



ATHENA

CRITICAL INQUIRIES IN LAW, PHILOSOPHY AND GLOBALIZATION

Call for Papers - The transformations of globalization: power, geopolitics and law

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Factual Background:

The election of the 47th president of the United States triggered not only a change within the global order as we know but also laid down the foundations for the *creation of a new order*. The exit of the United States from the WHO, the sanctions against the International Criminal Court, the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on climate change, the decision of the American president to terminate the agreement reached by the OECD in 2021 on the global taxation of multinationals, the recent legislative proposals to protect the US enterprises from any application of due diligence regulations, the end of the U.S. Foreign Aid Agency system: all these indicate a clear orientation that expresses a growing conflict between *power and law*.

The effects of this new American policy reverberate in several directions: against the supranational legal order that had been created after the Second World War; towards the revision of the traditional system of US alliances; towards the overcoming of the principles of liberal democracy; towards the decline of the West and the emergence of the power of the Global South; towards the international protection of human rights. Let's look at all these aspects.

In the field of international relations, we are witnessing the emergence of regional powers endowed with significant military capabilities and power, such as, for example, Russia, China, Israel, but also India and Pakistan, which feel they have the necessary autonomy to continue their conflicts regardless of the reactions of the major world powers. Thus, it begins to take shape what Charles Kupchan has called *No One's World*. As India, China, Brazil and other developing states grow, Western dominance will give way to a more equitable distribution of global power; therefore, Kupchan says "the new world will belong to no one... the world that is shaping up will be multipolar and politically different; it will consist of greater powers expressing distinct conceptions of what constitutes a just and legitimized order" (Kupchan 2013, x).

These transformations in international relations re-propose the importance of geopolitics (Haushofer), which, after having been marginalized by mixtures with National Socialism, is now re-proposed with the aspiration to be not an auxiliary discipline, but "a global political science, capable of contributing decisively to the determination and solution of the tasks of government" (Portinaro 1982, 35).

It is within this framework that the transformations of the relationship between the United States and Europe can be analyzed. In a new approach to the concept by the US administration,¹ the system of values on which Atlantic solidarity was based is completely overturned, and the idea of the West is reformulated as a sovereigntist key, opposing the conception of liberal democracy. Europe is accused of replacing its spiritual and cultural roots, restricting religious freedom and being unable to oppose mass migration, paradoxically posing a threat to the transatlantic partnership and to the very security

¹ Illustrated in the US State Department document, *The Need for Civilizing Allies in Europe*, 27 May 2025.

of the United States. Thus, Europe becomes the only bulwark of liberal-democratic principles against what was the leading country, but which now aims to subvert the system of its allies.

Hence, a question arises: *what has the West become, or what is becoming?*

For real, the West is the result of an inextricable intertwining of relationships between civilizations (Quinn 2024), and it can be argued that there has never been a “unique and pure” European or Western culture.² Therefore, it could be said that the West is an abstraction and that it is susceptible to a plurality of meanings. It can, in fact, connote the political community of liberal democracies, as well as a “cultural community” (*Kulturgemeinschaft*) founded on a Christian basis.³ But because of the rift between the United States and Europe, what is the fate of the West now?

An answer may perhaps come from an analysis of developments within the Global South. The summit that took place in Tianjin, China, was an opportunity for China and Russia to propose their leadership in the Global South and, for China, the affirmation of its role as a global leader. A model of multilateralism has emerged to oppose US unilateralism. China has expressed its willingness to carry out a geopolitical revolution, which aims to shift the center of global power from the Atlantic to Eurasia, from the West to Asia.⁴

Perhaps the Chinese century has already begun, and the West, because of its internal divisions, does not seem able to take up the challenge. Or perhaps we can only say that we are currently within a “global disorder”, in which the outlines of a possible multipolar order are not yet glimpsed.

Aims and Scope of the Call for Papers:

This call for papers would like to investigate the transformation that globalization and the global order are facing from different perspectives. We aim to answer (although not exclusively) the following questions:

1. Geopolitical scenarios and the transformation of the global legal order: what interaction?
2. The role of international and regional institutions in directing this transformation;
3. The transformation of global politics in the light of the exercise of unilateral powers;
4. The impact of power on the global and regional economies;
5. The role of civil society in the transformation of global politics;
6. Law, geopolitics and new technologies: how do these tools influence global transformation?
7. Power, geopolitics and protection of fundamental rights, especially in the field of business and human rights.

² “So-called Western values – freedom, rationality, justice, and tolerance – are neither exclusively nor originally Western, and the West itself is largely the product of long-standing ties with a much larger network of societies settled in the south, north, and east” (Quinn 2024).

³ “The origin of the West has sometimes been identified in the division of the Roman Empire in 4. century, and sometimes in the ‘Atlantic revolutions’ of the late 18th and early 19th century” (Trautsch 2018/2019, 413). The West can be equated with the member states of NATO, or it can mean the totality of the Western European states and the companies that settle abroad (in addition to the United States and Canada, also Australia and New Zealand) (Trautsch *ibid.*). It was a fundamental concept of political and social language in the second half of the 20th century to express the East-West opposition between the blocs of the “Cold War”, and as the descriptive concept of the countries united under the leadership of the United States (Trautsch 2013, 95).

⁴ Robert Kaplan has formulated a suggestive image, resorting to the instability of the Weimar Republic, to represent the current world disorder. “The whole world,” Kaplan writes, “is now a great Weimar, connected enough for one side to mortally influence the other parts, and yet not yet connected enough to be politically coherent” (Kaplan 2025, 7). Weimar was, in fact, characterized by a plurality of centres of power, which could explode – as indeed happened – in situations of open conflict. Weimar, Kaplan comments, is like our world today with its different civilizations, but – at the same time – increasingly united.

Information for authors:

The call is open to all scholars who want to contribute, coming from political, legal, historical, philosophical, international, anthropological, social and economic disciplines.

Interested authors can send a 700-word abstract on a topic related to the call for papers **by 28 February 2026**, by writing to athena@unibo.it (and in cc gustavo.gozzi@unibo.it and luigi.sammartino2@unibo.it).

Selected proposals will be communicated **by 7 March 2026**.

Final papers must be submitted to the Review by using this link **no later than 30 June 2026**.

The final issue will be published in November-December 2026.

For any other information, please contact the Journal Manager, Luigi Sammartino (luigi.sammartino2@unibo.it).

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