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## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE PRECARIAT: A CASE STUDY OF THREE RUSSIAN CITIES\***

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**Abstract.** Sustainable social and economic processes of the recent decades are characterized by the emergence of new phenomenon known as precarity and its new accompanying class known as the precariat. The precariat as a social class or social community is primarily associated with a factor of instability and insecurity of workers with flexible employment. This paper studies the precarity on the labor market for the socially-oriented professions in the three Russian metropolitan areas: Moscow, Kazan, and Rostov-on-Don. The paper searches for the causes of precarity of socially-oriented professions based upon the analysis of economic processes in the public sector, and of the reformers' rhetoric and its reflection in the discourses of the main actors about the goals and direction of the reforms. Socially-oriented professions are associated with the creation of benefits, which are very little associated with markets and in most cases belong to public or mixed goods. Our findings suggest that the reforms of Russian education and healthcare spheres are accompanied by large-scale institutional changes which resulted in bureaucratization, orientation toward achieving performance indicators not related to professional values, stagnation of incomes, inequality between regions, and instability of professional trajectories. We conclude that reducing the prestige of socially-oriented professions, the material well-being, along with instability, become the main factors of precarity.

**Keywords:** institutional changes; entrepreneurship; education; healthcare; precariat

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### **1. Introduction**

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The precariat has become a social reality. Many studies after the publication of the book *Standing* (2011) demonstrate that the phenomena that can be attributed to precariat and precarity are observed in almost all areas of employment (Kopycińska and Kryńska, 2016; Tvaronavičienė, Gatautis, 2017). It is necessary to understand the reasons for such wide distributors of precariat as a new social class or a new social community (Fraser, 2013). In the context of this work, this paper focuses on the precariat as the new class of vulnerable adepts of the “gig economy”, as well as the labor precarity of socially-oriented social groups in the conditions of Russian labor market. The phenomenon of precariat forces researchers to change approaches to analyzing employment, changing working conditions, and rethinking traditional models related to labor relations in both economic theory and sociology. The modern development of spheres where socially-oriented professionals are engaged is connected with large-scale reforms that involve radical institutional changes. However, institutional changes (at least in the short term) do not lead to the formation of stable equilibria and are increasingly characterized by deinstitutionalization, which is the cause of precarity (Dobbins et al., 2014).

The growth of the precariat is accompanied by a policy aimed at increasing the public-sector efficiency. There is a hybridization of economic relations (Gregory, 2016), but the change in the proportions between the private and public sectors and the introduction of competitive mechanisms occur asynchronously with the formation of sustainable effective institutions (Volchik and Posukhova, 2016; Štreimikienė et al., 2016; Vasylchak and Halachenko, 2016; Strielkowski et al., 2016a; Strielkowski et al., 2016b; Niño-Amézquita et al., 2017). This disjunction leads to instability of professional status, in particular, among socially-oriented professions.

The emergence and strengthening of precariat are associated with regulatory dysfunction. These dysfunctions stem from the belief that not only the structures of organizations can be consciously determined, but also market design can be successfully done. Design and pernicious self-confidence in this plan led to the destruction of social institutions, which, in particular, were responsible for the stability of employment. Precariat is a consequence of the lack of effective institutions for regulating emerging new social relations. Such institutions cannot be replaced by designing effective market mechanisms (Mirowski and Nik-Khah, 2017; Tvaronavičienė, 2018).

One important and paradoxical (at first sight) reason for the formation of the precariat is the desire for efficiency. Efficiency as a concept, although associated with intuitively accessible for each meaning, in fact there is a set of theories in economics that differ in complexity and not in homogeneity. In the ordinary sense (and most often in public discourse), efficiency is understood as the ratio of costs and results. In this context, efficiency is close to the notions of productivity and performance. Although there are also many unsolved research issues for the private sector and private goods, there are satisfactory answers about measuring and improving efficiency, productivity and performance. However, for other types of goods – public, mixed, club, trust, etc.

Trust and social solidarity cannot be replaced by competition and the pursuit of profit. But this does not mean that there should be no competition and utilitarian behavior, oriented to profit. It is all about the institutional limitations of utilitarian human activities and cultural and social contexts that must be considered in the light of historical heritage and experience (North, 1990, North, 2005). In addition, chronic underfunding of the social sphere in the period of radical market reforms led to the formation of significant shadow institutions and corruption mechanisms (Strielkowski and Weyskrabova, 2014; Čábelková and Strielkowski, 2015; Koudelková et al., 2015). Shadow relations in the sphere of education and health can be considered as compensatory mechanisms of adaptation to low official incomes.

For professional groups associated with the public sector, the pursuit of efficiency turned into an increase in bureaucratization, instability (related, inter alia, to an endless series of reforms) and the performance of previously uncommon functions. Professionals ceased to define goals and plan changes by passing these roles to managers (Lorenz, 2015, Lorenz, 2014, Lorenz, 2012). Here we face a very sensitive issue for the economic and managerial

sciences – the universality of recommendations for improving efficiency. Labor precarity of socially important professions is associated with changes of both technological and institutional nature. The identification of the causes and consequences of precarity is impossible without a detailed study of social and technological contexts (Brougham and Haar, 2017). Possible solutions to the problem of precarity can be reforms aimed at increasing the incomes of professions that are under threat of precarity. Why is the employment in the public sector increasingly drifting towards the precariat? The answer to this question depends both on an understanding of the nature of the precariat as a social phenomenon, and on the analysis of the processes taking place in the public sector over the past decades.

This paper is structured as follows: section 2 provides a comprehensive literature review. Section 3 outlines the methodology used in our study and describes the data obtained for this research including the origin, sampling frame and the scope of the population. Section 4 reports on the empirical results obtained in the course of this study and provides some discussions on these results. Finally, Section 5 concludes the paper providing closing remarks and policy implications.

## **2. Literature review**

Precariat is formed wherever stable forms of employment are destroyed. The reason for this destruction is often institutional changes related to reforms and the adoption of new laws, as in the case of Spinehmland (Polanyi, 2002), and the introduction of new technologies or processes of globalization (Standing, 2012). Here it is necessary to stipulate that a flexible labor market is undoubtedly associated with an increase in economic efficiency, but provided that there are no significant restrictions on competition in this market. Is the labor market competitive in the public sector? And what is the nature of this competition? the answer to these questions provides understanding of the process of reforms aimed at optimizing and increasing the efficiency of the public sector. If we take a detailed look at the labor market in the public sector, it can be hardly concluded that it is competitive. For example, in the general education sphere, the state (or municipalities) is an absolute monopolist as an employer: out of 43,198 general educational institutions, the number of non-state institutions is only 717, which is only 1.6% (Ministry of Education, 2017). In such conditions, the dominant employer state (or municipal), subject to uniform regulatory documents on the organization and payment of labor, dictates the basic parameters and conditions of employment, which is difficult to call market competition.

If elements are introduced at the intra-organizational level, it should not be forgotten that public sector organizations are increasingly turning from specific organizations based on professionalism to bureaucratic organizations, where the power of administration and the achievement of exogenous non-market performance indicators dominate (Bezes et al, 2012).

Reforms in the public sector can be characterized as moving from the principle of corporate professionalism to the principle of economism. By “economism” one can identify a wide class of phenomena in deep-rooted social and political discourse associated with the adoption of basic principles for organizing the production of any economic benefits (private, public, mixed, etc.): market orientation, maximizing profits, cutting costs. This approach can also be described as econocracy (Earle, Moran, and Ward-Perkins, 2017) or managerialism (Taylor, 2007).

To trace the evolution of managerialism (economism) and, most importantly, to obtain a relevant understanding of these processes, we need to briefly address the issue of the genesis of institutions. Within the framework of the various economic currents of neo-institutionalism, the point of view dominates before the Austrian school that institutions arise as a result of collective actions (Hayek, 2012) (North, 1990). However, there are other explanations for the formation and evolution of institutions, for example, as the process of dissemination of collective beliefs and expectations in society (especially among the expert community and political elites), which

is the basis for the formation of new rules and measures of social and economic policy (Walliser, 2008). Such collective beliefs are formed on the basis of ideology or widespread scientific ideas and their implementation in public policy measures within the course of ongoing reforms.

Economization and managerialism (the term “managerialism” is used to characterize new management approaches to the provision of public services within civil service reform in the 1980s in the UK (Taylor, 2007)) in education leads to the introduction of practices that are borrowed from business (Redden and Low, 2012). And that is reflected in the emphasis on the quantitative indicators of the activities of educational institutions, different ratings and the results of unified testing systems (OGE, EGE). The practice of new public administration or new management in the public sector (in Russian scientific literature the translation as “new public administration” is more often used, but we consider this translation not entirely precise, and we will use the abbreviation New public management, NPM, in order not to multiply inaccuracies in the translation in the future) is usually associated with neoliberal market reforms in developed countries, originating in the 1980s (Lorenz, 2012, 2014).

The very term NPM (New public management) was first used in the work of Christopher Hood (Hood, 1991). Later, the concept of NPM was developed by Hood himself, as well as by his numerous followers. Proceeding from the market ideology, NPM declared simple principles: using a management style that is characteristic of the private sector; focus on performance indicators of the organization; great discipline in spending resources and their savings (O’Flynn, 2007). However, the widespread use of NPM methods in the public sector and in particular in education is linked to the processes of globalization, as well as to the fact that managerial ideas penetrated the discourse not only of conservative politicians, but also of socialists and social democrats (Verger and Curran, 2014).

The introduction of NPM was carried out and is still carried out under the banners of efficiency and de-bureaucratization. However, the practice of using NPM has shown basis for thinking: “Despite the fact that the organizational changes carried out as part of NPM reforms were aimed at increasing the efficiency of solving problems by separate quasi-autonomous state structures, this led to a paradoxical growth of the state apparatus and bureaucratization”.

The reform of the school education institute has been carried out in Russia since 2011 and causes significant changes in the conditions and content of the teachers’ work. New standards are adopted, new requirements are introduced to regulate the work of a teacher. The following changes can be emphasized: introduction of the basic and unified state examinations (Unified State Exam, USE; mandatory (obligatory) state examination); transition to fundamentally new federal state educational standards (FSSES); the introduction of the professional standard “Teacher”; transition to electronic document management; updating forms and methods of teaching (interactive teaching aids, distance learning, etc.); the introduction of a new system of labor remuneration; inclusive education (Kulagina and Eliseeva, 2014). In addition, bureaucratic control is being strengthened and the number of teachers’ administrative burdens is increasing.

On the other hand, the resource base for the modernization of the institute of education is shrinking. Official statistics record that over the past few years the expenditures of the consolidated budget of the Russian Federation on education are stagnating. And if in nominal terms for the period from 2013 to 2016 expenditures for the whole system of education increased from 2.9 to 3.2 trillion rubles, the aggregate amount of expenditures was growing at a faster rate. As a result, the share of expenditures in 2016 was reduced to 10%, and the gap in the dynamics of nominal spending reached 7.8 percentage points (Analytical Center, 2017).

It is institutional changes related to bureaucratization and stagnation of revenues that are key factors in the pre-categorization of teachers. Reforms in Russian health care are carried out and implemented under the slogans of increasing efficiency and optimization. In 2014-2015, regulatory acts were adopted, and according to them the

implementation of a set of measures to optimize the healthcare sphere began. Despite the positive goals of such reforms as improving the quality and availability of medical care, as a result, there was a reduction in the number of doctors, increased medical burden, the enlargement of medical institutions through mergers and reorganizations. Among the positive results of the reforms, the increase in wages and equipment of hospitals with high-tech equipment was declared. However, according to some estimates, starting from the 2010, the quality and availability of medical care decreased considerably.

In Russia, the optimization and improvement of the effectiveness of health care are conducted without a significant increase in funding. Traditionally, since the time of radical market reforms of the 1990s, health care in Russia has been very poorly financed, for example, public health expenditure in Russia in 2015 was only 3.4% of GDP, while in OECD countries the average indicator was 6.5% of GDP (OECD, 2017). Low financing combined with optimization-oriented reforms lead to an increase in instability among a professional group of doctors. Reorganization of health care facilities is also accompanied by an increase in bureaucratic burden, which is reflected in the growth of “paper work” activities, meant for doctors.

A series of economic crises, a decline in production, an increase in unemployment, and the instability of the labor market led to an increase in the flexibility of social and labor relations in Russian society when the principles of wage payment and organization of working time are unsustainable, often violating the employee's labor rights. In the sphere of hiring and moving employees, the rules and procedures for layoffs, transfer to the worst payment principles and working conditions are simplified. The deterioration of the social and labor situation of a large number of workers, the growth of their social vulnerability and the instability in the labor market in the scientific literature have been designated as the process of precarity (Standing, 2012; Foti, 2017; Hartung et al., 2017; Jenkins et al., 2017; Alonso et al., 2016). An important feature of the precariat is instability, which can be considered in the context of specific institutions that determine the formation of professional and social statuses. Formation of the precariat in Russian conditions has its own peculiarities. These features are determined by the historical patterns of the evolution of the institutional environment (Maslov and Volchik, 2014; Oleinik, 2012; Klimina, 2016; Kirdina, 2014). Characteristics of the institutional environment are manifested in the formation of stable status and public opinion about certain characteristics of the profession, which is reflected in the specific perception of professional identity. Perception of professional identity by representatives of socially-oriented professions, considered in the context of this work, is an important factor in precarity. In the Russian conditions, the influence of institutional inertia remains in the spheres of socially-oriented professions. The attitude in society towards education and health, as well as the status of teachers and doctors in Russian society, evolved from the Soviet attitude toward these professions. In the late Soviet period, in the 1980s of the last century, teachers and doctors had a low social status. In society there also was an ambivalent attitude, which, on the one hand, was based on recognition of the importance and social value of professions, and on the other, on the tacit acceptance of the fact of financing the social sphere ‘by a residual principle’.

In the Russian society, representatives of socially-oriented professional groups are increasingly entering the precarity zone, in the context of this study they are teachers and doctors. Socially-oriented professional groups are engaged in areas that can be attributed to the public (state) sector of the economy. Therefore, the causes of precarity are related to the specifics of the functioning of Russian public sector organizations in the context of ongoing reforms.

Changes in the economy of socially-oriented professions, as well as in social status, are reflected in the perception of their identity by workers. Moreover, in Russian society the attitude to the profession of a teacher and a doctor is evolutionarily, but steadily changing. In the official rhetoric, socially-oriented profession is associated with the provision of services, and in this way accentuates the consumer approach. In other words, there is a drift of professions from education and health care to management or own business, where quantitative ‘performance

indicators' (Janda et al., 2013) become the main criteria for success, which is reflected to a certain extent by the reflection of entrepreneurial activities in the media (Čábelková et al., 2015).

Russian reforms in the social sphere are carried out in line with the widely spread neoliberal economic policy. And although the rhetoric of the reformers can clearly not refer to the methods of neoliberalism, the measures of the current policy are very often traced back to the reforms carried out since the 1980s. The central idea of such reforms is the economic and market-oriented production of public goods. Therefore, the sources of precarity of socially-oriented professions are connected with the formation of flexible market mechanisms, and it does not always lead to significant economic results but has a destructive effect on the institutional structure and the reproduction (professions) of professionals in the public sector.

### **3. Methodology**

This formulation of the problem determined the content of applied sociological research. The object of the study is the representatives of socially-oriented professions (school teachers, doctors) working in budgetary institutions of Russian megacities (cities with a population of more than 1 million people). The subject of the study is the perception of the degree of precarity of their labor by teachers and doctors. The survey time frame used in this study was March-May 2017. The geographical scope of our data were three Russian cities: Moscow, Rostov-on-Don, and Kazan. Moscow is the capital of the Russian Federation with a population of more than 12 million people. Rostov-on-Don is the largest city in the South of Russia, the administrative center of the Southern Federal District and the Rostov Region. The population of the city is 1.1 million people. Kazan is the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan within the Russian Federation. The population is 1.2 million people. According to the 2010 population census, Russians were 92% of the population of Moscow and 91% of those in Rostov-on-Don. In Kazan there live 49% of Russians, 48% - Tatars.

Our methods of research employed in this study were: 1) a mass survey on a standardized questionnaire; 2) deep semi-structured interviews. The sample of the mass opinion poll is quota-proportional, the statistical error of the survey does not exceed 4-5%. In total, 2054 school teachers who worked in Moscow, Rostov-on-Don and Kazan and 870 doctors from Moscow and Kazan took part in the survey. The sample of in-depth interviews is typological. 42 representatives of socially-oriented professions, 7 teachers and doctors in each of the three cities were interviewed within the study.

The sample of the survey of teachers was conducted as follows: The sample was collected in the Russian cities in the spring of 2017, 948 teachers of Moscow schools, 618 teachers of Rostov-on-Don and 488 teachers of Kazan were questioned with a standardized questionnaire. Our criteria for the selection of respondents were as follows:

- respondents' work place – city budget schools located in different parts of the city (30-35% in the center of the city, 70-65% in sleeping areas);
- gymnasiums, lyceums – from 10 to 15% of the total number of schools;
- secondary general education organizations (Municipal Budgetary Educational Institution Secondary School) - 85-90%.

In Moscow, female teachers accounted for 89% (in Russia there is a high degree of feminization of the pedagogical profession, about 85% of school teachers are women (Bondarenko et al., 2017)), 93% have higher education. Russians by nationality are 99% of respondents. Teach humanitarian subjects at school – 42% of teachers, natural science subjects – 40%, other subjects – 18%. In Rostov-on-Don, 94% of female teachers were interviewed, 95% of respondents with higher education. 97% of respondents are Russians by nationality. Teach humanitarian subjects at school – 50% of teachers, natural science subjects – 31%, other subjects – 19%. In Kazan, 82% of female teachers were interviewed, 97% of respondents with higher education. 51% of the teachers

surveyed are Tatars by nationality, 35% - Russians. Teach humanitarian subjects at school – 46% of teachers, natural science subjects – 35%, other subjects – 19%. Other parameters of the sample are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Sampling of a sociological survey of teachers in Russian megacities.  
Distribution of groups of respondents by age and work experience, %

Location	Age					Work experience				
	up to 30	31–40	41–50	51–60	over 60	up to 5	5–10	11–20	21–30	over 30
Moscow	19	24	35	20	19	16	13	30	31	10
Rostov-on-Don	22	23	36	16	22	18	11	25	33	13
Kazan	15	21	36	23	5	15	16	28	31	10

Source: Own results

A sample of the survey of doctors was conducted as follows: a standardized questionnaire surveyed 468 doctors working in Moscow and 402 doctors in Kazan. Our criteria for the selection of respondents were the following:

- the category of doctors in the study is people who have received a higher medical education in the relevant specialty and who work at a medical institution;
- respondents' work place – city budget hospitals located in different parts of the city (30-35% in the city center, 70-65% in the sleeping areas), in medical institutions of different profiles (therapeutic, surgical and traumatological, pediatric, preventive, etc.);
- work profile: therapists – 10-15%, pediatricians – at least 10%, surgeons – at least 5%, emergency doctors – at least 5%.

In Moscow, 39% of male doctors and 61% of female were interviewed. 98% of the respondents are Russians by nationality. 68% of those surveyed have a higher education, 29% have been trained in residency / internship, and 3% have a scientific degree. In Kazan, 39% of men and 61% of women participated in the study of the medical corps of medical institutions. Russians by nationality are 37% of respondents, Tatars - 62%. 67% of respondents have higher education, 28% - have been trained in residency / internship, 5% - have a degree.

**Table 2.** Sampling of a sociological survey of doctors of Russian megacities.  
Distribution of groups of respondents by age and work experience, %

Location	Age					Work experience				
	up to 30	31–40	41–50	51–60	over 60	up to 5	5–10	11–20	21–30	over 30
Moscow	14	27	27	26	6	10	19	32	34	5
Kazan	11	27	31	24	8	12	15	33	32	8

Source: Own results

#### 4. Empirical results and discussions

The results of our own sociological survey showed that no more than a quarter of the Russian teachers described pedagogical work as prestigious. Most of the teachers refer their work to usual (ordinary) professions: in Moscow 46% of respondents chose the answer option “not too prestigious, but it cannot be called as non-prestigious”, 43% in Rostov-on-Don, and 50% in Kazan. About a quarter of Moscow and Kazan teachers and 40% of Rostov-on-Don respondents consider pedagogical work as not prestigious. Accordingly, almost half the number of Rostov teachers characterizes their profession as prestigious (25.3% in Moscow, 13% in Rostov-on-Don, and 22% in Kazan). (Table 3).

Moscow doctors estimate their profession as prestigious more often than teachers: 33% of the doctors surveyed in Moscow, and 46% – in Kazan. More than half of the respondents in the capital of the Russian Federation and a third of the respondents in Kazan consider the profession of a doctor to be ordinary. And no more than 12% of doctors consider doctor's work to be non-prestigious (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Distribution of answers to the question “Do you think that in our time the profession of a teacher / doctor is prestigious?”, %

	Teachers			Doctors	
	Moscow	Rostov-on-D	Kazan	Moscow	Kazan
yes, it's quite a prestigious profession	25	13	22	33	46
it's an ordinary profession, not too prestigious, but cannot be named un-prestigious either	<b>46</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>31</b>
this profession is clearly un-prestigious today	22	40	25	12	11
hard to answer	6	4	3	2	11

*Source: Own results*

Moscow teachers believe that the prestige of the teacher's profession in Russian society has increased over the past 5 years (34%). A much smaller number of Rostov (8%) and Kazan (18%) teachers agree to this. Respondents from provincial schools in most cases indicate a decrease in the prestige of teachers' work (25% in Moscow against 61% in Rostov-on-Don and 44% in Kazan). For the next 5 years, the same position towards school teachers' status in the society is predicted by one third of the respondents in the surveyed cities (31% in the first group, 39% in the second group and 28% in the third group), and the fifth part of teachers believes that the prestige of the profession will decrease (21 %: 20%: 26%, respectively). (Table 4).

Various assessments of the prestige of the profession by metropolitan (capital) and provincial teachers illustrate the growing processes of inequality between the capital and the regions. Moreover, inequality is increasingly affecting the institutional and social environment of Russian regions, helping to lock in the trend towards the precarity of socially-oriented professions.

**Table 4.** Distribution of answers to the questions “From your point of view, has the prestige of the profession of a teacher in Russian society changed over the past five years?”, and “Will the prestige of the profession change in the next 5 years?”, %

Answer options	Teachers			Doctors	
	Moscow	Rostov-on-D	Kazan	Moscow	Kazan
	<i>during last 5 years</i>				
increased	<b>34</b>	8	18	<b>36</b>	16
stayed the same	<b>36</b>	26	33	32	<b>45</b>
decreased	25	<b>61</b>	<b>44</b>	30	25
hard to answer	4	6	5	2	14
	<i>within next 5 years</i>				
will increase	29	16	23	<b>48</b>	26
won't change	<b>31</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>28</b>	20	<b>32</b>
will decrease	21	20	23	17	19
hard to answer	19	25	26	16	24

*Source: Own results*

A survey of doctors showed that in Moscow the prestige of their profession rather increased (36%) or did not change (32%). In Kazan doctors note the absence of fluctuations in the status of doctors more often (45%). Half of Moscow respondents are optimistic about the social evaluation of doctors' work, they believe that the prestige of the profession will increase within the next 5 years. Only a quarter of Kazan doctors agree to this, and a third of those polled in this city do not predict any special changes. (Table 4 above).

Teachers assessing the negative dynamics of the prestige of the profession on the whole also note that this is due to the indifference of society and the state to the problems of school. An important component of the professional well-being of representatives of socially-oriented professions is their perception of their social and economic situation. In a sociological survey, respondents were asked to assess the basic aspects of their lives according to a 5-point scale.

Empirical measurements showed that the satisfaction of teachers and doctors with these parameters is low in most cases. Against this background, the satisfaction of the capital's teachers and doctors in all positions is slightly higher than that of the provincial respondents. The integrated average in the group of teachers is 3.9 in Moscow, 3.2 in Rostov-on-Don and 3.4 in Kazan. In the segment of doctors this indicator is 3.7 in the Russian capital and 3.5 in Kazan.

Regarding individual positions, the teachers of the three cities are most satisfied with the way their life as a whole is going on (4.0 average points in the first group, 3.7 in the second group, 3.8 in the third group). The average grades of teachers are given to their health (3,9: 3,5: 3,4), housing conditions (3,8: 3,3: 3,8), life prospects (3,8: 3,2: 3,4 respectively). A noticeable difference is in the assessment of the satisfaction of Moscow teachers with the quality of leisure (3.8 in Moscow against 2.8 in Rostov-on-Don and 2.9 in Kazan) and the level of financial prosperity (wellbeing) (3.8 against 2.8 and 3, respectively). (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Distribution of answers to the question “Assess the various aspects of your life” according to a 5-point Likert scale (average scores)

	Teachers survey			Doctors survey	
	Moscow	Rostov-on-Don	Kazan	Moscow	Kazan
health	3,9	3,5	3,4	3,9	3,7
wellbeing	3,8	2,8	3,0	3,5	3,2
housing conditions	3,8	3,3	3,8	3,6	3,6
leisure	3,8	2,8	2,9	3,5	3,3
life prospects	3,8	3,2	3,4	3,7	3,6
how the life is overall	4,0	3,7	3,8	3,8	3,7

*Source:* Own results

Respondents note a decrease in the prestige of the profession of a doctor even in comparison with the Soviet period. The implementation of the program for the development of school education in Moscow affected the higher satisfaction of the capital's teachers with their financial situation during recent years. The results of the survey showed that the majority of the three megacities describe their economic well-being more as good than bad (52% in the Russian capital, 46% in Rostov-on-Don, and 42% in Kazan). At the same time, 26% of school teachers estimate their prosperity to some extent as unsatisfactory in Moscow against 43% in Rostov-on-Don, and 27% in Kazan. (Table 5).

It should also be noted that due to the deterioration of the economic situation in the country and a decrease in purchasing power, there is deterioration in teachers' satisfaction with their financial situation this year. In particular, Moscow teachers in 39% of cases estimated their prosperity as good 2-3 years ago, whereas this year the estimate is almost half of that (23%). In the Rostov segment, there is also a decrease in satisfaction (from 18%

- 2-3 years ago to 11% - at the present stage). In the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, the number of respondents who assess their financial situation as “good” has not almost changed (34% 2-3 years ago and 31% this year). But if you look at the other side of the scale, you can see that 1,5 times more teachers in Kazan estimate their wealth as “rather bad than good” this year (25%) than a few years ago (17%). The answers of Moscow and Rostov teachers also show the difference in these positions by about 10% in the direction of deterioration. (Table 6).

The assessment of their financial situation by doctors is also a difference depending on the place of residence and the time period. But the interviewed doctors on the average estimate their own prosperity lower than the teachers.

**Table 6.** Distribution of answers to the question “Try to assess your financial situation”. Survey of teachers, %

	Good	Rather good than bad	Rather bad than good	Bad
Moscow				
2-3 years ago	39	44	14	3
current year	23	52	24	2
in 2-3 years	30	47	17	6
Rostov-on-Don				
2-3 years ago	18	53	22	7
current year	11	46	34	9
in 2-3 years	19	42	30	10
Kazan				
2-3 years ago	34	45	17	4
current year	31	42	25	2
in 2-3 years	41	39	17	3

Source: Own results

Inside the professional segment, Moscow doctors are less satisfied than the doctors of Kazan. Only 10% of Moscow respondents rated their financial situation this year as “good”, the percentage of similar answers regarding the position “2-3 years ago” is 2.5 times higher. Most of the doctors of state hospitals in Moscow characterize their financial situation “rather good than bad” (59%). In the nearest future, in Moscow the interviewed doctors do not expect an increase in their income level. (Table 7). In Kazan, the share of positive assessments of doctors in relation to their income is somewhat higher and is 24% this year, and 25% 2-3 years ago. From 42% to 45% of the surveyed doctors speak of a rather good financial situation now and in the recent past. But the Kazan subgroup has a higher percentage of respondents who describe their financial situation as “rather bad than good” (29% and 27%, respectively). Most respondents do not also predict significant changes in the level of payment for their labor. (Table 7).

**Table 7.** Distribution of answers to the question “Try to assess your financial situation”, Survey of doctors, %

	Good	Rather good than bad	Rather bad than good	Bad
Moscow				
2-3 years ago	25	59	13	3
current year	10	65	20	5
in 2-3 years	13	67	12	8
Kazan				
2-3 years ago	25	42	29	4
current year	24	45	27	4
in 2-3 years	27	44	25	4

Source: Own results

The unsatisfactory financial situation of doctors and teachers makes the phenomenon of part-time work significant. If one looks at the indicators of purchasing power of the interviewed representatives of socially-oriented professions, you can see that the majority of respondents (with the exception of Rostov-on-Don) can afford to buy things of durable use (TV, refrigerator) when buying on credit (from 29% up to 45% of respondents). The second is the answer to “money is enough for food and clothing, but the purchase of durable goods is a problem” (from 25% to 43% of all groups). The lowest purchasing power is recorded in the segment of Rostov teachers, where one third of respondents note that buying clothes causes them difficulties. And Moscow teachers and doctors demonstrate higher consumer power. (Table 8).

The decrease in the respondents' assessments of their material well-being over the last 2-3 years coincides with the deepening of reforms aimed at optimizing and increasing the efficiency of health and education spheres. The state policy in these spheres is realized with the use of target development indicators, for the achievement of which the effectiveness of institutions and organizations functioning is assessed. However, the use of indicators and metrics leads to long-term institutional dysfunctions (Muller, 2018) and, in particular, to an increase in precarity of socially-oriented professions.

**Table 8.** Distribution of answers to the question: “What types of purchases can you afford?”, %

	Teachers survey			Doctors survey	
	Moscow	Rostov-on-Don	Kazan	Moscow	Kazan
money is enough for food, but buying clothes causes difficulties	9	33	9	12	2
money is enough for food and clothing, but the purchase of durable goods (TV, refrigerator) is a problem	25	43	33	27	32
we can afford to buy things of durable use when buying on <i>credit</i>	45	14	38	29	46
we can easily buy things of durable use with our <i>own money</i> , but it is difficult to purchase really expensive things, for example, a car	18	8	14	27	14
we can afford quite expensive things – an apartment, a summer residence and much more when buying on <i>credit</i>	3	1	5	4	5
we can afford quite expensive things – an apartment, a summer residence and many other things with our <i>own money</i>	0	1	1	1	1

Source: Own results

In the conditions of reforming the spheres of education and healthcare, and a series of economic crises, Russian teachers and doctors are entering the precarity zone. This is manifested in the worsening of the situation with respect to the social and labor rights of workers, when social obligations are not being fulfilled, the work load is not growing, and not accompanied by a rise in wages (Bobkov et al., 2014). According to international research, Russian teachers work more than the average for OECD countries. Their working week exceeds 46 hours, which is 8 hours longer than the working week on average. The teaching is given almost 23.5 hours in Russia, which exceeds the average load in the OECD (20 hours). Moreover, Russian teachers spend much more time on general administrative work.

The materials of the all-Russian study of medical workers conducted by the specialists of the Academy of Labor and Social Relations in 2016 also show that “many doctors and nurses, in addition to working at their main job, earn something at other places (...), taking into account all forms of employment the share of employees working more than 60 hours per week is 41 per cent. Every third respondent works from 41 to 60 hours and only 27 percent says that the actual duration of their work week is up to 40 hours” (Rosstat, 2017).

The studies of doctors and patients conducted by the scientists of the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation in 2012 and 2014 recorded a negative assessment of the planned reforms on the part of

heads of public health institutions and ordinary citizens. And later, these negative forecasts are confirmed when there is a noticeable increase in pay, while the quality of medical services remains unchanged or decreases. The main reason for these phenomena, according to the results of this study, is a further reduction in the amount of budgetary allocations with low effective demand from the population (Alexandrova, 2017).

Empirical measurements within the framework of our research show that in the capital and in large provincial cities the degree of the work precarity of socially-oriented professional groups is different.

In Moscow, from 36% to 46% of teachers indicate an increase in workload. While in Rostov-on-Don, from 64% to 76%, and in Kazan, from 65% to 81% of teachers report an increase in the volume of their work. Moscow and Kazan teachers most often note the growth of work on the preparation and conduct of lessons and the increase in the burden of extracurricular work. Rostov teachers often point to a significant increase in administrative workload, filling out a different kind of reporting. (Table 9).

**Table 9.** Distribution of answers of respondent groups to the question “How has your workload changed over the past 1-2 years?”, Survey of teachers, %

Workload	Moscow			Rostov-on-Don			Kazan		
	decreased	didn't change	increased	decreased	didn't change	increased	decreased	didn't change	increased
Work on preparation and conduct of lessons (mastering Federal State Educational Standard, new forms and methods of teaching)	13	40	<b>46</b>	3	27	<b>70</b>	2	17	<b>81</b>
Administrative load, reporting	8	<b>56</b>	36	3	21	<b>76</b>	1	31	<b>68</b>
Individual work with students	4	<b>58</b>	38	3	31	<b>66</b>	3	32	<b>65</b>
After-class workload (educational, creative, sports and other events)	6	<b>54</b>	40	6	30	<b>64</b>	1	29	<b>70</b>

Source: Own results

The introduction of new duties to the teachers occurs gradually and is perceived by them as a permanent process. Therefore, teachers perceive an increase in the workload as a self-evident thing. Our surveys of medical workers reveal that in Moscow and Kazan, most doctors record an increase in workload over the past 1-2 years. Most of all, the volume of official duties, tasks performed increase (80% in the first group and 67% in the second group). The growth of the administrative workload, the filling of accounts are noted by 57% of Moscow doctors and by 78% of Kazan doctors. Doctors point out that the increase in workload is, in particular, related to the process of ongoing reforms. A larger number of doctors in Moscow than in Kazan have noted an increase in the work load, which is not related to their job duties (66% vs. 46%). (Table 10).

**Table 10.** Distribution of answers of respondent groups to the question “How has your workload changed over the past 1-2 years?”, Survey of doctors, %

Answer options	Moscow			Kazan		
	decreased	didn't change	increased	decreased	didn't change	increased
performance of duties, scope of tasks performed	2	18	<b>80</b>	1	32	<b>67</b>
administrative load, reporting	0	43	<b>57</b>	2	20	<b>78</b>
activities not related to official duties	2	32	<b>66</b>	1	53	<b>46</b>

Source: Own results

In our study, representatives of socially-oriented professions were separately asked how much they were concerned about the various manifestations of precarity.

Materials of a mass survey of city teachers have showed that school teachers are most concerned about the risks of increasing workload without wage growth (71% in Moscow, 84% in Rostov-on-Don, 73% in Kazan) and job losses (78% : 62%: 49%). The teachers surveyed are concerned about the risks of reducing or delaying wages (58%: 48%: 41%). Another 55% of Moscow, 41% of Rostov-on-Don and 35% of Kazan teachers are afraid of forced transition to part-time work. (Table 11).

**Table 11.** Distribution of answers of respondent groups to the question “How much do you currently worry about the following professional risks?”, Survey of teachers, %

Professional risks	Moscow				Rostov-on-Don				Kazan			
	not worried at all	rather not worried	rather worried	worried a lot	not worried at all	rather not worried	rather worried	worried a lot	not worried at all	rather not worried	rather worried	worried a lot
Reduction or delay in wages	24	18	<b>36</b>	<b>22</b>	24	27	<b>29</b>	<b>19</b>	30	28	<b>23</b>	<b>18</b>
Forced transition to part-time work	15	30	<b>31</b>	<b>24</b>	32	27	<b>26</b>	<b>15</b>	33	33	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>
Increase in workload without increasing wages	9	20	<b>36</b>	<b>35</b>	4	13	<b>34</b>	<b>50</b>	12	15	<b>34</b>	<b>39</b>
Loss of work	6	15	<b>25</b>	<b>53</b>	15	23	<b>25</b>	<b>37</b>	22	29	<b>18</b>	<b>31</b>

Source: Own results

As for medical workers, the results of our study showed that Moscow doctors are much more worried about the risks of precarity than the doctors of Kazan, and also the segment of the teachers in general. The overwhelming majority of the doctors working in budgetary medical institutions in Moscow and Kazan are afraid of an increase in the work load without an increase in salary (95% in the first group and 63% in the second group). Another 89% of Moscow and 57% of Kazan doctors are concerned about the risks of job loss. Prospects for reductions or delays in wages raise fears among 89% of doctors in the Russian capital and half as many doctors in Kazan (43%). Another two-thirds of the respondents in the first group are concerned with the risks of shifting to a part-time/week job, and half of the number of concerned in the second group. (Table 12).

**Table 12.** Distribution of answers of respondent groups to the question “How much do you currently worry about the following professional risks?” Survey of doctors, %

Professional risks	Moscow				Kazan			
	not worried at all	rather not worried	rather worried	worried a lot	not worried at all	rather not worried	rather worried	worried a lot
Reduction or delay in wages	3	9	<b>32</b>	<b>57</b>	27	31	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>
Forced transition to part-time work	7	17	<b>38</b>	<b>37</b>	31	40	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>
Increase in workload without increasing wages	1	4	<b>41</b>	<b>54</b>	19	18	<b>34</b>	<b>29</b>
Loss of work	3	7	<b>32</b>	<b>57</b>	20	24	<b>34</b>	<b>23</b>

Source: Own results

The majority of the interviewed school teachers and doctors do not agree that the state effectively solves the social and economic problems of teaching, and provincial teachers express more critical assessments. Among the teachers' corps in Moscow, this figure is 53%, compared with 87% in Rostov-on-Don and 84% in Kazan. In the segment of doctors in the Russian capital, the part of dissenters is 59% and 85% in Kazan. (Table 13).

**Table 13.** Distribution of answers of respondent groups to the question “How much do you agree with the statement that the state effectively solves the social and economic problems of teaching?”, Survey of teachers, %

	Moscow				Rostov-on-Don				Kazan			
	totally disagree	rather disagree	rather agree	totally agree	totally disagree	rather disagree	rather agree	totally agree	totally disagree	rather disagree	rather agree	totally agree
teachers	<b>18</b>	<b>35</b>	33	15	<b>50</b>	<b>37</b>	11	2	<b>32</b>	<b>52</b>	16	0
doctors	<b>22</b>	<b>37</b>	33	7					<b>32</b>	<b>53</b>	13	2

Source: Own results

Interviewed teachers and doctors in case of violation of their labor rights (growth of unpaid workload, reduction / delay of wages, loss of work) have a rather passive position. Nothing will be done by 49% - 64% of the respondents in all groups (Tables 14-15). Against this background, teachers are most often focused on handling complaints to the authorities (from 59% to 61% of respondents in the three cities). From 63% to 91% of the school teachers from different cities are not ready to participate in political actions, apply to the judiciary, or the mass media. (Table 14).

**Table 14.** Distribution of answers of respondent groups to the question “How will you act in case of violation of your labor rights (growth of unpaid work, reduction / delay of wages, loss of work)?”, Teacher survey, %

Answer options	Moscow		Rostov-on-Don		Kazan	
	rather yes	rather no	rather yes	rather no	rather yes	rather no
apply to the authorities	<b>59</b>	41	41	<b>59</b>	39	<b>61</b>
contact the media (newspapers, TV)	30	<b>70</b>	13	<b>87</b>	9	<b>91</b>
file lawsuits with the judiciary	37	<b>63</b>	27	<b>73</b>	32	<b>69</b>
participate in public organizations to protect the rights	37	<b>63</b>	41	<b>59</b>	38	<b>62</b>
participate in political actions and demonstrations	15	<b>85</b>	13	<b>87</b>	16	<b>84</b>
do nothing	38	<b>62</b>	39	<b>61</b>	52	<b>49</b>

*Source:* Own results

Medical workers in Moscow's budgetary institutions demonstrate a greater willingness to assert their rights in comparison with doctors from Kazan. 74% of Moscow doctors apply to the authorities in case of violation of their labor rights against 32% of Kazan specialists. 57% of the respondents of the first group and 31% of the second one expresses the willingness to participate in the activities of public organizations to protect their rights. Regarding other forms of protection of the rights (media, political actions, court), the indicator of readiness to use them does not exceed 45%. (Table 15).

**Table 15.** Distribution of answers of respondent groups to the question “How will you act in case of violation of your labor rights?”, Survey of doctors, %

Answer option	Moscow		Kazan	
	Rather yes	Rather no	Rather yes	Rather no
apply to the authorities	<b>74</b>	26	32	<b>69</b>
contact the media (newspapers, TV)	28	<b>72</b>	15	<b>86</b>
file lawsuits with the judiciary	45	<b>55</b>	36	<b>64</b>
participate in public organizations to protect the rights	<b>57</b>	43	31	<b>69</b>
participate in political actions and demonstrations	23	<b>77</b>	7	<b>93</b>
do nothing	36	<b>64</b>	44	<b>56</b>

*Source:* Own results

## Conclusions

Overall, one can see that labor precarity of socially important professions becomes a manifestation of very important trends in socio-economic development, not only in Russia, but also in other countries. The most significant social phenomena associated with precarity can be the following: strengthening regional disparities (mainly between the center and regions), low prestige of socially-oriented professions, low wages, corporate insecurity of employees in front of the administration of organizations and institutions.

Under Russian conditions, socially-oriented professions are associated with undiminished professional risks. Reforms, meant to improve the financial position of professional groups of doctors and teachers, are perceived rather negatively by the representatives of these groups. This paradox is due to the fact that reform is often carried out on the basis of the mechanical achievement of targets in the pursuit of mythical efficiency without taking into account the professional characteristics, values, and opinions of public and professional associations.

One of the consequences of reforms in the Russian public sector is the growing disparity between professional groups in different regions. Based on the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, it can be concluded that in the capital and large provincial cities, representatives of socially-oriented professional groups are subject to precarious labor in varying degrees.

It can be concluded that the attitude to the problems of health and education is characterized by a certain cynicism in the Russian society. On the one hand, there is an understanding that education and health care are underfunded, subject to avalanche-like bureaucratization, and lag behind development levels not only from developed countries but also from many developing countries. On the other hand, there is also a strange consensus in society that the problems in education and healthcare concern only the actors of this sphere, so, no one is ready to violate the status quo in relation to doctors, teachers, professors. Perhaps this is a consequence of the ideological framework of neoliberalism: once the actors in the sphere of education choose their profession, their position is the problem of finding consensus within the framework of contractual relations with the employer. And although this point of view has a rather serious ideological and even theoretical basis, it seems incomplete and even erroneous. Therefore, precarity studies are needed to focus on the negative consequences of reforms in the areas of socially-oriented professions. Understanding these problems is an important step towards creating conditions favorable for overcoming negative trends not only in Russian but also worldwide.

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