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SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH
ON OCCUPATIONS AND
PROFESSIONS IN THE USSR 1960-
80S: IDEOLOGICAL
FRAMEWORKS AND
ANALYTICAL RESOURCES**

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THE HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON OCCUPATIONS AND PROFESSIONS IN THE USSR 1960-80s: IDEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS AND ANALYTICAL RESOURCES

The article analyzes of the content and context of research on occupations and professions in Soviet sociology from 1960 to the 1980s. It describes the key topics of observations of professional groups, gives definitions of occupations and professions in Soviet social sciences, and analyzes ideological and censorship restrictions for research and publishing. Sociology of occupations and professions as a separate disciplinary field appeared in Russia only in the late 1990s. Before this time, these topics were integrated into social structure and social stratification observations, research of the working class, intelligentsia, industrial sociology and sociology of organizations. From the 1960s Soviet sociologists searched for new explanatory models and they decided that socio-professional groups were the best criterion for a Soviet social structure description. During 1970-80s researchers of Soviet social structures debated about the place of professional groups. This article analyzes these and other features of sociology of occupations and professions in the USSR. The analysis is based on the bibliographical observations and interviews with Soviet sociologists. This project was supported by Science Foundation of NRU HSE.

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Introduction

Historical and theoretical generalizations concerning the evolution of disciplinary knowledge are still respected in the genre of analysis within the sociology of occupations and professions. This concern with the reflection about epistemic changes within the discipline and the tendency toward thematic classifications of the previous periods can seem artificial, even old-fashioned - better for textbooks than discussion. However, such activity proves that the theoretical ambitions and desire to maintain disciplinary autonomy in a world where the boundaries between areas of social knowledge are rapidly disappearing are still alive.

The sociology of occupations and professions maintains an interest in its own disciplinary history, which serves as a museum exposition of the past and inspires analysts to find new sources. The object of research is a wide range of occupations and professions and the institutional history of professional communities. Leading authors of sociology occupations and professions contributed to the reconstruction of the epistemic evolution of this discipline (Abbott, 1993; Freidson, 1984; Sciulli, 2009; Macdonald & Ritzer, 1988; Saks & Olsop, 2003; Gadea, 2011). In Russia, the situation is even more complicated: the awareness that the study of occupations and professions is a separate academic discipline came only at the end of the 1990s². Before that time research on occupations and professions was integrated into the analysis of social structure and stratification, working class, intellectuals, work and employment sociology, management sociology, sociology of organizations, etc. Researchers became aware of the disciplinary identity; they adapted international ideas for the Russian context, formed an agenda and developed thematic courses³. There were the first analytical attempts at the reconstruction of the history and current state of research on occupations and professions in the USSR and Russia (Abramov, 2013; Mansurov & Yurchenko, 2013; Moskovskaya, 2010; Romanov & Yarskaya-Smirnova, 2009; Shkaratan, 1996; Korableva, 2013). However, the history of this research contains many opportunities for a researcher and its reconstruction promotes the understanding of the transformations of social sciences in post-Soviet space and opens opportunities for the adequate assessment of the nature of professionalism in the USSR and Russia.

² In an interview the researcher of occupations and professions I.P. Popova said that the thematic heading "Sociology of Professions" appeared in the most authoritative Russian sociology journal "Sociological Research" only in 2009.

³ The first training course "Sociology of Professions", based on the international context of the discipline was the course by R.N. Abramov, was delivered for the first time in the 2001 year, at the master's program of the Center of Sociological Education of the Institute of Sociology in the Russian Academy of Sciences. Since 2002, the course has been regularly taught at the Faculty of Sociology, NRU HSE (Moscow) (see Abramov, 2003).

This article contains the results of the research on the history of occupations and professions in Russia⁴. It draws on interviews with Russian and foreign researchers (20 interviews), thematic analysis of publications of Soviet and Russian academic journals (“Sociological Research”, “Universe of Russia”, “ECO”, and “Economic Sociology”) and the results of work with library resources of the Institute of Scientific Information for Social Sciences (ISSS RAS) and the Institute of Sociology in the Russian Academy of Sciences. Our analysis of publications on the topic of occupations and professions in Soviet sociology is based on a bibliographical search conducted from 2013-2014 at the ISSS RAS and the library of the Institute of Sociology in the Russian Academy of Sciences. The aim of the analysis was to compare the international and domestic context; therefore the selection of publications was implemented in stages. Prior to the search, we formed lists of Soviet and Russian sociologists who were mentioned in contemporary reviews (Mansurov & Yurchenko, 2013; Moskovskaya, 2010; Romanov & Yarskaya-Smirnova, 2009; Shkaratan, 1996) and in interviews with researchers of occupations and professions. Concurrently, on the basis of the available material on the history of Soviet sociology (Shkaratan & Radaev, 1996; Sociology, 1998; Doctorov, 2013; Firsov, 2012) a list of original terminology and themes was drawn up. Having gathered these preliminary materials, we conducted a consecutive search for specialized publications on the topic. As research on the sociology of occupations and professions was dispersed in different sections of the directory, the search detailed examination of almost all sections relating to social sciences and philosophy. On the basis of the bibliographical analysis we compiled a list of publications and analysed the contents. Following that, we selected materials that were best suited to the set objectives of the study.

Assumptions of Soviet sociology applied to the analysis of professions and occupations

Soviet research on social structure, labour, intellectual and socio-professional groups aimed to connect Scylla - a socialist society canonical model of social organization - described in Orthodox Marxism-Leninism and the Charybdis - a complex world of social reality. Bearing in mind all the compromises and even expediency which seriously affected the work, we should not view Soviet sociology only as decorative science serving the interests of the party and economic

⁴ This study was carried out in 2013-2014 within the scope of the “Science Foundation of National Research University Higher School of Economics” program, project No. 12-01-0014 “Social studies of occupations and professions: history, theory, methodology”.

nomenclature. The history of the Soviet social structure and "industrial sociology" research showed how sociology attempted to cope with the ideological pressure, seeking to understand what was really going on. The results of this quest were not always reflected in the publications, this is why they often require postfactum comments from the researchers. Here we will try to give a new reading of some texts and practices of Soviet sociology, which can help to understand how professionalism was perceived and how occupational groups were defined.

The simplified dogma of official Marxism-Leninism from 1950-80s prescribed sociologists to follow a simple model of social structure (in the jargon of Soviet sociologists it was named *trekhchlenka*, consisting of three parts or "2+1"), declared by Stalin. (Shkaratan, 1996). Workers and collective farm peasantry were nominated the core classes of the socialist society, while labor intellectuals formed the "layer" that had an intermediate position. Of course, class contradictions were denied because "under socialism, the working class, together with the collective farm peasantry and the intelligentsia, control the national means of production" (Blyahman & Shkaratan, 1973, p. 159). Such a vision of social structures inevitably led to a situation when qualified industrial workers and technicians became a priority for Soviet researchers, although the scientific and technical intelligentsia (factory engineers, employees of research institutes and laboratories) were also of interest for sociologists, because from "1960 up to 1975, the number of scientific workers increased 3.5 times, and the number of employees with a doctoral or degree 3.3 time" (USSR, 1969-78).

The existence of the division of labour in the production process in terms of socialism was the fundamental question that sociologists and economists tried to explain in a way that did not contradict the official guidelines on labour in a communist society – a place that is "socially homogeneous, excluding any exploitation of man by man" and the "work as a vocation and need of human beings" (Changli, 1973; Changli, 2010, p. 45-46). The work of the Soviet economist and sociologist, Changli, who developed the theory of communist labour, is indicative in this case: the division of labour is described as the category of "class society", which under socialism would be replaced by its distribution through "deliberate systematic organization" that would in turn eliminate the "spontaneous division of labor" (Changli, 2010, p. 233-236). This thesis reflects one of the main ideological arguments used to criticize capitalism: the chaos of a market economy was contrasted with the scientifically planned socialist economy, which was believed to be free of crises and recessions.

Nowadays, Russian authors (Moskovskaya, 2009; Moskovskaya, 2010; Mansurov & Yurchenko, 2013) reasonably point out that unlike American and British sociology of professions at that time, Soviet sociology did not distinguish between "occupations" and

“professions”. Even the hints of any institutional separation of professional communities were avoided by all means. For example, in the later Soviet period, Grishin and Sogomonov in their discussions stressed that "professional ethics" can become the expression of group interests only under capitalism and in this form it "dies" in a socialist society⁵.

In the 1950s and 60s, the term "profession" was used as a broad category of regularly employed workers with certain skills used in the production process. Strumilin was the patriarch of Soviet economics and statistics who gave in several of his works a classification of professional work, determined the relationship between the "educational standards" and qualification, but considered the various types of professional activity. The approach of Strumilin was based on a number of speculative assumptions about the relationship of man with his biology, on the nature of giftedness and talent and their connection with "educational standards". And while some of his ideas and metaphors in the description of professions look bright and original, they are more the result of the author's insights than real supporting data. He defines a profession as a “complex of special labor skills acquired in the process of school or extracurricular education, combined in one person and united in a common title, for example, locksmith, carpenter, violinist”(Strumilin,1982,p.17-18; Strumilin,1921).

Specialities reflect more specific types of activities within professions. A Soviet economist did not consider the length of study as a relevant characteristic of professionalization, as "any work, even the most simple and unsegmented, assumes a certain accumulation of skills"(Strumilin,1982,p.17-18; Strumilin,1921). At the same time, Strumilin considered it appropriate to classify occupations according to their "similarity and difference" and offered his own ideas for such a classification.

One of the founders of the Soviet industrial sociology, Podmarkov(Trostanovskij,1999), also made a notable contribution to the development of the sociological understanding of occupations and professions in the USSR. In the interpretation of Podmarkov, professions were composed of two factors: the technological structure behind the natural fragmentation of the production process and the activities of the subjects of labor (Moskovskaya,2010); in other words it was the Marxist vision of the combination of the productive forces and production relations. In addition to other work in 1972, Podmarkov published a “Man in a World of Professions” in the academic journal “Questions of Philosophy”. Here he postulated the key role of profession acquisition in the socialization of an individual, while the social connection between people in modern society is largely defined by characteristics of occupational structure

⁵ see (Grishin & Sogomonov, 19820

(Podmarkov,1972). By the time the article was published, active reception of language and logic of the late-American structural functionalism⁶ happened in Soviet sociology. These explanatory models seamlessly fit into the description of the late-Soviet society as a stable and progressively developing one.

Scientific and Technological Revolution: a thematic frame of research devoted to occupations and professions in the USSR

Ideological recipes - providing for a simplified perspective on the social structure of Soviet society and defining the industrial workers as the main socio-professional group - are not a valid basis for an adequate understanding of the situation in the Soviet society during the period 1960-80s. The post-war social and economic recovery influenced the entire world, including the USSR, which became particularly noticeable at the end of the Stalin era in 1953 and the beginning of the thaw. Rapid urbanization, broadening access to higher education, welfare, the opening of new businesses, and the creation of research centers had a significant impact on the social structure of the Soviet society, which became even more complex, mixed, and could hardly be described within the rigid framework of Marxism.

From the second half of the 1960s, Soviet sociologists extended their research interests beyond studying workers as a socio-professional group. This interest was the result of not only scientific curiosity, but also practical considerations: Firstly, the employment structure in the USSR changed rapidly and the percentage of people in white-collar occupations increased. Secondly, the rise of educational levels and opportunities led to a situation where, despite all the propaganda efforts, school graduates sought to obtain higher education and move into the city rather than become workers or farmers. The research of Shubkin and his colleagues from Novosibirsk showed these transformation preferences of young people in their choice of careers in the early 1960s (Shubkin&Artemov,1964; Shubkin,1964; Shublin,1965; Constantineovski&Shubkin,1977; Titma,1975). The party and government structures were concerned about the new challenges and Soviet sociology and expanded their range of studies on the socio-occupational structure of Soviet society.

The theoretical problem was how to reconcile the ideological rhetoric about erasing distinctions between mental and physical labor and the formation of a homogeneous labor increased complexity of production and the emergence of new social and professional groups. To save the situation, a concept was introduced, which became an important slogan during the

⁶ In the 1960's. T. Parsons repeatedly visited the USSR and met with Soviet philosophers and sociologists that also contributed to the perception of his ideas. see (Chesnokova, 2000).

period of 1960-80s - this was the idea of a scientific-technical revolution (STR). This concept led to qualitative changes in the production and social structure of the USSR and accelerated the transition to a Communist society. There is almost no use of the term STR in Western literature. In the West, changes in technology, production, and society were usually associated with the "third industrial revolution" or the "third technological revolution", which occurred after the Second World War. At this time, methods of scientific management, flexible manufacturing of the post-Fordist type, emergence of early generation computers, and robotics and electronics, along with the development of a new type of media, led to the formation of a post-industrial society and global village, described by D. Bell and M. McLuhan (Segrillo,2014).

In addition, the situation of global confrontation in the Cold War period demanded the key world players make massive investments in research and development and the accompanying infrastructure in the form of university laboratories, private research centers, and experimental areas. This stimulated the spread of higher education and an unprecedented growth in the number of people employed in the sphere of knowledge manufacturing and processing. Thus, the socio-occupational structure of developed countries, including the USSR, underwent profound changes throughout the post-war period: new occupations and professions, which did not exist before or belonged only to the intellectual elite, started to emerge and become popular. In the USSR it was even more explicit, since before the Second World War, in spite of the industrialization and development of the educational system, the majority of the population were rural residents and workers, and the modernization of the system of basic and applied research was carried out in the period of 1945-55, when hundreds of new research institutes (SRI) and laboratories were established. From 1955, the state committee devoted itself to the introduction of new technology (from 1965 it was called the 'National Committee' affiliated with the USSR Council of Ministers on Science and Technology), and for many years it was involved in the "introduction of application[s] of advanced science and technology in the national economy, as well as the strengthening of scientific and technical promotion" (Decree,1955).

The scientific-technical revolution (STR) became the crux of extremely convenient propaganda clichés and an insightful concept used to explain the changes taking place in the social structure. First of all, official definitions of the STR stated that "ongoing the processes of "scientification" of all spheres of human activities"(Historical,1974), that develops the "intellectualization of labor in society"(Ibid). This was well within the positivistic foundation of this theory, perceived in a simplified and processed manner by the founders of the Soviet state, which was supposed to become the first state on Earth based on rigorous scientific principles, giving it a historical advantage over capitalism. In practical terms, this meant the dominance of

technocratic engineering thinking in the management system and the successful penetration of the ideas of the Scientific Labor Organization founders F. Taylor and G. Ford in the organization of socialist production. In the 1960s, the concept of the STR worked as a theoretical umbrella for the promotion of cybernetics, system analysis, interdisciplinary studies, and the science of science (Gvishiani,2004,p.105).

Discourse on the STR was widely distributed at all levels: in the statements of the leaders of the Soviet Union and official government programs, in the media and propaganda, and in the scientific discourse-philosophy and sociology:

Those were all of the STR issues. All newspapers and radio were talking about the STR. I really do not remember if it was ever carefully defined. But it was defined as a promotion and improvement of technologies in production and so on. (Transcript of interview with prof.V.A. Yadov)

It should be mentioned that, for the Soviet social scientists of the 1950-60s, Western ideas on technocratic society, managerial revolution, and the role of the modern technologies of production and management in social change were available in the form of exposition. In 1959, Osipov published his monograph, "Technology and Social Progress" (Osipov,1959), where, in a critical way, the main technocratic concepts were stated. And in 1962, a major science administrator and the son-in-law of the Soviet Prime Minister A.N.Kosygin Gvishiani (Gvishiani,1962) published his book, "Sociology of Business", which described the corporate management models of that time in the United States. For many years, Gvishiani was one of the leaders of the State Committee under the USSR Council of Ministers on Science and Technology, and supervised the technical and scientific cooperation of the Soviet Union and Western countries. Gvishiani was familiar with earlier technocratic theories, in particular, and planned to write a thesis about the ideas of Veblen in his book, "Technique and civilization", but then turned to management and systems theories.

According to the recollections of Gvishiani, he actively monitored the emergence of sociology in the USSR and was involved in the creation of the Institute of Social Studies in 1968⁷. A little earlier, using his official influence, he participated in the promotion of STR in the working programs of the academic institutes of the AS USSR:

The problems of the scientific and technological revolution played a significant role. In those years, some institutions of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR had been engaged in research in this area. At first they focused on the role of scientific revolutions in social development, on the distinctive features of the first industrial revolution, the essence of the STR

⁷ "I tried to keep constant contact with ICSI and even thought about the possibility of working there concurrently." (Gvishiani, 2004, p. 103).

of the twentieth century, on the problems of the science of science, role of forecasting, etc. Many scientists, not only social scientists, but also representatives of the natural sciences were involved in the development of science policy issues. I used to work closely with some of them, and we were able to publish articles on STR in leading journals, to fix the recognition of this phenomenon in encyclopedias and dictionaries (Gvishiani,2004,p.105).

In social sciences, the STR as a thematic research direction and a unique "brand" remained in use throughout the 1970s and in the first half of the 1980s, although in proportion with the senescence of the Soviet system, this concept increasingly became an "empty signifier", which was useful for the legitimization of their research - from cybernetics to the history and philosophy of science and technology. According to Cheshev, a Tomsk philosopher who got involved in the philosophy of science in the late 1960s with Meleschenko⁸, one of the leaders of philosophy and history of technology, there was an idea and a real prospect of establishing the STR Research Institute in Leningrad (St. Petersburg), but that opportunity was not realized because of the death of Meleschenko in 1972:

U.S. Meleschenko wanted to establish a research institute devoted to the STR. There was already the decision of higher courts: a fundamental decision at the level of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. And with that decision in May 1972, he came and his heart stopped. And with his death, the Institute gave out. I even wanted to bond my personal destiny with this Institute. Meleschenko was ready to take me to work there. There were many publications about the social implications of scientific and technological progress and the STR, from the society "Znanie". But somehow, this interest was extinguished in the second half of the 1970s. (transcript of an interview with prof.V.V. Cheshev)

Why is it so important to understand the concept of the STR in order to understand what happened to the research of professional groups in the Soviet sociology? As mentioned above, the complexity of the socio-occupational structure of the USSR was easy to explain as a consequence of the STR under the conditions of developed socialism. That is, the STR was deeply integrated in the explanatory logic of sociologists, who were interested in occupations and professions in the USSR. Secondly, most of the publications related to the theme of occupations and professions were legitimized by referring to the STR - titles of books and articles became very typical: "Intelligentsia in conditions of STR", "Working class in conditions of STR", etc. Thirdly, the real technological, economic, and social changes in post-war USSR were largely the result of technological and managerial upgrading - through the establishment of

⁸ U.S. Meleschenko had several works on the subject of STR: (Meleschenko, 1967; Meleschenko, 1970; Meleschenko, 1971).

research centers, the expansion of polytechnic education, and the introduction of computer technology. Therefore, in concurrence with Western countries, the STR or the "third technological revolution" were quite adequate analytical tools to better understand the ongoing changes. In general, it can be said that without taking into account the Soviet discourse of STR, it is difficult to analyze the contents and key subjects of research occupations and professions in the Soviet Union.

Workers, employees, and soviet intelligentsia as professionals

Most professionalized activities were associated with a social layer of intelligentsia by Soviet sociologists, though there were some reservations related to the saturation of creative and intellectual components of the labor of industrial workers. This led to the introduction of 'Centaur', for instance, who were highly skilled workers close in status and nature of labor to engineers. Conversely, some engineers were classified as working class because of the introduction of new technologies (Gogolyuhin,1966;Filippov,1978).

Some part of those involved in some occupation, are moving towards professionals.

What's interesting is that M.N. Rutkevich (Rutkevich,1975; Rutkevich,1977; Rutkevich,1976) noticed when he spoke about the workers that are practically engineers at specialized automated tools. They are skilled not at mechanical, but electronic systems and, of course, they must be well prepared. On the other hand, some of engineers worked not as workers, but as supervisors of these systems. They were downgraded to the status of workers, although in principle it was the work of an engineer: by status 'workers-engineers', 'engineers-workers'. (transcript of interview with prof.V.A. Mansurov)

Modern critics of this theory believe that it served as an ideological screen to hide the accelerating inflation of the certified engineer status, describing it as an "ugly phenomenon generated by the perverted system of wages and a huge oversupply of specialists, which became, perhaps, the most telling evidence of [the] degradation of [the] intellectual layer in the Soviet period" (Volkov,1999). A close equivalent to the modern language in sociology of occupations and professions is the concept of 'deprofessionalization': narrowing the borders of autonomy and losing social status and prestige as a result of the introduction of new methods of management and technology. In addition to this, attempts to precisely follow the ideology "about erasing the borders between the physical and mental work" brought some Soviet sociologists to the idea of classifying the professionalized occupations, made up by the layer of intelligentsia, as the working class and the peasantry.

However, at the end of the 1960s, none of the major sociologists foresaw the rapid construction of a "classless society", where all its members formed a highly qualified labor force, equally creative and intellectual, with considerable autonomy. Rather, they discussed long-term trends in the movement to this condition, which signs were demonstrative of the increased proportion of people with higher education, and structural changes in the working process. However, it was noted that the need for 'semi-skilled routine work' would not vanish in the foreseeable future. By the beginning of the 1980s, the ideological rhetoric which accompanied publications on topics related to research of occupations and professions, had also seen changes. If at the end of the 1960s authors often insisted that their analyses were associated with the construction of the 'communist society', then a decade later it was about 'developed socialism', which corresponded to the fluctuations of the ideological direction.

In 1968, under the supervision of the Institute of Philosophy of AS USSR, Stepanian and Semenov collaborated to create a monograph "Classes, Social Layers and Groups in the USSR". The material from this publication reflects the social structure of Soviet society: the three sections of the book are devoted to, respectively, the working class, the peasantry, and the intelligentsia and officials. In this edition, however, as in some earlier studies (Kugel,1963), an actual deviation takes place from a simplified view of Soviet society as consisting of large social entities:

The discussion was related to the problem of stratification. Because the approach was based on classes, it was already primitive and therefore we were seeking groups that could be identified. In the end, these were professional groups. (transcript of interview with V.A.Yadov)

The authors of the monograph classified all employed people, who in the Anglo-Saxon tradition relate to professions, as intelligentsia, because they define this group as a "social group or layer, consisting of people, who professionally do highly qualified mental work, requiring special secondary or higher education" (Classes,1968,p.136-137). Further, in characterizing Soviet intelligentsia, the authors tried to find a compromise between the risk of narrowing the information only to highly educated professionals, having the appropriate status and competence level, and the statement of movement, to the disappearance of the "social layer" because the labor of workers and peasantry became more and more "intellectually rich". If professionals with higher education had been called intelligentsia, then there would have been the risk of ideological character. Soviet intelligentsia have would looked like a professional group of bourgeois society with their special interests, which could not be allowed in the Soviet system. In

the second case, the social structure of Soviet society would look so obviously primitive and distant from reality that it would have been impossible to make any adequate analysis. Therefore, the intelligentsia was described as being a "united" but "diverse" group with its internal structure (Classes,1968,p.140).

This leads us to the question: what is this structure and where is its place in professionalized occupations? In the Anglo-American tradition, and partly in the Continental sociology of professions, it is believed that the degree of freedom in professional practice and autonomy in decision-making is a significant sign of a professionalized occupation. In Soviet sociology, a distant analogy of such autonomy is the concept of the "creative nature of work", which had a vague interpretation, often associated with the fact that as labor became more intellectualized, the proportion of routine labor decreased, but autonomy in the working process and the opportunity for personal fulfillment increased.

Stepanian and Semenov at first denied "creativity" as a "criterion for distinguishing social groups" (Classes,1968,p.142), but a few pages later they use it to separate the "employees" group ("clerks", "white collars") from specialists (Classes,1968,p.142). In this logic, the "specialists" are close in meaning to professionals, because they have a high level of education and their work is more "creative". Whereas the "labor of employees is comparatively low semi-skilled, ...which is combined with simple physical manual work (correspondence, accounts, trading)" (Classes,1968,p.164). It is also emphasized that the difference between "experts" and "employees" is in the length of their education, levels of wages, and culture in general. In fact, it is a Soviet version of the qualitative distinction between "professions" and "semi-professions" in a common coordinate system for sociology of occupations and professions. The authors also mentioned the intra-professional hierarchy, speaking of the "differentiation of intellectual work types", citing the example of the "surgeon" profession, which spawned many specializations.

Relying on their own categorical grid consisting of three kinds of intellectual work (economic, political, ideological), the authors identified three groups of intelligentsia: technical-economic (all engineers and technicians), employees of the state and public organizations (government and party officials, military officers, lawyers), and scientific-cultural (scientists, doctors, journalists, and other liberal professions). Of course, such a system of classification does not provide the understanding of professionalized groups in the social structure, but quite accurately reflects the class logic of Soviet society.

This concise analysis was necessary to demonstrate that the Soviet sociology was well aware of the special status of the professionalized occupations. Due to ideological causes and the nature of employment, they offered their own vision of the causes, circumstances, and

consequences of the formation of professional groups. First of all, dissolving the discourse about professions in an ideologically acceptable way about the "Soviet working intelligentsia", which included almost all groups of employees engaged in non-physical work - "clerks", was a handy trick. At the same time, there was an understanding about the qualitative differentiation between "employees" of the bottom level with a limited jurisdiction and the routine nature of labor and "specialists". The most professionalized part of the intelligentsia had its own social and cultural habitus, and was stipulated by the relatively high level of education and degree of autonomy, i.e. the "creative labor content". It is the specialists who are closest by their nature to "professionals" in the Anglo-American view and "personnel" in the continental approach (particularly in French sociology of occupational groups).

Speaking within the theoretical framework of analysis, along with Marxist and stratificational approaches, the traces of neo-Weberian thought are visible, when authors refer to "cultural differences" which define the isolated status of specialists. In general, it should be stressed that in the second half of the 1960s, a number of Soviet sociologists were not limited to a simple view concerning the professionals as part of the intelligentsia, and sought to show that the heterogeneity of the social structure of the Soviet society only grows.

In this respect, tough debates between different groups of 'structurers'⁹ are worthy of our attention and these continued throughout the 1970-80s. Structurers were engaged in studying and describing the social structure of Soviet society. At the time they were on top of a Soviet sociological hierarchy, since their work had an important ideological function - creating an official picture of how Soviet society was arranged. A detailed description of this debate is provided by one of its key participants, Shkaratan, in the textbook "Social stratification" (Shkaratan,1996). The main conflict was between the consistent supporters of Stalin's formula of the social structure of Soviet society (*trekhlenka*) and those who sought to show the complexity and the differential nature of Soviet society. According to Shkaratan, "for decades M.N. Rutkevich was a strong advocate of Stalin's formula" (Shkaratan,1996,p.224). Within this approach, the intelligentsia was named a "class-like group", which was supposed to "mask the real stratification with unprecedented diversity of the top layers and bottom ones" (Shkaratan,1996,p.224). In the 1970-1980s, for additional support of *trekhlenka*, an ideology-driven concept of "social uniformity" was used, which assumed the disappearance of differences in types of labor and the blurring of the boundaries between socio-professional groups. However,

⁹ This is the word informants who studied and described the social structure of Soviet society used for the USSR sociologists.

social scientists who were interested in the analytical understanding of Soviet society did not seriously consider these ideas due to their "apparent invalidity" (Shkaratan,1996,p.227).

It was dangerous to openly proclaim one's opposition to Stalin's *trekhlenka*, because Rutkevich, together with his associates, had serious administrative force and for several years he supervised the leading center of sociology in the USSR - the Institute of Sociological Research of AS USSR¹⁰. Therefore, the Soviet social scientists who were interested in understanding the real organization of Soviet society were forced to declare acceptance of the official policy, but at the same time conducted their own studies that showed the complexity of the social structure of real socialism. One of the first was the Leningrad sociologist, Kugel, who had already in the early 1960s demonstrated that *trekhlenka* did not explain the structure of society in conditions of an industrial society, where a lot of new socio-occupational groups had emerged (Shkaratan,1996,p.225; Kugel,1963). Sociologists, who did not want to repeat the ideological mantra of "social uniformity", had to use euphemisms and invent neologisms to describe their research results. This is how the term "layer" (Shkaratan,1996,p.235) was introduced. This term made it possible to represent the structure of Soviet society in the form of a multi-level system of socio-professional groups: different "layers" had qualitative differences in terms of work, property management, and degree of autonomy.

In the early 1970s a sustainable alternative to Stalin's *trekhlenka* was established, when a socio-professional group was interpreted as "a primary element of the social structure", and layers reflected social differences and were rooted in the division of labor (Autyunyan,1971,p.99; Shkaratan,1970; Shkaratan,1996,p.241). Shkaratan, who worked in Leningrad (St Petersburg), was the main opponent of Rutkevich and the leader of the stratification research of socio-professional groups. Based on the census population and the research of different occupations within the industry, he developed and perfected together with colleagues, the classification model of the socio-occupational structure of Soviet society. In 1973, Shkaratan and Blyahman published a book which presented the main characteristics of this model (Blyahman, Shkaratan,1973). According to the authors, the STR did not lead to the blurring of borders between classes, but to the emergence of new "socio-professional sectors", which were in constant motion as part of the social structure. The authors of the book developed the thesis about a variety of occupations that make up the socio-professional layers and offered their own classification of officials and intellectuals:

- workers of skilled mental management labor (managers of enterprises and public or state organizations);

¹⁰ ICSI AS USSR became the Institute of Sociological Research in 1972-73.

- workers of highly-skilled mental labor (researchers, university teachers, designers, etc.);
- creative intelligentsia (figures of the literature and art);
- workers of skilled non-manual labour (engineers, teachers, doctors, etc.), i.e. intelligentsia of mass professions;
- workers of non-manual, predominantly intellectual labor of service (trade and office employees, etc.) (Blyahman&Shkaratan, 1973, p.270).

The authors of this model were well aware of the status, institutional, and socio-cultural differences between the groups of professionalized occupations and emphasized their "uniqueness" as in the case with the group of "creative intelligentsia", marked as a separate subgroup. From the names of the groups and their descriptions it can be understood, that the classification takes into account: first, the level and type of education; second, the type of activity and the amount of power, and; third, the degree of freedom and control, or the level of autonomy and routine in the labor process. In other words, in some respects, this classification is adequate both to the Western (American and British) stratificational diagrams, and also to hierarchies of occupations according to their level of professionalization.

In the second half of the 1970s, Shkaratan, together with colleagues, continued to develop his research and theoretical ideas based on the results of the surveys in the industry, expert estimates, and census data. In 1980, the article by Shkaratan, Philippova, and Demidova, "Social layer and profession" was published (Shkaratan & Philippova & Demidova, 1980) which summarized the material collected during the previous few years (Shkaratan&Philippova&Stakanova,1977; Shkaratan&Rukavishnikov,1977). In this work, Shkaratan et al. try to combine information about the professional attributes of respondents with their attachment to a social layer of the urban population on the basis of population censuses.

For the purposes of comparison, a list of occupations was adopted and used by the Central Statistical Office of the USSR during censuses. The resulting classification approximately corresponds to the one mentioned above, but the criteria used to classify occupations and professions is of interest: the "ratio of performance and managerial functions; degree of diversity and uniqueness of functions; degree of self-organization at work; complexity of work at the given work place (required education level of an employee); and socio-economic assessment (wages and living conditions)" (Blyahman&Shkaratan, 1973, p.25-32). Despite the specific terminology here, we can see that these criteria are partly identical with those that were used from the 1950-70s in the concepts of the traits theory, and even in the later neo-Weberian approach: taking into account the level of education, autonomy in carrying out work, social status, etc. In our view, with all of the assumptions outlined herein, the classification signs of

professional groups in Soviet sociology are comparable with those in the Anglo-American sociology of professions. The socio-professional groups themselves, by substantive features, are close to the concept of *personnel* in the continental model of professionalism, where there is a high dependence on state policy in education and employment.

The difference from the Anglo-American perspective is that Shkaratan and other Soviet sociologists did not use separate terms "occupation(s)" and "profession(s)" for labeling the institutional isolation of professionalized occupations. In addition, the sources which we examined almost never contained a separate term "professional(s)" to indicate the relevant categories for the terms: "specialist(s)", "socio-professional groups," "intelligentsia", "skilled workers", "mental workers", "professional layers", etc. Sometimes the term "professions" is used in general, but the term "professionals" is rarely used for describing members of a social group. In our view, this is due to the semantics of the term "professional" being ambivalent.

Barriers and challenges to Soviet sociology of occupations and professions

This article endeavored a meaningful analysis of the Soviet sociology knowledge base concerning the study of occupations and professions. The main intention of the author was to get away from the reproduction of established ways of viewing the history of Soviet sociology as a social and biographical history of the main actors and their relationships, with the relative inattention to contents and results of their research, many of which were assessed by event participants themselves as "ideological compromises." Another extreme is the ritualization of the Soviet sociology heritage, which is considered as an "emergency reserve" of Russian social sciences, stored in honorable places, but which are hard to access for analytical purposes. We had no intention to make the content of Soviet sociologists' works an object of irony or worship. We considered the total stock of knowledge in terms of its relevance to the corresponding knowledge bases in disciplinary areas of the research of occupations and professions in other countries. We hope we managed to be accurate with the material analyzed.

The publications and interviews collected reveal a serious involvement of Soviet sociologists in the examination of the socio-occupational structure of society at that time. Mostly, the theme was developed in the works on the social structure and the intelligentsia. A simplified view of a profession as a set of skills and the declaration of vanishing differences between occupational groups remained the prerogative of the "conservative" part of Soviet sociology, advocating ideological dogmas. At the same time, many sociologists have sought to

show the complexity of the socio-occupational structure and ongoing changes in the system of occupations and professions.

Of course, in that situation there were ideological and censorship limits which affected the choice of theoretical framework, methodologies, and descriptions of research results. Firstly, it was not common to take individual professional communities in their institutional origins as an object of study with references to history and record of status changes. Traces of this method, which is widespread in Western sociology of occupations and professions, can be found in the work of Yadov (Social...,1977) and his colleagues, who devoted their attention to engineers of Soviet plants, and in the later work of Kryshtanovskaya (Kryshtanovskaya,1988; Kryshtanovskaya,1989), which was also devoted to the engineering profession. Also, the Leningrad sociologist, Kugel, actively studied scientists and university teachers, following the structural-functionalistic logic (Kugel,1983). Mostly, sociologists were focused on major socio-professional groups - engineers, skilled workers, and professionals in the field of trade. The authors were interested not in the positions of some occupational groups with respect to the others, but in their place in the social structure, or their applications - motivation, organization of work and rest, etc. Such a prospect was borne out of the desire to eliminate the separation of communities for any reason:

The Soviet state did a lot to destroy professionalism as elitism: it was implemented through constant intervening in the affairs of other associates, destruction of trade associations, disintegration of professional groups, so that their members regarded themselves as separate individuals. Those were, in fact, measures of state administration, and they too should be also considered as one of the components of deprofessionalization. Deprofessionalization, as depriving the professionals of their power, as the elevation of elite. And partly - of proletarianization. (Transcript of an interview with P.V. Romanov)

Secondly, in publications of the time it is almost impossible to find the contradictions and problems of the world of occupations and professions. Behind the sleek facade of the mandatory formulas it is difficult to see the ideological tensions in the socio-occupational structure of Soviet society. Meanwhile, the credential inflation of higher engineering education, a reduction of the real status of the engineer at work, a decrease of prestige for other employees, a lessening of the upward mobility of young scientists, and the shadow of corrupt practices in healthcare and school education increasingly formed the real picture of the complex transformations of occupations and professions in the USSR. Of course, it is possible to find indications of disparities in employment, issues of motivation for skilled workers and engineers, status disparity, and other problems in the studies of Soviet intelligentsia and social structure, but quite

often they are vague, with reservations about their significance to a "harmonious Soviet society". Most explicitly, the real tensions in the world of professions are seen in the acute debates between opposite camps of social structure researchers (Rutkevich vs Shkaratan)(Rutkevich,1982;Rutkevich&Philippova,1977), intelligentsia (Aitov vs Stepanyan)¹¹ and others.

Thirdly, in the narrow hallway of official Soviet Marxism, Soviet sociology cautiously opened the doors to international sociology, which led to the formation of a special dialect of Soviet social sciences, combining ritual formulas of Marxism-Leninism, borrowing from and being exposed to ideological "clean-up" foreign terms, and neologisms of their own invention. This special language became the determinant of a specific style of thinking and analysis, which affected the content of texts and interpretations. Therefore, the direct translation of concepts and materials of Soviet sociologists' publications to the modern language of the sociology of occupations and professions is difficult: it is necessary to carry out analytical assumptions and reconstructions, which sometimes look artificial. However, in our view, this does not mean that Soviet sociology was exclusively a local version of knowledge devoted to extra-scientific objectives. Our analysis shows that, with respect to the study of socio-professional groups, many Soviet sociologists carried out qualified work, which helps us to judge this segment of workers:

"I read the V.A. Yadov, O.I. Shkaratan, O.V. Kryshantovskaya. I think it's a good school for us. I recently wrote an article on professional choice and referred to those articles which are representative of the subject of professional specialization of the youth. Those were serious research. Really good and methodologically sound. And theoretically it is also worth learning". (Transcript of interview with I.P. Popova).

Fourthly, there are almost no studies of so-called "marginal occupations" related to the darker side of society - beggars, professional criminals, profiteers (in the Soviet slang they were *fartsovschiki (spivs)*), restaurant musicians (in Soviet parlance, *labuhi (musos)*), prostitutes, and also there are almost no studies low-qualified workers occupied with heavy and "dirty" work - nurses and hospital cleaners, janitors, hospital pathologists, dishwashers in cafes and restaurants, cashiers, etc. Also there is no known research of professionals engaged in private practice in medicine, education, law, crafts (shoemaking, for example), though there were legally working private doctors (dentists, homeopaths, massage therapists) in the USSR. In addition, there were private lawyer practices and legal counseling, tutoring, semi-private handicraft workshops, dressmaking, beach and wedding photographers, re-touch artists and jewelers.

¹¹ In 1979 a critical review was published by N.A.Aitov, a sociologist from Ufa, concerning the article of T.A. Stepanian about the formation of Soviet intelligentsia (Stepanyan, 1979; Aitov, 1979).

Official propaganda denied the existence of many "shadow occupations" in the USSR as absent in a socialist society and characteristic only of "moribund capitalism". This is why modern researchers of late Soviet history of occupations (Romanov, Yarskaya-Smirnova, 2007) were forced to rely on sketchy and often unreliable memories, rare messages in the Soviet press, and Soviet detective stories, where one could see some elements of "the shadow life" of socialist society. Soviet studies of unqualified "dirty" activities were not available, since it was believed that the percentage of qualified labor was growing and working conditions were improving, while inequality and exploitation were impossible under socialism. Besides, the study of "marginal occupations" often relies on the methods of social anthropology and ethnography, which are infrequently used in Soviet sociology. Consequently, this became an additional obstacle for filling in this knowledge gap. We believe that the lack of research on "marginal occupations" is a very serious gap in the knowledge base of Soviet sociology, because outside the attention of Soviet sociologists there remained a complex world that did not fit the qualification schemes of the social structure.

Finally, the Soviet sociology did not pay attention to the problems of professional power and expert division of labor within the professional groups. Close discussion themes were divided into "organizing" and "performing" labor and were associated with the question of the possible existence of professional managers in the socialist economy. This theme was painful for Soviet ideologists, because overseas critics of real socialism pointed to the emergence in the Soviet Union of professional managers, who manage the means of production and who had been recruited from the nomenclature and formed a "new class" of bureaucracy. The main critical attacks on the façade of the official models of social structure came from dissidents and political and scientific elite of the socialist countries - such as M. Djilas, author of the book, "New class" (Djilas, 1992) and M.S. Voslenskiy, who published essays on the life of the party and the economic elite in the Soviet Union (Voslenskiy, 1991). Accordingly, a number of the Soviet sociologists acknowledged managerial work as "professional", requiring not practical leadership experience, but knowledge of the science behind organization and management. The ability to rely on ACS (automatic control systems) are the signs of professional management" (Blyahman, Shkaratan, 1973, p. 274). Others were the supporters of the official point of view; that although the USSR needed some specific organizational functions (Epstein, 1970), this had nothing to do with the emergence of an independent group of professional managers:

Leaders of all ranks are constantly changed by those workers who have shown the signs of leadership and agreed to take on the organizational position. Heads of governmental entities and collective farms, as well as Secretaries of party committees are elected and re-

elected in a timely manner, and report to the population or to the Communists. Administrative apparatus possesses no special ownership of means of production in socialist society(Rutkevich,1980,p.206-218).

In other words, the important topics of the Sociology of occupations and professions remained behind the scenes.

Certainly, it is difficult to provide a full picture of research by sociologists on the subject of occupations and professions within one article. We have given the ideological and epistemic framework for these studies and shown, in the example of the study of the social structure of the USSR, how exactly the professionalism in Soviet sociology was understood. In addition we related the ideas and results of the Soviet sociologists' works with broader studies of occupational groups. This gave the opportunity to see that, despite all the ideological and censorship obstacles in the Soviet social sciences, there was remarkable progress in the study of occupational groups.

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