



مؤسسة قرطبة
The Cordoba Foundation

Exclusive Citizenship and Contemporary Theories of Transnational Justice

23-24 October 2013 - University of Wrocław, Poland

Conference report – 30 October 2013 – The Cordoba Foundation

This is a summary of the proceedings of a timely conference held in Poland focusing on citizenship and contemporary challenges to building equal and fair societies across Europe. The conference was attended by William Barylo, Research Assistant at The Cordoba Foundation.

Aims of the conference

On Wednesday 23rd and Thursday 24th October 2013, the University of Wroclaw in Poland hosted a public conference, titled “Exclusive Citizenship and Contemporary Theories of Transnational Justice, Multiculturalism, Neutrality, Contract, Free Speech, Neo-racism and Deliberation”. The conference was organised jointly with the University of Tromsø, Norway. The aim of the conference was to gather authors approaching the problem of transnational justice on local, state, regional and global perspectives, using a range of approaches including socio-political, cultural and religious.

Issues explored

The conference explored a range of issues such as the fact that a large number of migrants lose their lives trying to cross borders illegally; others arrested by the police and treated as criminals – in some cases kidnapped to become sexual slaves or to supply illegal market activities. Ironically the Universal Declaration of Human Rights endorses the right to emigrate (Cf. Art. 13), but not to immigrate across national borders (Cf. Art. 14). This implies that a right to international emigration could not be exercised if not in the limbo – leaving many people unprotected by any of the basic human rights legislations.

Another set of issues highlighted at the conference related to the consequences of the globalisation of capitalism. This process has transformed economic tensions into huge networks of “systemic violence” that spans the globe. On the other hand, it could possibly help realise the ideas of justice, pluralism and democracy on the global level. Clearly, there is a need for a clarification of the causes, mechanisms, and proper solutions of this very important question that contemporary global society is faced with.

A question that is fundamental to Europe where countries involved in conflicts for centuries, like Poland and Germany, want to pursue friendly cooperation in regional and transnational structures, and to the entire world where human-made “risks” of, among other things, environmental degeneration, mass migration, international organised crime and terrorism, financial crises, “precarity” (a condition of existence without predictability or security, affecting material or psychological welfare) of labor, ghettoisation, and the racialisation of minorities require all states and their citizens to closely cooperate.

On the other hand, such cooperation would demand a need to rethink the traditional notions of citizenship as a source of political subjectivity, agency and empowerment, as in the example of the project of decolonisation and de-orientalisation of citizenship.

Key presentations

Adam Chmielewski, professor of philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy, University of Wroclaw, opened the conference with a paper, entitled “academies of hatred”, Which related to several incidents staged by extremist groups in the public domain. Chmielewski spoke about Polish-Lithuanian racism in football stadiums and pointed out that this kind of xenophobia (not present 15 years ago) has become acceptable in a large part of Polish society and even supported by some scholars and academics. These are symptoms of the rise and entrenchment of exclusionary xenophobic ideologies among the Polish youth. In an attempt to explain the present wave of Polish

extremism, Chmielewski highlighted the authoritarian tendencies displayed by some Polish political parties, as well as despotic leanings on the level of local government.

Kjersti Fjørtoft, professor of Philosophy at the University of Tromsø, in her paper “Public reason, religious reason and Democratic legitimacy”, advocated the right to bring religious arguments as an explanation, not a justification in public debates.

Bruno Drweski, professor of History and Lecturer at the National Institute of Languages and Eastern Civilizations (INALCO, Paris), in “The distorted discourse of Secularism as a tool of neo-racism in Europe today” analysed how all the political streams are divided on the question of secularism and religious minorities as well as how secularism is used to further anti-Muslim and anti-feminist positions especially with respect to the exclusion of women from the employment market.

Drweski further recalled how at the time of Socialism in France, Polish and Italian workers were excluded from work because of perceived as “too religious”. There is still a perceived superiority of the so called “democratic values” in rich countries. The current revival of the hatred discourse is clearly evident in social, economic, political, and ideological crisis in Europe. For the more deprived classes of the society, Islam is seen as the theology of liberation from class system (subconscious division between social classes and thus, for some, Islam is not a social-theological question but a social emancipation).

Tomasz Jarymowicz, PhD candidate (Philosophy), University of Tromsø, presented a paper on “Secular and religious arguments in the public sphere: a critique of the divide”. Religion, according to him, has a political dimension and such its place in the public sphere. He related this to Harendt’s statement that love is apolitical because it focuses on sameness. Jarymowicz analyses critically the concept of empathy towards the marginalised, stating that empathy and love does not guarantee one listening to other people. He concluded that secularism and religious are interconnected.

Melina Duarte, PhD candidate (philosophy), University of Tromsø, in “National Membership : a question of individual choice”, called for non-citizens to be granted rights according to different conceptions of citizenship, such as those based on cultural and social dimensions. The current democratic theories are irrelevant, argued Duarte. Legal status should be spread to people present in a state (but for a long time to avoid temporary immigration votes in order to change a regime or immigrating only for benefits from the welfare state). She advocates an inclusive citizenship that should be mainly an individual choice and a matter of self-determination.

William Barylo, PhD candidate (Sociology) at the EHESS in Paris and Research Assistant at The Cordoba Foundation, delivered a paper on “Muslim Charities in Europe: redefining citizenship through religion. Case study of France and Poland”. Barylo explained that charities based on Islamic ethics in France and Poland do change positively the perception of Islam and Muslims in the public sphere through an original understanding of the concept of “citizenship”. To shed further light, he examined the different legal statuses, political and social contexts of those associations which are portrayed in terms of activity and members’ background. He then focused on the perception of faith, commitment and citizenship among the volunteers and showed how the three are inter-linked. Barylo also discussed the reactions of people and public services interacting with such charities and organisations in the French and Polish settings respectively. He concluded that social action of Muslims refreshes the concept of citizenship and improves harmonious living in pluralist-cultural areas.

Barylo’s presentation was followed by the screening of “Polish Muslims: An Expected Encounter” film, which he directed and produced.

Dr. Mariusz Turowski, researcher at the Institute of Philosophy of the University of Wrocław, delivered a paper about “Post Orientalist citizenship : research agenda and an illustration”. The paper discussed about the existing types of colonialism: “cultural, political, sexual, spiritual, epistemic and economic oppression / exploitation of subordinate racialised/ethnic groups by dominant racialised/ethnic groups with or without the existence of colonial administrations” - (Grosfoguel, 2002:205-206)”. He criticised the common terms of “national identity”, “national development”, “national sovereignty” that produces an illusion of “independence”, “development” and “progress” – typical of Eurocentric cultures.

Turowski suggested that critical border thinking was the epistemic response to the subaltern (lower classes and social groups at the margins of a society) to the Eurocentric project of modernity. There is a need for a re-definition of citizenship, democracy, human rights, humanity and economic relations, stressed Turowski.

Dr. Jakub Nalichowski, researcher at the Institute of Philosophy, University of Wrocław, discussed “the fetish character in culture and the regression of community belonging”, resulting in the falling rate of profit, ever expanding market and multiculturalism. The world faces a change of capitalism, more focused on consumerism and not only production. This change leads to the devastation of human, natural, social, and psychological resources. Thus, people have less empathy and less cognitive capabilities (less reflection). The symptoms of these social pathologies are visible when concepts emerge like “the clash of civilisations”.

Wojciech Ufel, researcher at the University of Wrocław, presented a paper, titled “Can men struggle for their rights? Discussing conflict in radical democracy” based on Chantal Mouffe’s 1985 book, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*”, the paper discussed concepts relating to plural and radical democracy. Radical democracy addresses weaknesses of the current democratic systems with an alternative way to manage different opinions when turning opposing parties to a state of Agonism (friendly enemies). Ufel presented the Habermas’ Deliberative Democracy (Habermas – theory communicative act between facts and norms) and his Type I and Type II deliberations with a critical analysis of the Type I (because of absolute rule, allowance of rational arguments only and excluding those not belonging to the public sphere).

Urszula Lisowska PhD candidate (philosophy) at the University of Wrocław, spoke about “the matter of perception. Martha Nussbaum’s capabilities approach and the notion of citizenship”. She advocated a change of perception of humanity, and a broadening of the meaning of “dignity”, for a more inclusive citizenship.

The conference ended with recommendations for future areas of focus and called on all presenters and participants to collaborate where possible to bring about necessary changes in society for a more equal and fair society.

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The Cordoba Foundation
Westgate House, Level 7, Westgate Road, Ealing, London W5 1YY, UK
Tel. +44 (0)20 8991 3372
Fax. +44 (0)20 8991 3373