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## REVIEWS AND ESSAYS

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### WORLD ORDER AND ITS FUTURE: REFLECTIONS ON THE BOOK BY ANTON GRININ

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**Grinin A. L. *The Struggle for a New World Order: History, Current State and Prospects*. Moscow: branch of Uchitel Publishing House, 2025. 464 p. (In Russian)**

#### What is This Book about?

Many authors write about the emergence of a new world order. It is no surprise since ‘...we are in the vortex of destabilizing events which signify the erosion of the previously established world order’ (Grinin 2025: 43).

In the 1990s, when the unipolar American order was established, many books were published that often argued that this order would remain for a very long time. Among the most famous were Zbigniew Brzezinski's *The Grand Chessboard* (Brzezinski 1997) and Francis Fukuyama's *End of History* (1992). The reference list for the book under review alone contains hundreds of names and titles. There were, of course, also more profound works, for example, Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations* (Huntington 1996). Does another book on the coming world order have any value? What new insights can it offer? First and foremost, it is important to understand that today's debate is about the weakening of the current, but already ‘old’, American world order, and about the contours of a gradually emerging new, non-American world order. Therefore, a systematic study of how exactly the world order is transformed, what forces and processes contribute to this transformation, in what directions, how and why the struggle for a new world order intensifies, what the new world order might look like, and many other questions have both important academic and theoretical significance, as well as important practical application.

One can agree with the author that the question of the future world order has become very acute today: will it be a reincarnation of the American world order, as the US academic and political apologists suggest, or will it be a world order with new forms of functioning, new principles of organization, and new international relations. It is decided today what course the world and Russia will take for at least several decades. Currently, the World-System is in an unstable state, on the eve of a highly probable bifurcation in the development trajectories. This opens up real opportunities to increase the influence of global and regional leaders, including developing the foundations and principles for the future world order, and it facilitates the elaboration of key developmental strategies, including the search for partners and allies (Grinin 2025: 5).

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### Why this Book is More Complete?

Of course, there are works specifically devoted to demography, generational and ethnic, civilizational, and geopolitical issues of the modern world, but each of them is considered separately, without reference to the others. And they are hardly considered as a factor in the emergence of a new world order.

Such specialization, including in the field of futurology, is one of the most important reasons why the ‘black swan’ phenomenon regularly emerges when a completely unaccounted-for factor ‘suddenly’ comes into play in the situation of a changing world, and it ‘turns out’ to be extremely important. This factor used to be ‘simply’ outside the scope of professional interests, and sometimes even beyond the authors' understanding and so it remained unnoticed.

‘Black swans’ hover over futurologists because scholars fail to consider ‘insufficiently systematized areas’ (Grinin 2025: 18). That is, they ignore too many aspects of complex phenomena.

Of course, it is physically impossible to take into account *all* aspects of the world order and *all* factors of global dynamics. Let us recall Ilya Prigogine's statement, ‘If we can predict the behavior of a system, then it is not a large enough system’ (Prigogine Stengers 1984). But the immensity of the subject and object does not mean that we should abandon the attempts to understand and predict to the largest possible extent, that is, to create the possibly most precise pattern.

Anton Grinin's book allows us to see beyond because it takes into account a greater number of factors.

### Methodology

A crucial point is that to achieve the stated objectives, the author applies the methodology of Megahistory or Big History. The International Big History Association defines this relatively new field of study as follows, ‘Big History is the attempt to understand, in a unified and interdisciplinary way, the history of the Cosmos, Earth, Life and Humanity’.

Big History cannot exist without an interdisciplinary approach that combines natural and social sciences to explain the existing world and its history. Scholars engaged in the creation of Big History have repeatedly addressed the world-system theory and to the global world-system dynamics, applying their characteristic synthesis of scientific knowledge (Grinin, Korotayev 2012, 2015, 2016a, 2016b; Grinin 2012, 2022).

IBHA members have coined an interesting term – the ‘World-System reconfiguration’. They have also explored its application to the current political situation. Unfortunately, ‘this concept rather gradually enters political science circulation and is applied insufficiently’ (Grinin 2025: 40).

Anton Grinin convincingly shows that the emergence of a ‘multipolar world’ is influenced not only by geopolitical and political circumstances, and that not only economic growth per se is important, but that at least seven or eight other factors also play their role.

### Technological Revolution

The author of the book under review has repeatedly written about the ‘cybernetic revolution’. The most thoroughly it was described his excellent coauthored book and articles published back in 2015 (Grinin L., Grinin A. 2015a; 2015b; 2015c) and in the book under review as well (Grinin 2025: 174–177).

Now the author writes about the ‘technological aspects of global competition’ and returns to the idea of the inevitable ‘most active introduction of self-managing systems into all spheres of life, about the intensification of the struggle to revise the world order through the concentration of efforts in the field of development of the latest technologies’ (*Ibid.*: 225).

Of course, global inequality is only increasing because some people create new versions of computers and write programs, while others only use what is created outside their country. The emergence of a huge number of Indian, Chinese, and Japanese programmers is the current evidence not of these regions' leadership, but of ‘catch-up modernization’. Perhaps, they will catch up. Probably, the situation will change in the future, but today, the leaders of technological development live in countries populated by Europeans, primarily Anglo-Saxons.

Scientific and technological superiority always has fascinating consequences in warfare. The advent of iron weapons revolutionized all production areas and, of course, warfare (Berzin 1984).

Both Rome and Great Britain managed to become the greatest empires precisely because they had decisive military and technological superiority over almost any enemy. In fact, this superiority made European countries the absolute leaders in the world and the creators of the global world-system of the 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Anton Grinin rightly points out that in the near future, military conflicts may take the form of cyberwarfare, with virtually no human involvement. ‘Today, unexpectedly for many, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) have come to the forefront in connection with military operations’ (Grinin 2025: 227). This passage once again inspires respect for the author: the world has barely noticed the realities of the 2020 Azerbaijan–Armenian war. It is good that Anton Grinin also analyzes its consequences.

As it often happens, science fiction writers predicted a phenomenon long before it was put into practice. Radio-controlled aircraft became a Soviet innovation in Alexander Kazantsev's novel, published in 1937 in a periodical and published as a separate edition in 1941 (Kazantsev 1941).

‘It is clear that hardly everyone will be able to make a breakthrough in this direction, and this, accordingly, intensifies the struggle for a place in the world order’ (Grinin 2025: 227).

However, electronic weapons are not the only source of military-technological superiority. I do not know whether tectonic or climate weapons exist but if they do, it is not Burkina Faso, or even China, Iran, or Russia that possess it.

This is what Anton Grinin writes about: the use of interfaces and artificial intelligence as ‘information and ideological weapons of colossal power’ (Grinin L., Grinin A. 2015d; Grinin L., Grinin A., Korotayev 2023).

And this weapon cannot be developed in Algeria or Thailand.

It is obvious that the formation of a new world order is already underway and will continue to form through a series of wars. One can only hope that they will not be global ones.

### **The End of the Western Absolute Dominance**

The theories of Samuel Huntington and his followers about the Great Divergence, that is, a rapid divergence in the levels of development of Europe and the countries inhabit-

ed by Europeans, are extremely interesting. However, these ideas had been discussed before him (Pomerantz 2017; Frank 2001).

Leonid Grinin and Andrey Korotayev's theories of on the reconfiguration of the World-System and the acceleration of this reconfiguration are even of greater interest and relevance for our subject (Grinin, Korotayev 2015). From these authors' point of view, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the development gap is replaced by convergence – that is, the equalization of development levels between the so-called ‘West’ and the rest of the world, which gives rise to the Great Reconfiguration of the global world-system (Grinin 2016a, 2016b, 2016c; Grinin L., Grinin A., Korotayev 2024).

Hardly anyone will deny that the Great Divergence is coming to an end. The absolute world leader of the 17<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries – European civilization – is losing its leadership. All forms of world order from the Great Discoveries to the First World War – Westphalia, Vienna, and Washington system – were the variants of the ‘European world order.’ These systems became global because it was the European powers that divided the world and formed the global world-system. Even the bipolar world between the USA and the USSR from 1945 to 1991 was a world order dominated by two superpowers belonging to European civilization.

It is noteworthy that all the other factors contributing to the formation of a new world order, outlined by Anton Grinin, are related to the strengthening of the non-Western countries.

### **Demographic Factors in the Global Trend**

Anton Grinin rightly writes,

With a strong state, even a poor and not very literate, but large population becomes a significant force. Imagine if the USSR had continued to exist with a population significantly larger than the US. The geopolitical landscape would be different today or if Russia had a population of 250 million instead of 146 million. Even if the Russian Federation's weight might not be as great as that of the hypothetical USSR, it would certainly be greater than it is today (Grinin 2025: 245).

Thus, to claim the role of an independent ‘center of power’, a country should be large and populous enough.

Let me remind you that having made a colossal leap in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the comparatively small Netherlands yielded its position as the world leader to England. A regional leader, and especially a world leader, is always a large country with a large population.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Japan had been defeating China and any of its armies since 1931, but it was physically unable to occupy the country.

Today, Western countries are losing their demographic leadership, and this also predetermines the ‘decline of Europe’ predicted by Spengler (1939).

I disagree with the author of the book only in one point, namely, that ‘the decline observed in the demography of Europe (a unprecedented phenomenon in human history, since it happens in the absence of wars, epidemics and natural disasters) will inevitably create enormous, perhaps, even insolvable problems’ (Grinin 2025: 226). I disagree that ‘the phenomenon is unprecedented.’ The same process was observed in the Roman Empire from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD: a decline in the ‘titular’ Roman

population, a crisis in their traditional culture, and the replacement of native Romans by migrants.

### **The Migration Factor**

Of course, ‘migration is not just an economic, but also a political, cultural, humanitarian, social, legal, and – especially important for our topic – geopolitical aspect’ (*Ibid.* 255).

I would dare to draw the same analogy: the Roman state was forced to import slaves into Italy because Romans became administrators and warriors outside Italy. ‘Economically’ active Syrians, Greeks, and residents of Asia Minor and North Africa also moved in. By the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the Romans had transformed from a dominant ethnic group into an unconsolidated mass of people seeking to consume rather than to build a state, which determined the destiny of the Western Roman Empire.

### **Generational and Gender Factors**

Western civilization itself is not simply ‘aging’. First, it shows militant feminism. In the US 64 % of women of childbearing age do not intend to have children, because ‘feminism, elevated to the level of the highest ideology, is increasingly driving society toward depopulation’ (Grinin 2025: 273).

Second, the rapid growth of sexual minorities.

Third, there is an aversion to children, which is strange even from a biological perspective. Worst of all, the younger the respondents, the more reasons they find to refuse to create a nuclear family (Serebryanyi 2024).

‘There are radical opinions that the emergence of Generation Z – whether their consciously want it or not – will lead to the complete destruction of the business ethics that developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the attitude toward work, money, careers, and other things on which the stability of the global economy and society has been built for centuries’ (Grinin 2025: 273). If this assessment is correct, we face a clear example of the suicide of a civilization: its degeneration. What is much more difficult to agree with, is that ‘History does not know such precedents <...> Family crises have already occurred in history, particularly in Antiquity’ (Grinin 2025: 272).

The ideology of biological degeneration and civilizational suicide is rapidly expanding and is represented by an ever-growing number of increasingly unusual variants.

The author of the present review wrote a book called *Gender Revolution* (Burovsky 2025b). I tried to cover as many phenomena as possible, but the book was literally out of date already by the time of its coming out.

### **Ideological Factors: Ethnocultural, Religious and Others**

Anton Grinin rightly points out that in global competition, the winners are not only those who are stronger economically and militarily, but also those who can offer a more attractive vision of the future, ideally, of course, one that appeals to all people – those of different civilizations, cultures, genders, ages, genders, and political preferences.

But how realistic is the creation of such an all-encompassing ideology? So far, we can see clashes of ideologies as part of the rivalry for global dominance. With respect to Russia, ‘the new order will largely depend on the goals that the Russian Federation will set and on the course of Russia’s foreign policy’ (Grinin 2025: 43).

### Globalization and Multipolarity

The author of the book presents generally known facts about the existence of both bipolar and multipolar versions of the global world-system in the past. The current situation is that since 1991, with the collapse of the USSR, the world-system has become unipolar.

The US position can be compared to that of the Roman Empire in the 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, and to that of the Athenian Arche. In the latter case, the countries of Europe, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand should be considered as analogous to Athens's unequal allies.

The reconfiguration of the World-System, as emphasized in the work of Anton Grinin, is 'a process when the balance of power changes in the world ... and a new world order begins to be formed' (Grinin 2025: 369). Even the seemingly unbreakable alliance between the US and Europe is disintegrating before our eyes.

Elsewhere, my co-author and I attempted to analyze not the 'ideology for the masses', political correctness, and tolerance, but the actual ideology of mondialism (Burovsky, Yakutseni 2009). While not being a supporter of this system, I note that a unipolar world has many advantages.

The global economy allows using the resources from across the globe, creating a unified logistics system. Roughly speaking, everything becomes more accessible and cheaper. The incredible rise in living standards since the 1990s is a direct consequence of economic globalism. Any country always loses when closes on itself. The civilizations of pre-Columbian America were cut off from the rest of humanity not of their own will. But it is a fact that isolation played a fatal role for them.

The self-isolation of vast civilized China by the 19<sup>th</sup> century made it so backward that this enormous country appeared weak against aggression not only from European alliances, but from any European country, including Russia.

In general, unification is always good while isolation always leads to backwardness and degradation. The difficulty is that any ideal solution can be devised, but in real life, globalism is not a 'concert of powers' or the rule of wise benefactors of humanity. It is a brutal dictate not even of states, but of supranational forces, acting solely in their own selfish interests. And these interests are understood in an extremely primitive way: as maintaining the usual level of consumption.

As a result, for any country, nation, or people 'joining globalism' does not mean 'entering the system' or even 'taking a low-level position within it'. It means 'being devoured by the system', which is far from the same thing.

### The Decline of Europe

The civilization of Europe of the Modern period created the global world-system. It is the direct heir of both Antiquity and the Christian civilization of the 5<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, which we incorrectly call 'medieval.'<sup>\*</sup> This civilization not only 'discovered' the whole world but also laid the foundations for both the global world-system and the emergence of technogenic civilization.

The foundations of this civilization can be expressed in a few simple ideas:

1. The world is a storehouse of extremely useful, yet unrelated, phenomena and processes.

2. All these processes can be understood, studied, and put to use by humans.

3. Nature's 'storehouse' is inexhaustible, there is certainly enough for everyone.

The main thing is to study and work.

The European civilization got a mortal blow in the fires of World War I, and World War II finally finished it off. That is, civilization did not disappear, but by 1945, China had joined the UN Security Council. By the 1960s, many non-European countries had acquired power at least equal to that of Europe.

This can also be understood in terms of the theory of catch-up modernization. Europe was the first to create a technogenic civilization. Today, the technogenic civilization is global.

I am not sure whether Europe itself has realized this, but this has happened.

Whatever the world of the future will be – unipolar or hundredpolar – European civilization is doomed to be just one of the technogenic civilizations in a not-so-wonderful, but ‘at least’ new world.

### **Postmodernism**

Anton Grinin writes convincingly about the degradation of European civilization. He believes that ‘after the peak of achievement is passed, decadence inevitably comes. Decadence is associated with a decline in morals, but, even worse, with the ideological glorification and open exaltation of these violations, their propaganda, and the desire to normalize them. Decadence is also usually associated with the destruction of the family and declining birth rates’ (Grinin 2025: 255–256).

What Grinin called decadence would be more accurately called the culture of post-modernism.

Modernism is life through constant creation and respect for knowledge, skill, and creation. Postmodernism is life on the back of what has already been created.

For a long time now, people with low intelligence and energy have been entertaining strange ideas – to abolish any hierarchy. As they joked in the Khrushchev era, the era of ‘unisex’ clothing and breeze block construction: the bathroom and toilet have already been combined... It only remains to combine man with woman and floor with ceiling.

This also has a complete analogy in the late Roman Empire, and in many ways, in the Russian Empire of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The decay of civilization is expressed in the fact that for a ‘good’, that is, well-fed, life, and one no longer needs to work ‘too much’ – especially to make super-efforts.

Octavian’s Rome would have crushed the barbarians without even noticing. In the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, Rome simply did not want to do anything.

### **A New Civilization**

We live in a New global civilization, a subsidiary of the European civilization of the 17<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but nevertheless completely different.

Five major events occurred in the 1960s:

– Humanity expanded beyond planet Earth. Civilization began to transform into a space civilization.

– Global money emerged. Along with it, there emerged a global super-bourgeoisie.

– The wealth of transnational monopolies reached the level of that of large and powerful countries. Standard Oil and General Motors became richer than Italy and Spain, as rich as France, and almost as rich as Germany.

– So-called colonialism came to an end. No more priority for Europe and Europeans. Europe is a global parasite. Europeans are colonizers and bloodsuckers. Hooray for political correctness! Long live tolerance!

– It has become known that the planet's resources are limited. Roughly speaking, there is not enough for everyone (Medows *et al.* 1972).

Since then, economic and political power belongs to a cosmopolitan stratum of the very rich. The bourgeoisie of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are mere paupers compared to them.

### **Bourgeoisie and Super-Bourgeoisie**

In the late 1930s, Ferdinand Lundberg assumed the existence of 'super-rich' in the United States and spoke of 'America's 60 ruling families' (Lundberg 1948, 1971).

Today, the super-rich do not live only in the United States. They are not bourgeois... They are super-bourgeoisie. They are hundreds of times richer than all the emperors in human history. And they have a different psychology.

Knowledge used to be power. Knowledge brought money and power. To have knowledge was prestigious. The masters of life supported and developed this system of values because they themselves shared it. And they believed in progress.

The super-bourgeoisie also needs progress but it should be controlled and controlled manually. The technoscience of the Earth's leading firms is creating new lines of production. Before our very eyes, the computer was born, along with mobile communications and a special mobile computer – the iPhone, a hybrid of a computer, a telephone, a photo and movie camera. The advent of the 3D printer... The advent of space programs... The advent of... well, I could go on and on. But all this is a tamed progress. It is achieved by huge teams of people receiving wages. An engineer is an ordinary employee and a proletarian who knows his place.

There were many bourgeois – they amounted up to 5, 10, and 15 % of Europe's population. But even just for themselves, the bourgeoisie needed many universities, many doctors, many engineers and technicians.

The super-bourgeoisie makes 0.001 % of the Earth's population. They do not need so many specialists. And they are not the vanguard. They are the smart individuals who managed to grab, while the others are just herd, including representatives of the peoples from which the super-bourgeoisie emerged.

The super-bourgeoisie knows for sure that they, at least, will receive the medical care which we have become accustomed to rudely calling 'health service'. There are enough professors for them. And the professors will come running, pushing and kicking along the way. 'Who wants the best we have got?!?!'

The others can be treated by sorcerers and witch doctresses.

Research is already underway to extend active life to 120–140 years. The question is who will benefit from this expensive research. We, who die at 80, will face the Establishment who at the age of 120 will look and act like 60-year-old people.

Likewise, the super-bourgeoisie knows it will always receive a good education. They always get access to new knowledge regardless of whether the others have it.

I develop these ideas in more detail in my other articles (Burovsky 2020, 2022; Burovsky and Luzhetskij 2022).

### **Degradation? No, the Emergence of a New Civilization**

There is no doubt that ‘there are obvious signs of degradation of the Western political system, democracy, human rights, and ideology’, that Western ‘elites, in order to maintain their dominance, increasingly violate the basic rights of citizens and the Constitution at the legal and institutional level’ (Grinin 2025: 255).

But is it only about political democracy? Since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, people of the Western world have become accustomed to social guarantees: accessible scientific medicine, education, and upward social mobility. Starting from the 1960s, the state began to increasingly cancel its obligations.

What does the actual refusal of the material well-being for the majority, accessible healthcare, education, social security, and equality before the law mean? It is a refusal from European civilization's achievements. The majority of the European population faces a rather real ‘decline’ to the level of the Ancient East at best (Burovsky 2025a).

The European civilization used to assume that ‘someday’ everyone would become like Europeans in terms of education, skills, and income.

Now, ‘they themselves are not satisfied’. The ideology is simple: do not develop. Why? You dance so beautifully. And if you want to do more than just dance, we will quickly send gunboats. Muammar Gaddafi wanted to, and so did Saddam Hussein. No, guys, dance in circles... What beautiful kokoshniks you have!

Naturally, ‘anti-Americanism is on the rise in the world, along with a desire to somehow limit American voluntarism and opportunism in relation to established traditions and norms of international life, as well as the influence of any internal American changes on the rest of the world’ (Grinin 2025: 319).

But ‘Americanism’ probably has nothing to do with it. For the super-bourgeoisie, 90 % of the population of the United States is the same kind of herd as everyone else. Let them work for a pottage, seek healing from shamans, read comics, eat bugs, watch idiotic TV shows, think the earth is flat, kill witches, and die at 60. They do not pity them at all; the super-bourgeoisie do not identify themselves with any nation.

### **Ideology for Herd**

In the nation-states of the 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the imperative of introducing the greatest possible number of people to culture and civilization grew.

But by the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this imperative was not the prevailing one, precisely because national bourgeoisies were replaced by a cosmopolitan super-bourgeoisie.

Knowledge is still power, but it is in the hands of the super-bourgeoisie, who are the owners of untold amounts of capital. They do not want knowledge to fall into other hands... precisely because it is power. Who gives a rifle to an aborigine? Let him run around with a stone axe. The rulers of the New Global Civilization promote irrational, and therefore harmless, values, partly under the guise of ‘scientific’. Including among the residents of Western countries.

The super-bourgeoisie are people with the clearest mind. Exclusively for the purpose of ‘nurturing’ the masses, they employ

the ‘missionary work’ of LGBT (the activities of this public movement are banned in Russia – *Editor's note*) and political correctness approach, comparable in power to the missionary work of the Spanish Inquisition, which ultimately led to the decline of the Spanish Empire; there is also observed the replacement of meritocracy in personnel promotion with the ‘questionnaire’ princi-

ple, which combines the worst traits of class monarchies and socialism; the deterioration and corruption of the elite; censorship and the ‘cancel culture’ characteristic of totalitarian regimes; the replacement of knowledge in education with ideology and a number of other vices (*Ibid.*: 279).

I will state that in the Western world, including the United States, we observe three trends: the globalist trend for the elites; the postmodern – for the masses; and a conservative – for the middle class. The latter, the refuge of mentally normal Americans, is our natural ally. If there are too few representatives of this trend, they will suffer the fate of Aetius and the sacrificial Roman boy whose name is lost in the history.

### Scenarios for the Future

Having described and analyzed numerous and diverse factors of global rivalry, Anton Grinin offers possible scenarios for the future. According to him, there are eight of them. Some are quite related, so I will list them according to their relatedness.

1. The paradigm of the absolute leader, that is, the USA.
  2. ‘A world concert where the United States will not be the first among equals, but one of equals’ (Grinin 2025: 321). That is, the dominance of the United States together with its allies (similar to the Athenian arche).
  3. ‘The formation of a world government, associated with total control over business and population, related to the accounting of the ‘carbon footprint’ of every person, as well as, accordingly, control over their consumption and the concentration of power and control over the distribution of financial flows on a global scale’.
  4. A very close scenario: ‘Digital regulation, logically leading humanity into a “digital concentration camp”’ (Grinin L., Grinin A. 2023).
  5. A multipolar, or multi-nodal, world in which different centers of power coexist. Such a ‘world’ is assumed to be either bipolar, with the United States and China as superpowers, or tri- or quadripolar, with Russia and Europe added to these centers. A multipolar world is also possible, ‘with a certain number of poles (USA, EU, Russia, India and possibly others)’ or with ‘the absence of a certain fixed number of independent poles’, whose number can vary (Grinin 2025: 324).
- Other scholars also write about ‘new poles’ (Ilyin, Leonova 2015, 2019; Ilyin, Rozanov 2015).
6. ‘A World-System that has reached maturity and is free of antagonistic contradictions’. I do not understand how it can be free of contradictions. Whether the authors of this idea understand it one should ask them.
  7. A hybrid world order, yet unknown in history. This hybrid world order will flexibly and fluidly combine the bearers and characteristics of unipolarity (Grinin 2025: 226).

In short, the latter are two ideal models where everyone is happy and everything is fair. How this ideal can be achieved and who will organize it, remain unanswered.

Perhaps, I am a bad person and a pessimist, but I am sure no one will listen to these pathetic calls. Politics is driven by interests, not by calls to ‘do good.’

### The Prospect of a Great War

Of course, the predictions include ‘global war, catastrophe, or something similar with various outcomes’ (*Ibid.*: 319).

In 2009, my co-author and I also considered the possibility of a Great War (Burovsky, Yakutseni 2009). Since then, this possibility has only become more real, and new hotbeds of international tension have emerged.

However, the Great War scenario does not completely rule out any of the seven scenarios listed above. If the Great War brings colossal destruction and the deaths of billions, but modern countries and states survive, the technological civilization will continue, so one of the first possible scenarios will be realized.

### **What is the Most Probable?**

Of course, in futurology, making long-term forecasts is considered the most difficult. In our case, it is vice versa: paradoxically, it is short-term forecasts that are the most difficult to make and the shorter the timescale, the less accurate they are.

For the long-term forecasts, the day-to-day turbulence is of little importance. Regardless of the character of Kamala Harris or Jackson, or whether China seizes Taiwan, the emergence of a multipolar world is an absolute inevitability.

A multipolar world will inevitably be very complex. Even the 'bipolar world' of 1945–1991 included, in addition to the two superpowers, a number of great powers that played a role in the global order comparable to that of the superpowers.

It is most likely that some 'hybrid world order' will be truly a version of a completely unprecedented new multipolarity.

This has never happened before, because different 'poles' belong to different civilizations. This process began already at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when we attributed China and Japan to the great powers, as well as observed the growing influence of South Korea, India, and Turkey.

The possible multipolar world of the middle and late 21<sup>st</sup> century is inevitably even more complex and contradictory.

First, a widespread decline in living standards is inevitable. All 'centers of power', that is, all world systems – superpowers and great powers, and they both with their allies – are striving to be economically autonomous. This simply means to be as independent as possible. Everything can be produced anywhere, but it will always be more expensive.

Moreover, a high level of militarization is inevitable. The rapid growth in living standards and consumption in the 1990s–2010s was caused, among other things, by the reduction in military spending.

We will probably have the same level of consumption that we experienced in the 1960s – 1980s – which is far from famine or even 'major shortages'.

Secondly, a constant clash of civilizational cultures and ideas awaits us. That is, the constant presence of 'others' in the lives of all populations, countries, and peoples.

It is easy to say is that this has truly never happened before. But it has happened.

Many historians attach great importance to the fact that the bi-ecumene of the Ancient Near East and the ancient Mediterranean united very diverse peoples with different social and political systems, religions, and traditions (Pomerantz 1995; Rou 2003).

The 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century, the global world-system also witnessed the clash between various European peoples. It is difficult to argue that the Irish coexisted peacefully with the English, or the Poles with the Ukrainians and Russians. But these peoples are certainly much closer in racial, linguistic, cultural and religious terms than any of them are to any of the 'colonial' nations.

Today's situation is closer to the 'ancient Eastern' than to the more familiar European one of the 17<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is not a hierarchy that is being established, but rather competition and mutual penetration of extremely different cultures.

An outright fear of multipolarity is common – unipolarity is promoted as a kind of 'calm' state of global society while multipolarity is considered as being conflict-ridden.

But the participation of peoples from all over the world in the development of world civilization, the clash of people of equal strength and different cultures, has its rather positive aspects.

There are compelling reasons to believe that the rapid development of 'Western Eurasia' (Burovsky 2011) is driven, in part, by the clash of peoples and states – different, but having the similar economic, military and technological level of development. Everyone had to borrow a lot and learn to be more tolerant.

The Hindu and Chinese civilizations developed as a single center amidst a barbaric periphery. This determined both their slow pace of development and the high level of xenophobia.

Thus, the future world order leaves no room for idyllic love between nations. Conflicts are inevitable, especially military ones. But this 'unbrave new world' presupposes an intensive exchange of ideas and technologies, and thereby accelerated development for all.

Multipolarity is the real path to progress for nations, each of which fears being overtaken by others.

### **The Most Frightening Things**

The collapse of any civilization is fraught with the loss of the established level of complexity. The 'decline of Europe' is accompanied by two alarming trends: barbarization and postmodernism. These are the two main lines of simplification, or, in scientific terms, primitivization.

Thus, in the ruins of the Roman Empire, 'non-economic characteristics' became far more important than property, qualifications, and intelligence. Being born into a land-owning family or belonging to the tribal nobility became more important than even possessing outstanding abilities.

Regardless of whether it is beneficial to the globalists, the 'unbrave new world' inevitably brings with it the primitivization of general and professional culture.

The disintegration of the norms and principles of European civilization is replaced and complemented by the disintegration of traditional foundations of all civilizations. The wildly understood 'freedom' of being single and having sex with whomever one chooses is convenient and effortless, just like the 'freedom' of being illiterate; of sincerely believing that 'space exploration is just waste of money' and that one can travel from Europe to South America by bus.

At the same time, all world-systems will abdicate even those obligations that they have today – in education, medicine, the dissemination of scientific knowledge, even the maintenance of order.

There will not be enough for everyone.

### **A Fatal Lack of Ideas**

Perhaps, the most frustrating aspect of humanity's current situation is the lack of new ideas. Indeed, what can we offer humanity? What kind of world order?

Patriotism works perfectly well for each individual world-system and each region. But ‘patriotism as a counterpoint to global patriotism cannot work. And Donald Trump is demonstrating this perfectly today’ (Grinin 2025: 266).

The idea of a nation-state? How can it be reconciled with the acceptance of a broader community?

Trumpism has proclaimed a return to the idea of an American territorial empire. ‘We will conquer Greenland, annex Canada’. The idea of empire has a number of advantages over the idea of a nation-state, but it also belongs to the past.

The idea of conservative values – family, marriage, personal integrity, the importance of education and work – is great, but it requires many ‘corrections’ and also belongs to a past history.

What could become an idea that unites conservative values, patriotism, and a global world order?

To influence the world order, one should systematically develop an ideology that would equally be suitable both for the national idea and the movement toward the unification of humanity... Today, many are captivated by the idea of Russia confronting the West, the very essence of the conflict. In the short term, this is very important. But no less important, and in the longer term, even more important is finding what Russia can offer the world (Grinin 2025: 265).

Anton Grinin believes that ‘Russia has two important foundations: 1) the desire to be an example for other societies; and 2) the tradition of internationalism’ (*Ibid.*: 264).

‘If Russia finds something to offer the world in the form of a comprehensive ideology that is interesting to many, then its authority will increase’ (*Ibid.*: 266). Without such ideas, ‘there can be no talk of any Russian leadership’ (*Ibid.*: 373). This is fair enough. But no one has such ideas, which means that no one can claim leadership. And this is sad.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize once again that Anton Grinin's work differs from others by using a larger array of heterogeneous information, a more systematic approach, and depth of the analysis. The application of Big History methodology allowed the author to take a more systemic view of how the existing world order is transforming and what factors influence its changes. He constructs plausible models for a new, non-American, world order.

I think it is important to note that Anton Grinin's work is not only of theoretical but also practical significance.

#### NOTE

\* The ideas of some kind of ‘middle’ age between the high culture of Antiquity and the ‘Renaissance’ appeared in the 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> centuries and have no relation to reality. This is a separate topic, which I will not discuss here, but I also have no reason to speak of the Middle Ages as a time of decline.

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