
Geopolitics of 5G - The case of Huawei

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Why 5G matters

5G technologies are reshaping the way users experience the digital sphere and, thus, their daily lives. 5G is one of the game changers that would further enable cyberspaces potentialities for our societies, economies, and lifestyle.

5G brings with it unprecedented possibilities of applications, including healthcare, education, autonomous vehicles, augmented reality, industrial production, public services. **But it does come with risks.**

1. Introduction

→ Concerns

There are multiple and contrasting geopolitical interests and security concerns regarding 5G adoptions and implementations

→ High stakes

The current confrontation between Chinese companies and some Western governments is shaping tomorrow's communications networks.

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What are the political and securitarian implications of such technological disputes?

5G in a Contested Domain

- Nearly 80% of the market is dominated by three big companies:
 - Huawei 30%
 - Ericsson 26%
 - Nokia 22%
 - 35% of the patent related with 5G are owned by Huawei
 - While 5% of them is owned by american companies.
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- **therefore, the domination of Huawei is considered a threat by the U.S. government**
 - **Security, economic, and systemic considerations constitute the main pillars of U.S. fear concerning Huawei.**

U.S. Government's concerns

Huawei's reach to the security infrastructures is the source of security concerns. U.S. government fears that Huawei could be used for espionage purposes in the name of China

U.S. government is deeply concerned about the risks of allowing any company beholden to foreign governments to gain positions of power inside there telecommunications networks.

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How are states dealing with the security concerns of 5G technologies?

In the U.S.

The United states of America completely banned every Huawei's products, in order to protect itself from possible espionage and in an attempt to slow down effectively Huawei's domination of the 5g networks market in the western world

- **This strategy has been successful in America, but now the real battleground is Europe**

The fight for the European market

- 25 percent of 105 billion income earned by Huawei in 2018 emanates from Europe and the Middle East.
 - Huawei holds 18% of the market in EU and Middle East
- **A lack of coordination among EU members prevents EU countries from developing a common 5G deployment**

The fight for the European market

➤ **There is a division in the members of the EU regarding Huawei:**

U.S. administration pressures to drive Huawei out of the European market

Eastern countries like Poland, Czechia or Romania agreed with the American position

While the European Commission recognizes the security risk concerning 5G networks, France, Germany, Netherlands and other Western EU countries refused to ban Huawei to avoid a trade war.

The case Meng Wanzhou “Huawei’s Princess”

The number of accusations of spying and voluntary security breaches have been increasing

Several arrests of chinese citizen overboard linked to Huawei occurred in the last two years (Canada, Poland).

- **The distrust from governments towards Huawei is growing.**



Huawei CEO Meng Wanzhou was arrested in Canada when Trump was president

(Dec 2018)

After three years of judiciary battle and negotiations, Meng Wanzhou has become the face of the political battles between the U.S. and China.



**Huawei CEO Meng
Wanzhou recently
“freed”**

(Sep 2021)

Conclusion

It is likely the new networks will shape the competition for 21st-century dominance between the world's leading technology superpowers – the US and China. At the same time, the EU is seeking to establish itself as a regulator in the new digital economy.