



Interconnectedness in worlds apart

The world has always been apart but never more interconnected than we are today - both between the different parts in east and west and north and south. But also internally in the different parts of the world. So Asia and Europe that is so-called East and West is closer to each other and more connected than ever before in our history. Inside Asia and inside Europe we are also seeing more interconnectedness than ever before. In Europe we have successfully deliberately integrated Northern and southern Europe with Eastern Europe. Europe consists historically of many mainly smaller nation states but now we are successfully cooperating in all important fields so peace and stability for the first time in our thousand year long history is preserved since end of second WW. To me who have lived and worked in Africa, in America, in Asia and now back in great old Europe that is good, that is actually indeed very good. Let me try to explain why I think so and add such an unqualified positive label to this intensely interconnected world.

First let me try to briefly define interconnectedness. I think interconnection is made of many things political, economical and technological. First politically and economically: I think it is increased interaction and division of labour in a totally new global economy that at the core consists of some sophisticated global supply chains. This is facilitated by international agreements and a strong wish to benefit from the so-called liberal international order the world has enjoyed especially the last 25 years after the end of the Cold War and unification of Europe. Technologically the new ways of production and communication has enabled us to create products and services where we all increase our standards of living. The new technologies are those that allow you all the things you use every minute of the day - social media, new contacts through skype and the like. So our lives are better both materially and culturally because we have all these consumption goods we dreamt of once upon a time - apartments, cars, tv, travel and also a new surprising life style where we as individuals can enjoy the best symphony orchestra in the world at home in your apartment and we are in closer contact with more friends and other persons than any of our forefathers.

Secondly I want to share my expectation and description of the future evolution of this interconnectedness. 1) I think we will continue to improve the technical possibilities for an ever increasing interconnected world. This goes for individual citizens and for countries. We may be very close in time to witness a revolution in mobility with driverless cars and flying cars and even more affordable global travel and communication. 2) The continuous technological development will possibly be constrained by some individual governments who for different and may I say - perfectly legitimate political reasons - are unwilling to participate in this increased interconnectedness. It can be protectionism or isolationism and the like political trends that will want to exclude a country from this world order. And it can play out in political initiatives to reduce or refute the interconnectedness. It can also be tougher immigration policies that does not want to see a free flow of migrant labour or that wants to stop waves of refugees. 3) Those countries and companies and cities who join the process of increased interconnectedness will face many challenges and problems on the way forward, not surprisingly. Basically because we enjoy so many benefits of this new closer relationship that we both become much more interdependent and also because we will have to agree on common rules for how to exercise this new closeness. Environmental standards that all will uphold, common and responsible efforts to fight climate changes, common approaches to ban child labour and secure social standards, avoid dumping of products and all together to ensure an overall acceptable common framework for global interaction. That will be difficult. But the majority will most likely want to pursue this approach - simply because we humans are social and like to be interconnected rather than isolated.