The value-rich state

Is there a concept against the value-lessness of the globally imposed New normal? *

by Christian Zeitz **

1. The Notion of values

The concept of "values" has played a significant role in political debate and meta-political journalism for decades. The reference to values seems to have an affirmative effect on political concepts and to affirm political objectives vis-à-vis potential critics. Those who refer to values insinuate that they are not concerned with interests, especially not with the particular interests of certain target groups or even with their own economic interests, but with the welfare of the people and the preservation of order as a whole.

In this respect, the concept of "values" functions as a contemporary perceived substitute for the ancient concept of bonum commune, for the common good in the world of ideas from Aristotle to Thomas Aquinas and in the modern thought of Catholic social teaching and contemporary so-called communitarianism. The recourse to "values" even seems to be suitable for immunizing political measures or concepts against criticism from the outset.

Particularly groups of people who feel they belong to conservatism seem to be receptive to perceiving a policy agenda explicitly dubbed a values-based conception as the epitome of their objectives and not to question it further. "Values" in this sense are a formal cipher for an ideal that need not be questioned further. "Values Instead of Words: Preserve and Move.

Das "Konservative Zukunftsmanifest" (The Conservative Manifesto for the Future), a book by Vincenz Liechtenstein and Reginald Földy, was in this sense an identity-forming work intended to link the German-

speaking conservatives of the turn of the millennium with the perspectives of European social policy.

However, the political history of the last twenty years has shown that the concept of values is hardly suitable to save society from disastrous developments, because the concept of values in itself is only a formal construct that can be used for content determinations of any kind and thus be made a placeholder for any agenda - even those that definitely contain the opposite of a conservative worldview.

2. Score and values

A review of the manifold uses of the term "values" and the scope of concepts with which all possible views and ideas are or can be served and covered shows that the concept of "values" is by no means limited to the preservation of the essential features of a proven cultural and social order, or what someone might consider them to be. This is shown by the extensive catalogs of collections of ideals, desirable behaviors and basic attitudes alone, which are understood as "values" in everyday life and in political as well as cultural discourse. These include, for example

(A) Justice, peace, freedom, security, solidarity.

(B) Altruism, charity, decency, modesty, humility, honesty, diligence, generosity, loyalty, bravery, integrity

(C) Empathy, flexibility, patience, composure, credibility, creativity, effectiveness, incorruptibility

(D) Politeness, cleanliness, diligence, thrift, efficiency, sense of duty, orderliness, punctuality, probity, perseverance, kindness

(E) Otherness, diversity, sustainability, respect, self-actualization, spirit of resistance

It is evident that the groups of values designated by the letters A to E comprise completely different kinds/types of concepts which, on the one hand, concern different levels of human activity and, on the other hand, represent inhomogeneous, partly even mutually incompatible value concepts.

Category A refers to systemic properties of cultural or political collectives or states.

Category B refers to human characteristics or dispositions that are of great relevance to the fabric of the social or state community.

Category C refers to action potentials that are conducive to cooperation or coexistence in the community.

Category E comprises desirable qualities that are classically referred to as so-called secondary virtues.

Finally, category D refers to the (supposed) desirability of system-transcending, oppositional or "alternative" behaviors.

3. "Values" as reference systems of a good order?

It must be noted that the "values", across the categories, address completely different individual and social entities and relations, which at one time, valuatively, are about ideas, moral ideals, virtues and ethical standards, at another time, value-free, about maxims of action, character traits and dispositions of action. It must therefore be doubted whether the

"concept of values" can lead to socio-politically relevant statements or even be made the yardstick of a policy that is committed to a certain principle of social order, which in turn is based on a certain, clearly defined image of man. The doubts become more entrenched when it is considered that business-ethical concepts such as corporate mission statements, company policies, economic principles and corporate identities are also not infrequently associated with the concept of "values" and sold as such. Here, "value" fully becomes a component of a marketing concept or of sales-promoting target group work.

In view of this, it is not surprising to realize that the concept of value originated in economic theory and was borrowed from there only in the 19th century by individual ethicists and philosophers in order to justify or objectify sociopolitical positions.

In view of the range of values found here and the normative concepts behind them, however, it must be stated that this endeavor has failed thoroughly, which has not prevented the concept of value, however, from having made a grandiose career in the 20th century and up to the present day.

In fact, there is no socio-political or cultural-political concept that cannot be justified with "values", and this is also the way it is handled by practically all (electioneering) politicians. "Value" is that which is stylized as politically "valuable" by one's own program. This is how it is handled by the representatives of practically all political tendencies, whereby it is particularly noteworthy that the conservative-oriented electorate in particular has meanwhile become so frugal in the face of dissolution and globalization that the mere, self-confidently presented

reference to a nebulous "value" consciousness already evokes feelings of happiness and democratic approval, without any question as to which objectives and which social order the respective value propagandist has in mind.

In view of this, one thing is certain: the concept of value is of no help in assessing a socio-political or cultural-political conception, because it is not values that represent the determinants on which social order was built and which therefore make the way it functions or the form of life associated with it explainable. The question to be asked, then, is: What holds societies together at their innermost core?

What determines their essence, their construction principle? And what can be established as a reference value for the assessment of a good social and cultural order of the future?

4. The action as the smallest building block of society

These are, of course, the supreme questions of all social and cultural science disciplines. They cannot be answered exhaustively within the framework of a small basic essay. Therefore, in the following, the history of ideas of great thinkers will first be searched for suitable analytical set pieces, from which some basic considerations for the cornerstones of a good order of the future can be gained.

Human society can be thought of from two sides: Starting from the actions of individuals, whose interaction synthesizes a communal order. Or starting from the community organism, as whose limbs or organelles the individuals are seen, as it were.

Aristotle, in the fourth book of his Nicomachean Ethics (named after his son Nicomachus), examines two different kinds of actions, each of whose relative importance in a society determines the character of coexistence and the goodness of order: As "praxis" he describes actions that point to a certain purpose as the desired result of action. "Poiesis" he calls the realm of those actions whose respective purpose has its value grounded in the consummation of the action itself.

"Theory," i.e., the pursuit of pure knowledge, would be, according to Aristotle, "the highest form of praxis," i.e., the fulfillment of true human existence. Poiesis, in contrast, aims at change, pushes for "optimization," destabilizes society accordingly. The "pre-stabilized order" (a term coined by Leibnitz) and its preservation is a target conception of this figure of thought.

Plato had already given the word to this idea of stability: "When fathers have become accustomed to their children doing as they please; when teachers are afraid of pupils, and prefer to bow to them; when, finally, boys have no respect for laws ... then there they are ... the beginnings of tyranny." The preservation of order makes it necessary for philosophers to become kings, or for kings to become philosophers.

This affirmation of an insistent form of human coexistence is found in a particularly pronounced way in Confucius. He sees the impending collapse already at the source of the wrong use of words: "If the words are not right, then what is said is not what is meant. If what is said is not right, then the works are not right. If the works do not prosper, then morals and arts perish. Therefore, the most important elements of

statecraft would be the "renomination (renaming) of names" and the restoration of Li (manners)."

The preoccupation with actions as the smallest building blocks of human order has, over the centuries, led to highest-ranking achievements in the humanities.

The economist Ludwig von Mises wanted to recognize only one form of human behavior as actually existing and drew far-reaching conclusions from this: Human action was always a chain of explicit purpose, means identification, and purposeful bringing about of a desired end; anything that would call into question the primacy of individual action was a form of socialism. Max Weber, on the other hand, distinguished between "purpose-rational" and "value-rational" action and established the discipline of "sociology of religion," which conceives of various types of society as "the product of collective action under the influence of religion."

5. What holds society together at its core?

Modern action theory was founded by Ludwig Wittgenstein, who regarded certain patterns of action as the expression of a socially specific game ("language game"). Action theorists such as Gilbert Ryle referred to him, pointing to the coincidence of certain patterns of action and their underlying states of mind ("The Concept of Minds"), which explains the categorical difference between static and dynamic societies.

According to the first great sociologist of religion, Emile Durkheim, people's repertoire of actions, and thus the type of society, is determined entirely by the determining force of the religion in question:

The animistic age would be followed by the totemistic one, and this in turn by the polytheistic one, which was finally replaced by the monotheistic one.

The anthropologists of the 20th century, first and foremost Claude Lévi-Strauss, have attributed the persistence of non-European tribal societies in insurmountable primitiveness to the dominance of totemism ("The Sad Tropics").

The concepts addressed so far (with the exception of - to a certain extent - Mises) regard the actions of the individual as building blocks, but these as quantities completely determined by the uninfluenceable superordinate order.

In sharp contrast to this are considerations which, although they did not originate in the "Age of Enlightenment", experienced their heyday in it. "If you don't like the old laws, burn them and make new ones" can be understood as the guiding maxim of a style of thinking that found its first heyday in the middle of the 18th century. In 1862, Jean Jacques Rousseau brought out his "social contract," in which the ordering of the state and civil community as the product of a conscious act of transferring individuals' rights of freedom to the state is rewarded by the latter with the performance of protective and regulatory functions. The idea was by no means new or particularly original: from Epicurus and Cicero to Hugo Grotius and Samuel von Pufendorf, there is a wide range of thinkers thinking of a conscious and more or less formal act of transferring sovereignty from the individual to the community-based state.

Of course, it was Thomas Hobbes who published the idea of overcoming the "bellum omnium contra omnes" (war of all against all) by a state sovereign through a state-founding treaty more than a hundred years before Rousseau (1651). However, while Hobbes was committed to the idea of rule under law, which was given its first flowering somewhat later by his compatriot John Locke, Rousseau must be understood as a pioneer of socialist centralism. He, Rousseau, believed in an abstract "common good" to which the individual must be subjected. He thus laid the foundation for the idea of creating a good and just order through superior central authority. This was supplemented by one of his most important descendants, Auguste Comte, with the intellectual products of a radical belief in technology: society or the state had to be operated like a machine and its output optimized in a targeted manner, which would eliminate all social problems.

6. Socialism versus Spontaneous System

The basic ideas of Rousseau and Comte can be found in numerous concepts that still enjoy the greatest influence today. These include all variants of socialism, Hans Kelsen's "Pure Theory of Law," Vilfredo Pareto's welfare economics (inspired by Jeremy Bentham's idea of the "greatest happiness of the greatest number"), various neo-contract theories (John Rawls and others), and last but not least and most especially the conception of a "New World Order," whose phantasm of planning and domination is currently afflicting the entire globe like a serious disease.

A radical antithesis to this technocratic intentionalism, which presumes to believe that a few have centralized knowledge for the purpose of optimizing social planning for the (alleged) benefit of those subject to domination, is the idea of a "Spontaneous Order" that makes the dispersed knowledge of many available for the benefit of all. The "Spontaneous Order" - a central concept of Friedrich a. Hayek denotes a type of social order within the framework of which individuals freely pursue their self-chosen goals, while at the same time abiding by the "rules of just action" which they cannot influence. While seeking their own advantage, they perform indispensable services for the community at large and thus for their fellow citizens, discovering solutions to problems and procedures that serve the community at large and advance the process of civilization. This idea of the "Invisible Hand" is magisterially formulated by Adam Smith (1776: The Wealth of Nations), who stood on the shoulders of Scottish moral philosophy in the tradition of Francis Hutchinson and and David Hume. In this way, an order emerges that is "the result of human action, but not of human design" (Adam Ferguson).

This order has always been the target of attack of all scientists, constructivists, technicists, common-good communists and other intellectuals and political activists who, because of their half-education and arrogance, believe that they have more knowledge than the additive, intergenerational process of civilization of the last millennia has produced.

They have, after all, recognized that planning and technology alone cannot produce social order and satisfy the complex needs of millions and millions of people.

Just as the positivist Auguste Comte recognized in his late work that, in addition to the hardware of the social machine, there is also a need for software, for an ideology of rule, which he called "philosophie positiv," so too the technocrats of the great cultural-socialist transformation as well as those of the "Great Reset" are working feverishly on the "ideational superstructure" of the new order of rule.

7. The arrogance of "European values "

In connection with the central theme of this essay, it is not without a certain piquancy that they are happy to use the time-honored concept of "values". With the conception of "European values", this concept has made an outrageous career. It is worth recalling, for example, a historic milestone in the process of European integration, when draconian "sanctions" were imposed on the Republic of Austria at the beginning of the year 2000, after the inauguration of the Schüssel/Riess-Passer government ("black-blue") gave rise to fears that Austria might interrupt the implementation of the so-called anti-discrimination law (Art. 13, Amsterdam Treaty, 1997) and thus call into question the claim to dominance of "European values". Austria's effective humiliation ensured that homosexual "rights," LGBTQ + phantasms, abortion (dis)culture, gender speech and practice, multiculturalism and immigration dictates, interfaith recognition egalitarianism (incl. the "religion of peace), guilt cult of the occident and its nations, idolatry of the climate and the "mother earth", acceptance of the "health"-dictatorship as well as the

enforcement of various chastisement rituals (prosecution of "hate- and prejudice-crimes" including elimination of freedom of speech) is not questioned by anyone who still wants or has to stay "in the system".

8. The human being as an "indeterminate animal"

Has Friedrich Nietzsche, who spoke succinctly of the "revaluation of all values," received a late appreciation or vindication with the imposition of "European and Global Values" in the 21st century? "I will show you the superhuman." - Is the transhumanist homunculus from the Gates-Fauci-Schwab human factory the realization of the self-deification phantasm from Nietzsche's "Zarathustra"? Was Nietzsche right when he understood the morality of Western civilization as a mere drive of a degenerated bourgeois society?

These questions are exciting and central. But they can only be addressed and not answered within the framework of this small work. One thing is certain, however: Nietzsche, who was one of the very few philosophers who made the concept of value a central category of his thinking, put his finger into a wound that he himself could not close.

He did, however, inspire the highest-ranking minds of the twentieth century to take the theory of the interrelationships of man, culture, society, and politics a few essential contributions further. He did this especially by formulating what at first sight seems a strange proposition, which he presented in two, only marginally different, variants. In his book, Beyond Good and Evil (1864), it reads "Man is the animal not yet established." (Third main piece. The religious knowledge) In his Zarathustra trilogy (1883 - 85), on the other hand, he writes: "Man is the

not established animal" - "A rope, knotted between animal and superhuman." (Preface, 4. KSA 4, 16)

The small difference of "not" and "not yet" gave place to the inspiration of two completely different concepts: Martin Heidegger (1889 - 1976) conceived of man's "thrownness" into a structure of cultural tradition as a source of "worry," even anxiety, about the indeterminacy of his own existence. It is certainly an oversimplification to reduce Heidegger to his role in National Socialism, but the idea that the "not yet" determined animal of the German as a kind of "master man" should be brought to its final destiny determined his thinking at least in the 1930s.

Arnold Gehlen, on the other hand, elaborated the characteristic as "not yet determined animal" as the only true constant of the human species and made it the basis of his "philosophical anthropology". According to him, man is almost infinitely plastic, and this enables him to survive under the most diverse, radically different technical, cultural and political conditions. This does not mean, however, that any arbitrary combination of social conditions leads to a humane coexistence and a good order. In particular, he argues, stable institutions and moral frameworks are essential for a good order.

One could focus Gehlen's ideal of society on a guiding concept, which he himself does not use, without shortening it or even raping it: that of normality. Normality is the systemic coherence of an equally humane and functional order.

9. The "New Normal" as Dehumanized Totalitarianism

It is evident that the totalitarian dictum of a "New Normal" that has begun to take hold of the world as of the year 2020 radically contradicts this ideal of being human.

The human being of the Third Millennium today faces a truly epochal challenge. After the "old values" have proved to be mere empty words without an objectifiable purpose and the "new values" have proved to be a Trojan horse, the question arises as to the principle of integration of a good society of the future. The dilemma is that the supposed poles of opposition - complete libertinage and unconditional central control - seem to be gaining equal real presence and effect in the dynamics of the New World Order, so that the mondiale society is apparently heading for a radically amoral technofascism.

Is there any hope of salvation from the aforementioned dilemma and the threat of universal totalitarianism?

The danger of a world coming apart at the seams has been repeatedly addressed by great thinkers of the past, each offering specific answers to this problem. Let us mention here only two thinkers who can be connected under the title "community through wholeness": Othmar Spann and Karl Polany, whereby the practical shaping of the problem solution would have to take place with the one by re-establishment of a spiritually founded organic community order, with the other by a secular-socialistic re-integration of the people who have become egoistic.

One experience from the millennia-old political history of mankind has proven to be reliable especially in the very last phase of the "great transformation" currently taking place: No permanently effective social and political order is based solely on rational discourse, objective consensus and planning design by the population collective. All effective state or quasi-state structures, on the other hand, are rooted in a religious or quasi-religious conception of God - from the medieval "state of God" to the divine grace of absolutist monarchy and the party religions of the 20th century to the mondial superstate structure of the Corona religion.

10. The foundation of a value-rich society

Admittedly, it is essential what kind of faith characterizes the respective state. And although personal religiosity should remain a private matter, at least the image of man of the Christian Occidental cultural tradition seems to be a constant, for whose general acceptance it is worth fighting chivalrously.

Here we come back to the starting point of this essay: It is not just any values, not any arbitrary values, on whose root foundation the state order of the future should be built, but those values which result from the fact that man is regarded as the image of God. And these are unalterably freedom, justice and human dignity.

This foundation of values is, on the one hand, humane and, on the other hand, enables the necessary plasticity for the formation of a society of free people under the conditions of a strong technological dynamic.

Liberation from the totalitarian dictates of the "new normal" will not take care of itself. It requires intellectual commitment, agitational professionalism and the ability, sufficient creativity and determination for the formation of new constitutional and institutional frameworks. If, in the course of this, it is possible to free the concept of value from its indeterminacy, even arbitrariness, it shall be right to work on a value-filled society of the future.

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** The author: Mag. Christian Zeitz is Scientific Director of the Institute for Applied Political Economy IAPÖ in Vienna.