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MEGATRENDS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

МЕГАТРЕНДИ В БЛИЗЬКОСХІДНОМУ РЕГІОНІ

МЕГАТРЕНДЫ В БЛИЖНЕВОСТОЧНОМ РЕГИОНЕ

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Abstract. *The study of megatrends as the most revolutionary courses of mankind progress facilitates the definition of the time progression properties of both the global system and regional subsystems within the universal patterns. The objective of this study is to systematize and classify megatrends and determine the nature of their manifestation in the Middle East. On the basis of this analysis a reciprocal effect of the Middle East regional trends on the megatrends of the global world is defined, the nature of the co-evolution of global and regional megatrends is outlined and further courses of mankind progress are forecast.*

Megatrends exert the influence on the state of the world, thus defining the qualitative sense of the modern stage of global system evolution. The major megatrends were defined: globalization, integration, democratization, a reduced degree of mankind security and an increasing severity of global problems; a change in the international political structure; a crisis of the global leadership institution; a shift of the center of universal development (orientalization); an inversion of the fundamental values (freedom versus security); a virtualization of sociopolitical relations; a new model for the change in political power and administration in certain countries; an increased role of network structures in the international politics; an ideological indoctrination of international relations, namely the growing impact of the religious and civilizational factors.

The processes that are now occurring in the Middle East are defined by and greatly influence global development megatrends and the establishment of the world order structure, which makes it necessary to forecast trends for their future development. It is thus advisable to examine these processes at multiple levels of analysis: global, regional, sub-regional, bilateral and national.

Political changes in the region also reflect its internal problems. These are, above all, the authoritarian regimes, religious divides, Islamic extremism, excessive military spending, arms imports, and societies' dissatisfaction with living conditions. At the political level it is the absence of a joint political entity that could consolidate regional actors which constitutes yet another problem. At the regional level the transformation of relations along with the growing conflict potential leads to destabilization and fosters more polarization of the region. The dysfunctional nature of internal elements of the region is used by more powerful external actors. The old order is disappearing whilst the phase of transition to a new one is still ongoing and is characterized by uncertainty, the strengthening of the role of political Islam along with the new geopolitical role of Islamic fundamentalism, unrestricted transit of Islamism ideas, recurrent internal and interstate conflicts, and the heightened threat of non-state actors. It was concluded that ever-growing instability, a potential redrawing of the existing national boundaries and the emergence of quasi-states, relying on ethnic and ethno-denominational powers and sustained by influential geopolitical centers of power, can all be expected.

An analysis of megatrends and the nature of their manifestation in the Middle East enables us to make conclusions about the feasibility of employing such a category in international political analysis and actualizes the research of megatrends management at the global and regional levels alike.

Keywords: *megatrends, the Middle East, regional security, Islamism, Islamic fundamentalism, Pan-Islamism, Pan-Arabism.*

Анотація. *Дослідження проблематики мегатрендів як найбільш кардинальних напрямів розвитку людства надає змогу визначити характеристики часової ритміки як глобальної системи, так і регіональних підсистем в межах універсальних закономірностей. Завданням дослідження є систематизація та класифікація мегатрендів і визначення специфіки їх прояву в близькосхідному регіоні. На цій основі з'ясується зворотній вплив на мегатренди, акцентуються риси коеволуції глобальних та регіональних мегатрендів та прогнозуються подальші напрями розвитку.*

Мегатренди здійснюють кумулятивний вплив на стан світу, визначаючи якісний зміст сучасного етапу еволюції світової системи. Визначені найголовніші з них - глобалізація, інтеграція, демократизація, зниження ступеня захищеності людства та посилення глобальних проблем, зміна політичної структури світу, криза інституту глобального лідерства, переміщення центру світового розвитку (орієнталізація), інверсія фундаментальних цінностей, віртуалізація суспільно-політичних відносин, нова модель зміни політичної влади і управління в окремих країнах, зростання ролі мережевих структур у світовій політиці, ідеологізація міжнародних відносин, зокрема зростання ролі релігійного та цивілізаційного чинника.

Процеси, що відбуваються в близькосхідному регіоні, визначаються і в значній мірі впливають на мегатренди загальносвітового розвитку, на формування структури майбутнього світоустрою, що викликає потребу в прогнозуванні подальших тенденцій їх розвитку. Ці процеси аналізуються на декількох рівнях: глобальному, регіональному, субрегіональному, двосторонньому, національному і транснаціональному. Політичні зміни в регіоні пов'язані з внутрішніми проблемами: насамперед, це авторитарні режими, релігійні розбіжності, ісламський екстремізм, надмірні військові витрати, імпорту зброї, незадоволення суспільств умовами існування, а на політичному рівні – відсутністю єдиного політичного проекту, який міг би консолідувати регіональних гравців. На регіональному рівні реконфігурація відносин та зростання конфліктогенності призводить до дестабілізації та більшої поляризації регіону. Дисфункціональність внутрішніх елементів регіону використовується більш впливовими зовнішніми акторами. Старий порядок у регіоні зникає, а стадія переходу до нового ще триває та характеризується невизначеністю, посиленням ролі політичного ісламу та новою геополітичною роллю ісламського фундаменталізму, небмеженим транзитом ідей ісламізму, постійними внутрішньодержавними,

міждержавними та транснаціональними конфліктами, посиленням загрози з боку недержавних акторів. Зроблено висновки, що можна очікувати подальшого росту нестабільності, реконфігурації відносин та більшої поляризації регіону, можливого переділу існуючих міждержавних кордонів та появи квазі-держав, які спираються на етнічні та етноконфесійні сили і підтримуються впливовими геополітичними центрами сили.

Аналіз мегатрендів та специфіки їх прояву в близькосхідному регіоні дозволяє зробити висновки щодо доцільності використання цієї категорії в міжнародно-політичному аналізі і актуалізує дослідження управління мегатRENдами як на глобальному, так і на регіональному рівнях.

Ключові слова: мегатренди, близькосхідний регіон, регіональна безпека, ісламізм, фундаменталізм, панісламізм, панарабізм.

Аннотація. Исследование проблематики мегатрендов как наиболее кардинальных направлений развития человечества дает возможность определения характеристик временной ритмики как глобальной системы, так и региональных подсистем в пределах универсальных закономерностей. Целью исследования является систематизация и классификация мегатрендов и определение специфики их проявления в ближневосточном регионе. На этой основе констатируется обратное влияние на мегатренды, акцентируются характеристики коэволюции глобальных и региональных мегатрендов и прогнозируются дальнейшие направления развития.

Мегатренды осуществляют кумулятивное влияние на состояние мира, определяя качественное содержание современного этапа эволюции миросистемы. Определены важнейшие из них – глобализация, интеграция, демократизация, снижение степени защищенности человечества и усиление глобальных проблем, изменение политической структуры мира, кризис института глобального лидерства, перемещение центра мирового развития (ориентализация), инверсия фундаментальных ценностей, виртуализация общественно-политических отношений, новая модель смены политической власти и управления в отдельных государствах, возрастание роли сетевых структур в мировой политике, идеологизация международных отношений, в частности возрастание роли религиозного и цивилизационного факторов.

Процессы, которые происходят в ближневосточном регионе, определяются и в значительной степени влияют на мегатренды глобального развития, на формирование структуры нового мироустройства, что вызывает необходимость дальнейшего прогнозирования их развития. Эти процессы анализируются на нескольких уровнях: глобальном, региональном, субрегиональном, двустороннем и транснациональном. Политические изменения в регионе связаны с внутренними проблемами: прежде всего, авторитарные режимы, противоречия религиозного характера, исламский экстремизм, чрезмерные военные расходы, импорт вооружений, недовольство общества условиями существования, а на политическом уровне - отсутствием единого политического проекта, который мог бы консолидировать региональных игроков. На региональном уровне реконфигурация отношений и рост конфликтности приводят к дестабилизации и дальнейшей поляризации региона. Дисфункциональность внутренних элементов региона используется более влиятельными внешними акторами. Старый порядок в регионе исчезает, а стадия перехода к новому продолжается и характеризуется неопределенностью, усилением роли политического ислама и новой геополитической ролью исламского фундаментализма, неограниченным транзитом идей исламизма, постоянными внутренними, межгосударственными и транснациональными конфликтами, ростом угроз со стороны негосударственных акторов. Сделаны выводы, что следует ожидать дальнейшего роста нестабильности, реконфигурации отношений и еще большей поляризации региона, возможного пересмотра границ и появления квази-государств,

опираючихся на етнічні та етноконфесійні сили і підтримуються впливними геополітичними центрами сили.

Аналіз мегатрендів та специфіки їх проявлення в ближньосхідному регіоні дозволяє зробити висновки про наукову цільовість використання цієї категорії в міжнародно-політичному аналізі і актуалізує дослідження управління мегатрендами як на глобальному, так і на регіональному рівнях.

Ключевые слова: *мегатренды, ближневосточный регион, региональная безопасность, исламизм, фундаментализм, панисламизм, панарабизм.*

Problem statement. Throughout the social sciences there has been a growing awareness that a solution to the global issues calls for the upper management of universal development. Which is why the case for megatrends as the most revolutionary course of mankind progress, of fundamental and to the maximum extent lasting tradition for societal pace plays an important role in modern science that comprises the research of conceptual and applied aspects of global trends in international relations in retrospective and prospective variations as well as their identification and analysis of their specific nature in any world region.

Review of the main researches and publications. The study of the given problem is marked by an insufficient theoretic and conceptual definition, which may for the most part be due to its interdisciplinary nature. For our research there are identified three main approaches. The first one is represented by the studies of philosophers, sociologists, political scientists and psychologists, which focus on the qualitative transformations of the international policy system as a whole [Гелд, МакГрю, Голбрайт, Перратон: 2003; Нейсбит, Эбурдин: 1992; Noehn, Parsasiliti, Efron and Strogin 2018:19; Naisbitt, 2017; Winston, 2019; Wise, 2020]. Second approach centers on the fact-based, applied analysis of global trends in international relations and on their manifestations in some world regions [Ден Сяопин, 1987; Ден Сяопин, 2002; Gaub, 2019; Global Trends 2020: the world in 2020: n.d.]. Third approach regards the management of megatrends [Megatrends. The main trajectories of the evolution of world order in the twenty-first century 2013; Fabian, O'connor and Hoile, 2017; Global Trends 2030: the world in 2030: n.d.].

For the wholesome understanding of the modern trends for the Middle East development the studies of H.Kissinger [H.Kissinger, 2017], P.Cockburn [P.Cockburn, 2017], M.Lynch [M.Lynch, 2016], F. Halliday [F. Halliday, 2017] etc. are used. Whereas the patterns of megatrends manifestations remain unexplored in this region. There is observed an insufficiency in the amount of publications dedicated to the subject of our article.

Purpose and objectives of the article are designed to determine the nature of megatrends manifestations within the Middle East regional subsystem, which in turn enables to identify their reciprocal impact on the global trends. An application study of the global trends and the nature of their regional manifestation calls for the definition of the time progression properties of both the global system and regional subsystems within the universal patterns; for the specification of some features and prospects, and of their nature.

Methods of research. In order to achieve the purpose and to realize the objectives the international process is being considered in the light of the system approach. The nature and the main tendencies of global development are characterized by the global trends as the main directions for the pace of global society, which define the main prospects of the modern world evolution and the future of mankind. In the meantime, they differ in scale, that is they emerge in different parts of the world with varied extent and intensity. It is through close interaction and mutual reinforcement that they exert the influence on the state of the world, thus defining the qualitative sense of the modern stage of global system evolution and its further prospects.

An analysis of global trends in international relations and of the nature of their manifestation in the Middle East involves the research of megatrends manifestation in international politics processes and fields where the area of “conceptual overview of the main international issues” is being shaped, an attempt to “grasp and outline the strategic essence of the complex historical and

modern foreign policy processes... to spot what is principal without neglecting the minutia, but also avoiding the overdetailedization" [Xaac, 2019:13].

On the basis of generalization of numerous efforts to outline the main megatrends a conclusion may be made that there is a certain consensus as to the definition of the three major ones: globalization, integration and democratization [Megatrends. The main trajectories of the evolution of world order in the twenty-first century. 2013:6]. Globalization as a megatrend implies the transformation of the Westphalian model of international politics; integration — the transformation of the current international system; democratization — the transformation of the political system in particular countries [Megatrends. The main trajectories of the evolution of world order in the twenty-first century, 2013:35]. Attention is heeded to the tendency to integrate within the economic and political areas, the international relations are set out to merge into the regional and holistically endogenous ones. Wherein it should be noted that the global trends are of cyclical and wave nature; they evolve erratically and non-linearly, following the axis center — semi-periphery — periphery while their intersection generates a new quality. The megatrends are the dyads of processes-antagonists interchanging one another in a certain cyclical rhythm. On the one hand, recognizing the certain voluntarism and an absence of consensus on megatrends definition among the researchers an attempt should be conducted to add to the aforementioned megatrends the other ones that are related to them. These are: a reduced degree of mankind security and an increasing severity of global problems; a change in the international political structure; a crisis of the global leadership institution; a shift of the center of universal development (orientalization); an inversion of the fundamental values (freedom versus security); a virtualization of sociopolitical relations; a new model for the change in political power and administration in certain countries; an increased role of network structures in the international politics; an ideological indoctrination of international relations, namely the growing impact of the religious and civilizational factors.

Their further analysis involves taking the interconnection of global, regional and state processes into account. In particular, within the Middle East region it can be observed by an example of such megatrends as the democratization, the growing impact of the religious and civilizational factors, the new model for the change in political power and administration, and the political structure transformation in certain countries.

Among the main megatrends of modern world development most political scientists name, above all, the globalization. This concept seeks to reflect what is general, which constitutes the nature of processes and events at the global stage; it is a process of the time and space expansion to the scale of the whole planet as any system aims at reaching its marginal integrity. But this process is of undulating nature, it occurs with varying regional intensity. The core elements of instability are the negative outcomes of globalization: uneven advantages distribution during the process of the world economy globalization, misguidance of globalization processes, polarization within the certain countries or regions (global asymmetry of the modern world), a risk of conflicts emerged on the global, regional, national and transnational levels, a threat for some countries to have the administration of their economy being transferred from the national governments to the more powerful states or transnational corporations. A neoliberal globalization model fosters the conservation of negative cases in the world economy. It leads to the regionalization or fragmentation that is to the reinforcement of the world's sociopolitical heterogeneity amidst the pressure to become westernized on the part of the western countries. Which is why there are attempts of various states and nations to distance themselves from the negative outcomes of globalization by pursuing the particularities of their region, their identity. The term "globalization" is at times used pragmatically in order to explain and justify the economic issues some countries are facing, even though they are caused by the specific rather than global situations. Those nations and groups that gain no advantage whatsoever from the globalization regard the regionalism, nationalism and separatism as the only recourse to protect themselves and to retain their own identity. Globalization 2.0 has to differ from the previous one. A new world order emerges where the economic power is shifting to Asia, the spatial outreach and density of global connections are

expanding while their structure is getting more complex, and the states and nations are becoming more deeply interconnected.

One of the main megatrends is a reduced degree of mankind security; the other megatrends are functionally derived from it. It is the international order where the hierarchy is being created among the power states that are crucial for the international system and its components to exist and evolve. The same applies to the regional order. H. Kissinger reflected an idea of the modern international system's heterogeneity and of the typological diversity of its subsystems, among others. While in his study *Diplomacy* he points out that in modern system the order is to be ensured by example of the Vienna "Concert of Nations", but the power balance will be maintained on the global scope, in his further studies, namely in *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?* [Kissinger, 2001] and *World Order* [Kissinger, 2017] he went on to underline the heterogeneity of the global international system. Thereupon he concludes that it is essential to form a concept of order within the certain regions, which would be acceptable for others, bearing in mind that the military dominance in the region of one totalitarian state poses threat to the international orders of other regions. Kissinger outlines several levels of order: as a theoretical model, in particular on the level of a certain region or civilization; on the level of international order as a practical embodiment of the given concepts in the considerable part of the world, considerable to the extent that it can influence the global power balance.

The global trends have substantially transformed not only the modern world as a whole, but also the particular regions, namely the Middle East. At the same time the regional trends, the Middle Eastern ones in particular, have a reciprocal effect on the megatrends of the global world, even though it were the extraregional countries that comprised the systemically crucial components of international relations within the region, serving as the warranties of sustaining the regional security with a view to its strategic, energy, trade-economy and culturally-religious value. The Arab researchers have long criticized the term "Middle East" as an artificial theoretic construct, claiming that it is essentially political as of the way it was coined and used. Nevertheless, it is deemed relevant to regard the Middle East region as a certain politically-problematic unity with the advanced connections between its constituent parts, which gives a sign of the strong interdependence. The key arguments thereupon are the presence of factors of regional interdependence, collective identity, and the way the regional order is formed as a set of devices for ensuring the regional security and settling the regional conflicts.

The Middle East region is engaged in the processes of globalization and completely fits into the trend of the growing globalization that was reflected by the involvement in the global political and economic practice. Meanwhile, it is regarded as problematic to evaluate their impact on the region, for there are various political regimes in different states as well as various stages of development. The Gulf States, based on their scale and technological development pace, have found themselves in the center of international politics and economic relations. Whereas for other states it is particularly difficult to reach the adequate level of well-being and for some — even to eradicate poverty. Thus, there may be confirmed a significant degree of differentiation and non-uniformity in the rates of socioeconomic development. The region in the context of globalization is not always regarded as one of the most influential subjects within the system of international relations. It is by virtue of a line of reasons, each of which calls for a separate research: its conflict potential, unstable political state in some countries, the unresolved Arab–Israeli conflict, the emergence of so-called new generation conflicts, the uneven development of certain countries in the region.

However, regardless of that, the Middle East remains one of the key regions in global politics, an area of complex intertwining of interests and rivalry among the great powers, foreign policy activity of the world power centers. The energy factor remains in many ways definitive in the geopolitical landscape, as neither in short-term outlook, nor in a mid-term one there could be a threat of losing one of the main components of ensuring the world energy security. In the context of the actualized issue of uneven resource distribution between the industrialized countries and the rest of the world this problem has gained an additional dimension. At the same time, in the long-term prospect the globalization involves the universal shift to a fundamentally new level of

modernization that is to the new alternative energy sources. Accordingly, the states with resource-oriented economies should switch to the new development model in the future in order not to face the severe systemic crises.

The historical and political hurdles standing in the way to stabilization remain as such: instability of its geopolitical landscape; the presence of various factors impeding the economic and political integration of the regional states, namely the presence of several comparable as to their impact and potency states in the region, which essentially adds complexity to the identification of any state as a geopolitical center that would be able to exert effect on the security state of the region. The ethnic-denominational and ethnic-political controversies are the crucial factor, as they are of transnational character and are potent not only to alter the power configuration, but also to lead to even more harmful consequences (terrorism, issue of allocation of water resources etc.). As the matter of fact, the amplification of the elements of chaos at the times of globalization shows negative impact on the international system as well as on the Middle East regional sub-system. The regional processes are becoming increasingly defined by the chaotic interaction between the actors of varied nature — from nations to the transnational actors to particular individuals. In analyzing them it is necessary to take into account the change in the international political structure; the crisis of the global leadership institution; the shift of the center of universal development; an inversion of the fundamental values.

The megatrends involve the re-ideologization of international relations, the growing role of national, religious and civilizational factors. As H.Kissinger puts it, nowadays the Middle East, transcending the limits of the Westphalian order, pertains in a confrontation somewhat similar to the pre-Westphalian religious wars in Europe, in a state of tension, disarray and violence [Киссинджер, 2017:119]. The nationalism and fundamentalism in many cases and in various regions act as independent political powers, or as allies, but mainly as competitors. A substitution of pan-Arabism ideology with the Islamistic paradigm occurs. Pan-Islamism has traditionally been deemed as an alternative to the pan-Arabism - a political doctrine that was built upon the idea of common historical destiny, language, religion and culture of the Arab peoples, the movement for unity and independence of the Arab nation based on the detachment of Islam from the state. The movement was related to the Arab nationalism, according to which Arabs constitute one nation sharing the common language, history and culture, which was reflected in the establishment and function of the League of Arab States. The proponents of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party, which for a long time was leading in Syria and Iraq, regarded the Arab unity as the establishment of the single Arab state to unify the whole Arab nation. The ideas of the religious and political alliance of Muslim nations were shaped as early as in the 1970s in pan-Islamism - the religious and political ideology and movement for the unity of all the nations that practice Islam, the proliferation of which became a reaction on the political and economic expansion of the European states into the Muslim world. It is based upon the premise of the leading role of Islam in the spiritual and secular life of the society, upon the unity, solidarity of all the members of the Muslim community regardless of their citizenship, race, nationality or social status, upon the necessity to consolidate all Muslims within the single state. Pan-Islamism becomes the official doctrine of the Ottoman Empire, which strived thereby to sustain the hegemony in the Muslim world. The Turkish expansion on the Arab territory under the pan-Islamic ideas led to its drop in popularity and the proliferation of the pan-Arab ideas. The XX century history is the history of opposition between the two ideologies - pan-Islamism with the concept of global Islamic ummah as a transnational community of laymen and pan-Arabism. The modern Turkish foreign policy once again employs the pan-Islamism mottos.

As for the megatrend of desecularization as an event of returning religion back to the world politics it should be stated that religion has entered the world politics and has established itself therein for long as a political ideology, political source, political institution, and a powerful geopolitical factor of impact. A higher awareness of the role of the religious factor in the international relations is connected to the Ba'ath as the rise in political activity under the so-called "Islamic project" or "Islamic alternative" also demands the special attention and a more detailed research. Islam serves as an organizing factor in the history of the East, as a core and a driving force

of Islamic civilization, possesses an enhanced capacity to mobilize the vast masses of people, in modern times is one of the most dynamic world religions, which in turn gives grounds for the projection that until the middle of the XXI century it will become the top largest world religion surpassing the Christianity. In particular, the deterritorialization indicated in favor of the global role of Islam.

Regardless of the growing significance of the religious factor in the regional international relations, the amplified internal differentiation in the Muslim world hinders the exercise of the Islam's bridging function on the international and regional stages. It is within such context that an approach of viewing Islam as a non-state subject of the world politics shows to be fairly topical and significant. Special attention should be paid to and much detailed research should be conducted with the so-called "Islamic project" or "Islamic alternative", the issues of Islamism as a political religion. The concept of political religion is used to denote the religious ideologies involving the exploit of religion for the political objectives rather than the application of politics to the religious causes, to characterize the ideologies that replaced the religions and continue to execute their functions. At the current stage, the phrase "political religions" is referring to the transnational religious communities, based not upon religions, but rather upon religious ideologies that bear a mild resemblance to religions while being a foundation for the mass political movements. As per usual, the political religions are named in such a way as to signify their links to a religion, e.g. "Islamism", "Orthodoxism", "political Hinduism". It should be recalled that the augmentation of the religious movements was forecast back in the 80s-90s by a renowned American futurologist John Naisbitt to whom we owe the introduction of the concept of megatrends into the scientific discourse [Нейсбит, 2003: 22].

Islam is in essence an overarching religion, an Islamic religious doctrine contains not only the religious-philosophical and moral grounds, but also the regulations of socioeconomic and political nature. The ideological beliefs in Islam are mostly divided into the traditionalist and reformative ones, the latter being sub-divided into modernism and fundamentalism. The crucial elements of Islamic fundamentalism are as follows: the world's segregation into the "territory of Islam" and "territory of war"; a concept of caliphate; the establishment of the single Islamic state and jihad; the rules of Islamic solidarity, that is its own principles of imposing an alternative international order.

An interconnection of the varying megatrends manifestations in the Middle East may be regarded in different ways. The change in the international political structure, the crisis of the global leadership institution and a shift of the center of universal development entail the new configuration of geopolitical centers on the global scale, within the Middle East landscape and in the Arab world; the reframing of the regional alliances; the increasing regional volatility relating to the possible overview of the Middle East political map, as in the formation of a complex and undefined regional configuration of geopolitical powers. It can be expected that in the foreseeable future the region would demonstrate the accumulation of global political volatility and ambiguity. The Middle East is facing the issue of the need for the regional anarchy prevention, the necessary prerequisites of which are the mitigation of the radical Islam impact and the establishment of a dialogue between the various political forces and states.

The manifestations of deterritorialization, as F. Halliday points out in particular, are the "erosion" of state sovereignty, the review of the borders, the collapse of statehood into the tribal and religious units (Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Yemen), which then are to be supported by influential regional geopolitical centers [Halliday, 2017]. P. Cockburn and F. Halliday focus on transnationalization, "new generation wars" and the emergence of quasi-state formations as a consequence of the actions of transnational actors [Cockburn, 2017; Halliday, 2017]. M.Lynch considers democratization within such system to be characterized by the mainly destructive attributes and outcomes [Lynch, 2016:47-49]. While World War I has transformed the Middle East, there were national states established and the borders outlined, the Arab Spring led to the emergence of the biaxial structures of the regional system - the Sunni "arc of moderation", which brings together the countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf and Jordan under the leadership of Saudi Arabia, to which Egypt is favorable, and the Iranian-Shiite axis with

the participation of Iran, Syria, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Shiite Iraq. A particular significance is being gained by the geopolitical rivalry between Iran and the Saudi Arabia, an internal Islamic geopolitical and ideological conflict surpassing the regional level and growing into the global one.

The contemporary research on the specifics of the Islamic factor impact, the new geopolitical role of Islamic fundamentalism indicate that the Islamic world is not the only one in determining the possible nature of relations with the outside world, which in its turn served as a basis for the shaping of three options for the "Islamic project": modernist, fundamentalist and traditionalist.

Conclusions. Our analysis of the specific megatrends manifestations in the Middle East and the way these regional processes inform global trends has lead us to conclude that the Middle East is a heterogeneous space; Middle Eastern regionalism is characterized by the emergence of integration models at the sub-regional level, is of fragmented, chaotic and disorderly character, as globalization acts as a catalyst for the aggravation of friction and the escalation of political strain.

The processes that are now occurring in the Middle East greatly influence global development megatrends and of the world order structure, which makes it necessary to forecast trends for their future development. It is thus advisable to examine these processes at multiple levels of analysis: global, regional, sub-regional, bilateral and national. Regarding the latter, there tends to be a governing crisis in the countries that have traditionally been recognized as strongholds of Arabism (Egypt, Syria), weakening their position in the region. At the regional level the transformation of relations along with the growing conflict potential leads to destabilization and fosters more polarization of the region. Such processes, however, reveal the contours of the new system of international relations — a polycentric one.

Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia are competing for the upper-hand in establishing the regional order. The confrontation between Tehran and Riyadh assumes ever-greater geopolitical importance. Israel, Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia remain as the main centers of power in the modern Middle East, just as Qatar and United Arab Emirates emerge as the centers of power of a new type. These act as finance, investment, trade, transport, infrastructure, information and communication centers of global, as well as regional level. Now it all depends on the kind of financial or political leverage used by the actors to solidify the new order. In any case, all this indicates the growth of the potential for conflict in the region and the desire of ambitious actors to fill 'the vacuum'.

It is clear that the old order is disappearing whilst the phase of transition to a new one is still ongoing and is characterized by uncertainty, the strengthening of the role of political Islam along with the new geopolitical role of Islamic fundamentalism, unrestricted transit of Islamism ideas, recurrent internal and interstate conflicts, and the heightened threat of non-state actors. Ever-growing instability, a potential redrawing of the existing national boundaries and the emergence of quasi-states, relying on ethnic and ethno-denominational powers and sustained by influential geopolitical centers of power, can all be expected. It is not merely about the long-standing conflict in Syria, but also about the conflict potential of the region as a whole, its ethno-religious peculiarities, security, trade and energy supply concerns and, finally, the reconfiguration of regional alliances. Such a reconfiguration may at any moment tear the 'political map' of the Middle East, thus engendering the problem of addressing regional anarchy.

It should be noted that the situation surrounding the Syrian issue (its regional aspect) and the Russia's and China's stances have helped outline the shape of a new system of international relations where there are other centers apart from the USA. U.S. Grand Strategy in the Middle East grows ever dysfunctional, and the USA currently faces a strategic failure in this vital region of the world. All this indicates that the period of U.S. dominance in the world has come to an end. In any event, the transformation of relations and the growth of instability has resulted in destabilization and further polarization of the region. The Middle East will continue to fall under the category of one of the most complex and heterogenous conflict zones of the modern world in the future.

Political changes in the region also reflect its internal problems. These are, above all, the authoritarian regimes, religious divides, Islamic extremism, excessive military spending, arms imports, and societies' dissatisfaction with living conditions. At the political level it is the absence of a joint political entity that could consolidate regional actors which constitutes yet another

problem. The dysfunctional nature of internal elements of the region is used by more powerful external actors, namely the U.S. Geopolitical rivals of the U.S. are China whose increasing clout is becoming more apparent, and Russia who has been conducting the policy of political, economic and humanitarian 'return' to the Middle East since the beginning of the 21st century. It is primarily the extraregional actors' policies that will determine the dynamics of the development of relations among the countries of the Arab world.

In the context of the crisis of neoliberal globalization a post-globalist paradigm premised on universally shared values, pluralism and accommodation of the interests of all world's civilizations. Current experience suggests, however, that no country in the world can indefinitely dominate the rest. Eventually, Americanization will probably be succeeded by either Sinicization or Arabization. There can be no doubt for now that it is China that is the main geopolitical rival of the U.S.

Thus, an analysis of megatrends and the nature of their manifestation in the Middle East enables us to make conclusions about the feasibility of employing such a category in international political analysis and actualizes the research of megatrends management at the global and regional levels alike.

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