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**TABLE OF CONTENT**

Editorial .....	3
Julian Warter	
Corporate Average Fuel Economy: A Relic of the Past .....	5
Myles Owens, Walter E. Block	
Deadly Consequences of Emphasizing Profits over Human Life: How Corporate Greed Has Caused the Death of Millions .....	19
Hershey H. Friedman, Clifton Clarke	
The Ethics of Representing the Other: From Backstage to Frontstage Racism? .....	37
Amna Ben Amara	
Ethics Principles of Social Development Formulated by Alessandra Moretti .....	55
Stefano Amodio, Aurelian Virgil Baluta	
Current Ethical Implications of Russian/Soviet Positive Eugenics .....	63
Sana Loue	
From Individual`s Rights to Public Benefits – A Conflict of Values in Healthcare .....	71
Rodica Gramma	
Neurotechnologies and Neuro-Enhancement. Ethical Challenges .....	81
Beatrice Gabriela Ioan, Bianca Hanganu, Irina Smaranda Manoilescu	
The Captive Mind and the Society of the Spectacle. Faces and Symptoms .....	87
Anton Carpinschi	

## EDITORIAL

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I am honoured to present you the nineteenth issue of the Journal of Intercultural Management and Ethics (JIME).

The current issue includes interesting papers from various fields portraying the diversity of the research community and the cross-disciplinary approach of this journal. The main field of the papers in this issue is ethics.

Myles Owens and Walter E. Block examine the effectiveness of the Corporate Average Fuel Economy program regarding its ability to reduce pollution. Using a variety of automotive reports from the Congressional Budget Office, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the United States Department of Transportation the authors determine that these standards largely subsidize driving costs for consumers and disincentivize the need for electric vehicles. The authors conclude that CAFE should be repealed, and other more effective environmental policies be examined.

Hershey Friedman and Clifton Clarke demonstrate what happens when uncontrolled greed wins out over human life. The authors emphasize that the value of a life is infinite, and no cost-benefit analysis can justify purposely selling a product or service that can harm any person. Their paper provides several examples demonstrating that millions of people have perished because of corporate malfeasance.

Amna Ben Amara reveals that metaphors are central discursive strategies that can be employed in the Othering process and identity construction. As such, although Trump's rhetoric has already provoked a cottage industry of books, the role of his ideologically motivated metaphors in detecting his perception of American national identity has remained largely undiscovered. The aim of her research is to investigate the highly racialized dimension of Trump's metaphors and their role in marginalizing undocumented immigrants from the nation's popular imagination.

Stefano Amodio and Aurelian Virgil Baluta put into scientific circulation the ideas contained in a document initially available only on media, part of the speech of an Italian MEP, Mrs. Alessandra Moretti. Their paper includes the general theme of social development under the conditions of respecting some fundamental principles of ethics, showing that the education is a key element of social development. The authors reveal that the combination of factors such as employment or unemployment are correlated with the perspective of gender and social origin on the basis of a multicriteria analysis.

Sana Loue shows that many Western nations, including the United States, utilized what have been called both negative and positive eugenic measures, seeking to eliminate "negative traits" from the populace through strategies that included restrictions on immigration, involuntary sterilizations of those deemed to be unfit, and segregation, while utilizing "positive" measures such as better baby contests, fitter family contests to encourage selective reproduction. The author reveals that, in contrast, eugenicists in late Imperial Russia and the early Soviet period focused their efforts on positive eugenic strategies in an effort to halt what was seen as the growing degeneracy of the population and encourage the proliferation of desirable traits. An examination of the underlying basis for the "positive" approach and the reasons for its cessation raise important ethical issues for consideration today.

Rodica Gramma emphasizes the important differences that should be taken into consideration, when the ethical concepts are used in the analysis of the specific practical situations in healthcare. The author underlines that the definitions of medical ethics, bioethics, and public health ethics seem to resemble in their ultimate scope, but look very different in their relational interactions among stakeholders. The ethics approaches and their potential effect on human rights protection are discussed in the presented case study analysis of a legislative act on late term abortions for social reasons in the Republic of Moldova.

Beatrice Gabriela Ioan, Bianca Hanganu and Irina Smaranda Manoilescu show that neurotechnologies include specific devices and procedures for accessing, monitoring, investigating, evaluating and manipulating the structure and functioning of the human brain. Neurotechnologies may also be used for enhancement purposes, i.e., neuro-enhancement, in order to increase the individuals' mental and physical capacities. The authors analyze, based on the literature data, the ethical challenges raised by the use of neurotechnologies for enhancement purposes of the human being. The ethical analysis of neuro-enhancement starts from the blurring boundary between therapy and enhancement and is polarized between arguments in favor and arguments against this application of neurotechnologies. The authors conclude that neurotechnologies designed to enhance the human being are still in their infancy. and these technologies must be evaluated and regulated ethically and legally in an anticipatory manner.

Anton Carpinski reviews some faces and symptoms of the captive mind in communism and after communism starting from the idea that the captive mind -- a socio-mental alchemy with deceptive propagandistic ingredients is a "banal evil" in the spectacle society in which we all live. The stake of his paper is deciphering the states and feelings hidden behind the faces and symptoms of the captive mind.

I am confident that you will value the articles in this issue of the Journal.

Finally yet importantly, I would like to express my gratitude to all the colleagues who contributed to this issue, either as authors or as reviewers.

# CORPORATE AVERAGE FUEL ECONOMY: A RELIC OF THE PAST

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## Abstract

We examine the effectiveness of the Corporate Average Fuel Economy program regarding its ability to reduce pollution. Using a variety of automotive reports from the Congressional Budget Office, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the United States Department of Transportation we determine that these standards largely subsidize driving costs for consumers and disincentivize the need for electric vehicles. Our thesis is that CAFE should be repealed, and other more effective environmental policies be examined.

**Key words:** Pollution; regulation; fuel efficiency

## I Introduction

In mid-March 2020 Trump announced his repeal of Obama era fuel efficiency standards (Davenport, 2020). The revocation would replace the Obama administration's required 5% yearly fuel efficiency increase with a mere 1.5% yearly rise (*Ibid*). Critics of the idea claim that it would lead to a significant increase in the levels of Co2 released by cars furthering the pollution of earth's atmosphere. This has reignited a much longer fought debate over the government's role in the automotive industry, most notably its role in implementing Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards (CAFE). Since its passage in 1975 and its implementation in 1978 these standards have set a fuel efficiency floor that automobile manufacturers must meet on a yearly basis. The goals for CAFE standards were outlined as such by congress: technological feasibility; economic practicality; effect of other standards on fuel economy; need of the nation to conserve energy.

Recently CAFE standards have pivoted to create more of a focus on the need to address environmental problems such as climate change:

“Reduce our petroleum consumption, increase the availability of alternative fuel vehicles, promote the advancement of innovative technologies, lower greenhouse gas emissions both helping to mitigate climate change and improve air quality” (US Department of Transportation, 2014). Unlike “Green House Gas” standards (GHG) monitored by the EPA, which measure the amount of greenhouse gases such as CO2 being emitted, CAFE regulates somewhat differently. Each standard is tailor-made for a company's vehicle fleet. Each model in a company's fleet is given a goal fuel efficiency number in terms of miles per gallon (mpg). This is calculated based on the “footprint” of the vehicle which is—“calculated as the product of the wheelbase and the average track width of the vehicle”(Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, 2011).The mpg goals of all the models in that company's fleet for that particular year are averaged together to set the standard for the company's fleet,

which they must meet or face penalties. Of course, these standards are raised every so often so as to drive innovation in fuel efficiency technology. In this paper we focus on the failure of Corporate Average Fuel Economy to benefit the environment and how it leaves a negative impact. The 1973 Oil Crisis was a tumultuous time for America. In response to American military support for Israel during the Arab-Israeli war, the mostly Arab, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) placed an embargo on exports to the United States (Office of the Historian, n.d.) In addition they also severely limited their production of oil. This put a strain on Americans as oil prices skyrocketed.

During the OPEC oil embargo, inflation-adjusted oil prices went up from \$25.97 per barrel (bbl) in 1973 to \$46.35 per barrel (bbl) in 1974 (Boyle, 2020)

Eager to ease the burden on Americans and to conserve oil, the Nixon administration put in place economic policies including price freezes and Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards. These policies had dire consequences. The price freezes were repealed, but in regard to CAFE the government still has not learned from its mistakes. It should have allowed Corporate Average Fuel Economy to remain where it belongs... in the seventies.<sup>1</sup>

We next consider in section the unintended consequences of this program: the cost of driving. Section III addresses market innovation, while section IV focuses on resulting fatalities. In section V we argue by analogy and conclude in section VI.

## II Unintended Consequences: Cost of Driving

The problem with CAFE standards is that they worsen the problem they were trying to fix, and they create a new problem they did not foresee. One of the most glaring issues is this policy fails to acknowledge that by forcing vehicles to become fuel efficient<sup>2</sup> they are now lowering the financial cost of driving for everyone. The more fuel efficient a vehicle is the smaller the importance played by costs in driving behavior. According to a consumers union report by Synapse Energy Economics the 2025 CAFE standards when compared to the 2016 CAFE standards would save consumers \$3200 for cars and \$4800 for light trucks.<sup>3</sup> This is not an insignificant decrease in the cost of operating a vehicle. One could argue that this is good for consumers. It might very well be beneficial to drivers if we assume that the increased cost of the vehicle due to the need to meet CAFE standards would be low enough to create net savings. One would also need to assume that the fuel efficiency of future vehicles would otherwise be lower or remain constant without government regulation. However, as far as driving behavior is concerned the initial cost of purchasing a vehicle is a sunk cost and therefore should not affect driving behavior. Unlike vehicle cost, gasoline savings do affect driving behavior. A decrease in the financial cost of driving creates an incentive for people to want to drive more.

According to the Federal Highway Administration, which is a regulatory agency within the Department of Transportation, monthly traffic volume trends report since 1971 shows that the number of millions of miles driven in the United States has gone from 1,128,168 to 3,228,026 in 2020 (US Department of Energy).

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<sup>1</sup> For critiques of CAFE standards see Crandall and Graham, 1989; DiLorenzo, 1999; Galles, 2002; Malkin, 2012; Moore, 1991; Murdock, 2012. For an alternative view, see Bento, 2017; Noland, 2004

<sup>2</sup>The CAFÉ program requires that vehicles become more fuel efficient, not less. We are saying that although that sounds good, it is not. In our view, the market tends toward the optimal fuel efficiency, and altering it by law decreases prosperity, not increases it. For the resources its costs to attain over-optimal efficiency could be better used in an alternative manner.

<sup>3</sup> These are the total savings for the lifetime of the vehicle. See on Comings, T., Allison, A., & Ackerman, F.. (2016, September 7). *Fueling Savings: Higher Fuel Economy Standards Result In Big Savings for Consumers*. Synapse Energy Economics.; <https://www.synapse-energy.com/sites/default/files/Fueling-Savings-Consumer-Savings-from-CAFE-2025-16-035.pdf>.

However, not all miles are CAFE miles. CAFE only applies to vehicles categorized as “light-duty”. When vehicles not regulated by CAFE are taken out of the equation such as “heavy-duty” vehicles we see a slightly different number. From 1970 to 2019 the increase in miles driven rose from 1,039,986 to 2,924,053 million miles.<sup>4</sup> An increased number of miles driven goes hand in hand with a rise in the number of gallons consumed by the population, which leads to the increased production of greenhouse gases. From 1971 to 2020 the United States Energy Information Administration’s data on “United States Product Supplied of Finished Motor Gasoline” showed an annual change from 6014 thousand barrels a day to 8034 thousand barrels a day (US Energy Information Administration). This growth is primarily due to the change in behavior of everyday drivers rather than commercial vehicles which primarily run on diesel fuel.<sup>5</sup> Finished Motor Gasoline also excludes finished motor gasoline for aviation use.<sup>6</sup> One could argue that this is simply due to an increase in the population over time. This is simply not the case. When controlled for population since 1971, which is when the FHA began their reports, there has been an overall 172% increase in miles driven per capita.<sup>7</sup> Although CAFE is likely not responsible for all this growth, it has likely contributed to it. CAFE is clearly not responsible for all this growth.

It is important to note that the cost of driving includes more than the financial expense of operating a vehicle such as fuel and repairs. CAFE standards do lower the financial cost, but other factors play a role in the overall cost of operating a light-duty vehicle and can be useful predictors on how much people drive. Other cost are any barriers that make driving light-duty vehicles less preferable. This can involve a variety of aspects. The quality of roads or the abundance of safety hazards may make driving less preferable. The time it takes to commute by car due to traffic may make other means of transport more attractive. Even the availability and financial cost of parking a vehicle plays a role. How great or small this cost is dependent on government planning. State control of infrastructure such as public transportation, bike lanes, density of development, zoning, road construction, parking minimums, and federal highways all have an influence outside the purview of CAFE. For example, city governments that have zoning policies that encourage denser building development i.e., New York City will have fewer miles driven within their jurisdiction when compared to cities that promote less dense development. A more spread-out city such as Atlanta will have more vehicle mileage due to the inability to get around on foot or by other means. For example, a University of California, Irvine study found that “comparing two California households that are similar in all respects except residential density, a lower density of 1000 housing units per square mile (roughly 40% of the weighted sample average)

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<sup>4</sup> This statistic was calculated by removing non-CAFE vehicles such as combination trucks, motorcycles, and Buses from the USDE “Maps and Data - Annual Vehicle Miles Traveled in the United States” data.

<sup>5</sup> According to the Diesel Technology Forum: “The 2020, year-end U.S. truck vehicles-in-use data shows that almost about 75 percent of all commercial vehicles are powered by diesel engines, and among the largest trucks (Class 8) diesel vehicles-in-use accounted for 97 percent of the overall population.”

<sup>6</sup>Motor gasoline (finished): A complex mixture of relatively volatile hydrocarbons with or without small quantities of additives, blended to form a fuel suitable for use in spark-ignition engines. Motor gasoline, as defined in ASTM Specification D 4814 or Federal Specification VV-G-1690C, is characterized as having a boiling range of 122 to 158 degrees Fahrenheit at the 10 percent recovery point to 365 to 374 degrees Fahrenheit at the 90 percent recovery point. Motor Gasoline includes conventional gasoline; all types of oxygenated gasoline, including gasohol; and reformulated gasoline, but excludes aviation gasoline. Note: Volumetric data on blending components, such as oxygenates, are not counted in data on finished motor gasoline until the blending components are blended into the gasoline.

<sup>7</sup> The exact statistic is 1.72457618. This was calculated using the population by decade statistics provided by the United States Census Bureau at <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/decade.1970.html>.



implies an increase of 1200 miles driven per year (4.8%) and 65 more gallons of fuel used per household (5.5%)” (Brownstone & Golob, 2009).

To put it simply, cities that are designed to support car travel will experience more of it, other things equal. Governments that build cities which encourage substitutes and complements to driving such as foot traffic, biking, and public transportation will see more people traveling using those methods.<sup>8</sup>

Upon occasion CAFE standards might well lower travel and other costs. But this does not necessarily improve consumer benefits. Suppose we passed a law subsidizing steak and taxing hamburgers. The former would be less expensive, and the latter more so. Would this promote economic welfare? Of course not, assuming that the present allocation of resources for these two goods is at least roughly congruent with people’s tastes.<sup>9</sup> Even the harshest critics of the free enterprise system have never contended that the ratio of these two foodstuff does not at least loosely follow consumer tastes. Suppose a law were passed that prohibited the production of any car with greater quality than the Ford Focus, or the Volkswagon bug, both fine automobiles. Then, assuming this legislation were obeyed, there would be no more Maserati’s, Rolls Royces or any such luxury vehicle. The costs of driving would plummet. But it is difficult to believe that this would increase human happiness or economic welfare.

It is difficult to say quantitatively how large of a role these other costs play when compared to CAFE standards. What is important, however, is what they have in common. These contributing factors all decrease the cost of driving. How does this square with CAFE? In September 1988, the Federal Trade Commission studied the effects of raising the 26.5 miles per gallon standard to 27.5 miles per gallon. They estimated that, over a 15-year time horizon, this alteration would increase gas consumption by 200 million gallons per year, rather than decreasing it (Galles, 2002). Already two out of the four goals of the new CAFE standards have been missed. They raised rather than reduced petroleum consumption and have increased instead of lowered greenhouse gas emissions.

It seems that if regulators wanted to reduce the amount of miles driven, and therefore fuel consumption, they should be increasing the cost of driving, not decreasing it. To accomplish this many have proposed a gasoline tax. In a 2003 Congressional Budget Office study which compared total long-run annual costs to achieve a 10 percent reduction in gasoline consumption they found that a Corporate Average Fuel Economy standard of 31.3 mpg for cars and 24.5 mpg for light trucks and a gasoline tax of 46 cents a gallon would together place a 2.4-billion-dollar cost on consumers (The Congressional Budget Office, 2003). This is equivalent to roughly 3.2 billion dollars in 2020 currency. Although the cost consumers are burdened with is the same under each policy, under the gasoline tax drivers are indirectly incentivized to drive less (US Department of Transportation). For each mile driven they are incurring a larger cost than they would have without a gasoline tax. CAFE standards would increase the initial cost of new cars. Even though a policy such as the gasoline tax is more in line with the policy goals of congress and the NHTA it likely has a greater political cost. A 2018 Gallup poll on commuting found that 83% of Americans commute to work by car. Even though this number is decreasing from the 2007 figure of 91% it is still a large number of people to potentially anger with a direct tax on something that is essential to their daily life (McCarthy, 2018). The CBO for 2003 estimates it would cost about \$228 annually for each vehicle (Congressional Budget Office, 2003). This will likely cause many motorists

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<sup>8</sup> Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, is one such example. See on this Block, 2022.

<sup>9</sup> If it were not, market forces would tend to move us in the direction of the allocation between them desired by the public. For example, if there were too much of one good, profits in it would fall, leading entrepreneurs as if by “an invisible hand” to produce less of it. if there were too little of one good, profits in it would rise, leading entrepreneurs as if by what Smith (1776) thought was God’s hand to produce more of it.

to hold off on replacing their older less fuel-efficient vehicles. This contributes to the increased amount of fuel consumption by Americans.<sup>10</sup>

Not only will they hold on to their older cars for longer but when they eventually upgrade to a newer vehicle, they will likely increase the number of miles that they drive overall. This is a crucial point the Trump administration attempted to make in 2020 but critics failed to understand. During the second 2020 presidential debates Trump stated in regards to his slashing of Obama era fuel efficiency standards, “What’s happening is the car is much less expensive and it’s a much safer car, the car has gotten so expensive because they have computers all over the place for an extra bit of [fuel economy]” (Gallagher, 2020). In other words, according to Trump, the cost of vehicles are increasing because of CAFE standards, which force manufacturers to implement new and expensive technologies to lower their mpg numbers. It is clear that if regulators are looking to reduce fuel consumption, Corporate Average Fuel Economy is not the answer. If the goal is less fuel consumption, then any policy that would tend to increase the population is not the answer; further, any policy that promotes longer commutes is not the answer.

In addition to this many of the critics of fuel efficiency standards would likely vehemently oppose fossil fuel subsidies as well. They might argue that subsidies promote the use of fossil fuels which pollute our environment. This is ironic because like fossil fuel subsidies, Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards subsidize pollution as well, yet only appear to receive a fraction of the backlash.<sup>11</sup>

### III Life and Death

Not only do CAFE standards affect new vehicle purchases, they also impact the type bought. We can see just how sensitive consumers are to the cost of driving by examining the relative shift in sales of cars to light-trucks. In the modern era consumers as a whole prefer to purchase SUV’s and pickup trucks for a variety of reasons (US Bureau of Economic Analysis). However, between the years 2004 and 2005, after a 25-year downward trend in the sale of cars, every category of automobile increased its market share while every category of light-truck decreased. In 2005, cars made up 45 percent of new vehicle sales which is a percent higher than the 44 percent of the previous year. It would then go up to 47 percent in 2007. A Congressional Budget Office (CBO) study determined:

“U.S. new-vehicle market shares have been such that a price increase of 60 cents per gallon (a 20 percent increase if the base price is \$3 per gallon) is associated with an average increase in the market share of new cars<sup>12</sup> of 2.6 percentage points (the sample average is 46.4 percent)” (CBO, 2003).

These marginal changes in consumer preference are not of much consequence, especially when light-trucks have continued to dominate the vehicle market. However, it is actually a matter of life and death, and it just so happens that CAFE standards exacerbate the issue. At first glance this is hard to see. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) “A bigger, heavier vehicle provides better crash protection than a smaller,

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<sup>10</sup> According to the Transportation Research Board’s 2006 report, “Commuting in America III: The Third National Report on Commuting Patterns and Trends” there are more folks driving, fewer folks walking, more folks driving alone, folks driving longer distances ... There are many reasons that have nothing to do with CAFE that might explain the increasing driving behavior in the USA

<sup>11</sup> For any given level of activity (i.e. miles driven), stricter CAFE standards reduce fuel consumption and GHG emissions. A variety of factors (more people; less car-pooling; longer commutes; less walking; larger people; higher mpg.) promote more activity or miles being driven. Is CAFE the primary cause? That is not pellucidly clear, although in our prudential judgement this is indeed the case. However, it cannot be denied that this regulation likely plays an important explanatory role in this phenomenon.

<sup>12</sup> Presumably, this is because new cars have better fuel economy

lighter one, assuming no other differences. The longer distance from the front of the vehicle to the occupant compartment in larger vehicles offers better protection in frontal crashes. Heavier vehicles also tend to continue moving forward in crashes with lighter vehicles and other obstacles, so the people inside them are subject to less force” (IIHS, 2021).

It seems that CAFE standards would help solve this problem by decreasing the cost of driving because gasoline expenses will be lower for drivers. This lower cost would translate into increased demand for light trucks because they would be less sensitive to changes in gasoline prices. This is true and would be a benefit except for the fact that CAFE standards also incentivize manufacturers to change the way they go about building the vehicles in their fleets. In order to increase fuel efficiency, they often decrease the weight of their vehicles. This renders vehicles across the board less safe and already small light-weight vehicles which faced existing safety concerns because of their weight even more dangerous. A National Academy of Sciences study using National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) data found that every 100 pounds of weight removed causes 322 annual deaths. It is estimated that this may cause 1300 to 2600 deaths per year (Malkin, 2020). This should not be taken lightly. The number of deaths will only rise as the United States continues to put more and more drivers on the road each year.<sup>13</sup>

DiLorenzo (1999) points “to the carnage that has been created by corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standards. To meet these standards the automobile industry has dramatically downsized its fleet, making cars narrower, shorter, and lighter. The result, according to a study by Robert Crandall published in the *Journal of Law and Economics*, is responsible for approximately 2,500 additional traffic fatalities each year.

“Consumers have responded to this government-mandated death and carnage by buying millions of larger sports utility vehicles and minivans. This in turn has caused the ever-arrogant regulators and their accomplices in the environmental movement to begin advocating special taxes and regulations on these larger vehicles with the intent clearly to drive them from the market.”

#### **IV Market Innovation**

Let us remember that all of this occurs because the market alternative would apparently lead to worse environmental and economic outcomes. Critics of a deregulated system claim that without government intervention fuel efficiency standards would not increase, leaving us with a more pollution filled society. This can clearly be seen in pre-1978 data changes, which saw a 13% increase in fuel efficiency standards from 1975 to 1978 (Environmental Protection Agency, 2019). This took place years before the minimum fuel efficiency standards took place, which brings into question the usefulness of CAFE.

However, it is not beyond reason to assume that companies anticipated the future regulations by improving their fleet fuel efficiency ahead of schedule. Therefore, critics may argue that this increase does not reflect actual market driven progress. Critics might also point out that fuel economy was stagnant or even decreasing during the decades before fuel economy standards were introduced. From 1950 to 1970 the fuel economy of all motor vehicles decreased from an average of 13.1 mpg to 12 mpg (US Energy Information Administration). While it is impossible to argue with the general trends of the vehicle industry it does not tell the complete story. It overlooks the astounding amount of innovation in fuel economy technology being researched. Much of this new technology was actively being pushed into the market and was often a key selling point for consumers. Despite what

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<sup>13</sup> For an alternative viewpoint on reducing traffic fatalities, in this case via privatization, see Block (2009)

we may think of the people of the mid twentieth century they were in fact concerned about fuel economy.<sup>14</sup>

The 1960 Chevrolet Corvair is a perfect example of this sentiment. In a May 1960 advertisement, the first line reads: “Even though the Corvair’s main virtues are economy and efficiency...” The ad would then mention that the Corvair was a “magician on milage” stating that “your gas dollars will now go farther... because the Corvair delivers miles and miles and miles per gallon”.<sup>15</sup> To be more precise the 1960 Corvair delivered consumers a fuel economy of 20.7 miles per gallon according to Motor Trend magazine, which awarded the Corvair car of the year in 1960 (Motor Trend, 2009). The 20.7 mpg estimate is 40% more efficient than the fuel economy average of 12.4 mpg in 1960 (US Energy Information Administration). The Corvair would also beat out the 1979 CAFE passenger car standard of 18 mpg (US Department of Energy). The Corvair was also not just an outlier. Other domestic vehicles such as the Ford Falcon which claimed in one of its commercials a fuel economy of “30 miles a gallon” (Falcon Club of America, 2019). The 1970 AMC Gremlin in one of its launch day advertisements claimed a fuel economy of 23 mpg (Automotive history, 2021).

The desire for more economic vehicles is further demonstrated by the increase in the share of foreign cars in the United States market during the sixties and seventies. Honda went from 0.04 percent of the market in 1964 to 1.4 percent in 1976 (Knoema, 2020). The vehicles that were being marketed by Honda at the time were cars such as the 1976 Honda Civic which they claimed had a combined fuel efficiency of 36 mpg (BionicDisco.com, 2017). The underlying lesson from this should be that there was not only consumer demand for more economic vehicles, but that demand was actively being met with innovative fuel efficient vehicles far before CAFE. It would also be wise to note the reason that demand for fuel efficient vehicles pre-CAFE is not reflected in the EIA average fuel economy data. One must not simply take from the data that in the fifties and sixties American’s wanted and bought inefficient vehicles until fuel economy standards were put in place. The fact that it takes time for new innovations to become the standard should be factored in.

The prime example of green innovation in the modern automotive market is the rise of the electric vehicle. The most noteworthy of the competitors in this market is Elon Musk’s Tesla, which has produced an entirely electric vehicle fleet. In addition to this in recent years other companies such as General Motors and Ford have both hopped into the electric vehicle bandwagon. Supporters of Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards might be quick to take credit for this since one of their primary goals was to promote alternative fuel sources and innovative technologies, but they would be wrong in doing so. Electric vehicles do tend to have a lower cost of driving per mile with that of the standard Tesla Model 3 only 2.7 cents per mile.<sup>16</sup> This is based off the 2019 cents/ kWh of 10.54 (US Energy Information Administration, 2020) and the standard Tesla’s city/highway range being 26 kWh/100 miles (United States Department of Energy, 2019). The national average gasoline cost of gasoline in 2020 was 2.258 dollars (US Energy Department Information). With this information we can determine that a similar gas vehicle such as the 2020 Toyota Avalon, which has a combined 25 mpg fuel efficiency, cost around 9 cents<sup>17</sup> per mile (USDE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, 2021). This is 6.3 cents per mile more expensive than a

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<sup>14</sup> We suggest that perhaps consumer demand, in addition to CAFE, drove the shift to cheaper, lighter, more efficient vehicles.

<sup>15</sup> This claim is based on information gathered from an online antique shop selling vintage magazine advertisements that feature the 1970 Corvair. The shop and the referenced listing can be found at <https://www.etsy.com/au/listing/638473921/vintage-chevrolet-corvair-car-ad>.

<sup>16</sup> The exact figure is 2.7404 cents per mile.

<sup>17</sup> The exact figure is 9.032 cents per mile.

Tesla. Even though an entrepreneur like Musk might see an opportunity here to provide consumers with a vehicle with a lower cost of driving, the relative consumer benefit of an electric vehicle decreases each year. CAFE standards are lowering the cost for driving. So, from a consumer perspective as CAFE standards increase, the benefit of switching to an electric vehicle, and the case for CAFE, decreases. In other words that gap in cost per mile will slowly close over time as the fleets become more and more efficient.

The implication for those who support green energy is profound. Not only can supporters of CAFE standards not take credit for the Teslas of the world, but they must also acknowledge the fact they are indirectly<sup>18</sup> disincentivizing the creation of electric vehicles. To support this argument let us assume that objectors to deregulations are right in their belief that the market will not lead to an increase in fuel efficiency or at least not to a large enough degree to measurably reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases. If that is the case, if we go back to 1978 when CAFE standards began to be enforced and select one of the most popular cars of the year it will be the 1978 Oldsmobile Cutlass which sold over 632,742 units (Lisa, 2021). This automobile had a combined fuel efficiency of 18 miles per gallon (About Automobile). This aligns with the 18-mpg standard for that year. (USDE). So for cars that were at that level the cost per mile using 2020 gasoline prices would be approximately 12.5 cents per mile<sup>19</sup> driven.<sup>20</sup> That is an 9.8 cent gap when compared to the previously mentioned Tesla's cost per mile of 2.7 cents and a 3.5 cent gap when compared to the Toyota Avalon's 9 cent cost per mile. For the consumer who is trying to determine the best vehicle mileage wise CAFE standards have thus effectively reduced the incentive of switching to a Tesla from a standard gasoline car by 3.5 cents per mile.<sup>21</sup> For a motorist who drives 15,000 miles a year that is a 525-dollar cost that CAFE standards have eliminated from consumers yearly driving and therefore 525 fewer reasons<sup>22</sup> to switch over to a cheaper and greener alternative such as the Tesla.

If CAFE standards had not existed and fuel efficiency did not increase, then there would be a far greater incentive to create a vehicle that greatly reduced driving cost. In this scenario one could even say that CAFE standards delayed the onset of green products such as electric vehicles. Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards do not promote but rather stifle innovation. Of course, some may argue that after you take into account the subsidies<sup>23</sup> that green companies such as electric vehicle companies receive, the effect Corporate Average Fuel Economy may have on consumers might not matter. The country would still get fuel efficient vehicles and innovative companies such as Tesla. While this argument may be valid it still does not undermine the criticism that looking at CAFE on its own fails according to its own standards. The goal to "promote the advancement of innovative technologies" is simply not accomplished by this program.<sup>24</sup> It is likely that without regulation the market would have introduced electric vehicles on its own and therefore there was no need for CAFE.

It could be argued that advances in improving fuel economy are innovative technologies. If they were endogenous, this would be true. But CAFÉ standards are

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<sup>18</sup> If CAFE makes conventional vehicles more affordable in times of rising oil prices; it makes these vehicles more competitive vis-à-vis EVs

<sup>19</sup> The exact figure is 12.5444...

<sup>20</sup> This statistic was calculated by simply dividing the EIA 2020 gasoline average of 2.258 dollars by 18 mpg.

<sup>21</sup> This 3.5 cent figure comes from the difference between the cost per mile of the Oldsmobile and the Toyota Avalon.

<sup>22</sup> CAFE standards save this driver an estimated \$525 per year.

<sup>23</sup> It is difficult to mention this phenomenon of green subsidies without thinking of Solyndra. See on this Carden, 2011; Stephens and Leonning, 2011; Welch, 2011.

<sup>24</sup> United States Department of Transportation Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards at <https://www.transportation.gov/mission/sustainability/corporate-average-fuel-economy-cafe-standards>

exogenous to the marketplace. Another motive for CAFE was to increase energy security. But such international trade considerations are too far afield for the more local focus of the present paper. On yet another matter, the question arises: Has anyone been imprisoned for violating CAFE standards? The answer is no; however, financial penalties have been levelled at violators.<sup>25</sup>

## V. Analogies

CAFE standards, it might be contended, have good purposes; were implemented with good intent. The goal was to reduce our carbon footprint. But according to that old aphorism, “the road to hell is paved with good intentions.” In order to see this more clearly, let us consider a few analogies.

Housing standards. There are homeless people. This is a serious problem. And, yet, some people are hogging up more than their fair share of residential space. How would most people react if we proposed a maximum standard of 500 per square feet per person? A family of 5, thus, can occupy a building of 2500 square feet, but no more.<sup>26</sup>

The best thing that can be said for these standards is that they are silly. They constitute a rights violation. Imagine, putting people in jail for being too fat, or too slow, or for occupying additional housing space, which they paid for with their own honestly earned money.

Are these good rules? A case can be made for them similar to the one that are brought forth on behalf of CAFE. Perhaps it will now be easier to see the flaws in those arguments with the benefit of these analogies. The entire “standards” exercise is reminiscent of the Procrustean bed<sup>27</sup> of ancient fable.<sup>28</sup>

## VI Conclusion

Not only does Corporate Average Fuel Economy not lower fuel consumption and protect the environment it creates a new set of problems which revealingly demonstrates the issues that arise when the government does not grasp fundamental economic theory.<sup>29</sup> In terms of CAFE achieving its goals of decreasing our petroleum consumption, increasing the availability of alternative fuel vehicles, promoting the advancement of innovative technologies, and lowering greenhouse gas emissions it has utterly failed.

We can only offer these conclusions on a tentative basis. Based on the above considerations the present authors are led to conclude, only provisionally, that the CAFÉ

<sup>25</sup> Regulatory Tracker (2019)

<sup>26</sup> Only one house per customer. Summer cottages will be a thing of the past, unless people are willing to occupy 50% of their allotted space in it, or 33%, if they want three domiciles, etc.

<sup>27</sup> In the ancient Greek mythology, Procrustes, an evil giant, would either cut off the limbs of people too tall to fit in his bed, or stretch out the limbs of those who were too short to fit it. See on this: [https://www.google.com/search?q=Procrustean+bed&sxsrf=APq-WBumjXWWrT44qmtcD2ZmHlwPaJXjgA%3A1648783442377&source=hp&ei=UnBGYsDxFM389APLmL6wCQ&iflsig=AHkkrS4AAAAAYkZ-YIQUI7yJ6dNzzQcPYWQICk8g3KZH&ved=0ahUKEwjA4pH79PH2AhVNPn0KHUuMD5YQ4dUDCAk&uact=5&oq=Procrustean+bed&gs\\_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAMyBQguEIAEMgUIABCABDIFCAAQgAQyBQgAEIAEMgUIABCABDIFCAAQgAQyBQgAEIAEMgUIABCABDIFCAAQgAQyBQgAEIAEOgcIIxDqAhAnUL8PWP4dYI8kaAFwAHgAgAFjiAGgAZIBATKYAQCgAQKgAQGwAQo&scient=gws-wiz](https://www.google.com/search?q=Procrustean+bed&sxsrf=APq-WBumjXWWrT44qmtcD2ZmHlwPaJXjgA%3A1648783442377&source=hp&ei=UnBGYsDxFM389APLmL6wCQ&iflsig=AHkkrS4AAAAAYkZ-YIQUI7yJ6dNzzQcPYWQICk8g3KZH&ved=0ahUKEwjA4pH79PH2AhVNPn0KHUuMD5YQ4dUDCAk&uact=5&oq=Procrustean+bed&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAMyBQguEIAEMgUIABCABDIFCAAQgAQyBQgAEIAEMgUIABCABDIFCAAQgAQyBQgAEIAEMgUIABCABDIFCAAQgAQyBQgAEIAEOgcIIxDqAhAnUL8PWP4dYI8kaAFwAHgAgAFjiAGgAZIBATKYAQCgAQKgAQGwAQo&scient=gws-wiz)

<sup>28</sup> For an awkwardness in this regard, see Golden, 2021.

<sup>29</sup> We allude, here, to the notion that there are reverberations, boomerangs, price elasticities which have to be taken into account. Yes, of course, initially, better mileage per gallon would lead to less fuel being used. But, if this also led to more driving, it is conceivable that this effect toward more fuel consumption would swamp the first effect.

program is the failure we argue that it is.<sup>30</sup> We therefore call for more research in order to know more definitively the results of this program. *Ceteris* is never *paribus* in all real-world studies, and we have not ruled out the possibility that some of the negative effects to which we point may have emanated from causes other than CAFÉ. Modesty should be the watchword for our own framework, analysis and conclusions. How can subsequent researchers reach a more rigorous conclusion? One possibility would be econometric analysis, which of course constitutes a statistical attempt to hold all other phenomena constant, so that we can more clearly see the effects of this one public policy.

A referee of this Journal challenges us in this way: “If not CAFE then what and why?” We have answered the “why?” at least to our own satisfaction, all throughout this paper. What about the “what?” What alternatives are there to CAFÉ, and, indeed to all other possible governmental carrots and sticks? Our response is to rely upon more traditional elements of law. Automobile pollution is merely a trespass of smoke, dust and other such particles. How does law ordinarily and traditionally handle trespass? Why, by suing the perpetrator! (Rothbard, 1982). Thus, no additional public policy need be created to address this problem; it can be resolved by the courts. Of course, there are difficulties here. Each motorist creates an infinitesimally small part of the overall problem. There is in law a famous doctrine, “*de minimus*”: the law does not concern itself with trifles. It would be silly to try to sue each car owner on an individual basis. However, if the roads, streets and highways were all privately owned (Block, 2009), there would be far fewer people against whom to target a lawsuit. When a nightclub makes noise at 3 a.m., neighbors do not sue individual partiers; rather, they bring a lawsuit against the nightclub owner for creating an unwarranted disturbance. The same would apply to motorists’ pollution.

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<sup>30</sup> A referee of this Journal asks, which other approaches could be used to incentivize switching to electric vehicles and thus improving air quality? First of all, it is by no means pellucidly clear that electronic energy sources are more environmentally beneficial than alternatives. They, too, use scarce resources, and/or are unreliable, dependent upon weather conditions (the wind does not always blow), time of day (for solar). However, putting that aside, the usual governmental methods for accomplishing anything are either carrots (e.g., subsidies, benefits, penalties for competitors) or sticks (penalties, taxation, regulations). It is difficult to see why any of these alternatives would be inferior to CAFÉ.

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# DEADLY CONSEQUENCES OF EMPHASIZING PROFITS OVER HUMAN LIFE: HOW CORPORATE GREED HAS CAUSED THE DEATH OF MILLIONS

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## Abstract

This paper demonstrates what happens when uncontrolled greed wins out over human life. The value of a life is infinite, and no cost-benefit analysis can justify purposely selling a product or service that can harm any person. This paper provides several examples demonstrating that millions of people have perished because of corporate malfeasance. Executives were aware that they were risking the life of consumers but prioritized profits over safety.

**Keywords:** business ethics, opioid epidemic, marketing of sugary beverages, Boeing's 737 Max, medical devices, climate change, menthol cigarettes, marketing of guns

## Introduction

There have been numerous incidents where corporate greed appears to have been prioritized even over human life. This paper will examine this phenomenon by way of presentation of several well-known examples. This article also suggests ways in which ethical management can reduce, if not avoid these deaths. Corporations are run by human decision-makers who, for the most part, were all college graduates from good schools and, of course, studied ethics. Let us first examine what these decision-makers may have learned from their studies.

## Learning Ethical Decision Making

It is unclear whether ethics can be taught (Friedman, Kleiner, & Lynch, 2022; Hühn, M. P. (2014); Parks-Leduc, Mulligan, & Rutherford, 2021; Wang & Calvano, 2015; Ward, 2020). Scholars have been trying to understand why supposedly ethical people make highly unethical choices (Bazerman & Tenbrusel, 2011; Carucci, 2016). Several researchers assert that culture – even more than what one is taught in school - plays a significant role in explaining differences in ethical policies among firms and countries (Whipple & Swords, 1992; Trobez et al., 2017; Scholtens & Dam, 2007). They contend that business ethics occur in a social and cultural environment controlled by a set of complex factors, including norms, formal values, codes, and laws. Sonenshein (2005) opined that corporate culture is the prime determinant of unethical conduct in corporations. Most companies have ethics and compliance policies, but it takes more than values statements to sustain an ethical workplace. Ethics starts at the top of the organization; if the corporate culture, either in government or private industry, encourages dishonest behavior, very few people will resist the temptation to bend the rules (Fox et al., 2007; Simmons, 2020).

Business decision-makers may also be influenced by business icons and examples revered by their instructors in business schools (e.g., Jack Welch, Steve Jobs, Lloyd Blankfein, Mark Zuckerberg). Many students are taught to appreciate the importance of maximization (of profits, utility, and shareholder value) but are given little understanding of the importance of ethics, customer satisfaction, and social responsibility in building a strong, prosperous, and sustainable company. This may explain why the least honest students are those majoring in economics and business, with only a 23% rate of honesty vs. slightly above 50% for humanities students (López-Pérez & Spiegelman, 2012).

It is interesting to note that Welch, who influenced numerous managers, is now seen as "The Man Who Broke Capitalism" by Daniel Gelles, author of a book with that title (Gelles, 2022a). Welch believed in outsourcing, offshoring, and firing the bottom 10% of employees annually, thus destroying morale. He kept the stock price up by focusing on cost-cutting and financial manipulation—the company eventually got into trouble with the SEC for accounting fraud charges. It became evident that Welch was responsible for creating a culture of doing anything, including deceptive tactics to distort earnings and keep the stock price increasing. One company that Welch acolytes greatly influenced was Boeing. Following Welch's management philosophy, the firm became more interested in cost-cutting than safety and quality (Gelles, 2022a, 2022b). After he retired, GE went into a nosedive and never recovered.

Many methods are used to teach business ethics. Traditionally, business ethics courses rely on case studies and ethical theories drawn from philosophy, mainly the writings of Aristotle, Mills, and Kant. Generally, ethics is examined from three approaches; virtue ethics, deontological, and utilitarian (consequentialist). Posner (1999) exposes the fallacy of this predominant approach to the teaching of ethics and morality:

If some moral principle that you read about in a book and that may have appealed to your cognitive faculty collides with your preferred, your self-advantaging way of life, you have only to adopt an alternative morality or, if you're bold enough, an antimorality (like that of Nietzsche, who famously attributed the morality of "good" people to their will to power) that does not contain the principle; and then you will be free from any burden of guilt (Posner, 1999, p. 74).

Some scholars believe that rather than focusing on changing behavior, courses in ethics should emphasize the cognitive biases that cause people to become unethical (Bazerman & Tenbrusel, 2011). One way to help ensure that people act following their own moral compass is by increasing ethical awareness and encouraging them to consider the consequences of decision-making. Sezer, Gino, and Bazerman (2015, p. 79) assert: "making morality salient before people face an opportunity to cheat decreases their tendency to do so."

Bazerman and Gino (2012) posit that the correct way to teach ethics is by using a behavioral ethics approach. Behavioral ethics takes a descriptive rather than a normative approach and attempts to assist professionals and students in understanding their behavior when facing an ethical dilemma. By making people aware of the contradictions between how they act and contrasting it with how they should ideally behave, they can develop their moral sensitivity. It may be challenging to teach individuals to be ethical, but it does appear possible to instill ethical awareness into students (Altmeyer et al., 2011; Bowden & Smythe, 2008; Williams & Dewett, 2005).

One way to demonstrate how essential ethics is to business is to focus on the destruction in human life that unethical behavior may cause (Gerstein & Friedman, 2015). Indeed, the deadliest ideas in all of business may have been maximizing profits and shareholder value. These ideologies might be misguided, and the misdoings of unethical

business leaders have damaged capitalism at its core. Surveys show that "nearly one-half of millennials are receptive to living under socialism and regard capitalism as a captive of greed" (Edwards, 2019, para. 1). By being aware of the alarming number of deaths caused by concentrating too much on profits, corporate leaders may understand why the firm's objective should be to maximize safety and product quality. A change in organizational culture can be an antidote to toxic practices that kill people.

In the following examples, we see that focusing on profits rather than safety and quality can indeed result in many deaths.

### **The Triangle Shirtwaist Company Factory Fire**

On March 25, 1911, The Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory fire in New York City claimed the lives of 146 workers — mostly young immigrant women, some only 15 and 16-years old — who perished because of locked doors and ignored safety features. There was considerable evidence that the owners' negligence was a major cause of the tragedy, yet they were held accountable. However, the tragedy did make the public aware of the horrible working conditions in sweatshops. It resulted in several laws and regulations to provide better protection for laborers and also led to the growth of labor unions. It galvanized the public and legislators by making them aware of how widespread death in the workplace had become.

### **Ford's Pinto Debacle: Is it Cheaper to Let People Burn?**

It is essential to recognize that corporations can commit crimes and should be prosecuted for them (Swiggert and Farrell, 1980-1981). The concept of corporate homicide was first recognized in 1978 in a class action case against Ford Motor Company. The company was accused of reckless homicide because three teenagers were killed in a Ford Pinto with known fuel tank design defects that made the cars prone to gas tank explosions in the case of rear-end collisions. An internal Ford memo (known as the infamous Pinto memo) was leaked to *Mother Jones Magazine* that proved that the company knew of the problems with the fuel tank before the Pinto was introduced but performed a cost/benefit analysis that suggested that it was cheaper to pay liability for burn deaths (cost of human life was pegged at \$200,000) and injuries (\$67,000) rather than spending \$11 per car to correct the defect for more than 12 million automobiles. More than two dozen people were killed or injured as a result of the Pinto's fatal design flaw before the car was recalled by Ford (Friedman et al., 2020).

The main lesson one might learn from the Ford Pinto case is that corporations should never place profits ahead of consumer safety. It should also be highlighted that Ford spent much money lobbying Congress not to adopt the NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) safety standards (Dowie, 1977).

### **Union Carbide's Pesticide Plant in Bhopal — Worst Industrial Accident in History, 3,800 Immediate Deaths**

On December 2, 1984, a storage tank in the Union Carbide pesticide plant in Bhopal, India, began to leak methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas into the city. Approximately 3,800 people died immediately, and there were another 20,000 premature deaths from the poison gas over the next 20 years. This is the worst industrial accident in history and occurred because the company was more concerned with cutting costs than maintaining a safe workplace (Broughton, 2005; Gerstein & Friedman, 2015). The local government was aware of serious safety problems at the plant. Indeed, "the facility continued to operate with safety equipment and procedures far below the standards found in its sister plant in Institute, West Virginia." (Broughton, 2005, p. 4).

### **Aggressive Marketing of Opioids Has Resulted in the Death of 500,000**

Opioids have been responsible for over 500,000 deaths since the mid-1990s. Corporate greed is mainly responsible for this great catastrophe, although shifting attitudes about managing pain certainly contributed to it. Opioids have been around since after the Civil War, and they were widely prescribed from then until the 1920s, causing a massive increase in addictions. Opioids are appropriate for palliative care for terminally ill patients and in short-term situations after surgery. However, doctors started prescribing the opioid-based on Purdue Pharma's claim that it was safer and more effective than other painkillers and non-addictive, although there was information that it was addictive and resulted in overdoses. Indeed, there is minimal evidence that opioids are appropriate for chronic pain since patients develop a tolerance for it and need higher and higher doses for them to work (Lopez, 2019).

Years of aggressive and misleading promotion by Purdue Pharma entrenched misinformation that opioids were without risk, influencing medical education and ensuring less restrictive legislation through lobbying and campaign contributions. A report in the Annual Review of Health found that

Between 1996 and 2002, Purdue Pharma funded more than 20,000 pain-related educational programs through direct sponsorship or financial grants and launched a multifaceted campaign to encourage long-term use of [opioid painkillers] for chronic non-cancer pain. As part of this campaign, Purdue provided financial support to the American Pain Society, the American Academy of Pain Medicine, the Federation of State Medical Boards, the Joint Commission, pain patient groups, and other organizations. In turn, these groups all advocated for more aggressive identification and treatment of pain, especially the use of [opioid painkillers] (Lopez, 2019, p 20).

Purdue spent over \$200 million on Oxycontin marketing in 2001 alone. They spent vast amounts of money on all-expenses-paid symposia for pharmacists and physicians in fancy resorts in places such as Florida, Arizona, and California. The goal was to get them to prescribe and promote Oxycontin. Purdue also used a database that indicated which physicians were the highest prescribers of opioids in the United States so they could target them. There are more than 100 internal company memos that reveal that the company knew that its opioids had the potential to be addictive. (Strachan, 2019).

Insys Therapeutics was another company that put greed before safety. They developed a sublingual formulation of Fentanyl called Subsys for pain management. Insys became a phenomenally successful IPO, and its revenue approached \$500 million by 2015. The following are some of the methods used to fuel the sales of Subsys that included bribing doctors. But as *Mother Jones* reports:

Several Insys employees were simultaneously filing whistleblower lawsuits alleging that the addictive drug was marketed, off-label, to patients who suffered from all kinds of pain, and detailing dubious sales tactics – including, allegedly, taking doctors to strip clubs, encouraging sales reps to sleep with and give lap-dances to doctors, hiring doctors' significant others, paying kickbacks for more prescriptions, compensating physicians for speaking at events based on the volume of Subsys prescriptions written, and posing as doctors' representatives to get insurance to cover the drug (Strachan, 2019, p. 28).

### **Boeing Transforms Itself from Company that Prides Itself on Quality and Safety to**

**Focus on Stock Price—737 Max Crashes Kill 346 people**

Robison (2021) blames the highly compensated executives who transformed a company that *previously* prided itself on quality and safety for the two 737 Max crashes that killed 346 people. Prior to this change in attitude, if executives were not satisfied with the reliability of a plane, they would modify it despite costly delays. Once Boeing shifted its focus to its stock price, the culture changed, and the goal was to cut costs, look for shortcuts, and ignore what deliberative and cautious engineers wanted.

The senior engineer commenting on the culture at Boeing stated, "Boeing's actions on the issue pointed to a culture that emphasized profit, in some cases, at the expense of safety." (Kitroeff, Gelles, & Nicas, 2019. p. 10). It is now known that Boeing employees questioned the design of the 737 Max and contended: "This airplane is designed by clowns, who are in turn supervised by monkeys" (Kitroeff, 2020).

**Andrew Wakefield's Fraudulent and Unethical Research on Vaccines Causes More Than 9,028 Deaths**

Some consider Andrew Wakefield among the most unethical researchers in history. He is most likely the father of the anti-vaccination movement (anti-vaxxers). In 1998, Wakefield published a paper in *Lancet* that demonstrated a causal link between the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine and autism combined with IBD (eventually, the paper was retracted). His sample consisted of 12 children, which is too small a test group to make such claims. It was later revealed by a journalist (Brian Deer) that Wakefield had a serious conflict of interest given that he was paid about \$700,000 by the lawyer working on a lawsuit against the firm that developed the MMR vaccine. It was later revealed that Wakefield had also applied for a patent to replace the MMR vaccine a few months before publishing his paper. Later, a former student asserted that Wakefield often ignored laboratory data. There were also questions as to how patients were recruited for the study. Deer ultimately demonstrated that Wakefield purposely manipulated the 1998 data published in his paper.

When the smoke cleared, Wakefield lost his license to practice medicine. In the name of profit, Wakefield's fraudulent research has resulted in at least 152,763 preventable illnesses and 9,028 deaths (Deer, 2020; Fraser, 2017).

**Sugar Association Sponsored Research is Responsible for an Obesity Epidemic and at Least 25,000 Deaths per Year in the United States**

According to the National Cancer Institute, adult American men consume an average of 24 teaspoons of added sugar per day (equal to 384 calories) (Harvard Health Publishing, 2022). People are more afraid of fat than sugar; this may be due to biased research conducted in the 1960s. John Hickson, then vice president and research director of The Sugar Association (known in the 1960s as the Sugar Research Foundation), sponsored three Harvard scientists in 1965 at the cost of \$6,500 (\$48,000 in 2016 dollars), who, in their review article slanted the negative results of their research that examined the causes of heart disease, from sugar to fat. Several published articles found evidence linking sugar consumption to heart disease. The researchers accomplished this by being selective in the research cited so that the role of saturated fat would be maximized and the part of sugar minimized (Bailey, 2016).

It is impossible to determine how much harm was caused by this deceitful research. According to one study, each year, sugary drinks are responsible for 184,000 deaths worldwide, including 25,000 deaths in the United States (Wanjek, 2015). These deaths result from heart disease, diabetes, and cancer and are strongly related to the consumption of sugary drinks such as soda, sports drinks, and fruit drinks (Wanjek, 2015). Coca-Cola is still spending vast amounts of money to fund researchers who are downplaying the role of sugary



drinks in causing obesity (O'Connor, 2016).

The Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale University has found that advertising sugary beverages to children has increased and has taken on new and innovative forms. Drinks loaded with sweeteners are marketed to convince parents that these drinks are healthy choices. The labels often stress that they contain vitamins or use words such as "natural" to suggest health. Companies use cartoon characters and funky names to promote sweetened drinks to children. Lower-income households are significantly more likely to purchase these sugary drinks than those from higher-income households, and Black and Latinx families are the target markets for these drinks (Fleming-Milici, 2021). Young people drinking sugar-filled beverages are more likely to become overweight adults hooked on sweet drinks.

### **High Drug Prices Will Result in 1.1 Million Medicare Patient Deaths by 2030**

Americans overpay for their health care but do not get much in return. In 2019, the United States ranked 35<sup>th</sup> in national health according to the Bloomberg Global Health Index (World Population Review, 2022). Other wealthy countries spend approximately 50% of what the United States spends on health per person (\$11,945 in 2020) (Wager, Ortaliza, & Cox, 2022). The high price of drugs is responsible for many deaths.

One of the biggest contributors to poor health, hospital admissions, higher health care costs, and preventable death is patients failing to take their medications as prescribed. Cost-related nonadherence is a significant and growing issue that is a direct result of runaway drug prices and a failure to implement policies and regulations that make drugs more affordable (Antrim, 2020, p. 6).

If Medicare could reduce drug prices by directly negotiating with drug companies, annual deaths would decrease by 94,000 (Antrim, 2020).

Several studies have found that the price of drugs in the United States may be anywhere from 2 to 4 times higher than in other countries. This is the result of allowing pharmaceutical companies to charge whatever they wish. To make matters worse, drug companies have several ways to suppress competition. Using "pay for delay" agreements, they pay manufacturers of generics to delay introducing competing, cheaper drugs for a period of time. They also make minor changes in order to establish new patents (called evergreening).

Another way drug companies demonstrate that they care more about profits than helping the sick is by introducing "me-too drugs" that provide few advantages over existing products. The sole purpose of these drugs is to increase profits for the manufacturer. It is estimated that 60% to 75% of all new medicines are me-too drugs. Add-on drugs are another way to increase profits without providing substantial benefits to patients. These are drugs added to other drugs to make them more effective. The problem arises when they are overpriced relative to the additional benefit provided (Waldrop, 2021).

One proposed solution to reduce the high cost of pharmaceuticals is to use value-based pricing. Several countries, including Germany and Australia, use this method to ensure that "the price of a drug is based on the benefit provided to patients in terms of quality of life or efficacy; this pricing approach makes their drugs cheaper and more valuable to the patients taking them." (Waldrop, 2021, para. 1).

Wendell Potter, a VP for corporate communications for a leading health insurer, came clean recently in an op-ed piece that the insurance industry was more concerned about profits than truth. The term "choice" used in healthcare was a public relations ploy to thwart attempts to reform the system and reduce the enormous profits of the health insurance companies. This

is why these firms are spending a great deal to confuse the public and make them believe that reforms mean less choice when the opposite is true (Potter, 2020).

### **Role of the Oil and Gas Industry in Spreading Climate Disinformation and Causing Five Million Deaths a Year**

Climate change causes five million extra deaths per year (Preidt, 2021). Who is to blame for this catastrophe? It is becoming evident that the oil and gas industry was aware of the dangers of climate change long before they acknowledged it. Exxon (now ExxonMobil) knew back in 1977 that fossil fuels contributed to climate change. The company did not make the public aware of the impending danger, and they promoted disinformation in the name of profit.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Exxon hired top experts to look into the climate change issues and even to study how much carbon dioxide would be absorbed by the oceans. The company developed sophisticated climate models and was aware of the effects of climate change. James Black, a senior scientist at Exxon, noted the following about climate change in the 1970s:

In the first place, there is general scientific agreement that the most likely manner in which mankind is influencing the global climate is through carbon dioxide release from the burning of fossil fuels... present thinking holds that man has a time window of five to 10 years before the need for hard decisions regarding changes in energy strategies might become critical (Hall, 2015, para. 3).

According to Hall (2015), Exxon became a leader in spreading misinformation about climate change. An Exxon executive was quoted as stating, "Victory will be achieved when the average person is uncertain about climate science" (p. 6). The company created the *Global Climate Coalition* to sow confusion and convince the public there was no reason to worry about climate change. Overall, the company spent \$30 million on think tanks to promote climate change denial (Hall, 2015). Exxon also used its political clout in 1998 to prevent the United States from signing the Kyoto Protocol, which aimed to reduce greenhouse gases.

From the mid-2000s through to the 2010s, ExxonMobil and other fossil-fuel companies gradually "evolved" their language, in the words of one ExxonMobil manager, from blatant climate denial to these more subtle and insidious forms of delayism. Another ExxonMobil manager described the effort by former company chairman and chief executive Rex Tillerson in the mid-2000s as an effort to "carefully reset" the company's profile on climate change so that it would be "more sustainable and less exposed." They did so by drawing straight from the tobacco industry's playbook of threading a very fine rhetorical needle, using language about climate change just strong enough to be able to deny that they haven't warned the public, but weak enough to exculpate them from charges of having marketed a deadly product (Supran cited in Powell, 2021, p 15).

If the fossil-fuel companies had been honest about the dangers of climate change back in 2000, greenhouse gas emissions would be a fraction of what it is today. Oil companies continue to deceive the public. They sell billions of dollars of oil fields and other polluting assets, so they can make claims about improving the climate and reaching future goals of net zero emissions. However, the oil wells are sold to companies that have no intention of combating climate change and are guilty of such practices as flaring (wasteful burning of excess gas) and thus harm the environment. Moving assets to another company has a positive

impact if the purchasing company signs an agreement to cut emissions from the purchased oil wells, not increase them (Tabuchi, 2022).

### **The 2013 Dhaka Garment Factory Collapse Killed More Than 1,100 Workers and Injured 2,600**

Bangladesh is one of the major manufacturers of cheap clothing, much of which is produced under hazardous working conditions such as overloaded and unsafe factory buildings. The clothing is made for large companies in the developed world. On April 24, 2013, the Dhaka garment factory collapsed, killing more than 1,100 workers and injuring another 2,600 people. It is the clothing industry's most terrible industrial accident (Rahman & Yadlapalli, 2021). This was an accident waiting to happen. A day before the collapse, structural cracks were found in the building, and shops on the lower floors were immediately vacated. Unfortunately, the owners of the garment factories on the upper floors kept their employees working a day after an engineer found the building unsafe.

The Rana Plaza collapse called attention to the horrors of the global fashion business that employs 40 million of the poorest laborers in the world and makes them work in dangerous and debasing conditions. About 10% of these unfortunate workers are in Bangladesh. At least 29 global brands were identified as doing business with one or more of the five factories in the Rana Plaza building. After the accident, 222 companies signed the *Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh*, an agreement to ensure that employees in the garment industry worked in a safe workplace environment (Rahman & Yadlapalli, 2021).

Although there have been some improvements since the Rana disaster, much remains to be done, and safety and labor issues continue in Bangladesh and other countries. Retailers benefit greatly from cheap labor, and manufacturers are afraid to make substantial improvements because this will increase the cost of the garment. Retailers claim they are fulfilling their obligations by only purchasing from manufacturers that abide by the abovementioned *Accord*. The truth is that most manufacturers are pretending to comply with the rules because they might lose the order if they raise prices. Meanwhile, the profit margins on a typical \$30 shirt made in Bangladesh are as follows: Workers get \$0.18 (.6%), the factory owner receives \$1.15 (about 4%), and the retailer receives \$17.70 (59%). Factory owners would be happy to spend more on improving pay and working conditions if buyers provide money for this and not pressure them to keep costs down. Retailers are to blame for the abysmal working conditions because they do not want to sacrifice any of their profits (Rahman & Yadlapalli, 2021).

### **Medical Devices Have Caused More than 80,000 Deaths and 1.7 Million Injuries in the Past Decade**

Approximately 10% of Americans (32 million) have an implanted medical device. Medical devices designed to prevent or treat a disease within the human body, such as a pacemaker, must undergo the same FDA review process required for drugs. Devices permanently implanted in a person are difficult to extract if problems arise, making it all the more important for such devices to be regulated for safety. Unfortunately, many such medical devices are not appropriately vetted before being released to the public. These devices have been responsible for more than 80,000 deaths and 1.7 million injuries in the past decade. The reason for the medical device safety crisis is because there is little regulation of these products. There has been an attempt to pressure the FDA to regulate medical devices effectively (Salazar, 2021).

But thanks to regulatory loopholes and lax oversight, most medical devices are poorly vetted before their release into the marketplace and

poorly monitored after the fact...When trouble does arise, device makers often equivocate, regulators dither and patients seeking redress are forced into lengthy and expensive court battles. In the end, faulty products can remain on the market for years (Editorial Board, 2019, paras. 3, 4).

One example of a medical device that has turned out to be deadly – 80 have died as of 2018 – is the vaginal mesh, also known as the pelvic mesh. It was designed to stay in the body and hold pelvic organs in place. So far, there have been more than 100,000 patient claims that companies have paid \$8 billion to settle. Other medical devices that turned out to be dangerous include: Essure, a permanent birth control device injected into the fallopian tubes, made of metal coils that was found to be linked to 800 pregnancy losses and autoimmune disorders; the power morcellator designed to shred uterine tissue which was found to spread cancer; metal hips that released poisonous material; defibrillators that sent out electric shocks at random; artificial heart valves with short shelf lives; and robotic surgeons that maimed patients (Editorial Board, 2019).

There are several simple solutions that can improve outcomes. One problem is that the FDA agency responsible for monitoring medical devices, receives 35% of its revenue from the medical device industry. This results in a conflict of interest that encourages the agency to approve devices quickly. The last four people to head the agency, currently led by Dr. Jeffrey Shuren, found highly lucrative positions in the industry after leaving their job at the FDA. The medical device industry spent more than \$300 million in the decade ending in 2017 for lobbying. The industry also pays hospitals and doctors hundreds of million dollars in consulting fees. Finally, the industry itself should make the entire process of monitoring devices transparent and efficient by creating a global medical device registry to which doctors who see problems and patients experiencing issues should be able to report them so that they will become known immediately to all stakeholders (Editorial Board, 2019).

Medical devices with fatal design flaws but were sold anyway include the Guidant heart defibrillator, Medtronic Sprint Fidelis (a cable connecting defibrillators to a patient's heart), Bjork-Shiley heart valve, A.H. Robbins Dalkon Shield IUD, and G.D. Searle's Copper-7 IUD. Playtex super-absorbent tampons and Renu contact lens solution also had serious problems (American Association for Justice, n.d., pp. 4-8),

### **After Two Dam Collapses, a Third Vale Dam is in Danger of Rupturing; Death Toll Approximately 300**

Executive of the Brazil-based mining giant, Vale, were charged with negligence in the Brumadinho dam disaster that killed about 270 people on Jan. 25, 2019. This followed the 2015 collapse of a Vale Dam in Mariana, considered Brazil's worst environmental disaster. The retired Xingu dam is also at "serious and imminent risk of rupture." State prosecutors say Vale executives were aware of safety issues but did not correct the problems. They are being tried for murder because of the January 2019 disaster. In addition, communities devastated by the catastrophe are getting a \$7 billion payout (BBC News, 2021; Ennes, 2021).

There is evidence that Vale knew about significant problems with the dam in Brumadinho since November 2017 but did nothing to rectify the issues because they were concerned about its bottom line. In effect, the company placed profits before human lives and environmental safety.

It should be noted that dam failures have been known to occur, and it is therefore crucial for executives to continuously monitor the health of dams. On October 9, 1963, the Vajont dam failure created a 13 billion gallon tsunami that killed 2,056 people in Italy. It is 860 feet high and is one of the world's tallest dams (Mauney, n.d.).

### **Asbestos Industry Responsible for 230,000 Deaths Between 1979 and 2001**

As early as the 1930s, asbestos manufacturers knew the dangers of their product. A large number of asbestos workers were dying from asbestos-related causes. Despite this, the manufacturers covered up the hazards for over half a century. In one internal memo dated 1966, a company executive wrote, "If you have enjoyed a good life while working with asbestos products, why not die from it." (American Association for Justice, n.d., 25-26).

### **Menthol Cigarettes Responsible for 378,000 premature deaths in the United States between 1980 and 2018**

Menthol is a chemical compound that creates a cooling effect on the throat, reducing the harshness of cigarette smoke. It also restrains the coughing reflex, making it much easier and bearable to inhale cigarettes. It makes it considerably easier to start smoking and more challenging to quit. More than one-third of cigarette sales in the United States are menthol brands. Young people also prefer menthol over regular cigarettes (Truth Initiative, 2022; Wailoo, 2022). The tobacco industry promoted the false claim that menthol cigarettes were the healthful choice to African-American communities for decades. The industry also supported cultural events, politicians, and organizations in the Black community to gain support. Unsurprisingly, 85% of African-American smokers smoke menthol cigarettes vs. 30% of white smokers (Wailoo, 2022).

Public health groups have urged the FDA to ban menthol cigarettes for over a decade, and they are finally going ahead. The latest research demonstrates that "Menthol cigarettes were responsible for 10.1 million extra smokers, 3 million life years lost and 378,000 premature deaths between 1980 and 2018" (Truth Initiative, 2022, para. 12).

### **There were 345 "Active Shooter Incidents" in the U.S Between 2000 and 2020, Resulting in More than 1,024 Deaths**

In 2020, about 45,222 people died from gun-related injuries (24,292 from suicide and 19,384 from homicide) in the United States. The American gun culture is unique, and the estimated number of firearms per 100 residents (120.5) is the highest in the world (BBC News, 2022). To place the entire blame for gun-related injuries on corporations would be unfair. However, this paper will examine how one highly unethical company marketed weapons. Laws requiring strict background checks may be the government's responsibility, but companies should be reluctant to indiscriminately sell assault rifles to young people knowing the injury they may cause.

Daniel Defense manufactured the weapon used in the Uvalde, Texas elementary school shooting that resulted in the deaths of 19 children and two adults. Daniel Defense is a company known for aggressively marketing military-style assault weapons (similar to the AR-15) to young people. This company has used advertisements showing children carrying and firing guns. The company must have done a stellar job targeting young consumers. Salvador Ramos, the Uvalde shooter, bought his assault rifle directly from Daniel Defense a few days after his eighteenth birthday (Yaffe-Bellany & Silver-Greenberg, 2022). Evidently, this is a company that is more concerned with profits than protecting the lives of children.

Remington Arms, the manufacturer of the AR-15 style rifle used in the 2012 attack at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, agreed to pay \$73 million as part of a settlement to the families of nine of the victims. There were 27 victims, of which 20 were children. According to one of the plaintiffs, the company aggressively marketed its weapon in a way that "continued to exploit the fantasy of an all-conquering lone gunman,

proclaiming: 'Forces of opposition, bow down. You are single-handedly outnumbered.'" (Sorkin, 2022, para. 1).

Helen Steur, a victim of the April 12, 2022 subway shooting in New York City, is suing Glock, the manufacturer of the gun used in the attack that resulted in 30 people being wounded. The suit accuses the company of improper marketing of its product by stressing features that include ease of concealment and high capacity that appeal to those with criminal intent. Moreover, the company failed to "adopt the most basic policies and practices" to ensure that its guns did not end up in the wrong hands (Closson, 2022).

## Discussion

While the reason seemingly ethical people behave unethically is debatable, it is unquestionable that unscrupulous behavior emerges in a culture that encourages greed. The deaths referenced in this paper are largely a part of the profit equation established by corporate leaders. They reflect the culture of the organization and the operating systems in which they occur. Only a change to a culture that values life over profits can reduce or eliminate preventable deaths in these organizations. These cultures generally experience inertia and therefore need an external force to effect required changes. One such force is governments. They should enact laws and establish regulations that more effectively protect and reward whistle-blowers and impose imprisonment on corporate leaders who intentionally or through willful blindness cause preventable deaths in their companies. Punishing corporate leaders is consistent with the US Supreme Court's ruling in *Citizens United*, which ascribes first Amendment rights to the corporation. Those who speak for the corporation should be held accountable for the corporation's actions.

The American Association for Justice (n.d.) provides numerous additional examples where companies heartlessly marketed hazardous products to consumers.

Every day there is another recall or warning of a product that turned out to have design flaws or unexpected problems - a drug with an unanticipated side effect, a toy with a sharp piece that can injure a child, or a popular food product that may have been contaminated in production. These recalls and warnings are so frequent that consumers are no longer surprised. What would surprise consumers is the fact that sometimes those who are responsible for these dangers know about the problem and do nothing about it. People find it hard to believe that anybody would cover up a product's danger and then market that product to the very people it is likely to kill or injure (American Association for Justice, n.d., p. 3).

The fact that corporate executives so frequently make such callous decisions, and have always done so, shows the need for America's civil justice system. At a time when many advocate closing the courthouse doors, these stories give an indication of the dangers we would be exposed to without its protections. When government regulation can offer little more than a slap on the wrist and a small fine, the civil justice system is necessary to both detect such outrageous behavior and deter it in the future (p. 28).

There are indeed many situations where price tags must be placed on human life—regulatory agencies have no choice but to consider the value of human life as part of their work. Howard Steven Friedman, a prominent health economist and data scientist, has written about the issues involved in determining how much a human life is worth in his book, *Ultimate Price: The Value We Place on Life* (Friedman, 2020a). These "invisible prices"

affect health, safety, and various policies. Moreover, undervalued lives (e.g., elderly vs. young, poor vs. rich, or foreigners vs. Americans) will receive less protection and be exposed to greater risks.

No situation should exist where a court determines that someone's death does not merit damages since their death "saved money." No situation should exist where the death of one billionaire is deemed to be worth more than the deaths of a hundred people who earned much less. *No situation should exist where a company unnecessarily risks people's lives to save a few dollars.* No situation should exist where unequal valuing of human life leads to the denial of basic human rights (Friedman, 2020b, para. 22; italics added by authors).

## Conclusion

This paper demonstrates what happens when uncontrolled greed wins out over consumer safety. Investigations of disasters that occur in companies invariably revealed that much of the malfeasances that led to the tragic event were known by people who were engaged in those activities or observed them. People should feel comfortable speaking up and reporting situations that may result in preventable deaths.

Johan Karlstrom, CEO of Skanska, has his company focus on the "five zeros: zero accidents, zero ethical breaches, zero environmental incidents, zero losing projects, and zero defects." He believes that business is not only about shareholder value but also about making the world a little bit better (Brzezinski, 2017). The paper posits that zero deaths from a company's products should also be a corporate goal. Millions of people have died or been injured because companies prioritized earnings over life.

Several organizations are working on instilling a sense of higher purpose into capitalism. They include Conscious Capitalism Organization, JUST Capital, Coalition for Inclusive Capitalism, and Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose (Friedman & Mizrachi, 2021). Many investors are demanding metrics like ESG (environmental, social, and governance criteria) to see the impact of a company on all stakeholders –customers, employees, suppliers, communities, society, and the government. The Big Four accounting firms are working on new ESG standards that can become part of annual reports. Gallup is working with Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose (CECP) to get firms to use its ESG analytics tools to give capitalism a soul (Clifton, 2021). Some CEOs are motivated by social norms, want their firms to improve the world, and desire to provide employees with meaningful work. These leaders talk about focusing on the "triple bottom line" (TBL, or the three Ps): people, planet, and profits (Miller, 2020). The examples discussed in this paper demonstrate what can happen when companies ignore society's needs and focus only on profit.

Examples such as those presented here could easily be incorporated into any ethics course and vividly demonstrate the dangers of ignoring possible consequences to human life and society when morality is not prioritized. When there is too much pressure to focus on profits, corporate leaders are capable of ways where even human life is considered trivial. The corporate culture has to move away from maximizing shareholder value and consider the value of one life as boundless; no cost-benefit analysis can justify purposely selling a product or service that can harm any person. The Talmudic principle that "To save one life is tantamount to saving a whole world" (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 37a) should be part of every company's mission statement. The two deadliest wars in American history were the Civil War (620,000 military fatalities) and World War II (405,399 military fatalities) (Statista, 2022). Deaths from corporate greed exceed these numbers by a large margin.

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# THE ETHICS OF REPRESENTING THE OTHER: FROM BACKSTAGE TO FRONTSTAGE RACISM?

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## Abstract

Metaphors are central discursive strategies that can be employed in the Othering process and identity construction. As such, although Trump's rhetoric has already provoked a cottage industry of books, the role of his ideologically motivated metaphors in detecting his perception of American national identity has remained largely undiscovered. Therefore, the aim of this research is to investigate the highly racialized dimension of Trump's metaphors and their role in marginalizing undocumented immigrants from the nation's popular imagination. This study met its research objectives through using the cognitive approach developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). In the pursuit of such aim, the research achieves the following findings: it illustrates that Trump often conceptualizes undocumented immigrants as liquid, threatening animals, and un-welcomed guests that should be combated. Trump's rhetorical strategies are highly effective not only in dehumanizing undocumented immigrants and proving their incompatibility with his vision of Americanism but also in fanning the flames of fear and anxiety and communicating a sense of axiological urgency to act against them. Most importantly, the dysphemistic aura of the then president's metaphors justifies the dramatic shift in acceptable appeals to race and ethnicity among many Americans and, consequently, casts doubt on the idea of a post-racial America. It demonstrates his association of patriotism with plain hostility towards the out-group and his endeavor to erect impermeable and well-defined boundaries that filter out these groups out of the popular national imagination.

**Keywords:** CDA, Conceptual Metaphor, political discourse, undocumented immigrants. Caravan, imagined community, political correctness.

## Introduction

A growing number of researchers across disciplines have scrutinized the major components and premises of American national identity (Jones-Correra et al, 2018). However, the task of defining Americanism has necessitated great skill, as it encompasses the dilemma of who is to be included? What values are to be pursued? Who are the 'real' representatives of Americanism (Devos & Banaji, 2005)? Along similar lines, Schildkraut (2007, p.597) outlines four major components of American national identity, including liberalism, "the understudied civic republican tradition, the contested ethnocultural tradition, and the equally contested incorporationist tradition", which are described by Smith (1993) as the "multiple traditions". These divergences about the meaning of nationness are often echoed in everyday social interactions, policy issues, and public discourse (Schildkraut, 2003).

Although many researchers emphasize the importance of both the civic and ethnonational definitions of American national identity and their tremendous influence on the larger processes of nation-building, a wide range of surveys investigating the major elements

that construct a “true” American have overlooked components like civic republicanism<sup>1</sup> and incorporationism<sup>2</sup> (Schildkraut, 2007). Accordingly, when investigating American national identity, a plethora of surveys, including the General Social Survey, often ask respondents whether certain ascriptive characteristics like “ancestry, being born in the United States, having American citizenship and speaking English” are important in defining Americanness. Indeed, although many Americans show respect to the major principles embedded in the constitution and their significance in determining American national identity, large segments of respondents lay emphasis on the importance of speaking English, being born in the U.S. and Christianity in defining Americanness (Schildkraut, 2011).

Besides, social scientists, including Huynh, Devos, and Smalarz (2011) emphasize the salience of race as a key factor in defining American national identity, as some ethnic groups, particularly European Americans, are seen as more American than others. In a recent survey, Bonikowski and DiMaggio (2016) show that “no fewer than one half of Americans espouse views of the nation that restrict legitimate membership on the basis of native birth, Christian faith, and linguistic fluency”. Indeed, the association of American identity to a set of “ascriptive features” such as whiteness leads to a subtle and sometimes blatant privilege of the U.S.-born and European immigrants over the foreign-born and non-European immigrants (Hafsa & Devos, 2014). Hence, Jones-Correra et al. (2018) suggest that the tendency of U.S.-born to perceive nonwhite immigrant newcomers as “them” rather than “us” justifies the argument that “the more ascriptively similar immigrants are to U.S.-born whites in regard to race, the more likely they may eventually be accepted as American, as one of us”.

In other disciplines, particularly in sociology, a wide range of researchers place a premium on the role of the “contexts of reception”, including governmental policies, public opinion, and demographic trends in facilitating or hampering the integration of immigrants (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014). As such, demographic categorizations can be considered as an important factor in determining attitudes towards immigrants, given that in the last half century the intensive influxes of immigrants have caused tumultuous demographic changes. In effect, by 2016 immigrants and their U.S-born children represented 25% of the American population that is approximately eighty-six million people. These immigrants were mainly from Latin America and Asia. Accordingly, between 1970 and 2015, the non-Hispanic white population in the United States declined from 83 to 62 percent, whereas the Hispanic population increased from 4 to 18 percent during the same period and Asian groups grew from 1 percent to 6 percent. Such demographic mosaic also includes black immigrants namely from Africa and the Caribbean, as nearly 10 percent of blacks in the United States are now foreign-born. These groups, hence, have remarkably altered the contours of the U.S. demography in both urban and rural neighborhoods (Foner et al., 2018).

The incremental presence of these groups has ignited heated debate among political leaders about the different policies they should pursue in dealing with future immigration. Nevertheless, apart from these legal measures, the reality of increasing diversity in the U.S. has caused a stir over issues of identity definition and group categorization. Such laments were further intensified with the findings projected by the U.S. Census Bureau (2012) which revealed that the national population of non-white racial groups will outnumber that of Whites before the middle of this century. In this regard, a plethora of White Americans in the U.S. perceive race relations as “zero-sum,” in which status gains for minorities are coupled with status loss for Whites (Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014 in Major et al., 2017) and less bias against minorities is inevitably meshed with more bias against Whites (Norton & Sommers, 2011 in Major et al., 2017).

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<sup>1</sup>America as an energetic participatory democracy with loyal citizens

<sup>2</sup>America as a highly diverse nation of immigrants

Moreover, social psychological theories of identity and intergroup relations prophesize that these demographic changes are not only likely to be threatening to many White Americans, but also will cause them to embody more conservative political stances and discriminate more against immigrants (Thompson, 2009 in Major et al., 2017). For instance, social identity theory envisages that people are motivated to preserve a positive social identity, and they do so by making a comparison between the status of groups with which they identify and that of other groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986 in Major et al., 2017). When they feel that their own group's higher status relative to other groups is unstable or slipping, they experience "group status threat", that is they worry about their own group's status and leverage. Thus, such feelings of threat and insecurity may exacerbate prejudices against immigrants (Stephan & Stephan, 2000 in Major et al., 2017). In this context, Craig and Richeson (2018) emphasize the strong belief among many Americans living in regions with large racial minority groups that their advantageous position is under jeopardy. For this reason, many scholars suggest that Trump's appearance as a candidate for the 2016 GOP nomination and his victory were epitomes of the deeply anchored anger and anxiety among white Americans. On a deeper level, in investigating the major reasons behind the rise of Trump, Bhambra (2017) emphasizes the role of Trump's electoral campaign in bringing to the fore a racialized form of identity politics" where "whiteness trumps class position".

Echoes of such argument are found in Cohn's (2017) assertion that Trump's story of "a once-dominant country in decline" found resonance among many voters during the 2016 election, comprising some who had formerly supported Democrats. Accordingly, the 2015 American Values Survey revealed that the view that "America's best days are behind us" has increasingly come to the fore in the run up to the 2016 election, contending that in 2012 only 38% of Americans had this view, whereas, in 2015, the percentage of respondents sharing this view reached 49% (the respondents include Republicans, Tea Party movement members, white Protestants, white working-class Americans) (Jones et al., 2015). In this vein, Hochschild (2016) suggests that the factual accuracy of such chilling picture of America does not matter, but what really matters is that "it felt true" to large segments of the American population. As a result, weeks after the victory of Donald Trump, hate crimes had intensified and they were often accompanied by blatant references to the President-elect or his "make America great again" campaign slogan (Anderson & Gharabaghi, 2017). Accordingly, the Southern Poverty Law Center revealed over 800 hate incidents against Muslims, Jews, African Americans and immigrants just 10 days after the election.

The argument here is not to establish a direct link between the election and these incidents of discrimination and violence or to suggest that there is no alternative or competing view for Trump's gloomy picture of the U.S (Braunstein, 2018). This alternative view, as Braunstein (2018) suggests, is held by the majority of Democrats, white college-educated and non-whites who believe that the country's "best days are ahead of us". However, as Anderson and Gharabaghi (2017) underscore, there is "one thread that links the movement rightward across the global north and west: a rhetoric that "we" are threatened by "them," and "we" can no longer sit idly by and watch as "they" destroy "our" way of life". This "they" indeed differs across settings, as it can be immigrants, the religious other, or the elites. To encapsulate, Bonazzi (2003 in Ferrari, 2007) powerfully argues that if "the actual exclusions from the "circle of insiders" in American history are in each case traceable to and determined by concrete historical reasons", it should be noted that "it is the special spin of public discourse which fully legitimates them".

Although Trump's rhetoric has drawn a great deal of attention among a wide range of researchers since his candidacy, we still lack an understanding of the mechanisms that he employed to assert his definition of American national identity and to leverage his audience (Duban, 2018). As such, applying Metaphor Theory can offer insights into Trump's



understanding of American national identity and unveil the propensity of his language to “define in significant part what they take as reality” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Accordingly, Duban (2018) emphasizes the heavy presence of metaphors in Trump’s discourse and their role in making his political message “memorable, inspiring and comprehensible for the audience”. He goes on arguing that Trump’s metaphors are of paramount importance in manufacturing his political identity in a way that appeals to most voters and therefore in representing him as “authentic, and relatable”. As such, Duban (2018) identifies the following metaphors in Trump’s rhetoric: “the battle/military metaphors, construction/ build metaphor, machine/ process/ technology metaphors, illness/health metaphors” and mainly the “drain swamp” metaphor.

Moreover, Pilyarchuk and Onysko (2018) analyze the metaphors that Trump used in his acceptance speech, victory speech and inaugural speech. Their study indeed identifies the different metaphors Trump employed in addressing issues related to economy, politics, and immigration. Although their research points at the role of metaphors in exacerbating fear of the “Other”, it does not thoroughly analyze the different ideological dimensions of these metaphors. Similarly, Stamenković (2017) emphasizes the heavy presence of metaphors in Trump’s discourse and their salience in addressing the issue of terrorism. More recently, Duggan and Veneti (2018) study certain rhetorical features, including metaphors and mythology, and their role in crafting Trump’s and Clinton’s brand identities during the 2016 U.S. presidential elections. Compared to Clinton’s discursive strategies Trump’s metaphors are more powerful in crafting his brand identity and conveying strong affective messages.

Nevertheless, given Cammaerts’ (2012) argument that metaphors can be considered as “discursive weapons in a war of positions between often divergent and conflictual conceptions of the organization of society and in relation to identities and citizenship”, one can argue that Trump’s metaphors are rarely understood, if at all, within the framework of national identity. In this regard, the main research aim of this dissertation is to explore the ideological dimension of Trump’s metaphors and the role they play in excluding the “Other” from “the nation’s popular imagination” (Wodak, 2015). This literature review will scrutinize notions like imagined communities and symbolic boundaries which are part and parcel of the debate surrounding the construction of nations and national identities.

The value of examining the above areas of research will be to offer the reader an analysis and a thought-provoking discussion of the different issues raised and hence facilitate a critical understanding of how the “Other” is constructed in political discourse. In this regard, a sensible starting point is to succinctly study what is meant by the term national identity and to highlight the contested nature of such a concept. Given Michael Billig’s (1995) definition of national identity as ‘banal’, that it is taken for granted, how can we determine people’s definition of it in their everyday lives? Can we consider national identity simply as not being something? In other words, is national identity “a label, an empty box, which defines what is outside, rather than its contents” (McCrone & Bechhofer, 2015, p.7)? As the subsequent scholarship on national identity shows, this concept is highly complex and therefore cannot be considered simply as “a badge” given at birth (McCrone & Bechhofer, 2015). In this regard, Miller (1995) observes that national identity is bent upon “mutual recognition” of the different group members. Nevertheless, he states that “the attitudes and beliefs that constitute nationality are very often hidden away in the deeper recesses of the mind, brought to full consciousness only by some dramatic event”. For him, most people do not pay considerable attention to their national identity in their everyday lives and that their identity is brought to the surface only in “an emergency”, or as Miller puts it, during “some dramatic event”. For instance, the belief in the existence of common bonds between Americans was strongly present after the “terrorist” attacks of September 11, 2001, as the number of flags had considerably increased. However, what is more revealing was the

symbolic dimensions of these flags and their role in bolstering and rejuvenating the sense of community and comradeship among Americans (Theiss-Morse, 2009).

The main point behind this argument is that people “buy passively and willy-nilly into the nation as ‘imagined’, limited, sovereign and as a community” (McCrone & Bechhofer, 2015). This indeed implies that national identity is, to a large extent, discursively crafted by certain hegemonic discourses. Along similar lines, Wodak et al. (1999, p. 22) contend that national identity is “constructed and conveyed in discourse . . . A nation is a mental construct, an imaginary complex of ideas . . . this image is real to the extent that one is convinced of it, believes in it and identifies with it emotionally”. Hence, digging deeper into Anderson’s conception of national identity as “imagined, limited, sovereign community” is of paramount importance to this research.

## Literature Review

### *Imagined communities*

Despite the criticisms leveled at Anderson’s concept of imagined community, his framework has proven to be enduring and significant in contemporary political and social science and particularly in relation to the definition, application, and reconfiguration of national identities within local and global challenges (Abbas, 2017). In this regard, the Pakistani American sociologist, Abbas (2017) states that Anderson’s book was first published in a period during which the world was fissured between the two major forces of Communism and Capitalism. It was also a period when modernist scholars like Ernest Gellner and Eric Hobsbawm had initiated “a radical” approach to world history based on the rise and fall of nations. However, for Anderson (1983), since the end of World War II national conflicts have “defined themselves in nationalist terms”. As such, he states that the argument of the end of nationalism has been faultily presumed, as nationalism still “maintains itself in the light of globalization, internationalization, and the challenges of ethnic diversity” (Abbas, 2017). In defining the nation, Anderson (1983) contends that it is a replica of “cultural artifacts of a particular kind”. In this vein, he pinpoints that a nation “is an imagined political community”. It is imagined because the “members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson, 1983).

Another pillar of Anderson’s conceptualization of nations as imagined communities is that nations are horizontal entities united by their mutual sense of fraternity and solidarity. Indeed, for him, such sense of fraternity “makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings” (Anderson 1983, p.7). Hence, it can be inferred that Anderson’s theory of imagined communities emphasizes the profound “emotional legitimacy” and the sense of coherence and social proximity that people, “even if they have never met,” feel towards each other (Anderson, 1991). Therefore, regardless of the disunity and injustice that may afflict a nation at any historical juncture, the nation still rekindles deep personal sentiments among its members that are mainly seen through their willingness to preserve a sense of loyalty towards such nation (Anderson, 1983). This, indeed, entails that Anderson’s concept of imagined community is mainly predicated upon “the feeling” of belonging. In this vein, Anderson (1983) states that imagined or constructed feelings of national belonging are of paramount importance in enabling the members of a particular community to have a shared sense of camaraderie and pride in a country as diverse, huge, and, at times, divided on political and social concerns as the United States.

Although imagined communities extend across time as well as space, “no nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind” (Anderson, 1991). In effect, this entails that an imagined community is characterized by well-defined boundaries that filter out those who do

not fit within a particular imagination of the nation. In this regard, some scholars suggest that Anderson's definition envisions strong linkages between nationalism and racism. However, Anderson refutes such criticism arguing that nationalism:

“Thinks in terms of historical destinies, while racism dreams of eternal contaminations, transmitted from the origins of time through an endless sequence of loathsome copulations: outside history ... The dreams of racism have their origin in ideologies of class, rather than in those of nation: above all in claims to divinity among rulers and to “blue” or “white” blood and “breeding” among aristocracies” (Anderson, 1983).

As a response to Anderson's thesis, some critics, including Abbas (2017) declare that the erection of barriers that exclude particular groups of people and fence them out of the imagined geographical vicinity of a particular nation is often framed in racial and cultural terms. Along similar lines, Desai (2009, p.8) contends that although Anderson was right when he declares that racism has its roots in class, his claim that racism has nothing to do with nationalism overlooks the deeply seated national inequality that has been productive of racism within perennial communities, namely the U.S.

In addition, Abbas (2017) adds that with the increasing power of capitalism, which reinvents itself in the light of the challenges that it faces, it is not that easy to separate race from nation, or racism from nationalism. He goes on arguing that there is “an element of ethnocentrism permeating the conceptualizations of the idea of imagined communities”. Even within a civic understanding of nationalism, most or perhaps all imagined communities, however, encompass strong elements of ethnic nationalism. Accordingly, strong forms of nationalism can be strongly associated with nativism. In an attempt to define this concept, Mudde (2007) contends that it “holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (“the nation”) and that nonnative elements are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state”. As such, Anderson suggests that the style of imagination is what distinguishes nationalism, contending that “communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined”. This, indeed, implies that nationalism is an invention or as Anderson describes it, a “product” of a “creation,” a product of the “imagination” of the individuals and not “a pre-given social state”. Hence, a wide range of researchers including Breuilly (2016) suggest that Anderson's framework on nationalism falls within the constructivist camp. Consequently, a plethora of researchers propose that the concept of national identity emanates directly from the broader social psychological theory of social identity (Theiss-Morse, 2009), which perceives identity “as an awareness of one's objective membership in the group and a psychological sense of group attachment” (Huddy & Khatib, 2007). Such arguments, thus, assert the power of imagination in the creation and re-creation of nationhood.

Nevertheless, Anderson's emphasis on imagination is staunchly criticized by Yael Tamir (1995) in one of his essays. In this regard, he suggests that Anderson overestimates the power of imagination when declaring that the act of imagining can be sufficient in the creation of nations or communities. Aware of this argument, Breuilly (2016) states that “the work of the imagination, here, consists not in making things up but envisioning something that we cannot see, but which is nonetheless real”. Hence, Breuilly's statement justifies Jenkins' assertion that Anderson's conceptualization of nations as imagined should not be read as “imaginary”, as the emotional allegiance of the in-group members is often translated into concrete actions. Indeed, when members of the in-group feel that their community is threatened by certain groups, they often resort to enact prejudiced policies and violent militaristic measures aimed at protecting the nation from this perceived threat. This, as I already mentioned, brings to the fore the argument that national identity does not appear as a result of “some deeper, long-enduring identity”, but rather as a result of certain situations in

which the ‘Self’ and the ‘Other’ are reciprocally crafted. As a corollary, Triandafyllidou (2007) rightly argues that national identity is not only defined from within, that is from shared features among fellow nationals, but also from without. In fact, the longing for the validity and legitimacy of the national “Self” cannot be separated from the conception of the “Other”. As such, in his foundational book *Nationalism*, Kedourie (1992) contends that ‘there is a duty laid upon us to cultivate our own peculiar qualities and not mix or merge them with others’. Thus, it is through differentiating and distancing themselves from the “Other” and erecting boundaries that exclude this “Other” that individuals can come to be seen as one people. In this context, Wodak et al (2009) powerfully argue that in order to investigate how national identity is discursively constructed, there should be a focus on the different discursive strategies employed in political discourses, including the positive self-presentation and possible negative other-presentation

### *Racially divisive appeals*

Mendelberg (2001) suggests that before the Civil Rights Movement, political candidates were allowed to run electoral campaigns on overtly racist platforms that supported policies of legal segregation and win the elections. Nevertheless, Mendelberg goes on arguing that things have changed after the Civil Rights Movement which supported racial equality and defended an integrationist perception of American national identity. As such, many argue that the election of Obama signaled the US entry into a post-racial era. However, empirical evidence proves that racial attitudes have retained their salience even after the election of Obama. In line with this argument, Tesler and Sears (2016) underscore that during Obama’s presidency, racial attitudes had much more influence on whites’ policy preferences than in the past. This, indeed, justifies the argument that many white Americans experienced high levels of “racial resentment” during the so-called “post-racial era”. In this regard, Haney Lopez (2014) emphasizes the role of certain politicians in activating racial resentment among many white voters. He backed up his argument by referring to the “law and order, “tough on crime” rhetoric of the 1990s.

However, as the racial priming theory entails, racial appeals should be communicated implicitly, as voters may reject these appeals when they are explicit. In this vein, by referring to the subtle racist undertone of the Willie Horton advertisement, Mendelburg illustrates the role of implicit racial appeals in hinting to race without breaking the norms of racial egalitarianism defended by champions of the Civil Rights Movement. Although the ad was highly effective in harnessing support for George HW Bush, the heated criticism raised at its racist undertone faltered its effectiveness among voters. For Gale (2004), this technique is a replica of “dog whistle rhetoric” which is predicated upon the usage of implicit visual cues. Such cues are mainly meant to denigrate minority populations “but do so obliquely enough to allow the speaker room for deniability if challenged” (Brown, 2016). In addition, Philpot (2007) suggests that while Democratic candidates are often portrayed as paying special attention to racial matters, Republicans are frequently portrayed as racially insensitive. For this reason, when delivering their racial appeals, white Republican candidates tend to be more “constrained in their ability to use explicit appeals”. Indeed, as Bonikowski (2018) suggests, one should not lose sight of the fact that certain political candidates have had a troubled history of racially hostile rhetoric which was seen by many Americans as intensifying racist speech. For instance, Trent Lott, in 2002, was forced to resign from the Senate after expressing his endorsement of “a former segregationist”, Strom Thurmond. Indeed, he states that “when (he) ran for president, we voted for him. We’re proud of it. And if the rest of the country had followed our lead, we wouldn’t have had all these problems over the years, either” (Valentino et al., 2018).

Nevertheless, Stephen (2013) convincingly argues that this theory, to date, may have overemphasized the salience of racial appeals as implicit without testing the contexts in which explicit appeals may be highly efficient. In line with this argument, Valentino et al. (2018) suggest that after Obama's election, "anecdotal evidence has suggested a shift in the acceptability of explicit and often hostile racial political rhetoric". Hence, they conclude that the explicitness of racial appeals is no longer a criterion for their rejection among voters, as an incrementally large group of citizens start to perceive themselves as "an embattled and even disadvantaged group, and this has led to both strong ingroup identity and a greater tolerance for (overt) expressions of hostility toward outgroups". Although Valentino et al. attribute this shift to the election of Obama, they insist that determining its exact timing in political discourse cannot be easily identified, for there have been "no continuous survey measures of tolerance for (overt) hostile racial rhetoric over the past decades". As such, since their study was conducted during 2010 and 2012, they assume that such shift is not solely caused by the rise of Donald Trump.

In addition, negative presentation of the "Other" might also be communicated through the way certain groups are described, or the traits attributed to them. These negative traits can be associated with individuals who are sorted into a particular category. Moreover, the expressions chosen to describe these groups can be both literal and metaphorical (Boreus, 2006). For instance, various studies, including that of Flowerdew et al. (2002) have investigated the discriminatory use of burden, flood and influx metaphors and their role in contributing to the "negative mental models, stereotypes, prejudices and ideologies about the "Other" (van Dijk, 2001).

### ***Methodology***

From a social constructionist vantage point, "nationalism is an eminently discursive phenomenon" that plays a paramount role in the erection of symbolic and real boundaries between people (Wodak, 2015). In this process, particular subjects may get labeled as "Other" and therefore set in stark opposition to those seen as the true bearers of a shared national identity. Hence, negative "other" presentation is perceived by a plethora of researchers as part and parcel of the discursive construction of nationalism (Van Dijk, 2001). Therefore, Critical Discourse Analysis, particularly Critical Metaphor Analysis could be highly helpful in scrutinizing the ideological positioning and dichotomized nature of Trump's metaphorical expressions and their effectiveness in framing issues related to immigrants. In this vein, in their book *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) Lakoff and Johnson state that a metaphor is a replica of conceptual mapping from one semantic source domain, which often includes "handy and familiar" parts of the physical world, to a different semantic target domain.

Additionally, Musolff (2007) accentuates the power of metaphor in activating prejudice or acting as "sleeping poison". In this regard, Taylor (2018) emphasizes the ability of metaphor to unveil "non-obvious meanings" and to "zoom out above the level of the text" to scrutinize aggregated meanings. As such, he emphasizes the strong linkages between metaphor and Critical Discourse Analysis, which is "critical in the sense that it aims to show non-obvious ways in which language is involved in social life" (Fairclough, 2001 in Taylor, 2018). Consequently, from a critical framing background, Cammaerts (2012) suggests that the political use of metaphors can be perceived as part of 'framing wars', as it epitomizes the scuffle between different meanings and worldviews. It plays a paramount role in constructing us/them dichotomies "by associating features like good and evil, just and unjust to the various subject-positions". Thus, as Cammaerts (2012) points out, the strategic use of metaphors in political discourse is a highly effective "discursive practice" that is mainly meant to "hegemonize" people's attitudes, ideas, and ideologies and to "temporarily fix meaning". As

such, hegemony is not considered as an absolute and fixed notion; rather, it “has to be fought for constantly in order to maintain it” (Giroux, 1981 in Cammaerts, 2012). This implies that the strategic use of metaphors can be highly productive in creating political myths that develop certain hegemonic strategies and leverage the audience to adopt political leaders’ preferred beliefs about particular issues, including immigration.

To serve the analysis, this research will focus on the Caravan of 2018. Indeed, in various instances, Trump blatantly declared that the caravan “represented a grave threat to the sovereignty of the United States,” and that “our country is being stolen ... by illegal immigration” (Semple, 2018). Additionally, as the caravan headed to the U.S. border, the executive administration enacted various xenophobic measures to prevent these groups from entering the U.S. Thus, in order to block the caravan’s entry, the Trump administration warned to call the National Guard and threaten the ongoing North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) negotiations in case the caravan passed freely through Mexico (Macias, 2018 in Silva and Toro-Morn, 2019). The executive pressures to stop the caravan reached their peak by the end of November 2018. In this regard, the Office of the president declared that “the lawlessness that continues at our southern border is fundamentally incompatible with the safety, security, and sovereignty of the American people. My Administration has no choice but to act” (The Office of the White House 2018 in Silva and Toro-Morn, 2019). As shown above, Trump’s reactions to the caravan reveal much about his stance on undocumented immigrants and zoom on his staunch refusal of the entry of such groups to the U.S. Therefore, trying to dig deeper into Trump’s statements on the caravan will allow an in-depth investigation of his attempt to depart from the conceptualization of the US as a nation of immigrants. Indeed, his response towards the recent caravan of immigrants from Central America provides a good example of his use of immigration policies to reinforce cultural and ethnic divisions that make coexistence impossible. Before digging deeper into such argument, it should be noted that the immigrants who crossed the US/ Mexico border were mainly women and children from Central America. Some of them were seeking asylum, while others were looking for family reunification. Such caravan was preceded by many other caravans; nevertheless, “this was the first to garner a response from a sitting U.S. President” (Silva and Toro-Morn, 2019). As such, Donald Trump blatantly states that the caravan “represented a grave threat to the sovereignty of the United States,” and most importantly to the American way of life.

### ***Findings and Discussions***

A plethora of critical metaphor scholars, including Taylor (2017) suggest that “there is not a distinct line between the metaphors of country and metaphors of people who move in migration discourse. For instance, “the nation is a family home” metaphor asserts immigrants as “guests” or as “invaders of the family home” (Bruke, 2002 in Taylor, 2017). Likewise, in “the nation is a body” metaphor, Santa Ana (2002) argues that migrants can be seen in relation to the nation-body as a “disease” and/or as a “physical burden” that the nation must shoulder. The metaphors detected in this study are Hence, as the analysis will show the investigation of the metaphors used to address immigrants cannot be accomplished in isolation from the metaphoric conceptualization of the nation. In this regard, it should be noted that the categorization of the metaphors detected in Trump’s statement on the caravan is based on their source domains.

#### ***Container and liquid metaphors***

Chilton and Ilyin (1993) note that the concept of the state and its borders is not easy to imagine. Therefore, political leaders often employ metaphors to help their audience or potential voters understand and visualize such concept. In this regard, Charteris-Black (2006) suggests that the container and liquid metaphors can be highly effective tropes in defining the

boundaries of a nation-state and hence in deciding who is to be included in or excluded from the popular imagination of the nation. As such, Charteris-Black (2006) emphasizes the link between water and container metaphors, as the former is often associated with fluid and the latter generally includes fluid. As such, he (2006) states that “the emotion of fear can be aroused by disaster and containment scenarios through the perforation of a boundary around the container allowing the inflow or outflow of liquids”. Thus, the large influxes of fluid in a “bounded space” escalate the fluid level and therefore the pressure within the container. Accordingly, it can be inferred that water metaphors are mainly meant to present immigrants as coming with alarming numbers and therefore, to give rise to the implication that they are out of control and in need to be regulated. This argument is evidenced through the following examples which emphasize Trump’s frequent conceptualization of immigrants as “wave”, “flow”, and “influx”.

Based on the above examples, it can be observed that a remarkable number of Trump’s metaphorical expressions fell under the highly complex conceptual metaphor “immigrants are natural forces”, which is closely associated with the image of water. The most frequently used word in these examples is “flow”. Indeed, through conceptualizing immigrants as water and flood and denying them agency, Trump seeks to communicate a dehumanized lexicalization of these groups and therefore, block any empathy towards them. In line with this argument, Kainz (2016) suggests that associating people with water dehumanizes them “due to the substance’s lack of shape and color and the impossibility of distinguishing one drop from another”. The chief goal behind the use of such a metaphor, hence, is to reinforce the implication that immigrants are uncontainable just like natural catastrophes and to convey panic-inducing notions to the audience and encourage restrictive political action. In this regard, Trump frequently states that for the nation to be in full control of the ‘national container’, “a big, beautiful wall” should be built, as open borders “are an altar for ritual sacrifice”. As such, Trump portrays America as a container that has to be shielded from the flood of “aliens”. Concomitantly, these “aliens” are conceptualized as violent and disastrous fluids that endanger the safety of the American people (the “container”).

Perhaps most importantly, the above-mentioned examples show that Trump uses the container metaphor to say that it is safe inside the container of the U.S and threatening outside, which underlies the physical manifestation of building a wall to “protect” the U.S (Chilton 2017, p.585). The feelings of threat that Trump seeks to communicate are mainly meant to define two contrasting spaces, a fearful external space and a secure internal one (Ferrari, 2007). Through such distinction, Trump goes as far as to caricaturize the external space as dark, fearful and replete with enemies. In this regard, Montgomery (2017) argues that Trump is highly skilled in “turning up the discursive volume” and allows no room for “turning the volume up further”, as he often amplifies and hyperbolizes certain political messages in order to make them more effective.

Thus, his response towards the recent caravan of immigrants from Central America provides a good example of his use of immigration policies to reinforce cultural and ethnic divisions that make coexistence impossible. It shows how Trump seeks to conceptualize the movement of immigrants as a single one-dimensional event. Indeed, he emphasizes the flood’s perilous qualities, while overlooking the fact that floods “often recede and leave fertile soil in their wake”. Accordingly, in her discussion of the use of water metaphors in Californian public discourse about immigrants, Santa Ana (2002, p.73) suggests that such metaphors do not refer “to any aspect of the humanity of the immigrants, except to allude to ethnicity and race” and tap immigrants into one essentialist group. Such monolithic and highly reductionist conceptualization of immigrants further justifies the argument that Trump uses mappings in a highly selective way in order to deliberately emphasize certain aspects of

the source domains, while ignoring others. As such, Trump's racialized representation of immigrants tends to overlook the contexts of migration, the considerable diversity among immigrants, and their cultural and economic contributions to the American society. Such argument, indeed, goes in tandem with Charteris-Black's (2012) concept of 'purposeful' metaphor which is reinforced by the fact that political speeches are not spontaneous forms of discourse. Santa Ana (2002) makes the same point contending that "to characterize the movement of people as moving water might seem quite natural, but such a formulation of movement of people is not the only possible image that can be employed". Indeed, associating particular noun collocates, like "flood", "flux" and "flow", to the word immigration contributes to the construction of certain collocations, which when frequently used, form distinct "semantic prosodies" (Stubbs, 2001). As such, Stubbs (2001) defines discourse prosody as a "feature which extends over more than one unit in a linear string". Hence, the frequent concurrence of expressions like immigrants with words like "flood" and "wave" contributes to the creation of certain negative and emotionally loaded discourse prosodies that portray immigrants as threats, undifferentiated mass and even as enemies who should be avoided and "dammed" (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008).

However, one cannot argue that water metaphors are always used to negatively portray immigrants or stimulate antipathy towards them, as there are certain instances where metaphors are used to generate a different 'conclusion rule'. Echoes of such argument are found in KhosraviNik's (2010) study of the UK media representation of refugees and immigrants, particularly those who are geographically distant from the UK. As such, the fact that these groups are located far away from the UK is seen as one of the major reasons behind the sympathetic portrayal of these groups. The same applies to political discourse, as when immigrants are geographically far away from a particular country, they are more likely to be presented in a more positive light. However, given the ample evidence for group status threat within the US and the role of the current political discourse in stimulating such threats and fears, one cannot argue that undocumented immigrants, particularly those entering the U.S., are seen in a positive light. Indeed, these groups are even compared to animals.

#### *Animal metaphors*

As the analysis will show, "animal metaphors" are part and parcel of Trump's political discourse. Indeed, as I already surmised above, the choice of such metaphors can be motivated by Trump's willingness to emphasize the negative aspects of immigration, while blinding out its merits. However, it should be noted that the conceptualization of immigrants as animals is not a new metaphorical mapping, as it is deeply anchored in Western culture. It has its roots in Aristotle and Plato's "the Great Chain of Being" which is bent upon certain hierarchically arranged elements, including "God, humans, animals, plants, and inorganic matter". In this vein, Lakoff and Turner (1989) contend that "the Great Chain of Being" can function as an example of metaphorical mapping used to justify the superiority of humans over other living creatures. It "allows racists to denigrate their respective targets by 'demoting' them from humankind's central position in the Chain down to the 'lower' ranks of animals, plants, disease-engendering organisms or inorganic material" (Musolff, 2012). Although such a notion of social determinism "long ago bankrupted its scientific credentials", the belief in this "moral ordering" is reproduced each time the metaphor "immigrants are animals" is used (Santa Anna, 1999).

The use of certain expressions like "brutally murdered", "released", and "roaming" allows the frame of a cage from which "wild", "aggressive" and even uncivilized animals are "released". The chief goal behind such (mis-) representation is to stimulate insensitive attitudes towards immigrants, magnify the seriousness of threats, and perhaps most prominently create an 'us' vs. 'them' division. Consequently, this metaphor creates an urgent need to exclude these groups and fence them out of the American territory, hence out of



Americans' national imagination. Along similar lines, Crespo-Fernández (2013) suggests that through such metaphor, politicians call for “the extinction” of immigrants and make it even a duty to avoid them. As such, the “vilification” and “demonization” of immigrant groups can be highly productive in justifying Trump’s policies towards such groups, as it is “only when we degrade the enemy to the level of animals or construe them as alien or as a threat to “our way of life”, can we draft soldiers for a kill’ (Fabiszak, 2010). Hence, it can be inferred that “immigrants are animals metaphor” entertains a highly dysphemistic effect, as it is often highly productive in generating an insulting discourse strategy that blatantly “dehumanizes” certain individuals (Kövecses, 2002). Arguably, it can be inferred that Trump’s sermon on undocumented immigrants contributes to an indirect conceptualization of immigrants as “monsters” in order to intensify fear and antipathy towards these groups.

This metaphor does not only contribute to the creation of a dehumanizing narrative of immigrants, but also to the assertion of a “moral authority narrative” which has been widely referred to in different studies on migration discourses within the context of certain European countries. Indeed, Trump’s suggestion that immigrants are intrinsically vehement, and inferior allows the implication of a particular moral order. Such moral judgment, nevertheless, is presented as a fact rather than a mere opinion. This, in effect, plays a paramount role in normalizing and popularizing (Bhatia, 2015) Trump’s discourse and most importantly in reinforcing a concordance and singleness of purposes among his audience in order to resist the threat posed by these groups. Along similar lines, Hare (2001, 165, in Bhatia 2007) rightly argues that “our ultimate moral principles can become so completely accepted by us, that we treat them, not as universal imperatives, but as matters of fact; they have the same obstinate indubitability”. This, indeed, justifies the power of metaphor in leveraging people’s worldviews and even persuading certain groups to accept the unacceptable (such as the conceptualization of immigrants as animals).

Moreover, this metaphorical categorization does not only attribute to Americans the forces of good and forward their sense of moral superiority, authority, and integrity but also deny undocumented immigrants any (moral) right to provide any clarification. Thus, Trump’s vilification of the “Other” contributes to the creation of a particular mythology where immigrants are seen as essentially bad and those who avoid them are seen as essentially good. In doing so, Trump casts undocumented immigrants in the mold of primitivism and wildness inflicting precarious physical, mental, and social pain. On a deeper level, Trump’s galvanizing discourse creates the frame of a battle between two major forces of evil and good. Indeed, when political leaders perceive a particular issue in metaphoric terms, they often design policies that heavily draw on these metaphoric entailments. For instance, animal metaphors can be taken to convey various entailments, with a simple one being the approval of treating immigrants as animals. As such, Millar et al (2017) rightly argue that “metaphors could act as a transition from the argument ‘migrants should be deported’ to the conclusion ‘any means are justified to do so’”. Even more, this metaphor may sometimes exacerbate violence against immigrants, as words can have serious repercussions. In this regard, McGuire and Canales (2011) contend that abusive language is synonymous to murder and thus may lead to what he calls ‘verbicide’ “because of its potentially deadly consequences”. Hence, the consequences of such metaphors may be reinforced with Trump’s frequent use of physical suffering and disease metaphors.

#### *Immigrants as Unwelcomed Guests Metaphor*

Although “immigrants are unwelcomed guests/thieves metaphor” is not categorized within dehumanizing narratives about immigrants, it is highly productive in portraying these groups as criminals, drug dealers, and even terrorists. In this regard, as a wide range of scholars note, Trump often does not draw a clear distinction between immigration and

terrorism. In general, his argument that criminals and terrorists might enter the country through the border has led to the observation that the debate over migration is often adjacent to debates over crime and terrorism. Similarly, his stigmatization of the caravaners as foreign “invaders” evidences his racialized representation of these groups and his endeavor to challenge their legacy to stay in America. As such, this conflation of asylum seekers with “illegal” immigrants epitomizes Trump’s attempt to blatantly justify the administration’s ripple efforts to avoid the U.S. dedication to Human Rights and provides ample evidence for the “zero –tolerance” measures pursued in dealing with undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers. Perhaps most importantly, these measures stand in stark contrast with the deeply anchored idea that the U.S is a nation of immigrants, a land for the religiously persecuted. Hence, as a plethora of scholars note, the 2018 caravan represents an epitome of a new form of racism which is predicated upon the “insurmountable” cultural divisions between ethnicities and cultures that make living together impossible.

Perhaps most prominently, the dysphemistic spirit that dominates Trump’s metaphors provides further evidence for the incremental acceptability of explicit appeals and their effectiveness in galvanizing racially resentful voters. Such adaptability with explicit racial appeals, indeed, represents a rupture with the deeply rooted traditions of politically correct and racially coded appeals. Most importantly, it brings racism from the backstage to the frontstage and “normalizes racist discourse as logical” (Shafer, 2017). Taking into consideration the literature reviewed on racial appeals, it should be noted that explicit racial appeals are not solely associated with the rise of Donald Trump. Nevertheless, this does not deny the fact that these appeals seem to reach their crescendo with the rise of this politically incorrect figure. Thus, Trump’s denial of “political correctness” and his willingness to “tell the truth plainly” is not a new argument. What is new about this argument is mainly its immense “popularization” during his electoral campaign. Additionally, for Trump, political correctness is no longer effective in facing the urgent problems plaguing the nation today. In other words, he states that commitment to political correctness can endanger American national security and American way of life. In his recent book *Identity: The politics of Resentment*, Fukuyama (2018), who once announced “the end of history” and hence the triumph of liberalism revisits his early conclusions. Indeed, he states that the world is entering a new phase characterized by the upsurge of what he calls “the authentic identity” embodied in the persona of Donald Trump, who voices people’s resentment of the “careful” language they have been abided by since the Civil Rights Movement. His major conclusion is that the endeavor of certain groups for recognition has evolved to become aggressive demands to be treated better than other groups. He goes on arguing that the incremental shift towards “personal identities” has faltered universal understanding of human dignity and hence has become highly effective in exacerbating antagonism between the different groups.

Besides, Shafer (2017) suggests that such normalization of frontstage racism and its acceptance as rational and objective rhetoric has perilous effects on the non-white other, mainly Latinx immigrants. Roger C. Rocha, Jr., president of the League of United Latin American Citizens makes the same point suggesting that “it is obvious that Trump’s vision of making America great does not include Latinos” (Llenas, 2015). The Southern Poverty Law Center states that Trump’s campaign and his popularity have considerably contributed to the recent escalation of white extremism and the normalization of white supremacy as a casual neoliberal reality (2016 in Shafer, 2017). Nevertheless, Shafer notes that “while it is difficult or even impossible to link findings directly to a specific cultural phenomenon like Trump’s rise to mainstream acceptability”, the available empirical reality “speaks to the notion that citizens and their children might learn vicariously via a successful public figure how to express racist sentiments in ways accepted or even rewarded in public”. What can be understood from such argument is that Trump’s discourse seems to widen the boundaries of

acceptable public discourse about racism, but at the same time tightens the boundaries of national belonging.

This does not deny the fact that many argued that Trump's longing to reassert group sentiment and express Americans' cultural belonging cannot be considered as "racist". As such, in various instances, Trump himself states that "people who want their immigration laws enforced, and their borders secured, are not racists. They are patriotic Americans of all backgrounds who want their jobs and families protected". In this regard, Kaufmann (2017 in Bhambra, 2018) has argued within the context of the UK but applicable also to the U.S. that racial self-interest revolves simply around identifying with one's own. It is a phenomenon of 'group partiality' that refers to shared aspects of group sentiment. He further contends that all other minority cultures are allowed to voice their cultural belonging. Therefore, for him, white majority populations should not be stigmatized if they wished to do the same. He suggests that "we must accept that groups will look out for their cultural, economic and demographic interests' and, although lamentable this might be, he goes on saying that such 'clannishness' "does not deserve the "racist" appellation".

However, Kaufmann misses the point that 'minority partiality' was rarely about the cultural expression of group sentiments or issues of diversity or difference (Bhambra, 2017). Along similar lines, Ipek Demir (2017 in Bhambra, 2018) contends that claims by minority groups took place in the context of structured racial inequality, intending to reduce that inequality and prompting more inclusive policies. As such, Kaufmann's resonance would lead to "a society of hierarchy and domination produced by opportunity hoarding along lines of difference". Hence, the difference between minorities and majorities voicing group sentiments is that minorities' group sentiments emanate from their longing for inclusion and equality, whereas majorities' group sentiments are motivated by their willingness to exclude and dominate (Allen, 2005 in Bhambra, 2018). Indeed, as the analyzed data suggests, Trump's interpretation of patriotism is one that is bent upon intolerance and plain hostility towards the out-group. This narrow imagination of national identity supports exclusive narratives about the past that override the oppressive history and the struggle of different groups within the American society. Thus, Trump's quest for a common culture emphasizes his backward-looking definition of national identity and places rigid and even insurmountable boundaries of identity that cannot be overcome by undocumented immigrants. Nevertheless, it should be noted that not all undocumented immigrants are fenced out of the American national identity. For instance, Trump rarely, if at all, talks about building a wall along America's border with Canada which facilitates the entry of many European undocumented immigrants into the U.S. It seems that Trump does not consider the flow of white immigrants as a threat that should be resisted. These groups are already part of the Western culture and do not need "an ideological certification" to ensure that they "share our values and love our people". Undocumented migration, in this context, is not referred to as a neutral or value-free term, but rather as a scapegoat for "a racialized identity politics".

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, this research paper attempts to analyze the construction of immigrants in the US American political discourse and identify the different strategies employed by politicians in generating hostile attitudes towards the Other. Among the strategies identified are evaluative negative proclamation towards particular social groups, racially divisive appeals (implicit and explicit) and negative metaphorical constructions. Touching upon these productive analytical tools was instrumental in unpacking the different ideological motivations behind Trump's use of metaphors and their role in stoking feelings of anxiety and fear of the Other. His portrayal of immigrants as dangerous animals, floods, enemies and as unwelcomed guests is mainly meant to amplify both the moral and the physical threats

posed by these groups and therefore to instill the view that their exclusion from the popular imagination is a national and even a moral duty. Accordingly, these metaphors represent highly effective tropes in legitimizing the erection of well-defined boundaries of belongingness through social sanctioning, cultural marginalization and the militarization of borders. Most importantly, they illustrate the argument that hostility towards undocumented immigrants has escalated in number and virulence, as immigrants are blatantly seen as perilous threats to American culture and identity.

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## ETHICS PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FORMULATED BY ALESSANDRA MORETTI

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### Abstract

The article puts into scientific circulation the ideas contained in a document initially available only on media. The ideas put into circulation are part of the speech of an Italian MEP, Mrs. Alessandra Moretti. Within the article, a critical form of the ideas of the discourse is presented, with references to the economic and social context in which they are presented, to elements of doctrine and social practice applicable to the themes in its content. The speech includes the general theme of social development under the conditions of respecting some fundamental principles of ethics. The education is a key element of social development. Through education the power in society is dissipated. Holders of an adequate education have power in society. A concept of social development is cohesion. Social development means equal opportunities between men and woman, regional and social origin. Social development means also to reduce discriminations in the field of employment, entrepreneurship, earned income, education. The combination of factors such as employment or unemployment are correlated with the perspective of gender and social origin on the basis of a multicriteria analysis.

**Key words:** ethics, social development, education, equal opportunities, inclusion, linguistic mediation.

### Introduction

There has recently been an expansion of research on ethics on multiple levels. We are witnessing the emergence of new fields of ethics research. Desires for social progress or social innovation are naturally associated with the restrictions and new options that ethical norms imply. We can thus speak of an ethics of social development. At the same time, trends in the mobility of the tools used appeared in scientific research. We frequently encounter the use by one scientific discipline of a research tool specific to another. Through this article we propose for scientific research in the field of ethics the use of a scientific research method specific to history: the circulation of ideas contained in a valuable document.

The document put into circulation represents the speech given by Mrs. Alessandra Moretti, Italian MEP, at the open day organized by the TESEO Institute on May 27, 2022. Being in the age of massive use of digital communication tools, specific to the knowledge society, we propose to put into circulation the ideas contained in a document available on such an electronic medium. For the value of our study, it is very important to specify who is the owner of the points of view recorded and circulated through this article. Mrs. Alessandra Moretti being a member of the European Parliament, representative of Italy, has the ability to



establish directions of action in terms of social development, to know and to validate or not the developments recorded at the European level.

### **Current stage of research**

Social development is closely related to human development, a field of research with interdisciplinary predilection. The sequential approach to the changes that occur in the evolution of the individual (Golu, 2010) allowed the establishment of intervention tools, including at the community level, capable of capitalizing and expanding the skills of individuals. A component of social development within the European Union was represented by the formation of European social law. It was established gradually, even before the effective existence of the European Union, starting with the firm application of internationally recognized norms (International Labor Conventions). It continued with the elaboration of norms regarding human rights, including the right to education (European Convention on Human Rights, 1950). In the rigorous application of this Convention, jurisprudence has validated since 1968 the right of the beneficiary of education to have the opportunity to benefit from the education received (Belgium, 1968).

Later, other elements of progress were included in the European social law: the right to professional guidance, the right to professional training, the right to benefit from social services (European Social Charter, 1961; 1996). We can say that in the second half of the 20th century and in the first years of the 21st century, the objectives of European social law concerned the recognition of certain principles, their application being different depending on the economic conditions of each country.

### **Social and economic context**

The problems of necessary and foreseeable sectoral reallocations for the next period, the basis of the new requirements towards education, are the subject of studies by international institutions (International Monetary Fund, 2021). At the same time, studies on the need to adapt education to the new global context advanced (Raley & Preyer, 2010) or new tools of formal education were launched (Brunelli, 2018). In order to cope with the new economic and social environment, specialized studies on some components of education have also evolved. In the era we live in, there is research including regarding the study of foreign languages as a tool for communication and understanding between people (Zweifel, 2018).

The suite of educational science developments is in an advanced systematization phase in various European countries. In Romania, for example, we identify studies in which pedagogy is closely correlated with the philosophy of education and development or social reform projects (Cristea, 2001).

For some fields, such as medicine for example, the progress of science is increasingly evident in our lives, but it generates the appearance of ethical problems (Hanganu et al., 2022). In the field of social development, the progress of science has among its main objectives precisely the elimination of ethical problems inherited by humanity from previous historical periods. Among the important ethical issues of social development are the elimination of segregation in the field of employment, entrepreneurship and earned income, fair access to education as the basis of equal opportunities, the capacity for social progress between generations.

The experience of the formation of European social law, as it is presented today, has highlighted the fact that the considerable differences existing in the social and economic structures of various states complicate the elaboration of international agreements in this field (Popescu & Voiculescu, 2004). For this reason we find in the policies of the European Union the efforts towards cohesion in real terms. Mrs. Moretti's speech launches a new stage that consists in establishing real convergence objectives of social development indicators.

### **Education - key element of social development**

The first area of action for social development identified by Alessandra Moretti is education. Correlation with behavior change is associated with the education process. Contemporary learning psychology refers to changing behaviors as part of the need to adapt knowledge and expectations to new realities (Santos, 2022). Alessandra Moretti said: *< All the statistics tell us that the school is the one that more than other factors determines the future of young people in terms of professional positions and future earnings >*.

University education was the subject of an extensive reform. In Italy, for example, the focus fell on the organization of studies, the recruitment and development process, the financing mechanisms, the accreditation system (Trivellato, 2007). From Mrs. Alessandra Moretti's speech, we understand that she proposes to launch in Italy a reform of the content of university training, by developing the current network in accordance with regional development policy and implicitly with that of social development.

Christian social doctrine has observed that one of the ways in which injustice is formed is the boundless will to power of those who already have it (Marc & Richard-Molard, 1972). Through education, as argued by most doctrines focused on the realities of today's world, power in society is dissipated. Holders of an adequate education also have power in society. From the moment that accumulated material wealth declines in importance, education, along with science and creativity, occupies the remaining free area. Through education, as argued by most doctrines focused on the realities of today's world, power in society is dissipated. Holders of an adequate education also have power in society.

The increasing importance of education can also be understood by the important weight of intangible assets in the activity of companies. For the most part, intangible assets are dependent on the staff employed, on their training. The importance of intangible assets is so great that managers are tasked with evaluating different types of intangible assets and establishing a hierarchy of them in terms of their utility (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2003).

### **Ethics and social development- inseparable elements**

Ethics intervenes through values. Since the 20th century, the doctrine synthetically explains the role of values in society: in order to adapt to nature, man made tools and to adapt to social necessity, he created values; these can also be considered tools, but in a different way (Stroe, 1997). However, although ethics is connected to values, reason remains a reference element. The most useful particular thing in nature for man is the very man who is guided by reason (Spinoza, 1957). From Mrs. Moretti's speech we note that reason based on numbers, arguments and calculations can be the basis of a social development in accordance with high values and standards. The *social elevator* is a point of Ms. Alessandra Moretti's speech. She said: *< Upward mobility rates are much higher in Northern Italy, which is affected by the presence of higher quality schools, more stable families and more favorable labor market conditions >*.

A concept that appears in different forms in Ms. Alessandra Moretti's speech is cohesion. A reference element of the exclusion is *< the poor mobility >*, in particular the fact that *< intergenerational mobility remain low >*. Social doctrine from different European countries highlighted the fact that, in essence, the cohesion policies of the European Union aim to achieve harmonious and balanced development, especially by promoting the reduction of development gaps between different regions or countries (Voiculescu, 2014). In the context of achieving the cohesion objectives of the European Union and recovering the existing development gaps, one more important concept is recommended, that of deficit. In addition to the already established financial, infrastructure and ecological deficits, we must consider, measure and take measures to reduce the educational, institutional and democratic

deficit (in real terms) (Coșea, 2010). By establishing university educational specializations required by the labor market in the regions of Southern Italy, both the national and structural regional educational deficit will be reduced.

The idea of social action is evident in Mrs. Moretti's speech. What he wants is the fastest possible change for the better in society. In our era, we have the advantage that human action to change reality is also supported by the social doctrine of the Catholic Church. The thesis of Pope Francis according to which reality is more important than the idea (Pope Francis, 2018) is congruent with the messages regarding the priority of social development of the type formulated by Alessandra Moretti.

Mrs. Alessandra Moretti sees social development in accordance with the relevant doctrines of this period, but also with recent achievements of science, including those regarding ethics. Social development is a complex research field comprising several autonomous research areas. For Mrs. Alessandra Moretti *< those born to rich parents have an advantage, with a 33% chance of maintaining the social status of the family >*.

Mrs. Moretti considers the approach to social development according to several exigencies of theory and doctrine such as: the link between social development and sustainable development, systems theory, information theory as already established (Chistilin, 2008). Mrs. Moretti said *> <according to the framework provided by the European Commission, every national plan must include measures for equal opportunities, inclusive education, fair working conditions and adequate social protection >*.

The connection to the issues of sustainable development occurs through references to the green economy. The correlations with the idea of human security, a concept that is in the attention of economic research after it was launched by the UNDP (Dumitru & Dumitru, 2014), do not escape either. Connecting development to these elements of science and human knowledge gives us confidence that we will not witness a development that alienates us, but will be a social development, in the interest of all, based on the fundamental norms of ethics.

### **Management and effectiveness in the project of social development**

When important problems are identified, there is a need for solutions to solve them. In Ms. Moretti's speech, we find what management science requires in order to correlate the binomial between decision and effectiveness: responsibility, decision-making capacity, authority (Drucker, 2010). It is the responsibility based on the knowledge of the situation, by presenting the most relevant data, but also the ability to initiate solutions through direct involvement in projects that bring progress compared to the previous level.

As she presents the problems, Mrs. Moretti has in mind an axiom of human resources management: training for the various professions must be thought of in such a way that the subsequent activity ensures both general interests, expressed in the production of social goods, intended for collective or individual consumption, as well as personal interests, income from the profession (Omer, 2006). The problem of regional development and implicitly the need for a regional policy appeared in economic theory since the 8th decade of the 20th century. The complex character of this problem, the restrictions that intervene, the way of formulating the objective function for regional policy as it had been formulated since then (Blaga, 1979) in the community space or outside it, remain broadly the same.

We need to nuance what investment actually means as further research evolves. Education is an investment, and investment in human resources is the most effective (Suciu, 2000). Managers of modern companies accept the idea that staff give value to the company, representing an important asset of it (Mayo, 2001). Moreover, the inclusion of human capital among the company's assets, with all the difficulties generated by the evaluation system, is in accordance with both the doctrines of international accounting and the philosophical reflections on values and the human condition. From a philosophical point of view, the active

man essentially remains the source of all goods and values (Roşca, 2014). More than that, in Ms. Moretti's speech we found out about *< Essential elements that should not be worth less than the green and digital transition. In general, it is essential that all funding for recovery is based on a measurable principle of gender mainstreaming and that the gender budget is rigorously applied >*.

### **Equal opportunities – part of social development**

In the era we live in, we use a multi-criteria system to identify equal opportunities. When we talk about equal opportunities we think about eliminating any type of discrimination that generates social inequity or economic losses. In Mrs. Alessandra Moretti's speech, we identify the issues regarding equal opportunities between men and women, regional and social origin. They lead to discrimination in the field of employment, entrepreneurship, earned income, access to education.

Among the mentioned discrimination criteria, gender equality has the most extensive relevance at the European level. Based on funding from the European Union, studies were carried out on gender segregation on the labor market and in the field of entrepreneurship or calls for projects were launched that generated a mix of studies and analyzes combined with concrete solutions put into practice (Profemin, 2022).

The analysis of the implications of the horizontal segmentation of the labor force took place at the initiative of the International Labor Office, both at the global level (Rubery, 2015) and on the example of some countries, such as Greece, which are at an extreme level of regional development (Koukiadaki & Grimshaw, 2016).

Moreover, this reality has long been a rule in all OECD countries (Andronie & Făinişi, 2012). For this reason, a European Institute for equal opportunities between men and women operates in the European Union, with member countries having specialized authorities corresponding to it according to the specifics of national legislation.

EU member countries have adopted normative acts in the application of community norms regarding gender equality. From this perspective, Mrs. Alessandra Moretti's call refers to a new stage of these efforts, in which the results will be conclusive. At the same time, reference is made to the economic benefits of equal opportunity policies. We understand from the data presented that the first step in a chronological sense for ensuring gender equality is the one in the stage of ensuring education. Equality from a regional perspective, natural in a country like Italy, is connected both with equality from the perspective of social origin (of the individual's social environment) and with that based on gender. In Mrs. Alessandra Moretti's speech, we identify the main tools of EU Parliament: *< The 2020-2025 Gender Equality Strategy, presented in March 2020 by the European Commission, as regards the labor market, requires that wages and working conditions be uniform between women and men. The first steps in this direction were seen with the proposal of the Pay transparency directive, discussed in the FEMM Parliamentary Commission in Brussels at the end of 2021 >*

We see a use of the concepts of multicriteria analysis in a purely qualitative interpretation of the social phenomenon, with the identification of solutions for future social development. The way in which education must act to combat those state parameters of the social system that generate segregation is thought by Alessandra Moretti according to the current requirements of organizational behavior in an international context (Cole, 1995).

At the same time, there are studies that have made available quantitative data and qualitative analyzes able to draw attention to the multicriteria type problems of the ethics of social development in different countries, including Italy (Russo et al., 2018).

Thus, the combination of factors such as employment or unemployment are correlated with the perspectives of gender and social origin. Following such studies, the reaction of Mrs. Alessandra Moretti, member of an institution with decision-making power (the Parliament of

the European Union) to launch the project that multi-criterionally attacks social development is natural.

### Conclusions

The axes of social development in the vision of Mrs. Alessandra Moretti are in line with the fundamental aspirations of people, with the results of scientific research and with the requirements of several social doctrines, with the norms of ethics, including the current Christian doctrine.

It is an approach that takes into account the current social and economic context. Issues of education as a basis for effective inclusion are considered. Mrs. Alessandra Moretti practically launches a social development project based on management rules. In the social field, it is necessary to ensure equality between men and women, equal opportunities from a regional point of view and social origin. Equality of opportunity must lead to undifferentiated access to employment, entrepreneurship and income for individuals.

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# CURRENT ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF RUSSIAN/SOVIET POSITIVE EUGENICS

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## Abstract

Eugenic theory was premised on a belief in genetic/biological determinism and promised the “self direction of human evolution.” Many Western nations, including the United States, utilized what have been called both negative and positive eugenic measures, seeking to eliminate “negative traits” from the populace through strategies that included restrictions on immigration, involuntary sterilizations of those deemed to be unfit, and segregation, while utilizing “positive” measures such as better baby contests, fitter family contests to encourage selective reproduction. In contrast, eugenicists in late Imperial Russia and the early Soviet period focused their efforts on positive eugenic strategies in an effort to halt what was seen as the growing degeneracy of the population and encourage the proliferation of desirable traits. An examination of the underlying basis for the “positive” approach and the reasons for its cessation raise important ethical issues for consideration today.

**Keywords:** Eugenics, Russia, genetic screening, Soviet Union

## Introduction

The term “eugenics,” derived from the Greek roots for “good” and “origin,” has been attributed to Francis Galton, who used the word in 1883 to define the science of breeding a better race (Weindling, 2021). Galton (1908) was concerned that individuals who were “degenerate,” so labeled based on their social characteristics and mental abilities, maintained a higher rate of reproduction compared with fit and healthy persons, who were restricting their reproduction. The science of eugenics would correct this perceived imbalance.

Accordingly, eugenic theory was premised on a belief in genetic/biological determinism (Selden, 2005) and promised the “self direction of human evolution.” Eugenic proponents linked a perceived decline in population quality to inherited qualities and differential birthrate, often blaming targeted groups for recurrent social problems (Allen, 1997). Biological metaphors were utilized to shape social policies, including those relating to immigration, segregation, and sterilization (see Ellis, 1912).

The transnational eugenics movement that flourished in Western countries from 1900 through 1940 was driven by a variety of factors. There was widespread economic and social instability, due in part to increasing industrialization. Medicine was seen as a national resource and scientists were viewed and viewed themselves as a special class of concerned experts (Leonard, 2003). The surgeon and eugenicist J. Ewing Mears (1909) proclaimed, “The members of our profession are not only the conservators of the public health, but are, or should be, in every sense the promoters of the public good.” Rivalries erupted between eugenicists and practitioners of various health sciences with respect to the appropriateness of their touted interventions to prevent and treat disease, with professional power and ownership of the relevant terrain in play (Pernick, 1997). Rational scientific planning offered the possibility and the hope that human resources could be preserved for the benefit of future generations and enhance efficiency.



The implementation of eugenic theory assumed a variety of forms across countries. In the United States, the lines between genetic research and eugenics were quite blurred, a situation exemplified by the dual roles held by Charles Davenport, both a leading biological scientist and the head of two organizations that funded eugenic research (Duster, 2003). Eugenic efforts frequently utilized two approaches. What has been referred to as “negative eugenics” focused on eliminating what have been characterized as “negative traits.” These strategies were designed to decrease reproduction in families deemed to have inferior hereditary qualities, e.g., through the involuntary and often unknowing sterilization of individuals deemed to be “feeble-minded” or “imbeciles”, eugenic marriage laws that prohibited the marriage of individuals with sexually transmitted infections, and the passage of anti-miscegenation laws to enforce racial segregation. Restrictive immigration laws would serve to prohibit the new addition of such persons into the country (Dorr, 2008; Ellis, 1912; Okrent, 2020; Reilly, 2015). The burden of these negative measures fell predominantly on immigrants, the poor, and minority persons (see Leonard, 2003).

The second approach employed so-called “positive” eugenic measures. These measures sought to encourage the proliferation of better health and higher intelligence across the population by promoting reproduction among those deemed to be healthy and fit and by recognizing and rewarding those who were believed to best exemplify positive traits. In the United States, positive eugenic strategies often assumed the form of “better baby” and “fitter family” contests, frequently accompanied by government-supported propaganda intended to influence individuals’ reproductive decisions (Pernick, 2002; Selden, 2005). These measures, the positive and the negative, would act together to control the ability of those deemed undesirable to reproduce.

The use of “negative” eugenic measures to reshape social policy and society was carried to its extreme under the Nazi regime. Borrowing from the U.S. models for anti-miscegenation and involuntary sterilization (Bergin, 2016; David, Fleischhacker, & Höhn, 1988), the Nazi government instituted gradually escalating measures designed to improve what was conceived of as the Aryan race and eliminate those deemed to be inferior: the segregation and stigmatization of groups, involuntary sterilization, euthanasia and, finally, an effort to completely exterminate disfavored groups from within the population (Bergin, 2016). Those deemed to be defective would not only be prevented from reproducing, but were to be themselves eliminated.

In contrast to the emphasis in the United States and Nazi Germany on “negative” eugenic approaches, the eugenics movement in late Imperial Russia and the early Soviet Union emphasized “positive” eugenic measures. This article explores the eugenics movement during these periods, describing salient similarities and differences between the eugenic movements in the US and Russia. The article then discusses aspects of the Russian positive eugenics movement and its cessation that have relevance for ethical dimensions of medical research and practice today.

### **Eugenics in Late Imperial Russia**

The issue of eugenics was first raised in Vasilii Markovich Florinskii’s 1865 publication of *The Perfection and Degeneration of the Human Race*. He suggested that ideal people could be fashioned through an emphasis on and the cultivation of good health and wellness, beauty, moral excellence, absence of chronic disease, and absence of psychopathology. These goals could be effectuation through rational marriage, embraced at a population level (Krementsov, 2014).

Russian eugenicists became familiar with the writings of eugenicists in Western countries during the period from 1900 through 1917 following the translation of their works

into Russian. Russian eugenicists borrowed ideas selectively from other countries, including the French, British, and American models, calling their movement *antropoteknika*.

The First International Eugenics Congress was held in London in 1912. Although it was not attended by any Russian eugenicists, it was attended by the philosopher Petr Kropotkin and the journalist Isaak Shklovski. Both disagreed with Western countries' conceptualization of eugenics and their proposed implementation strategies. Specifically, Kropotkin criticized the class bias of the Congress and opposed proposals to sterilize "the unfit," referring to this approach as a "beastly philosophy" (Kropotkin, 1912; Problems in Eugenics, 1913). Shlovski contested Western eugenicists' notion of a hierarchy of higher and lower races (Krementsov, 2010).

Later, Russian jurists and criminologists rejected the Western idea of inborn criminality and involuntary sterilization of prisoners, and Russian psychologists and educators rejected idea of "feeble-mindedness." In contrast, they contended that children deemed to be defective could be trained to be normal members of society. Unlike the focus of the Americans, British, and Germans on race and class, the Russian eugenicists emphasized the use of "positive" measures to propagate "good" heredity (Krementsov, 2011, 2015), advocating the systematic intervention in human reproduction and heredity and development on a population basis. They suggested that it was the scientific belief in the negligible role of environment on heredity that was responsible for the development of "questionable ideas," e.g., racial superiority, sterilization, segregation, euthanasia (Iudin, 1914).

Various factors underlay the growth of and enthusiastic adoption of the eugenics movement during this period of time. Physicians and public health personnel eagerly embraced eugenic theory, which had invigorated science and medicine with new excitement. This new science of eugenics provided physicians, who were generally not viewed high on the social ladder (Frieden, 1981; Hutchinson, 1996), with both greater recognition and a platform from which they could claim autonomy and authority vis-à-vis the Russian state (Krementsov, 2011). Eugenics offered new possibilities for research related to medical family histories, twin studies, and alcoholism and heredity. And, not unlike eugenicists and politicians in the United States (Roosevelt, 1907; Walker, 1989), Russian physicians, scientists, and politicians voiced considerable anxiety about what was seen as the increasing degeneracy of Russian populations. Russia did not, however, experience a number of conditions that fueled the eugenics movement in the United States, Great Britain, and Germany: declining rates of fertility, high rates of immigration, and increasing industrialization (Leonard, 2003).

### **Eugenics in the Early Soviet Union**

The eugenics movement continued during the early years of the Soviet Union, fueled by a number of factors. Regular medical care and social programs were generally absent (Khen, 2006). The new government sought to create and propagate the image of the "New Soviet Man," who would be "psychologically, physically, and culturally at home in the radically different society" (Howell, 2006). Accordingly, the eugenics movement focused on improving man physically and changing human nature (Bardziński, 2013).

Nikolai Koltsov, a biologist and pioneer of modern genetics in Russia, argued, however, that efforts to control natural selection were unwise because the cessation of selection would lead to degeneration and suggested that a focus on gene engineering without first solving social problems was destructive. He postulated that eugenics was comprised of three elements:

- Pure science (anthropogenetics), i.e., the gathering knowledge of human genetics and principles of inheritance of human traits;

- Applied science (anthropotechnique), meaning the application of knowledge of anthropogenetics to find appropriate measures to improve future generations, e.g., social policies, modification of individual behaviors; and
- Eugenic religion, the espousal of an ideal that would give meaning to life and motivate people to sacrifices and self-limitations (Krementsov, 2010).

The years of the Bolshevik eugenics movement saw an increased emphasis on public health, the protection of maternity and infancy, and opposition to abortion in both professional circles and in public forums. During the years 1920 through 1925, eugenicists provided lectures to both professional and lay audiences, facilitated public discussions, and organized exhibits touting the benefits of eugenics. Eugenics was integrated into curricula of biology courses in secondary schools and universities and even became the focus of plays and fictional works. Eugenic theory was implemented via a focus on the investigation of hereditary diseases and the institution of legal prohibitions, e.g., marriage registration and the establishment of a minimum age for marriage. In a striking contrast to their Western counterparts, the Soviet eugenicists of this period paid no attention to race, did not conduct research on those who might have been considered “unfit,” focused their research on understanding those with creative talents, and rejected the sterilization or isolation of “defective” persons, advocating instead their “re-education.” The focus on maternal health elevated the status of gynecologists, providing them with a path to advancement in medicine, while the broader dissemination of materials relating to eugenics led to increase in membership of Russian Eugenics Society.

By the mid- to late-1920s, however, eugenics was attacked as a bourgeois science that was incompatible with the egalitarianism of Bolshevism. Eugenicists were accused of ignoring social and environmental conditions, raising the debate about phenotype and genotype. By 1930, eugenics became associated with racist policies of Nazis and was dismantled as fascist science (Krementsov, 2011). Under Stalin, research on human genetics was portrayed as vital for socialist reconstruction and the field of eugenics was transformed into a focus on Soviet medical genetics.

### **Current Ethical Implications of “Positive” Eugenics**

Despite the demise of programs both in the U.S. and Russia that promoted positive eugenics, lessons can be gleaned from the nature and approaches adopted by this movement. The increase in medicalization as both a facilitator and a consequence of positive eugenics allowed the state—meaning the relevant governmental organ—to exert ever-increasing control of their populations through, first, moral training and the establishment of mechanisms within existing public health structures to reward those deemed to be fit and, therefore, desirable, and, second, by regulating reproduction, such as by imposing restrictions on the ability to marry (Rose, 2001). Research agendas, rhetoric, and social policies were adapted and adopted to fit the political, economic, and ideological contexts. An underlying belief in the ability of science to fuel progress propelled the movement forward.

Some of these same conditions are present today, in the U.S. and elsewhere. New biotechnologies have been embraced for their ability to identify the potential for genetic disorders, leading to a “growing acceptance of the notion that ‘defective’ babies can be prevented” (Duster, 2003, p. xii) and the ability to identify and associate specific genetic disorders with specific racial and ethnic groups (Duster, 2003). Although apparent consensus exists that neonatal testing is morally justified in situations in which a disease causes harm or where early intervention confers a benefit, there is an absence of needed broad debate or consensus regarding the boundary between difference and defect, what exactly constitutes a defect, and what should be prevented, even if preventable.

Consider as an example the following hypothetical situation. Genetic testing may be conducted at any of six points in time: (1) during the neonatal period; (2) prenatally, between implantation and birth; (3) during the preimplantation stage of embryonic development, following in vitro fertilization; (4) during the pre-fertilization stage, before in vitro fertilization; (5) when couples are considering whether to reproduce; or (6) when a person recognizes a higher-than-average risk of developing a particular disease later in life (American Medical Association, 2021). Suppose that it becomes possible to assess the probability of giving birth to homosexual offspring through genetic testing or, even if it is not, that people come to believe that a genetic test could, indeed, apprise them of the likelihood of giving birth to a baby who would later display same-sex attraction. Indeed, despite research findings and scientists' advisories that genetics alone cannot predict an individual's sexual orientation (Ganna et al., 2019; Lambert, 2019), apps are now available that ostensibly can provide consumers with a same-sex attraction score based on an analysis of their DNA (Kwon, 2019). Either scenario could lead to the imposition or adoption of "positive" eugenic measures, e.g., discouragement, whether legally or through social pressure, to reduce the number of unions that could lead to such births and/or decisions by couples not to have children based on their belief that individuals with same-sex attraction are more likely to face discrimination and experience unhappiness. This scenario also raises the question as to whether a potential ability to modify sexual orientation in utero could be considered an enhancement to improve an individual's functioning, and therefore a "positive" strategy, or an informal effort to eliminate persons with a specific characteristic (see Thomas & Rothman, 2016 and their discussion of Down syndrome).

The scenario is not as farfetched as it may seem initially. There have been numerous efforts to identify the biological and genetic influences that determine sexual preference among males (Hamer et al., 1993; LeVay, 1991), as well as calls to proactively eliminate homosexuality through genetic testing, should it become possible to identify those genetic factors primarily responsible for same-sex orientation (see Yoder, 2019). It is not that long ago that homosexuality was considered to be a mental disease or disorder (Burton, 2015), reflective of a psychopathic personality (Schmeiser, 2008). Indeed, some mental health professionals continue to portray same-sex attraction as a pathological disturbance in need of a cure (Friedman, 1988; Socarides, 1995; Vider & Byers, 2015). Research conducted by individuals within a homophobic framework, whether due to personal bias or societal hostility, may produce biased research findings and/or jeopardize the safety of research participants (see, e.g., Dörner, 1989).

While this hypothetical situation is possibly an extreme example of the risks of more subtle forms of positive eugenics, it amply demonstrates the dangers associated with a too-eager embrace and acceptance of scientific ways of knowing in the absence of an adequate exploration of and attunement to the larger social and political contexts (Kwon, 2019; Maxmen, 2019). This imagined scenario underscores as well the ease with which already-stigmatized groups may be further stigmatized as the result of a failure to consider the messaging implicit in approaches that rest on positive eugenics.

## Conclusion

As the above discussion demonstrates, even strategies associated with positive eugenics may lead to adverse consequences. The Soviet Union recognized relatively early during the course of its eugenics program that positive eugenics was incompatible with an ideology that emphasized egalitarianism (Merricks, 2010). We can consider Rawls' observation relating to justice:

Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. For this reason justice denies that the

loss of freedom for some is made right by a greater good shared by others. It does not allow that the sacrifices imposed on a few are outweighed by the larger sum of advantages enjoyed by the any. Therefore in a just society the liberties of equal citizenship are taken as settled; the rights secured by justice are not subject to political bargaining or to the calculus of social interests (Rawls, 1971, pp. 3-4).

Accordingly, we learn from positive eugenics that the imposition of strategies designed to benefit the larger society and/or the state may disadvantage and even harm the individual. It is not only that such practices contravened what was the Soviet ideology of egalitarianism. It is also that such measures have the potential to harm individuals and families through the implicit and explicit denigration of targeted qualities and characteristics.

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## FROM INDIVIDUAL'S RIGHTS TO PUBLIC BENEFITS – A CONFLICT OF VALUES IN HEALTHCARE

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### Abstract

This article emphasizes the important differences that should be taken into consideration, when the ethical concepts are used in the analysis of the specific practical situations in healthcare. The definitions of *medical ethics*, *bioethics*, and *public health ethics* seem to resemble in their ultimate scope, but look very different in their relational interactions among stakeholders. The major differences could be attributed to the moral norms and values that guide the ethics decisions. The ethics approaches and their potential effect on human rights protection is discussed in the presented case study analysis of a legislative act on late term abortions for social reasons in the Republic of Moldova.

**Keywords:** Medical Ethics, Bioethics, Public Health Ethics, Late-term abortion, Human rights, Republic of Moldova

### Background

The development of new scientific biomedical fields and the introduction of new technologies and innovative treatment methods expose human lives to previously unknown and more complex challenges. Emerging ethical topics are discussed more frequently in the professional literature, and many specialized bioethics commissions at the national and international levels are trying to address them. Still, novel ethical issues constantly arise with progress in medicine and biotechnology. The ethical questions affect all stakeholders, from public health administrators, to healthcare providers and their patients, as well as the society at the level of individuals and groups of people. Ultimately, ethics becomes an indispensable virtue for a proper clinical care and management of patients, and for the administrative decision-making and public health policy development.

The definitions of *medical ethics*, *bioethics*, and *public health ethics* are all part of the applied ethics in philosophical context. In many cases, the ethical values are referenced directly to *human or patient rights*. It is indisputable that all these definitions are very closely connected, but the distinctions between these domains seem to be a very fine line, and sometimes - confusing for decision-makers. Even more than that, they do not understand the role of these concepts in the public health policies development.

### Human rights in patient care

The concept of *human rights in patient care* refers to the theoretical and practical application of general human rights principles to the patient care context, particularly to interactions between patients and providers. It applies rights principles universally to a health context or setting. However, the concept of human rights in patient care derives from universal and inherent human dignity, rather than the rights of patients as participants in a consumer transaction. It includes key patient rights to liberty and security of the person; privacy; information; bodily integrity; life; highest attainable standard of health; freedom



from torture, cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment; participation in public policy; non-discrimination and equality (Cohen & Ezer, 2013).

### Three domains of applied ethics

The consensus is that *medical ethics* applies primarily to patients care and management, the *bioethics* addresses the ethics of biomedical research, and the *public health ethics* is concerned with the societal health and well-being. Altogether, all three domains are responsible for the protection of human rights in healthcare. As much as these concepts seem to resemble in their ultimate scope, they look very different in their relational interactions

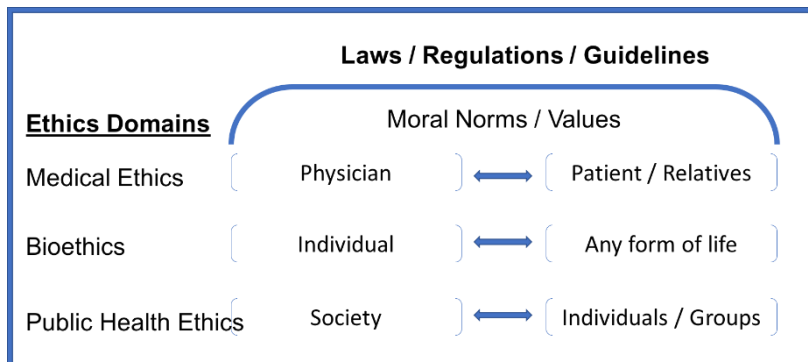


Figure 1: Distinctions between ethics domains

among stakeholders. The major differences could be attributed to the moral norms and values that guide the ethics decisions, along with the interacting key-players involved in each of these domains. These distinctions establish the relationships among participating parties, which could have intrinsic or

newly created conflicts, and, ultimately, may affect the human rights of individuals (Figure 1).

#### What is ethics?

Ethics is the theoretical discipline that concerns with the meaning of all aspects of human behavior and studies the concepts of *Good, Evil, Duty, Justice*, etc., namely people's morality. It is the consideration of how society or individuals develop the rules and principles (norms) by which to judge and guide meaningful decision-making.

Robert Solomon, one of the authors on the *business ethics* concepts (Solomon & Hanson, 1983), noted that the ethics etymology suggests its core meanings: a) *the individual nature*, including what it means to be "a good person", and b) *social norms* that govern and limit our behavior, in particular regarding what is right and wrong (which we call morality) (Solomon, 1992).

As a concept, ethics appears only when we affirm ourselves in a relationship with another person and get involved in someone else's freedom. Especially, the ethics examines this relationship by stating that you **MUST** do so that to respect one's freedom like your own, which would inspire the trust of others. This relation is mediated by the social rules, norms or laws, in order to allow people's coexistence and to distinguish the limits of accepted freedoms: *my freedom, your freedom, the rule*. In this way, the ethic decisions are guided by the *imperative* and *law*. The ethics has the ambition to rebuild mediation between **freedom**, which is the starting point in philosophical reflection, and **law**, as the end-point in proposing solutions (Morar, 2012).

Based on these relational arguments, the ethical reflection is necessary when certain choices are made, with a potential benefit or harm affecting others or ourselves. The subjects of ethical discussions and dilemmas encompass such definitions as health, life, human dignity, integrity and autonomy, etc., underlying human relationships in a democratic society. In the context of biomedical sciences and clinical practice, ethical reflection appears as a continuous and inevitable process, with many synergistic scopes and conflicting interests between the involved stakeholders. Trying to find a solution to ethical conflicts, prioritizing the values becomes crucial. This paper will attempt to reflect on these conflicts through the

interpretation of medical ethics, bioethics, and public health ethics, as these domains relate to the fundamental human and/or patient rights.

### *Medical Ethics*

Since Hippocratic Oath, the medicine is promoted extensively by the existing professional codes of ethics (Byrd & Winkelstein, 2014). The basic principles of medical ethics relate to the correct behavior of the representatives of the trade, the moral qualities that should characterize them, given the social function of the profession, and are determined by the specific duties and responsibilities. For instance, in medical profession the gentleness, kindness, and empathy are the utmost expected qualities in a society that has a strict moral judgment. Therefore, these qualities should especially characterize healthcare workers in their relationships with patients.

The object of medical ethics is the field of moral relations in clinical practice. Particularly, this domain tends to regulate interpersonal relationships between doctors and patients, their relatives, along with the professional relationships between health workers and the society. Thus, the ethics triangle “doctor-patient-society” can be easily interpreted in the context of medical care. The physician establishes his own values that characterize him or her professionally and applies them in dealing with others, while respecting deontological and legal frameworks imposed by the society as the limits of freedoms for each involved party.

The core values of medical ethics are very similar to those that protect the patients’ rights in general. For instance, the non-discrimination, confidentiality, and responsible (clinical) conduct are crucial principles in medical ethics, mandating an equal and fair attitude towards each patient, protection of patients’ privacy and respect for their autonomy. At the same time, there are some specific conflicting categories in medical ethics, such as healthcare provider’s authority, patient’s trust, and perception of clinician’s professionalism by patients that may entice the healthcare provider to neglect unintentionally some of the core values. For example, patients expect to have the best intentions from a clinician and entrust their fates almost unconditionally, believing that “doctors should know what is best for the patients and should care for patients”. In turn, doctors encourage the patients to consent to procedures and recommendations that in doctors’ opinion are needed to the patients, a so-called paternalistic model of doctor-patient relationships (Kaba & Sooriakumaran, 2007). However, doctor’s social and personal commitments are not always at the highest level, and their medical competence and care for patients in circumstances such as complex diseases (i.e., cancer) or resource-limited societies with scarce diagnostic infrastructure may be objectively hindered by an incomplete understanding of diseases and lack of effective diagnostics and treatments. Psychological influence of such believes may constitute the bulk of the “placebo effect”, which is related, at least partially, to the level of trust in a physician’s professionalism. The trust in medical providers’ professionalism makes some patients vulnerable with respect to their autonomy, biasing their decision toward doctor’s suggestions or recommendations. This phenomenon is especially noted in post-Soviet societies and developing countries in general, where the paternalistic approach to doctor-patient relationship is still a social norm.

In fact, the interests of medical providers and patients are asymmetrical and not always aligned with human rights principles. In this context, the notion of dual loyalty is applied, which poses particular challenges for health professionals when the subordination of the patient’s interests to state or other purposes risks violating the patient’s human rights. However, health professionals are increasingly asked to weigh their devotion to patients against service to the objectives of government or other third parties. A medical provider should have high moral standards in order to minimize the asymmetry with patient’s interests, and the patient should be better educated in his or her rights in order to exercise them in relationships with the medical provider. The medical ethics categories reflect the

particularities of moral atmosphere in the medical practice and play a key role in regulating professional relations. The ethical canons usually are translated into specific legislation at the national levels that reflect the major principles of human rights as individuals. Thus, human rights in patient care complement medical ethics by providing a set of legally recognized and globally accepted norms and procedures for identifying systemic issues.

### *Bioethics*

Semantically, medical ethics is closely related, but not identical to bioethics. Medical ethics focuses on problems arising specifically from the medical practice, while bioethics addresses a subject which is much broader, dealing with moral issues initiated by the developments in biological sciences, in general. Some debatable terms, such as “life conception”, may be shared by both medical ethics and bioethics. For example, the issue of the “beginning of life” is as much a philosophical and religious concept as it is a biological natural event. At first appearance being attributed to the domain of *bioethics*, the definition of the “beginning of life” has a practical meaning for *medical ethics* when considering the human rights issues, specifically, in cases of legislative and social norms of abortion, sometimes referred to as “prenatal welfare” in legal arguments (Fox, 2015). Some legislations (i.e. Europe) consider that the embryo becomes a subject of human rights after 12 weeks of gestation, while other administrative laws are based on the religious believes that “life begins at conception”, resulting in a large variation in legislation on abortions among geographical regions and countries (Myser, 2008). For a physician as an individual, either situation may be unacceptable at the personal level, but the ultimate victims of the conflicting and competing interests are the pregnant women and their “unborn” fetuses (Shah & Salazar, 2014).

As a philosophical field, bioethics appears in the middle of last century, being promoted as a space for reflection and concern for the impact of speedy progress of biomedical sciences over the morality of a society. The subject of bioethics is the value of life in any manifestation and at any level of development. In a simple definition, the main purpose of bioethics is to protect the life as a naturally occurring phenomenon.

Bioethics is centered on the individual, addressing the vulnerability of the patient's life in the context of medical care, the value and respect of human life from conception (human embryo, abortion, artificial fertilization, experiments with embryonic stem cells, etc.) till death (the dignity of dying, the issue of euthanasia, medically assisted death, end-of-life support, etc.). Some additional topics of bioethics include issues on genetic engineering, identification of the risks for individuality and uniqueness of human beings, cloning and use of cells, tissues and human organs for transplantation. Bioethics examines human attitudes toward lower forms of life, especially when it concerns the inclusion of animals in biomedical and pharmaceutical experiments, irresponsible exploit of animals, along with tortures and sufferings caused by the human activity (Dubois et al., 2017).

The distinction between medical ethics and bioethics domains comes from the identification of key stakeholders involved in the act of ethical assessment. In medical ethics, these parts are identified with the healthcare provider on one side and the patient, relatives or colleagues on the other side. In bioethical analysis, the core value is the life in any form (including animals), basic concerns being protection and respect for its dignity. Moreover, bioethics reflects not only upon the individual life, legally recognized, but also on any form that is not recognized as an individual (ex. embryos), or its perspective rights in life's development (ex., use of embryos and cloning issues). Thus, there is a bias toward a generalization of benefits in bioethics vs medical ethics in which the benefits are always patient oriented.

A larger interpretation of the term of bioethics is given by a philosopher and physician of the last century, Albert Schweitzer, who has introduced a new ethical concept - "*reverence for life*" (Tan & Tatsumura, 2014). In his opinion the reverence for life should become the

world concept of contemporary society: The sense of ethics is to urge to express equal reverence for life. It is also the fundamental principle of morality. Good is what serves to maintain and develop life, evil is all that prevents or destroys life. (Schweitzer & Joy, 2006).

While the field and practice of bioethics applies philosophical principles such as autonomy, beneficence, justice, and non-maleficence to the patient care context, the human rights framework applies a complementary set of legal norms (for example, freedom, security of the person, non-discrimination) that have been developed through judicial interpretation. This legal analysis enables a more systemic approach, widening from of an individual patient-provider relationship and focusing attention on the state and health policies (Cohen & Ezer, 2013).

#### *Public health ethics*

The term "public health" refers to the whole society efforts to improve population health and disease prevention or the "society obligation to assure conditions for people's health" (Petrini, Gainotti & Requena, 2013). Public health ethics and the resulting policies emphasize primarily broader measures and interventions at the community level for prevention and prophylaxis of diseases, rather than treatment of individuals. The target group is the population as a whole (Goldsteen, Goldsteen &, Dwelle, 2015). By far, the most arguable conflicts of interests related to human rights are present in the public health ethics, ranging from whose interests are primordial, to who is to decide what is good or bad for the individual and the society (Annas & Mariner, 2016).

In general terms, the *public health ethics* defines the relationships between the majority of population or the whole society vs. specific individuals or groups of individuals, in many cases with special needs or interests (i.e., sharing a disease or a condition). In public health ethics, the society possesses a normative power over the community and its individuals. The *common good* is the key value applied in relation to other parts. Thus, the majority or the society, being guided by commonly accepted principles, sets limits of their normative power, applies its standards in relation with individuals, and develops the laws for interaction with individuals or other groups.

Many arguable issues and contradictions could arise in response to public health policy initiatives, developed based on the principles of justice, equity, and common good. Sometimes, the process of identifying the common good results in individuals' outcry and resistance. For example, many societies, especially from developing and resource-limited countries, are faced with anti-vaccination currents promoting a negative attitude towards state-mandated universal vaccination programs. While these programs are an important achievement in prevention of serious infectious diseases, individual's right to accept or not the intervention that concerns their health, as well as parents' right to decide about vaccination of their children is conflicting with the common good of health systems to have maximum coverage of population for prevention of diseases. In some cases, the vaccination is mandated indirectly by compulsory requests for certificate of vaccination before admitting a child into a public education institution (kindergarten or school), which could be seen as a barrier in achieving the fundamental right to education of individuals (Dawson, 2011).

The Nuffield Council of Bioethics' report *Public Health: Ethical Issues* describes a step-wise intervention that a state may use in promoting public health: "an intervention ladders"- from the least to the most coercive or intrusive measure, in which every step up the ladder requires a stronger justification to support the intervention (Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2007). The identified moral considerations, which should be taken into account in an ethical evaluation of public health interventions, include, among others, protection of non-dominant (minority) subgroups from marginalization and stigma; justified and fair distribution of health benefits; prevention of utilitarian commitments in health policy, etc. While it may be not easy to apply these ethical principles and frameworks as general

guidelines for developing public health policies and practices, it needs to be considered that public health activities can significantly influence individual's actions. Moreover, public health policies can entirely ignore or exclude individual's right to make informed choices. For instance, imposing the compulsory quarantine for the patients with dangerous infectious diseases; or banning smoking in public places; or fluoridation of drinking water, etc. - all considered beneficial for "common good", these measures of public health interventions may be perceived unethical as limitations imposed on individual's freedom.

Under the influence of described circumstances, it became evident the necessity for the decision makers to design appropriate and fair policies and measures, which would favor the population, viewed as a whole, or the majority of a community. However, this approach sometimes could contradict the traditional focus of medical ethics, applied on doctor-patient relationship (individual approach).

Trying to determine the balance between individual's rights to make informed choices and the power of the state to ban freedoms, we could make the reference to the *principle of injury*, originally formulated by John Stuart Mill in his essay *On Liberty* (Mill, 1869). Mill argues that the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is the only one that is meant to prevent a danger to others. Only in this case, the individual's good, physical or moral, does not prevail over the common good. Here comes another dimension to the discussion, referring to the limits of freedoms and responsibilities of individuals towards their own health versus social responsibility towards public health.

Thereby, public health ethics is complemented by human rights, as the main goal of this field is ensuring that public health interventions provide benefit and minimize harms, respect individuals' dignity and rights to the greatest extent possible, and are implemented fairly (Cohen & Ezer, 2013).

### **Discussion: A case study**

To demonstrate the significant differences between ethics approaches mentioned above, a case-study from the author's practice in the Republic of Moldova, is analyzed below.

A 34-year old woman at 20-21 weeks of pregnancy visited the OBGYN office for an initial consultation. This was her 4<sup>th</sup> pregnancy and she is the mother of three children: 6, 4, and 1 year and 8 months old. She is a housewife from a small village and her husband is employed on temporary seasonal agrarian works. The family lives in very precarious conditions, below the poverty line under national standards. The woman complained about her family difficult financial situation and mentioned that she was not happy about one more child. As a solution, the obstetrician, in a paternalistic manner, suggested an abortion due to woman's social situation. He stated with a very cold and contemptuous attitude: "*It is enough to multiply the poverty!*"

It should be mentioned that abortion, based on social reasons, is legally supported in the Republic of Moldova (Ministry of Health, 2020). The law allows a voluntary interruption of pregnancy without any restriction within first 12 weeks. After 12 weeks and up until the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> week of pregnancy, certain medical and social situations may serve as a basis for an abortion. Upon a request from a pregnant woman, a committee consisting of medical consultants would consider the following social conditions as the justification for a late voluntary abortion:

1. Pregnant women under 18 and over 40 years of age;
2. Pregnancy resulted from a rape, incest, or human trafficking;
3. Divorce during pregnancy;
4. Husband's death during pregnancy;

5. Imprisonment or deprivation of parental rights of one or both spouses;
6. Pregnant women in the process of migration;
7. Pregnant women with five or more children;
8. Pregnant women who take care of:
  - 1) a child under 2 years;
  - 2) one or more family members with 1st degree of disability that requires care, according to the conclusion of the Medical Expertise Council on Vitality (subdivision of the Moldova's National Council on Disability);
9. Combination of at least 2 circumstances: lack of domicile, lack of financial resources, abuse of alcohol and / or drugs, domestic violence, loitering.

In terms of *medical ethics*, we could observe that the obstetrician's behavior is strongly influenced by the paternalistic style of communication, typical for post-Soviet countries. The doctor feels that he is entitled to dictate what is best for the patient, based on his own moral norms and values and without going into specific details. Moreover, the doctor will impose his own opinion as the only right solution at the moment. The paternalistic approach remains a serious problem in doctor-patient relations in the Republic of Moldova, and it is one of the reasons of frequent violations of patients' rights to consent, to be informed and to make an informed decision or choice.

Using the vulnerable state of the patient, caused by insufficient information on the available alternatives, the doctor, most likely, will convince the patient to accept his point of view. For instance, in this specific case, being scared of her health and social status, the pregnant women will give the doctor a full authority to decide for her. As a result, the principles of *medical ethics* will be seriously violated in this and similar cases. In the same time, the right of choice of this pregnant woman is violated.

In terms of *bioethics*, the value of the fetal life, which is a form of life with the prospects of its development into an individual with natural rights to exist, is neglected. At a gestational period of 20 to 21 weeks, the human fetus grows up to 26 cm long (almost 1 ft.) and weighs up to 350 grams (over 1 pound). All his organs are formed, including his fingerprints. In canonical bioethics approach, the priority should be given to a life, which cannot defend itself but has the potential to grow and to become a person with full rights. The pregnant women should make an informed decision based on her present health and social status and the moral outcomes of termination of pregnancy. From the point of view of "pro-choice" adepts, the decision should belong to a mother. On the other side, "pro-life" adepts promote the idea of banning abortions as murders *de facto*. But, banning the abortions would result in violation of women's rights, most likely leading to an increase in number of criminal abortions. The bioethics question remains unsolved in this dilemma regarding the gestation age at which we give the value to a human life in its embryonic form. The consensus of 12-week threshold is arbitrary and should not have a significant weight in decision making, specifically in physiologically healthy embryonic development. Can this value be assessed in terms of a utilitarian approach of long-term "good"? And whose "good" should have a priority? From a social justice point of view, it seems very unethical to favor the embryo development in a rich family and to ignore the right to live of an embryo conceived in the womb of a poor woman.

In terms of *public health ethics*, the legal framework to terminate a late-term abortion for social reasons is an example of a utilitarian and, ultimately, discriminatory approach. In the absence of adequate social programs that should support women with many children, widows or single mothers, the state increases the list of social indications for abortions. The decision based on any social factors to abort a fetus in an advanced gestational period of pregnancy is profoundly unethical with no evident good for a society. Addressable social situations, such as lack of a home during pregnancy, or caring for a child younger than 2

years, or having a disabled person in the family etc., are primarily an expression of despair and lack of opportunities for pregnant women, rather than thoughtful and well-considered choices in family planning. Apparently, the voluntary interruptions of late pregnancies are strongly influenced by a shortage of sensitive social programs to encourage births, rather than by well-thought and morally assessed decisions.

Combating the poverty by reducing the number of population should be an unacceptable solution, as has been shown in recent historical examples of unethical health policies (Wilkinson, 2011). In fact, in a long run, given a negative birth rate of population, such measures will affect negatively the demographic and social indicators. It is sad that policy makers mask their questionable decisions with an obscure “pro-choice” explanation of respecting the women right to decide over their bodies. Therewith, in a country where abortion is found to be the most common measure of birth control, arises the question regarding the right to information of individuals on reproductive health. The international experts reported serious violations of human rights in the Republic of Moldova, despite that the local authorities did not find their legal solutions and public policies to be unethical.

Similar cases can be encountered in other economically poor societies in which the process of public policy development is heavily influenced by the benefit of the majority and the perceived “common goods” prevail over the interests of individuals and even over their rights.

## **Conclusion**

The fundamental rights of individuals and the principles of equity and justice are embedded into every domain of ethics, and every public health regulation and guideline should be scrutinized extensively for compliance with the current standards of ethics. To comply with the principles of ethics, the public health policies must ensure that individuals are provided with adequate information in order to make informed decisions or choices. And, at the same time, in order to respect their autonomy, they must be offered possibilities and alternatives in the decision-making process

The development of public health policies is a very complex and difficult task. These policies can significantly influence behavior and choices of individuals, members of the society. Policy makers need to ensure that in the process of development of public policies and interventions, the ethical aspects and particularities of each situation are taken into consideration in terms of protecting the individual rights and values, as well as preserving the morality of the society in general by respecting bioethical principles. Sometimes, it becomes very complicated to achieve these conditions simultaneously, because they could have too many points of divergence. The application of principles promoted by human rights in patient care seems to be the best and objective solution.

That is why policy makers need to know and understand the essence and value of ethics, bioethics principles and human rights should become a topic of continuous education of healthcare providers, policy makers, and governmental officials.

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# NEUROTECHNOLOGIES AND NEURO-ENHANCEMENT ETHICAL CHALLENGES

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## Abstract

*Introduction.* Neurotechnologies include specific devices and procedures for accessing, monitoring, investigating, evaluating and manipulating the structure and functioning of the human brain. Neurotechnologies may also be used for enhancement purposes, i.e., neuro-enhancement, in order to increase the individuals' mental and physical capacities. *Material and methods.* In this paper, the authors analyze, based on the literature data, the ethical challenges raised by the use of neurotechnologies for enhancement purposes of the human being. *Results.* The ethical analysis of neuro-enhancement starts from the blurring boundary between therapy and enhancement and is polarized between arguments in favor and arguments against this application of neurotechnologies. Neuro-enhancement is supported by arguments such as: the possibility of accelerated development of human species and of the individual, but also the right of the individual to choose freely. At the opposite pole, neuro-enhancement is seen as a threat to human dignity, an attempt to go beyond the limits of nature associated with risks that are still insufficiently known. Neuro-enhancement has also the potential to deepen social disparities and inequities and to create social pressure in the sense of accepting these neurotechnologies, with the annulment of the individual's free will. *Conclusion.* Neurotechnologies designed to enhance the human being are still in their infancy. However, given the major implications they can have on individual identity and on the evolution of the human species, these technologies must be evaluated and regulated ethically and legally in an anticipatory manner.

**Key words:** neurotechnologies, neuro-enhancement, ethics

## Introduction

The brain is the central organ of our existence, which defines us as individuals cognitively, emotionally and as a personality. The importance of the brain is also demonstrated by the fact that currently brain death certifies the death of the human being (Chan & Harris, 2006; UNESCO, 2021). It is thus obvious the importance of knowing the human brain in all its complexity. The human brain represents the object of study of neuroscience which "aims at explaining human behavior and certain social norms (such as altruism, empathy, human behavior, free will) on a neurological basis, in order to increase our understanding about ourselves and other people" (Dubljević, Jox & Racine, 2017; UNESCO, 2021).

Neurotechnologies include devices and procedures that aim, on the one hand, to investigate the human brain (neuro-imaging), and on the other hand, to modulate or modify its functioning (neuro-engineering) (van Est, 2014). Neurotechnologies find their applicability both in the medical field and outside it, with various purposes, including for the enhancement of individuals. The application of neurotechnologies with the aim of enhancing individuals defines the field of neuro-enhancement, which will be approached from an ethical perspective in this paper.

## Neuroenhancement - framing the field

Enhancement is “a deliberate intervention that aims to increase an existing capacity that most or all human beings commonly have, or to create a new capacity” (Focquaert & Schermer, 2015).

The idea of human enhancement is not new (Krutzinna, 2019). Some forms of enhancement, such as doping in sports or pharmaceutical enhancement of memory and attention, are already possible, and others may be available in the near future, such as the neurotechnologies aimed at increasing cognitive capacity (Giubilini & Sanyal, 2015).

*Neuro-enhancement* is defined as the use of neuroscience applications (medicines, devices or technologies) in order to increase the normal cognitive or affective functions of people (Focquaert & Schermer, 2015; O'Connor & Nagel, 2017; Krutzinna, 2019). Neuro-enhancement is different from other enhancement modalities due to the complexity of the brain functions and the effects of neuro-enhancement on behavior and cognition (Chan & Harris, 2006). Thus, neuro-enhancement has the potential to influence cognitive capacities (for example, memory and attention), affective states and physical capacities (for example, muscle strength), but also social and moral capacities and decision-making competence of individuals (O'Connor & Nagel, 2017).

While surgical interventions or different types of brain stimulation are still at a hypothetical or experimental level (Siipi, 2011), the off-label use of certain drugs with the purpose of neuroenhancement is a reality today. In this sense, we mention the use of modafinil, methylphenidate or dextroamphetamine by people who do not suffer from the pathologies for which these drugs are intended, in order to improve their cognitive performance (Goodman, 2010) or the administration of Prozac in people who do not have need for antidepressants in order to improve their emotional state and social life (Kraemer, 2011).

In addition to technologies that could have a profound and irreversible effect on the health and neurological identity of users (such as deep brain stimulation), interventions such as nutrition and cognitive training can also be included in the category of neuro-enhancement methods ( O'Connor & Nagel, 2017 ).

Also, a new generation of non-invasive brain stimulation devices (NIBS) or Do-It-Yourself brain optimisers is currently gaining ground. These devices, considered *soft-neuroenhancers* (such as transcranial Direct Current Stimulation – tDCS) are gadgets that can be used to increase attention, relaxation, falling asleep, or faster acquisition of skills, such as playing a musical instrument (Brennkmeijer & Zwart, 2017).

*Moral enhancement* represents a particular type of neuro-enhancement that can be achieved through interventions aimed at improving the moral capacities and moral behavior of individuals, such as the sense of justice, altruism, empathy, reducing aggression, etc. (Focquaert & Schermer, 2015). Traditionally, moral enhancement can be achieved through moral education, an available and proven effective method. Added to this, at least at the research level, are interventions using drugs and neurotechnologies (for example deep brain stimulation) to activate certain brain areas (such as the cerebral amygdala) (Focquaert & Schermer, 2015; UNESCO, 2021).

### **The bioethical framework for the analysis of neuro-enhancement**

Neuro-enhancement can be an attractive option for individuals, in the idea that it could enable the achievement of health, happiness, economic success, etc. However, neuro-enhancement raises a multitude of ethical issues, from individual ones such as the safety and autonomy of users, to those of a social nature, such as justice, equality and health policies or the type of society that tends to be created by accepting methods of neuro-enhancement (O'Connor & Nagel, 2017).

*Neuroethics*<sup>1</sup>, a distinct part of bioethics, deals with "the examination of what is right and wrong, good and bad about the treatment of, perfection of, or unwelcome invasion of and worrisome manipulation of the human brain" (Safire, 2002). Neuroethics includes, on the one hand, *ethics of neuroscience*, that regulates and guides from an ethical perspective research in the field of neuroscience and the application of its results to humans, and on the other hand, *neuroscience of ethics*, which study the neurological basis of morality (Figuroa, 2016; UNESCO, 2021).

Since the 1990s, the debate on the ethical, legal and societal aspects of neuro-enhancement has emerged and evolved in both the public and academic domains (Brenninkmeijer & Zwart, 2017).

The ethical debate on enhancement brings into discussion as a central element the distinction between *treatment* and *enhancement* (Krutzinna, 2019), the concept of *normality* being placed at the basis of this distinction.

Normality<sup>2</sup> is often understood from a statistical perspective (Krutzinna, 2019). Statistical normality is "a norm and goal" in medicine, meaning that what is above the lower limit of statistical normality is considered medically normal (Siipi, 2011).

Taking normality as a reference point, we can say that therapeutic interventions are aimed at restoring the body's normal functions, while enhancement interventions aim to increase a capacity of the body, which is already within the normal range for our species. The concept of normality is, however, ambiguous both descriptively and normatively. Descriptively, normality is defined in statistical terms (as previously shown) (Giubilini & Sanyal, 2015); however, what is statistically normal varies widely across places and over time, depending on different factors such as: nutrition, education, knowledge, or available medical interventions (Siipi, 2011). In a normative sense, normality refers to the observance of moral, social or cultural norms, by virtue of which a certain condition of the body can be considered normal or pathological. This ambiguity in the definition of the *normal* brings with it ambiguity regarding the distinction between therapy and enhancement, with some authors even considering that this distinction cannot be made (Harris, 2010; Krutzinna, 2019).

The ethical debate on the enhancement of the human being unfolds along a continuum placed between two poles where the supporters (bioliberals and transhumanists) and those who oppose (bioconservatives) these interventions are located.

**Bioliberals** and **transhumanists** advocate human enhancement technologies and argue that people should have the freedom to decide for themselves and their children.

At a first assessment, one might consider that if there is both individual and social benefit, the choice to freely accept neuro-enhancement must belong to the individual (Chan & Harris, 2006; Ioan et al., 2017). However, methods intended for neuro-enhancement raise questions about the safety of their use and how they might alter the behavior and decision-making ability of those who use them. For example, the use of cognitive-enhancing drugs calls into question the individual's ability to act and decide as an autonomous being, as well as the authenticity of the decisions individuals make and the values they promote under these circumstances (Chan & Harris, 2006).

The discussion regarding autonomy in the context of neuro-enhancement is particularly difficult in the case of children<sup>3</sup>. Parents can decide in favor of applying a neuro-enhancement method for various reasons, from treating a disease, to improving the child's capabilities as an intrinsic value or to give the child a competitive advantage, in accordance with the standards imposed by society (Krutzinna, 2019).

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<sup>1</sup> The term *neuroethics* was introduced by William Safire (Safire, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> The idea of *normality* was introduced in the 19th century by Sir Frances Galton, thus marking the beginning of medicalization, according to which what is not "normal" must be treated (Krutzinna, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> *Pediatric enhancement* includes methods to shape children and improve their capabilities (UNESCO, 2021).

Children are, however, a vulnerable category in the context of neuro-enhancement. On the one hand, it is about the possible long-term effects of neuro-enhancement on a developing brain (O'Connor & Nagel, 2017). On the other hand, children have a developing autonomy, which means that decisions in the early stages of life are made on their behalf by others (usually parents). This means that children need protection against unjustified interference to promote their best interests (Krutzinna, 2019). At the same time, the moral acceptability of neuro-enhancement in children brings into question their right to an open future (Feinberg, 1980). Thus, decisions made on behalf of a child are wrong whenever they limit his ability to make his own choices as an autonomous adult. In this context, the American Academy of Neurology recommends a "more conservative" approach in applying neuro-enhancement methods to children than to adults (O'Connor & Nagel, 2017).

The proponents of human enhancement consider that becoming post- or trans-human is an improvement of human nature, which has always been an ideal of humans (Giubilini & Sanyal, 2015; Brenninkmeijer & Zwart, 2017). In their view, human enhancement is a part of human development, whether achieved by natural or artificial means, is a shortcut, freely chosen by the individual, being acceptable in a free market (from a libertarian perspective) or a stage of evolution that allows same result with less effort (from a utilitarian perspective). More, enhancement gives people the ability to reverse the physical and social effects of the natural lottery. Such an approach even justifies the promotion of an individual and collective "obligation to enhancement" (Harris, 2010; Savulescu, Ter Meulen & Kahane, 2011; UNESCO, 2021).

*Bioconservatives* reject the idea of enhancement, arguing that it is likely to dehumanize human beings, who will become less authentic<sup>4</sup> and to create a more competitive and less fair society. Enhancement is considered a threat to human dignity, being an attempt to overcome the limits of nature.

Opponents of human enhancement raise the possibility of producing disproportionately large negative effects compared to the benefits, which makes these methods unethical, even if they are accepted or requested by individuals who should aim to exceed their capabilities naturally, through active effort (Kass, 2002; Fukuyama, 2006; Sandel, 2007; UNESCO, 2021).

Neurotechnologies are still marked by uncertainties<sup>5</sup>, because we still know very little about the functioning of the human brain and the effects of interventions on an individual's mental capacities or behavior<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, neuro-enhancement risks and user safety must be carefully weighed against the benefits (Chan & Harris, 2006; Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2013), and the use of these technologies in medical practice and for non-medical purposes must be done with great caution (Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2013).

Another important aspect is the effectiveness of neuroenhancers. There are authors who question the very existence of a real problem raised by neuro-enhancement, while others predict that neurotechnologies have the potential to transform the human species into one of cyborgs or superhumans (Brenninkmeijer & Zwart, 2017).

At this time, the efficacy and scientific validity of many of the envisioned neuroenhancement methods are uncertain. However, the ethical issues related to neuroenhancement require a proactive approach, precisely because of the potentially

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<sup>4</sup> One of the central arguments against neuro-enhancement is the threat to the authenticity of people, their actions and the decisions they make (Siipi, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Animal research in the field of neuroscience provides limited physiological information, but not about the complex functioning of the human brain (Chan & Harris, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> For example, the administration of methylphenidate in people who do not suffer from ADHD causes an increase in attention and concentration, but at the same time, it reduces performance on tests of spatial memory (Chan & Harris, 2006).

important impact these techniques could have on individuals and society (O'Connor & Nagel, 2017).

Enhancement is also seen by its opponents as the result of societal pressure on individuals to conform to standards of mental efficiency in study, work, sports performance, etc. This is likely to determine the so-called enhancement divide, i.e., the division between the enhanced and the non-enhanced, which raises problems of social equity. Social pressure towards neuro-enhancement also touches upon the issue of eugenics, i.e., selecting the best based on neurocognitive characteristics (Kass, 2002; Fukuyama, 2006; Sandel, 2007; UNESCO, 2021).

## Conclusions

Neurotechnologies are a burgeoning field that promises real health benefits for users. At the same time, the possibility of using neurotechnologies to enhance the human being reopens the debate on the ethical acceptability of human enhancement and enriches it with new challenges generated by the very particular importance of the brain as the central organ for our existence. Although neuro-enhancement is still at an early stage, this field must be carefully analyzed from an ethical, legal and social perspective and regulated in an anticipatory manner in order to be able to limit the possible unwanted effects that may occur when such interventions become reality.

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# THE CAPTIVE MIND AND THE SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE. FACES AND SYMPTOMS

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## Abstract

Starting from the idea that the captive mind -- a socio-mental alchemy with deceptive propagandistic ingredients is a "banal evil" in the spectacle society in which we all live -- this essay reviews some faces and symptoms of the captive mind in communism and after communism. The stake of the essay remains, however, deciphering the states and feelings hidden behind the faces and symptoms of the captive mind.

**Keywords:** the captive mind, society of the spectacle, voluntary servitude, phenomenon and syndrome, fear, sin, the banal evil

## I. Introduction

From the beginning, I have to make two clarifications of a terminological nature. First: in addition to the phrase "the captive mind" (Miłosz, 1953), two other keywords appear in this essay - "the voluntary servitude" and "the society of the spectacle" - coined by two authors from different eras. At the dawn of modernity, Étienne de la Boétie described in his famous *Discourse on Voluntary Servitude* the insidious connections between tyrannical political regimes and the voluntary enslavement of the masses bought with "bread and circus" (Boétie, 1576/1975). Four hundred years later, in an anti-system book entitled *The Society of the Spectacle*, the writer Guy Debord, one of the theorists of the Western protest movements of the 1960s, critically analyzed the manipulative political-media strategies of the society of the spectacle (Debord, 1967/2009). But things are connected! The captive mind, the (in)voluntary servitude and the society of the spectacle coexist in the vicious circle of complicity and mediocrity.

Second clarification: without abandoning the established expression "the society of the spectacle", I will sometimes use phrases such as the *spectacle-society*, the *society as a spectacle* which seem to me, in certain contexts, more direct and more conclusive. Society is not only a society of the spectacle, but is itself a spectacle, the *spectacle-society* as such. When society becomes a generalized and permanent spectacle in which we all participate, when our thoughts, feelings and actions are automatically transposed through the media and social networks in a continuous display, it means that society is not only a society of the spectacle but, it becomes a *spectacle-society*. In the *spectacle-society*, the illusions and temptations, prejudices and vanities maintained through the propaganda apparatus and the political-media manipulative strategies project a pseudo-reality superimposed on the objective reality, in other words, it is configured a fictitious super-reality and the human mind, stucked in its own limits, falls victim to prejudices and temptations. This is the disease of the captive mind! How could we treat this disease? How could the personalization of the captive mind *phenomenon* and, implicitly, its transformation into a personal *syndrome* help us?

## II. The Captive Mind: Phenomenon and Syndrome



The mind fallen into the captivity of errors, prejudices and illusions is perceived as a phenomenon when it is researched by an external observer placed at a psychosocial distance that does not affect the objectivity of the research. To an outside observer, the phenomenon of the captive mind in the case of ordinary people manifests itself when their inability to overcome their own limits and vulnerabilities, illusions and prejudices is combined with (in)voluntary dependence on other people and interest groups. But the phenomenon of the mind trapped in its own limits and prejudices, illusions and vanities is also manifested in the case of autocrats and dictators. At this level, conduct deficiencies and character weaknesses translate immediately into actions and political decisions. Maintained, often through the cult of personality, the phenomenon of the captive mind in the case of autocrats and dictators exerts a devastating impact on the collective mind. Analytical and impersonal, the outside observer approach can provide a number of useful references and explanations about the manifestations of the captive mind in various circumstances: the mental blocks of political and military leaders in geostrategic power games, the delirium of some strata of the population manipulated by empty propagandistical promises, the harmful impact of corruption in public life, the functional illiteracy and occupational imposture.

Unlike the external, uninvolved observer, for whom the captive mind is a phenomenon perceived from a distance, an involved observer, placed in the midst of the manifestations of the captive mind phenomenon, can become aware of its effects on his own judgments and evaluations. The observer placed inside the captive mind phenomenon may sooner or later come to feel and evaluate the captive mind syndrome in his own person. The experiences of the involved observer mark the transition from the impersonal, objective, positivist approach from the outside of the captive mind phenomenon to the personalized, reflexive, therapeutic approach elaborated from the experiential interiority of the captive mind syndrome. Assessing captive mind syndrome by exploring its symptoms on a very broad scale -- from inflexibility of thought and decisional voluntarism to mental dependence and (in)voluntary enslavement -- helps the concerned observer to approach with a deep and comprehensive understanding the captive mind states. Being involved, the participant observer feels the phenomenon of the captive mind as a syndrome of not finding self-awareness and, implicitly, of the influence of foreign groups and centers of interest on one's own person. These two defining aspects of captive mind syndrome intertwine because the loss of self-awareness can be explained by influence and sometimes (in)voluntary dependence and in turn the (in)voluntary influence/dependence can be explained by the loss of self-awareness. Arriving here, we could define the syndrome of the captive mind as *a state of mental dependence, insecurity and not finding of oneself both in personal life and in public life*.

Depending on the position and the degree of involvement, each of us can perceive states of the captive mind from a dual perspective. I perceive the captive mind as a *phenomenon* when I am outside of all personal involvement and experience. I perceive the captive mind as a *syndrome* when, by its symptoms, I become aware of the effects of the captive mind phenomenon on my own experiences and actions. The interchangeability of the positions of the uninvolved observer and the involved observer favors the complementarity of analytical perspectives: the impersonal investigation of the captive mind phenomenon by the uninvolved observer, respectively, the personalized assessment of the captive mind syndrome by exploring its symptoms by the involved observer. So, throughout this paper, a series of impersonal observations regarding the phenomenon of the captive mind are interspersed with the exploration of the symptoms of the captive mind personally experienced over time. Starting from this double hypostasis of the captive mind, I advance the following hypothesis: *filtered through critical self-analysis, the captive mind syndrome can help us understand how we become mentally dependent on other people and centers of interest foreign to our*

*interpersonal security*. As an internalization of the phenomenon of the captive mind, the syndrome of the captive mind passed through the filter of critical self-analysis proves to be a privileged experiential posture for studying and countering the phenomenon of the captive mind in the society of the spectacle.

### **III. The Captive Mind in the Society of the Spectacle: A Socio-Mental Alchemy with Deceptive Propagandistic Ingredients**

From childhood to old age we live in a spectacle-society that often reveals itself to be as inconsistent and derisive as it is aggressive and dangerous. The spectacle, in itself, is neither new nor a bad thing. New and worrisome in the terrible times we live in are the global dimension of the phenomenon and, above all, its perverse effects. The confiscation of public communication by political propaganda apparatuses in non-democratic regimes, the politics perverted into a media show, sometimes of dubious value, in democratic regimes, consumes more and more of the time of those who allow themselves to be seduced. On a constant basis, we consume every day not only material goods delivered through advertisements, but also ideological prefabs packaged propagandistically. We risk becoming, in these circumstances, captive minds that can be manipulated through the oldest and newest propaganda-media techniques. Living in the world of the spectacle at any cost -- the spectacle meant to conceal and often distort the true problems and realities -- we are living, in fact, our own alienation against the background of an increasingly overwhelming surrealism. In this way, we sometimes end up in the strange and harmful situation of not being used to thinking with our own mind. The spectacle of the sensational and the ridiculous transformed into a consumer product becomes, under these circumstances, the drug of the captive mind, the tool of mental laziness, of manipulation and enslavement.

Phenomenon and syndrome, the captive mind is the unfortunate result of a socio-mental alchemy designed to penetrate as many social environments as possible. Such alchemy resorts to an ideological "cocktail" with attractive and deceptive propagandistic ingredients able to numb personal, critical thinking and, at the same time, arouse individual and collective emotional pulsations. "Class struggle is the engine of history"; "The sharpening of the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie leads to the socialist revolution"; "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement"; "The dictatorship of the proletariat ensures the victory of the socialist revolution"; "The proletarians have nothing to lose in this revolution except their chains. They have a world to gain"; "Law represents the will of the ruling class raised to the rank of law. Communist law represents the will of the masses elevated to the rank of law"; "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs"; "Religion, the opium of the peoples" -- here are some ideological-propagandistic formulas promising in a peremptory tone what the British political scientist of Romanian origin, Ghiță Ionescu, called "the communist system of political happiness" (Ionescu, 1984). Later, when I had come to read Raymond Aron's books, I understood that this propagandistic "cocktail" -- the "opium of intellectuals" seduced by Marxist-Leninist ideology -- mixed messages and slogans that functioned as a "pass ticket" through various social environments sensitive to promises that are as attractive as they are vague and misleading (Aron, 1955).

And Czesław Miłosz wrote about the ideological-propagandistic ingredients designed to induce the symptoms of the captive mind. Drawing on themes and terms specific to Eastern civilizations, he referred, on the one hand, to "the Murti-Bing tablets" -- so named after an imaginary Mongolian philosopher who was said to have succeeded in finding a means of organically transmitting happiness through the consumption of pills -- and, on the other hand, to "Ketman," that style of double life lived in falsehood, submission, and hypocrisy, assumed and practiced to perfection under the tyranny of Oriental despotisms. By

using these expressions, the Polish thinker was referring, in a metaphorical manner, to a generalized method of "brainwashing" and inducing an artificial state of happiness (Miłosz, 1953). Systematically administered in the pace of party propaganda, these psychotropic ideological ingredients maintained what Jean François Revel later called the "totalitarian temptation," that fascination for the total political power felt to the full by those intoxicated by the exercise of total power, but also by those who, paralyzed by fears and helplessness, end up abandoning themselves with frenzy to the Supreme Leader perceived as the final and universal solution (Revel, 1976). Emotional states with a strong negative impact, the "drunkenness of power" felt by dictators and the "fear of freedom" experienced by the masses coexist in the totalitarian temptation that still haunts the minds of some of us. The euphoria of the unlimited exercise of power proved a fatal political narcotic, in the end, in the case of Mussolini, Hitler, Ceaușescu or Gaddafi, but each of these dictators took full advantage for a period of time of the fascination of the masses for the total power of the Dictator and, at the same time, for the fear of masses assuming their own rights and responsibilities.

But, this ideological alchemy filled with propagandistic ingredients that fuel the totalitarian temptation continues to claim victims even today, in the bloody days of the Russian Federation army's invasion of Ukraine. Against the infernal background of the war, on Russian television there are scenes in which preopponents compete in threatening statements about the activation of frozen conflict zones controlled by the Russian Federation (Transnistria, Chechnya, Ossetia and Abkhazia or even Kaliningrad), about the location and the possible detonation of atomic bombs, the erasure of Ukraine and Great Britain from the world map, etc. This propaganda delirium that heats up the captive minds of politicians and a good part of the misinformed and manipulated population is maintained by an ideological alchemy which combines Sovietism, Russian autocratic imperialism of Eurasian origin and radical conservatism. Loyalty to the Soviet Union, but a Soviet Union without Marxism-Leninism and communism, is fueled by the nationalism and militarism of Russian imperialism, the anti-modern rhetoric, the hostility towards democratic principles and liberal values, the criticism of Western civilization, the promotion of Christian-Orthodox values, the recourse to Orthodox messianic spirituality and mysticism, the defense of the traditional family, the imposition of militarism as a defining ethnic-national virtue.

The entire ideological-propagandistic scaffolding on which the Russian Euro-Asian empire is built reveals the totalitarian temptation and the illusion of the infallibility of total political power. Like everything human, limited and vulnerable by its nature, the infallibility of total political power, however, sooner or later proves to be an illusion. "The Emperor is empty!" exclaims the child in Andersen's famous fairy tale, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, in his sincerity. And yet many of us, although aware of this, still use ourselves in a profitable complicity with the traffic of illusions. Like the servant advisers of the emperor who competed to buy more and more expensive and non-existent clothes, we too do not stop getting drunk on the deceptive political illusions sold at an overpriced price through the megaphones of demagogic populism and aggressive nationalism. And this all the more because, not a few of us, refuse to assume clear judgment and public responsibility, preferring hypocrisy, opportunism and voluntary servitude perceived as much more convenient and profitable. As far as can be seen, it is much easier to mechanically reproduce patriotic and xenophobic slogans than to manage the economy, health and education on the basis of the rational projects and fair tenders.

The communist regime collapsed in Romania at the end of 1989, but the totalitarian temptation, the dogmatic belief in the ability to solve all problems by seizing power by a charismatic, "virile" leader that easily promises saving solutions is present in the minds of many among our peers. To maintain these illusions, it is enough to periodically be launched new promises in the cadence of mobilizing slogans, because many people like the emperor's

new clothes, however deceptive they may be and, therefore, the emperor's clothes must always be renewed. Then, if many of us like the political-media spectacle full of unfulfilled promises, accusations against others and evasion of our own obligations and responsibilities, why not offer it to them -- instead of the really important thematic public debates realized under the sign of the competence and of the professionalism --, the show of the imposture, of sterile politics and of the bad taste ?! Speaking, in this context, about an amalgam of confusions and ambiguities of thought, I am referring, in fact, to the phenomenon of alienation and enslavement of one's own thinking in which all layers of society participated and continue to participate. Thus, we all participate in a generalized and meaningless spectacle in which we meet (pseudo) fanatical agitators and activists, cynical rulers, intellectuals enslaved to power, ("the betrayal of the scholars"), enslaved media companies, but also ordinary individuals, more or less ignorant, more or less naive and gullible, but vulnerable to misinformations and populist-demagogic, aggressive nationalist and xenophobic manipulations. Caught in such agitation, the individual and the collective mind allow themselves to be captivated by the convenience of verbal stereotypes and slogans empty of content, but full of false promises. The individual and the collective mind thus enter into the captivity of the public evil embodied by the phenomenon of the captive mind.

#### **IV. Faces and Symptoms of the Captive Mind in Communism and after Communism**

Seen from the perspective of an outside observer, the phenomenon of the captive mind presents itself under different faces and symptoms. For example, when extremist political ideologies are accepted without their critical analysis and evaluation, and the aberrant orders of some hierarchical heads are executed without hesitation, the captive mind takes the face of the *dogmatic mind*. Disciplined and reproductive, inertial and ritualistic, incapable of initiative and creativity, dogmatic thinking enters the minds of leaders and executors, most of the time, because of fear, illusions or complicity. To the strange mixture of fear and illusions in relation to the possession and exercise of absolute power is added the convenience of the automatic reproduction of ideological theses and propaganda slogans. In our part of the world, the one that generated and maintained the dogmatic mind in the last century, first through the tentacles of the Third Communist International in Moscow, then through direct political-military occupation and entry into its zone of influence, was "the Soviet political mind" (Tucker, 1972). Today, in the Russian Federation, the "Soviet political mind" has turned into a dogmatized ideological corpus widespread in all strata of the population composed by: the belief in the superiority of dictatorial and authoritarian regimes in relation to democracy; the cult of absolute power held by the supreme leader; the messianic exceptionalism nurtured by the Orthodox faith preached by the Russian church; the aggressive nationalism, xenophobia and anti-Westernism.

As can be seen, the above lines refer to the dogmatic mind perceived as a phenomenon and characterized as such by an external observer. How could we move from the dogmatic mind phenomenon perceived by an external observer, an objective and uninvolved observer, to the dogmatic mind syndrome felt in personal consciousness? To make such a transition, the perspective of the outside observer should be changed to that of the participant observer. Therefore, in order to reconstruct, from the inside, the perverse dogmatization of my thinking since my early school years during the communist regime, I will once again resort to mental focus and autobiographical memory.

Subjected from the earliest age to a treatment of systematic dogmatization, the generations that appeared immediately after the establishment of the communist regime in Romania lived in a regime of captive mind politically directed through a generalized propagandistic spectacle in the whole society. Carrying the portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and of the leaders of the Romanian Workers' Party from Gheorghe Gheorgiu Dej,

Gheorghe Apostol, Emil Bodnăraș and Chivu Stoica to Alexandru Moghioroș, Nicolae Ceaușescu, Petre Borilă and Alexandru Drăghici I was parading together with my colleagues at the festivities of May 1, August 23 and November 7. Imitating the Soviet model, we were shouting then communist slogans of glory to the Soviet Union and its brilliant leaders, "In the fight for the cause of Lenin and Stalin, be ready !" Ready anytime !"; "Fighting for the cause of Lenin and Stalin, forward !". I would say and repeated automatically, together with my colleagues, these slogans that, at that time, I did not really understand.

During reading classes, we were learning Mihai Beniuc's poems "Leading the Communists", "Song for Comrade Gheorgiu-Dej", "The Party Taught Me". Deeply impressed, we were reciting the poem "Lazăr from Rusca" dedicated by the poet Dan Deșliu to the memory of the poor peasant Lazăr Cernescu fallen in the battle against the class enemy: the bourgeoisie and the exploitative landlords. But, we were also reading *Mitrea Cocor* by Mihail Sadoveanu, the novel of the moral transformation and communist indoctrination of the poor peasant Mitrea during his captivity, as a prisoner of war, in the Soviet Union. A great destiny was prepared for him then. Returning to the country thus re-educated, Mitrea Cocor would become the leader of the forced collectivization of peasant households in his village. After I became a pioneer, I regularly was reading, as a subscriber, the permanent columns in *Scânteia Pionierului* (The Spark of The Pioneer) newspaper: "Let's know the fiery struggle of the communists !" or "From our elder brethren, the Utemists" (UTM, Uniunea Tineretului Muncitor / Union of Working Youth). But, reading the column "Faces of the working class", I was impressed by the activity of illegals such as Ilie Pintilie, Bela Brainer, Filimon Sârbu and, above all, by the heroism of the young apprentice Vasile Roaită, shot by the gendarmes while pulling the siren calling the workers from the "Grivița" workshops to strike.

A few years later, I realized that I lived part of my childhood in a cage of the thinking directed not by my parents nor by our wonderful teachers. Much later I would learn that what I and my generation we lived in those years was an experiment of the captive mind by captivating and manipulating the innocent mind of some children by the communist party's ideological-propagandistic apparatus. And, much later, I realized that in fact this mind-capturing experiment had, through an ideological alchemy of attractive and deceptive propagandistic ingredients, engulfed the entire society in a generalized spectacle of manipulation in which would be participate and other faces of the captive mind.

Another face of the captive mind is the *fanatic*. The most dogmatic individuals become, overnight, the most fanatical executors. The conformism and unconditional submission of the dogmatist easily turns into the aggressive self-sufficiency, the intolerance and lack of discernment of the fanatic. This is able to commit extremist acts in the name of a false authority and leaders whose mind - itself captive - issues decrees with a harmful impact on the life of every citizen. The fanatic does not doubt, has no moments of hesitation. Believing himself the sole repository of truth, the fanatic acts automatically and relentlessly. If we agree with Amos Oz that fanaticism is "a ubiquitous component of human nature, a malignant gene" (Oz, 2016), I find it rather difficult to believe that the remedies proposed by the famous writer -- imagination and literature -- could work. As for the sense of humor, I would be a bit more confident but, unfortunately, the fanatics are immune to any manifestation of it, whether it is the situation comic, the healthy laugh or the fine irony. I can't imagine, for example, how the principal of my high school in the picturesque city at the gates of the Danube Delta -- a short and full of himself guy - who was reading with zeal from the documents of the Party at the megaphone in the school yard -- might have been amused at some political joke whispered by a braver colleague.

Between platitudes of the dogmatics and zeal of the fanatics, another face of the captive mind appears: the *arrivists* ( the go-getters). From the ambition to reach the power

and privileges quickly and by any means, the arrivists arise, a combination of opportunists and careerists in a banal and harmful form. Seemingly mobile compared to dogmatics and fanatics, profiteering and cunning individuals, the arrivists move skillfully between groups, interests and slogans. But the agitation of the arrivists in the vicious circle of compromises and group arrangements offers no real solutions to a political deadlock or constructive solutions for public policies. Trapped in duplicitous behaviors focused on concealment and simulation, the captive mind bears the marks of the hypocrisy of the opportunists and the ambition of the arrivists. Opportunistic, greedy and duplicitous, the arrivists seek by all means to occupy an advantageous position in parties, ministries, departments, embassies, universities, even through matrimonial alliances and profitable family combinations. We can fall into the trap of the arrivism very easily, especially when the competitive spirit and competition are replaced with the ambition and opportunism of the careerist. Opportunistic and ambitious, the arrivists aim by all means to occupy a position or position as advantageous as possible in parties, ministries, departments, embassies, universities, but also in various matrimonial alliances and family combinations. When the prestige based on honest work is replaced by aggressive advertising, job hunting and the pursuit of success at any cost, we are dealing with minds that have fallen into the captivity of the avarice and vanity typical of the arrivist.

But, the captive mind occurs most often in the case of the *ignorants*. Easy to misinformed and manipulated through political, economic, religious, historical prejudices and untruths, the ignorants become a corruptible clientele through various forms of electoral bribes and pseudo-social aid that encourage laziness, corruption, unemployment. The mind in the captivity of ignorance can take different faces according to the nature of ignorance. When Socrates was saying, "I know that I know nothing, and I do not know this either", he was actually referring to the natural cognitive limits of the human being. When the symptoms of the captive mind express the natural bio-genetic cognitive limits between which we evolve as a species of Homo Sapiens, it manifests itself what I would call the *liminal ignorance*. But, the awareness of ignorance as a natural fact that expresses the liminality of human knowledge gave to the great philosopher, at the same time, the power to believe in the self-transcending capacity of human knowledge, because he also said: "I know that I know nothing, but I know that I can know more than I know". The Promethean will to overcome the natural limits of ignorance remains the existential challenge to human knowledge. On the other hand, we face a *conjunctural ignorance* generated by socio-educational deficiencies, especially when we are part of a disadvantaged population, easily misinformed and manipulated by spreading slogans and maintaining political, religious, ethnic, racial prejudices, gender. Against the background of socio-economic underdevelopment, the disadvantaged groups of the population can become a captive and maneuverable mass through various forms of electoral bribery and pseudo-social assistance that encourage idleness, corruption and unemployment. In the society transformed into a generalized and mediocre spectacle, the ideological and emotional manipulation of the social body contributes, in same time, to the increase of individual and collective dependence on underworld groups and mafia networks of influence and power.

In the real life of the spectacle-society we observe, however, how the faces of the captive mind combine depending on the different situations we face. We can be dogmatics and fanatics at the same time, or ignorants and dogmatics, fanatics and ignorants. We can be dogmatics and fanatics precisely because we are ignorants and superficials. Anyway, the impact of the dogmatists, the fanatics, the arrivists, the ignorants contribute to the increase of individual and collective dependence on influence groups and power networks and, implicitly, to the decrease of personal and interpersonal security. Not infrequently, groups of political-financial-media power act in the sense of diverting attention and emotional

manipulation of individuals and the social body by weakening free, critical, creative thinking, diminishing the spirit of discernment, amplifying and directing negative emotions. Diverted and dogmatized by propaganda and attractive promises, attracted and manipulated by entertainment shows of dubious quality, poisoned with hatred and irrational, populist-nationalist and xenophobic impulses, fallen into prejudices and comfortable stereotypes, the human mind is thus directed towards unconditional obedience. But, unconditional listening is potentially insecure listening. Even worse, the man of the captive mind is not aware, most of the time, of the fact that the mind no longer belongs to him, that his mind is no longer, in fact, his mind, that the words said and repeated over and over again are, in fact, no longer his words. The man of the captive mind can live, more or less contentedly, such states shorter or longer periods, sometimes even for his whole life. Dissipated throughout life, the potential and insidious danger of the captive mind constantly threatens us all. But what is hidden behind these faces of the captive mind ?

#### **V. What is hidden behind the faces of the captive mind ?**

The dogmatists, fanatics, arrivists, ignorants are some of the visible faces of the captive mind, expressions through which the captive mind manifests itself in the world. Behind these, in its deep layers, the human psyche lives, however, certain complex experiences that shape the visible faces of the captive mind. The mind in bondage to *fear* and the mind fallen in *sin* seem to shape the visible faces of the captive mind. The boundlessness of the unknown, the precarious state of health and the fear of death, the risk of job loss, the disinformation and manipulation maintained by some media channels, the low level of security and the fragility of human civilization, etc. generates in us an *existential* fear. In these circumstances, fear as a state of fact becomes the generative fear of captive mind syndrome. Lucky or unlucky, winners or losers, confident or skeptical, sometimes we can't escape the emotions and feelings of fear and dread that trigger the blockages of the captive mind. Life experiences, individual and collective psychologies, multiple and controversial social histories generate a diversity of options, motivations and reactions to managing fear and the captive mind phenomenon. Of course, life is not and cannot be only fear. Life is rich, diverse and too complex to be felt only as fear. And yet, the paralyzing fear that holds the human mind captive remains an experience in itself and, at the same time, a theme of reflection that always challenges us. Life haunted by individual and collective fear has darkened the evolution of humanity since cave prehistory and continues to haunt it today, in the times of pandemic crisis and of the global clash of civilizations. Why do existential fears and anxieties return to the consciousness of human beings, beyond our more or less fleeting successes and achievements ? Probably, because the overlapping of different forms and manifestations of fear accumulates into a bigger and deeper fear, an all-encompassing and paralyzing fear: the *fear itself*. When I talk, as an outside observer, about the accumulation of the forms of fear, I think of a lot of fears whose sources differ: political tyranny and police reprisals, economic-financial crises, ethnic-nationalist conflicts, ideological-religious fundamentalisms and terrorism, military threats and the apocalyptic specter of a new world war.

How could these negative emotional states be controlled ? I think that training the ability to live in the vicinity of fear could be important to counteract it. By learning to face the fear, this will no longer follow us with the same intensity throughout our lives. Referring to fear for political reasons, I would say that the training of the ability to live in the vicinity of fear is not foreign to those who lived a part of their life during the communist dictatorship. I have often thought about how the ability to live in the vicinity of fear was shaped in my mind. I experienced the first shock of a terrible fear in secondary school, around 12-13 years old, when, in the middle of the Romanian language class, the school principal suddenly

entered our class accompanied by three strangers in civilian clothes and two militiamen. Frightened, the teacher immediately interrupted her lesson, we were searched, then taken out of the classroom, and our books, notebooks, satchels were rigorously checked. This show of force lasted for over two hours. Scared, we didn't know anything, we didn't understand what was happening to us. The next day there was a special assembly in the school yard where we were told in a stern and threatening tone by an unknown person that three classmates had written and distributed manifestos hostile to party and state politics. The initiator, one of the best students in our class, would have attracted two other colleagues in this subversive action aimed at the stability of the socialist order in the Romanian People's Republic. I then learned that the parents of the three colleagues were called to the Prosecutor's Office for explanations and intimidation, and the three colleagues were expelled from school for a year. Experiencing such a shock at such a young age marked me deeply. I was beginning to understand that, in addition to dogmatization and fanaticism exercised through the propaganda machine, one of the ingredients of power in a dictatorship is the sowing of fear in every cell of the human being since from childhood.

Is there a vaccine against the fear? Growing up, I always looked for it. A memorable moment was when, in the middle of the summer of 1964, I saw on the Danube quay at Tulcea a large and silent crowd of men with very short hair and poorly dressed waiting to be boarded. In the hours that followed, on the ferry and then on the night train ride through the Moldavian plateau, I plucked up the courage and started talking to some of them. Speaking in a whisper, I understood that they had been released from the Periprava extermination camp after years of hard labor to cut reeds in the Danube Delta. They were young, middle-aged, but even older peasants whose fault was that they had opposed the taking of land and machinery from their small family farms. I had in front of my eyes the victims of the process that was presented to us at school under the pompous and false headline, "the socialist collectivization of agriculture under the wise guidance of the party and state leadership." I saw and understood, then, that in our country there was a political resistance to the forced collectivization of agriculture. There were people, and not a few, who, in despair of losing their little earning and of their way of life, overcame their fear. So, it is still possible! We can defeat our fear by always facing it.

Another memorable moment in my fight against the fear was that wonderful Sunday of October 22, 1978 when, in the speech that marked the beginning of his pontificate, Pope John Paul II spoke Christ's exhortation, "Don't be afraid!". Why, at the beginning of his mission, this new pope with a rich and courageous pastoral experience in communist Poland felt the need to utter this exhortation? The exhortation of the Sovereign Pontiff coming from communist Poland had in mind, I think, in addition to the theological background, the fighting for the freedom and security of people here on earth. In a sense, it was a call to all people on the planet to overcome the fear. It was aimed, therefore, the human liberty and security needed by men, women and children all over the world, a world increasingly faced with rapid transformations and ideological-political challenges. "Don't be afraid!" the exhortation spoken by Pope John Paul II on the day of his enthronement marked the birth of a hope whose threshold was to be crossed by us, those living in Europe beyond of the Iron Curtain, only after the collapse of the communist dictatorship.

But, fear is not the only deep experience from which the captive mind is born. Falling into bondage to *sin* is the other hidden experience that often generates the captive mind syndrome. In addition to the natural-instinctive substratum, *Homo Sapiens* has built, over time, a cultural-spiritual substratum on which the order of moral principles and values rises. The one with a mind fallen into sin is willing to relativize and disorganize this axiological order to the point of destruction. The ugly and hidden face of sin is the one that supports the visible faces of the captive mind, the visible faces in the behavioral dysfunctions of the



human being, in its slippages from legal, moral, spiritual-religious principles and values. Deviations from legal principles and values are sanctioned, as we know, by the competent institutions depending on the case, from contraventional culpa to criminal culpa. Deviations from moral principles and values - truth, honor, justice, honesty, correctness, kindness, solidarity, charity, etc. - lead to moral guilt. The moral guilt can be assumed through a deep and honest examination of conscience of the person concerned. Deviations from spiritual-religious principles and values lead to the theme of sin, which is the focus of all world religions. In the sense of spiritual-religious guilt, the sin means going astray; work against nature; walking on the wrong road; missing the target; deviation from sacred, supernatural commandments; the disobeying the divine Will perceived as the supreme Value and the absolute Reference. Although they have their own identity, legal, moral, spiritual-religious slippages know many interferences in the complexity of real life. Theft, lie, betrayal, etc. they are found, simultaneously, in the plane of jurisdictional procedures, moral reflection, spiritual-religious meditation, but they are treated and sanctioned in a manner specific to each of these planes.

The mind in the captivity of sin is, unfortunately, a fact. *But in what relation to sin is the mind that has not (yet) become a captive mind?* Is the mind that has not become a captive mind, a mind out of the danger of sin? Can we say with certainty that the free, critical and creative human mind is a mind freed, forever, from sins greater or lesser? Exposed to external threats, but also to our own vulnerabilities, are we throughout our existence, both in the public space and in the private space, safe from the danger of sin? The fact that we are naturally fallible does not, however, throw us directly and irremediably into error and guilt. The fact that we are vulnerable and exposed to mistakes does not automatically make us guilty, guilty without fault. The presumption of innocence shows us that there must be a fault, a material incriminating act for which a person is judged and penalized. On the other hand, the much invoked legal principle of the presumption of innocence cannot exclude the anthropological principle of culpability and the risk of sinning. Invoking the principle of presumption of innocence in a particular case does not mean that the person in question is really innocent. Of course, following the law and legal procedures, the person in question must be proven guilty with indubitable evidence. But, even if a person is, at a given moment, innocent, this does not mean that said person is, in a guaranteed way, non-guilty for the rest of his life. Even if he has not yet made a mistake, any person can make a mistake at any time because, being *fallible*, he is also *culpable* and, thus, can fall under the influence of guilt in legal, moral or spiritual-religious terms. Moreover, from a Judeo-Christian perspective, biblical wisdom reminds us of the condition of ever-falling creatures, in search of the blessing of the divine Omnipotence. There is always - the *Holy Scripture* reminds us - the risk of making mistakes knowingly or unknowingly, willingly or unwillingly, by deviating from the values and norms imposed by people, but also by not understanding the divine economy and disobeying the heavenly Providence. There is, therefore, the permanent risk of falling into the captivity of the "devil's part" in us.

When I say that the captive mind is the mind in captivity of the "devil's part" in us, I mean that the devil is not a delusion, not a distant ghostly apparition. On the contrary, the devil is in us, more precisely, there is in the human being a "part of the devil" to which we often fall into an accomplice captivity. The problem for the honest man - the man of assumed fallibility - is the identification in his own person of the "part of the devil" and the energetic application of appropriate therapies to counteract the harmful effects. "To reveal the reality of the devil in this world of ours - Denis de Rougemont was writing in a famous essay dedicated to this tormenting problem - is not equivalent to increasing the fear of the devil, but means giving to the devil his true appearance. (...). The devil is the anti-model par excellence, his essence being precisely the disguise, the usurpation of appearances, the shameless or

subtle forcing of nuances - in short, the art of making forms lie. (...) The first trick of the devil is the incognito in which he maintains himself. God says: < I am that I am >. But the devil, always jealous and desirous of imitating God, even in reverse, tells us as Odysseus tells the cyclops: < My name is Nobody, there is nobody here. Why would you be afraid ? Do you tremble in front of the non-existent ? >” (de Rougemont 1994, p.7, 11). Hence, the cunning of the devil who, pretending that he does not exist, masks the true appearance of the demonic that lies within us and makes himself invisible even in the midst of our temptations and mistakes. But since the devil claims to be gone, to be "nobody," and our mistakes, falls, and sins persist, it means that *the "devil's part" is within us*. And the captive mind, the mind unable to recognize the palpable fact that the "devil's part" is within us, is nothing more than a captured mind, or worse, a mind captivated by the "devil's part" that lies within each of us. The captive mind thus becomes -- sometimes with our knowledge and will, sometimes without our knowledge and will -- the accomplice of the "devil's part" in us, the gate of our personal and interpersonal insecurity. The complicity of the captive mind with the "devil's part" in us reveals, once again, a fact that is only apparently surprising: the "banality of evil".

## VI. The lesson of the "banality of evil" and the captive mind syndrome

In a famous book written on the occasion of the trial in Jerusalem of the war criminal Adolf Eichmann -- the Nazi bureaucrat, zealous executor of the plan to exterminate the Jews - - Hannah Arendt revealed the dangerousness of the "banal evil" hidden behind an ordinary individual. Hannah Arendt warned us that banal evil, the evil in the minds and actions of each one of us, can favor the organization, institutionalization and amplification of political evil. The phenomenon is known in history, unfortunately, always repeating itself. Multiplied in the mass of individuals, the banal evil of our vulnerabilities -- from ignorance and indifference to illusions and temptations -- facilitates the rise of individuals, organizations, demagogic-populist, extremist parties towards the levers of state power. This is *political evil*, the institutionalized expression of the pathology of power that haunts the minds of autocrats, dictators and their minions. In its turn, political evil encourages the perpetuation in positions of power of its accomplice, the *banal evil* with its entire procession of vicissitudes.

But let's look more closely at how easily the banal evil can lure us into the trap of the captive mind. Not always being able to be sufficiently informed and attentive, we easily become pawns in the games of interest groups foreign to our own values and ideals. It can happen to us, for example, to fall into the trap of propagandistic promises or to be deceived by the populist speeches of some demagogic politicians. The captive mind, however, is more insidious. It happens to us, and not infrequently, that we are not aware of being stuck in prejudices and errors, that we allow ourselves to be deceived by illusions and temptations, that we do not free ourselves from misinformations and manipulations. No one is exempt from such dysfunctions and absences of free and critical judgment. Naturally limited by our own ability to know and process information, vulnerable to the avalanche of rumors and ideological-propagandistic manipulation, insufficiently aware of the dangerousness of their own prejudices, fearful in the face of the pressures and threats of power, we present in private life and in public life, more than once, the symptoms of the captive mind. I have now referred to the banal evil and the syndrome of the captive mind among ordinary people. Apparently harmless, the involuntary phenomenon of the captive mind hides, however, a series of dangers that transform it, at any time, into a phenomenon with a major social impact. This transformation occurs when, for various reasons, incapable of self-control we, ordinary people, enter a state of mental dependence and (in)voluntary servitude to other people and interest groups, becoming thus pawns and maneuvering masses on the stage of public life.

The captive mind syndrome manifests itself, however, on other levels as well. If at the

bottom end of the power axis are we, ordinary people often falling into a state of mental dependence and (in)voluntary enslavement, at the top end of the power axis, political leaders are not exempt from falling into the traps of the captive mind. I have in mind here, at the level of political decisions, first of all, *the discretionary egocentrism of dictators*. Dazed by the "drunkenness of power", blinded by the importance of his own person trumpeted by the chorus of flatterers, the dictator frozen in his own delirium is unable to see his limits and correct his mistakes. Ridiculous sometimes in the forms of manifestation, dramatic always in the harmful effects, the discretionary egocentrism of dictators exercised through state terrorism brutally throws us into the world of injustice and absurdity. Another level of the captive mind syndrome is that of *the incompetence and corruption of many politicians*. Mediocre, immoral, careerist, this type of politician appears most often in autocratic regimes and also in formal, fragile and ineffective democracies. The egocentric and discretionary manifestations of dictators, the excesses of incompetent and corrupt politicians, the mental addiction and the (in)voluntary enslavement of ordinary people seem to me to be the main levels of the captive mind syndrome in public life. Derived from the life situations sketched earlier, the lesson of the "banality of evil" might sound like this: *the political evil may pass sooner or later paid for with great sacrifices, but the banal evil of our own vulnerabilities always remains, favoring through its generalization the syndrome of the captive mind and the perpetuation of public evil*.

Making some remarks on the "banality of evil", we could say that in Romanian society the coexistence of the *banal evil* (human vulnerabilities) and the *political evil* (the dictatorship of the Communist Party followed after 1989 by the dysfunctionalities of a formal and ineffective democracy), led to the perpetuation of the *public evil* (the captive mind phenomenon). Generalizing, we could state that, *the banal evil of human vulnerabilities instrumented by the political evil of the pathologies of power maintains the phenomenon of the captive mind, one of the forms of public evil*. So, when I talk about the phenomenon of the captive mind I am not referring to mental illnesses treated in psychiatric offices and hospitals. I have in mind, instead, the main levels of the phenomenon of the captive mind in public life: the mental dependence and (in)voluntary enslavement of ordinary people, the discretionary egocentrism of dictators and autocrats, the populist demagoguery of many politicians.

## VII. Instead of conclusions

In the terrible times we live in, when political pathologies become more and more threatening, it is natural to seek answers to some difficult questions: how could we fight against the "devil's part" in us ? How could we secure ourselves as a society and as individuals in the face of mind "games" captivated by illusions and delusions, temptations and immeasurable pride ? Exasperated by the expansion of evil in the multiplicity of its seen or masked forms, is the emancipatory adventure of the mind still possible ? To what extent could the knowledge of psychocultural deficiencies in Romanian society help us to design an operational reflexive-therapeutic scenario ? Starting from these questions from the position of the participant observer, the observer who explores the faces and symptoms of the mind enslaved by its own errors, illusions and prejudices, the next step should lead us to seeking a remedy for clearing the mind. But, about all this in a future essay.

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