Engineering and blue-collar occupations prestige in the minds of industrial city students (Naberezhniye Chelny city experience)

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Abstract. In this research work an attempt is made to reveal the factors and level of engineering and working professions prestige in the minds of studying youth on the basis of empiric data. The results of research allow revealing the mechanism of social-professional self-identification of school-aged youth, on the basis of which an opportunity to study in a new way traditional system of profession-oriented work appears.

1. Introduction
Economic (market) and political reforms of the last two decades have brought significant changes in the composition, structure, and social stratification of professions, in society values and value orientations of youth and as a consequence in the hierarchy of professions prestige. A large number of scientific studies indicate that, formed in conditions of painful market reforms, hierarchy of occupational prestige is deformed, not meeting the development needs of the society, socio-professional groups, and to a considerable extent, misleading consciousness and behaviour of young people [1; 2; 3]. The prospects of Russian society development are challenged by critically low status and prestige of scientific workers, teachers, doctors, culture workers, engineers, and many working professionals of skilled labor. It negatively influences the views and life plans of youth as well. Thus, problems of professional self-determination of youth, status and prestige of professions are interrelated. In the contemporary circumstances they are not only relevant, but also acquire the priority character of political, economic and moral-ideological problem of the whole society. Issues related to the qualification and creative potential development, quantitative reproduction of engineers and workers primarily on large city-forming enterprises are particularly important for such industrial centres as Naberezhnye Chelny.

2. Main part
For sociology, perspective understanding of the profession is neither a simple separate system function of the social labour division, not single individuals properties but social-group reality. Both professions and to a varying degree institutionalized social groups exist both in the real world and in the symbolic one, in the world of public consciousness and cultural views [4; 5]. In our opinion it is possible to distinguish at least three relatively independent aspects of their lives and activities that
should be taken into account in the measurement and analysis of occupational prestige. 1. Assigned functions, role they play in the functioning and development processes of economy and society. For example, the role of scientists and engineers in providing the moral, aesthetic and intellectual development of society and the younger generation. According to this aspect there are both retrospective and prospective views in the public consciousness. They are largely mediated by dominant ideologies, political rhetoric, the style and content of media reports. 2. Sustainable socio-cultural features of the group and its typical representatives. They manifest in the level of education, culture and fellowship, in the style of consumption and behaviour, in attributes of clothes, appearance, in the vocabulary and in the speech style. All they differentiate groups and at the same time are of stratigical nature. 3. Third relatively independent aspect is connected with the socio-economic characteristics of the group. They indicate profession socioeconomic status, income, living standards, working conditions, career, realization of needs and interests. In addition to the real and objective existence all these aspects and associated properties are reflected in society's symbolic being.

In methodology of several studies professions are measured at two different yet interrelated properties: the degree of their social recognition and the "profitability" [6; 7].

Public recognition, legitimacy of professions put forth remarkable autonomy from their profitability. According to research materials young people both employed and studying prefers profitable, cost-effective employment forms and fields. For youth social categories and groups engaged in such spheres, as a rule, are referential, embodying life success. In the context of a difficult choice substantive aspects of professions naturally become less important. As we can see paradoxical and marginal types of people in a transitional period probably begin developing, first of all, in the face of today's young generation, typological certain qualities adequate to the market economy model in Russia. We note that the parameter "profession profitability" in our approach is included in the concept of "profession attractiveness" as a leading component. From the standpoint of our approach we cannot agree with the attempts of strict distinction of professional and economic stratification. The economic aspect is the necessary attribute of all professions and distinguishes them from amateur practice. From this point of view close correlations between income indicators of socio-professional groups and professional self-prestige are not random ones.

New concepts such as "image of a profession", "pathos of a profession" need additional analysis to justify their inclusion in concept structure of occupational prestige.

Occupational prestige is considered in terms of their attractiveness for students of a large industrial city. This phenomenon of social and group consciousness manifests on a personal level as relatively stable value relation to the professions. It has multivariate, complicated determination and formation mechanisms; it also executes regulatory and incentive functions [8]. In accordance with our approach attractiveness assessments of occupations reflect first of all socio-economic and stratification characteristics of professional groups.

Naberezhnye Chelny city both as an urban centre and as a complex social environment, where students’ ideas about the occupational prestige are formed, has its typological and "individual" features. This is a relatively young, large, multi-ethnic and fast growing modern city. Gradually losing its monofunctionality and direct dependence on the base of city-forming enterprise, however, it maintains and develops its industrial profile. Transformational crisis of 90s significantly reduced the security, status and prestige of engineers and workers not only of KAMAZ plant, but most of other enterprises of the city. These processes became significantly reflected in the consciousness of the population and especially young people. They contributed to the decrease of the industrial professions’ attractiveness. Large industrial enterprises, as studies show, are significantly in arrears of business, trade, finance and management in the attractiveness of the socio-economic labor conditions [9; 10]. These areas and industries acquire the status of prestigious and promising ones in young people’s minds. They become more preferred as spheres of employment, career and objects of professional
ambitions. All this leads to a gradual allocation of "youth" industries, on the one hand, and sectors and enterprises with aging contingent workers, on the other one. General demographic decline of the 90s and mass release of the first generation employees of large enterprises out of the economically active age also exacerbate the deficit situation, shortage of personnel. In this difficult context the problem of students’ orientation in engineering and working professions assumes a special relevance. Major factors in this orientation, of course, are the status and prestige characteristics of the most demanded production occupations. Modern youth as the second generation of citizens is the medium of new tendencies more adequate to the requirements and market economy conditions. The empirical base of our research are the data obtained during specific applied sociological research among pupils of the 8th, 9th and 11th forms of secondary schools in Naberezhnye Chelny.

The ten-point scale methodology, proven in the framework of Novosibirsk project, was used to assess the occupational attractiveness within this research. Those surveyed were offered a list of 32 best known, mass, and for some items popular in the city professions. The task of measuring the socio-economic status and characteristics of professions forced us to introduce the concept of "social potential of a profession", which was determined through the list of indicators reflected in the toolkit. More precisely, using this concept the following occupational groups were assessed: workers, engineers and economic ones. Pupils’ value orientation in the sphere of labour and future professional activity were also assessed. They reflect the needs and interests of individuals, and the typical conditions and ways of their implementation. These also reflect stereotypes of mass culture media broadcast, typical characteristics of youth subculture in the transition period, influence of different reference groups. They provide selective attitude to their profession, highlighting the most significant and valuable properties. We proceeded from the assumption that the assessment of occupational prestige is formed in a certain extent on the basis of pupils’ value orientations interaction in the sphere of labour and socio-economic characteristics of professions and their development level. It is about domination in the pupils’ minds of "materialist" values, on the one hand, and attention and interest focus on their socio-economic and, consequently, their status-stratification characteristics, on the other hand. Anticipating the received materials analysis one can say that there is a strong correlation between performance estimates of prestige and social assessments of potential trades.

"Social potential of the profession" is understood, within this research, as the information image of its social opportunities in the consciousness and the submissions of the pupils. Social potential of the profession is a kind of reflection of socially stratified status of professional groups.

Differences between workers and engineering professions in the students’ assessment largely reflect real differences in the nature and content of the work of these socio-professional groups and, therefore, can be considered to be functionally justified. However, the differences in the estimates of engineers and technicians occupations on the one hand, and economic professions on the other, are, in our opinion, the reflection of the developed in the last decades deformations and distortions of stratified system of both society and major cities.

Status of economic, "market" professions benefits should be seen as dysfunctional and do not reflect the more complex or more creative work. They are the structural constraints of normal and sustainable development of both the economy and society as a whole. The considered value orientations and evaluations of potential professions underlie notions of prestige and attractiveness of existing in the society of professions and specialties. Of course, they reflect local and regional characteristics of the economy, labour market and employment. In this regard, Naberezhnye Chelny, as well as Tatarstan as a whole differs in sustainable vector of socio-economic development in the last decade. However, this development is still uneven and does not exclude serious imbalances. Sociocultural views of young people, clearly lag behind the movement of the economy and its needs. However, they though with some distortion, but reflect both yesterday's and today's working conditions, characteristics and deformation of socio-professional stratification and at the same time they are both the factors and the development restraints.
In general, the service-sector jobs for students are more attractive than production ones. Consistently the economic and market-based professions are perceived as elite. The study revealed the presence of gender differences in the perception and evaluation of many professions. Professions related to education, culture, health and activity in the service sector tends to be more highly valued by the girls, and manufacturing, technical training preferred by the young men.

3. Conclusion.
According to our hypothesis the youth when assessing the attractiveness of the profession pays their attention mainly to the socio-economic characteristics, but in varying degrees, the socio-cultural features of typical representatives of professional groups are also taken into account. This factor is particularly active when there is a clear mismatch of their appearance and lifestyle normative notions and stereotypes of youth subculture. This is probably one of the manifestations of cognitive and cultural dissonance. Workers today for the most part are not native attributes of success, which is focused by mass media and the youth of today, they differ significantly from the reference group also in lifestyle, consumption and communication. Factors increasing the prestige of working professions in the minds of young people, obviously, are the processes associated not only with the appreciation of the real socio-economic status of their respective groups, but are also associated with changes in the dominant ideology, with the development of a new style of life, communication and self-representation. Much more attention should be paid to the career prospects of young workers in the social policy companies, PR projects, and career-oriented work so that working professions would not be perceived as dead-end branches from the point of view of socio-tier development. The engineering profession according to our study, albeit slowly, but steadily is developing in the direction of improving the social status, potential and prestige. For Naberezhnye Chelny, as for large industrial center, it is a significant fact. This trend, of course, requires political, administrative and information support not only in the framework of a single city or region, but society as a whole. Raising the prestige of the engineering profession as well as working professionals, is a structural, strategic factor in the realization of tasks associated with the new industrialization of the economy with the development of high-tech and information technology and with the transition to innovative model of development.

4. References
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