

THE END OF PAX AMERICANA AND THE RISE OF MULTIPOLARITY

Book Review:
Savin, Leonid. Ordo Pluriversalis. The End of Pax Americana and the Rise of Multipolarity. Black House Publishing Ltd, 2020

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<p>Информация о статье:</p> <p><i>Received:</i> 19.08.2020</p> <p><i>Accepted:</i> 03.09.2020</p>	<p>Abstract: The world is in the midst of a systemic transition from unipolarity to multipolarity, which has prompted many experts to think deeply about the future of the international order. Leonid Savin, a leading figure of the International Eurasian Movement, is one such expert. His latest book, «Ordo Pluriversalis: The End Of Pax Americana And The Rise Of Multipolarity», covers a wide range of topics in arguing that the coming world order will be a post-liberal one characterized by civilizations acting similar to how nation-states presently do in the current order. Savin reveals how a rich diversity of social, political, religious, legal, and other systems have survived the brief period of American-led liberal unipolarity, which will lay the basis for the coming reorganization of international (or it should be said, inter-civilizational) relations. Intriguingly, since one of the foundations of this worldview is that these various systems will become more prominent in the wake of America's decline, he also attempts to incorporate many social theories into the field of political science to account for the increasingly complex nature of inter-entity relations. Savin's work is therefore practical but also highly theoretical, though this review simplifies the gist of his ideas by focusing only on the most important ones which contribute to his conclusion of nation-state-like civilization-level actors becoming a subject in global affairs.</p>
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<p>Key words: unipolarity; multipolarity; polycentricity; Eurasianism; civilizations; geopolitics; Russia; US; Huntington; Dugin</p>	

Leonid Savin is a Russian expert on multipolarity, editor of the Geopolitica.ru think tank, and a thinker of the International Eurasian Movement. His latest book, “Ordo Pluriversalis: The End of Pax Americana and the Rise of Multipolarity”, is his ambitious attempt to prove the demise of both the American-led unipolar world order and its attendant liberal-globalist model of planetary management. In its place, he argues, is an emerging multipolar world order characterized by a collection of civilizations behaving as international actors just like nation-states presently do. His work is extensive and touches upon a wide array of topics that are all connected to these four points but divided into thirteen very diverse chapters that altogether advance his core arguments.

The first one, The Collapse of Unipolarity and the Crisis of World Politics, cites many

Western experts’ own assessments that the era of the US’ international supremacy is over. Savin attributes this to a combination of factors ranging from disagreements between its ruling Democrat and Republican factions over multilateral and unilateral strategies respectively (epitomized by the sometimes radical policy divergences between Obama and Trump) to the Iraq War and 2008 Financial Crisis. He quotes Charles Krauthammer’s view that the primary reason was the “lack of clear elite consensus” which challenged unipolarity “from within” (p. 43) but then notes that it’s also being much more actively challenged “from without” by Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, and others (p. 44). In any case, the resultant structural changes, which include moving towards new poles of influence and even network-centric relations being political actors (p. 31),

compelled the US to seek what he calls an “exit strategy” (p. 32). Savin cites Gerard Gallucci, who describes this as “America fall[ing] back to its default setting relying on a panoply of military and intelligence approaches.”

The second chapter concerns Multipolarity in the Context of International Standards, where Savin covers a lot of topics related to this concept. He observes how “there is no clear criteria for multipolarity” (p. 43) before suggesting that the best approach is to consider various poles. This part of his book elaborates on different theories such as cluster multipolarity (pp. 50-51), balanced multipolarity (p. 52), and unbalanced multipolarity (p. 52). Importantly, the author challenges the widely held notion that multipolarity defined the pre-World War I and interwar international systems by reminding the reader that the existence of colonies denied independent agency to most of the planet. Moreover, “the international regimes existing then bore an exclusively Western European character...(so) speaking of genuine, global multipolarity in regards to this period is impossible” (p. 64). Instead, Savin marks the post-World War II period as the precursor of multipolarity because of decolonization and the emergence of many regional organizations, including trans-regional ones such as the Non-Aligned Movement (pp. 65-68).

Crises act as catalysts for multipolarity (p. 68), so he regards the 1997 Asian financial crisis, 1999 NATO war on Yugoslavia (p. 70), and 2003 Iraq War as important milestones that raised interest in this concept as a natural response to unipolarity, which he also notes was articulated by President Putin during his famous 2007 Munich speech (p. 73). The Russian-Chinese Joint Declaration on a Multipolar World was also a crucial moment in this respect (p. 65), the reverberations of which are acutely felt in the present day after both countries came under intense American pressure in recent years and thus decided to intensify their partnership even more than before. For multipolarity to truly come to fruition, however, this will require “a new ideological foundation differing from the dogmas of neoliberalism and capitalism” as well as “the construction of a non-contradictory, logical system that can be competently and adequately applied in practice

with adjustments for regional specificities and differences” (p. 84).

The third chapter about Non-Western Approaches To Multipolarity deals with precisely that. Savin describes the Chinese (pp. 85-92), Indian (pp. 104-109), Iranian (pp. 109-114), and Latin American approaches (pp. 114-121), but particular attention is naturally paid to the Russian one (pp. 92-104). He relies on Russia’s foreign policy concepts to trace the evolution of its approach, giving credit where it’s due by noting the paramount influence of the late Yevgeny Primakov on this process (pp. 99-100). He also places immense importance on the Neo-Eurasianism of Alexander Dugin (pp. 100-101), which he quotes him describing as “a philosophy of multipolar globalization designed to unite all the societies and peoples of the earth in the construction of a unique and authentic world, every component of which would be organically derived from historical traditions and local cultures.” This understanding clearly arose out of the social sciences, hence why Savin devotes considerable time to studying them later on in his book.

Before doing so, however, he spends the next chapter discussing Polycentricity and Pluriversality, which frame everything that then follows. In his words, “polycentric” suggests some kind of spatial unit with several centers. However, the term does not specify what kind of centers are in question, hence the obvious need to review various concepts and starting points”, which he then does (p. 126). He concludes that, “besides the aspect of deep interdependence” (p. 130), “the polycentricity of the early 21st century” includes “(1) a military-diplomatic dimension of global politics with the evolution of quickly developing giant states; (2) an economic dimension with the growing role of transnational actors; (3) global demographic shifts; (4) a specific space representing a domain of symbols, ideals, and cultural codes and their deconstructions; and (5) a geopolitical and geo-economic level” (p. 131). As for pluriversality, which also “challenges the totality of liberal universality” (p. 132), this “entail[s] multiple ontologies, or multiple worlds, which are supposed to be known, not simply seen as multiple perspectives on one world” (p. 138).

Altogether, the acceptance of polycentricity and pluriversality enables the reader to better understand the rich diversity of the world's past and present legal systems, understanding of security and sovereignty, economic models, religions, ethnoi, people, and nations that form the foundation for Savin's civilization-driven concept of multipolarity.

Chapter five is a crucial one since it deals with Deconstructing the West, the starting of point of which is "the formulation of a number of alternatives, such as: a non-West; an Anti-West; a New West; and the East (and North and South) as a spatial, ideological concept" (p. 149). He advises, however, that "even the most brilliant critiques of the West produced from within must be considered with extreme caution" because "the 'external' designation of the West cannot be regarded as 100% established" and "the method of deconstruction employable as an analytical tool itself originated in the West and is associated with post-modern models" (149-150). According to the author, "this can hinder the revelation of the potential of non-Western thinking through its imposition of the general trend of Western style post-colonial studies, which continue to operate with European rationality, or through applying post-modernist deconstruction to traditional societies (including through the use of new technologies and media)." Keeping all of this in mind, one can more effectively deconstruct the West in order to discover the many non-Western dimensions of the emerging world order.

The preceding five chapters from the sixth up to the eleventh concern the earlier mentioned topics of Law and Justice; Security and Sovereignty; Economics and Religion; Power and the State; and Ethnoi, Peoples, and Nations. They're very descriptive and cover subjects as diverse as traditional Andean cultures (pp. 196-205); the Ukrainian Crisis (p. 224); Islamic economics (pp. 269-274); "case studies in the formation of power structures in the US, Russia, and Iran" (pp. 308-319); and "the creolization or hybridization of culture" (p. 327), "ethnoconstructivism" (p. 329), and Arab, Iranian, and Indian nationalisms (pp. 343-352) as a few of the most interesting things related to each chapter's theme. Savin makes many insightful points throughout this

very large part of his book, only a few of which will now be highlighted in this review given its limited scope in order to give the reader a better idea of the thoughts that he elaborated upon.

On the topic of Security and Sovereignty, he concludes that "Insofar as there is no single unambiguous interpretation of the concept of security or other notions related to it, there can be no single model for international relations. It follows that there can be no single political system claiming universal recognition... Accordingly, speaking of any possibility of developing a single standard that could encompass the national interests of existing states and their security strategies and concepts is impossible. Instead, a more appropriate view is one that appreciates the coexistence and coevolution of multiple geopolitical systems with their own approaches to security and sovereignty and a system of mutual deterrent mechanisms which suits the concept of a polycentric world order" (pp. 226-227). As for Power and the State, Savin argues that "The supreme art of managing a state inhabited by different ethnoi rests in creating an organic symbiosis which maintains a balance of forces that suits all sides" (p. 303). Nevertheless, he asks the reader to remember "one last important remark. For the majority of states in the world, the term 'nation' is of foreign origin. Western Europe, where 'the nation' and 'nationalism' ultimately took shape out of Hellenistic philosophy and Roman law, is in geographical terms but a small peninsula of Eurasia. But over the past several centuries, the whole world has come to internalize this small peninsula's narrative" (p. 354).

All of this and more enables the reader to better understand the concepts Savin introduces in his last three chapters about Strategic Culture and Civilizations, Forming an Alternative, and Multipolar Praxis. The first-mentioned, which is chapter eleven, concerns what he calls "inmost strategic culture". He defines this as "point[ing] to the deepest and innermost elements of state strategy associated with the ethnic and ideological systems of peoples", which he considers to be a specific form of a state's strategic culture that's "something larger than military-political thinking, defense planning, or the use of armed force" like that word is usually

associated with (pp. 355-356). Elaborating on this, he writes that “If we attempt to overcome the American view on strategic culture, which is focused on questions of organizing war and handling conflict-related decisions, then, arriving at the deeper level of ‘inmost strategic culture’, we can ‘spin’ the potential for conflict in a positive direction, avoid mistakes, misunderstanding, and bias, and act according to the principle of ‘win-win’, not a zero-sum game” (p. 357). This train of thought is closely connected to ethnopsychology, the interest in which “rose dramatically during the Second World War” after “impetus was given to the instrumentalization of ethnographical and anthropological studies to serve military and political strategy” (p. 359).

Afterwards, Savin introduces the reader to the topic of civilizations, which brings together everything that they’ve learned up until this point about the past and present diversity of the world then places it within the framework that he believes is most relevant for understanding the ongoing global systemic transition from the American liberal-globalist model of unipolarity to the emerging multipolar world order. He addresses the different definitions of this term, as well as how it was conceptualized and acted upon in the historical context of Western politics (pp. 365-369). His metahistorical analysis of this subject critiques Spengler, Toynbee, Braudel, and Koneczny (pp. 369-378). Particular attention should be paid to his observation that “Jaspers’ concern for the West is shared by modern authors who define the present traumatic shifts in the world political system as signs of a new transformation of Axial Time. For the latter, the main question is whether this directly represents a sign of the collapse of Western civilization and how such will affect other civilizations” (p. 380). Considering the relevance of this question, Savin then moves along to discussing “theories of civilizations in the context of post-modernity and globalization” in order to help arrive at an answer (p. 380). It’s here where he elaborates more on “The Russian-Eurasian Civilizational School”, which is of the utmost importance to understanding his book’s vision of the future (pp. 385-391).

To concisely summarize, “Danilevsky proposed to define civilizations as culturo-

historical types, and identified five laws of their development” (p. 386), while Leontiev “considered religion to be the backbone of civilization, without which a civilization is vulnerable to collapse or absorption by a different civilization” (pp. 386-387). Mechnikov, meanwhile, “rejected the concept of linear time, according to which the development of societies proceeds along a straight line, and instead pointed to the complexity of clear classifications, insofar as the subjective sympathies of a scholar and various contingencies make any assessment contradictory, unproven, and arbitrary” (p. 387). Concerning Chkeidze, he “put forth the notion of ‘pan-regions’”, which “is attributed to Karl Haushofer, but Chkeidze proposed such a model somewhat earlier” (p. 389). Savin also writes that “he observed parallel processes in world politics: (1) the differentiation of state autonomy, religion, race, and economics along various lines; and (2) the integration of a new type, that of a union of nations into a ‘continental-state’” (389). As for Sorokin, he assessed that “Western society or ‘civilization’ is not homogenous” (p. 390). He also “proposed a theory according to which there exist ideational, idealistic, and sensate systems” which “manifest themselves in art, science, ethics, philosophy, and systems of law and religion” (p. 390). Sorokin believed that “In antiquity things were better, and now they are worse”, which is why he “call[ed] for a radical conservative revolution” (p. 390).

On the topic of global geopolitics and etymology, Savin points out that “Samuel Huntington was the first author to politicize the concept of civilizations by introducing it into the context of geopolitical confrontation. In our view, although Huntington’s definition of civilization clearly bears a certain ethno-sociological shade, it most closely of all conveys the idea that socio-political formations can be taken as definite centers of power insisting on common interests and values in international relations” (p. 391). For this reason, “It is no coincidence that Alexander Dugin, in his study *The Theory of the Multipolar World*, points to Huntington as the author who came closest of all (although not close enough) to conceptualizing what might be considered a ‘pole’ in the new system of international relations. Civilization

can therefore be called a collective community, united by a belonging to the same spiritual, historical, cultural, mental, and symbolic tradition whose members recognize their closeness to one another independent of national, class, political, and ideological affiliations. However, in order to fulfill the conditions necessary to function as a center of strength, common geopolitical conditions are also needed, a point which has been suggested by Russian scholars” (p. 392).

Therein lays the relevance of Savitsky’s concept of “mestorazvitie (‘place-development’, topogenesis)”, which “explain[s] the totality of geographical, ethnic, economic, historical, and other peculiarities that compose a single whole. This neologism very organically conveys the interrelationship between landscape, culture, and peoples in the broadest possible sense. It is no coincidence that this term was later developed and interpreted by Lev Gumilev in his work *Ethnogenesis and the Biosphere of the Earth*. In describing the legal and political framework of such, we inevitably arrive at the concept of large spaces (Grossraum) of the German jurist and geopolitician Carl Schmitt” (p. 392). This insight allows the reader to better understand the subject of Savin’s twelfth chapter about Forming an Alternative which, while touching upon neopluralism (pp. 404-407) and synthesis theory (pp. 407-409), focuses mostly on non-Western theories of International Relations such as the Chinese (pp. 410-413), Indian (p. 413), and Islamic (pp. 413-414) ones. He writes about the need for sustainable politics and remarks that “In the present situation, the abandonment of identity and the neglect of selfhood are leading to the weakening of the life forces of peoples to an even greater extent than happened under Modernity. The state is becoming vulnerable not only to Western liberal hegemony, but all sorts and forms of ideological simulacra and political derivatives... Perhaps the main question on this matter remains how to correctly institutionalize the relevant political mechanisms in different societies for arriving at genuinely sustainable politics through consensus” (p. 423).

The answer, as Savin posits, is Dugin’s interpretation of Heidegger’s *Dasein* and his own Fourth Political Theory. The former is the subject of the latter and described as “being-

there”, “human reality” (p. 424), or “thinking presence” that “determines a given civilization’s Logos” (p. 425). This term and others of Heidegger’s are important to consider in the context of civilizations since “[his] ideas harbor a message which is relevant to the creation of a counter-liberal project that can be realized in the most diverse forms”, which perfectly dovetails with the purpose of the Fourth Political Theory (p. 425). Dugin’s concept isn’t as complex as Heidegger’s and can be simplified as “an open project whose ordinal number reflects the principle of its negational approach: it is neither the first, second, nor third theories, which it identifies as Liberalism, Marxism (Communism), and National Socialism (Fascism) respectively” (p. 424). According to Savin, “Eurasianism and Heideggerianism are in some sense interconnected and spiritually close tendencies among contemporary ideological currents in Russia. Although these two schools can also be examined as independent philosophical doctrines, as is often done by secular scholars and opportunistic political scientists, any deep understanding of one can be had only upon grasping the other” (p. 427). Remembering the rich diversity of human civilizations both past and present as extensively elaborated upon in the preceding chapters, the existence of which debunks the liberal notion of Western civilization’s supposed universality, it naturally follows that the Fourth Political Theory is the approach best suited to harmonizing relations between them in the post-liberal multipolar future.

The final chapter about Multipolar Praxis suggests the establishment of a “polylogue” or “multilogue” to function in place of a dialogue in a “polycentric structure with multiple intersecting processes” (p. 431). Savin also writes that “One aspect of no small importance to the strategy of multipolarity is the inclusion of new actors into a broad coalition which rejects the unipolar dictatorship of the US” (p. 432), examples of which include BRICS (p. 432), the SCO (p. 432), VISTA (p. 434), the N-11 (p. 434), and some G20 countries (pp. 435-436). Similarly, Savin envisions “European autonomy” being a necessity in the formation of the multipolar world order (pp. 436-441), especially with respect to German leadership

of this continental process. What else is interesting about this chapter is the relevance of economist and political scientist Leopold Kohr's ideas, who was opposed to large supranational projects and believed that "true democracy in Europe can only be achieved in little states" (p. 443) Kohr also thought that "It will be easy to unite small states under one continental federal system and thus also satisfy, secondarily, those who want to live on universal terms", which Savin writes "is practically the very idea of a Eurasian confederation, merely expressed in other words!" (p. 444). He also suggests that Kohr's ideas "can be adapted to the contemporary situation, adjusted to different regions, and might be fully applicable as a technocratic instrument" (p. 448).

Wrapping up the final chapter, Savin briefly discusses the relevance of systems theory (pp. 451-455) to his model of civilization-driven multipolarity, to which end he also cites Lars Skyttner's fifteen rules "for defining the very laws of a system's functioning". Savin also agrees with Hilton Root "that international relations constitute an adaptive, complex system, suggesting that international relations, like other complex ecosystems, exist in a constantly changing landscape in which hierarchical structures yield to systems of networked interdependence, a process which changes each and every aspect of global interactions. Consequently, a new means of understanding the process of changes is needed by politicians, on which point Root proposes that the study of complex systems offers an analytical basis for explaining unforeseen developmental disruptions, governance trends, and shifts in the contemporary global political economy" (p. 456). Finally, Savin channels Kenneth Gergen by proposing "the concept of 'systasis' or 'systase': 'an organization without an absolute centre, around which order – as a patchwork of language pragmatics that vibrate at all times – is continuously being established and threatened'" (p. 459), and Jean Gebster, "[who] is also responsible for another important notion of practical utility to political theory and international relations: Synairesis. 'Synairesis comes from synaireo, meaning 'to synthesize, collect,' notably in the sense of 'everything being seized or grasped

on all sides, particularly by the mind or spirit'" (p. 460). Taken altogether, Savin believes that "A pluriversal, harmonious order of a complex and polycentric system of systems perhaps most approximately expresses the ideal which the overwhelming majority of the planet would like to see in political incarnation on the global level" (p. 461).

All things considered, "Ordo Pluriversalis: The End of Pax Americana and the Rise of Multipolarity" is an extremely intriguing read that anyone interested in multipolarity, Eurasianism, civilizations, and post-liberalism should read. This is Savin's magnum opus and an enormous contribution to the scientific literature on these interconnected topics. His compelling arguments about each and seamless incorporation of social science theories into International Relations through his "inmost strategic culture" and other such concepts provides a lot of thought-provoking material for researchers to follow up on. In addition, his book will likely spark more international interest in the Fourth Political Theory, which is uniquely positioned to function as the means for establishing a "polylogue"/"multilogue" in the predicted civilizational world order. The only constructive criticism that can be made about his book is that it would have probably been easier on the reader if Savin told them a little bit more early about the grand concepts that he'll be working to prove throughout the work since that would greatly help them better understand the significance of chapters 6-10. Nevertheless, this book is a masterpiece and it's easy to imagine it being celebrated in the future as a milestone in the intellectual development of the multipolar world order.

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ЗАКАТ ПАХ AMERICANA И РАССВЕТ МНОГОПОЛЯРНОСТИ

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<p>Информация о статье: <i>Поступила в редакцию:</i> 19 августа 2020 <i>Принята к печати:</i> 3 сентября 2020</p>	<p>Аннотация: Мир находится в процессе системного перехода от однополярного к многополярному устройству, что побуждает многих аналитиков всерьез задуматься о будущем международном порядке. Среди таких экспертов – Леонид Савин, один из деятелей «Международного евразийского движения». Его очередная книга, «Ordo Pluriversalis. Возрождение многополярного мироустройства», охватывает широкий спектр тем, доказывая, что грядущий мировой порядок будет пост-либеральным, характеризующимся цивилизациями, чьи действия будут аналогичны действиям национальных государств на современном этапе. Савин показывает, как социальные, политические, религиозные, правовые и иные системы в своем богатом разнообразии пережили краткий период либеральной однополярности, ведомой США, которая заложит основу предстоящей реорганизации международных (возможно следует сказать междивизиляционных) отношений.</p> <p>Интерес вызывает тот факт, что поскольку одной из основ подобной мировоззренческой позиции является понимание, что эти разнообразные системы станут более значимыми в результате ослабления роли Америки, автор стремится включить многие социальные теории в область политологии для объяснения усложняющейся природы межсубъектных отношений. Таким образом, книга Савина имеет как практическую направленность, так и теоретическую составляющую. Данное резюме представляет суть идей автора в упрощенной форме.</p>
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<p>Ключевые слова: однополярность; многополярность; полицентризм; евразиянизм; цивилизации; геополитика; Россия; США; Хантингтон; Дугин</p>	

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