

Report for the Advisory Committee to the Human Rights Council

The third agenda item for the Human Rights Council (hereinafter “HRC”) 36th meeting of September 12th, 2012 was titled “*Promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms through a better understanding of traditional values of human kind: best practices*”. Not surprisingly, out of 47 votes, 15 countries were against and 7 others preferred to abstain.

The notion of *traditional values of human kind* is as beautiful as it is naïve. Although it might be tempting to believe that certain “noble” traditions and values are openly accepted by all human kind, it is imperative that we hold as the fundamental premise that most (if not all) men tend to believe they are -or at least can be- more humane than the rest because of their beliefs. As such, man adopts different definitions of “values” and “traditions”, which, in turn, shape what we consider to be “humane”. Some consider liberty to be the supreme value, others advocate for equality above anything else, some believe in religious principles while others understand them as intolerant practices. The HRC document seems to refer to *dignity*, *freedom* and *responsibility* as the traditional values that are upheld by all mankind. At first glance they might seem reasonable but arguments could be made to defend different interpretations of each of these values and even to replace them with other values. The document also highlights the importance and particular roles of the family, community and society and educational institutions. Again, different connotations might be attributed to this social structures and how they should articulate with the education system.

Although divergence in the interpretation of the right and wrong dichotomy is what defines us as members of a global civilization, there must be some common ground of ideas amongst humans; otherwise, we would be extinct by now. And that common ground is what we seek through this paper. We will argue that there is an inherent understanding that allows for all interaction between humans that should be promoted by States and that is deeply entangled with the way individuals see themselves as members of a larger group.

As values differ greatly amongst cultures, religions, regions, political views and such, we believe the starting point should be the acknowledgment of the fact that we are different and coexist. This would allow us to understand that no human has the *autoritas* to determine

whether another person exists and why that person should or shouldn't exist (save maybe for situations in which the person relies on artificial means to live). On the contrary, that must too be a part of the starting point, as it entitles us to be called "civilized". Besides accepting the undisputable fact that others are different, we should also recognize the right of others to be different. Recognition does not mean promotion, in the sense that one thing doesn't and shouldn't lead to the next. We must learn to coexist respectfully but we are not obliged to accept the institutionalization, through public policy, of "values" that threaten the course of nature. Not God. Nature. Although we might differ in religious or spiritual perspectives, the laws of nature apply to mankind in the exact same way. Again, we are trying to prove the most basic stepping stones from which all human relations arise (as opposed to *traditional values of human kind*).

We are all individuals but most of us live surrounded by others. In fact, most people usually depend on others for their survival, phenomenon that can be traced back to conception. We all depend on external nurturing. Likewise, natural law dictates that every newborn depends on the food, shelter and protection provided by his/her birth parents. This simple structure builds up to a family, the basic social unit that adds up to a community. Thus, it seems reasonable to promote this structure as a matter of public policy. It must be mentioned that sometimes, in an extraordinary gesture of generosity, couples choose to adopt. This too must be modeled from the basic natural rule. Again, it is not a matter of faith. It is merely the articulation of the previous notions we have addressed and nature's law.

Parents will educate their children as they deem fit and will make a number of decisions on behalf of the infant/teenager for a certain period of time. This process can be enriching, as every individual has a mind of its own. The individual's understanding of the right and wrong dichotomy will likely be influenced by what he/she has been taught, what he/she has been exposed to (both home and in the outside world) and his/her inherent feelings, thoughts, reasoning and motivations. Only one thing is a given. That individual will be subject to natural law, just like the rest of us.

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