

Evolution of Value Systems in the “Era of Great Changes”: General Challenges and Problems

Alexander I. Yakovlev✉

Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia

aliv_yak@mail.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7164-1321>

Abstract. The article examines the evolution of the system of traditional values in the era of fundamental changes in the social system. Values of different levels are considered: formational, belonging to a certain social system and changing with the change of the system, as well as civilizational, deep values, generated in a certain religious and cultural space and preserved in the system of ideals and norms of behavior of many generations.

Values reflect and express a certain state of the whole society. With the change of the social system through formational evolution in the West or through “catch-up modernization” in non-Western countries, changes occur in the system of values as an interconnected set of ideals, ideas and norms. Traditional values, as a rule, retreat before the values of “today”, generated by society itself or borrowed from outside. Conflicts of identity and self-identity of the individual and society arise.

In the first decades of the 21st century, in the context of the beginning of the change of the world order, new meanings of development are being developed and sought. The processes of globalization (technological revolution, global migration, flows of goods and information), as well as the West’s desire to maintain the dominant order, while non-Western countries strengthen their importance in the world system, give rise to conflicts of values at different levels. However, not every civilizational challenge becomes a threat to traditional values. In non-Western societies, there is an adaptation of their value system to changed conditions while maintaining fidelity to the ideals and norms of their cultural and religious tradition.

Keywords: values, value system, civilization, formation, tradition, crisis, conflict of values, religion, culture, Modern era

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Introduction

In the first decades of the 21st century, it became obvious that the world system was going through an era of transition to a new state, which manifested itself primarily in the material and especially virtual spheres. Less attention was paid to the sphere of spiritual life, the inner world of people and society, in which the phenomena of transition also manifest themselves with natural inevitability. For a person as a subject and object of the historical process, not only material life remains a reality, but also spiritual life, rooted in the foundations of civilization. In the course of changes in social life, contradictions and even conflicts naturally arise between different kinds of ideals, ideas and interests of people. The period of global transition reveals such conflicts no longer at the level of individuals, but at the level of societies and groups of states. Consideration of the processes of social development is possible in a dual system of coordinates: civilizational and formational, considering society as an integral social and industrial organism.

Materials and Methods

The article is of a theoretical nature and comprehends the evolution of the content of the concept of “value” in the countries of the West and the Arab world. The main research method is a comparative analysis of the concepts of domestic and foreign authors devoted to values. The empirical and informational base was the works of Russian and foreign socio-historical and philosophical thought. The scientific novelty of the study lies in the socio-philosophical analysis of the evolution of value as a phenomenon in the era of formational transition.

Values are traditional and modern, Eastern and Western, European and national, or elite and mass, popular and cosmopolitan. In sociology, attempts have been made more than once to build a hierarchy of value systems: hedonistic, etiquette, aesthetic, moral or materialistic and “post-materialistic”. In the coming era, we have to think about the criteria.

Values changed in individual historical eras. Thus, in the New Age, during the implementation of the “Enlightenment project,” in the era of modernity in Western countries that constituted the vanguard of world development, there was an irreversible erosion of the traditional (Christian) system of values and its displacement by the values of capitalist modernity. In the period before the era of modernity, the system of values was built in civilization on the basis of religion, but in the era of modernity, values arise and change in a certain culture: national culture (mass or elite), cosmopolitan mass culture of consumer society, or global youth culture of the Internet, which has acquired almost autonomy.

A new phenomenon is the influence of stable global and regional migration (pendulum and constant) on the spread and preservation of national cultural norms, including values.



They started talking about the onset of the “era of nomads” not tied to a specific “soil”. There are practically no closed societies left in the world. The flows of people, goods, finances and information irreversibly lead to changes in the value systems of individual societies.

Previously, religion, family, school and books were the bearers of values. Now the role of these socio-cultural institutions is weakening uncontrollably, if not disappearing. The almost absolute dominance of the Internet has arrived. At the same time, the state has the capabilities and tools to influence the values and value orientations of society.

In the era of formational transition in relations between states and groups of states, along with the usual political and economic contradictions, value contradictions have come to the fore, which take the form of religious, civilizational-cultural, and national contradictions. But, in essence, it all comes down to the fact that people and societies are guided by different ideas and feelings when making decisions and have different ideals before them in their activities.

Results

A civilization is a stable, ethno-demographic and socio-cultural community that inhabits a certain territory and has for many centuries clearly expressed traditional features and timeless foundations of culture and religious system, worldview and national psychology.

A formation is a special, time-limited, historically determined type of society that has a set of special productive forces, production relations, political system, social organization and culture.

In the space of civilization, one formation system is replaced by another. With the change of eras, the ideas and interests of people change, who, however, as a rule, remain faithful to certain ideals that arise on the basis of values generated in certain civilizations.

Values are reference points in human activity and worldview, generally accepted norms and ideals in the self-identification of a person and society in a specific space and time. Back in 1902, S.N.Bulgakov in his article “The Main Problems of the Theory of Progress” pointed out that “a person needs to have a holistic view of the world... In a word, a person asks and cannot help but ask not only how, but what, why and for what purpose” [1:48]. The problem of the meaning of life is determined and resolved by a certain set of values that both an individual and society develop for themselves in a certain historical period.

Changing the Christian Value System in the West

The Western model gained dominance in the world about 500 years ago. Its qualities gradually became normative for non-Western countries that were embarking on the path of catch-up modernization according to the Western model of development, to which there was no visible alternative. Part of the Western model was a system of values that arose on the basis of ancient culture, Christianity and Roman statehood, later supplemented by the

values of the Reformation and the Enlightenment, and in the 20th century also by the era of consumer society.

Values form an interconnected system. Values have changed in individual historical eras.

Over the centuries, a single Christian European civilization was divided into Western (Atlantic) and Eastern (Orthodox), the boundary was the Great Schism in 1054, the capture and plunder of Constantinople by the Crusaders during the Fourth Crusade in 1204 and the fall of Constantinople under the blows of the Ottomans in 1453, when the Christian West did not come to the aid of its co-religionists. Gradually, the combination of political events and differences in church life determined different aspirations. The German philosopher Johann Herder wrote ironically at the end of the 18th century that in the East the Christian idea “confused the human mind – instead of living on earth, people learned to walk on air... without knowing it, they laid the foundation of the Byzantine Christian Empire... on the religion of monks” [4:499]. In turn, in the West, as S. Runciman noted, the church turned out to be the custodian of Roman laws, its prominent figures had to become lawyers, and the pope took the place of the emperor [9:22]. On the one hand, the peculiarities of statehood and political circumstances, as well as church conflicts, on the other – the difference in interests and aspirations in public life, strengthened the division between East and West.

The further transformation of Christian civilization in the West, where Western and Northern Europe acquired a new quality, is logical. Changes in people’s lives entailed changes in their worldview. In the New Age, during the implementation of the “Enlightenment project”, in the era of modernity in the Western countries that constituted the vanguard of world development, there was an irreversible erosion of the traditional (Christian) system of values and its displacement by the values of capitalist modernity. One of the ideologists of the French Revolution, Baron P. Holbach, in the middle of the 18th century outlined the rational worldview of the materialists of his time, who expected the implementation of the “kingdom of reason”. At the same time, the atheist P. Holbach considered his interest and benefit to be the basis of human behavior. This kind of utilitarian worldview has become an integral element of the modern development model.

The Great French Revolution of 1789 has become a symbol of the New Age. It (in combination with the American Revolution of 1786) meant not only a break with the previous era and its system of values, but also the emergence of a holistic political culture and political system; institutional frameworks were created for a new system of values, ideas and ideals, moral norms and behavior for the future. At the same time, the new system needed to “reduce the significance of Christianity for the sake of the survival of Western civilization itself, for the sake of its, so to speak, competitiveness” [8:22].

Of course, the old order was not passive in the face of such pressure; it resisted. At the beginning of the 19th century, on the European continent, which found itself in the vanguard of world development, the rejection of rationalism and pragmatism was growing, and mysticism and pietism were growing in religious life. In socio-economic life, the culture of possession (profit and gain) was still inferior to the culture of public benefit, based on the

system of Christian values. In painting and literature, the Romantic movement, based on lofty ideals, predominated.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the transition from the traditional vertical value system, oriented toward the highest absolute value – God, to a horizontal value system, in which there is no hierarchy and spiritual values are equal to profane ones, begins and ends in Western countries. The concept of the sacred has disappeared. The bourgeois value system has done away with a number of old ideals: the principle of justice has been replaced by the principle of charity, the principle of public benefit has been replaced by the principle of the benefit of an individual. However, tradition has not disappeared completely, it has shrunk into a tolerable marginal phenomenon in the space of the new modern order.

In the 19th century, J.Mill and A.I.Herzen wrote about this. The Russian philosopher was initially a European, he wrote: "We need Europe as an ideal, as a reproach, as a good example; if it is not like that, it must be invented." Later he discovered that in the West, "individuals are beginning to fade away, to disappear in the masses... everything is moving towards mediocrity, faces are lost in the crowd." "The bourgeoisie is the ideal to which Europe is striving, rising from all points of the bottom," wrote A.I.Herzen in 1862. "This is the 'chicken in cabbage soup' that Henry IV dreamed of... The bourgeoisie, the last word in a civilization based on the absolute autocracy of property, is the democratization of the aristocracy, the aristocratization of democracy... everything from below is drawn to the bourgeoisie, everything from above falls into it by itself because it is impossible to hold on. The United States represents one middle state" [5:71, 276, 354].

The change of value systems, being a retreat in the civilizational sense, became a grandiose leap into the future in the formational sense. The West, using the results of the Reformation era with its cult of rationality and the Enlightenment era with its conviction in the omnipotence of man, used the fruits of the Industrial Revolution and became the leader of world development.

Conflict of Values in the Non-Western World

In an attempt to overcome their backwardness, non-Western societies were forced to take the Western model of development as a model, which for a long time seemed normative and universal. But back in the early 20th century, M.Weber pointed out: "The first enemy that the 'spirit' of capitalism had to face, which was a certain lifestyle, normatively conditioned and appearing in 'ethical' guise, was a type of perception and behavior that can be called traditionalism," i.e. loyalty to the usual system of values. But, firstly, along with the Western one, there are other types of rationality (Taoist-Confucian, Hindu-Buddhist) [2:80]. And secondly, the desire to improve people's lives (modernization) entailed a change in attitude toward the usual set of values. The process of evolution of value systems is encompassing an increasing number of societies outside the West. The ideals of a consumer society are also being adopted in the East, as backwardness and poverty are overcome there.

According to the optimistic statement of F.Fukuyama at the beginning of the 21st century, the Great Break that occurred in the West with the previous way of life and the entire

social order for the sake of increasing "freedom and equality – the two things that people in modern democracy value most of all" [10:12] will happen in the East. In non-Western societies, "the way forward seems to promise an ever-increasing level of disorganization and social atomization, while the path of retreat is cut off for us" [10:191].

R.Inglehart and K.Welzel, in their analysis of modernization processes, pointed out that in non-Western societies, "changes in values... lead to important socio-political consequences, values and beliefs evolve in a 'predictable direction'" - "promoting changes in sexual norms, gender roles, family values, religiosity, motivation to work, relationships between man and nature, and people's social and political activity" according to the pattern of "a humanistic culture that emphasizes self-expression", and, in turn, "the values of self-expression are more closely associated with democracy than any other factor" [7:10, 13, 15].

These trends were reinforced at the turn of the century in the context of globalization by the technological factor. Modern technologies differ from the technologies of the twentieth century in that they can directly influence people's worldview and perception of the world, replacing the traditional mentality with a modern, Western one. The Internet has proven to be a powerful "leveler" of culture among young people, continuing the process begun by the 1968 revolution. The Internet unifies national cultures and imposes cosmopolitan "youth uniformity" as a new norm. Youth culture generates its own values, and also reduces and simplifies the cultural space of tradition. The Internet space in the 21st century has become not only a battlefield for political ideas, but also a space for confrontation between cultures.

It is well known what this led to. The former value systems – ideals, ideas and interests – were replaced by a set of "basic interests, needs and passions". "Westernism rationalized man", A.A.Zinoviev pointed out. "It excluded from his 'inner world' everything superfluous, all psychological rubbish, ideological confusion, a tendency to excessive reflection, excessive mediation between idea and deed. But Westernism made man more reliable for building human associations on a huge scale and with a high level of social organization" [6:305, 306, 355].

The English historian E.Hobsbawm, assessing the crisis that engulfed the world capitalist system by the end of the twentieth century, wrote that "even more obvious than the crisis of the world economy and world politics was the social and moral crisis... It was a crisis of the beliefs and ideas on which modern society had been built after the modernizers won their famous battle against the reactionaries at the beginning of the nineteenth century – a crisis of the rationalistic and humanistic initial premises shared by both liberal capitalism and communism... However, the moral crisis consisted not only in the denial of the initial premises of modern civilization, but also in the destruction of the historically established structures of human relations inherited by modern society from pre-industrial and pre-capitalist society, which, as we can now see, created the conditions for the development of the former. This was a crisis not of any one form of social organization, but a crisis of all its forms" [11:20–21].

Value systems serve as norms and regulators of public life, government policy and the activities of individuals, serve as the basis for legal norms, morality and ethics of society, and offer criteria for identification and self-identification of individuals and society. The

Western socio-economic model of industrial society has become normative for all non-Western countries, displacing the vertical value system inherent in traditional societies from all spheres of public life.

Discussion

In the era of the global formation transition in relations between states and groups of states, along with the usual political and economic contradictions, value contradictions have come to the forefront, which take the form of religious, civilizational-cultural, or national contradictions, which was noted by S.Huntington at the end of the 20th century. People and societies are guided by different ideas and ideals when making decisions and in their activities, although they have similar goals. The activities of people are determined by the system of values that is established in a certain era (historical formation) and in a certain community of people, which can be defined as a civilization. Each civilization has a certain religious system, but religion, being the "core" of civilization, still does not fully determine its qualities and properties. Religion is closely connected with the "root" values of civilization, and loyalty to religious foundations subsequently affects the degree of loyalty of society to the system of traditional values. In the material dimension, each new formation is also characterized not only by special material parameters and characteristics, but also by its own version of the value system, determined by the new conditions of economic and social life of people.

In the West, by the end of the 20th century, the capitalist formation not only rejected the Christian value system as outdated and not corresponding to the realities of modern times, but also abandoned the ideals of the Enlightenment. At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, various levels of the value system change to varying degrees, and fragmentation occurs within each level. The lower, social level of values is most susceptible to the impact of socio-economic changes; they determine the norms of behavior. The middle level, including socio-political and aesthetic values, generally corresponds to the norms of the dominant social system (formation), including previous norms; this level determines the ideas and ideals of human activity. The higher, metaphysical level (civilizational, root), expressing the spiritual life of people and society as a whole, is also deprived of its former integrity, contains both fragments of tradition (religious and ethical), and fragments of emerging relativism, atheism and paganism. They are guided by it, determining the meaning of life, or they discard it, not asking themselves such an impractical problem. The widespread trend in the 21st century to move away from real knowledge of life and the past into the virtual world is indicative, in the long term leading to social atomization, the disintegration of ties and human society itself.

Conclusions

In the process of socio-economic development of modern industrial society according to the Western model, interaction between non-Western societies and the West took place, which gave rise to both conflicts and changes in existing value systems [12:108, 220]. In international life, this led to "dialogues of civilizations" in an attempt to create a common humanistic platform for overcoming common problems of world change, as well as global challenges of our time (ecology, terrorism, poverty and hunger in the global South). Not every challenge to civilization and its values is a threat if it does not encroach on the civilizational and cultural identity of man and society.

The change in the world order that is taking place today also gives rise to the problem of changing the system of values that determine the purpose and path of world development.

Problems also arise within individual non-Western societies. These are changes in public life of three types:

- rejection of Western (bourgeois, liberal) values, norms of behavior and morality of modernity, defined as traditionalism or fundamentalism; - acceptance of Western values (bourgeois and liberal) at the expense of belittling one's own value system, which coincides with the West's idea of – the inevitability of the triumph of liberal culture (synthesis);
- a combination of elements of Western and one's own values (socioeconomic and political), which in the understanding of Europeans was called multiculturalism (symbiosis).

The solution to these problems cannot be simple. B.P.Vysheslavtsev, who lived in the USA, wrote about this in the mid-20th century. According to the Russian philosopher, "all the creativity of life, the creativity of history consists in the constant resolution of the conflict of values; we always face an alternative of solutions" [3:126].

An important, almost fundamental, necessity within one civilization is the dialogue between the past and the present, based on historicity as a fundamental quality of civilization, our human existence and thinking.

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About the author

Alexander I. YAKOVLEV, DSc. (Hist.). Professor. Chief Researcher at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7164-1321>. Address: 12, Rozhdestvenka Street, Moscow, 107031, Russian Federation, aliv_yak@mail.ru

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