



Freedom, Truth and Morality in Politics and in International Relations

Abstract: The United States is a federal republic whose citizens enjoy a dynamic political system, a strong tradition of the rule of law, robust freedom of speech and religious belief, and a wide range of other civil liberties. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prevents the government from enacting laws that: govern the establishment of religion; prohibit the free exercise of religion; restrict freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of assembly. There is a growing tendency in global politics, academia and in diplomacy to accept the inclination of hegemon states to dominate all-important aspects of global power. Freedom and moral standards are viewed as a political ballast because human beings by nature, and states in particular, have a boundless desire for unrestricted power and for the promotion of their own self-interest, regardless of international law, custom, culture or tradition. The twenty-first century crisis of freedom is at the root of the crisis of truth. In the conceptually contemporary world, John Paul II's voice clearly showed the inseparable link between freedom and truth. The Pope's philosophy of freedom is contrary to the concept of freedom from values, so widespread in contemporary culture, especially in the USA.

Keywords; freedom, morality, truth, John Paul II, realism, natural law.

Wolność, prawda i moralność w polityce i stosunkach międzynarodowych

Streszczenie: Stany Zjednoczone są republiką, której obywatele cieszą się dynamicznym systemem politycznym, silną tradycją rządów prawa, silną wolnością słowa i przekonaniach religijnych oraz szerokim zakresem innych swobód obywatelskich. Pierwsza Poprawka do Konstytucji Stanów Zjednoczonych uniemożliwia rządowi uchwalanie praw, które: regulują ustanawianie religii; zakazują swobodnego praktykowania religii; ograniczają wolność słowa, wolność prasy, wolność zgromadzeń lub prawa do składania petycji do rządu o zadośćuczynienie za krzywdy. W globalnej polityce, środowisku akademickim i dyplomacji wzrasta akceptacja tendencji hegemonów do dominacji nad najważniejszymi aspektami globalnej władzy. Wolność i standardy moralne są raczej postrzegane jako balast polityczny, ponieważ człowiek z natury, a w szczególności państwa, mają bezkompromisowe pragnienie władzy i promują własny interes. Kryzys wolności w XXI wieku leży u podstaw kryzysu prawdy. W pojęciowo współczesnym świecie głos Jana Pawła II wyraźnie ukazywał nierozzerwalny związek między wolnością a prawdą. Filozofia wolności papieża jest sprzeczna z koncepcją wolności od wartości, tak rozpowszechnioną we współczesnej kulturze, zwłaszcza w USA.

Słowa kluczowe; wolność, moralność, prawda, Jan Paweł II, realizm, prawo naturalne.

Introduction

Political freedom is a central concept in history and political thought and one of the most prominent features of democratic societies.

The Global Freedom Index ¹ fell in 2022 for the seventeenth(17th) year in a row as thirty-five countries experienced a decline in their political rights and civil liberties, according to a new report released today by Freedom House (FH). One of the biggest factors causing the decline of democracy over the past 17 years has been the trend of attacks on free speech. According to FH in 2022, media freedom came under pressure in at least 157 countries and territories. In addition to the news media, the freedom of individuals to express their opinions is also at risk.

The concept of political freedom relates to the concepts of civil liberties and human rights, which in democratic societies are usually afforded legal protection from the state. Although political freedom and economic freedom are far from perfectly correlated, history indicates that the two are mutually supportive. Therefore, freedom often forms the foundation upon which economic freedom—and therefore wealth and prosperity can be built. Well recognize in western civilization the concept of rule of law that respects property rights, enforces contracts, and punishes corruption is essential for the operation of non-governmental enterprises. Well-known prof. Milton Freedman and his followers from the Chicago School stressed that economic freedom is both a necessary freedom and a vital means for political freedom (1982; P.8).

Contemporary American political division between liberals and conservatives observed in public discourse moved to opposite direction. In general liberals tend to look only at the economic side of man's nature, conservatism looks upon the enhancement of man's spiritual dimension as the primary concern of political philosophy. Conservatives believe that; "Foremost among the transcendent values is the individual's use of his God-given free will, whence derives his right to be free from...arbitrary force" (Edwards, 2018)². And stressing individual freedom they declare the conservative looks upon politics as the art and policy of achieving the maximum amount of freedom for individuals that is consistent with the maintenance of social order (Edwards, 2018).

1. Freedom of speech and First Amendment

In contemporary society, every person has two types of rights: natural rights and legal rights.

¹ The Global Freedom Index 2023. Washington, DC.

² Lee Edwards; <https://www.heritage.org/staff/lee-edwards>

1. Natural rights are rights granted to all people by God that cannot be denied, changed or restricted by any government, institutions, or individual. Natural rights are granted to people by “natural law” regardless of their social or political status.
2. Legal rights are rights granted by governments or legal systems. As such, they can also be modified, restricted, extended or repealed. In the United States, legal rights are granted by the legislative bodies of the federal, state and local governments (Longley 2016).

The First Amendment was the amendment to deal with natural individual rights. Without exception, the rights in the First Amendment are thought to be natural rights because they deal with matters of conscience, thought, and expression.

The First Amendment was adopted on December 15, 1791, as part of the Bill of Rights—the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution. The Bill of Rights provides constitutional protection for certain individual liberties, including freedoms of speech, assembly and worship.

Freedom of thought is the precursor of other liberties, including freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of expression. Free exercise is the liberty of people to reach, hold, practice and change beliefs according to their own personal conscience. Clauses relating to speech, press, peaceable assembly, and petition are intended to promote debate regarding the kind of governmental policies that shall promote the development of the individual sense of humanity and personality.

In the United States, the First Amendment guarantees free speech, though the US, like all modern democracies, places limits on this freedom. The Supreme Court often claims that the First Amendment reflects an original judgment about the proper scope of expressive freedom and often says that the First Amendment answers challenges related to freedom of speech. “The First Amendment itself reflects a judgment by the American people that the benefits of its restrictions on the Government outweigh the costs” (U.S. Supreme Court, 2010). Still more scholars conclude that freedom of speech, unlike freedom of the press, had little history as an independent concept when the First Amendment was written (Anderson D. 1983).

In general, the First Amendment guarantees the right to express ideas and information. On a basic level, it means that people can express an opinion (even an unpopular or unsavory one) without fear of government censorship and punishment. The First Amendment protects all forms of communication, from speeches to art and other media however while the public has a right to freedom of speech when it comes to the public institutions, the government does not have this right when it comes to private entities. Companies and private employers can regulate speech on their platforms and within their workplace since the First Amendment only applies to the federal and state government institutions.

For American elites in XVIII, rights were divided between natural rights, which were liberties that people can practice without governmental intervention and positive rights. In respect of positive rights, which were legal privileges defined in terms of governmental

action like the rights of due process and confrontation (Campbell, 2017, 252). The political and legal establishment of the American ruling class in the second half of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries agreed on the essence of the social contract, namely, that political society should protect natural liberty and restrict liberty only to promote the public good.

Americans typically viewed natural rights as aspects of natural liberty and personal freedom that governments should help protect against private interference. Most American agree that federal or states governments themselves could restrain only to promote the public good and only so long as the people or their representatives agreed.

According to the First Amendment, speech and press freedoms were natural rights that were regulated in promotion of the public good, meaning the good of all people. Throughout USA history, many cases have evaluated the boundaries of free speech and press, but those rights have been consistently protected and reaffirmed by the US Supreme Court.

The Harvard case; Freedom of expression and corporate donors.

Latest university protests against big corporate donors, with over 100 professors from Harvard viewed in letter, that “big money” influence the official position of university and lead to suppress the freedom of speech and the right to held own expression of the political view related to the war in Middle East.

In November 2023, the Harvard University professors have sent a letter to university president Claudine Gay, condemning Her for issuing a statement opposing antisemitism on campus — claiming she was bowing to the interests of wealthy donors and alumni, and was breaching on the free speech of students.

From the open letter to the President of the Harvard University freedom respected member of academia announce publicly;

“As Harvard faculty, we have been astonished by the pressure from donors, alumni and even some on this campus to silence faculty, students and staff critical of.....,” (Harvard University, 2023) the open letter reads.

The letter went on to urge university officials to; “affirm its commitment to the freedom of thought, inquiry and expression in light of the extraordinary pressure being brought to bear upon critics of the State of Israel and advocates of the Palestinian people.” (Harvard U. 2023). Members of Harvard University continued in the above-mentioned latter by stressing the need for the space in academia for honest and meaningful debate. It is worth stressing that a major learning objective of attending universities is preparing students at all levels to engage actively with democracy and being introduced to opposing views and encouraging students to challenging ideas.

There is a general view among scholas that university leaders and faculty must remain in their faithful commitment to free speech, open debate, and peaceful demonstration on campus. These principles are the beacon of academic freedom at all universities. Moreover,

the First Amendment requires public universities (but not private) to protect the right of all student groups to debate, engage in open discussion and demonstrate on campus.

Faculty and administrators must expose students to difficult and often controversial material to maximize their understanding of a subject, even if that subject is sensitive or uncomfortable, if they wish to see a graduate students equipped with the ability to engage with problematic concepts, dogmatic views or commonly accept theories.

One of the Harvard University schools expressed that value free expression for many reasons by underling that academic excellence depends upon freedom of expression, intellectual curiosity, advances in research, practice, and education all fed by the open exchange of ideas. (Harvard U. 2023)

Attitudes toward speech rights have shifted in this generation of college students, but legal protections under the First Amendment have not. Even as students place less value on unrestricted freedom of speech, its place on campus has repeatedly been upheld by administrations and governments and championed by groups founded to protect free speech.

The right to practice free speech does not imply that hate speech is not offensive. However, because the First Amendment does not legally define nor restrict hate speech, and public colleges are bound to sustain constitutional rights, campuses must uphold free speech on campus.

2. Rational states in International Relations

The debate between neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism has dominated IR debate for decades. The two schools of thought have completely different views on the international system in an attempt to define the world of international politics.

The debate is characterized by their disagreement over specific issues such as: the nature and consequences of anarchy, international cooperation, relative versus absolute gains, intentions versus capabilities, institutions and regimes, and priority of state goals to dominate in region or globally.

After the World War II, Hans Morgenthau (1948), representing mostly a German viewed in international relations sought to develop a comprehensive international theory as he believed that politics, like society in general, is governed by laws that have roots in human nature. His concern was to clarify the relationship between interests, freedom and morality in international politics.

In contrast to realist and neorealist view of permanent anarchy in international relations more optimistically minded idealists from academia who expected international tensions to be resolved through diplomacy and open negotiations marked by goodwill are on the defensive side of the intellectual dispute spectrum. In contemporary academic discourse idealists camp is in minor position despite strong theoretical arguments and demand from international public opinion for more balance approach in international relations and in diplomacy.

In Morgenthau's account, every political action in global politics is directed towards keeping, increasing or demonstrating power. According to realists like Morgenthau (1967) any political act or desire to compromise based on morality or idealism can lead to weakness – and destruction or domination of a state by a competitor.

Indeed, morality was portrayed by realists as an ethical ballast that should be avoided in policymaking and in International Relations. In this sense pursuing the national interest in international politics is 'amoral' – meaning that it is not subject to calculations of morality. Realists believe that their theory most accurately describes the image of world politics held by practitioners and diplomats of statecraft. In general, neorealists were focused on security measures, as a main concern for the hegemon state.

The realist view on international cooperation, freedom and moral standards is less than optimistic as man by nature and the states in particular has an uncompromised desire for power and promote self-interest (Keohane, 1986). International cooperation and mutual respect become difficult to achieve as this strive for power is likely to increase tendency to limit freedom and reject idea that states act on moral and ethical ground in international politics.

According to the leading voice of neorealist camp. represented by prof. J. Mearsheimer (1995) for University of Chicago the two main obstructions to international cooperation are relative gains considerations and protect own dominate interest (global interest in case USA and in case of China regional interest), both of which stem from the assumption on the logic of anarchy. Since international relations are competitive game, states compete with each other to ensure their own benefits outweigh those of others.

The negative side of the realists' dogmatic theology emphasis power and self-interest is often their negative view regarding the relevance of ethical norms in the field of international affairs among states. From the point of view of realists' national politics is the main domain of authority and law, whereas international politics, they sometimes claim, is a sphere without justice or relation to freedom. Neorealists assume that international politics are characterized by active or potential conflict among states, where ethical standards, rule of law, justice and political norms do not apply.

However, hegemon state which dominate globally (or in particular region) forcefully and vigorously protect own domestic constitutional orders and legal system but at the same time in order to gain dominance position they tend to disrespect for other countries constitutional orders, political standards and officially elected representatives or constitutionally appointed judges.

Rational state actors pursue their national interests to survive the vicious competition and to establish dominant positions in international affairs. From the neorealist perspective, the international system is in permanent anarchy forcing nation-states to act in a rational and self-centered way with their basic objective to ensure their own survival. Therefore, a rational theory of international politics shall be constructed based on states interest to secure dominance position in geopolitical, military and in economics terms. Such a theory

is not concerned with morality, freedom, religious beliefs, motives or personal judgments. In realists view on International Relations hegemon must be prepared to act according to own selfish interest and reject the idea of respect for competitors' political freedom, tradition, beliefs, constitutional order, common accepted values and norms that so distinctively form national consciousness and reflect historical and cultural experience.

3. The Freedom and true in JP II legacy

The XXI century crisis of freedom is at the root of the crisis of truth. In the conceptually modern world, John Paul II's voice clearly showed the inseparable link between freedom and truth. Over the course of JP II lengthy philosophical work and diplomatic engagement, he has eloquently and forcefully proclaimed the principles that must underpin any free society, including European ideologically and hegemonistic driven postmodernism that is leading to nation deconstruction and the American experiment in so-called ordered freedom.

John Paul II's philosophy of freedom is contrary to the concept of freedom from values, so widespread in contemporary culture, especially in the USA. In his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (1979, 12) Pope quoted the words of Christ, "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free".

In his 1993 encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor*, the Pope rejects a series of ethical systems that propose novel criteria for the new moral standards based on misguided assumptions about the man and truth. And then His Holiness so eloquently stress the importance of honest relationship with respect to truth and authentic freedom but not to falls freedom or unilateral freedom but the fundamental truth in relation the man and global order; "These words contain both a fundamental requirement and a warning: the requirement of an honest relationship with regard to truth as a condition for authentic freedom, and the warning to avoid every kind of illusory freedom, every superficial unilateral freedom, every freedom that fails to enter into the whole truth about man and the world"(Dulles A. 1995).

As the Pope goes on to explain (*Centesimus Annus* 1991, 46) that the authentic democracy is possible only based on a rule of law and a correct conception of the human person. "If there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. . . ." And Pope emphasizes the risk of deliberate manipulation by political and interest group by expressing; "In a world without truth, freedom loses its foundation and man is exposed to the violence of passion and to manipulation, both open and hidden" (C.A. 1991, 46).

According to John Paul II, freedom alone, uprooted from the truth if left to decide for itself what is good and what is evil, will disregard the humanity of those around us and dehumanize the entire civilization (*Veritatis Splendor* 1993, 84). Spiking on political trends and power of majority Pope reflected in *Centesimus Annus*(1991); "Those who are

convinced that they know the truth and firmly adhere to it are considered unreliable from a democratic point of view, since they do not accept that truth is determined by the majority or that it is subject to variation according to different political trends”.

During John Paul II visits in USA and in open speech in the UN, He underline the speed of global acceleration for freedom which is one of the great dynamics of human history. He perfectly understands the social and political implication of the global new order phenomenon which is not limited to any one part of world politics; nor is it the expression of any single culture. For increasingly confusing and ideology driven agenda in today's politics the Holy Father reflection offer a universal judgment on freedom and politics by saying; “There can be no rule of law ... unless citizens and especially leaders are convinced that there is no freedom without truth” (Veritatis Splendor, 1992).

John Paul II view particular men and women in global politics and throughout the world have taken the risk of freedom, asking to be given a place in social, political, and economic life which is commensurate with their dignity as free human beings. Speaking to the top diplomats and politicians at UN the Pope express necessity for universal longing for freedom is truly one of the distinguishing marks of our time (John Paul II, 1995).

In Veritatis Splendor (1993), Evangelium Vitae (1995) and elsewhere in his official teachings, Pope claimed that denying the link between freedom and truth could lead to disrespect for man and move toward totalitarianism. And in *Memory and Identity* Pope explained: “The abuse of freedom provokes a reaction which takes the form of one totalitarian system or another. This is the corruption of freedom which we have experienced in the 20th century, and we are experiencing some of the form today” (John Paul II, 2005). He contemplates freedom and politics in His moral respect for man and deep sense of humanity by reflecting; “There can be no rule of law ... unless citizens and especially leaders are convinced that there is no freedom without truth.” (John Paul II, 1999). The negation of natural rights and objective truth in social and political life leads to the monopolization of political power and subsequently limits the freedom of speech and increases political corruption.

Conclusion

The consensus among scholars and politicians shall be nourished not by disordered passion for self-destruction and profit driven economic agents but by an inner sense of responsibility to a higher law, interpreted by wisdom, goodness and honesty of ordinary citizens. In western civilization many academic scholars and policy makers are addicted to false terminology and misleading concepts like; home economicus, animal spirit, rational behavior, consumer choice, self-corrected market and live according to purely pragmatic and hedonistic standards of pleasure, wealth, and power.

In such chaotic and confusion world of science and politics We as people, communities and nations a social and political product of misguided modern civilization in XXI century are in danger of losing the moral and spiritual foundations on which our freedom rests. College campuses must stand firmly and unequivocally for open debate and discussion as civil discourse is imperative to the development of critical judgments and the capability to meaningfully discussion, critical view on officially proclaim majority position.

The contemporary crisis of freedom, therefore, is at root a crisis of truth and the Great Pope, John Paul II was right when He said: “There Is No Freedom Without Truth”.³ Undeniably the relationship between human freedom and truth is of exceptional importance, not only in the humanistic sense, but also in the political, economic and sociological dimension. Therefore, understanding the thought of John Paul II in the theological and the philosophical but also in the individual, social and political context helps all of us to properly understand and respond to the challenges of our time.

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