Transformation of the Value System and its Impact on Formation of the Tajik Youth Identity

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Abstract—The article is about the role of values within the framework of existing basic philosophical concepts, the problem solution of the correlation between “eternal” and “relative” values and their role in the functioning and development of society. The authors consider the peculiarities of the value transformation inherent in the modern Tajikistan due to the globalization processes. It is shown in the article that the disintegration of the fundamental forms of the social life organization is accompanied by the crisis of self-identification, which is very essential for young people, since their economic thinking and decisions are closely connected with the value consciousness of society. The researchers also write about the problem of changing the value foundations of the Tajik society in connection with its desire to build an industrialized society based on the principles of democracy, humanism, the rule of law and freedom of choice. The goal of the research is to analyze the issues related to the transformation of the value system, the value relationship of a man to the world, the value dimension of the world and the formation of Tajik youth’s social identity.

Keywords—absolute and relative values, value crisis, value transformation, self-identity, traditional society, youth

I. INTRODUCTION

Beyond values, or more precisely the value dimension, there can be no politics, no economy, no law, and therefore one cannot associate values only with spiritual and cultural phenomena– morality, religion, and education. However, attention to the value aspects of being usually intensifies, when the society, as well as the individual, is in a state of moral value crisis, when the old norms and ideals cease to be significant due to the fact that they do not correspond to the new social conditions and the realities of public life. The consequence of this situation is the loss of self-identity and disorientation of a person, which ultimately determine the isolation of the person from the society and the state, when the public ideals and values become alien to them.

The formation and development of the technogenic and consumer civilization in Europe determined the value crisis. Due to the globalization processes, which intensified the integration processes, the whole world began to endeavour for the “benefits” of the technogenic civilization. Therefore, the value crisis overtook almost all societies and cultures, including traditional ones. For that reason, at the beginning of the 20th century, the themes of the crisis and the cultural destruction became central in the works of E. Cassirer, M. Heidegger, E. Husserl, I. A. Ilyin, N. A. Berdyaev and many other world philosophers. As a result of their search, axiology was formed as a relatively independent metaphysical discipline. The objective historical and ideological precondition of axiology was the crisis of traditional religions and ideals of the Enlightenment at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

A. Problem Statement

In our opinion, it is necessary to consider the concepts like “crisis of traditional values”, “value crisis” and “moral crisis” within the framework of the established basic axiological paradigms in order to understand their essence. Before the epoch of the value crisis, the concepts were platonic and sophistic-sceptical. The essence of the platonic axiological concept is the recognition of the existence of supra individual and supra-human supernatural, super-social, objective and spiritual values, but at same time they might be personally embodied and confirmed. We entirely agree, “Attempts to find and substantiate an objective and absolute system of values, especially of moral order, will be undertaken in philosophy every time and with greater persistence according to the crisis state of society. The necessity of the “platonic” justification of universal values is especially important in the atmosphere of mass rampant personal and corporate selfishness”[1].

As for the sophisticatedly sceptical point in axiology, it postulates the subjective and relative nature of values, not only changing from epoch to epoch, from culture to culture and from person to person, but also lacking stability even in individual
human being. This position is confirmed by practical examples. Today we can observe the crisis of values in traditional societies, which slowly borrow and decode the norms and ideals that have emerged in the technogenic and informational civilization. These values are gradually beginning to acquire the relative character in connection with the dynamically changing sociocultural realities. As for the traditional moral, spiritual and religious-cultural norms and values, they are often preserved in the form of expressively demonstrative rituals and ceremonies that promote the preservation of national and religious identity.

It seems that, within the framework of the platonic axiological concept, the use of the concept “value crisis” is not justifiable, since the values are extra-individual and do not depend on social transformations. Moreover, the existence and functioning of an individual society in particular, and of humankind as a whole, are due to their presence. One can discourse about the crisis of values within the framework of a sophisticatedly axiological concept, as it claims their relative nature. The concept of “crisis” itself in the general sense means a revolution, a turning point, a time of transition when existing means of achieving goals become inadequate, resulting in unpredictable situations. A revolution in understanding the essence of values was carried out by Nietzsche. He rejected the platonic theory of values, considering it as the source of the disintegration of human will and the human community. He believed that the theory, like the Christian morality as a whole, tries to reconcile the individual with the lawlessness of reality, justifies human laziness and weakness, and issues a system of dead prejudices as the only true value system. According to him, the only true value of our being is the value, which promotes biological preservation, “power growth” or “movement on the power scale” [2]. His nihilism is still evaluated ambiguously. Nevertheless, in our opinion, if we exclude the pathos of unambiguity and absoluteness, then one can find quite a rational grain in his views. The Nietzsche’s idea of values influenced the French existentialists of the 20th century, Sartre, Jaspers, de Beauvoir [3–10], who tried to reconsider human life through the prism of changed values.

As for socio-centric axiology, the genesis of its ideas can be seen in the ideas of the sophists, sceptics and stoics, later – in the modern period (the theory of the social contract). However, a consistent view of values as a purely human form of organization and planning of social life can be seen in Marxism. The principles of M. Weber and E. Fromm also belong to the socio-centrist theories [11–14].

It is well known that, according to Marxist theory, the source of all values, both material and spiritual, is the economic basis of society (productive forces and production relations), which undergo qualitative changes in the course of human history. Different social layers, which do not have the identical attitudes to the means of production (to the main element of any basis), also profess contradictory class values, often having nothing in common with each other and even hostile to each other, so to say, antagonistic values. Therefore, the value systems of slaves and slaveholders, feudal lords and peasants, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are opposite. Values, from the point of view of Marxism, although they are objective in nature, i.e., they do not depend on the will and consciousness of people, but are purely historical and relative, since they have no super social foundation – either objectively natural or objectively ideal. It seems that this way of thinking is extreme, and it can be described as a philosophical immoralism that perceives morality as a set of rules, which is transformed depending on time, place, occupation and socio-cultural environment. The manifestation of immoralism is the demand to re-examine the “old-fashioned” moral standards.

The sociocultural approach is also close to the socio-cultural approach [16–18]. Within its framework the idea that culture is formed due to human activity, as a person’s desire to accumulate and systematise previous experience in the form of certain spiritual essential ideals, values, beliefs, knowledge, etc. At the same time, human activity itself is impossible without certain ideological value ideals and ambitions, without certain rules and traditions that regulate daily and industrial experience. Therefore, the sociocultural approach emphasises person’s deeds, which do not only create the conditions of existence, but also constantly transform the world through the cognitive, artistic and aesthetic activities. The last remark firstly refers to the era of modernity, which is characterised by rapid changes in all spheres of society. The source of these changes is person’s need for self-actualization and self-actualization.

In connection with the above-mentioned, the conclusion arises: the question of whether the values are absolute or relative; whether they are suprahistorical or historical; whether they are universal or nothing more than the formal phrases, will always be controversial. The solution of these questions will largely depend on the initial philosophical and ideological interpretations of people. No one would deny that people tend to seek some absolute support of their existence, knowledge and value orientations. And this is not accidental: if everything is relative, then the criterion for defining truth and lies, good and evil, good and bad is lost, and the foundations of personal moral existence collapse, which is psychologically unbearable. For that reason, the search for fundamental values should be accepted as reasonable.

At the same time, to deny the historicity of values is meaningless, since it is obvious that every epoch establishes something new into their content. The changed conditions of life fill the old values with new meanings. The value system is continually transformed. The society abandons some values and form new ones that reflect the tendencies of the new era. However, even here there is an element of suprahistoricity.

B. Research Methods

The theoretical and methodological basis of the research is the general scientific principles of social phenomena cognition: first of all, the dialectical method of cognition of social processes and phenomena; the general methodological principles of the social and philosophical theory of values. Furthermore, systemic and concrete historical approaches are applied in the process of the survey. The use of systemic and structural-functional methods allowed to define structure, and to analyse the political and socio-cultural mechanisms of these processes.
II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The current situation in the Republic of Tajikistan confirms the mentioned above, namely, being traditional, the Tajik society in the process of political and economic transformation has not escaped changes in the moral and value sphere. This is especially obvious in the sphere of marriage and family relations, parents-children contacts, the sphere of human relationships in general, when the contradictions between the “old” and the “new” are particularly evident. In our opinion, the main problem is that the Tajik traditional society has preserved the supreme supra-individual and suprahistorical values. Particularly, religious ones that have kept their declarativeness and imperativeness. However, in reality slowly, but inevitably, in most cases they stop to meet and to reflect the new conditions of life, as well as to conform to them. Definitely, these contradictions will be solved gradually, progressively and most advantageously. It may possibly be better to maintain absolute, higher values as spiritual reference points of human public and private life activity. At the same time, they must not hold back the formation of new, constructive value orientations, conditioned by the challenges and realities of the modern era. Conversely, here we come across the eternal issue about the measure and the boundary within which the absolute and the relative can coexist harmoniously.

Like in other traditional societies, there are two models of value systems in modern Tajikistan [19, 20]. The first tends toward a post-industrial individualistic model of the Western values. The second is associated with the supporters of traditionally national-religious mentality and is inclined towards a patriarchal-collectivist model of values.

According to the Russian researcher M.S. Komarov, supporters of the traditionalist value system are mainly elderly people, habitually living in small towns and settlements, with low educational and socio-professional status. On the contrary, the adherents of liberal individualistic values are generally representatives of the younger generation, residents of large cities with higher education and rather high social and professional status. The main dynamic social circumstance, where the modernizing value consciousness appear and develop, is the dynamic urban environment and its highly educated strata with the predominance of young people in them [21]. However, we believe that this statement is not an axiom in the framework of traditional societies. In particular, in the modern Tajik society, characterised by the intensification of religious consciousness, educated young people, who live in cities, and even work in the state, scientific and educational institutions, also support the traditionalist value system along with older people. The foregoing is supported by B. Nasurova’s survey. Having analysed the reasons of religious activity among the Tajik youth, she points first of all to the main factor, namely, the transformation of society and social spheres after the collapse of the USSR and the integration of Tajikistan into the world community. This integration, on the one hand, opened new horizons for development, and on the other hand, created new contradictions [22]. In this regard, B.A. Nasurova states that Tajik society has moved from the political and spiritual dictatorship of one party to democracy and multi-party system. The freedom of conscience has become real. A full-scale revival of religious institutions has replaced the Soviet atheism. In these circumstances, in connection with the democratization of public life, the citizens of Tajikistan, like other peoples of the post-Soviet society, have sharply increased their interest in their history, national culture and traditions. Along with the growth of national, ethnocultural and religious self-awareness against the backdrop of the general economic, political and moral crisis, accompanied by a weakening of power and the criminalization of society, the old problems became intensified and new ones in national relations and religious situations appeared. Immediately nationalism, ethnic separatism and religious extremism developed.

As for the young people, they were the part of modern life in the face of drastic changes in the political, spiritual and economic spheres. In the transition from old to new, for various reasons, the country was not able to maintain the positive that we had before: productive capacity, employment level, universal compulsory education, social guarantees, public and personal security. The new system, together with the positive sides in its entirety, revealed negative features as well. In the conditions of social life destabilization, the younger generation turned out to be the most vulnerable and unprotected.

The change in world outlook had a special impact on the religious sphere. While during the Soviet period religion was pushed aside and thrown out of an ordinary person’s life, now religion has increasingly become a part of the system of value orientations, having a profound influence on them. Religion has begun to fulfill the formed earlier spiritual and ideological vacuum, which ultimately determined the strengthening of the religious worldview of the Tajik people. According to surveys, differences in the level of religiosity also depend on ethnicity. Tajiks are the most religious. Accordingly, 96.9% of Tajiks, 93.5% of Uzbeks, 84.8% of Russians, 80.8% of representatives of other nationalities, which live in Dushanbe (Tatars, Koreans, Afghans, Ukrainians, etc.), believe in God.

As you can see, the results of the survey, done in 2000, have already shown that young people more consistently adhere to the principles of Islam than the older generation, i.e., their fathers and grandfathers, whose worldview was formed during the Soviet period. Moreover, the survey showed that students follow rituals more strictly than pensioners do: 89% of students and 84% of pensioners keep to the most important norms of Islam [23].

All of this shows the restoration of historical religious roots by the citizens of our country. Research conducted by the “Shark” Centre over the past few years have shown that the role of Islam is very significant in the functioning of the Tajik society. Islam performs the following main functions in the Tajik society:

- it is the main cultural paradigm for all ethno-regional Tajik groups;
- it remains one of the most important components of identity, even more important than civil and ethnic identity;
- it acts as the basis of understanding and perception of the world;
✓ it is the basis of morality, rules of social and individual behaviour;
✓ it plays the role of the main sociocultural regulator of public life.

Thus, despite the integration of Tajikistan into the global community and the penetration of liberalistic, individualistic values, the Tajik society remains traditional. Being a secular country, Tajikistan is trying to resist the growing influence of religion; therefore, the course is set at reviving traditional national customs and values.

No one would contradict, “The obvious, active resistance of culture to foreign elements is a manifestation of a sufficiently strong social immunity and a protective reaction. In this case, the perception of new phenomena, their interconnection with established elements of culture, is usually a painful process, often accompanied by acute conflicts, the scale of which depends on how much these innovations affect deep layers of culture” [24]. However, it cannot be denied that the penetration of new trends, in particular values, is an inevitable process for traditional cultures. Therefore, in order to avoid “acute conflicts”, a longer period of adaptation is needed.

In contrast, the preservation of one’s culture is the primary task of a self-sufficient nation. We agree that “peoples, social groups that do not feel pride, emotional commitment to their language, customs, traditions, their history, easily concede in competition, assimilate, etc. All this proves that adherence to one’s culture, history, tradition, language is the fundamental condition for the integration of people and the forming “awareness of We”, etc. For that reason, one should not shy away from the manifestations of ethnocentrism (in its reasonable, functionally appropriate forms) in real everyday life”.

Two interacting groups of reasons cause cultural changes, i.e. the formation of new ideas of the society, modes of activity, norms of behaviour and values. The first group consists of internal reasons, emerging in the process of self-development of a given society and its culture. The second one comprises external reasons, arising in the process of interaction with other cultures. At the same time, if the process of interaction with other cultures is active and intensive, it causes the acceleration of internal processes of changing society’s self-development. Similarly, the active development of society causes its openness to innovations, particularly in the cultural and spiritual sphere.

This problem is extremely important. In the opinion of A. G. Efendiyeva, every civilization forms its specific “reaction” to the “challenge” of modernization. Scientists state, specifically, that many cultural and spiritual principles of the European civilization, such as secularization of the world, objectification of nature, rational scientific and technical attitude to the life, pragmatism, etc., radically oppose the principles of Eastern civilizations, especially Islam and Hinduism, where the sacred attitude to the universe plays a fundamental role. In this regard, forcible attempts to implement some elements of European civilizations into the eastern cultures can lead to the conflict, the rejection of the so-called western values, as it still takes place in a number of Muslim countries. In this case, we actually speak about the influence of traditions, mentality, especially psychology, morals, customs, labour ethics and other important components of national culture on the modernization and its socio-cultural prerequisites.

It should be noted that this process is painful and may well exacerbate various types of social conflicts, as the former system of self-identity will be disrupted. In this regard, one of the important problems is the dilemma of the socio-cultural identity of Tajiks and Tajik citizens. The vacuum of the basic life orientations, the erosion of the spiritual community of individuals make them “foreigners”, they lose themselves. In order to get out of this state, a person must develop an adequate self-determination both in the individual and in the public life. The affirmation of the positive socio-cultural identity appears in the conditions of the total crisis as the backbone with which the consolidation of the healthy powers of society starts. The particular attention should be given to youth as a subject of social relations in this situation. The youth is the most vulnerable, unstable, subject to various kinds of destructive influences all through the socio-cultural crisis.

Youth is a rather complicated period in the development of personality. It is characterised as the time of status and role uncertainty, ambivalence of feelings, unbalance, as a period of stress and instability of social values of a young person. According to E. Erikson, the main task of individual development in the period of youth is self-determination and the formation of identity [25].

In general, the situation of the modern Tajik youth in society is characterised as extremely unstable and contradictory. On the one hand, it represents the most mobile, dynamic part of our society, which has tremendous innovative potential. On the other hand, due to the limited nature of its practical, constructive activity, the incomplete involvement of the young person in the system of social relations, the most socially unprepared, and therefore vulnerable part of it.

The person himself is responsible for choosing his way of living and implementing it. If he is capable of identification, self-esteem and a value attitude to his life, he is also able to create an “I-concept”, and then to realise and to develop it as a fundamental value. Therefore, the tasks of scrutinising the features and capabilities of a young person, the conditions for a purposeful influence on the development of his creative potencies, are topical for today. The core problem here is the problem of social, pedagogical, psychological support for the process of determining the young person’s place, his position in the system of social relations, the formation of his dominant personal relationships, life self-determination – everything, that is included into the sociocultural identity.

All this objectively generates the necessity of the energetic actions on the part of the family, society and the state, aimed against the negative for the nation processes. These deeds can contribute to the preservation, reproduction and development of the system of values, culture, intergenerational communication, and the creation of conditions for free development, realizing the potential of the individual and society.

In this sense, the desire of the country and state institutions for the revival and preservation of cultural heritage, the
promotion of traditional values is very appropriate and justified. In our opinion, this is an attempt to demonstrate absolute ideals as value orientations. They might constitute the basis of the young people’s self-identity, which determines the unity of the nation and diminish the contradictions between the older and younger generations.

Nevertheless, we cannot simplify the problem of the evolution of youth identity. Among other factors, the process of social development and the formation of young people’s identity depend on the passing the certain number of social “transitions”. The most significant transitions are the transition from education to the labour market; the transition from the parental family to one’s own; transition from living with parents to separate living and financial independence; the transition from youth culture to mass one. The considered transitions are associated with an active choice of ones own social position and identity patterns. They depend on a combination of people’s individual abilities and opportunities to overcome external risks and threats.

As mentioned above, the social identity becomes of particular relevance in the modern society, which is also called the era of “modernity”, the era of “industrial society”, etc. If we compare the identification processes of the traditional society and the modern society, then it should be noted that in traditional societies the social status of an individual is strictly regulated by a number of factors, among them is the belonging to the community, the estate, etc. Supra-individual values, which have absolute character and determine norms, models, motives of behaviour, dominate in traditional societies. The processes of social differentiation and individualization are parallelised in the modern time, since the macrosocial conditions of people’s life change very quickly. In addition, the spectrum of potential identification signs, for instance, professional, political, style, worldview, etc., is widening.

This parallelization of the processes of differentiation and expansion of the spectrum of identification features is the natural state of modern society. However, under unfavourable conditions, or purposeful destructive activity of interested groups, it can become a factor of disintegration of society. In this situation, the same supra-individual traditional values can become the connecting link of different identification features.

In addition, the personal need for self-determination with respect to different communities is growing. The culture of postmodernity is characterised by reflexivity, mosaicism, when there is a close intertwining, and mutual influence of institutional changes and intrapersonal transformations. Sociologists state that in our time social models are becoming more complicated, and less clear. The boundaries between social norms and social deviations are blurred, allowing each individual to self-determine by the method of opposition. As I.V. Rassolova writes, the traditional subjects of deviation: insane, criminals, prostitutes, sexual minorities get legitimacy and social status and, consequently, in the modern identification realm they are on equal footing with the image of “a common person”. The peculiarity of the postmodern era comes at a loss because of frequent transformations of identification models. The phenomenon of the relativization of cultural models and values is both the result and the cause of the constant social changes that are characteristic of modern and postmodern societies. Individuals acquire the right to choose themselves in terms of consumer goods, personal life path, reference system of values, etc. The mass media participate in the process of expanding the field of values and models of reference, reflecting everything that happens in the world community [26].

In today’s Tajik society, there is not a continuity, but a change of generations, reflecting a break in continuousness, a break in historical development, the transition of society to the rails of another economic, social and political system. The change of age groups is manifested in the fact that the generation of “fathers” was in a situation when the material and spiritual heritage, which should and must give to its successors according to the laws of developmental sequence, lost its former significance. The parents’ social values in the overwhelming majority have lost their meaning and practical significance in the new historical situation, by virtue of this, they cannot be completely inherited by “children”, since they are not suitable for them either for the present or for the future life [27].

The Tajik philosopher Kh. U. Idiev states that during all transformational periods of the human society development the disintegration of the fundamental forms of the organization of people's social life is accompanied by widespread crises of the personal self-identification in the society. Since in such conditions the society faces the necessity to develop new systems and symbols that provide a sense of maintaining new forms of collective and individual identity.

Active attempts are being made in the Tajik society in order to form a national idea, to develop national consciousness and self-consciousness based on the traditional value system, to which new content is attached.

Anthony Smith considers that the constant degeneration and transformation of values, symbols, memory, mythology and traditions form various aspects of the heritage of nationalities. The identity of individuals could be understood from the point of view of national ideals, national heritage and cultural elements [28, 29].

One cannot deny that national identity is a special kind of belonging to a particular nation that has symbols, sacred places, traditions and customs, heroes, history, culture and a certain territory.

III. Conclusion

Consequently, the history of the development of societies has repeatedly demonstrated that the values and other components that make up culture can greatly enhance or weaken the progressive development of economic and political relations. Absolute values, forming the spiritual basis of society, are fixed in the people’s religious and cultural traditions; strengthen the self-consciousness and self-identity of the individuals, protecting it from marginalism and assimilation. This is especially important in modern societies, which are developing in the period of globalization and the information boom. On the one hand, the values forming in developing societies and reflecting new sociocultural conditions have a relative character. On the other hand, they contribute to a more accelerated adaptation of modernization
processes in traditional societies. Being an ideal-spiritual phenomenon, every value is realised in the activities of people, including economic. The changes that occur in Tajikistan under the influence of transformation affect the formation of life orientations and priorities, the choice of ways and means to achieve goals. In brief, transformations influence the system of vital values especially of the younger generation. Values become the most important for the young man's consciousness as signs, according to which he correlates his actions and deeds. They express the importance of the country, state, family, activity, social status, existing social norms, political and economic transformation of modern society, etc. In our opinion, they represent a form of crystallization of a person’s psychic energy, which is used as a productive force in social life. As values express goals and means of achieving them, they also fulfill the role of fundamental social norms, fixed by customs, traditions, and the system of moral attitudes. In this regard, normative value relations constitute the core of the sociocultural conditions of society and the mechanism for regulating its social life.

Despite the transformational processes, which inevitably cause the change of the value system, all the most significant, formed earlier absolute values of society that represent the meaning of its existence never lose their relevance. Among them there is the activity directed for the benefit of society; mutual assistance, love for the motherland, justice, labour as a means of material security, self-affirmation, etc. However, they can be filled with new content. As for the Western society that has reached the stage of post-industrial, or "postmodern" society, the issues of self-actualization and self-identification of the individual have become the leading leitmotif in the lifestyle of a prosperous middle class that has reached a high level of material well-being and social security. Nevertheless, at the same time they feel their social instability, marginalism against the background of the day-to-day widening cultural diversity, weakening the influence of traditional social groups. They face the wide opportunities for choosing an individual lifestyle style and realizing personal claims.

Based on the foregoing, it follows that there is a direct correlation of values with all parts of public life, in particular with the identity formation, especially for young people, the successors of the older generation, who assume responsibility for the future of both the nation and the state.

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