

The Bouillon of IR Theories or How the Concept of Identity and Identity Politics has Emerged

Before 1990s there was a tendency towards a homogenization of the society, however, the new globalization wave was formed upon the differences. The main feature of this process was the emphasis on the differences. It attempted to establish a relative culture. Thus, it provided an opportunity for different identities to express themselves.

Those identities were of individual, group, ethnicity, social-civic society nature. As it is known, globalization was against state-centric approach, since bureaucracy of the state and state-centric approach were preventing the circulation of the capital. Thus, last wave of globalization on the basis of pluralism has integrated various individual and group identities into the political area in order to decrease the importance of the state and make the borders meaningless. State's strong structure was to be turned into set of small elements, which would speed up the circulation of the capital; which in fact, is the liberalism itself. Alongside with the neo-liberal globalization, social- state structure became empty and a vacuum came out. At this point, different identities tended to fill this emptiness. During this period, liberalism was considered as the winner of the confrontation and in parallel with the collapse of Soviet Union, Fukuyama's "End of History" thesis was put forward. Since there was no another thinking to be proposed, identities came on the first plan. Alongside with these processes, human rights, being another argument of the neo-liberal globalization, were forming the agenda. This provided the opportunity for the identities to be presented on the arena and have a voice.

During this period, Huntington's 3rd wave of globalization also was in influential process. The specifics of this process were norms, values, culture, individualism and autonomy. In fact, on the one side, the political transition and changes on Balkans and ex-Soviet territories, collapse

of the state-centric approach, and, on the other side, taking into consideration the identity “patchiness” of those countries. During this period, neo-liberalism globalization has reached its objective: established micro-structures were not an obstacle for the capital circulation, instead boosted it. Thus, we have witnessed the wave of mini-state formations on the territories of former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. In short, identity politics was the instrument for new state-building processes.

The events that started to develop by the end of 1980s beginning of 1990s had shown that academia of International Relations discipline is not ready to explain the changes erupted. The shifts in the world politics were so radical and at the same level unexpected that stumped the academia into a deadlock. In a short period of time different theoretical approaches, that seemed unshakable, have failed to explain the rapidly changing world. The collapse of the Soviet Union has resulted in a political vacuum and formation of several zones of conflict on ethnical and religious grounds. There was a need to explain what happened from a theoretical point of view, since neither traditional theories nor the post-modernism due to its either critics, rejection and no concrete explanations of what is it, were able to do so. Here, the article of Alexander Wendt “Anarchy is what states make of it” published in 1992 and later his book “Social Theory of International Politics” (1999) have provided an answer to the question of what happened on the milestones of 1980s-90s. Thus, IR academicians, evaluating the current circumstances, have addressed to the constructivism, which in fact is the juncture point of positivism and post-positivism.

Constructivist approach quiet rapidly became popular providing explanation of the changes and their causes. This distinguished it from the more static grand approaches where change was a strange concept as such. It demonstrated the importance of identities and their role in determining the interests, thus explaining the collapse of the Soviet block and formation of dozens of independent states in the post-Cold period as well as the conflicts rising on the basis of those identities. Constructivism, unlike realists even in their 'neo' versions, emphasized the role of history, immaterial power of norms, values, ideas, interpretations and language, thus explaining the effect of Gorbachev's "New Thinking" of the dissolution of Soviet Union and rapid wide spreading of neo-liberal globalization.

Shortly, neo-liberal globalization of 1990s has an impact on the changes in capital accumulation process (like Fordism, flexible production and, later, post-fordism), and technology innovations related to it (communication and transportation), which have resulted in the formation of new global system, constructed by civil society. In fact, constructivism is social one and international politics have put emphasis on individuals, groups, and their identities. From this point of view, the new world has emerged, leaded by United States of America. Within this new world, constructivists have redefined all concepts of IR according to the existed conditions and as critics of constructivism stated, the IR theories have touched upon all the possible concepts and did not find any virgin one, but the concept of identity by the end taken by constructivists.