Acharya, Amitav. 2014. The End of American World Order. Cambridge: Polity Press, 157 pp. $ 19.95 (Paperback).

The crisis of American power is not a new topic in world politics. Even the proponents of the idea of the American-led World Order can hardly reject the fact that America's influence in the world politics is in decline. There has been consensus among many of them that crisis of American preponderance stems from its internal weaknesses, unilateralism under George W. Bush and invasion of Iraq that questioned the US power projection regardless of its military and overall material capabilities. This unilateralism weakened its ability to translate material assets into political influences. However, most of the scholars pertaining to this line of thought claim that America's decline would not change the World Order that is organized around its norms and rules. Joseph Nye in his newest book '*Is the American Century Over?*' has no doubts that America will preserve its position in world affairs as long as it embraces multilateralism, as he points that its dominance is not to be achieved through power over others, but through power with others.[1] Most of the policy makers and scholars, who are afraid of uncertainty that the end of the US World Order can bring, claim that this decline would bring about problems similar to those multipolar Europe was faced with during pre World War I period. However, the question remains what is perspective of the World Order without leading role of the United States? Or more precise, what is the perspective of a globalized World Order featured by simultaneous rise of a number of states that exist in different geographic locations interacting regularly and continuously?

Having written on the topics of emerging powers, Third World regionalism, emerging regional architecture and power shift towards China in the recent years, Amitav Acharya made an introduction to his latest book „*The End of American World Order*". Tackling with this provocative issue, unlike many of the scholars contesting the fact of decline of the American-led World Order, Acharya comes to a cutting edge claiming that '..the American World Order is coming to an end whether or not America itself is declining' (p. 2). Through six chapters of this notable book Acharya points out decline of unipolarity, shatters the myth of liberal hegemony and challenges one of the biggest issues in the world politics, the issue of polarity, claiming that the 21st century World Order will be neither unipolar nor multipolar, but multiplex, consisting of multitude regional worlds being „in collusion" (p. 106). Thus, Acharya is particularly interested in showing to the reader that his book is not about the decline of the United States, but rather about the complexity of world affairs that requires and is more than the hegemonic US-led World Order. In

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1   Joseph S. Nye, Jr. 2015. *Is the American Century Over?*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 112.

other words, the contemporary World Order does not imply leaving United States out of business, but rather needs it to be more cooperative and collaborative with others.

Acharya unfolds with pointing to one of the prominent weaknesses of the American-led World Order, the normative desire for universality that ignores varieties of actors and the multitude of their experiences. Hence, he claims that the American World Order was at its best an international order, not global, since it has included just a group of like-minded Euro-Atlantic states, so its geographic scope, ideological stance, legitimacy and credibility were always too narrow for being named global. Therefore, the unipolar stability thesis is unsustainable because it rests only upon European experience. Regional conflicts from the Third World are completely overlooked by it, not to mention the fact that "unipolar moment almost certainly coexists with a multipolar or bipolar regional order in Asia" (p. 20).

When talking about alternatives, since the US is not likely to persist as a global power number one, Acharya finds that none of the emerging powers is capable to substitute the US and 'fill the gap' of the collapse of the American World Order. This comes to be the main driving force of the multiplex "regional words" approach or "multiplex cinema", which is used in Acharya's book as a metaphor for pluralist conception of global order (p. 82). The reasons why emerging powers are not able to shape global order on their own terms he finds in their own regional constraints: lack of unity, vision and resources (p. 8). The problem is their lack of ability to make consensus over international norms and rules, which stems from the differences in their political systems and domestic conditions such as economic (under)development, territorial disputes etc. This implies that emerging powers can be perceived more as challengers spreading diversity of cultural traditions than as international actors offering an alternative to the existing World Order.

Nevertheless, the core argument of the book addresses the question: what type of order may come in place of the American World Order in the years to come? Acharya claims that no individual power would be in a position to exert influence in any part of the world without the consent or even participation of its rising regional powers. This would redefine the old-fashioned regionalism and make it an axe of universalism. Claiming that neither the US nor the emerging powers have potential of shaping the global governance on their own initiative, Acharya argues that it is highly unlikely for the world to face unipolarity ever again. Instead, the current complex world demands for a hybrid model of global governance which is something between global concert (established among great powers and the emerging ones) and network of regional orders. It requires also taking into consideration the needs of weaker states, the experience of regional institutions and overall regional context. That kind of order is to include institutions inherent to the American-led World Order, such as multilateralism, but in its more inclusive and less elitist and self-centered form. The complex World Order also implies taking into account voices of deprived nations and making space for social movements, in addition to states. Only World Order of that kind is likely to enjoy a satisfying level of legitimacy as a guarantee for its endurance and stability.

However, what seems to be mostly problematic concerning Acharya's ideas about multiplex world is presumption about its openness and power sharing. It's hardly sustainable the idea that China, with its projected growth of about 20% of global GDP by 2030 and demonstrated interest in norm-making (p. 75), would be prone to non-assertive foreign policy behaviour and would have incentive towards supporting World Order based on authority and power sharing. Additionally, in Acharya's argument it is not clear how all those culturally and politically diverse powers and regional orders would build consensus over common institutions and global rules.

Nevertheless, by offering a new perspective on the future of the World Order, Acharya's work significantly contributes to scholarship on multilateralism and global governance, as well as to regional perspective in world politics. What would be the future of the World Order is yet to be seen, but Acharya, writing on this issue without alarmism and biases, made this debate inspiring and vigorous. This all make his work recommendable for reading and reflection.

Marija Popović is a doctoral candidate in International and European Studies at University of Belgrade, Faculty of Political Sciences. She is also a teaching associate at the Academy of Criminalistic and Police Studies, Belgrade. E-mail: marizza87@gmail.com.

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