

## ***Ethnicity, human rights, war*** ***Some frame questions and few answers***

***by Paolo Roseano***

Being the title of my presentation “Ethnic minorities, human rights and war”, it is self-evident that we shall deal with three main concepts, i.e. ethnicity, human rights and war. The main focus will be on the complex interrelations among these concepts. As a matter of fact, there is much talk about that. The most recurrent idea about the complex interplay of ethnicity, human rights and war might be summarised as follows: “The violation of the (human) rights of minorities leads to conflict or violence”, and, vice versa, “To preserve peace you need to respect human rights, those of minorities in particular”.

These sentences sound like slogans or ethic axioms, and they are. For this reason they are not exhaustive from a scientific point of view. If we wish to reflect about the interplay among the three concepts I mentioned, first of all we need to set some frame questions, which might seem obvious, but probably are not such. The answers we give to those interrogatives might influence the interpretation we give of the interplay between the above-mentioned concepts. We should try to find out an answer to the questions “What is ethnicity?”, “What is war?”, “What are human rights?”. And, finally, we should ask ourselves why we want to reflect about the relations among ethnicity, peace and human rights. Do we wish to investigate them for the sake of knowledge, or do we want to define some operative strategies?

### *What is ethnicity?*

Most sociologists would agree on a vague definition of ethnicity, described as a mix of objective and subjective elements, such as culture, language, myths, self-consciousness, and so on. In fact, the main academic dispute in this field does not concern the description of ethnicity, but rather its ontological status. The quite harsh dispute I am referring to is generally known as the “primordialists/circumstantialists controversy”. It would be quite hard to summarise it in few words, unless we accept the risk of caricaturisation in recapitulating the key ideas of each contending position. If we accept this risk, then we may try to go over their main points.

According to a critical synthesis<sup>1</sup> of the primordialist approach to ethnicity, primordialists believe that:

- a) Ethnic identity and attachment are given *a priori*, *ab origine* and *causa sui*, are underived, prior to all experience and interaction.
- b) Ethnic feelings are overpowering and coercive. If an individual is a member of an ethnies, he/she necessarily feels a certain attachment to that group.
- c) Ethnicity is essentially a question of emotion or affect.

On the other hand, circumstantialist (a.k.a. instrumentalist) model of ethnicity, which is dominant nowadays, maintains that ethnies are constructed by rational actors who calculate their objective interests and then take decisions concerning association and/or political mobilisation with others<sup>2</sup>. Ethnicity is sometimes seen as the result of modernisation and sometimes as something that is challenged by modernisation (and which is going to decline).

These very brief summaries are indeed too unsophisticated, but they help us to focus on the fundamental difference between the two approaches, which seems to me to consist in the different ontological status attributed to ethnicity. According to primordialists, ethnicity is an independent

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<sup>1</sup> J.D. Eller, R.M. Coughlan, The poverty of primordialism, *Ethnic and Racial studies*, 16, 2, 1993, p. 183-202.

<sup>2</sup> F.J. Gil-White, How thick is blood?, *Ethnic and Racial studies*, 22, 5, 1999, p. 789-820.

phenomenon, existing *per se*, while according to circumstantialists it derives from some other phenomena, thus being an epiphenomenon.

Both these axioms have corollaries concerning ethnic dynamics. In fact, if ethnicity is an ontologically independent phenomenon, ethnic dynamics as well do not depend on other kinds of phenomena, whereas if ethnicity derives from some other phenomena, ethnic dynamics do the same. If we consider ethnic conflicts to be one of the major forms of ethnic dynamics, then we have to conclude that, according to primordialists these conflicts may be explained only by referring to ethnicity. On the other hand, according to circumstantialists ethnic conflicts do not represent a real type of conflict, because their origin lies in non-ethnic phenomena; in other words, ethnic conflicts have non-ethnic causes (be they economic, political or else).

Indeed, this is an undue simplification of both approaches, and the consequences I tried to draw are ingenuous, nevertheless the forceful generalisation and simplification I suggested are unfortunately necessary in the context of a seminar.

So, if from a theoretical point of view one considers conflict to be a degeneration of ethnic dynamics (we shall discuss later if it is such), from an operative point of view one suggests some cures for this kind of “social disease”. If we agree with primordialists, we shall then try to cure ethnic conflicts with ethnic medicines, while if we agree with circumstantialists, we shall try to cure it with economic or political medicines, chosen according to the purported causes of the rising of ethnic conflict and, ultimately, of ethnicity itself.

It would be interesting to investigate the whole range of both circumstantialist and primordialist theories to illustrate the several remedies suggested. Nevertheless for our purposes it might suffice to remind some of them. According to cultural primordialism the main way to avoid ethnic conflict would be a certain degree of separation within a multicultural society, while according to a more psychological primordialist approach the solution would lie in a strengthening of personality and in the reduction of prejudices. In a circumstantialist perspective economic integration of minorities (either as individuals or as groups) should insure interethnic peace.

The second basic difference between the two approaches lies in the contrasting ideas of human being that underlay primordialism and circumstantialism. According to the second theory ethnic actors behave rationally as *homines oeconomici*, whereas according to the first they do not necessarily do so. Quite on the contrary, they behave on the basis of emotion and affect.

G. Sciortino has drawn a more detailed classification of ethnicity theories<sup>3</sup>. Sciortino subdivided these theories on the basis of two dichotomies, both connected with what was once described as “the nature of mankind”, but which could be better described as different analytic choices. The first concerns the nature of action (*homo oeconomicus* vs. *homo symbolicus*) and the second the nature of social order (individualism vs. collectivism).

	<b>Homo oeconomicus</b>	<b>Homo symbolicus</b>
<b>individualism</b>	<p><b>Individualist rationalism</b></p> <p>Ethnicity = rational resource whose function is to lower the costs of identifying allies and to discourage free riders.</p> <p>Ethnic conflict = competition among social actors having a limited rationality for the control of scarce resources.</p>	<p><b>Individualist primordialism</b></p> <p>Ethnicity = primordial form of identity, based on categorisation processes such as “we because not they”.</p> <p>Ethnic conflict = searching for psychological certainties through the claim for ascriptive identities based on a corpus shared experiences.</p>
<b>collectivism</b>	<p><b>Collectivist rationalism</b></p> <p>Ethnicity = ideological superstructure hiding the exploitation of minorities.</p> <p>Ethnic conflict = groups have different access to social resources and power.</p>	<p><b>Collectivist primordialism</b></p> <p>Ethnicity = is the base for any symbolic production, it is an exaltation of a primordial difference.</p> <p>Ethnic conflict = Cultures are different and ethnocentrism in not avoidable.</p>

<sup>3</sup> G. Sciortino, La sociologia delle relazioni etniche, tra primordialismo e multidimensionalità: una rassegna, La Ricerca Sociale, 47-48, 1990, p. 58-98.

As we see, the interpretations of ethnic and ethnic conflict derive from two analytical choices, the first concerning the rationality of human action, the second concerning the individual/collective bases for this action.

Sciortino also suggests that there is a need for a multidimensional theory of ethnicity, being able to go beyond the polarisation of this tetradic model. As a matter of fact, the polarisation still persists, at least to a certain extent, since the rationalist approaches have been largely popular because they were –maybe purportedly- consistent with the modernisation paradigm.

But what remains of this dispute if most of analysts dealing with ethnicity are rationalist (i.e. instrumentalists) while ethnic actors are primordialists? F.J. Gil-White in a very recent article<sup>4</sup> gave empirical evidence that ethnic actors tend to share a primordialist vision of ethnicity. This does not represent a real challenge for circumstantialist approaches, but it arises several questions at an operative level. Above all, what should be done to avoid ethnic conflict? Is it possible? If so, which are the best solutions? Are we able to find any, provided that the multidimensional theory of ethnicity is still a work in progress?

### *What is war?*

Maybe we could find some hints by looking a little bit closer to war. Academicians dealing with war studies, international relations or foreign policy, historians, psychologists and sociologists have tried to define what war is, and why it occurs. Most of them agree in saying that the major effect of war is the destruction/(re)construction of politically autonomous communities. The condition of being a legitimate (i.e. performed by state) form of violence distinguishes war from other forms of conflict and violence. Nevertheless, scholars disagree on the nature of war, as others do on the nature of ethnicity. The controversy between the so-called rational and the so-called realistic interpretations of war is quite similar to the dispute between circumstantialists and primordialists.

According to the rational interpretation of war, which dates back to Enlightenment, war is a necessary evil, it is a mere instrument used by rational actors to pursue certain goals (even to establish a durable peace, in its idealistic version). In this way, war is not necessarily a rational instrument, but it serves rational political or economical purposes. Many analysts (Clausewitz, Comte, Saint Simon, Durkheim, Spencer, Fukuyama) tend to see war as a phenomenon deeply connected to economy. War is seen sometimes as a superstructure of economical competition, but according to the majority of these sociologists, war is going to disappear in modern societies because of the growing richness. This thesis lies on the postulation that human beings are rational and that they realise that in a capitalistic and globalised world, war is no longer the best way to pursue their interests, and, therefore, they tend more and more to avoid conflicts.

The realist theory, on the contrary, explicitly or implicitly rejects the idea of rationality of human beings. Therefore violence (and one of its peculiar forms named war) cannot be rational, it is rather a basic human instinct connected with identity, *libido*, *dépense*, and the problem of “making sense”. Conflict, thus, may not be avoided. This theory, which after World War II seems to be widely popular, may be found, although with significant differences, in the works by Pareto, Mosca, Weber, Raymond Aron, Freud, Jung, and Bouthoul.

Our attempt to retrace an analytic option concerning social order dichotomy (individual vs. collective) leads us to recall the definition of war. War is defined as “violent conflict between societies or organised human groups”, therefore it cannot be but collective. At an individual level there may not be proper war, but rather conflict or interpersonal violence.

Having introduced this dichotomy, we are now able to present a tetradic model.

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<sup>4</sup> F.J. Gil-White, How thick is blood?, *Ethnic and Racial studies*, 22, 5, 1999, p. 789-820.

	<b>Homo oeconomicus</b>	<b>Homo symbolicus</b>
<b>individualism</b>	<p><b>Individualist rationalism</b> Exogenous psychologism (frustration-aggressiveness theory).</p>	<p><b>Individualist primordialism</b> Endogenous psychologism (Psychology of <i>dépendance</i>, of the identity function of conflict).</p>
<b>collectivism</b>	<p><b>Collective rationalism</b> Theories of the economic, judicial etc. function of war.</p>	<p><b>Collective primordialism</b> <i>Rassenkampf</i> (<i>à la</i> Glumpowicz) and other extremist interpretations of social Darwinism.</p>

Being war collective, the most relevant controversy within war studies is indeed the rational vs. realist one. This controversy has a relevant ontological implication: according to the rational approach, war depends on economic or political factors, thus having no autonomous ontological status. According to the realist approach, conflict is part of human nature and is no way an epiphenomenon. It is neither transitory nor a degeneration (as it is considered by the so-called *pacifisme plaintif*).

The concept of war generally occurs together with the concept of peace. It is now generally accepted that peace should not be seen as "negative" (i.e. as the mere absence of war), but as "positive". Positive peace almost equals justice, being a condition of harmonic relations, equality, welfare and respect of rights. As the word "peace" is to be found several times when speaking about both ethnicity and human rights, we should have a look at some of the declarations concerning human rights.

#### *What are human rights?*

The idea that ethnic and linguistic minorities have certain rights is not new. At an international level the first significant attempt to regulate this aspect was performed by the Society of Nations. Some decades later the UN approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the 1966 UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. A detailed description of these fundamental moments in the history of human rights would largely exceed our task today. What we shall do is to investigate some of their contents with the aim of pointing out which are their main underlying features. Once again we shall pay attention to what images of human being, war and ethnicity are conveyed in these texts.

Although the Society of Nations purportedly aimed at protecting minorities, some of its most important inspirers (Veblen and Wilson, for example) showed unequivocally that the existence of ethnicity disturbed them. It was seen as something "heady", as a major cause of conflict. It was explicitly defined as "not modern", archaic and still oddly persisting.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is deeply rooted in the cultural tradition of Enlightenment (as it was interpreted in America), based on rationality and individualism. In fact, if we have a close look at some articles, we are impressed by the similarity of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the American Declaration of Independence (1776). For instance, in the Declaration of Independence we read that "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*", and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that "*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.* (art. 1) *Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world* (Preamble)". The images of mankind conveyed are the same: men are rational and are taken into consideration as individuals.

But the parallelism is not limited to this point. The notion of war is almost identical. According to the Declaration of Independence “*whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends [Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness], it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it [...], when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government [...]*”. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights “*it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law*”. War, in this case rebellion, is seen as a necessary evil, whose fire-up is decided rationally, i.e. to obtain certain goals through certain tools, all of which have been evaluated and chosen by actors who know what is good for them.

In the Declaration of Independence ethnicity is not explicitly mentioned. Nevertheless there is indeed a reference to “ethnic brotherhood” where the representatives say that “[We have not] *been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. [...] We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends*”. We might provoke and assert that, since “consanguinity” was described as a tool to obtain solidarity (from the British), the representatives implicitly shared an instrumentalist *ante litteram* approach to ethnicity, which would be consistent with their rationalistic assumption. Nevertheless this is questionable, since we also read that “they have been deaf to the voice of justice and consanguinity”. Are justice and consanguinity juxtaposed or contraposed? My hypothesis is that they are contraposed, although in a light way, the first representing a rational appeal, the second an emotional one. In this sense, so, consanguinity would be seen in a more primordialist light. On the whole, “consanguinity” (or, if we accept the risk of using a more recent word, “ethnicity”) is not considered as negative.

In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ethnic groups are not mentioned, because the whole declaration focuses on individual rights only. Nevertheless, ethnicity is mentioned as a possible basis for discrimination: “*Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status (art. 2)*”. It is interesting to point out that the majority of the alleged possible causes for discrimination are ascriptive elements.

In order to summarise the basic assumptions (or analytic choices) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we might say that: 1) men are rational, 2) they are considered as individuals, 3) ethnicity is seen in a negative light. This should lead us to conclude that the only approach to ethnicity compatible with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the rationalistic individualistic one, which is consistent with the spirit of the traditional categories of state-centric politics of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (economy and power, the two being often seen as the two faces of the same coin).

A more recent development of international law concerning human rights gave more importance to the collective aspect. The 1966 UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights explicitly shares the main assumptions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: men are seen as having inalienable rights (whose “recognition [*omissis*] is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world”) and are taken into consideration as individuals. Although its approach is more attentive to some collective aspects, human beings are taken into consideration mainly as individuals.

The idea of ethnicity is explicitly mentioned just once. More frequently the Covenant uses the words language, culture or “nation”, and does so in a very ambiguous way. Sometimes nation is meant as “state”, sometimes as “ethnic group”. When ethnicity is mentioned (either as such or as nationality, language or culture), it is still generally seen as a basis for discrimination (Art. 2.1, 4.1,

20.2, 26). What is really new is the content of art. 27: “In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language”. This article states that individuals have certain rights as members of ethnic/linguistic/cultural groups (minorities). This statement does not represent a radical change of the individualistic perspective, but it smoothes it<sup>5</sup>.

Do other approaches exist? So far we saw just two approaches, both purportedly based on a rational image of mankind, the first of them focusing exclusively on individuals, the second also on groups. If the tetradic classification we used so far is true (i.e. if the two analytic choices are operative in any field), we should find out a dichotomy between a “*homo oeconomicus* approach” and a “*homo symbolicus* approach”. Where does this dichotomy lie? In order to find an answer we might look at the ontological status of human rights, and ask ourselves a frame question: do human beings as such have rights? The two kinds of possible answers constitute the traditional dichotomy between the doctrine of natural law and the contractual theory. I suggest we might read this dichotomy as an analytic choice, the one between a rational and a non rational picture of mankind. In a (quite extremist) contractualist perspective the existence of human rights derives from the will of human beings who establish them because they believe them to be the best instrument to pursue their interests (in this case very often interests coincide with peace, which assumption is rejected by certain psychological approaches to conflict). Thus the contractualist models are fully compatible with the rationalistic approach, they represent the implementation of the rationalistic option in the field of human rights.

According to a (quite extremist, again) naturalistic point of view, “men are endowed, by their Creator or by Nature, with certain inalienable rights”. Thus human rights are given, *a priori*, not necessarily *causa sui*, but indeed coercive and prior to all interaction. This sounds terribly similar to the characteristics of what we called the “primordialist” interpretation of ethnicity. Thus we are in front of a “primordialist” interpretation of human rights. Is the concept of men underlying the two “primordialisms” the same? Probably it is. In both cases men are not “free”, in the sense that there is an external objective limit: ethnicity is unavoidable and so are human rights. We might also decide to act against them (against other’s or our ethnicity, against our or other’s rights), but they are still there, they exist, we might deny them but we may not cancel them. The latest sentence could lead us to sink in the quicksand of the controversy about the freedom of men, which would exceed our task and our possibilities.

	<b>Homo oeconomicus</b>	<b>Homo symbolicus</b>
<b>individualism</b>	<b>Individualist contract theory</b> Human beings establish human rights because they deem them to be the best instrument to pursue their individual interests (utilitarianism).	<b>Individualist doctrine of natural law</b> Every human being has individual inalienable rights (ethic interpretations of the Grundnorm theory).
<b>collectivism</b>	<b>Collective contract theory</b> Human beings establish human rights because they deem them to be the best instrument to pursue their group interests (sociological jurisprudence, juridical realism)	<b>Collective doctrine of natural law</b> Human beings have collective inalienable rights as members of certain groups.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of either approaches? It is quite clear to all of us that if we accept the naturalist approach the ontological status of human rights is extremely weak from a

<sup>5</sup> It is now worth saying that according to some analysts this collective approach is dangerous because, in case ethnic bounds cause conflict, the strengthening of collectivism would just worsen conflict, which, on the contrary, might be “cured” only through the strengthening of individualism.

scientific point of view: they derive from a Prime Mover whose definition is arbitrary and has been subject to historical and cultural changes (do we seriously think that a Religion of Mankind may be the ultimate functional substitute of the Religion of God<sup>6</sup>?). On the other hand if we give up this idea of the Prime Mover and choose to give a contractual value to human rights, we risk to fall into relativism.

Logically speaking, an instrumental interpretation of human rights (seen as a tool to obtain/maintain peace) is not compatible with a naturalist interpretation of human rights, because they rely on different analytic options. Now, in the juridical texts we mentioned, there is a strange combination of both approaches: human beings are considered as having inalienable rights which have the instrumental function of granting peace. There is a strange oscillation between a primordialist approach to human rights and an instrumentalist one.

Is this an advantage or a disadvantage? Probably both. From a theoretical point of view, we expect the logical principle of non contradiction to represent a still valid assumption. Therefore, as scientists, we would reject the possibility of coexistence of two different antithetic approaches. But from an operative point of view we are aware of the fact that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights tries to take the best of the two approaches: it makes use of a primordialist approach to strengthen the instrumental function of human rights. Thus, although contradictory, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights may be very effective, indeed more effective than any declaration based only on a rationalistic/instrumental idea of human rights. So what?

*So what?*

So far we pointed out two interesting dichotomies. Both of them concern the nature of human beings: the first consists in the contraposition between *homo oeconomicus* and *homo symbolicus*; the second resides in the opposition between individualism and collectivism.

On the basis of these dichotomies we may define four main groups of consistent approaches to the phenomena we discussed so far.

	<b>Homo oeconomicus</b>	<b>Homo symbolicus</b>
	<b>Individualist rationalism (1)</b>	<b>Individualist primordialism (2)</b>
<b>individualism</b>	Ethnic individual instrumentalism (a) Rational individual conflict theory (b) Individualist contractualism (c)	Ethnic individual primordialism (a) Realist individual conflict theory (b) Individualist naturalism (c)
	<b>Collective rationalism (3)</b>	<b>Collective primordialism (4)</b>
<b>collectivism</b>	Ethnic collective instrumentalism (a) Rational war theory (b) Collective contractualism (c)	Ethnic collective primordialism (a) Realist war theory (b) Collective naturalism (c)

We would expect these ideal-typical triads to occur empirically, but we saw they do not. In particular, within the empirically found triads (a) + (b) binomials tend to be consistent, while (c) is not always such. Why does it happen? My opinion is that the first two items are exquisitely theoretical, while the third has important operative implications.

This is the clue and the end of our tetradic model. As Fichte said, Reason binds on its knees in front of Reality. What remains of our disputes between individualism and collectivism, between *homo*

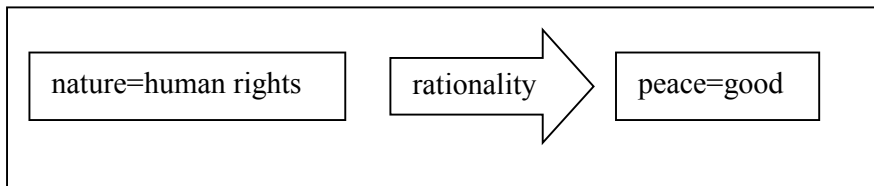
<sup>6</sup> During the 20<sup>th</sup> century human rights were seen as deriving from the very human dignity. As it is well known through the works of Nietzsche, Vögelin, Vattimo and many others, this is a clear case of transcendentisation of immanency. If “God is dead” (or useless because he/she is rationally unknowable), if we replace him/her with Nature, Reason or Human Being, we face the same logical problem: we postulate the existence of an Aristotelian Prime Mover. This sounds indeed like a checkmate for rationality.

*oeconomicus* and *homo symbolicus*, if human beings act sometimes according to certain assumptions and sometimes according to others?

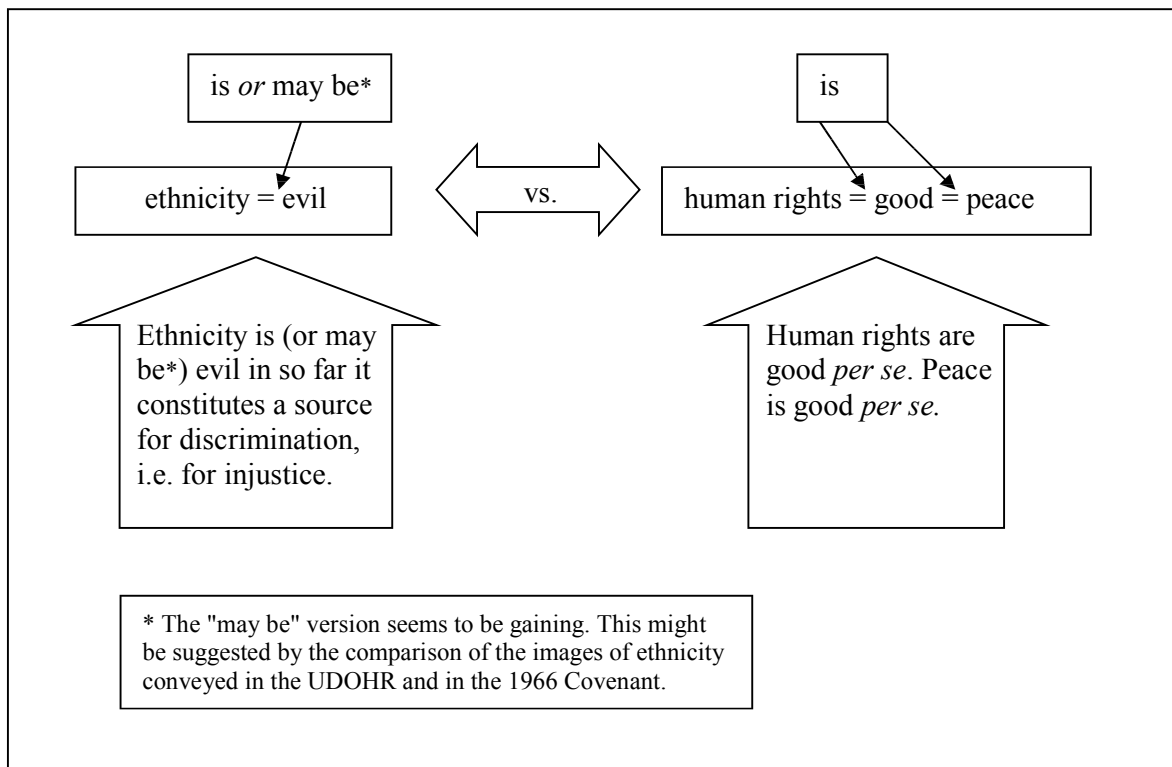
When remaining in a purely theoretic *milieu*, we may presume that the dichotomies we pointed out are real, but when we have a look at reality, we realise they are not really such (world mismatching is wanted). When we leave aside analysis and we want to act we have to recognise that our cognitive models do not entirely match reality.

This too is not new: it is a characteristic of reflexive modernity. So far we *pretended* to share the modern assumption that “rational is real”, we pretended to believe that our tetradic model was not a merely theoretic approach, but that it could help at an operative level. We did so with the aim of pointing out the insufficiency of such a model. Unfortunately that is all we can do at the moment. Being the recognition of the limitedness of the previous approaches one of the main characteristics of reflexive modernity, what we can do is to admit we need a new (multidimensional) paradigm in the fields of ethnic studies, war studies and human rights studies.

Provided that we still lack a new, generally accepted, multidimensional paradigm in those fields, what about the operative level? Should we wait until we have such paradigm to guide our policy making? This is indeed impossible, also because we do not know if we shall ever have it. At an operative level it seems to me that a solution has been found. There is, in fact, a (para-)logical chain which represents the criterion to take operative decisions. The chain is:



If we wish to see what is the role of ethnicity in this chain, we could draw the following "mental map":



Of course, we are aware of the theoretic weakness of this chain. Its weakness does not lie only in the mixture of both *oeconomicus* and *symbolicus* approaches, but it goes much further. In fact, in this logical chain, which is evident in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, there is a new element: “good”. What is good? Is it defined by nature or by reason? Is Good given once for always (primordial ethics) or defined from time to time on the bases of the current needs (utilitarian relativist ethics)? Here again we face a terrible question and feel the need for an answer and, ultimately, for a new paradigm for ethics. And how shall we solve the problem of the definition of good and evil if we do not find an answer to the questions concerning the free will of human beings? And so on, and on, and on.

It is now evident that the questions we rose are real frame questions. They involve the very idea of human being. Our incapability to find univocal answers might sound as a scientific checkmate and is related to the notorious phenomenon called "the end of the illusion not only of objectivity but even of neutrality of science".

The fact we do not have a scientific multidimensional model should not prevent us from acting. There have to be policies concerning ethnicity, human rights, peace, ad concerning their interplay. Policy making in those fields must have a multidimensional approach, and, as no theoretic multidimensional approach is available, policy makers have to find out one. This is exactly what has been done, consciously or unconsciously, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: a “multidimensional and apparently para-logical” chain (or set of elements) concerning the interplay of ethnicity, peace and human rights has been chosen and used for practical purposes. The model underlying the Universal Declaration of Human Rights might be refined in the future, but it is an attempt, probably the best known, to overcome the theoretic *impasse* characterising late Western modernity.

Thus there is still room for optimism (or just for hope and good will) as far as operative aspects are concerned. But, of course, our optimism is shaded by the accuse (or the risk) of smuggling ideologies under the label of "peace" and "human rights".

Skopje, October 2000.