Logos Universality Mentality Education Novelty: Philosophy & Humanistic Sciences
ISSN: 2284-5976 | e-ISSN: 2501-0409
Covered in: ERIH+; CEEOL; Index Copernicus; CrossRef; CrossCheck; J-Gate; Google Scholar; Ideas RePeC; Econpapers; Socionet; KVK; WorldCat, EBSCO.

2021, Volume 9, Issue 1, pages: 96-99 | https://doi.org/10.18662/lumenphs/9.1/60

Ethics, Values and the Public Sphere – A Contemporary Approach

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Abstract: Review of Antonio Sandu, "O etică centrată pe valori în sfera publică" [An ethics centred on values in the public area], Iasi: Editura Lumen, 2017.

Keywords: *ethics, public area, axiology, models, ethical code, deontological code.*

How to cite: Morariu, I.-M. (2021). Ethics, Values and the Public Sphere – A Contemporary Approach. *Logos Universality Mentality Education Novelty: Philosophy & Humanistic Sciences, 9*(1), 96-99. https://doi.org/10.18662/lumenphs/9.1/60

With a scientifically and professional background that would surely determinate some of the ones who read his work or his biography to define him as an overqualified individual, and others like a specialist both in the field of the ethics, as also in the one of philosophy and sociology, Antonio Sandu is for sure one of relevant voices of the contemporary research from the Romanian space. The books and articles (like: Sandu, 2010a, 2010b; Sandu, 2013; Sandu, 2015; Sandu, 2016b; Sandu, 2017; Sandu 2019; Sandu, 2020; Sandu et al., 2020) that he published come to certify the value of his approaches, while his activity as a professor at "Ştefan cel Mare" University from Suceava, Romania and the recognitions that he received during the time are testifying to his academic and paedagocical skills.

With a large area of competency, Antonio Sandu focuses often on topics that are relevant for a certain situation. Thus, for example in 2020, he published a book dedicated to the bioethical aspects (Sandu, 2020), warmly received by the critics (Morariu, 2020), where he was facing a stringent problem pointing the most relevant elements that were defining it and offering potential solutions.

The same think will be done by him in works like the one dedicated to the technics used in the social assistance (Sandu, 2010b), in the one where he was presenting the social construction of the reality (Sandu, 2016b), or in the one dedicated to the ethics centred on values in the public area (Sandu, 2017). The later one, which can be considered a real manifest for the implementation of an ethics based on values in the aforementioned space, brings a real and valuable contribution to the understanding of the relevance of such a phenomenon. Segmented into five big parts, the book comes to take into consideration the different categories of values, their relevance for the evolution of the society and the trends that exist there. As the author underlines in the foreword of the demarche:

> "*In the practice of regulating ethical standards it takes place a deconstructive-reconstructive process that makes the transition from the ethical universal to the social particular, through values operational, less inaccurate and unclear than they are principles or constitutive values.*
> *We discover with interest the inventory, the analysis, the evaluation and the application of ethical principles to the structures of the administration publishes and to the actions of the officials who carry out their activity in this type of organization"* (Sandu, 2017, p. 8).

In the introduction of the book, Antonio Sandu emphasizes the road towards an ethics centred on values in the public sphere (Sandu, 2017, pp. 11-27). Later, in its first chapter (Sandu, 2017, pp. 29-49), he speaks about the

care, offering an openness to the topic based of Levinas and bringing again into attention an older research (Sandu, 2016a). Using philosophical categories that are also in use in the sociological area, he speaks about the call to the being as a subjective duty (Sandu, 2017, pp. 29-32), the exteriority of the being and its moral nature (Sandu, 2017, pp. 38-39), responsibility as a form of calling to existence (Sandu, 2017, pp. 39-42), responsibility towards the non-presence (Sandu, 2017, pp. 42-43), the image between hidden and revealed (pp. 43-45) and s. o. Later on, in the second chapter of the book (Sandu, 2017, pp. 51-84), topics like the public good (Sandu, 2017, pp. 59-66) or the justice as a main tool in the ethical act (Sandu, 2017, pp. 67-84) are emphasized.

The 3rd thematic unity of the demarche (Sandu, 2017, pp. 85-140), entitled **"Ethical operational values in the function of the public administration systems"** comes to approach the public responsibility (Sandu, 2017, pp. 85-90), transparency (Sandu, 2017, pp. 91-112), integrity (Sandu, 2017, pp. 113-127) and the respect for the autonomy of the beneficiary of an administrative act (Sandu, 2017, pp. 128-140). It is continued by a part (Sandu, 2017, pp. 141-183) where the author brings into attention aspects like the professionalization of the ethical expertise (Sandu, 2017, pp. 141-153), the superior interest of the children and the way how the systems of social protection should understand it (Sandu, 2017, pp. 154-167), or the ethics of the strategies that can be used in order to motivate the personal in an organisation (Sandu, 2017, pp. 168-183).

The work is closed by a chapter entitled **"A few considerations on the conduit code of the public functionary"** (Sandu, 2017, pp. 185-192), where Antonio Sandu clarifies a complex terminology, emphasizes the ethical principles that should guide the activity of the public employed (Sandu, 2016a, p. 32; Sandu, 2017, pp. 192-205),shows how important it is the freedom of expression (Sandu, 2017, pp. 206-213) and offers a model of the coordination, monitory and the control of the professional behaviour norms (Sandu, 2017, pp. 214-222). At the end of the presentation, professor Sandu concludes by insisting on the fact that:

> *"So that ethics can be an instrument of change in public administration, it is necessary to adopt a new, value-driven code of ethics that focuses on forming an ethical organizational climate and establishing a ethical management of the civil service. In this volume we aimed to bring a series of clarifications from the perspective of ethics applied, of the main normative elements contained in the Code"* (Sandu, 2017, p. 223).

Bringing into attention a topic that has a big relevance for the cultural and social contemporary space, based on a rich bibliography as it

can be seen from the list posted in the end of the book (Sandu, 2017, pp. 225-247), Antonio Sandu's book entitled: An ethics centred on values in public sphere, published in 2017 at the acclaimed Lumen Publishing House from Iasi comes not only to investigate a relevant topic, but also to create bridges of dialogue among cultures, domains and between the theoretical and practical sphere.

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