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THE VALUE OF INTEGRITY IN THE REPORTS OF WORK

Simona-Roxana ULMAN*

Abstract: *The most important aim of this paper is to identify the main general ethical values conducting to personal integrity, to build the general ethical values pyramid and, so, helping to improve the reports of labor for having positive results on the economic field. In this context, the human psychological development theory thorough by Maslow is exploited as example for the building of a human values hierarchy necessary to the individual as a social being to engage in normal interactions with the others. These general values are an imperative for the person's integration in society, also contributing to his belonging society's welfare and to its performance.*

Keywords: ethical values, reports of work
JEL Classification: A14, A01

Introduction

Long deliberations on the crisis theme were and are present in the economic research area. Different subjects were up for debate trying to find the eventual causes of this negative phenomenon apparition that damages the social and economic circumstances. Starting from financial, managerial errors and going to superficiality, demagogy, lack of objectivity characterizing the social and economic actors and their actions that, resumed, firmly define the daily macroeconomic reality with all its pregnancies, the ethical aspect was unlooked. Ernest Bernea (2011) emphasizes that thousands of pages were written by the everywhere analysts that spoke about the crises' causes, ways of action and effects without being conscious of its roots: "They speak about the block, branches, head and fruits, but do not say anything about the root". The actual economic crisis is so persistent and with such grave effects on the economic and social totality because it has on its base a moral crisis of those who are on the top of the social pyramid, but also, of those from its basis. In this context, it have to be emphasized that the true source of the actual economic crisis has as a starting point the human factor, meaning the impossibility of the community members to attend normal, correct, responsible and trustworthy relations.

1. The pyramid of general ethical values

The aim of this paper is to identify the main general ethical values conducting to personal integrity, to build the general ethical values pyramid and, in this manner, to offer a practical

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explanation for what we call integrity from the work reports. In this context, the human psychological development theory thorough by Maslow is exploited as an example for the building of a human values hierarchy necessary to the individual as a social being to have normal reports with the others.

The start is the duty as a foundation value without which the individual would not be able to pass on the next pyramid's levels: dignity, cooperation, social responsibility or integrity. It happens because no one may pretend to be dignified, cooperator, moral responsible or integer without respecting the rules, the norms, the laws, the society's unwritten principles, but especially, those written.

Similar to the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the advancement to the top of the pyramid of the general ethical values is accomplished in a progressive manner: winning one value is impossible without achieving the former one. So:

-dignity cannot exist without duty as the need for safe cannot be wanted until the physiological needs are satisfied;

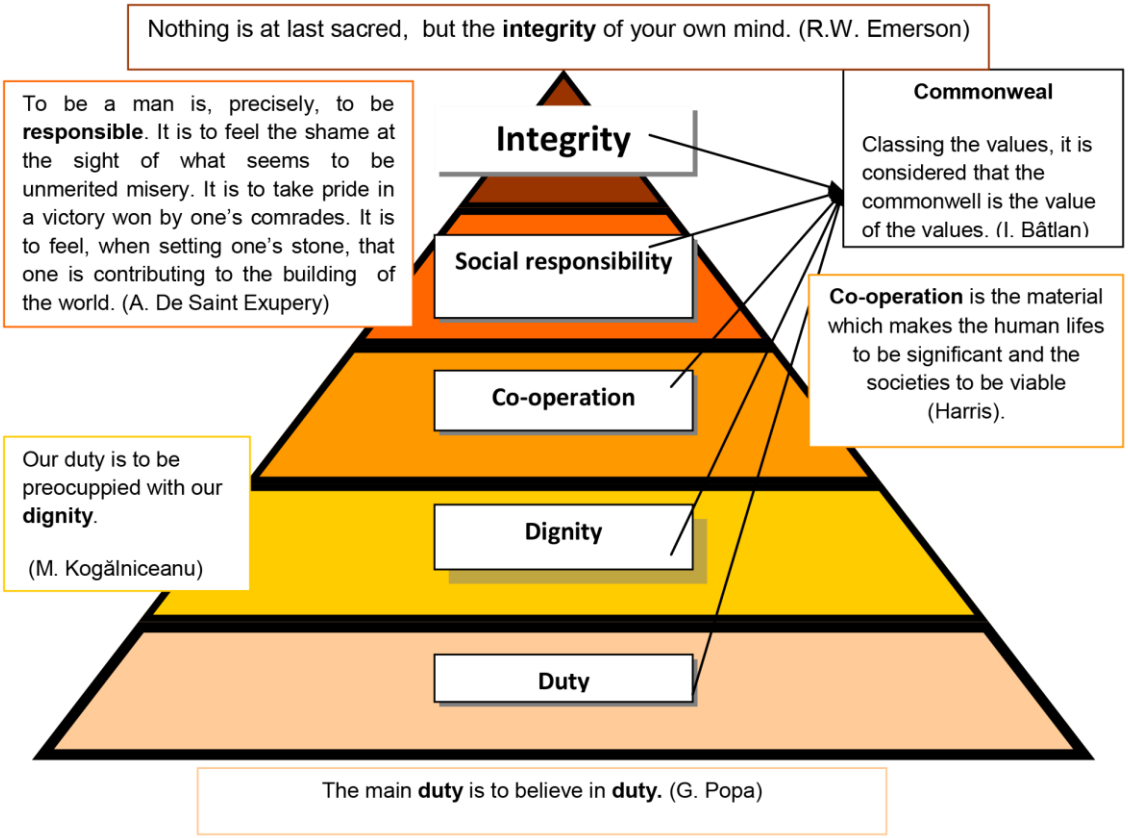
-co-operation cannot be achieved out of the respect of the dignity and duty principles, equal situation with the one of the individual who cannot concentrate on the love or belonging needs without the physiological and safety needs being achieved;

-social responsibility doesn't exist if the individual does not respect his moral duties towards self and society, if he is not dignified and does not co-operate with the other members of the society from his or her work reports as the esteem need cannot be fulfilled if the needs before it are not satisfied;

-integrity does not exist out of respecting the duty, the dignity, the co-operation and the moral responsibility values as the self-actualization need does not exist when the former needs (physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem) are not satisfied.

The reports of labor that do not subordinate to duty are fated from the beginning to fail. So, the duty, in its double sense – moral and judicial, is exactly the starting point or the basis on that a report of work is built, indifferent to its platitude or complexity. According to this, the duty from the pyramid of the general ethical values can be considered as equivalent to the basis of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, physiological needs. As it happens in the theory of needs, the advancement to the superior level cannot be possible without achieving the former value, the same happens in our case: the dignity, as the second level of the pyramid, cannot be acquired without achieving the value of duty. So, initially, the individual forms his spirit of duty of judicial and moral obligation towards himself and society and, then, he can pretend himself to be dignified. Without respecting laws, norms, regulations and rules, the dignity is impossible to be gained.

Figure 1 - General ethical values pyramid – prerequisite for the efficient work reports

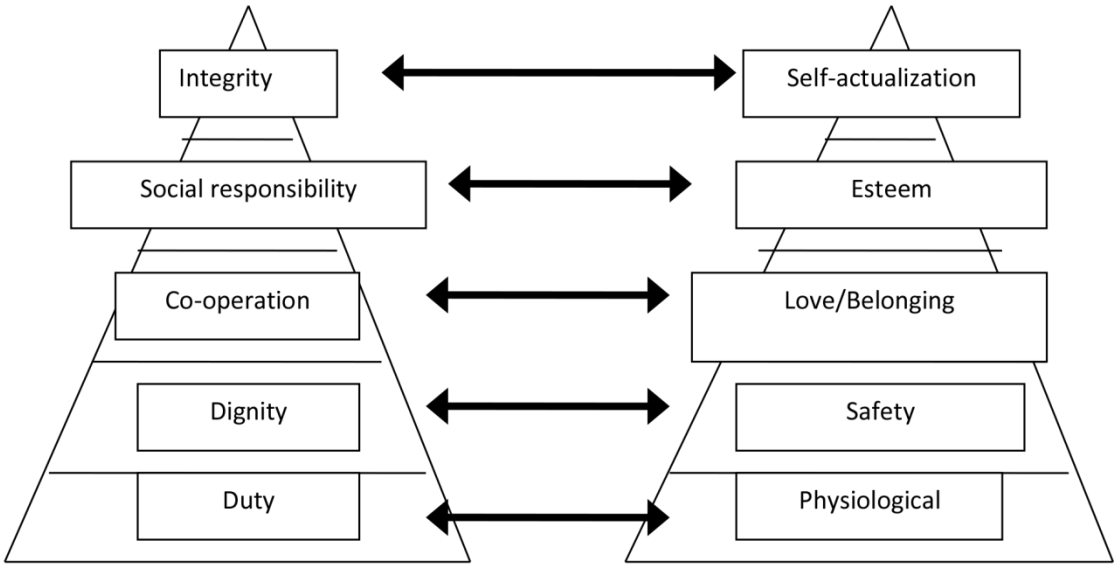


Source: author's work

2. Main characteristics of the public values

All the societies, including the modern and judicial specialized ones, allow the evasion or, even, the circumvention of some social-moral civil obligations and indebtedness in the conditions of respecting the law. In this context, the duty, as the ethical value through which the laws and the regulations are respected, is not enough for an efficient and beneficial for the society report of work. It must be completed by dignity, as the human value of the second level of the general ethical values pyramid and corresponding with the safety needs from Maslow's Hierarchy.

Figure 2 – General Ethical Values Pyramid versus Maslow's Hierarchy



Source: author's work

The dignity is the value that helps the individual directly implied in the community's life and with impact on its progress to internalize the written and unwritten rules and laws, becoming, in this way, a constituent part of the moral person. In this case, the individual is not capable to abdicate from them, indifferent to the confronted situation. This internalization is gradual, till childhood, starting from simple rules majoring its level of complexity as the experience of life is attained.

Co-operation among people is one of the most important elements of the society, being possible to be even the most important one; it is the fact that makes the human lives to be significant and the societies to be viable (Harris, 2010, p. 53). The dignity reveals the self-person respect and, then, it is rounded by the respect for the others with whom the person interacts in his quotidian activity. In this way, it is possible the advancement to the next level of the pyramid – the co-operation level – which is the correspondent of the love/belonging needs from the Maslow's pyramid. The co-operation means the good and prolific relation to the nearby persons.

Mises sustains the direct correlation between the human action and the division of labor as a consequence of the first one's progress and giving birth, in this way, to what is called today co-operation (Mises, 1985, cited in Pohoata, 2009, p. 118). So, individuals and their necessities provoked the apparition of the division of labor for a better satisfaction of the human needs. Starting from them, helped by some efficient solutions, close by the conviction that the individual is a social human being, this division of labor appeared and spread all over the world and provoke the process of specialization. For all these aspects, the co-operation as an ethical value is required. In this way, every actor implied

in labor reports must be aware that he has to accept both the pluses and the minuses of his belonging environment and to be open to communicate and even to negotiate. Indifferent of the simplicity or the complexity of work reports among individuals, without this mentioned elements, the work's outcome is inefficient and not on the long term.

The origin of responsibility is in the rational and conscious part of the human nature. It is the value wanted to be deliberately, not strained, assumed by the individual. It best promotes the freedom of the will, owned by every human being, but possible to be used with discernment only by the grownups. Responsibility, as co-operation, is determined by the human condition as a social being and it adapts on the historical and social context from that moment. We participate at an enhancement of its complexity and of its arias of application: political, judiciary, professional, homelike, etc., all these elements having the moral responsibility as common principle.

In this context, the human behaviors are responsible and determined through decisions taken with discernment depending of the advance on the fourth level of the pyramid of the general ethical values. Starting from the duty, as the basis value needed to be respected in a work report, and followed by the dignity and the co-operation, the ethical condition of an individual is possible to be enriched with the fourth essential and complex value – moral responsibility. This cannot be acquired without the other values before it and has as correspondent the esteem need on the Maslow's hierarchy. So, the responsibility cannot exist without the respect for laws, rules and regulations and essential society's written or un-written norms, without the cultivation of dignity's principles and without the co-operation's promotion and practice as an intertexture of personal interests with the others' ones for the achieving of a common objective. In other words, an individual, who is not capable to respect the three mentioned values, is not capable to be morally responsible, that means a „conscious and wanted self-engagement having as its basis a choice among more possibilities" (Batlan, 2008, p. 103), choice made, first of all, taking into consideration the moral aspect. So, even if an option gives superior financial benefits, a moral responsible individual would not take it into consideration, if it does not respect the limits of morality.

Integrity represents the supreme ethical value of the social actor that is employed in human reports. It is gained in individual's evolution, being a sum of values defining the complete ethical person, respecting the moral principles without taking into account the public opinion, the pressure exerted by superiors, by third parties or even by his own temptations. The integrity value appears as a direct consequence of the advancement on the scale of values, being on the top of it, possible to be attained only after the individual's ethical maturation that is helped by the achievements of the former values as keys for the personality. This is similar to the last level of the hierarchy of Maslow – the

self-actualization need, integrity being the fulfilment or actualization of the complete ethical person, who does not abate from the moral principles indifferent to the confronted situation.

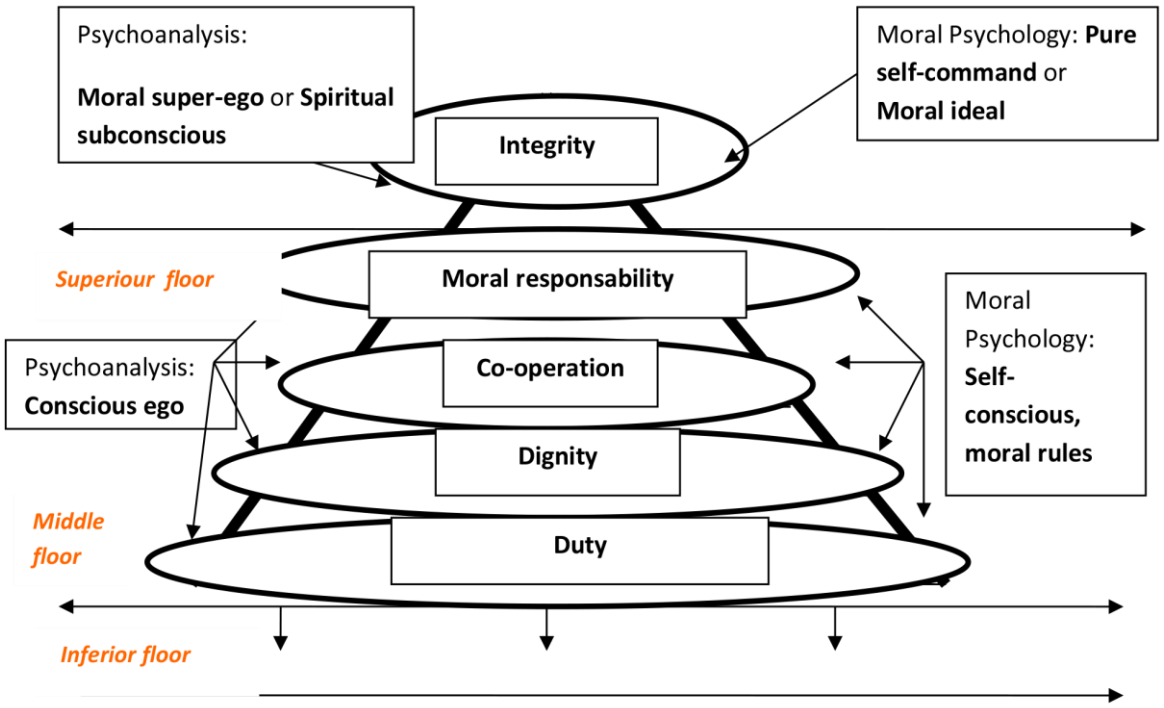
Integrity has the aspect of a permanent value, with deep roots in the human personality, being impossible to sustain that a person is incorruptible at this moment or a man of integrity and latter not. Also, it is the value that does not admit halves of level, or adaptability to the context taking into account the own interest or other ethical abnormalities. If these elements interfere in the person's habits, the social actor clearly cannot be named as being characterized by integrity, but aspirant after it. The advancement to the last level of the pyramid of ethical values is difficult and, usually, being only a level to that we aspire or tend, a level equal to ideality or ethical excellence. Besides these aspects, a complete integrity asks high professional competencies to be acquired.

Integrity can be understood as a person's capacity to discern between good and bad, where „good means the human being determination and bad, illusiveness determination" (Boirac, 1910, cited in Enachescu, 2005, p. 73). In this manner, when the concept is put into practice, without exception, the individual have to choose only the good. In this context, the presence of the moral reflection capacity and the moral values inosculation with the cognitive aspect are imperatively necessary so that the implemented behaviors of the person to be rational, not impulsively made or existing the risk to be perceived as being blunt in its manner of approach. Hence, if the other values included in the pyramid belong to the middle floor, the integrity, as a human value, can be integrated in the superior floor of the psychic assembly in relation to the conscience. This floor is „the depositary of the gained, superior spontaneity of the moral values and virtues" (Enachescu, 2005, p. 73). The spiritual subconscious or the pure self-command is on this floor as the Moral Psychology proclaims, but, also, the super-ego, accordingly to Psychoanalysis. On this level, the conscious ego's acts are coordinated and censored according to moral norms (Enachescu, 2005).

Integrity is an intrinsic value, but, especially, an acquired one through the role of the individual's education and life experiences in the delineation of human personality. The events in which the individual is implied, the socio-cultural and economic context, near the two different aspects discussed earlier, form the individual's moral Super-Ego, being „the depository of the moral values continually offered by the Ego" (Enachescu, 2005). As a supreme value, the human integrity can be identified with this superior floor of Super-Ego, as a sum of acquired human values by the individual on the path of life. This superior floor adjacency is a challenge that may be attained only by the coryphaeus of ethics applied into practice, by the ones who can be given as an example in any situation of life. As it is well known, the ideality isn't a human value possible to attain, but the individuals always tend to it.

This permanent challenge is a superior level of attunement and it cannot be else than prolific equally at the individual and the general levels. Similarly, the objective of integrity, although it is almost impossible to attain, is useful to be always cultivated in the reports of labor. A social actor implied in such a report, who is always conscious, available and open to the objectives' detection and resolution from an ethical and fair (towards himself, towards belonging organization and towards society) perspective is a right-hand model, trusted to be followed and possible to be characterized as tending to integrity.

Figure 3 – The bordering of the values of the pyramid from the psychology theory perspective



Source: author's work

The empirical reality (proven by famous reports) shows that any country has a maximum score of integrity (Mulcahy, 2012) and the things evolve in the same manner when we refer to the individual level. So, individuals can have different personal ethical levels that close more or less by what is called personal integrity, but the superior limit is not possible to achieve as it also happens in the case of countries. This impossibility to get at complete integrity is also caused by the complex reality in which the individuals are implied and to which they have to brave it up. Society, in general, is in a permanent transition, the perfect equilibrium being impossible to be attained and, even more, to be

defined. This is the explanation for the fact that individual, as a piece from a whole, aborts to attain it.

It can be observed that the integrity is a concept difficult to define. In conclusion, we assume that, this ethical value is the sum of the former values which were presented in the pyramid of general ethical values: the duty, the dignity, the co-operation and the moral responsibility. This is effectual for the reports of labor (from an organization or among organizations, or between an organization and the third parties with whom the individual relates when he is on his job). These do represent the synthesis of all the general human values present and practicable in a society and with a high importance for the reports of labor. In other words, it can be concluded that, when an individual is a man of integrity on his labor, he makes his duty on his place of work in the same way as it was here defined. But with one exception: his professional competence, meaning that the individual cannot possess integrity if he does not attain the obligatory professional abilities for the achievement of the work tasks.

These aspects can be difficult determined through the adoption of the norms on the level of society or of organization wherefrom the individual belongs to. However, Verhezen reveals that more judicial regulation does not generate more integrity (Verhenzen, 2010, p. 196). This measure has as direct effect the attenuation of some aberrant behaviors, but does not motivate people to be better employees. Therefore, the strategies that have as main goal the advancement of the level of its members' integrity do not have to approach only this regulation perspective, but to fathom the approach from the humanity, morality and motivation of employees' perspective. In other words, the human resources from the organization have to be seen first of all as human beings in general and, then, as the company's employees.

Conclusions

This paper analyzes, as it was discussed, in a concrete way, what integrity is as a general ethical value. The concept does not have a clear definition in the social or economic literature, integrity being imprecisely defined through the reference of other ethical values that were identified with it, or seen as a totality of all the others values, without being a palpable ethical category such as the truth, the sincerity, the courage, etc.

In this context, a clear apology of the needed faces to achieve the integrity value on the reports of work was desired to be offered on this essay so that the concept's limits to be well bounded. In other words, the paper sustains that integrity in the reports of work may not exist without another four values: ethical duty, dignity, co-operation, moral responsibility. As Andrei Plesu sustains, the real

moral competence starts with a un-hypochondriac experience of guilt, with the feeling of moral incompetence, of self-excommunication (Plesu, 2008, p. 19). Therefore, a profound understanding of the value of integrity conducts to the feeling of the necessity to also implicate the ethical part in the day by day practice from the labor sphere to a superior level. This, in its turn, determines the aspiration to tend to the accession on the discussed value, helping theoretical integrity, in this way, when the needed resources and efforts are implied, to concrete into a correct practical behavior in the economic labor market area. This proper way of action conducts to the performance of the companies that directly impacts the economic growth of a nation.

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