

Does global justice can exist?

»Because a (narrower or wider) universal community widely prevails among the Earth's peoples, a transgression of rights in one place in the world is felt everywhere [...] «

- Immanuel Kant, *To Perpetual Peace. A Philosophical Sketch*

A man once said: *Wars make history exciting. Peace is not worth reading.* And it seems to be a dictum still in force. Which newspaper sells by reporting about happiness among the population instead of the recent financial crisis? Which TV show would be watched when portraying a satisfied family instead of showing famines, pandemics and crimes in the world? And, of course, the best material a journalist can get - war and injustice. It is a marketing strategy highly effective. Beside the self-evidence of the duty to inform the own people, emphasizing injustice in the world basically sells. The average media consumer seems to seek for this on purpose in order to get frightened himself or to judge it with his superior sense of morality. This is the first step of news developing to political material out of journalistic one. Who does not know Neo-Marxists complaining about cruel Capitalism ruining other countries' economies, who does not know feminists complaining about patriarchy ignoring women's rights?

Kant's statement might be read in the two following ways: he might have mentioned exactly the case described above - if we push aside the fact Kant did not know modern media – or he discussed the effect of such a transgression as impact on our societies leading to injustice there as well as a result of a degradation of the stability of law and order. Both interpretations are suitable for the following discussion concerning the possibility of global justice.

Justice is an old dream. It has been dreamed by politicians, philosophers and the many sorely afflicted in a world which seems to be full of cruelties the individual has to face. Justice is meant to be the situation in which every individual feeling endangered of being mistreated is protected in its rights by authority such as state, judiciary and law and order. Immanuel Kant's sketch to achieve global peace highlights the value of justice as pillar of society portraying it as a common aim. This common aim is today one of the key concepts of the United Nations willing to provide peace, liberty, security and also justice to all mankind. The Charter of the United Nations was a milestone on a long way to global justice. But it is obvious that only a few of much effort to achieve this had effects to make a difference.

Therefore the question to be discussed must be the following: Does global justice can exist?

Let us get back to the example of the Marxists and the feminists taking part in various discussions and being a wonderful example for politically engaged citizens dreaming of justice - Marxists of economic justice, feminists of justice for both sexes; both groups are somehow egalitarian, both tend to be rather loud in public and both believe in a theoretical system as the one and only true order. To a certain extent, this last aspect reveals a distinctive relation to Kant believing in his categorical imperative as absolute moral system as well. Once stepped onto the global stage, the theory starts to observe the starting conditions. Because a theory is nothing but human construction, it is necessarily combined with

judgement based on emotion. Maybe only natural sciences can claim to discover without judgement, however, as soon as humans are concerned in anthropological, psychological or sociological theories, emotion turns up shaping the appearance of the theory and even more coining its articulation. As a result of that, Communism was never satisfied with believing in the analysis of economics done by Marx but they were eager to change something about that similar to feminists not stopping to accuse a male-dominated society. Also liberal politicians and citizens get trapped the thought to know the better system and cannot imagine how a tribal system or a theocracy can be preferred by a different culture. Interspersed with emotion, anger and hatred against the other are inevitable. Hatred, because he is wrong, of course wrong, undeniably wrong. And nothing was ever punished more severely in societies than being wrong; every heretic in the European Middle Ages could experience that. Such a universal approach of being right is predetermined to meet resistance. When dividing the world into good and bad as it is typical for Western theoretical approaches to make a difference in the world, necessarily those enemies are spotted quickly. Then the frontlines are clear on the world stage ready to play another act of the play of global conflicts.

Let us have a look at the enemies. They are evil just for the sake of being evil. They are the real life counterparts of the dark side known from every novel which the light side has to face to win against it in the very end. Literature and film industry significantly influence us perceiving things as that easy in a long tradition of religions founding their teaching on the eternal fight of the Good against the Evil – God and Satan are the Platonic ideas for perception of politics throughout history until nowadays.

But things are not that simple. In order to take one step backwards from the issue, the origins of conviction must be observed. What people believe, either of religious or ethical content, is tightly bound to their character. Character, in turn, is deeply rooted in the own cultural background resulting from birthplace, family and education. The dependence of background where everyone could theoretically have been born into necessarily states a relativity of beliefs because no culture and no individual is capable of proving the correctness of its origins. Whether God really engraved his Ten Commandments into stone or sent them in the Quran can neither be proven by Jews nor by Muslims. This scepticism can go that far doubting about every moral system in the world. However, this is obviously not useful. It is only a tool in order to take the step backwards and also questioning the own beliefs because nothing in this world is more dangerous than strict belief in the own convictions which lead to the many wars which crimes against individuals must be regarded as aspects of our understanding of injustice.

But what is justice? We defined it as rights that the individual is endowed with protected by authority, in turn, these rights protect the individual from being mistreated. However, no consensus could ever be found to set up a bill of rights compatible with every culture. Dominance of Western countries in the United Nations coined the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As it is programmatically mentioned in the title, it is a universal approach rejected in many places. The Muslim world set up an own Declaration of Rights in harmony with the principles of the Quran. Which system of justice is now the correct one?

If we want to be just, we use to interfere in other cultures in order to establish our order and to replace the wrong one. The same approach is pursued by ever Jihadist trying to establish his own order and both

actors on the global stage struggling to let the play end according to the own wishes is somehow violent. Even our occidental societies perform violence against other ones when acting out of missionary purpose. It is violence, too, harming others in their way of life and taking away their order away they believe as strong in as we do in our own one. We do not make others happier that way which was our purpose. Justice, therefore, seems to be relative. What we perceive as injustice might be just for someone else and vice versa. But imposing our understanding of justice on others is unjust, too.

The only way of avoiding this must be to ignore events happening in the world. As result of consequent cultural relativism, we just do not interfere in foreign cultures and accept them as they are. Our first interpretation of Kant stating us to feel transgression of rights confronted us with the problem that we are emotionally upset about what happens in the world. This could be easily solved by leaning back and referring to cultural relativism.

On the other hand, not everything happening in the world which does harm to humans is to be explained out of cultural background. Although we agree that no one can be evil out of himself, he can harm others by mistreating them which means he ignores the rights the victim has in the moral system the society both perpetrator and victim were raised in. Especially if it happens on a larger scale such as it is true for war crimes we are able to use it as an example in the current discussion because the media will most probably report about it so public and politics get involved with. Thus, leaning back might be a crime itself when we do not face crime that happens trying to prevent and prosecute it. We can become unjust that way, too, contributing a new point to our insisting thought that justice is relative.

This leads us to the following dilemma: Either we interfere in the world trying to make our stand against transgression of rights either by criminal individuals or governments risking colliding with a different mentality or we lean back and letting crime happen explaining it as natural in other cultures and only focusing on our own society where we want to be happy. Basically, this is the reason for fighting crime. Every crime results in unhappiness in an individual which became a victim. When we already stated that we have to doubt about so many theoretical concepts to which concepts for the meaning of life also belong, one consensus cannot be eradicated from the list of aims in life. Every individual wants to be happy and this must be considered the most important criterion for judging actions. But, going hand in hand with this, not only a victim must be considered in this decision. A prisoner can also be perceived as victim because his personal freedom is limited. But just because he became criminal, the society is safer when he is prevented from committing further crimes, firstly, because he is unable to do this in prison and secondly, because he might be re-socialised. So happiness of many more people is protected when crime is prosecuted. Prosecution thus justifies itself somehow in a utilitarian way.

Applying this to other cultures, trying to help an individual out of danger to be mistreated would offend a whole culture because what we perceive as mistreating is usual cultural heritage. Not only extreme examples should be considered here. Also polygamy, burqa etc. could be considered to be crime from a Western point of view; however, this judgement happens due to own morale education and bringing up. Especially the feminists mentioned in the introduction easily get caught by the wish to interfere in foreign countries in order to establish the own, pretending to be the much better system.

The question is now, how this dilemma can be solved. Because of our both extreme points of polarised opinions, the idea to pursue a dialectical approach immediately crosses one's mind. In order to stay in the tradition of the Aristotelian middle (*mesotes*) between two extremes or the Buddhist middle (*majjhima*) path, we have to set up a principle guiding our role in the world. It is unavoidable to question Kant's categorical imperative. Deontological thinking might rather lead to the reversed result because a good idea to make a difference usually turns out to devastating effects as the so-called war on terror had as well. But also teleological thinking is not enough because then we might ignore the means we use in order to justify our end. Therefore, a middle path between both concepts might be needed as well. Max Weber pointed out that politicians need to act according to ethics of responsibility combining both previously mentioned concepts rather than according to ethics of casts of mind equal to pure deontological ethics. This ethical concept we choose now does not allow us to interfere in other cultures in an ignorant way. As we already pointed out, trust in the superiority of our values is not suitable on the global stage. The criterion of giving justice to people must be applied on two levels: We have to protect individual rights for the aim to allow humans to reach happiness as well as the rights societies and cultures have, especially the right to exist. Deciding about that not by applying Utilitarianism but rather a fair system of respect to individuals and groups is the key concept to act in the world without devastating results. Especially communication is fundamentally necessary because an external view on a society enhances misinterpretation already present.

William Shakespeare said: *The whole world is a stage and all men and women are only actors. They appear and disappear and throughout his whole life everyone plays many a role.* The principles mentioned above might make up a guideline for us to behave properly on the world stage playing our role as well as we can to reach happiness for ourselves and to help others reaching it. But the question from the beginning is left. Can we reach global justice? At first, we have to admit that justice is highly subjective. *Quot homines, tot sententiae.* Creating a Utopia has been always a wrong path chosen by so many dreamers although it is basically impossible to build such a perfect world. But as long as humans exist, we can struggle to make a difference and to give justice to as many as possible according to the principles we impose on ourselves including respect for other cultures, a sense for the needs of a society, empathy, negation of the thought of own superiority, communication and a suitable ethical system of responsibility for all mankind, principles, that grow out of true wisdom. Then, only then, we might be able to go forward in achieving justice and to put an end to the play of global conflicts we only enhance when trying to change something without such principles. We must develop a wisdom suitable to become the director of the play in order to put it at a happy end. If we fail to do so, we only become marionettes of the forces which want to harm and pretending to do good we do bad. *Simul iustus et peccator* we become guilty by pursuing reasonable aims just as the ones we considered to be our antagonists in the play caught in this dilemma just in the same manner. In this play, no real antagonist exists anymore if you once get the rules of it. The only antagonist is the lack of wisdom.