**The contradictory approaches to regionalization in R. Higgotfs**The Theory and Practice of Global and Regional Governance: Accommodating American

Exceptionalism and European Pluralism”

The on-going process of globalization presents the world with a set of benefits on one hand and challenges on another. Of no doubt, synergistic unification of the heterogeneous economies presents humanity with an opportunity to dynamically develop both human and social capital throughout the world. But at the same time the broad array of complexities, caused by the convergence of the economic, political and cultural space, raises the question of how to effectively and efficiently manage the processes of regionalization in different regions of the globalizing world.

In this regard, it is of crucial importance to analyze the patterns and models of management and governance of the regionalization processes. The article of R. Higgott “The Theory and Practice of Global and Regional Governance: Accommodating American Exceptionalism and European Pluralism” (Higgott, 2005) can be of a significant interest for researchers specializing in the field of multilevel governance, regionalization and globalization processes.

In the mentioned article R. Higgott focuses on the comparative analysis of the American and European approaches to the governance of the complex regionalization trends. The author conducts his analysis within the solid theoretic framework: aside from comparing and contrasting the American and European models, Higgott provides the clear definitions of the key terms (regionalism, globalization, governance, etc.) and sheds a light upon the links between economic globalization and governance. Apart from theoretic speculations, in the conclusion the author provides a set of valuable recommendations to the European policy-makers.

The author conducts his analysis on the basis of the idea that the contemporary world order is shaped by two the interlinked and entangled tendencies: the globalization of the world and the development of integration process in the various regions. He correctly uses realist approach to describing the very essence of the circumstances in which the mentioned tendencies take place: “…actors …are not ethically neutral and dispassionate. They are players with political agendas” (Higgott, 2005, p. 6), thus posing a question of difficulties any regional union faces on the path of its development. On this basis the author continues to speculate on the models to follow to overcome the deficiency of discordant political agendas within regional integration processes.

The first way to overcome such deficiency is to rely upon the realpolitik methods of governance, i.e. consider the occurring regionalization through the lenses of realist terms of ‘primacy’ and ‘interest’. Higgott sees such tendency in the course of American foreign policy under Bush administration. The author bluntly states, that the United States dominated the world in political and economic dimensions after the end of the Cold War, but its primacy is being eroded” (Higgott, 2005, p. 11). The author is sure that unless the principle of irrelevance of selfbinding commitments to the dominant powers is reviewed by the American policy-shapers, the building of effective global economic structures will remain undermined.

However, one can find the approach to regionalism based on the principles of pluralism, interdependence and cooperation to be quite beneficial and effective. This is the very approach European states used to come up with the most successful integration model in the history of humankind. In the discussed article, Higgott delivers 12 arguments to prove the above- mentioned statement, which range from underlining the success of the complex of intergovernmental institutional structures to the success of the European Union in establishing a web of bilateral and multilateral connections with other integrations.

Comparing the two approaches, Higgott labels them as “American Exceptionalism” and “European Pluralism”，thus clearly drawing a dividing line in the very essence of the underlying principles of two approaches. While criticizing American approach, the author believes that European experience of the integration should be exported to the outer world and be used as a guiding example by other regional groupings: “The EU must take on a major share of the responsibility for advancing the theory and practice of global governance” (Higgott, 2005, p. 27).

Higgott’s article clearly reflects the reality of the world order, existed 10 years ago, in 2005. Of no doubt, it stood the test of time: except for the few hereinafter mentioned remarks, the major part of the statements presented in the article still holds sway.

First, the vectors of American foreign policy strongly depend on the acting US president administration. As J. Joffe, Prof, at Stanford University and the editor of Die Zeit, correctly underscored, the speeches of B. Obama lack “words such as “balance,” “order,” “containment” and “alliance-cohesion” 一 the bread and butter of realism” (Joffe, 2015), which one could attribute to the foreign policy of the US under Bush administration. However, we can still find the relevance of Higgott’s argument of the desire of the States to build global governing institutions, in which the US will still have the leading positions. In the article “Scoring Obama's Foreign Policy” M. Indyk, K. Lieberthal and M. E. O’Hanlon sum up the current approach of American leader to the issue of globalization: “He has been trying to shape a new liberal global

order with the United States still in the lead but sharing more responsibilities and burdens with others where possible or necessary” (Indyk, Lieberthal, & O'Hanlon, 2012).

Second, since the article by R. Higgott was published, the world has seen the appearance of the third approach to regionalization, which one can notice in the attempt to create Eurasian version of the European Union by the Russian Federation. Eurasian Economic Union went through all the stages of development starting from free trade zone to a complete economic union. As seen from Washington D. C. this economic integration represents “a move to re- Sovietize the region” (Klapper, 2012). This integration is considered to be crafted by Moscow using only realist means, thus one can argue it is different from two aforementioned approaches by its radical realist nature.

Third, Europe’s unity is being challenged by the vast range of problems, starting from economic crises (consider Greek economic crisis) and ending with security threats (the Paris attack of 13 November 2015). The recent refugee crisis and a series of terrorist attacks put the Shengen zone into a serious test. However, the solidarity of the European countries in their will to stay united in front of the future challenges still give a cause for optimism.

To conclude, the article of Higgott helps to get an insight of the underlying principles of the economic and political regionalization processes, but one may feel the need to update the findings.

References:

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