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## **MORAL FOUNDATIONS OF EUROPE IN UPCOMING WORLD ORDER**

### **Summary**

It is possible to assert that moral foundations of Europe are general moral values. In the paper author attempted to find out the origins of these foundations, as well as their role in contemporary and future world. The author came to conclusion that a precondition for their preservation is a re-definition of the concept “being a European” in direction of one model of increasingly inclusive identity.

Key words: Europe, moral foundations, Kant, peace, liberalism, justice, normative will, inclusion

### **THE ESSENTIALS OF EUROPE**

When addressing the issue of the “moral foundations of Europe”, it is appropriate to make an attempt first to identify that what can be named as the “essentials of Europe”. In other words, what is central to Europe’s distinctness? Without having the ambition to offer an exhaustive taxonomy of these essentials, I think that the following list covers some truly important features of the identity of Europe. The first is in the domain of geography and ethnography, the second addresses Europe’s religious and cultural traditions, the third its historical relevance, the fourth covers the field of politics, while the fifth deals with an important aspect of the relations among European states throughout their history. In summarized form, a list of Europe’s essentials would then look as follows:

- 1) A relatively small continent inhabited by a range of different ethnic groups and cultures, originating in the migration of populations and the continent’s separation by rivers, mountains, lakes, valleys and seas.

- 2) A Judeo-Christian religious and ancient Greek and Roman cultural tradition.
- 3) A strong relevance for world history, both in terms of power (conquest) and in terms of culture and science.
- 4) A tradition of liberalism and democracy.
- 5) The recurrence of wars among states, conflicts between ethnic and religious groups, and even genocides.

It is obvious that the fifth essential stands out as one that sheds a grim light on the identity of Europe. The first half of the twentieth century represents in that regard a particularly sad episode in Europe's history. On the other hand, we see in the second half of that century, simultaneously with international relations that are marked by the Cold War, the emergence of an unprecedented peace project: the European Union, with the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Community (EC) as its precursors. The heart of this peace project is nicely formulated in the official motto of the European Union: "*In varietate concordia*" ("United in Diversity"). The ECSC/EEC/EC/EU, however, does not only have a historical and pragmatic background as an initial attempt to minimize the chance of states resorting to wars (in perspective of Europe's violent past), but also a rationale in something that leads us to the primary theme of this paper, i.e. to the moral foundations of Europe.

## EUROPE AND IMMANUEL KANT

An appealing point of reference in that regard is Immanuel Kant, the author of the work *Toward Perpetual Peace* (hereafter *TPP*)<sup>1)</sup>. Kant asserts there that the civil constitution of states ought to be "republican"<sup>2)</sup>, that such states will progressively establish peace among themselves by means of a "pacific union", and that cosmopolitan law is to operate in conjunction with this union<sup>3)</sup>. Kant's conception of the stage on humanity's path toward eternal peace, the stage he addresses in *TPP*, is thus based on a world order that satisfies three requirements: liberal states (1) in a federative union (2) that endorses cosmopolitan law limited to conditions of universal hospitality (3). But what is the *final* stage

1) *Zum ewigen Frieden*

2) By "republican" Kant means a political society that combines individualism and social order. In such a society, the individual is a self-legislator making laws that apply equally to all citizens (himself included). It is possible to assert that Kant's conception of republican societies does not differ much from the contemporary notion of liberal societies.

3) Cosmopolitan law is to be limited to "conditions of universal hospitality".

on this historical route of humankind? By what else will the final phase of our moral and political development be marked, apart from perpetual peace?

The answer to this question can be found in Kant's *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (hereafter *RBMR*)<sup>4</sup>. In that masterpiece Kant elaborates in depth on the "ethical commonwealth", which is, together with perpetual peace, the destination toward which history leads the human race<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, Kant's political plan for perpetual peace depends on the ethical commonwealth, while the establishment of this commonwealth is contingent on our moral progress. The same issue from a different angle: political and moral progress converge on the same objective - the objective of the ethical commonwealth.

In *RBMR* Kant asserts his position that the rational message of Christianity is a moral one and that this message is a call for the unity of humankind. The ultimate aim of human progress is, according to Kant, that "man ought to leave his ethical state of nature in order to become a member of an ethical commonwealth" (Kant 1793: 126). This commonwealth would be "a union of men under merely moral laws which have a special and unique principle of union (virtue)" (Ibid., 121).

In an existing *political* commonwealth all the political citizens are in an ethical state of nature, whereas the concept of the *ethical* commonwealth implies a moral society that ideally extends to the whole of humankind. An ethical commonwealth Kant describes therefore as "a *world republic* under the laws of virtue" (Kant 1793: 132; emphasis added). Such a commonwealth is a task that only God is capable of achieving adequately. Kant: "Indeed, the members of such an ethical commonwealth would be the people of God" (Ibid., 132). No matter how unachievable the goal of an ethical commonwealth appears to us, it is thus Providence that will provide us the necessary help, but "only if we apply ourselves wholeheartedly to the task of moral improvement and the creation of an ethical commonwealth (Ibid., 133)".

The final aim of politics is thus the development of an ethical community. Such a community is marked by individuals who are guided by their duties, i.e. by Kant's notion of the categorical imperative. Moreover, the highest political good and the highest moral good can

4) *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*. The notion that Kant distinguishes two phases (at least) in the path of humanity toward perpetual peace and a global state, an intermediate phase being addressed in *Toward Perpetual Peace* and *The Metaphysics of Morals*, and the final stage elaborated on in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, is not a generally accepted notion. It is one that I elaborated on in Rakic (2009).

5) There are different viewpoints regarding the reality of Kant's project of perpetual peace. For a statement that challenges the notion that Kant considered perpetual peace as a realistic project, see Babic (2008).

only be achieved simultaneously. And that can occur exclusively in a world community. Hence, political leaders ought to look beyond politics and their states and directly to ethics and the world state for a proper conduct of their policies.

What can we conclude from this? First, the ethical commonwealth is a community of morally perfected humans. Second, humans ought to fulfil their moral duties and Providence will then give them a helping hand in achieving the ethical commonwealth. Third, such a commonwealth transcends all social boundaries and hence extends to the whole of humanity. Finally, in an ethical commonwealth human moral progress reaches also a political objective, one that is embodied in a cosmopolitan order (“a world republic” in Kant’s words).

Since Providence helps humanity in achieving both the ethical commonwealth and perpetual peace, the latter also has a moral foundation. In fact, perpetual peace is a segment of a future perfectly just world, marked by the ethical commonwealth. In such a world, a variety of social cleavages that have the potential to cause conflicts are superseded. Being a cosmopolitan order, the ethical commonwealth supersedes one such cleavage – the ethnic schism. The rationale of Kant’s federation from *TPP* is based on the need of humans to preserve a connection to their ethnic or political communities and not to be robbed of their cultural identity and specificity. But why the need for such ties in a community of humanity, in a commonwealth of the highest good? Can we imagine the highest good and a community of humanity as a condition in which humans are divided along ethnic and political lines?

In short, Kant regards the ethical commonwealth and perpetual peace as the purpose of our historical development, while the world federation is a stage on humanity’s path to this purpose. This begs the question at which stage of development humankind is now. It is possible to advance the thesis that the EU might be regarded as a union of states that has the potential to become a federative union. The EU is not a federation (yet?), especially not a global one, but it certainly is a successful peace project. In that regard, it shows a resemblance with Kant’s design from *TPP*. It is a large-scale and enduring peace scheme, albeit one that can be considered only as an intermediate stage of humanity’s development toward the ethical commonwealth and perpetual peace.

Furthermore, the member states of the European Union are liberal states, while “universal (i.e. European) hospitality” is no less than a realistic outlook. It can be asserted, therefore, that the EU is not far from fulfilling the essential elements of Kant’s three requirements from *TPP*. In that sense, Euro-enthusiasts have a case to argue that the EU

might be regarded as a stage on the route of humanity toward a cosmopolitan order and global peace.

If we return now to the five “essentials of Europe”, we see that four of them are fairly addressed by Kant’s notions: a cosmopolitan order that supersedes a world of nation states with ethnicity as their salient feature, a Judeo-Christian conception of the ethical commonwealth consisting of morally advanced humans who are to be called the “people of God”, and a global federative union that consists of liberal states that aspire peace. Although the moral foundations of a united Europe as a tool for peace (and reconciliation<sup>6)</sup>) are apparent, it is less obvious what role liberalism and cosmopolitanism play in these foundations.

## LIBERTY, JUSTICE AND COSMOPOLITANISM

An extensive elaboration on the moral foundations of liberty would obviously exceed the purposes of this paper. Hence, I would like to spend only a few lines on raising one argument that demonstrates the strong link permeating the relationship between freedom and justice. Thereafter, I will establish a connection between freedom, justice and cosmopolitanism.

A prerequisite for acting *intentionally* in a just manner is to be free. Without being free, one cannot act in a just manner because he wills so, but only because he is forced to. A truly just act, on the other hand, is one that is performed on the basis of our free will. The issue of justice is thus to a significant degree an issue of freedom. In fact, freedom contains the *opportunity* of justice, because just acts are founded in our free will. A morally perfect world would be one in which we would act in accordance with justice on the basis of our free will. In such a world we would use our freedom with justice as its purpose.

The question now is whether a cosmopolitan order to which the EU might be a prelude is one that serves justice better than the existing order. In the following paragraphs I will briefly review a number of statements in favor of cosmopolitanism, selected on the basis of both their relevance and the diversity of arguments they espouse. Afterwards I will advance my own contention that establishes a link between cosmopolitanism and the *opportunity* of justice (which is rooted in our freedom, as we have seen in the previous paragraph).

6) The concept of European peace goes hand in hand with the notion of reconciliation (or “*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*”). Both of them have closely related moral foundations: reconciliation facilitates a lasting peace, while peace is the pre-condition for reconciliation.

An already classical statement in favor of a cosmopolitan order is Beitz (1979). Beitz argues there against the parallelism between individuals and states, asserting that states are not sources of ends in the same sense as are persons. This leads him to a position that favors international distributive justice with principles that establish the terms on which persons in distinct societies can fairly expect each other's cooperation in common institutions and practices (Ibid., 180). Members of some states might then have obligations of justice with respect to individuals elsewhere (Ibid., 182). In other words, arguments in favor of social and economic equality should also apply to the global context. Beitz himself calls this conception a cosmopolitan one, linking his position to Kant's (Ibid., 181).

David Held goes further in addressing the issue of the institutional context of cosmopolitanism. He contends that the global changes under way now lead to the establishment of new forms of holding trans-national power systems to account, helping thereby open up the possibility of a cosmopolitan order. These changes he observes in, for instance, the growth of institutions such as the UN and the EU, the "Social Chapter" of the Maastricht agreement, as well as in the emergence of a "trans-national civil society" (Held 2002: 38, 39). In Held (2003) the author elaborates on what is required for a "cosmopolitan polity" to complement administrative, legislative and executive capacity at the local and national levels with similar capacities at regional and global levels. That is the creation of regional parliaments and governance structures (e.g., in Latin America and Africa), as well as the strengthening of similar bodies where they already exist (EU), a reform of the General Assembly of the UN, the opening of functional governmental organizations (WTO, IMF, World Bank etc.) to public examination and agenda setting, general referenda concerning the implementation of core cosmopolitan concerns and the development of a cosmopolitan law-enforcement and coercive capability (Ibid., 176-179). He asserts further that nowadays "cosmopolitanism is a less utopian project than that set out by the theory of the modern state at the time of Hobbes's *Leviathan*". (Ibid., 183).

Marchetti (2008) follows Held's notions, but develops, in addition to that, a unique "cosmo-federalist position" that is grounded not only in a political theory of cosmopolitanism, but also in an ethical theory of choice-based consequentialism (Ibid., 36). Marchetti's commitment to the idea of a world state is perhaps best exemplified by the opening sentences of the book: "Either democracy is global or it is not democracy... Any political system that applies allegedly democratic

principles within a limited scope is either hypocrisy or an illusion” (p. 1).

Alexander Wendt proposes a teleological theory which suggests that a world state is inevitable within 100-200 years. He advances cosmopolitanism with scientific arguments, previously having elevated teleology into the domain of science. In his view, world state formation at the micro-level is driven, along Hegelian lines, by the struggle of individuals and groups for recognition of their subjectivity. At the macro-level, the “logic of anarchy” generates a tendency for military technology and war to become increasingly destructive, thus aiding the protective tendency of world state formation. The entire process moves through five stages, each responding to the instabilities of the preceding stage: a system of states, a society of states, a world society, collective security, a world state (Wendt, 2003).

Beitz’s and Marchetti’s assertions that have been presented here are largely moral arguments in favor of cosmopolitanism, while Held’s and Wendt’s contentions focus more on the likely (Held) or necessary (Wendt) future global developments that purportedly approach a cosmopolitan order. In the following section I will attempt to support cosmopolitanism through an amalgamation of these two lines of reasoning, i.e. through a combination of moral and teleological arguments. Again: is a cosmopolitan order to which the EU might be a prelude one that serves justice better than the existing order?

## THE NORMATIVE WILL

To answer this question I will make use of the concept of the “normative will” from *History and Future of Justice* (Rakic, 2004). There I defined justice as “a state of affairs we believe ought to exist as a common standard” (Ibid., 13). The reason why it ought to exist is not always rationally comprehensible. Why we ought to help those who are starving to death, or why we ought not to grab the only seat in a bus just in front of a disabled person (in spite of the fact that we can get away with it unpunished in any form), is not something we can explain in terms of our rational interest. It is some type of intuition that tells us that we are abandoning an unwritten law according to which things ought to happen. Its essential element is the concept of the “one thinking in terms of all”, which primarily includes the abandonment of mere self-interest. It is what we call the *moral law* (Ibid., 13, 14).

But who is to decide about the content of this moral law? This question leads us to the concept of the normative will. Unlike the ge-



neral will, which is descriptive, the normative will is prescriptive. The general will is the political will, whereas the normative will transcends the political realm. The general will is that what a community wills, the normative will is what a community believes it *ought* to will. It is the will of the majority, meaning how the majority believes it ought to act. This type of belief of the majority is justice. Hence, justice can be defined as the “normative will of humanity”<sup>7)</sup>. It is this will that determines the moral law. Is there a more persuasive manner in which justice and the moral law can be defined? I cannot see one. What is just can only be agreed on by the majority of people in the world – not in terms of how they usually act, but in terms of how they believe they ought to act<sup>8)</sup>.

The question that comes up now is whether this normative will of humanity can be expressed better in a cosmopolitan order or in an alternative to it. In the current age of globalization we see that some of globalization’s aspects are opposed to the normative will of humanity, i.e. to justice. On the other hand, we might be approaching a future of global justice, because globalization opens up better possibilities for the expression of the normative will of humanity. In spite of its injustices, globalization’s “cunning of the mind” appears to be leading humanity to an order in which world citizens have institutional mechanisms to express not only their general will (i.e., their political will), but also their normative will (i.e., the moral law).

Globalization is a unique moment in history, because never before was the expression of the general will of humanity possible as it is now. In a truly democratic world order, global justice will be the expression of the normative will of humanity through its general (political) will. The expression of the general will of humanity will then be the realization of its normative will.

It is global institutions that will aid the development of global justice, because they will establish formal mechanisms through which the general (political) will of humanity is to be expressed. But in such a situation moral issues will also be increasingly framed along the lines of the normative will of humanity. In other words, moral issues will be approached more and more from the perspective of the moral will of humankind. Hence, global institutions will then express the general will of humanity, in line with its normative will. The references to Held

7) See Rakic (2004: 31-34).

8) A nice illustration of the normative will of humanity one can find in Kant’s *Conflict of the Faculties*, although Kant does not use the term “normative will” (Kant, 1907). Kant very rightly observes there that the “enthusiasm” for the French Revolution might have been simply a consequence of it being moral. Unlike enthusiasm for Hitler etc., which encompassed one nation or a limited number of nations, enthusiasm for the French revolution was one of humanity. The moral support for something by humanity is precisely its normative will!



in this paper are an excellent example of how the normative will can be materialized: through global institutions with legislative, executive and administrative capacities, complemented with a trans-national civil society as a moral check on them. In sum, *a global order humanity appears to be necessarily approaching (the teleological element in my argument) is one that contains the potential of serving as a framework for the expression of the normative will of humankind (the moral element in my argument).*

## **THE MORAL FOUNDATIONS OF EUROPE AND THE EMERGING WORLD ORDER**

The European Union might be a prelude to a cosmopolitan order in which the normative will of humanity can be expressed more adequately, i.e. in which justice would figure more prominently. A united Europe would then be a peace project, a potential advance to a cosmopolitan order, as well as a possible lead up to justice (via the normative will of an extended, European community). We have seen that liberty is a value that ought to remain dear to Europe, not only because of its political standing, but also because of the fact that it is a pre-condition of justice. It is thus peace, cosmopolitanism and liberalism that have a moral foundation. They have been directly or indirectly stipulated in this paper as the “essentials of Europe”, and we have seen that all three of them have been thoroughly addressed by Kant. We might indeed regard them as the moral foundations of Europe.

We have seen, however, that all three concepts have also a universal moral foundation. In that sense they can serve as moral building blocks of the emerging world order. Hence, Europe has a case in asserting that its moral foundations ought to be the moral foundations of the emerging world order as well.

Lest not to fall prey to excessive optimism regarding a united Europe, it is in order to mention a number of serious dangers that are faced by Europe and by its moral foundations. They include the following:

(1) Europeanism does not necessarily have to result in cosmopolitanism. In fact, it can breed another type of communitarianism: Euro-centrism. It is possible that a European identity, in combination with various regional identities, gradually replaces traditional national identities. In that case, we would not move in the direction of cosmopolitanism (with all its moral foundations), but to a state of affairs in which nationalism is simply substituted by Europeanism (in that case as

opposed to cosmopolitanism) and regionalism (as opposed to cosmopolitanism and /or Europeanism).

(2) European Union policies can strengthen nationalism. It is possible that Europeanization will encounter a strong backlash from EU member states. The debates and referenda surrounding a European constitution are evidence of such developments.

(3) EU bureaucracy and politics might overpower Europe's moral foundations. It is possible that the European Union does not develop in the direction of a liberal and potentially cosmopolitan order in which the normative will of a large community can be materialized better than in its member states. We might see a highly bureaucratized and politicized entity that does not serve justice in any enhanced manner.

(4) Demographic trends may change the dominant cultural context of Europe. The influx of immigrants from Islamic countries, in combination with a possible admission of Turkey into the EU, might impact on the Christian-liberal-cosmopolitan value framework that characterizes Europe.

(5) The majority of economic growth may shift to Eastern Asia. Furthermore, the population of Europe is becoming progressively older, while Third World populations are younger, increasingly urbanized and expanding at a much faster rate. These two facts in combination might result in a gradual move of Europe in the direction of the global periphery, making developments on the European continent less relevant benchmarks for non-European cultures. This might also affect the spread of the moral foundations of Europe to these cultures.

(6) Developments in the field of bio-technology are uncertain and can have a potentially significant impact. Cosmetic neuro-pharmacology, cosmetic neuro-surgery, pre-implantation screening, therapeutic and reproductive cloning, the creation of embryos with the sole purpose of deriving stem cells from them, as well as a variety of other possibilities of bio-technology might result in a reformulation of a significant number of our moral concepts. The moral foundations of Europe might then also be affected and reformulated.

Some of these "dangers" can be avoided, some cannot. It would exceed the purposes of this paper to go into that, but I would like to make one final remark in that context. It can be cogently contended, namely, that a redefinition of Europe can help us in preserving its moral foundations<sup>9)</sup>. In that regard, it is impossible not to consider ways how

9) For an interesting elaboration on the relationship between European identity and EU enlargement, see Thiel (2006). Thiel notes that the widening of the EU has reached a "critical mass" and that hence "deepening" ought to reflect the changed identity of the EU. Thiel believes,

to connect the traditionally Christian tradition of liberalism, democracy, peace and cosmopolitanism to the values of Islam. To put it differently: how can Europe incorporate Islam in its moral groundwork and how can this inclusion be accepted both by European Muslims and Christians? Only if such an incorporation takes place in a proper manner, can the moral basis of Europe be preserved.

Europe's moral foundations are capable of this incorporation, because they appear to be based on general human values. It is thus possible to preserve them. That requires, however, a redefinition of Europe – one that extends the meaning of “being European” to all those cultures and individuals that identify with Europe's *moral* foundations. We have seen what these foundations are. Europe has to find ways how to make them attractive to cultures that are not considered as traditionally European. Only then will Europe's moral groundwork be preserved. In other words, it might be necessary to redefine the concept of “being European”, i.e. Europe's cultural identity, in order to preserve the moral foundations of Europe.

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## **МОРАЛНЕ ОСНОВЕ ЕВРОПЕ У НАСТУПАЈУЋЕМ СВЕТСКОМ ПОРЕТКУ**

### **Сажетак**

Могло би се тврдити како су моралне основе Европе опште моралне вредности. Покушаћу да установим порекло ових основа, као и њихову улогу у садашњем и будућем свету. Закључићу да је услов за њихово очување редефиниција концепта “бити Европљанин” у правцу једног све инклузивнијег облика идентитета.

Кључне речи: Европа, моралне основе, Кант, мир, либерализам, правда, нормативна воља, инклузија

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however, that this deepening ought to be “more intergovernmental and less federalational to (re-)gain and retain popular support” (Ibid., 9).

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