
Anthropological Crisis as the Demolisher of Welfare System in Democracy

Antropoloģiskā krīze kā labklājības sistēmas postītāja demokrātijā

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Current transition from agrarian societies to industrial ones around the globe carries shift of values along with – namely, from Traditional to Self-expression. The shift has been described by analysts of the World Values Survey Association (WVSA). In much described Inglehart & Welzel cultural map of the world, Baltic States are positioned somewhere in the middle between the poles. The article sketches dangers arising from one-sided over-emphasizing of benefits of democracy and self-expression. Societies undergoing fast transition between their former experiences and current challenges testify frictions and they may be described as torn apart societies. The author uses the term “plastic man” coined by Martin Heidegger – in whom the changing part of personality is increasing whereas the steady side is decreasing. As sociologist Arnold Toynbee puts it, the man of today is a “man running away from God”, consequently, his plasticity takes over and man is not in position to control his or her own choices and changeability. The article offers Christian anthropological view of a man in his or her relations with God. The reminder refreshes knowledge of European Christian roots and challenges the current social development.

Key words: anthropological crisis, values, traditional and self-expression values, democracy.

Introduction

Conferences around the world show that regardless of lack of its uniformity society thirsts for stable value-oriented criteria. The truth behind the need is simple – the criteria described as “stable” would help to live through the turbulent and conflicting, albeit beautiful age.

Research recently published by the World Values Survey Association (WVSA) describes two mutually correlated value directions in European countries, namely, Traditional values versus Rational-secular values (World Values Survey, *see Findings and Insights*). Traditional values emphasize religiosity, national pride, and respect for authority, obedience and marriage. Secular-rational values emphasize the opposite

on each of these accounts. However, the overall value system is linked to both political and economical performance of the given society. Consequently, the survey points to interaction between the Traditional values versus Rational-secular values on the one hand and Survival values versus values of Self-expression on the other. Survival values involve a priority of security over liberty, non-acceptance of homo-sexuality, abstinence from political action, distrust in outsiders and a weak sense of happiness. Self-expression values imply the opposite on all these accounts.

Reflections

Interaction is attention worth in many ways, particularly because Baltic States are located somewhere in the middle between the opposing poles, as Inglehart-Welzel cultural map shows (Sterbenz, 2014). No doubt, both Latvia and Lithuania experience dynamic changes within society, both societies undergo transition from more traditional orientation unto paradigm of Self-expression, openness and freedom. And they just repeat what other European countries have gone through before: “Since the first world values survey in 1981, every western country has shifted markedly along the spectrum towards greater self-expression” (Living with the superpower, 2003). These latter values are seen as more and more important for “natural” development of personality and there is no doubt that the tendency will grow in future.

As it was emphasized, both dimensions suffer from internal contradictions with the opposite and acceptance / non-acceptance depending on different national cultural contexts in various European countries. Axis of Traditional / Rational-secular values have helped to describe differences between societies where traditional Christian values are still valid, on the one hand, and societies that strive to ignore their historical roots of Christian culture, on the other. As it was said above, traditional values emphasize national pride among other values, respect for authority, obedience and marriage. Consequently, societies with higher national self-esteem and high level of national pride emphasize values that work for healthy development of the society:

1. Importance of parent-child ties, deference to authority and traditional family values;
2. Non-acceptance of homosexuality, divorce and abortion, euthanasia and suicide;
3. Defense of self-respect of man/woman, and recommends registered marriage.

Transition experience moving from agrarian to industrial society, depopulation of Latvian countryside is sad and illustrious. Losing people in rural areas work for deep changes within society. Consequently, the largest shift from traditional values towards secular-rational values happens in this phase of national development.

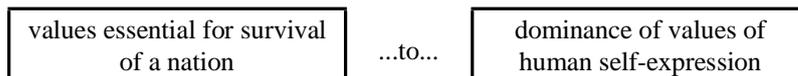
So far characteristics of the region we know the best. New challenges arise after European Social Agenda has announced shift from industrial society towards the so-called knowledge society (*see* UNESCO World Report “Towards Knowledge Societies”). The World Report in this regard emphasizes: “The future [is painted] in both promising and disquieting tones, promising because the potential offered by a rational and purposeful use of the new technologies offers real prospects for human and sustainable development and the building of more democratic societies; disquieting, for the obstacles and snares along the way are all too real.” As promising as it may sound, the document expresses also some concerns in regards to loss of some

key characteristics and attributes of humankind, be they professional or moral: “But do not the information technologies, by automatizing knowledge, provide grounds for the fear that we may witness the disappearance of know-how and traditions that, only a few decades ago, constituted the daily way of life over much of the planet?”

The issue of values is taken up by further conclusions. Due to the widespread and not foreseen use of internet changes occur also on human identity level: “The internet offers, moreover, radically new possibilities for experimenting with personal identity, thanks to the recent instituting of exchanges that are fixed up without the parties’ physical involvement, in an entirely anonymous, disembodied and synchronous way. By enabling virtual selves to be superimposed on real selves, the Web establishes a wholly new realm of self-expression. On the one hand, it fosters the tendency towards depersonalization and self-forgetfulness; on the other, it creates dynamics enabling individuals to multiply their virtual identities, under cover of an almost infinite number of pseudonyms” (Ibid.).

Knowledge society is characterized also by culture of innovation: “In a global knowledge economy, where the touchstone of competitiveness will be capacity for innovation, the fostering of a culture of innovation is a matter of encouraging the rapid spread of inventions and new ideas throughout the society.” The spread obviously pushes the innovation process to its limits, consequently, innovations often mean break away from traditions, the well-known. This is where values of self-expression come into picture. The UNESCO document warns against the threat to human basics: “It is precisely because innovation has become largely unforeseeable that it is important to concentrate on the conditions that favor the emergence of the process of innovation... We also have to watch out for the human cost of these transformations, keeping in mind that innovation is truly a process of “creative destruction”: “The destructive mechanisms inherent in innovation must be paid special attention so that their social and cultural consequences can be mitigated.” “The technological revolution underpinning the rise of the knowledge society carries, like any other, a serious danger of making some social relations and the position of some social groups precarious. Does recognizing this necessarily mean accepting the idea that certain individuals or whole generations may find themselves being sacrificed on the altar of change? Knowing that there is often a violence inherent in times of foundation, can we really not envisage that, on the contrary, this challenging of established practice and knowledge will itself crucially depend on the development of individual and collective capacities? This is the true issue for societies, which are going to need to be both knowledge societies and innovation societies – and must therefore become learning societies.”

The much-quoted UNESCO document along with WWSA survey show that the knowledge society is characterized by strong conviction – sustainable persistence of society is secured by sticking to values of self-expression. Societies undergoing swift shift over to knowledge society may experience sharpened tension between its former experience and current challenges. It may be described as a shift from...



In value discourse human developmental dynamics may be formulated as follows:

$$\textit{Quality of life} = \textit{subjective welfare} + \textit{subjective self-expression}.$$

Overall paradigm of the knowledge society points to self-expression of its members as an essential value. Knowledge society would be unable to reach its goals unless values of self-expression are put in center. “Knowledge societies cannot function effectively without highly educated workers, who become articulate and accustomed to thinking for themselves. Furthermore, rising levels of economic security bring growing emphasis on self-expression values that give high priority to free choice” (Inglehart & Welzel, 2010, 551-567). What is the spectrum of self-expression values?

It follows from the WWSA survey that self-expression values are characterized as putting emphasis on individually taken freedom, and satisfaction of individually subjective will of self-expression. It envisages toleration of:

1. Questioning of ethical protonorms of human existence;
2. Profanation of religious norms;
3. Carelessness towards value of life (e.g. legalization of euthanasia, surrogate motherhood, legalization of abortions, etc.);
4. Ideology of same-sex marriages;
5. Repudiation of children in the name of comfort of adults;
6. Decline from hard work while delegating it to immigrants.

The overall tendency is described as creating danger to the very existence of democracy. Inglehart & Welzel point to the fact that “mass publics become increasingly likely to want democracy, and increasingly effective in getting it. Repressing mass demands for liberalization becomes increasingly costly and detrimental to economic effectiveness. These changes link economic development with democracy.” Paradoxically, the danger is facing the very same system giving birth to the value of self-expression.

It seems that process of democracy is threatened by the loss of human self-identity. The identity may be described as the concept of following aspects:

1. The outward concept of the self;
2. The inward concept of the self;
3. Awareness of changing and steady sides of the self;
4. Awareness of the protonorm.

The man of today is called a *plastic man* (the term of philosopher M. Heidegger) in whom the changing part of personality is increasing whereas the steady side is decreasing. As sociologist A. Toynbee puts it, the man of today is a “man running away from God”, consequently, his plasticity takes over and man is not in position to control his own choices and his changeability. Because religion offer the standards of unchanging protonorms, crucial for survival of humanity. In this situation, is there any need for instruments to oppress the changeability and plasticity? – Of course, not. Rather, what is needed, may be called “self-hermeneutics”, i.e., certain criteria for self-understanding.

Let’s use simple example to show that human identity can’t be reduced to his/her professional activity; rather image and likeness of God” is used as definition of the identity of man:

Who am I?

Lawyer Student Pupil Professor Politician

“None of them is ME, because there are thousands of specialists in each of the fields mentioned. Man has been created in God’s image and likeness.”

In Christian tradition man is characterized as a creature possessing dual nature. He can think about himself as being self-sufficient and to ignore his Creator, and still he can recognize himself as a person endowed with capacity to become a “likeness of God”, as Bible describes him in the book of Creation (Gen 1: 26).

<p><i>A man of secular society.</i> “...made from the dust of the earth” (Gen 2:7, 19)</p>	<p><i>A man with capacity to become “likeness of God”.</i> “Created a man (‘adām’) and endowed with life-giving breath (‘neshama’)” (Gen 2:7) “God said: let us make a man (‘adām’) according to our image and likeness” (Gen 1:26)</p>
<p><i>Consequence:</i> Anthropological border and value perception is short-limited</p>	<p><i>Consequence:</i> Anthropological border and value perception is limitless</p>

Willing to be free and to “understand the self” are universal attributes, however, they shouldn’t be practiced on behalf of values essential for human existence. If basic conditions of human existence (family, positive demography, the virtue of work, mutuality) are respected, then the self-expression values are not threatening for society. Otherwise “democracy” may lead to the “culture of death (Pope John Paul II, 1995) and slow destruction of society essentials.

Conclusions of WWSA points to threatening development of society (feared also by the early American politicians in their own country) in two directions:

1. Fear from aggression from outside.
2. Fear from pseudo democracy which may take to values reducing society’s capacity to survive and sustain itself. Satisfaction of the need for egoistic self-expression taken on the level of ideology may threaten the very existence of society.

Democracy and self-fulfillment has become specific ideologically engaged mindset. Perverted democracy and the so-called emancipation may lead to anthropological crisis. How anthropological crisis is manifested? It has been described as “individuation, in other words, the individual and self-fulfillment increasingly taking precedence over community”, “perverse effects that this glorification of individual freedom is having” (Lipietz, 2014, 66-68). It is worth to quote well-known philosopher Y. Lotman – within the context of the current political development based on freedom of subjective opinions, democracy forgets that “culture takes its origin in limitations, in rules aimed to limit instincts”. This is an axiological counter-revolution, as it was recognized by WWSA analysts. The process destroys not only family life, but also basics of democratic state.

Anthropological crisis should be balanced by the concept of the structure of human being described by the Church Fathers in 4th-7th centuries. The view has been encompassed by European Christian tradition.

Thinking	Will	Heart	Awareness	Conscience
It's NOT a function of brain, but rather the energy of rational activity, synergy of the Spirit of the Lord Christ and human consciousness. Results – inspiration, revelation, discovery, intuition	It's NOT an item-oriented motivating function of psyche, but rather spiritual uniqueness of soul, synergy – power satisfying the needs of soul	It is spiritually emotional organ of the mystical content of soul, the key object of pedagogical impact	Activity of the Spirit of the Lord manifesting in the sphere of consciousness and soul. Leads to personality. Man in unity with Christ is a free personality. It regulates goals of human values, self-evaluation, self-respect	An organ regulating spiritually the emotional life of soul; the place where Spirit of the Lord acts

Conclusions

1. System of opposites “Traditional versus Self-expression values” has been widely used to describe changes occurring worldwide. The Inglehart & Welzel cultural map of the world positions Baltic States right in the middle between the opposites – pointing to fast changes of societies both politically, economically, socially and culturally. Move from agrarian towards industrial society causes shift in values.
2. Now, the move from industrial society towards the knowledge society makes the issue of values even hotter. Societies with traditional values promoted and supported for centuries are facing fast development of democracy. In certain cases new liberal-democratic values are met with suspicion – as mentioned in the article. However, development of democracy requires promotion of values which work for initiative and individual creativity of citizens.
3. It should be pointed that radically new possibilities for experimenting with personal identity, thanks to the recent instituting of exchanges that are fixed up without the parties' physical involvement, in an entirely anonymous, disembodied and synchronous way creates new type of anthropology – alienated from that of European Christian foundations.
4. Duality of humans is a well-known topic in Christian anthropology, stemming from the Biblical account of the creation of man. M. Heidegger has described man as possessing mutually related “changing” and “steady” sides. The very idea of democracy may be threatened by the one-sided self-sufficiency of man with tendency to ignore his Creator.
5. Christian anthropology speaks about “protonorms” as essential for human co-existence (family, procreation, roles of mother and father etc.). In case these protonorms are ignored, society is under risk to degrade its spiritual tradition and follows the way of the “culture of death” (Pope John Paul II).

6. Although M. Heidegger uses the term “steady” side of a man, Christian anthropology describes it as being in dynamic and creative relationships with God. Spiritual creativity – and not the outward one – is what should be protected in the current development of society basics.

All nations have common basic protonorms, and the entire Europe shares common roots in Christian culture (anthropological notions). Now, different attitude met in various cultural entities called “nations” towards values of self-expression may be treated as “different cultural scenarios” (the term from social psychology). Following those basic values each nation develops its own behavioral type – illustrating what people mean by freedom, what are limits of freedom, how do they celebrate weddings, how mother cares for her child, how father speaks to his son, how the stronger one cares for the weak, how the living ones bury their dead – all these basic cultural scenarios determine particular life styles.

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Kopsavilkums

Modernitātes pāreja no agrārās sabiedrības uz industriālo sabiedrību viscaur pasaulē iezīmē arī līdzesoju vērtību pārbīdi, proti, no tradicionālām uz pašizpaušmes vērtībām. Vērtību pārbīdi un nomaiņu ir analizējuši Pasaules vērtību izpētes asociācijas (World Values Survey Association, WVSA) pētnieki; daudz diskutētajā Ingleharta & Velcela (Inglehart & Welzel) pasaules kultūrkartē Baltijas valstis ir iepozicionētas vidējā apgabalā starp kartes poliem. Raksts iezīmē draudus, kas rodas no vienpusīgās demokrātijas un pašizpaušmes vērtību un labumu pārāk lielās uzsvēršanas. Sabiedrībās, kurās notiek ātra pāreja no to iepriekšējās pieredzes uz mūsdienu izaicinājumiem, var pamanīt plaisas sabiedrības struktūrā, un tās var raksturot kā iekšēji plosītas sabiedrības. Autors izmanto terminu “plastiskais cilvēks”, kas ir Mārtiņa Heidegera termins un kas sevī ietver tādu izpratni par cilvēku, kurā personības mainīgā daļa ir pieaugoša, savukārt nemainīgā daļa samazinās. Kā norādījis sociologs Arnolds Toinbī, mūsdienu cilvēks ir “cilvēks, kas bēg no Dieva”, līdz ar to viņa plastiskums ņem virsroku un cilvēks vairs nav spējīgs kontrolēt pats savas izvēles un noteikt savu mainīgumu. Raksts piedāvā kristīgi antropoloģisko skatījumu uz cilvēku un viņa attiecībām ar Dievu, un atgādina par Eiropas kristīgajām saknēm un izaicinājumiem mūsdienu sociālās attīstības procesos.

Atslēgvārdi: antropoloģiskā krīze, vērtības, tradicionālās un pašizpaušmes vērtības, demokrātijā.



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