

# The Issue of Global Governance in the Context of International Relations Theory

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*More than two decades ago, the concept of global governance became one of the most important in the theory of modern world development, especially within the framework of the current phase of globalization process. The Russian researchers also deal with this concept in their studies. The author regards these scientists as optimistic globalists (as opposed to pessimistic ones) who exaggerate the possibility of creating the global (supranational) governance. Our view of the concept of global governance is intended as a critical framework from the standpoint of methodology of political realism, which is the leading trend in international relations theory.*

**Keywords:** globalization, global governance, theory of international relations, political realism, theory of hegemonic stability, optimistic globalists.

The concept of global governance is an appropriate response to the current globalization processes unfolding in the modern world. Specialists in Global Studies raise the question that the modern world needs a fundamentally new governmental system conforming challenges and needs of the time.

Within the framework of international relations theory the issue of world governance is not something fundamentally new. Several approaches have been already developed within the context of this issue, namely, network, institutional-normative, and polar approaches (Temnikov 2001: 74–83). If we proceed from this classification of approaches, the concept of global governance originates in the institutional-normative model, which considers *the norm* to be the main regulator of international relations, while *the regimes* are the mechanisms of their creation, implementation and substantiation. Normative governance and regulation are based on the rules adopted and developed by international community. Being legally binding, these rules do not consider the use of force as a proper way to meet modern requirements of regulation.

The examples of development of global governance theory can be found in publications of the journal *Vek globalizatsii* ('The Age of Globalization') and the *Journal of Globalization Studies*. One of the first publications on the subject was Veber's article (2009) where the author attempted to formulate the problem and suggest approaches to its solution. Shortly afterwards, in his article on similar topic Alexander Chumakov argues that 'under the influence of globalization, the international community becomes more and more a single integrated system in almost all spheres of social life, whereas there are no control mechanisms that are adequate to this integrity' (Chumakov 2010: 4).

In our opinion, the actualization of the global governance problem within its institutional and normative forms brings us to the first big controversy in the theory of interna-

tional relations between the political realists and the idealistic liberals. This controversy deals with the problem of correlation between the power and the right in international community, as well as the inevitability of conflicts and contradictions, and their correlation with cooperation in international affairs. The most vivid examples of this dispute were shown as early as in 1948 by the U.S. expert in international relations Hans Morgenthau in his book *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (Morgenthau 1967). About fifteen years ago, eminent American scholars in the field of international relations (Keohane, Krasner and others) introduced the idea of smoothing contradictions between the two approaches and of a certain tolerance towards ideological opponents. It is obvious that this trend is determined entirely by objective circumstances – the ‘volume’ of cooperation in the world is increasing against the background of traditionally long-standing conflicts. However, then the question arises: what is the case with the opposite trend? Would it be possible to assume that the conflicts and international violence just transform, while *remaining the most important component of international life* due to heterogeneity of global community? Do they, in their turn, inevitably cause controversy, and, hence, the disputes about them? Would not it be a bit too early to bury the political dispute between realists and liberals? The further development of the global governance theory by the Russian specialists in Global Studies (let us call them optimistic globalists) suggest that the time has not come yet, and that liberalism in its extreme, Kantian, forms, still exists, and therefore it requires a response with respect to the realities of contemporary international life and to its governance within the concept of political realism. The present article is devoted to these issues.

Theoretically and methodologically, the concept of global governance is based on two ‘pillars’. *The first ‘pillar’* is interpretation of globalization as a potentially non-conflict state of the world. Advocates of global governance put an emphasis on the emerging global ‘single integrated system’. But let us turn to the realities of modern international life. What can we observe? Indeed, cooperation and interdependence penetrate all spheres of human life, including space. By the way, in this regard, space is a very illustrative form of cooperation. After Yuri Gagarin's spaceflight in 1961, U.S. President John F. Kennedy made a statement that the Americans should really be tied in to getting on to the moon ahead of the Russians. The United States expended huge amounts of money for this purpose and was able to leave the Soviet Union behind in the space race. However, some years later the Soviet-American project ‘Soyuz-Apollo’ was launched, so today almost all space flights are international.

However, the development of international cooperation and globalization processes, unfortunately, does not lead to the decline of conflicts, violence and confrontation in the modern world. Thus, the proposed system of global governance can hardly reduce them, since they are objective by their nature. Samuel Huntington's concept of ‘clash of civilizations’ (Huntington 2003) is one of the most appropriate theories concerning contemporary conflicts of a new generation (Lebedeva 2006). Its essence lies in the fact that political and ideological types of confrontation inherent to the period of the Cold War, turned out to be less viable (they have just disappeared) than the cultural and civilization types of confrontation, which did not show up during the confrontation between two systems, but have not sunk into oblivion because they were more resilient in comparison with the ideological confrontation.

In this context, one should mention the point of view expressed, in particular, by Kosachev the Chairman of the State Duma Committee on International Relations, that the present stand-off between Russia and the West, despite the end of the Cold War, is primarily connected with the civilizational differences. Two different civilizations simply cannot understand each other and adapt to each other.

In addition to the profound civilizational contradictions, the very process of globalization, in the form of westernization, generates, so to say, 'new' civilizational conflicts in the modern world. A slow process of social modernization in Russia in no small measure is related to the fact that the Russians with their genetically ingrained inclination towards solidarity form of social order display implicit bias against the Western forms of arrangement of life. The imposition of the Western, that is liberal, model of development provokes even more violent protests in other countries, for example, Afghanistan or Iraq, where the presence of American troops leads both to violent political and mental protests.

Civilizational factor is one of the reasons for the explosion of Islamic terrorism in the modern world: public opinion in Muslim countries rises against the Western countries domination in the modern world. The Islamist fundamentalists acting in Muslim countries claim that Islam is the oldest religion, which gave rise to many spiritual and material values; therefore, their wretched existence in the backyard of the world civilization does not correspond to their contribution to the treasury of world's values. It is common knowledge that the struggle with international Islamic terrorism is very difficult and, as some experts believe, almost hopeless. Thus, according to Mirsky, a well-known Russian expert on Islam, if terrorism itself (according to the law of cyclicity) does not come to naught over time, then, the civilized community will either lose the fight against it, or will be fighting this battle during the whole 21<sup>st</sup> century with no hope of winning. The reason for this is the actualization of the most critical aspects of confrontation between the West and the Muslim world, which took place right in the era of globalization.

All the above-mentioned should be categorized as civilizational contradictions that exist in the globalizing world. But this is an incomplete record of the fundamental contradictions that are inherent to the globalized world.

When speaking about the contradictions between core and periphery, Immanuel Wallerstein, a prominent sociologist of modernity, proceeds from neo-Marxist concept. If we summarize his ideas, the relations between developed countries ('the Core') and developing countries ('the Periphery') are antagonistic, and this collision tends to exacerbate. By the way, it is worth noting that the neo-Marxist conception is quite popular among Russian sociologists in their case studies of contemporary world order.

Let us give a more thorough description of Wallerstein's arguments. First, as a sociologist, he speaks about long-term social trends in the modern world. Contrary to popular opinion, Wallerstein argues that the end of the Cold War marked not a victory but a historic defeat of liberalism, as the scientist foresees a collapse of all the gains of social liberalism and democracy in the developed countries. The reason for that is in the growing migration from the South.

Karl Marx's ideas that the proletariat's ultimate goal is to destroy capitalism, do not correspond to the realities of the modern world. Currently, the term 'proletariat' in the world-system context refers to the entire population of the periphery. The contemporary proletariat, that is population of the South, is eager not to destroy capitalism but, on the contrary, to live under capitalism. Since it is impossible, mass migration occurs. The human rights will be sacrificed to restrain the mass migration. But since it is unachievable to

completely stop the migration, the unemployment among the indigenous population of the Western countries will increase and their wages will be reduced. This will inevitably provoke conflicts between indigenous population and migrants. The increasing crime rate will require security costs, which in turn will affect the quality of life. According to Wallerstein, by the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the living standards in the United States will be comparable with the living standards at the turn of the 1980–1990s or decrease even lower (Lantsov and Achkasov 2005: ch. 6.4).

Wallerstein's prediction is unfolding before our eyes. The democratic revolutions in North Africa have led to mass migration to Europe. As a result, Europe does not know how to get rid of mass migration from the outside and because of that is ready to review the Schengen Agreement. Second, Wallerstein discusses the future political dynamics of the world. In his opinion, the relations in the World-System core will be unstable. The three main centers of power – the U.S., Japan and the united Europe – will come into conflict. He further predicts that the United States and Japan would create one bloc with anti-European orientation. China would probably be offered to join this alliance. As a counterweight, the Russian-European bloc would be created.

The creation of these blocs will be the response to the threats emanating from states in the South. Already in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, one should expect direct attacks of the marginalized, poor and underdeveloped South on the rich North as well as the wars of conquest between the Southern States themselves (perhaps, with the use of nuclear weapons) (Lantsov and Achkasov 2005).

As one can see, according to this famous sociologist, the prospects of the globalized world development are far from bright. Quite the contrary, in his opinion, the contradiction will only deepen. Let us note that the forecast does not contradict the facts and is entirely supported by real data. We live in the Northern Hemisphere, and more specifically – in Europe, in Russia, and so we have no clear idea of the problems of the periphery. Meanwhile, this is not just a gap between the levels of development of the Core and the Periphery but there is *a tendency to widen this gap* or, figuratively speaking, this is the gap between the levels of the gap. Here is how the proportion between the levels of 20 % of the poorest and 20 % of the richest among the world's population has changed for the last half century: 1960 – 1:13, 1991 – 1:60, 1999 – 1:74, 2008 – 1:100.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, from the standpoint of those scholars whom we could classify as *pessimistic globalists*, the idea of a 'single integrated system' in the modern world is at least arguable. Such a standpoint cannot be ignored. The world is full of contradictions, and what is more, they tend to worsen. We have just mentioned a few. Therefore, the very idea of creating a supra-national (global) mechanism of governance will remain controversial in the near future.

The role of morals and law in the regulation of social systems is *'the second pillar'* in the methodology of global governance concept. According to the advocates of this concept, *'morals and law* are the main instruments that affect public consciousness and behavior. One should also emphasize *the ideology, politics, economics, finance, culture, etc.*, that directly or indirectly, manage social systems. But among these factors *morals and law* are, of course, the dominant' (Chumakov 2010: 9). For those who support political realism

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<sup>1</sup> *The Editors'note:* However, one should take into consideration the fact that since 1998 we observe a very significant shrinking of the gap between the Core and the Periphery of the World System, as the growth rates in the World System Periphery (and, especially, Semiperiphery) are significantly higher in the recent years than in the World System Core – thus, we are dealing with the process that has recently become known as 'the Rise of the Rest', in contrast with the 'Rise of the West' (see, e.g., Korotayev *et al.* 2011).

this statement is their major contradiction with the liberal idealism. In his classic work, *The Politics of Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace*, Morgenthau argues that if countries do not adhere to the principle of identifying their national interest in the categories of the struggle for influence, they will inevitably lose in their foreign policy. The political realists argue that the basic principle of foreign policy is the concept of 'interest defined in terms of power', as opposed to absolutization of law and morals. Morgenthau puts an emphasis on the criticism of 'moralism and legalism' (*i.e.*, adherence to laws and morals as regulators of international relations; or, in contemporary meaning of the term, adherence to liberal idealism). He argues that each sphere of international life has its own rules which should not be confused. Thus, it is impossible to apply moral standards to world politics, or norms of world politics to the international economy. In practical terms, the mixing of principles leads to failures and setbacks. The main disadvantage of those who in their political activities are guided primarily by moral and legal principles is that they (ironically enough) lose their allies, suffer defeat from their adversaries, and lose their orientation in the implementation of national interests.

The Russian scholars have identified another significant shortcoming of moral and ethical regulation in international relations. According to Khrustalev, a well-known expert in international affairs, the weakness of such regulation lies in the fact that 'there have been differences in interpretation of principles of morals and ethics in our world. For example, one of the key principles of Marxism-Leninism was the provision of the class nature of morals and the justification of any action in the name of victory in the class struggle ('revolutionary expediency'). Actually, this is an argument for all extremists: 'the end justifies the means' (Bogaturov 2009: 107).

The speculations of those who support the establishment of a global moral and legal regulation in international relations obviously do not correspond to the classical author of political realism Hans Morgenthau and the Russian scholar Khrustalev. They are rather closer to Kant's position who is one of the founders of the liberal and idealist paradigm in international relations theory.

In his famous article *Perpetual Peace* (Kant 1966), Kant envisioned the possibility of achieving a conflict-free world in international relations. Conflict-free world is seen as a world republic with universal citizenship where the relations between certain parts of the country are based on international law. In fact, what Kant bears in mind, is elimination of borders and creation of a single world republican state.

For the purpose of our discussion on the concept of global governance and its link with Kant's thoughts it is important to understand how Kant grounds the possibility of achieving a 'peaceful' world order. Being true to his philosophical doctrine, he argues that 'political maxims *must proceed neither from a state's prosperity and happiness... and consequently nor from the end which each of them makes the object of its will as the highest empirical principle of politics; but they must proceed from the pure conception of the duty of Right or Justice, as an obligatory principle given a priori by pure reason*' (*Ibid.*: 300). Kant calls this philosophical principle the categorical imperative, which every human is given by virtue of his natural state. If modern people do not follow it, it is only because of depravity of human nature that is to be overcome.

Kant's moral categorical imperative is quite consistent with the optimistic globalist assertion that 'law and moral certainly predominate ...' The institutional and regulatory model of international governance, which, as noted above, includes the concept of global govern-

ance, is described in the literature on international relations primarily from the critical standpoint. Thus, proceeding from the classical provision that since ancient times there have been two types of governance in international relations – the right and the power (Morgenthau 1967: 219), – Denis Temnikov writes ‘... regulation through the standards has never been dominant, and has always been an associated or alternative form of the power regulation process’ (Temnikov 2001: 78).

Let us turn from the critical part of our reasoning to its positive component. What is (or could be) the governance in contemporary global world? For one thing, the new interpretation of ‘global governance’ emerged in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century due to the end of the era of bipolarity, the development of globalization processes and the increased attention to the issue of how the world political issues will be regulated and controlled under new conditions. Thus, the concept of global governance has emerged. This is primarily a speculative model, as it has never been implemented in practice. Relying on the historical analysis, we will try to project the actual international trends into the future.

The period from the 1990s to the early 2000s was marked by the dominance of the U.S. as the sole leading global power, or, in other words, by a unipolar world. It was the kind of global governance, which was described long ago in American literature on international relations under the name of *the theory of hegemonic stability*. Nowadays, Zbigniew Brzezinski (2005) is one of the most active adherents of this theory. Its essence lies in the fact that the world is more likely to remain stable and conflict-free when a single nation-state is the dominant world player (the Americans mean, of course, themselves).

However, one should keep in mind that the theory of hegemonic stability indicates the possibility of leadership in economic area only. The simultaneous imposition of rules of conduct in all spheres of political, economic and cultural life, as a rule, provokes a sharp rejection on the part of other members of international cooperation. We all have witnessed this in connection with the growth of anti-American sentiments all around the world.

In the mid-2000s the trend towards centralization of the international system began to wane. Although the superiority of the United States is undisputable, the country itself, having initiated the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003, began to lose confidence. With the change of administration in Washington in January, 2009, the militant speeches of American politicians have become less frequent, and the American policy itself has become a little more circumspect. There have been some signs of U.S. intentions to make adjustments to its foreign policy behavior. The ambition is unlikely to become smaller, but the reality of life forces Americans to exercise prudence and to be more inclined to at least listen to its allies, especially NATO.

Started in 2003 as a militarily minor, the war adventure in Iraq has provoked surprisingly extensive political and diplomatic rift over the world. In 2004–2008, it acquired the features of the opposition on the part of the majority of leading countries to the American policy of unilateral action, and this, subsequently, led to the tendency toward *decentralization* of the World System. The international conditions for American leadership have considerably narrowed.

In addition, the decentralization of the world system has emerged as a result of ambitious projects of the U.S. foreign policy and as a result of objective processes in the world system, namely, the enhancement of its polycentricism. Hence, alongside with states and international organizations, the non-state actors could possibly participate in global governance. This is what the advocates of idea of *global society* (similar to the interstate society), such as Haas, Grum, Burton and others, tend to believe.

The book *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics* by Rosenau and Szempiel (1992) has given a renewed impetus to the development of the idea of global governance within the framework of global society. The book discusses the mechanism of this kind of governance. In *Turbulence in World Politics*, published two years earlier (1990), Rosenau writes about the governance as a system of rules, typical of all kinds of human activities. According to him, contemporary system embraces activities of various governments, but it also subsumes many other agencies and groups. The phrase 'global governance without global government' now came into use among scholars of international affairs, and refers to multiple networks, which include fora, conferences, congresses and meetings held by governmental and nongovernmental actors on various issues of world order as well as the activities of international organizations – both intergovernmental and nongovernmental ones. In our opinion, the contemporary international community is seeking to achieve this very form of global governance against the backdrop of the demise of global unipolarity. The new term 'nonpolar society' introduced into academic literature by Haas, as American expert, is consistent with the above-mentioned views. It is an interesting notion since it displays a key feature of contemporary global governance. 'In contrast to multipolarity – writes Haas – which involves several distinct poles or concentrations of power – a nonpolar international system is characterized by numerous centers with meaningful power'. He lists these centers, namely, global and regional powers, various international organizations, major international companies, international network of media, illegitimate paramilitary formations, drug cartels, individuals and others. 'Today power is diffuse, power is now found in many places and in many hands'. And what is the most important, 'with so many more actors possessing meaningful power and trying to assert influence, it will be more difficult to build collective responses and make institutions work' (Haas 2008). In other words, the modern international system is difficult to manage, it is rather chaotic despite the system of 'global governance without global government'. The latter, rather, is more associated with chaos rather than with order. This approach to contemporary global governance is shared not only by foreign but also by Russian experts in international affairs. Here are a few quotes from *World Politics* by Lebedeva: when analyzing the structure of global governance, 'its significant diversity' is obvious, 'the emerging global governance connections are not hierarchical, compared with the connections when they exist within a state'; 'current policy is based on collective decision making through the variety of different levels of coordination', in modern world politics 'concerted action is often unachievable due to various reasons' (Lebedeva 2006: 337–338). Again, we can see the same idea that the modern world is difficult to manage.

However, in the context of our article, we must put a question: if the modern world is so unmanageable, will we be able, maybe in the offing, to achieve a greater harmony in this matter? To the disappointment of the optimistic globalists, we have to say that the medium-term forecasts in the field of international relations are rather negative. For instance, such forecasts are made by Russian economists specializing in international affairs. Thus, Inozemtsev tends to believe that there is a strong possibility that China would become new number one after the United States loses its economic and financial superpower. This conclusion is quite obvious if we consider the effects of the global economic crisis. Will it be a new unipolarity or, more likely, a new bipolarity – the future will show. In any case, Inozemtsev does not believe that the United States, with its messianic ideology and history that it had in the twentieth century, will stand somewhat aloof, calmly and dispassionately

watching the rise of China, its turning into the world's largest economy, the formation of the Chinese sphere of influence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean (Inozemtsev 2009). There is the only conclusion – the world will witness instability. Another negative forecast is associated with the idea of apolar, or global power vacuum, which will replace the unipolarity (Ferguson, Voitlovsky).<sup>2</sup> Far more dangerous forces than rival great powers will benefit from this global disorder. This could be a sharp destabilization of the Greater Middle East, an uncontrolled proliferation of WMD, infinite Afghan drug trafficking, a feeling of permissiveness among Islamists. One might assume the probability of growth of local and major regional wars. Voitlovsky even admits that the transitional nature and instability inherent to the modern international political system do not exclude the possibility of another world war in the long run (Voitlovsky 2009).

In this context, the relevant timeframe of the forecast is of high importance. In world politics, where the phenomena and processes are very different in nature, we should bear in mind, according to Kosolapov, ‘the module of length of the process, defined as average length of a typical process of this class’ (Kosolapov 1998: 68). Here, the absolute module of length is the active life of a person or the average limit of generational change, which is about 30 years (Temnikov 2001: 84). Consequently, it is hardly probable to ‘look’ further than 30 years from now (although, we should note that the great sociologist of modernity I. Wallerstein makes some of his predictions for almost a century ahead; that is why he is great).

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Yet, at the end of our discussion with optimistic globalists we would like to come to some kind of compromise. To do this, there is nothing better than to quote Tsygankov, a well-known Russian political scientist in international affairs. There is room for this compromise in his thoughts, ‘The development of moral universals and common law is not a unidirectional trend, the outcome of the conflict between global solidarity and particularistic loyalties is not predetermined, and there are no serious reasons to believe that the international society will become a society of universal values and norms that have overcome and left for history the values and norms of states, ethnic groups and cultures. *The abovementioned attempts, nonetheless, are not necessarily doomed to failure* (italics added), since the international relations are not only about the law of force, but also about the law of interaction, and even the law of coordination and adjustment ...’ (Tsygankov 2002: 365–366).

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<sup>2</sup> The point in question here is that no polar order can be generated in the near future: the bipolarity ‘has ended’, unipolarity ‘is coming to an end’, and multipolarity will be impossible in the near future, proceeding from its classical characteristics (equivalence according to resource indicators of several – not less than six – force centers).



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