157 - ETHICS, CULTURE AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

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It is necessary, when dealing with any issue relative to specific actions by professionals, to initially clarify what is meant by profession/occupation and professional - since, in Brazil, both connotations are used indistinctly in common sense and by the society. Thus, I will initiate with an attempt to clarify points preceding the different divagations on ethics and professional responsibility.

Today, according to the Ministry of Labour, observing the CBO (Brazilian Classification of Occupations), there is a range of occupations in catalogue, and all of them, with no exception, were created by society, aiming the solving of the problems that disturb it.

Understanding that everyone who executes any action aiming to solve problems that disturb society in its necessities and wishes is performing a possible occupation, be it as any person acting as a gravedigger, as a newspaper dealer, as a tire fitter and other services, wished for and sought. It is thus, and for that reason acceptable, that it be understood that profession is every activity going on in the quest for simple - though proper - solutions for the several problems existing in society; the people involved may be laypeople, but generally owing a certain intuitive ability. It is thus acceptable that profession should be conceived as “occupation, job requiring special skills and usually training that may be - or not - long and intensive”.

Such individuals, during a given period of time, solve the issues, but the inevitable will always take place, and an issue that would initially appear as simple, ends up, through the very solving of it, leading to the identification of wider and more complex questions, which then demand the developing of more accurate and specialised studies.

Therefore, every labouring sphere has a central mission which reflects the basic necessity of society, enough so as to compel a professional to act. Thus, there is always a mission; however, in order to reach its satisfactorily accomplishment, one must observe the issue of the model of performance that is prescribed for acting, specially because such models may be permanent, but will sometimes change due to location, moment and circumstances found. And finally, in order to be able to execute a mission, with the performance prescribed in certain occupations, it is mandatory to use always the proper sense of identity of the service and his action as a professional, i.e., to include in his interventions the basic features of personality, motivation, his intellectual strengths and weaknesses; in sum, his existence as a professional, keeping always a moral identity, in this case regarded as 'the must-be of prescription'.

Thus, when speaking about the quest for solving and the solution of issues or complex and scientific problems disturbing society, it is also necessary the preparation of specialised personnel, able to deal with them. Therefore, it must be initially considered that the personnel to be involved must have proper and long-lasting training, using several scientific and technological knowledge - a condition of ability which is obtained through graduated preparation, and, however, it may be understood as a proper solution the training of a specific professional, training which is conceived as: “Process to which certain groups of people subject themselves, in their quest to identify, analyse, study, understand and develop scientific and technological knowledge, aiming to favour the solving or problems, offering proper and competent solutions”. Therefore, such a training and preparation presents specific characteristics.

Thus, when becoming a professional, there is always some kind of exchange, of negotiation between the individual and the community, i.e., the individuals, here the professionals, agree to operate within the issues and existing problems which must be properly solved, offering their work, and the community agrees to compensate them for their service, which means, it recognises their right to perform it. It is then established that work is actually the essence of the Human Being, since the latter cannot be separated from the conception of society, as it is with the others and for the others that the professional works and creates culture; and, as there is no society without culture, one cannot say that there could be culture without a social relation where the individual exists for the culture and acts to his transformation. Thus understood, every professional act will result in a cultural act.

At the beginning of the process of professional preparation in higher education, such a common-sense and moral situation accepted by the community become a start point. It is important to highlight that when speaking of common sense, it must be identified when dealing with the problem of culture, which is this case may be considered as an accumulation of knowledge, erudition, self- intellectual activity - since all things resulting from the interference of the Human Being onto his surrounding world is regarded as Culture.

It must be thus understood that it is not possible to speak of 'cultured' and 'uncultured' individuals, since every individual is cultured, as they somehow take part into the cultural creation by their own society, and act contributing for the establishment of certain norms for action and sharing values and beliefs.

This more formal professional preparation we are dealing with must be necessarily developed within colleges and universities, regarded as the ideal *locus* for building and developing systematised knowledge, which offers, besides the many possibilities of teaching, a systematic participation to the scholars in the communitarian projects, involving the knowledge found in the course and the experience with the community, which ends up allowing also the participation of the scholar in scientific projects and development of researches - conditions which certainly contribute for the improvement of the professional training that is offered.

Thus, it is observable that it lies with the university the responsibility to develop the safe and cult basis of the social-historical world of knowledge; and it is the professional's responsibility, as one of the parts involved in the process, or rather as its more interested part, to constantly proceed to an ongoing quest for the more specific knowledge, regardless of where such knowledge and technology might be found and developed. It is noticeable that such attention and procedures will certainly allow the professional to meet with the wishes, desires, necessities and specificities presented by the society.

Only with the condition of existence of a group of professionals of a same academic and scientific area, through the official and legal acknowledgement of such an academic profession, it will be possible, through the junction of the specific and specialised competence of the professionals, to objective and develop the organisation of a professional category. For the success of such an organisation, the professionals must be graduated, in higher education, within the same area and specificity; and likewise, besides proving their educational level, present a professional register within the due organisation of control, i.e., a

counsel or an order, and thus they will be seeking to take full ethical responsibility for the result of their professional interventions.

Acting within such normality, proper of a culture of profession, it is stated in the Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1998 (Title I, Chapter II, item XIII, art. 5) that: "it is free the practice of any work, art or profession, since the professional qualifications established by law are verified", and further, as the Title III, Chapter II, item XXIV, art. 21 reads, it is within the Union's responsibility to "organise, maintain and execute the inspection of the work", which can be completed with what's established in the item XVI, art. 22: "to organise the national system of employment and conditions for the practice of professions". So, in Brazil it rules the principle of Regulated Professions, created and acknowledged by Federal Law, such professions regarded as ones which professionals may offer a permanent risk to society through their actions.

It is interesting to highlight that in those law-acknowledged professions (apart from Law), the only criteria to perform them is to have an academic training, i.e., a minimal qualification offered by a college/university level course; there is no other necessity to verify the ability and professional competence to perform an occupation. The Counsels and Orders of profession perform typically public activity, which is supervising, and have, for that reason, a condition of autarky, having a juridical personality of public right, enjoying financial and administrative autonomy.

However, regarding the condition of culture and professional responsibility, it is those legal organisms that establish the codes of conduct and ethics that every professional - enabled to perform his area of knowledge and field of operation - swears to follow, submitted to the necessary verifications to keep the society safe and offer it the guarantees for fulfilling all the conditions of quality, competence and ethical responsibility for the result of the intervention of the enabled professionals.

Therefore, it is indispensable that the professionals properly masteries the scientific and technological knowledge indispensable for professional attention, having also the ability to develop a competent and responsible operation to justify and demonstrate that such professionals are qualified and take a desirable ethical commitment.

The initial clarification on profession and professional been done, I now discourse on issues turned towards the clarifying of the ethics used in general occupations, and specifically in those occupations which received legal regulation from the Brazilian Government.

The first point to be made is about inadequate and undue professional participation within the labour market with attitudes regarded as common sense - a type of attitude which is constantly found in the heart of society, for it is the manner how part of it lives and huddles, with absolutely no questioning about the reasons of occurrence and meaning of the facts. Thus, it is common to verify attitudes of total acceptation towards the manner how social situations and conditions are, with no discussion at all regarding values, principles, conducts, beliefs, customs, etc.

I emphasise that, whatever gives the impression of existing as something natural, by force of habit, may be turned into rules and laws, thus constituting actions of imposing order. However, the normative effects applied do not allow the establishment of the legal and regimental in the field of knowledge and technology with what is ethical, being highlighted that what contradicts *normative* is not always contradicting *ethical*, and vice-versa.

It is important, however, the realisation that, regarding any action to be performed by a qualified and enabled professional, there will always be the demand that he apply the scientific and technological knowledge, which are considered to be the more adequate for his intervention. Therefore, it is necessary for him to have competence and responsibility regarding the result of his action as a professional, which is, to have enough culture in order to find, among the knowledge and skills, the one which is possible, proper and strictly ethical to be performed, for in such case of intervention by professionals who are registered in orders and counsels, it is not allowed the usage of any type of common sense.

Aiming to better demonstrate how the people operating as professionals and having a exacerbated common sense might be regarded, I will make use of the work of an Argentinean doctor and philosopher who lived between the late 19th and early 20th centuries - entitled 'The Mediocre Man':

"The mediocre man is a shadow projected by society. He is essentially imitative and is perfectly adapted to live with the herd, reflecting the routines, prejudices and dogmas which are recognisably useful for the domestic ways."

José Ingenieros (1877-1925), (1980 : 44).

Another situation found in the heart of society is the existence of groups of people who regard themselves, even with certain pride, as owners of a good moral, not being able, however, to identify the meaning and concept of that term. Thus, I take the opportunity to clarify that moral may be understood as a flexible level of daily rules concerning: customs, values, character and circumstances of people and society in given places. It is important to consider here that moral allows certain relativism, as it responds to interests of groups and segments, contributing those rules, in certain occasions, for the occurrence of meaningful changes in a same society. Therefore, I understand that the proper concept for moral is: "A set of norms and rules acquired by habit, regulating behaviour".

Deriving from such a way to conceptualise moral, it is possible to find, within society, people who will present extremely moralist behaviour and judgement, as they adopt positions deriving from principles of philosophical or religious grounds, forming thus the group of essentialists. The more individualist ones, on the other hand, will always look to defend their private and more immediate interests, not regarding the community's status, presenting thus a behaviour grounded on selfishness. However, it is always possible to find, within society, groups of people concerned with collectiveness, and, beyond the principles by them adopted, they orient themselves according to the context and the effects that may be caused by their actions, being regarded as owners of an ethic of responsibility.

As attitudes determined by ethics are more holistic, and may, in certain conditions, work as a norm for human rationales, universal and necessary, valid for all people and society, in all time and location, it is viable to conceptualise it as: "A set of rational and objective knowledge (science), regarding the behaviour of people in society".

Looking to strengthen this conceptualisation a little, I will make use of a few concepts ascribed to the Greek philosopher Aristotle (469-399 BC), since in Plato's Phaedo it is told how Socrates, who was regarded as the philosopher of ethics, used basic concepts regarding reason to define ethics, distinguishing 'good' and 'evil' souls; to the philosopher, man is able to know 'good' and tell it from 'evil', and, if virtuous, he will be able to reach his happiness. Socrates believed that human nature would lead people to act correctly and according to knowledge, and that moral is the apex of philosophy, understood, in that case, as philosophia, joining *philia* - friendship, affection - to *sophia* - wisdom - i.e., 'love of wisdom'; he also believed that the only way to reach happiness is practicing virtues by means of philosophical attitude.

Thus, it may be considered, from the issues identified in Socrates, that a life without investigation is worthless, and also that evil and wrong actions have origin in ignorance and failure. It is also understood, from Socrates, the notion of truth, which may mean that it is always necessary, before acting, to proceed to the verification and confirmation on the conditions of 'knowledge, must, power' which certainly will help to define the voice of reason, i.e., if a person 'must and can' act or not. Thus, when attributing to Socrates that kind of understanding, it may be considered that he is really the responsible for bringing up this huge contribution for the definition of what is today regarded as indispensable for the understanding of what Ethics of Knowledge

is.

Now linking this understanding on Ethics of Knowledge to the existence and operation of any qualified professional, i.e., as seen before, the one who must operate using scientific knowledge obtained through his participation in a process of higher education training, and complemented by his own ongoing quest through the permanent study on knowledge, technologies and new methods and techniques, in a process of ongoing grounding and preparation, it is possible to understand that professional ethics is: “The best and better qualified capacity of attention, evaluation, intervention and solving of problems and issues, with total dedication, competence and responsibility, offered to society”. Therefore, a professional's ethics will always depend on his specific and specialised competence within the field of his preparation and operation.

In order to plentifully take over his competence, the professional must observe it to have a double character, i.e., its technical and its political dimension.

Depending on the professional's cultural grounds and on the society where he is operating, such a rumoured dichotomy may spring from the cultural preparation which makes that the subjects always think by contradiction, not prepared to reflect on contradiction itself, which would lead the professional to at least the conscience that there is an ethic articulate dimension and a political dimension, and even a technical dimension, and, when using the additive alternatives, his action towards society would be building 'culture'.

The relations developed between the professionals and the ones benefiting from them is always on a permanent and delicate balance, i.e., the professionals having the interest of secure more rights to themselves, and the other part struggling for the enlargement and the quality of the services which are offered them. Thus, depending on the involvement of the professionals on the act of their interventions, they will be able, by means of the competence and responsibility shown when using the articulation of the three dimensions above mentioned, besides offering the indispensable attention looking to solve the issues and problems concerning his occupation, to contribute for the best adequate cultural preparation of the other part, which, along the process, will end up resulting in a profitable synergy, making it easier that they achieve the desired social support and recognition.

Therefore, every intervention by such professional must follow a sequence of procedures based on scientific and technological knowledge, as well as on his conscience of ethical responsibility, and not on the values and cultural beliefs of a given social section which might be regarded as morally correct, disturbing or even aggressing, however, the conditions to seek planed, measurable and controllable results, as it is every professional's duty.

Such procedures are generally based on concepts and knowledge of the administration/management field, be it business, processes, service and other areas; these concepts and knowledge being: a) Identification and evaluation of the context, which is obtained through the making of a deep and well done anamnesis, looking to know all the conditions and characteristics of the problem; b) Development of diagnosis, i.e., of an evaluation of the problem aiming to identify the conditions and qualities necessary to establish the possibility of obtaining results through attention; c) Identification of the qualities of the problem, concerning the conditions found through the procedures of identification and diagnosis of the found conditions; d) Analysis of the competencies which the specialised professional possesses, aiming to solve the problem; e) Verification of the possibilities of attention with benefits; e) Prescription of the actions and activities which are most proper to solve the situation/problem raised and diagnosed by the professional aiming the resolution of questions and/or problems found; g) Planning of the means which are available for safe and competent action; h) Decision-taking concerning the most adequate procedures to be adopted within the different conditions already mentioned; i) Development of the very intervention and evaluation of the results achieved.

I therefore own that the professional responsibility is linked to the using of the best and most updated technique as possible for solving the problematic situation, identified by the professional himself, thanks to his knowledge as the best and most indicated for the real conditions, using always the dimensions defined as technique and political, and mediated by the ethic dimension.

Looking to conclude, I would like to stress that beyond such specific professional responsibility, there is also the necessity, due to the social responsibilities taken by the professional, of willingness to serve society, and to be aware that, in given situations of identification of existence of attention to benefits, taking into account the technical knowledge and the other conditions identified in the problem which was presented, it will always be a duty and a responsibility of any professional to proceed to the recommendation of a specialist for the attention.

Thus, it is understood that action, actuation or intervention by any professionals must be based on scientific and technologic knowledge, which will allow to show herself as qualified, competent and able to perform with ethical responsibility the chosen and supporting occupation, thus propitiating cultural transformation - at least within her specialty, the universe of the society involved, becoming then worthy of credit and respect.

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ETHICS, CULTURE AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

ABSTRACT

The text approaches issues concerning the identification and explanation of terminologies such as profession and professional, looking to clarify points that precede the several divagations on ethics and professional responsibility. However, when dealing with such a theme, it is stressed that in Brazil is dominant the empire of the regulated occupations, created and recognized by Federal Law, which regulates and inspects the operation of the professionals who are registered. Such a procedure is done through the application of Codes of Conduct and Ethics to which every professional, on graduating in her field of knowledge and operating area, is sworn. It is also clear that every intervention by such a professional must follow a sequence of procedures based on scientific and technological knowledge, as well as on her conscience of ethical responsibility. At the final part it is stressed that action, actuation or intervention by any professionals must be based on scientific and technologic knowledge, which will allow to show herself as qualified, competent and able to perform with ethical responsibility the chosen and supporting occupation, thus propitiating cultural transformation - at least within her specialty, the universe of the society involved, becoming then worthy of credit and respect.

KEYWORDS: Ethics, Profession, Professional Responsibility, Culture.

ÉTHIQUE, CULTURE, RESPONSABILITE PROFESSIONNELLE,.

SOMMAIRE

l'identification et l'explication sont embarqués dans le texte se référant des questions sur des terminologies comme profession et professionnel, recherchant pour clarifier les points qui précèdent le divagações différent sur l'éthique et la responsabilité professionnelle. Cependant, traiter celui-ci thématique qui est détaché qu'au Brésil le principe des professions réglées, créées et identifiées règne pour la loi fédérale, règle et fiscalizes l'exercice des nelas enregistrés de professionnels. Ce procédé si donne par l'application des codes du comportement et de l'éthique que tout le professionnel à l'être qualifié pour l'exercice dans son domaine de la connaissance et du champ de l'exécution, jure pour soumettre elle-même. On le démontre également que toute l'intervention de ce professionnel doit suivre un ordre des procédures basées sur la connaissance scientifique et technologique et dans sa conscience de la responsabilité morale. À l'extrémité on le renforce que l'action, l'exécution ou l'intervention de n'importe quel professionnel doivent être établies dans la connaissance scientifique et technologique, ce qu'il rendra possible à lui que si démontre qualifié, compétent et est qualifié exercer avec la responsabilité morale la profession qu'elle a choisie et donne à la sustentation, oportunizando donc la transformation culturelle à lui, au moins dans la portée de sa spécialité, de l'univers de la société impliquée, de devenir de cette digne forme de degré de solvabilité et du respect.

MOTS-CLES: Éthique, Profession, Responsabilité Professionnelle, Culture.

LA ÉTICA, CULTURA Y RESPONSABILIDAD PROFESIONAL

RESUMEN

La identificación y la explicación se sube en el texto que refiere preguntas sobre terminologías como la profesión y profesional, buscando para clarificar los puntos que preceden el diverso divagações en el ética y la responsabilidad profesional. Sin embargo, tratar éste temático se separa que que en el Brasil el principio de las profesiones reguladas, creadas y reconocidas reina para la ley federal, regula y fiscalizes el ejercicio de los nelas registrados de los profesionales. Este procedimiento si da con el uso de los códigos del comportamiento y de los éticas que todo el profesional al calificó para el ejercicio en su área del conocimiento y del campo del funcionamiento, jura para someterse. También lo evidencian que toda la intervención de este profesional debe seguir una secuencia de los procedimientos basados en el conocimiento científico y tecnológico y en su conciencia de la responsabilidad ética. Al extremo se consolida que la acción, el funcionamiento o la intervención de cualquier profesional se deben establecer en conocimiento científico y tecnológico, qué hará posible a él que si demuestra calificado, competente y se califica ejercer con responsabilidad ética la profesión que eligió y da al sustenance, oportunizando por lo tanto la transformación cultural a él, por lo menos en el alcance de su especialidad, del universo de la sociedad implicada, de pasar con esta forma digna de crédito y del respecto.

PALABRAS CLAVES: El Ética, Profesión, Responsabilidad Profesional, Cultura.

ÉTICA, CULTURA E RESPONSABILIDADE PROFISSIONAL

RESUMO

São abordadas no texto questões referentes a identificação e explicação sobre terminologias como profissão e profissional, buscando esclarecer pontos que precedem as diferentes divagações sobre a ética e a responsabilidade profissional. Contudo, para tratar dessa temática é destacado que no Brasil impera o princípio das Profissões Regulamentadas, criadas e reconhecidas por Lei Federal, as quais regulam e fiscalizam o exercício dos profissionais nelas registrados. Esse procedimento se dá através da aplicação de Códigos de Conduta e de Ética que todo profissional ao ser habilitado para o exercício em sua área de conhecimento e campo de atuação, jura submeter-se. Fica também evidenciado que toda intervenção desse profissional deve seguir uma seqüência de procedimentos baseados nos conhecimentos científicos e tecnológicos e na sua consciência de responsabilidade ética. Ao final é reforçado que a ação, atuação ou intervenção de qualquer profissional deva estar baseada em conhecimentos científicos e tecnológicos, o que lhe possibilitará que se demonstre qualificado, competente e habilitado para exercer com responsabilidade ética a Profissão que escolheu e lhe dá sustento, oportunizando por essa razão a transformação cultural, pelo menos no âmbito de sua especialidade, do universo da sociedade envolvida, tornando-se dessa forma digno de crédito e respeito.

PALAVRAS CHAVE: Ética; Profissão, Responsabilidade Profissional; Cultura.