GLOBAL AND PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION FOR EMPATHIC CIVILISATION: THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PSYCHOCULTURES

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SUMMARY

This article draws attention to the relationship between neuroethics, neuropolitics, political psycho-cultures and public and global mental health. In the hegemonic culture of neoliberalism the purpose of life has been reduced to the self-realization in economic and consumerism terms that promotes the hypercompetitive narcissistic or manic self, indifferent to the fate and suffering of others and accommodated to commodification of morals, mental health and well-being. The real public and global mental health promotion is strongly associated with creating a more empathic, less selfish individual and collective mind where people put a greater emphasis on common interests and bioethical values.

Key words: *public mental health - global mental health - political psycho-cultures - clash of civilizations - empathic civilization*

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"Empathy is integral to solving conflict in family, schoolyard, boardroom and war room. The ability to take the perspective of another, to identify commonalities through our shared feeling, is the best peace pill we have… Although we may have the science to solve the issues of environment, for example, if we don't care about people downstream who we don't see or know, we won't have the motivation to apply that science"

Mary Gordon 2005

Psychiatry today is a broad interdisciplinary field of disparate discourses, different practice and various languages (Jakovljevic et al. 2010) which are spoken and practiced in the name of patients care and personal recovery, good mental health and well-being, personal growth and quality of life (Jakovljevic 2012). In increasingly globalized and multicultural societies, empathy, dialogue, respect and trust are fundamental for reversal of vicious circles into virtuous circles of virtues of the public and global mental health promotion. The real public and global mental health promotion is strongly associated with creating a more empathic, less selfish psycho-culture, the culture of individual and collective mind where people put a greater emphasis on common interests and bioethical values. The empathy initiatives like The Empathy Community Circle (ECC) model are an essential strategy to kickstart and underpin a cultural shift from the damaging hyper-individualism that has plagued the 20th century towards a greater emphasis on collective identities and humanistic values in the 21st century (Krznaric 2015). The end result of the ECC is to „increases community feeling & identity, boosts wellbeing and environmental concern, deepens democratic culture promoting the public over private self and immunize against consumerism with 'belonging' rather than 'buying' and shifting balance between intrinsic and extrinsic values" (Krznaric 2015).

Public and global mental health including both the promotion of mental health and the prevention of mental disorders are inseparable from politics and politicians. For example, during the Cold War Western countries considered that promotion of mental health is best seen as an increase of the value that people give to their mental health, in the Eastern bloc the promotion of mental health meant a decrease of the prevalence and incidence of mental disorders (Sartorius 2014). A new interesting example is that empathy has become something of a political buzzword. There is an increasing concern for the alarming decline of empathy in society today. According to president Barack Obama, the „empathy deficit" is a more pressing political problem for USA than the federal deficit. Some research indicates that empathy levels have dropped nearly 50% in the US over the past 30 years. Interestingly enough, the steepest decline was recorded in the past ten years. The „empathy deficit" may be related to „the growing narcissism and the narcissism epidemic in American culture" (Twenge & Campbell 2009) and „the era of de-civilization which refers to the process of reducing the amount of care that society provides to its most vulnerable members" (Sartorius 2009) as well as accepting the authority of moral principles over ethical principles (Sartorius 2000). We live in a world of increasing divisions and violence where more than a billion people lack sufficient shelter, food, clean water and medicine, where cultures, nations and states clash and war, where acts of terrorism and political corruption seem normal and ordinary. Furthermore, we also live „in a contracting society where traditional values are undermined as we rely increasingly on the authority of legalistic contracts and less on trust, promises, and long term covenants (Sugarman 2015). However, according to

Poznan Declaration (September 26, 2014) large parts of the world's population live under various degrees of corrupt public authorities and the lives under such conditions are far more likely to be 'solitary, poor, brutish, nasty and short' (cf Hobbes 1651)". In increasingly globalized and multicultural societies it is likely that impartial and non-discriminatory institutions and education help to contribute to the promotion of universal basic values, ethical behavior and public as well as global mental health. „A society will be better off where a large share of the population can be described as *homo reciprocans*, motivated by the desire to be cooperative and to improve their environments, or *homo empathicus*, driven by their empathy for the strife of others. Rather than where a large share acts as the strictly rational utility maximizer, *homo economicus*. Accordingly, an increase in the proportion of the two former and decrease of the latter… with training in anti-corruption, ethical and impartial thinking, it is possible that social trust and social capital will be promoted, leading to a virtuous circle, from which national health and development stands to benefit" (Poznan Declaration 2014).

The rise of public and global mental health as fields of engagement and research has given new form to fundamental questions about how mental health, social sufferings and psychiatric disorders vary across cultures, states and globalizing world war and peace, questions about the politics of pathologization, normal pathology and pathological normality, criminalization and treatment of specific forms of behaviors, experience and mental disorder as well as about ethical challenges related to them. Psychiatry as a medical discipline limits itself to the study and treatment of the psychopathology in the individual and induced madness in smaller groups, excluding collective psychopathology from both theory and practice. Narcissism, paranoid, manic and depressive disorders and nihilism do not solely pose as the components of an individual psychopathology, but also as political, mental and cultural phenomena associated with the games of power. It appears that there is a bit of truth behind the statement made by Friedrich Nietzsche that reads as follows: „Individuals are rarely mad – but when it comes to groups, parties, nations or times, madness is there by rule". The reasons behind the willingness of a highly cultured nation to „throw itself on the mercy of gangs composed of demonic fools that plan to enslave the entire world", as Dietrich Schwanitz (1999) said, and the answer to the question whether, in the process of building socialistic/communistic empires offering false freedoms, false democracies and false humanism, revolutions really had to divulge millions of their kids, are highly intriguing topics of public mental health that should be addressed by psychiatry, as well. Equally intriguing is the question how a highly moral social environment could allow for a holocaust (Vetlesen 2014); within this context, the author refers to the Hitler's statement that reads as follows: "How very useful is for a sovereign to have subjects that lack a mind of their own"

(see Vetlesen 2014). Public and global mental health sciences and disciplines could substantially contribute to the shaping of a healthy, fair and welfare societies and empathic and humanistic civilization.

Public mental health and political psycho-cultures

Public mental health is strongly associated with the concept of political psycho-cultures and collective mental models and mentalities. The concept of political cultures of collective mind/self is underpinned by systemic psychodynamics (Gould et al. 2001) and its application to social, political and organizational phenomena. Systemic psychodynamics explores the way in which emotional needs of individuals, groups, communities and societies shape cultures, structures and processes going on within a social system and *vice versa*, i.e. the way in which cultures, structures and processes affect emotional needs (Stein 2011). Political psycho-cultures represent the ideal, emotional and moral surrounding that determine and shape our understanding of what is politically correct, acceptable or unacceptable, desirable or undesirable, worthy of admiration, repulsive, and how power and welfare should be distributed. They define the standards of our political behavior and gives form not only to our emotional reactions and cognition, but also to our identity as an individual, group, community, and civilization. Specifically, psycho-cultures primarily exist that people can achieve together what they cannot alone; this process results in the forming various group and collective identities. Our political, social and economic identities can be narrower or wider, and be expressed through an "us and them" conceptual orientation, where "the others" may be defined or perceived with various degrees of likeness, trust and respect, either as friends, rivals, or enemies. The four fundamental dimensions of a psycho-culture or collective mentality are as follows: 1. the belief system that guides ideas about the oneself and the others, us and them (OK corral), about human identity, human life, human rights, and human frailty; 2. the attitude towards power, purpose, justice, truth, love, freedom and happiness; 3. the advocacy of a specific ideology and attitude towards other ideologies; and 4. the level of empathy, compassion, altruism, democracy and humanism. Nowadays, we distinguish generally speaking between the culture of life and good, and the culture of death and evil.

Culture (from Latin *colere* – cultivate, foster, nourish) represents an integrated system of education, knowledge, art, worldview, attitudes, beliefs and behavioral patterns typical of the members of certain society, which does not come as a result of bio-heredity, but rather as a social product created, transferred and maintained through communication channels and learning processes. According the "4 I's cultural model" (Markus & Conner 2013), a cultural cycle (the mutually constitutive nature of culture, individual and self) has for layers: individuals (individualistic vs. collectivistic

cultures), interactions (empathic vs. selfish cultures, inter-cultural vs. ethno-cultural empathy), institutions (state institutions vs. civic NGO) and ideas (left vs. right, democratic vs. non-democratic ideologies). We become cultured through training in various activities, such as customs, arts, ways of interacting with people, and the use of technologies, and the learning of ideas, beliefs, shared visions and philosophies, and religion. Culture is both a social and a psychological product, since, in its nature, a human being represents a political being, a „*zoon politikon*" as Aristotle used to say, a social being that can truly realize himself/herself only within a political community. It is the way of life and communication of a particular group of people or human society at a particular time. According to some, a culture represents a collective brain programming, the neural transmission of beliefs, values, mores and laws, responsible for the differences between members of various communities. Culture is not just produced by the brain; it is also by definition a series of activities to shape the brain/mind related to neuronal plasticity. Culture and individuals mutually shape each other. Political culture is defined as a pool of attitudes, beliefs and behavioral patterns, which pose as the determinants of political processes and values, as well as the regulators of behaviors exercised within the frame of a certain political regime. Psycho-culture or culture of mind is related to the cultivation of soul (*cultura animi*) mentioned by Cicero as early as in the ancient times, as well as to the development and refinement of noble virtues, but also the shaping of a collective mind or ideology. Put in other words, psycho-culture is associated with concerns as to how to develop a healthy personality and maintain mental health, i.e. how to raise healthy individuals capable of developing a healthy, good and happy society of wellbeing. Just like each and every society, which is always driven by its governing ideology that guides its social and political processes, each and every individual has own ideology, or frame of reference i.e. the system of values and life orientations that guides him/her throughout a lifetime and determines his/her behavior that, in time, turns into habits that eventually become one's character or mental model. According to Senge (2006) mental models are deeply ingrained assumptions, beliefs, generalizations, or pictures and visions that influence how we understand the world and how we operate in the world and create our narratives and life stories. From the psychological standpoint, mental models can be divided into individual and collective ones. A mental model that includes our way of perceiving ourselves, others and the world around us, has a substantial impact on our behavior throughout both personal and political life. Two people with different mental models can observe the same event and describe it differently (Senge 2006). A mental model includes beliefs about the functioning of the world (the facts of life), as well as values that mirror ideological, moral and ethical principles. Unlike the facts of life that are evidence-based, values come as

a result of an individual, group or collective judgement and visions. When people with similar mental models truly share a political vision they are connected in the political psycho-culture and bound together by common aspirations and goals.

Various political cultures are associated with various political philosophies and ideologies (e.g. liberalism, conservatism, socialism, nationalism, anarchism, fascism, feminism, ecologism, religious fundamentalism and multiculturalism). An ideology represents a more or less coherent system of ideas that shape policies and political actions devoted to preservation, adjustment or radical changing of the existent power-exercising system. Therefore, any given ideology includes the following three dimensions: assessment or critics of the existent social status, the vision of the society to be created, and a theory as to how to introduce political changes. Ideologies can roughly be divided into left-oriented ideologies proclaiming the principles of freedom, equity, fraternity and progress ("hard" left orientation: communism and anarchism; "soft" left orientation: socialism and contemporary liberalism), right-oriented ideologies that promote the principles of supreme authority, order, hierarchy, duties and responsibilities ("hard" right orientation: fascism; "soft" right orientation: conservatism) and center-based ideologies (classical liberalism). Namely, an important dimension of our lives is that we do not live in the material world only, but also in the world of various ideas and ideological systems. Regardless of their nature (philosophic, political, artistic, science-based, religious, or else), ideas not only mirror, but shape the world we live in and the lives we live. Furthermore, ideas are born and shaped in our brain and get to be realized through it, but, in turn, also shape that very brain. Ideas shape our individual, group and community-based identity, as well. Political ideas do not merely reflect interests of certain political groups and one's own ambitions, they also inspire and guide political actions and therefore shape not only social environments, but the material world, too (Heywood 2007). In a certain sense of meaning, political ideologies represent social cement that binds not only certain social groups or classes, but also the society on the whole by virtue of bonding values and beliefs, so that they also play an important role in political and cultural identities' shaping. From public and global mental health perspective one can speak about narcissistic, paranoid, manic, depressive, nihilistic and humanistic ideologies and psycho-cultures.

A highly challenging issue here is to what extent are individual ideologies moral, and to what extent are they ethical. According to Sartorius (2000), anything desirable and acceptable by a certain community is perceived as moral, while the term "ethical" refers to universal, global human values applicable to each and every human being, i.e. to the entire human race. Civilized societies accept the superiority of ethical principles over moral norms, increasing thereby their social capital that represents an important constituent of

a healthy society (Sartorius 2010). Promotion of moral behavior aims to encourage whatever is good for, and to eliminate whatever is bad for, a certain community. The perception of "good" can substantially vary across communities, the true issue therein being the promotion of something unethical and malicious that harms the others. In such cases, it is justified to use the term "psychopathology" of both ideas and ideologies. Politics is a synonym of power, its real-life manifestation most commonly being an activity targeted at driving the behavior of others to the end of attainment of one's own goals and fulfillment of one's own interests. Ethics of a given politics is adjudicated on the basis of degree of harmonization and overlapping of goals set out by, and the outputs of, the politics in reference with overall interests of, and overall benefit for, the society and civilization.

The sense of superiority and narcissistic political psycho-culture

Narcissism (a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, self-overestimation, need for admiration, and lack of empathy) is a severe moral disorder that affects not only narcissistic individuals, but also, in an ever increasing manner, the society we live in. Narcissism is spread so wide that it is safe to discuss the domination of the narcissistic psychological and political culture of governing elites. Put in other words, narcissism does not represent only an individual pathology, but also an important contemporary social and cultural phenomenon; within this context, healthy narcissism should be distinguished from an unhealthy one. Narcissistic psycho-culture includes the cognition of superiority (basically, the belief that "we are OK since we are better/more important than the others"), self-satisfaction, lack of empathy and an exalted affectedness ("others exist in this world only to admire us and approve of us"), egoistic motivation ("others exist in this world only to satisfy our needs"), as well as double moral standards and egocentric and autocratic behavior aiming at abuse and subordination of others. The "narcissism epidemic" is an issue discussed ever more frequently, with the awareness that the number of covert and huge narcissists is steadily increasing. Many are of the opinion that we live in times of arrogance, narcissism, hedonism and relativism, operating on the key words like money, success, fame and glamour, while culture has shifted focus to self-admiration and self-absorption (Twenge & Campbell 2009). Since the year 1980, the representation of narcissistic personal features among US students has allegedly witnessed rise comparable to that of obesity. In 2006, 1 out of 4 students fulfilled the criteria for narcissistic personality disorder (Twenge & Campbell 2009). According to one study, American students have estimated that, on the average, not more than 32% of their peers as superior over them, while their Japanese counterparts estimated that for 50.2% of their peers (Marmot 2007). Our public

life is crowded with public figures, businessmen, politicians and leaders that flaunt their greatness and brag about it, while mobs seem to eagerly await the chance to mimic such vane glamour and tend to project their own need for an ultimate power into such figures.

The narcissism epidemic has been explained by the encouragement of consumer mentality, as well as by materialistic philosophy, idolatry, changes in ways children are brought up, the influence of media, easy access to credits and credit cards, etc. Vane, greedy and manipulative individuals that think of themselves as better, more important and superior over the common interest have always existed in this world. In our social life, self-absorption and focusing solely on one's own needs and interests, radical egoistic hedonism, individualism, shamelessness, self-confidence at the verge of pompousness and disdain, ruthless competition, envy, and extravagancy lacking any common decency, have reached massive proportions. The feeling of shame seems to have perished; it is perceived as a sign of weakness that a narcissist, who thinks of himself/herself as flawless, simply cannot afford. The lack of respect for others mirrors the cessation of existence of authorities and traditional human values. Narcissists are the champions of egoism and selfishness, expect unanimous respect, admiration and approval of others, but fail to provide the same in turn. Deeply convinced that they are capable of doing, and allowed to do, anything they like, they manage to exercise that "right" merely by creating a desired, in most cases warped picture of themselves for a public. This distorted public image that allows them to operate under false pretenses represents one of the pillars of their power, made possible through media control. In mass media, the reality is distorted to such an extent that many people end up wondering whom they can trust. In our narcissistic political and public amusement park, the games of power have become the dominant social amusement. People get more and more alienated, not only from each other, but from their selves, as well. As a result, it appears that we get more and more puzzled in distinguishing right from wrong, so that many people find it very hard to function properly in the contemporary narcissistic society. In view of the foregoing, it has become necessary to continuously draw attention to the true, indefinite and higher human values and to clarify certain issues that fall within the realm of morality, moral psychology and ethics.

Victims of own success and power: the superbia syndrome

The superbia syndrome (Hubris syndrome, Hubris Nemesis syndrome, Babilon syndrome) manifests itself in various ways. Hubris syndrome, a form of the superbia syndrome, describes a pathological intoxication with power or success when a mighty person bloated with an unleashed pride and self-confidence, treats others in an arrogant and depreciating manner (Owen 2011, Russel 2011). The pattern behind this arrogance syndrome was recognized as early as in the ancient Greece: A hero

becomes glorious and is celebrated for his success despite all odds. In the subsequent course, such an experience gets the best of him so that he starts to treat others, that is to say, commoners and mortals, with contempt and disrespect, and eventually becomes so self-confident that he starts to think that he can do anything he likes. An excessive self-confidence and the feeling of ultimate power lead to the distorted perception and interpretation of the world and initiate wrong actions. Eventually, Nemesis, the goddess of vengeance, emerges on the scene and avenges the wronged, since the hero defies reality defined by gods and thinks of him as a superior being that possesses powers close to divine. The gods of reality demand humbleness. According to the Pope Gregory the Great, superbia (pride, arrogance) should be viewed as "the queen of sin", "the root of all evil" and the commencement of any given sin, and comes down to false glorification of oneself and the perception of oneself as the center the world is spinning around (Glazier & Hellwig 2005). This should by all means be distinguished from a healthy self-respect and true pride of being a creature created "in the image and likeness of God". Arrogance goes hand in hand with vanity or clouded judgement of oneself and own achievements, which can be mirrored in one's striving to prove his/her eminence or get an approval of others (Glazier & Hellwig 2005). Arrogance dazzles us and prevents us from seeing the truth that can help us to become better, happier and more successful, and is almost always associated with self-perception of superiority and the superiority complex disorder. Within this context, it is interesting to quote the conversation about arrogance, power and force, led between the Pope Francis and the Rabin Abraham Skórka (Bergoglio & Skorka 2013). According to the Talmud, Nimrod, the ruler of Babylonia, imposed upon his subjects the construction of a sky-high tower so as to leave his mark, hence striving, with a certain arrogance, to get closer to God; in the process, he was less bothered by the destiny of unfortunate workers who fell off during construction than with the loss of bricks (Rabin Abraham Skórka). In other words, the purpose of the tower construction was not the wellbeing of his subjects and the benefit of the mankind, but rather own success. "To be able to get closer to God, one has to be devoted to his/her fellow humans" (Rabin Abraham Skórka). When an individual climbs so high on a social scale, it becomes dubious whether he/she is still capable of reasonable behavior, since he/she detaches from reality. "When a man becomes arrogant, he creates a monster that can unleash at any given point" … „Anyone who thinks that power means imposing one's own will is sorely wrong" (Jorge Bergoglio), since the exertion of force driven by violence eventually induces a counter-strike. Power stands for something originally meant to be to the benefit of others, and therefore attracts people just like any attracting force.

Hubris syndrome is a serious problem from the public and global mental health perspective. We are all dependent upon the good judgement and decisions of our political leaders, particularly at times of crisis and war. As violence reflects thirst for wealth and power, hubris syndrome is usually associated with violent behavior. The dictators like Stalin, Mao Tse Tung, Adolph Hitler, Idi Amin, and Saddam Hussein were suffering from a superiority complex or hubris syndrome. Restraining of arrogant behaviors and hubris syndrome generally in society, particularly in business, political and military field, is closely related to the protecting pro-social behavior, public benefit and safety of our civilization (Jakovljevic 2011).

Collective demoralization and depressive political psycho-culture

Depression represents an individual or a collective moral breakdown characterized with the lack of meaning, hope, self-confidence, determination and satisfaction with one's standing. It can be a sign of personal or collective crisis, an individual psycho-pathological occurrence and a sign of depressive disorder, but also a collective psycho-political phenomenon tagged as a depressing political culture. Depression is a disorder typical of our time and appears to be ever more increasing. According to some opinion, the reasons behind this should be partly sought in collective demoralization and the fact that many people are in conflict with socio-cultural settings they are unable to cope with. Depression is a medical term that stands for a certain condition, while the state of depression and dejection represent an integral part of human lives. Depressed and demoralized persons are often overwhelmed with worries and negative and unhappy thoughts. They are pessimistic about their future, dissatisfied with their current standing, always questioning the possibility of favorable developments and always awaiting the worst case scenario. They are fully unaware of their pessimism and perceive themselves as merely realistic. When depression and dejection are manifested in political life of a certain community, such settings are described as depressive or depressing political culture that may also arise in response to narcissistic or paranoid political culture of the governing elite.

Depressive political culture includes negative cognition (in essence, the belief that "we are far from being OK, we are actually weak and incompetent, while others are far better, far more competent and far stronger than us", that is to say, pessimistic and fatalistic mindset and the lack of self-esteem), negative affectedness (frequent bad moods, disappointment, the feeling of helplessness and hopelessness, dejection), negative motivation (lack of interests, lack of inspiration, lack of energy, lack of ideals, withdrawal) and inappropriate behavior (playing the role of victim, passivity, passive-aggressive behavior, auto-destructive behavior). What actually stands in the very heart of passive-aggressive behavior is a suppressed rage that, if accumulated, might lead to mutiny and an aggressive explosion of violence. Persons

suffering from anxiety (avoidance-based) and addictive personality disorders are prone to depressive political culture.

Omnipotence, spectacle and false happiness: manic political psycho-culture

Each era is characterized with mental deviations and challenges typical of the time. At the time Sigmund Freud was born and practiced, hysterical symptoms were far more common than today. Our time, on the other hand, witnesses rise in the representation of bipolar disorder, formerly known as manic-depressive psychosis. According to some sources, the incidence of bipolar disorder manifested in manic and depressive episodes have risen from 1% to 5% when it comes to the US. Impartial differentiation between some phenomena, e.g. self-confidence, self-awareness, joy of life and the pleasure of self-confirmation, from triumphalism and aggressiveness towards others and at the expense of others, is sometimes rendered difficult. Two thirds of people suffering from bipolar disorder appear not to be substantially affected in their professional lives, so that these lives remain productive and fulfilled. Our time is the time of rapid changes, huge ups and downs both in professional and private lives, the time of spectacle, hedonism, various performances, hyperactivity and multiple roles, euphoria and tragedies associated with wars, terrorism and climate changes, all of that sometimes seeming close to collective mania and bipolar life scenario. Therefore, it becomes hard to distinguish a bipolar disorder from a common lifestyle and to set clear boundaries between normal and abnormal, so that some authors even talk about the manic culture (Stein 2011). The features of manic psycho-culture are manic defenses, fastening of a life rhythm, desire for hedonism, hyperactivity and hyper-production, and spectacularity (Rudan et al. 2016).

According to Stein (2011), manic culture that has led to the crediting crisis and economic collapse seen in 2008, comes as a result of triumph the West was overwhelmed with following the downfall of communism. Manic culture is characterized with denial, omnipotence, triumphalism and hyperactivity, the significant role thereby being played by an excessive hubris (Jain 2009) and greed (Tett 2009). Denial is a psychological mechanism of defense used to negate one's vulnerability and challenges to be faced or faced already. Denial usually represents ignoring or an oversight of warning signs or danger alarms. Manic culture refuses to take danger alarms seriously and deal with them in a reasonable, sound way. Omnipotence is a feeling of ultimate power, so that crises and problems are perceived as provocation and challenging of that superiority and ultimate power. Leaders and followers of manic culture are usually blind as to the true motivation of their actions, as well as to the dynamics influencing their behavior. Omnipotence is closely linked to triumphalism, which mirrors in striving to be superior

over others and in the need to win, to be better than other individuals, institutions and cultures, these victories thereby being celebrated in triumphal celebrations, always emphasizing the successes made and demonstrating power and superiority over others. Hyperactivity is actually in function of self-defense from own vulnerability and the thought that something bad could happen.

Manic political culture includes unrealistic, pompously-positive cognition (the core belief thereby being the following: "we are more than just OK, we are supreme, far better, more honest, more deserving, more capable and stronger than others"; it goes hand in hand with optimistic and megalomaniac self-perception, underestimation of danger, vaulting associations, self-overrating). It also includes a high-pitched affectedness (hyperthymia, unrealistic optimism), motivation ("I am powerful, I can do anything", going hand in hand with irritability, hyperergia), inappropriate vaulting behavior (playing the role of savior or persecutor, hyperactivity, proneness to aggressive or irrational behavior, risky behavior).

Egomania - somewhere between narcissism and mania: An adaptive disorder unanimously seen in politicians?

The question that frequently pops up is whether one can be a good, successful politician without being narcissistic, egocentric or egomaniac. To answer that, let's quote Oscar Wilde, who once said: "A red rose cannot be considered selfish simply because of its desire to be a red rose. It would be enormously selfish should it wish for all flowers to be red and to be roses". Egomania is a frequently used term, but still lacks a clear scholastic definition. Similar terms are *egocentrism* (the most extreme form of individualism, within the frame of which a person thinks of himself/herself as the center of the universe, judges everything in view of his/her personal interests, and thinks that everybody sees things, thinks and feels alike; *egoism* (selfishness and putting one's personal interest before the common good); *egolatria* (the cult of the self and self-worshipping); *egotism* (a cruder and more ruthless variant of egoism, an excessive vanity and arrogance, an excessive self-absorption, i.e. preoccupation with own greatness and significance); *egotropy* (self-orientation, narcissism and egocentrism); *egopathy* (an overwhelming perception of own greatness and significance, going hand in hand with the need to depreciate others) – (see Corsini 2002). According to the ENCARTA Glossary (2001), egomania represents "a dangerous obsessive self-preoccupation". The term *egomania* is more frequently used by laymen and media than scholastic literature and professional circles. For instance, Donald Trump is tagged as egomaniac by his critics and opponents. According to some, egomania stands for a narcissistic personality disorder, while other authors distinguish between the two. Literature sources discuss three types of narcissism: 1. grand or malignant narcissism characterized with rage, manipulativeness, crave for

power and over-estimation of one's significance; 2. fragile narcissism characterized with grandness used as a defense mechanism so as to protect oneself from the core feeling of inadequacy, anxiety and loneliness; and 3. exhibitionistic or highly-functional narcissism seen in persons who think of themselves as important, articulated, resolute and outgoing. Egomania can be considered a highly-functional narcissism, a certain type of hyperthymia or hypomania, i.e. a phenomenon standing somewhere between sound narcissism, huge or big ego, and mania. Hyperthymia is a variant of temper that many politicians seem to have: they present themselves as leaders, people of action, bold, resolute, optimistic and determined. However, when power & success crave get the best of them and turn them into excessive narcissistic egocentric and egoistic persons, we consider them egomaniacs. Egomania pathology may vary in its severity. Egomania can be presented as "the dark triad of an agentic style", "a specific triumvirate of personality traits" described by Peter Jonason et al. 2010 (according Dutton 2013). Individuals with "the stratospheric self-esteem of narcissism; the fearlessness, ruthlessness, impulsivity and thrill-seeking of psychopathy; and the deceitfulness and exploitativeness of Machiavellianism" can be very successful in certain situations and social circles. These three traits may over some time give the impression of cool, confident and charismatic person who is fun to be with and may represent a successful reproductive strategy (see Dutton 2013).

The feeling of jeopardy and paranoid political psycho-culture

Paranoid disorder is of the outmost importance both as an individual psychopathological phenomenon and a sign of mental disorder, and as a collective psycho-political phenomenon known as the paranoid political culture. Paranoia and aggressiveness almost always come hand in hand, both when it comes to individual and to collective pathology. A paranoid political culture is unexceptionally associated with conflicts, war and prosecution of those who disagree. The war that took place in former Yugoslavia can be described as the war between paranoid and narcissistic political culture (Jakovljević 1992).

In their book „Paranoia-the twenty first century fear", Freeman & Freeman (2008) claim that 15 to 20 percent of non-psychotic persons often produce paranoid ideas, and that, on top of that, 3-5 percent suffers from a severe paranoia. Non-psychotic paranoid ideas may vary in their intensity and are described as an abortive paranoia, mild paranoia, low-level paranoia, paranoid attitude, or occasional paranoid occurrences. They may be suggestive of so called "normal paranoia", transient paranoid responses and paranoid personality disorder. Medical histories of paranoid persons often uncover unresolved family issues and childhood abuse. Their behavior is characterized with an extreme suspiciousness and over-proneness to see enemies and hostile

behavior everywhere they look, as well as with jealousy, constant questioning of loyalty of their friends, relatives and co-workers, paranoid interpretation of otherwise harmless, banal events, emotional detachment and rigidity, and strong sense of self-importance and self-grandness. Persons of this kind are intolerant, often angry and hostile, have hard times to forgive and are huge grudge-holders. They appear to constantly expect to be mistreated or abused. They are prone to make a mountain out of a molehill and avoid emotional strings and attachments, evoking uneasiness and fear in other people. They are unwilling to confide in anyone and constantly criticize or blame someone for something, even for their own mistakes. They "read between the lines" and are therefore able to "read hidden messages" behind banal events, e.g. that a neighbor has actually got himself/herself a dog just to provoke them. Despite their pronounced sense of self-significance, paranoid persons are easily ashamed, hurt or humiliated. They are convinced that they are highly capable and gifted, even when no memorable results have been achieved; they namely believe that that lack of achievements does not come as a result of their incompetence, but of the fact that they were prevented from realizing their otherwise huge potentials. They are often preoccupied with unfounded explanations of the occurrences in their immediate environment and the world on the whole (proneness to conspiracy theories). One might say: "Isn't it a reasonable response to truly or potentially dangerous world we live in?" Caution is the better part of valor, no doubt, but over-suspiciousness is not recommendable, since it lowers the quality of life and interpersonal relations.

Modern times, the way of life and competitive culture go in favor of paranoid responses and paranoid perception of the world. Paranoia does not boil down to an individual pathology, it is an important social, political and cultural phenomenon of the contemporary world; of note within this context, a sound caution should by all means be distinguished from an abnormal paranoia. A number of public figures, especially those active in political life, plead for suspiciousness about others and those different in any way; they are surrounded by followers and likeminded persons, who eventually help them to split people to "us, the good guys" and "them, the bad guys" Paranoid political culture underpinned by the projection mechanisms and the "enemy/escape gout" concept, represents a highly dangerous moral disorder. This culture includes negative cognition (core belief: "we are OK, but others are not; the world is a dangerous place"), negative affectedness (suspicious mind, frequent sense of danger and jeopardy, dissatisfaction, anger, rage, proneness to hatred), aggressive motivation (strike because of feeling threatened, crave for vengeance) and inappropriate behavior (exaggerated caution, persecution hidden behind the mask of savior, playing a role of defending victim, evoking conflicts). Life is perceived as a battle and the world as a battlefield; the history is made by winners; man is wolf to man; conspiracy is seen everywhere, so

that conspiracy theories are in their prime; no one is to be trusted; everybody grabs whatever one can lay his/her hands on. In an environment of absolute distrust and suspicion, everyone strives to prove his/her loyalty by denunciating others before being denunciated. The cause justifies the means to it; therefore, mass crimes are not uncommon. The essence of this psychopathological political culture is the following belief: "Better get them or they'll get us first. Someone always has to loose; better make sure that we do not end up as losers".

Auto- and hetero-destruction and nihilistic political psycho-culture

To paraphrase the words of Vetlesen (2014), used when discussing the destruction of the Planet Earth and ethics, nihilistic political psycho-culture is "just the right path to collective suicide". According to Friedrich Nietzsche, nihilism means that "the highest values have become worthless" and is "just another word for emptiness and crisis people are thrown into"(see Vetlesen. 2014). In its essence, a nihilistic political culture is a culture of death and includes negative destructive cognition (core belief: "maybe we are not OK, but they are even worse; nothing is OK anymore, but we shall change that at any cost"), negative affectedness (disappointment, anger, rage, hatred), negative motivation (extremism; "they'll get what they deserve, if necessary at the expense of our own death"; vengeance and punishment of the enemy) and inappropriate behavior (playing the role of victim that defends himself/herself in an aggressive manner, hetero- and auto-destructive behavior, terrorism). The pattern of behavior often complies with the following model: "Given the circumstances, it is better to die than to live, but we shall show them first, so that they will perish, too". One believes that he/she heroically sacrifices himself/herself for a greater good and that he/she shall be rewarded in a far more beautiful afterlife. Nihilistic political culture almost unexceptionally goes hand in hand with terroristic activities and the recruitment of suicide (kamikaze) terrorists, the latter making use of special deliriating and brain-washing techniques.

Mutual respect, trust, compassion and solidarity: Cultural evolution to empathic humanistic political psycho-culture

It is patently obvious that we live in a narcissistic-manic mental culture of spectacle, hedonism, marketism and consumerism, pervaded by paranoid and nihilistic culture of terrorism and war. What can be done? Is there still hope for the humanity? What is a desirable, normal political psycho-culture? Is war truly the law of nature? Can we make the world safer by loving our neighbors and enemies? Is world piece, political system based on empathy and global culture of empathy a utopia? Are struggle and killing really the basic laws of nature? Could it really be that a man represents a creature incapable of firmly deciding between right and wrong?

Should any attempt to eliminate wars end up in unsuccessful lamentation, given that people have an inherent need for hatred and destruction? Literature sources answer these questions in a highly contradictory manner. According to Freud and his disciples, altruism is an unhealthy compensation for our desire to harm, a manifestation of masochism. People basically have only two sets of instincts: surviving & mutual bonding instincts and destruction & killing instincts, which are equally important and interlaced, so that it is senseless to expect that belligerent tendencies are possible to eliminate. On the other side, some research clearly shows that children, from infancy, have a sense of fairness, and think that harming others is wrong (Ricard 2015). According to Staguhn (2007) „although found in human nature, war does not represent a universal way in which the nature tends to express itself", nor does it represent "an integral part of the divine plan", as claimed by the Prussic militarist Helmuth von Moltke. It seems that the solution to the problem lies on the bright side of human nature, in attachment, empathy, altruism and cooperativeness that constitute its humanistic code (Beck 2000), i.e. that it lies in the empathic mode of human brain. The overspread view of human beings as slaves to a "selfish gene" has been a self-fulfilling prophecy (de Waal 2009) leading to selfish society. De Waal (2009), primatologist and empathy expert, claims that humans have competing genes, some selfish and aggressive, and others selfless and empathic, which constantly jostling for dominance creates our "bipolar nature". Empathy is social glue that holds humans together which is very important for survival. To empathize means to civilize and humanize, to civilize and humanize means to empathize. With empathizing we see each other's humanity. Empathy leads to healthy, creative, flourishing and well-functioning families, communities, nations, societies and civilizations. Human beings are biologically wired to need connection, attachment, recognition, validation and belonging. Empathy is what enables us to extend our social affiliations and connect with other people in larger social, political, economic and religious units, blocs and cultures. People are encouraged to engage in conflicts and wars by those benefiting from them, so that one should work on developing immunity to warmongers (Staguhn 2007). Vengeance has been claimed to be the very essence of human nature, but it can also be overcome by virtue of forgiveness. Civilization represents an attempt to confine the aggressive and revengeful part of human nature; great religions have made it their mission, too. I quite agree with Olson (2013) that "an ethos of caring is an essential part of what it means to be human and an elemental requirement for human happiness, then empathically impaired societies must be found wanting and challenged". The promotion of a dialogue among civilizations and creation of an empathic humanistic cooperative political culture may contribute to the development of global civilization of love and piece. This knowledge is not new; in his famous book "The art

of war", the great Chinese philosopher and general Sun Tzu pointed out that, similar to the fact that the best treatment is the one that prevents a disease, the best art of war is the one preventing the war, that is to say, the true art of war is defeating the adversary without even engaging in battle. As is the case in politics and any other activity, a war success depends on knowing what to do and where and when to do it, but also on knowing what not to do. "The art of war" is not merely insight into the Chinese ways, the way of doing business included; this ancient book offers a proverbial wisdom that makes it the manual of life (Minford 2009). A good leadership requires five virtues: intelligence, humaneness, trust, courage and stringency. „Should you rely solely on your intelligence, it will drive you to unruliness. Should you let humaneness be your only guide, it will guide you to weakness. Should you choose to hold trust in the highest esteem, it will lead you to folly. Should you rely on the strength of your courage, you shall be led to violence. If you lead your men with too firm a hand, it shall lead you to cruelty. If you possess all of the five qualities and know how to use each of them on purpose, you are suited to be a warlord". As pictured by Staguhn (2007), „a human being seems to be floating over the abyss, in-between contradictories: war and peace, hatred and love, power and powerlessness". It appears that a man floats in-between expansive narcissism, aggressive paranoia, depression, destructive nihilism and altruistic humanism, shaping thereby various political mentalities that in turn shape his destiny. Contemporary wars are associated with a lot of mental health problems and individual and collective psychopathology so that the choice between clash of civilizations or creative dialogue among them has become a fundamental question, not only for global mental health but also for the very survival of mankind.

Today altruism, or better to say altruistic love, compassion and empathy, are more than ever a necessity (Ricard 2015), particularly for a more ethical future. According to Beck (2000) the potential for changes and overcoming violence and hostility lies in the supremacy of altruistic-humanistic over narcissistic-expansive orientation. Altruistic-humanistic orientation is characterized with the following beliefs and attitudes: any man is equal and equally worthy as compared to others; strangers are potential friends; no group is above others; each life is a sanctity; if I give strangers a helping hand, it makes me a better person, so that this orientation looks towards peacefulness. Narcissistic-expansive orientation includes the following beliefs: our group (national, political, etc.) is superior, chosen, elite, while strangers represent potential enemies; our rights and requests are beyond those of others; the lives of others are expendable; only help provided to my own kind makes me a better person, so that the whole point is to fulfill one's own interests. Regrettably, it seems that mankind still did not realize that „war does not represent the best means to an end" (Staguhn 2007).

Empathic humanistic cooperative mental/political culture includes positive cognition (core belief: "we are OK, but others are OK, as well"; "together we are more capable and stronger"; "the world is a lovely place, and we can keep it that way only if we join our efforts"; "life is magnificent"), positive affectedness (empathy, love, compassion, kindness, forgiveness), altruistic motivation ("it's good to do good", "good deeds are rewarded *per se*", "we are better and worthier if we help and give to others", "it is in our own interest to take into account the interest of others") and cooperative behavior ("some kind of bonds exist between all of us", "win-win" behavioral strategy, avoidance of playing the roles of victim, savior and persecutor). In its true sense of meaning, psycho-politics should be oriented towards the promotion of humanistic political mentality through various promotions of post-conventional morality. Real-life application is made possible through empathic and pro-humanistic training in forms of creative workshops that may be psychological (tailored so as to evoke positive emotions, altruistic attitudes and promote love, empathy and compassion – psychodrama, chat forums, encountering groups), educational (learning about oneself and others, forum, knowledge games and quizzes), communication-based (social games funded on grouping, sub-grouping and pairing and their joining into bigger units; amusement games), artistic (theatrical: agon - competition, alea - chance, mimesis - mimicry and ilinx - whirlpool; visual art, music, etc.) in their nature; one can also resort to simulation games, confrontation of opinions, through dialogue, etc.)

Global mental health: Is there a cosmopolitan empathic society somewhere on the horizon?

„Should the world be put in order, my nation has to change first.
Should my nation be changed, my home town is to be restored first.
Should my home town be restored, my family should be put in order first.
Should my family be put in order, I should put myself in order first."
An unknown Chinese warlord

Today, at the first decades of the 21st century we have witnessed to the growing and huge sufferings caused by natural catastrophes, wars, and other man-made tragedies like terrorism, human trafficking, domestic and school violence, etc. In our postmodern times of ethical relativism the human condition cannot be understood nationally or locally but only globally, with empathy and compassion. With increasing globalization, mobility and migrations, the world is becoming a cosmopolis deeply interconnected so that what happens in one part of the world may have strong repercussions in other parts. This has led to an ideology of cosmopolitism, universalism and empathic civilization with renewed interest for thinking about what is it that human beings have in common, what is a real human nature, and to explore the ethical basis for it. But, the question is how "in the world of the individualistic, calculating, selfish and self-interested homo economicus (economic human) and free market where politicians aim only to be elected or re-elected, where financial interest groups wield a

disproportionate influence on policy makers, where the well-being of future generations is often ignored …, where governments pursue national economic policies that are to the detriment of the global interest" (Ricard 2015) practice compassion, altruism and ideas of collective goods, promote global mental health and well-being, and create a cosmopolitan empathic society. According to Ricard (2015) the answer is in an enlighten education for a cosmopolitan empathic society and cooperation in a caring economy. Cosmopolitism is a life philosophy that all human beings belong to a single community, based on a shared ethos and morality. As stated by Ricard (2015), we all people belong to the same family and we are the ones that make the history meaningful; but we are also the ones that can increase or destroy our chances of a lifetime. We have to recognize and promote very fundamental fact about ourselves: we are a species that has evolved to thrive on empathy, kindness and compassion associated with our inter-connectedness and interdependency. Empathy is fundamental for establishing and maintaining all of our most significant relationships based on respect, trust, understanding, non-judging, and friendship. Although human history is full of atrocities, cruelties and evil behavior, empathy and compassion have been defined as one of the most important and distinctive qualities of the human mind. Demonizing political opponents doesn't change anyone's mind for better, but empathy can. Compassion, caring, creative altruism, pro-social and pro-humanistic behavior are fundamental for well-being, mental health and our capacity to foster creative relationships with each other and the world we live in. Empathy is the invisible force that holds society and civilization together. It involves empathy for difference and opening to diversity. Love, kindness, gentleness, and compassion are like basic vitamins for our minds, they are intrinsically related to our well-being. Good news from the latest neuroscience research is that empathy and compassion can be taught, learned and culti-vated. Envision a future in which economics, education, medicine, psychiatry, and even politics are infused with more empathy and compassion transforming our world. Empathy and compassion is an esprit de corps of the humanistic civilization of love and the creation of global cosmopolitan society governed by law and order as well as of the promotion of global mental health. Global empathic civilization seems to be a key to the very survival of humankind and life on our planet.

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