

The current configuration of the World, its functionality and stability are the outcome of two, seemingly contradictory, but quasi-permanent processes: globalization and fragmentation. All along history, these two processes took on very different forms and evolved at different rates, with relevant alternations of the aggregation and dissolution of state entities, with periods of global stability and global or regional instability. An increasing process of globalization, which has been developing over the past few decades, is based on economic, political and cultural considerations. Despite these trends stimulated by trans-national economic activities, by transition to a multi-polar world and an American-type cultural expansion, regional or local feelings are getting momentum inside national states, under the general globalization umbrella.

The apparently low interdependence relationship between globalization and the settlement system is nevertheless a highly topical problem, given that the human communities are the main actors of the globalization process. It is quite an obsession that multi-national companies are actually the elements most deeply involved in the process of globalization, but their actions materialize mainly at the level of the populated centers. Many towns, which generate globalizing fluxes are the ones that affect and are affected by the generalized effects of some local actions. It is smaller towns that are more affected by the local than by the global one, with some exceptions due to geographical position and the innovating spirit of the respective urban communities. For example, some small towns do make a remarkable contribution to the intensity of globalizing fluxes; it is the case of the so-called world “technopoles”, or towns discharging dominantly academic functions. The information yielded by these centers is the driving-force behind globalization; besides, it is in these very centers that the means of diffusion and access to information for as many citizens of the Planet as possible are improved and the information society development strategies are being developed.

The exponential force of globalization, which some human communities can only temporarily cope with, acquires a variety of penetration forms, and the growing number of relocation centers puts such pressure that any organization based on local or regional dominance is demolished. In this context, a series of questions obviously arise: Is there any real support for mankind’s progress through globalization? What are the limits of globalization, if any? Is not the structure of the globalizing fluxes conducive to a hypertrophy of the services and the financial-banking systems, causing an implosion of the society? How much can mankind lose as individual progress is limited by uniformity of options for people’s development? These are but a few questions which the author of this book tries to answer.

