Chapter 2
The Role of the Core Moral Values in Social Work

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ABSTRACT
We consider it appropriate to examine, within the social work act, under the new circumstances, the importance of other than traditional values which tend to become central, that human intervention relates to. In this particular context, tolerance, understood as a respect for different, but human lifestyles, and the empathy, as a way to meet real, not “presumed” expectations, of individuals and groups, have the ability to restructure the system of values of social work able to allow a different approach in order to achieve the human condition.

INTRODUCTION
The changes taking place in the contemporary world have an unprecedented effect on the society as a whole, but in particular, on the value system to which the individual relates. This implies that, in a society whose fundamental feature is the change – in which the stability only seems to be an “accident” – are imposed new standards and criteria for assessing the importance of a values system, axiological accepted, as well as in value hierarchies of a certain field of social action.

BACKGROUND: ON THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF CENTRAL VALUES IN SOCIAL BECOMING
The materialistic thinking seeks for the mechanisms of social progress in an objective determinism in which the economic dimension, the “relations of production” – in the
Marxist interpretation – are revealed as decisive. An opposing view is supported by spiritualist philosophy, which accredits the idea that the dimension of consciousness is responsible for the development of the society, and not that much of the material factor of social life.

Both perspectives can be penalized if we reject the above-mentioned unilateral explanations, considering that the radical restructuring of the hierarchy of values—values that belong to the objective-subjective are causing social progress and give its measure. The restructuration of the axiological system of a society around new “core values” is likely to also impart a new direction to the progress of humanity as a whole.

In such an understanding of social becoming, we support the idea that: a) during Greek and Roman civilizations, the central values were the moral ones; b) the axiological system of Middle Ages is built around religious values; c) the values of the reason are capital in the modern period—“Knowledge becomes otherwise the supreme ethical value and the central value of the system of values” (Boboc, 1984, p. 380); d) the establishment of economical values corresponds to the affirmation of capitalism, centred on efficiency and entrepreneurial spirit, as dominant values for the axiological system and, consequently, for the entire social becoming; e) political values, as essential values, are related to the communist period from the history of humanity; f) for the knowledge society, in which we entered and which we intend to develop in the foreseeable future, is characterized by moral and religious values. A whole axiological system is restructured around these ones, which also determines a new configuration of the structure of social action (Sandu, 2016a).

The undeniable feature of contemporary theoretical discourse is recovering the moral thinking, as the central concern of any systematic reflection on the social dimension: “A name, an ideal, unites consciousnesses and animates again the Western democracies in this end of millennium: the ethics”, stated Gilles Lipovetsky (1993) ever since the last decade of the last century.

How could it be otherwise when in a knowledge-based society, where everyone knows what is essential about the others, both at the individual and organization level, the fact of having an attitude devoid of morality is revealed to be even “counterproductive” in the medium and long term, for personal development and, consequently, for the overall success of social action.

By accepting this understanding of the decisive role of moral values in the value system of our society, we must assume that for the social assistance as well, the core values, to which one should relate, must be searched for in the field of morality (Sandu, 2016b, pp. 28-47).
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