

Kant's Cosmopolitanism vs Contemporary Regionalism: Two Aspects of a World Development Project

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Introduction

In this essay I plan to outline two perspectives of the contemporary world development - cosmopolitanism and regionalism. During the last years, the processes of cosmopolitanism, as well as regionalism are considered to be the main tendencies which determine the modern world development order. Being opposite in their meaning these tendencies describe and forecast the future of the humankind in different and sometimes controversial terms.

Thus, over many centuries, human societies across the globe have established progressively closer contacts. Recently, the pace of global integration has dramatically increased. Unprecedented changes in communications, transportation, and computer technology have given the process new impetus and made the world more interdependent than ever. Multinational corporations manufacture products in many countries and sell to consumers around the world. Money, technology and raw materials move ever more swiftly across national borders. Along with products and finances, ideas and cultures circulate more freely. As a result, laws, economies, and social movements are forming at the international, cosmopolitan level.

On the other hand, the rise of a political ideology that focuses on the interests of a particular region or group of regions, whether traditional or formal, is observed today. Regionalism describes situations in which different religious or ethnic groups with distinctive identities coexist within the same state boundaries, often concentrated within a particular region and sharing strong feelings of collective identity. It often involves ethnic groups whose aims include independence from a national state and the development of their own political power. *Because of the objective integration processes that one may observe in the contemporary world, cosmopolitan project within its Kantian version becomes prior to the concept of regionalism.*

Kant's concept of cosmopolitanism

Speaking about the historical roots of cosmopolitanism as a world outlook one should admit that this concept has already been used by Stoics and Cynics. The Christian position is also often interpreted as a cosmopolitan. Thus, in the Middle Ages, the Apostle Paul taught that within Christ there is "neither Hellene nor Jew." Because of Adam Smith's theory the concept of cosmopolitanism became widespread in Europe at the beginning of the XVII century. As argued by the classic economy, the merchant has no home, he can live in any country. Homeland is where he multiplies his profits.

Immanuel Kant is one of the most prominent supporters of the cosmopolitan outlook of the XVIII century. In his philosophy of history, based on the system of transcendental idealism, he argues about the possibility of the "World-civil society"; that the humankind may achieve in the future. His idea of a cosmopolitan world order is closely connected with his social-political ideas and has three main dimensions: ethical, legal and esthetical [1].

Because of the lack of positive world development projects, I. Kant's cosmopolitan idea is of great importance today. Trying to work out a proper solution for the problem of social inequality, many contemporary political scientists and sociologists are focused on I. Kant's

concept of the cosmopolitan world order. The latter introduces the urgent necessity of a global civil society, as well as the new understanding of global status of human rights. Those who stand for legal cosmopolitanism concept, believe that human rights are universal for all the people in the world. Thus, the World Conference on Human Rights, which took place in 1993, proclaimed the universality of basic human rights and freedom, regardless of one's religion, culture or traditions.

Proponents of regionalism: critics of I. Kant's cosmopolitan ideas

Proponents of regionalism and cultural relativism assume that it is the different historical traditions, psychology and culture of different countries that makes a strong impact on a certain understanding of a human rights concept and policy practice in this field. Because the Universal Declaration of Human Rights represents the traditional Christian values, some of the Eastern countries have proclaimed that they cannot obey the Western standards and models of human rights.

This seems to be the dominant reason for human rights violation there. Moreover, leaders of several countries (Iran, China, Indonesia, etc.), using the arguments for regionalism and cultural relativism, seek to justify the legality and necessity of human rights restrictions.

Conclusion

All in all, it becomes evident that the contemporary world is undergoing the process of integration in all the spheres of social life. Theoretically, one may try to avoid the process of globalization, but what will we get in the end? As the world has become an integral system in almost all the basic parameters of social life, individuals, countries and people do not actually have a choice, whether to integrate into the world community or not. Regionalism, being a part of the processes of globalization, makes countries face the most suitable conditions for inter-ethnic violence, organized crime and international terrorism. In order to escape the threat of the nuclear war and conflicts it is highly recommended to study and to control the processes of regionalism in the contemporary world.

It is also important to have realistic expectations as to what is achievable. Creating new alternative forms of interaction is a long process. Conflicts are short; the peace building process is very long. As far as there is no development without peace, and there is no peace without human rights, the world must implement policies on human rights protection. There much remains to be done.

How should civil society promote legal cosmopolitanism? It must promote respect for human rights. It must provide human rights education. It must teach peaceful co-existence. There is no genuine democracy unless based on human rights. Civil society must enable the individual to become agent of change.

All these issues one may find in I. Kant's cosmopolitan concept which should become the ground for a positive project of a new world development order in the XXI century.

Источники и литература

- 1) Kant, I. Critique of judgment. 2008.