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THE APPEAL TO COLLECTIVE PATHOS IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC

*Review
Article*

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Abstract

During crises, the way leaders communicate to their followers becomes more important. As an overview, shared and collective emotions play their part in generating certain kind of attitude and behaviors in specific circumstances, including a crisis created during pandemic times. The main question of this article is how important is collective pathos in setting up a global environment characterized by calm and rational thinking instead of panic and fear.

INTRODUCTION

It is true that the speaker takes into account the person's needs and characteristics of the people who will form his audience when conceiving a speech, because, bearing in mind the pathos he wants to generate, he will emotionally mark each of them. But audiences are made up of extremely diverse people. How will the speaker succeed in influencing entire masses of people?

Persuading an audience is not done by referring to its personal components, because an audience does not represent the sum of its parts. It is much more than that. An audience includes the cognitive and affective connections that unite its members, it represents the common background of experiences, but also their aspirations. Therefore, the speaker will consider, along with the individual pathos, the collective pathos too, those collective affections and emotions that dominate the group. Through his speech, he aims to generate such emotions to motivate the audience to adopt a new attitude or behavior, or the manifestation of some already existing but latent ones.

LITERATURE REVIEW

At first glance, collective emotions refer to the same set of emotions that members of a group share. How is this possible? Can people who form an audience share the same emotion even if they are people with different personalities and life experiences? In the book *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* (Stein, 2000, p. 13), one of the most elaborated phenomenological perspectives on sharing emotions can be found. Collective affect is not a simple result of emotional contagion, even if this phenomenon plays a very important role in their spread, nor does it consist in summing or aggregating distinct personal emotions, but rather an intentional and phenomenological structure in its own right. The relationship between individual and collective emotions lies in the constitution, not in the summary.

The collective consciousness and the concept of the crowd

But in order to understand the concept of collective pathos, the origin of its essence must be considered, namely the idea of collective consciousness which is ultimately composed of rational and emotional aspects. Therefore, Emile Durkheim (2013, pp. 38-39) considers the collective consciousness as the totality of the common beliefs and feelings of an average number of members of a society that forms a system with an independent life. The fundamental principle of

the common conscience is to reject as immoral any act centered exclusively on oneself. As mentioned earlier, society is not the simple sum of the people that make it up, but rather a system formed by their association, a distinct reality with its own characteristics. Of course, nothing collective can be produced by individual consciences if it is not assumed, but this necessary condition is insufficient. Individual consciousness must be joined in a certain way, and the social outcomes that follow are explained through the fundamental principle. Individual minds, through the formation of groups, give rise to a new psychological entity (Durkheim, 1982, p. 103) consisting of an other type of individuality. But the collective consciousness differs from one generation to another (Durkheim, 2013, pp. 248-249). Each generation has its own spirit, its own way of thinking and feeling, its own special needs and aspirations. Even linguistic changes can be observed for each generation, but also changes in the way they perceive beauty and in philosophical perspectives. The dichotomy of the collective consciousness at the level of generations is important for a speaker, because in this way he can adapt his speech according to the perspective and philosophy of that generation. After all, any important theme of humanity, starting from death, life, peace, justice, was perceived differently at the level of generations in terms of the experiences of the people who form them.

In order to better understand the idea of collective consciousness, the concept of crowd (of people) must be considered. (Le Bon, 2006, p. 2). From a psychological perspective, the crowd assumes that despite certain circumstances, an agglomeration of people determines new characteristics, very different from those of the people that form the crowd. The feelings and ideas of all the people in the crowd lead in the same unique direction, and their conscience personality disappears. A collective mind is undoubtedly formed, with very clear defining characteristics. The disappearance of the individual conscious personality and the transformation of feelings and thoughts is the proper direction of a crowd about to be organized. Hundreds of isolated people can acquire at specific moments and under the influence of certain violent emotions - such as those caused by a national event - the characteristics of a psychological crowd. After all, there are certain ideas or emotions that do not actually come into play or turn into behaviors or actions until people form a crowd (Le Bon, 2006, p. 6). But what are the mechanisms by which the new crowd characteristics are materialized? First, the individual, as a member of a crowd, is overwhelmed by a sense of invincibility that allows him to give in to instincts that, if he was alone, he would have suppressed. At this point, the feeling of responsibility that appears with the assumption of a

certain idea, a certain behavior or a specific action, disappears. Secondly, in the crowd each idea or behavior has contagious characteristics to such an extent that the individual sacrifices his personal interest for the collective interest of the crowd. Last but not least, the emergence of new features of the crowd is due to the suggestion process. Through various mechanisms, an individual can be led into a specific state in which he loses individual consciousness and submits to all suggestions made by an operator and performs acts contrary to his own nature. At that moment, all feelings and thoughts follow a single direction dictated by the operator, and this aspect can be quickly observed especially in the case of totalitarian discourses effects. What should be kept in mind about crowds is that intellectually they are inferior to isolated individuals (Le Bon, 2006, p. 14), but from an emotional and actional perspective, depending on the circumstances, the crowd may be superior to individuals, depending on the nature of the suggestions printed in the crowd. Given the exaggeration of feelings within large groups (Le Bon, 2006, p. 36), they are impressed by excessive feelings.

A speaker who wants to move the masses may resort to abusive or even violent statements. Exaggeration, assertion, repetition or diminution of rationality are some well-known argumentative methods for speakers that can be used in public meetings. Moreover, many show an affinity for exaggerated feelings towards heroes, because their apparent qualities and virtues are often amplified. When it comes to crowds, the entire audience experiences, at the same time, the same emotion, and if this emotion is not immediately turned into action is due to the fact that most unconscious viewers can not ignore that they are victims of illusions. However, sometimes the feelings suggested by the images are so strong that they take the form of actions. On the other hand, the power of words is connected to the images they evoke and is independent of their real meaning. Words, whose meaning is poorly defined, tend to have the greatest emotional influence (Le Bon, 2006, p. 100). For example, terms such as democracy, socialism, equality, freedom, whose meaning is so vague, carry with them a very high persuasive load. On the other hand, simple and pure statements, independent of any evidence or rationalization, are an effective way to convey an idea to the masses and imprint it on the collective consciousness. But the statements have no real influence if they are not repeated constantly and, as far as possible, in similar terms.

This power comes from the fact that repeated exposure incorporates a long-term idea into the deep areas of the unconscious (Le Bon, 2006, p. 126). In the end, the experience evoked by both images and words is almost the only effective

process by which truth can be determined stably in the minds of the masses through discourse. It is necessary for the experience to take place on a very large scale and to be repeated often.

Shared emotions

Returning to Stein's perspective (Stein, 2000, p. 13), this is based on the general theory of common experiences, which are not necessarily emotional. Sharing emotions differs at levels of emotional life. Thus, one can talk about sensory emotions and general emotions. Common experiences include moods, "communal emotions of life" and are dependent on the sensations an individual has or the emotional energies involved. One of the differences that occur between individual and common experiences is the possession of different subjects for the same experience. In contrast to individual emotions, in the case of shared emotions, a kind of plurality is formed to which both members of the group and people outside it relate. Stein does not support the existence of a supra-individual, separate subject, called "us", but in his loneliness the individual ends up identifying emotionally with the group he belongs to and integrates into this plurality. Stein does not support the existence of a supra-individual, separate subject, called "us", but in his loneliness the individual ends up identifying emotionally with the group he belongs to and integrates into this plurality.

Also, the structure of the experience differs from the individual to the common ones. There are two distinct intentional directions of shared emotions. On the one hand, there is the intentionality regarding emotions, the emotional target or the object of emotions. In the case of collective emotions there is a super-individual intentional object or value in the sense that it has the same emotional contribution for the individual as it has for the other members of the group. Without this intentionality, emotional sharing could be confused with simply affecting the individual by the emotions of others or by automatically mimicking those emotions - the emotional contagion. Thus, the individual must be aware of the emotions of the group and the emotional similarity in order for the emotion to become a collective one. Moreover, experiences are embedded in a so-called flow, which has a structured internal, temporary and motivating coherence - one experience follows and determines another or affects each other under a causal relationship. The flow of common experiences is held by that supra-individual subject mentioned above and should not be confused with a collective consciousness. There is no owner, but rather a social integration of experiences and a relationship of belonging.

Therefore, an emotion can be considered shared if it meets a number of conditions (Szanto, 2015, p. 7).

If there is a set of interrelational subjects (S1, S2, ..., Sn) that experience emotion E at time t, being members of a group G such that S1, S2, ..., Sn would not experience emotion E if they wouldn't be members of the G group or if they were non G, then the experience of emotion is constituted through the prism of belonging and experienced in the "us" mode. Also, S1, S2, ..., Sn experience the same E so that E has the same phenomenological content and intentional object (a supra-individual value, evaluative target, event, etc.). Moreover, S1, S2, ..., Sn generate an E * emotion that is part of a common supra-individual experiential flow, so that the phenomenological and intentional content, through the prism of the individual experiences of the subjects, is united in the same coherent experiential integrated, which has a plural subject (the social integration of the subjects). The fourth condition that must be observed consists in the affective and cognitive intention of S1, S2, ..., Sn which must be directed towards a certain experience or emotion. Finally, there must be certain rules that guide the matching of E * with the evaluation target.

Collective emotions

What one needs to remember from Stein's theory of sharing emotions is that there are two types of emotions considered here: the shared ones discussed above and the collective emotions that are the subject of this article. Members of a group G have a collective emotion if there is a shared emotional culture with a robust common evaluative pattern, in or related to G, and group members are mutually aware of a direct or mediated perception (in the case of an oratorical act, or a particular technology, even by the speaker himself) of these patterns. A shared emotion can become collective the moment it is narrated. Interesting in the case of the discursive act is the fact that this narration of the emotion that the members of a group are aware of sharing can also be done by the speaker, as a representative of the group's ideology, not necessarily by a member of the audience.

Regarding Stein's perspective on collective emotions, a number of limitations could be identified. The first of these (Szanto, 2015, pp. 12-13) addresses the problem of empty random experiential groups. The question was whether or how there can be common phenomenological experiences without there being any (real) individual as a member of the given experiential group or members who are aware of that content. Certainly, this possibility really seems to contradict any plausible phenomenological relationship of (individual) experience. After all, a basic statement of phenomenology is that in every corresponding

experience there must be a subject who is aware of his own experience.

A possible solution to this dilemma could be to indicate a possible social identification with existing or non-existent groups and/or with a certain narrative coherence of the collective. Social identification, here, is understood in a broad sense as a positive, negative or neutral emotional identification of an individual with a social group or as self-categorization according to some more or less relevant properties related to the group. These types of identification are facilitated either by negative prejudices outside the group or by high favoritism within the group or when the subject experiences alleged feelings of belonging to a non-existent experiential group, simply to distinguish himself from a perceived negative group. Ultimately, this will lead to the construction and maintenance of an individual or collective narrative about emotional sharing, such as the ritualization of community experiences from the past of collective memory. Such narrative coherence may even replace the socio-psychological mechanisms of in-group/out-group distinctions, such as when, for example, someone tells a true or false story about the shared experiences of one of his ancestors and therefore, re-establishes it experientially as a community. Similarly, the above distinction between common and collective emotions can be used here. Thus, unlike shared emotions, collective emotions will not necessarily involve the synchronous or bodily presence of all individuals to share an emotional domain through phenomenological content.

The second set of limitations of Stein's perspective (Szanto, 2015, p. 13) concerns a well-known problem in social ontology, which could be called the problem of misidentifying members. There are a number of possible types of errors regarding the relationship between individuals and the community that can be embodied in the following statements: (a) Although I have the same type of emotion as a given group, I misidentify myself as a member of that group (in the case of most radical, simply because there is no such group). (b) I am a member of a given experiential group, but I misidentify what the group's "experiential standards", "rules of sentiment" or "rules of sharing" are; (c) Some or all members of the group (individually or collectively) are wrong about me by sharing an emotion, because I am just pretending to share it or falsifying the emotion altogether; (d) the Group itself misidentifies or is confused with its own valuation rules, experiential standards or sharing rules; (e) Although I have the same type of emotion and the same phenomenological content as the group, we are not connected enough because we have created an illusion.

The types of errors formulated in clauses (b) and (d) lead to a third set of limitations, which could be called normative problems of collective emotions. These problems arise in large part due to the fact that Vendrell Ferran (2015) adequately conceived of Stein's "broad emotional cognitivism." According to him, affective states, "even states of mind", are essentially intentional phenomena and possess "correlated objectives". Moreover, the "appropriate emotions" full of passion - which are composed of evaluative cognitions and bodily feelings - are connected and reveal values of the group. Consequently, from the point of view of the subjectivity of the experiential correlation, the emotional reactions of a subject, even at the affective level, may or may not be adequate. In other words, they can be classified as "right" or "wrong", "rational" or "irrational" evaluations. Thus, even if moods (eg, weakness) or purely sensory feelings (eg, pain) cannot escape the values that are revealed through them, emotions are capable of this.

The phenomenon of emotional contagion is the basis for sharing emotions, but it is not just about it. Starting from Figure 1 it can be seen how the message sent by the speaker is subjected to an evaluation by the receiver, the result causing the appearance of a certain emotion whose expression is perceived by the speaker.

Moreover, the evaluation of the message by the receiver also implies a situational component that can be materialized in the theme / subject of the speech, as well as the context in which the speech is given in front of the audience (political, economic, educational, etc.).

Thus, the transition to the theory of social evaluation can be made (Brudner, 2014, p. 4) when one wants to understand the formation of collective emotions. The theory of social evaluation is the process of integrating information that arises from the emotional expressions of others in the evaluation made by an individual of a situation. Two characteristics of the issuer (Brudner, 2014, p. 9) are of primary importance in capturing the emotional expressions of others. His emotional displays must be trustworthy, and his emotional expressions must be based on a competent assessment of the situation. Together, these two factors determine the accuracy of the registered evaluation information. In order to perceive a person, regardless of culture, one refers to his candor / trust and competence, aspects that establish the degree of credibility. In emotional communication, trust assessments predict interpersonal influence, and the perception of competence determines the magnitude of convergence or divergence in relation to group values.

When one talks about the appearance of collective emotions, one must also refer to the forms (Bart-

Tal, 2007, p. 444) they can take. Thus, the emotional atmosphere refers to the emotions that occur when group members channel their short-term attention to an event that affects them as a group. Beyond this, emotional culture encompasses the emotional relationships that are crystallized in a particular culture, while the emotional climate incorporates the collective emotions experienced as a result of a society's response to its socio-political conditions. Moreover, collective emotional orientation refers to the characteristic tendency of society to express a specific emotion. Faith that evokes a specific emotion can be widely shared by members of society and appears frequently in public speeches, cultural products, or educational materials. These guidelines may even characterize entire civilizations (fear in Eastern culture, humiliation in Islamic communities, or hope in Western Europe).

Emotional contexts adjust the way members of society categorize events (Bart-Tal, 2007, p. 447). More specifically, a collective response to a conflict or peaceful event is affected by temporary collective reactions to an event, closely linked to the social and emotional context. The orientation based on collective fear penetrates the depth of the psychic substratum of the members of the society and becomes connected to the social ethos of the conflict. The main problem of fear as a collective emotion is its stability beyond current changes or the social context. The orientation of collective fear tends to limit the perspective of members of society by relating the present to past experiences associated with a conflict and by building future expectations only by relating to the past. Hatred against external groups includes a broad cognitive spectrum that produces a clear distinction between the external group subjected to and the in-group, consequently delegitimizing the external group. On the other hand, hope is made up of aspirational cognitive elements and awaits a purpose accompanied by positive emotions about anticipated events. Once collective hope appears, it serves as a prism globally, but also as a source of collective mobilization and action to achieve a common goal. Security is another collective emotion that is used in speeches. It has a rather primitive substratum, if one refers to the pyramid of primordial needs built by Maslow. A high sense of security leads to a sense of satisfaction, peace, contentment and peace, while a low sense of security leads to frustration, fear, dissatisfaction and extreme behaviors.

Thus, collective emotions are taken into account insofar as the actors considered are aware of the interests and needs of the other members of the group. These are especially important in establishing individuals' areas of engagement for joint actions. However, they do not have to explicitly share their feelings with each other, it is

enough for the speaker to know the common points and expose them to them. Individual emotions can converge into collective emotions (Sanchez-Burks & Huy, 2009, p. 4) in both small groups and large audiences, forming distinct affective tones. Because strategic change is unlikely to affect all units in the group to the same extent, collective emotions may be particularly complex, related to different roles, values, or interests.

Another important concept to remember in this chapter is the emotional openness (Sanchez-Burks & Huy, 2009, p. 4), which refers to a person's ability to recognize the emotional dynamics of a group. Emotional composition means the substantial proportions of shared emotions that are experienced by various subgroups in a given group, as well as the distribution and heterogeneity of these emotions. Finally, collective emotions perform many social functions. While shared emotions often play a crucial role in the integration of different social groups and communities, they can also be involved in social conflicts, in destructive forces that shape society. The theoretical model issued by Knottnerus, in 2010 (Knottnerus, 2010, pp. 39-61) refers to collective emotions as emotions that vary depending on type, strength or intensity and are shared by actors in specific ritual events. The theory of structural ritualization (SRT) (von Scheve and Salinda, 2014, p. 3) captures the role that symbolic rituals play in social interactions and the development of social structure. Due to the focus of rituals on human behavior, ritual practices contribute to the standardization of actions, structuring the dynamics of the group. Affective interactions are not limited to physical contact, but include any kind of connection that leads to sympathy. Sympathetic interactions should not be confused with friendly social relations, but should be understood in relation to the ancient Greek meaning of sympathy. Synchronized pathos (Seyfert, 2012, p. 12) is the situation in which all actors involved interact on the same emotional frequency.

Concrete manifestations of collective pathos in discourse

The most appropriate framework for observing how collective pathos works is the official public communications made on a major negative event. One such event is this year's COVID-19 pandemic. Although it is about an extremely contagious virus, the fear of the population is just as contagious and difficult for country leaders to control. In the event of a pandemic, it is very likely that in some areas fear will become a collective panic, weakening the ability of leaders to manage this problem. Fear is part of the DNA, a very indispensable element of life. Fear has always played a key role in human history, while safety is rather a relatively recent phenomenon. The hysteria that has gripped people's

rational thinking in recent days has already wreaked havoc. In many cases, attempts to communicate by political leaders based on inducing collective calm often failed. For example, Donald Trump's March 11, 2020 (CNBC Television, 2020a) speech had the opposite effect than expected, as it did not address the fundamental ways in which Covid-19 threatens the United States and did not provide information on how the country would respond effectively in the crisis. Central to Trump's speech was a 30-day ban on travelers from Europe to the United States. Such a ban would only work if there were not an "extraordinary number" of infected people in the United States. This statement generated collective panic, but without appealing to the responsibility of citizens within their own country. In the case of generating a collective panic, the primary instincts are activated. Thus, the population did not travel abroad, but showed neurotic behavior within their own country, exposing themselves more than necessary. On the other hand, in previous comments, Trump referred to the new coronavirus as a flu and even at one point said that infected people could go to work. Thus, it generated confusion in the population, and in a state of confusion, the collective calm that Trump hoped to generate through his speech had zero effects.

Another example of accentuating collective panic in exchange for establishing collective calm is the speech of Mayor Jim Gooch announcing the situation in the state of Kentucky regarding the Coronavirus pandemic (PBS NewsHour, 2020). One of the mistakes he made in his speech was to compare the current situation with the 9/11 terrorist attack, a significant national event for Americans, which aroused collective horror in the nation. If in the case of the terrorist attack, the population had no control, being forced to be overwhelmed by the fear of a new attack, in the case of the pandemic, the actions of the population mattered enormously. Therefore, the false analogy between the two situations, instead of calming the population and causing them to behave responsibly, generated a total rational paralysis and an extremely strong collective panic. "This nation has faced lots of crises, you know, whether it be the terrorist attacks or whatever. But the one thing that really united us when we faced those things was that we had resolve that we were not going to let terrorists or anybody else... destroy our normalcy". Thus, the mayor encouraged the normal behavior of citizens, an absurd requirement on the emotional and mental background of the population. The solution to establish collective calm lies in providing solid arguments, rich in information relevant to the population, because it needs to know which direction to go next and it needs to feel safe. Unfortunately, American leaders have not resorted to this strategy. They chose to refer to abstract

principles of calming the population, inefficient in fact.

But not all American leaders have failed in their attempts to deliver a pandemic-appropriate speech. The content of former Vice President Joe Biden's March 12, 2020 speech (CNBC Television, 2020b) was largely in line with what nonpartisan public health officials recommended: things like training Americans to stay away from large assemblies and proposing measures that go beyond testing of the country. The general idea of the speech was not to describe an initiative that Biden will implement in January 2021, if elected, but was to emphasize the contrast with President Trump, showing what he will do other than the current administration, if he were president right now. Biden proposed a full mobilization to enhance testing, including specific policies such as building hundreds of new mobile testing centers. Biden made it clear that testing was a priority, which the government must address immediately. The aim was not only to outline effective public health measures, but also to convey to the public that if he were president, he would understand the urgency of the testing crisis and have a plan for managing it. By comparison, on the evening of March 11, Trump gave no specific explanation for what he is doing to increase testing capabilities and simply stated that there was an improvement in testing capabilities when everyone knew they were disastrous. Worse, he then went on to tell Americans that their individual risk of contracting the virus is very low. Thus, Biden reduced his collective panic through his speech, but unfortunately this effect was short-lived due to the lack of authority he has in this situation.

On the other hand, a more effective speech can be seen in the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel (Ruptly, 2020). She stated that she was aware of the restrictive measures taken, such as the closure of schools, kindergartens, playgrounds and leisure centers, etc., that they were very harsh. „There are restrictions that have never existed before in the Federal Republic. However, these measures must be respected”, Merkel underlined. „We must show that even in this unprecedented situation so far we can act heartily and rationally to save lives. It is a task that falls to each of us, without exception. All actions that can endanger people must be reduced, said the German chancellor. To protect others we must keep our distance. It would be of "existential" importance to keep public life to a minimum. I appeal to you: follow these rules imposed only in the short term. Our government will always check again how restrictions can be reduced, but also what tougher measures can be applied where necessary”. Unlike the American leaders, the German Chancellor called for more transparency in the arguments presented and stressed the temporality of these measures. The strongest enemy of collective panic lies in the temporal

indefiniteness, the inability to set a time limit within which this panic will end. By including the idea in the short term, the population calms down easily and leaves room for reason to process the arguments offered. Also, the inclusion of specific emotions in the speech ("we can act heartily and rationally to save lives"), not necessarily abstract principles, is effective in calming the population.

If on the one hand there are American people whose national culture is centered on the overestimation of freedom and anxiety about coercion, and on the other hand there are the German people who have a rapid positive reaction to the authority of their leaders in actions given the social background in which they developed - let's not forget Hitler's ability to appeal to collective pathos and move the masses in a certain direction - it would be worth mentioning the way in which Romanian leaders called to the collective pathos to change the collective emotional orientation, which refers to the characteristic tendency of society to express a specific emotion, from collective panic to collective calm. For example, at the beginning of the state of emergency in Romania, when the collective response to this conflict event was one of panic and confusion, affected in addition to temporary collective reactions to this event, President Iohannis addressed the Romanians (Digi24, 2020a) - „Critical weeks are coming. Dear retirees, do not unnecessarily expose yourself to a huge risk and limit any travel!” - in order to inform them about the existing situation. Through his human tone, content and communication, the president managed to generate a reduction in the collective panic in the public. The strength of this discourse lies in the fact that it does not need further clarifications, the public being able to understand the information transmitted, no need for additions for them to make an action decision. How does the president manage to invoke the collective pathos among the audience? First, it integrates emotionally charged linguistic expressions into its discourse to determine the affective interaction specific to the collective pathos and the process of emotional contagion, possible even when communication is mediated by a communication tool - in this case, television. These expressions include "unfortunately", "I am with my soul next to the grieving families", "Dear Romanians, in a terrible irony of fate", "No matter how cruel and paradoxical this may sound, it is true", "We live moments of balance", "Now is the time to be strong and supportive", "As a man who loves democracy", "It is time for compassion, generosity and altruism". It can also be seen that the president addressed the community, but not at the mass level, without any specific characteristic, but at the level of the people, a social group of which he is also a part - "the defining character traits of a people hard tried by history", "I believe in us", "Romanians",

“The true strength of a nation”. In the case of this speech, it can be seen that the actors considered - their leaders and followers - are aware of the interests and needs of other members of the group, and the chairman explicitly mentions this empathy - “The gravity of the present situation is unprecedented and that is why we must join forces to win together in this struggle of endurance and attrition”. But the main problem with fear - which underlies collective panic - is its stability beyond current changes or the social context. Moreover, future speeches by President Klaus Iohannis did not support the general note given by his first speech. When the interests of political leaders tarnish the interest in national security, the population will lose confidence in them, will be panicked again and will act instinctively, endangering the security of the community in this situation. Also, in the case of the press conference on April 28, 2020 (TVR1, 2020), the president stressed that the establishment of the current crisis in the medical system, during the pandemic, is due to the mistakes of the previous management. Or, in the case of a speech aimed at calming the population collectively, mentioning past facts to justify the current situation is not effective. In order to diminish the collective panic that is influenced by the current social and psychological context, it is important that the arguments of a discourse in this sense fall within the temporal sphere of the present, at most of the future.

This pandemic also included one of the holidays with the greatest spiritual and symbolic load among Christians, the dominant religion for the Romanian people. Being a good time to take over the emotional load of the approach of this event and to be corroborated with a message of national interest, the president delivered a public speech on this occasion as well (Digi24, 2020b): Vom sta acasă de Paște. Asta aștept să faceți cu toții. Dacă scăpăm acum din mână epidemia, s-ar putea să fie foarte grav). Among the statistical data that captured the situation of infections and deaths in Romania, the president inserted in the speech a more humane message, based on personal example to influence the community to perform a precise action - to stay home, to protect themselves. “I will celebrate the Resurrection on Sunday, I will stay at home with my wife, Carmen. It will be just the two of us, we don't go to church, we don't go to get light, we don't go to anyone's table, we don't invite anyone to dinner. We light a candle at home and pray”. This discursive sequence is a way of communication that the president has adopted so that the message is much better conveyed. That name is an audio-visual “anchor”. The population can concretely visualize the image of the president sitting at home with his Easter wife, because he is part of the religious group that predominates among the community - Christian. The consistency and public

display of the practice of the religious ritual characteristic of this holiday in previous years support his statement this year and give credibility to the message. The audience being overwhelmed by the mental and emotional state determined by the visualization of the image described above, can more easily accept the call to action (or inaction, rather, in this case) transmitted collectively further by the president. „It simply came to our notice then. It's hard for us, we usually meet with the family, we go out, but this time we can't. It is difficult, but it is very, very important to respect even now, for the holy holidays, the rules imposed by the authorities. [...] So, dear Romanians, follow the instructions of the authorities, so that after that we reach the phase where we can also talk about relaxation”. Such a message, delivered in the period preceding a holiday with such important symbolism for the Romanian people and for the idea of peace, helps the speaker to generate a dose of collective calm in the audience. Moreover, the president's message comes from the person with the highest deontic authority in the country, from the depository of national trust, from the strategic depository, from Cotroceni. But in order to determine a community, which does not have a mentality based on assumption and responsibility towards its neighbor, to respect certain rules, to adopt a certain conduct, to isolate itself, it is necessary a balance between maintaining the collective fear that generates a state of alertness and collective calm that does not allow the establishment of anarchy based on primary instincts. This balance has been maintained for a period of time, but not enough to fulfill the purpose of the quarantine imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic in Romania. An error on the part of the President was to announce a deadline for this quarantine period. Realizing this, the president allowed the fear to disperse and replace it in the emotional spectrum of the community with collective irresponsibility. In times of crisis, leaders should communicate transparently and bring to the public's arguments based on facts of the present, without mentioning the past or relying so confidently on the future. The strategy of announcing the deadline of the quarantine period, only determined a much earlier relaxation of the Romanian masses.

Both the speeches of the political leaders mentioned above, but also a study by the Gallup International Association (Gallup International, 2020) show that the establishment of collective fear in a time of crisis depends very much on the social and historical background of the peoples. In the Balkan countries included in the study, it seems that there is no collective panic among the population. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 73% of survey participants believe that the threat of the virus would be exaggerated; in Bulgaria, 72% of

those surveyed would have the same opinion, in Northern Macedonia 73%. These results are also related to the history of this region. The Balkans have been a very turbulent region for centuries. In such places, the intensity of history is much higher, which means that there have been many more crises that should have been resolved. And the last 30 years would be an example in this regard. In Bulgaria, Romania and the former Yugoslav countries there have always been crises in the last three decades. In a way, the Balkans are more accustomed to such situations. Interestingly, however, 76% of respondents are willing to accept the restriction of personal freedoms in the fight against the epidemic, regardless of whether or not they believe that the threat is exaggerated. The first places in this aspect would be Austria, with 95%, Northern Macedonia, with 94% and the Netherlands, with 91%. The lowest acceptance for the restriction of personal freedoms was registered in the United States, where only 45 percent of those surveyed agree with the restrictive measures. This attitude is explained by the current sharp political divide and the strong democratic tradition of America. Gallup researchers have also seen a clear increase in confidence in national governments. Figures show that more than two-thirds of people around the world have begun to trust rulers because they fear the current situation. Normally, people's trust in politicians was between 20 and 40 percent. Political elites, who have fallen into disfavor in recent years, are regaining people's confidence at a time seen as the beginning of an unprecedented global crisis in recent decades. 'Alone' is replaced by 'together', 'close' to 'distant' and 'global' to 'national'.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, in the event of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, the communication strategies used by world leaders can be divided into two categories: those through which insufficient information was provided and which amplified the collective panic, and those that responded to the strongest collective fears and managed to control the irrationality of crowds. Thus, one can observe the importance of understanding how collective pathos works in order to manage the destructive emotional reactions at the community level.

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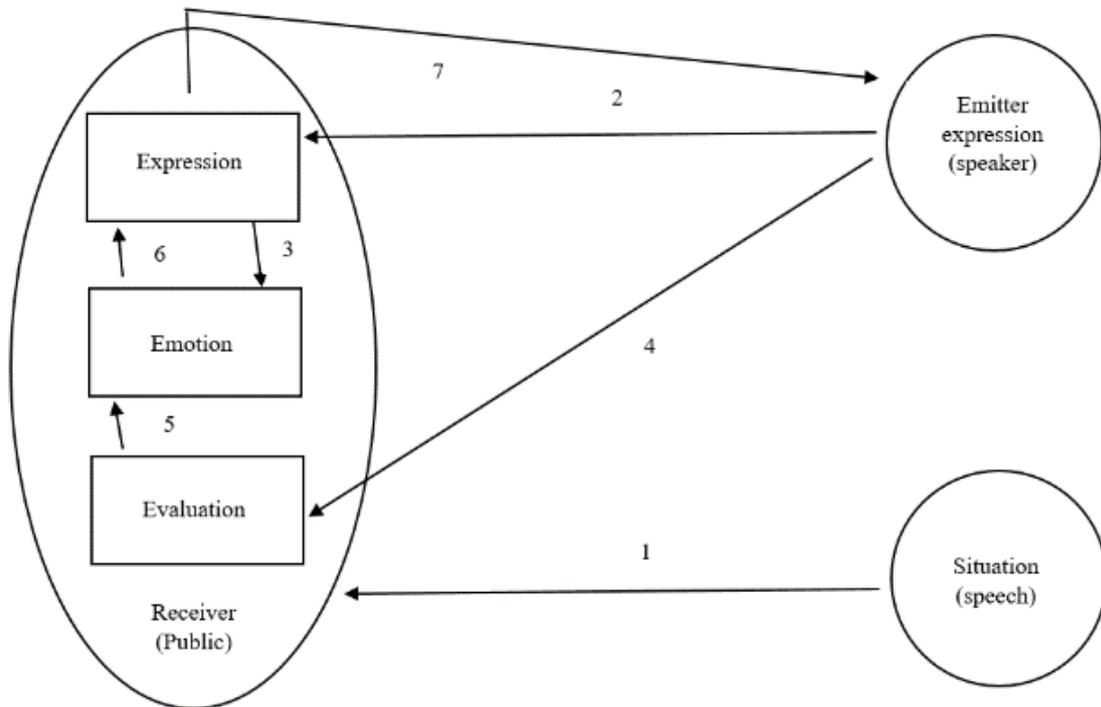


Figure 1
The scheme of emotional contagion depending on the context