



EDITORIAL

The Transformation of Values in the Times of Uncertainty

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The current issue of *Changing Societies & Personalities* continues its main thematic thread—reflection upon value transformations in various socio-cultural contexts. The keyword that may characterize the entire issue is uncertainty. On the one hand, uncertainty inevitably follows any transformation. On the other, the COVID-19 pandemic, which is analyzed in several articles from different perspectives, is far more than a health crisis. COVID-19 is affecting societies at their core by changing the habitual way of life, and its long-term impacts are hidden in the fog of the future. The pandemic will end sooner or later, but uncertainty will remain. From big things to small, from philosophical concepts to everyday feelings, being uncertain means that people and societies are alive.

Revealing the historical roots of post-colonial thought, Konstantin D. Bugrov (Yekaterinburg, Russia) begins his article *Colonial Revolution and Liberatory War: from Communist to Post-Colonial Theory (Georgy Safarov, Mao Zedong and Frantz Fanon)* by mentioning Vladimir Lenin's justification of a national liberation war even if it is a war of a colonial semi-feudal state against a well-developed imperialist state. Lenin's idea was followed by the Communist International (*Comintern*), which in 1920 proclaimed the possibility of a direct transition of colonies to socialism. Bugrov outlines three key tendencies of the Communist thought developed in the 20th century, which had an impact on the further development of the colonial (and post-colonial) agenda: the intellectual legacy of Antonio Gramsci; the Orthodox Leninist thought represented by different types of the USSR-inspired communist movements across the world; and some radical interpretations of the resolutions of the 2nd *Comintern* Congress. The article explores the concepts of three political figures: Georgy Safarov who, as Bugrov argues, arranged a set of rather unsystematic *Bolshevik/Comintern* ideas on colonial revolution into a theory of anti-colonial peasant war; Mao Zedong who insisted on achieving national independence by means of war rather than

by overcoming economic backwardness; and Franz Fanon who developed a theory of revolution in Africa and considered colonial dependence not only as a system of subjugation, which permanently reproduces backwardness, but mostly as a psychological trauma. Bugrov explores both similarities and differences between the three trends in the shift from the Communist to post-colonial paradigm of thinking.

Oksana V. Golovashina (Yekaterinburg, Russia) in the article *Battles for Bandera: Dissonant Historical Narratives of Ukrainians in Poland and Problems of Integration*, stresses that today's interpretation of history has more than ever moved from the hands of professional intellectuals to become an object of everyday personal experience and collective interpretation. In conflicting situations, which arise between personal experiences and official interpretations, "the ensuing combinations reveal often paradoxical interrelationships between collective representations and the influence of official discourses on them". In the post-socialist countries, where collective representations of the past that were constructed under the influence of a socialist discursive model, the conflict of interpretations becomes quite passionate. Golovashina analyzes the increasing flux of Ukrainian migrants into Poland and examines Polish and Ukrainian historical narratives. In particular, she focuses on a new pantheon of Ukrainian national heroes, some of whom are viewed quite negatively by many Poles, according to the field research of Ukrainian migrants conducted between October and November 2017 in the Polish cities of Warsaw, Krakow and Poznan. The article analyzes historical narratives in the context of intensive exchanges between Ukrainians and Poles along with an examination of methods for reconciling the conflict potential of national histories.

As Michal Müller (Olomouc, the Czech Republic) notes in the article *The Value of Work-Related Uncertainty: Changes from Demands on Certainty to Finding Ways of Living in Uncertainty*, work and uncertainty are two important objects of sociological research that have a philosophical overlap. Presently, according to Müller, "it turns out that society is transitioning from excessive adherence to certainty, caused by negative experience during the early form of capitalism, to finding ways to live in uncertainty". Firstly, uncertainty is introduced in the context of risk as a related phenomenon because modernization and technological development increases uncertainty in the labor market. At the same time, uncertainty and risk might be understood as a price to pay for democracy, which is related to the uncertain nature of capitalist society. Then Müller discusses the positive role of uncertainty at the level of the state, entrepreneurship, and employment. He points out that "it is precisely the uncertainty that leads entrepreneurs to modify individual relationships and seek new, better solutions to current situations". Finally, Müller shows that the very theme of uncertainty becomes relevant more than ever in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, which seems to be the greatest reminder of uncertainty in the modern history, and forces to reflect upon its consequences, both negative and positive. Müller concludes that, on the one hand, uncertainty "associated with work, whether at the level of social structure, individual entrepreneurial activities, or employment, is a significant value, if it does not take extreme forms". On the other, freedom as a responsibility for individual actions is possible only in the context of uncertainty.

The analysis of the new reality of COVID-19 is continued by Sanja Bizilj, Eva Boštjančič, and Gregor Sočan (Ljubljana, Slovenia) in the article *Perceived Efficacy of Virtual Leadership in the Crisis of the COVID-19 Pandemic*. In many countries, strict measures were introduced in order to limit interpersonal contacts and thus control the infection. Under such circumstances, virtual leadership becomes one of the most important challenges faced by entrepreneurship, since a lack of personal contacts with employees could cause difficulties in monitoring work performance and resolving conflicts. The article aims to answer the following research question: “Do digital communication skills affect the perception of leadership efficacy when transferring to remote work in the context of COVID-19?” The research focuses on the leaders of those organizations that allowed the staff to work from home. The authors note that the research is “based on the social cognitive theory and the concept of efficacy from the point of view of both self-perception (self-efficacy) and that of the environment (efficacy)”. In addition, the importance of digital communication skills for effective virtual leadership is demonstrated.

Irina M. Kyshtymova, Lidia V. Matveeva, and Anastasia A. Deineko (Irkutsk and Moscow, Russia) explore current attitudes toward the image of the mother, which is increasingly formed “not only via direct mother-child communication, but is also mediated by media narratives.” In the article *Cartoon Image of the Mother, Its Perception by Elementary School Students and Correction in the Process of Media Education*, the authors point out that the overwhelming presence of various media forms exposes children to not only children’s content—first of all, cartoons—but also commercials, news programs, talk shows, and other information addressed to adults; which is why the impact of media products, cartoons in particular, on children’s development and behavior is a promising research direction. The aim of the article was “a psychological analysis of cartoons displaying different images of the mother in order to theoretically substantiate and empirically test their influence on the perception of the mother by younger schoolchildren”. The authors stress the need to develop effective algorithms for the psychological analysis of media content in order to estimate its role in the formation of a child’s personality and their attitude toward significant others.

In the article *The Efficacy of a Holding Community Program—Promoting Social Reflection at School*, Anna Siegler, Sára Serdült, Fanni Csernus, Lilla Dézma, Izabella Ilea, and Sára Bigazzi (Pécs, Hungary) mention that, from their perspective, Hungarian public education focuses primarily on the development of cognitive rather than social and emotional areas. However, the contemporary philosophy of educational systems in many countries presupposes the importance of social cohesion and active citizenship, which requires cultivation of positive relationships and reciprocity between school students. The authors present a concept of holding environment; it is based on the methodology of conflict resolution, intergroup dialogue, socio-emotional competence development, prejudice reduction, and human rights education. The authors insist that enabling students to be reflective means making them active shapers of society “not by the absorption of ready-made knowledge or the compliance with rules, but through dialogue.” The article evaluates

the effectiveness of the proposed Holding Community Program in developing perspective-taking, reducing prejudice, and promoting active participation.

Jamaluddin Hos, Ambo Upe, Muhammad Arsyad, and Hasniah (Kendri, Indonesia) in the article *Time Allocation and Economic Contribution of Women in Fulfilling the Basic Needs of Poor Households* explore poverty as one of the most significant problems in developing and underdeveloped countries, including Indonesia. Special attention is paid to women who play an essential role in sustaining the economic resilience of poor households. The authors study the case of women's labor in stone-breaking companies, which involves producing building materials for mixed cement cast. They stress that "women's involvement in stone-breaking activities that are included in heavy and abusive work certainly has a subjective motivation known as background. Limited access to decent work with a fair wage has forced housewives to undergo heavy and rough activities such as stone-breaking... Furthermore, in most cases, woman join this occupation to support their husbands' income to meet families' needs". The research is based on the data collected through in-depth interviews with 25 informants. The results show that, although stone breaking is a heavy work, women allocate sufficient time to taking care of their households. At the same time, the economic contribution of women to sustaining the existence of their families is quite significant.

As Olga V. Kruzhkova, Irina A. Simonova, Anastasia O. Ljovkina, and Marina S. Krivoshchekova (Yekaterinburg and Tyumen, Russia) state in the article *Vandal Practices as a Psychological Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic*, the pandemic situation is completely new to the contemporary world and may elicit a strong emotional response in people both at the level of individual reaction and collective experience. Transformation of people's emotional states caused by quarantine restrictions, which significantly reduce social activities, changes routine actions and may trigger destructive criminal activities. At the same time, the accumulated feelings of fear, anxiety, and helplessness "force people to seek solutions to a difficult situation at any cost". The authors aim to classify vandal practices as a response of people, groups, and society to a global threat caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This social tension is often translated into protests and vandal actions. The authors consider vandalism as "an individual impact on the objects of urban environment which is revealed through changing their current state without appropriate sanctions from the other entity that has legal rights to these objects (its owner or manager)". In the article, 80 cases of vandal actions are analyzed, and vandal actions are classified.

Irina G. Polyakova (Yekaterinburg, Russia) in the article *Informal Sperm Donation in Russia* notices that Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART) are becoming more popular and accessible. Society is becoming receptive to assisted reproduction, and sperm donation is one of the most widely used and well-known ART. Recently, practices of informal sperm donation, along with those conducted in formal settings (in fertility clinics and similar institutions), have seen a growing demand in Russia. A factor contributing to this demand is undoubtedly the Internet as digital platforms facilitating donor-recipient interactions provide a fast and cheap access to this service. Nevertheless, informal sperm donation remains a relatively new phenomenon, which

remains underexplored in Russian research literature. The article discusses the informal practices of online sperm donation in Russia, focusing on donors' perceptions of the process, motivations, and expectations concerning potential recipients, as well as their evaluations of donor-recipient relationships, and taking into account that donors invest significant time and resources in their activity. The study is based on interviews with 11 men aged 28–53 from the perspective of symbolic interactionism as the most productive theoretical approach in this respect. Polyakova concludes that “the emergence of online platforms offering sperm donor matching services enables donors and recipients to dodge the rules of fertility clinics”, at the same time as raising a number of ethical and legal concerns.

A forest as a classical locale of traditional culture among the Yorùbá people of southwestern Nigeria, which constitutes about 18% of Nigeria's population, is the focus of a research study undertaken by Fausat Motunrayo Ibrahim, Benson Osikabor, Bolanle Tawakalitu Olatunji, Grace Oluwatobi Ogunwale and Olawale Julius Aluko (Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria). The Yorùbá strongly believe that there is an interface of the visible and invisible, the tangible and intangible, and regard those human beings are on a perpetual journey between *ayé* (the world) and *òrun* (heaven) where “the world is perceived as a market place whereas heaven is man's real home”. In the article *Forest in the Context of Social Change: Traditional Orientation and Forest Mystification in a Nigerian Forest-Reserve Setting*, the authors take into account the complexity and interconnectedness of various elements of traditional forest mystification in the Yorùbá social context. Forest mystification as a marker of the relationship between the individual and society is examined along with other indicators of traditional orientation including attitudes toward religion, ageing, gender, and cultural enthusiasm. The article studies the correlations between each element of this model and forest mystification.

The BOOK REVIEW section contains the review by Andrey S. Menshikov of Daria Dubovka's book (2020) *V monastyr' s mirom. V poiskakh svetskikh kornei sovremennoi dukhovnosti* [To the Monastery in Peace: Searching for Secular Origins of Contemporary Spirituality]. The reviewer analyzes the specifics of the author's approach toward what it means to be a devout Orthodox Christian today.

Discussions around the topics raised in the present issue will be continued in the subsequent issues of our journal. In planning to introduce new interesting themes, we welcome suggestions from our readers and prospective authors for thematic issues, debate sections or book reviews.

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