

CULTURE OF CHANGE AS THE FUNCTION OF DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCE OF SMALL (NUMBERED) NATIONS

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Abstract: *In a general sense, historical groundbreaking changes affect all segments of human behaviour. Habits, customs, traditions and national cultures inexorably reshape under the influence of these changes. The life cycle of every form of human behaviour is visibly shortened under the influence of change, while at the same time, the life cycle of mankind is being extended. All human societies that failed to adapt to the changes historically disappeared and their national cultures survived only in records. It is necessary to thoroughly explore the links between the development of science and the interconnections of people and the culture of change. Through this relation we would be able to recognize their common impact on small (numbered) nations. Exhaustive receptiveness and involvement of the "representatives" of science (academia) of a small (numbered) nation is reflected in the culture of change.*

Key words: culture, change, science, education



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1. Introduction

The world that surrounds us in its cultural diversity is a constant source of change and instability which are becoming more dynamic and more pronounced, and equally affect us, technology, society and the community and all the connections between the social, biological and spiritual in the human race.

No matter how we define or interpret culture, since there is no harmony of scientific thoughts about its unique definition, it is an integral part of the structure of society. Likewise, education is also an integral part of the structure of society, and it is inseparable from culture, since the transmission of cultural norms is conditioned upon education, i.e. the modes of education which are conditional again on globalization.

It is the globalization that brings multiculturalism, i.e. cultures (not necessarily) pervaded in their essence which once again use education for their expansion and influence past cultural practices that are beginning to change. The complexity of the relationship between the concept of culture and change management and the impact on the development of education and science are worth further clarification and a modest contribution of this work.

We wish to place special emphasis on culture, both organizational culture and national culture as a phenomenon, and integrate it with the management of change, and changes in the environment as a whole. A culture of change (or a change of culture) becomes the source of extension of the lifecycle of human community and of new theories that science will study and adapt to.

2. Culture

The concept of culture in literature is viewed in different ways, but it is an incomplete picture for the most part. For most researchers, culture remains a concept the transformation of which requires more than just a cosmetic change. However, it is much more persistent, it is built from the ground up, and that is the only way to change, again from the ground up. In one of the more comprehensive definitions of the concept of culture, it is defined as a “complex unit that includes knowledge, faith, art, morality, law, custom and all other abilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor, 1871). They might also mention a combined definition similar to that offered by two authors in 1985 (Boyd & Richerson, 1988), which states that culture is “a combination of beliefs, values and preferences capable of influencing behaviour, which through society, not genetics, are transmitted and shared within a particular subset of society.” All of the aforementioned, both beliefs and values and preferences, were not derived from anything but were acquired from others, since the culture consists of elements and characteristics shared by people of the same culture, yet unique to each individual individually (Joel & Mokyr, 2016).

We can view nations and societies in the world in a similar way to business systems - they are all different in their own way, that is, they all have their own cultures characterized by certain values, norms and beliefs, which are again influenced by both the past and the present, and the development of technology, and goals and strategies (Handy & Aitken, 1986).

Following the logic of change that happens within business systems, and mapping it to social structure, we can say that we find that “societies that achieve great successes tend to believe that nothing can hurt them or destroy them. However, success often also gives birth to failure, especially in societies with strong cultures’ (Miller, 1994). Such a social structure is deprived of the acquired evolutionary advantage because their strong culture relied too heavily on past procedures, which in most cases are an obstacle to change implementation, paying too much price for not adapting to change.

3. National culture

The collection of beliefs, values and standards shared by members of one nation, by which we interpret and perceive their identity that distinguishes them from other peoples, reflects their national culture (Del Giudice et al, 2012). Thus, one could formulate national culture as a set of common and ubiquitous values and assumptions about life that focus on the behaviour of people or a nation (Leithy, 2017). Statements that the national culture shapes the behaviour of the population within certain national territories, i.e. within states, and that if we take the same logic of similarity to the business system, it does the same within and outside business systems through the decisions of its leaders or consumer behaviour, it encounters support in the wider academic community (Breidenbach & Nyiri, 2009).

Nowadays, there are a very few clean ethnic states in the world. The largest number are multiethnic states, and it is difficult to define the boundaries of national cultures in one country. Members of different ethnic groups, nationalities and beliefs communicate with each other, dynamically exchanging knowledge about their own and national cultures. Mother tongue, literature, art, theatre all play an important role in the development and integration of national culture. The mutual exchange of skills, practices, knowledge and beliefs, as well as the tradition that each culture carries in its core, is also building a common and accumulated knowledge.

There is a strong tendency nowadays to create a “global culture” or “culture of globalism”, which leads to the denial or annulment of national cultures, to alienate the people from their customs, habits and traditions that have been real for centuries. Therefore, no nation should be indifferent to its national culture, and each must take care of its development. Caring for our own culture and promoting cooperation with other peoples and their art and language can only enrich our own culture. In the context of globalisation, one nation strives for a culture that can address the challenges of a modern day, for a nation which comprehends its national identity will always try to elevate its culture and not let it fall behind the cultures of other nations. It is the multinational states that need to create an atmosphere of national tolerance, communication and respect for different cultures and languages, which also develops our own national culture.

4. Change and change management

The concept of change has probably remained the only constant since the first scientific records.

These constant changes, both social, cultural and geographical, also require profound changes within each system as a whole and particularly in the ways it has performed certain functions so far. Owing to the rapid pace of change that the present world is undergoing, we can no longer perceive change as a transition from one environment, which was stable, to another. The continuity of constant adaptation and constant evolution is also highlighted by the very perception of change where all things are determined by their continuity (Jabri, 2017).

Ideas, information and knowledge about the repeatability of some of the processes of change within us, systems in general and the environment have focused attention on the process of change management. As changes are ubiquitous, if we want to organize and monitor systems, it is clear that the life cycle curve of any system will depend on our ability to adapt to changes, both within the system and in the human environment (Covic & Planinic, 2023), as shown in Figure 1.

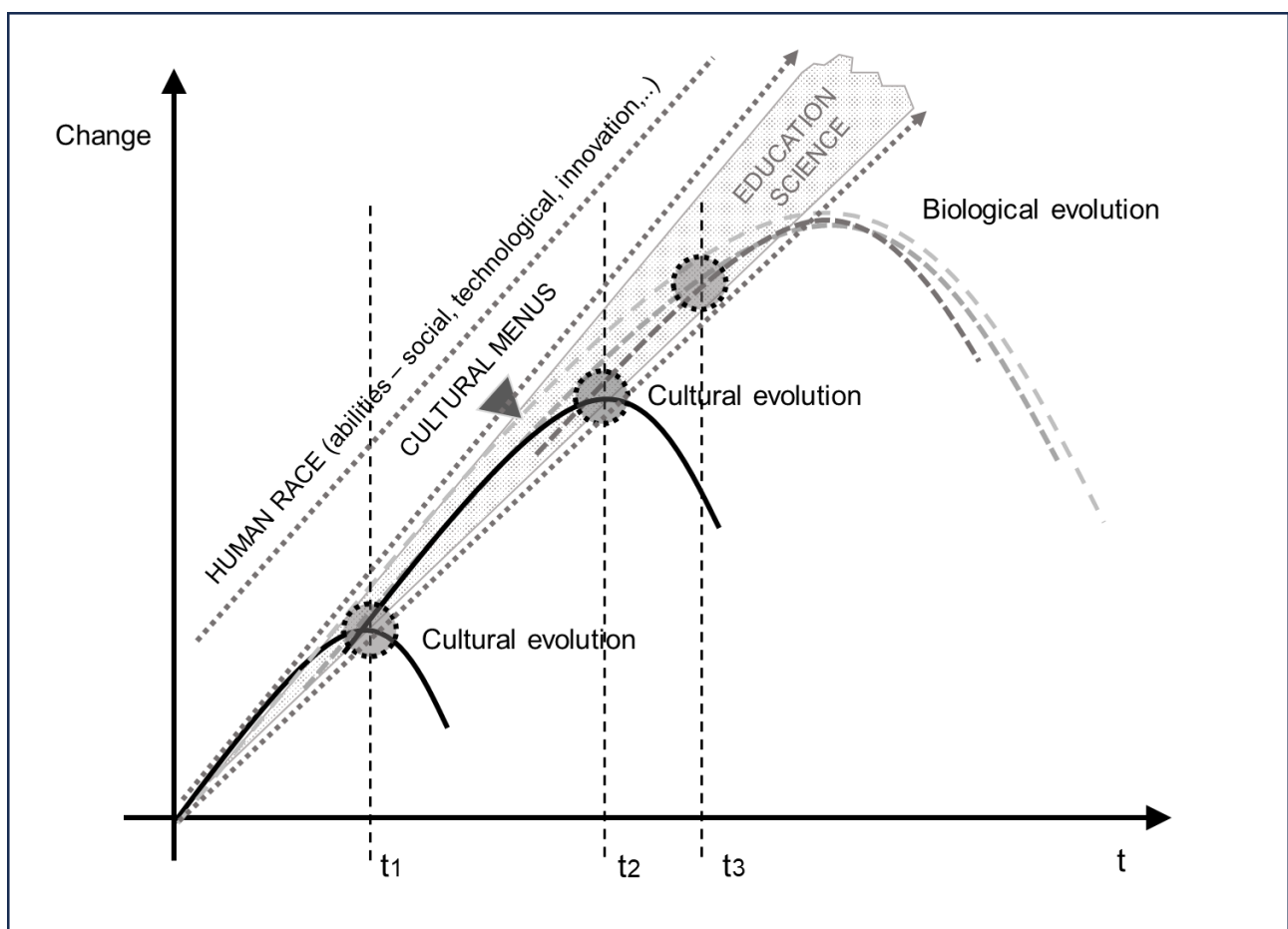


Fig. 1. Evolutionary characteristics of change

Change as a concept can usually be frightening for any system. On the other hand, it is the only constant in our society. The worst way to approach change is by a simple reaction aimed at solving the problem at hand, since such a simple approach usually ends in additional problems and does not address the essential need for change. People are used to not acquiring new knowledge because they have incorporated it into routine and it has become part of our group or personal identity (Schein, 2010).

These routines, or basic assumptions, are one of the strongest obstacles to the process of implementing change. Under the influence of change, the life cycle of every form of human behaviour is visibly shortened, while, on the other hand, the life cycle of the human race is prolonged. As the curve of their life cycle grows, and as the human race develops its technological, innovation, social and other capabilities, it also selects new choice option that best suit the conditions of their environment. Each of these choices is unique to a particular human community despite, for example, theoretically sharing certain characteristics with other communities. It is this unique feature of human characteristics that makes the difference.

5. Culture of change - change of cultures

These two phenomena are a mark of modern systems. The initiators of change very often choose to ignore all the necessary steps because they must be significantly planned. Given that culture is an intertwined set of roles, goals, attitudes, practices, communication, values and assumptions, it is impossible to just insert change into all of this and expect it to take root. However, education can help us do just that. It is precisely the new technologies such as television, social media or the Internet that have contributed to expanding the social learning and education to the sources that until then were unimaginable. The degree to which people will give up their initial beliefs and adopt some new cultural features is a variable that we can call crucial, and which precisely allows us to make a significant step forward in cultural change (Joel & Mokyr, 2016), and a possible representation is given in Figure 2.

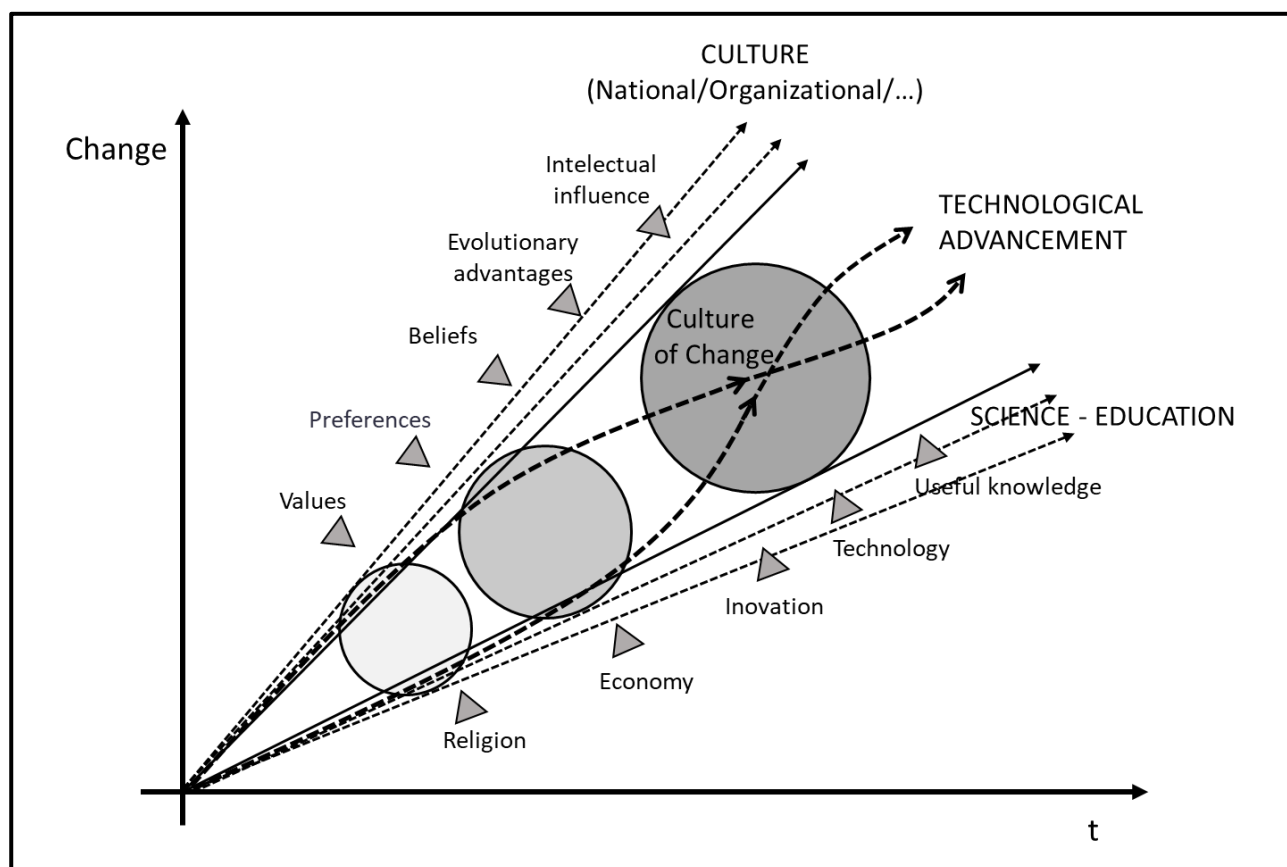


Fig. 2. Culture of change and impact of cultural components

Here we mean knowledge and technology as the fundamental components of culture, which can accelerate cultural change. Just like all the systems, cultural systems resist change. And the reason is usually that institutions or systems resist innovation, seeing it as a rebellion against deep-rooted beliefs and customs. The opposite is true for environments and systems that are open enough to receive new ideas, which ultimately affect the change of environmental parameters. Excessive importance that was attached to inherited knowledge has led to innovation being considered a threat. The key to innovation in culture is that it should represent an opportunity to convince others that new knowledge is useful and can make progress in many fields, especially the economic field. It is this useful knowledge that the driver of change rests on.

Institutions in the broadest sense are the ones that translate our beliefs into norms or laws, so we can say that culture is the foundation of institutions. Disharmony between culture and cultural beliefs on the one hand and institutions which are based on and mirrored in them on the other can lead to their imbalance and loss of trust in these institutions, which ultimately leads to institutional and political imbalances. This is precisely what can reflect on the “small” or “small numbered nations” through the loss of an essential backbone since they create an environment for cultural evolution which is limited by the institutional and technological environment. On the technological side, the development of the printing press has increased the literacy of people while the increased mobility of people and the way they interact with each other have given rise to a range of knowledge that was previously unimaginable.

On the other hand, both culture and knowledge change faster than the evolution of the people who transmit them. This is particularly true of young generations today who are strongly susceptible to a wide selection of cultural variants, such as different ideologies or fashion and other social and cultural trends. Looking back at our recent history, and by recent we mean the past few centuries, it is possible to see that culture cultural evolution were more important than biological evolution (Jablonka & Lamb, 2014), which further underlines the significance of cultural evolution as a tool to understand the historical impact on society and the change that happens too quickly.

Throughout history, every nation has “produced” its “cultural entrepreneurs” (Joel & Mokyr, 2016), individuals who have emerged as a result of evolutionary change but who are capable of changing the cultural choices of others, their preferences, beliefs, and customs. If the environment, which is always larger and stronger than them, is sufficiently inclined to new ideas and innovations, it is possible to seize the opportunities it creates and change the cultural beliefs of a large number of individuals and institutions behind them, and at the same time the environment that gives rise to new cultural changes. With the culture of change, it is necessary to preserve the essential national attributes, especially for the small and demographically exposed peoples (Covic & Planinic, 2023). By growing and evolving and going through phases in their life cycle, each nation adopts a culture that corresponds to its level of development and helps it to survive.

Time, environment and circumstances define a culture and it is clear that no culture is ideal or universal in every situation (Don et al, 2001). There are no “cookbooks” or step-by-step instructions for culture and change.

6. Education and science in the culture of change

In the 1990s developing countries, some scientists began to question the relationship between education and economic development (Pritchett, 2001) since the enormous investments in science had not produced an expected economic growth. response of economic development to the stimulus that was meant to generate enormous investments in science was inadequate. Many countries, such as the countries of the Scandinavian peninsula, Poland and Estonia, and Moldova, had invested significant resources in science, particularly in human resources, but without greater economic results.

On the other hand, questioning cultural beliefs and relationships between people and their environment as well as the advantages of technologies has led to questions of faith and belief and its multiple impact on economic growth. Religious perseverance in the education of people, especially literacy, has significantly contributed to the development of technology and innovation which in turn enhanced economic empowerment of the society in all segments of life. On the other hand, every human society strives to change its environment permanently, but it succeeds only so far as the religious and cultural beliefs set the “boundaries.” For example, the work on human genetic manipulation has never taken root despite the advancement of technology that makes it possible. Thus, some things could not be done before, they cannot be done today and will certainly not be done in the future.

Major European overseas discoveries and subsequent research have erased the boundaries on the penetration of new technologies, information, products, as well as useful knowledge from distant societies and cultures previously unknown, and their transmission to European culture and science. In those times, science took new and undiscovered paths, and it seemed “like it was hunting a new prey” (Eamon, 1985). At that time, Europe became more aware that the accumulated knowledge from distant countries was much greater and more advanced, as many scientific advances were made based on this knowledge (Bala, 2006). In a short period of time, imported knowledge gained ground Europe, and to a certain extent even improved.

In the age of Enlightenment, the term “useful knowledge” was used to describe what we already know. Today's growth is precisely conditioned by the growth and expansion of this “useful knowledge”. This knowledge brought all the benefits created by human society, which until then were reserved only for the wealthy, and thus extended people's lifecycle. “Cultural entrepreneurs” of that time often failed in trying to consolidate new ideas among those that were important for further progress. In parallel to the development of globalisation and the global economy, there was a gradual scientific revolution (Cook, 2007).

There was a growing need for quality and quantified knowledge, supported by concrete and written evidence and facts, which has devalued the established opinions and authorities of the time, as shown in Figure 3.

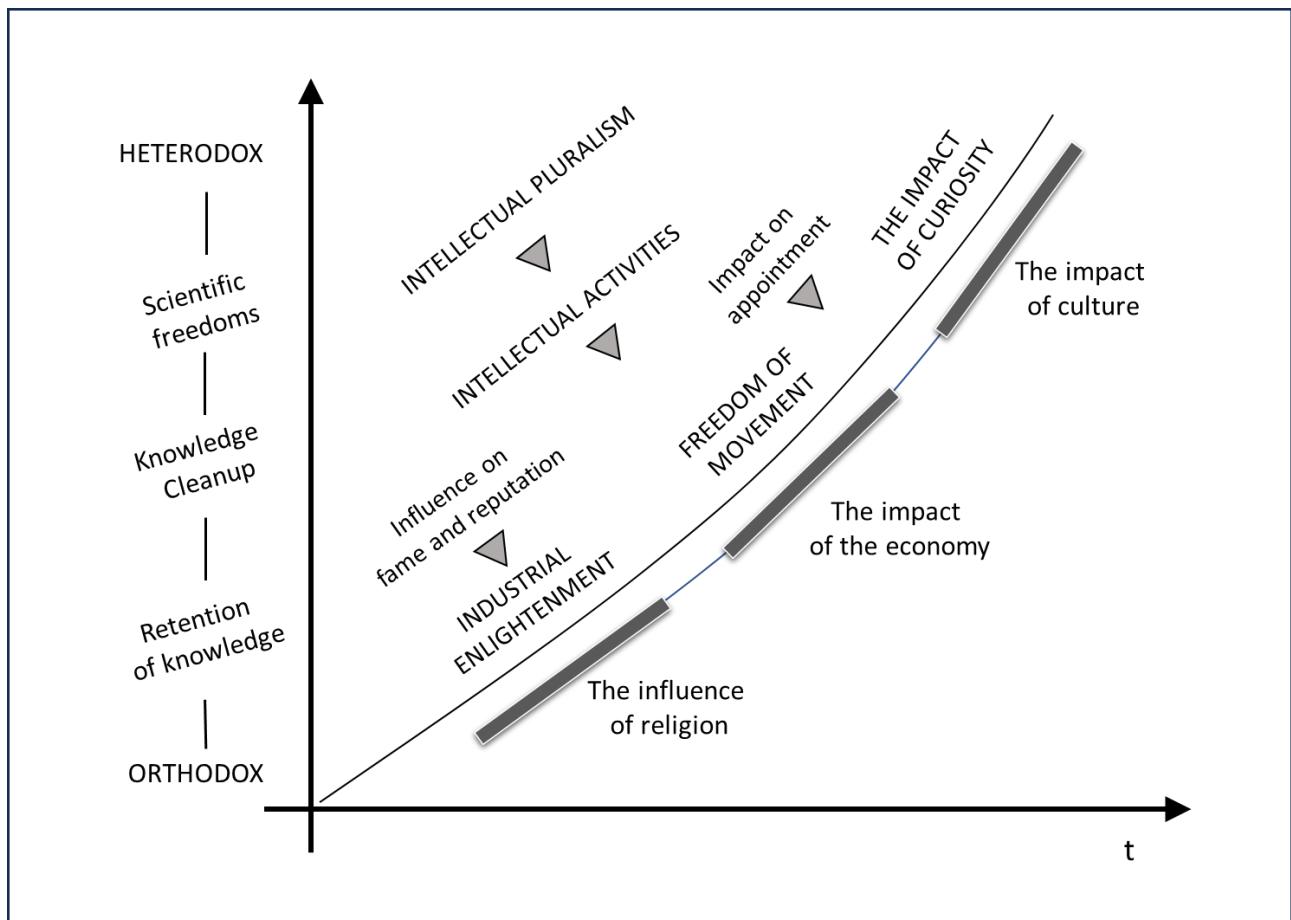


Fig. 3. Knowledge as the function of culture of change

One of the key prerequisites for scientific development and learning progress was the invention of a printing press. It has enabled oral knowledge to be put on paper and preserved over the centuries. It was on the basis of one such system of the first Croatian printing house in Bosnia-Herzegovina that the Croatian people built a network of connected education, learning and information systems in light of their culture and the social, technological and economic environment over the centuries (Covic & Planinic, 2023). All of this has created a positive shift in attitudes toward progress, social and technological.

7. Conclusion

Knowledge is the only truly valuable resource and the basis for the success of all communities of the future. Adapting to change is necessary for a society to be able to offer new a value, whether economic or scientific, and this encouragement comes from its environment which initiates the change. Also, as we continue to develop as a society, it will be interesting to observe how these influences change and shape the education system in the future.

Surely, without the synergy of knowledge and science, there is no technological progress. Many of the scientific and expert analytical models we use today were neither available nor known one or two centuries ago.

However, technological progress has revived the environment in every sense, accelerating all the processes within the systems, which gives greater meaning to visionary thinking about the process of culture of change which is much more rapid and aggressive than ever before. In any event, the fundamental reflection on the complexity of the relationship between culture and change management was equally significant 150 years ago as it is today, although it was then called other names.

Change is a reality of our everyday life will be there with us in our future. Building a consensus between culture, especially the culture of small (numbered) nations, and change management can greatly help us develop a theory of culture of change as a discipline by which we can monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of human communities and other systems in the future.

In this way we contribute to exploring the impact of changes on the cultural values of our people, as well as all other small (numbered) nations whose contribution to civilization can be recognized and be part of the global trends of change that we witness every day. Our future research would be focused on change of culture and on deep insight in the theory of the culture of change as the essential dimension of cultural impact on all natural communities and systems.

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