

# ISSA Proceedings 2002 - Political Risk And Power In The Modern World: Moral Arguments And Priorities



## *Introduction*

On the threshold of the XXIth century in the modern culture as a whole and in its separate areas, - politics, science, economy etc, - the question on necessity of use of ethical arguments, ideals of tolerance and pluralism of opinions, flexibility instead of force strategy for conflicts

decision in the conditions of globalization of a world history is actualized(**i**). A special interest to a problem of political risk and power in a context of their orientation to moral arguments and priorities is caused in this connection.

An overwhelming majority of tasks that a person solves in various institutional systems and ordinary life has a risky character. Risk is an integral feature of a human activity.

How people make a choice in conditions of choice? What psychological mechanisms do control the process of decision-making in conditions of risk? What is the political risk? What is the status of moral arguments in politics? What is the technology of person behavior in conditions of risk and world history globalization?

The globalization concept itself represents a philosophically and culturologically integral concept reflecting the tendencies of world history development at the present stage. It is stated within the given concept framework that the modern society is a complete and interconnected world constantly facing with the necessity of cultural pluralism in solving global problems of modernity (establishment of international order on principles of equality and mutually advantageous cooperation; development of economic integration; problem of global nuclear war prevention; environmental problems in all displays; demographic, power, food problems; problem of space use; subglobal problems of sociological, culturological and humanitarian lines connected with liquidation of exploitation, poverty and other forms of social inequality). It becomes clear that

despite of all uniqueness and uneliminability the distinctions between separate civilizations (Western, Islamic, Indian, African, Chinese and others) with all their cultural, ethnic, social pluralism, the thesis of world civilization unity does not seem the erroneous concept any more and the modern world consideration through the prism of eurocentric, rational, western vision does not follow the spirit of time and global perception of world. It is already impossible to imagine the modern world beyond the range of dialogue of separate cultures, "meeting of civilizations" and treatment of civilizations as intercommunicating units, steady and defining interaction and equality. The global interaction of cultures leaves no illusions for the preservation of "pure" civilizational formations in their original ethnic, social and cultural isolationism and results in the XXIth century into the formation of global culture, a uniform planetary civilization with a new scale of values common to all mankind.

The profound knowledge in the field of risk methodology, formation of mechanisms of risk behaviour, reactions to risk situations are especially important for a politician, economist, lawyer because it is impossible to make social decisions of a strategic plan without the knowledge of risk culture. The responsibility measure and risk degree of individual and group decisions accepted at a global international level is great, but the search for the correct strategy of choice in various risk situations inside the own country is not less important and crucial. The rational analytical attitude to the study of risk problem, as well as the operative use of some knowledges and recommendations in social practice will promote the substantiation of technology of adequate behavior in real situations of political risk at the time when a globalization process of a human history takes place in the world. These and other questions will also be considered in our study.

### *1. The concept of risk in the modern world*

The creation of fundamental concept of risk assumes the interdisciplinary synthesis of various theoretical models reflecting the regularities and mechanisms of formation of risky thinking and behavior in various spheres. The problem of risk is one of the "youngest" problem the interest to which has appeared in the 60th of the XXth century in connection with the development of system studies and necessity to solve some applied problems in the field of technological and ecological risk, prospects of political and strategic risk, development of economic and commercial risk models.

When etymologizing the word of "risk", some researchers emphasize such its

substantial characteristic as “maneuvering among the cliffs”, and explanatory dictionaries specify at least two characters of risk in explaining the concept of risk: risk as a *probable danger* (“to run risks”, “at risk for life”); *risk as on the off-chance action* in hope for a favorable outcome (“to act on the fear and risk”). The first reference to the concept of risk allows distinguishing its two interconnected component – the objective (symbolized as a “cliff”) and the subjective (an image of “manoeuvring”). From the point of view of the objective component, the risk reproduces this or that uncertainty in the area of vigorous activity of subject. The subjective component of risk reflects the behavioral susceptibility of the subject to make decisions taking into account the scale and dynamics of appropriate objective uncertainty.

It is rather a complex task for decision-making in situation characterized by uncertainty relative to the result of a certain activity since a decision-maker is not able to foresee unambiguously either he will be successful or not (for example, in the course of elections), either he will win or lose money (for example, in a game of chance or in commercial transaction).

So, the existing definitions of risk fix first of all the moment of its uncertainty referring to the result obtained in the process of a certain activity. When making a choice of alternative, the subject risks in solving a problem, since there is a certain probability that his choice will lead to the loss or unprofitable result. During the process of decision-making the subject chooses lotteries (sometimes they are called rates, bet) rather than alternatives, i.e. alternatives with their consequences or outcomes coming with a certain probability.

The decision accepted by the subject within the framework of given paradigm is a function of two variables – the value of prize and the value of risk. It is typical, that “winged words” in various cultures reflect such dependence as: “the minimum of risk – the maximum of prize”, “who does not risk, that does not drink champagne”, “the profit is the award for risk”. Undoubtedly, the given approaches show a principal feature of a person behavior in risk situations when the subject runs to risk in expectation for a high prize but not just because the risk has rather a positive value.

The analysis of different approaches to the problem of risk allows to distinguish such its parameters as: *alternativeness* (the presence of two or more alternatives of choice); *contradictoriness* (positive and negative vectors of realization in specific social situations of decision-making); *uncertainty* (impossibility for predicting unequivocally the result or outcome of risky activity); *stochastic nature*

(probability for reaching the desirable result – a prize, success; probability for reaching the undesirable outcome – failure, loss, illness; probability for correcting the purpose in case of its transformation during the risky activity).

*Thus, risk represents such a kind of activity which is carried out in situations of the obligatory choice aimed at removal of uncertainty and at a possible achievement of desirable result (prize), the alternative to which may be a probability of a lack of success (failure, loss) caused the possibility of a specified target transformations (both with positive, and with negative vectors).*

## *2. Specificity of political risk*

The increasing attention is given to the problem of political risk due to the processes taking place in our country at present. *The political risk represents a probability of undesirable political events which should be taken into account in economy and politics*, i.e. the political risk reflects a probability of both undesirable political events of a destructive character for business and sharp political events resulted from the activity of governmental structures. This is a typical feature of a majority of countries at present. The political risk is naturally considered by the researchers of this phenomenon in a close indissoluble connection with the strategy of economic policy, the development of market relations, the action of national governments as well as various political forces, parties and movements (both inside and outside the country) which effect the activities of economic subjects.

It is important for the modern politicians, economists and experts in the area of risk to take into account the approach that is formed in the international practice. This approach includes the allocation of three basic levels in analyzing the nature of political risk:

1. External international or global risk – “megarisk”;
2. Internal or regional risk – “macrorisk”;
3. The level of individual subjects (politicians, economists, businessmen etc.), firms, parties, movements – “microrisk”.

## *3. Conceptual models of political risk*

The international practice worked out *various conceptual schemas of the study of political risk for the need of economic subjects* operating in the markets of foreign countries. The knowledge of these schemas allows to predict and evaluate rationally and weighfully the influence consequences of various political changes on investors in their residence country, to investigate the events caused changes

of their position, to estimate a probable effect of a power subject (legal government) on this or that company.

*The indices of foreign trade, internal economic indices and the foreign trade indices* are the major *economical indices* (used in various applied models of analysis and assessment of political risk) applicable to the substantiation of theoretical approaches to the study of risk. The most significant *sociopolitical indices of risk* are *the educational level, political stability, international relations and political system*. Thus, the examination of political and an economic situation in a country are carried out by the leading international experts, the development of situation is predicted and the measures against the possible negative tendencies are planned. This or that applied model of political risk takes into account the character of a subject and a sufficient goal for the realization of which it is developed.

#### *4. Risk and culture of power*

The risk and the power are inseparable – the power is destined for people meaningfully running to risk. The field of politics in which the political power in the state is realized by the subjects represented by the highest officials of the executive and legislative power represents in a certain sense *a market in which there is a formation, demand and supply of a specific kind of politicians, parties, programs, opinions, positions*. But a market is always characterized by the presence of risk, choice of alternative, overcoming of uncertainty with multiversion results. The inseparability of risk and power is proved also by the fact that one of the power motives for a certain type of people is that they consider power as something similar to “entertainment”. There is an opinion that politicians are the people of game and politics itself is a game.

Similarly to any activity, risk in politics assumes concentration of power in hands of professionals, competent subjects expropriating the rights of the majority and authorized to realize a direct political power. *They may expect a success in the actual game of politics only when they have a specific training and professional competence*. The adherence to game, certain elements of illusionism and involvement, obligation in observance of rules is not only the successful image of risk in politics, but at the same time it represents the absolute requirement of political game, investment in game which is both the result and condition of game functioning. All those who run risks and recognize political trick worthy investments take up upon themselves a number of obligations entering private contracts which sometimes operate much stronger than all official or confidential

agreements since the subjects may be placed out of game and loose the expected profits in case of breach of game rules (Bourdieu)(ii).

The degree and orientation of risk in political game is set by the structure of game space. It forces an experienced politician to form his own position in the field of alternative and possible, probable and incredible positions. This is the art of maneuvering among the acceptable and beforehand stipulated positions and avoiding discreditable positions pushing together the subject of power with opposition politicians. The rules of game in the appropriate political space assume that a competent, reliable, serious and responsible politician is predictable in his political activity for colleagues. The latter are also predictable for the experienced politician due to their conservatism in action. Nevertheless, the real political game may also have other models of behaviour with absolutely unpredictable variants of decision-making that is especially typical for the conditions of instability, overcoming of totalitarian "closed" mentality, working out of democratic standards of political activity and models of "open" society in which the social policy results from its free critical discussion and expression of the various points of view.

##### *5. Power need and risk*

The sphere of political life is rather an impartial place for diffident, timid and unsociable people. The "gladiators" of power which are successful on political Olympus have not only professional training and competence, responsibility and individuality, but are also able to control themselves not giving away to exhausting doubts and alarms. They believe in their abilities and strength of character to withstand the intensity and cobwebs of political struggle. Despite of understandable wish to operate and manipulate others their need for power may be shown not stronger than it is characteristic for the subjects performing other social roles.

The need for power is universal and ubiquitous. It penetrates us at home and outside of it, in love and hostility, with close and unfamiliar people. The power as a need to dominate is formed in a context of other needs of a subject (need for freedom, self-affirmation, self-expression etc.) which may be expressed to a greater or lesser extent. From this point of view it is unlikely necessary to evaluate the need for power as a defect since its aversion and disgust to it displays weakness, shyness, isolation, uncertainty of a person, as well as an excessive satiety with power may lead to deformation and heartlessness. Thus, the excessive or insufficiently contented need for power is equally abnormal for a

person. However, “modus of possession” with its trend to have as much as possible is characteristic for the need for power to a greater extent than “modus of being” with its originally human aspiration to exist. As it is emphasized by E. Fromm, the keen thirst for power roots not in force, but in weakness. It is formed as a result of some reduction of dignity, vanity, interests of a person, as a reaction to injustice, injury and offence. Thus it promotes generation of wish to restore balance of mind and to satisfy the need of having power. While and since an individual is strong he doesn't need to dominate others and he does not tend to power(iii).

As to the political power, people either search for it or behave politically passive and run out of it. A rigid orientation to political power as well as “a flight from politics” is the extreme poles of social space within the framework of which the script of political life is developed and the appropriate psychological types of people are formed by their attitude to politics. The attitude to personal participation in political life, interest to politics, knowledge of political life may act as independent indices of such attitude(iv).

#### *6. Principles of power in a mirror of a subject of power*

The aspiration for power is determined by certain psychological predispositions to it due to which the appropriate principles of power are realized. One such principle may be *the principle of power preservation* that considers the attitude to power as prevailing and almost unique value. According to it the main position here is *preservation, deduction and multiplication of power*. Since the principle of preservation is the parameter of power (power is not given up), its realization demands purposefulness and resoluteness reaching brutality and uncompromisingness at times.

*The principle of efficacy* demands also a strong demonstration of a human's character. Otherwise the power loses its status losing capability, resoluteness and ability to cope with circumstances. When there is no required will, the power is incapable and feeble, but without the sound knowledge it also shows its weakest sides – it becomes uncontrollable and unpredictable to the highest degree.

At the same time, the force of power is not equivalent to the power of force. “Guns is the ultima ratio of kings”. That's why the force is used as an extreme mean when other means “do not work”. According to it the power holder must be resolute and *weighed, rational, tolerant, able to avoid impulsive actions and violence* at the same time. The arbitrariness of power is always accompanied by

aggression. The best mean for keeping power is a support on law, i.e. the principle of legitimacy. A person is free, when he relies not on people but on law. The wish to rule may not be the dominating and final goal since the final point of pretension of power is the personal liberty and it is rather dangerous to infringe on it. Therefore, the *principle of reality* commensuring motives of actions with varying rules and conditions, desires of people and separate persons is important for a subject.

Despite all his imperiousness the ruler isn't internally free, the freedom of his will is limited. The power and personal freedom are always antagonistic since the power in a society is limited by various circumstances in the form of pressure of different parties, mass media, opponents etc. Therefore the art of power includes manoeuvring, constant risk to make dizzy fall from an idol of crowd up to its anti-hero.

In this plan the *principle of joint leadership* realizing *the aim of power at partnership and cooperativity* is important. The belittling of this principle results inevitably into leaderism, degradation of personal measurement of power, its transformation in tyranny and dictatorship.

Arrogance, self-conceit without elements of self-criticism and a reasonable self-evaluation leads finally to power destruction accompanied by a crowd of slanderers, bootlickers, inclination to pompous scripts and awards, displays of "pedestal" thinking.

*The ability to control personal inclinations, weakness, defects is not less important for the subject of power, than demonstration of his striking human qualities.* To a certain extent the subject of power is a hero, the representative of a history, fighter but not an ordinary person, therefore the greatness principle is important for him. At the same time, with a view of self-preservation and self-defense the ruler is sometimes forced to sacrifice members of his command used as shock-absorber of relations of the subject of power with people, "removal of fire" and "release steam".

The power must follow the *principle of secrecy* and it uses a wide spectrum of *implicit means and tools* (closed meetings, confidential correspondence, secret diplomacy). It is extremely dangerous for the power to say the truth prematurely. And in this connection there is a time interval for declassification.

## 7. Power and morals

The methods of power realization, psychological predispositions to power or flight



from it, propensity of running to risk depend not only on the power motives, individual personal qualities, but also on the attitude of power subject to moral values. The requirement of morality in politics is a solemn but extremely flexible at the same time.

A fine distinction between the official and semi-official, a proscenium and side scenes, openness and secret diplomacy, risk of political life and game hold the relationship of politics and moral in a constant strain. The conjugation of power with violence paves the way for identifying the power with vice and immorality, expressed in such widely spread definitions as "politics – dirty hands", "the politics and morals are incompatible", "power – blood" etc. The idea of moral nihilism is especially sharply expressed by F. Nitsshe. From his point of view "the morality is immoral" just as any other thing on the Earth". Based exclusively on virtue, it is impossible to affirm the domination of virtue. When one gambles on virtue he refuses power, loses his will to power". In describing the means with the aid of which the virtue reaches the power F. Nitsshe points out: "Exactly by the same means, as political party: slander, suspicion etc. Hence, exclusively with the aid of "immorality".

Within the framework of given paradigm F. Nitsshe describes the following ways to power: introducing a new virtue under the previous name; connecting it with personal "interests"; using a slander, advantages and benefits and cases for its exaltation; transforming its adherents into fanatics by means of victim; using a grand symbolism.

According to Nitsshe, the power realized through the use of ways ordered to it should use:

1. compulsory means which are at virtue disposal;
2. means for it seduction;
3. etiquette of virtue.

The idea of moral nihilism, the neglect of moral norms for reaching political targets, the affirmation of principles of might and power as opposed to truth and justice developed by F. Nitsshe and his followers contradicts not only to the universal moral positions of a human being, but is a certain "anti-ideal" that is not realized in the human history in full measure due to its abstractedness and isolation from the real life and owing to the fact that the activity of political leaders, subjects of power is always in sight. It is only possible to speak of a "conformity" measure of some representatives of high power to such anti-ideal:

Caligula, Richard the IIIth etc.

At the same time, the speculative and torn off the vital realities hope on “general weal” does not guarantee the morality of political actions. Unfortunately, the categorical imperative of E. Kant ordering to all people (irrespective of their political position, functions carried out and social status) to act so “that you always regard to mankind in the person of your own and in the person of any other in the same way as to the aim but never as only to a mean” is only an ideal. An appeal to a general blessing, moralizing of politics, a hope for high ideals of general happiness and prosperity led mankind in tragedy more than once. S.L. Franc wrote “All trouble and harm ruling on the Earth, all streams of spill blood and tears, all disasters, humiliation, sufferings are the result (to 99 per cent at least) of will for realizing good, fanatical belief in some sacred principles which should be immediately spread throughout the world as well as will to a merciless extirpation of harm while perhaps only a hundredth part of harm and suffering is caused by the action of evidently evil, criminal and self-interested purpose”.

From the positions of realization of unity principle of political actions and morals, the professional and psychological training of the power subject at present must be carried out first of all on the basis of the fact that politicians may be really respectable and law-abiding in a jural state only. The contraposition of politics to morals loses its sense first of all in a society where all subjects and their actions are exposed to the constant test for morality introduced practically into a social field of not only politics, but also in other spheres of life changing the civil status of a person. This is a way of creation by the power subjects the institutional means and conditions for a politics of morals. The contraposition of politics to morals disappears with the understanding that the requirement of using the moral arguments in politics should be elucidated by the law, that the ethics of responsibility, that the paramount decisions should come forward together with the ethics of persuasion aimed at eliminating the acts contradicting to the law even if at first sight they seem to be oriented to the highest and sacred principles.

## NOTES

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- ii.** Bourdieu P. *Le sens pratique*. P. 1980.
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