Clout: Time for responsible capitalism*, Strategy Dynamic Global SA.

- Kleer J., 2011, *Związki między gospodarką realną a wirtualną*, (*Relations between the real economy and the virtual*), [in:] *O nowy model działalności państwa w finansach*, (*About the new model activities of the State in Finance*), PWE, Warszawa, 123–129.
- Kleer J., 2014, *Destrukcyjne siły ładu światowego*, (*Destructive Process of the World Order*), *Studia Ekonomiczne*, no. 4, 516–534.
- Kleer J., Kleiber M., 2015, *Zagrożenia globalne barierami rozwoju*, (*Threats of global barriers to development*), Komitet Prognoz „Polska 2000 Plus” PAN, Warsaw.
- Leggewie C., Welzer H., 2012, *Koniec Świata jaki znaliśmy. Klimat, przyszłość i szanse demokracji*, (*End of the World as we knew it. The climate, the future and the chances of democracy*), Wyd. Krytyka Polityczna, Warsaw.
- Megamiasta przyszłości. Szansa czy zagrożenie rozwoju*, (*The future of megacities. Opportunity or threat to development*), 2015, Komitet Prognoz „Polska 2000 Plus” PAN, Warsaw.
- Strzelecki Z., 2014, *Tendencje rozwoju ludności świata*, (*Trends of the world population development*), [in:] *Kryzys Jakości Życia*, (*The crisis of Life quality*), Komitet Prognoz „Polska 2000 Plus” PAN, Warsaw, 17–38.
- Szukalski S.M., 2014, *Zagrożenia globalne wynikające ze zmian strukturalnych*, (*Global threats arising from structural changes*), [in:] *Kryzysy systemowe*, (*System 'crises*), Wydanie drugie, Komitet Prognoz „Polska 2000 Plus” PAN, Warsaw, 215–237.