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Professional Culture of the Specialist of the Future

**PROFESSIONAL CULTURE OF THE SPECIALIST OF THE
FUTURE: MORAL ASPECTS**

Elena Viktorovna Karmazina (a)*

*Corresponding author

(a) Novosibirsk State Technical University, Novosibirsk Pros. Marx, 20, Russian Federation, +7-913-772-3159,
346-33-12, karmazin.88@mail.ru

Abstract

Professionalism is one of the important values in the modern culture, an essential factor of personal dignity, and the goal of training specialists in the system of higher education. The concept of 'professional culture' (the object of this study) is close in meaning to the concept of 'professionalism', since it also indicates the degree of mastery in the profession and the ability to perform important public functions. The author presents a new interpretation of the issue of the structure of professional culture. According to the author, the two main structural elements are the information block ('knowledge') and the value-normative block ('values'). The value-normative block contains various aspects of personal and social obligation, which is incorporated in the concept of 'professional duty' (inevitably correlated with moral and civic duty) and is referred to as 'professional ethics'. The content of 'professional ethics' (the subject of this study) constitutes understanding of ideas of the 'common good' (the essence of professional duty), the attitude of specialists to their profession (identity), to corporate solidarity, and to responsibility mechanisms. The author substantiates the necessity to update the conceptual framework for studying and teaching the professional ethics through the use of the concepts of 'social system and personality', which are fundamental for modern social sciences, and their derivatives: 'instrumental intelligence', 'formal rationality', 'depersonalisation', 'identity' (individual, corporate, professional), 'individualisation', and 'personalisation'. The article presents a programme, proposed by the author, for updating the humanitarian study of professional culture.

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Keywords: Identity, morality, 'non-religious asceticism', professional culture, professional ethics, social system.



1. Introduction

Basically, the professional consciousness of specialists of the future is already being shaped, and the modern system of higher education plays an important role in this process. Despite being predominantly theoretical and analytical in content, this article is ultimately focused on the contemporary practices in higher education and a fundamental upgrade of its humanitarian paradigm with account for the challenges of the future.

Professional culture, being the result of historical development of general social processes: division of labour and exchange, differentiation and specialisation of activities, is one of the segments of the general socio-cultural reality. (Hughes, 2009b; Hughes, 2012; Ivanova & Maksimova, 2011; Mansurov & Yurchenko, 2013) The two main structural components of professional culture (as well as of culture in general) can be conditionally designated as 'knowledge' and 'values'. The 'knowledge' block includes a variety of information that is useful and effective for a particular activity type (knowledge, abilities, skills, and competencies). This aspect of professional culture has an external environment consisting of scientific research, technological and administrative developments; it is interrelated with mastering the achievements of applied sciences and administrative regulations, and problems occurring in it are of a utilitarian nature. As regards the 'knowledge' area, the professional culture development level is reflected in the concepts of 'qualification' and 'mastery'.

The 'value' block is a value-regulatory set of ideas and rules created and conveyed within the professional community but in a complex relationship with a wider general cultural context that determines not only the means but also the goals of professional activities. In this aspect, the external environment for the formation and development of professional culture is made up of worldview, moral, legal ideas and concepts of structure of the 'social order' in general. This value-regulatory complex performs the functions of regulating the consciousness and behaviour of specialists as regards the specialist's attitude to his/her profession (i.e., personal and professional identity), the purpose of the profession, its place and role in the social system, what specialists are allowed and obliged to do during their professional activities in relation to ordinary citizens, colleagues, various organisations, including those reflecting the difference between the positions of the state and of the civil society. These are issues relating to the fundamentals of the rights and duties of professionals, the admissibility of privileges for specialists, and the mechanisms of responsibility in their specific activities. The 'value' block contains (and problematises) various aspects of personal and social obligation, which is incorporated in the concept of 'professional duty' (inevitably correlated with moral and civic duty) and has moral (ethical) significance. According to general cultural concepts, the moral sense of any profession is service to the society, the public good; in some cases, it implies the service involving special efforts, risk, and possible sacrifice. This fact explains how the term 'calling' (a word of religious origin) came to be used in relation to some professions. Due to that, the value block of professional culture is designated as 'professional ethics'.

- In special scientific and methodical literature on professionalism, there is a tendency of interpreting professional culture superficially. Accordingly, as regards the value block, the content and significance of professional ethics are disclosed only in its regulatory aspect. The wider worldview meaning of problems, values, and norms that modify general culture in the activities of

the professional community is, as a rule, reduced to several general phrases about inseparable connection between the professional and the social areas, and indispensable necessity for social competence in professional culture. What is more, the meaning of such general phrases is not disclosed or specified.

- The growing amount of information that it is necessary to master in professional activities and vocational education can lead one to believe that the main difficulty in the future development of professionalism will consist in mastering and implementing the 'knowledge' block, i.e., achieving a high level of professional skill and qualification. While accepting such interpretation on the whole, we must admit that the pace and scale of social and cultural changes in the information society at present (and also in the foreseeable future) are creating a situation in which the content of many concepts and ideas of professional ethics as well as their value will become problematic.

2. Problem Statement

In contemporary culture, the content of the basic concepts that explain the meaning of professional and moral duty is vague and obscure. In many cases, it is contradictory and radically problematised, both in terms of theory and practice. The situation in pedagogical activity, in the content of humanitarian educational courses is not much better.

- If we accept that one of the key tasks of the newly created training (special training) courses in Humanities is to combine professional and general cultural competencies, we should bear in mind that it is necessary to update and upgrade the conceptual framework in teaching of humanitarian disciplines. Please replace this text with context of your paper.
- There is a reference to the future in the theme of our conference; therefore, we need to analyse the historical background, the problem of continuity in the development of professional culture, and to indicate at least a few 'continuity breaks' that occurred in the past.

In today's rapidly changing world, even the next coming generations speak different languages, and the resulting gaps and cultural barriers are still more significant in a longer socio-cultural continuity. The general cultural concepts of ethics and philosophy — good and evil, public and personal good, moral duty, justice, dignity, humanism, human rights — are 'alien' and 'unfamiliar' primarily to the consciousness of contemporary masses, especially the youth. As a result, there emerges a need for students to learn the 'language' of moral consciousness, which will allow them to enter the realm of the very set of morality problems.

As for the values and norms of professional ethics, its main principles will be as follows:

- – fidelity to professional duty (serving the common good);
- – professional self-awareness (identity);
- – autonomy of professional community and corporate solidarity;
- – confidentiality and professional discretion;
- – qualification tests establishing the rights and responsibilities of specialists. (Evans, 2008; Yarskaya-Smirnova & Romanov, 2012)

The list is short, but almost every one of these points needs a detailed commentary based on the general cultural context which should be borrowed by students from the social and humanitarian training

courses taught in higher educational establishments, both in terms of content and value. At the same time, the practice of teaching shows that for analysis of principles of professional ethics it is not enough to focus only on the ethical theories generally accepted in university courses (the very structure of these courses is outdated). It is necessary to expand the conceptual framework of humanitarian education by adding the terms, ideas, and problems of modern socio-philosophical, socio-psychological, and culturological discourses. In this case, the focus will be on concepts of social system and personality, personal and collective identity, self-awareness, individualisation, personalisation and depersonalisation of culture, mass culture, and counterculture. We should also add, to this list, concepts that reflect the large-scale stages of historic cultural dynamics (traditional culture, the culture of industrial and post-industrial (information) society).

Understanding professional ethics requires paying special attention to the value of the principles of professionalism. The most difficult question in post-traditional culture is what value and obligation are based on. In the modern world where values are diverse and often contradictory, and the sacred authorities and the 'only true' doctrine that can indicate the 'true path' have been lost, the motivation of tradition, which was so significant in the previous epochs, inevitably loses its ground. On the other hand, references either to traditionalism (especially national one) or directly to national identity (features of national culture) as the basis of moral authority are most common in the literature on professionalism.

Historically, the content of professional consciousness and its place in culture have changed significantly, primarily because the nomenclature of professions itself has changed with the development of production and the entire social system. At the same time, changes in the life organisation patterns and general cultural processes have led to the breakdown of old and the formation of new worldview foundations of morality and professional ethics.

Each historical epoch shapes its main cultural pillars in the minds of people — values (priorities) and life principles. These are ideological and moral complexes which have received the name of 'the spirit of the epoch' in the history of culture.

The worldview and moral changes that took place in the early modernism period (early industrial society) were of particular importance from the point of view of professional ethics development and interrelation of these processes with the shaping of the 'spirit of the epoch'. During this period, professional culture of many occupations became closely interconnected with other cultural phenomena representing the world of production, labour, market, and administrative establishments. These included attitude towards work ('labour ethics') and towards business and market activities in general ('business ethics'), as well as principles of social and system organisation ('formal rationality', 'instrumental intelligence'). Together, these components formed the pillars of the phenomenon that was given the name of the 'spirit of capitalism'. This name has become iconic: to this day, most of the fundamental studies of the basic socio-cultural processes of the present and future feature the expression 'a new spirit of capitalism' in their titles, subtitles or section headings (Boltanski & K'yapello, 2011; Castells, 2000).

In the early industrial society, the status of professional (business, 'organisational') consciousness in culture has radically changed in comparison with the traditional society: it drove religion away from the leading positions in the world outlook, thus creating, jointly with science, a "disenchanted world" (according to Max Weber) of our time. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, the world-famous

book by M. Weber, as well as all subsequent comments and writings on this topic have shown that the transition from a religious socio-cultural dominant to the activity-based professional and business priorities was the leading trend in the early industrial society and the foundation of the personal and social obligation inherent in the trend ('non-religious asceticism', 'labour and duty'). See the quote below: "For when asceticism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life, and began to dominate worldly morality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order." (Weber, 2006, p. 126).

"The spirit of capitalism demanded worldly goods, pleasures, property and power; at the same time it viewed the foundation of true morality as constant intensive and effective work, devotion to the cause and professional duty." (Karmazina, 2015, p. 222).

In this regard, the following may be considered the most important questions in understanding current and future trends in the development of professional culture:

- Is 'non-religious asceticism' still preserved as a moral imperative of professional culture?
- Does 'non-religious asceticism' express the spirit of the modern epoch?

3. Research Questions

At present, the theoretical basis for study of any large-scale social and humanitarian problem is combination of the concepts of 'social system' and 'personality', as well as their derivatives in the modern scientific and research context. When gaining an insight into the central concepts of professional ethics through which the idea of professional duty is revealed — 'society', 'personal good', 'public good', 'people's interests', 'the good of the cause' — one meets with added complexity of structural understanding of social reality. The concept of 'social system' (as well as 'instrumental intelligence', 'formal rationality', and 'depersonalisation') leads to transition to impersonal characteristics, to social institutions and the principles of their functioning. The concepts of 'self-awareness', 'identity' (individual, corporate, professional), 'individualisation', 'personalisation' are brought to the forefront through the concept of 'personality' (in the social and systemic context).

The generalised concept of 'social system' symbolises the structural, impersonally objectified factors of social being which are represented in the triad of 'norms – roles (statuses) – institutions' correlated with certain value foundations.

"The essence of instrumental intelligence is maximising the efficiency, productivity, and economically interpreted utility, which requires a 'functional' attitude to man and directly contradicts, in many social and practical aspects, the traditional ethics of charity and love for people." (Karmazina, 2015, p. 223). The paradigm of formal rationality subordinates the goals of activities to the principles of quantifiability and efficiency, freeing them from any discernible, visual link with human needs (even from any indirect link — through values and customs). The 'superhuman', impersonal nature of system requirements is determined by the intrinsic logic of the system which is autonomous in relation to the life goals, needs and interests of living human individuals.

"Formal rationality is an attribute of the social system in its developed forms. Just like one hundred and two hundred years ago, the main imperative requirements of the formal-rational, 'instrumental' intelligence are deep specialisation and functionality, quantifiability and impersonality." (Karmazina, 2015, p. 223).

Instrumental intelligence and its derivatives occupy a predominant position in the structure of the modern social world (Bauman, 2008; Bek, 2000; Giddens, 2004; Menegetty, 2003). They make up fundamental bases for the economic activity ‘cosmos’ being even more tremendous than in the times of M. Weber and relying on information technology and global economic paradigms of activities rather than on industrial and mechanical ones. The irresistible impact of this ‘cosmos’ on lifestyles, behaviour patterns, all value and regulatory establishments that permeate, guide, and ‘model’ people’s lives in the information society is perceived by most people as one of the main burdens of the present day and labelled in their consciousness as subordination to ‘anonymous forces’, depersonalisation, alienation, callousness, and inhumanity (Gashkova, Berezovskaya, & Shipunova, 2017; Sokolova, Pytkin, Safanova, & Stroganova, 2017; Bylieva, Lobatyuk, & Rubtsova, 2018). Consequently, this leads to a negative image of the ‘system’ in the mass consciousness, especially in youth subcultures and among representatives of creative occupations. In the language of modern youth subcultures, a system is an impersonal monster, an obvious evil, a symbol of oppression and suppression of man in modern society. (Krasnoruckij, 2017; Yarskaya-Smirnova & Romanov, 2012; Timermanis, Ivanov, Zamorev, & Smaragdina, 2017).

Jürgen Habermas divides ‘systemic’ pressure on the individual in modern society into the following aspects:

- the institutionalised struggle for existence;
- the discipline of alienated labour;
- the eradication of sensuality and aesthetic gratification;
- the dictates of professional careers; the ethics of struggle for success;
- the pressure of status competition;
- values of possessive individualism and available substitute gratifications. (Habermas, 2007,

p.116)

This characteristic and evaluation given by one of the best known contemporary representatives of social philosophy should become the subject of a special discussion during which it would be logical to oppose the ‘accusation’ against the system to its ‘justification’ in order to achieve objectivity.

When ‘accusing’ the system, either consciously or unconsciously, everybody perceives the impersonal, ‘cosmic’ in scale structures of modern society as a huge field of opportunities for achieving goals and self-realisation which were inaccessible to people of previous epochs. “For the majority of people, the most terrible things in their social life are ‘to be left behind in the past’, not to get an education that can open access to modern complex types of professional activities.” (Karmazina, 2015, p. 224). As a consequence, the status of the social system in the public consciousness is becoming increasingly significant and increasingly contradictory.

The main questions are as follows:

- If the concept of ‘professional duty’ (the key concept of professional ethics) should be disclosed through the idea of public (common) good, how can ‘common good’ itself be explained, taking into account the two inextricably linked aspects of human life — individual-personal and socio-systemic (impersonal)?
- How can the principles of humanism and formal rationality be combined in professional ethics?

4. Purpose of the Study

The professional framework of society is part of a more general social system. In its modern development, professionalism in general and its resulting phenomenon — professional culture — face counteractions, challenges, and threats, both systemic and non-systemic ones, as well as determine the main features and nature of its subsequent development.

The main contradictions and ‘challenges’ are as follows: (Giddens, 2004; Evans, 2008; Professional'naya kul'tura: opyt sociologicheskoy refleksii, 2014; Mansurov & Yurchenko, 2013)

- changes in the professional structure of society, ‘death’ of old professions and the emergence of new ones, which destroys the professionalism tradition that has existed for centuries;
- change in the attitude of specialists towards their professions (weakening of professional identity) in the conditions of transformation and pluralism of cultural values. The motives of ‘loyalty’, ‘devotion’, ‘serving’ gradually disappear from culture in general and professional culture in particular. The motives of utilitarianism and formalisation are becoming stronger;
- bureaucratisation, which is expansion of the areas of administrative management and control in the epoch of ‘big organisations’, pressure of the administrative area on ‘professionals’. The consequence of bureaucratisation is the increasing number of standards and instructions, various kinds of regulations, the apotheosis of formalisation and standardisation. The conflict between ‘professionals’ and ‘officials’ becomes acute in modern conditions, since the ethics of ‘professionals’ demands protecting ‘the good of the cause’, while the ethics of officials demands increasing their power and the number of subordinates, especially against the backdrop of the state property predominance.

Bureaucratisation in its developed forms can literally bring professional activities to ruin, destroying its essence, demanding the reproduction of external forms under an unofficial slogan of ‘Imitation and simulation!’. The most striking example is the present-day practice of social institutes of education and healthcare (especially in Russia) which manifests itself in a huge number of all sorts of nonsensical regulations and reports;

- commercialisation, when professional activities are under the pressure of the market economy principles which imply priority of maximising the profits over ‘the good of the cause’;
- pressure of the civil society demanding openness, possibilities of external control, equality of access to information and resources. This pressure is directed against the traditions of autonomy and corporate isolation of professionals.

The objectives of the paper are determined by the idea about the subject of the study that was set out and substantiated above.

- The key objective:
 - to adapt the traditional vocabulary and traditional schematics of the humanitarian study of the phenomenon of professionalism (professional culture, professional ethics) to modern conditions and development prospects.
- Derived objectives:
 - to structure the humanitarian educational programme for study of professionalism on the basis of philosophical-ethical and socio-systemic principles.

– to operationalise moral ideas with the aim of solving cognitive and educational problems.

5. Research Methods

If we do not understand the moral meaning of any large-scale job that involves a lot of people and resources, we believe this job to be useless and pointless.

At a time when all concepts of the good and benefit have become dramatically problematic and uncertain, the study of moral aspects of any socio-cultural phenomena inevitably begins with restoration of the bases, the foundation which can be used to build a new paradigm of humanitarian knowledge about culture, in this particular case, professional culture.

This foundation is represented, on the one hand, by language, a system of concepts from the scientific and philosophical heritage, and on the other hand, by common worldview schematics.

Consequently, the main research methods used are:

- theoretical-analytical;
- historical-genetic;
- comparative-historical.

6. Findings

The purpose of adapting the traditionally established forms of learning and teaching any educational material to the new forms of life that emerge today and will develop in the future requires significant expansion of the range of sources and literature and the use of new worldview schemes.

With the expansion of the subject field of new humanitarian knowledge about professionalism and professional culture, one should be guided by the following semantic lines:

- fundamentals of socio-cultural dynamics (traditional, industrial, information society; the main worldview value and ideological complexes of each of the outlined historical stages);
- history of professions and professional culture (professional duty, professional status, rights and duties);
- modern social system and professional structure (causes and consequences, social and systemic contradictions, challenges and threats);
- – social system and personality (humanistic and instrumental intelligence, individualisation and standardisation — the main contradictions and conflicts, the problem of ‘system justification’);
- self-awareness and identity (personal and corporate identity, the problem of measure);
- socio-cultural and value pluralism of the modern epoch. Mass culture and counterculture;
- professional culture and values of the civil society: sources of contradictions.

‘System and personality’ is a crucial and increasingly complex relation as applied to the modern culture, particularly, in professional ethics. (Menegetty, 2003; *Identichnost'. Lichnost', obshchestvo, politika*, 2017). Is it a specialist’s professional duty to protect (first and foremost) the ‘good of the cause’ or the ‘interests of people’? None of the opposing positions is unquestionable — neither the ‘human rights’, nor the effectiveness of activities. These positions normally coincide to a greater or lesser degree, nevertheless, sharp contradictions are not infrequent.

The deepest internal socio-cultural conflict manifests itself in the presence of two opposite tendencies. “On the one hand, there is a tendency towards individualisation and personalisation — the

ideals of personal integrity, uniqueness, and originality, singularity of personal destiny (the principles of 'being true to oneself', 'a need for oneself', 'self-reliance'). (Karmazina, 2015, p. 225). "On the other hand, there are system requirements for personal fragmentation (deep specialisation) and role functionality, as well as social conformism, ability to integrate, sacrificing one's unique individuality, into any structures and relationships; flexibility and mobility." (Karmazina, 2015, p. 225). There is an obvious contradiction between personal uniqueness and system-role functionality, but neither party to this contradiction can be 'sacrificed', so it is necessary to seek an acceptable degree of combining them in each particular case.

Equally difficult is the situation around the correlation of personal and professional identity. Loyalty of a specialist towards corporate values and norms cannot be unlimited and unambiguous. The dominant element of self-identification of the specialist with his/her systemic 'role' and professional function leads to a situation of 'professional deformation'.

The same can be said about the problem of professional secrets. It is natural that there arises the question of why so many people support such figures as Assange and Snowden being radical opponents of the system who reject any systemic and professional identity and loyalty. The problem of assessments of personal and impersonal principles of human (individual and social) life by the mass consciousness should become the subject of discussion as part of the relevant training course.

- The educational material proposed as the content of the updated humanitarian paradigm requires maximum problematisation due to its complexity and, in many cases, acute contradictions.
- The set objectives can be achieved through the use of interactive methods of studying this material, as well as discussions and debates specially prepared by students.

7. Conclusion

All researchers, trying to foresee the future and analysing the dynamics of modern social processes, point out the rapidly increasing complexity of the 'formal rational' system, the multiplicity of social roles and relationships, as well as the corresponding increase in potential uncertainty and contradictory nature of the social situation for each person involved in it. Also, the content of mass consciousness and spiritual culture are undergoing a radical complication (relativisation). So-called 'long' (mediated) social ties being inherently impersonal are put forward to perform the role of the predominant type of social relations, instead of 'short', directly-personal ties that predominated previously. The significance of so-called 'abstract systems' — impersonal structures acting as universal intermediaries and setting requirements for role functionality — is growing dramatically. All researchers emphasise flexibility and versatility, as well as multiplicity, variability, and complexity of social life. The professionalism of specialists of the future, in our opinion, will integrate and transform these features.

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