IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS
IN THE PROCESS OF STAFF EDUCATION

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Abstract. *Professional ethics is treated as a part of all mankind output, and its teaching turns out to be an important element of preparation for taking part in culture. The society, in its own interest is interested in the level of moral qualifications, especially of those professional groups which protect values integrating culture. Our home prepares us to function in typical social situations but it does not teach us how to deal with performing professional roles. Therefore, deontology has been distinguished from ethics, the branch that deals with the sphere of human obligations at performing specific social and professional roles. The rules of deontology do not always have to be formalized in the form of ethical code. Some special requirements set to representatives of some professional groups result from the fact that they are constantly in "the service of the whole society". For these reasons having professional ethics is a kind of distinction for a profession, and therefore an evidence of social trust. Enduing a given profession with the mandate of social trust indicates therefore the necessity of constant care about the level of duties' fulfillment by all employees. People who perform a given occupation are also responsible for transfer and consolidation of rules of professional deontology among people preparing to a profession. The author indicates that for the reason of general consent to functioning of such ethics, in practice there is usually adopted a solution assuming that they are taught in the course of apprenticeship. This is the easiest and most effective solution.*

Key words: *professional ethics, moral values, deontology, ethical codes, education, Professional responsibility*

ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНАЯ ЭТИКА
В ПРОЦЕССЕ ОБУЧЕНИЯ ПЕРСОНАЛА

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Аннотация. *Профессиональная этика рассматривается как элемент общечеловеческой культуры, а обучение профессиональной этике – как важнейший элемент в приобщении к участию в культуре. Автор утверждает, что общество крайне заинтересовано в повышении уровня моральных норм, и особенно это касается профессиональных групп, защищающих духовные ценности в процессе интеграции культур. Наша среда готовит нас к традиционным социальным ситуациям, но не учит нас, как занимать профессиональные роли. Деонтология была выделена из этики и является наукой, которая взаимодействует с обязательствами по правам человека при реализации особых социальных и профессиональных ролей. Правила деонтологии не всегда определяются в моральном кодексе. Особые требования, предъявляемые к представителям профессиональных групп, исходят из понимания, что они постоянно находятся «в обслуживании всего общества». По этим причи-*

нам профессиональная этика рассматривается как особенность профессии и, следовательно, показатель уровня доверия общества. Наделение профессии социальным доверием призывает нас к постоянному вниманию к уровню выполнения работниками своих обязанностей. Люди, выполняющие свои обязанности, несут ответственность за передачу и совершенствование правил профессиональной этики среди людей, собирающихся приступить к профессии. Автором доказано, что на фоне теоретической общей готовности к профессиональной этике на практике обычно это решается путем обучения профессиональной этике в период стажировок и практик. Это наиболее легкий и эффективный способ.

Ключевые слова: *профессиональная этика, духовные ценности, этика, этические нормы и правила (моральный кодекс), образование, профессиональная ответственность.*

Introduction. In modern societies it is commonly believed that the level of educational systems' functioning is getting lower. Thus, there also appear opinions about systematical deterioration of young people preparation to perform their first professional duties. This kind of complaints is also aimed at the education preparing specialists enjoying a prestige in the society. Pointing at the imperfections of educational system, there is also a search for solutions which could counteract against these weaknesses. Developing a common vision which would define a reformed way of functioning of the whole system is a very complicated task. For it results from the very dynamics of educational system of the young generation which is constantly being adjusted to the needs of changing social reality. Therefore, the main problem is the fact that solutions used in educational practice until now appear to be less and less effective.

Prescriptions for malfunctions of educational system usually present one of two attitudes. One of them prescribes looking for solutions in the past, in theoretical ideas which never came into force because of excessive radicalism or lack of technical possibilities for their implementation. Sometimes, however, it is also postulated to come back to solutions which had been considered effective in the past. The second possibility opts for shaping of educational processes according to anticipated directions of social development. In this case we usually talk about "education for future". However, one cannot skip the fact that the first option is chosen more often. Also in Poland there is an ongoing discussion on effectiveness of the current model of young generation's education. In our country the sphere of education has been separated into two independent departments: general and higher education. However, it led to the situation where they both blame each other for contributing to the failures of the whole education system. Higher education is usually blamed for a low level of preparation to perform professional duties and general education for insufficiency in general and specific preparation of the candidates for studies. Maybe, the easiest way to repair the existing and unsatisfactory situation in this case leads through combining these two educational systems in one department. Then, at least a part of this system would be eliminated.

On the need of education in the range of professional ethics
Erich Fromm stated that we are "one animal for whom its own existence is a problem, which has to be solved by it and from which one cannot run

away" (Fromm, 1966, p. 31). Only through a conscious effort of setting targets towards which we aim and through elaboration of the rules we are going to follow in our own life, our existence makes sense. It results from the fact that every man should look for solutions to moral dilemmas appearing in life on his/her own. At the same time, functioning in a society we do not have to think about the nature of good and evil. We get ready-made recipes for their solution from social environment. Relative ease of obtaining ready-made hints to appearing problems weakens, as a result, our sensitivity to the evil which is present in our environment. It also leads to the situation that one does not notice the necessity of moral education of representatives of some social groups, not excluding professional groups. However, there exist occupations which perform cross-society and no citizen is indifferent to how they perform their duties. The society, in its own interest is interested in the level of moral qualifications, especially of those professional groups which protect values integrating culture.

Until now there have been disputes if people should undergo institutional ethics education. It is assumed that as we function in the area of a given culture and at home we obtain ready set of values and rules in the form of prohibitions and orders. In this case, the problem is in the fact that home prepares us to function in typical social situations but it does not teach us how to deal with performing professional roles. Therefore, deontology has been distinguished from ethics, the branch that deals with the sphere of human obligations at performing specific social and professional roles. The very notion: **deontology** (of Greek *deon* – duty) means "science about duties; set of indications and regulations relating to human acting in some area"(Jedynak, 1990, p. 48). Therefore, the notion deontology is wider in its meaning than professional ethics and also includes obligations of moral character surpassing performed professional role. Such regulations refer to relations between the members of a given group and the whole group and its individual members towards the society. Not many professions try to define their deontology formally. Thus, the rules of deontology do not always have to be formalized in the form of ethical code.

It is generally assumed that deontology includes only these professions in which the range of obligations does not finish at only fulfilling professional duties. In colloquial language the very joining of a professional group with distinguished indications of deontology is called "vocation". Therefore, we talk about vocation for the profession of doctor, teacher, priest, soldier or lawyer. A man functioning in such a professional community does not only have to be a perfect expert but should also be characterized with specific moral qualifications exceeding the range of requirements assigned to other people. It is hard to imagine a doctor who shuts the door of his/her office exactly at definite time, not caring if patients are waiting in a waiting room for immediate help. Such special requirements set to representatives of some professional groups result from the fact that they are constantly in "the service of the whole society". Yet, the professional role of a teacher does not finish with the ring for a break. Similarly, policeman has to always be ready to help people in a life-threatening situation.

For the reason of special social expectations, representatives of some professions are entitled to a formal authority, resulting from the very fact of per-

forming a given professional role. What is more, social expectations towards them are constantly verified. Therefore, the loss of social authority by a doctor, lawyer or priest usually means so called "professional death". It might even mean death sentence for a soldier, e.g. in case of arbitrary leaving of a battle-field. Yet, on the other hand, the very authority of a profession causes the fact that looking for trustworthy people, first of all we address representatives of such professions.

Such professional groups having their own professional ethics dispose, therefore, of "soft power" over the rest of citizens. Power of this type means the possibility of making decision for others in dangerous situations, which results from privileges which were entitled by a society. Doctors, judges, policemen and even teachers may restrict, and in definite situations, even deprive of freedom or ownership right of all members of their society, without any exception.

This power does not entitle to autonomous definition of directions of candidates' studies for these professions. Yet, societies influence the range of tasks performed by such professions in different ways. Most often it takes place through defining of threshold requirements (health, intellectual, etc.) made for candidates to such a profession and through social defining of the range of duties. There happens a kind of dualism of obligations, on the one hand they have an individual character because they are connected with performing of a profession. However, on the other hand – through professional ethics – society encircles privileges always closely combing them with obligations. With this it imposes a closely defined range of tasks indispensable to keep its durability and continuity of existence. It is clear that obligations imposed by a society is of superior character over individual duties. As a result the most desired state is when a person performing a given profession can draw individual obligations out of social obligations. "Vocation" is characterized by this when a profession is performed. That is why it in the interest of society to have most of such workers with vocation in such professional groups.

Such situation is possible owing to the fact that some amount of values is cultivated and conveyed from generation to generation, the values followed by every individual human and the whole community. The process of educating of the staff does not happen by chance but is determined by values functioning in a society. It was noticed by Aristotle when he said that " all art and all research as well as all activity and resolution seem to aim at some good and therefore the good was rightly described as the aim of all aims" (Aristoteles, 1966, p. 77). Thus, values make a kind of averaging of the range of duties and define the minimum of obligations which society imposes to every representative of a distinguished profession. Rising amount of these groups and developing specialization impose also a duty to normalize these requirements. This is not an easy task because in many countries, including some professional groups and in Poland, it was impossible to define unambiguously "this" minimum of requirements.

It would certainly be the best if all people respected moral rules binding in the frames of their profession only because of its internal approval and not because of threatening sanctions or fear of public opinion. Just in this there is

"vocation" for a profession. The value of doctor's work depends on not forced approval of professional deontology rules binding in this profession. The wider somebody accepts them, the more he/she identifies with their profession and the tasks he/she is supposed to fulfill are becoming obvious. One can conclude from this that teaching and self-study of rules of ethics and professional deontology is necessary for candidates aspiring for such professions. Such studies are indispensable for shaping desired values and moral attitudes of young disciples. The lack of acceptance for these rules at the level of preparation for a profession threatens with serious difficulties in implementing into a profession and assimilation with one's own group, and at the same time disqualifies the candidate for a profession.

Professional ethics in the process of preparation to perform an occupation

If, in a given profession, moral attitudes of employees are the same important as qualifications they have, then there arises the need to formalize them. Ordered set of moral requirements made for people performing a given profession is usually called a code. The very notion of "ethical code" defines as "consistent system of norms regulating the moral sphere of social life and solving problems of an individual resulting from her/his attitude towards social group, another man, him/herself" (Jedynak, 1990, p. 120).

It results from the very definition of a code – that it regulates a given area of social life in a moral aspect. But does it regulate every area? Without bigger controversies we can assume even major restrictions in this range. For there is no reason to introduce the code of ethics in these areas of life which have been normalized with detailed regulations of normative character e.g. the sphere of industrial safety. One can even conclude that codes of ethics are first of all necessary in a universal dimension, as it happens in case of Decalogue. However, they are accepted in the case of social groups which members are related to each other with the community of performed tasks. It doesn't matter where and when these tasks are performed. Versatility of requirements indicates that in every society there are formulated codes with similar contents for given professional groups. For example, representatives of medical professions in the whole world comply with requirements of the Hippocratic oath. Even if moral requirements in a given profession are not systematized, anyway their ordering takes place and sooner or later their codification.

Social needs determine the range of problems which has to be taken into account by a code of ethics binding in a given occupation. "Such ethics must take into account at least two determinants imposed by the whole society:

1) a group is tightly related with the community of tasks and interests. There exists an essential consensus as to define and accept some kind of behavior as specific for its all representatives. Therefore, a given group must be distinguished in the background of others and perfectionism in tasks' performance has a significant importance for this society;

2) there is a big turnover of staff in a given group, a constant generation shift takes place which requires incessant acquainting new members with basic moral requirements set by the society. However, the group

cannot be hermetic, must be available for others although access is not easy or automatic" (Konstanczak, 2000, p. 61).

For these reasons having professional ethics is a kind of distinction for a profession, and therefore an evidence of social trust. Contrary to appearances professional ethics does not limit employee's freedom but it gives a specific chance to have use of it. Provisions constituting its contents are to a great extent normalized by the very professional group which constitutes criteria of recruitment and defines general duties of its members. Also, only within the limits of the group amendments to codes are decided. It is true that this is a difficult freedom because one has to know how to make use of it. It is not a coincidence that only representatives of professions requiring high qualifications and which set specific requirements to their members in the area of professional improvement might make use of it. Undoubtedly, e.g. all health service meets such requirements, when making decisions they are expected to possess not only substantial qualifications but also, and maybe first of all defined personal predispositions.

In the past there have been made attempts to define universal moral rules characterizing the way of acting of given professions' representatives. One of such proposals includes requirements which might be classified in a few points:

a. "giving one's own individual abilities in the service of the state and, in the case of a collision, subordinate one's own interests to the interests of the state,

b. duty of honesty and impartiality in relations with citizens,

c. acting in a righteous way,

d. avoiding of acting which might arise suspicion:
– as to use of the post for private purposes,
– making decisions beyond official mode,
– violation of citizens' trust […],

e. recognition of superiority of social trust of the fulfilled […] post and authority […] over one's own private activity,

f. not abusing of power towards inferiors and petitioners,

g. sensible disposal of public means" (Bittner, Stepien, 2000, p. 58).

Such recommendations with a few modifications might be used to all professions of social trust. The employee does not only work for him/herself because its effects and preparation are decided by investigated and sorted problems of other people, including health ones. There is not even a possibility of isolating from the outer world. What is called bureaucratization of social life is nothing else but an attempt to run away from outer independent source of estimation of one's work and an attempt of placing it in a safe (for oneself) inside of an institution. Bureaucratization is inevitable in situation when there is a clear discrepancy of interests. Perceiving e.g. a patient only as a source of problems and a person violating the state of inner balance of the institution, results in breaking ties with him/her and concentrating on a formal aspect and therefore not essential for the tasks which are fulfilled by medical staff. Such situation might only be avoided by social control over functioning of health service. In favor of exercising social control there is openness of legal standards

and common availability of inner instructions regulating work of an institution. A citizen is not an enemy or threat for an institution because without him/her the existence of a given occupation would be of no sense. Therefore, there is a possibility of citizens' participation in decision-making processes. A democratic state creates such possibilities even by social character of supervisory institutions. Fossilized bureaucracy always occurs where citizens have no influence on making decisions and dissident instants are appointed and not voted.

Enduing a given profession with the mandate of social trust indicates therefore the necessity of constant care about the level of duties' fulfillment by all employees. Therefore, this trust also extends to transferring of the most of control authorizations into the hands of representatives of this occupation. Self-governing consists in it because the very professional group cares about the situation when social expectations are fulfilled on the highest level. No one will control a lawyer or doctor than colleagues performing the same job. Also, a professional group has to care about the level of education of disciples preparing for an occupation. This care also extends to education in the range of professional ethics. Generally speaking, people who perform a given occupation are also responsible for transfer and consolidation of rules of professional deontology among people preparing to a profession.

However, let's think how such transfer looks in the case of mass professions. Every year several dozen of graduates of different schools start work in the jobs of social trust. How many people must be engaged in introducing them into secrets of ethics of this profession. An alternative possibility requires earlier written elaboration of the rules of professional ethics and thus formulating of the code of ethics. The basic problem, at creating of such a code, is reaching a common consensus of representatives of a given profession for the rules included in it. Often, the lack of permission caused by inability to conclude compromises spoils all attempts of such codification. A classic example of such situation are repeated in Poland attempts of ethics codification of teaching profession. At the same time such codification is not a remedy for all problems and doubts of moral character. The example here is the profession of doctor taking pride in having the oldest code of ethics in which the number of offences against these rules is, in social feeling, still significant.

At last, one can do nothing, and leave all problems and controversies to resolve by the very employee. This kind of thinking originates from justified assumption of autonomous character of morality and complete responsibility of a human for his/her deeds. On the one hand we have ready-made solutions in the shape of the code conveyed verbally or in a written form from generation to generation and on the other hand we have a vision of a free man, not restricted of any imposed prohibitions or orders, which, by nature, should aim at the good. Such man does not need any codes. Every of these variants in ethical thought has had a long tradition. Every one has its followers as well as ardent opponents. However, it turns out that in the case of renunciation of institutional conveying of professional ethics' regulations, the level of professionalism of employees in a given occupation is falling down drastically. The practice shows that moral education is not less important than typical instrumental education.

Therefore, ethics of codes is not a relic of past totalitarian epoch where everything was normalized, totalized. Still, the codes exist and there is even a visible tendency of extending the number of areas of life normalized by them. In Poland such tendency has not been grounded yet. Some levels of management of economy are just making attempts to elaborate ethics codes for given companies or occupations. More and more often, one can notice the need to specify moral qualifications indispensable to perform definite functions in institutions and employing institutions. It also concerns people belonging to supervisory boards and brokers, stockbrokers, shareholders, etc. For the reason of general consent to functioning of such ethics, in practice there is usually adopted a solution assuming that they are taught in the course of apprenticeship. This is the easiest and most effective solution. Therefore, the disciple preparing for a profession should get to know basic moral requirements set to him/her during future career already during his/her education.

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