MARINHA DO BRASIL DIRETORIA DE ENSINO DA MARINHA

(CONCURSO PÚBLICO PARA INGRESSO NO CORPO DE ENGENHEIROS DA MARINHA / CP-CEM/2016)

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All engineers are familiar with the codes and standards that govern their work. For structural engineers, this includes the International Building Code and its referenced standards for minimum loads, concrete design and steel design. Printed editions require a considerable amount of paper—nearly four thousand pages just for these four publications—and additional volumes provide the design criteria for additional materials and situations. Other disciplines of engineering are similar; the amount of relevant technical information is far beyond what any individual could reasonably be expected to memorize. As a result, engineers must refer to such documents on a regular basis, reflecting their importance for engineering practice.

Engineers are also generally familiar with the codes of ethics that various professional societies have promulgated, such as the one adopted by the American Society of Civil Engineers. Consisting of four fundamental principles, seven canons and various guidelines to practice, it fits on a total of just six pages. Perhaps it would be reasonable to expect engineers to memorize it—if not in its entirety, then at least the core statements that appear on the first page. However, it is doubtful that very many engineers have taken this step; in fact, it seems unlikely that very many engineers even feel the need to refer to the code of ethics on a regular basis. Does this reflect its (un) importance for engineering practice?

[...] I advocate changing the paradigm for engineering ethics. The goal is to develop a way of thinking about and implementing ethics that is more consistent with the realities of engineering practice than what is found in much of the current literature. I begin by explaining what a paradigm is and examining the current paradigm for philosophy in general. I then question whether its emphasis on technical rationality produces an accurate picture of engineering. Next I cover the current paradigm for ethics in particular, which includes two modern approaches: deontology and consequentialism. At that point I introduce an alternative with ancient roots, virtue ethics, and argue that it is much better suited for application to engineering. Finally, I lay out a specific framework for engineering ethics that I have developed accordingly, by exploring what it means to be virtuous engineers.

[367 palavras]

Fonte: Adaptado de: Schmidt, J. A. "Changing the Paradigm for Engineering Ethics", Science and Engineering Ethics, vol. 20(4), 2014.

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