MORAL BASIS OF EDUCATION AND THE PROBLEM
OF HUMAN HIGHEST VALUES HIERARCHY

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ABSTRACT— *One of the most important functions of education is the function of moral education – transmitting of values accepted in a society. Globalizing society is in need of universally accepted system of values. Otherwise, conflicts between groups (bearers of different values) will be escalating. Presently, there is a tendency to establish human and human rights as the highest all-human value that is partly reflected in the UN charter. This value underlies the basis of the Western (market) civilization. However, self-realization of a human in the Western society through such all-human values as wealth and economy causes global problems, in particular, ecological one. Theoretically, one of the following values can be accepted as the highest one: society, mankind, nature, thinking spirit (God). Analysis of the consequences that happen – depending on the choice of the highest value – leads to conclusion that thinking spirit must be acknowledged as the highest value. In order to simplify this value for the perception of everyday's conscience – it can be described as «intelligent life whose bearer is humanity». This article suggests that: 1) sociologists of all countries need to discuss and accept hierarchy of the highest all human values, 2) politicians need to establish it as the moral basis of the international law in the UN charter, 3) people employed in the education system need to include it in their educational programs all over the world.*

Keywords: *education, hierarchy, moral, values*

1. INTRODUCTION

Conflicts between human groups, apart from fight for resources, are preconditioned by their moral principles that are based on values accepted in these groups. Today interconnection and interdependence between human groups are becoming more solid and stable in globalizing world. There is a need to have a minimal list of highest all-human values that could serve as foundation for a modern society. Social scientists are supposed to prepare this kind of list and legalize it worldwide. Education system would need to inform about it population of the Earth. This article (in terms of open discussion) offers a list of this kind and arguments possible hierarchy of these values.

2. MAIN CONTENT

Education is supposed to (as per Ya. Komensky) «prepare a human for the life's deeds» and has two main functions. First function is to give a complex of social and professional knowledge and

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skills to a student. Second one is to form human's behavior moral principles that are defined through values system of this particular society.

Local societies were transferring values from generation to generation through its local culture and the most important roles were played by religion and ideology. Every local society could keep its values as principles of moral behavior unchanged for indefinitely long time since societies were relatively independent from each other.

However, situation has changed in the globalizing world. There are processes of mixing, transfers and collisions of different cultures values; at that values that underlie the western society (market civilization) are dominating. The phenomenon of western values domination is not preconditioned only by natural processes of values transfers from one culture to another one but also by direct pressure of western elites that impose their values to the world through information, economic, political and military means.

Unfortunately, the most important problems (they are discussed below) that threaten dignifying existence of mankind are mostly preconditioned by original fallaciousness of the western civilization basis, i.e. by its fundamental values structure as well. Building up healthy values foundation of a society on the global scope is possible only with the rejection of western (market) civilization values and acceptance by all states some hierarchy of the highest all-human values. Creating this kind of hierarchy requires solving certain problems which appear when theoretical models of society are being constructed and concept "value" is being put in their basis.

The very first problem is connected with the possibility of putting values in the basis of society and concept "value" in the basis of theoretical models (descriptions) of society? Maybe needs are the original basis of society and concept "need" should be used for society foundation description? It is obvious that society cannot exist without meeting all kinds of needs.

In fact, solving this problem means a choice of research position between two lines in sociology. Representatives of the first line – it might be called "Plato-Marx line" – put needs in the basis of society. In particular, Plato's reasoning from the statement that "no one is self-sufficing, but all of us have many wants" comes to the conclusion that "Can any other origin of a State be imagined? There can be no other." (Plato. 1971, P.145). Marx and Engels considering human as a creature with needs stated that «creation of new needs is the first historical act» (Marx, K., Engels, F. . 3, P.12 etc.).

Second line might be called "Aristotle-Parsons' line" and her representatives put values in the foundation of society. Thus, Aristotle suggests that man "alone has a perception of good and evil, of just and unjust, and it is a participation of these common sentiments which forms a family and a city". Obviously, good and evil, justice and injustice are values not needs. Followers of structural-functional analysis stated that values underlie the basis of social systems. (Parsons, Shils, 1962, pp.202-203).

At first, Plato-Marx' line seems to be more correct. Society as subjective type of a system is a peculiar organism that cannot exist without environment. It appears on the basis of activity interaction between people (exchange of activity results – product and services) that are not self-sufficient creatures themselves. Meeting of needs always was and will be indispensable condition of society existence.

Hence, there is a need to take into account certain circumstances that limit role of the concept "need" for understanding and description of social processes.

First, human activity cannot be distinguished from animal activity if needs are considered to be the only stimuli of activity. It is not free and has objectively given meaning.

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Second, the most important feature that distinguishes human activity from animal one is its constantly growing power (increasing of its saturation with stuff, energy and information). This feature is preconditioned by the presence of technical means in human activity. By its power, human activity is not comparable with animal one.

As result (third circumstance), human gets free time, i.e. possibility to spend some of this power not for meeting his needs but values – any material or ideal phenomena that has meaning for a human and he is ready for the sake of them to make efforts and choose them freely.

Finally (forth circumstance), human activity acquires freedom and subjectively given meaning (i.e. meaning that human chooses himself) because of the presence of values as stimuli of activity. Taking this circumstance into account, it can be explicitly considered that human activity is principally different from any other live creatures' activity (Smirnov, 2010, P.150-154).

Taking into consideration all mentioned circumstances, the problem of choice between needs and values as basis of society can be resolved, as follows. Undoubtedly, society arises, exists and further develops based on its needs. However, the growing power of human activity allows spending the bigger and bigger part of this power on values (at some point "forgetting" about needs). Since values give to activity some features that are typical for human activity, i.e. freedom and subjectively give meaning; values start playing more and more important role in society existence and development. Without strained argumentation it can be said that values underlie social systems (societies) of modern type and mostly define their functioning and development.

Acceptance of this point of view leads to two next problems. First, how adequate would be descriptions (theoretical models) of society composed on the basis of "value" concept without mentioning needs? Second, which exact values need to be put in the basis of theoretical descriptions of social systems?

As regards to the adequate description (building a theoretical model of society) based on narrowed concept basis (without using concept "need") – it is clear that it would be impossible to build "integral and comprehensive" theory of society based on that. However, narrowed theoretical basis can help to build models adequate enough that would be able to describe certain phenomena and give understanding about happening processes if these models comprehend fundamental features of phenomena.

Heuristic utility of the simplest ideal models of real phenomena is universally recognized and such models have being used in natural sciences for a long time. Features of ideal liquid and ideal gas, perfectly rigid body, etc. were give by human and they differ a lot from features of real liquids, gases, bodies. Geometry is also studying not real by some ideal triangles and circles. Sociology should go the same way and build simplest ideal models of social phenomena. It is very likely that M.Weber intuitively chose this path when introducing "ideal type" in sociology. It can be also reminded (as illustrative argument) that caricature drawn with a few touches can more accurately and expressively show human's resemblance (or even his real nature) than an impressionist style portrait written with unlimited number of strokes. Herewith, it will considered that it is possible to build adequate enough models of social phenomena based only on the concept "value" and temporally forget the "need" concept.

As regards to the problem of revelation of particular values that underlie society – in sociology or any other science, it can be solved with two ways of reality study: empirical or theoretical.

Dominating number of sociologists is using empirical method of values studies that can be brought to opinion polls about certain phenomena of reality (strict scientific experiments are not unacceptable in a society due to moral considerations). American sociologist M.Rokeach did a

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survey to study values of American society and found eighteen terminal and eighteen instrumental values (Rokeach. 1973, .28). Similar survey did Russian sociologist V.A.Yadov in order to study values of Soviet society (Yadov. 1979, p.298-299). The main disadvantage of empirical method is that it is based on public's opinion about something. However, opinions might be true as well as false.

Theoretical method of studying values is almost not used in sociology – the method when totality of particular values is being revealed from some basic value that acts as principle of study. Example of such method of revealing fundamental values is given by N.O.Losskii who concluded world system of values that includes beauty, good, truth, life etc. from the supreme absolute value – holistic being given in God (Losskii. 1994, p.273). The main disadvantage of theoretical method is that it is not possible to prove primordial truthiness of the value suggested as basic logically. It is possible only to argument the conciseness of this value choice as principle of study and later to learn heuristic possibilities of values totality revealed on the basis of this primordial value.

If we take into account that values are stimuli of human activity that underlie society, then theoretically there is a need to reveal some value that will be recognized as main stimulus of activity of humans as social beings.

In frames of activity-value approach* for social phenomena description (authors – A.O.Boronoev, Y.M.Pismak, P.I. Smirnov) – "social significance (importance)" of human is suggested to be such a value that serves as main stimulus. It is understood as human capability influence the course of events in a society. Opposite concept is social nothingness. It is suggested that people en masse strive for social significance and avoid social nothingness. Concept of social significance allows forming universal (and abstract) typology of fundamental values of society. There is a detailed description of this typology in the literature (Smirnov. 2011, pp. 67-85) and there is a brief description below.

At level of everyday conscience people do not distinctly understand their real yearning. They strive after values that are more habitual and comprehensible for their understanding. We call these values - modi (i.e. forms of manifestation or existence) of social significance. People strive after modi and gain social significance along with them.

The modi that form the first group of values typology are terminal all-human values of individual level. Brief list of values includes: the holiness, the power, the fame, the knowledge, the craftsmanship, the economy. It is obvious that possession of these modi increases human's capability to influence the march of events in a society. Their presence can be seen in social figures that bear modi – chief, rich man, owner, holy man, etc.

The second group consists of instrumental values that are social by birth. Their function is to regulate the competition among subjects who strive to achieve modi of social significance, i.e. give more or less equal access to them, secure safe possession of the modi and soften the competition. These modi are freedom, law, equality, brotherhood, discipline and duty, etc.

The third group form instrumental values that are natural human features – beauty, strength, intelligence, health, life. Particular man needs to have at least some minimum of these modi either to make competition for modi of social significance possible or facilitates the achievement of social significance.

The forth group includes some terminal values that are natural by birth. These are all kinds of resources. In general, one can mark them with words "stuff", "energy", "space". They are interesting for 2 reasons. First, these are very ancient values that are coming from the animal ancestry (animals protect their territory). Second, they are material substance of wealth and economy that have far-reaching consequences.

Finally, the fifth group is represented by the highest all-human values: mankind and human, society and person, nature, thinking spirit (God). Securing these values is necessary condition for preserving intelligent life on the Earth.

Most of the values included in this typology are understood intuitively.

However, there is a need to comment some of them – holiness and thinking spirit. Thinking spirit (expression is taken from **Introduction to Dialectics of Nature by Engels**) can be understood as noosphere (V. Vernadsky, Teilhard de Chardin). Metaphorically, it can described as per de Chardin - a harmonized collectivity of consciousnesses equivalent to a sort of superconsciousness when the Earth not only becoming covered by myriads of grains of thought, but becoming enclosed in a single thinking envelope so as to form, functionally, no more than a single vast grain of thought on the sidereal scale (Teilhard de Chardin. 1987, P.199). In the text of the article it is partially equated with religious understanding of the God since as for preserving the thinking spirit as well as securing presence of the God on the Earth in believers' conscience – the same thing needs to be done. Holiness can be understood as belonging to the spirit and serving it.

There is an important element of the concept of social significance as basic personal value – idea about procedures (or means) of social recognition.

Since society cares who, when and how gets access to some modus of social significance, it developed procedures that let particular human access modi "by his right and the law". Empirically, there is unlimited number of such procedures but principally there are only two.

The first mode is – personal expertise. In this case, the meeting of trusted judges (experts) acknowledges the right of particular individual to possess certain values. Examples of personal expertise are – court decision, announcement of testament, awarding of academic degree, elections of an official etc.

The second mode – «impersonal» (or *market*). In this mode the procedure of social recognition comes to the act of purchase and sale. If the market accepts the product or manpower of this person thereby his social significance is also recognized to a certain degree. Human is not interesting for a market as a moral being and is evaluated only as the executor of social function (possessor of goods or producer of goods) [Smirnov 1990: 38-43].

Additionally, it is worth noticing that theoretically one can use value "pleasure" as basic principle for compilation of values typology. Pleasure has its modi – bliss, joy, delight, satisfaction and it would be an interesting study to find differences between them. However, pleasure is peculiar to a human as well to an animal. That is why social significance was chosen as basic principle of values typology compilation. Yet one cannot lose sight of pleasure because it lets modi of social significance enter the system of human personal values. If human is not enjoying possession of wealth or knowledge and he is not striving for them, then such modi of social significance are not main stimuli of activity.

Stated ideas let come to the problem of hierarchy of the highest all-human values. It is pre-conditioned by fundamental fallaciousness of the Western civilization basis, as it was mentioned above. Its basis includes:

1) value "human" or "person" is dominating (person can be understood as social essence of human),
2) activity in sake of the actor (ego-activity) is playing the first role in social functioning,
3) rule of impersonal procedure of social recognition,
4) leadership of wealth and economy as modi of social significance.

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Process of globalization is going on this basis and creates vivid and latent problems that threaten dignifying mankind existence. Vivid problems are ecological, demographic, lowering of mass culture, arms race, genetic health of Homo Sapiens species, alcoholization and narcotization etc. Latent problems are 1) problem of human self-realization without harming the environment and 2) problem of free time. At that, vivid problems that are discussed – consequences of the latent ones and they are not even seriously discussed.

Thus, latent problem of human self-realization in the world without harming the environment causes ecological problem. Self-realization can be more particularly understood as social significance achievement. In market civilization, people are self-realizing through wealth and economy that require material resources. If the number of the people striving for them is growing, at that minimally accepted level of wealth is increasing as well, then long life of this civilization requires unlimited resources which is impossible. Fight for resources starts arms race and growth of tension, etc. Free time problem stimulates drugs and alcohol consumption (it is so easy to use human's free time by making him an alcoholic or drug-addict and make profit of it!). This problem along with market procedure of social recognition causes the lowering of mass-culture and therefore health issues etc. (Smirnov. 2012, p.247-259).

Market civilization has been functioning for slightly more than two hundred years. It was formed ideologically after the Great French Revolution which essence was "autocracy of human Ego" that was raised in political and social right and tried "to possess society" by using this right. (Tutchev. 1993, p.273). In other words, the value "person" started dominating over the value "society". On an international scale, this value was consolidated in the preamble of charter of the United Nations (point 2) after the Second World War.

End results of the Western society functioning based on this value are highly sad and this means that this value should not be used as basis for the structure of globalizing society. Situation when a part is higher than the whole is absurd and dangerous. This is the situation of cancer tumor when its cells which are viable start to reproduce themselves, having gone out of organism's control.

The question arises, which of the highest all-human values (represented in our typology) can be put in the basis of social values structure?

Brief consideration of consequences that happen if we take one or another value as the highest brings to the conclusion that the thinking spirit must become the basis of values structure. Acceptance of any other value as the basic one causes logically unaccepted consequences.

In particular, acceptance of society as the highest value causes such social regime that is defined as "totalitarian". Practice shows that this regime is very uncomfortable for existence and free development of a person since it regulates human life in excessively rigid way.

If the nature is accepted as the highest value, then it is obvious that the best way to save it – would be exclude humankind in its current form from the nature. Unlikely, this solution would suit us.

Acknowledgement of humankind as biological species as the highest value (from the point of survival) – will return us to the Stone Age. In this case, human finds its place in the Mother Nature without harming it. This solution is also unacceptable.

The only way to avoid sad consequences is to accept the thinking spirit as the highest value. Preservation of intelligent life on the Earth requires dignifying saving of all mentioned highest values, harmonizing relations between person and society as well as between society and nature. It is extremely important to save humankind as bearer of intelligent life contrary to transhumanists ideas to pass this function to the artificially created or being created bearers.

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Additional consequence of the thinking spirit acknowledgement as the highest value must be the change of hierarchy of social significance modi. Leading modi should become the ones that do not require material resources: holiness, knowledge, mastership in spiritual sphere, fame, power. Besides, the place of the ego-activity as social basis must be taken by service and game types of activity and personal expertise should replace impersonal.

In general, it might be discussed about spiritual-game civilization as long-term reference point that is necessary for social evolution management (Smirnov. 2004. #8, pp20-21). Building of such civilization would be particular embodiment of Teilhard de Chardin's dream about the unanimous construction of a spirit of the Earth" [Teilhard de Chardin 1987: 201]. Further dignifying existence of mankind is possible only on the basis of healthy system of fundamental values of society

Elaboration and acceptance of unified system of the highest all-human values is incredibly difficult task. There are powerful human unions that will fiercely defend their values. Individualists and collectivists, nationalists and cosmopolites, representatives of different religions will not be able to change their habitual values fast and painless. Fight between them will be pushing the mankind in the situation of post-civilized barbarism when excessive and uncontrolled violence will be playing bigger and bigger role in the relations between people, countries and peoples (Smirnov, 2012 pp. 275-284). The ever-increasing thirst for resources (peculiar to the western civilization) will also stimulate the use of force.

3. CONCLUSION

Irrespective of advantages of the suggested hierarchy of values, its validity, its adequacy etc., the mankind vitally need this kind of hierarchy accepted as general moral reference point for all inhabitants of the Earth. Tries of united intelligence of philosophers, sociologists, culturologists, religiologists must be focused on the prompt elaboration of the mentioned hierarchy. In political sphere, the first step in the right direction would be the change of the preamble of the UC charter with corresponding specification of other articles**. Reconstruction of the values structure of the western society is absolutely necessary. Original values of certain groups of the people must be secured (in order to save cultural diversification) if they will not sharply contradict to the commonly-accepted values. The most important task of the education institute at the global scale – must become the dissemination of knowledge about the accepted system of the highest all-human values.

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NOTES

* The gist of activity-value approach can be expressed in a few simple statements:

- Society is based on the activity interaction between people (more precisely, social subjects), i.e. on the exchange of results and products of activity;

- Main types of activity are: 1) activity that is realized by an active subject for himself. One can call it ego-activity; 2) activity that is realized by active subject for the other. Any part of world can be this "other" - personality, society, God, nature and so on. That is the *alter-activity*, the *service activity* or just *the service*; 3) activity that is realized by the active subject for the process of realizing activity. That is game activity or just the game.

- Stimuli of activity are needs and values (values are stimuli of human activity only and needs are stimuli of activity for humans and animals);

- Values as human activity stimuli underlie social systems;

- The most important stimulus of the activity of people as social beings is social importance (significance).

** Suggested change to the Preamble of the United Nations Charter

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

- with all due respect and gratitude to the politicians who created our Organization
- with full acknowledgement of their political wisdom and foresight that showed itself in their striving to secure peace and safety for all humans

REALIZE THAT

- new unseen global challenges appeared that threaten dignifying existence of individuals, peoples and all humanity
- the biggest problem of resources depletion is caused by the activity of humans in the countries of Western (market) civilization

AND ARE

- willing to unite our energies to protect and save the highest all human values and guarantee by that – well-being of all humans on the Earth

AND FIND NECESSARY

- to introduce fundamental changes in the Charter of our Organization; replying on the total of all human values that we share:

Intelligent Life on the Earth whose bearer is humanity is declared to be the highest human value.

Individual and genus of Homo Sapiens as bearers of the Reason are declared to be highest human values.

Society and Person are acknowledged as the highest all human values and harmonization of relations between them is the necessary precondition for securing the Intelligent Life.

Nature of the Earth is included in the number of the highest all human values, since harmonization between it and globalizing society is absolutely necessary for saving all highest all human values.