

Translated excerpt

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Die Welt nach dem Westen.

Über die Neuordnung der Macht im 21. Jahrhundert

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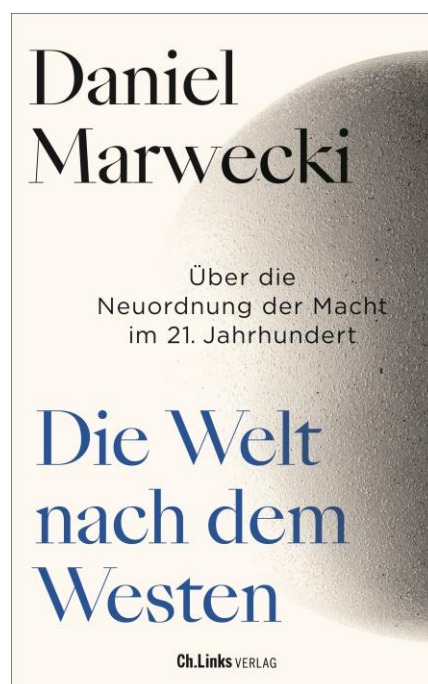
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The World After the West.

On the Reorganization of Power in the 21st Century

Translated by David Burnett



Prologue

The West is afraid – afraid of its decline. Though nothing new, this fear is certainly justified. Because the world created by Europe in the nineteenth century has become a world that the West can no longer dominate on its own. The decline of the West is accompanied by the rise of others.

Who are these others? It is the countries once called the Third World, nowadays known as the Global South. Both terms are misleading, as the non-West constitutes the majority. The collective descriptor lumps people and places together that actually have nothing in common apart from their having been overpowered by Europeans at some point in their history.

The decolonization of Africa and Asia took place at the start of the Cold War, which divided the world into two camps, both of which propagated a form of society and a vision of the future that originated in European history: communism and capitalism. The end of colonial rule did not mean the end of colonial dominance, however, but a passing of the baton, most notably from Europe to the United States, the new superpower.

But in yet another way as well the West kept writing history after the colonial era. When Jawaharlal Nehru took office as independent India's first prime minister in 1947, he declared to his countrymen that what the West had accomplished in 150 years India would have to do in just a few. Nehru had put his finger on the herculean task facing all decolonizing nations. Independence meant adopting the methods of the West in order to survive in a world the West had created. Alongside industrialization, this meant creating a bureaucratic state that permeated society, as well as the creation of a national identity where other loyalties may have previously held sway, and all of this within borders for the most part drawn by colonial overlords. Still pushing back against the West, it was evident how much their world had been made in the image of the West.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the present and the future seemed to dissolve into liberal complacency. Had European history not succeeded here in becoming universal? Even if not every country had gone the way of the West? But the spirit of the times has changed. History is back, and for the first time since its rise to global power the West is no longer in a position to steer it in its own interests.

What's happened? If we think about which country has most energetically adapted the methods of the West, presenting the West with a formidable counterpart and aspiring to be its

equal, China obviously comes to mind. No other country has embraced industrialization, mass production, technological progress and urbanization so quickly and extensively.

For the first time since the end of the Cold War, there's a real alternative to the West in the form of China. And this alternative has proved to be popular. Surveys show that in postcolonial societies China has meanwhile become more popular (or less unpopular) than the United States.¹ Conversely, China's image in the West has suffered. This has partly to do with the fact that China has expanded its ties to Russia despite the latter's invasion of Ukraine. So is the world divided again?

As the (still) second superpower after the United States, China lets no one dictate its policy. But the new self-confidence of the Global South has not only found expression in the "Middle Kingdom" returning to its former glory. India, South Africa, Brazil, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates – these and other states are no longer willing to bring up the rear in a world order imposed by others. They represent their own interests with aplomb, for instance in the BRICS+ alliance, and point out the West's double standard when representatives of former colonial powers insist on adherence to a supposedly liberal and rules-based world order.

They point a finger at this supposed hypocrisy when it comes to the politically charged wars of the present, namely the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the war in Gaza following the attack by Hamas on October 7, 2023. Why, many of these countries ask, does the West condemn Russia for attacking civilian targets but give Israel a free pass? How is it possible that the West always talks of democracy and human rights but only seems to apply them when it comes to admonishing political foes? Wasn't the invasion of Iraq in 2003 just as illegal as the more recent invasion of Ukraine?

The critique of Western double standards is an old one, to be sure. But this criticism has fallen on deaf ears, because those in a position of power feel no need to explain themselves when it comes to the contradictions between their words and actions. As Western hegemony fades, however, critiques of Western hypocrisy have increasingly garnered attention.

But idealized self-images are more tenacious than the realities they hide. This seems to apply in particular to Germany. Indeed, there is no other explanation for Germany's morally self-

¹ See, e.g., Robert S. Foa et al., "A World Divided: Russia, China and the Rest," University of Cambridge, October 2022, <https://www.bennettinstitute.cam.ac.uk/publications/a-world-divided/> (last retrieved on May 25, 2025).

assured position in international foreign policy, which many countries in the Global South now respond to with an incredulous shake of the head. Or maybe the reason is this: the more the world seems to slip through your fingers, the more self-righteously and defiant you're liable to act.

This book is an attempt to zero in on and describe the transitions and upheavals, the renewals and transformations of present-day catastrophes, to trace their historical roots while at the same time exploring potential futures. It deals with the world taking shape before our very eyes – at least when we decide to look. The decline of the West has long been prophesied. I won't be doing that here. Rather than doom-mongering, I intend to provide a historically informed analysis of the present.

My focus is on the ambiguity inherent in the little word “after” in the title of this book. On the one hand we are heading for a world that is less and less dominated by the West. On the other, this world is taking shape with the Western model in mind, working through its successes and failures. Thus, this world after the West might in many ways resemble our world in decline. Perhaps the world is gently slipping out of our grasp. That wouldn't be the worst thing the future could have in store for us.

Daniel Marwecki

Berlin, July 2025

INTRODUCTION

New ways of thinking

Thinking requires guardrails. But a world gone topsy-turvy seems to demand we do without, asking: What happens when global power structures shift so much that the usual explanatory models about the course of history become obsolete? Facing such a question, we can answer it in one of two ways. Either we defy external reality and defend our internalized narratives against newly emerging facts. Or we discard our old ideas and grope our way towards new ways of seeing things.

Those of us who have internalized the Western and hence also the German master narrative of the triumph of liberalism against its declared enemies are now faced with this stark choice. If we start this narrative in the previous century, it goes something like this. The liberal democracies, in a temporary alliance of convenience with the Soviet Union, won the struggle against Nazism and Fascism during the Second World War. The two victors of the war subsequently faced off in the Cold War, a chastened and reformed West Germany having thrown in its lot with the right side. With the fall of communism, this story – and indeed history itself – seemed to reach its conclusion. The great ideological confrontations, the religious wars of the secular era, had been fought to a conclusive finish. Germany, unsteady on its feet, risen from the ruins and deepest sin, had followed an arduous path and arrived, united, in the bosom of the West, settling in more comfortably than others at this endpoint of history. But now it seems clear that history isn't over after all, an observation that has meanwhile become almost as much of a cliché as Francis Fukuyama's original thesis about the end of history.

In the late 1980s, Fukuyama was an unknown official in the State Department, the foreign ministry of the United States. Then, in the summer of 1989, just before the Berlin Wall fell, he wrote an article that would make him famous overnight. Drawing on the philosophy of history of German thinker Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Fukuyama argued that the market economy and democratic nation-state represented the best possible model of political coexistence. There was therefore no longer any need to engage in fundamental debate about

different theories of social and economic organization. When historiography has reached its end, there's no longer any reason to wage war over conflicting views of historical progress.¹

Why history isn't over

There is no precise date when “the end of history” ended. It happened sometime in the present. It began with the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, and the subsequent wars in Central Asia and the Middle East. These wars not only failed to remake countries like Afghanistan and Iraq in the image of the liberal-democratic West; they also exposed once again – and not for the last time – the gulf between the West's liberal self-image and its destructive foreign policy. Economically, the West's star began to fade around the same time. The financial crisis of 2008 led to a recession that hit the old economies of the West harder than it did the rising ones. Western growth rates failed to regain their pre-crisis levels, whereas those in developing countries remained high. The Western share of global economic output has been steadily declining ever since.² A more recent date for the West's loss of power is the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, even if it didn't feel that way at first. The attack shattered once and for all the post-Cold War European order, even though it temporarily revitalized the liberal world's defenses, perhaps giving rise to something of a last hurrah. NATO, the Western military alliance long since thought defunct, suddenly gained new members in Sweden and Finland. Ukrainian resilience and the country's initial successes on the battlefield convinced even the most hardened skeptics in the German Chancellery that it was not just a good thing in principle but also a real possibility to stave off the Russian aggressors. Literary critic Albrecht Koschorke wrote in a newspaper article one year after the war's outbreak: “The imperial nostalgia Russian elites are said to be infected with is matched on the Ukrainian side by their own kind of nostalgia, though they may not yet be fully aware of it. It is focused on the now bygone future of liberalism as a global model and universal doctrine.”³ The historical triumph of the liberal model that Fukuyama proclaimed more than thirty years back – will it come to pass after all thanks to Ukraine?

¹ His article “The End of History?” – with a question mark at the end – was published in 1989 in *The National Interest*. His subsequent book *The End of History and the Last Man* came out in 1992 – no question mark attached. The German edition, *Das Ende der Geschichte* (1992/2002), likewise left out the question mark. And yet the question is back.

² Peter Heather and John Rapley, *Why Empires Fall: Rome, America and the Future of the West* (London 2023), 10.

³ Albrecht Koschorke, “Die Tage des Westens sind gezählt,” *Die Zeit*, March 2, 2023, <https://www.zeit.de/2023/10/weltordnung-westen-krieg-ukraine>.

Fueled by a warlike fervor that only those on the sidelines can feel, pundits and politicians in London and Brussels and even in Joe Biden's Washington saw the end of Putin drawing near – without, however, noticing that this take on events put them firmly in a global minority. The West's own morally grounded claim to world order no longer aligned with its capabilities.

Western accounts of Ukraine's self-defense have tended not to depict it for what it is – the struggle of a state for national sovereignty against an imperialist aggressor, an interpretation which, incidentally, would have found a more sympathetic ear outside the Western minority – but in the spirit of the liberal master narrative: as the struggle of democracy against dictatorship and oppression. In a sense, the West's past sins were catching up with it. Because how could the United States back up its position with appeals to the United Nations Charter, whose central tenet of non-aggression Russia had so flagrantly violated, when the United States itself had flaunted this very principle on multiple occasions, with lasting consequences in the Middle East and Central Asia?

A good part of the non-Western majority did condemn Russia's breach of international law in a vote at the U.N. General Assembly. But only states generally considered part of the West have followed through and taken part in sanctions against Russia or supplied weapons to Ukraine. Twenty years ago, or maybe less, this would have probably been sufficient to bring Russia to its knees. These days Russia has economic and political alternatives – mainly in China and India, but also in Brazil, South Africa and other countries.

That the Western policy of sanctions is widely considered to have failed is only one of multiple indicators of a process referred to by the abovementioned countries as the “multipolarization” of the world order. What this means is a resounding no to Western hegemony, advocating instead for a world with multiple and alternative power centers. The concept of multipolarity has itself had a polarizing effect in political debate. A good many people have used it as an anti-Western battle cry, which is why pro-Western defenders of Western hegemony see it mainly as a form of sabre-rattling that needs to be dealt with accordingly.

It's true that the Russian government is trying to legitimize its war against Ukraine as a war on behalf of a multipolar order. But the historical tendency towards a less Western world goes far beyond the power ambitions of a Vladimir Putin. It's part of a broader revisionist movement that Putin has been able to skillfully use for his own purposes. That a post-Western world is taking shape is an observable fact that we need to soberly acknowledge and that

needs to be taken into account in the policymaking of Europe and Germany. Whether this world is one to be feared is, as so often the case, a matter of perspective. Prior to 1914, Europe was a multipolar state system. The failure of this system led to the First World War. This is the main reason the word “multipolarity” has an ominous ring to European ears. In other parts of the world, where the historical and present-day experience of Western hegemony has been markedly different, the term has another set of connotations.

Global positions on the dire situation in Gaza since October 7, 2023, have more or less inversely mirrored those on the Russian invasion of Ukraine. After the attack by Hamas on Israel it has mainly been the United States, followed by Germany and Britain, who have supported Israel’s war in Gaza in the form of arms deliveries and diplomatic backing. The destruction of Gaza and its society is a reality the German public sphere has long turned a blind eye to, despite the German government having done its part to stoke the flames. Perhaps this destruction is what the West will bequeath the world after its demise. Alex Lo, long-time columnist of Hong Kong’s *South China Morning Post*, wrote in May 2025 in an almost jubilant tone that the Western world had dug its own grave in Gaza. The West would of course continue to exist as a geographic and political part of the world, he wrote, but as a moral ideal it had died – and this without any help from Xi Jinping or Vladimir Putin, both of whom welcome the demise of the Western-dominated world.⁴

Donald Trump and the perceived new loneliness

In Germany, the end of this order is primarily associated with one name: Donald Trump. The reelection of Trump as President of the United States in the fall of 2024 came as a shock to the German public. The newspapers boldly proclaimed the end of the West as we know it. Germany and Europe, everyone agreed, would have to go it alone now. Federal Chancellor Friedrich Merz, voted into office just a few months after Trump, declared at the traditional post-election televised debate, the so-called “elephant round,” that the time of foreign-policy dependence on the United States was over. For a fleeting moment, the seasoned transatlanticist Merz sounded like French general Charles de Gaulle, who early on had called for postwar Europe to play an independent role in global politics. What had previously only been heard on the left or right end of the political spectrum in Germany, namely that

⁴ Alex Lo, “The Western World Has Already Dug Its Own Grave in Gaza War,” *South China Morning Post*, May 11, 2025.

Germany was less sovereign than it pretended to be in foreign- and security-policy issues, became mainstream overnight on account of Donald Trump.

The Federal Republic of Germany had primarily looked to the U.S. as its guiding star, indeed its very founding and postwar integration in the West was thanks to the United States.

Trump's second term led to the growing realization that Germany and Europe would be largely on their own in a newly forming world. This can be scary, but it's also an opportunity: to reassess our country's own role and search for a new one that is more commensurate to our own position of power. It could also be a role in which we represent more credibly the liberal and human-rights values we proudly wear on our sleeves. For now, however, there is little indication of this.

MAGA: Magic and megalomania

What does Donald Trump mean for the West – and what explains his rise to power in the United States? In one of the last interviews he gave before his death in 2023, Henry Kissinger was asked about Donald Trump. Kissinger, who since serving as Richard Nixon's national security advisor during the Vietnam War has been regarded as a grand geostrategist, a war criminal, or both, answered that Trump was one of those historical figures who sweep away the hypocrisy and false certainties of their time and mark the end of an era. Which didn't necessarily mean, he said, that Trump offered an alternative to the old order or was even aware of the historical role he was playing. It could all be an accident.⁵

Trump, a master of chaos and renewal sent by the fickle gods of history? It's true that he knows how to bury the faded promises of the liberal order. His answer to globalization's broken promise of prosperity is tariffs. He reacts to the hypocrisy of Western foreign policy by elevating the principle of might is right and narrowly defined self-interest. In doing so he robs the West of both its appearance and claim to sanctity. To put it another way, Donald Trump solves the problem of the West's double standard in foreign affairs by stripping it of its morality altogether. This can have a peacemaking effect. Because wars are generally started by those who claim to represent a higher morality.

Trump makes himself immune to criticism with regard to both domestic and foreign policy because he no longer appeals to any higher values to which he could be held accountable.

⁵ Henry Kissinger, "We Are in a Very, Very Grave Period," *Financial Times*, July 20, 2018.

Trump is a liar, but an honest one, because everyone, including himself, knows that he's lying. Ironically, this might make him seem more credible than some of his predecessors, which is likely a major reason for his being elected in the first place. Stripped of the old illusions, the politics of Donald Trump are invested with a new kind of madness. MAGA – Make America Great Again – is a slogan reflecting both the magical and the megalomaniacal thinking of Trumpism, a mixture of showmanship, brutality and an absolute refusal to cooperate that we know from the world of professional wrestling and martial arts. Trump is a myth and a wrecking ball, an American fantasy, false prophet and comic-book hero in one.

Germans hoping that four years of Trump will be followed again by a Joe Biden type in the White House fail to acknowledge that even under the Democrats free-market globalization was no longer the preferred model of governance and that Europe had slipped down the list of American priorities. Trump 1.0 (2017-21) was followed by Joe Biden, who in many key ways continued the policies of his predecessor. One issue in particular occupies an important position on the global economic map and in the minds of policymakers in Washington: China. In his State of the Union address after the first hundred days of his term in April 2021, Joe Biden declared that the United States was “in competition with China . . . to win the 21st century.”⁶ To this end his administration kept in place the punitive tariffs imposed by his predecessor, Donald Trump. Added to this were industrial-policy measures such as the CHIPS Act or the Inflation Reduction Act, which can be understood as attempts to sell to the American working class the competition with China as the reindustrialization of the country while at the same time trying to curb Chinese growth in high-technology sectors.

The heightened economic rivalry with China under Biden has escalated into a tariff war under Trump's second term, with a still uncertain outcome. What becomes apparent, however, is the striking continuity since 2016 during shifting presidencies from Trump to Biden and back to Trump. What I'm referring to here is the attempt to contain China's rise to power and defend the dominant position of the United States. Other aims and international ties – with Europe, for instance – are subordinate to it. Well-known economic historian Adam Tooze, who has a sympathetic ear in the Democrats, is highly critical of Biden's foreign and economic policy. He writes that “Bidenomics is Maga for thinking people,” Trumpism for city slickers.⁷ While

⁶ See the transcript of his speech at <https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/04/29/remarks-by-president-biden-in-address-to-a-joint-session-of-congress/> (last retrieved on November 17, 2025).

⁷ Adam Tooze, “Facing War in the Middle East and Ukraine, the US Looks Feeble: But Is It Just an Act?” *The Guardian*, October 10, 2024.

it is true that President Barack Obama had declared a “pivot to Asia,” Sino-American relations back then seem downright friendly by today’s standards. The current great-power rivalry between the United States and China is the conflict that will decide more than any other what the post-Western world will look like – and how peaceful the path to such a world will be.

From empire to nation-state?

Donald Trump’s campaign slogan “America First” implies that the international order being held in place by the United States has more costs than benefits for its guarantor. India’s acting minister of external affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar put it like this: the U.S. is an empire that is learning to act like a nation again.⁸ His formula points in the right direction. But America First also means that a more nationally-minded America will not just give up its claim to supremacy. So it might be more appropriate at first to speak of a shrinking or downsizing of the imperial model. To be sure, the military dominance of the United States is still unchecked, and the dollar is still the global reserve currency. The latter has thus far secured the United States a privileged position on the world market as well as in financial markets. A shrinkage is suggested not only by the weakening of former alliances but also by the deterioration of soft power. The budgets, for instance, of the government’s development aid agency USAID and its radio station Voice of America were both slashed at the start of Trump’s second term.

Decolonization as a theme of our era

There’s a competition underway to name the chaotic interregnum between the phase of Western dominance, which now appears to be over, and the new order that is taking shape. A time-worn cliché attributed to Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci might be mentioned here: “the old world is dying, and the new world struggles to be born: now is the time of monsters.”⁹ The quote spells out how dangerous phases of transition are. The risk of war is greatest in such moments.

⁸ See an interview with Jaishankar at the Asia Society in Delhi on March 27, 2025, available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVigX-WM bek> (last retrieved on June 25, 2025).

⁹ Albrecht von Lucke, “Die Zeit der Monster und die Ära der Verheerung,” *Blätter für Internationale Politik*, January 2025. Gramsci’s talk of “monsters” refers to symptoms of morbidity and disease during the period of

The transition from a Western-dominated to a divided world is one thing. But there is more to the upheavals of the moment than that: an ecological crisis of planetary proportions, the fear of nuclear escalation, global demographic shifts, loss of prosperity, migration issues, and, in the West, a perceived sense across the political spectrum of having no future. The aforementioned Adam Tooze has coined the term “polycrisis” to describe the current situation. By this he means a condition of multiple crises which political actors can barely comprehend, let alone manage.¹⁰

Indian-born writer Pankaj Mishra, who divides his time between London and his native country, writes that our present is a moment of decolonization. What other framing, which other concept is in a position to capture such seemingly disparate phenomena as the tendency towards deglobalization, the rise of neo-right-wing parties, Chinese nationalism and the popularity of Korean series and boy bands in the West? The global division over the war in Gaza or in Ukraine? The structural decline of Germany as an industrial power? Like every other narrative structure, every inner configuration of the world, this one too is not exhaustive, other concepts and metaphors are possible. And yet casting the conceptual net of decolonization into the stream of history results in a greater understanding of where we are.¹¹

On the one hand decolonization means moving towards a world less dominated by the West. On the other hand it also means nationalism, exclusion and new forms of dominance. Indeed, it is not just the left that has a monopoly on the concept of decolonization, even though we tend to associate the two. Upon closer inspection, postcolonial thought also contains a potentially right-wing agenda: the defense of the supposedly native against the foreign, and the insistence on purity inherent to this.¹² Decolonization encompasses the ambiguity of our era and the realignment of political positions. This much-contested term will be used in the following chapters to help us explore the post-Western world in an open and unbiased fashion. Perhaps at the end of this book we will feel the need to retire the concept.

interregnum. For a discussion of the famous quote, see Gilbert Achcar, “Morbidity Symptoms What Did Gramsci Really Mean?” *Notebooks: The Journal for Studies on Power*, February 2022, online at https://brill.com/view/journals/powr/1/2/article-p 379_379.xml (last retrieved on July 14, 2025).

¹⁰ See, e.g., the interview between Tooze and Ding Xiongfei from the *Shanghai Review of Books* from the summer of 2023, online at <https://adamtooze.substack.com/p/chartbook-34-on-thinking-in-medias> (last retrieved on May 25, 2025).

¹¹ Pankaj Mishra, “The Last Days of Mankind,” *n+1*, September 28, 2024, online at <https://www.nplusonemag.com/online-only/online-only/the-last-days-of-mankind/> (last retrieved May 25, 2025).

¹² Christoph Paret, “Foucault bei den Galliern,” *Merkur*, 911 (April 2025).

Why we need new narratives

The liberal master narrative has outlived its usefulness. We need new stories about the past in order to even imagine a livable future, let alone make it happen. The new world is dimly emerging from the fog, allowing us to feel our way to the future. That's what this book is about.

It would be much easier, of course, to keep on tinkering with ideologies that may have once been theories with considerable explanatory power. But this would only delay the inevitable collision, particularly between European self-delusion and reality, which would then be all the more severe. It's a mistake to don the garb of the twentieth let alone the nineteenth century to wage the battles of the twenty-first. The duds of a German or a British imperialist who forces his products or thoughts onto a subjugated world may no longer seem like fitting attire, and yet they have not completely gone out of fashion. Conversely, there is little point in hoisting old anti-imperialist banners nowadays when it's still clear where the peripheries lie but the center is becoming ever harder to pin down.

Foregoing historical costumes is an attempt to withstand the chaotic upheavals of the present and take seriously the danger of collapse portended by a nihilistic age. In one sense this is the opposite of taking a scholarly approach. Political science, for instance, uses theories and historical comparisons to help understand chaotic external events and achieve a certain mental clarity, a plausible explanation of the world. Creating order these days, however, means first allowing for chaos. The attempt to be fully present in a chaotic moment like the one we have now, in which the guidelines of the previous century are vanishing into thin air, is nothing if not an artistic endeavor.¹³

This book is written from a political-science perspective, and also from a position of a certain cultural experience. I've spent the past five years teaching at the University of Hong Kong in the International Relations Department and, to the extent that pandemic restrictions allowed, traveling the surrounding countries and mainland China. Before that I was mainly working and writing my dissertation in Britain. My doctorate, for its part, was based on several extended research trips to Israel and the Palestinian territories. Hence, geographically

¹³ See the Adam Tooze interview in *Shanghai Review of Books* cited above.

speaking, the intellectual perspective of this book lies somewhere between London, Berlin, Jerusalem and Hongkong.

Its first chapter deals with the secret of Western domination. How did a handful of Western European countries manage to subjugate the world by the nineteenth century? The answers to this question have a determining influence on the catch-up strategies of the majority, not to mention the present-day discussions about what the West has supposedly lost.

The second chapter is about decolonization, a word that has enjoyed a revival in recent years beyond the confines of higher education. In this case it's not about postcolonial culture wars but actual freedom and developmental autonomy, which in many parts of the world have yet to be achieved. I also explore a topic that has accompanied the rise of the West and its current decline: the question of genuine emancipation from the West in the name of liberty, which the West has proclaimed for all but rarely applied to everyone in actual practice.

The basic idea developed in the first two chapters will be expanded in the third chapter by way of the East Asian drive for industrialization, with special emphasis here on China. If we understand decolonization as a powerful movement in collaboration with and against the West, then the greatest anticolonial figure of the last century was perhaps not Frantz Fanon or Mahatma Gandhi but Deng Xiaoping, Mao's successor, who enabled China's rise through a controlled opening to capitalism. In this case, the ambivalent figurehead of Asian independence would not be a feverish revolutionary but a pragmatist in a gray Communist Party uniform. The chapter extends into the immediate present with the threat of deindustrialization in Germany and Donald Trump's tariff war.

The fourth chapter continues where the third leaves off, throwing a spotlight on those countries that have not achieved ascendancy by deliberately playing the game. The question of poverty and growth is tied in here with the future issue of climate change, whose solution has long come to depend on China.

From these development-policy issues the book moves on to address the question of war and peace. The fifth chapter tries to explain the seeming permanence of violence and ideological extremism in the Middle East as failed reactions to the West. In close proximity to Europe, a world is forming in an era of waning Western dominance that is still struggling with the negative legacies of this Western influence.

The sixth chapter details the politically defining wars of the present, namely in Ukraine and Gaza. The reactions to and perspectives on these wars are indicative of a global realignment. The unwillingness to follow the West in its support of Ukraine and Israel can be understood not least of all as a revolt against the West – the second major revolt after formal decolonization.

The concluding chapter deals with the question of whether and how the transition to a multipolar world can take place without a catastrophic major war. The focus here is on the great-power rivalry between the United States, China and Russia. I will also touch on the sadness of Europe.