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# BUREAUCRATISM IN SOCIAL WORK: FROM FRAMEING TO SIMULACRE

L. M. Bilalova (a), N. L. Bolshakova (b), E. V. Sherbinina (c), D. D. Faizova (d)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) Chair of History of Philosophy and Social Humanities, Bashkir State University's Birsk subsidiary, Birsk, Russia

Iom77ufa@gmail.com

(b) Chair of social work, Bashkir State University, Ufa, Russia

BolshakovaNL@mail.ru

(c) Chair of social work, Bashkir State University, Ufa, Russia

e.sherbinina@gmail.com

(d) East Economical and Legal Humanitarian Academy, Mendeleev street, 215/4, Russia,

diana-faizova@yandex.ru

### *Abstract*

The article focuses on dual nature of professional values of social work. Authors allocate declarative values, which are adequate to the humanistic principles and real, demonstrating bureaucratization of social care organizations. This work represents attempt to see the facts of social work in Russia in true light and to explain present differences between word and activities by influence of bureaucratic practices. Authors explain, why and how it takes place, using frame theory by E. Goffman, Analysis of social service activities have demonstrated typical bureaucratic receptions and methods of work, the nature of which makes impression of simulacra's. Specialists in social work as performers of a situational role perceive bureaucratic frames of the organization which is under patronage and control of the state and humanistic values of social work become an irreplaceable component of the professional rhetoric. It was supposed that the organizations of social care are rather strongly bureaucratized that promotes formation of certain professional lines, especially, formalism, lack of flexibility in decision-making, implicit following to structural requirements. In such a situation the humanistic values are minimized. Humanity regards the person as of a paramount importance, and for bureaucracy is are port for administration. Organizations of social care according to reports, are occupied with tireless activity, and effectively cope with a set of social problems. This imitation of credibility and formation of simulacres instead of true values is one of the bureaucratic values.

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**Keywords:** Bureaucratism, frames, simulacres, values of social work.



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## 1. Introduction

Social work represents such a type of professional activity in which the valuable attitude towards surrounding people, to the world around plays the defining role in daily practice of social workers, both experts, and ordinary employees. In recent years in the Republic of Bashkortostan rather actively there is a search of new forms and methods of work with the population, the structure of management and financing by this sphere is reforming, social entrepreneurship is developing. On the concept of the chiefs of the branch, these changes should raise the overall performance of various organizations carrying out functions of social support in the region (Mukhamadeev, 2018), it is positive to affect social well-being of our citizens. Future experts study values of social work in high school during of educational programs on such disciplines as «Ethics of social work», «Deontology of social work». However among specialists in social work some of them do not have a profile education. But first of all, studying the professional and ethical code will not make the person merciful. Therefore the question of what purposes, values and principles actually specialists in social work are guided in the activity, is open.

The works by G.P. Medvedeva, V.A. Maltsev, E.I. Holostova, N.B. Shmelyova, E.R. Yarskaya-Smirnova, Nikitina, A.A. and others are devoted to a research of social work and values of social workers. Generally these are works on pedagogies and psychology in which main attention is paid to a problem of formation of new social workers. Researching levels and values of social work and social workers, Russian scientists mostly approve the concrete values, absolutely fairly noting their humanistic nature. But really not all of them write about problems in this sphere.

## 2. Problem Statement

Authors believe that values of social work have dual character, on one hand, are widely declared values proclaiming the humanist ideals, on the other hidden, reflecting bureaucratic essence of the system of social support of the population take place. Values are basis of communications between the social system and the person, have standard and regulatory functions (Parsons, 2002), define the purposes and means of activity, they are society products (Dyurkgeym, 1995; Thomas & Znaniecki, 1994).

## 3. Research Questions

Really, it is possible to consider values of social work in the broadest sense as content of corporate culture (everything that distinguishes social work from other professions: these are people, social workers and their clients, these are the purposes and types of activity). In terms of sociological approach values are regulators of human activity. Professional values of social work are based on philanthropy ideals, and it means the social workers are guided by this ideals in the work. T.N. Nikitina writes that social work is based on humanity and morality, wellbeing of people, social justice, dignity of the person (Nikitina, 2009). There are steady growth of efficiency and quality of work in the official sites of the governing bodies of social work (<http://mintrudrb.ru>). The criticism to social work expresses in works of a number of scientists (Maltsev, 2001; Romanov & Yarskaya-Smirnova, 2008; Starshinova, 2006). Declared values do not give the expected effects, there is no actual interiorization of humanistic values of a profession by the individual,

and what takes place in questionnaires and what speaks from a high tribune about, does not find confirmation in concrete situations of interaction with clients.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

This work is called to see realities of social work in Russia in its true light and to explain why words do not correspond to affairs in this professional field. Which bureaucratic practices gained distribution in domestic social work, what mechanism of their implementation, and the main question is why have been appeared conditions for bureaucratization of this sphere. The research will provide the theoretical bases for correction the existing defects that will positively influence on further image and prestige of a profession. It will promote the solution of personnel problems, to promote strengthening of civil society and democracy.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The authors proceeded from methodology of structurally functionalism and interactionism in their works. The main research methods are based on the principles interdisciplinary. The empirical material used in work was received by interview of the professionals and experts which had been carried out by one of the authors, the analysis of documents and as well as information from professional sites and charts of social workers in Russia.

#### **6. Findings**

Many authors (Dubov, 2004; La Piere, 1967; Yadov, 2013) noted existence of serious divergences between the declared values of the person and real behavior in due time, explaining this phenomenon with the following factors: superficial level of valuable preferences, lack of conditions for realization of values; rigidity of a system of values of the individual; existence of contradictory influences of standard and valuable instructions of reference group; temporary suppression of valuable orientations of the personality by other values in specific conditions. The divergence between values and behavior could have been observed by researchers also because communication with the declared values was studied, but not true, and, the hidden values could not be realized by the individual or they are not stated because of their socially unapproved nature (Yanitskiy, 2012).

So, values of social work as profession are induced by social workers during their professional activity and become their peculiar ideals, norms regulating activity of professionals who are enriched, concretized, transformations undergo. On the formation of system of values of a profession have an impact, on one hand, by the valuable samples and positions dominating in the state and society, on the other hand, of value, the particular organization and valuable orientations of the individual. Values of the state are a national ideology, profession values is what society waits from professionals for. It is duty, ideals, historically developed, formulated by founders of a profession. But values of the ascribed organization can be very different, and, which may not be shared with values of profession and can tumble ideals. Strict following to the rules originally made as means, turns into the aim. There is a well-known process of replacement of the purpose because of which "technical value becomes final value" (Merton, 2006).

Bureaucratized organization makes plenty of rules and instructions, prevalence of formal communications, job specialization, differentiations of power. And the most important there is control at all levels, inside and outside, that centralizing and bureaucratizing the organization (Mintzberg, 2004).

R. Jakall gives examples of some more interesting manifestations of bureaucracy: avoiding of responsibility, often owing to a gap between actions and consequences; ability to think one, and to do another, to invent a set of explanations for the taken extreme measures, ability to refuse publicly made statements, ability to design fictitious realities, ability to resort to euphemisms for covering the impartial reality, using screens of hiding original interests. G. Baudrillard the similar phenomena called simulacres – the faultless copy of a real process, "the generation by models of a real without origin or reality"; when the concept about "duty" is replaced with concepts "decent" and "acceptable" (as cited in Bodriyyar, 2015, p. 65) when the distinction not only between real and imaginary, but also between true and false is put (Bodriyyar, 2015, p. 76).

Features of bureaucratic approach to work are rather widely presented by the affairs taking place in institutions of social protection. In the Republic of Bashkortostan 2018, proclaimed as a year of family, was decided to improve family policy. The Ministry of family work and social protection of the population developed the plan of measures for a year, but, mainly, they are: competitions, forums, webinars and conferences, that is what to themselves was planned, fulfilled. Instead of the real and notable help people get official reorganizations and shifts. Instead of Center of the Public Assistance to Family and Children has been created a new structure – The Resource Center «Semya» and its branches - to promote strengthening the institution of the family. The word «family» appears in the new name of the ministry. But, as we know, one can pronounce many times the word «honey», but it won't become more sweet in the mouth... In these centers entertainments and events timed to memorials are carried out, tireless activity on implementation of the adopted programs is represented. Widely used quantitative methods of assessment of efficiency of the adopted programs does not give objective information about their work (Romanov & Yarskaya-Smirnova, 2008).

Sufficient financial support is provided only to needy families which wished the child's birth in 2018 those who had many children, more than four children. But in the republic there are needy large families, with three children, who didn't receive money according to the Maternity Capital Program and they only receive monthly the scanty sum on each child. For example, the maximum extreme size of a social benefit for needy family is 132.5 ruble on a person. In order to receive this money, it is necessary to provide twice in a year at least seven kinds of documents (data). This sum does not facilitate to the family well-being, but allows local officials to report the growth of captured families by state support, on success of the pursued social policy. GKU Republican Center of Social Support of the Population periodically interview population whether provided services are satisfactory. It is necessary to note that people do not ask for the public assistance because: "I don't trust in opportunities of social security authorities", "I do not know whether I have the right for the help", "I've no right to the public assistance", "The amount of the help, will be very small" (Batyigin, 2001, p. 7). It is obvious that to the population, especially in the remote places, not only services are inaccessible, but even information itself about these services is not accessible. Disbelief of the citizens in the state support makes to think about the reasons of this phenomenon. Staff of institutions speaks about strengthening of administrative control, about growth of the paper reporting. At

professional forums there are more and more similar revelations: "...we sink in infinite paper bureaucracy, it is harder and harder to work every year with different offices". Statistics confirming growth of number of the provided services are only a symbol of the hyper reality which was created by bureaucracy.

In our opinion the problem of bureaucratization of institutions of guardianship is particularly acute where the children incapable to articulate the interests, become hostages of a bureaucratic system - only figures in reports. On social networks periodically there appears information on inadequate execution of the duties by guardianship authorities when children are withdrawn from successful, but poor families and are not withdrawn from unsuccessful.

The decision on the fate of the child is made jointly, but this similar groupthink has got the negative side. There might be a situation when a search of consent becomes more valuable, than search of the most rational alternative, than the interests of the child (Aronson, 1998). Groupthink is very well laid down in bureaucratic context of everyday life of guardianship authorities, promoting the statement formalism in decision-making.

Authors has given some facts demonstrating that in social work two levels of values take place: there are widely declared values proclaiming the humanistic ideals and hidden, reflecting bureaucratic essence of specialists in social work (Ivanova & Faizova, 2018). Interviews and surveys which had been conducted with social workers confirmed commitment of social workers to humanistic ideals (Maltsev, 2001; Nikitina, 2009) because respondents knew what answer would be acceptable and socially expected, sometimes being afraid that their answers will lay down on the table to the boss. Despite the stated ideals, activity of specialists in social work it is the management process directed to realization of one of the directions of the public social policy, and as any administrative activity, owing to the objective reasons not only function but also dysfunctions. In concrete situations these employees are guided by job description and regulations. The report before the higher management becomes end in itself. Specialists in social work, to our opinion, focus the behavior on the state bureaucracy, finding the reference group in it, being guided by its professional values, report to them.

The theory of frames can become one of the possible ways of an explanation of the similar negative phenomena in social work. Gofman (2004) considered a frame as "a structural context of daily interaction" as the scheme of interpretation of events, that allows them to perceive and define events. Frames allow to reveal the latent party of interactions (as cited in Suhonosova, 2012), will organize the involvement into a situation so as well as meanings generate offers (Batyigin, 2001). Working in public authorities, specialists in social work as performers of a situational role perceive bureaucratic frames, and humanistic values of social work become simulacra. In the theory of frames the social identity becomes a changeable formula which defines behavior events. The person turns into the bureaucrat in the course of moving of a situation of interaction to the defined "organizational frame" (Batyigin, 2001, p. 11). The bureaucratic context makes an observed event bureaucratic. Actions do not coincide with declared values because frames are bureaucratic, and context is bureaucratic. In any situation (at work, in professional activity) we perceive, we notice, first of all significant, valuable to us. The main thing for the officer is to make a favorable impression on the administration opinion, to hand over the good report with good indicators at any cost. It also defines subsequently a frame, the scheme of behavior in compliance with which we will work further. A person has vocational training in higher education institution, perceives skills and values of a profession

- it is one frame, and then there is reframing – and philanthropic social workers become members of the organization. Impact on specialists in social work of organizational frames explains why social workers speak about humanity, but do bureaucracy.

The problem can be solved for the benefit of the client, for the benefit of society, for the benefit of the organization, for the benefit of the state. In our country in a scientific discourse practice, sometimes extramental quite often takes place, to unite concepts society and the state, which has come from the Soviet socialist past when society and the state were united because civil society almost did not develop and also there were no bases to oppose them each other. The main value (and interest) of the civil society is freedom (protected by the constitutional state), and the main sense and the purpose of existence of the state is general regulation and control. That is, the interests of society and state can be opposite. Therefore the solution for the benefit of the state and the bureaucratic organization can contradict the interests of society and the client. The social work from the moment of the origin in the developed democracy acts as an element of civil society, closely cooperating with various volunteer movements. Russian social work is initially government institution the interests of the state are its cornerstone. In spite of declared ideals, specialist's activity on social work - it is management aimed at realization of one of the directions of state social policy. And management objectively bears in itself not only function, but also dysfunction. As a result of dependence on the state bureaucratic apparatus, in the system of professional values of social work there is a replacement of social norms (humanistic values of social work) with norms institutional (calculation, stability, control, efficiency, anonymity) (Nestik, 1998), there is a replacement of frames.

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, the divergence between actively proclaimed values of social work and real is explained by bureaucratization of this occupation. This is manifested in control by high level officials, in growth of reporting, a formalism, conformism and a groupthink in decision-making are presented here. But first of all, in author's opinion, simulative practices of officials, the constructing of fictitious facts and a concealment of painful reality designed to show imaginary wellbeing and growth of efficiency of their activity testify about bureaucratization of the social work. The reasons of creating the conditions for bureaucratization of this sphere are that values and behavior models of experts of a system of social care, their corporate culture, took shape in the course of adaptation to the severe external environment of the bureaucratic state. They focus the behavior on the state bureaucracy, they find the reference group in it, being guided by its professional values, report to the state bureaucracy. Specialists in social work as performers of a situational role perceive bureaucratic frames of the organization and humanistic values of social work become simulacra's.

Wellbeing of citizens is a main objective of social work. The wellbeing of the citizen guarantees decrease in social tension and stability of a social system in general. But in Russia throughout centuries there were other traditions: not the "state for the people", but "the people for the state" (Lifintsev & Lifintseva, 2011, p. 75). Real wellbeing of citizens demands organizational and intellectual efforts, the budgetary investments. Therefore it is more preferable to instill to people some idea about wellbeing that the state cares for them, producing simulacra's. Therefore the bureaucratic background formats activity of social workers, nullifying all humanistic spirit, interfering with realization of humanistic values.

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