

# PATRIOTISM OF THE SAMOAN YOUTH IN THE CONTEXT OF UNIVERSALIZATION OF GLOBAL VALUES. BASED ON RESEARCH CONDUCTED IN SAMOA

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## Abstract

The main goal of this research paper is an attempt to interpret the concept of patriotism expressed by interviewed Samoans as a specific semantic and interpretive-narrative construction, embedded in the historical and cultural conditions of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as well as to identify its constitutive features. As a result of her reflections, the author considers the patriotism of Samoan youth as a well-founded concept, in the context of the universalisation of values, as well as the possibility of developing this patriotism in the context of globalisation.

The Author has demonstrated that Samoan youth is not indifferent to cultural universals, despite attempting to co-create them in course of a multi-cultural dialogue and globalization processes. Thanks to electronic means of communication the young Samoan generation of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century has access to the values of global culture. At the same time, young people are avid advocates of preserving and nurturing traditional culture.

The results of research conducted by means of local observations and an interview questionnaire in Samoa found clear support for the thesis that a process of universalization of cultural changes in specific areas of life has been occurring there. The type of authority was found to have been transforming from a chief-tribal one into a state-family model (law and family) with a tendency towards further democratization. The parochial political culture (clan and tribe) has been changing into a servile culture (family and school), manifesting the tendencies of political transformation towards a participatory culture. The dominance of men when it comes to the rights in public or tribal life has been also heading towards equality. The clan-tribal attitude toward a life territory has been transforming into a family-state attitude and forming as certain fatherland patriotism. The openness to the world which formerly was limited to sailing to other islands nowadays encompasses the entire globe.

**Keywords:** patriotism; culture values' clash; system transformation; traditional culture; Polynesian culture; mass culture; Samoan patriotism; universalization; cultural changes; cultural universals

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## **1. Introduction**

The category of patriotism in the present manuscript has been evaluated as a certain interpretive construct, which enables a multi-layered analysis of results obtained from conducted research, as well as formulating research questions on how to determine the social and cultural functions of patriotism. The present study derives from the author's three expeditions to Polynesia in the early 2000s, and is based on analyses of the research results. The research was conducted by means of a questionnaire among students of the Faculty of Education at the National University of Samoa in Apia – the capital of the Independent State of Samoa. The aim of this research was to learn about the opinions, aspirations, attitudes as well as the value system of the Samoan students being representatives of the educated elite of the young generation in this Polynesian country. It has been assumed that students of pedagogics, descending from various islands of the Samoa archipelago, would be representative in terms of the young generation's state of mind and knowledge. Is the patriotism of Samoan youth likely to endure and develop in view of the progressive development of civilisation?

“A patriot is a person who loves his homeland and is ready to make sacrifices for the sake of it” (Bralczyk, 2006). Definition of patriotism throughout the centuries has been undergoing certain transformations; it was defined as “love towards the land of the father(s)”, i.e. “loving the fatherland”, which manifested itself through an attachment to the home country and a readiness to defend it, as well as admiring the country's past and national traditions and focusing on diligent work: “Attitude towards the homeland, the nation, manifested by diligent work, prioritizing superordinate values, such as independence or sovereignty, over one's own goals; the readiness to defend them even at the cost of one's life” (Brzozowska, 2014).

Cultural universals may emerge in any community as imperatives arising from the human nature and from the aspirations of human collectivities. They may also appear as universalized cultural particularisms, and as the result of cultural diffusion, i.e. the dissemination on a global scale of the contents and forms of a culture, which originally was specific to one social unit only (Sztompka, 2002).

## **2. A contribution to understanding universalism**

Human life and the behaviour of individuals, pursued in universal models of action and their unique motivations, emotions and destinies, is the starting point for defining and analysing cultural universals. The American ethnologist George Murdock compiled all available information on historical and contemporary, primary and modern cultures in the archives of the University of Los Angeles in the hope of establishing the universal values of human cultures. The analysis showed that there are only two cultural universals in all researched societies: the

‘Thou shalt not kill’ rule and the prohibition of incest (Sztompka, 2002). While the protection of life is an obvious biological imperative, the prohibition of incest is a rule that imposes behaviour in the realm of unique motivations and emotions of action. The categorical nature of this cultural value derives from the protection of the ‘don’t kill’ message as a transmission of life from one generation to the next, in sexual relations and parenting, health and childcare protection. That is, the protection of the basic universal value of all cultures, which is the fundamental social unit - marriage and family. An individual is a social entity because he or she can be born into the natural marriage and family social group. This is the foundation of cultural universalisation.

In the present times, the process of cultural universalisation of mankind is an idea to some extent utopian, but worthy of attention, due to emerging concepts of cultural synthesis, universal culture, universals of values, etc. In these theoretical considerations lies hope that conditions for the introduction of a universal system of values and ecumenical norms of cultural coexistence and cooperation of mankind would eventually come into being, with each community preserving their specific cultural values, e.g. language, traditions, myths, legends, beliefs etc., which are not incompatible with the universal canon (Brozi, 1995).

In his book “The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order” an outstanding American political scientist S.P. Huntington specifies four value systems, which may currently create foundations for developing a universal culture:

- a) elementary values, inherent in all societies and universally recognised as the canon of norms of social coexistence, such as human life, good and evil;
- b) cultural elements common to societies placed at a higher civilizational level than primary societies, which are almost non-existent in the world today. These include values such as literacy skills, urbanization etc.;
- c) social-cultural beliefs, values and doctrines disseminated by the Western culture, adapted and adopted quite universally by other cultures;
- d) the dissemination of similar patterns of consumption and human needs and digitally saturated mass culture.

As we may conclude from these conceptual outlines, it is difficult to reflect upon a universal culture. We should rather point to cultural universals as elements of values and phenomena known to all historical and contemporary societies. Similarly, the concept of global culture is shallow and hasty. In the course of his analyses of the current processes of cultural globalisation, the Polish cultural scientist R. Paradowski perceives them as competition between three types of culture: traditional culture based on religion, liberal-democratic culture based on law, and the highly consumer culture, based on advertising and the market (Paradowski, 2000). In different parts of the globe and under different conditions, these types of culture clash and compete with each other, forming a feedback eclectic unity. The globalisation of culture is a long-term competition between religious, socio-legal and advertising-market values.

### **3. Patriotism Of The Samoan Youth**

Documentation of the formation process of Samoan youth patriotism can be found in the answers to the open-ended question, answered by 100% of the respondents: "If I left the Island, I would lose or gain (write down three predominant values)". Mostly losses were described or mentioned in buzzwords. Gains were mentioned in 25 cases. Expected gains could be divided into the following categories:

- a) educational – obtaining good education, skills, knowledge;
- b) cultural – getting to know other cultures, experiencing other lifestyles, customs;
- c) living conditions – higher wages, easier life;
- d) humanistic – new bonds with other people, new friends and acquaintances;
- e) other.

Educational gains as a result of leaving Samoa are defined primarily in terms of getting a better education at a higher level than is possible in Samoa. The respondents mentioned: "I would get to further the level of education; possibility of further education; I would focus on starting more courses; knowledge to pass on if I reach what I have been taught; I would gain new knowledge about other cultures; I would gain knowledge and skills". These respondents were convinced that what they can achieve at their own university would not be enough, and that staying in foreign countries and educational facilities would enrich them intellectually.

The cultural gains were described typically from the perspective of curiosity, a will to get acquainted with and experience new cultures: "I would gain more than my culture; adapting to new culture; experiencing new cultures; gaining more experiences with cultures of other countries; I would get to know other cultures". Such strong interest in other cultures as expressed in the statements is quite astonishing, given the declarations of being strongly committed to own culture traditions. Thus it is not a bond of a particular character ("my culture is the best"); it is indeed open to comparisons, which is an important trait on the path to multiculturalism.

Life gains are quantified in the category of improving material life conditions and civilizational accoutrements during visits to other countries, such as Australia, New Zealand etc. The respondents wrote: "I would gain a better life; I would gain a higher/better standard of living; I would gain financially; I would gain a different life; I would gain support for my family". The statements are brief and concise: "better wages, finances, better job, better life, obtaining resources to help family". Apparently, not all respondents were satisfied with their present level of life, in such circumstances migration seemed a natural pursuit of a better life.

Humanistic gains were astonishingly abundant in descriptions, projects and forecasting. Some selected examples: "I would communicate with other people; I would gain experience; I would gain relations; surely I would gain happiness; I would gain external experience; I would gain confidence; I would gain new

friends in my life; I would gain love; I would gain a handsome boyfriend or popular guy; I would gain a wider experience in a larger society”; I would gain many opportunities, changing experience”.

There were many other benefits of leaving the country mentioned, for instance: “I’ll come back again and serve our country; I would gain a lot; I would not lose anything; I would feel more Samoan; I would have global experiences; I would get to know the differences between Pacific and European countries; I would gain professionally; I would gain more opportunities”. However, losses connected with leaving Samoa, listed by the interviewed students, definitely dominated the answers to this open question. The foreseen losses were associated with the following objects and goods: a) the country and state of Samoa, b) family, siblings, dear ones, c) values considered to be fundamental, d) culture and its products, e) other personal goods. It had been anticipated that family, next of kin would be most frequently listed as losses. It was surprising, however, how often the respondents listed fundamental values and culture perhaps even more frequently than family and country-state. Did they identify those spiritual goods only with staying in Samoa, defined them based on territory alone and envisaged to lose them upon leaving the archipelago?

The loss of an opportunity to stay in their country was predominantly defined by the respondents as an emotional experience: “I would miss my country; I never ever want to leave my lovely country Samoa; lose freehold lands; I would never leave this country; I would lose a beautiful island, hospitable; land, supplies, amenities; my beloved country; I would lose environment protection; working together to build the community; my homeland and family”. The state was not referred to directly but it was present in the statements (homeland, community). The loss of family and dear ones had been evocatively emphasized. Furthermore, the loss of family was often connected to losing the country and its assets, such as in this ample statement: “I would lose my dearest family and my beautiful country where everybody lives peacefully. No wars and people won’t end up starving”. Other selected examples: “I would lose beloved friends and family; I would lose my favourite friends and family; my relations with parents and family; relations with friends; warmth and love in the family; present job, family job; I would lose my kids; I would miss my family; I would miss my husband”.

Losses of fundamental values are usually marked in slogans, in a single word, for example: respect, honesty, personality, identity, religion, traditions, language. But there is also no shortage of entries that say, for example: I would lose respect and values to developing technology; I would lose respect for adults; I would lose values; I would lose tolerance; I would lose tradition, I would lose respect for others; I would lose identity; I would lose language; I would lose cultural values; I would also lose my identity, my roots.

The loss of culture and its products was as a rule described with one word – culture; I would lose my culture. There were very few elaborate statements in that respect, for instance: “I would lose my free time, pastime activities; I would

lose changes in my lifestyle; lose the way I dress as a Samoan lady; I would miss traditional means; I would forget a lot from my culture towards the modern lifestyle; respect for my behaviour; I would lose my beloved culture”.

Other losses foreseen in case of leaving Samoa were described in short sentences, such as: “things I’m interested in; hearing Samoan language every day; my peaceful life, I would lose family ties and their guidance; I would lose happiness; I would lose my wonderful life; I would lose easy-going life; I would lose my interests; to love each other”.

Multi-faceted profit and loss account related to leaving Samoa evaluates the socialization process of the Samoan young generation in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century as a multidimensional and open phenomenon. This is proven by a diversified reaction to possible leaving of the island, which is even more multi-layered when listing the consequences of such a decision. A transformation of the socialization process foundations has been taking place – from being in-grained in the clan-tribal traditional Polynesian culture and its value system towards a state-family modern popular and mass culture, via mass communication of the global culture.

The responses of interviewed students to other questions confirm the above hypotheses, for example, the answers to “The possibilities of personally exploring the whole open world are...? “:

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| – your dream  | – 35 (36.8%) |
| – your dream which won’t come true due to financial reasons | – 19 (20.0%) |
| – your dream which won’t come true due to family reasons    | – 11 (11.6%) |
| – if I left, I would have lost my whole family              | – 17 (17.9%) |
| – other, describe   | – 7 (7.4%)   |
| – no answer   | – 6 (6.3%).  |

The obtained data denoted their openness to the world, other people and other cultures, at the same time lacking a traditional sectionalism. Only 17 people did not dream about this attractive chance of being a globetrotter, justifying it with a fear of losing their homeland world (which is understandable as there are different families and their problems). Other answers usually limited the “whole world” to continents or countries that the respondents found interesting, e.g. Europe or America. One might ask why only 17 respondents did not dream to leave while previous data implied that approximately 50% of the interviewees did not wish to leave Samoa. These answers alone show that one can dream of sightseeing the whole world but not planning it realistically due to financial considerations, family circumstances etc.

Cultural clashes of consciousness are the confrontation of a person’s or group’s sense of identity, axiological systems, emotionality and mentality with the same distinctive characteristics of other people or groups. The main hypothesis of the research in Samoa, in the course of the study, has been positively verified.

Compared to Melanesia and Micronesia, Polynesia is characterised by a relatively highly developed social organisation of the tribes. It witnessed the establishment of independent states ruled by kings and chiefs, with tribal councils

and a caste of shamans, specialists in organising religious ceremonies and advising on the politics of those in power. The authority comprised the king, chief, clan and tribal council. Nowadays, when asked in research who is the most important person on the island and why, the chiefs, elders, tribal council were only marginally mentioned as traditional authorities. The predominant answer is the family, the father, the mother and the government, the prime minister. Typical justifications: the mother, because she is the person who solves the problems in our family; the prime minister, because he has the power to create institutions that work for our benefit in the future, with power to implement things that protect our lifestyle and a decision-maker capable of improving the economy, education and international relations of our country. This raises a hypothesis of a growing trend towards formation and dissemination of a democratic social statehood with a recognized authority of a leader (chief-king, president, prime minister). This would be an interesting contamination of the institution of the traditional king (chief) with the institution of social democracy. Liberal democracy is not acceptable to the inheritors of the belief that the primacy of the tribe (community) over the individual is unquestionable. Therefore, the respondents find a domination of individual rights unacceptable, whereas they are keen to feel that they are members of a state community. When asked 'if you consider yourself a citizen in the full sense of that word', close to 80% of the Samoans answer that they do so out of the conviction that they enjoy living in this state. The civic community is slowly replacing the tribal community. But it still needs a modern chief.

What type of political culture is formed under such conditions? The traditional political culture can be described (according to Almond and Verba) as parochial, i.e. non-interfering in the decisions of chiefs and priests and obedient to orders and sacred tribal rituals. The clan, the tribe, the chief determine public participation and thinking. Nowadays, this is determined by the family and the school as an institution of the state and as an elementary political education. However, this is a political culture of submission – according to the nomenclature of the aforementioned political scientists – rather than a participatory culture. Citizens are aware of the state and its laws, but are not an active force influencing political decisions. When asked who maintains discipline and obedience within the state, the respondents point to the government, police, village council, as well as the family, clan elders, pastors. Few would argue that every citizen is responsible for this. Clearly it is already a step towards a participatory culture. This is also evidenced by the consensual answers to the question of whether citizens, subordinates, rebel against certain decisions of the authorities. About 60% of the respondents state that they rebel "sometimes" and about 10% – without such restriction. There is an awareness of the citizens' right to protest against specific acts of authority. This is not yet a participatory culture, but it is a behaviour progressing in such direction. It may be referred to as a culture of transformation of political consciousness, or a culture of becoming a citizen. In the traditional ancestral-tribal structure, primacy in public life belonged to elders and men over women. Polynesian women,

however, held an important position in marriages and families. Ethnologists note a peculiar feature of social life on the islands of Tonga, where the position of sisters – women was higher than brothers – men (Nikitorowicz, 2010, 98).

Among the five factors identified in the research as being present in Samoa that play a major role in the upbringing of children and young people, the tandem of school (29%) and family (21%) took the lead. This was followed by the media, churches and the state. Socialisation has been modernising towards school, media and state education, with families and religious churches still playing a significant role. Apparently, such trend is moving towards the predominance of self-directed elements of socialisation - self-learning, self-improvement by means of electronics, digital communication and the reflective shaping of one's own biography. This seems to be a universal trend.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The research findings enable the Author to confirm that the patriotism of Samoan youth is a well-grounded concept in the context of the universalization of values, as well as opportunities for this patriotism to develop in the context of globalization. Documentation of the development process of Samoan youth patriotism can be found in their answers to the open-ended question, given by 100% of the respondents: "If I left the Island, I would lose or gain (write down three predominant values)". Mostly losses were described in buzzwords.

The wide thematic spectrum of such profit and loss balance sheets arising from leaving Samoa makes the process of patriotism formation in the young Samoan generation of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century a multidimensional and open-ended phenomenon. The varied reactions to a possible leaving of the island, even more multifaceted in its enumeration of the consequences of the decision, testify to this. We can witness a transformation of the basis of the socialisation process from its hitherto rootedness in an ancestral-tribal traditional Polynesian culture (with its value system) towards a state-family modern, popular mass culture, through the means of mass global communication.

Cultural clashes of consciousness are the confrontation of a person's or group's sense of identity, axiological systems, emotionality and mentality with the same distinct characteristics of other people or groups. The main hypothesis of the research in Samoa, during the course of the study, has been affirmatively verified.

The very fact of the clash between the historical culture of the past and the contemporary civilisation, statehood, defines the purpose, theme and conditions for conducting this qualitative, socio-political and anthropological research.

The synthesis of some of the most valuable contents and forms of the traditional Samoan and Polynesian culture with the resources of modern civilisation brought by the modern world – a multicultural world, expansive in exporting its values – becomes the major generational task for the interviewed students.



It is apparent that the respondents have a problem how to prepare young Samoans to accept and selectively assimilate the value system of a new civilisation (what methods and forms of upbringing and teaching should be used) without abandoning, let alone neglecting, the value system of the traditional Samoan culture. This process is indeed difficult and unprecedented; not only imposed by the dictates of cultural globalisation, but perceived as a patriotic duty to the family, tribe, nation and state.

According to Almond and Verba's definition, political culture is a historically shaped knowledge of political life, the state and the political system, an affective attitude towards one's own organised communities and those of the others as well as the professed catalogue of overarching and symbolic values, such as the nation, its culture, history, customs. The cognitive layer of political culture is quite narrow and concerns mainly divergent views: who governs and who should govern the country. The affective layer is elaborate and two-layered: traditional (the family, the tribe) and modern (the state and its authorities).

However, generally in Samoa the attachment and sentiment to own country, homeland, culture and customs are intense. The valuing layer is also extensive, but not sufficiently to stifle, especially in young people, the need to travel, to see the world, to migrate. Thus we observe a dominant emotional patriotism, which is predominant among other identifications - with the traditional homeland, entering modernity as well as limited knowledge and political awareness.

Views expressed by the respondents indicate a widespread and uncontroversial opinion that citizens need to integrate with their young state. Their civic aspirations revolve around a stable and peaceful life in the country. The expressed aspirations are divergent, but not antagonistic. Some aspire to openness to the world and modernisation of the state, culture and customs, some attempt to combine it with the old Samoan culture and values, while others defend the tradition threatened by an expansive mass culture, and regard all novelties as harmful. Based on the research regarding the forming of civic attitudes, it can be concluded that three types of attitudes can be distinguished:

- an active attitude focused on actions leading to rational modernisation of the state and citizenship
- an attitude which is emotionally favourable, but realistically established on the traditional canon
- an attitude indifferent to state citizenship, opting for tribal relations.

We therefore come to a conclusion that the level of citizens' political culture is not yet a factor actively shaping their state-national identity due to being strongly imbued with the tribal culture, its norms and customs.

A hypothesis may be assumed that such social attitudes of the Samoans strongly influence the formation of the Samoan people's nation-state identification. It is apparent that both the educational and cultural policy of the Samoan state favours a modern, reformist value system and attitudes. At the same time, the state is interested in maintaining certain traditions and cultural values from the pre-state

era (with modifications relevant to the civilisation of information) as well as in discontinuing some imprints from the colonial era. That would require a high degree of flexibility in the curricula and school education, which are, after all, the main tools for strengthening state-society integration and social approval of its functioning. The more citizens show a reform-minded civic attitude in practice, the stronger the state-citizen integration will be and the deeper the political culture. Much will depend on the attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and influence of the teachers on the young people. The patriotic attitude is concretised in the intention and willingness to acquire a university qualification which enables to obtain a satisfying profession which is needed by the country and people.

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## PATRIOTYZM MŁODZIEŻY SAMOAŃSKIEJ W KONTEKŚCIE UNIWERSALIZACJI WARTOŚCI GLOBALNYCH. NA PODSTAWIE BADAŃ PRZEPROWADZONYCH NA SAMOA

### Abstrakt

Głównym celem niniejszej pracy badawczej jest próba interpretacji pojęcia patriotyzmu wyrażanego przez ankietowanych Samończyków jako specyficznego konstruktów semantycznego i interpretacyjno-narracyjnego, osadzonego w warunkach historyczno-kulturowych XXI wieku, a także identyfikacja jego cech konstytutywnych. W wyniku przeprowadzonych rozważań Autorka uznaje patriotyzm młodzieży samońskiej za koncepcję dobrze uzasadnioną, w kontekście uniwersalizacji wartości, a także możliwości rozwoju tego patriotyzmu w kontekście globalizacji.

Autorka wykazała, że młodzież samońska nie pozostaje obojętna na uniwersalia kulturowe, mimo prób ich współtworzenia w toku dialogu wielokulturowego i procesów globalizacyjnych. Młode pokolenie Samończyków początku XXI w. dzięki elektronicznym środkom komunikacji ma dostęp do wartości kultury globalnej. Jednocześnie młodzi ludzie są gorącymi orędownikami zachowania i pielęgnowania kultury tradycyjnej.

Wyniki badań przeprowadzonych za pomocą obserwacji lokalnych i kwestionariusza wywiadu na Samoa znalazły wyraźne poparcie dla tezy, że zachodził tam proces uniwersalizacji zmian kultu-

rowych w określonych dziedzinach życia. Typ władzy przekształcał się z wodzowsko-plemiennego w model państwowo-rodzinny (prawo i rodzina) z tendencją do dalszej demokratyzacji. Zaściankowa kultura polityczna (klan i plemię) zmienia się w kulturę serwilistyczną (rodzina i szkoła), ukazując tendencje transformacji politycznej w kierunku kultury partycypacyjnej. Dominacja mężczyzn w zakresie praw w życiu publicznym czy plemiennym również zmierza w kierunku równości. Klanowo-plemienny stosunek do terytorium życiowego przekształca się w stosunek rodzinno-państwowy i kształtuje jako pewien patriotyzm ojczyźniany. Otwarcie na świat, które dawniej ograniczało się do żeglowania na inne wyspy, dziś obejmuje cały glob.

**Słowa kluczowe:** patriotyzm, zderzenie wartości kulturowych, transformacja systemowa, kultura tradycyjna, kultura polinezyjska, kultura masowa, patriotyzm samokański, uniwersalizacja, zmiany kulturowe, uniwersalia kulturowe