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What Makes People Good or Bad? (Mis)Anthropological Essay on Searching for Social/Cultural Reasons on Judging the Other People*

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to discuss thinking of people which is informed by culture, social institutions and personal experiences, and which shows significant tendency not to operate in simply binary mode when it is about people from somebody's imminent social surrounding. Two examples are presented form the nowadays Belgrade. It is argued that at least people of this particular social context, who tend to deploy more nuances in the judging on and labelling their neighbours seen as bringing some kind of disruption of the social order then to those people they think as of generic categories only, are informed by such social/cultural perspectives on human being which paramount it, but also suggest its capacity for serious wrongdoing.

Key words: social cognisance, judging and labelling in culture, urban neighbourhood, Belgrade, misanthropology

Introduction

Anthropological[1] theory has never been so stretched out to embrace as much as a possible domain of human life and experience as it is nowadays. Yet anthropology perhaps has never been so far away from the public attention compared to some other social sciences[2]. I do not posses the right answer why that is so, nor I want to discuss it in detail here, but I guess it has something to do with

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[1] I am concerned here only with social/ cultural anthropology.

[2] Which (ominous?) signs probably are not to be looked for only in dropping anthropology out of the curriculum in British pre-university education, neglecting its social relevance in some academic circles in Serbia, or lowering funds for anthropological research in numerous of the European countries, but in status in society elsewhere, de-

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rather hard, or at least peculiar position, when we the anthropologist have to explain what is the exact subject of our discipline and to generalise our findings about it. What is in the name of our discipline (*anthropos*) does not stand fully for what we do, and what is not in that name (culture) describes it more accurately, although not completely by itself. Maybe the reason for situation like this lies in common tendency of people to think in sharply delineated categories when thinking about the things which have no real significance to them – or I am just infesting my impressions on examples I am about to present with too much structuralism[3]. I would not tribute this readily to some development in our evolution – although could not exclude it at all, since we are taught in schools to remember in patterns like that. Similarly to what Leach (Cf. 1969, 81-82) has observed for perception of English history, we think of velocity of an object being directly proportional to the quotient of the speed and the time even if Wikipedia is capable of providing us with the right definition, which insists on the *rate of change* of position an object in certain *period* of time.

But what about the people? Do we think of them in the same, simplified way we think of history or physics? Ethnic stereotypes or prejudices of some other kind will give a nod as answer to those questions, but is it a real answer? I think of course that people think of other people in simplified way, tagging them with attributes, but that those attributes become more and more pale and pervasive as people become more informed with personalities of those who they tag and who they see tagged only categorical at first, with their thoughts, manners, way of life etc. Thinking of other people then becomes kind of a reflection on the social or cultural self, on moral position those who tag occupy and judge the others according to it. Their perception of the self and of the others is cultural stance in fact, and it is informed by their sense of morality, which in turn is socially produced. That morality consists indeed of moral norms, but also of their negotiation and use in different and usually demanding situations in the real life. It is matter of mutual adjustment of individual experience of social occurrences and ideals community of an individual holds for the world (Cf. Heintz 2013, 3)[4].

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spite of the hundreds of thousands of pages with thorough and detailed analysis of every possible aspect of human cultures around the globe.

[3] It is true that I see the way people participated in this research think of themselves and of their neighbours, as well of some groups of people (i.e. the injecting drug users) in a manner which is similar to that "bringing some order to the confusion of reality" (Jackman and Scheurer Senter 1980, 342), but that the people really engage themselves in classifying the world with intention to order it mentally, as structural theory in anthropology has suggested long time ago.

[4] As a matter a fact, almost every contribution in that volume suggests it, this way or another, drawing from a range of examples from variety of contemporary social contexts around the world.

I will try to discuss this more elaborately by using two quiet different examples from the world and social or cultural surrounding I live in, that of urban life in Serbian capitol in 2010s. They evolved from my researches in period 2010-2012, but I collected them finally during the summer and the fall of 2014. I hung around with the people from some neighbourhoods in Belgrade and asked them to comment for me on some behaviour of their neighbours which I saw – and which they affirmed – as kind of a distraction to their sense of the social order and to decency in their neighbourhoods. While the second example looks as kind of the usual suspect for discussion like this and takes into consideration injecting drug users, or how do they affect the sense of the social order of those people who think of themselves as of the ordinary citizens, the first one is more unusual; it is about perspectives of the inhabitants of one apartment building on the person who makes troubles in that building and in their neighbourhood.

A case of an old man

A man, now in his eighties, has widowed a few years ago. Until then, he lived a little bit of a reclusive life for decades, spending most of the time in his apartment, and moving around the neighbourhood only occasionally. The main reason for that was he lost one of his legs in an accident almost half a century ago, having a prosthetic leg since. Shortly after his wife died, this man starts hanging around more prominently. Accordingly, his behaviour became odder every day: he asked his neighbours to lend him some money – although his monthly income exceeds national average salary[5]; he began to ask his neighbours to do him favours of which some looked obscure or absurd[6]; he gave the announcement that he is the owner of the building he has an apartment in[7], and of many other estates, and that he is looking for a woman to marry her, according to the last will of his deceased wife; he started to neglect his personal hygiene and that

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[5] He is receiving it since his disability starts, so this amount is not just fairly about the average of the retirement money in Serbia, but in the top 20% of it.

[6] From asking to make the phone call from somebody else's telephone, claiming that his home number has been disconnected (which is not true) and then calling TV repairmen service claiming that his TV-set is not working, then repeating it for every other device in his home, to asking to collect money for him so he can go for holidays to Africa, to asking to help him to bring old household thing from the cellar to his apartment and than bringing them back to the cellar.

[7] There are no owners of buildings for living in Serbia. The apartments in the building are subjects of the ownership, while the rest of the building properties (the roof, the gutters, the front door, the corridors, the green in front of the building etc) are shared ownership.

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of his living place to the extent that it not just became visible, but also the matter of the sense of smell.

This man was involved in some more serious incidents: he was caught shop-lifting several times in the nearby shops; he used to burn old papers within his living room and almost burned his apartment more than once; he broke into his neighbours' cellars and stole some of the things found there; he started to beg at the nearby bus stops, using his disability as a disguise. His neighbours became outraged with his behaviour, but refrain from addressing him, being aware that he must be ill, although he appears as sane and lucid at the first glance and in more than pretty good physical shape for the man of his age. But this man is not living alone in the apartment. He lives with his daughter-in-law, which is widow of his son, and with her children, a girl in his early twenties, and a teenage boy. This woman used be respected person in the neighbourhood as anybody else is there who is not involved into the conflicts with the neighbours, who are not generating conflicts within his/her family, who has not troubles with law, and whose behaviour is not described as troubled by any means.

At first, people from the building were sympathetic towards her, feeling that she is the victim of her deranged father-in-law. Then she addressed some of her friends from the building to help her to gather all of the tenants to try to reach solution for the problematic behaviour of her father-in-law, which she felt was not burden just for her, but for the all of the neighbours. The meeting of the neighbours started in rather emotional tone, with almost everybody showing their support to this woman. The things took more rational course when some of the neighbours asked for the possible legal steps and wanted to know if the woman has taken any legal action yet. She first replied that legal procedure is robust, preventing social or medical service to act effectively without consent of the person who is meant to receive their service. Then she was asked if those in-stitutions could act upon her request, where she answered that it is beyond every legal possibility for her to make request for medical or psychiatric examination of her father-in-law, because the law recognizes only such requests submitted by biological kin.

At that point, a sense of sympathy for the woman still prevailed in the atmos-phere of that meeting, but it starts to fade somehow as the meeting was finished without reaching any real decisive conclusion and soon after the question was made on what prevents that man's grand daughter from submitting request for any legal (i.e. medical) action, which was left unanswered. No other meeting like that took place for another couple of years, as the behaviour of an old man continued as it was, and no legal action has been taken by his grand daughter either. The attitude of the tenants of that building towards his daughter-in-law began to change. People avoided her, at first explaining one to another that they do not want to hear her complains any more, because they can not help her; then

such explanations took form of do not wanting to hear her complains because she and her daughter are not doing anything to overcome their situation.

At some point, some of the neighbours learned that the woman has made a contract with his father-in-law: he obliged himself to leave the apartment to her and her children after his death in return for being provided by livelihood until the rest of his days. The reason for such contract was the fact that the man has another son, who is not living in Belgrade, owning his own apartment in the town where he lives, but who is recognized by the law as the rightful inheritor if this old man dies without the last will or the document like that contract[8]. When this word spreads around neighbourhood, the woman shyly affirmed it, and then the focus on this problem went entirely on her and her motives. People kept being polite in personal contacts with her, but in the more formal manner, and almost no one left silent and without letting her know that she is the subject of judging and disapproval. Now people hold her responsible both for the troubles old men gives the neighbourhood and for his non-hygienic appearance. She becomes nobody's favourite now and her friends from the building cease their social contacts with her.

A case of a neighbourhood junky

Injecting drug users occupy but the lowest position in the social cognition of nowadays Serbia when it is about judging and evaluating other people according to their social identity. People think of them best when considering them unreliable, irresponsible or sick; other tags include "dirty", "filthy", "immoral", "cheating" etc, and many people think of them as of some kind of the social thrash, living dead or so, wishing the society could rid of them for good and by any means. The injecting drug users are well aware of this situation, trying to cope with it in different manners (Cf. Žikić and Ilić 2015). People think of the injecting drug users usually as of generic category, and are not able to claim that they know some of them in personal. Their opinions and attitudes towards this particular group of people, marginal to any society, are formed mostly by the general discourse on this topic, and by retold stories of some other people's experiences, where latter include *retold* personal accounts of the injecting drug

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[8] Contracts like that became quiet usual in Serbia from 1990s and on, mostly signed by the old persons without living spouses and/or children, and younger or the middle-aged persons who do not posses place of living on their own. That is because the courts appeared to be quite indecisive and the trails over inheritance lasted for many years if there is more than one inheritor, or if the inheritors can not reach the agreement upon the inheritance. According to the law, living spouse and children are considered as in the first line to inherit.

users, as well those of the people who has been in touch with them (like their parents, former friends, neighbours, medical professionals, policemen etc.).

Few people know some of the injecting drug users in personal[9]. Nevertheless, they display resentment and despise for that category of people, mostly holding that as something as natural as the air they breed, and when asked to explain that, they usually start with the drugs being the most sinister threat to the youth and to the society, followed by the general remarks on the all kind of destruction drugs bringing to those who inject and to their social environment, moral derogation of the injectors and their criminal activities, them being neglecting to anything else but the drugs, the danger of HIV/AIDS epidemics and other diseases etc. Rhetoric changes a bit however when it is about some particular injector, and when it comes from the person who actually knows or has known that injector. It does not go far from the general discourse on drug addiction, but judging of somebody more familiar is a little bit different than seeing him/her as the member of some socially distant group.

Petar[10] is a man in his late twenties who has been living in the same neighbourhood in one residential part of Belgrade his whole life. He is a drug addict since his teens and he is injecting the drugs for about ten years or so. His success in the elementary school was moderate, but he has never been interested in school and while in the high school considered to drop it, but completed it eventually with the lowest marks, just enough to pass. He never had a job, nor thought of having it, as he admits. His parents divorced when he was in his early teens and he is living with his mother, in her apartment since. He has a younger brother who moved away a few years ago when he finished his high school and who is working now. Petar is not in touch with him, nor claims that they were close when they were kids. Petar tributes that to his early taste for the drugs.

He is supported mostly by his mother; here and now he is in some job which is not considered as illegal, like selling things at the flea market, but usually he is either in occasionally dealing the small amounts of drugs, or in petty theft. He has been in jail yet and he is positive to Hepatitis C testing; he has been never tested to AIDS. His mother dislikes his habit of course and it is not eager of finding him injecting in the house. He gave her best in trying to get him to some therapy and rehabilitation, but as it looks now, she gave up of doing that, although not wanting him to inject at home when she is around. Petar inject mostly around the places he obtains drugs, but also in his neighbourhood. It is part of the town with several small parks or playgrounds, where injects here and now, but he is injecting – and keeping his injecting equipment – also in the cellars of the buildings around, mostly by breaking in.

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[9] I could claim it after more than ten years of researching the topics relating to the injecting drug users in Belgrade and its vicinity.

[10] It is not his real name of course.

Petar's habit is known to his neighbours. For the most of them, he is the only really drug addict in the neighbourhood. It is fairly truth when it is about the injecting drug users, for some others have either died or moved away, but there are several persons much younger than Petar who smoke marijuana/hashish regularly or take pills. People from that neighbourhood I have talked with are mostly surprised that Petar is still around, because they think that somebody "who's been junky for the most of his life" should be either dead or in prison, although none of them was able to explain the possible factual reasons behind the claims like that. Those people were asked about Petar, but first I asked them what do they think of taking the drugs and injecting drug users in general, and they replied all but one in standard formula of evil, destructive practise, sickness, filth, epidemics, people who wasted their lives and endanger the others', who should be closed down, beaten or worse.

However, when asked about Petar, who is their neighbour, they softened their voice a bit. A man, who has beaten him on several occasions, and once pretty much severely, claims that "he is a good kid in fact, or he'd be one if he's not a junky". He has beaten him because Petar broke into is cellar on several occasions and for finding him trying to inject in the basement of the building that man lives in. "I had to give him a lesson. Or at least I thought I was doing so for the first time. Later on I realise it's the only way those junkies could learn. I have no hard feelings for him. Just don't want him to inject where I live, nor to damage my property. He's otherwise alright. Not a nasty guy. I know he deals but he's not dealing in the neighbourhood. At least something, means he thinks of how we see him, not every junky will think that way, I suppose".

A woman who is the closest neighbour of Petar and his mother says "he's not that bad as they have told you maybe. He was a good kid. Always hung around but wanted to give you a hand if saw you carrying the bags from the market or so. Later on, when he started with… you know… drugs… he tried to fool people to give him money. And you know… people won't tell you that, some of them gave him small amounts occasionally. I gave him once for… he was a good kid. It's just that stuff ruined him, I feel sorry for him and for his mother". Another woman, who is almost of Petar's age and know him whole of her life claims that he is not like other injecting drug users (although admitting that she does not know anyone else in person): "I feel bad when I saw him and I know that he has scored and was stoned not long time ago. He looks so dirty and disoriented, but you can't help yourself but think that he didn't do you any harm for real. Alright, he wanted me to give him money or asked to buy things which were stolen obviously, but he's always polite when he's able to communicate at all".

A man who reported him to police once when caught him injecting in his cellar explains that he did so not because he wanted Petar to get arrested, but because he feared Petar might have overdosed. "When I saw him, I though at

once I'll call cops, and they'll call ambulance or whoever who could help him. He laid down just in that dirt and I was afraid to approach him, I mean, wasn't afraid of him, but had fear for him. I distaste him, he disgusts me, but not he as a person, if you understand me… not as Petar, kid I know from the neighbourhood, whose parents I know and whose brother I know, but that monstrosity which has overtaken that kid inside him… I remember, he was always childish, immature and careless and maybe that's what brought him here… He's junky, alright, human misery, no negotiation with me about that, but he's kid from the neighbourhood too…"

Another man who reported Petar to police says that he would not do it if only he knew it was Par who broke into his cellar. "I found the lock broken. It was on the ground and some things from my cellar were around it, like somebody searched for something… didn't' know if anything is missing at first, and who would bother himself with looking something in stuff nobody use anymore, but then I saw plastics and realised that I'll found the syringe, and when I saw blood… well, a few drops... all that stuff about AIDS came through my head and I simply didn't think of anything else but calling the cops. I was outraged, not because of somebody broke into my cellar, but because of that blood, possible disease and so… Well, Petar was an obvious suspect, I knew that somewhere in the back of my head, but was furious at that very moment. I didn't want to sue him[11], in fact, I feel sorry for him. I pity him for everything, for his parents divorced, for not being able to fit in the society, for his ruining his life…"

Couple of guys who went to elementary school with Petar and had his name in their telephone address books until recently say that he is kind of "an ordinary bloke" when it is not about the drugs. Both of them are parents now and that makes their view on taking drugs and those who do it even more strict, but they wish nothing bad to their former friend, finding him as person he always used to be, "but less and less as time goes by", since his habit ruined his health both physically and mentally. Some of the middle-aged women from the neighbourhood also find Petar as "a polite guy basically", and many other people think that he "perhaps is not bad person at all, but bad is what's he's doing" and that there is no way back for him to normal life any more. All of the people I have spoke about Petar feel sorry for him this way or another, but do not excuse him for his addiction. They speak of it as kind of sickness, but hold him responsible for getting into that at all. They wish if he can find some help, if he is not already beyond it, but basically do not want him near them or near those they care about.

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[11] If the damage of the burglary or theft is less than certain amount of money (today it is slightly above120 Euro), then public prosecution does not take place and case could be brought to the court only if perpetrator is sued by the person(s) harmed by his/her actions.

Two examples brought together

These two examples break a bit binary opposition "good/bad". It is not the sense of opposing values that is broken, but its use in everyday life situations demonstrates that the frames of the contents of opposition poles are not so firm as some former theories in anthropology, or some past research in the same social context would suggest (Cf. Žikić 2009, 2011). Parts of those contents could be displaced towards the another pole of the opposition – although not be bound within it – and the people are judged and accordingly tagged dynamically due to kind of a constant evaluation of their actions and deeds. Somehow it turns then that neither good nor bad is not seen as some intrinsic features of the people, but as something which is adhered to them, or maybe more correctly, to which they adhere. Verbal expressions in everyday life suggest that people could be tagged simply as "good" or as "bad" in a colloquial speech of course, but more detailed accounts on some real occurrences of those being tagged take more nuanced way of describing somebody's attitude of somebody else, i.e. his/her perspective on the "quality" of that person.

Both examples presented here document some kind of disruption of the social order in some particular micro-social context; that is how people living in the neighbourhood the examples take place see it. The context is entitled as "neighbourhood" which is pretty much broad designation and it is derived here from the accounts of the people involved in this small-scaled research. It is their notion of their imminent urban and social surrounding, which consists of several streets or few blocks and people living there, but also their kind of image of tranquillity within the social structure: place of dwelling, socialising, recreating, and resting, not of working, place for family and friends, not for the people link to the hardships of their jobs. It is not thought of as the place of ultimate harmony of course, but it is idealised in some way as the space mostly free from the bad things of the society, like whatever is considered as socially deviant or abnormal[12].

Consequently, people perceived as giving troubles to what people of the neighbourhood see as a basis for their notions of neighbourhood become not just talk of the day, but somebody whose behaviour is scrutinised for certain period of time. They are judged and tagged freely, and no one is afraid of that he/she might be marked as being indecent or impolite, because "*thou shall not judge*" does not apply when something is sensed as an obstruction of the (micro-local) social order. That is not consistent to Christian learning perhaps, but reflects frustration of the people who consider themselves to be moral enough,

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[12] For outlining the term "neighbourhood" in the socialist and post-socialist context of urban Serbia in more details, see Divac 2002.

or socially abiding enough, that their sense of order has been disturbed. But it is not that an old man, his daughter-in-law, or Petar are those rendered as aberrant by themselves. It is their behaviour what is aberrant in the eyes of their neighbours: neglecting one's own personal appearance and basic rules of communal hygiene, begging on the street, irresponsibility towards the sick person and the neighbours alike, injecting drugs and petty crime.

An old man was seen at first as some kind of a menace by himself. His behaviour was commented as "grandpa cracked", but as it turns to be worse than before, his neighbours start thinking if he is doing at least some of the things deliberately and on some purpose, although the one not known to them. An old man was met then with almost open animosity and tagged as someone who is disturbing the others. At the same time neighbours expressed sympathy and/or pity for his daughter-in-law and her children, together with consternation and even despise for an old man's son for being neglectful towards his father, although the son lives about 60 miles from Belgrade. After learning the real nature of the jurisprudential relation between the man and his daughter-in-law, their neighbours did not prevent themselves from feeling an old man is a disturbance to their everyday lives, but did so for commenting him further, and turned their dissatisfaction on the daughter-in-law.

Nevertheless, neither of them was socially isolated. It is true that the neighbours mostly avoid an old man, but here and now somebody stops for a chat with him, or helps him with the bags from the market, holds the door for him or so, even many of them keep thinking that no matter what the true nature of the cause for his behaviour is, he is sound enough to know that at least some of his actions disturb other people[13]. His daughter-in-law is approached with questions, but not with reprimands, although people want her to know they disapprove her behaviour. Neighbours in mutual interlocution hold her responsible for not taking the action which will put an old man in healthcare institution, thus helping him to keep his decency, but also which will also help them by putting away from them the disturbance of the social order as they perceive it.

On the other hand, Petar is being tagged as a junky and as a nice kid almost in the same sentence in more than couple of the accounts. And it is not just the way people tend to show sympathy for him as a person, while showing antagonism and despise for his drug addiction. It looks to me that they see "junky" and "nice kid" in the same person, and maybe it is their way to formulate that – at least for them – their injecting drug user neighbour is somebody who is an exemplary case of a person who missed his opportunity to develop his inner

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[13] In elaborating this attitude, some of the old man's neighbours told me: "why, he takes a bus around the town and he never got lost", or "he exactly knows to whom he can be rude and to whom should he be polite when asking for those stupid things, and he just knows that is better for him not to address some of us at all which he does not then".

capacity for being decent human being (which is obviously equalled to being good social person)[14] for letting himself to get involved in such a wicked and disastrous thing like drug addiction, and more to that, who is continuing with it, no matter to anything else. Keeping with such a bad thing as drug use is, Petar then becomes more "bad" than "good" in the sense of how social person should be, but his neighbours feels like categorical tagging is another kind of stereotype which in fact is not applicable in the real life and to the real person they know: they think of him as of not being bad all of the time; there are, or there was (in the past) times and situations in which he appears or appeared as any other neighbour does or did.

Good people/bad people or good/bad in people

People participated in this research tend to correct their possibly basic way of looking upon things, situations and more of all people according to binary categorisation of the matter of their interest, and to adapt those views according to personal experience of what is related in conversation as its primary focus. The pattern-like mode of thinking is plausible with the assumption that people are basically informed by different means of cultural training (school, family, institutions, rituals, laws, norms etc) that the easiest way of how to comprehend the world, or at least starting point for doing so, is to stick to the view of the world which suggests it as consisting of many different mutually opposed categories, which values normatively, or discursively serve to orient peoples thoughts, and actions and behaviour accordingly. On the other hand, they appear to be as flexible as possible when they are involved in resolving real life situations in which the discrepancy appears between some ideal, normative level and the requests of *their* everyday lives. Their perception of what is good and what is not are prone to the occurrences of their lives more than to some prescriptions for behaviour. Carrithers demonstrated for example how rather strict ascetics of Jainism which denies living in fact is adapted to the guiding norm for living, where people are aware that they are behaving according to what they find feasible enough ideology to apply in their lives and not to the ideology a it is meant to be, nevertheless expressing their devotion to the basic principles of their religion (Carrithers 1992, 92-116).

When it is about the result of this research, I hypothesise that people of course could think in stereotypes based on binary oppositions consisted of some mutually contested values, and even act towards other people accordingly, but that they tend to have more nuanced approach in thinking, and more

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[14] There is an account on local perception of *decent people* in social context of a Serbian town, although not entirely compatible to my example, Cf. van de Port 1998, 37-66.

to that to naming, or labelling, tagging the other people when those other people are their acquaintances, did not make them any real harm, and happen to be essentially periphery to their interests and needs – at the moment, or in some longer term. I will not exploit this further here because I would like to discuss in brief – or more adequately: to post some basis for discussion like that – the idea that human beings are good in their essence, or that they strive to be good, that incline to goodness etc. People thinking of other people – if not reflecting on how they did some bad things to those people or so – tend either to see themselves as "good people", or to see all people as good, or at least basically good, or to make distinction between "good people" (usually "those good as we are") and "bad people".

I do not know obviously if it has something to do with our evolutionary development, but I am absolutely positive that it has many things to do with the way our society and culture inform us and/or shape us to be social persons and members of some culture. It is the question of course whether human cultures and societies look like they do because the humans are built as they are or it is vice versa, but that question is of little relevance right now. What I find intriguing is that we are taught that human beings are either basically good, or just good, or capable to be good, but there forces which distract us or even prevent us from being so. Such forces could include supernatural entities like the devil, evil spirits, or vengeful ancestors, situations beyond control of ordinary human beings, like the need for save own life at the expense of the lives or suffering of some other people, but also human beings themselves either due to some presupposed faulty as their perceived inner capacity – like the religious concept of the sin, or due to occurrences in the social life – like criminal for instance.

People I have talked to live in a social world which is shaped by three main forces: Christianity, Socialism, and globalisation. Christianity is Eastern Orthodox and with significant influence both to traditional culture of Serbs and to morality of the post-socialist society; Socialism was a particular Yugoslav case, or maybe an exercise in the social system which was neither Soviet nor Western and a bit Soviet and Western; globalisation means mostly turning loudly, silently, with consternation or even passive, verbal resistance to the values of the society as shaped in Northern Atlantic rim form the end of the last century and on. All of those ideologies claim the wellbeing of man as their central point, although in different manners of course, and all of them address either the goodness inside the man or human being as a good being essentially. It is only normal then that people affected by those ideologies think of themselves as of good persons basically, as well of the capacity for being so in others.

On the other hand, all three ideologies suppose man's capacity not to be good as something natural or intrinsic to humans almost the same way as the capacity for goodness is presumed. Christianity see man as branded with the

Original Sin[15], Socialism was sceptical towards those men/women who did not comply to the ideal of the working class, while whatever ideology lies beneath globalising forces of the economy it sticks with the notion of free and unlimited market, which in turn means that man's world is perceived like some kind of arena, where everything is about one's own interest and consequently the others are perceived at least as the competitors if not as even worse. Nevertheless, people are instructed by different public discourses imminent to those ideologies or stemming out of them to believe that point of the social life, if not of their own lives, is that good can conquer the bad, although few of us can witness it for real.

So people I talked about the old man and the injecting drug user from the neighbourhood hold firmly that social life and social order are meant to be if not good by themselves, than fair enough to make people to live their lives in such a frame in the best possible way. Their judgment of the other people, but of themselves alike, is influenced by the idea that goodness is imminent to the human beings, but that being good as a person, meaning being good by nature, is not enough to be seen as the good social person. Good social person is the one who acts within the expectations of acceptable behaviour in some social context and that is not much of the revelation. But in the real life situations, where people are judged daily according to what and how they do in respect to their neighbours, environment, communal property, law abiding, moral norms etc, one is tagged as „good" or „bad" – or more precisely: one is evaluated as positive, or more positively, or as negative, or more negatively – due to public estimation of his/her behaviour nearly on daily bases, and individuals could move along that imagined transversal between the poles of the opposition, just as they can embrace opposite values of judging at the same time. It could be described as kind of a common, non-scientific way of judging somebody behaving "normally" or "abnormally" according to what is seen as commonly approved behavior in some social environment "facilitated by estimations of the extent to which a person is able to incorporate and manifest accepted norms, bodily and in speech, when interacting with others" (Rydstrǿm 2013, 120).

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[15] An interesting account on how some of the Christian theologists saw the need for the human nature to be regulated sternly by social forces and expressed it explicitly is Luther's statement: " let no one think that the world can be ruled without the blood; the sword of the ruler must be red and bloody; for the world will and must be evil, and the sword is God's rod and vengeance upon it" (Sheldon S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 2004 (1960), quoted in Furedi 2013: 158). Although context of that statement is quite different than the one of the examples presented in this text, I find it exemplary enough as a source of producing ideas which could be attributed as misanthropy indeed but which essentially suggest that at least in some cultures (including Western) man is not seen as such an exalted being as many ideologies appropriated by those cultures claim.

An old man is not committing any crimes towards his neighbours; his behaviour just annoys them, giving them sense of discomfort, while his appearance and acts make them feel as being ashamed because of him. They know that something is wrong with his mental health, so he cannot be hold fully responsible for what he is doing. On the other hand, it is more than disagreement with or disapproval of his behaviour, because after all, he is lucid enough not to get into some serious legal trouble or to get hurt badly. His daughter-in-law was hiding from her neighbours that she made a contract with him, but again that is something which is considered impolite rather that something which made any real damage to the neighbours. She was scorned more for letting him to appear as he does and for enduring living with her children in hygienically problematic environment, than for the very fact of hiding the contract; the act of making the contract is not to be criticised in itself – after all, she finds way to secure living place for at least one of her children or to secure them with property which they would be hard to acquire otherwise.

Finally, Petar is injecting drugs, and that harms himself and brings sorrow to his mother; no one else is harmed or in sorrow. He supposedly deals a bit, but his trying to keep it low, doing it here and now and he does not try to involve any children from the neighbourhood in drugs. He breaks into cellars, but people keep the things they do not need there anyway; he does not break into the apartments. Otherwise, people hold no grudge with him, nor find him repulsive. Whatever he is doing, he is suffering the most, which is true as a matter a fact for the old man and his daughter-in-law. Their neighbours are affected only peripherally in the material sense; what is hurt is their sense of decency, morality and so on in behaviour in the neighbourhood in general, i.e. their sense of the social order, or their wish for it.

None of those persons is viewed as belonging invariably to any of extreme opposite value categories. Some of their actions qualify them for being subjects of some bad talk and tagging here and now, but there is not unique or unanimous way of categorising them, which is probably case with any other of certain people's acquaintances with whom they are in no conflict and whose actions are in fact of little concern to them. I speculate that kind of a force beyond this ability is social cognisance of human beings as benevolent and malevolent towards the social world, i.e. other humans, which makes possible basis for binary categorisation, but also for experience that all classifications are rather abstract and thus hard to use in negotiations for making decisions in the real life.

Conclusion

This social cognisance is influenced of course by the discourses on morality, values and similar issues produced by ideologies dominant in the society, but it is not developed only that way. Social institutions are its agents. They are so by

providing list of norms and rules attached to social relations under competence of each of them. Judicial laws make basis for that and the general idea beyond them is transferred to every other set of rules and norms of any possible institution. The principle of law is to discern what is allowed or – prescribed, from what is not allowed or – sanctioned. It is reasonable to think that there will be no matters on what is not allowed and subject to sanctions in any law or rulebook, if it is not expected that some of the people will behave the way which will produce what is not allowed. People simply are not expected to be that good not to produce what is seen normatively as bad, undesirable or so, and the institutions of society are communicating that to us every day. That is how our institutions see us, humans, and that is how our society and culture reproduce it.

Social science is misled in a great portion by the notion of *humanitas*, disregarding to the large extent "the other side" of human nature. Even Bidney, as an author who has been credited with introducing this notion to anthropology saw culture as a restraining force on human freedom although equipping man with abilities beyond the limits of its biology but as the most of the other authors insisted on the content of *humanitas* as of something inherently positive (Cf. Bidney 1996, 402, 11). While it is true that the vision of man as "utterly corrupt, ignorant, wicked and incapable of freedom" characterises extreme, totalitarian right-wing ideologies [16], more humanist-oriented authors were not highly optimistic on this issue either, so Rousseau wrote on incapacity of humans to govern themselves without some external, pre-given authority, and Comte attributed individualism with causing social disorganisation, while many of the early sociologists and psychologists, like Durkheim, Giddings, Trade, Le Bon, among the others, were highly sceptical on human (meaning mostly: the common people) capacities to build social and political life without ordering of some compelling force (Furedi 2013, 240, 254, 308-314, 316-317, 332-334).

It is not human nature what is of my concern here, but since we the anthropologists see culture as human product it is reasonable enough to think of that product in other terms but those attributing it with the ideas stressing its positive aspects. Many forms of human suffering are social suffering (Cf. Kleinman et al. 1997), and every form of labelling humans is cultural labelling. Forms of people harming other people either way are caused perhaps not because people are bad or good, but because certain cultural or social environment is structured as it is. Maybe it is time to turn at least some of the focus of anthropological research to those forms and aspects of life in culture and society which contest our notion of *humanitas*; Morson coined the term "misanthropology" to denote study of misanthropy in world literature, defining it as "cussedness of human nature" (Morson 1996), but I found it somehow appropriate to denote research

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[16] Franz Lepopld Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism 1933-1944*, New York: Harper & Row 1963, 195, quoted in Furedi 2013, 288.

concerns with "cussedness of human culture and society" for latter contribute obviously to different norms, mores, institutions, relations in probably every culture or society. That is probably basis for reasoning which suggests that people should be categorised according to them conforming demands for behaving properly in a certain context – which is always social or cultural.

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Šta ljude čini dobrima ili lošima? (Miz)antropološki esej o potrazi za društvenim/kulturnim razlozima za donošenje sudova o drugim ljudima

Cilj ovog rada je da razmotri razmišljanje o ljudima koje je uslovljeno kulturom, društvenim institucijama i ličnim iskustvima i koje ima izraženu tendenciju da ne funkcioniše u prostom binarnom modelu kad je reč o ljudima koji su deo nečijeg užeg socijalnog kruga. Biće predstavljena dva primera iz današnjeg Beograda. U radu će biti iznesena tvrdnja da, makar ljudi iz istraživanog društvenog konteksta, imaju tendenciju da u prosuđivanju i etiketiranju ponašanja svojih komšija, posebno kada je reč o ponašanju koje narušava društveni red, donose nijansiranije i promišljenije sudove nego kada je reč o ponašanju ljudi koje percipiraju samo kao generičke kategorije. Naime, donošenje sudova o ponašanju ljudi koji su percipirani kao generičke kategorije je zasnovano na društvenim/kulturnim perspektivama o bivanju ljudskim bićima koje nadilaze ovakve kategorije, što zapravo sugeriše i ozbiljnu sposobnost ovakvog rasuđivanja da učini nažao.

Ključne reči: društveno rasuđivanje, prosuđivanje i etiketiranje u kulturi, gradski kraj, Beograd, mizantropologija

Qu'est-ce qui rend les hommes bons ou mauvais? Essai (Mis) anthropologique sur la recherche des raisons sociales/culturelles pour porter des jugements sur les autres

L'objectif de cet article est d'analyser la réflexion sur les hommes conditionnée par la culture, les institutions sociales et les expériences personnelles, réflexion qui a une forte tendance à ne pas fonctionner d'après un modèle binaire simple lorsqu'il est question des gens faisant partie du cercle social le plus étroit d'un individu. Ici seront présentés deux exemples de la Belgrade d'aujourd'hui. Dans cet article nous soutenons que les individus pris dans le contexte social étudié ont tendance, lorsqu'ils évaluent et étiquettent les comportements de leurs voisins, particulièrement lorsqu'il s'agit de comportements qui ébranlent l'ordre social, de porter des jugements plus nuancés et plus réfléchis que sur les individus qu'ils perçoivent uniquement comme des catégories génériques. En fait, porter des jugements sur le comportement des gens perçus comme des catégories génériques est fondé sur les perspectives sociales/ culturelles d'être des humains qui dépassent de telles catégories, ce qui en réalité suggère une capacité sérieuse d'un tel raisonnement de faire du mal.

Mots clés : raisonnement social ; évaluation et étiquetage dans la culture; voisinage urbain; Belgrade; misanthropologie