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POLITICAL TOLERANCE VERSUS MORAL TOLERANCE

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Abstract

In this article, we would like to show that tolerance as a political ideal tends to disappear, disappearance which is undeniably linked to a crisis of politics both in terms of nature and its importance. First of all, it is about a crisis of its nature, since politics, often conceived as being related to moral concerns, seems increasingly guided by logic of war, which makes use of force to become more and more banal, legitimizing it by a reasonably rational speech, which is not without problems. Secondly, we are talking about a crisis of the importance of politics, since its legitimacy is increasingly provoked by the market due to economic globalization, which weakens the politics, by replacing the concern for the public wealth or good with the rush of private goods. Starting from this discussion of the nature and importance of politics, we advocate in this article both for rehabilitation of politics as well as for an ethical accountability of political action, so that politics prevails over the economy and upon the violence that often accompanies it.

Keywords: Intolerance; violence; economical globalization; political rationality; ethical accountability;

1. INTRODUCTION

Although there are many definitions of politics, all the authors seem to agree with the idea according to which the political community is possible if and only it is based on a minimum of tolerance. These being said, it should be noted the fact that after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, intolerance has become more and more the dominating style of government. The natural question that results is whether we are not witnessing the disappearance of politics, being replaced from now on by a simple, illegitimate violence. To this, it is added the fact that globalization causes various effects upon politics, some of which can be harmful, even incompatible with the political city. Among these effects, the globalization of war as the ultimate form of violence and intolerance seems to be the most dangerous thing for politics.

Starting from this discussion of the nature and importance of politics, we advocate in this article both for rehabilitation of politics as well as for an ethical accountability of political action, so that politics prevails over the economy and upon the violence that often accompanies it.

2. THE MORAL FUNDAMENTALS OF POLITICS

For at least five centuries, it has been discussed within the political reflection about a certain dualism related to the fact that the politician does not act in his own name, but faces the need to take into account the dividing line between the role of political actor and the role of the individual.

Politics is considered by a stream of political philosophy as an immoral activity, or rather, politics is not conceived as a moral action. This is a major idea that we find in the works of many thinkers, starting from Niccolo Machiavelli to Gilles Lipovetsky, without even not forgetting to mention Nietzsche. Thus, Machiavelli (1960) shows that the wise prince does not have to honor his promises when this does not serve his own interests. For Nietzsche (1992), the modern age is marked by a new glow, the death of God, which also opens the time of man, but it is about an age without any considerations and moral limitations. In *Le Crépuscule du devoir*, Gilles Lipovetsky (1992) evokes the arrival of the post-deontological era /epoch, in which ethics loses its previous universality and importance, by turning into a mixture of contradictory and equally legitimate norms. In foreign politics, the school of realism shares the same conception of the political phenomena, which can be noticed at Hans Morgenthau or Kenneth Waltz. Although Morgenthau (1948) does not deny the moral dimension of the political action, however he insists on the necessity to separate the political reason from moral reasoning: a good politics is above all a reasonable politics (and not a moral one).

At the same time, thinkers who advocate for the compliance of the moral commitments in politics are no less numerous, and they can bring into discussion Kant, who insists on the fact that the moral imperative must prevail in politics as well. According to Kant, this articulation of morality and politics has retained its full influence, even though this influence is not particularly seen inside the political class. For Immanuel Kant (2007), no true politics can be put into motion without first paying tribute to morality. When Max Weber (2003) reflects on Protestant ethics, we find an identical idea, which is translated by the famous formula, "sincerity is the best policy", idea which makes it possible to believe in the possibility of a honest and moral politics.

The conflict between morality and politics is not necessarily shared by all thinkers, although they all agree with recognizing the existence of a border separating the two spheres of human action. From Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill to John Rawls, it was considered that politics should take into account the fair equality of chances and opportunity (Rawls, 2012), with the aim of taking into account the tolerance towards the differences, and especially the inherent differences between the individuals. In this respect, Mill (1994) reminds in *Utilitarianism* that, as far as the political action is concerned, utility is an acceptable criterion for judging a good action, of which may benefit most of the involved persons.

More recent reflections insist on the need to understand that any political action must be subject to an aporetic moral criterion, which should be valid for any human action. This thing can be explained by the fact that, as Zygmunt Bauman (2000) has shown, any human action has both positive and negative consequences, which could be summed up in the idea that good and evil always go together or cannot be separated.

Politics is a conflictual field where the interests are in a permanent collision, but also a field of conflict resolution, of permanent search for compromise, of common solutions and acceptable by protagonists, because the essential function of politics is to maintain the social integrity, to protect the social cohesion, to defense of the fortress. From this perspective, violence seems to be closely related to the way in which politics is conceived, as it is the *sine qua non* manner of preserving the interests of the Citadel. Since the establishment of the first political fortresses, organized violence, which is manifested in the form of war, is one of the key political activities.

At the same time, political fortresses/cities distinguish, fundamentally, between internal order and external order. Respect and maintenance of internal order are entrusted to the police, and the maintenance of the external order is entrusted to the army. This distinction between the police and the army is particularly important in the democratic countries: any confusion between the two is supposed to be dangerous for the democratic order and any police substitution by the army is seen as a serious assault upon democracy. It can be said that the distinction between the police and the army, between police action and war is part of the ethical system of democracies, and not only their institutional order.

3. THE NEW FUNCTION OF THE WAR

In history, the war has always been part of human existence, accepted as natural facts, an inseparable fact of life. Nowadays, war is conceived and accepted as the denial of politics, especially by those contemporaries with us who have experienced the various experiences of devastating wars on the European continent, but also in other parts. The figure of war, especially under the shape of extreme intolerance, was made known in *Intolerance* (1916), the famous film of the American director David Griffith. In another register, Arnold Toynbee's (1997) work regarding the close link between war and civilization has clearly shown this evolution in the perception of the war and this great change in the twentieth century.

Carl von Clausewitz had already insisted on the need to bring military action to the objectives of politics. According to his approach, which will be described as "realistic," war only makes sense if it is subject to politics, if in practice it can serve as a means to achieve the political goals. Otherwise, war remains only an act of mass violence. Thus, for Clausewitz, war is the continuation of politics with other means (Chaliand, 1990). Before him, in the time of the Terror, Maximilian de Robespierre presented the violence of the state as an instrument of reason. In a speech made at the Convention of February 5th,1794, a few months before being guillotined, he declared himself ready to govern the people by reason and the enemies of the people "by terror," considering these the new principles of political morality.

In the contemporary world, which is morally denying war, but at the same time transforms it into an almost daily activity, the relationship between politics and violence has not changed fundamentally. As Michel Foucault (1997) draws our attention, "politics is the continuation of war with other means" (p. 16). As such, Foucault reverses, overturns Clausewitz's formula, not referring to subjecting the war to politics, but about subjecting politics to war. This thing has unexpected effects upon the politics itself.

Indeed, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, which symbolizes the end of the Cold War, instead of witnessing the emergence of a world impregnated by the trade and peace values - what Francis Fukuyama (1992) predicted with the title of "the end of history" - ,we could notice throughout the whole world an unbroken series of wars, the majority of which civilian ones, including in Europe, that, however, had the chance to live in peace for 50 years after the end of the Second World War. These wars have largely affected a part of the civilian population, keeping the military effectives in a miraculous way. Of course, we are far from a miracle and close enough to a vision in which it appears a new type of war that does not imply the responsibility of the public authorities and which mainly involves a fundamental principle of the modern state, namely *the monopoly of legitimate violence* (Weber, 1992).

As the monopoly is questioned by many armed nongovernmental actors or governments that use the army in domestic politics, the traditional role of the state represents a problem. More and more criticized for its omnipresence, especially as regards the market regulation, the state is weakening dramatically. It no longer represents the organizational pillar of contemporary societies. The current world is populated by weak states, unable to assume a true responsibility on their own, although from a historical point of view the only source of human submission to public power resulted from its ability to protect life and property. The protective-state is endangered or on the verge of extinction, which calls into question its legitimacy, as it was described by Weber. And this thing is also an effect of globalization, a phenomenon upon which I will come back to later on.

On the other hand, alongside with this weakening of the state, there is another phenomenon, at least equally worrying: the availability of some governments to resort more and more frequently to the use of force, as it happens especially with a great power, such as the United States of America. In this framework of analysis, it appears the fear that there is a reversal, a reversal of Clausewitz's thinking, with the consequence that, in the future, politics is subject to the logics of war (Bertho, 2003).

After 1989, there was indeed a significant change in the rules governing the military activity. The paradox is that, despite expectations, states have been more inclined after this date/time interval to engage in wars than in the great confrontation era of the Cold War, when they were discouraged by the danger of a generalized nuclear confrontation. Today's war seems to be presented much less in the form of an inter-state conflict between nation-states or between military alliances; it does not recognize the banned areas, it no longer distinguishes warriors of non-combatants, civilians of soldiers. The war is losing its characteristic of an extraordinary event, a feature that has been preserved for Europeans for at

least a century. In regions such as the Near East, war has become a daily situation; it is part of the usual situation of things.

In addition, it should be noticed the fact that the states no longer declare war even when their military forces are confronted. The United States did not declare war on Serbia in 1999, to Afghanistan in 2002, or to Iraq in 2003. Sometimes, the diplomatic relations are not officially broken during the war. Thus, the armed conflict becomes an internal business, and not an external one. The speeches about war also build a new reality: instead of talking about war, it is preferable to evoke a humanitarian intervention. The military operations are designed to be limited in time and space, such as "surgical interventions" type, which mobilize professional soldiers on a voluntary basis and strive not to irritate an ever-sensitive public opinion about the war. Actually, the war is slowly starting to become a political means in the hands of states, losing its former status as the *ultima ratio*. Not only that war trivializes, but this trivialization appears to become morally accepted as well.

In *La politique en temps de guerre*, Alain Bertho refers to a very interesting letter from February 2002, signed by several American intellectuals, including Francis Fukuyama, Samuel Huntington and Michael Waltzer. In this letter, published in the press, one can read: "Bringing the war within an objective moral reasoning represents the attempt to establish a civil society and the international community on justice" (Bertho, 2003, p. 24). The idea seems to be old - Kant has already advocated for extending the social contract from the interior (the peace kept in the city/fortress through the monopoly of legitimate violence) in the sphere of external relations (the international community). Although the context is different, we are talking today about a government's claim to represent the entire community and to impose its own options on his behalf upon other nations through the use of war and the operation of a subtle replacement, that of the police by the army. What represents already the substitution of politics through war, thus returning to what Foucault mentioned.

The effects of this substitution, Bertho shows, are major. On the one hand, we are witnessing the appropriation of a legitimate violence by a single government, the proof being the United States' claim to relieve American soldiers of any responsibility before the International Criminal Court (Bertho, 2003, p. 34). On the other hand, this substitution puts into question the foundations of public power in the international sphere. In fact, the problem is to know which is the political court which legitimizes the use of force and considering this force as legitimate violence, if we fail to identify behind it the presence of a politically accepted body on a large scale by the international political community.

In a book that made a lot of noise, called *Empire*, Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt (2000) emphasized the fact that the powers of the Empire are forced to believe that war is a constitutive, institutional form of the new order. Since then, the organized day-to-day violence has been an increasingly trivial /commonplace phenomenon.

4. IN DEFENCE OF THE POLITICS

The political tolerance has two dimensions that are not necessarily contradictory: a moral dimension and a rational dimension. The political rationality derives its legitimacy from the fundamental function of politics: maintaining the social cohesion and integrity of the social body. A minimum tolerance is needed between individuals and the social groups, which allows them to live together in a political community. We can state, along with John Stuart Mill, that tolerance is the necessary derivation of liberty or with John Rawls, that it is the logical correlation of equality.

We deduce from this that tolerance is a fundamental political principle in the liberal thinking of John Stuart Mill, even if in his era it is rather understood in the form of religious tolerance. The political community ensures this tolerance through legitimate coercion (which may even be violent), exercised by the state as the supreme legitimate political court. And this is the paradox of the rational politics: tolerance has as instrument the violence. This paradox is inevitable, yet rational. In other words, this coercion being legitimate, it results that the respective paradox is in accordance with the principle of political tolerance.

But political tolerance has also a moral dimension that highlights the need to adequately measure the legitimate violence, to include it in contexts that should make it acceptable, not to allow it to overcome the limits of ethical norms established by a higher Court of the national state. It is about

subjecting the political action and the legitimate coercion associated with it to the exigencies of humanist ethics. Again, we can distinguish two dimensions of the problem.

On the one hand, the ethical responsibility of politics, which seems to me to be an eternal requirement, should not be confused with the moralizing approach in politics, which is merely the universal claim of a state in favour of the superiority of its own system of moral and political values, and which, therefore, denies any diversity of perceptions and therefore any tolerance to ideas that do not coincide with its own. The ethical responsibility of the political action implies a return to humanism, a reactivation of the idea that, despite the wealth of differences that make up the present world, the common foundations of humanity should be more important than what differentiates the individuals.

On the other hand, this demand for ethical responsibility of politics has the meaning of a demand for politics reconstruction, affected by certain effects of globalization. This exigency is opposed to the fact that today war is producing politics, not the other way round. Eventually, it is an appeal to tolerance, because replacing the war with police action transforms the opponent into a simple criminal, it removes any political legitimacy, and therefore approves any manifestation of intolerance towards him.

The exigency for the ethical responsibility of political action thus opposes to a morality that sets an absolute limit between "the good boys" and "the bad boys." In fact, it is an appeal to restitution of the political tolerance. The letter of the American intellectuals, quoted above, also underlines the fact that "under certain circumstances and in a certain context, can be morally upheld military activities that risk producing unintended, but foreseeable death of non-combatants" (Bertho, 2003, p. 35). This is a new vision of politics, entirely subject to military reason, taking into consideration that military action now treats non-combatants (civilians, citizens) as an inevitable legitimate target. For Alain Bertho, in this logic, war becomes another way or manner of governing.

Restoring the ethical responsibility of politics lies at the heart of the position adopted by those who oppose to wars, especially the preventive ones. In this sense, there is the possibility of making an analogy regarding the debate on the death penalty. In Europe, the death penalty imposed by the state is considered incompatible with the foundations of democracy and individual rights. The preventive war is the one that admits as morally acceptable the unintentional death of civilians, the sentence of capital punishment imposed on the individuals whose innocence is previously accepted. Therefore, we can speak of a serious violation of a widely accepted legislation in the democratic world. If we are aware of the fact that war is today a condemnation to capital punishment, we cannot refuse to resort to an international legitimate Court that legitimizes violence, namely the United Nations or the International Criminal Court.

5. GLOBALIZATION AS DISSOLUTION OF POLITICS

Globalization, instead, questions the fundamentals of politics for reasons that are not alien to the logic that is currently changing the nature of the wars. Politics is an area of action geared towards the general interest, whose guarantees are the institutions (a system of organized, general and mandatory rules). The politics defined by Claus Offe as a collective and cohesive choice is already put under discussion. To some extent, this thing is due to modernization, which considerably widens the possibilities for choice, though, at the same time, due to over-saturation with these possible choices, globalization is actually emptying of sense the idea of choice (Offe, 1996, pp. 35-38).

Globalization as a phenomenon does not aim the social integrity, it only supposes it. It is only possible when such integrity is achieved at a supranational level. The purpose of globalization is not the general interest, but the preservation of the alienated local interests and the valorisation of the private interests of the globalizing elite as general (global) interests. This global elite is very disparate, it includes the global mass-media, the world of global affairs and the intellectuals from all over the world. Globalization avoids the principle of a general, politics-specific obligation. For that part of humanity that is being globalized, the mandatory is perceived as an obstacle, as if, on the contrary, being globalized means to be completely freed from any limitations, including restrictions on general political interest within national states. Globalization is based on a single and unique obligation, that of which the localized interests to respect the conditions set by elites, limits and global hierarchies.

Viewed from this perspective, globalization seems to be a kind of politics or rather a strategy to transform the principle of cohesion politics in a local principle. This is the reason for which globalization presents itself as a deinstitutionalized policy or politics. Ulrich Beck (2000) uses another term, the one of

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"sub-political" (p. 17), by which he designates the complementary chances of action and exercise of power outside the political system. According to Beck, due to the fact that governments and parliaments, the public sphere and the courts are being circumvented/ bypassed, it results that the social contract is rewritten under the dictatorship of the economic actions.

Globalization is a policy transformation in the sense that it transfers the collective from a sphere of general interests to a sphere of private social spaces, thus signing the death of politics. Globalization is also the end of mass politics, because in the globalized world, the public opinion, represented by a mass-media corporation and intellectuals around the world, acquires only the role of the public, that of a crowd of spectators who participates in events, but who only has the right to acclaim or criticize.

The public opinion can only approve or condemn, but does not participate in making the important decisions or modifying them. It is really broken the connection between opinion and the political elections: the electoral failure of a prime minister or another does not change the overall decision-making structure. Zygmunt Bauman does not believe in the interactivity so praised by the new mass media means, for the access to the global internet network is not universal, being even limited. And if we are referring to those who do not have access to the Internet - and these represent the majority - we find out that they are actually required to be just the viewers of some satellite programs, "their destiny being just simply to watch" (Bauman, 1998, p. 75).

6. CONCLUSIONS

The main problem of globalization is the decline of politics and the end of the civil society. The low interest in politics and the low rate at voting are the symptoms of a worsening problem: can we design a democratic politics without the citizen's participation? Can globalization be part of a democratic project or deny it completely? Replacing the interest of the masses for politics with the one for sports is also very significant. Do we not witness a replacement of traditional political interactions that seem to be blocked?

The new world order - often dubiously considered as a new world chaos - needs weak states in order to maintain and reproduce. It needs neither institutions nor common rules that are accepted and mandatory. But the new world order is far from being chaos. Instead, it is a kind of "globalism politics" which, in the terms used by Beck, refers to the ideology of dominance in the global market that represses and replaces the political action.

The requirement to return to the traditional politics is often seen as an activity that opposes the effects of globalization, opposition which is actually superficial. Instead, we are discussing an ethical requirement according to which the political action should no longer be subject to the logic of the global market and, at the same time, the logic of the strongest one, and hence of the violence of the war. The aim is to render politics its essential mission, to be the guarantor of social integration, but this time not only at national level, but also globally or worldwide.

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