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Cita:

Morozov Viatcheslav (2010). *Liberal Democracy and the Counter-Hegemonic Alternatives: Russia and the Postcolonial Discourse*. V Congreso Latinoamericano de Ciencia Política. Asociación Latinoamericana de Ciencia Política, Buenos Aires.

Dirección estable: <https://www.aacademica.org/000-036/159>

Liberal Democracy and the Counter-Hegemonic Alternatives: Russia and the Postcolonial Discourse

Paper prepared to be presented in the V Latin American Congress of Political Science, organized by the Latin American Association of Political Science (ALACIP) Buenos Aires, 28-30 July 2010

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Thematic area: International Relations

Abstract. The global debate about democracy between the West and the non-West is one of the defining conflicts of our time. The appeal of the democratic values is weakened both by an ever greater degree of alienation between the population and the democratic institutions and by the fact that pro-democracy rhetoric is often cynically used to justify undemocratic decisions and practices. Moreover, the legitimacy of the western monopoly to define what democracy means in political practice is vigorously challenged by non-western leaders in many parts of the world. These attempts to decentre the West by exposing the Eurocentric nature of democracy promotion have to be taken seriously despite their underlying instrumental motives, because what makes them possible in the first place are genuine grassroots concerns about democracy dysfunctions and western unilateralism. This paper is based on post-structuralist theory of hegemony and uses discourse analysis to study counter-hegemonic conceptualisations of democracy with a focus on Russia. In addition to that, it brings in a perspective from postcolonial studies to conceptualize Russia's position in the international system and the prospects of alliance-building between Russia and postcolonial countries.

Introduction: democracy and hegemony¹

Recent developments in global politics, and in particular the attempts by a number of non-western states including Russia to re-politicise and re-conceptualise the universal

¹ The work on this paper has been supported by the Estonian Science Foundation (grant ETF8295). Some arguments in this paper were developed in cooperation with Maria Mälksoo and Bahar Rumelili. I would also like to thank Piret Ehin, Artemy Magun and Elena Pavlova for useful comments and suggestions on previous versions of this paper. Of course, I am alone responsible for any mistakes and shortcomings of the text.

values such as democracy and human rights, have opened a new crucially important area for research. This paper addresses the problem of the political existence of the universalia relying on a synthesis between constructivism and post-structuralist interpretations of Marxism. The notion of hegemony, introduced by Antonio Gramsci² and developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, is particularly useful in addressing the fate of universal values in the current global setting. Hegemony is an operation through which a particular identity is universalized, i.e. elevated to a position where it can represent the community as a whole.³ The conventional modern form of struggle for hegemony is the competition around the notion of the national interest between different parties and movements, each representing a particular view of common good, but each claiming the right to speak in the name of the nation as a whole. However, theory of hegemony does not have to rely on any ontological hierarchies in order to conceive of the political. Whereas in the state-centric accounts state sovereignty, even if contingent as to its empirical embodiment, still remains an indispensable locus to be seized in order to exercise power, hegemony theory is able to treat the pre-eminence of the state in modern times as an empirical fact rather than as theoretical prerequisite. This is so because the power which enables a particular identity to become hegemonic is derived not from the state but from antagonism, very much in the spirit of Carl Schmitt's understanding of the political,⁴ but without the state-centrism inherent in Schmitt's thinking.

Poststructuralist theory describes hegemony as a situation of antagonism and domination, but hegemonic domination is always contingent and the boundaries which separate the antagonistic forces are unstable. Hegemony is thus a notion which best illustrates the position of the West as a subject of world history in the late modern era. On the one hand, in the semi-periphery of the world system there is a lot of genuine resentment to what is perceived as unfair western dominance. On the other hand, this criticism is framed in terms explicitly borrowed from western liberal democratic discourse, which means that western hegemony is at the same time challenged and reproduced. A good illustration is the slogan of 'sovereign democracy' promoted by the Kremlin in the final years of Vladimir Putin's presidency.⁵

This paper is a first draft in the framework of a larger cooperative project involving Brazilian, Estonian, Russian and Turkish scholars. The overall objective of the project is to examine the existing counter-hegemonic interpretations of democracy and to demonstrate the urgent need to revisit the foundations of the global democratic consensus. It is based on the premise that the current global debate about democracy between the West and the non-West is a clear example of struggle for hegemony, and as such represents one of the defining conflicts of our time. We also assume that there are certain structural similarities between counter-hegemonic discourses throughout the world, despite their different ideological and historical backgrounds. Last but not least, we hope that there are ways of speaking about global democracy while keeping a

² Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971).

³ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, 1985), pp. 134–45.

⁴ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

⁵ Viatcheslav Morozov, 'Sovereignty and Democracy in Contemporary Russia: A Modern Subject Faces the Post-Modern World', *Journal of International Relations and Development* 11:2 (2008), pp. 152–80.

critical distance from both the western project of democracy promotion and the cynical instrumental use of pro-democracy rhetoric by the non-western leaders. This critical position, however, can only be found by carefully examining the tensions and the similarities between the existing hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses.

We live in a world where democracy is almost universally accepted as the only legitimate form of government. At the same time, there is an obvious trend towards ‘the attenuation and exhaustion of the normative content of modernity, that is, its commitment to autonomy, reflexivity, criticality, and to liberty as something always yet to be achieved rather than something already possessed because of this or that institutional arrangement’.⁶ It would be impossible to retrieve this normative content of modernity without recognising the fact that it has a particular and contingent historical origin and is, in essence, the sedimented and sublimed historical experience of the West. But it would be equally impossible to do that without embarking on what Ernesto Laclau calls ‘a systematic decentring of the West’, which involves exposing the Eurocentric nature of western discourse ‘which did not differentiate between the universal values the West was advocating and the concrete social agents that were incarnating them’.⁷

In many respects, we find ourselves today at a crucial moment when the debate about the future world order has reached a turning point. The failure of the neo-conservative project of unilateral democracy promotion is recognised nearly everywhere, including the U.S. A welcome fact in itself, it nevertheless involves a risk of throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Normative relativism, claiming that democracy is no good for non-western societies, has more appeal than ever. The rise of the BRIC countries makes their positions on the future world order crucially important, and Russia’s recent foreign policy advances in Latin America, among other developments, have produced speculations about a nearing end of western hegemony. Europe’s future is increasingly being shaped by the opposition between the European Union and Russia, each claiming a decisive role in defining the normative content of the notion of Europe.

This project is searching for ways to conceptualise the key normative issues outside of the black and white dichotomy of ‘the West vs. the rest’. It will critically engage with counter-hegemonic discourses in order to deconstruct their state-centric nature and conservative bias, at the same time revealing the genuine concerns that underlie the anti-western rhetoric of the Russian leaders and their comrades-in-arms throughout the world. The ambition is to prove that despite the cynicism involved on all sides, there is still an urgent need for a substantial discussion about the future of democracy in Europe and elsewhere.

In the following sections, I will provide a brief overview of the recent trends in Russian foreign policy to highlight the moments where it takes the form of a counter-hegemonic endeavour. In particular, I will emphasize the fact that it has not presented any radical challenge to western hegemony in the sense of offering an alternative hegemonic project. On the contrary, Russian foreign policy is characterized with what is perhaps

⁶ Boris Kapustin, ‘Modernity’s Failure/Post-modernity’s Predicament: The Case of Russia’, *Critical Horizons* 4:1 (2003), pp. 99–145.

⁷ Ernesto Laclau, *Emancipation(s)* (London: Verso, 1996), p. 34.

best captured by the postcolonial notion of hybridity: it accepts the rules set by the Master but challenges the latter's right to judge whether the rules are observed in each case. After discussing the advantages and limitations of describing Russia's situation as postcolonial, I conclude by reviewing the options for Russia's alliance with postcolonial countries, including those of in BRIC, on the basis of their common criticism of western hegemony.

Does Russia challenge the West?

Ever since Mikhail Gorbachev made it to the top of the Soviet hierarchy in 1985, every change of leadership in Moscow brought about an improvement in relations with the West. The presidency of Vladimir Putin was no exception: in spite of the negative impact of the then recent Kosovo war and the conflict in Chechnya, Russia was able to achieve significant progress in its relations with the European Union, the United States, and even NATO. It is therefore understandable that the election of Dmitry Medvedev, regardless of how it was handled domestically, raised cautious hopes in the West about a possible fresh start after the 'new Cold War' of the previous months.

Of course, no-one expected any radical break with the past: after all, the new president was handpicked by the previous administration, and Vladimir Putin himself was to keep many reins of power in his new position as Prime Minister. However, at first the developments seemed to startle even the inveterate pessimists. The new presidency started with the 5-day war in the Caucasus which many thought would have devastating consequences for Moscow's relations with the West. Russia entered a new legal ground by declaring its military action against Georgia a unilateral 'peace enforcement operation' – something it had staunchly opposed as incompatible with international law ever since the 1990s – and by recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The Russian military are now permanently stationed in these breakaway republics, and the FSB border guard is threatening to use force to protect international maritime traffic to and from the Abkhazian ports.

As the dust settled, however, it became clear that the war had been much less destructive than one had feared, at least for the relations between Moscow and the western capitals. Moreover, with the arrival of Barack Obama in the White House Russia was quick to signal it was ready to join the new administration in 'hitting the reset button' in bilateral relations. Opening the Russian airspace for U.S. military transit to Afghanistan was the first crucial step in that direction. One must not underestimate the approval by Moscow of the new U.S. missile defence strategy (which included, by the way, a tacit consent to the supply of the Patriot missile systems to Poland) and a much more constructive position on the Iranian issue.

Against this contradictory background, is it possible to discern any general trend in Russia's policy towards the Euro-Atlantic community? Are we observing any qualitative differences in Moscow's stance on key international issues under President Medvedev, or only marginal fluctuations within the limits set by the previous administration? First of all, it is clear that the answer to these questions must not depend solely, or mainly, on personal views and priorities of any particular decision-makers. Institutional factors, such as the current very peculiar double-headed configuration of

‘the vertical of power’, the inescapable legacy of the Soviet empire, which any Russian leader would have to deal with, the worldwide fatigue caused by the unilateralism of the previous U.S. administration, explain the recent twists and turns in foreign policy course much better than any individual preferences. Yet apart from these contingent influences, there are also much more profound mechanisms that determine the basic assumptions of foreign policy thinking and therefore play a key role in defining the long-term priorities.

A useful starting point in the analysis of these mechanisms can be the new policy documents developed by the Kremlin during the first year of the new presidency. Both the Foreign Policy Doctrine and the National Security Strategy show a good deal of continuity with previous conceptual documents and official statements. According to both doctrines, Russia is ready for pragmatic cooperation on key international issues, but greatly unhappy about western dominance in global affairs. The criticism of the ‘unipolar world’ and the very transparent, even if indirect, invectives against U.S. unilateralism have remained almost unchanged since the late 1990s when Russian foreign affairs were run by Evgeny Primakov.⁸

However, as opposed to the turbulent times of the turn of the centuries, today there is much more certainty about the fact that Russia is not going to present a radical challenge to western hegemony. Unlike the Soviet ideology whose basic premise was the incompatibility of the two systems, current Russian search for the great power status is framed in terms explicitly borrowed from western liberal democratic discourse. This position has crystallized in the following, very characteristic, phrase from the Foreign Policy Doctrine: ‘For the first time in the contemporary history global competition is acquiring a civilizational dimension, which implies competition between different value systems and development models within the framework of the universal principles of democracy and market economy’.⁹ The meaning of this passage is clear: different civilizations embrace different value systems, but they all share respect for the principles of democracy and market economy. Any value systems which deny the significance of those universal norms cannot serve as a basis for any civilization in the proper sense of the word; any political force denying the universal significance of democracy positions itself outside of any civilization and, writ large, outside of humanity. Russia is going to compete against the West as a separate unique civilization, but this competition must not affect their common adherence to universal values.

There is little doubt that official rhetoric tells us very little about the eagerness of the Russian authorities to implement democratic values in everyday political practice. Yet unlike the dictatorships of the last century, contemporary ‘illiberal democracies’ (to use Fareed Zakaria’s catchphrase¹⁰) rarely commit large-scale atrocities and carefully put on a democratic façade. Most importantly, however, they are incapable of presenting any alternative ideological platform which could even come close to liberal democracy in its

⁸ On the evolution of Russian foreign policy thinking since the end of the Cold War, see in particular Andrei P. Tsygankov *Russia’s Foreign Policy. Change and Continuity in National Identity* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006).

⁹ *The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*. Approved by the President of the Russian Federation on 12 July 2008, <http://www.un.int/russia/new/MainRoot/koncept.html>. Official translation slightly amended with reference to the Russian original.

¹⁰ Zakaria, Fareed, ‘The Rise of Illiberal Democracy’, *Foreign Affairs* 76(6), 1997, pp. 22–43.

global appeal. Consequently, they have no alternative to a grudging acceptance of western ideological hegemony and struggling, with varying eagerness, for the right to take part in defining what democracy means.

The struggle for the universal

In fact we are dealing here with one of the most challenging theoretical problems of our times – the dialectic of the universal and the particular. Universal values, such as democracy, freedom or good governance, are relatively easy to define at the abstract level, but it is political practice that fills these abstract and empty notions with concrete, historically specific content. This is always done locally, at a particular juncture of time and space, and this practical work always faces two formidable challenges. One is the danger of borrowing too much from countries with solid democratic credentials – the risk here is in applying formal institutional models which might not work in a different social, cultural and historical context. The other is normative relativism, where the regime simply declares itself a democracy and rejects all criticism by presenting the violations of established democratic principles as resulting from cultural specificity of the country in question.

In the early years of its post-Soviet existence, the Russian state fell into the first trap by thoughtlessly following the neoliberal prescriptions, which, contrary to naïve expectations, did not lead directly to consumerist paradise. Disillusionment produced cynicism, and this in turn resulted in a situation where the newly consolidated semi-authoritarian regime continues to describe itself as democracy, and very few Russians object.

At the international arena, however, Russia encountered increasingly tough criticism. The defence was found in the old concept of multipolarity, and the final product was marketed for a while under the label of ‘sovereign democracy’.¹¹ This slogan has never been formally approved by either Putin or Medvedev, and it is no longer part of active political vocabulary. However, it is still there as a model of search for legitimacy at the international stage. Moreover, far from its initial role as a defensive instrument, it has been converted into an offensive ideological weapon in the struggle for global leadership in a rapidly transforming world. What we are dealing with is in effect a claim on the part of Russia to share in the power to define what democracy means in practical terms. Criticising the West for its unilateralism, Russia does not stop at describing itself a democracy, but also demands the right to criticize others, including the U.S. and the EU. It has, inter alia, established Institutes of Democracy and Cooperation in New York and Paris with the official mission to monitor the situation with human rights and democratic freedoms. And it is actively working to develop ties with world leaders, such as Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, who are most vocal in their criticism of U.S. ‘interventionism’.

Undoubtedly, there are major flaws in the Russian position. Firstly, there is a credible charge that the Russian government does not respect basic political freedoms and therefore cannot legitimately speak in the name of the Russian people. Secondly, official Russia positions itself as a continuer-state of the USSR in legal, but also in

¹¹ For in-depth analysis, see Morozov, ‘Sovereignty and Democracy’.

political and moral terms, and therefore is held responsible for the crimes committed by the Soviet regime. These arguments, convincing as they are for many people in the West (and in particular in Central and Eastern Europe), are far from self-evident in the Russian context. When they are bluntly thrown in the face of a Russian audience, the most common effect is a feeling of being aggressively driven into the corner and deprived of the right to present one's own position.

Most significant, however, is the fact that Russia is actually playing by the western rules. These rules are, however, not the ones set by the West for Russia, but rather those the West has established for itself. Russian 'sovereign democracy' is, after all, based on the formal imitation of western institutions and procedures. If one looks at the letter of the law, the Russian parliament is democratically elected with four parties represented in the lower house, Russian judiciary is independent, there is a functioning free market economy and no formal censorship in the media. The outside criticism is successfully countered by dismissing it as a case of 'double standards'. If the critics say, for instance, that the elections are not free and fair, the response would be that the election law largely complies with the 'European' norms. If, on the other hand, someone would want to question the implementation of the law, they would have to cite specific violations on the ground. The counterargument in this case would be that no democracy is perfect and that even in the West small violations happen all the time.

In other areas the similarity is even more striking. The whole 'peace enforcement operation' against Georgia was explicitly modelled on NATO's 1999 Kosovo campaign in terms of both its legal justification and, with due regard to the difference in capabilities, the way it was carried out militarily. The recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia was presented as a *sui generis* case – again, with a clear reference to the recognition of Kosovo by the United States and its allies earlier in the same year.¹² Even the crusade against the 'falsifications of history', culminating in the presidential decree of May 2009 that created a special commission to protect the official version of the Soviet past, obviously had precedents in the European laws against Holocaust denial as well as in the 2006 Ukrainian bill codifying the famine of 1932–33 as the 'genocide against the Ukrainian people'.¹³

The hybridity of the Russian position

Russia's acceptance of the language and value hierarchies promoted by the West is in itself an illustration of the point that in a hegemonic situation the boundary that separates the antagonistic forces is unstable and shifting. Another useful way of conceptualising this phenomenon is by putting it in a different theoretical context of postcolonial studies and applying to it the notion of hybridity as developed by Homi Bhabha. In fact, there is significant disagreement in the postcolonial studies literature

¹² Viatcheslav Morozov, 'Western Hegemony, Global Democracy and the Russian Challenge', in Christopher S. Browning and Marko Lehti (eds), *The Struggle for the West: A Divided and Contested Legacy* (London, New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 185–200.

¹³ For a more detailed discussion on the significance of history, see Kurilla, Ivan, 'Memory Wars in the Post-Soviet Space', PONARS-Eurasia Policy Memo No. 63, September 2009, <http://ceres.georgetown.edu/esp/ponarsmemos/page/78355.html>; Morozov, Viatcheslav, 'Protecting "Our" History: Politics, Memory, and the Russian State', PONARS-Eurasia Policy Memo No. 64, September 2009, <http://ceres.georgetown.edu/esp/ponarsmemos/page/78356.html>.

itself about the extent to which the hegemony of colonial discourse leaves room for meaningful autonomous resistance by the colonized.¹⁴ According to Gayatri Spivak, colonialism has eliminated all grounds for resistance that are not in essence reproducing and strengthening of the colonial hegemony.¹⁵ Homi Bhabha, on the other hand, emphasizes that instead of a clear-cut exclusion or opposition, the colonial discourse produces hybridization, ‘a discrimination between the mother culture and its bastards, the self and its doubles.’¹⁶ Within this space of ambivalence, the hybridized native has enabled a form of subversion and resistance. Having (seemingly) adopted the knowledge of the Master, the natives are at once complicit in its reproduction, but also simultaneously misappropriating and perverting its meaning, thereby circumventing, challenging, and refusing colonial authority.

Accordingly, this is not the pro-active agency of an autonomously calculating agent that manifests itself in oppositional resistance, but an agency that emerges within the master discourse, but manifests itself innovatively in episodes of hybridization and localization.¹⁷ Ilan Kapoor characterizes it as a ‘guerrilla type’ agency, which he argues is indeed more effective than the direct counter-hegemonic discourse that is more liable to cancellation or even reappropriation by the dominant force.¹⁸

In effect, the poststructuralist and postcolonial perspectives are complementary rather than competing: both present a critique of the existing social order, both emphasize the relations of power and inequality inherent in any Self-Other relationship. What differentiates them is the fact that they are rooted in two distinct tracks of historical experience. Poststructuralism has been developed by western left-wing intellectuals who have been heirs to the tradition of various emancipatory movements *within* the capitalist society of the core – in particular, the workers’ and the feminist movements. Postcolonialism, on the other hand, grew out of the attempts to theorize the experience of the oppressed in the periphery of the capitalist system, where the dominant power was also explicitly present as *culturally* different – hence the emphasis on the cultural and anthropological studies so visible in the postcolonial literature.

Combining two perspective is potentially fruitful in one more way: it allows one to draw attention to the structural similarities between the positions of Russia and the countries traditionally described as postcolonial in contemporary international society. Of course, the Russian situation can hardly be described as strictly speaking postcolonial. Yet, facing the overwhelming economic, military and normative supremacy of the West, Russia (as well as, for instance, Turkey) does find itself in a setting that is best analysed in the postcolonial framework. The fact it has been imperial centre on its own, and that it continues to cling to its imperial identity by no means

¹⁴ Benita Parry, ‘Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse’, in *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 36-44.

¹⁵ Gayatri Spivak, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ in *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 24-28.

¹⁶ Homi Bhabha, ‘Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree outside Delhi’, *Critical Inquiry* 12:1 (1985), p. 153.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ Ilan Kapoor, ‘Acting in a Tight Spot: Homi Bhabha’s Postcolonial Politics’, *New Political Science* 25:4 (2003), pp. 561-77.

makes the postcolonial perspective invalid in this case. Power never works through one-dimensional hierarchies where Master and Slave identities are fixed and unproblematic – on the contrary, these roles shift with the change of context. It is enough to imagine a young black American in his native urban environment and as a soldier in Iraq or Afghanistan to appreciate the dramatic metamorphoses that are the stuff of global politics. In principle, the postcolonial approach is in no way limited to the experience of postcolonial studies and can be applied to any situation of inequality. But it is this specific structural position as an outsider facing western hegemony that makes the parallel between Russia and the ‘normal’ postcolonial countries really worth looking into.

Conclusion: a postcolonial alliance in the making?

The analysis of current Russian counter-hegemonic practices seems to suggest that Russia does not present any radical challenge to the established western-dominated normative order. Far from being a revolutionary power, it wages a war of position about the interpretation of the norms and values that it understands as universally applicable. It is true that some of the interpretations offered by the Kremlin are quite peculiar to say the least, and accepting them would amount to the recognition that ‘anything goes’. At the same time, however, Moscow remains faithful to certain rules that some in the West have perhaps too hastily declared obsolete. Thus, it seems that Russia prefers to set Abkhazia and South Ossetia aside as truly unique cases and to go on defending state sovereignty as the cornerstone of international law and order. Given the mixed experience in Kosovo and Iraq, one must perhaps give a second thought to the relative merits of democracy promotion vs. the principles of non-intervention and sovereign equality of states. In a world where the balance of power is unstable and probably shifting, value-based interventionism, instead of being a tool of liberalization (and westernization), might be used by the emergent powers to justify their geopolitical expansion. We might be better off in the future if we embrace Carl Schmitt’s image of the world as a political *pluriversum* rather than a *universum*.¹⁹

It is also important not to underestimate the potential appeal of Russia’s counter-hegemonic discourse in other societies throughout the world which find themselves in structurally similar positions. This is something that is being already used as a resource in the context of BRIC and other Russian diplomatic and economic offensives in South America and elsewhere. It must be emphasized that in terms of substance the interpretation of the key universal values, such as democracy, by the Moscow-based ideologues has not that much in common with the South American discourse. Russian understanding of democracy and freedom is very tightly linked with the idea of sovereignty and thus tends to prioritize state grandeur over individual freedom. It also has a much more favourable disposition to the pro-market dogma of the western neoliberals than the South American discourses which are so much dominated by the idea of social justice.²⁰ However, the post-colonial setting in which all these societies

¹⁹ See Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*. A contemporary revision of Schmitt’s argument in line with the version of the theory of hegemony presented here can be found in Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (London, New York: Verso, 2005).

²⁰ Elena Pavlova, ‘Latin America and Russia: Illusory Rapprochement’, *Russia in Global Affairs*, forthcoming.

find themselves makes their leaders use very similar rhetoric. If two nations face the same outside hegemonic force that they perceive as oppressive, this is already enough for them to create alliances in spite of what differentiates them. And if they find common language to describe their situation and to advance their claims, this makes such alliance potentially even stronger. The fact that the meaning attached to the specific terms in this language is dramatically different in their respective local social contexts does not necessarily make this language useless as a means to mobilise wider support for their cause.

Speaking more generally, the experience of the twenty years after the collapse of the Berlin wall seems to make it plain that we are still nowhere near the end of history and the idealist dream of remaking the whole world in the image and likeness of western liberal democracy remains as remote as ever. We will remain different in our approaches to the universal values, but at least we agree that such values exist. This provides ground for possible compromise solutions and a mutually enriching dialogue, but also for a more vigorous search for the new definitions of the universal values more suitable to our changing world.