


Chapter 8

Immanuel Kant's Take on Civil Disobedience and the Most Noteworthy Examples of the Misuse of Kantian Reasons to Defy Authority: Political Philosophy and IR Theory in the Age of Cognitive Warfare

Piotr Pietrzak

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0464-1991>

In Statu Nascendi Think Tank, EU & Vistula University, Poland & Sofia University, Bulgaria

ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses four interpretations of Kant's take on civil disobedience, not in the context of a genuine pursuit of wisdom but as an instrument for cognitive warfare. The discussion starts with the governor of Kaliningrad, Anton Alikhanov, who in 2023 implied Kant's responsibility in the West's determination to pursue the hidden anti-Russian goal of NATO's eastward expansion and giving Georgia and Ukraine false expectations that their transatlantic aspirations would be fulfilled. Subsequently, we consider Roger Scruton's 2003 assertion that, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, Kantian reasons justifying the US intervention in Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein are legitimate. Next, Adolf Eichmann's defense whitewashing his war crimes in his 1961 trial is examined. Finally, we analyze the alleged

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INTRODUCTION

Immanuel Kant's ideas revolutionized almost every aspect of social life, empowering a different, more mature debate in epistemology, ethics, religion, law, history, political philosophy, and IR theory. This know-how continues to have a tremendous impact on individuals inasmuch as Kant popularized an unconstrained cosmopolitan thought free of the tyranny of dogma, superstition, and the belief that the global architecture of power is based on cynical exchanges of power and influence. Kant is known for his idea of transcendental idealism, which postulates that all empirical objects in space and time are mind-dependent. This idealism presupposes that our understanding of the world is not of the world as it is in itself but as it appears to us, shaped by our cognition.

The ethical evaluation of the moral foundations of our actions and decisions is the deontological method. Kant did not treat people as mindless beings who must have all moral principles properly written and clearly defined to obediently perform their duties and moral commandments and thus enact their social roles. Kant fought against the dogma that created and maintained the bonds in each socio-political-legal system in a community within a cultural-civilizational area. He sought to change social life so that the masses would free themselves from oppression by emphasizing the freedoms and liberties resulting from understanding and following one's path of intellectual development.

Of course, the same principles could also apply to international relations. Thanks to these visions, liberal and constructivist IR scholars formulated democratic peace theory, which states that electoral and republican democracies avoid armed conflict with other democracies. Liberal institutionalists have been influenced by Kantian ideas that are more optimistic and constructive than Machiavellian consequentialism. After 2022, this optimism has slowly been replaced by defeatism and disappointment with a vision of world politics based on norms, rules, and regulations; a conciliatory politics is portrayed as naively irresponsible.

However, Kantian idealistic ideas infused with ethical considerations should not be mistaken for weakness; they promise long-term gains from collaboration that will be restored to normal when countries return to their senses and resort to categorical imperatives so that actions ultimately evolve into a universal law without contradiction. This is the most essential principle in Kant's philosophy and one of modern philosophy's most important ethical principles; it is not static, dogmatic, or mindlessly servile but is the same in every situation. A dynamic understanding of

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