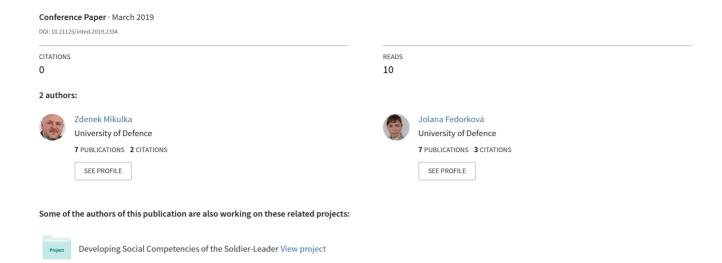# POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITS OF ETHICS EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DEFENCE − FUTURE MILITARY LEADERS OF THE ARMY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITS OF ETHICS EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DEFENCE - FUTURE MILITARY LEADERS OF THE ARMY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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Abstract.

The authors, in their contribution, which has the character of review studies, compile the knowledge, findings, and conclusions they have reached in previous studies and researches. Their aim is to evaluate the possibilities and limits of ethics education in the conditions of the University of Defence and to design a model of ethics education for military students - future military leaders. Authors concluded that it is necessary to extend the existing teaching of theoretical and applied ethics and to connect it with a suitable tool enabling the long-term development of students - future military leaders. The authors' proposed model of ethics education, therefore, represents a construction involving the theoretical background, identifying subjects and objects of ethics education and their interactions using the proposed application of the method, „11 Principles of Effective Character Education" by Thomas Lickona and Matthew Davidson into the conditions of the University of Defence. The acquired knowledge will be used by the authors in the draft of the Model of Ethical Education and Ethical Leadership of the Czech Armed Forces.

Keywords: Ethics, ethics education, military students, character, military leaders.

1 INTRODUCTION

Morality itself, whether perceived from a theological or philosophical point of view (how to do things right), or from a psychological point of view (why we do it the way we do it) is an important object of interest at the level of the individual, the team and the higher organizational unit in armed forces environment. Both points of view seek to make morality scientifically researched, and both have the same goal of creating a universal system that allows the quality of moral behaviour. Despite all the efforts of the scientific approach to morality, it cannot be understood only as a matter of science. Quite the opposite. Its indisputable presence in specific areas of human activity, including the military, is confirmed as irreplaceable.

In order to ensure the positive impact of ethical education and ethical leadership in the Czech Armed Forces (CAF), it is necessary to deal with moral integrity. Moral integrity in this sense points to the state of the individual, to the extent of his inner moral integrity, which stems from the choice between separation and integration, that is, from deciding between desires that should become part of ourselves and which we should reject [1]. From an ethical point of view, integrity is connected to a moral commitment and with virtue (areté), which refers to courage and self-control. In this case, virtue primarily means an ability to correct one's behaviour - to find its extent. With reference to this thought construct, moral integrity can be defined as a quality of moral self-control [2]. This understanding of moral integrity, however, carries a risk of a non-objective judgement of one's own behaviour in relation to others, which does not provide the necessary guarantee of moral conduct. A person morally integrated into a societal-cultural-political system of a certain moral self-perception (for example national socialism, communism, apartheid, populism etc.) may, in fact, act immorally. Another problematic moment of moral integrity based on the ethics of virtue is the influence of situational contexts created by cultural, social, familial, economic or political behavioral formulas on the impartiality of moral decision making. These relationships naturally influence behaviour.

The concept of moral integrity coming from deontological ethics appears to be more substantial and practically useful. According to this understanding, as long as we do not behave in accordance with the moral law, we do find ourselves in a state of dishonour not only in regard to the law but also in regard to ourselves. A dissonance between moral decision-making and behaviour takes place and as a result of this, a disintegration of moral integrity (wholeness) of the person [2]. In the deontological thought construct, it is possible, in relation to the military profession, to define moral integrity as a stable behavioral model corresponding to the values the military professional accepted [3].

It is apparent from the above that the basis of an educational process in the area of military ethics is a required set of military values, the way and rate of integration of these values into the system of a military organization as such and a level of moral integrity of individuals operating in a military environment. The moral values of the military profession themselves may be hidden behind demonstrations and symbols of material (uniform, ranks, ceremonies, rituals, badges, orders, and decorations etc.) and of non-material nature (acts, events and a way of their retelling and also a specific way applying principles of hierarchization into a military organization). The question of the real influence of thus declared values on specific human actions in individual sociopolitical and historical contexts is equally important as is the degree of tension between values connected to the military profession and individual civic and moral-value orientation of an individual. The individual can be exposed to a conflict within their conscience and, latently, to a danger of a real professional failure. A soldier is, therefore, as an individual, faced with decisions about how he is willing to engage himself in the military (fighting) activity and what kind of conduct can be considered professional while conducting the military (fighting) activity and what kind of conduct can be considered professional in this sense. At the same time, it is true that even the obeying of a command does not release an individual - soldier from responsibility for actions or decisions that they make while engaged in military (fighting) activity [4].

It is in this context that the effort to develop the quality of moral behaviour of military professionals with the help of ethical education and ethical leadership as a development of a good character and good action is to be understood. The basis of this is the moral values in addition to civic also specifically military. Their fulfillment enables the building and development of Warrior Ethos -an ethical base which is an absolute behavioral requirement for all CAF members and which "....embodies ideals and obligations of military services" and "... is expressed by traditional military values: responsibility and a sense of duty, justice, dedication, valour, loyalty and honour" [5]. However, in terms of a military organization, namely the CAF, an ability to engage in a professionally and personally matured moral attitude, allowing the construction and development of Warrior Ethos, cannot be taken for granted. The CAF must be capable of defining, building, developing and then requiring such a position, which ultimately means building and developing a system of ethics education and the ethics leadership of military professionals. The Doctrine of the Army of the Czech Republic [5] highlights the need for Warrior Ethos and its development and emphasizes its preservation and development under the CAF conditions. In this context, it is necessary to perceive the tension between the doctrine, considering Warrior Ethos as a basis and emphasizes it as an absolute requirement in relation to all members of the CAF, and the results of the analysis [6], reflecting the army reality in relation to ethics education and ethics leadership, these basic tools for building and developing a combat ethos [4].

From the comparison of approaches to ethics and ethics education in selected armies [4], the authors have learned that if the so-called functional concept is preferred in the environment of these armed and defence forces, the educational emphasis is put on the effectiveness of ethics leadership by creating the required patterns of behaviour. The risk of this approach is the possibility of suppressing the moral autonomy of educated military personnel. On the other hand, the prioritization of the aspirational concept emphasizes the moral development of the members of the armed forces, which is as important as military effectiveness. In this case, ethics education focuses on the building and development of proper behaviour resulting from its own moral autonomy [4].

In relation to fulfilling the role of the officer as a fully qualified member of the armed forces, fulfilling a social role that has a moral dimension, the functional attitude to ethics education is considered to be inadequate as it does not fully respect the individual as an autonomous moral factor [7]. For this reason, for the ethics education of students of the University of Defence (hereinafter UoD), future career officers, aspirational approach, which further develops the concept of service in the armed forces as an honorary mission and more emphasizes the commitment to ethical limitations on the use of military potential, seems to be more appropriate [4]. The proposal for its implementation into the UoD conditions in accordance with the results and findings of the researches [4], [6], [8], [9] is contained in the following chapters.

This article was written as part of the project "Development of Social Competencies of the Military Leader", implemented by the Department of Leadership, Faculty of Military Leadership of the University of Defence of the Czech Republic. The aim of this article is to evaluate the possibilities and limits of ethics education under the terms of UoD and to design a model of ethics education for military students - future military leaders.

2   METHODOLOGY

The subject of scientific interest and the applied research of the authors were full-time students of the military studies of the University of Defence in a total of 151, aged 19-31, passing through the system of leadership education as well as the current form of ethics education in the CAF and specifically at the UoD. The subject of the study was military ethics and ethics education (ethics leadership). Authors used selected specific methods, namely the content analysis of sources containing theoretical approaches and the bases of moral philosophy, sources of historical knowledge of military ethics, resources describing models of ethical education, documents relating to Warrior Ethos, issues of military ethics and ethical education, sources of knowledge about attitude to ethical education for selected armed and defence forces [7] and analysis of the current form of ethics education and ethics leadership in the CAF [6]. Other methods used were the method of written questioning for measuring moral integrity and the synthesis of available knowledge about the state of implementation of ethics education and ethics propaedeutics in the CAF.

In order to analyze the current form of ethics education and ethical leadership in the CAF and specifically in the UoD, tools for internal strategic analysis were used; specifically a combination of one heuristic (an experimental solution of a problem that does not have a clear algorithm or solution method) and two analytical methods. The "Delphi" method was used to collect data and formulations of the set of statements about the current form of ethics education and ethical leadership in the CAF. The obtained set of statements was subject to analysis by the "tree of problems" heuristics, which identified key claims and defined the relationship between the individual statements and the key statement. Then an analysis of the influence of the interested parties was done. The goal was to identify the individual interested parties that may participate in the solving of problems connected to ethical education and ethical leadership in the CAF environment, formulate their interests and goals in terms of the problems being solved and suggest a specific solution for them [4].

In accordance with deontological starting points, on the principle of correlation of the monitored personality dimensions of the tested person with a value position defined with the help of Shalom Schwarz's theory, the combination of tests NEO-PI-R Personality Inventory) and PVQ (Portrait Values Questionnaire) was used in the written questionnaires [4]. Five dimensions of personality was measured by the NEO-PI-R inventory: neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, friendliness and consciousness [10]; the inventory of PVQ was used for ten types of values: security, conformism, tradition, independence /self-determination/, stimulation, self-indulgence, /hedonism/, power, success, universalism, and benevolence, which make up the four value types of a higher order (conservatism, openness to change, ego-enhancement and overcoming yourself).

The studies [4], [8], [9] of CAF members - students of UoD that were carried out proved the layout of their personality and value characteristics. They emphasized the preference of openness, imagination, sensitivity to aesthetic stimuli, sensitivity to inner feelings, giving preference to diversity, curiosity and emphasis on independent judgement, new experience, experiences, impressions and emotions, unconventional values and behaviour, prioritization of change before stability, and readiness to critically reformulate valid standards and assume new social, ethical and political values.

Statistical methods were used for data processing, namely mathematical-statistical method of the Pearson correlation coefficient to determine the dependence between the variables, the statistical parameter method of the Student T-test for independent sampling and correlation, the Shapiro-Wilk test for verifying the normality of data, Cohen's "d" for monitoring of the material significance. Multiple regression analysis methods were used to determine the predictive validity of psychological and value variables. All hypotheses [4] were tested at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. The IBM SPSS Statistics 20 and Statistica CZ 12 [4] were used for calculations.

3   RESULTS

The authors suggest the deontological-utilitarian concept of morality as the theoretical basis of the model of ethics education and ethical leadership of the CAF members, which allows the combination of ethics of duty and ethics of virtue. In a deontological context, the authors suggest emphasizing the cognitive - rational aspect, that is, the development of skill to rationally judge the correctness or incorrectness of behaviour in relation to the rationalized norm (functional approach). In a utilitarian context, the authors suggest to emphasize the development of a good character (aspirational approach), the education focused on the interconnection of the reason to act with the search for a benefit or use and the limitation of suffering and pain (that with the fulfillment of virtue). The authors

suggest completing this deontological – utilitarian approach with a value orientation based on the theory of Shalom Schwarz and a construct of moral decision-making/reasoning based on the theory of moral reasoning of Lawrence Kohlberg, emphasizing the way the person perceives the moral dilemma.

The analyses [4] carried out proved that the mode of ethical education has to be inevitably linked to command and decision-making authorities of the CAF and has to come from a doctrinal approach based on the development of a warrior ethos [5], which delegates ethical education to the position of the main tool for building and development of a fighting ethos. In this context, the authors point out the tension between the Doctrine of the CAF, which considers the fighting ethos to be its foundation and emphasizes it as an absolute requirement of all members of the CAF and as an every-day reality of the life of individual CAF units (including education-focused ones). This tension was proved by an analysis of ethical education in the CAF [6]. In every-day life, a CAF unit does not correspond to the perception of meaning and importance of professional ethics and the level of implementation of ethics education or ethics leadership as required by the doctrine. The requirement comes from a concept that gives ethics education the role of the main tool for the development of a warrior ethos. The analysis carried out proved [6], that the inner environment of the CAF is not sufficiently ready for a doctrinal approach to military ethics and ethics education. Due to this, the practical implementation of a systematically understood ethics education and ethics leadership has to take this limit into account also in connection with the fact that there is no alternative to ethics education and ethics leadership for the fulfillment of doctrinal requirements for the building and development of a fighting ethos in the CAF environment [6].

Due to the absence of a suitable complex model of ethics education and ethics leadership for the CAF members, the authors propose to create this model on a platform of suitable, already-used and proven functional modes and subsequently establish specific programs of ethics education for individual groups and categories of the CAF members. The Berkowitz´s model of Character Education [12] offers itself in this context, Thomas Lickona's model of Character Education [13], Robert Olivar's program of Ethics Education [14] with the extension of Ladislav Lenz [15], Klasifikace metod mravní výchovy (Classification of Moral Education Methods) by Stanislava Kučerová [16] and Rozlišení metod mravní výchovy (Differentiation of moral education methods) by Pavel Vacek [17].

Berkowitz's model [12] is quite strictly focused on the environment of an educational institution of an elementary or secondary school type and highlights the need of a wholesome approach to the personality of the person educated and also on the mutual interaction of an adult model (teacher, educator, parent) with a pupil (minor, adolescent). Despite the overall complexity of his specific target and the interconnectedness of his emphases with the school environment does not allow for an application in a CAF environment and use it as a starting model of ethics education of military professionals.

Robert Olivar's program of ethics education [14] with the extension by Ladislav Lenz [15], despite the spread, availability of methodical materials and generous official support from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, is not applicable for ethics education within the preparation and leadership of military professional for these reasons:

- it does not offer sufficiently wide ethically-philosophical reflection, is not based on any theoretical starting point, his focuses on "learning the good" are rather therapeutic-pedagogical;

- the concept of the program is aimed at finding an answer to the question of how to live in the best understanding and harmony with the surrounding world, does not, however, offer a satisfactory answer as to why live with the world in this understanding and harmony - the existential dimension of a human life is not dealt with here;

- the program does not contain a whole slew of topics that the authors consider key for ethics education and leadership of military professionals, for example: global security and the ethics of peaceful coexistence, bellum iustum, building of ethos, European traditions and values etc. and with its overall composition does not allow the framework of elementary (secondary) education to be exceeded.

Based on these facts, the authors recommend the use of Pavel Vacek's Rozlišení metod mravní výchovy [17] as the basis for the creation of the functional part of the ethics education model in CAF conditions. His ideas are based on those of Stanislava Kučerová's Klasifikace metod mravní výchovy [16] with the inclusion of highlights of Robert T. Hall and John U. Davis [18] for the inclusion of pupils into a situation of reflection with the help of a story, analytical discussion or a game (animation) with

moral content. The authors propose Thomas Lickona's project of character education [13] with the name 11 Principles of Effective Character Education as a second starting point, for the creation of the aspirational part of this model.

4 CONCLUSIONS

From the point of view of the method chosen, functional or aspirational approach to ethics education and ethics leadership can be considered in the preparation of the model of ethics education. The authors have already stated that the functional concept emphasizes morally correct professional behaviour and acting as a result of ethics education, the aspirational concept is focused on building and improving the character of military personnel. The decision-making between these two approaches, which are somehow tensioned, relates to the requirement for the required output and performance standards of the ethics education object (educand, student, course participant of ethics education, or ethics training). A possible solution is the use of the so-called mixed concept, which is an attempt to balance the tension between functional and aspirational approaches, and the authors also recommended it for ethics education and leadership in the CAF conditions.

Applying functional concepts to a mixed model of ethics education for the CAF members practically means creating a set of carefully thought-out ethics programs for individual categories of the "CAF soldiers non-students". The authors believe that in the CAF conditions, the creation of these categories should be related to their stratification by individual ranks (soldiers - members of the basic training course, non-commissioned officers, officers, lower officers, senior officers) partly by classification (air force, ground force, special units) and partly according to their professional focus (combat units, combat support units, combat troops).

The aspirational concept aims at developing the right course of action primarily through self-responsibility and moral autonomy. The adoption of an aspirational approach requires the CAF to make significant changes in their approach to ethics education, for example in connection with the requirement to create a sufficient theoretical basis for understanding the moral nature of a good character, as well as a requirement to analyse the influence of situational factors on the character and not only on the behaviour of military personnel, and it is necessary to revise, in connection with the aspirational concept, whether military education, specialized training and the level of organizational culture do not weaken and impair the capacity of moral autonomy in the educated subjects. Aspirational concept of ethical education is, in the author's proposed mixed concept of the ethics education and ethics leadership of the CAF members, associated with the training of the officer corps, which is related to the assumption that officers, as ethical models, will "pass on" their ethical competencies to their subordinates who will be inspired to follow an example of "their" officers. In the CAF conditions, this is the category of the "CAF soldiers students", which can be characterized on the basis of the research results [4], [8], [9] as follows:

- Emphasis on openness, imagination, sensitivity to aesthetic stimuli, sensitivity to inner feelings, preference for diversity, curiosity, and independent judgement can be expected to have a significant degree of passion for new experience, experiences, impressions, and emotions, receptiveness to new ideas, unconventional values and behaviour, compared to the group of the "CAF soldiers non-students" is less conservative;

- prefers the changes to stability, declares readiness to critically reformulate valid norms and assume new social, ethical and political values, prefers independence and freedom of action, shows the need for creativity, autonomy, stimulation and life challenges, joy, sensual enjoyment and self-satisfaction, puts more emphasis on recognition, personal performance, personal success based on the demonstration of abilities,

The authors also recommend that the content of ethics should integrate the following values for the target group of the "CAF soldiers students" on the basis of research [4], [8], [9]: safety (safety, harmony and stability of the individual and safety of society) (self-control or self-discipline in negotiation, enjoyment, behaviour, etc.), tradition (respect, devotion and acceptance of customs and ideas offered by traditions), success (success, recognition, personal performance) and power (cope with influence and power, to build prestige and social status), benevolence (benefit, protection and increase of people's prosperity, friendship, loyalty) and universalism (justice, respect, tolerance and care for the good of people).

The authors, based on the analyses [4], [6] and their own knowledge of the ethics of the "CAF soldier students", suggest:

- to build ethics education on a platform of long-term focused intensive care for a group of UoD students - future CAF officers using aspirational concept;

- to include a subject creating a unifying theoretical introduction to moral philosophy and to extend the number of lessons devoted to the issues of military ethics and ethics education in the curriculum for all faculties of the UoD in the first year of accredited study;

- to condition the knowledge requirements in this area by successfully passed exam;

- creating a knowledge potential linking up with a suitable tool to develop the character of the "CAF soldiers students" in the long term. The authors consider the project of "effective character education" by Thomas Lickona and "11 Principles of Effective Character Education" [13] by Matthew Davidson as a suitable tool.

For the application to the ethics education of the "CAF soldiers students" under the terms of UoD, the authors propose the following interpretation of its principles:

Principle 1: Effective education of the "CAF soldiers students" is built on the development of a set of key ethical values as a basis of good character. This set consists of the required social moral consensus (so-called moral minimum) and moral values of the military profession.

Principle 2: Character education must be comprehensively understood in terms of UoD in three actively and harmoniously developed components: the growth of moral cognition (thinking), the development of moral feeling, and the practice of moral behaviour.

Principle 3: Effective character education uses a comprehensive, targeted and proactive approach to developing the character of the "CAF soldiers students" which means that UoD uses all dimensions of institutional life as an opportunity to develop the character (ceremonies and ceremonials, procedures, influence of teachers, commanders, and UoD staff as models, integration of the character development program into all spheres of the institution's life).

Principle 4: Effective character education creates a UoD community that cares about its members (to feel good there).

Principle 5: Effective character education gives the CAF soldiers enough opportunities for moral behaviour.

Principle 6: Effective character education at UoD must be based on meaningful and stimulating methods of active teaching and cooperative learning, respecting the "CAF soldiers students", developing their character and helping them achieve success. The success of this approach is based on finding the natural proportion between the effort to acquire the required knowledge and skills and the pursuit of the qualities of the character.

Principle 7: Effective character education supports the development of its own positive motivation for the "CAF soldiers students". The basis of character education and the basic ethical reason for accepting values and rights cannot be the fear of punishment or desire for reward, but the respect of others.

Principle 8: Effective character education must activate UoD personnel as a learning moral community, embracing their own core values that lead students.

Principle 9: Effective character education is thoughtfully organized and managed by UoD, has institutional support and is a part of strategic planning (long-term development and education concepts).

Principle 10: Effective character education in UoD conditions assumes partnering with collaborating subjects who are willing to engage in the process of character education of the "CAF soldiers students". This co-operation allows improving the efficiency of the educational process by creating a wider community, enhancing educational themes and, at the same time, possible ways of education.

Principle 11: Effective character education is developed and evaluated at the level of UoD as a whole.

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