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TRADITIONAL VALUES AND THE FUTURE OF CULTURE

For approaching this complex topic and provide our own informed prediction of possible future events in relations between and within cultures, we consider it necessary to first give a brief introduction to better understand the current "cultural situation". It is often referred to by various terms, such as "post-postmodernism", "globalized" or "culture of convergence", or "culture of conflict" between two approaches – the unipolar approach and national approaches opposing it.

At the heart of this situation is "the struggle for meaning", which actually involves the struggle for values, the true grounds of every culture. The rapid development of communication technologies, first within the boundaries of spaces defined by national-states, and since the 1970s onwards, beyond the state borders, with establishing the first transnational mass media, instead of the stated opportunity for more easily and quickly learning about "other and different", expanding the field of comprehending differences and accepting their presence, followed by a critical rethinking of one's own identity and its positive superstructure, resulted in practice in homogenizing in terms of values and, as a consequence, towards the more solid affirmation of binaries and the rejection of what does not belong to the dominant discourse. In our opinion, this result is based on the logic of the Enlightenment, built on evolutionism, and the supposed "rational" degrees in the intended "progress" from backwardness to progressivity, which was established at the early stages of modernism.

The era of modernism, after which the modernization process was named, led to drastic changes in the lifestyle of people and nations. Along with the "world change", there was a more or less systematic and encouraged change in "worldview". With the industrial revolution, which brought to the fore new industrial relations,

new consumer habits, new experiences of everyday life and new focuses regarding the role of humans in the world and what they can hope for in it, "the traditional", as inclined by definition to resist changes, is taken from its previously accepted position "in itself" and is placed in the negative otherness, which, at best, should be tolerated if it does not hinder the further, supposedly eternal path to progress.

Or, on the other hand, "the traditional" was regarded as something that needed "to be overcome", to be combated by destroying prejudices, eradicating the "mystical" thinking, "irrationality" of customs and established social relations. In this sense, traditionalism as a broader system of values ceased to be an end in itself, but began to be considered as a subject suitable for "enlightenment", for instrumentalization in favor of other, centralized systems of values. The Enlightenment resulted in either the consolidation of individual elements in the order of newly emerging canons of "national traditions", or their rejection. Therefore, in full accordance with the modern understanding of the role of the state and the reasons for its establishment, traditional values become either a parameter of nationality, or a parameter of "backwardness".

Globalization is a hypostasis of the aforementioned process. The project of evolutionary "modernization", as an already formed path that must be followed when moving from "backwardness" to "development", was finally established in the second half of the 20th century, having spread to the nominally "decolonized" new countries of "the third world". The transition from villages to cities, from large family communities to disparate ones, from illiteracy to bureaucratically managed education – all these have led not only to economic, but also to broader cultural transformations. Individuals and groups of people break away from local novelty and increasingly integrate into global trends. In this process, remaining hidden not only has become "obsolete", but virtually impossible, given the aforementioned rapid development of communication technologies over the past four decades.

Can we talk about a single global culture in the current "cultural situation"? We would say that the answer is yes, especially if we focus on the perspective of urban centres, the so-called "global cities", which, in terms of social practices to exist within them, strikingly less differ from each other than from rural areas of their countries. Even etymologically, the term "citizen of the world" combines both conceptions. It is not surprising that they are bearers of a globalist spirit, and that the "civic" ideology, outwardly so tolerant of differences, although considering them in a global, "progressive" way, is at the same time deeply exceptional in relation to the "retrograde" traditionalisms from the cultural background of their own environment.

For finally approaching the very theme of this presentation, namely the relationship between traditional values and the future of culture, it is important to note the structural political and economic factors at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. The tragic collapse of the socialist bloc further paved the way for the highly centralized and unilateral spread of the cultural influence of the collective West in both the "second" and "third" world. The economic dynamics of capital migration and market expansion have created, in effect, another necessity – the formation of identical consumer tastes. In the era of globalized capitalism, the value and therefore the cultural perspective of a personality are increasingly determined by their own identification through products and services that supposedly satisfy individual needs. Despite the fact that the identified needs are actually widespread.

Considering all of the above, we will also add a few remarks regarding the impact of international political relations, in a narrower sense, on the subject of this presentation. The unrestrained economic campaign of Western organizations at the forefront of globalization, with the logistical support of their government and non-governmental sectors, as well as in the situation of virtually monopolized military power (NATO), has created in the minds of many intellectuals the impression of "the end of history". While in the practice of "transitional" peoples,

this led to the destruction of their own subjectivity in the course of history, few people resisted the power of this, culturally speaking, "main wave". After all, such opposition usually entailed the epithet "rogue nation", the expulsion from the Western hegemonic structure of international economy and politics, and, in cases of prolonged persistence, even the risk of using brute force, following the scenario of some "humanitarian military interventions" (such as the aggression against Yugoslavia in 1999, Afghanistan in 2001, Iraq in 2003).

Unipolar globalization has affected the loss of traditional values in several ways: through economic, cultural, and political mechanisms. Media content promoted individualism, consumerism, and secularism, which replaced collective traditions worldwide, while threatening local languages as the basis of identity, and imposing English as a common standard. The neoliberal economic model required the complete opening of domestic markets to "McDonaldization" – standardized products with "the lowest common denominator", which in practice actually meant copying existing Western brands and aggressively promoting them to the detriment of the diversity of local consumer habits. In the field of social structures, the work on regrouping values from collectivism to individualism was underway, which resulted in losing the importance of traditional communities based on family, ancestral and customary ties (which also manifested itself in the drastic change in the perception of gender roles, i.e. gender norms and identities). Globalization also had a strong impact on the secularization of everyday life, its turn towards materialism and personal economic well-being, which was accompanied by a kind of commercialization of spirituality through "the New Age" and similar movements and practices (in which, perhaps, once authentic "Eastern beliefs" began to be sold as a commodity). Meanwhile, in terms of ecology, catastrophically destructing natural resources often occurred as the result of profit-focused, excessive exploitation for the

purpose of global consumption completely changing the environment, which traditional societies depended on.

However, these processes were not linear and equally intense in each community. Some communities have responded with various "hybridizations" – adaptations of local customs to the demands of the new, "global" culture; in the other communities, dramatic "re-traditionalization" has emerged as a reaction (suitable examples of which are fundamentalist movements, as well as nationalisms seeking alternative, often mystical, interpretations of history and their own people's role in it). However, the imbalance of power between the global North and South has been and remains a key obstacle to the preservation of diversity. In future, developing multilateralism and, consequently, multiculturalism based on solid political foundations (as an alternative to nominal "multiculturalism" in Western liberal economies, which in fact served only as a simple tool for justifying "imports of labor" in accordance with the needs of domestic capital), can become a beacon for the possible revival of local cultures.

Eroding the unipolar international system began to be felt with the sharp decline in the reputation of the United States after its aggressions in Afghanistan and Iraq (which also led to the first major disagreement in the Western military-economic bloc, when France and Germany refrained from participating). During the first decade of the 21st century this trend continued, including the economic growth of China and the recovery of Russia, which in fact meant the increasingly serious establishment of alternative centres of power. The financial crisis of 2008 further weakened the economic influence of the West and accelerated the process of "multilateral coordination" by founding the BRICS and promoting own economic and political models independent of the West (including the formation of the joint "New Development Bank").

The return of Crimea to Russia (2014) and China's initiative "One Belt, One Road" (2013) clearly indicated that these two rising powers intend to revise geopolitical borders and expand international economic flows, while further fragmenting the hegemonic power of the West. The fragmentation of power has resulted in rethinking global cultural flows. Chinese platforms, such as TikTok, and Russian media (RT) develop alternative channels of information, reducing the dominance of Western media and their strongly ideologically tinged images of the world, as well as English as the only universal language. Therefore, transiting to the multipolar world involves not only redistributing "hard" (economic and military) power, but also struggling for "meaning", that is, rethinking dominant values. While unipolar globalization tended towards homogenization, multipolarity, at least nominally, opens up space for pluralism, which, if viewed in terms of political realism, can also lead to new disagreements and conflicts (in the absence of a single independent "Leviathan"). Competition between powers can lead to cultural and economic isolationism (a good example is the current policy of cultural re-traditionalization, as well as the introduction of trade barriers by the Trump Administration in the United States). As well as open wars, an example of which is the geopolitical conflict in Ukraine.

The main task will be to find a balance between preserving authenticity and building bridges connecting various civilizations. Strengthening the BRICS influence can contribute to the future preservation of traditional values through multiple mechanisms, offering a response to unipolar cultural globalization. The empowerment of the global South allows for greater protection from cultural imperialism and the diversification of cultural narratives. This is also achieved through economic models supporting "the local" and emphasizing the importance of sovereignty and self-sufficiency.

This is also supported by the BRICS financial institutions, which, unlike the IMF and the World Bank, do not impose conditions aimed at deregulation and cultural assimilation. Although the same principles, focused on the idea that different cultures can coexist without dominating one another, can be seen in the work of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. It should be borne in mind that the BRICS countries have extensive experience in regulating cultural diversity, as each of them is home to many ethnic groups (for example, India has up to 22 official languages), which can serve as a roadmap towards better global inclusivity. Efforts by Russia and South Africa to promote native language education, including increased investment in "soft power", the creation of cultural industry products and their placement in domestic and foreign markets, may inspire other countries to join the process that is already well underway.

However, we must not overlook the fact that we may face numerous internal contradictions within the current and future BRICS countries, some of which we mentioned in the introductory part of the text. For example, the urban middle class often rejects tradition itself and is strongly influenced by the Western worldview, which is so entrenched that it is "the only progressive truth" and an interpreted identity factor. It appears that the answer to this trend should be sought primarily in the reforms of the education system.

Anyway, if multiculturalism is aimed at equal exchange rather than establishing new forms of domination, it can lead to key prerequisites for preserving traditional values. In the future, success will depend on whether the rising powers build inclusive multipolarity or repeat the mistakes of Western globalization.