

## PHILOSOPHY OF GLOBAL SECURITY

Vihren Bouzov

**Abstract.** We are living in an imbalanced and insecure world. It is torn by violent conflicts on a global scale: between the West and the East, between rich and poor countries, between Christianity and Islam, between the Great Forces and naughty countries, between a global capitalist elite and workers and between the global democratic community and global terrorism. An optimistic thesis will be grounded asserting that varied cultures and civilizations can solve all existing problems and contradictions peacefully and can carry out mutually advantageous cooperation more effectively irrespective of differences between them.

Security problems can be explained and defined by means of making use of fundamental philosophical notions. All levels of security are interrelated on a global scale. The problem of regulation of international relations worldwide as regards guaranteeing security of all participants in them is one of primary importance. The present-day multi-polar world could be based on a social and economic pluralism and peace culture.

Key words: global security, cultures, conflicts, peace culture

### *Philosophy of Globalization*

The problem of the effects of global economy and global transformations on human individual and common life and values is topical in present-day philosophical discussions on human nature and society. In the Globalization era today we are facing a situation in which human affairs are weighed and valued in a worldwide context. It features a new historical period of the development of capitalism on our planet - as the result of unprecedented progress of information and communication technologies, internationalization of economic life, free movement, cultural exchange and political cooperation against common threats. People are no longer individuals-subjects of limitations in a nation state and nation society (from birth to dead) - they have to live in the context of dynamic worldwide processes going on. The world has already become a mixture of closely interconnected cultures, nations, religions and ethnic communities.

The neoliberal values and utopic development projects claim to be universal therapy for all economic and social diseases of the present-day world. The deepening of economic and social imbalances on our planet is a lasting result of the neoliberal globalization. Our planet does not have adequate resources to secure high standard of living for all humans, on a par with that of the richest people and elites. The latter are not concerned at all with the making of change and development of the humankind. Moreover, the world today is increasingly divided by regional and civil wars, by violent conflict for redistribution of resources bringing huge misery for people, state destruction and forced migration floods.

The universal capitalist expansion transforms existing relations in the ranks of humankind: dynamic changes in them in recent decades have given an impetus to coordinated work in solving economic, political, social and cultural problems of states and their citizens. It accounts for the incredible scope of hunger, poverty and diseases among the population of our planet. The use of knowledge, information and communicative innovations is also very unevenly distributed, mainly benefiting citizens of the most advanced countries. J. Fulcher is right in saying that although it is often considered that global capitalism integrated world, it, as a matter of fact, permanently brings about more division into the distribution of wealth<sup>1</sup>.

It could be said that social and economic inequalities are prerequisites for the existence of lasting inequalities in the field of knowledge, the most important resource of the Global era. Practically, the developing countries and the poorest people in the world are deprived any social perspective. Their number has increased as a result of the use of neoliberal strategies.

#### *Global Conflicts: Aspects and Levels of Security*

Security problems can be explained and defined by means of making use of fundamental philosophical notions. All levels of security are interrelated on a global scale.

The notion of „social subject” in present-day social research is connected with stable roles played, or positions taken up: individuals, communities, groups, institutions or organizations, society, and even mankind as a whole, could play roles or take up positions. Social subjects, individual or collective, are distinguished by their consciousness and self-consciousness, and their capacity to make free choice. They enter into a variety of social relationships. The criterion of subjectivity spells out ability to make and realize autonomous decisions. This definition only pertains to living and social systems, based on communication.

The ‘social subject’ develops, and partakes of the nature of different relationships with the world and the environment: in them it strives for realization of its natural forces. One might rightfully say that it is very difficult for ‘the game model’ of social relationships to reveal the nature of a subject’s development; rather, the game model only dwells on its abilities and efforts to manage or not to manage a given environment. From this point of view, we should speak

---

<sup>1</sup> James Fulcher, *Kapitalizmut. Kratko vavedenie [Capitalism. A Short Introduction]* (Sofia: „Z. Stojanov”, 2008), 195 (in Bulgarian);

about security as of a notion related to different types of social subjects: individuals, social groups, organizations, society and mankind as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

Security can be defined as a process of support of a satisfactory control by the subject over harmful effects of 'the environment'. Such control can guarantee the existence-per norm-of a given social subject or a social system. The ability of a social subject to successfully cope with harmful effects of environment draws a dynamic dividing line between security and insecurity.

An environment can be natural or social, not affected or created by human intervention. The Copenhagen School of International Security Studies perceives of environment, or a strategic part of it, as a referent object in security maintenance<sup>3</sup>. The social subject is in active interaction with the environment, and is striving for control over negative effects of the latter, concerned with its own survival. Apart from „the factor of nature” in human environment, the technological world, developed by human beings, has an import of its own, too. It makes up the main difference between human environment and environment of other living organisms. A vast majority of effects in human environment are caused by different subjects: individuals or groups of such. The participants in a social interaction vie with each other in the distribution of specific amounts of resources and their rivalry struggle is an essential trait of a given security environment. People do not establish relationships with nature only, while endeavoring to transform it in order to fall in with their aims and interests. They establish relationships with other people and human institutions as well - with more important influence on their own development. A security environment can be identified with the system of a subject's social relationships.

This definition of security is burdened with the activist values of the Modern Time. Security is closely related to power and the imposition of somebody's power will. The notion of security is connected with the program of Modernity: it explains its ties with such modernist conceptions as „freedom” and „human rights”, „social contract” and „nation state”.

---

<sup>2</sup>Vihren Bouzov, “On the Conception of Security (A Philosophical Approach)”, *Analele Universitatii din Oradea, Fascicula Sociologie-Asistenta Sociala-Filozofie* N IX, 2010, 9-17;

<sup>3</sup>Barry Buzan, Lene Hansen, *The Evolution of International Security Studies* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 13-16, 212-217;

The view set out above features new dimensions of „the epic conflict between security and freedom”<sup>4</sup>; itself with a long history, indeed. These two notions, security and freedom, are related to the modernist project, but it could be said, that there exists tension exists between them. The safeguarding of security might entail limitation of individual freedom, so that unlimited freedom and security of all forms could be mutually excluded. Freedom is associated with responsibility for communitarian or social values - and security is one of them. Personal freedom could enter into controversial relationships with the freedom of others. Freedom is a personification of subjectivity, but security is crucial in the development of the subject.

Security can exist in normal set-ups or in crisis. The normal development of the social subject spells out ability of it to realize satisfactory control over the impact of environment. When crisis come up the social subject is not able to control environmental impacts successfully; and its existence and development could be jeopardized. Concerned with his own survival, a social subject is in active interaction with it and is striving for control over negative effects on it. Such control can guarantee the existence-per norm-of a given social subject or a social system. Otherwise an individual or social a system would come up against crisis situations. Crisis-determining factors could be classified as challenges, risks and threats.

A challenge is a critical state of the security environment, calling for certain answer. A threat is also a state of the environment, when it manifests itself in a normal framework. It can be revealed in a direct way, as a phenomenon immediately preceding a crisis. Risks are threats of an unknown, constant duration.

The following classification of principal levels and aspects of security could be well justified: personal, group (communal or organizational), state, regional and worldwide levels.<sup>5</sup> The first three of them are components of the content of the notion of national security. A individual state’s security is the leader in this system; it connects national to international security, the second principal aspect of security, while the latter encompasses interactions of different types of agents at regional and world level. Globalization shifts the accent of security problems onto the world level; as regards mutual commitment between global and local levels, it is of

---

<sup>4</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Obshnostta – tursene na sigurnost v nesigurnia sviat [Community. Seeking Safety in an Insecure World]* ( Sofia: “Lik”) 32 (in Bulgarian);

<sup>5</sup> Dimiter Ionchev, *Ravnishta na sigurnost [Levels of Security]* (Sofia: New Bulgarian University Press, 2008), 16-18 (in Bulgarian);

determining nature. All levels of security are mutually interrelated – a challenge on one level affects all of them and problems of security concern personal level and worldwide level alike.

We are living in an imbalanced and insecure world. It is torn by violent conflicts on a global scale: – between the West and the East, the USA and Russia, between rich and poor countries, between Christianity and Islam, between the Great Forces and naughty countries, between a global capitalist elite and workers and between the global democratic community and global terrorism. The powerful countries are in confrontation, striving to gain control over trade routes and natural resources.

Global conflicts cover huge part of our planet drawing humankind as a whole into them. Persevering and intractable, they determine the nature of major events in human life. In the past few decades the number of regional conflicts has been growing without let-up and none of them has come to an end as yet. One can rightfully say that the threat of unleashing a devastating world war has not been done away with.

The neoliberal globalization now apace deprives of life prospects millions of people and whole countries; increasing at the wealth of others at the same time. The world today can be easily destroyed by wars and economic conflicts, even by industrial accidents: this world exists in a dynamic state of transience. What can we do and what kind of future we can have in this dramatic situation?

An important task for philosophers and social scientists is that of explaining the nature and defining the underlying factors of these global conflicts and search for possible solutions and best prospects for humankind. In next chapter I make an attempt to spotlight certain critical arguments against one of the most ridiculous explanations of the global conflicts – cultural relativism (cultural imperialism).

### *Clash of Cultures or Confrontation of Civilizations*

Today, irrationalism continues to dominate in the social, political and intellectual life of humankind. So far as a strategy it has not succeeded in devising means of solving its problems effectively. Free critical discussion is the most reliable tool in the drive of intellectuals against irrationalism. It could hardly make the latter retreat, but could shatter the positions of irrationalism in the minds of reasonable people. It could also be a means of searching for consensus in shared, common interests.

The latest crisis with the terrorist attack against the yellow French magazine Charlie Hebdo, which has published provocative caricatures against Islam, and the crisis with refugees – the new enemy of the rich EU-countries are another confirmation of the present existing and deepening process of internal war and the fundamental division of the West.

Cultural relativism is the philosophical basis of a doctrine according to which cultures today are in fierce rivalry and all future conflicts will be caused by cultural differences. As is well known, it is a doctrine upholding the view that mutual understanding and conciliation between different cultures are impossible. Thus, it makes senseless any endeavors for integration and dialogues in the search for acceptable solutions to controversial issues and stands for a policy of confining cultural and ethnic communities within their boundaries. Cultural relativism substitutes tolerance for violence and cultural imperialism.

An optimistic thesis will be grounded asserting that varied cultures and civilizations can solve all existing problems and contradictions peacefully and can carry out mutually advantageous cooperation more effectively irrespective of differences between them. The most eloquent example here is S. Huntington's hypothesis of 1993 - that far-reaching cultural differences between cultures (civilizations) will kindle future world wars<sup>6</sup>. As a cognitive deception or manipulation, this kind of cultural relativism is unattractive, but as a basis for practical policy- it is a hazardous doctrine. The event of 9.11 and the wars ignited by the Great Powers in the Middle East seem to confirm the ominous prophecy of that American historian. The present day claims on downfall of multiculturalism (Sarkozy, Merkel) are also an illustration of such kind of ideas.

Cultural relativism is a generalization of epistemological relativism. It claims that mutual understanding and joint activities between different theories and hypotheses is impossible. Yet the meaning of terms and laws is different. They go through changes in case of transition to a new theory. Theories cannot reach objective truth – their results are determined by historical and psychological factors. Two scientific theories or paradigms cannot be compared by checking experience, because it is theoretically charged.

The same arguments are developed by relativists as regards different cultures. It is even more difficult to compare them: they are symbolic worlds of values and meanings specific for a

---

<sup>6</sup> Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 72, 1993, 22-49; S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon&Schuster, 1996);

respective community. We can talk about different cultures on the basis of specific ethnic, national, political, social, and regional and gender features. In our countering cultural relativism we should look for support from some of the most eminent contemporary rationalist philosophers: Karl Popper and his theory of rational discussion, Donald Davidson and his rejection of the indeterminacy of translation and Hilary Putnam with his analogy between cultural relativism and cultural imperialism.<sup>7</sup>

For „a cultural imperialist”, all notions - reason, truth and evidence - are his own constructions, they can only be thought of in terms of his culture. This doctrine could lead to very dangerous social and political consequences. Eurocentrism, westernization, neoliberalism and the doctrine of Western domination and the new Western nationalism are all forms of cultural imperialism. Cultural imperialism creates S. Huntington’s nightmare: the West is left alone against all the others. This makes us think of the final episode in a famous movie: hidden in a small shed, P. Newman and R. Redford beat off the attack of the whole Bolivian army outside...

Indeed, all people are committed to certain cultural tradition. Its history, customs, norms and language make up a unique unity. We are able to reason about them - about norms, customs, history etc. – our own and foreign ones. We can criticize them, we can accept some of them and can reject others. We are able to study the history, customs, norms and language of a nation - and we can change them. In the Globalization era technologies now have transformed the one-time boundless world into a “vast village” (M. McLuhan). The dynamic clash of cultures and free communications erase lines of demarcation today.

### *Towards a New Structure of the Global Security*

Illustrated below is the possibility of applying the game-theoretic philosophy of decisions-making to the selection of a political strategy of building up a more effective system of

---

<sup>7</sup> Vihren Bouzov, “Rejection of Cultural Relativism (Some Arguments)” , in: *Obshtestva v prehod – teoria i praktika [Societies in Transition – Theory and Practice]*, III th International Conference of the Council of Europe (Veliko Turnovo: 1998), 229-235; Karl Popper, “The Myth of the Framework”, *The Myth of the Framework. In Defence of Science and Rationality* , ed. Notturmo, M. (ed.) (London: Routledge, 1996), 33-65; Hilary Putnam, “Why Reason Can’t be Naturalized?”, in: *Epistemology: an anthology*, E. Sosa&J. Kim (eds.) (Malden, MA: Blackweel Publ, 1982), 314-324.

international security. Political relations – international ones in particular, can be modeled as game interactions in which there are certain strategies of pursuing success or profit. The system of international security inherited from Globalization era is unable to overcome regional conflicts and new threats to humankind.

The world today is faced up with two alternatives: unipolar world with a monopoly of power-imposed solution to global conflicts, or multi-polar world, based on the balance of power and consensus in the common interests of guaranteeing security and social values. The unipolar world is dominated and ruled by global economic and political elites, it is a world of permanent wars and confrontation of civilizations, of West and East. The multi-polar world could be based on a power balance, social and economic pluralism and peace culture.

The accepted orientation to the model of making collective decisions by proxy appears to lead to negative consequences for our insecure world. Today there exists a widespread view that the „New World Order” of dominance of one superpower, the U.S., committed to settling the world conflicts with power intervention - is not a permanent security guarantee. Unless the U.S., NATO and the EU assume the role of proxy in situational coalitions created under their control.<sup>8</sup>

Other more promising strategy is to choose a dominant option. One option should be dominant for decision-makers, if they prefer its outcome to be the outcome of each other option, making other participants to act. If such option is not available, and if ambiguity exists, an agent might make a choice as per a rationalizable possibility, dominating in a current situation. More often than not it leads to a decision finding an equilibrium (balance) in the game.<sup>9</sup> The model suggested above allows the formation of coalitions based on a limited consensus among several parties. The choice of a dominant option postulates an option of finding equilibrium or cooperative decisions, acceptable to each party; they do not make their status worse. In the context of international relations the imposition of such a model of management and settlement of crises calls for overcoming the unipolar insecure world and emergence of new leaders in the ranks of existing global opposition.

---

<sup>8</sup> Vihren Bouzov, “Political Confrontation Today and the Global Terrorism Challenges to the Balkans”, in: *Tradition, Modernization and Identities 4. Dialogue of Cultures and Partnership of Civilizations on the Balkans* (Nis, Faculty of Philosophy, 2014) 107-113;

<sup>9</sup> Frederick Schick, *Making Choices. A Recasting of Decision Theory* (Cambridge University Press: 2007);

Security in such a world would be based not only on a balance of forces, but also on value-motivated consensus around common interests and shared responsibilities. It could be said that this is the sole realistic road to finding solutions in the now raging global energy and financial crisis, to the overcoming of existing geopolitical confrontation, reducing poverty and the ecological crisis by means of reducing emissions, with due respect for the interests of developing countries.

## REFERENCES

- Barry Buzan, Lene Hansen, *The Evolution of International Security Studies* (Cambridge University Press, 2009);
- Dimiter Ionchev, *Ravnishta na sigurnost [Levels of Security]* (Sofia: New Bulgarian University Press, 2008) (in Bulgarian);
- Frederick Schick, *Making Choices. A Recasting of Decision Theory* (Cambridge University Press: 2007);
- James Fulcher, *Kapitalizmut. Kratko vavedenie [Capitalism. A Short Introduction]* (Sofia: „Z. Stojanov”, 2008), (in Bulgarian);
- Hillary Putnam, “Why Reason Can’t be Naturalized?”, in: *Epistemology: an anthology*, E. Sosa&J. Kim (eds.) (Malden, MA: Blackweel Publ, 1982), 314-324;
- Karl Popper, “The Myth of the Framework”, *The Myth of the Framework. In Defence of Science and Rationality*, ed. Notturmo, M. (ed.) (London: Routledge, 1996), 33-65;
- Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?”, *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 72 (1993), 22-49;
- Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of World Order*. (New York: Simon&Schuster, 1996);
- Vihren Bouzov, “Rejection of Cultural Relativism (Some Arguments)” , in: *Obshtestva v prehod – teoria i praktika [Societies in Transition – Theory and Practice]*, III th International Conference of the Council of Europe(Veliko Turnovo: 1998), 229-235;
- Vihren Bouzov, “On the Conception of Security (A Philosophical Approach)”, *Analele Universitatii din Oradea, Fascicula Sociologie-Asistenta Sociala-Filozofie* N IX, (2010), 9-17;
- Vihren Bouzov, “Political Confrontation Today and the Global Terrorism Challenges to the Balkans”, in: *Tradition, Modernization and Identities 4. Dialogue of Cultures and Partnership of Civilizations on the Balkans* (Nis, Faculty of Philosophy, 2014) 107-113;
- Zygmunt Bauman, *Obshnostta – tursene na sigurnost v nesigurnia sviat [Community. Seeking Safety in an Insecure World]* ( Sofia: “Lik”) (in Bulgarian);
- VIHREN BOUZOV is Professor of Legal Philosophy and Logic of Social Sciences at St. Cyril and St. Methodius University in Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria. He is the author of “Rationality , Decisions and Norms in the Globalization Era (Essays in Practical Logic)” (IVIS, 2011) and co-author of “A Treatise of Legal Philosophy and General Jurisprudence” V.12, “A History of the Philosophy of Law in Europe XX Century. The World of Civil Law”, E. Pattaro (ed.), Springer, 2015. His essay „Rationality, Decision and Choice” has been published in the Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science (Volume 236, 2003) and he has publications in the fields of legal philosophy, political decision theory and philosophy of politics also in Italy, Austria, Poland, Romania, Czech Republic, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Serbia. Contact: [v.bouzov@gmail.com](mailto:v.bouzov@gmail.com).**