

Khatuna Chapichadze
Georgia

NEOLIBERAL POLICY: MEASURE FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION/TRANSFORMATION OR ESCALATION?

Summary:

General assumption suggests that neoliberal policy is an efficient strategy for conflict resolution/ transformation and/ or has conflict preventive function. This theory is based on the logical expectation of peace as a necessary condition for productive economic activity, while getting as much profit as possible seems ideal in a peaceful environment. The examples of internally conflict less contemporary prosperous states practicing neoliberal approach (the US, Great Britain, modern China - through merging, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, etc.) have to be taken into consideration in this regard.

However, development of neoliberalism – s. c. neoliberalization, but first of all consequences of this process apparently show different stages of conflict evolution in different regions and countries of the world directly affected by neoliberal policy. The US war in Iraq, military operations in Afghanistan, Syria, etc. can be discussed as illustrations of great economic interest of key neoliberal powers to gain maximum profit and material resources in developing countries, rich with such resources and potential, that are already successfully made as economic and/ or political/ military bases for the neoliberal superpowers, whether are targeted as such.

Competition as an integral part of neoliberal system and one of the determining factors for its success can also be a counterargument to the interpretation of neoliberalism as a peaceful doctrine and practice. The complex nature especially of human relationships, for instance, in the workplace, as well as in a society at large, conflictual tensions and/or conflict escalation within socium, are of great importance while analyzing violent or peaceful essence and/ or effects of neoliberal development.

In addition, much more massive social tension based on increasing inequality has to be taken into account, under neoliberalism.

Keywords:

neoliberal policy; conflict resolution/ transformation; conflict escalation; conflict prevention; neoliberal powers/ superpowers; developing countries; revival

of ultra-nationalism; social gap; the poor; middle class; elitism; competition; s. c. neoliberalization

Main thesis

General assumption suggests that neoliberal policy is an efficient strategy for conflict resolution/transformation and/or has conflict preventive function. This theory is based on the logical expectation of peace as a necessary condition for productive economic activity, while getting as much profit as possible seems ideal in a peaceful environment. In parallel with in fact more unstable in economic, social or political terms, however much accepted in the mainstream liberal optimist arguments provided on the issue mainly by Immanuel Kant¹, Raymond Vernon², Richard Rosecrance³, Manchester school⁴, functionalists⁵, neo-classical economists⁶, etc., as well as in spite of the dominant theories of capitalist and democratic peace⁷, structural realists⁸, Marxists⁹ and even Samuel Huntington¹⁰ share more pragmatic and reliable evidence-based opinions contradictory to the liberal optimism, although from a different angle. The examples of internally conflict less contemporary prosperous states practicing neoliberal approach (the US, Great Britain, through merging - modern China, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, etc.) have to be taken into consideration from the optimist perspective.

On the contrary though, the internal processes per se taking place currently in the world's most successful liberal-democracies developed and strengthened not less importantly through the miracles of neoliberal economic growth of the 70s and 80s of the 20th century, can be considered as in fact confirmation of the existing social gap if not of a conflict between the elite powers and the public at large, the latter containing not only the poor segments of the societies but more significantly for the object, and thus, content-change of the traditional, two-component contradiction analysis or qualitatively for a new analysis, also the

¹ I. Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, New York 1957, p. 32.

² R. Vernon, *Sovereignty at Bay: The Multinational Spread of US Enterprises*, New York 1971.

³ R. Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World*, New York 1986.

⁴ J. Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War*, New York 1989.

⁵ Ch. Moon, *Market Forces and Security*, Unu.edu, <<http://archive.unu.edu/unupress/marketforces.html#linking>> (08.12.2016).

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ B. Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World*, Princeton 1993.

⁸ K. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Reading 1979.

⁹ V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, New York 1939.

¹⁰ S. P. Huntington, *The Clashes of Civilizations?*, "Foreign Affairs", Vol. 72, No 3.

middle classes in these countries. At certain degree the apparent revival of ultra-nationalist and in general right-wing groups, but firstly of such moods in the public, fears to be translated as different sorts of phobias in such progressively assessed societies for decades or even centuries as are France, Germany, Great Britain, the US or in less developed post-socialist or post-Soviet states the explanation for which could be more logical and easy to understand under the post-socialist and post-Soviet syndrome essentially, is well-grounded in increasing social alienation of the populations, especially of the local ones towards the governments and undoubtedly their elitism irrespective at the same time to their ideological or simply conceptual standpoints regarding the economic, social or foreign policy arrangements in a particular society. Nowadays, the differences between the leftist and rightist platforms of the political elites no more can serve as reliable arguments for electoral or other public choices in the successful Western democracies as well. Along with the external threats perceived as such in the public discourse – migrants and increasing unemployment frequently associated with it or terrorism without borders, more culturally analyzed as fears of loss of identity and/or of traditional resources for being secure or keeping dominance/ privileges over the new-comers for instance, elitism of the small number of people in the face of government and other ruling social strata serve as the main source of massive distrust and even aggression for the large public. Starting ironically from France, the first European country where the institutional development of the Western liberal-democracy took place, and the growing national and European success of ultra-nationalist French National Front in the last years, the increasing Euroscepticism in the rest of major EU countries or already out of it (in the US) with the nationalist success in the United Kingdom demonstrated through its withdrawal from the European Union (commonly known as Brexit) that was based on an advisory referendum held in June 2016, the outcomes of the recent Presidential Elections in the US with the victory of neoliberal, businessman and populist, Republican candidate – Donald Trump with his extraordinary, however deeply conservative and non-politically correct rhetoric against migrants, Muslims, women, LGBTQ or other minority or less-privileged groups of a society, are very symptomatic. Even though it might seem absurd at first glance, although the successes of ultra-nationalism and radical right-wing that could be perceived as certain guarantees for the political, social, economic, religious, etc. protection by the local population and felt beneficial for their positions in the societies, but the victory of even intrinsically economically neoliberal and thus, far from the support of a policy oriented towards decreasing social inequality gaps between the elite powers and the public again, however supplied with “more sincere or open” populist rhetoric that triumphed in the US through the November 8, 2016 Presidential Elections and which matched first of all with the interests of white, middle-class Americans, also reveals the massive needs for much more socially, economically and politically inclusive approaches and policies, where elit-

ism even with more leftist and progressive contents seems distant from large public discourse and so, appears abandoned by the latter to any possible chance despite all the progress made or to happen under also widely promoted American Dream and exclusive ambitions for the achievements by this superpower or super nation.

Along with much more massive social tension scenario/s based on increasing inequality triggered under neoliberalism, competition as an integral part of neoliberal system and one of the determining factors for its success can also be a counterargument to the interpretation of neoliberalism as a peaceful doctrine and practice. The complex nature especially of human relationships, for instance, in the workplace, as well as in a society at large, conflictual tensions and/or conflict escalation within it, are of great importance while analyzing violent or peaceful essence and/or effects of neoliberal development.

S. c. neoliberalization – development of neoliberalism, but first of all consequences of this process apparently show different stages of conflict evolution in different regions and countries of the world directly affected by neoliberal policy as well. The US war in Iraq, military operations in Afghanistan, Syria, etc. can be discussed as illustrations of great economic interest of key neoliberal powers to gain maximum profit and material resources in developing countries, rich with such resources and potential, that are already successfully made as economic and/or political/military bases for the neoliberal superpowers, whether are targeted as such.

Conclusion

Regardless of the commonly dominant assumption that neoliberal policy is an efficient strategy for conflict resolution/transformation and/or has conflict preventive function, the idea supported by the liberal postulates and widely popular theories of capitalist and democratic peace, mainly structural realists and Marxists share more realistic arguments in opposition to the liberal optimism, however from a distinct perspective.

However there can be traditionally provided the examples of internally conflict less contemporary prosperous states practicing neoliberal approach (the US, Great Britain, through merging – modern China, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, etc.), but the internal processes as such taking place currently in the world's most successful liberal-democracies advanced importantly as a consequence of the neoliberal economic progress made especially in the 70s and 80s of the 20th century, demonstrate the existing social gap if not a conflict between the elite powers and the public at large, where the latter significantly includes also the middle classes in these societies, along with the poor.

The apparent revival of ultra-nationalist and in general right-wing groups, but firstly of such tendencies in France, Germany, Great Britain, the US or less developed post-socialist, whether post-Soviet states can be explained by in-

creasing social alienation of the populations towards the governments and undoubtedly their elitism irrespective at the same time to ideological or simply conceptual standpoints of them regarding the economic, social or foreign policy arrangements in a particular society. Nowadays, the differences between the leftist and rightist platforms of the political elites no more can serve as reliable arguments for electoral or other public choices in the successful Western democracies as well.

Along with much more massive social tension scenario/s based on increasing inequality triggered under neoliberalism, competition as an integral part of neoliberal system and one of the defining factors for its success can also be a counterargument to the interpretation of neoliberalism as a peaceful doctrine and practice.

S. c. neoliberalization – development of neoliberalism, but first of all consequences of this process apparently show different stages of conflict evolution in different regions and countries of the world directly affected by neoliberal policy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Books and articles:

- ✓ Huntington S. P., *The Clashes of Civilizations?*, "Foreign Affairs", Vol. 72, No 3
- ✓ Kant I., *Perpetual Peace*, New York 1957
- ✓ Lenin V. I., *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, New York 1939
- ✓ Mueller J., *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War*, New York 1989
- ✓ Rosecrance R., *The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World*, New York 1986
- ✓ Russett B., *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World*, Princeton 1993
- ✓ Waltz K., *Theory of International Politics*, Reading 1979
- ✓ Vernon R., *Sovereignty at Bay: The Multinational Spread of US Enterprises*, New York 1971

Internet sources

- ✓ Moon Ch., *Market Forces and Security*, Unu.edu,
<<http://archive.unu.edu/unupress/marketforces.html#linking>>
(08.12.2016)