

Fundamental Considerations for Professional Ethics

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I. INTRODUCTION

The interest of organizations in professional ethics is increasing. On the one hand, no one wants to suffer from employees who lack the minimum ethical standards that put the organization itself at risk. On the other hand, the scope of the ethical exercise has been identified, beyond mere regulatory compliance, with personal excellence that allows development in all its dimensions. In view of this, educational institutions play a crucial role because they are an element of the long framework that requires education aimed at personal and organizational excellence. Therefore, university education cannot be understood without considering ethical behavior in a broad sense, beyond thinking about satisfying the needs of ethical professionals required by the labor market, which is indisputable. The commitment to professional ethics is a commitment to the excellence of individuals and organizations. Thus, educational institutions committed to excellence are constantly and seriously considering what concrete actions they can take to educate professionals with a high ethical commitment. Among all these actions, there is one that we consider the starting point and which is essential, precisely because it obeys the nature of the university: the specific action of thinking, studying and deepening the scientific nature of professional ethics. Once one has some knowledge about something, it will be possible to launch oneself into the world of transmission and application of knowledge. In a world invaded by information, it is increasingly difficult to discern what is true in any field of knowledge. This problem is also faced by professional ethics. As a result, we are faced with the need to think about the following questions, among others: How to respond to problems in the professional field in accordance with ethics? Do all ethics have the same value? Why bet on realistic ethics? Is the Thomistic approach to the problems faced by professional ethics valid today? Is it possible to make a philosophical approach compatible with the approaches taken in the professional world, including those that approach ethics as a professional competence? What place does the virtue of justice have in the world of professional ethics? What place does the family have in the professional sphere?

This work is divided into three main sections. In the first section, Manuel Ocampo bases the approach to professional ethics that guides this and other works: realist ethics. First, he explains the complicated moment of moral pluralism in which we find ourselves, and hence the need for realist ethics to provide reason and an answer to the approaches in the field of professional ethics. In the second part, he explains relevant aspects of realist ethics. We can

say that in the first part of the work we are framing the discussion in a field, we are providing language and referential framework to professional ethics to later address other specific questions. Such a reference is necessary in the midst of the academic proliferation of discussions on professional ethics, particularly in its teaching and measures within organizations to promote the ethical behavior of professionals. In the second part of the work, we try to build a bridge, once the approach to the scientific nature of ethics has been established, to link it to current discussions and applications, among them, emphasizing justice, which had already been addressed previously, and of which some nuances of Aristotelian and Thomistic thought are now highlighted. In addition, we wish to emphasize that, when speaking of professional ethics, it is essential to assume justice as a virtue that shapes this area of knowledge. Experts in ethics will be experts in justice. On the other hand, we present the current discussion of ethics as a professional competence. We account for the possibility and limitations that this has. In the third part of the work, the reality of the family is addressed because it is not possible to assume a professional ethics that seeks excellence in people and organizations while trying to ignore the closest reality for all people: their family life. This section first explains the natural character of the family and how it shapes society. Subsequently, corporate family responsibility is addressed.

In the following lines I summarize some general ideas of each of the chapters. In the first part, entitled Professional Ethics: relativistic ethical systems versus realistic ethics, Manuel Ocampo analyzes the scientific character of realistic ethics, presenting some ethical systems in order to raise awareness of the need for objective and realistic ethics. The starting point of his analysis is the recognition of doctrinal pluralism and, therefore, from this pluralism he sustains the need for a realistic ethics. The author makes a historical review of ethical conceptions, starting from Greece and the antithesis between nature and law, i.e. *nomos* and *physis*. He explains that the opposition between nature and law goes back to the Sophists. Among the elements he highlights in his historical tour of Greek philosophy, it is worth mentioning the Aristotelian approach where virtue is necessary to guarantee the good deed. He also makes a synthetic analysis of Kantian thought and explains that for Kant practical reason is reason applied to moral practice, and what will be good or bad will be the will of man. In addition to this, he adds Marx and points out that Marxism "discards any ethical proposal that tries to go beyond pure experience or what they call meta-empirical". Subsequently, he criticizes existentialism, which he points out refuses the abstraction of universal concepts under the argument that it does not consider the richness of the individuality of each human being. The author analyzes utilitarianism, consequentialism and proportionalism. With regard to utilitarianism, he stresses the consideration that the important thing will be the results. Finally, he explains the importance of Christianity with regard to professional ethics since he warns that in modernity and postmodernity, utilitarianism has acquired new strength under the theories of consequentialism and proportionalism.

In the second chapter entitled "Foundations for a realistic ethics, under the perspective of St. Thomas Aquinas", Manuel Ocampo highlights two elements of Thomistic thought regarding human acts: education in virtue and the common good. The author has devoted these pages of the book to explain in detail and in a way that is accessible to readers the principles of the

moral order. In this sense, he explains that, unlike Aristotle, for Thomas Aquinas recognizes first principles that are shaped by the tendencies of human nature, therefore, they contain what is naturally just for man. Furthermore, he emphasizes the role of virtue and, therefore, the virtuous man will be the one who acts according to right reason. He explains the importance of the virtue of prudence. Subsequently, he carries out some ethical considerations on law, right and justice as fundamental elements of general and applied ethics. He also explains the importance of the common good and why this will be the foundation of morality in general and of realist ethics, as well as the moral obligation to contribute to its achievement. In this same section, the author warns of a serious problem that liberalism has produced, which consists in limiting ethics to the sphere of the individual and politics to the sphere of the community, without the latter taking into consideration the ultimate end of man.

In the third section, entitled "The virtue of justice: shaping professional ethics", I argue why professional ethics is based on virtue ethics. Such an approach is compatible with the understanding of professional ethics as competence, for example. Moreover, among all the virtues, justice and prudence have a relevant place. When dealing with professional ethics, people easily recognize situations where justice is at stake. Hence the need to provide professionals with theoretical elements that enable them to discern what is just and what is unjust. Following the line of argument of the work that emphasizes the scientific nature of ethics, it is necessary to know what is just and what is unjust. The contributions of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas provide readers with clear coordinates regarding this virtue.

In the fourth chapter entitled: "Ethical competencies: a path for the teaching of professional ethics in Mexico", together with Francisco Pérez, we discuss some challenges presented by professional ethics, among them, that the approach to professional ethics is usually made from the disciplines or specific fields of knowledge, leaving aside the philosophical basis on which professional ethics is based, as explained in previous sections. Thus, in the first part, the scope of professional ethics is analyzed from a philosophical perspective; the second part presents the context of teaching professional ethics; the third part deals with professional competencies in higher education; the fourth part shows an analysis of professional ethics as a competency with the challenges and limitations that this represents in the Mexican educational context.

In the fifth chapter entitled "Dialogue between family and society: a relational approach", Rafael Hurtado and Pablo Galindo Cruz point out that human nature demands the existence of the family and that the family confirms human nature. They warn of the maturity required by parents to develop the common family project, as well as the serious danger that individualism and utilitarianism represent for the family. They point out the need to understand the origin of the human being in order to deepen the destiny of persons. They maintain that communities are articulated on the basis of the family and how society can be thought of on the basis of the family.

In the sixth section, Rafael Hurtado and Hugo Cruz analyze "Corporate family responsibility: an application of business ethics", emphasizing the responsibility of the company, which they summarize in three aspects: leadership style, favorable organizational culture and flexibility policies. The authors summarize the benefits for the organization of assuming these aspects. They make a historical review of the concept of corporate social responsibility and corporate family responsibility. The latter, as they point out, is key to position the company as a decisive actor in family issues.

I am grateful for the impulse that Universidad Panamericana, through the Institute of Humanities and the academic areas, is giving to professional ethics from different fronts. Ethical professionals are those who contribute to the common good with an attitude of service; they are those who, having a solid academic preparation -also in ethical issues- are trained for the workplace. They will undoubtedly be professionals capable of arguing concrete proposals and solutions to real problems with a Christian philosophical basis. These high ideals are precisely three of the four learning outcomes that are sought in the students of this great institution and to which we, the research professors who are dedicated to this discipline along with other lines of research, and who have formed, together with other colleagues, the Research Group on Professional Ethics, are committed. My gratitude and recognition to Manuel Ocampo and Rafael Hurtado for building bridges to think about professional ethics, as well as to Pablo Galindo, Hugo Cruz and Francisco Pérez for their generous time and contribution to this work.

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