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The development of two main coalitions of countries as a model for a new world order?

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MOTIVATION

- "Our age is insistently, at times almost desperately, in pursuit of **a concept of world order**. Chaos threatens..." (*Kissinger, 2014*). An increasing number of contradictions and clashes around the world during recent years - from the struggle between values to military conflicts, - intensifies the sense of uncertainty. **What's going on?**
- From the perspective of self-organisation theory (Synergistics), we can say that through explosions and bifurcations, the world is reorganising its structure in response to external challenges, and we stand on **the threshold of the formation of a new world order**.
- The theory of institutional matrices which we have been developing and verifying since the early 2000s (*Kurdina 2001; Kirdina-Chandler 2017, Kirdina-Chandler 2019 etc.*), serves as lenses and helps us clarify **the contours of the coming world order**.



OUTLINE



- Definition of *world order* and its characteristics at the end of the 20th century.
- Signs of a shift in the unipolar world order in the 21st century.
- Future possibilities: unipolarity, multipolarity, or bipolarity?
- Institutionalisation of bipolarity.
- Conclusion.





Definition of *world order* and its characteristics at the end of the 20th century.



World order is...

- “**a conventional system of global organisation** that determines the fundamental nature of interactions between states and non-state actors” (*Efremova* 2016: 5), “a relatively stable, albeit limited in historical time, state of the international system, characterised by the dominance of rules of conduct in the international arena **recognised by the majority of actors** and based on a balance of the interests of the world's leading powers” (*Nikitin* 2018: 32–33).
- Leading world powers are states with the **highest indicators of national power**.



World order at the end of the 20th century

- It was what many called “the third wave of globalization which can be termed «**neoliberal globalization**»” (Palley 2019:2) under the US leading. It was **the unipolar world order**.
- **Globalisation ≠ internationalisation**, the latter being a natural process of growing inter-ethnic ties and the strengthening of the interdependence of various states that accompanies the history of mankind.
- But globalisation at the end of the 20th century was **a directed process** of universalisation and unification of economic, political and ideological institutions which has a supranational character and which **leads the hegemony** of one global player.



Signs of a shift in the unipolar world order in the 21st century.

ICAPE, 2026, January 9



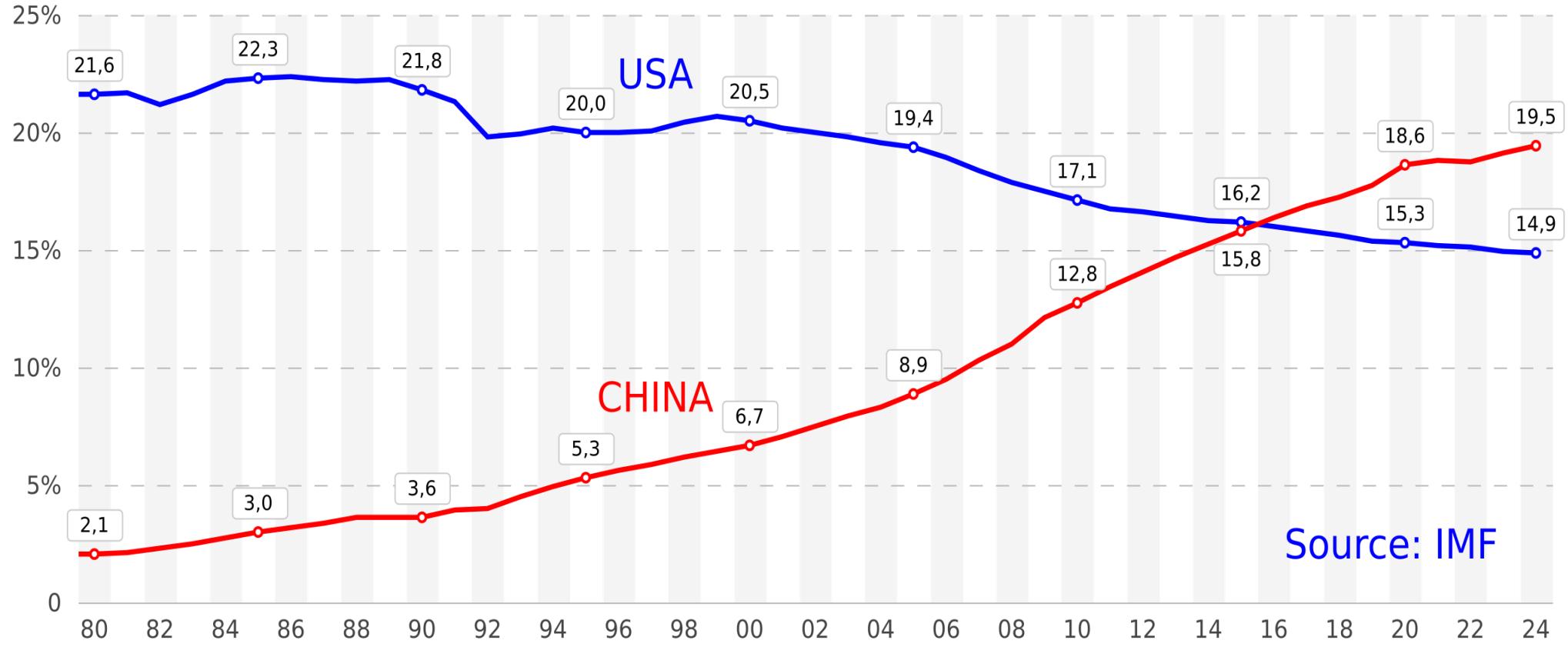
Changing theoretical discourse

- The United States is gradually losing its leadership position and its claim to world hegemony (*Kagan 2008*), which is accompanied by **a slowdown in globalisation**.
- The new world order is replacing the “liberal world order” (*Nye 2017*) with the global hegemony of the US.
- “Whereas in the 1990s, the United States was almost universally viewed as the world’s sole and unshakable superpower, by the time of the 2008 financial meltdown, the notion that US hegemony was in a deep and potentially terminal crisis moved from the fringes **into the mainstream**” (*Silver, Rayne 2020:17*).



Statistics

GDP based on PPP of China and the USA, share of world total, %

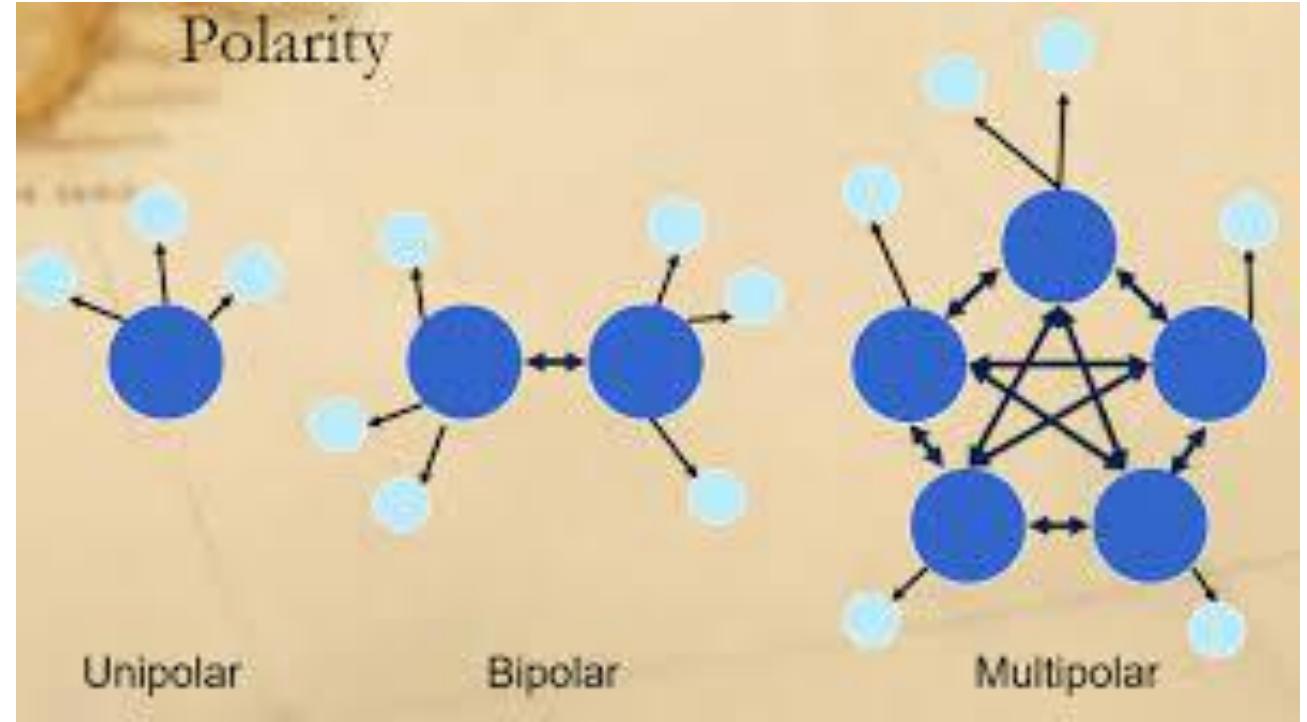


Source: IMF



The unipolar world order against markets and democracy

- The reason for the slowdown the unipolar world is due not only to the increasing economic power of other countries, but also to a number of inherent negative consequences: unipolar globalisation of markets leads to an improvement in the situation for some and deterioration for others, increasing **social inequalities and contradictions** (*Rodrik 2017; Stiglitz 2017*).
- Unipolar globalisation poses **a threat to democracy**, as a superpower is tempted to use its position for its own benefit, without taking into account the interests of other countries (*Köchler 2020*).



Future possibilities: unipolarity, multipolarity, or bipolarity?



Unipolarity

- The unipolarity of the world means **the hegemony** of one global player. Such a world was envisioned by the supporters of the theory of globalisation and Fukuyama's former concept of the "end of history".
- But in an interview on March 30, 2022, Fukuyama refuted himself and was forced to admit "**the end of the end of history**" in our time (*Fukuyama 2022*).
- History itself has pronounced a negative verdict on unipolarity. So realistic experts **do not consider** the "new unipolarity" as a possible model for overcoming the world chaos.



Multipolarity - *pro*

- The statistical substantiation of a transition to a multipolar world comes from forecasts of the reconstruction of the world system of the largest economic centres, comparable to each other in terms of power, but **civilisationally and culturally different**.

"So, it is expected that by 2030 the United States, in terms of real GDP, will give way to China, India will rise from 10th to 3rd place, and Brazil (by 2050) from 6th position will take 4th place. At the same time, over the same period, Japan will drop from 3rd to 5th place, Germany from 4th to 9th, France from 5th to 10th, and Italy and Britain will leave the top ten largest economies of the world. Russia in these calculations will rise from the 9th position to the 6th" (Miller 2015:11).



Multipolarity – *pro* (cont)

TOP 10

2025

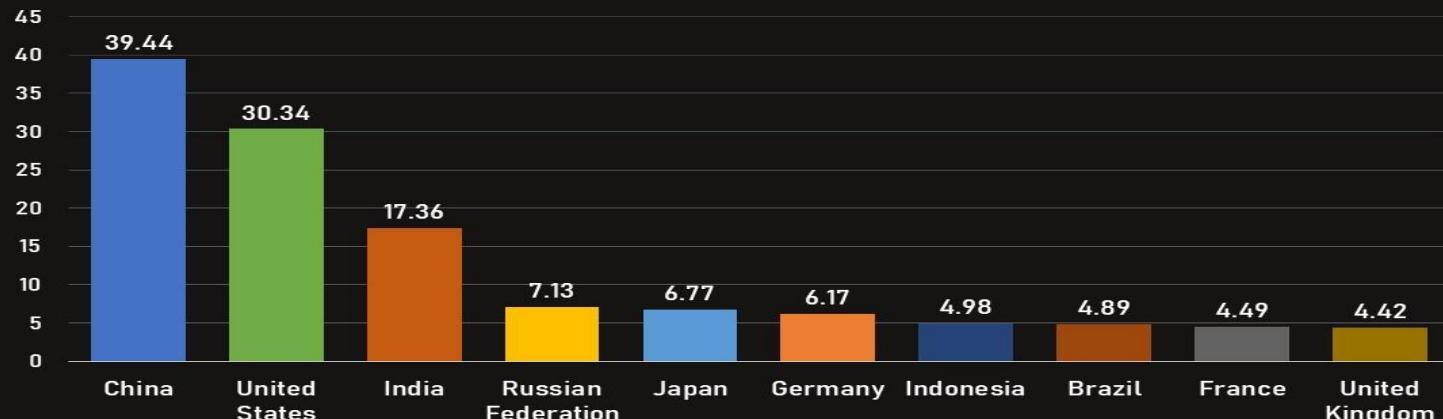
LARGEST ECONOMIES BY GDP (PPP)

- China holds the top position with a GDP (PPP) exceeding \$39.44 trillion, followed by the United States and India.

GDP (PPP) measures the total value of goods and services produced in a country, adjusted for price differences, to compare living standards across nations.



GDP (PPP) IN TRILLIONS OF USD





Multipolarity - *contra*

- The thesis of multipolarity (or “polycentricity”, “constructive polycentrism”, “world order of interacting local civilisations”, “multipolar constellation” etc.) as the most preferred model of a sustainable world **has many supporters** among experts, scientists, and politicians, especially outside the West.
- In turn, the opponents of multipolarity identify it with chaos (*Kissinger 2014*) and believe that a multipolar world is a **transitional phase from a unipolar world to a bipolar one** (*Arin 2001*). I think so too.

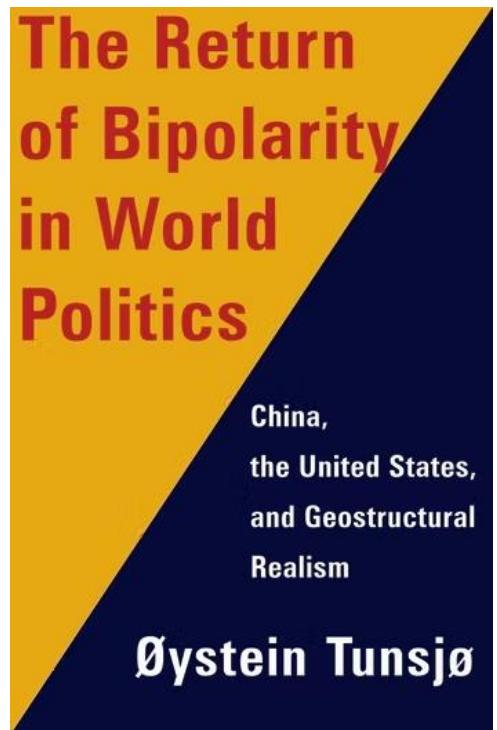
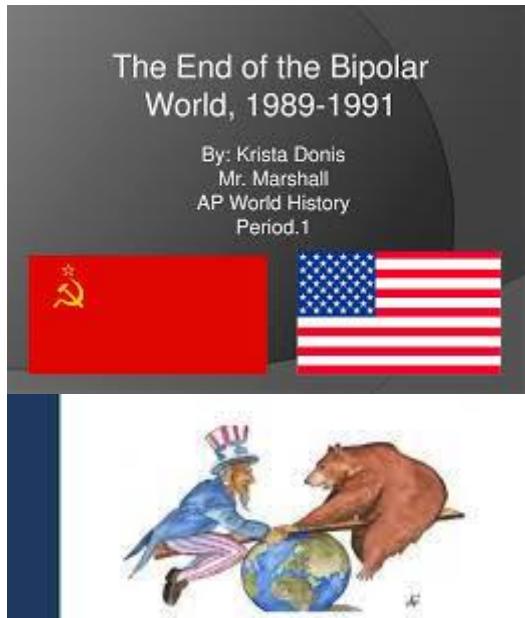


Bipolarity

- Bipolarity is inherent in the world organically: “ ...at the global level, the world social system has always been and remains bipolar in the first approximation, ... therefore the world is simply doomed to be bipolar, because the poles **must complement** each other within the unity of opposites” (*Tikhomirov 1997: 54–55*).
- Bipolarity provides a dynamically tense balance (the term “peaceful coexistence” was used during the Soviet era) and prevents conflicts, especially if it is institutionalised through the creation of equally powerful “symmetrical” **coalitions**.



Bipolarity ≠ just a fight between giants





Coalitions as two poles of bipolarity

- When I speak of coalitions (from the Latin *coalitio* - union), I mean **groups of states** united around common values and goals but maintaining independence in matters unrelated to these common goals.
- Such goals include the interaction of the countries forming the coalition in **promoting their shared values** in the economic and political spheres and supporting each other in the global world.
- In accordance with the terminology of X-Y matrix theory, we call them **X- (Non-Western) and Y- (Western) coalitions**.



Institutionalisation of bipolarity.



Bipolar coalitions

- The crystallisation of these coalitions, reflecting the world's bipolarity, is increasingly **evident in the 21st century**.
- Each coalition has its own **institutional core**.
- The core of the **Western coalition** comprises NATO (founded in 1949) and the European Union (1993), with the composition of their member countries intersecting.
- The core of the **non-Western coalition** are the structures of the SCO (founded in 2001, until 2001 - the "Shanghai Five"), BRICS (2006) and the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States, 1991), the composition of which is also increasingly overlapping.



NATO and the European Union, 2001–2025

	2001 No. (countries)	2025 No. (countries)
NATO	19 (the US, Canada, Iceland, UK, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Norway, Denmark, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, Germany, Spain, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic)	32 (the US, Canada, Iceland, UK, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Norway, Denmark, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Türkiye, Germany, Spain, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Croatia, Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Finland, Sweden)
The European Union	15 (Belgium, UK, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Germany, Greece, Denmark, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Finland, Sweden)	27 (Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Germany, Greece, Denmark, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania)
Total (including overlaps)	23	36



NATO and EU collaboration

- The EU-NATO **strategic partnership** is based on EU-NATO Declaration on the European Security and Defence Policy (2002, December 16): “It is founded on **shared values**, the determination to tackle common challenges and the unequivocal commitment to **promote and safeguard peace, freedom and prosperity** in the Euro-Atlantic area”.
- **In 2017 the first progress report** on operational actions, taken jointly by the EU and NATO, was prepared and highlighted “**strong, solid and cooperative** approach in common activities”.
- Following this, **10 EU-NATO progress reports** on cooperation were prepared by June 2025, reaffirming commitments to develop it.

https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/29052_en



The SCO, BRICS and CIS, 2001-2025

Organisations	2001 No. (countries)	2025 No. (countries)
Shanghai Cooperation Organization	5 (Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan)	27 (10 members: Belarus, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan; 2 observers - Afghanistan, Mongolia; 15 dialogue partners - Azerbaijan, Armenia, Bahrain, Egypt, Qatar, Cambodia, Kuwait, Laos, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Sri Lanka, UAE)
BRICS	4 (Brazil, Russia, India, China)	19 (10 members: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, UAE, Indonesia; 9 partners: Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Malaysia, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Nigeria, Vietnam)
Commonwealth of Independent States	10 (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan)	10 (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan)
Total (including overlaps)	13	39



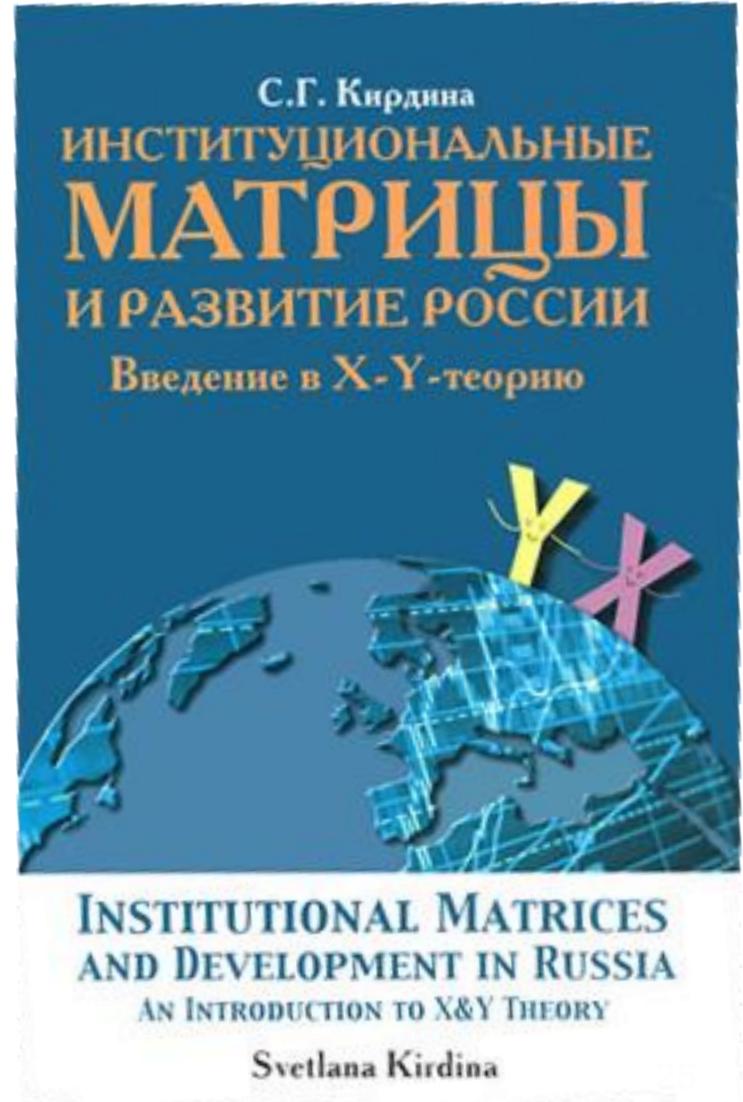
The SCO, BRICS and CIS collaboration

- The value platform of these associations is “based on the principle of equality in the global economy and politics, on the affirmation of the right to development of all countries of the world, and not just the ‘golden billion’, on the fight against exploitation and neocolonialism by developed countries in relation to the developing world, on **the values of respect for the diversity of cultures** between member states and mutual trust.” <https://infobrics.org/post/40281>; <http://rus.sectsco.org>
- Summits of these associations are increasingly **being held jointly** like **SCO+** (2022, Samarkand, Uzbekistan; 2025, Tianjin,) or **BRICS+** (2023, Johannesburg, South Africa; 2024, Kazan, Russia; 2025, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) formats.
- The countries that are members of these associations **participate in joint activities and projects**, mainly educational and cultural ones.



The trend of institutionalisation of bipolar X- and Y-coalitions was noted back in 2014:

“... **bipolarity** finds its expression not only in the concentration of material and technological potential in each of the groups of countries, but **also in the strengthening and development of institutional structures and ties**. Ultimately, it is they who become the milestones of the so-called “new world order”... At one pole of this order, Western countries are concentrated with the dominance of Y-matrix institutions. They are increasingly strengthening cooperation with each other... At the other extreme, which includes groups of countries dominated by the X-matrix, there are parallel processes” (Kirdina, 2014: 315-316).





Conclusion



From uncertainty to order

- Overcoming the situation of chaos presupposes reliance on a model of a new world order. The most discussed are the models of a **unipolar, multipolar, and bipolar world**.
- The bipolar world model is **the most realistic**. It is based on two coalitions. The institutional core of the Y (Western) coalition began to take shape **40 years earlier**: over the past 25 years, it has grown more than **one and a half times** from 23 to 36 countries. The institutional core of the X (Non-Western) coalition, which began to take shape later, has **tripled** in size over the same period from 13 to 39 countries.
- In terms of national power indicators, these coalitions **are roughly equal**.



Bipolar coalitions are our chance to a global dialogue

- The institutionalisation of bipolarity in the XXI century will not mean a return to the discourse of the Cold War and the confrontation between the two poles of power, permeated with the "friend-enemy" dichotomy (*Schmitt, 2007 (1932)*), but will support **a dialogue** between large equivalent subjects of world economy and politics.
- Both coalitions will be able to **complement each other** within the framework of the "unity of opposites" and contribute to overcoming the contradictions of the different processes, as well as maintaining collective security. This will help **save the world** from catastrophe.



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Thank you for your attention!

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