

## НАУЧНЫЕ ШКОЛЫ

DOI: 10.22363/2313-0660-2018-18-3-701-705

### ROLE OF GLOBAL SOUTH IN THE MULTIPLEX WORLD

**Interview with Professor AMITAV ACHARYA,  
UNESCO Chair in Transnational Challenges and Governance,  
Distinguished Professor at the School of International Service  
of American University**



**Abstract.** Amitav Acharya is the UNESCO Chair in Transnational Challenges and Governance and Distinguished Professor at the School of International Service, American University, Washington, DC. He is the first non-Western scholar to be elected (for 2014–15) as the President of the International Studies Association (ISA), the largest and most influential global network in international studies. Previously he was a Professor at York University, Toronto, and the Chair in Global Governance at the University of Bristol, U.K. He held the inaugural Nelson Mandela Visiting Professorship in International Relations at Rhodes University, South Africa in 2012–13 and the inaugural Boeing Company Chair in International Relations at the Schwarzman Scholars Program at Tsinghua University in 2016–18.

He was a Fellow of Harvard's Asia Center and John F. Kennedy School of Government, and was elected to the Christensen Fellowship at Oxford. His books include *Constructing Global Order* [Acharya 2018a]; *The End of American World Order* [Acharya 2018b]; *Why Govern? Rethinking Demand and Progress in Global Governance* [Acharya 2016]; *The Making of*

*Southeast Asia* [Acharya 2013]; *Whose Ideas Matter* [Acharya 2009] and et.

His essays have appeared in leading international affairs journals such as *International Organization*, *International Security*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Journal of Asian Studies*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *International Affairs*, and *World Politics*.

He has received two Distinguished Scholar Awards from the ISA, one in 2015 from its Global South Caucus for his “contribution to non-Western IR theory and inclusion” in international studies, and another in 2018 from ISA’s International Organization Section that recognizes “scholars of exceptional merit... whose influence, intellectual works and mentorship will likely continue to impact the field for years to come”.

In his interview, Professor A. Acharya talks about non-western IR theories, Global South issues and concept, contemporary international studies, multiplexity and the role of new institutions of global governance.

**Key words:** Global South, ISA, Non-western world, developing countries, Third World, IR Theory

— **Dear Professor Acharya, you are considered to be the voice and the icon of the Global South in International Studies, especially after “Non-Western International Relations Theory” [Acharya, Buzan 2010], that has become a true turning point in the IR discipline. What has changed since then in the IR scholars’ perception of the Global South as a part of the world and as the community of IR scholars?**

— Thank you for your kind words. For the past decade, there has been a growing awareness of the lack of diversity and inclusion in IR scholarship. As I have written in several of my papers, more and more scholars, in both the North and the South, are increasingly conscious that the discipline of international relations does not capture the voices, experiences and contributions of non/Western societies and often marginalizes them. Of course, this awareness is more present in the Global South than in the Global North, but it is nonetheless significant.

Another development is that the study of international relations is increasingly popular in the Global South, especially in large countries like China, India, Indonesia, Turkey, Mexico, and Brazil. Given the relative size and importance of these countries, and the fact that scholars in these countries are growing more impatient with having to rely exclusively on Western literature on IR and Eurocentric concepts and theories, and are thus resentful of their lack of participation and representation in academic debates, there is something of a protest movement against Western dominance in IR.

— **I was really impressed by the number of people visiting workshop on Global South during ISA-2018 Annual Convent in San-Francisco (*WB17 — ISA-Global South Caucus Dialogue*) — about 100 academics, including the President of ISA. What’s the reason for such popularity of this intellectual movement?**

— Aside from the reasons cited above, namely, the parochialism of the discipline and its growing popularity in the Global South, another reason for the high turnout of Global South scholars at events such as the ISA’s dialogue is that professional associations such as the ISA are under pressure to create more opportunities for debates and dialogues on issues of concern to the Global South. Historically, ISA and similar Western groupings have given little space to Global South concerns. They are thoroughly dominated by Western scholars. The ISA did not elect a non-Western scholar, or a person of color, as its President for more than five decades since its founding, i.e., until 2014, when I was elected as its President. Global South scholars are still seriously underrepresented in ISA’s governance structure, including its leadership and committees. Hence any opportunity for getting their voice heard at ISA conventions is of great interest and excitement for Global South scholars.

— **According to you, how successful is this narrative ‘Global South’? As a notion is it better than “developing countries”, “non-aligned movement”, “third world”, “rising powers”, “non-Western countries”? This could be treated in some way as an attempt to go away from the real problems of the Asian, African and Latin American countries, which could hardly be combined in one term. Is it possible to perceive the Global South as an indivisible community?**

— All the terms you mention are problematic. The fact is that none of the expressions, such as Global South, Third World, of Non-West is a unified or homogenous category. There is a lot of diversity within each such concept, in terms of geographic

feature, level of economic development, degree of political stability, and the extent of the international and regional influence of countries. The term “rising powers” is another such category. It describes only a handful of countries in the Global South, such as China, India, South Africa, Brazil, Indonesia and Turkey, etc. These constitute what I call the “power South”, to be distinguished from the “poor South” which includes the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) like Bangladesh or Myanmar. Many countries are in between. So, it’s far from a homogenous, united or indivisible community. Regions are somewhat more distinctive but even then, large regions like Asia contain a lot of diversity. Yet, there are also some common elements, such as a shared colonial past, and problems of underdevelopment which are yet to be fully overcome even by China, which still sees itself as a developing nation. Moreover, Global South as a whole perceives itself to be underrepresented or disadvantaged in the current world power structure and especially in global governance institutions. So, these create a common political outlook if not total unity.

— **In the article “Imagining Global International Relations out of India” [2018c], you emphasize the prospects for the development of the Indian theory of international relations and, in particular, suggest to develop “syncretic or pluralistic universalism”. Could you explain this term in details? Could it be fully applied to other Non-Western IR schools, for instance, Chinese or Russian?**

— Pluralistic universalism simply means “unity in diversity”. The traditional concept of universalism is “one size fits all”. I call it “particularistic universalism” or “monistic universalism”. This assumes that there is one set of standard of rationality or politics or ideology that applies to all. This is the universalism of Western Enlightenment movement. Here dissent or diversity are not tolerated and are dismissed. Against this, the idea of “pluralistic universalism” holds that one should recognize and respect diversity, which is a fact of life, but still search for a common ground. So, the world is diverse, culturally, politically, and ideologically. This is the reality. But this does not mean a clash of cultures of civilizations is inevitable. Instead of dismissing or ignoring that reality, and imposing the standard of one nation or one particular civilization on all others, one should accept and respect differences and seek to find ways of reconciling them. It is still possible to find space for unity and cooperation while respecting differences amongst us.

— **In recently published 2nd edition of your book “The End of American World Order” (the review of the book is placed in this issue of *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations* [Grachikov 2018]) you describe the modern world as “multiplex”. In this regard, we are witnessing now some kind of hybridization of world and foreign policy, aren’t we?**

— A Multiplex World is a pluralistic world that combines the features of both the West and the Rest, North and the South.

But the key feature of Multiplexity is that there is no global hegemony, like that of the US or Great Britain before it. There is a multiplicity of ideas, identities and culture yet nations are bound by an interdependence forged by economic links and shared vulnerability to transnational dangers like climate change. In a Multiplex World there is no outright copying of the Western ideas or institutions by Global South countries. Instead, there is what I have called, especially in my recent book *Constructing Global Order*, the dynamics of “localization” (adaptation of foreign ideas and norms by local actors

in the Global South), “subsidiarity” (creation of new universal norms by Global South actors) and “circulation” (a continuous exchange of ideas and norms between the Global North and the Global South). These processes create hybridity in a Multiplex World. They give agency to the Global South and help bridge the North-South divide and prevent an outright “clash of civilizations”.

**— It is known that the circle of your fans in China is very wide. Your books are translated and published in China, you are professor at Tsinghua University. You seem to be very demanded by foreign universities. What are the main vectors of your cooperation with them? Do you have any academic projects with Russian ones?**

— The Chinese academic community studying international relations is large, growing and very interested in the kind of work I have been doing, including Asian and comparative regionalism, constructivism and norm diffusion, non-Western IR Theory and Global IR. So I get a lot of invitations to teach and speak in China and several of my books and articles have been translated and published in China. I enjoy speaking at Chinese universities and think-tanks and find these interactions very useful and important for my own work. I am not the only foreign scholar to be so engaged in China. But I have learnt a lot about China and its incredible rise to global power.

I do not have a similar engagement in Russia. But I have visited Moscow at the invitation of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA) and I have also been invited to St Petersburg State University next year. I hope there will be more such opportunities in the future for me to interact with Russian academics.

I am also deeply engaged with the IR community in India, Indonesia, Japan, Thailand and Myanmar.

**— For the last couple decades, some new international institutions have appeared in the global political arena — BRICS, ABII and others. Do you think that it is an active process of creating a parallel (alternative) architecture of international relations or do you believe in convergence?**

— I don't think these are parallel institutions in the sense of challenging existing multilateral bodies. Rather, they are complimentary, albeit filling a void in addressing issues and areas where the existing institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF have proven to be uninterested or ineffective. The AIIB and the BRICS' New Development Bank or the Contingent Reserve Arrangement are such institutions. They are distinctive features of the global multiplexity that I have talked about.

*Interviewed by D.A. Degterev*

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**For citations:** Role of Global South in the Multiplex World. Interview with Professor Amitav Acharya, American University, USA. *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations*, 18 (3), 701—705. DOI: 10.22363/2313-0660-2018-18-3-701-705.

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## **РОЛЬ «ГЛОБАЛЬНОГО ЮГА» В МУЛЬТИПЛЕКСНОМ МИРЕ**

**Интервью с профессором АМИТАВОМ АЧАРИЕЙ,  
заведующим кафедрой ЮНЕСКО по вопросам транснациональных  
проблем и управления, заслуженным профессором  
Школы международной службы Американского университета**

Амитав Ачария — заведующий кафедрой ЮНЕСКО по вопросам транснациональных проблем и управления, заслуженный профессор Школы международной службы Американского университета в Вашингтоне. Он стал первым западным ученым, который был избран (2014—2015 гг.) в качестве президента Ассоциации международных исследований (ISA). А. Ачария работал профессором Йоркского университета в Торонто и заведующего кафедрой глобального управления в Бристольском университете (Великобритания). В 2012—2013 гг. он стал первым приглашенным профессором программы им. Н. Манделы по международным отношениям в Университете Родса (ЮАР) в 2012—2013 гг., а также первым из профессоров кафедры компании Boeing по международным отношениям программы Schwarzman Scholars в Университете Цинхуа (КНР) в 2016—2018 гг.

Он был членом Азиатского центра Гарвардского университета и Школы управления Джона Ф. Кеннеди и был избран в качестве почетного члена Совета колледжа в Оксфорде. Среди его трудов: «Построение глобального порядка» [Acharya 2018a]; «Конец американского мирового порядка» [Acharya 2018b]; «Зачем руководить? Переосмысление спроса и прогресса в глобальном управлении» [Acharya 2016]; «Формирование Юго-Восточной Азии» [Acharya 2013]; «Чиьи идеи имеют значение» [Acharya 2009] и др.

Его статьи опубликованы в ведущих международных журналах, включая “International Organization”, “International Security”, “International Studies Quarterly”, “Journal of Asian Studies”, “Foreign Affairs”, “Journal of Peace Research”, “International Affairs” и “World Politics”.

Он получил две награды за выдающиеся заслуги от ISA: в 2015 г. — за «вклад в западную теорию международных отношений и международные исследования», и 2018 г. получил признание как «ученый исключительных заслуг... чье влияние, интеллектуальные работы и наставничество по-прежнему будут оказывать влияние в своей области в течение долгих лет».

В своем интервью профессор А. Ачария рассказывает о западных теориях международных отношений, проблемах и самом понятии «Глобального Юга», современных международных исследованиях и новых институтах глобального управления.

**Ключевые слова:** «Глобальный Юг», Ассоциация международных исследований, западный мир, развивающиеся страны, третий мир, теории международных отношений

**Для цитирования:** Роль «Глобального Юга» в мультиплексном мире. *Интервью с профессором Амитавом Ачарией, Американский университет, США* // *Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Международные отношения*. 2018. Т. 18. № 3. С. 701—705. DOI: 10.22363/2313-0660-2018-18-3-701-705.