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## THE POSTMODERN SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS — MORALITY AND JUSTICE VIS-A-VIS TO THE ARROGANCE OF POWER\*

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The article discusses the understanding and misunderstanding of morality and justice in post-traditional society on the background of ideas M. Blondel, Ortega y Gasset, E. Chiavacci and S. Privitera. Actual absence forming of human consciences and long persist relativisation of truth and values which was revitalized in actual social place and new social conflicts. Today it is very hard to consider which type of justice have to be application and which morality have to be preferred in social relations. Axel Honneth and Marek Hrubec emphasize to need, so-called good life on the ground of strengthening social appreciation, they estimate and recognise the other as to peer. It is possible to remove arrogance powerful and with means of transparent practices in social relations towards to transnational and global responsibility.

**Key words:** Social life, Morality, Justice, Social conflict, Power, Global responsibility, Ethical ways.

Thematizing ideas, that present understanding of morality and justice, means to realize autonomy and timeless character of a moral science. Morality affects social environment and protects human dignity. The Spanish philosopher and sociologist of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century José Ortega y Gasset (1883—1955) stated that “a social life is not exclusively a political life but, and preferably, it includes spiritual, economic and social dimension, which means that it includes all collective forms of being including a way of clothing or spending pastime” [7. P. 41]. People, as all the humanity, control area and means of civilization.

Thinking about the human ethos more precisely, it could be detected that a primary normative basis exceeds moral human positivity and experience. The ideals, desires, the so called *meta-reality* that was examined by Plato (427—347 before Christ) assuming that eternal forms had existed before the physical world, could be given as the evidence. Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century humanity is not able to control natural laws as well as pursue individuals to forget the ideals. The order of Logos had been fascinating for ancient cultures before the social norms were defined. Their nature was either theophanic (revealed) or human (formed by people in ethics and moral science). In an everyday contact with the reality each individual learns the art of the so called “small steps” which include modesty, deliberation, sensitivity to differentiate truth and falsehood, the good and the bad, favour from disfavour, certainty and uncertainty, order and disorder, moderation and lavishing, important and wasteful. E. Chiavacci says that: “The man lives in particular situations in which he makes many important decisions and recognition of his identity requires giving to all these decisions its final meaning. The final meaning

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and its basis needn't be discussed — this requirement is a moral life" [5. P. 14—15]. However, things that are the most essential need to be revealed as humanity lack the ability to define it.

### **1. Historical Time, Social Environment, Power and their Influence on Social Politics and Social Practice**

A time horizon defining human history and a social practice is dynamic. It is historically structured. The life of each individual develops in time as well as events and personal acts. The emergence of moral norms could be traced in the ancient times as taboos, later as the law. The human life and mutual relations were improved by the help of the norms.

The French philosopher Maurice Blondel (1861—1949) asked two questions in his work *L' Action*: Is there any reason and any destiny in a human life? What is meant by a human deed? He realized that he was living a particular fate without an explicit wish and without explicit knowing who he was. These concepts were found eluding but he felt that responsibility for their comprehension or misunderstanding would affect his personal future and eternity. There is nothing that could be added to and taken out of the acts once performed. Where is this feeling of responsibility from? The thinker realized that people were predestined to life and death, for eternity. Nevertheless, he asked: How and why if we did not know in advance? [1. P. 65]. Analogous questions are being asked by many people regardless the age.

The deeds are important in human life but righteousness requires the deeds would be in harmony with right and obligation. The righteousness is a virtue that is preceded by *conditio sufficiens* in order the man become righteous from a moral point of view [8. P. 110]. Everything the man does is totally responsible for, there is no escape and if there is, it a false idea. Indeed, some people are naively conceived that they are not concerned with the issue as they do not count on eternity. According to Blondel the deed is a general requirement in a social practice. Everybody is concerned with it; it is a highlighting of a universal determinism. The deeds are happening without a human effort. The action is necessity that cannot be doubted. Its negation would require effort that cannot be overcome. Even in a sleep humans are active — they breathe, dream, and think. The deeds are not necessity, they are obligations.

M. Blondel claims that the man cannot develop, learn and be spiritually richer without impoverishing his own self. Each decision eliminates other options. Therefore he asks: Do we have opportunity to stop? And he answers? No, we need to proceed further. And can we refuse to make a decision in order to keep all the options that have been offered? And he answers 'no'. We have to get involved in the choice otherwise we can lose everything. There is no space to be neutral and passive for too long as all the options could be lost [1. P. 66].

### **2. Morals, morality and justice**

Morals, morality and justice are the conceptions which refer to the quality of humanity (*humanum*). "Morals is an external manifestation, an act, effectuated according to the criteria of a moral law and moral rules" [3. P. 32]. The conception of morality

is a compound form which is manifested in the prospective of social relationships, thus it is sometimes very difficult to decipher a relation between persons and social structures in practical life, as they follow from the diverse relations and proportions between different realities, e.g. my world and the world of others, divergent aims, circumstances.

Justice — as a basic virtue in the human living together and public space — transcends the individual man and his possibilities. All people are open to justice and desire eagerly justice. Social justice is a key for a correct co-existence. From this reason it is a natural claim of our days to stabilize: What type of rationality and justice could be included in the bases of practical philosophy, hence ethics? Will be sufficient here only juridical, political and philosophical discussions? As it seems, the dialogue discussions and argumentations are enough today, but what we are able to identify clearly in our days is a fact that there exists a significant disproportion between: the knowledge and doings, the truth and justice, the prescription and description, between the acts realized in utilitarian way and the acts behind which is the sincerity, benevolence, between the scientific guidelines and norms, between the ethics and science, which is evident today mainly in the field of medicine. The people of 21st century are very proud of scientific attainments, but at the same time they do not realize that their knowledge is not the cognition of the substance of the things and the being itself.

It is also very difficult to judge in view of the progressive relativization of the morals and values which values and what kind of behaviour is to be preferred in the given situation. Could it be a behaviour considering more individual justice or societal one? It seems that in contemporary society one thing can be confirmed indubitably: the human acts are more effective when they are done with love. When there is not love, there is also a lack of authenticity. According to the above-mentioned philosopher Blondel, it is so because “(...) in the nature of man is always something so unique which deserves to be loved in a unique way” [1. P. 253]. If we do not love others, we do not care that the justice is applied towards them. In everyday life we often hear that morals and good manners are not worth while. It is so, because the controversy norms are given in the same platform as the universally valid moral norms. Besides, in the mass-media, amorality is put in the centre of attention more than morality, which is often undervalued and ridiculed, too. Frequently, injustice is given for justice and error for the truth. Who had caused this and who will set it right? Is the science and research to resolve it? Probably not. Morals and justice require great effort as everything what is important.

The moral requirement creates a space for the rightful structures in all times and also our contemporary period, characterized by multiculturalism and relativism, cannot avoid this. On the other hand it is right to protect identity, to respect cultural differences and provide that any cultural community could not feel marginalized and endangered in its future existence.

### **3. Social Conflicts and Ethical Ways out**

In the last years, as all of us can observe, we are witnesses of revitalisation of social conflicts throughout the whole world. It is not caused just by of globalisation, cultural plurality, economical-managing crisis, increase of unemployment, but first of all by ar-

rogance and immoral behaviour, which are the breeding ground for creating of new forms of exploitation and disavowal even in highly-developed western countries. It is really true, that the crisis invokes psychological stress and social collision, however they should not emerge, if those who are governing and living in luxury have more solidarity with those, who are working and though becoming just minimal wage for their work. These are the reasons of today loudly speaking about exploitation and slavery labour. Just remember the bankrupt businesses, which do not pay up salaries to their employees even for several months lasting work, slavish practices against the people who struggling for survival are forced to work abroad, as well as enormous bureaucracy demanding the work over time and also during weekends. All of this is causing the disavowal and increase of real barriers between rich and poor, employers and employees, young and old, those who work and those who are long-lasting receivers of social supports, majority and minority inhabitants, inhabitants of villages and towns, as well as conflicting interactions against authorities or influential opponents. So it seems that the ground of social discontent is created by insufficient moral and social appreciation.

Marek Hrubec from the Philosophical Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Faculty of Arts of the Charles University in Prague states that “the a critical social theory arose just in thirtieths years of twentieth century in time of *World Economic Crisis* (1929—1933)” [4. P. 7]. The need to pay more attention with a full sense of responsibility to human rights had been becoming more urgent in the consequence of moral evaluation of war acts and world policy especially after the Second World War. Representative of the Frankfurter School in Germany Max Horkheimer (1895—1973) is recognized as the first critical social philosopher.

Therefore the critical theories are very important also today, because they offer us analyses of society, economics, politics, culture, social movements. Their obligation is to prefer rational reflection taking some distance from the course of events. In the rhetoric of these theories the questions like these are being raised: What is the causality of social conflicts? Which kind of disavowal has to be happened, so that it would be considered as unacceptable to such an extent that people are willing to take part in social conflict? Which kinds of moral expectations about the social justice have to be broken, so that people would feel themselves disavowed? How it is possible to eliminate the unjust failure of acknowledgements early in time? Axel Honneth (born in 1949) influenced by Hegel’s Conception of Acknowledgement in works *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) and *Basis of the Philosophy of Law* (1820), and also by Habermas’ intersubjective theory in work *Kampf um Anerkennung* (*Struggle for Acknowledgement*, 1994) with the subtitle *Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* tried to respond these questions. Honneth analysing the social phenomenon’s tried to formulate his own responses to questions about causality of social conflicts. In advance the research seeking responses for four questions was made: Which conditions are influencing a good life? Which possibilities are the most suitable for self-realization? What precludes the formal understanding of the acting and behaviour possibility? Which kind of historical tendencies have influenced the development of acknowledgement and disavowal among people?

Relating to expectation of fair social acknowledgement Honneth identified three basic levels of acknowledgement:

— The first level concerns the sphere of intimacy, so it is a matter of acknowledgement relation through the love and friendship. Intersubjective creation of personality is starting in the childhood in the relations with the parents, siblings, and near people. The child is acknowledged by being accepted by his parents. The person is becoming independent and earning his own individuality just gradually. The struggle for acknowledgement is joined with the moral progress, in which “the historical game of the dialectics between the specific and general” [2. P. 198. In: 4. P. 115] is realised;

— The second level deals with the acknowledgement in the legal relationships. Every person in the modern state is legally considered for coequal, even if in the practice it is not always so. Also in the current social sphere there are equal and more equal ones, therefore it is necessary to develop the legal acknowledgement through the constitutional acknowledgement;

— The third level deals with the social acknowledgement, which is the appreciation of the specific contribution of individual person, of his general characteristics and expressions. The awards known almost all the world over are “The Deed of the Year”, The Best Sportsman, Moderator, Journalist”, as well as awards of “Mothers” and “Fathers”. All of these three types of acknowledgements can of course be changed and reformulated at the local or international level. It is very positive, that the need “to have clear consensus in questions of justice” increases in the actual integrated world. For example, concerning this goal the smaller countries try to integrate themselves into bigger units, because as isolated they would not be able to face the challenges of just acknowledgement.

Honneth though competently points out, that the people are not primarily critical towards the society. They see the discrepancy between reality and before adapted standards of consensual communicative proceeding, however they know that the social norms are continually broken in practice. The discrepancies are being solved just then, when they become unbearable and morally condemnable [4. P. 18—19].

Many analyses and statistical evaluations are being elaborated in post-traditional society, however they also can be manipulated, e.g. before elections. It is clear, that no theory is perfect; therefore we need new deeper analysis, and based on them also new reformulations in the social sphere. The contribution of the Honneth’s social reflection about the theory of acknowledgement consists of the fact, that it evokes in people the need to solve the problematic of social and cultural disavowal.

On the other hand, the honest citizens are provoked by the boasting of those powerful and their arrogance resulting from the unhealthy policy. This is the reason, why the citizens trust neither political parties, nor politicians. Their disappointment results from the fact, that majority of current politicians are taking care just about filling up their own wallets using everything and everybody to reach the status of “the new rich people”. What than the ordinary working people paying taxes can do? How should they cope with the privileged caste having no conscience? And anyhow, how did we come so far away to such a degree of decadence?

It is true, that such people have always been found in the politics who have taken profit of the subsidies from public resources, however after being proved guilty they

were at least ashamed and some of them, because of their qualms of conscience, paid back what they stole. Today we are witnesses of exhibitionism of those powerful, who not only do not feel ashamed for their deeds, but in opposite they apologize what is inexcusable. Miloslav Kral (born 1930), Czech mathematician and theorist, views the meaning of power in the connection with controlling. He says that “(...) the traditional totalitarianism was defined by a prison cell while the postmodern totalitarianism is characterized by a virtual cell which moves together with the person and the person is not aware of its existence so far he/she behaves in accordance with the algorithm of the ruling élite. The contemporary totalitarianism declares itself to be democratic but it is actually only a make-believe” [6. P. 50].

This typical Machiavellianism also disposes of modern tools to manipulate people by affecting their mind, opinions, values, models. The postmodern totalitarianism has generated models of personalities, celebrities and politicians which are the object of the media’s attention.

### **Conclusion**

Two points are resulting from the ideas outlined in this contribution: the need to strive for refinement of the conceptions of personal dignity, and for promoting the style of love and friendship in relations with other people. The personal autonomy, uniqueness, and unlikeness can be taken into consideration and toleration only in these attitudes. The purposeful strengthening of consciousness about the social, corporate, and moral responsibility for life, for social relations, and for solidary behaviour, can also be added to this style, what intensifies the sociability. Democratic governments should support and strengthen the family, intimate and friendly structures, which are the appreciations of love protecting the social relations. In the current Europe there are some ambitions to elaborate new theories among national institutions and European legislation, though this system is poorly elaborated in case of international recognitions, what can be seen e.g. in cases of remote adoptions, by recognitions of marriages, or diplomas.

The solidarity is not the symmetric form of interpersonal relations, because it takes into account the actions of individual, who should be the contribution to the society. It is the altruism, understanding of particular situation of other man, and the willingness to help him. Therefore the endeavour to reformulate basic legal relationships is justified in order to prevent pathologic occurrences in society and domestic violence. M. Hrubec affirms that: “Permanent refusal of rights and social appreciation has destructive effect on human relations and exposes the subjects to the risk of hardship” [5. P. 82]. There is a need to develop human feelings at the cognitive level by recognizing the other like the equal one, and also at the practical level like the presence of intellectual life forwarding to trans-national and global responsibility.

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## **ПОСТМОДЕРНИСТСКИЙ ДИСКУРС СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ ОТНОШЕНИЙ — МОРАЛИ И СПРАВЕДЛИВОСТИ VIS A VIS — С ВЫСОКОМЕРИЕМ ВЛАСТИ**

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В статье автор разбирает такие философские категории, как нравственность и справедливость в посттрадиционном обществе. Эти категории рассматриваются в свете идей М. Блонделя, Хосе Ортеги-и-Гассет, Э. Чиваччи и С. Привитера. В современном философском дискурсе постулируется фактическое отсутствие категории «человека совести», отмечается релятивизация истины и ценностей, которые были обновлены современной социальной реальностью ввиду новых социальных конфликтов. В статье ставится вопрос о том, какой тип правосудия должен быть принят и какая мораль должна быть предпочтительна в современных социальных отношениях.

**Ключевые слова:** социальная жизнь, мораль, справедливость, социальный конфликт, сила, глобальная ответственность, этические способы решения.