

**NAIRA HAKOBYAN**, *Doctor of Psychology, Professor*  
*National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia*  
*International Scientific-Educational Center*

**E-mail:** [nhakobyan@mail.ru](mailto:nhakobyan@mail.ru)

**LIDA ARAMYAN**, *PhD, Associate Professor*  
*Khachatur Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University, Republic of Armenia*

**E-mail:** [aramyanlida23@aspu.am](mailto:aramyanlida23@aspu.am)

**ANNA KHACHATRYAN**, *PhD, Associate Professor*  
*National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia*  
*International Scientific-Educational Center*

**E-mail:** [anna.khachatryan@isec.am](mailto:anna.khachatryan@isec.am)

## **ABSTRACT**

*The article discusses the phenomenon of anomie in a socio-psychological context. Anomic psychological processes are compared with the issue of the professional deformation of a person. The research question concerns the definition of the interconnection between the phenomena of anomie and professional deformation. The scientific innovation of the article is that professional deformation can be considered as one of the signs of anomie. This article aims to show that the phenomenon of anomie can be revealed through the term of professional deformation. The comparative analysis of theoretical approaches to studies of anomie and professional deformation is presented to achieve this goal. Thus, the theoretical approaches of E. Durkheim, R. Merton, P. Sorokin, A. Markova, Yu. were discussed. Punanova and others. The main results presented in the article show the key points of anomie description and understanding in modern psychological science. The critical points of the literature review and discussion open the perspectives to study the phenomenon of professional deformation in the context of anomie issues.*

**Keywords:** *Anomie, professional deformation, social norms, society, stability, social integration, occupational stress, deviance, professional identity, social equilibrium, normlessness, workplace culture, alienation, occupational burnout, ethical erosion.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The issue of anomie is one of the most discussed problems in modern scientific, socio-philosophical and sociological disciplines. The need to study anomie is related to emerging risks that make modern society unstable and chaotic. The management of social processes is determined by many factors, among which anomie occupies a special place. The hidden influence of social anomie

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has led to the fact that this issue often remains in the shadows (Hakobyan et al., 2022).

In a stable society, the congruence of means and goals ensures normative behaviour. In an unstable society, the purposes and means are exaggerated, and, as a rule, deviant behaviour occurs. Simultaneously rejecting or substituting goals and means manifests revolutionary behaviour, rebellion and reversal. The other type of behaviour, when goals play a significant role and the choice of means is ignored, leads to antisocial behaviour or crime.

In the anomic condition of modern society, human activity is characterized by an increasing role of cognitive activity, increasing importance of the function of attention, active observation and control, processing of incoming information and decision-making under conditions of acute time shortage. Thus, work is almost always associated with mental and emotional stress, which can cause the development of nervous strain. Professional deformation extends to all aspects of a person's physical and mental organization, which change under the profession's influence. This influence is clearly negative. As the characteristic of anomie, professional deformation can lead to decreased work efficiency and difficulties in everyday life and communication.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The prominent French sociologist Emile Durkheim first described the phenomenon of social anomie. He singled out anomie as a manifestation of deviant behaviour. Moreover, explaining anomie, he emphasized that social rules play an essential role in regulating people's lives, so during crises or social changes, life experience ceases to correspond to the ideals embodied in the context of social norms. As a result, people feel confused and disoriented, and social norms are destroyed, contributing to deviant behaviour (Konty, 2005; Wohl, 2016). Deviant behaviour is a human activity or social phenomenon that does not correspond to a society's officially or de facto established norms. As a result, it may impact the rationality of the economic choice of a person.

According to E. Durkheim, social rules play an important role in regulating people's lives because prescribed norms govern the behaviour of society, as a result of which people know what to expect from others and also know what other members of society expect of them. Their life experience is more or less consistent with the expectations determined by social norms (Durkheim, 2014).

E. Durkheim noted that anomic states in society occur significantly often in the conditions of economic crises and dynamic reforms. At the moment of social disorganization, whether it is the result of a painful crisis or an unexpectedly favourable situation, society is temporarily unable to exert the necessary influence on a person (Durkheim, 2013).

E. Durkheim characterizes the concept of anomie as a state of society with a systemic breakdown of the norms guaranteeing social order. Social anomie indicates that the norms of behaviour are seriously violated and weakened. Anomie is a psychological condition characterized

by a sense of disorientation when people are faced with the need to uphold conflicting norms (Durkheim, 2013, 214). Anomie occurs when the division of labour does not create sufficiently compelling contacts between members of society, as a result of which the adequate regulation of social relations is neglected (Durkheim, 2014, 291-300). Moreover, anomie results from an incomplete transition from mechanical to organic solidarity because the objective basis of the latter - the social division of labour - develops faster than the moral support in the collective consciousness. A necessary condition for the occurrence of anomie is the conflict of needs and interests and the lack of the possibility to satisfy them (Durkheim, 2014, 301-306).

It is known that F. Durkheim's theory of anomie is developed in two different scientific directions. Adherents of the first scientific direction consider anomie as an absence of moral discipline and emphasize distinguishing between normative tension and coalition of norms. In this case, the individual's ethical and social standards do not contribute to achieving the intended goals (Zhao & Cao, 2010; Goode, 2015). Meanwhile, the research of the followers of the second scientific direction is based on the theoretical model of modern society, which consists of a system of different groups. These groups are in various conflicts, almost leading to social changes in society (Hakobyan et al., 2023; Granovskaya & Nikolskaya, 2001).

According to R. Merton, anomie occurs when people fail to achieve the goals imposed by society through the legal means they set. He believed that anomie arises from a gap between a society's cultural goals and the socially approved means of achieving them. In anomie, elements of shared recognition of legal and moral norms that lead to defined goals are missing (Merton, 1966, 87-96). To achieve a goal, people use two types of means: legalized, socially approved, and anyway that leads to success.

The legality and effectiveness of the means to achieve the goal do not always coincide, so people are faced with a choice: if the goals become a priority, any means is considered justified and vice versa. The goal loses meaning if the main thing is the means (Steenvoorden, 2015). Merton notes that when people seek financial success but are convinced that it cannot be achieved through socially approved means, they turn to illegal means and even crime to achieve the goal. An imbalance between goals and means leads to anomie. According to R. Merton, each person adapts to the state of anomie in his own way, either showing submissive or deviant behaviour, where he rejects the ideas and norms established by society (Merton, 1938). This is why R. Merton developed five "anomic" ways for an individual to adapt to the environment: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreat, and rebellion. In this context, innovation is presented as one of the manifestations of anomie in society. Innovation in modern society is not only perceived as a sign of the development of society but also as a mechanism that disrupts the foundations of society's stability (Merton, 1966, 132-140). The phenomenon of anomie is linked with the studies on professional activity, particularly the tendencies of deformation of professional interests, lack of professional norms of behaviour and deformation of Self-perception.

The famous Russian sociologist Pitirim Sorokin introduced the term "professional

deformation”. However, at present, this concept is perceived as certain destructions that accompany an individual’s work activity and negatively affect its effectiveness and positive self-esteem (Zeer, 1997). In a broader sense, professional deformation is a mark left on each person by professional activity.

Neither the Russian, Western, or American schools of psychology have a common understanding of professional deformation. The term describes the individual personality structure and situations that have a catastrophic impact on the individual’s psychological structure and affect work efficiency and relationships with a partner (Mikhailova, 2017; Savina, 2021).

This also applies to working in the same profession for a long time; in other words, this category is subject to the opposite influence of time when there is the appearance of undesirable professional characteristics, changes in professional behaviour, as well as changes in certain lines of the mental world and character that arise due to the performance professional responsibilities.

According to A.K. Markova, six risk factors hinder an individual's professional development (Markova, 1996).

Personality deformation is understood as a change in certain of its qualities, which are, in a certain way, the following:

- 1) changes that are associated with age;
- 2) long-term psychological stress, which can lead to poor working conditions;
- 3) crisis of professional development;
- 4) monotony of work, which leads to boredom, lack of interest in work, low productivity, easy irritability, decreased cognitive activity, fatigue syndrome,
- 5) professional fatigue; consuming someone’s internal resources and inconsistencies in the guidance system; temporary decrease in physical and cognitive productivity,
- 6) professional deformation.

However, it should be noted that in the process of professional activity, psychological changes occur that negatively affect the level of professionalism of the individual and his psychological health.

G.D. Trunov defines professional deformation as the penetration of the “Professional Self” into the “Human Self,” meaning that with professional deformation, the impact of professional frameworks and attitudes is not limited exclusively to the professional sphere (Trunov, 12).

A.K. Markova, in turn, connects professional deformation with adverse changes in the socio-psychological structure of the individual (Markova, 1996). In this sense, one can find

parallels between professional deformation and anomie issues. For example, as the author rightly notes, behavioural stereotypes, professional habits, communication styles and skills are changing, which makes it difficult to successfully carry out professional activities. Manifestations of professional deformation, in this case, can be a formal attitude towards performing functional duties, the transfer of a larger share of specific professional actions, stereotypes and attitudes to behaviour outside of work, and others. Also, professional deformation causes undesirable transformations in the individual's mental characteristics. We are talking about mental processes, states, properties, qualities and structure of personality, including its conscious and subconscious components. These transformations entail negative changes in the individual's professional capabilities and inclinations.

The complex of negative consequences of the profession's impact on the personality is defined as professional deformation.

The following types of professional deformation are distinguished (Firsov, 2000):

- professional stress;
- personal stress;
- stress of responsibility;
- emotional and motivational fatigue;
- state of mental tension;
- state of nervous overstrain;
- emotional exhaustion;
- professional crisis;
- “compassionate fatigue” syndrome;
- indifference;
- callousness;
- cynicism.

According to E.F. Zeer, many years of performing the same professional activity leads to the appearance of professional fatigue, impoverishment of the repertoire of ways to perform activities, loss of professional skills, and decreased performance. Professional destruction may develop at a certain stage of professionalization (Zeer, 1997). Professional deformation is a gradually accumulated change in the existing structure of activity and personality, which negatively affects labour productivity and interaction with other participants in this process, as well as the cognitive-emotional development of the individual himself (Pryajnikov, 1997; Punanova, 2000).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodological bases of this research are the theoretical approaches of E. Durkheim and R. Merton on the issues of anomie definitions and the opinions of Yu. Punanova and A. Markova about the characteristics of professional deformation as well. The research method was a comparative analysis of theoretical approaches to anomie and professional deformation issues.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Personality deformation is understood as a change in certain qualities, which, to a certain extent, determine the individual's psychological health and quality of life.

Professional deformation manifests in various behavioural acts that have a negative connotation and negatively affect the process and result of professional activities.

In the process of working, a person directly encounters new conditions for him. An objective need for adaptation arises, as a result of which the norms and values of the environment are adopted, as well as its transformation.

As a result of “the interaction” between the individual and the profession, an active qualitative transformation by the individual within his inner world occurs – leading to a fundamentally new structure and way of life, i.e. creative self-realization in the profession, as well as personal and professional development.

This picture of work adaptation is often called the professional transformation of the personality. The genesis of the human character in professional activity can be considered as development, enrichment and derogation, degradation, and deformed existence. On the one hand, a person improves in this type of activity, acquires specific skills and abilities, etc.. On the other hand, various negative phenomena arise, combined into the professional deformation concept.

The determinants of the occurrence of professional deformation are unfavourable options for overcoming age-related crises, the subject, object and content of the profession, the social environment, and vital and random events. The main features of professional deformation include psychophysiological changes, professional activity stereotypes, professional development stagnation, character accentuations and psychological defences.

It is characteristic that representatives of the “man-to-man” type of profession, who constantly work with people, are at greater risk of professional deformation than representatives of the “man-to-technology” and “man-to-nature” professions. This is due to the fact that communication with other people necessarily includes their impact on the specialist. A specialist who feels empathy and empathizes with the client, as it were, accepts

the personality traits of his partner in business communication and his problems, which is unsafe for his mental health.

Speaking about the consequences of the impact of professional activity in a social sphere, we can highlight both positive consequences for the individual - as “personal growth”, and negative ones (professional deformation, normlessness, situations of uncertainty, and finally - anomie).

Among the indicators of personal growth of an employee, it should be noted such consequences of professional activity as a deeper awareness of himself, an adequate understanding of the people around him and current events, a productive analysis of life situations, the ability to reflect, developed skills for productively overcoming life’s difficulties and the consequences of mental trauma, communication skills, the ability for self-regulation, empathy, positive changes in values, expressed tolerance for dissidents and the opening of new cognitive horizons.

At the same time, we note some negative consequences of the impact of the professional environment on the personal growth of an employee, such as the pronounced effect of the negative mechanism of projection onto oneself and loved ones, the adoption of the role of a “teacher”, excesses of self-control, pronounced stereotyping of thinking and separation from living experience, coldness in communication or a cynical attitude towards others.

The comparative analysis of the various theoretical approaches showed that among the characteristics of anomie, two groups of negative factors can be distinguished:

- objective (organizational and role) - generated by the conditions of the work itself or its improper organization. For example, overwork, excessive psychological tension in working with clients, negative socio-psychological climate in the team, lack of norms, powerlessness and social isolation.

- subjective - personality characteristics.

Both groups are interconnected. On the one hand, the long-term psycho-traumatic influence of objective factors can lead to changes and deformation of professional activity. On the other hand, subjective factors, namely, deformation factors of personal growth, insufficient self-regulation, and the failure of socially significant value attitudes, negatively affect the perception of the professional environment and working conditions. In other words, the interconnection of anomie and professional deformation can be formulated in the position that one of the signs of the phenomenon of anomie can be considered professional deformation of the personality.

## CONCLUSION

In the most general form, professional deformation is not only a violation of already learned methods of action but also changes associated with the transition to subsequent stages of professional development, as well as changes related to society's transforming processes, anomic characteristics of the society, age, physical and nervous exhaustion.

Any professional activity already at the stage of development deforms the personality. Many human qualities remain unclaimed. As professionalization progresses, the success of an activity begins to be determined by an ensemble of professionally essential qualities that have been "exploited" for years. Some of them are gradually transformed into professionally undesirable qualities. At the same time, professional accentuations develop - overly expressed qualities and their combinations that negatively affect the activities and behavior of a specialist.

The phenomenon of professional deformation is accompanied by mental tension, psychological discomfort, anomie and crisis phenomena. Deformations caused by many years of performing the same professional activity often give rise to professionally undesirable qualities and change a person's professional behavior.

The professional deformation of the personality is influenced by a group of personal, organizational, and role factors that act in such a complex relationship and interdependence that, in each individual case, it is almost impossible to predict the absolute occurrence of professional deformation. Usually, the cause of this phenomenon is a combination of harmful anomic factors. In this situation, individual professional development can aggravate or smooth out their influence. Thus, the process of professional activity in cases which are psychologically traumatic for an employee can lead to a decrease in both the individual's ability to work and work productivity, as well as to negative changes in the psyche and loss of value orientations.

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