The Significance of Social Values in Social Time

Ana PASCARU, *Ph.D.,*
Academy of Sciences of Moldova
Chişinău, Moldova
apascaru2010@gmail.com

Abstract

The article focuses on the values changing/stigmatization through social time. The study reflects the present of the social time in the values changing and how it express the real social needs / demand. Also its try through different/divergent characteristic of the social time prove their force into values change in society, including Moldovan society.

Keywords: *contemporary society, social time value, difference.*

A decade after starting a new century and millennium, the similarities and differences / particularities of the society that embraced the second half of the XX century are becoming more and more affected by the transformation of the reality. The appearance of these realities is due to profound changes reflected in their transformation and as a result some trends are emerging that soon may degenerate into either inter-societal processes rather than intra-societal or quite unexpected phenomena. These happened due to the underestimated significance of the profound changes that were treated as an emergency only for societies from Central and Eastern Europe that were trying to get rid of their totalitarian tribute in '90s of the XX century. Over times, the experience accumulated proved that the burden of change lies not only in overcoming the initial framework, and that the Berlin Wall damaged also the stable societies in their development and the move beyond borders imposed for necessary changes. The vision through which the changes were tackled ended with a materialization of the inadequate perceptions of the reality in transformation at different levels, with resizing of societies through the triad of cause-effect-consequences, failing to concentrate on the analysis of the taxonomy of the prefigured reality, because the contributions for changing interconnections, interdependencies between societies, cultures, components of globalization and creation of a new civilizational order are not yet sufficiently known.

In this context, the nature of the profound changes and transformations and their expression need a complex analysis of the realities. The complex analysis is

anchored in values and reflected in identified opportunities that refer to connections/interconnections, interdependencies /interactions, thus contributing to reducing the accumulated disparities. At the same time, this will conduct to establishing the impact of the profound changes on the cultural spaces with borders far to be consistent with those established between societies. This analysis will try answering to what extent the cross-cultural / cross-border trends are shaped by many unknown variables. That means identification of those unknown variables and relating them to uncertain announced trends (trans-cultural / transnational) and to the values and systems of values through social time, on one hand, and on borders, on the other hand, which, depending on the level of awareness of communities, can be fulfilled or not. Not less important is to determine the conditions in which the social time becomes a dominant and what it means in the contemporary society.

The flow of the monitoring values in communities is addressed through the dichotomous nature of changes in relation to cultural spaces through social time. Such an approach can be identified in the proliferation of the dichotomous nature of changes within cultural spaces that modifies / stigmatizes not only the societal values (fundamental, national and general human), the flow and communication between them, but also the very dimension of cultural spaces themselves. At the same time, there is a confrontation between the inner value of transformations and those which happen at the individual level, intra- and extra-group, community, and society. It's necessary to point out that the results could lead, in turn, either to recovering / using / stigmatizing or to creating assets that become value / non-value/ kitsch, in this way outlining the situation of each society, the relations between internal factor versus external factor, and finally, the meaning of the value flow through the social time, marked by the turn of the millennium.

The study presented is an attempt to reflect on the significance of the movement/flow of values (their change / stigmatization) from the perspective of social time. This is the purpose for which an inter- and multi-disciplinary approach is envisaged addressing these issues, being a part of a more comprehensive research on time and historicism in reshaping societal values (fundamental, national / identity and general human) that includes also the similarities / differences / features present in the Moldovan society. It is a continuation of previous studies focused on analysis and synthesis of the causes that helped shaping the sources that continue to supply unpredictable effects and consequences, disrupting / distorting / marginalizing the confluences of cultural spaces and the flow of values in and out of them.

Determining the significance of the social time in the context of values helped proving that the social time not only ensures the manifestation of values in the cultural space, but is also rooted in them. In this context, we are less interested in emphasizing the definitions of social time but rather rely on seeing it as a genuine support for decoding resources that supply and indirectly influence the reshaping of societal values. In this regard, the social time is considered by P. Sorokin[1] to be a relation between activities and differences that the social time is adding to the biological or psychological time, while for G. Pronovost[2] the social time is the core of activities. Therefore, the expression of rhythms characteristic to social groups in this study is related to the presence of the values. Also, based on the above-mentioned consideration, we conclude that through the social time it is possible to facilitate the deepening of identifications and disapproving of opportunities in the process of changing / stigmatizing of values that refer to the group and between groups, between community and communities, between society and societies. In this way it's also possible to highlight the content/essence of the social time, namely the axioms, rules, and primary data that, combined, generate forms, shades, social representations, a multitude of social signs and practical skills.

The above-mentioned landmarks have facilitated the review of the relations between different types of the social time in the society: historical, modern and postmodern. On the one hand, it highlighted a penetrating and omnipresent development of these types of time in cultural spaces of the contemporary society, in which a massive migration managed to establish a multicultural environment. On the one hand, it highlighted their role in supporting / marginalizing the axiology of the identity at individual, group, community levels, but also at the level of the community values (tolerance, acceptance, and trust). This refers especially to the postmodern level (radicalized modernity according to A. Giddens)[3] of the development of society, regardless of its status within civilization, where the social time (relation between activities) is targeted by outside confluences. As a result, the rescaling of values is becoming a litmus paper is the relationship between national values and universal human values, between value as a scope and value as means, at intra- and extra-societal level.

---

[1] P. Sorokin, *Sociocultural Causality, Space, Time: A Study of Referential Principles of Sociology and Social Science* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1964).
[2] G. Pronovost, *Sociologie du temps* (Paris: De Boeck Universite, 1996).
[3] A. Giddens, *Consecinţele modernităţii* (The Consequences of Modernity) (Bucharest: Univers, 2000).

Another aspect which has not to be neglected focuses on the analysis of the social time's contribution to change the perception (awareness) of the community members in selecting one or another set of priority values. In this case the axiological component of the change is emphasized, that means to what extent these changes can fit into activities undertaken by community members, having at as priority the actualizing of values or the creation of goods that in time may become values, according to A. Pascaru.[4] The preferred choice will emphasize that the set of designated values is directly proportional to the perpetuating needs and requirements of the society. This requires raising awareness of the society members concerning changes resulted from their choosing and this will involve another level of knowledge because this set of values require to comply with requirements and needs of communities outside the societal space. Besides that, in emerging societies (new democracies or developing societies) giving up or accepting the set of values happens frequently ad-hoc, as a tribute to historical ideological formalism. In this way the uncertain attempts to returning to normality and to overcome the impact of the devaluation of values in private, the community and social life is compromised, the inherited awful mentalities being encouraged.

Focusing our attention on the criteria / forms of the social time (differences, phenomenology, social order, axiology) that is the purpose of this research, starting with its (qualitative) differences, brought us to the supposition that there is no time, but times and ways in which a temporal sequence is separated from the other, which means a difference between the modern and Renaissance styles. The interest for qualitative differences prevailed in terms of their facilities in highlighting issues that lead to what separates one social time from another and changes the projection / stigmatization of values. Even if these differences, according to R. Sue,[5] N. Gavriluță,[6] etc., are found beyond the linearity, univocality, mechanical character and stereotyped "monochrome" through which the modern time is becoming a dominant one in certain respects in Western societies, but is not lacking in developing societies. Due to deep transformations occurred at the turn of the millennium, re-shaping of the dominant time within any society is becoming possible, evolving either to the socio-cultural time (American

---

[4] A. Pascaru, "Comunicarea dintre valorile etniei majoritare şi a minorităţilor etnice în societate" (Communication between Ethnic Majority and Ethnic Minorities Values in Society), in *Anuarul Institutului "George Bariţiu" al Academiei Române*, Cluj-Napoca, vol. VI, Series Humanistica (Bucharest: Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2008), 427-439.

[5] R. Sue, *Temps et ordre social* (Paris: P.U.F, 1994).

[6] N. Gavriluţă, *Fractalii şi timpul social* (The Fractals and Social Time) (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 2003).

society) or to socio-historical time (new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe).

In this respect, the situation of the societies in development (new democracies) from post-soviet space shows an accumulation of social-historical time that manifests virulently in all fields of activities and frequently against the perpetuation of these entities. These events are usually based on the actions which aim not to settle / reconcile some discrepancies / disagreements or to find ways for returning to democratic values, national and general human, supported by ethnic, social, religious groups. The undeclared goal often is to deprive the majority that constitutes an integral part of any society from its own socio-cultural time. It occurs because the causes that instigate the national or linguistic minority through social-historical time are usually outside the cultural space of the society, while the confluences of these spaces are transformed into tools of political manipulation. Divergent interventions of mainly socio-historical time (geo-chrono-political) that occur usually at the expense of social and cultural time of the past are due to the inherited past and to the implication of the external factor.

In this context, the relation between the condition of value based on the criteria of the cultural space and the various criteria of the social time lead to the need for deepening the knowledge concerning the stigmatization of the transformation of values in the contemporary society, especially in emerging societies. While referring to the differences of the social time the ways for monitoring the contribution of values in the process of society perpetuation are transformed to the extent that they account for value changes due to profound changes at intra- and extra-societal level. Simultaneously, it became obvious that these changes, along with establishing interconnections and interdependencies, continue to be an equation with many unknown things from the social time prospect. These could be explained by the fact that changes, going beyond the usual boundaries of societies, bring with them elements from outside that either enforce internal processes or upset them. Depending on the state of the society the predominant external factor in relation to the internal factor supports the presence of several types of social times and therefore the change / stigmatization of values occurs. According to which is prevailing in the society – conciliation and conflict or conflict and some elements / manifestations of the reconciliation – it can be concluded that a particular social time became or not predominant for the whole community regardless its ethnic, religious, social or political affiliation.

The need for focusing on the differences of the social time through the phenomenological criterion encouraged the author to insist on another aspect less

analyzed – the omnipresence of the social time within community by the set of values that have been accepted comparing with those that remained unemphasized. This aspect explains the flow of sets of values, i.e. the replacement of one set by another, in the flow of social time. By emphasizing the differences and phenomenological criteria we performed and underlined the understanding that the social time within the community is directly proportional to the release of values through activities that represent the movement and appearance of new values. This understanding means, in fact, the recognition of the necessary connection, the mutual complementarity of the perpetuation of values and of the social time. In this context, the perpetuation of values distinguishes the valences of the social time that characterize any society. Thus, the social time gives a meaning and significance to the life, demonstrates the community groups' ability to ensure its value and perpetuation. This is about developing myths / demythologization / remythologization, utopias, ideologies, various conscious and unconscious social forms that strengthen the quality of the social time in terms of values (set of values) changed / stigmatized or accepted and realized.

In this context, the examination of the Moldovan society in particular and the post-soviet one in general, is more than an emergency, because many of the problems they face, including the deviation from societal values in relation to the extra-societal ones, have their origins in the social nature of the sources that supply the times. These times are characterized by a divergent / destructive presence that still persists two decades after implosion, because their aim from the very beginning was based on domination / imposition, by dictatorial / totalitarian methods, of the time brought from outside the social environment. The applied methods were quite diversified, starting with "hijacking" from real historical time until its replacing with an artificial one, requiring to give up to the roots (traditions, history, cultural space, etc.) and forcing the adoption of sources outside the community that became a subject controlled by authorities.

This explains many social facts the Moldovan society is facing, but they are provoked by different social times, this making it difficult to find a solution. As an example, we recall here the ease with which facts are internationalized; this is what happened with the contribution in excess of those who created the previous old times, distorting their character, and not without imposing them the double standard that was used until recently by international organizations. In support of these arguments are the events of 6-7 April 2009, when a part of the society tried to defend the democratic values and the universal human rights, but they were instead abused and accused of supporting the policy of the neighboring society.

Initially they were treated in the same way as during the internationalization of the *Transnistrian* conflict in the early '90s, when were done attempts to demonstrate that it was an artificial conflict.

Monitoring studies developed on social time made it clear that it reflects the succession of roles pursued for human communities going forward. Although few of these studies referred to values that occurred in the cultural space, the identification of a specific preferential activity (conscious or background activity) already invokes the presence of these valences. For example, in the modernity such a charismatic role was claimed by the labor time that usually gives meaning to the individual / collective existence, to promises for progress and material wealth. Postmodernism as a cultural expression of radicalized modernity, according to A. Giddens,[7] divides the social time in leisure time and quaternary time. But here also arises the problem concerning the value of these times, given the context when the frequency of changes on the set of values goes beyond the intra- and extra-society, and even in the continental framework. There is a real danger that the social time, in absence or reduction of values, can be easily turned to dissipation (thanks to the development of technologies) of all times: not only to what has been created, but also to the Earth in general.

The criterion of the social order of the time in the process of analyze of values should be also emphasized. This criterion includes the phenomenological quality and the manner in which it becomes dominant in the hierarchical ordering and structuring of the community or society. The ordering and structuring proves or denies the development of the social time. It is well-known that the whole Middle Ages were build organically and structurally on the religious times of the Christian monotheism. The modernity itself has, as its last landmark, the social order imposed by the social labor time. The postmodernity in turn, according to R. Sue,[8] is based on another order and another dominant time. In case of the post-communist societies, particularly those from the post-soviet space, we can consider several forms of time. For example, the consequences of the disintegration of identity and the replacement of value pillars with dogmatic pillars without substance/content managed to change the level of genotype of the self-excluded times, contributing to maintaining the state of uncertainty and insecurity and blocking the communication between the ethnic values of the national minorities. The last ones, the original and the Russian-speaking minority in case of Moldovan society, continue to demand the right for assuring such communication

---

[7] Giddens, *Consecinţele modernităţii*.
[8] Sue, *Temps et ordre social*.

that in fact means further marginalization of the social-cultural-historical time of the majority.

It is important to also emphasize on the axiological criterion – the possibility for the social time to maintain, produce and sustain the societal values at the confluence of the manifested cultural spaces. The experience gained shows this possibility of the social time that rarely remains unreleased. The social time is considered to be the source of morality, using the meaning of Durkheim's term, only when religious and labor values, and values of the perfect individualism, according to G. Lipovetstky,[9] were defining one by one the dominant medieval, modern and postmodern times. However, it should be mentioned that the dominant time in the communist society was ensured by replacing Christian values with those of militant atheism, and the undertaken activities, including their results, were reported to doctrinaire landmarks and not to the criteria of value. In fact, we are not talking about the replacement of values per se, but about the lack of support of values from the individual and community levels to the societal one. While these substitutions were infiltrated in the subconscious of the individual by different methods, the historical / socio-cultural times have facilitated the perpetuation (especially by the lack of the private property) of the devaluation of the labor value and of the labor time. The motto: *they pretend to pay us, we pretend to work* continues to be present in daily activities. By monitoring several researches and by measuring public opinion polls, the author managed to reveal the difference in the respondents' attitude from the post-communist societies that refer not to work values in general, but to the choice between the options - *very important* vs. *quite important*. For example, if for respondents from Georgia this report is 78% to 13.3%; in Serbia by 60.9% to 29.8%; in Romania to 54% to 35.8%; then to those in Ukraine this report is 39.5% to 39.2%; in Moldova is 43.5% to 46.7% and in Russia - 49.7% to 32.0% (World Values Survey, 2005-2006).[10] The assessment of options provided by respondents indicate that after 1991 there weren't great changes in terms of awareness concerning the labor value and its natural content, through which the individual promotion is possible.

Obviously, the criteria of phenomenological and social order differences continue to be complemented with other dimensions that are found in the models analyzed, applied to social times. Among the models based on the proposed paradigm adopted for addressing the issue of values, the most appropriate and

---

[9] G. Lipovetsky, *Amurgul datoriei. Etica nedureroasă a noilor tipuri democratice* (Le Crépuscule du devoir. L 'éthique indolore des nouveaux temps démocratiques) (Bucharest: Babel, 1996).
[10] World Values Survey, accessed January 6, 2012, www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/ 2005-2006.

relevant can be considered the model of historicism that belongs to G. Pronovost.[11] The classification of the social time developed by G. Pronovost reported the social body to history, this one being examined as a whole, partially and fragmentarily. This approach facilitates the identification of the existence of a family social time with the educational time, the religious and economic time; with the macro-social and quaternary time. On this basis, it was possible to find out that there is not just a purely psychological difference between the hypostasis of the social time and the historical time because one time or another "seems" to flow faster / slower, depending on the different ontological status of these temporal regimes.

Bibliography:

1. Gavriluță, N. *Fractalii și timpul social* (The Fractals and Social Time). Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 2003.
2. Giddens, A. *Consecințele modernității* (The Consequences of Modernity). Bucharest: Univers, 2000.
3. Lipovetsky, G. A*murgul datoriei. Etica nedureroasă a noilor tipuri democratice* (Le Crépuscule du devoir. L 'éthique indolore des nouveaux temps démocratiques). Bucharest: Babel, 1996.
4. Pascaru, A. "Comunicarea dintre valorile etniei majoritare și a minorităților etnice în societate" (Communication between Ethnic Majority and Ethnic Minorities Values in Society). In *Anuarul Institutului "George Barițiu" al Academiei Române,* 427-439. Cluj-Napoca, vol. VI, Series Humanistica, Bucharest: Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2008.
5. Pascaru, A. "Condiționarea valorilor în societate" (Conditioning the values in Society). In *Redimensionarea valorilor în contextul noii vecinătăți cu UE,* 7-40. Chișinău: Tipogr.-Sirius, 2011.
6. Pronovost, G. *Sociologie du temps*. Paris: De Boeck Universite, 1996.
7. Pronovost, G. *Tipologia timpurilor sociale* (Social Times Typology). Bucharest: Hyperion, 1997.
8. Sorokin, P. *Sociocultural Causality, Space, Time: A Study of Referential Principles of Sociology and Social Science*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1964.
9. Sue, R. *Temps et ordre social*. Paris: P.U.F, 1994.
10. World Values Survey. Accessed January 6, 2012. www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/ 2005-2006.

---

[11] Pronovost, *Sociologie du temps*, and *Tipologia timpurilor sociale* (Social Times Typology) (Bucharest: Hyperion, 1997).