THE TRAFFIC MORALE, ETHICS AND CULTURE AMONG THE ROAD TRAFFIC USERS

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ABSTRACT
Every participant in the road traffic can contribute at the same time in improving and endangering the safety of the road traffic, which means its responsibility, is double. The way and the efficiency of the social reaction against the traffic crime, which is a result of the irresponsible behavior of the man, depend on the level of the social consciousness. Regarding the negative traffic phenomena, it still can be noticed insufficient social and individual awareness of the magnitude of the danger and the damage that the modern traffic brings with it. The responsibility of the participants for the road traffic safety can be in the form of moral (ethical) and legal responsibility that is prescribed by law or other regulations and may be material, misdemeanor, and criminal-legal. The moral responsibility of the participants in the road traffic, which is the subject of interest of this paper, is related to the consciousness, morality, ethics and ethical behavior, as well as the culture. The value of the participants in the road correspondence is evaluated according to the degree of their morale on the road. The traffic morale is a

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conscious struggle of the traffic users that serves the entire society in order to reduce the great human and material losses on the roads.

**Key words:** traffic morale, traffic ethics, traffic culture, safety, road traffic

## INTRODUCTION

In parallel with the development of the actual events and potentials of the traffic, as well as the negative events that occur, the behavior of the participants in the traffic and the consequences of traffic mobility, the morality, ethics and the culture in the traffic are developed as special forms of the human life and activity in the society.

The traffic is becoming more and more dangerous no matter how much the warning, the preventive measures, the campaigns and the controls grow. In the reduction of its danger the most can help the true ethical intention of the man to keep an eye on the rules and the regulations, his conscious and responsible behavior, self-discipline and a sincere desire not to do harm to him and to others.

The behavior in the traffic, the traffic morale, ethics and culture are being learned since the earliest, preschool age. The basic solution lies in the constant education of all road traffic users and in respecting the traffic rules and regulations.

### TRAFFIC MORALE

The basic, most simplified definition of the morale is a set of social norms that the subject as his own, unconditional, self obligation based on the good as a verbal value, in normal situation feels at the moment with all its being, and not only recognizes with reason, that often carries out a touch of his natural inclinations and realizes his humanity, and whose offense he feels bite of conscience, while society applies superfluous sanctions on him, with simultaneous request that he feels biting the face.\(^2\)

The question about the traffic morale\(^3\) is one of the most complex questions. It is very complicated, directly related and depends on the moral qualities of every traffic user and on the efforts and investments of the society in creating the material conditions for the smooth running of the

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\(^2\) Лукић, Р., Социологија морала, Belgrade, 1974, p. 120

\(^3\) Матевски, М., Моралот во патниот сообраќај, III издание, Просветно дело, Скопје, 1984, pp. 11-14 & 95
traffic. The problem is even more complicated and difficult that always should be a fight against the self, a struggle against the conceptions that often do not coincide with the perceptions of the social community, the understandings that can not fit into the broad ethical and in-theater spectrum of society. Therefore, in order to be comprehended the approximate meaning of this complex issue, an analysis is needed that will cover at least its basic parts in relation to the role of man and morale in modern road traffic. Today, there is no doubt; there are differences in the understanding of the role and the way of forming, that is, the creation of traffic morality.

The traffic morality consists of regulations, general and special rules, norms and orders, such as regulations that legally regulate the obligation of the traffic users, how to act and behave towards the traffic norms and how to act towards one another in the traffic.

The traffic morality is conditioned by the economic structure of the society, the degree of motorization, the interest of society and the participants in the traffic safety for the tradition, the customs and the habits in the society. The new principles on which it is based are: defensive driving, conscious discipline, accuracy and orderliness of the driver, as well as all the principles upon which the general morality is based on man (humanity, solidarity), and the principles of traffic-technical culture.

By withdrawing the sensitive borderline between the criminal and the non-criminal in the field of the road traffic in terms of morality, some basic principles (norms) are of particular importance. According to the principle of mistrust, each participant in the road traffic must consider the incorrect and unprocessed behavior of the other participants and be governed by such an expectation. In contrast, this is the principle of trust: every participant in the road transport can and should basically rely on the belief that the other participants abide by their duties and obligations in their participation in the traffic. A middle value among them is the principle of limited confidence, according to which the participant in the road traffic has the right to believe

4 Јосифовски, Д., Сообраќајна психологија, Авто-мото сојуз на Македонија, Скопје, 2006, p. 129

5 For the basic principles, ie. regulatory principles relating to the ethics of road traffic safety and establishing the border line between criminal and non-criminal behavior more in Краљев, Т., Кривично правните и криминолошките аспекти на сообраќајната делинквенција, Студентски збор, Скопје, 1994, стр. 89-93 и Арнаудовски, Љ., Васиљевиќ, В., Веригиќ, Д., Гајдов, Б., Димчевски, Љ., Јанчевски, Г., Јовев, Ј., Камбовски, В., Кинов, Г., Кнежиќ, Б., Крцкоски, М., Радовановиќ, Д., Смилевски, Ц., Смугревски, Д., Софијанова, Д., Чачева, В., Шурбановски, Н., Превенцијата во сообраќајот на патиштата во СР Македонија (Организација и остварувањето во системот на оштетствена самозаштита), Институт за социолошки и политичко-правни истражувања – Скопје, Институт за криминолошка и социолошка истраживања – Београд, Скопје, 1986, p. 340-342
that the other participants will adhere to the traffic rules and regulations, but at the same time he must be ready to immediately abandon such conviction when from the circumstances of the case it arises that the situation is different from that which determines full confidence. Regarding the principle of defensive behavior, the road traffic users should always and accurately fulfill the obligations arising from the traffic rules and the regulations, even when they consider that the deviation would be harmless, and they are obliged to avoid the dangerous situations created by the irregular behavior of the other participants. The principle of solidarity is based on the interconnectedness of the behavior of the various participants in the road traffic, in accordance with the common interest of mutual care and protection. According to the principle of optimal safety, the behavior of all road traffic users should be carried out by taking safety measures which mean achieving as optimal security and protection as possible in this sphere.

TRAFFIC ETHICS

The ethics deals with issues of rights, obligations, duties, and responsibilities. It also includes theories and discussions about whether the intent to realize some activity or its consequences are the most important aspects of the defining if that activity was right or wrong. All these concepts and issues can be applied in the field of the road traffic safety.

The traffic ethics turns the knowledge of the essence, strength, positive and negative sides of the traffic into a moral value system and a code that will provide human, proper, careful, truly useful, legal and benevolent participation in the traffic and its use. The basic norm of the traffic ethics is: Think of yourself and others!

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6 The word defensive derives from the Latin word defandere = to defend, protect or eliminate the dangers that jeopardize your safety. In the traffic, this behavior is for the safety and security of others.

7 In our judicial practice, none of these principles has been consistently implemented, affecting the higher or lower degree of due attention. Mainly, it starts from the principle of proper behavior: the behavior that is a consequence of one of the numerous regulations in this area is relevant.

8 For the philosophical and political aspects of ethics in traffic-security policies, more with Elvebakk, B., Ethics and Road Safety Policy, Institute of Transport Economics, Oslo, 2005

The strict traffic ethics is new imperative for everyone. If we want to enjoy the benefits of the modern traffic, it must function with clear and stable ethic conscious of everyone for his responsibility in the traffic, by holding to the rules, regulations and norms in the traffic and by taking constant care for ourselves and for the others as basic ethic position of every person. There is a constant need for warning to the negative moral procedures in the traffic and to control the people themselves to prevent their behavior in the traffic to suffer themselves, other people and, especially, the children. When everyone sees how an evil is done, they also think that they can do it, and so it affects the construction of bad ethics in traffic, general lack of truth and irresponsibility, and so on.

The main question for all interested according to the ethic aspects of the road traffic safety is who is responsible for the traffic accidents and at the same time for the people involved in the road traffic. The safety is under influence of the actions and releases of certain drivers, and under the decisions made by the politicians and implemented by the civil servants. Besides that, the choices and the priorities made by the engineers, designers and managers in the automotive industry have clear consequences for the level of safety in the system.

The way the automotive industry promotes the new cars is something that can be discussed in terms of ethics and responsibility. Is it time to require the automotive industry to take responsibility for promoting the safety not only for the driver and passengers in the car, but also for those outside the car? It can be argued that this is even more important in countries where the traffic safety is bad.

Due to the existing tension in the traffic safety between the security and the personal freedom and because the state authorities have an interest in saving people's lives, the measures that some might describe as paternalistic are not uncommon. However, the paternalism is a high-value concept, often used as an ideological weapon, to show that a certain measure increases the space of the state at the expense of the individual. Hence, it is not easy to come up with a neutral definition, and it is even more difficult to decide whether any measure or law should be described as pan-political or not. According to Loeken's definition, a measure is paternalistic only if it is

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introduced to improve the well-being of an individual or group of individuals. The measure that is introduced primarily to reduce the socio-economic costs of saving lives and rehabilitation is not a paternalistic one. However, the concept of paternalism is often used in public debates to describe and cancel the second type of measure. Often, in real cases, it is not entirely clear whether potentially paternalistic measures have been introduced purely because of the belief in the value of life and because people will be less harmed or because of the social costs associated with non-implementation of the new policy. It is considered that individual freedom and responsibility are limited when people are not allowed to decide for themselves whether to accept a certain risk.

TRAFFIC CULTURE

The traffic culture is a specific type of culture that should be shared by all traffic users. It is a very important element of the traffic safety and it is not just knowledge of traffic rules and regulations and the ability to drive a vehicle, but also a way of movement and behavior in the traffic, which will be in accordance with the general interests of the traffic users and the interests of their safety. However, as the MoT\textsuperscript{12} concludes, the existing educational system obviously does not achieve this.

The term traffic culture\textsuperscript{13} is a set of knowledge, rules and norms of behavior in the traffic, on the basis on which the individual evaluates his or her behavior in the traffic as correct or incorrect, socially justified or unjustified. The traffic culture consists of written and unwritten rules that have the sole purpose of respecting for all the traffic users, and especially the unprotected and poorly protected persons, such as pedestrians, children, elderly and disabled people and people with disabilities. The traffic rules and regulations are created by people. The variables are dependent on the development of the traffic. They are the basis for shaping the behavior of the traffic users as well as the traffic safety. In addition, the drivers help in coping with individual situations in the traffic. The traffic users shall be obliged to observe in accordance with the regulations of the traffic rules, traffic signs placed on the road, and the signs and orders given by the uniformed officers. The respect of the traffic rules and regulations directly

\textsuperscript{12} Practical advice and warnings for drivers, The subjective factor - the culprit for the increased number of traffic accidents in the Republic of Macedonia, January 23, 2010, taken from \url{http://www.mvr.gov.mk/ShowAnnouncements.aspx?ItemID=8202&mid=700&tabId=72&tabindex=0} [accessed 06.10.2017]

\textsuperscript{13} Мое и Темков, К., Основи на сообраќајната безбедност и сообраќајната култура, 1 дел, taken from \url{http://www.rsbsp.org.mk/doc12/osnovi-temkov.pdf} [accessed 01.03.2018]
affects the level of traffic culture of road users. It derives from the basic
definition of a traffic culture which states that it contains rules and norms of
behavior in traffic. The written rules and regulations are defined by laws and
by-laws. The basic act that regulates the written rules is the Law on Road
Traffic Safety and the bylaws deriving from it. Thus, it emphasizes and
points out that the state bodies, the bodies of the municipalities and the city
of Skopje, the legal entities, the physical persons and other traffic users
develop the humane and ethical relations in the correspondence, encourage
the solidarity of the traffic users, thus contributing to the protection of the
life and health of people, especially children, old and disabled people, people
with special needs and take care of the environmental protection.\textsuperscript{14} The
unwritten rules are universal for all possible traffic situations (eg giving
assistance to a driver who stopped on the road due to a defect, providing
assistance to people when crossing the street, etc.).

The traffic culture\textsuperscript{15} refers to the personal and collective feeling of its
sense and usefulness, to the need of proper preparation and enabling its
uninterrupted development, the knowledge about traffic and traffic means
and aspects of use, the adaptability about the use of modern speeds and the
relationship between the results and consequences of traffic, etc. It is about
all gamma views, determinations, solutions that are important for the life and
movement of man, in his community and in all mankind.

The modern road traffic requires knowledge and demonstration of an
appropriate co-directional culture by all traffic users. As a special kind, here
is the traffic-technical culture\textsuperscript{16}, as a general knowledge of the problems in
the management of the vehicle under different conditions of the road,
depending on the climatic and atmospheric conditions, the braking distance
of the vehicle during braking, the traction force of the vehicle, the influence
of nature from inertia when overcoming the curves, the engine's operation,
and the transmission devices when the vehicle moves uphill or downhill. In
the traffic-technical culture of the driver while driving the vehicle, the
principle of defensive driving should always be present, under which is
understood the respect of all unforeseen situations at any time, as well as the
regulations governing road traffic.

CONCLUSION

\textsuperscript{14} Art. 3-а, Law on Road Traffic Safety, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no.
54/07, 86/08, 98/08, 64/09, 161/09, 36/11, 51/11, 114/12, 27/14 and Decisions of the CCRM
114/07, 144/07, 41/08

\textsuperscript{15} Моге и Темков, К., Култура и етика во сообраќајот, taken from

\textsuperscript{16} Јосифовски, Д., Сообраќајна психологија, Авто-мото сојуз на Македонија, Скопје,
2006, p. 129
The participants in the road traffic are the first link in the chain for improving the traffic and road safety situation. Regardless the technical measures that will be applied in relation to the vehicles and roads, however, the effectiveness of policies and strategies in the safety of road traffic depends on their behavior. Every participant in the road traffic can contribute simultaneously for threatening and improving the safety of road traffic, which means that his responsibility is double. The number of injured people in road accidents is known, but the number of people at risk, the degree to which they are at risk and the magnitude of the risk of being injured is not known. A number of simple questions cannot be answered, precisely because of the problem of exposure.

The level of traffic morality, ethics and culture that the individual owns mostly depend on the domestic education and upbringing and education acquired during schooling, primarily in elementary and secondary schools. Although there is no separate subject in the education system of the Republic of Macedonia that will process the traffic culture, however, the problematic issues touch upon certain contents of other subjects and extracurricular activities. But never enough! Everyday irregular and non-cultural behaviors in the traffic are noticed, not only among young people, but also in adults. Promoting traffic morale, ethics and culture should be a continuous process for all current and future traffic participants.

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