

JOURNAL OF CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY
AND LEADERSHIP

POSITIVE MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP
IN SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATIONS

Antinomies of Professionalism: The Philosophical and Historical Considerations

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/JCRL.2016.010>

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Abstract: The aim of the paper is to discuss the philosophical and historical sources and concepts of the antinomy of contemporary professionalism. A professional is somebody distinct from a craftsman and a specialist. Professionalism has its roots in the medieval phenomenon of a profession, which refers to the category of an occupation, liberal arts as well as the beginning of universities and a characteristic vision of education. In the 19th century, the understanding of a profession was altered. The development of science and technology, which runs in parallel with the endorsement of materialistic objectivism, resulting in the total separation of reality from the realm of values, contributed to the fact that professionalism was cracking at its seams. In consequence, the contemporary professionalism is endangered by the possibility of losing its essence. The dangers are the following: commercialisation, corporationalism, esoterism, politicalisation, bureaucratization, technocracy and barbarisation.

Keywords: professionalism, philosophy and history of profession, occupation, calling, business ethics, division of labour.

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of professionalism is currently investigated within the theory of management and organisation as well as within the paradigms of sociology or business ethics (cf. Burrage and Torstendahl, 1990; Jemielniak, 2005). The considerations in this paper, the subject of which is professionalism, are of historical and philosophical nature and they approximate what is referred to as the history of ideas or the history of concepts.

Nowadays, professionalism is as much the subject of serious scientific research referring to complex phenomena related to professional work as a popular advertising gimmick. Marketing specialists willingly refer to professionalism. Such words as ‘professional’, ‘a professional’ they perceive as very attractive, desirable and modern expressions of the quality of an advertised product, service or a company. Additionally, as in the case of many other popular concepts, the numerous abuses of their meanings occurred. The expression ‘professional’ suffered the same fate as – for instance – the word ‘intelligent’: through the extension of the denotation of the word (it extended from persons to objects), the meaning got blurred. Therefore, just to stick to the already mentioned example, ‘intelligent’ in the original sense could be predicated of God exclusively. The man was intelligent only as much as he or she resembled God. And not every man was allowed to boast that trait. Then, ‘intelligent’ started to be predicated of animals – first primates, then mammals and finally the whole animal kingdom was said to have at its disposal a variable degree of intelligence – however variable it was, it was adequate for their needs and their habitat. Nowadays, even artifacts became intelligent: cars, white goods, installations, buildings, software etc. In the case of professionalism, the word first referred to the people possessing some work-related competences. Then, it started to mean the things done by them: services, products, companies, solutions, equipment: ranging from the professional bank services to professional chimneys, floors and make-up. From time to time, it is said that “the contemporary world needs professionals” and what is understood by it are the highly qualified specialists, engineers, trainers, advisors and experts. The requirement of professionalism was extended to almost every sphere of life. The professional economy became a synonym of progress and welfare.

That semantic shift of the word ‘professional’ first applying to people and then to things symbolically expresses a certain philosophical and cultural transformation that the modern concept of professionalism underwent. Professional items and services gradually replace the professionals, who, if they want to preserve that honourable title (professional) must somehow reduce their activity to pure value-free manipulation of material objects. What sort of repercussions such activities might bring was shown by the crisis in 2008. Reviewing the literature on the subject, one sometimes has an impression that it is only the system, mechanisms or improper procedures that are to blame for the crisis. Thus, the responsibility for it is transferred from people to the system and so the former are justified by saying that such were the mechanisms, trends etc. With the special predilection one attracts attention to certain states of psychological nature (optimism, instinct, panic etc.). Yet, one forgets or (deliberately) misses the fact that the crisis emerged not only due to the structures and processes devoid of subjecthood and personality but it did emerge due to the so-called professionals taking decisions and shaping the economy. The answer to the question about the source of the crisis essentially presupposes the decisions of ontological nature: is economy a self-contained regime of quasi-subjective nature or is it the world created and managed by particular people? Are market laws something which emerges spontaneously and the man only sets the conditions for their emergence but the laws once they have emerged are self-governing. Or is it the case that the man creates a certain economic regime together with its laws being purely conventional.

In the light of the fact that the idea of professionalism is somewhat blurred and in the light of the dangers arising from this fact, it seems to be entirely justifiable to ask what professionalism is in the strict sense, what characterizes professionalism and what its sources are. Furthermore, what is the relation between professionalism in the colloquial sense to what professionalism essentially is, was or should be? Being aware of the fact that the phenomenon of professionalism is relatively complex and is nowadays considered from many different angles, in the present paper we will limit our attention to only one of them, that is to the perspective of both historical and philosophical nature. We will observe that from that perspective, modern professionalism is not only a phenomenon of rich and long tradition referring to many important issues but also it shows the internal diversity, which in contemporary times threatens the essence of the very phenomenon.

2. The definition of professionalism

Let's start with some fundamental distinctions. Both in the colloquial sense and in the popular science discourse, the word 'a professional' is often used as a synonym of the word 'a craftsman' or 'a specialist'. All these words refer to somebody who professionally perform some activity and he does so adeptly. When we scrutinize more closely what these words mean, when we pay attention to some subtleties, it turns out that each of them in reality refers to somebody else. So, a craftsman is a person having craft. In Polish, a craftsman means '*fachowiec*'. In German the word '*das Fach*' means no more and no less than work, occupation, profession, labour, craft, area of expertise, branch. The word 'craftsman' is reserved for somebody who has practical and usually manual abilities in a given area. Those abilities are acquired not only with the apprenticeship at the master's but first and foremost by one's own practice. The opposite of the 'craftsman' is a 'botcher', that is the one who performs something poorly and hurriedly. On the other hand, the word 'specialist' originates from Latin, in which '*specialis*' means something 'particular', 'singular', 'distinct' 'of a given type'. Whereas in the case of a craftsman what is emphasized is his or her abilities, in the case of a specialist, what we point to is his or her specialistic knowledge. The specialist 'with respect to' or a specialist 'in'. Despite the fact that we can call a specialist a craftsman and the other way round, there are some differences between the two: 'a craftsman' is a more colloquial word and it directly refers to a given person, names him or her and locates him or her in a broader social and economic context. A craftsman/expert provides his or her services on the free market, meets customers and simultaneously acts on his or her own behalf. On the other hand, a specialist is a work position whose set of duties is determined within the internal arrangement of a company. A specialist also acts (oftentimes exclusively) on the behalf of the company. A given position one may 'occupy' or 'leave', when it comes to being a 'craftsman' a person is one or not. Finally, one demands from a specialist the competences certified by appropriate documents; from the craftsman one does not demand them. It may be said that the word 'craftsman/expert' describes a good 'specialist' with respect to more elementary and manual labour, whereas a 'specialist' refers to an 'craftsman/expert' specializing in more 'technical', more advanced, more complex and intellectual business. From the social

perspective, an expert/craftsman (blue-collar worker) is certainly of a lower status than a specialist (white-collar worker).

Still, a craftsman/expert or a specialist is not the same as a professional. Between a craftsman/expert and a specialist, there is a difference with respect to what one does within a given occupation. However, it seems as though professionalism refers rather to the manner of doing one's job than the range of duties typical of it. Professionalism can be associated with mastery one achieves in a given field; and thus mastery can be achieved by both a craftsman/expert or a specialist. It is the etymology of the word 'professionalism' that indicates that the word is neutral when it comes to type of work distinctions. The word originates from the Latin '*professio*'. It means primarily: open statement, declaration (the tax declaration, for example). Secondly, it means an occupation one admits having as well as a job, a profession, a skill. Hence, the word 'professor' means "the one who claims that is adept in a given field", a teacher, a master, an expert. In 1913, a German philosopher and educator Teobald Ziegler said that professor is *qui profitetur*, it means who openly professes what he believes to be true (Czeżowski, 1989, p. 232).

So, it seems that any job can be described as professional. Having taken a closer look, there emerges some dubiousness giving rise to a broad research perspective: although one can do better or worse in each occupation, in the case of a few jobs, the problem does not boil down to achieving mastery but what matters is the very content of the services provided. For example, is prostitution an occupation? Or is it a type of work at all? What is meant here is not a solution of legal but of philosophical nature. The same sort of doubts apply when it comes to some other activities which – from the moral standpoint are poles apart from prostitution: is, for example, priesthood an occupation and is it a type of work? In this case, one is more prone to use the word 'calling'. Referring to professionalism, one might ask whether a representative of any occupation can be a professional. But what is an occupation then? What is work and what about calling? In the case of those last questions, we encounter the bundle of questions intertwined, which – in the context of the question about professionalism – leads to extremely important or even fundamental problems for being a human as such¹.

¹ Therefore, the question appears whether both the recognition natural and technical sciences boast these days and the following devaluation of humanities, philosophical

Before we proceed to pose the questions concerning historical and philosophical sources of professionalism, let's try to more precisely characterize what we are talking about at all. In Polish, the word '*profesjonalista*' ('a professional') refers to somebody who ceaselessly cares about his/her activity being possibly closest to the rules of art and who makes that activity his/her primary source of earnings. So, the word 'a professional' bears a different connotation – this time related to occupational practice – to the one exposed by the word 'craftsman' or 'specialist'. A professional is the one who does something with great degree of accuracy, precisely and unhurriedly (though quickly) in a composed manner and according to the rules of art. The professional execution of something bears the signs of mastery. A professional is conceived of as the opposite of an amateur, who in turn does something – as the professional does – out of true passion and for the sake of satisfaction, but an amateur does so without any financial prospects in mind and without the full mastery of required skills. A professional is the one who devotes all his or her life to a given profession, while an amateur devotes merely his or her free time. In the primary professional literature, it is indicated that a professional is distinguished among any other occupations by the following traits (Hall, 1986):

1. A professional (in the strict sense) cannot be a representative of a each occupation. The professions that can fall into the category of occupations done by 'a professional' are the ones which demand great, specialistic knowledge of the academic nature. A given person becomes a professional not as much by long-lasting preparation for a given occupation (e.g. by apprenticeship) as by belonging to an academic society.

and theological studies result from the need of the moment or from the lack of appreciation of the essence of the very thing. The truth is that the unquestionable achievements of natural science and technical science in particular caused a huge acceleration of civilisation changes. However, it results from the relative simplicity of their research areas. In comparison with them, the issues directly related to the man such as liberty, love, peace, democracy, state, society, creativity, work or occupation do have not essentially the unequivocal definitive solutions. The case of prostitution is quite telling. Although we are able nowadays to send people into space, we still cannot resolve the issues which constitute a social problem for millennia. Another example is the activity of men and women devoting all their time to raise children. Is that an instantiation of work? Is being a mother or father an occupation? Certain legal solutions first presuppose the solutions of the said problems of philosophical nature. The legal solutions in turn entail some practical benefits or losses for particular people.

2. A professional is not the one who graduated from a given faculty but the one who after the graduation acquired a proper license.
3. The acquisition of the license enables graduates to become the members of a professional association (the so-called corporation). It allows them to do a given job.
4. These associations have their own ethical codes, their laws, habits, culture, behaviour and their own dress codes etc.
5. Professionalism is associated with the paternalistic attitude.
6. Professionals own socially desired goods: apart from good education, they boast a high social prestige, numerous privileges, and above-average wealth and power.

So, it transpires that professionalism is characterised not only by the manner of doing one's job but also does professionalism indirectly specify which occupations might be regarded as professional. A professional is not only the one who has some scientific knowledge at hand with respect to a given occupation but also the one who is characterised by the high ethical awareness. He/she does not live thanks to his/her job but he/she lives for that job. His/her job is of a nature of a service. According to the meaning of the word '*professio*', that service is transparent and the one who provides that service is responsible for his or her actions, boasting the trust by those who he or she serves. He/she is doing his/her best to be honest to them. A professional does not act awaiting the applause or the pleasure of anything but for the individual as well as the common good. The so-called business ethics is a remnant of a sort of professions traditionally conceived of.

The properties of professionalism enumerated above, though they appear not to raise any questions, point to the said bundle of fundamental problems. If one wants to understand the phenomenon of the contemporary professionalism, one must ask about the relation between professionalism, science, university and education on the one hand, with ethics, social relations, culture and politics on the other one. There are two wings of professionalism which both allow professionalism to transcend the ordinary idea of an occupation. However, the strict connection between those two realms within the phenomenon of professionalism nowadays gives rise to a sort of tension which in practice produces the antinomies that are not easily solved.

3. The historical and philosophical sources of professionalism

A professional is a special occupational activity done according to the rules of art. The concept of art boasts a long tradition (Tatarkiewicz 2012, chapter II). Generally speaking, art (Greek *techne*, Latin *ars*) is the ability to act according to certain rules. For ancient Greeks, art was almost any human and divine activity – except for poetry. Not every art was of the same status. Greek philosophers and then Christian ones distinguished between liberal arts (*artes liberales*) and vulgar arts (*artes vulgares*), also referred to as mechanical arts (*artes mechanicae*) in the Middle Ages. That distinction was based on the criterion related to the necessity of using physical labour in a given discipline (Tatarkiewicz, 2009, Vol. 1, pp. 221, pp. 345–346). For Greeks as well as for later Christians, a man was truly a man to the full (free and noble, a rational being) when he did not have to work physically (pleonasm) or when he did not base his life on the possibilities of its morally problematic body. The man to the full – as St. Paul said – ‘the inner man’ is what we become once we make ourselves free of the needs and temptations of our body (‘the external man’). So, *liberal arts* were regarded as incomparably more valuable than vulgar arts – the latter were referred to as ‘sordid arts’ (*sordidae*) by Cicero – since the former allowed for the development of the typically human traits. That distinction of arts backed up implicitly by some understanding of human as a free and rational being corresponded with the then social divisions. If the word *ars* was used in the Middle Ages, what was meant by that was liberal arts. That category comprised seven arts (*trivium* and *quadrivium*), which even today easily merits the term science, that is rhetorics, logic, grammar, geometry, arithmetics, music (understood as the theory of harmony) and astronomy. Being taught them required the literacy, which was not at all common back in those times. These arts lay ground to then ‘higher education’ predestining its possessors to be representatives of social elites.

With the emergence of universities in the 12th century, liberal arts started to be taught at the philosophical faculty. Apart from the faculty of philosophy, the medieval as well as the modern universities contained three more faculties, that is the faculty of law, medicine and theology. Graduating from philosophy enabled the graduates to study at the remaining faculties. And this is exactly in the case of university education that we encounter the starting point of professions. What

was referred to professions were occupations which demanded studies at one of the said faculties. So, there were all in all four professions: a scholar, a lawyer, a physician and a priest. Because then education was dramatically different to the contemporary one with respect to both the manner thereof and the contents, the representatives of former professions were characterized by other ‘occupational competences’ than nowadays professionals.

Most of all, specialist knowledge played a smaller role than today. The foundation of then education was something that we would be inclined nowadays to call ‘versatile humanistic education’. All the professionals were characterised by the supreme culture based on studying the works of classical literature and philosophy. What mattered in all those professionals was not only the ‘expertise/technical knowledge’, which – being closely related to earlier philosophy – was distant from empirical and scientific approach, but most of all what matters were some ethical attitudes and the world-view. Belonging to one of the professions guaranteed prestige, privileges and at times even wealth. The addressee of the services provided by professionals was then elite. The populace was doomed to the services of the so-called ‘practitioners’: quack doctors, master craftsmen etc.

The emergence of modern professionals is related to the general cultural transformations of the last two centuries (Larson, 1977). The former activities by the professionals were based both on a certain model of knowledge as well as on the certain social and economic order, which in the 18th century started to crack at its seams. Due to the industrial revolution in England and French revolution as well as due to the rapid development of natural science and the emergence of modern technology, the old order was shattered. Once the modern civil state emerged in the 19th century, the care and attention to the health and education of citizens were the responsibility of the state. From then on, it was of interest to the state who was to do the job of a physician, a teacher or a lawyer. The ability to do an occupation stopped depending on the influences of potential patrons and became the business of passing state examinations. The introduction of mainstream education favoured educating people of lower social ranks (middle class). Thus, the access to those professions became a slightly more extended. At the same time, the second half of the 19th century is the period of self-organisation. There emerges a set of multifarious organisations lasting up to the present day. The development of natural science and the demands

of the capitalistic industrial market for new technologies caused the increase in the significance of natural science and technical faculties within universities, which also had a bearing on the increased status of the graduates thereof. The community of professionals extended: apart from lawyers and physicians there appeared the professionals representing other scientific disciplines. Furthermore, there was a decline of the status of theology and ‘classical’ education. Philosophy, ethics, rhetorics or logic were replaced by natural and legal sciences. Entering the free market, professionals became the service providers in the new society, the services calling for knowledge and the abilities of the academic level.

4. The concept of education, occupation and science

Professionalism, and this is what the very concept and its history imply is closely related to knowledge, science, university and education. In this respect – at the very first glance – professionalism approximates what a specialist really is.

Still, there is a conspicuous difference which is related to the understanding of what education is and what the concept of an occupation implies. The Greek roots of professionalism go hand in hand in that case with the Jewish and Christian tradition. The concept of education – the concept with which professionalism is strictly connected – refers us back to the culture of the 19th century, sometimes referred as ‘the age of education’. That concept became a primary slogan providing the way of conceptualizing the nature of man, particularly within the realm of German protestant culture. The word ‘*die Bildung*’, whose *cliché* is the Polish word ‘*kształcenie*’ (both educating and shaping/building things) refers us to Old-Testament theological context and reminds us of yet another definition of the man, differing from the one stemming from the ancient Greece. The fragment of the Bible as translated into Polish by Jakub Wujek (1599) sounding in the following way: “*I rzekł: «Uczyńmy człowieka na obraz, na podobieństwo nasze»*”, in the last translation by Luter from 1545 is rendered into German as: “*vnd Gott sprach / Lasst vns Menschen machen / ein Bild / das vns gleich sey*” (Gen 1, 26) [Then God said: „Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness (...)”]. A human, though understood as *imago Dei*, is not obviously – due to the original sin – the pure and uncorrupted reflection of God

(*das Ebenbild*), but God relates to the human as a pattern/model (*das Vorbild*), which the man should make his or her own orientation point in his earthly life and simply follow that ideal (*nachbilden*). Although the issue of the man resembling God was interpreted differently in both Catholic and Evangelical church on the turn of the centuries; the majority of these interpretations correlated a given resemblance with a specific purpose the man faces in his walk of life. The resemblance to God has a dynamic nature – is a path of effort and improvement of one's own human-divine powers. Though the man is, corporeally speaking, an animal and that is why he is motivated by drives and desires, by being created in the image of God the man has a sort of not-from-this-Earth element he or she should focus his/her attention on. The man can do so not by satisfying one's animalistic needs but by the ceaseless lifetime striving for perfection. Human soul, resembling due to its complexity God as the Holy Trinity, has various abilities and sensitivities, which enable it to help such 'higher values' as good, truth, beauty or sanctity to materialise. It is precisely due to developing one's own religious, ethical, aesthetic, cognitive, social and political competences when the man fully becomes that which the man essentially is an image of God. It opens before the man the prospect of salvation (Jervell, Crouzel, Maier, and Peters, 1990).

In the 19th century, that opinion on the nature of education was secularised yet maintained one thought intact: that is the man only through education, that is developing one's abilities and sensitivities, becomes the man to the full, and distancing himself from particularism and the egoism of his animalistic mode of existence. The concept of education, originating from the realm of theology, is not thus confined exclusively to the effort of cognising and acquiring abilities, as we understand it today. It rather implies the whole life of the man in the relentless strife for one's own destiny, which is the eternal life next to God or else – in the secular version – being fully what the man essentially is and should be. It is related to the popular – back from the period of reformation – connection between work and occupation (*der Beruf*) with calling (*die Berufung, der Beruf*) of a man – the connection which laid foundation to the modern capitalism. As Max Weber suggests, that is exactly the German word *der Beruf* that captures the meaning of the Latin profession most precisely (Weber, 1994, p. 62). From the times of the release of the first translations of the Bible by Luther, the concept of an occupation – conceived of as the set and duties and tasks related to

a given job – acquired religious connotations. Thus, the religious meaning was attributed to the secular work and that applies both to its process, organisations as well as the benefits and advantages reaped from them all. What was found in Luther’s teaching merely in its infancy, in the successors of his thought – particularly in the Calvinists, Purists, Pietists, Methodists and Baptists assumed the nature not of a strong claim but rather of a consistent life practice.

The famous Luther’s speech against the Catholic practice of indulgences was based on the belief that it is only God and not any human act that can cause the remission of sins. God chose a few and condemned the others – what the man is left with is a deep faith in belonging to the former. As much as Luther was still convinced that no external symptom determines whether a given person is chosen or condemned by God, the other adherents of Luther’s thought believed that however the man cannot by dint of his actions ensure God’s grace, he can still by resorting to those actions acquire the subjective self-confidence that the former is the case. The faith in salvation, being shaky by its very nature, is thus ensured by the fact of success and effectiveness of one’s own acts which can change this world for better and thanks to that these very actions demonstrate God’s glory. The effects of one’s acts, including the fruits of our labour, the so-called life success etc., are not the means of salvation but the “symptoms of being chosen” (Weber, 1994, p. 97). Because no ritual or magical ceremony (e.g. the Catholic sacrament of penance) is unable to ensure our salvation. What counts is only systematic consistent work complemented with such moral traits as forbearance, thrift, moderation, self-composure, diligence, honesty, modesty, responsibility, conscientiousness, being hard-working; so the traits typical of an ascetic and monastery life eventually lead to saving the capital, collecting the savings arising from our labour (as opposed to the consumption and enjoying our life by means of it). According to Richard Baxter – the representative of the 17th-century English puritanism – the unwillingness for work is a sign of the lack of Grace (Weber, 1994, p. 152).

It is exactly on the ground of the said puritan moral code – however, only after the conspicuous weakening of its ascetic ideals – where the modern *homo oeconomicus* is born towards the end of 18th century. The said type of human perceives the meaning of his life as the permanent professional work and as the ceaseless accumulation of wealth due to the former. The essay by Weber quoted above does not mention at

all how the weakening of the religious spirit, the disconnection of the concept of professional work from other than utilitarian and hedonistic values both came about. So, why did it all turn out that way – why the progressing secularisation of labour with the simultaneous preservation of its monopolistic significance for life and the self-understanding of man must have eventually led to the narrow specialisation, which – according to some critics – is a trademark of ‘the modern barbarism’ the answer to that question is provided by the change of the concept of knowledge – the change being parallel with the rise and development of Protestantism – as well as the concept of being, which lay foundations to the said change.

In the 19th century, the earlier concept of education and occupation is gradually becoming obsolete. What is getting more and more palpable is the so-far unknown development of scientific knowledge and technology, which are the subject of teaching and the tool to perform the tasks related to doing one’s job. Science and technology first smuggle and then spread, and finally ensure the primacy of a certain vision of the world which laid the ground for the former and enabled their spectacular development. That is because science and technology presuppose a certain understanding of being, which is totally opposed to the way reality was conceived of beforehand. And it is only on the basis of that early concept of the world that the said vision of education and occupation was possible at all.

Trivialising, one can say what follows. Both in ancient times and in the Middle Ages the dominating belief was that the world consists of things, which have their own essence, their own nature. In the classical systems of Plato and Aristotle, the world is an organized whole and the things belong to the pre-ordered places; and everything is governed by some order. Everything has a specific sense and purpose. The true being is static, permanent and changeless – according to the fundamental law of metaphysics *ens et aliquid, unum, verum, bonum convertuntur*. In the Middle Ages, what is additionally emphasized is the contribution of God to the creation and the shape of the world. As the Bible says, at the moment of creation of particular things, God judged them as good. The world was a trace of God’s creation. Beauty, truth and good incarnated in objects are the epiphany of God’s existence. All that is cognised via contemplation and theoretical life, through the powers of one’s reason and by subordinating senses to the reason itself. That – sketched in the simplified version – ancient and medieval vision of the world became

invalid at the beginning of the 17th century. In the writings of the philosophers who laid foundations to the modern natural sciences, the reality became a fact, a material three-dimensional object, a phenomenon governed by certain laws. It would be in vain to look for any purpose in it, any superordinate aim, any value, even any quality – all these are unjustifiable anthropomorphisations – Nature is just a quantity, which we can represent by dint of the language of mathematics. What used to be observed in Nature is now only a human artifact, an interpretation, a subjective conceptualisation. Nature in itself – objectively speaking, that is in accordance with the methodology of natural science – is something completely different, that is brute existence, pure matter in motion. The disciplines investigating Nature these days do not deal with the meaning of its existence or its value. Objectively speaking, there are no such things out there to investigate. The meaning, purpose, values and God are of subjective Nature. Almost the same applies to faith, political elections, the way of raising children and living one's life. Because the human life is daily surrounded by values, the man must, providing he desires to cognize the objective reality, suspend one's private vision of life and somehow cuts oneself off from one's own vantage point, thus becoming an 'impartial observer', who according to the universal method and through experiments attempts to verify the presupposed hypotheses. Whereas earlier science meant passive contemplation and the reason reflected reality faithfully, nowadays science is becoming investigation, action, labour, discovering and exposing truth as well as its modelling and constructing. Even if the human sciences study the values as state of affair of human being, as socially dominated desires, contents of valuations etc., in sum, as sociological, psychological or neurobiological events which are present in human behavior, so treat these values as facts of human being, so as facts which there are, not should be (D. Hume's 'is-ought problem', G.E. Moore's 'naturalistic fallacy'). Behind the scientific treatment of values hides the same philosophical model of being and knowledge which underlies the modern natural science. If the human science treats values as facts, it assumes that the human is an animal which subordinates to the same natural laws like other animals and natural objects. It is a very controversial point of view which is certainly far from the old idea of professionalism.

So, if science as the certain model of knowledge essentially does not know and cannot know about values as such (meaning of live, God etc.) – and science is a foundation of education and training people for

the sake of their future occupations – then, it is the profession that must resign from viewing the world in the light of values. Professionalism, which used to combine the requirement of extended and deep-rooted knowledge with the attitude of the virtuous man, now became self-contradictory. New professionalism, even more than for religion, calls for subordinating to brute facts, among which there is no place for values. What new professionalism cares about is succinctness, being to the point, professionalism (as conceived of above), quick service of high quality – without posing unnecessary questions about the meaning and the value of a given enterprise. What used to constitute the essence of professionalism, that is the harmonious combination of substantive knowledge with a certain system of values is the most problematic aspect of contemporary professionalism.

5. The dangers and antinomies of professionalism

If the need for professionals is much aired today and if there is a necessity of professionalising all the occupational activities, one must consider – within the context of philosophical and historical source and the concept of professionalism – what exactly it means and what benefits the process brings about and what are the dangers related to it. According to some sociologists, professionalising occupational activities is associated with the high standard of services, which are provided for the sake of society to satisfy the needs of its members. That standardisation used to be connected with a certain cultural mission. According to, for instance, Emile Durkheim, professionalism in the modern society provided the basis not only for the division of labour, social roles and classes but also for the moral order (Durkheim, 2012). Once the earlier socio-political order coupled with the great revolutions towards the end of the 18th century ceased to operate, these were precisely the professionals that served as the prop of traditional values.

And how does it look like these days – at the time of the split between knowledge and values (understood as universal and timeless ideas), at the time of commercialisation of any activity and at the time of collapse of traditional systems of values?

First and foremost, operating on the free market, professionalism is permanently threatened by commercial factors. On the one hand, due to the relatively small number of professionals – and hence a relatively

small completion – there is a great demand for their services. On the one hand, due to the still growing demand for a variety of services requiring high competences and inversely proportionately small number of professionals and thus a small competitiveness, there arises the temptation to relinquish the professionalism-related ideal of reliable labour for the common good and to replace it with the unrestrained drive for earning easy money (the evidence of which is for example having many tenures).

On the other hand, it is becoming more and more usual for professionals to be ‘hostages’ of the companies and institutions they work for. Siding with the interests of their wealthy employers, professionals forgo some part of their competences under conflicts. Resigning from autonomy is as harmful for professionalism as is the unrestrained use of autonomy in the defence of one’s own interests. Professional corporations established for the sake of education and the protection of occupations and their representatives, more and more usually in social perception resemble closed clans, which protect their privileges and obstruct the access for the occupations thus harming the people not having appropriate ‘connections’ or influences. The abuses of corporatism are well-known.

The operations on the free market is only one of the dangers of professionalism. The protection from the sweeping commercialisation of professions and the dangers stemming from that fact is financing their activity from the public budget. Yet, here comes another danger related to the politicalisation of professionalism as well as its bureaucratization. Together with the emergence of modern national states, there appeared the connection between particular professions with politics and the state administration. The early connection of the state with church and law was extended by the connection of the state with science, education and health care. The activity of professionals was subordinated to political interests. It leads to well-known pathologies occurring in health care education or state administration such as limiting medical services, the state imposing more and more administrative and organisational obligations and the state financing only the selected areas of research within the science policy. The extreme instantiation of such dependency and deformation of the essence of professionalism are totalitarian systems in which professionals are forced to uncompromisingly execute the commands issued by those in power.

The other side of the excessive dependency of professionalism from the state is that there are from time to time some calls for professionals to take over the power and start deciding upon what is good or bad for the citizens. As it is known, knowledge is power. It was quite a long time ago when sociologists noticed the overlap between the concept of professionalization with the concept of power: professionalization is a process in which certain social and occupational groups gain control over the process of labour, which entails the process of the social power acquisition. The idea to replace professionals of different disciplines (lawyers, physicians, engineers etc.) with politicians seems the more sensible, the more politics is laden with bigger amateurship. Since Athenian democracy, there has been the major current in the philosophy criticizing the contingency and incompetence of the people elected to wield power.

Undoubtedly, it would be beneficial for the society if politics was done by competent people who would treat – which was the subject of Weber’s writing at a time – politics as their calling (*der Beruf*). Due to the fact that the manner of exercising power has changed, politicians are required to have increasingly better substantive preparation. Because managing the state has become an exceptionally complex enterprise, politicians are surrounded by a bunch of experts and advisors, who – as if from the ‘backseat’ – take decisions instead of the former. It gives rise to criticizing the phenomenon of technocracy and the power of experts. So, whereas the professionalisation of politics is a desirable phenomenon, ceding the power into the hands of professionals (experts, specialists) is not bound to bring the expected benefits because politics is a realm of choices of axiological and world-view-related nature, contemporary professionals are – as mentioned above – able to make substantive and value-free choices. It is related to the postulate of the total subordination of one’s rules of arts to the laws of science. And this is exactly where the reason for professionals departing from ethics lies. It was pointed out in the 1930s by Ortega y Gasset in his *The Revolt of the Masse*: “Professionalization and specialization, not being properly balanced, tore the European man into pieces, while the man for that reason is absent wherever he strives to be or should be” (Gasset, 1978, p. 718). According to the Spanish philosopher, a professional is a ‘new barbarian’, is a man highly ‘uncultured’ who turns a blind eye on values, ideas and tradition limits his activity to manipulating matter.

By matter he understands both minerals, plants, animals and the man himself (social engineering, genetics, transplantation etc.). The same idea presented by a Polish philosopher Henryk Elzenberg (Elzenberg, 2005, pp. 244–246). From that point of view, ceding power into the hands of professionals makes the realization of the controversial idea of transhumanism closer.

6. Conclusions

So in the light of what has been discussed above, how are we to understand the popular slogan these days “the world looks for professionals” – the call for professionalisation of services and commodities?

Firstly, “the world looks for professionals” because they hide, on the one hand, in their own organisations, which oftentimes serve to impede the access to a given occupation and they do serve some particular interests of their members (corporationism). On the other hand, they conceal their knowledge, which is oftentimes mythologized (esotericism). The world looks for the professionals receptive to people’s needs and ready to help them disinterestedly.

Secondly, the slogan “the world looks for professionals” may mean that it looks for them because they dispersed and are now lost. Still the so-called ‘professionals’ are present and available but this is not the type of professionals the world is looking for. These are real professionals that the world is looking for, that is the ones that combine the demand for maintaining the high quality of their occupation with ethical rules which in advance obstruct the wild implementation of technologies and innovations only because it ‘must be so’ etc. So, the professionals requested are the ones who do not associate their occupation merely with money and power but the ones who associate it with ethics.

If the above-mentioned slogan is to be construed in this way, it means then that “the world looks for professionals” is valid to the same extent as that “professionals need the world”. What is the world then? The world is not the outer space of distant stars, not the ordering of processes, things or people organised in accordance with the rules of technical management. It is neither the biological environment in which evolutionary mechanisms operate. The world is the realms of ideas, values, history, knowledge, arts and dreams, which all contribute to being a real human. The world is time in which we exist. Yet, it must be

granted that the world looks for professionals thanks to whom – so we believe – we may be able to live longer, more easily and more happily. However, to make it materialise, first professionals must become the citizens of the world. Still it takes the redefinition of the aims and the methods of education as well as liberating university from the economic context on the one hand and on the other hand, it takes the constant reflection over the relation of ethics to business. History teaches us that once university as the place of promoting liberty and high values was established, the role readily attributed to it was the one of a servant to a certain power (first the ecclesiastical power and then the secular one). Nowadays, it is attempted to subordinate university to economic goals. Unfortunately, it not only distorts the sense of the idea of university but also it threatens the idea of professionalism.

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