

CONTEMPORARY NOMADISM AND REVIVAL OF COMMUNITY LIFE

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ABSTRACT

The text focuses on the problem of contemporary nomadism, which can be observed in a variety of forms in our culture and everyday life too, in its relation to the revival of cultural life. It aims at introducing causes, sources, representation, forms, and consequences of contemporary nomadism in our culture. We shall combine the contemporary representation of nomadism and pay our attention to new forms of community life, which have their base in the fellowship, rootedness and self-fulfilment of individuals. The text deals also with the new communicative concept of community, which is dynamic, creative and innovative. The community will be understood as an open phenomenon that is oriented not only to its preservation but also to its creation and reproduction, which is willingly constructed within the process of social communication.

***Keywords:** contemporary nomadism, real and digital nomadism, community, forms of communitarian life*

INTRODUCTION

Nomadism as a movement, traveling, migration is perceived as a contemporary phenomenon in its many manifestations, contexts, and forms of our present-day life. M. Maffesoli [3] writes about it as about the time of the mass exodus, which stands against identic certainties or institutional security and which starts new, adventurous journeys of the new initiation quest whose contours are still not precisely bordered. According to him, the postmodern man is soaked with rambling to the core [3]. Postmodern tribalism accentuates, for better or worse, the decline of homogenous society and rambling urges draw the attention to impermanence of all things. That is why we become travelers constantly looking for some other places or explorers of the ancient worlds that are still worthy of discovering.

In history as well as in contemporary times, peregrination has had a great social and religious importance. From a social point of view, it fostered amalgamation and cohesion among people. Peregrination was a kind of adventure that brought a chance to acquaint with other cultures, religions, traditions and customs [2]. People became travellers, pilgrims, seekers, those who are purified (therapy), initiated, passing some existential test and, etc.

In present times, there exist new forms of mysticism that resemble certain nomadic structures like the existential approach or manner of thinking that is open to otherness, to the mysterious and unknown. Contact with a stranger and foreigner along with the related ambiguity and multiculturalism enrich our knowledge. It opens the door for various references and forces us to reach plenitude, which rationalism or positivism cannot give us. Nomadism is becoming a symptom of the present times. Today, a nomad is not bound to an identity, borders or domicile.

This phenomenon can be seen in our everyday life where it creates various contradictory opinions and reactions because along with the real level, contemporary nomadism is performed also in the virtual sphere and its impact on an individual's life cannot be measured so far. Here are mostly changes of values and value systems, influence on the way of life and lifestyle of people, brain drain, the arrival of new workers and their connection to the revival of community life whose importance is currently growing and getting new forms that correspond with the postmodern way of life.

Problems of the contemporary situation in our postmodern society as well as paradoxes of these times, which create grounds for the revitalisation of nomadism while they are becoming impulses for the revival of community life, lead our attention to this phenomenon. On the one hand-side, contemporary people have been closed inside themselves, in their personal space, which is constantly formed and where belong the area around their permanent address, their family and work. People are exposed to a variety of measures leading to stabilization of their manners, suppression of their passions, individualities due to collective goals, their manners are being moralized. On the other hand side, this era is the time of scepticism against strong political systems, theories, rigid ideas about society and her evolution. It is characterized by hyper-consumption and its negative impacts. Although material richness has become the long-coveted ideal, poverty is being publicly exposed and discussed at the same time. Consequences of the world globalisation, of scientific and technical development, indirect consumption, disciplining of the body and violence against people can be observed in a human, who becomes amorphic, as well as in his/her concepts and living experiences that are becoming uniformed. Everything is happening in the era of ceaseless changes of everyday reality and the globalized world. It is the time of new challenges and dangers by outcomes of scientific–technical progress. People wish to live active lives according to their desires and their wish to share collectively their religious, spiritual, and emotional experience grows interdepend.

CONTEMPORARY NOMADISM

M. Maffesoli sees contemporary nomadism in current mobility that can have many reasons: there belongs work migration, consumer migration, seasonal migration, which is tourism and travelling, and then there is social mobility or mass migration caused by economic imbalance. We see contemporary nomadism,

which established in the Slovak society at the end of the 20th century as a theoretical problem, and forms of practical realization of an individual's life in several contexts. It can be a return of something essential, deeply rooted in our core (human and social too), something that represents an anthropological constant that impacts our lives with all their aspects. It is also a principle that is not solely a personal approach but also a manifestation of 'a collective unconsciousness'. Nomadism is an initiation approach, which is the least personal approach of all. We are experiencing the presence of a certain 'collective unconsciousness' [3]. This opens the theme of rehabilitation of community life in present times.

On the one hand side, nomadism expresses also personal plurality as it stands for a revolt against permanence, closeness and prevailing stereotypes in the working, private, individual and collective spheres of human life, while, on the other hand, it represents wishes (of an individual and society too) for the transcendental. M. Maffesoli writes that a desire for infinity hides in the soul of each person and society as the whole. It is necessary to remind that what is anomic today, in its anarchic power can create a base for something that will become canonic tomorrow [3].

As an existential approach or way of thinking and acting, nomadism is manifested on two basic levels – in the real-time and in the digital time, via modern media: electronic nets, television, informative streams. These all enable to share collectively variety of cultural, scientific, sexual and religious experiences in the real-time, *and they characterise existential* adventures. Although possibilities of 'cyberspace' are not half exhausted, they indicate cultural enrichment that is always connected with mobility and circulation [3, 2002, 35]. Nomadism becomes a kind of therapy, healing of soul and also a kind of self-fulfilment of people. And finally, peregrination is an urge that drives us to another individual and a reason for re-evaluation of relations towards one's home-place [5].

Nowadays, contrary to Apollonian values (harmony, consonance, order, rationality, logics), we can observe a return of Dionysian attributes (urges, change, incertitude, sensual perception, fulfilment) and speak about 'nomadism of passions'. We refuse domestication of passions and moralisation of behaviour (which were characteristic for modernism) and while looking for delight we do not concentrate solely on the goal, which is necessary to reach, but paradoxically, we foreground the idea of peregrination as the follow up of intensive moments. Nowadays, the bliss becomes a way of self-expressing, it is connected with measures for 'vita simplex'. The pleasure from life invokes circulation of goods, emotions, communication and that is why communities last. By its circulation, an individual asocial pleasure resembles that this world is a place where we are supposed to live despite its problems and imperfections and therefore we have to appreciate it. Just like the world, also bliss is temporary and this is the origin of measures to get from it as much as possible. This temporality is also the source of

shame and pursuing that it causes, as well as the aspect of everlasting quest for delight [3].

COMMUNITY

Community (lat. *communitas*) refers to a society, social structure, or sense for society. It is a core form of coexistence with other people. The community is formed on the grounds of kinship and other natural and spontaneous bonds (personal relationships), or on the basis of rationality, articles of partnership or social agreement. The need of the community is connected with the human need of a home, with the need to belong somewhere, to have some familiar environment, own world, close friends as one's support. Therefore, coexistence with another person or with more people shows more values than only safety and a feeling of intimate closeness.

E. Visnovsky writes that community is more than a commonplace of living of a group of people, institutions, or a common organisation of everyday life and shared experience. It is also a shared cultural identity, shared symbolism, values, meanings, desires and certitudes, participation, loyalty, solidarity and commitments.“ [5]. Z. Bauman emphasizes the positive feeling from the community when he writes that the community is a warm, cosy and pleasant place [1]. The community becomes a place, space, where everything included becomes known and close to us. The human longing for a public home does not necessarily mean longing for incorporation, ties, unity and consolidation with others. Neither it is about one's passive adaptation or subordination.

The community can provide enough space for self-expression and self – development of its members, for plurality and heterogeneity of their forms of life and it also can create necessary conditions for its creation as vital organism. The aim of community is a good life of each of its members. Its members mutually share what they create for one another. We shall regard the community as the aim of social life, it provides ‚the worm of public home’ to its members, and as an instrument of its endeavour – it provides the best place for their development. E. Visnovsky describes the contemporary community as a society of individuals that contains a rich variety of individual forms of life [1]. These forms are capable of mutual communication and can enrich themselves as well as contribute to the creation of a unique corpus. Such community cannot exist without creating public space for real individuality, for unique and creative self, and vice versa.

NOMADISM AND NEW FORMS OF COMMUNITY LIFE

Nowadays, new forms of community life are being formed on the grounds of commonly shared emotions, feelings, ecstatic elations from the presence and from the life that is going on ‚here and now. These communities are called ‘emotional by M. Maffesoli [3]. Their core is formed by fellowship, rootedness, and self-fulfilment of individuals. These attributes characterize a new understanding of the

community, so-called ‘communicative community’ that is defined by J. Habermas in his theory of communicative acting [4]. Such a community is dynamic, creative and innovative. Its base dwells on social communication and social acting. Its aim is not only to keep itself alive but also to create and reproduce itself. This community is constructed *ex voluntate*, in the process of social communication.

Communicative community rise in the process of change in which an individual self (I) is transformed into the collective (We), which is an outcome of individual participation in the commonly shared experience and emotions with other people. After such a processes, the collective self is connected with something higher, universal like, for example, nature, deity or so on. Everything is happening in the spirit of return to real values like fellowship, solidarity, love, truth and fidelity. M. Maffesoli explains that considering the rhythm of life of the community, moments of emotional accord among its members, when all of them merge into a common identic vibration have immense importance [3]. In his opinion, natural postmodern fellowship is based on *the natural organic will* that becomes the base of natural relationships among people that are kinships, friendships, relations with neighbours and others. Mutual comprehension among members of the community is based on intimate personal bonds and this intimacy is performed in small groups with similar interests. Each person needs to belong somewhere.

Nowadays, we can observe a return to grand social events that are organized on the level of families and interest groups (weddings, graduation, baptism, or funeral feasts) and that in their implicit function resemble medieval carnivals and rituals that were performed as celebrations of life. Their actual function is almost similar. They rehabilitate our craving for life and give structure to our public life. The revival of community life has its traditional and non-traditional forms. New forms of communities appear as outcomes of several new factors. Among the most significant ones are mass tourism, music concerts, shopping in hypermarkets or rise of various interest groups on social media. However, we should include also groups that while pursuing their everyday routine meet for example in parks, sitting there on a regular base (au-pairs, pensioners, bodybuilders) or meet during their holidays in camps, and so on. Those places and interests connect people, enable them to experience similar events, emotions, experiences. And that is how hyper-consumerism with participative and affective dimensions of contemporary consumption are manifested.

CONCLUSION

Contemporary nomadism betrays usual expectations that are traditionally associated with the meaning of the notion of nomad. Contemporary nomads usually live in cities, use social media and travel not only physically but also virtually in cyberspace. In the hypermodern society we live in nowadays, consumption is frequently understood as mental doping, hunger for adventure and also as a way of self-recovery of man. Present-day ‘homo consumer’ appears

more than ever as 'homo ludens' because he longs for other people's company, for sharing emotions, experiences and events with them. The common or shared becomes his/her target and provides expected satisfaction. Nomadism becomes a way of life that enables to combine these two contradictory requirements: the one that is individualistic in its core and the other which is collectivistic. Individualistic desires lead people to choose their communities according to their inner needs, interests and opinions. That is why they are surrounded by people who expect almost the same, those, whom they can mutually share their experiences, impressions and emotions with. Nomadism brought a revival of communitarian forms into human life.

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