

## PANDEMIC MORALITY AND HUMAN SECURITY

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### Abstract

Morals and morality acquire immense importance in the conditions of epidemics and pandemics. The current COVID-19 pandemic is the first pandemic in a number of future pandemics. Morals and morality are human creations and qualities that radically distinguish the man from the animal. They are the basis of the most fundamental human traits and qualities, regulating human behaviour and all human activities. Morality, as an active reflection of morals, is perfected and developed thanks to human ethics and the individual's activity within a society. A high morality is necessary for people in their work, regardless of their field of activity. They cannot develop and progress outside of morals and morality. The journalistic and life activity of all media representatives, politicians, medical workers of all rank, but also of national and international organizations and institutions represents no exception.

**Keywords:** *morals, morality, moral duty, organizations, institutions, educational functions, COVID-19.*

### 1. PRELIMINARIES

The COVID - 19 pandemic forces humanity to have a high level of morality when it comes to individuals, ethnicities and states. Moral represents one of the oldest forms of culture or social conscience. It, at its beginnings, over time and at present, regulates human behaviour in its essence. Moral distinguishes the man from the animal. It is a product, a creation of numerous generations which succeeded each other over time. But it is also a product or a creation of the efforts of moralists and ethicists from all times. Its norms, principles and imperatives are ensured by the public opinion and by the moral conscience of the individuals. Being of a spiritual nature, moral can be regarded as something objective. Not material, but exactly like it, it exists independently of the will and conscience of humans taken apart. Moral is objective in its existence. It is compulsory for every normal individual and it changes in time and space,

according to various living conditions, cultures and civilizations.

At a certain development stage of culture and civilisation, in the midst of philosophy, a science about moral appears - Ethics. Its founder, Aristotle, interpreted it as a practical philosophy. Ethics therefore represents the theory or philosophical science of moral. It theoretically fundamentes the validity and necessity of human activity, of moral norms, principles, imperatives and requirements. Ethics proves that some moral norms are no longer in accordance with the new requirements of life. Ethics also establishes and fundamentes new ones. Human communities are the only ones who can accept them or not since the community or the society, and not ethicists or moralists, represent the true creator of moral norms. Moral and ethics have therefore a lot in common, but they do however represent different things. At a spoken, day to day level, they are usually used as synonyms.

There is also another term which relates to moral and ethics and it is usually used as a synonym for the former. This term is called morality. Morality represents the individuals' subjective reflection of moral, of norms, principles and imperatives existent within a community or society and the actual culture. As we all know, reflection cannot always be precise. Each normal individual represents a subject in itself. Therefore, he or she reflects the moral through its individuality. He or she may prefer some norms more than the others. Therefore, right from the beginning, reflection as morality does not completely coincide with the morality reflected. Here is where the difference between morality and moral stems from. Moral is objective in the meaning presented above, whereas morality is subjective. In a sense, it is also objective or it

reflects the objective moral and therefore it is only partially subjective. The more morality is closer to moral, in its reflection, the more objective it becomes and vice-versa. When morality is far from moral, it becomes more subjective.

The reflection of moral in morality can be equalled with the moral knowledge, but this does not also mean a moral behaviour. The majority of those who opt for a delinquent behaviour know that this is not right, but this does not stop them from doing harm or acting amorally.

Morality can be low or even damaging, when it incompletely or wrongfully reflects the existing moral. In order for the individual to have a high morality he must not only know or adequately reflect the moral, but he must also behave according to the known or adequately reflected norms. Here, the moral beliefs are also necessary. But they are not enough. There is also the need for a firm will to permanently proceed in accordance with the moral norms and requirements. The high morality requires daily, constant efforts on behalf of the individual, so that it behaves and acts according to the standard moral norms. This is a difficult, but necessary thing.

People are neither angels, nor robots. They often have to choose whether to act morally or not. For the sake of family interests, for the preservation of social or peer equity, for the sake of charitable and human interests, individual or collective, the individual is sometimes forced to violate certain desideratum or moral norms. However, regardless of the reasons, the individual has to tend to act morally in collective interest and not according to personal or selfish reasons.

The high morality individual honestly relives all his failures in this field and tries not to repeat such behaviour or the wilful or forced moral violations. He always reproaches himself for being sinful, for not being able to meet the divine requirements, and asks God to forgive him for this. In the same way, the moral individual constantly analyses his behaviour in order to avoid, at least in the future, those moral gaps which he admitted or he thinks that he admitted.

Moral and morality, as well as moral and ethics, permanently interact among each other.

This, sooner or later, leads to progress, to changes and permanent evolutions. Progress is not by far rectilinear. Deviations take place all the time, oftentimes there are periods of regression or stagnation. One could speak about the relative dependency of morality on moral and vice-versa the relative dependency of moral on morality. We could meditate even further when it comes to these interactions, dependencies and influences, but it is not the case. We shall know stop at the analysis of the morality of the journalists, of the other mass media representatives and of the public they address, at the morality of the medical workers, of politicians, but also of the national and international organisations or institutions.

## **2. THE MORALITY OF THE MASS MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES**

In journalism, according to professor Marian Petcu "there are three levels of communication - a) that of simple/neutral information, from which we can move towards b) the value added by the explanation and towards c) the value added by the comments. Here (and only here) we can manifest ourselves with some sort of originality/creativity. In fact, the major imperatives of information journalism remain, even in the era of the Internet: 1) to understand quickly and well and to make yourself well understood; 2) not to cause any harm!" (PETCU, 2018).

I would like to appreciate the second point, highlighted by this journalism specialist - "not to cause any harm!". This represents the moral requirement that every journalist has to uphold in his professional activity. Often, the entire journalistic activity is reduced to the first level - a simple, neutral information. How can the journalist not cause any harm in this case? It would be more correct to say how he can harm. The journalist may not offer the entire information, he could completely falsify it or he could change the time and place of the event. In all these situations, as well as in other similar ones, the journalist produces a lot of harm. A case study of this aspect could be the news regarding the 30 000 Syrian refugees that the Republic of

Moldova would allegedly host if Maia Sandu wins the presidential elections against Igor Dodon. Such fake news was issued by Dodon's staff. They are to blame for such fake news. However, the journalists from the TV stations that broadcasted it are equally to blame. Their blame is ever greater, as they broadcasted the news knowing that it is fake. The German chancellor Angela Merkel's intervention was necessary in order to deny such falsehood. However, the resulted damage could no longer be neutralised or transformed.

The Syrian refugees actually headed towards some of the richest and most democratic countries of the European Union. It is true that there are talks about the proportion of their dislocations in these countries. The fact that the Republic of Moldova is not a member of the European Union led to the exposure of this fake news. It seemed plausible, at first sight, that such a thing would have been possible for our state.

The journalists who took part in this ugly manipulation can blame the politicians, but it would be fairer for them to blame themselves and not to repeat such cases of fake news. It is regrettable that some journalists are ready to completely forget about professional ethics, dignity, honesty or humanity just to get a better paid job.

A journalist from Publica TV, who always uses fake news and manipulations, in his speech at an international scientific conference in Chisinau vehemently and rightly criticized the manipulation practices of journalists in the Russian Federation. Being an educated person, not only in the field of journalism, but also in that of theology, he had the audacity to criticise someone for sins completely similar to his own. What kind of a morality can we speak about in this case? Not about the highest and not even about the simplest morality.

The imperative of the information journalism "not to cause any harm" can be violated when we speak about another imperative "to understand quickly and well, and to make yourself quickly and well understood." If the journalist did not learn how to understand the information quickly and well, he will either willingly or not falsify it and therefore he will create damage. The situation is similar to that

when he is not quickly and well understood because of his own fault. He will become the partisan of the falsification of the news and therefore, he will also be the partisan of the evil committed by it. Continuing to act in the same way, will make him become completely amoral.

The journalist's amorality also manifests itself when he looks for other people to blame besides himself. You act morally only when you understand quickly and well, when you also try to make yourself quickly and well understood and when you consciously do no harm and do not contribute to the harm done by others. Otherwise, for the person of the journalist and for the society it would be better and more moral to give up this activity.

In order to be the first ones delivering some sensational news, some journalists are ready to break various moral norms, knowing that the general public permanently awaits such news or information. It is true that the public looks for such news, but they should be authentic, unfalsified and honest, in accordance to the both the law and the moral. The public can basically be educated, especially by the present-day media or by contemporary journalists. The latter are the ones who establish the moral or amoral direction the education will be carried out. This is where the enormous responsibility of the journalists towards the people, the general public and the young generation stems from. Neither the family, nor the kindergarten or school can compete with the media in the training process, especially with television. Hence the urgent need for media representatives with high morality, high professionalism, high moral responsibility and love for people, nature and society.

Journalists can positively or negatively influence both politics and politicians. Through the same means, they can educate and train people, including the young ones in the spirit of democracy and humanism, dignity and spirituality, verticality, solidarity and human freedom, including the freedom of speech. If all media representatives had high morality, the political class would also be moral. Therefore, it would not successfully spread its amoral, undemocratic, racial and aggressive ideas. The fourth power – the press or the media in general, might contribute more than it does in the present

to the progress of mankind, to excluding wars from the human practice and to solving the majority of global issues, including the social-ecological one in the extended sense of the word (SÎRBU<sup>a</sup>, 2018).

Journalists, the media on the whole, educate not only the youth, but also the public, the public opinion of the society. According to Mihail Guzun, in the preface of the Cross-media Guide (SÎRBU<sup>a</sup>, 2018), the mass media – public opinion relationship is in phase of radical changes: the boundaries between journalism and the public disappear. Digitalization has overcome the level of the technical sphere and it orients itself towards changing the traditional image of public opinion. In the information society, the citizen, through social networks, blogs, Facebook, forums and Twitter channels, aims to become “the fifth power”, another factor in the forming of public opinion. The traditional media “the fourth power” has competition. Guzun claims that for the network societies of tomorrow, the issue of the quality of the services and of the contents of the media products becomes extremely important.

He also claims that digitalization raises serious questions regarding the professional image of the journalist. A new professional reality occurs and the journalist has to deal with the new requirements. Therefore, the future of journalism is a cross-media one, meaning that print tests, and audio and video material will be in a unique network, in a reciprocal dependence. It is obvious that professionalism will be the only one able to offer a justification of existence for the journalism of tomorrow (CREȚU et al., 2015). We totally agree with Mihail Guzun, but we can also make a remark. The justification for the journalist’s tomorrow existence does not refer to professionalism, although it is compulsory. The high morality of journalists is equally compulsory. No matter how perfect the journalist might be in his profession, he will still be a poor specialist if he isn’t moral and does not have high morality. The journalist must permanently respect the principles of professional deontology and the general-human moral norms. This is the only situation in which he represents a true high-quality professional, an authentic personality. He will never allow himself to offend good

people, to betray the truth and to proceed in a hypocritical or abject manner.

From the aspects mentioned above we can say together with Mihail Guzun that “the transfer of journalistic teaching on a new, modern basis, taking into account the new digital realities in organising the curricula has become a must. Cross-media represents an irreversible tendency. The managerial skills, the knowledge in the economic and technical field are equally important as those of drafting the content of the broadcasted media product” (CREȚU et al., 2015) and of the behaviour in accordance with the imperatives of the high morality.

We believe that cross-media and its representatives play a major role in training politics and the population in the field of national security and defense. According to Victor Strîmbianu, a PhD. major general, the political class has to be aware of the complexity and of implications of the national security management. According to him, this is done preventively, in time, through adequate training and specialised national and international institutions, before political leaders take get into public positions which involve issues of national security. Basically, this training has to become a compulsory, sine qua non, condition in the race to gain an important position in the state (or in the Alliance). The author stresses that the responsibility of the political class is maybe more important than its awareness. It has to generalize the legal responsibility, on the long term, including the materials used for the decisions that it takes and the duties that the decision-making factors assume during their terms of office (STRÎMBIANU, 2015).

At the same time with the elements mentioned above, “a consistent, adequate, adapted and sustained report to the public is necessary regarding the evolution of the security environment, of the risks which derive from it, with the purpose of assuring the popular support necessary to implement the decisions of the political factors when it comes to national and allied security. This is done in time, through education, school, mass media, which refers not to the state’s control over the media, but to its voluntary and conscience adherence to the effort of supporting national interests and, last

but not least, through a permanent strategic communication with the society". Without the freedom of speech, there is no democracy, according to law associate PhD. professor Alexandru Amititeloaie (AMITITELOAIE, 2018). He also claims that the press "has become a major danger from Romania, starting from December 1989, when its role in creating turmoil and in facilitating a puppet regime at the head of the country is well-known" (AMITITELOAIE, 2018).

Media representatives together with the representatives of the given political party, starting from 1990, replaced the word "Gypsy" with "Romany", that Romanians knew before that as an alcoholic beverage. "Without any scientific basis, this word entered the public space, creating an unavoidable confusion between it and the name of the major ethnicity, respectively that of "Romanian." A. Amititeloaie claims that besides dishonouring the ethnic Romanians, especially of those who travel abroad and are subjected to all kinds of insults generated by this confusion, it is worth noticing that this diversion aims beyond these aspects, which are of course extremely serious. It is about contesting the Latin origin of the Romanian people, of its primacy and continuity in the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic geographical space" (AMITITELOAIE, 2018).

We have to state that not all media and political representatives took part in this act of diversity, but only the amoral part. "Out of the blue they started calling the Gypsy "Romany" ..." (AMITITELOAIE, 2018). As a migratory people, gypsies reached Europe in a number of waves in the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> century, migrating from India, through Minor Asia. In the Byzantine Empire their presence is documented starting from 1088. They get into Central Europe at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, reaching Rome.

Originating from India, Gypsies have no connection with Romanians or with any other European people. They reached the Romanian territory following the construction of the autonomous principalities of Moldova, Muntenia and Transylvania. They were slaves and they were brought by the tartars. This is why the historian Nicolae Iorga said that they were also called "tartarians" (AMITITELOAIE, 2018).

The amorality of the state media from the Russian federation is obvious, especially in the last years, when the aggressiveness of this country led to a serious global problem. According to doctor Gregori Glicon from the Centre in the name of Marshall, by analysing the Russian press and the means of mass information of the last years, one notices that it is extremely powerful when it comes to the materials published, the dominance of the idea of the specific ideologically propagated competition with Western governments, especially with the US government.

The topic of the present publications in the governmental means of mass information is reduced to the fact that Western governments try to isolate Russia, to defeat it, with the purpose of enlarging their sales markets and of spreading their cultural influence throughout Eurasia (GLEASON, 2015). Adulteration, manipulation and incitement to hatred is something common in the Russian politics and media, as well as the amorality of the majority of politicians and media representatives from this country. We cannot speak about the morality of the Russian president and of the journalists who fully support him as he is ready to do everything it takes to preserve his popularity. "... According to Nicolae Țibrigan, the Russian president has to act on an international level in order to preserve his popularity trend" (ȚIBRIGAN, 2015).

Politics is often regarded as dirty and amoral. Can it also be moral and clean? I believe it can, it can be both clean and moral and this happens when in the interhuman and interstate relationships there is reciprocity or the golden law of moral manifests: "Do not do to others what you do not want other to do to you." The same idea applies to journalism and journalists.

The media, cross-media and the journalists in general have to inform the public, educating it in a moral manner regarding the most delicate and intimate questions or issues. Here we can include the gender phenomenon (ȚÎRDEA, 2018). Here, gentleness and objectivity are highly required. Teodor Țîrdea claims that "nowadays, the gender phenomenon represents one of the most complicated and contradictory issues of contemporary science, philosophy and practice..." (ȚÎRDEA, 2018). The previously-mentioned

author says that the “gender” phenomenon represents “a social gender” perceived during its interaction with a concrete moral culture. We also encounter here the biological definition of gender, correlated with the structure of the human body, the notion of “gender” having a socio-cultural meaning – of femininity and of manhood (ȚÎRDEA, 2018).

A delicate and thorough approach of behalf of the representatives of the media, cross-media, science and medical practice is also necessary for the issue that has stirred up completely opposing viewpoints. Here we refer to gender identification and transformation. “It is, first of all, about the problems of sexual deconstruction (gender deconstruction) and its medical-reproductive and moral-normative consequences; we particularly refer to transsexuality and the attitude towards homosexuality” (ȚÎRDEA, 2018).

Journalists have to contribute to the “enlightenment” of the population regarding these issues, proving that no theory can explain all the data and mechanisms regarding the appearance of the homosexual attraction and that contemporary science was not yet able to offer a definite answer to what exactly does homosexuality represent – illness, vice, inborn anomaly or personality quality (ȚÎRDEA, 2018). At the same time, it is necessary and moral to avert the public about the fact that some behaviours may lead to the appearance of masculine or feminine homosexuality. The specialised literature highlights the following aspects: a) the predetermination of the particularities of the family environment: the maternal over-guarding, the negative perception of the father, the negative experience with siblings and the positive experience with sisters, or the other way around; the professional environment: artists who mostly live their lives in a bohemian manner of a life model structured according to the example of a Gypsy camp etc.; b) a predestined and assimilated situation (the homosexual attraction, homosexual contacts with people the same age etc.); c) a temporal predestination – the homosexual contacts replace the heterosexual ones for a limited period of time (in confined collectives with people of the same gender – penitentiaries, boarding houses, military units); d) an imagined predestination (it develops

under the influence of the erotic, pornographic information or of the fantasies with a homosexual content); e) personal predestination (in the result of the narcissistic development of personality, because of the fear of sexual failure); f) biological predestination (genetical, constitutional, neuroendocrinological, endocrine or prenatal factors, organic abnormalities of the brain) (ȚÎRDEA, 2018).

The moral-educative activity of journalists, the media or the cross-media is also necessary in the case of the attitude towards homosexuality as it sometimes acquires, according to professor Teodor Țîrdea, the characteristics of homophobia – of an irrational hatred towards homosexuals, which often manifests fear in relation to personal phantasies and sexual impulses. This is usually based on the conviction that homosexuality is abnormal, sinful, it reduces natality, it leads to the degeneration of the personality, it attracts the youth, it is a spreading factor for STDs and AIDS. Many of these allegations are not confirmed by the specialists (ȚÎRDEA, 2018). The journalists’ efforts contribute to changing the old attitudes and replacing them with new moral and ethical standards (SÎRBU<sup>b</sup>, 2018), related to humanism and human security. It would be moral for the media to propagate the entire Romanian culture, including the one referring to the psychology of the Romanian people, so lively and nobly described by the clinical cognitive science professor Daniel David in his monograph (DAVID, 2015).

### 3. THE NEED FOR HIGH MORALITY IN THE CONDITIONS OF EPIDEMICS AND PANDEMICS

The morality problems regarding journalists, politicians, doctors, militaries and of every specialist and professional have nowadays turned into macroproblems. In the current unique conditions of the spread of COVID - 19 throughout the world, all the other problems intensified. The lack of high morality led to the spread of the virus throughout the world and to the degradation of the global economy.

Which exactly is the role of moral and of high morality in all this? The most direct one.

The new Coronavirus appeared and got out of control in November 2019. The Chinese authorities told people about the virus and its disastrous consequences extremely late. They also drastically diminished the real number of infected people and of deaths.

The World Health Organisation, in its turn, has also hidden the truth regarding this virus. Only at the beginning of spring it officially declared the pandemic with this new Coronavirus. The population of European countries, and not only, has hung on to the enormous danger in the offensive. Football matches played with many spectators also contributed to the rapid spread of the pandemic in Italy and Spain, which later spread to other countries.

Some political leaders, such as those from America, Great Britain or the Russian Federation, as well as others did not pay attention to the real threat that this virus represented for the humanity. The global issues related to ecology, demography or climate change could and still are not taken seriously, but their effects did not manifest as fast and as brutal as the effects of COVID - 19. This virus can also be regarded as a global issue. It manifests extremely fast and it triggers a chain reaction.

The countries of the world, but especially those in the EU, out of their own selfishness did not help and did not support Italy and Spain from the very beginning. If this happened, the doctors, the medical workers in Italy would not have had to proceed amorally when choosing who to treat. Or, the infections were in such large numbers that doctors and hospitals could no longer cope with the situation created.

The frivolous and even amoral behaviour of many leaders has cost mankind dearly. The US has become world leader not only in the economic and the military field, but also in the number of infections and deaths caused by the virus.

If mankind learns the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic, it will become much more moral. The high morality of politicians, media representatives, doctors and of all those in power is the only one able to protect humanity in future epidemics and pandemics. The fact that these pandemics will appear does not even represent a question anymore as their premises already exist today.

#### **4. THE NEED TO REFORM THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS**

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The COVID - 19 pandemics as well as the numerous local wars and aggressions prove the inefficiency of many international organizations, such as the UN, the OSCE, the WHO etc.

All organisations and international institutions should be funded not by each country directly through quotas, but centralized through the reformed UN, or another organization that will replace it. In this way those respective organisations and institutions will be more independent and efficient. They should have an equal number of state representatives, regardless of their population. This is the only way in which those particular organisations and institutions will honestly fulfil their obligations.

For example, the OSCE was created with the purpose of regulating the conflict between European states. This organisation did not solve any conflict (Transnistria, Mount Carabao, Eastern Ukraine etc.). The highest financial quota and the highest number of workers from these organisations come from the Russian Federation. Hence the tacit support of its interests, in conflicts organized or inspired by it, and not in the legitimate interests of the conflicting parties

The most influential organisation in the world - the NU - also has many problems that it cannot always solve. To blame for this is mainly the right to "VETO" of five countries from its Security Council. I am positive that if this right did not exist, in the world there would have been a lot less blood. Tens of "VETO" from the Russian Federation led to escalating wars in Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, etc. The same thing could be said about the other countries who have this right. This given right does not protect the interests of peace and progress, but of a country or another that possesses this right and of their allies. The states who have this right will not give it up. This is why the NU reform is necessary. It should be replaced by the Global Union of Nations, in which there would be no "VETO" right. This organization may more

successfully lead the efforts of all states in solving various global issues. Firstly, the issue of world peace, without which terrestrial life, including that of the human species, cannot be ensured (SÎRBU<sup>c</sup>, 2018). The Global Union of Nations will also guarantee the exclusion of international manipulation (SÎRBU, 2020).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The COVID - 19 pandemic dictates the need for high morality. Moral and morality represent human creations which makes the individual completely different from the animal. Morality, as an affective reflection of moral, develops and improves itself due to the individual's activity within society and nature and also due to ethics, as a philosophical science on moral and ethicists, as its representatives.

High morality is necessary to all individuals working in various fields, including the representatives of the media or of the cross-media in general. Journalists, politicians, doctors, specialists of all kinds are obliged to selflessly acquire the educational function of morality in order to form a population with high morality, based on humanism, national and general-human culture, on the achievements of civilization and human practice.

The moral duty of journalists, of all media representatives, medical workers or teachers also consists in supporting the spiritual and technical and material progress of humanity in preserving human security in general, as well as in the durable development of the individual, society and terrestrial nature. COVID - 19 represents one of the first pandemics and lessons have to be learned from it. This is the only way in which mankind will be able to save itself in case of other future pandemics. The lessons of the new Coronavirus pandemic also involve reforming international organizations and institutions. The UN should

give way to the Global Union of Nations, which will exclude the right to "VETO" of any member.

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