

THE IMPACT OF THE GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION OF WORLD ECONOMIES ON THE FUNCTIONING OF GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS

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Abstract: The global expansion of trade and the associated multi-level disruptions are causing increasing complexity in supply chains and making them vulnerable to various types of change. One of the challenges currently facing participants in global supply chains is geopolitical and economic change. These are dominated by armed conflicts, political conflicts, and economic crises. They affect the conditions for international cooperation and the execution of deliveries. The aim of the research was to identify and evaluate the most important political and economic events of recent years that have influenced changes in the functioning of the global supply chain. The analysis used the desk research method of data from various reports from 2023–2025. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data enabled a multidimensional assessment of the resilience of supply chains to geopolitical turbulence. The results showed the key global economies and the actions they have taken that influence changes in the supply chain on a global scale. A comparison with the logistics performance of these economies also showed that the efficiency of the global supply chain depends not only on China's production potential, but above all on the efficiency of flows and the quality of logistics corridors in Japan and EU countries.

Keywords: global supply chain, geopolitical changes, logistics efficiency

INTRODUCTION

As supply chains play an increasingly important role on a global scale, their complexity and vulnerability to crises are also changing. The disruptions of recent years caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical conflicts, climate change, and consumer pressure for sustainable development are just some of the challenges currently facing companies that are part of international logistics flows. The activities of individual countries, especially economic powers, which play an important role in shaping global supply chains and their participants, are important in building global balance. Political and economic decisions in different countries can have a huge impact on the global economy, as the world economy is highly globalized. The influence of individual countries depends on the size of their economies, their role in the international market, and their relationship with other countries within international organizations. According to the report, the greatest current risks of disruption due to geopolitical factors are possible armed conflicts (23%), geo-economic



confrontations (8%), and economic crises (5%) (World Economic Forum, 2025). This results in frequent social unrest, which further hinders the free flow of information within logistics systems. This requires building resilience based on local cooperation and social and regional diversification.

Global politics and the resulting activity of international organizations and multilateral political and economic agreements also contribute to the standardization of legal regulations, which facilitates cooperation between countries. At the same time, political and economic stability and the development of international institutions help to maintain global economic order. It can therefore be concluded that the process of globalization is the result of technological progress, market liberalization, and increased cooperation based on international interactions, which is also evident in the functioning of supply chains (Grzybowska and Stachowiak, 2022).

Unlike local supply chains, global structures involve cooperation between partners from different countries, taking into account different legal systems, business cultures, time zones, and currencies. Global supply chains play a key role in the functioning of the economy, as they allow for the integration of production and logistics processes on a global scale, influencing the competitiveness, innovation, and economic development of countries, continents, and the world. Their importance stems, among other things, from increasing access to global markets (Erixo, 2018).

At the same time, against the backdrop of political and economic changes, managing global supply chains poses many challenges. Companies must contend with geopolitical risks, currency fluctuations, and economic instability in various regions of the world, which can adversely affect the flow of goods and its regularity. Therefore, the aim of the research was to identify and assess the impact of the most important political and economic events of recent years on changes in the functioning of the global supply chain.

The conducted research is based on theoretical research, supplemented by secondary data analysis. The analyses demonstrated that the stability and efficiency of supply chains depend on the quality of logistics corridors and the efficiency of flows, demonstrating an original theoretical contribution.

THE FUNCTIONING OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

Supply chains are key elements of modern management and the functioning of economic organizations. They play an important role in creating value, managing resources, and maintaining the competitiveness of these organizations in local, regional, national, and global markets. They perform an important function in process coordination by synchronizing activities between different participants, enabling organizations to avoid delays and excess inventory. Properly functioning chains also serve to reduce production, transportation, and storage costs by optimizing processes (Alzate et al., 2022). All these functions, in turn, have the final effect of increasing value for the customer, meaning delivering a product or service in a way that meets their expectations and builds loyalty (Leończuk, 2019).

Globalization has driven significant changes in supply chain management, providing access to raw materials and markets worldwide. The ability to systematically expand the network of suppliers, manufacturers, and distributors beyond a single country's borders leads to the creation of international and global logistics and operational systems (Michalczyk, 2017). Globalization also promotes the establishment of strategic partnerships with suppliers, carriers, and logistics companies, as cooperation with

international partners allows companies to operate more efficiently, reducing costs and improving customer service. On the other hand, the high complexity of such systems necessitates a supply chain that is flexible, resilient to adverse environmental phenomena or processes, and capable of real-time response to changes in supply and demand (Witkowski, 2017; Sudarshan, 2025).

The concept of a global supply chain refers to a network of connections between entities and processes involved in the creation, transport, distribution, and sale of products or services in international markets (Harland, 2013), enabling the delivery of products to customers around the world, which increases the reach and potential demand (Oleksy, 2017). Globalized supply chains enable companies to adapt more quickly to changing market conditions. Increased demand in a given region allows organizations to quickly redirect their resources to such locations, which contributes to the optimization of their operations (Kuryło et al., 2019). In this sense, the global supply chain refers to the process of integrating and coordinating logistics, production, and distribution activities at the global level (Korczak, 2012).

Supply chain management involves many challenges, resulting, among other things, from volatility in demand caused by rapid changes in consumer preferences, which makes forecasting difficult. Another challenge is the possibility of supply disruptions, which may be caused by, among other things, logistical problems, natural disasters, political conflicts, and a number of other unpredictable processes and phenomena (Marel and Zbroja, 2020). For many companies, participation in the global supply chain requires completely different skills and qualifications, which result primarily from legal, political, and economic aspects (Bukowska-Piestrzyńska et al., 2022). On a global scale, the possibility of sudden, unpredictable disruptions is of key importance, as exemplified by the COVID-19 pandemic (Slusarczyk et al., 2023). Its outbreak revealed how vulnerable global supply chains are to disruptions (Wieczorek, 2022). Regulatory changes, customs regulations, trade tariffs, and armed conflicts, which have been particularly intense in recent years, affect the organization and operating costs of supply chains (Banaszyk, 2022).

This has made modern supply chains more complex, dynamic, and sensitive to global economic and political changes, which poses a number of challenges for their effective functioning in terms of risk and crisis management. Political conflicts, regulatory changes, and economic sanctions can affect the availability of raw materials and the ability to operate in certain regions of the world. Global supply chains are subject to a number of legal and trade regulations that may change as a result of political decisions. This, in turn, means that existing and potential customs barriers and changing legal standards require constant monitoring and consideration in modified operational strategies. Issues such as competition between countries, armed conflicts, economic sanctions, social unrest, and protests can significantly affect the functioning and efficiency of global supply chains.

IDENTIFYING ECONOMIES WITH GLOBAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INFLUENCE

There are economies that have a significant impact on the global supply chain. Regulatory and economic changes in these economies often determine the external conditions for trade and logistics flows at the global level. In order to identify the countries with the greatest global influence, available reports and studies in this area were analyzed first.

The research process involved identifying the economies with the greatest impact and then quantifying them using selected logistics indicators. For this purpose, a desk

research analysis was conducted based on reports from international organizations and quantitative indicators of economic conditions, including the logistics efficiency of individual countries.

The annual Asia Power Index (2025) report measures resources and influence to assess the relative strength of 27 Asian countries. The index classifies them in terms of their resources and how they are used in eight categories, including economic and military potential and economic relations. According to the index, the most influential economies are the United States, China (>70 points), and India (>40 points). The United States dominates in terms of economic and military capabilities, which testifies to its greatest geopolitical importance in the world. China, in turn, plays a significant role due to its high level of influence and leverage through economic interdependence.

Global Competitiveness measures a country's competitiveness, defined as a set of institutions, policies, and factors that determine productivity. According to the Global Competitiveness Report (Schwab, 2019), the United States, Japan, and Germany rank high among the world's most competitive economies. The latter two countries in particular play a key role due to their technical standards, which influence global logistics.

From an economic perspective, the most important indicator is the share of global GDP by purchasing power (The World Economic Outlook, 2025). It measures the level of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), which reflects the processing capacity of domestic factories, existing infrastructure, and operating costs. In this respect, the global leaders are China (18.8%), the US (15.4%), and India (7.5%).

The Global Soft Power Index (2025) is an indicator that allows for the assessment of a given country's potential political and image influence on others, for example through trade regulations. According to the report's findings, the United States, China, Japan, Germany, and France scored the highest in this area. The United States maintains its high position mainly due to its high visibility and potential influence, ranking high in the area of international relations, while its overall score has not improved, which may be the result of internal political tensions.

In turn, the International Energy Outlook (IEO) (2025) provides data on global energy markets, showing the impact of countries on fuel prices. The report presents Russia as a major net exporter that determines the energy security of Europe and Asia. Russia, the US, and Saudi Arabia, due to their energy resources, can destabilize global logistics.

The results of the most important international indicators concerning various economic aspects allow us to identify key global economies that have a significant political and economic impact on global changes. In summary, these economies also influence changes in global supply chains (European Central Bank, 2025; EIU, 2024; Grant Thornton, 2025; Deloitte, 2024; SPG Global, 2025):

1. United States – changes in US interest rates affect exchange rates, capital flows, and commodity prices; decisions on tariffs on imported goods and sanctions imposed on trade;
2. China – changes in the country's investment strategy may affect the development of other global economies, commodity prices, and the stability of global financial markets.
3. European Union countries – changes in fiscal or economic policy, particularly in Germany or France, or decisions to leave the EU, affect trade in other EU countries and the eurozone.

4. Japan – changes in the industrial and technological sectors, as well as maintaining low interest rates, affect the development and functioning of global supply chains and asset prices around the world.
5. Russia – its dominant role in the energy sector may influence energy prices in other countries, while its involvement in the armed conflict with Ukraine may cause significant volatility in energy prices and slow down trade and investment flows.
6. Latin American countries – the dominant role of these countries in the natural resources sector, combined with a change in economic strategy, may cause global changes in the prices of these resources, and political crises in Venezuela may affect oil prices.
7. India – the country's economy has a significant impact on global consumer and technology markets, particularly in the IT and manufacturing sectors, as well as on gold prices (high global share in imports of this commodity).

These economies were then quantified based on their global impact in terms of logistics activities using indicators such as GDP level, overall Logistics Performance Index (LPI) level, Liner Shipping Connectivity Index (LSCI) level, and DHL Global Connectedness score.

Table 1
Logistics indicators for economies with global influence

Country	Overall LPI	Liner Shipping Connectivity Index (LSCI)	Overall DHL Global Connectedness
China	3,7	1300	49
USA	3,8	528	55
Germany	4,1	323	64
France	3,9	261	61
Russia	2,6	173	34
India	3,4	398	41
Japan	3,9	429	52
Brazil	3,2	159	44
Mexico	2,9	191	51
Venezuela	2,3	34	23

Source: (World Economic Outlook, 2025; World Bank, 2023; The DHL Global Connectedness Index, 2022)

A comparison of individual LPI, LSCI, and GCI indicators shows Germany's dominance in the European logistics market. China, on the other hand, confirms its strong position in maritime logistics, playing a key role in global trade. The case of the US shows high operational efficiency while maintaining its role as the main global consumer. Russia (despite its high position due to energy resources) and Venezuela, on the other hand, show significant isolation in trade structures due to their low level of global connectivity. Japan, on the other hand, controls key technologies in the supply chain. This proves that the efficiency of the global supply chain depends not only on China's production potential, but above all on the efficiency of flows and the quality of logistics corridors in Japan and EU countries.

THE IMPACT OF THE US-CHINA CONFLICT ON GLOBAL TRADE FLOWS

Changes in the fiscal, economic, and technological strategies of key global economies have a significant and far-reaching impact on international trade, financial markets, commodity prices, and political stability in other regions. They have the ability to influence global decisions in international trade and, consequently, the global supply chain.

The decade of recent changes in global trade was initiated by changes in the political landscape of the United States in 2016. This resulted in the US withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Paris Agreement on climate change. At that time, protection for American production and services was also introduced, with tariffs and taxes imposed on foreign products, which started a trade war with China. The conflict began to intensify in 2018 when the US and China began imposing tariffs on each other's trade (Table 2). The long-standing trade war has affected cooperation and the efficiency of flows in the global supply chain.

Table 2

The US-China trade war – a chronological overview

Year	Imports from China to the USA	Imports from USA to the China
2018	A 25% tariff on imports of steel and steel products and a 10% tariff on imports of aluminum. A 10% tariff on over 8,600 goods, which was increased to 25% the following year and then to 30%	15-25% tariffs imposed on over 100 American products, including fruit, alcohol, pork, and nuts. An additional 5-10% tariff on 7,300 American goods, which was increased to as much as 25% the following year
2019	An additional 15% tariff on over 5,600 Chinese products, a significant portion of which were agricultural and food products	An additional 5-10 percent tariff on approximately 30 percent of goods from a list of over 5,000 American products
2020	Conclusion of an economic and trade agreement between the USA and China	
2025	Implementation of a 34% tariff on all goods manufactured in China. Imposition of a 145% customs tariff on Chinese goods. Ultimately, a 10% reciprocal base duty was maintained. Deferral of duties on Chinese chips	Implementation of 10% and 15% tariffs on selected US goods, including 10% tariffs on crude oil, agricultural machinery, and vehicles, and 15% tariffs on coal and LNG. Imposition of a 125% tariff on US goods. Reduction of the base tariff to 10%

Source: (Ambroziak, 2020; Brown, 2019; Górzyński, 2025)

The trade conflict between China and the US has resulted in changes to the rules of trade cooperation around the world, forcing international companies to change their strategies and seek alternative markets and suppliers. The particularly sharp escalation of the trade conflict between the US and China has also had consequences for the global production system. Due to rising labor costs in China, production activities are increasingly being fully or partially relocated to other Asian countries where manufacturing costs are lower, such as Vietnam or Thailand (Ambroziak, 2020). The relocations particularly affect the technology sector, including companies such as Apple, Google, HP, Nintendo, Microsoft, Dell, and Amazon. At the same time, the US has recently imposed numerous tariffs on other countries, such as Canada, Mexico, and EU countries, which has caused a significant slowdown in global trade.

The imposed tariffs cause an increase in the prices of raw materials and products, which is mainly felt by consumers and is reflected in the results of various sectors, mainly

technology, automotive, and agriculture. It is predicted that a 25% tariff imposed on European Union countries could lead to a decline in Polish GDP of up to 0.4% (Sojka et al, 2025). This, in turn, affects ongoing cooperation and negotiating conditions in the supply chain and forces (Tariffs Return to Headlines, 2025):

- the search for new regions and suppliers of raw materials where tariffs are lower;
- redirecting the flow of supplies outside countries affected by tariff increases;
- the use of bonded warehouses, free trade zones, and other opportunities to reduce tariffs in order to maintain existing payment terms and tariff levels;
- a review of suppliers of raw materials and finished products at every stage of the supply/production process in order to minimize the impact of tariffs on costs;
- changing contract and cooperation terms to include clauses mitigating tariff increases.

China and the United States have diversified their trading partner bases, separating themselves from each other in terms of both imports and exports (Global Trade Outlook and Statistics, 2025). In some cases, this diversification has taken place at the microeconomic level along the supply chain through trade diversion and production relocation, for example in other Asian countries, where the share of imports from the United States and imports and exports from China has increased. In addition, changing demand patterns have led the European Union to import more from China but export more to the United States.

THE IMPACT OF THE ARMED CONFLICT BETWEEN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE ON THE GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN

The war in Ukraine has had a significant and long-lasting impact on the global supply chain. The effects mainly concerned problems with the supply of raw materials such as oil, gas, coal, and agricultural products. The conflict caused an increase in the prices of certain raw materials, disrupted the Polish market for suppliers of selected products, and affected the cooperation of many markets with the Russian market. In July 2025, following the announcement of sanctions on refined products, the price of diesel contracts in Europe rose by \$42 per ton. High energy prices were the main cause of stagnation in the transport sector (Polska Izba Paliw Płynnych (PIPP), 2025).

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 had a particularly strong impact on the energy, food, and raw materials sectors. Sanctions imposed on Russia and restrictions on gas and oil supplies led to an increase in energy prices, which affected production and transport costs. The reduction in gas supplies from Russia (a decline in its share of EU imports from 40% to around 10% in 2023) had a significant impact on energy-intensive industries (World Energy Outlook, 2025).

Due to the fact that Ukraine and Russia are among the key exporters of grain, metals, including rare metals and rare earth metals, as well as oil and gas, the disruption of supplies of these raw materials has affected global markets, causing price increases and shortages in many sectors. The war and economic sanctions have also necessitated changes in transport routes, which has contributed to longer delivery times and increased freight costs (Brząkała, 2022).

IMPACT OF OTHER FACTORS ON THE GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN

In addition to changes in tariffs, the COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on international trade and changes in the functioning of the global supply chain, causing serious disruptions in global supply chains, mainly due to border closures and transport restrictions. As a result, many production facilities were closed and international transport was suspended, leading to shortages of goods, delays, and increased costs. This caused supply problems and difficulties in fulfilling orders. On the other hand, the pandemic accelerated the development of e-commerce and significantly affected the TSL market. Furthermore, domestic and regional trade gained importance, as it was characterized by greater flexibility and faster availability of selected raw materials and products.

The global supply chain is also affected by rapid technological developments in automation, artificial intelligence, and Industry 5.0. Many global companies have invested in new technologies, which has allowed them to increase efficiency and reduce costs. This can be seen particularly in the case of China, which is intensively pursuing global technological dominance. The "Made in China 2025" policy has contributed to increasing China's competitiveness in the global market, changing the dynamics of supply chains in the field of advanced technologies. The policy's objectives include a systematic invasion of foreign markets by 2035 and 2049 (Boullenois et al., 2025). First, China wants to become one of the global leaders among industrial countries that manufacture innovatively, energy-efficiently, and with minimal resources. Secondly, China is striving for dominance in the areas of railway, marine, aviation, and aerospace engineering equipment, next-generation IT, new materials, agricultural, medical, and energy equipment (Talin, 2025). China's strategy promotes the development of Chinese technologies and brands, leading to greater control over global supply chains and more intense international competition in the field of innovation. Currently, the "Made in China 2025" strategy has a significant impact on international trade, mainly through an increase in Chinese exports of advanced technologies and changes in the structure of global supply chains, i.e.:

1. Growth in exports of advanced technologies – at the beginning of 2025, exports of mechanical and electrical products from China, accounting for about 60% of the total value of exports, increased by more than 5%, while trade in advanced technologies accounts for almost half of the total value of global trade in such products (in 2025, China became the leader in exports of electric vehicles, solar products, and lithium batteries) (Silk Road Poland, 2025);
2. China's trade surplus - in 2021, China recorded a record trade surplus in exports and imports (an average increase of 30%), which is due to the growth in exports of products such as electronics and medical equipment (Chiny: eksport i import biją rekordy, 2021);
3. USA and EU dependence on Chinese imports – China is the main supplier of numerous goods to the US (approximately 50% of total imports) and to the EU, and currently accounts for almost 30% of global industrial production. The strategy strengthens China's position as a key link in global supply chains, particularly in high-tech sectors, which increases the dependence of other economies on Chinese supplies (Obserwator Finansowy, 2023);
4. Impact on Polish trade – in 2021, trade between Poland and China increased by 28% in terms of exports, while imports from China to Poland increased by 37%. At the

same time, Poland can benefit from the diversification of supply chains by attracting investments through nearshoring.

The crises have caused political and economic uncertainty and forced companies to adapt their strategies to geopolitical disruptions that have not been seen for decades, including diversifying suppliers and relocating production facilities. According to the report's findings, the global changes have caused specific problems in national supply chains (Fig. 1).

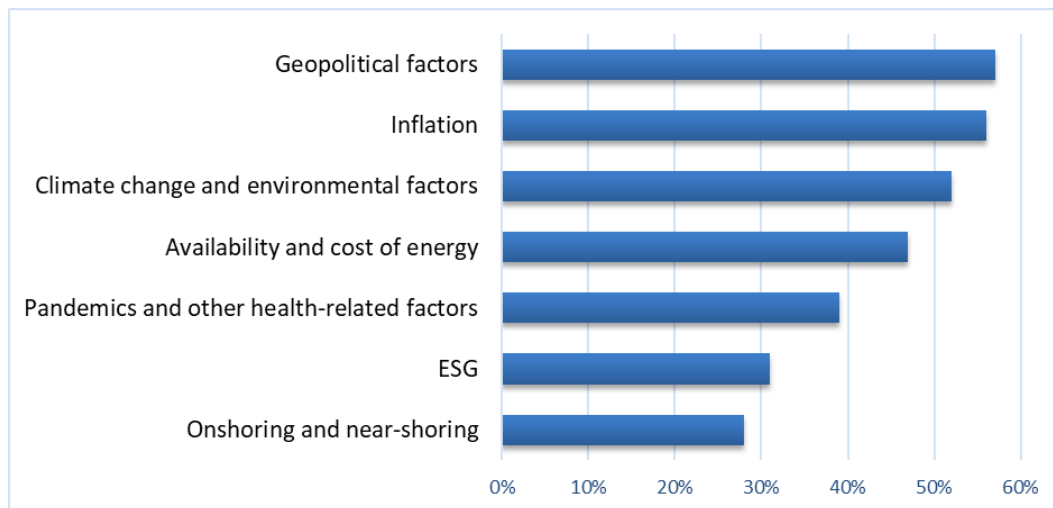


Fig. 1. Types of disruptions affecting the supply chain risk

Source: (WTW, 2025)

The latest reports indicate a persistent state of uncertainty, with geopolitical tensions and cyber threats becoming the main destabilizing factors. This impacts the risks associated with supply chain operations. This creates increasing uncertainty and makes companies more susceptible to supply chain disruptions.

Data from 2022 shows the peak of pandemic disruptions, while the main disruptions in the supply chain were mainly caused by problems with the shipment of materials and raw materials. Half of European companies experienced disruptions in deliveries from suppliers outside China, with only about 20% of companies reporting disruptions caused solely by suppliers from China. More than 40% of disruptions were in deliveries from wholesalers or manufacturers with whom there were no long-term contracts (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2022).

Numerous political, economic, and financial events over the past decade have had a decisive impact on global supply chains and trade, changing not only the way risk is managed, but also companies' competitiveness strategies. These changes have prompted many companies to increase flexibility, diversify suppliers, and invest in new technologies and more sustainable solutions. Shifts in production and the need to seek alternative markets have led to changes in the structure of supply chains, which are now more flexible and more often based on local cooperation. The recent intense economic changes are affecting global trade and the competitiveness of supply chains, forcing companies to develop new cooperation strategies, diversify their sources of supply, and invest in new technologies and innovations.

CONCLUSIONS

Disruptions in supply chains led to significant shortages of raw materials and components, followed by production stoppages, which were particularly felt in the automotive and electronics industries. These disruptions were also followed by an increase in operating costs, as companies were forced to adapt their logistics strategies very quickly, incurring higher costs resulting from the need to find alternative suppliers or change transport routes.

Geopolitical changes and armed conflicts have revealed the vulnerability of the global supply chain to unforeseen changes. For this reason, companies around the world must adapt their strategies to new challenges by diversifying their sources of supply, developing regional supply networks, and investing in management technologies. Rising costs, geopolitical uncertainty, and changing market conditions are forcing them to become increasingly flexible, which should ensure resilience to future crises.

The challenges and risks associated with the globalization of supply chains require a comprehensive approach to management and planning. Companies should develop risk management strategies, invest in logistics support technologies, and monitor rapidly changing market conditions. At the same time, proper risk management is essential to increase the resilience of supply chains and ensure long-term operational stability for companies.

At the same time, the study has certain limitations. Due to the analysis of secondary data from reports and quantitative data, the data obtained is not always current given the changing geopolitical situation.

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