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THE MAIN WEAKNESS OF LIBERALISM IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION

This paper is going to discuss and analyze some of the weaknesses and challenges of liberalism in the context of global transformation. The essay will highlight some of the feeble aspects of the Western liberal strategy, which often intend to glorify and distinguish itself and impose its values and perspectives on the whole world and increasingly during last 24 years since the collapse of communism. Thus, this article will argue that the Western values and ethics could not be the moral example for the whole world because of its stubborn unwillingness to recognize the independence and adequacy of non-Western civilizations and their values that have been omnipresent for generations to come. The paper is also going to talk about the influence of globalization on liberalism, and why it seemed right from liberalism to create one liberal world with common religion and style of life. In general, Liberalism became the most popular ideology in the world, because of the economic necessity and the economic success of the most developed Western countries. Therefore, it attracted other countries around the world, especially, post-USSR countries that followed this strategy to revive their economies and for their desire to achieve economic prosperity.

Above all, there are still many nations around the world that have denied this ideology and rejected the liberal approach. And this paper is going to stress that these societies are also rational, because they all have deep cultural roots and religious values, and ethics that could be considered even stronger than the once existing in the liberal world. Hence, the paper will argue that in the process of globalization, a rational dialog between Western and Eastern societies is crucial for the well being and survival of the whole world, because it is really necessary to find the best way of interaction between global societies. Indeed, the Western experience can be seen as a good example of a successful economic experience for many post-USSR countries and it will be useful to follow this way economically, but there is no need to impose other liberal aspects and views of life on their Eastern counterparts. Overall, the liberal ideology and its westernization strategy since the collapse of the USSR became stronger, but at the same time has a lot of huge problems as it is going to argue that the new liberal strategy of perfection and westernization of non western-countries is flawed and inefficient because it does not consider other cultures, traditional values, and beliefs. The liberal boom and prosperity in the last few decades was mainly due to economic and financial progression, however, this prosperity is limited and it will not be able to uphold the liberal superiority forever. Hence, the liberals need to change their strategy of westernization and their idea of perfection in order to be able to attract and integrate other non-western countries, and to continue its global progression.

*Are you aware that the more serious
thinkers among us are used to regard
the spirit of Liberalism as the characteristic
of the 20 destined Antichrist?
John Henry Newman (1841)¹*

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¹ Newman, J. H. (2013). *Newman's Apologia Pro Vita Sua*. London: Forgotten Books. (Original work published 1913), 284-285.

dictate the West rules over the East, this way could stress collaboration in economical spheres, but not in cultural values and ethics.

Since the end of the 1990, over XX years have passed by to the Western Allies victory over the USSR in the Cold War. This victory was perceived by many liberals around the world as the end of history, it was remarked as the vanishing of the last barriers to the liberal ideology and its westernization of the world.

The Liberal agenda and its Westernization strategy was rapidly spreading, booming and altering and destabilizing all other traditional theories, cultural values, and mentalities of non western people and countries around the globe. All of this was accomplished under the slogan of the «opened society».

The “open society” is a term that was originally developed in the 1932, by the French philosopher Henri Bergson¹. It was further matured and elaborated on during the Second World War, by the Austrian-born British philosopher Karl Popper.

The primary work of Karl Popper is named “The Open Society and its Enemies”, and the main idea of this work was to refuse non-democratic institutions and societies². This theory became widely-spread and enchantingly successful after the failure and collapse of the USSR in the 1990. The open society could be defined as a world without borders, without specific cultural and national identities that are declared absolute “archaic”. This implies that non-Western world must be liberated from its identity and be completely open to foreign influence.

In this case, the West was not perceived as piece of the other parts of the world and their cultures, their national identities, and their values. The West was rather signified as the matrix, the role model and the ideal example for all other cultures, values and identities. It was seen as a “universal” culture, human rationality and an ideal figure of behaviors.

As discussed by the famous American political scientist, Samuel Huntington, the concept of a universal civilization is a typical product of the Western civilization. He argues that in the Nineteenth Century, the idea of “white man’s burden” helped to justify the spread of Western political and economic domination of non-Western societies. At the end of the Twentieth Century, the concept of a universal civilization helps to justify

¹ Bergson, H. (1932). *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, Eng. tr. by R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton (1986) of *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion*. Félix Alcan, Paris

² Popper, K. (1945). *The Open Society and its Enemies. The Spell of Plato, Vol. 1*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 25-48.

Western cultural dominance over other societies and there is a need for these companies to copy Western traditions and institutions”¹.

In this way, we are able to see that the main case of conflict in the modern world will not be anymore ideological or economic. The main case of conflict and misunderstanding in the global society will be cultural antagonisms. And the main conflict will occur between nations and different civilizations. Nowadays, we can see the most powerful forms of conflicts, that is not a battle for territory, but a conflict between civilizations². The most preceded ideology in the world after the collapse of the communism has become the Western liberal ideology and its culture.

However, the liberals tend to be refusing all other ideologies of non-Western societies and that in particular, represent a raise of cultural incomprehension, and therefore, it constitutes the main problem of liberalism. Thus, the Modern liberalism must pay more attention not only to Western countries, but also to other cultures and their traditions in order to become more efficient and appeal to the rest of the world.

Above all, civilizations are the essence of all cultures. They are the main difference between nations in the world. Arabic civilizations will never become identical to Chinese and Western never identical to non-Western, and vice-versa. Hence, it is not about what is right and what is wrong civilization, it is just about different roots of the society that each culture lives in. Yet, each representative of a particular civilization has more than one characteristic, a resident of Madrid may portray himself with different features like a Madrid, an Spanish, a Catholic, a Christian, a European, a Westerner³. Therefore, only in this way, civilizations can widen their borders and this borders can also cross with akin civilized societies, for example, North America and Europe.

Thus, the Western liberal ideology, feeding of the collapsed communist ideology, overemphasizes itself as the «only faithful» and «uniquely correct» theory. Nevertheless, during the communist era, communism also promised a quick elimination of national distinctions and the achievement of a complete social homogeneity. The same was imposed to the whole world as the certain chart of conduct. Now, the winning lib-

¹ Huntington, S. P. (1993). The Clash of Civilizations? *Foreign Affairs*, 72, 3. <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/48950/samuel-p-huntington/the-clash-of-civilizations>>

² Huntington, S. P. (1993). The Clash of Civilizations? *Foreign Affairs*, 72, 3. <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/48950/samuel-p-huntington/the-clash-of-civilizations>>

³ Huntington, S. P. (1993). The Clash of Civilizations? *Foreign Affairs*, 72, 3. <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/48950/samuel-p-huntington/the-clash-of-civilizations>>

eralism, embarks on an analogical «work». It comes forward for the total standardization of the world in form of Westernization.

When people associate themselves with their culture, they cannot accept opposing cultures and other ideologies for their life. Thus, occurs the clash of civilizations, as one culture, which is represented as the only right thing, does not bear in mind peculiarity and specificity of other cultures. Therefore, the main case of the world spread of liberalism is globalization. Because economics became crucial in the world due to imports, exports, foreign investments, international trade, and etc. Why liberalism?

As the essay mentioned, it became the most popular and influential ideology after the collapse of communism due to the economic success of the most developed and successful Western countries and societies, that represented a great example for the post-USSR countries, which have grown in numbers and got attracted by the economic needs and necessity to develop. Thus, liberalism is widespread by economically successful countries, because this ideology portray free commercial transactions and satisfy economic necessity. As argued by Gideon Rose, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR): "Liberalism highlighted the manifold rewards of moving to a world dominated by markets rather than traditional communities"¹.

In General, every ideology has its strength and weakness. Nonetheless, this paper is going to suggest that in the context of global transformation, liberalism has become very vulnerable and merely defined. As argued by Alasdair MacIntyre, a Scottish philosopher who compares the contemporary liberalism and ideologies to the old theories of Plato and Aristotle. We will now emphasize some of his arguments.

Hitherto, the biggest problems of liberalism in the context of global transformation as discussed by MacIntyre, is that the liberal ideology is merely defined and only based on one civilization, one culture, and one rationality. It's only based on the western civilization and it's values. The West try to enforce its liberal ideology on everyone and on all countries without considering other civilizations, cultures, ideas and beliefs. So, they try to show all other cultures and ideologies inferior to liberalism and based on that scheme, liberalism tend to push the whole world to join them but they really fail to consider the values, traditions, and beliefs of other civilizations.

Therefore, the modern liberal theory fails to integrate other points of views, other values, traditions and other cultures because it problematizes

¹ Rose G. (2012). Making Modernity Work: The Reconciliation of Capitalism and Democracy. *Foreign Affairs*. <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136776/gideon-rose/making-modernity-work>>

that liberalism is perfect and ideal but this is a very flawed and dangerous thinking because nothing is perfect or ideal. As discussed by MacIntyre, we always need to improve and strive for the best in order to be successful and maintain that status, but for those who tend to glorify and idealize liberalism, how can they really improve and continue their success when they overlook/underestimate all other ideologies and everything that they can improve from¹. We need other ideologies, other values and other beliefs and cultures so we can compare our own ideology with them and validate our theories, values, and rationalities. This is the only way to improve and maintain our success. Hence, the liberal attempts to westernize and standardize the world, and enforce the western ideology on all nations, are blind and ill defined.

In the book of Alasdair MacIntyre, “Whose Justice? Which Rationality?” , the two major topics discussed, are relativism and liberalism. It is necessary to say that in these topics, the author gives a special emphasis and attention to the ideas of Aristotelian ethics. Especially, its values in comparison with “utilitarian consequentialism” and “Kantian deontology”². Indeed, moral discourse of Western philosophy became less stronger and stopped to prove what really is kind or painful for human population. MacIntyre argues that Western ethics could not be the ethical example for the other world. By the way, there can be a chance to develop successful model of society throw sophistication of liberalism and modernism. One way is to follow Nietzschean nihilism, another one is to give new born for an Aristotelian ethics. But in this case, it might be not just a return to ideology of Ancient Greeks, there must be created modern ideology, based on old principles³.

Developing of social sciences can be contributed to generally accepted values of ethics and liberal traditions. Hence modern liberalism came as combination of Aristotelian moral values with any of national traditions. Modern Western ideology is based on freedom of thoughts and individualism of every single person, but what actually conclude this freedom? There are a lot of factors, which influence on human’s mentality like family, environment, education and also traditional values of his/her country. Is the freedom essential or just acquired? For example, the

¹ MacIntyre, Alasdair (2008). *Whose Justice? Which Rationality? Overcoming a Conflict of Traditions/Liberalism Transformed into a Tradition*. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 164-182 / 326-348.

² MacIntyre, Alasdair (2008). *Whose Justice? Which Rationality? Overcoming a Conflict of Traditions/Liberalism Transformed into a Tradition*. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 164-182 / 326-348.

³ MacIntyre, Alasdair (1981) *After Virtue*. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 64-185.

idea of being successful can be our own purpose or suggested by society. In the author opinions, freedom can be comparable with capacity to develop life of single person. The main thing in this case would be responsible self-understanding. In return to Aristotelian Nicomachean Ethics, there is a possibility to underline that there are characters which lead to consistently good behavior and on the other side is truthful to say that there also a place for weakness of will and force of character¹.

In short, the main and first weakness of the liberal ideology is the way that each individual is represented as absolutely free person in his habits, confession and style of life. Moreover, liberal ideology does not pay enough attention to religion and historical traditional in general. It proclaims that every person just need to choose any society by accepting its obligations only for feeling comfortable. But the person still remains absolutely free and independent². As Hobbes wrote, there is “no other goal, nor other garland, but being foremost”³.

Isolated individuals enjoy their freedom, and their rights became political apathetic. It seems like contradictory, but it is also the result of freedom to choose what to do and not to do.⁴ Men and women in liberal societies no longer have access to a single moral culture within which they can learn how they ought to live.⁵ Liberals are free to choose, but on what values and criteria their choice can be based? On own thoughts and experience? Individually created life values?

Additionally, liberalism are still dynamic. In this case we still can observe it developing and in particular experiences, but it is also important to say that we cannot expect the ending of this process. Modern people live in a tough time, when judgment of history reveals itself. The crisis of liberal ideology can be connected with the biggest crises of the culture. After rapidly development of the modern technology, we became able to find solutions of essential life problems in technical sphere, which is completely unnatural.

In short, the post-industrial societies from the expected society with high quality of life grew into psychologically diseased society in which

¹ Aristotle, (1962). *Nicomachean Ethics*. tr. Martin Ostwald. Indianapolis.

² Walzer, Michael (1990). The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism. *Political Theory*, 18, 1, 6-23. <<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/191477?uid=3739232&uid=2&uid=4&sid=21104728193327>>

³ Hobbes, Thomas (1640). *The Elements of Law*, in J.C.A. Gaskin (ed.) (1990). *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politi.*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁴ Walzer, Michael (1990). The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism. *Political Theory*, 18, 1, 6-23. <<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/191477?uid=3739232&uid=2&uid=4&sid=21104728193327>>

⁵ MacIntyre, Alasdair (1981). *After Virtue*. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 64-185.

the «way of life grew into a threat for bases of life». In the conditions of deepening socio-economic and spiritual crisis a dialog between the West and East is vitally important. Today from all ideologies of the new era, only liberalism reserves so simplified emphasis of history. But the specific of XXI century, considers only one fact, that is, that humanity already does not have time after the crash of communism, test another catastrophe now already after total realization of liberal project XXI century needs new dialectics, dialectics of “bihemisphere thought”, in which equal rights will be receive by both western technical rationality and eastern spiritual intuition.

Overall, the liberal ideology and its westernization strategy since the collapse of the USSR became stronger, but at the same time has a lot of huge problems as it is going to argue that the new liberal strategy of perfection and westernization of non western-countries is flawed and inefficient because it does not consider other cultures, traditional values, and beliefs. The liberal boom and prosperity in the last few decades was mainly due to economic and financial progression, however, this prosperity is limited and it will not be able to uphold the liberal superiority forever. Hence, the liberals need to change their strategy of westernization and their idea of perfection in order to be able to attract and integrate other non-western countries, and to continue its global progression.

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