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Barbara Sena

Professionalization without Autonomy: The Italian Case of Building the Nursing Profession

Abstract: The nursing professionalization is still a work in progress, especially because forms of medical dominance and conflicts with other health professions often undermine its professional autonomy. This article contributes to the understanding of the relationship between professionalization and autonomy building in the health professions by presenting the case of Italian nursing, where medical dominance, supported by the legal system, is the main factor preventing nursing from achieving professional autonomy. The work aims particularly to understand how professionalization and professional autonomy can follow two parallel and sometimes opposite paths toward building the nursing profession, and the role of academic knowledge and specialized roles to legitimize and strengthen professional autonomy. The analysis draws on the literature addressing professionalization, professional autonomy, and medical dominance, as well as various sources on Italian nursing. They include national legislation, research literature, and national sociological surveys on Italian nurses.

Keywords: Professionalization, professional autonomy, nursing, medical dominance, legal system

Sociological studies on the nursing profession have become increasingly prevalent in recent years. One of the more debated aspects concerns the field's professionalization, which has been more problematic than in other professions, especially because nursing has historically been subjected to forms of medical dominance and conflicts with other health professions (e.g., Allen, 2007; Ayala, Binfa, Vanderstraeten, & Bracke, 2015; Bourgeault & Grignon, 2013; Etzioni, 1969; Styles, 2005; Varjus, Leino-Kilpi, & Suominen, 2011; Wall, 2010).

The outcome of the professionalization process is the achievement of "professional autonomy." In the sociology of professions, this concept is commonly referred to as the autonomy of an individual practitioner or professional group to define performance standards and ethical codes for its members in accordance with specific training, as well to conduct discretionary work activities in a normative manner (Engel, 1970; Mastekaasa, 2011; Scott, 1998). In many studies, professional autonomy is used more or less synonymously with "work autonomy," defined as the degree (of freedom, independence, and discretion) to which an individual can determine the kind of work he or she does and the procedures with which to do it (Freidson, 1970, 1994; Hackman & Oldham, 1975). In both cases, the "power" of a profession to identify and safeguard the content and practices of its work influences its evolution and status in the system of interdependent professional relations (Abbott, 1988). The link between professionalization and professional autonomy is often taken for granted, and it is still analysed in a fragmented fashion in theoretical and empirical

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investigations (e.g., Finn, 2001; Kangas, 1999; Kovner, Brewer, Wu, Cheng, & Suzuki, 2006; Mastekaasa, 2011; Salani & Coulter, 2009; Thompson, 2012; Zangaro & Soeken, 2007).

This paper contributes to understanding of the complex relationship between professionalization and the achievement of autonomy by presenting the particular process of how the Italian nursing profession has been built. This process is relatively recent and has undergone relevant changes since the end of the 1990s. During that period, nursing went through several stages. Nursing passed from the status of being a simple health occupation lacking a well-defined and homogeneous qualification or specificity, as well having a principally auxiliary role in the health field, to being a “semi-profession,” namely, an occupation whose status is not yet fully institutionalized, endorsed or composed of a body of specialized knowledge (Etzioni, 1969), to being a real profession with specific and technical knowledge, a university training path, specific roles and competences, a formal code of ethics and a set of legal and institutional acknowledgements (Rocco & Stievano, 2011).

However, although Italian nursing today apparently presents all the formal characteristics to be considered a “profession,” it still has weak professional autonomy within the health professions’ division of expert labour, due to various factors. One of these is the medical dominance, which has been a focus of the main discussion on nursing professionalization (Salhani & Coulter, 2009). Even though in the last 20 years medical dominance has partially declined (Bury & Taylor, 2008; Coburn, 2006; Tousijn, 2002, 2006), it continues to be very strong and exists in different forms in the Italian health system. Another issue is the role of the state (the legal system) in promoting professional autonomy. In Italy, it has been contradictory, since on the one hand the state has formalized nursing’s professional autonomy through specific laws, training paths and health services reforms, while on the other hand, it has impeded the full formal recognition and development of career paths and specific roles for nursing, instead maintaining the power of physicians in the system of health professions.

The purpose of this article is to provide a sociological analysis of the evolution of nursing profession in Italy, highlighting how some aspects related to the process of profession building prevent nursing to achieve a full recognition of its professional autonomy.

The particular focus of the work will be on two different but interconnected aspects of the Italian case. The first concerns institutional reforms that have involved health professions over the last twenty years, changing the academic training and the regulatory system of health professions. This is a central point that addresses much of the professionalization of Italian nursing within the health professions in the last twenty years. Freidson (1970, 1974, 2001) considers professional knowledge and expertise to be secondary to the importance of professional autonomy. He maintains that only when autonomy is assured can a profession secure control of its practice and be in a position to determine its standards and educational requirements, as well as to protect that autonomy through a code of ethics. In many countries, educational reforms have been a key tool for the empowerment of health professions (e.g., Davies, 2008; Gerrish, McManus, & Ashworth, 2003), while in Italy, they have produced significant improvements in the knowledge expertise of nurses but rarely been implemented on an institutional and organizational level because of strong medical dominance of the management and control of specialized nursing training (Abbott, 1988).

The second aspect that this paper addresses concerns the emergence of new social-health integration pathways that should strengthen the role of nurses in many health services outside traditional and medical-centred hospital settings. In recent years, in many countries, task-shifting strategies have been implemented whereby specific tasks and responsibilities are being shifted from the medical to the nursing profession through the central role of governance in reorganizing primary care services (Maier, 2015). In Italy, different models of primary and integrated care have

been promoted by the government, but they have been poorly defined from the point of view of the reorganization of the healthcare division of labour and formal and social recognition of the new tasks and roles, perpetuating the subordination of nursing to the medical profession.

These aspects, more than others, seem to be central to understanding the paradox of the professional evolution of nursing, in which professionalization and professional autonomy processes have followed different and sometimes opposing paths.

The article is divided into three main sections. In the first, a theoretical and conceptual framework is presented. In particular, some relevant theoretical aspects from the literature on the sociology of professions related to professionalization, professional autonomy, and medical dominance are analysed.

In the second session, the particular case of the evolution of the nursing profession in Italy is presented in terms of the main legislative reforms and institutional changes that have influenced the professionalization process. The focus is particularly placed on reforms in the nurse training system, which marked a turning point in the building of the nursing profession within the system of health professions.

The third session analyses the development of new integrative pathways of care and changes in health systems, as well as their opportunity to increase the professional autonomy of nurses, highlighting the paradox produced by the contradictory role of Italian health policies in preventing this process.

The study taps into the relevant theoretical literature, especially by using the conceptual framework for professionalization, professional autonomy and medical dominance provided by the sociology of professions. The analysis of the Italian case draws on a variety of sources, including national legislation, research literature and a secondary data analysis of national sociological surveys on Italian nurses produced in the last 20 years. This period is considered the most significant for observing the main changes in the process of building the nursing profession.

Theoretical framework and previous research

Many writings have debated the definitions and characteristics of professions and taken various positions on the process of “professionalization.” Generally, the process that leads an occupation to become a “profession” comprises different social, political and institutional phases, which are sometimes co-present with no precise sequence, ranging from the appearance of a certain type of work considered to be full-time employment with a body of specialized knowledge and techniques, to the establishment and development of specialized training schools, creation of professional associations, recognition by the state as professional activity and, in many cases, development of a formal ethical code (Etzioni, 1969; Evetts, 2002, 2011; Frankford, 1997; Freidson, 2001; Muzio & Kirkpatrick, 2011; Styles, 2005; Wilensky, 1964). However, the attainment of these features by profession is in many cases a necessary but insufficient condition to obtain professional recognition and autonomy (Salhani & Coulter, 2009). More relevant to this purpose is how a profession is able to define its professional boundaries within the “system of professions” based on complex and dynamic networks of professional groups within a specific work sector and constantly struggling in legal, public and workplace arenas characterized by “jurisdictional disputes” (Abbott, 1988). According to Abbott (1988, p. 59), the “diagnosis, treatment, inference and academic work provide the cultural machinery of jurisdiction.” Specialized academic training, which in health professions is a necessary requirement to access the profession itself, is one of the fundamental characteristics that distinguishes a profession from other types of occupations and contributes to the strengthening of its jurisdictional boundaries in relation to other professions (Abbott, 1988; Freidson, 2001; Saks, 2012).

Even if the dominance of one profession over other professional groups is a central factor influencing all levels of professional autonomy in various jurisdictions,

this aspect has been widely studied in health professions specifically in the doctor-nurse relationship. This expression, first formulated by Freidson (1970), means both the high “professional autonomy” of physicians in their work and the “predominant” position of the medical profession in relation to the autonomy of other health occupations and professions and to the power exerted over patients and their care process (Starr, 1982; Tousijn, 2000, 2002; Twaddle & Hessler, 1987).

Tousijn (2000, 2002) distinguishes four main forms of medical dominance that have historically influenced the doctor-nurse relationship in different countries. The first form is the “functional” type. It consists of the exclusive assignment to doctors of central functions within the overall system of care, such as making the diagnosis and choice of therapy. This power has been associated with the hospitalization process for most diseases. In this context, nurses, but also other health occupations, such as midwives or pharmacists, in the face of control by the much more autonomous and independent medical profession, have been forced to accept forms of subordination to it. The second form of medical dominance is the “hierarchical” or “vertical” type in relation to the division of health labour. Even in this case, the organizational development of hospitals is the most important phenomenon, since in hospitals, doctors have been considered the top of the hierarchical scale, with nurses and midwives, followed by many other health professions such as laboratory and radiology technicians and rehabilitation therapists, placed further down. The third form is the “scientific” type. It means that the medical profession itself has the exclusive power to identify fields and methods of medicine as a science. This kind of dominance arises, for example, from critiques and struggles by many doctors against non-conventional medicine, such as homeopathy or pranotherapy, which are more often practiced by other health professions, such as nurses, midwives, and physiotherapists. Finally, there is also a form of “institutional” medical dominance, which is manifested in the almost exclusive presence of doctors on many health occupations’ qualification commissions, academic staffs, and national institutions.

Medical dominance has undergone a process of decline since the early 1990s due to some changes in health systems, including health system reforms, consumerism, the professionalization of non-medical health occupations, as well as the hyper-specialization and division of the medical profession into different roles, which have weakened and fragmented its power to control health and pharmaceutical services (Andri & Kyriakidou, 2014; Bury & Taylor, 2008; Coburn, 1999, 2006; Gordon, 2005; Parse, 1998; Tousijn, 2002, 2006; Tousijn & Giorgino, 2009). Despite these changes, however, in the Italian context, the medical profession still plays a dominant role in all jurisdictions in the system of health professions, having a particular influence through the four types of dominance described by Tousijn. Particularly evident is the influence of doctors on the state since they are well represented in Parliament and control the legislative process of many health reforms (Toth, 2015).

The professionalization process of nursing

The principal theories of professionalism presented above consider specialized and expert knowledge one of the distinctive features of a profession’s autonomy (Freidson, 2001; Abbott, 1988). Despite the growing convergence of educational systems and approaches among different countries promoted by World Health Organization (WHO), at this time there is no uniformity in the way nursing education is globally organized. Some countries continue to consider education programs at the secondary school level to be sufficient, while others require university-level education as the minimum point of entry to the health professions. In Europe, cultural shifts over the last twenty years have been underscored by reforms in the health disciplines and particularly in educational directives on nursing (Lahtinen, Leino-Kilpi, & Salminen, 2014). Most European countries, such as Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom, have moved the education of

first-level nurses to the higher education sector and now offer an academic diploma or a degree. Several German universities are also now offering a first-level professional and academic qualification, and the nursing profession in France is campaigning for nursing to move to the higher education sector. Accordingly, the link between academic and specialized knowledge and the professionalization process is not so clear that it can be uniquely defined in nursing.

In Italy, the nursing education system is one of the more advanced in Europe. Changes in nursing education started about twenty years ago. Nursing courses have been present in university education since the adoption of Law 341/1990, when the hospital-based nursing diploma was abandoned, and a university-based diploma became the nurse training system. Furthermore, since the University Reform of 1999 and the subsequent Decree of 2001 by the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research on “Determination of the degree classes in health professions,” nursing has seen the establishment not only of an academic title for nursing but also the obligation to achieve this qualification to practice the profession and register with the National Regulatory Board (IPASVI), the only official professional nursing association in Italy. By the same decree, the first advanced degrees and masters in health professions with different specializations were established in 2004. Since 2006, the first Ph.D. in nursing research has been implemented, which for the first time provides nurses the opportunity to have an academic career and conduct research (Rocco et al., 2014).

Despite this extensive training, some contradictions in the formal recognition of advanced academic titles must also be highlighted. Besides the first-level masters (following the nursing degree) in “coordination and management functions,” the masters and advanced degrees activated by Italian universities in the field of nursing are poorly recognized by health organizations through clear contracts and career advancement opportunities (Cipolla & Rocco, 2014). This limitation has repercussions not only for the recognition of nursing’s cultural jurisdiction but also on nursing’s appreciation within the workplace arena. In the United Kingdom, for example, nurses with a master’s degree can become nurse practitioner or advanced practice nurse, roles that enable them to perform several functions that until recently were within the exclusive domain of physicians, including the formulation of diagnoses, prescription of drugs and administration of therapies (Royal College of Nursing, 2012). These types of activities are actually forbidden to Italian nurses, despite their long and advanced academic training.

Furthermore, the affirmation of a specific nursing faculty with full-time academic nursing staff is lacking in Italian universities. Currently, academic courses and research doctorates on nursing are managed and controlled by faculties of medicine, where the only structured teaching staff is mostly composed of physicians, while nurses teach principally as external and adjunct staff.

In Freidson’s (2001) theory, specific training, especially university-based education, is a basic element of professional autonomy. Usually, such education is under the control of the professional group itself, which can manage the number of professionals entering the labour market through having rigid admission standards for specialist schools or requiring candidates to pass an examination to obtain a qualifying title (as in the case of the medical profession). In addition, those engaged in specialist training are generally full-time teachers coming from the profession itself and committed to enhancing the wealth of skills and specific knowledge of the profession through academic study and research. This normally leads to knowledge-based control of the teaching staff and a high level of standardization and reliability of the degrees issued by the education system. In addition, a long, specialized training path produces a student socialization process with a distinct culture and professional identity, creating a strong sense of belonging to a professional community (“professional solidarity”) and an awareness of its roles, skills and responsibilities, which continues even after the training period ends and students embark on different career paths. Although an instructional system can provide the ground for professional attacks by

other professions, preserving the exclusivity and specificity of the profession's knowledge expertise, at the same time, in a system of professions, "few dominant professions lose the ability to instruct themselves, although subordinate professions often lose it to dominants, this being an important means of domination" (Abbott, 1988, p. 57).

So, at least from the point of view of its cultural structure, Italian nursing can be considered, for all intents and purposes, a profession with an increasingly high level of specialization and training. Although this is a necessary condition for being considered a profession rather than a technician or craft occupation (Freidson, 2001), academic training is insufficient to guarantee professional autonomy. The presence of both strong "institutional" and "scientific" medical dominance (Tousijn, 2002) on the levels of academic education and research effectively prevent Italian nursing from not only controlling its own knowledge, still encrusted with purely medical methods and approaches, but also strengthening the involvement and identification of students with the nursing profession. It also reverberates in nurses' medical-centred culture, hindering new generations of nurses' construction of a professional identity and autonomy (Wade, 1999). In this sense, the nursing profession in Italy is still strongly dependent on the medical profession in the building of its cultural structure (Abbott, 1988), since most of the stable professors in nursing academic courses are doctors, whereas nurses have still little chance of accessing a university career, which in most cases is controlled by commissions exclusively composed of physicians (Cipolla & Rocco, 2014). This form of institutional dominance (Tousijn, 2002) seems to have been overcome in other countries such as the United States and Canada, where nurses dominate their own cultural jurisdictional machinery, with academic departments, faculties, schools, and centres of research managed by specific, full-time academic nursing staff. Even the professional Italian nursing association, called IPASVI, which represents the nursing profession on a national and local basis, is able to play only a partial role in advocating for the profession, ensuring that the deontological code is respected, endorsing the professional cultural growth of registered nursing and promoting the Continuing Medical Education (ECM) activities required of all health professionals by the Italian National Health System (Rocco et al., 2014).

Professional paths and institutional constraints

An important step for Italian nursing was the enactment of Law 42/1999, called "Disposition concerning health professions," which ratified nursing's professional autonomy from a legal point of view. Nurses officially became autonomous professionals with specific responsibilities and a formal ethical code, even if nowadays the positive effects of this law can hardly be perceived in professional practice (Rocco & Stievano, 2011).

Some Italian sociological surveys (e.g., Cipolla & Artioli, 2003; Tousijn, 2003) point out that twenty years ago nursing had a quite homogeneous identity, even in terms of social perception. The nurse was seen as a figure appointed to perform auxiliary and subordinate patient assistance tasks. Although this corresponded only partially to the real activities performed by nurses, in the eyes of patients and doctors, the nursing role comprised essentially this. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the millennium, a national survey conducted by Cipolla and Artioli (2003) noted the dissatisfaction of Italian nurses towards their level of knowledge, especially in relation to their subjective expectations and the need to have specialist skills. Nurses believed that the formulation achieved by that point was adequate to the organizational context and the necessities of the population; however, it was inadequate for their personal expectations. In other words, the survey highlighted that the desire for higher education mainly came from nurses themselves and not from the organizational health system (Artioli, 2003). In addition, the survey showed that nurses complained

about the limited recognition of their role, their lack of decision-making power, their low regard in public opinion, their residual role with respect to doctors and the insufficient number of nurses compared with patients' care needs.

In the last few years, the doctor-nurse relationship has been influenced by nursing's increasing request to establish itself as a discipline that is separate from the medical one but at the same time equal to it (Allen, 2007; Rafferty, 1996). In the literature, this paradox is often referred to through the dichotomy between "care" and "cure" that historically characterizes the tasks, practices and identities of doctors and nurses (Baumann, Deber, Silverman, & Mallette, 1998; England, 2005; Jecker & Self, 1991; Katz, 1969; Kottow, 2001; Watson & Ray, 1988; Treiber & Jones, 2015). The task of curing the sick derives from the set of medical and scientific knowledge, and it is therefore based on principles of universality, rationality, and emotional neutrality, while the activity of caring comes from much more uncertain and varied knowledge, largely based on interpersonal, relational, psychological, emotional, and aesthetic skills (Cancian & Olikier, 2000; Dowling, 2006; Johnson, 2015). Such duplicity in the nursing profession has meant that it has historically been placed in an intermediate position between the medical profession and the roles of auxiliaries to the medical professions (Sena, 2015; Tousijn, 2000). For this reason, nurses have progressively left the less qualified tasks for occupations with a lower professional profile in performing of specific roles and responsibilities, such as in advanced nursing practice (Bryant-Lukosius, Dicenso, Browne, & Pinelli, 2004; Pulcini, Jelic, Gul, & Loke, 2010; Sheer & Wong, 2008).

At the same time, in recent years there has been a continuous reorganization of the health system and health workforce, aiming to reduce hospitals and to increase alternative services, especially in primary care, with the purpose of offering better follow-up, continuity of care for outpatients with chronic degenerative diseases and integrated care structures for the diagnosis and treatment of different pathologies (Barbazza, Langins, Kluge, & Tello, 2015; WHO, 2016). The delivery of these new health services, which are more functional for the needs of the population and the rationalization of health expenditures, would also seem to suggest a change in nurses' work in terms of greater autonomy and role specialization, strengthening its jurisdictional boundary in the workplace arena (Abbott, 1988; Salhani & Coulter, 2009). This is a global trend in many countries where the doctor-nurse relationship is consistently changing, and it has been identified by WHO (2007) as a strategy to alleviate progressive shortages of physicians, to improve the quality and efficiency of healthcare systems and to reduce the increasing costs of public health. Recent studies (Maier, 2015; Maier & Aiken, 2016; Martínez-González et al., 2014) show that in many Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, such as the United States, Australia, Canada, England, Finland, and Netherlands, there is a tendency toward extensive task-shifting from physicians to nurses in the field of primary care, supported by different national regulatory reforms. However, even in this setting, the Italian case shows a delay in professional change, highlighting the strength of the medical profession in maintaining its professional boundaries in all workplace settings (Toth, 2015).

About 80% of Italian nurses today work mainly in hospital settings, although different integrated paths had been formalized by the end of the 1970s and have been considerably promoted in recent years (Sena, 2015). Nevertheless, non-hospital settings present several problems on the implementation level in the Italian health system. For example, the family and community health nurse, who is widespread in many countries and even encouraged by the WHO (2000, 2006), is hard to get formally recognized in Italy, although there have been a specific academic specialization and an official association of family and community nurses (called AIFEC) for several years (Rocco, Marcadelli, Stievano, & Cipolla, 2017). This is due to the fact that family health nurses act with much more autonomy than hospital nurses, overcoming many forms of medical control by general practitioners in primary care and

strengthening interprofessional cooperation in many interdependence areas (Fenster-Thuente, 2008; Martin et al., 2013). However, this role in Italy does not have true organizational legitimacy. Although many experiments in different regions and health organizations have been conducted, at the institutional level, no family or community nurse's path is generally recognized (Rocco et al., 2017). The causes of this delay in Italy, compared with other countries, can be partly explained by the fact that Italy has one of the higher numbers of physicians in the population and, at the same time, one of the lower numbers of nurses. The nurses-to-doctor ratio was 1.5, one of the lowest in the EU-28, where the average is 2.3 (OECD, 2015). Especially in primary care, this ratio is particularly evident. These data confirm the persistence of a doctor-centred healthcare system, even if the trend in recent years supports the idea of a progressive reduction of doctors in the short-to-medium term due to the aging of the Italian medical profession without a rebalancing of tasks and responsibilities among other health professions (Vicarelli & Pavolini, 2015).

A further explanation of nursing's weakness in the workplace arena is the fact that, until the beginning of the 2008 economic crisis, nurses had immediate and stable employment, whereas in the last few years the situation has rapidly changed with a shift from a shortage of nurses in the National Health Service to unemployment problems or an increased use of atypical contracts for those who have recently graduated (Centro Studi Nursind, 2014). This change is principally due to austerity measures introduced by Italian government since 2010, both in terms of expenditure cuts and turnover block (Vicarelli & Pavolini, 2015). The generational replacement block of both doctors and nurses has, indeed, maintained traditional cultural barriers in interprofessional collaboration, effectively strengthening functional and hierarchical forms of medical dominance (Hall, 2005; Tousijn, 2002).

Italian nurses perceive this situation as conflicting with their desire for greater professional autonomy. In the second Italian national survey on the nursing profession (Cipolla & Rocco, 2014), the majority of respondents still felt that they had few tools to manage financial and human resources, despite the management skills received through academic curricula. In addition, nurses continue to be exposed to an excessive workload and a high turnover and have to deal with a lack of instruments with which to influence health policies and the development of the health organizations where they work.

Accordingly, the difficulty of moving the professionalization of nursing toward a parallel achievement of professional autonomy in the Italian context can be explained by the lack of and contradictory support from the state and its regulative reforms in promoting forms of task-shifting from physicians to nurses in the context of primary care and in removing all the above-listed institutional and structural constraints on the empowerment and formal recognition of the nursing profession. Regulatory reforms in primary care, produced at the regional and national level, have actually not changed nursing's status of subordination to the medical profession in the system of health professions. In addition, although there are now several specialized academic training courses for nurses in several topic areas (e.g., family and community nursing, wound care, case management, etc.), these advanced skills are not yet formally recognized in health services in terms of careers paths, responsibilities and interprofessional relations, which are still controlled and undermined by functional and hierarchical forms of medical dominance.

Conclusions

In this work, attention has been paid particularly to two main aspects of the process of professionalization and the achievement of professional autonomy: cultural jurisdiction and the legal system. As outlined above, in these settings, professionalization and professional autonomy do not always follow the same path, although they have

often been considered interrelated and dependent concepts in many theories of professions.

In the last twenty years, the Italian nursing profession has been “built” in a changing institutional, educational and health system, and it now struggles with several constraints of a different nature. The case of Italian nursing shows how a high level of academic and specialized training and institutional reforms to promote new integrated care models in which the role of nursing could be most valued are insufficient to complete the professionalization process and thus to guarantee the achievement of professional autonomy.

The sociological analysis presented here demonstrated that in the last twenty years, Italian nursing has moved from unqualified training to having academic and specialized education like any other profession and more than is required in other countries. However, the numerous reforms to increase this advanced training and the construction of specific areas of practice for nurses have not been followed by a parallel recognition of the profession in terms of its institutional enhancement and autonomy. Medical dominance is still persistent in all four principal forms identified by Tousijn (functional, hierarchical, scientific, and institutional) and, particularly in controls on the educational and organizational levels of health professions. Thus, we can consider the professionalization process to be incomplete because it is not associated with the achievement of professional autonomy. This is confirmed by Italian nurses’ low perception of their own potential as a profession, highlighted by national surveys.

Accordingly, medical dominance continues to be the main factor slowing the complete professionalization of nursing in the Italian system of health professions, despite many studies pointing out that it this dominance is weakening.

The role of the state and regulative changes in the National Health System, especially its reorganization and the rationalization of functions and costs, must be noted. They have often hindered or at least slowed down the turnover of senior health personnel and the introduction of innovation to the health system, such as the development of social-health integration pathways, thus preventing even the possibility of a new generation of nurses’ professional development and empowerment, repeating the dominant position of medical profession in the cultural and workplace arena. The government’s contradictory and ambiguous role in maintaining some structural and institutional constraints on the achievement of nursing’s professional autonomy could be considered the principal cause of the persistence of medical dominance in the Italian healthcare system. In this sense, legal and institutional support must be considered essential for the interconnected development of professionalization and professional autonomy in the system of health professions.

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Joakim Krantz and Lena Fritzén

From Expert to Novice? The Influence of Management by Documents on Teachers' Knowledge Base and Norms

Abstract: The aim of this study is to reveal how teachers experience the effects of management by documents in their professional practice. Approximately one hundred primary school teachers were asked to describe their daily teaching work with special focus on the demands in terms of the production of documentation. The reports were analysed using a “profession theoretical” model which focuses on the following aspects of professional knowledge: recognition, emotional engagement, and evaluation of and responsibility for one’s own work. The results show that the teachers have experienced that the teaching profession has changed because of fixation on results, and fragmentation has resulted in a decrease in the levels of trust and a feeling that the work is boring. The internal pedagogic discourse is weakened because of the presence of an external legal discourse. Management by documents can thus be a factor that causes a professional regression.

Keywords: Management by documents, teacher knowledge and norms, professional regression

In the wake of the introduction of New Public Management, the work that teachers do has changed radically (Jarl & Rönnerberg, 2010; Solbrenke & Englund, 2011; Stenlås, 2009). In a goal- and result-driven school system, it has become more important to manage and document every aspect of the student’s performance. In the Swedish context, these changes in management systems have resulted in teachers’ work being managed, controlled, and standardized by different demands with respect to documentation. These demands entail control and management of teacher’s work processes; this we define as “management by documents.” In this study, our investigation into management by documents is limited to (i) individual development plans (*individuella utvecklingsplaner*) which contain written evaluations of every student and (ii) action plans (*åtgärdsprogram*) for students who are at risk of not achieving the required subject proficiency or competency (National Agency for Education [NAE], 2008a, 2008b). Both technologies, which include a presentation of each students’ performance, are linked to educational programs which are intended to support and ensure students’ achievement of educational goals (Rose & Miller, 1992).

The question that we ask is: How do teachers experience the influence that management by documents has on their work? In Sweden, these changes in management systems and their effects on teachers’ professional knowledge have been discussed

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by politicians, researchers, and by teachers themselves. The decrease in overall Swedish student performance levels in PISA (NAE, 2013) prompted the Directorate for Education and Skills – OECD with a mandate from the Swedish government to analyse the Swedish school system, including the work that teachers perform (OECD, 2015). In the report, it was noted how the growth of the school bureaucracy in the Swedish school system had undermined trust in the teachers' professional competence.

People at all levels observed that there has been a marked cultural shift in the school system, from belief in the professional competence and expertise of educators and a high degree of social trust in their judgments to one of distrust, increasing bureaucratisation of decisions, and uncertainty about expectations under which educators are supposed to operate (OECD, 2015, p. 114).

Using the motto “Let teachers be teachers, not administrators!” several teacher unions have given voice to teachers' dissatisfaction with this situation (Läraryrket, 2016). Teachers claim that they spend 50% of their time on administrative duties, and 2/3 of teachers report that they do not have time to properly execute their teaching assignment (Skolvärlden, 2016). International research shows that teacher is the most important individual factor for student learning. Based on a wide-ranging international overview of the subject, Håkansson and Sundberg (2012, p. 161) write: “The research shows that students who are taught by the most effective teachers enjoy learning benefits four times greater than those students who are taught by the least effective teachers.” Effectiveness is dependent on professional's knowledge, ability, and what they do. What is of importance, in this context, is professionals' knowledge base and norms which include both theoretical and practical knowledge (Grimen, 2008). There is a current lack of knowledge about the effect that management by documents has on teachers' knowledge and norms (Agevall & Jonnergård, 2007; Agevall, Jonnergård, & Krantz, 2017). It is this lack of knowledge that we address in this paper. Our hypothesis is that teachers' knowledge base and norms change when the demand for documentation becomes more marked at school. To test this hypothesis, we interviewed almost hundred teachers who shared their experiences of management by documentation. The responses that were made by the teachers were analysed by using a profession-theoretical model which focused on aspects of their professional knowledge base and norms (Agevall & Jonnergård, 2007; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, 2005).

The aim of this paper is to present how teachers experience the effects of management by documents on their profession.

Management via documentation

The demands for documentation can be put into perspective as being part of a wider discourse—a discourse where documents and documentation represent that which is normal, reasonable, and natural as well as rational (Foucault, 2003; Riles, 2006). In this discourse, documentation becomes a condition for improvement work, quality assurance, and school development. Documentation sets demands and expectations for clearer demarcations of responsibility, a clarification of work processes, and the development of the ability to be self-reflexive. Documentation as a management technology constitutes an important part of the message that pedagogic practice transmits to students, caretakers, teachers, principals, business people, and politicians. Documentation thus fulfills system-related functions in terms of making comparisons (comparability), imposing control, and making selections (Hofvendahl, 2006; Krantz, 2009; Sjöberg, 2011). Changes in school management systems and procedures have been dependant on the profession's (i.e., teachers') ability and willingness to exercise internal control over the school system (Mausethagen & Mølsted, 2015; Sahlin & Waks, 2008). For teachers, management by documents is directly expressed in terms of how documentation, evaluations, and other judgments inform

teachers how the achievement of certain goals and results should take place (Biesta, 2011; Englund, 2012). The fact that teachers must be professional in this area of documentation constitutes professional practice (Forsberg & Lindberg, 2010). In terms of increased accountability and curriculum control, traditional demands placed on teachers (where they previously determined for themselves the nature of their pedagogic work) have changed (Mausethagen & Mølstad, 2015), resulting in a situation where less attention is given to the relational aspects of teacher's work (Mausethagen, 2013a).

The degree to which changes in school management systems have resulted in professionalization or de-professionalization for teachers is debatable (Mausethagen, 2013a, 2013b; Mausethagen & Smeby, 2016). In a comparative study of the education systems in Sweden, Ireland, and Finland, Swedish and Irish teachers (in contrast to Finnish teachers) experienced that an increase in demands for documentation contributed to a decrease in professional autonomy (Houtsonen, Czaplicka, Lindblad, Sohlberg, & Sugrue, 2010). When the demand for documentation is related to an overarching administrative level, many teachers were of the opinion that their work dealt with the development of democratic learning structures to a lesser degree (Biesta, 2004; Eggen, 2010). Brante, Johnsson, Olofsson, and Svensson (2015) show that teacher's autonomy has been weakened. Other studies show that teachers' resistance towards accountability policies and current developments in school management systems is legitimised by moral arguments and by reference to their experience-based knowledge (Mausethagen, 2013b). According to Asp-Onsjö (2012), documentation can establish order and create "truth" from the perspective of those who are in power. She claims that an increase in documentation can, in certain situations, increase teacher's professional influence over parents. Documentation can also cause resistance when the "truth" that documentation creates is questioned by caretakers and students. In an attempt to fend off accusations of being unclear or arbitrary, uncertainty and protectionist strategies can develop within teachers (Krantz, 2009).

Management by documents causes teachers to act in response to external demands and expectations, so as to come across as legitimate (being a professional). But, on the other hand, they also create and support quality improvement processes in the school's operations (being professional) (Hargreaves, 2000; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). In the tension between external demands and internal expectations, feelings of distrust and reliance have to be dealt with so that the school operations proceed in a professional manner (Mausethagen, 2013b).

Analytical framework

Our theoretical point of departure includes the claim that teachers' knowledge base and norms change in response to the effects of prevailing forms of management by documents, and that this change influences pedagogic practices. So as to understand this change, it is appropriate to scrutinize the terms *knowledge base* and *norms* more closely.

Knowledge base and norms are foundational to the functional professional-theoretical perspective which is usually credited to Parson (1939) and Freidson (2001). A profession, with its associated competencies (knowledge base) and responsibilities (norms), should solve certain societal problems. Professionals claim to possess the necessary knowledge and ethical considerations to classify problems, to give direction to their actions, and to be able to evaluate the consequences of their actions (Abbott, 1988). By using their specialized education and training in practice, professions have developed their own theoretical knowledge ("to know that"), as well as context-dependent, experiential knowledge ("to know how to") (Ryle, 1990). Professional autonomy includes both knowledge and norms. In cases where it is suspected that teachers' knowledge base and norms are in a state of change, then it is

necessary to provide a further specification of those aspects which constitute teachers' knowledge base and norms.

This is what we are able to do by using Dreyfus and Dreyfus's (2005) model, which describes the five steps by which knowledge and norms are developed. The first step, a *novice*, characterizes knowledge as consisting of facts in the form of context-free rules. A novice evaluates her work in terms of how well it follows the rules. An *advanced beginner* has begun to recognize and differentiate between different relevant parts in different situations. A person who is *competent* has learned to prioritize and can judge that which is important to a particular situation and experiences a personal responsibility for the choices that are made. A *proficient performer* is heavily engaged, understands, and interprets situations in terms of whether the problem is to be solved or a potential is to be exploited, and is guided by open rules. Finally, an *expert* performer has the ability to perceive and differentiate between more subtle features of a situation or problem, and possesses a level of preparedness, and thus, foresight. An expert teacher also follows the rules, but rules and routines are context dependent. The path from novice to expert allows the practitioner to develop from a position where she merely follows the rules to a place where she can assume responsibility for her work, which entails a series of ethical considerations based on professional judgments (Fritzén, 2007). When routines are replaced by a more profound sense of engagement, norms become intrinsic to teacher's work. Based on Dreyfus and Dreyfus (2005) and theories of ethics at work (Benner, 1993; Freidson, 2001; Polanyi, 1962), Agevall and Jonnergård (2007) identify three aspects (forming a so-called "knowledge triad") which they claim are crucial to the development and maintenance of profession's knowledge and norms.

The three aspects which are crucial for the continued development, maintenance, and further development of the professional's knowledge base and norms are: (i) recognition—the ability to see, to notice, and recognise a situation, (ii) emotional engagement, and (iii) evaluation and responsibility for one's own work (Agevall, Jonnergård & Krantz, 2017, p. 25).

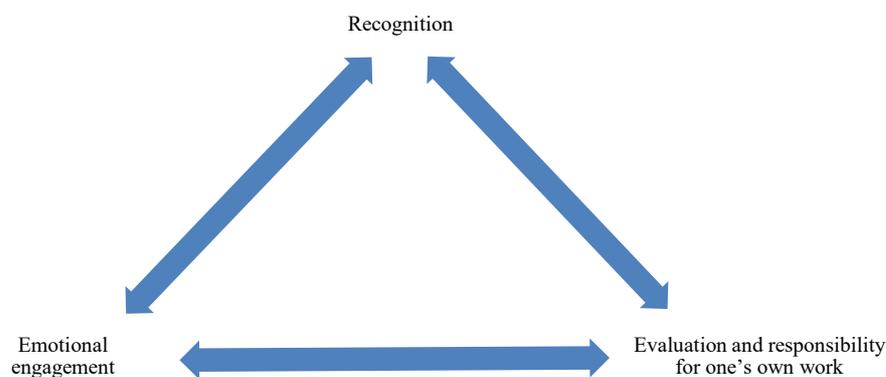


Figure 1. *The knowledge triad. The arrows in the figure indicate that each of the three aspects are dependent on each other.*

Recognition refers to the ability to identify what is demanded by a professional person in a certain situation (Polanyi, 1962). "Recognition can be summarized as a perceptual ability which is grounded on knowledge and experience. We also claim that this ability is related to ethics" (Agevall et al., 2017, p. 27). *Emotional engagement* refers to the subject's willingness to do good work. Polanyi (1962) highlights intellectual passion as a necessary condition for the work done by a professional to be successful. Emotional engagement is closely related to whether a teacher can make independent choices or not. Teacher's autonomy entails that she enjoys the freedom

of action and possesses the ability to act (Agevall et al., 2017). *Evaluating and taking responsibility for one's own work* involves a critical examination of one's work and taking personal responsibility as an inalienable part of knowledge development (Molander, 1993). Taking responsibility requires freedom of action which includes an ethical compass which takes into consideration both the individual and society needs. Englund and Solbrekke (2010, p. 2) state that, "[P]rofessional responsibility gains a specific meaning. It implies a commitment to a body of knowledge and skills, both for the profession's own sake and for use in the service of its clients and in the interests of society." The way in which work is assessed and how responsibility is judged are linked to the possibility of making independent choices. Freedom of action thus entails responsibility and ethical behavior (Svensson & Karlsson, 2008).

Group interviews and qualitative content analysis

Nineteen group interviews with 94 teachers (69 women and 25 men) were conducted. The teachers represented three different schools from three different municipal counties in Sweden. Two of the schools included students from Years 7-9 whilst the other school is an F-9 school. A condition that was common to all of the schools was an expectation from teachers to undergo professional development concerning their ability to document and maintain individual learning plans and action programs. One of the schools stood out in that a large proportion of students had not achieved specified knowledge goals. All teachers at the three schools were interviewed. A majority of the teachers possessed considerable teaching experience in terms of years of service. The interviews were conducted according to how teachers were organized in their respective work teams. The teachers were informed of the purpose of the research project, and they were notified that their participation was voluntary. This research project was approved by the ethics board.

During the interviews, questions were asked about teachers' work plans, their documentation and assessment practices, and about what they thought were the causes behind a decrease in student performance results. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim as 275 pages of 12 point text. Our decision to interview teachers entailed that their view of the organizational context and different institutional levels would come to the fore. This method resulted in some limitations, however. During the group interviews, it is possible that teachers influenced each other. For example, a teacher might describe her own professional work in a favorable light but may take the opportunity to be overly critical of school's management and management by documents. The focus of the interviews was on teachers' descriptions of their own practices, and so we did not perform any classroom observations or read what teachers wrote in the relevant documentation. Notwithstanding this, we were able to receive feedback from the participants. By re-visiting the summary transcripts with the teachers, we were able to reach a higher level of mutual enlightenment and thus, provide even more, supportive evidence for our final conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). The majority of teachers who participated in this study possess many years of professional teaching experience; a fact which may have influenced the result of the study. Previous studies have shown that veteran teachers can be more critical of changes in school management when compared to teachers who have just begun their teaching careers. Reference to the contrast between "before" and "now" can be sometimes used to legitimize resistance to a certain development or change (Mausethagen, 2013b).

The analysis of the interviews consisted of three distinct stages. The first stage was a content analysis based on the theory presented in Goodson and Lindblad's (2011) termed professional work life narratives. The second stage examined management by documents as a force that provides structure, in the sense that such management partly controls attention and behavior (Rose & Miller, 1992), and partly influences teachers' relationship with each other, with students, and with parents

(Mausethagen, 2013a). Our ambition was to clarify and interpret the meaning conveyed by the statements uttered by the teachers during the interviews (Bergström & Boréus, 2000), in an attempt to condense the data (in contrast to merely “reducing” or summarizing the data (Miles et al., 2014). The themes that emerged during the second stage of the analysis included “the good teacher,” “autonomy,” “responsibility,” and so on (see also Agevall, Jonnergård, & Krantz, 2017). In the third and final stage, we find the relationship between the concepts that constitute the knowledge-triad. The themes that then emerged (“fixation on results,” “fragmentation” and so on) are both empirically based but also theoretically reconstructed. The extracts provided exemplify the teachers’ experience of how management by documents influences their profession.

From expert to novice?

The overall picture that the teachers painted of the changing demands for documentation was bleak. Only a few teachers thought that the increased demand for documentation gave rise to clarity, not least for the parents:

You have to be clearer [in your work], and if it is documented, then it is easier to follow up on it. You might have a parent who says “I have never heard of this.” But yes, we said this last time, here you are, here it is, written here [in the action plan].

For some teachers, the demand for documentation can give rise to a sense of relief and elevated professionalism, since one can show evidence for what one had done (and the sense that one has “covered one’s back”). One teacher reported: “I think that more standardization would be a good thing. It would be great if we had something printed out in advance.”

However, in general, the teachers were very critical of local school management and of decision-makers at the national level. Some of them argued that the time that was previously spent on planning, lesson delivery, and following-up, was now spent on completing documentation and entering individual results into a specially-designed computer system. Documentation involved in producing individual learning plans and action programs took too much time from their pedagogic work, according to the teachers.

Before the previous series of student development discussions [with each student], I was supposed to enter information for 120 students into the PODB [computer documentation system which teachers use to record individual learning plans and action plans] about what they had done in the subject, how they are performing, and what they should do if they were at risk of not achieving the [course] objectives.

When we consider the knowledge-triad’s three aspects, a picture emerges where the teachers’ knowledge and ethical compass can become threatened.

Recognition

The teachers claimed that they knew a great deal about students without needing all that documentation. One teacher stated that “[we] know what must be done, but we can’t because there was just not enough time.” The time resource that teachers have to spend on documentation, instead of being spent on what they think are relevant issues, has an alternative cost. This causes a shift in goals which influences their ability to use and develop their sense of recognition.

Two aspects involving increasing demands on documentation were identified as important conditions for the use and development of recognition. The first was a strong *fixation on results* and an associated short-term assessment of knowledge. The second was a *fragmentation* which worked against the “whole picture” perspective; something which, according to the teachers, was crucial to student learning.

Fixation on results

With reference to the increase in control- and inspection systems since the 1990s, one teacher claimed that

There have been lots of instructions from the national level that entail that we must live up to the achievement of goals. And we should be prepared when the National Agency for Education or a school inspector comes and asks, “What have you done?” We have created this form, and we have investigated this. It’s in the file, and we have it on paper.

This emphasis on results and performance singles out students who do not achieve passing grades, and poses a challenge for teachers who claim to have the best for their students at heart. According to the teachers, negative side effects of documentation emerge in the form of a stigmatization of students and their exclusion, which leads to worsening relationships with students and their guardians. Some teachers claim that this is “absolutely insulting for the students, they don’t understand what is going on, everything goes over their head.” Teachers report that they have to try to avoid situations where students, in the mass of documents, are treated in an “inhuman and insulting manner.” One teacher described the situation as one where teachers should not “break students any more than they are already broken.” The teachers stated that they did not want to contribute to a situation where the student felt bad because student’s feeling of alienation had been documented. The fixation of results can be perceived as standing in opposition to teachers’ knowledge and experience that they have regarding their students’ social- and intellectual development.

The problem is with all the paper drills that come on top of everything. All these forms that we have to mark and fill in. It’s not enough that we write that the student has achieved the learning objectives; we also have to fill in another form which has to be signed. There’s loads of paperwork.

The teachers claimed that the documentation itself might be a factor behind the decline in student performance. It was clearly apparent, according to the teachers, that different people at schools had different norms and values with respect to what was considered to be important knowledge and how it should be documented.

I believe that the students must feel good if they are to perform better, but I have never heard school management speak about how important it is that we work on getting students to feel good. Instead, they say that you don’t have very good results, can’t you fix the results?

According to these teachers, work at school is becoming more one-sided towards knowledge management, results, and measurability, where notions of objectivity, effectiveness, and equivalence take center stage.

Fragmentation

The teachers reported on a lack of opportunities to work together on a particular topic and with a particular group of students.

There are lots of small projects [which demand professional development] and lots of balls in the air which we don't know where they land. We start one project after the other, but without finishing them and without anyone giving us any feedback.

The teachers were critical of the management's lack of understanding of the fact that fragmentation spreads into their teaching and its development, and can thus cause a decrease in student achievement. Fragmentation also causes many teachers to focus their attention on things that they have difficulty in apprehending as having any useful pedagogic function. According to the teachers, an opportunity to establish a perspective of the whole and to take a procedurally and more formatively orientated approach is limited. One teacher said,

I wish I could make [educational] plans and be inspired by others, build on themes about what we are supposed to do. To find more difficult assignments. To plan this [thing] together, to have the time to do something that's fun.

The fact that the school operations are understood as being "fragmented" and that different projects and inputs continually trigger the next make it generally more difficult to evaluate the results of these different contributions.

Emotional engagement

The teachers claim to possess a high level of engagement with the students. They claimed that good teachers were at school primarily for the students' sake. But notwithstanding this particular sentiment, the teachers experienced negative emotions at times when they felt that they could not be busy with what they thought was their primary professional task. *A lack of trust and a job that has become more boring* were two aspects which came to the fore in the interviews with respect to the theme of emotional engagement.

Lack of trust

A feeling of distrust was repeatedly referred to by the teachers. The teachers reported that, for a particular time period, they were forced to document and report on the performance of each student to the school administration as a part of an action plan. "From April [onwards], every Friday, we had to report to the administration block about how much closer Johan and how much closer Stefan are now to a passing grade. We bent over backwards for them." The teachers were critical of the notion that the documents were to "prove" what they had done.

We are chased high and low to improve the grades. Many feel a lot of frustration about this that we are not good enough.... The principal, municipality, and school administration claim that better results are the same as better grades. And from below, parents, and students put pressure on us.

Another teacher argued that the documentation created mistrust and criticism from students and parents, amongst others:

I have never been so careful with documentation as I am now. But at the same time, I have never before been subject to as much criticism as I have this last year, primarily from students and parents. In some way, the more one documents things, the more open to criticism one becomes.

The teachers state that "the good teacher," the teacher who prioritizes her students,

is under the threat of disappearing. The result of such a development, we claim, can lead to a situation where the teacher's professional pedagogic independence runs the risk of being compromised.

Boredom

Part of the general dissatisfaction experienced by the teachers, according to their reports, was their frustration over a lack of resources. The teachers felt forced to spend time on things that they did not believe would make a positive contribution to the students. Consequently, they did not have time for those things that they thought were of importance and "fun" in the profession. They claimed that the heavy workload and the nature of the work led to stress, a "draining of energy," and made work "boring."

I believe that the energy people had 4-5 years ago has been all eaten up, and we feel under such terrible pressure because we are not doing enough, even though we are working as hard as we can. It takes all the energy we have to do the fun things than working more on the theme.

Generally, the teachers reported that with respect to the school's operations, the importance of enjoying work being done, being engaged, and possessing enthusiasm had decreased. For example, the teachers reported that the "fantasy and spontaneity" that a teacher can bring to the classroom now runs the risk of being completely lost.

Evaluating and taking responsibility for one's own work

We identified two approaches concerning evaluating one's own work and taking responsibility for one's work. The first approach is based on an internal evaluation which is informed by the teacher's own quality criteria. The second approach is based on external demands and expectations on what the teacher must do and develop; in other words, this consists of an external evaluation. Questions about responsibility are closely linked to both approaches. We are thus confronted with two (partly contradictory) discourses; namely the *internal pedagogic discourse* and the *externally-grounded judicial discourse*.

The weakening of the pedagogic discourse

The internal evaluations that teachers make add to their knowledge of what constitutes good performances and qualities. The norm that "the student is at the center of the work that is to be done" is, as we interpret it here, embedded in quality criteria which are based on that which constitutes a good teacher and work that is properly performed. One teacher stated that:

[The sharing of] knowledge is left at the wayside. It [all the contacts with other people and the formulation of plans] takes time away from our teaching role.... There is a huge difference between starting work in a school today than what it was 30 years ago when I started. It's not the same job.

So as to live up to the norm of being "good teachers," the teachers claim that they want to have more time to hold collegial conversations where they, themselves, set the agenda. They wanted to spend more time on pedagogic and didactic development. In addition, they wanted more opportunities to work on generic skills and competencies, formative assessment, school's democratic assignment, and their own subject knowledge. They also reported that they wanted to take on more active roles as teachers: to supervise students, instill enthusiasm, demonstrate qualitative differences in students' work, support students, set demands on students, and not allow

students to work so much on their own. The teachers' statements concerning the necessity for more focus on their professional assignment were based on the view that they wanted to spend more time on responding to the question: What are the right things to do? The teachers were also critical of the prevailing situation where no one took responsibility for continuity, the school's vision, the exchange of experience, and thus, the long-term strategies for the school's operations. Against this background, for some of the teachers, it was unclear what the purpose of the work was and what the teachers were supposed to focus on.

We never have time to develop the operations [at the school].... Administrative tasks just become more and more.... More and more time and energy is spent on reporting, action plans, learning plans, IUPs, attendance lists and statistical summaries. I just wish I could have pedagogic discussions with my colleagues.

Even the most experienced teachers felt insecure and claimed that they "fumbled" their way forward and wondered whether they were doing a good job. In certain cases, the teachers reported that there was a conflict in the goals between what they considered to be good work and what the school management was asking for. "I feel that the principal and the school management team's goals are not the same as ours. We have other ideas about what we should do so that the students can succeed." Whilst the school authorities and the school management focuses on the school's documentation, attention is directed towards the teachers' and the school's accountability. From the teachers' perspective, it becomes more difficult to see how the (internal) work that is done at the school improves the situation and how documentation responds to or stands in any meaningful relation to teachers' active responsibility.

The reinforcement of the judicial discourse

In the teachers' work, the search for externally validated legitimacy seems to be all the more important, along with creating trust in the school operations and dealing with risk. This judicially-orientated discourse emerges because teachers feel that they must be prepared to answer to criticism and deal with opposition. These sentiments are expressed by the teachers in terms of "the parents keep the school and the teachers on their toes," "you are being watched," and you should "watch your back." The teachers thus become careful about what they write because such documentation may, in part, expose them to criticism, and, in part, because students' guardians "read between the lines." The documentation is very strongly linked to assessments and setting of grades. The result of this is that the teacher's approval and subjective assessment of the students is dealt with a form of distancing, which, in turn, results in a simplification of the documentation. Such a simplified documentation puts collective pressure on the teachers to honor the formulations and assessments that they have made.

[W]e live under the threat that any day of the week you can be reported and exposed with your name and everything in the newspaper—that's what he said in the assembly hall, you know.... There was a lawyer who was here and said: If you haven't documented it, then you will have problems.

The practice of documentation is grounded in the apprehension of external doubts. The teachers find it difficult to reveal their work processes and the students' performance for these purposes, as part of their professional assignment. The question as to why all this documentation must be made is answered with the reply that they have to protect themselves from future criticism and blame. One teacher expressed this sentiment as: "[We must] show that we, at the school, have done what we have done." By completing their documentation, teachers can prove that they are "loyal" and that they "have a grip on the situation."

Discussion and some final conclusions

The hypothesis that we wished to test in this study was whether teachers' knowledge base and norms change as a result of management by documents. This study has shown that teachers when they describe their daily work, do experience that their teaching assignment undergoes a change associated with changing management systems and an increase in the demand for documentation. In cases where changes in the teachers' knowledge base and norms are related to the all three aspects of the knowledge triad, and how these three aspects relate to each other, we then observe how these aspects are dependent on each other. "If one aspect of this knowledge triad is influenced negatively, the development, maintenance, and further development of the professionals' knowledge- and norm system is blocked" (Agevall, Jonnergård, & Krantz, 2017, p. 28). Limited emotional engagement can lead to a diminished sense of recognition, which, in turn, can limit the teacher's ability to make independent evaluations, and vice versa. The autonomy of the teacher entails both freedom of action and the ability to act.

The teachers claimed that they possess a sense of recognition about their students and their needs which exists without the need to document it to the degree to which they are forced to. The resources—time being the primary resource—that teachers must use in the production of documents adversely influences their sense of recognition. The teachers want to spend time engaged in meetings with their colleagues, students, and parents with the aim of improving the quality of their teaching. In this study, we note that the teachers report that current developments in this area are moving in the opposite direction, with a concomitant negative influence on their sense of recognition.

The teachers' sense of engagement in their work is strongly connected to their students. Their emotions are negatively impacted upon when they are not able to spend time on what they themselves define as their central professional assignment. In a school which is driven by goals and results, there exists a risk that the freedom to act becomes gnawed away at the edges, with a lack of engagement on the teachers' part as a result. The need to work in a job which does not correspond to one's expectations creates a person-job misfit (Harju & Hakanen, 2016). Being bored at work can lead to consequences which influence the teacher's knowledge and behavior, and their ability to act effectively (Ficher, 1993). If the role of the teacher becomes passive and distanced from the students, then the level of teacher engagement can be impacted on negatively (Loukidou, Loan-Clarke, & Daniels, 2009). One result of a lack of engagement is that teaching sessions become more instrumental in their nature. With respect to evaluation and taking responsibility for one's own work, the teachers feel that they are forced to act in conflict with their knowledge and experience.

Management by documents tends to de-contextualize knowledge and experience, at the risk of losing competencies and thereby limits the ability of teachers to take responsibility for their work (Arfwedson, 1994; Rolf, 1991). Whilst less time is available for pedagogic work, school operations become more singularly focused on the control of knowledge, results, and measurability (Biesta, 2011). Management by documents displaces pedagogic and professional practices from a position where the professionals at the school take their point of departure in a more complex and mutual learning situation to a direction where they are engaged in a simplified and individualized learning situation. Using efficacy and objectivity as catchwords, school operations run the risk of becoming more and more directed towards short-term goals, and these goals become predictable (in contrast to long-term, and somewhat unpredictable goals). The stricter management and control systems described in this paper can limit the teachers' ability to act, resulting in a loss of "fantasy and spontaneity" on the teachers' part, which was claimed to be an important part of their work. When the judicial discourse is reinforced, it is made manifest in the form of increasing criticism from parents, managers, and politicians. The teachers' ability

and willingness to take responsibility for their work is influenced by conflicting goals and different opinions of what constitutes properly executed work. Instead of “helping the student achieve a passing grade,” teachers have to spend time on “writing a document which explains why the student did not achieve a passing grade.” The documentation tends to become a self-legitimizing administrative exercise, where schools cannot live up to what is promised. A lack of trust and misguided criticism clouds the fact that transparency and accountability also contain democratic aspects (Biesta, 2004). We note that management by documents also leads to shifting responsibilities and impacts on the teachers’ sense of professionalism so that they became more contractual; thereby resulting in situations which are characterized by less trust than before (Koehn, 1994). The teachers felt that things that they had agreed to needed to be written down; to have things in black and white. Documentation, therefore, may create a sense of ambivalence in relation to what professional responsibility the teacher has and what responsibility can be allocated to others. However, the acceptance of professional responsibility demands that teachers have freedom of action; something they themselves claimed they lacked at the time of the study. It is apparent that management by documents causes the teachers to act, to a large part, according to external demands and expectations so as to present themselves as being a professional, whilst they wish to be professional in creating and maintaining quality improvement processes in school operations (Hargreaves, 2000; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). According to what the teachers brought to our attention, we also note that the goals have shifted so as to accommodate quality in terms of formal quality controls, which, on occasion, left the teachers feeling inadequate. A large part of the evaluation work which should be done at schools has shifted focus from the teachers’ professional knowledge and ethics to results and regulations in the form of standardized procedures and routines. This has consequences for the teacher’s sense of professionalism in terms of independent assessments that teachers can make of cases within a collegially-exercised knowledge base (Englund & Solbrekke, 2015; Svensson, 2010; Svensson & Karlsson, 2008). If professional responsibility is diminished, then recognition and emotional engagement suffer as a result. This, in turn, reduces teachers’ ability to satisfy the students’ needs.

When teachers’ ability to be engaged is negatively influenced, then their ability to act in a professional manner or to be professional, decreases. This leads to avoidance strategies with respect to taking responsibility and gives rise to a sense of limited personal responsibility. Teachers who may have previously developed levels of expert knowledge are at risk of becoming mere followers of rules (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 2005). As result of this, management by documents, according to our interpretation, can be a factor behind a regression from expert to novice. Now that the bureaucratization of the Swedish school system has been taken note of, in conjunction with worsening school results (OECD, 2015), the teachers’ ability to perform as experts should be encouraged and supported, and the factors which cause teachers to become rule-following novices should be avoided.

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Collaborative Learning at the Boundaries: Hallmarks within a Rehabilitation Context

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Abstract: The aim of the article is to shed light on how collaborative learning at the boundaries between professions plays out within a rehabilitation context. The study has an ethnographic design in the form of observation and interviews in two rehabilitation contexts. Findings showed that collaborative learning was stimulated when the professional groups made a concerted effort to acquire an overall perspective on the patient's situation and requested and disseminated context-dependent expressions and knowledge about how the patient functioned. The "training" of patients on the ward served as an abstract boundary object amongst the staff functioning as a unifying resource in collaboration. The study exemplifies the learning potential when boundaries between professions become more open in an overlapping collaboration. This enables awareness of one's own boundaries and of the fact that one had a wealth of shared knowledge. In addition, it entailed the learning of techniques and procedures from other professions, which augmented and developed one's own professional repertoire.

Keywords: Collaborative learning, interprofessional collaboration, boundary object, rehabilitation, ethnography

Interprofessional collaboration in the health sector is by nature a complex process—the problems are complex and several professions are involved. Interprofessional collaboration occurs in the boundary areas between professions, across agencies, and between public service and volunteer work, and it requires active participation in discussing and negotiating to arrive at joint decisions (Anderson, 2012; Orvik, 2015). The delineation between professions has traditionally been used to construct boundaries around tasks and fields of knowledge and to exclude others. However, the borderlines between professions can also be areas of contact that link social worlds and open opportunities for collaboration, learning, and development (Akkermann & Bakker, 2011; Edwards, 2011; Wenger, 1998).

This article presents findings from an ethnographic study at two rehabilitation units. Rehabilitation services are often associated with interprofessional collaboration, involving different health and social care professionals who regularly come together to solve problems and provide services (Wade & de Jong, 2000). Building on the work of Edwards (2011), we regard the boundaries between professionals as spaces for both learning and gaining insight into the purposes and practices of others.

Thommesen (2010) sees rehabilitation as a process requiring cooperation, communication, and coordination, and this entails that professions are tangent to and cross one another's boundaries to solve problems and meet challenges associated

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with patients. Through joint meetings and daily collaboration, distinctive areas of expertise of the professions emerge allowing professionals to familiarize themselves with one another's knowledge and assessments. The parliamentary white paper *Morgendagens Omsorg* [Tomorrow's Care] (Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services, 2013) emphasized the importance of taking into account what occurs between care providers because it is within these interactions that learning and development emerge and contribute to shaping health services for patients. Previous empirical studies in health care have focused on interprofessional collaboration from a number of different angles such as identifying core interprofessional competencies within rehabilitation teams (Croker, Trede, & Higgs, 2012; Kendall et al., 2011), and investigating enablers and barriers in interprofessional collaboration (Supper et al., 2014). However, even though interprofessional learning is usually understood as professionals learning from, with, and about one another (Barr, 1998), there seems to be little research into the understanding of how collaborative learning at the boundaries plays out within a rehabilitation context. Building on our findings from a Norwegian ethnographic study, the article aims to shed light on the potential for learning in collaborative practices based on the following research question: What are the characteristics of collaborative learning at the professional boundaries within a rehabilitation context?

Theoretical background

In a review article, Reeves et al. (2011) found that theoretical perspectives have been minimally employed in the development and evaluation of interprofessional intervention studies. Nevertheless, there seems to be a general agreement among scholars that interprofessional collaboration facilitates learning and development of practice, which involves negotiations pertaining to the contributions that are significant in joint activities (Akkermann & Bakker, 2011; Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) argues that learning at the boundaries is necessary for dynamism within communities of practice. Learning at work is understood in its broadest sense including change and development which also may involve cross-disciplinary work. Referring to Suchman (1994), Akkermann and Bakker (2011) denote the term *boundary crossing* as the need for professionals from time to time to enter into territory they are not only unfamiliar with, but in which they also are unqualified to some extent. Thus, interprofessional collaboration at the boundaries also includes an understanding of how markers of difference between the professional groups are played out in daily practice (Akkermann & Bakker, 2011; Johannesen & Olsen, 2008). In 1989, Star and Griesmer paved the way for research on boundary crossing and learning, introducing the concept of boundary objects to indicate how some artefacts fulfil a specific function in bridging intersecting practices. They explain boundary objects as being both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. The authors underscore the need for analysing the different viewpoints of actors in order to understand how boundaries are encountered and crossed. Boundary objects are viewed as organic arrangements that allow different groups to work together (Star, 2010). Referring to a wider community of practice, Wenger (1998) describes boundary objects as entities such as artefacts, documents, terms, and/or concepts that can link communities together as they allow different groups to collaborate on a common task. Akkermann and Bakker (2011) review the research literature on boundary crossing and boundary objects to determine current insights into the learning potentials of boundary work. Most studies focus on boundaries within disciplines discussing how groups and individual professionals with different expertise, tasks, and cultural backgrounds collaborate during work, also within a health care context. Some of the studies use the term boundary object with reference to a shared problem space such as the health of a patient with a chronic and complex disease that needs to be

solved in collaboration (Edwards & Fowler, 2007). Akkermann and Bakker (2011) conclude that vagueness at boundaries triggers a dialogue and the negotiation of meaning “explaining why encounters at boundaries are not only described as challenging, but also as worthwhile to investigate in relation to learning” (Akkermann & Bakker, 2011, p.150).

Previous studies identify a variety of factors concerning interprofessional collaboration and learning at the boundaries. Drawing on the empirical data, Edwards (2011) regards boundaries as spaces where the resources from different practices are brought together to expand interpretations of multifaceted tasks and work problems. This teaches the ability to integrate one’s own interpretations with those made by other professionals. The learning that occurs in these spaces does not only pertain to learning how to do the work of others, “but involves gaining sufficient insight into purposes and practices of others to enable collaboration” (Edwards, 2011, p. 34). A study focusing on interprofessional collaboration within medical staff in the physical emergency clinic shows different kinds of learning from failures, problem-solving and through collaboration across professional groups. Thus, a team or a working community can be a context for workplace learning if it offers an opportunity for discussion about work situations (Collin, Valleala, Herranen, & Paloniemi, 2012). Quinlan (2009) found that knowledge work within multi-disciplinary primary health care teams is carried out in the context of collective decision-making and involves the negotiation of knowledge claims. Croker, Trede, and Higgs (2012) identify interpersonal and activity-related collaborating capabilities (engaging, entering, establishing, envisioning, effecting) across team members’ professional affiliations. A study conducted within the practice of community rehabilitation found ten competencies, even though the authors warned that the development of such competency lists could inhibit the promotion of reflective, holistic, interprofessional practice (Kendall et al., 2011).

Facilitators and barriers in interprofessional collaboration have also been the focus of several studies. In a systematic review, Supper et al. (2014) finds that the principal facilitators of collaboration were the workers’ common interests in collaboration and their perceptions of opportunities to improve quality of care. The challenges of definition and awareness of one another’s roles and competencies and responsibilities are perceived as some of the main barriers. Based on a qualitative study, MacNaughton, Chreim, and Bourgeault (2013) finds that empowering team members seems to enhance collaborative interactions. They argue that more interchangeable roles might help to lessen the workloads of team members and prevent power struggles, because of less differentiated professional roles. As can be seen, boundaries facilitate complementary and overlapping practices among professional groups (Højhold, 2016; Johannesen & Olsen, 2008). Duner (2013) finds that social workers, physiotherapists and occupational therapists have some overlapping areas of responsibility for the everyday life activities and routines of older people. MacDonald et al. (2010) identify behavioural indicators for acknowledging the professional roles of other disciplines, such as seeking out the contributions of other team members and identify overlapping professional skills amongst team members. In a recent study, Falk, Hopwood, and Dahlgren (2017) explore how knowledge emerges and is passed along as a chain of actions among health care professionals. Despite valuable insight into how knowledge sharing unfolds in a particular practice, their study also reveals a need for further exploration of the complex nature of knowledge seeking and learning during interprofessional work.

After reviewing the literature, there still appears to be a paucity of knowledge concerning how interprofessional learning plays out at disciplinary boundaries within rehabilitation contexts. Within rehabilitation services in Norway, professionals in nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, physicians and—less frequently—social workers collaborate on providing necessary support for a patient’s own efforts, aimed at achieving the best possible combination of function and coping

abilities (Ministry of Health and Care Services, 2011). In addition to regular meetings to negotiate and agree on how to solve complex care problems, these professions also work together closely to provide rehabilitation services on a daily basis.

The empirical study

The research that informs this article is drawn from an ethnographic project, conducted in two rehabilitation contexts. Participant observation of healthcare professionals in shared workspaces and patients' rooms was followed by interviews with the professionals. This combination meant that we could access intentions and understandings concerning interprofessional work in the wards. Participant observation is a suitable method for investigating patterns and connections between caregivers' actions, relations, and collaboration in the practice locations (Fangen, 2010). A general goal of qualitative research is to develop an understanding of phenomena associated with persons and situations in their real social context (Fangen, 2010; Tjora, 2012)—in this conjunction, what characterizes collaborative learning in the boundary areas of health professions.

Study context

The study was conducted at two municipal rehabilitation wards. The primary focus of these wards was rehabilitation, but they were also responsible for ensuring that needs were met for patients who required nursing care during their stay. Many of these patients came to the rehabilitation wards following stays in the hospital for training activities of daily life before they were discharged home or transferred to a nursing home. A patient's stay on the rehabilitation ward is allocated based on an application made to the municipal service-request office, which has the financial and coordinating responsibility for the health and care services in the municipality. The municipality has an organized health-services apparatus, inline with a market-oriented, service-request/service-provision model, for which the objective is qualitatively beneficial and cost-effective operations (Birkeland & Flovik, 2014). This is why the office requesting the services, in collaboration with the patient and their next-of-kin, makes the decision as to how long the patient could spend on the ward and coordinates the patient's return home or their eventual transfer to a nursing home. On both wards, the staff included a physician, nurses, assistant nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists. The professionals on both wards participated in team meetings in addition to their informal contact on the wards. Both wards observed the same formal guidelines and structures for interprofessional collaboration, (for example, meetings with the service-requesting unit in the urban district, or in network meetings both with and without the patient present). The wards had somewhat different architectural infrastructures, which influenced the extent of informal contact. On one ward, the offices of the occupational therapists and physiotherapists were located on site, while in the other, the offices and training room were on another floor, separate from the ward. The physician's office was on the ward in the first case and outside of it in the other.

Data collection

The study was conducted by a group of five researchers with different professional backgrounds (three nurses, one occupational therapist, one physiotherapist). We wished to gain insight into both formal and informal situations in which professional groups planned or carried out collaborative activities. Although the research question established the point of departure for investigation, opportunities that arose in the field and the knowledge acquired by the researchers during the course of the study also contributed towards determining the situations on which we wanted to focus.

As researchers, we worked in the field in alternating pairs for 17 days (a total of 76 hours). Before fieldwork, we cleared suitable days for observation with the wards and agreed that two researchers would come in the mornings. We took account of the meetings that would be suitable for us to attend as observers and ensured that separate written consent was obtained beforehand if the patient and their next of kin were to be present. We were present as observers for a total of eight interprofessional team meetings. A patient and next of kin were present at three of these meetings. A representative from the service-request office was present at all the observed meetings on one of the two wards, but at only one meeting on the other. We were also present during some patient situations in which several different professions were involved. We wanted to gain insight into informal collaboration on the ward, and into how personnel communicated between themselves both directly and by using aids such as notice boards and message books. We posed questions underway if clarification was required during our observations. Data were written up in a field journal (Fangen, 2010; Tjora, 2012). We did not use a tape recorder during meetings and brief ad hoc conversations on the ward. It was deemed important to acquire descriptions in detail and at a meaningful level of various situations in accordance with what Geertz (1973) describes as “thick descriptions.” Utterances and action must be incorporated in their context if they are to bear meaning. These observation notes were written in final form the same day, with a precise and specific account of conversations, comments, and actions, as well as the context in which they occurred. In addition, we wrote keywords and questions we wished to bring up during planned follow-up interviews with the various professional groups that were conducted nearly every day during our observations.

Qualitative interviews

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) characterize the qualitative research interview as a conversation with a structure and an objective—in this context aimed at enhancing knowledge of the professions’ collaboration and learning within the boundary areas between them. A total of 24 persons, representing five different professions were interviewed across the two wards. Four nurses, four occupational therapists, four physiotherapists, four assistant nurses, two physicians, two professional development nurses, one head of section (nurse) and one institution manager (nurse). The interviews were based on an interview guide containing key topics that had been sent to the informants beforehand, including the significance of formal and informal situations in which collaboration and learning took place, and the interviewee’s perceptions of both their own role and that of others in collaboration to rehabilitate the patient. The qualitative interviews also provided an opportunity to clarify and elaborate on the meaningful content associated with the discussions and behaviours in the observed situations. We emphasized the interviews were of a dialogic nature. The interview guide helped maintain a shared focus during the interviews, but we also attempted to follow up and elaborate on statements from the informants, and this contributed towards developing a more nuanced understanding of the topic in focus. A dictaphone was used to record the qualitative interviews, which were subsequently transcribed verbatim by a research assistant. The qualitative interviews proved to be an important source of data because the professional groups’ perspectives provided an enhanced understanding of our observations.

Data analysis

Data analysis is not seen as a separate stage in ethnographic research (Fangen, 2010). Thoughts and ideas linked with the data material manifested themselves early in the process, which initiated further reading of literature with relevance to the distinctiveness of the data. One relevant question in the research process was how the re-

searcher(s) influence(s) the process (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). In both the field-work and the further analysis of the data, we placed emphasis on being conscious of our own pre-understanding. Reflexivity was stimulated through ongoing discussions in the research group. We worked continuously, each one individually and all of us collectively, to process a comprehensive and complex data set with a view to making it accessible for joint analysis. The collective efforts of five researchers can be construed as a type of researcher triangulation, which, according to Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), involves using researchers with differing academic background and pre-understandings in relation to a research topic. Multiple participants in the analysis process, according to the authors, can be seen as a source for nuanced and fruitful interpretation.

Inspired by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) and Fangen (2010), the analysis process was roughly divided into three levels of interpretation. The first level of interpretation involved the researchers reading through the material to obtain an overall, introductory understanding. When data from interviews and observation are read in light of one another, a better basis for interpreting the meaning and significance of the content is created (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Fangen, 2010). This in turn provided an opportunity to see actions in the light of the stated intentions brought out in the interviews. Ideas, associations, and reflections from the introductory reading were recorded and then discussed in the group. The second level of interpretation involved re-reading the texts, this time in light of specific questions/topics described in the interview and observation guides, as well as in the research question. To highlight the meaningful content that fell suitably within these tentative topical headings, we used colour coding, which resulted in a more capsulized compilation of the material. Typical patterns and distinctive features characterizing collaboration and learning in boundary areas were depicted through three headings, and meaningful content was supported with quotes: Expanding interpretations of the patients' situation, addressing uncertainty and context-dependent information, awareness of similarities and differences. The depiction of the findings reflected what Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) call critical understanding, and Fangen (2010) calls second-degree interpretation.

The third level of interpretation involves a more abstracted and theoretical understanding (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Fangen, 2010), in which findings are discussed in the light of theory and prior research. As reflected in the discussion, this is a more comprehensive interpretation that expands a critical, common sense understanding. Although the findings reflect collaborative learning between professions on two rehabilitation wards, the study may be transferable to other similar contexts.

Ethical considerations

The study was approved by NSD (Norwegian Data Protection Office for Research, project number 34457) and by the two rehabilitation wards where the study took place. The staff were given information prior to the field study during information meetings, and they gave informed consent to participate. At the start of the field study, the personnel involved were again informed of the purpose of the study and written, informed consent was collected from each participant. We informed the staff that they could withdraw from the study at any time, and without giving a reason. Although the focal point of the study was the staff, the field study also entailed encounters with patients and with work situations, both formal and informal. All patients and next of kin who were involved in the situations we observed (for example, during meetings and morning personal hygiene routines on the wards) were informed about the study and asked by a liaison person on the ward if we could participate as observers. Written informed consent was obtained, and the participants were told that they could ask the observer to withdraw from any given situation without providing any reason.

Findings

Expanding interpretations of the patients' situation

One recurrent finding throughout the analysis was that interprofessional collaboration was driven by a desire to be able to “see all aspects or the whole” as one physiotherapist expressed it. The professional groups' collaboration, therefore, enabled an expanded perspective on the patient's situation, and this also fostered learning opportunities because staff gained insight into one another's assessments: During one network meeting, an occupational therapist (=O) and physiotherapist (=P) emphasized the patient's mobility and need for a walker and support stockings, while a nurse (=N) contributed knowledge concerning the patient's anxiety about falling and the need for help with daily personal hygiene. On one of the wards, the physician (=Dr) seldom attended these meetings, but according to this physician, he obtained information about the patients from the various professional groups: from the nurses concerning somatic changes, from the physiotherapist about physical function ability, and from the occupational therapist about cognitive function: “if there are cognitive issues, we just ask if there is an occupational therapist who can administer an MMS [cognitive test] and so on” (Dr.)

The wish to acquire a comprehensive and correct depiction of the patient's situation was sometimes a topic of discussion: At a network meeting with the service-requesting office (=RO), the physiotherapist assessed that a patient was ready to return home. However, a nurse who knew the patient well was of another opinion and thought that the patient was not medically well enough, and made the argument that “to move her now is hair-raisingly ... unethical.”

Generally, the employee with a professional background from the requesting office and the nurse concurred in their assessments, but there were also regular cases of conflicting views:

N: Applied for LTA (long-term admission)
 RO: Consider it...
 N: Needs it.
 RO: Needs?
 N: Yes.
 RO: Nursing care and physician's report lacking.

One example illustrated how aspects of a patient's situation might be overlooked if the relevant professions were not present: During a network meeting with a patient, when the physiotherapist and occupational therapist the patient posed medically related questions pertaining to pain and blood circulation, the questions went unanswered.

Addressing uncertainty and context-dependent information

It was particularly when situations were problematic or unclear that the professions consulted one another for an opinion: “What do we do now, where do we go from here, is there anything we haven't seen?” (N). In one case, the nurse experienced that she was unable to “make any further progress” with the patient, and she encouraged the occupational therapist “to go in and conduct a new assessment” (N). The initiative on the part of the nurse prompted the occupational therapist to conduct a new assessment and draw up a training programme. It was common to seek situation-specific advice from one another: “We [nurses] can go to a physiotherapist or occupational therapist and relate a situation that they can offer advice about, or they can get advice from us” (N). Patient's medical status might affect the training regime and result in the physiotherapist or occupational therapist seeking advice from the

nurse.

Collaboration was stimulated by the professional groups' interest in ascertaining how the patients functioned in various situations, particularly when there was doubt: For example, when a patient was to be discharged and sent home, the occupational therapist might consult with a nurse or assistant nurse who had had continual contact with the patients, concerning the patient's general status and cognitive function, for example, "We see them on a very limited basis" (O). If an occupational therapist had conducted a cognitive test on a patient, it was important to obtain a notion of how the patient functioned in different situations: "whether they [nurse and assistant nurse] can see things in practice that indicate one thing or another ... check to see that we see the same thing ... are there any differences between morning, evening, night" (O). One physiotherapist acquired much useful information from assistant nurses "because some people react differently in a training situation with a physiotherapist than they do with an assistant nurse" (P). Perceptions about how patients functioned could vary: "They [physiotherapists] see the patient down there [in the physical therapy room] where he can walk on the track in a secure environment, and up here [on the ward] he can hardly stand upright!" (AN). Experiences might also vary due to "the patient making a maximum effort during training, and then coming up to the ward completely exhausted" (N). Exchanges of information like these frequently occurred at the weekly interdisciplinary meetings.

Awareness of similarities and differences

Interprofessional collaboration could also be of a more overlapping nature when the focus was on particular patient situations. One example was in reference to a visit made to a patient's home prior to their discharge. Normally, the physiotherapist and occupational therapist were the staff members who conducted these home visits. "On these visits, we work together examining the risks of stumbling, the physical environment in the home, but also how the user functions in his/her own home and how he or she does different things" (O). Physiotherapists and occupational therapists emphasized that they cooperated well with one another and had overlapping work tasks. One occupational therapist thought that her professional group had much knowledge in common with nurses, while at the same time she believed that "we do not have the same theoretical basis when we observe the user in the same situation" (O). A similar distinction was expressed when the professions spoke of their own assistance provided to patients, and that of others, when patients were washed and dressed in the morning: "personal hygiene routines" were associated with nurses and assistant nurses (=AN), while "ADL training"(activity of daily living) was related to occupational therapists. Nevertheless, there was some overlapping between ADL chores and personal hygiene routines: "I had a patient who was to be visited by the occupational therapist today; I read afterwards what she did, so now I will know it the next time I am there" (AN). However, some situations were perceived as so profession specific that they excluded overlapping:

It has to do a little with boundaries between the professions, too. We can accompany patients to the toilet, but that is the limit; we summon the assistant nurses as soon as it is a question of actually going to the toilet, taking off clothes. For those tasks, I feel that I have to wear gloves and so on; that is where I draw the line as to what my work tasks include. (P)

For all the professions, the term *patient training* appeared to be conducive to overlapping collaboration. Although the patients often associated training with physiotherapists and occupational therapists, the nurses and assistant nurses were convinced that they too were "trainers". One example showed how nurses asked for help from the physiotherapist to explain the following: "Because they [the patients]

need a good amount of repetitive training”(N). In this context, training was related to activities throughout the day, such as morning hygiene routines, getting in and out of bed and acquisition of skills that they needed to practise in order to do. “Things like visits to the toilet, moving from one place to another, are things we most often do. And then we need to do it right, not just halfway” (N). *Transferring* patients was also a situation that fostered collaboration and learning opportunities for the staff. Generally, the physiotherapist first assessed the patient’s ability to move (for example, to move from a lying position to a sitting posture, from bed to a chair), and then demonstrated for the others (N, AN, O) how the procedure should be carried out:

Today I had one [patient] who was very heavy. I went and got the physiotherapist who showed me a few tricks; after that, it was very easy. It feels very satisfying, plus, we are making a little progress and learning more. (AN)

On occasions, they also collaborated on finding expedient ways of performing the tasks: “There are a lot of unsafe moving situations that not everyone feels comfortable doing” (P). In such cases, several professional groups might convene around a patient in a somewhat overlapping manner:

[a]nd then the physiotherapist came in, along with the occupational therapist and the nursing students, and supervised the moving situation. The occupational therapist would go to the next patient, but the physiotherapist and the nurse remained behind to supervise the movement from bed to chair. (P)

It was emphasized that the movement was to be carried out as gently as possible, both for the patient and the staff.

Discussion

Findings showed that collaborative learning was stimulated when staff made a concerted effort to acquire an overall perspective on the patient’s situation. This involved everyone sharing and soliciting each other’s profession specific knowledge about the patient in question, usually during joint meetings. Our findings demonstrate how the professions are dependent on one another in order to achieve this “overall” perspective: The absence of one profession (nurse) from a network meeting means a lack of a response to a medically related question. Sharing of knowledge can be associated with complementary competence, whereby professional groups with different knowledge and skills bring their special competence into a team (Bjørke, 2012; Orvik, 2015). In a qualitative study of teamwork in different health institutions, Kvarnström (2009) found that team members learned from one another when they took part in the way other professional groups reasoned concerning various patients. In our findings, this pattern of collaborative learning became particularly clear when patients presented with problematic, complex health care situations in which the professions were unsure as to whether or not they had overlooked something. They then proceeded to enquire in an open environment where ideas crystallized into solutions through the efforts of the entire team. The acknowledgement that knowledge was lacking entailed further mapping of the patient’s situation, such as in the case when the nurse encouraged the occupational therapist to assess the patient a second time. The findings in this study serve to illuminate aspects of “knowledge work” among professionals (Quinlan, 2009), specifically those where they fill in knowledge gaps and open up questions for exploration. In order to get a deeper and broader understanding, Schön (1983, 1987) highlighted the significance of an open and explorative attitude when naming and framing problems in practical situations. The quest for an overall perspective on the patient’s situation might also bring about conflicts of opinion and negotiation—in our findings, these especially

took place in conjunction with a patient's transfer from the rehabilitation ward to their private home. Based on the organization of the municipal health services (Birkeland & Flovik, 2014), one staff member with a professional background from the Service Request Office participated as a decision-making intermediary when decisions were to be adopted regarding whether the patient would stay on in the institution or be discharged. Contexts such as these demanded a professionally reasoned argument grounded in the perspectives that the professional groups already had, regarding the patient's situation and functional level. As Edwards (2011) claims, meetings that focus on finding solutions are rarely neutral; there are strong emotional elements that reflect how discourses connect with identities.

Collaborative learning was also stimulated when the professional groups requested and disseminated context-dependent expressions and knowledge about how the patient functioned. Our findings showed, for example, that the patient's physical function ability could vary from the training room to nursing ward. A cognitive test conducted by the occupational therapist could likewise be verified by information from the nursing staff about how the patient handled activities of daily living on the ward. Together they created a more nuanced view of the patient's function and coping, which resulted in increased insight for each professional, along with significance for further follow-up. According to Edwards (2011), relational engagement with the knowledge of others can produce a form of common knowledge, which comprises a partially shared understanding of what matters for other contributing professionals. Thus, this knowledge can mediate responsive professional action (Edwards, 2011).

Another pattern in collaborative learning was characterized by an awareness of similarities and differences among the professional groups. We saw examples of this when the occupational therapist and physiotherapist stated that they might have overlapping work tasks, and that the occupational therapist and nurse perceived that they had knowledge in common, although the difference in theoretical background coloured what they observed in the same patient situation. This form of collaboration between health professions may have elements of role overlap, as Booth and Hewison (2002) and Nancarrow (2004) found between occupational therapists and physiotherapists working in rehabilitation and intermediate health services. One study of interprofessional collaboration in a hospital setting showed that close collaboration among professionals of equal status facilitated learning (Keshet, Ben-Arye, & Schiff, 2012). An overlapping collaboration is situation-specific—it is the aspects in the given situation together with professional caregivers' technical assessments that create this form of collaboration. Overlapping collaboration and an awareness of similarities does not mean that professional groups take over tasks that they are unqualified to perform. What happens is that the boundaries between professions become more open, and we are simultaneously made aware of a separate and distinct core competence. The example of the physiotherapist who felt uncomfortable, but not necessarily disqualified, when she helped a patient in a toilet situation illustrates an increased awareness of the specificity of her own professional knowledge. The example also raises some questions that need to be further investigated: how boundaries between professionals seem to coincide with particularities of situations, which may have the potential for both helping/caring and training patients (as in the case above). The example also sheds some light on the status of different work tasks (such as helping patients use the bathroom), and how this affects where the boundaries are drawn.

Interprofessional collaboration at the boundaries fosters opportunities for learning and development (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Edwards, 2011; Hagland, 2015; Wenger, 1998). Close collaboration and overlapping increases the opportunities, as Barr (1998) has expressed it, for the professions to learn from, with and about one another. Examples in our study illustrate how the spirit of professional community and development is stimulated when professional groups realize that they share much knowledge in common, or when profession-specific techniques were

disseminated to the others in the shared practical environment; as when moving patients and describing principles in ADL therapy. According to Wenger (1998), learning at the boundaries is necessary for dynamism within communities of practice.

In our study, the notion of training gave rise to an awareness of similarities between the professional groups, since training was central in the patients' rehabilitation process in the form of activities to which all of the professions related in various ways. Training can be understood as an abstract boundary object concept that, according to Wenger (1998), can create a sense of community and connection between the professional groups. What is crucial is that a boundary object facilitates collaboration between the various professional groups and helps to interconnect the knowledge and activity of the professions (Star, 2010; Star & Griesmer, 1989). Training as a boundary object had particular significance for the way nurses and assistant nurses viewed their own role when the patient tried to master activities in a normal, routine day.

As a profession, nurses usually differentiate between themselves and others when it comes to ways of working. Whether nurses work independently, collaboratively or both, caring for patients and next of kin is deeply rooted as a primary responsibility (Henderson, 1997). Within rehabilitation, nurses usually work more comprehensively compared to other professionals like physiotherapists and occupational therapists who have a more specialized, therapeutic approach towards patients. Earlier studies have indicated that nurses may have difficulty describing their role and responsibility in interdisciplinary rehabilitation (Burton, 2000; Dahl, Romsland, & Slettebø, 2014; Christiansen & Feiring, 2016). Expectations regarding each other's roles contribute to the way situations are defined and build lines to follow in the interaction (Album, 2010). Thus, patients often have particular expectations about how they should be treated by nurses, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists within rehabilitation contexts. Despite the fact that the physiotherapists and occupational therapists were seen through their own and others' eyes as the central staff in rehabilitative training, our study shows that the assistant nurses and nurses perceived themselves as trainers when they stimulated patients to self-help in performing daily activities. Thus, caring and therapeutic perspectives and approaches towards rehabilitative patients were more aligned. Training as a boundary object stimulated learning in terms of identity development (Wenger 1998), with a particular significance for nurses and assistant nurses in rehabilitation contexts. The perception of oneself as a "trainer" can be understood as a form of self-categorization relating to the term a person chooses to denote themselves as, in terms of being a member of various social groups (Chatman et al., 1998). It can underpin and support a feeling of equality between the professional groups in their legitimization of their own roles in a rehabilitative team.

Conclusions

The ethnographic approach of this study enabled us to reveal nuances in interprofessional collaboration and learning at the boundaries, as seen on two rehabilitation wards. The study contributes to understandings of how local interactions between different professions may promote joint learning, although to a greater extent for nurses and assistant nurses (AN) than for occupational therapists (OT) and physiotherapists (PT). Collaborative learning was stimulated when the professional groups shared and solicited one another's knowledge and insight about patients. What created a particular incentive for such collaborative learning was the acknowledgement that knowledge was lacking in terms of problematic and complex patient situations, which bolstered an open and investigative attitude. A similar pattern emerged when the participants together created a more nuanced and more valid notion of the patient's functional level and ability to cope, based on context-dependent, profession-specific input. Both patterns in collaboration at the boundaries thereby led to the

construction of new knowledge that became significant for the further follow-up of the patient, and in addition, fostered learning for the staff.

The study exemplifies the learning potential when boundaries between professions become more open in an overlapping collaboration. This enables awareness of one's own boundaries and the fact that one has a wealth of shared knowledge. Additionally, it entailed the learning of techniques and procedures from other professions, which augmented and developed one's own professional repertoire. Training, understood as an abstract boundary object, served as a unifying artefact in collaboration, underpinning a feeling of equality and legitimacy, especially among the nursing personnel in the rehabilitative team. Nevertheless, findings in this and other studies show a need to more fully explore nurse roles and participation within interprofessional teams in rehabilitative contexts. We also need to know more about how learning and knowledge development at the boundaries takes place in the field of rehabilitation, not least in conjunction with the profession-specific student groups' experiences with interprofessional collaboration. In a time when patients' co-determination and influence on decision-making processes are being emphasized to a great extent, there is also a need for further studies addressing how such matters impact on collaboration between professions, patients and next of kin.

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A Tale of Two Autonomies

Abstract: Despite comprehensive theoretical discussions on the nuances of autonomy, research tends to treat autonomy as a unidimensional concept. In contrast, this study of Norwegian welfare professionals presents empirical support for the multidimensional nature of autonomy, drawing on cross-sectional survey data from three datasets spanning six years. The findings show significant differences between welfare professionals' experiences of professional and personal autonomy. An analysis of the relationship between professionals' experience of performance demands and these two types of autonomy challenges the notion that increasing performance demands limits professional autonomy.

Keywords: Welfare professions, autonomy, performance demands, managerialism, management

The struggle between professional knowledge and managerial control continues to be a topic of discussion among professionals and academics alike. Central to this is the suggestion that professional workers are losing autonomy to increasing demands and controls on production and efficiency (Evans, 2009; Harris, 2002; Lawler & Bilson, 2009), a development attributed with potentially grave consequences for the professional role (Evans, 2009; Harris, 2002; Lawler & Bilson, 2009; Lymbery, 2012). An empirical revision of the dimensions of autonomy is necessary because a chasm seems to exist between the classical theoretical understanding of autonomy and empirical research. Theory tends to present autonomy as a multidimensional concept, while empirical efforts often treat it as unidimensional, creating confusion about what we discuss, the individual dimension of autonomy or the concept as a whole?

My findings inform the general debate on autonomy by mending the chasm between theory and observation regarding the multidimensionality of autonomy. Using unique cross-sectional data on welfare professionals in the period 2004–2010, I apply theory and principal component analysis to establish experiences of autonomy as a concept with personal and professional dimensions. Specific to professionals, this article explores the influence of perceived performance demands on welfare professionals' experiences of personal and professional autonomy. This focus is particularly relevant in light of research describing a loss of professional autonomy due to increased demands on performance and managerial control. I wish to challenge this story.

Research aims

Bridging the chasm between theory and empirical research on autonomy among professionals, this study compares experiences of performance demands and professional and personal autonomy among welfare professionals three years removed from graduation in the period 2004–2010. The study has three aims:

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- to combine theory and principal component analysis to establish measurements for empirically demonstrating that performance demands, professional autonomy, and personal autonomy are experienced as different concepts, a prerequisite step for exploring research aims two and three;
- to compare welfare professionals' experiences of performance demands, professional autonomy, and personal autonomy;
- to explore the relationship between performance demands and experiences of professional and personal autonomy.

Professional workers and autonomy

“Professional worker” describes someone working in a profession. Defined by Brante as “occupations conducting interventions derived from scientific knowledge of mechanisms, structures, and contexts” (2011, p. 17). Professions are considered more or less professional based on characteristics such as education, social status, prestige, and historical origin. This scale of professionalism has led to the use of subcategorizations such as “semi-” or “pre-professions” (Brante, Johnsson, Olofsson, & Svensson, 2015).

Welfare professions discussed in this study include social workers, child-welfare workers, teachers, and nurses who constitute a cohort by their connection to the social welfare system. They are treated as similar to “semi-professions” (Brante et al., 2015), but I label them welfare professionals to emphasize the nature of their work, rather than their place in a professional hierarchy. Welfare professions may have a more fragmented and disputed knowledge base compared with classical professions, yet act with considerable autonomy (Brante et al., 2015), and are in the Scandinavian context often employed in the public sector.

Autonomy is surprisingly hard to define, often presented with diverging characteristics. In an analysis of the term, Ballou (1998) finds autonomy to be about acting within a set of rules with ability, capacity, competence, decision-making, critical reflection, freedom, and self-control. Others see it as an attitude rather than a characteristic of the work situation (Hall, 1968), or as defined through occupational behavior (Schutzenhofer, 1987). Autonomy is neither good, bad, nor absolute; it is contingent on the situation, is a gradual scale rather than dichotomous, and can be both a source of strength and a hindrance for professionals (Evans & Harris, 2004). Autonomy is used to describe professional freedom at the micro-, mezzo-, and macro-level (Gross, Tabenkin, & Brammli-Greenberg, 2007). This article examines autonomy on the micro-level, looking at welfare professionals' experienced freedom of decision-making, used interchangeably with discretion.

Autonomy is of particular interest to professional workers because they enjoy a protected status in exchange for using their autonomous skills to serve society (Engel, 1970; Freidson, 2001; Parsons, 1991). This is regulated by a “professional contract” which sets the relationship between control and freedom for professionals. An arrangement where a governing body provides education and protection of the professional status in exchange for professionals using their abilities for the betterment of society (Brante et al., 2015). Although Mastekaasa (2011) suggests that autonomy is not particularly important to the professional worker, it remains a topic of interest in the discourse on the professional role and discussions on control and freedom for professional workers (Brante et al., 2015; Øverbye, 2013).

The two autonomies

Among numerous dimensions of autonomy, this article concerns the distinction between personal and work-related autonomy (Engel, 1970). Personal autonomy is the “freedom to conduct tangential work activities in a normative manner in accordance with one's own discretion” (Engel, 1970, p. 12), while work-related autonomy is

“freedom to practice his profession in accordance with his training” (Engel, 1970, p. 12). These dimensions capture two central aspects of autonomy: on the one hand, personal autonomy over tangential work activities such as organizing and scheduling, and on the other, work-related autonomy in applying professional practices and training. Although they are likely to influence each other to some degree, they are understood as inherently different dimensions of autonomy (Engel, 1970).

Research aimed at describing experiences of autonomy tend to lump these two aspects together (Ballou, 1998; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Mastekaasa, 2011), creating hybrids such as “the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the employee in scheduling the work and determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out” (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, p. 162: and applied similarly in Mastekaasa, 2011). An understanding that merges Engel’s (1970) dimensions of personal autonomy (controlling tangential aspects of work) and work-related autonomy (the process of determining procedures).

Brante et al. (2015) present multiple dimensions of autonomy, including ones measuring the professional’s control over tangential elements such as when to work, at what tempo and order, and how to act towards clients. This understanding follows the spirit of Engel’s two autonomies in separating between tangential tasks such as when to work, what tempo, and professional autonomy in how to act towards clients. It differs from Engel’s in that they define professional autonomy as the freedom to perform the work and procedures with no explicit connection to training. This understanding is similar to Hackman and Oldham’s (1975). I adopt this understanding because of the close connection between professional training and the decisions professionals make (Bøe, 2013), and that being a “professional” is not necessarily limited to training or education, but can also be considered contingent on the type of work performed (Løwendahl, 2016).

The data in this article comes from a battery of questions measuring “job demands” and “job-decision latitude,” or the “discretion permitted the worker in deciding how to meet these demands” (Karasek Jr, 1979, p. 285). “Job-decision latitude” is similar to Engel’s (1970) work-related autonomy by being concerned with professional decision-making. However, it differs in that it does not include an explicit link between decisions about the professional content of their jobs and their training. Making Karasek (1979) in this regard more similar to Hackman and Oldham (1975), Brante et al. (2015), and Løwendahl (2016) than Engel (1970). In this article, I refer to this kind of professional decision-making as “professional autonomy.”

“Job demands” include both workers’ experiences of having demands on their performance and of being in control over their work situation such as time and workload (Karasek Jr, 1979). The former measuring demands on how hard and fast they work, the latter measuring personal autonomy; being in control of tangential elements of work such as one’s work situation and schedule (Engel, 1970; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Mastekaasa, 2011). Supported by a principal component analysis, I propose that Karasek’s (1979) category of job demands should be refined into two different concepts: (1) personal autonomy or the degree of control professionals experience over their work situation excluding professional decisions, and (2) performance demands, or the professionals’ experienced demands on their performance.

This refinement allows me to treat autonomy as a concept with multiple dimensions of professional and personal rather than a singularity. Allowing for a better understanding of professional workers’ experiences and how the various dimensions of autonomy may be influenced by performance demands.

Managerialism and autonomy

Welfare professionals’ experiences of autonomy and performance demands are particularly relevant due to the popular notion that new public management (NPM) reforms—part of broader neoliberal governance also in Scandinavia (Peck, 2010)—have weakened professional autonomy through increased control and demands on

performance (Brante et al., 2015; Harris, 2002). This “managerialism,” a prevalent aspect of NPM seen in social work in the United Kingdom, represents a trend towards increased managerial control on production (Evans, 2009, p. 146). Research from the Scandinavian welfare context points to similar issues of balancing organizational control and professional autonomy among social workers and nurses (Brænd, 2014; Dalsgaard & Jørgensen, 2016; Hildebrandt, 2016; Shanks, 2016). Such developments have also been found across the spectrum of welfare professions in Denmark (Willig, 2016).

Managerialism is characterized by an increased business orientation among welfare professional organizations, with greater emphasis on finances, budgeting, and control (Harris, 1998). In Scandinavia, this means an increased use of performance control measures, seen in conjunction with a loss of trust in professionals and an organizational need for control to compensate for this (Øverbye, 2013). Some research has pointed out that a skewing of the balance between management and professional practices could lead to restrictions on professional autonomy and the prioritizing of managerial control (Harris, 2002; Lawler & Bilson, 2009). For example, Danish and Norwegian nurses have experienced a disconnect between performing tasks they are trained to do as caregivers and meeting specific production measures such as turnover rates in hospitals (Brænd, 2014; Thomassen & Larsen, 2016). Managerialism and NPM are broad, general descriptions of trends not easily measurable; however, both theoretical and empirical contributions suggest that an emphasis on performance and ensuring production are central elements. Therefore, I treat welfare professionals’ experiences of performance demands as an indicator of managerialism.

As for the consequences of managerialism on the professional role, Evans (2009) argue that increased managerialism can complement rather than limit it. This because social work managers in the United Kingdom report adhering to professional values despite being tasked increasingly with production and performance goals. This then becomes an additional part of the manager role, working alongside and not against professional autonomy. Added responsibilities, such as budgeting, allows local human service managers to operate flexibly within the system and providing maneuverability in gray areas (Evans, 2009, p. 153–156). With the result that professionals report that their managers give them the discretion to make sound professional decisions despite increased managerialism (p. 157).

These complementary functions are possible because managers see themselves as performing independent professional and managerial roles (Lawler & Hearn, 1997). Derber’s (1983) literature review found that professionals are controlled differently in how they work and what they produce, suggesting that professional and personal autonomy are two separate dimensions which may co-exist (p. 335). A literature review by Kirkpatrick (2006) shows that increased control over social work practices in the United Kingdom manifests itself as an increase of rules, procedures, and standardization, without these changes influencing professional values and practice to the degree one might suspect.

This is also found in the Scandinavian welfare system as Shanks (2016) suggests that Swedish welfare service managers keep a strong professional identity regardless of increased focus on cost effectiveness. The ability to maintain their professional identities in the midst of neoliberal reforms suggests that increasing demands may not necessarily limit the “controller’s” professional role, nor the professional autonomy among the “controlled.” As professionalism and control coexist in “professional bureaucracies,” professionals may lose some control over the means of their work (personal autonomy) but retain power over the ends (professional autonomy) (Engel, 1970; Harris, 1998). These theories explain how professional and personal autonomy can coexist and support each other as separate dimensions of autonomy; individuals need not possess one or the other exclusively but can possess both to different degrees.

Hypotheses

Drawing on research on autonomy and managerialism, I present two hypothesis supporting my second research aim: to compare experiences of performance demands, professional autonomy, and personal autonomy among welfare professionals three years removed from graduation in the period 2004–2010.

The first hypothesis tests whether the two proposed dimensions of autonomy are experienced as different dimensions by the professionals. I use data from three samples to test if these are recurring differences. The second hypothesis tests how experiences of performance demands developed over the period for welfare professionals three years removed from graduation as a cohort.

1. Welfare professionals experienced personal autonomy and professional autonomy as different dimensions of autonomy.
2. Welfare professionals as a cohort experienced increasing performance demands in the period.

From the disagreement on the relationship between managerialism and professional identity, I present two hypotheses to support my third research aim: to explore the relationship between performance demands and experiences of professional and personal autonomy. These hypotheses test to what degree managerialism limits professional and personal autonomy.

1. Experiences of performance demands have a negative correlation with experiences of professional autonomy among welfare professionals.
2. Experiences of performance demands have a negative correlation with experiences of personal autonomy among welfare professionals.

Methodology

These hypotheses were tested with data from StudData, a Norwegian database of students and former students from professional programs at several universities and colleges in Norway. The samples include former students who were three years beyond graduation in 2004, 2006, and 2010, having completed welfare professional programs at the institutions. This design provided information about how professionals in the same situation, but at three different times experienced performance demands and personal and professional autonomy. Data from three different graduating classes allows for tracking the stability of these experiences with three samples, and the development of the cohort over time. Participation was voluntary, and respondents could refuse to continue participation at any time. The Norwegian Data Inspectorate approved the survey.

The response rate of the database in 2004, 2006, and 2010 was 56%, 58%, and 37% respectively. Respondents not currently employed were removed from the sample. Some questions were missing answers for some respondents. The number of welfare professionals (nurses, teachers, preschool teachers, social workers, and child-welfare workers) in the responding cohort varied between 850 and 1025. At three years after graduation, respondents in the selection had a mean age of 30.4, 30.9, and 30.1 respectively. Eighty-five percent of respondents were women in 2004, 86% in 2006, and 78% in 2010, which corresponds to the higher number of women admitted to welfare professional programs.

Variables

I combined eight self-reported statements concerning work characteristics into three merged variables measuring welfare professionals' self-reported experiences of performance demands and personal and professional autonomy. I devised the variables from Karasek's (1979) model for measuring job demands and job-decision latitude,

which asks, “To what degree would you agree with these statements about your current job?”

Karasek’s merged variable “job demands” consists of five statements. This variable is refined to measure two merged variables for this study. Two statements concerning how professionals experience demands on how quickly and hard they work are used to measure the variable “performance demands,” while the three statements concerning professionals’ experience of being able to control their own work situations are used to measure the variable “personal autonomy.” The principal component analysis, shown in Table 1, collaborates this separation, providing empirical evidence that Karasek’s variable “job demands” actually contains two different variables. Three statements measuring “job-decision latitude” are then used to measure the variable “professional autonomy.”

“**Performance demands**” measures how professionals experience demands on how hard fast and hard they work, is the mean of the following two questions: 1) “My work demands that I work very fast” and 2) “My work demands that I work very hard.” A high score indicates a high level of experience of performance demands, and relates closely to demands on performance and production, central features of managerialism.

“**Personal autonomy**” measures how professionals experience their ability to control their own work situations, is the mean of the following questions: 3) “I am not asked to do disproportionate amounts of work”; 4) “I have enough time to get the work done”; and 5) “I am not exposed to conflicting demands from others.” A high score indicates a high level of experience of personal autonomy.

“**Professional autonomy**” measures the freedom professionals experience in making decisions about the content of their work and their discretion to determine procedures (Brante et al., 2015; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Løwendahl, 2016). As a measure of experienced autonomy in decision-making, this variable does not differentiate between decisions made based on individual preference and those based on professional knowledge. Nevertheless, it is considered professional autonomy because it concerns the say that professionals have in determining the measures to use in their work. Professional training is thus treated as an implicit element in the decisions professionals make. Professional autonomy is measured as the mean of the following questions: 6) “My job makes it possible to make a lot of decisions on my own;” 7) “In my job, I have very little freedom to decide how I do my work;” and 8) “I have a lot of say about what happens in my job.” (The answers to question 7 were reversed to create a unified scale.) A high score indicates a high degree of experienced professional autonomy.

I utilized the educational code registered to each participant to determine their professional backgrounds. Previous studies have used different praxes when grouping professionals. For instance, Mastekaasa (2011) included physicians, nurses, teachers, and social workers. Inspired by Brante et al. (2015), and the availability of professional groups in the dataset, I included the following welfare professions in my analysis: nurses, teachers, preschool teachers, social workers, and child-welfare workers. Multiple regression analysis with ordinary least squares (OLS) to control for the effects of professional group, age, and gender showed a non-substantial effect on the relationship between performance demands and the two autonomies. This does not mean that every profession experienced the three variables similarly, but that the relative relationship between the variables is not substantially different between the included professions. Based on this I treated all included professions as one cohort of welfare professions. Subsequently, I present the findings as correlation coefficients for easier interpretation.

Variables’ validity

The category of performance demands differs from personal autonomy in that it concerns the experience of demands regarding time and effort at work rather than the

experienced control over the work situation. Performance demands increase when professionals are asked or expected to produce at a certain level, while personal autonomy decreases when professionals lack control over their work situation, such as being unable to prioritize tasks or facing conflicting expectations of what to do. Therefore, professionals may experience the expectation to work hard and fast to reach a goal or quota (high performance demands) while also experiencing a high degree of control concerning what to do (high professional autonomy) and when to do it (high personal autonomy), such as when social workers are expected to follow up a certain number of clients, but may choose which clients to follow up when and with what measures.

The validity of “personal autonomy” poses a challenge for the analysis and results. As Table 1 indicates, the statements describing one’s ability to control the tangible elements of the work situation are distinct from those describing professional autonomy and performance demands, which raises the question of what to call this variable. My decision to name it “personal autonomy” rather than alternatives such as “workload” was based on established theories about professionals’ ability to control their tangential work situation beyond the professional content (Derber, 1983; Engel, 1970; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Karasek Jr, 1979). The crucial argument for this decision was the strong relationship between the workload elements of question 3 and 4 (“I am not asked to do disproportionate amounts of work” and “I have enough time to get the work done”) and autonomy in question 5 (“I am not exposed to conflicting demands from others.”) The relationship between these three questions is clearly stronger than with those in performance demands and professional autonomy, which suggests that my variable “personal autonomy” is related to experiences of both workload and autonomy, and not one or the other (Table 1). Therefore, I am confident that it measures participants’ experience of being in control of their own workday and such is a fitting measure for personal autonomy.

Analytical approach and methods

The internal consistency of each merged variable was measured by their Cronbach’s Alpha score. The principal component analysis shows that each scale was unidimensional (Table 1). A high Cronbach’s Alpha score (zero to one) indicates that the merged variables measure the same underlying concept. The values for “personal autonomy” for each of the three years (2004, 2006, and 2010) are 0.65, 0.64, and 0.69 respectively. Values for “professional autonomy” are 0.62, 0.64, and 0.63, and for “performance demands,” 0.71, 0.77, and 0.74. One potential weakness of Cronbach’s Alpha is that few items, as in this study, tend to score lower than many (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). As there is no absolute threshold for internal consistency (Cortina, 1993), care must be taken not to use Cronbach’s Alpha as the only proof of a merged variable being internally consistent. Although the scores in this study are not very high, the combination of unidimensional variables demonstrated by principal component analysis (Table 1) and the Cronbach’s Alpha scores, give me confidence that the three merged variables measured different, unidimensional concepts to a satisfying degree.

I confirmed the refinement of Karasek’s “job demands” into “personal autonomy” and “performance demands” with a principal component analysis and a rotated components matrix using Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization. Principal components analysis indicates how statements load into different variables, signifying which statements measured the same underlying concept. Statements loading in the same variable are understood to measure the same underlying concept. I performed a preliminary analysis with Direct Oblimin, a rotation-assuming correlation, to confirm the different variables before presenting with Varimax rotation to present the variables clearly. Rotation with Varimax illustrates the differences between variables more clearly by assuming that they are independent of one another.

I used Spearman’s rank order to determine the correlation between performance

demands and professional and personal autonomy. Results that point to statistical significance are indicated with no stars ($p>0.05$), two stars ** ($p<0.05$), and three stars *** ($p=0.00$). All statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics v.23 for Windows.

Results

The results support that the five statements constituting Karasek’s (1979) one variable “job demands” should be separated into the two distinct variables I call “performance demands” and “personal autonomy” (Table 1). The eight statements in Karasek’s measurement of “job demands” and “job-decision latitude” indicate that they feed into three separate variables with an Eigenvalue over 0.9, explaining at least 63% of the variance in the eight statements that I call “performance demands,” “personal autonomy,” and “professional autonomy” (Table 1). Principal component loadings from all three datasets show similar patterns. Even though some elements, such as question four, may appear weakly related to questions one and two, they are substantially different enough to be considered as three distinct concepts in the next level of analysis.

Table 1.
Merged variables’ Rotated Component Matrix

	<i>Performance demands</i>			<i>Personal autonomy</i>			<i>Professional autonomy</i>		
	<i>2004</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2010</i>
1. My work demands that I work very fast.	.865	.869	.864	-.133	-.112	-.169	-.042	-.037	-.039
2. My work demands that I work very hard.	.826	.817	.855	-.206	-.228	-.211	.061	.032	-.009
3. I am not asked to do disproportionate amounts of work.	-.275	-.163	-.363	.704	.724	.665	.047	.053	.029
4. I have enough time to get the work done.	-.372	-.317	-.324	.695	.705	.751	-.005	.032	.046
5. I am not exposed to conflicting demands from others.	.067	.008	.042	.805	.802	.841	.082	.066	.041
6. My job makes it possible to make a lot of decisions on my own.	.192	.159	.206	.017	-.008	.009	.753	.776	.755
7. In my job, I have very little freedom to decide how I do my work.	.127	.080	.125	.040	-.067	.009	-.809	-.768	-.787
8. I have a lot of say about what happens in my job.	-.035	-.074	-.110	.140	.082	.099	.712	.731	.724

Bold numbers indicate statements loading to the presented variable.¹

¹ The presented order of the loadings was changed from the output for uniform presentation.

Experiences of autonomy and performance demands

The average scores of welfare professionals' reported experiences in years 2004, 2006, and 2010 show a slight increase for performance demands, and that personal and professional autonomy are experienced as different dimensions in all three samples (Table 2).

Table 2.

Mean experience of performance demands, personal autonomy and professional autonomy

	2004	SD	2006	SD	2010	SD
Performance demands	2.85 (850)	.60	2.84 (929)	.63	2.99 (1022)	.64
Personal autonomy	2.52 (853)	.67	2.47 (928)	.66	2.41 (1025)	.70
Professional autonomy	3.06 (854)	.58	2.97 (928)	.57	2.99 (1025)	.58

Note: Responses on a scale from low (1) to high (5) experiences of each concept with N and standard deviation.

Concerning hypothesis 1 the results indicates that “personal autonomy” and “professional autonomy” are experienced as different dimensions of autonomy. Comparing the experiences of personal and professional autonomy with paired samples T-test show that these differences are statistically significant ($p=0.00$) in all three samples. The recurring nature of these differences suggests that this is a stable relationship. The results also support hypothesis 2 in that experiences of performance demands increased somewhat in the period, specifically:

1. There was a recurring statistically significant difference in the experiences of professional and personal autonomy among welfare professionals.
2. There was a slight increase in experienced performance demands for welfare professionals as a cohort during the period.

Relationship between autonomies and performance demands

While the means indicate the stability and development of how these concepts are experienced, correlation analysis is necessary to test hypotheses 3 and 4 regarding how the experiences of one concept influence the experience of the others. Correlation analysis indicates that welfare professionals who experienced increasing performance demands experienced less personal autonomy (Table 3). Experiences of increasing performance demands were not related to experiences of professional autonomy. Results show a moderate negative correlation between experiencing performance demands and experiencing personal autonomy in the study years (-0.341^{***} , -0.414^{***} , and -0.444^{***} respectively). The correlation analysis indicated no statistically significant relationship between experiences of increasing performance demands and professional autonomy ($p>0.05$).

Table 3.
Correlation matrix showing the relationship between experienced performance demands, personal autonomy, and professional autonomy in 2004, 2006, and 2010

2004	<i>Performance demands</i>		<i>Personal autonomy</i>		<i>Professional autonomy</i>	
		N		N		N
Performance Demands			-.341***	849	-.049	850
Personal Autonomy	-.341***	849			.137***	853
Professional Autonomy	-.049	850	.137***	853		
2006	<i>Performance demands</i>		<i>Personal autonomy</i>		<i>Professional autonomy</i>	
		N		N		N
Performance demands			-.414***	928	-.037	928
Personal autonomy	-.414***	928			.112**	928
Professional autonomy	-.037	928	.112**	928		
2010	<i>Performance demands</i>		<i>Personal autonomy</i>		<i>Professional autonomy</i>	
		N		N		N
Performance demands			-.444***	1022	-.018	1022
Personal autonomy	-.444***	1022			.103**	1025
Professional autonomy	-.018	1022	.103**	1025		

Note: Correlation Coefficients for all three years with N. No stars ($p > 0.05$), ** ($p < 0.05$), and *** ($p = 0.00$).

The results demonstrate that increasing performance demands influence these dimensions of autonomy differently. While correlation is not causality, the data indicates that experiences of personal autonomy are moderately related to experiences of performance demands, while experiences of professional autonomy are unrelated to experiences of performance demands.

My interpretation of this is that the professional actors experience that they are able to keep their professional decision-making ability despite being of increasing performance demands. This does not reject that increasing performance demands may limit experiences of autonomy as a whole, but it suggests there are substantial differences in the influence of increasing performance demands on the distinct dimensions of autonomy. The difference shown here indicates that the relationship is stronger between performance demands and personal autonomy than performance demands and professional autonomy. These results reject hypothesis 3, and support hypothesis 4, specifically:

3. Experiencing increasing performance demands did not limit experiences of professional autonomy among welfare professionals.
4. Experiencing increasing performance demands limited experiences of personal autonomy among welfare professionals

Personal autonomy and professional autonomy appear as weak dependent concepts with a statistically significant correlation in all three years (0.137***, 0.112**, and 0.103**), supporting hypothesis 1 suggesting that they are experienced as distinct dimensions.

Main findings

The main findings of this study are as follows:

1. Principal component analysis supports the theoretical separation of Karasek's (1979) two variables into the three variables: performance demands, professional autonomy, and personal autonomy, enabling the empirical testing of this study's hypotheses.
2. Welfare professionals three years removed from graduation experienced professional autonomy and personal autonomy as different dimensions. Experiences of performance demands for the cohort slightly increased in the period.
3. On an individual level the increasing performance demands seem to have a negative impact on experiences of personal autonomy, but not on professional autonomy. This relationship was recurring over the period.

These findings present two major theoretical implications that warrant further discussion: First, autonomy is measurable as a multidimensional concepts, and second, experiencing increasing performance demands might not serve to limit professional autonomy to the degree that some have suggested (Evans, 2009; Harris, 2002; Lawler & Bilson, 2009).

Discussion, implications, and future research

This study's principal component analysis indicates substantial differences between experiences of professional and personal autonomy, suggesting that future research should account for this multidimensionality. The empirical backing for the multidimensional nature of autonomy supports Engel's (1970) theories about there being at least two distinct dimensions of autonomy. It contributes to previous empirical research by empirically demonstrating autonomy as consisting of multiple dimensions rather than a singularity. The multidimensional view of autonomy provides a more accurate description of the influence that different work characteristics, such as performance demands, has on professionals and can increase the precision of empirical research and discussions.

Managerialism and autonomy

The multidimensional aspects of autonomy can explain why there are two schools of thought regarding the effects of managerialism and performance demands and how both can be right in their own way. Managerialism may limit autonomy as a whole, and yet affect the dimensions of personal and professional autonomy differently.

Although these results support the notion that experiences of performance demands tended to increase among welfare professionals in the 2000s, the correlation coefficients indicate that increasing managerialism is not necessarily an obstacle to experiencing professional autonomy. Supplementing previous research, my findings suggest that managerialism may not be as limiting to professional autonomy as has been suggested, but that it may limit welfare professionals' experience of personal autonomy. The takeaway being that professional autonomy—and through it, the professional role—may not be under the same stress as professionals' ability to organize their own work situation.

As welfare professionals experienced having to perform better, their experience of personal autonomy decreased, while professional autonomy remained unchanged. This duality may be explained by theories on the separation between control and professionalism in professional bureaucracies (Engel, 1970; Harris, 1998); that is, professionals may treat freedom to plan and freedom to perform as independent dimensions (Lawler & Hearn, 1997), or that they may be governed differently in the

means and ends of their work (Derber, 1983).

An alternative explanation is that limitations on professional autonomy may be experienced as indirect or entangled restrictions. For example, too little time and too many tasks could indirectly hamper professionals' ability to perform their jobs with the desired professional autonomy. However, the weak correlation between professional and personal autonomy suggests that they are largely independent dimensions and that indirect restrictions cannot explain the results alone. Nevertheless, the direct and indirect effects of managerialism on professional autonomy through personal autonomy warrants further research considerations.

Some of this effect could potentially be explained by differing expectations coming into their professional career. Professional workers who enter initial job positions may be conscious of the tension between professional autonomy and managerial control, but have fewer or no expectations of limitations on how to control their workday. Coming recently from an educational situation with a high level of personal autonomy, new professionals may experience a "shock" of having less control over their own workday as employees. The effect of this should be limited by the study measuring experiences three years after graduation.

The professional contract

The "professional contract" regulating the relationship between control and freedom for professionals is one in which a governing body provides education and protection of professional status and in exchange professionals' use their abilities for the betterment of society (Brante et al., 2015). This study's findings suggest that any limitations from this contract are more poignant for professionals' ability to organize their workday, than for their application of professional expertise. Which indicates that the professional contract work as intended: Welfare professionals experience an ability to perform their job as trained professionals, even with increased demands on performance. Rather than losing professional influence over their work, professionals lose control over the organizing of their work. This is compatible with the intention of the professional contract, which describes a trade-off in which professional workers exchange something for their status (Brante et al., 2015; Derber, 1983; Engel, 1970). The professional contract may still be viable under increasing managerialism as welfare professionals experience continued control over their decision-making, even as they lose control over the tangible aspects of their workday. A possible explanation for this is that personal autonomy may lack the explicit and historical protection of professional autonomy in the professional contract, making it a more likely casualty of increasing demands for control and production.

Consequences for managers

According to Noordegraaf (2011), conflicts between professional and managerial logics are not solvable by adding more professionalism to "rescue" professional work from control, nor by "moving beyond" professionalism through more restrictions on the work. Rather, Noordegraaf (2011, p. 1362) argues that professionals must realize that they need to be managed and thus adapt to changing contexts. My findings suggest that practitioners and managers in welfare professions are adapting to these changes by compartmentalizing personal autonomy and professional autonomy; treating them as two separate dimensions rather than one, allowing for increased performance demands without it limiting professional autonomy.

The mechanism behind this has been previously described among nurses who take individual responsibility for providing the care they deem necessary, independent from organizational goals focusing on performance demands (Thomassen & Larsen, 2016). Serving as an example of how professionals are able to compartmentalize the decisions about what is professionally necessary, and what is organizational preferable. This poses a potential challenge for managers as professionals

appear to favor their professional training over managers' instructions. Creating a chasm between organizational needs, defined in their routines and enforced by control, and what the professionals prioritize. When creating measures and instructions concerned with ensuring performance, managers should be aware of how these measures might be individually adapted by the professional to fit their professional understanding, rather than being uniformly applied. This is important in order to avoid goal displacement which risks that the provision of care becomes an individualized effort rather than an organizational goal (Brænd, 2014; Thomassen & Larsen, 2016). One way of avoiding this is to involve the professionals in creating performance measures aligning professional considerations with organizational goals and need for control.

Managers should be aware that efforts to increase performance influences experiences of professional and personal autonomy differently, the non-relationship between performance demands and professional autonomy is no argument for managers to demand performance under the veil that professional autonomy appears to be unaffected. Managers must consider that a decrease in experiences of personal autonomy may have negative impact on organizational and personal performance by limiting the sense of empowerment and trust necessary for work performance (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002) and for work satisfaction (Barak, Travis, Pyun, & Xie, 2009), both of which are important elements in job retention (Barak, Nissly, & Levin, 2001). Although autonomy is neither good, bad, nor absolute (Evans & Harris, 2004), managers and professionals must work together to ensure that their blend of demands and autonomy suit their work situation. It should also be considered that limits on personal autonomy are not necessarily negative, a straightjacket for the professional, in some instances it may benefit professionals who are freed to spend time on professional decisions rather than administrative ones.

Limitations and future research

One limitation of this study is that the data constitute an average from a variety of individual welfare professionals, which loses the nuances of each professional group and individual. Increased individualization (Brænd, 2014; Thomassen & Larsen, 2016) could reveal greater variations between welfare professionals, within and across professions. Controlling for the relative effect of different professions reduces the risk for this regarding the different professions. Future case studies are necessary to better gauge these variations on an individual level. Some respondents may have been working in different fields than their educational code indicated. Inherent biases always exist among respondents as they choose to answer surveys; however, both risks are minimized by the three independent datasets, which indicated stable trends in the correlation between performance demands and autonomy. The situation in Norway may be different than in other countries with respect to experiences of performance demands and the corresponding effects on experiences of autonomy. Similar studies should be conducted in countries with a stronger emphasis on performance demands.

Another potential limitation is my redefinition of "job demands" into "performance demands" and "personal autonomy." Although I have argued extensively for this choice, using theory backed by principal component analysis, this redefinition should be developed further in future research to better nuance the differences, preferably by developing question batteries specifically for this purpose. Controlling for professions, age, and gender does not rule out other elements acting as a spurious effect or codependent factor. Finally, Lin (2014) suggests that organizational size might be relevant to experienced autonomy. This study lacked data to control for organizational size; future research should examine the effect of organizational size on experiences of different dimensions of autonomy.

Conclusion

This study empirically establishes the multidimensional nature of experiences of autonomy among professional welfare workers, addressing the chasm between theory and empirical data in this research area. The different ways in which professionals experience personal and professional autonomy are partly explained by increased performance demands which appear to have a greater effect on experiences of personal autonomy. The strong relationship between performance demands and personal autonomy and the simultaneously weak relationship between performance demands and professional autonomy suggests that increasing performance demands might not serve to limit professional autonomy.

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Partnership as Educational Policy Imperative: An Unquestioned Good?

Abstract: “Partnership” is often promoted as an unquestioned “good” for higher education institutions in relation to its various stakeholder organizations. This paper seeks to problematize this uncritical valorization through a critical interrogation of the concepts and socio-material practices associated with partnership. In the name of partnership, new forms of governance are inaugurated that have far-reaching effects. More specifically, this paper is concerned with a critical analysis of partnership in relation to a longitudinal study of the relational practices between a university and five local authorities within a Scottish educational context. In particular, we trace how a “signature event” transformed a partnership assemblage, from one characterized by a grammar of participation, to a formal partnership aligned with a set of principles that we characterize as a grammar of representation. We argue that this transition led to a new assemblage that enacted new accountabilities, performativities, and alignments under the sign of partnership.

Keywords: Partnership, signature event, professional accountability and responsibility, socio-material practices, teacher education

“Partnership” is often promoted as an unquestioned “good” for higher education institutions in relation to its various stakeholder organizations (e.g., Scottish Government, 2011). Whilst critical commentators have questioned assumptions informing a number of other key concepts in the policy lexicon, such as “excellence,” (Reade, 1997) “quality assurance,” (Ball, 2003; Harvey, 2005) and “accountability” (Strathern, 2000; Popkewitz & Wehlage, 1973; Wagner, 1989) partnership as a more recent policy imperative appears to have largely escaped such scrutiny and in much of the literature it remains under-theorized. Such neglect is all the more surprising given the extent to which partnership and collaboration have become foregrounded in public service delivery, whether in education, health, social care or criminal justice (Cardini, 2006; Carnwell & Carson, 2009). The intention to put service users at the center of programme design and delivery appears to detract from the possibility of a critique of the practice of partnership itself. This, coupled with a theoretical orientation that has tended to valorize a community of practice approach (e.g., Lave & Wenger, 2002), may have also contributed to this (Guile, 2010; Hughes, Jewson, & Unwin, 2007; Roberts, 2006). Such critical readings of partnership that have been undertaken, such as Hopwood’s (2014) analysis of partnership in an Australian healthcare context, suggest that there is widespread confusion around the very concept of partnership itself and a need for greater theorization in the light of this (Taylor & Le Riche, 2006).

The aim of this study is to contribute to this conversation through bringing theory

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to bear at both a conceptual level and in relation to thinking through a four-year empirical study that was focused on an educational partnership. This partnership was between organizations that were implicated in teachers' professional development, in relation to both initial teacher education (ITE) and professional development within the context of on-going practice. We are specifically concerned with addressing the questions:

- How might partnership be conceptualized?
- How might an empirical approach to partnership be theorized?
- And then, in relation to a four-year longitudinal study:
- How might different partnership assemblages be characterized?
- What are the broader consequences and implications of the move from one partnership assemblage to another?

Here, we are interested in the impact that such change has in relation to broader accountability and governmentality agendas within higher education.

The paper, therefore, contributes to a theorization of partnership in four ways. Firstly, in an effort to move beyond the conceptual confusion that has characterized thinking in relation to partnership to date, we begin by identifying a tripartite typology that comprises of lexical, stipulative and empirical approaches, each of which refracts partnership in distinct ways and orientates analysis in different directions. Secondly, through the analysis of a four-year, longitudinal study of an educational partnership between a university and five local authorities, we trace how these different orientations to partnership interplay in practice. Thirdly, we argue that it is possible to distinguish two distinct partnership assemblages that we characterize as a grammar of participation, which is predominantly relational and emergent, and grammar of representation, which, in contrast, is primarily concerned with aligning practice to a text (Candler, 2006).

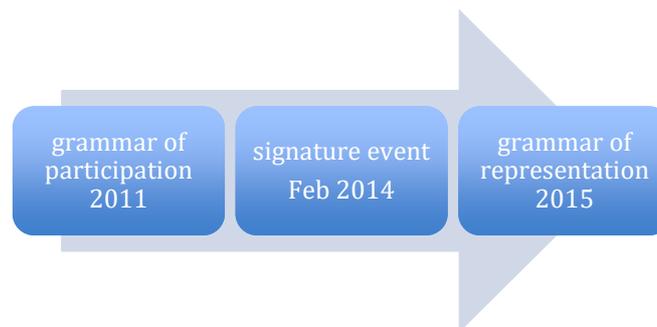


Figure 1. *The signature event and the two phases of partnership*

Finally, on the basis of this particular analysis, we take a more critical line in relation to partnership, arguing that far from being an unquestioned “good,” partnership can, in practice, lead to new policy alignments that further extend regimes of accountability.

How might partnership be conceptualized?

As noted above, partnership, as a particular form of knowledge exchange between university departments of education and other stakeholders, has been promoted as a desirable outcome at both European and national levels (Caul & McWilliams, 2002; Dahlstedt, 2009; MacAllister, 2015; Scottish Government, 2011; Smith, Brisard, & Menter 2006). Given the ambiguities that are associated with understandings of partnership to date, we identify three different approaches that are characterized as lexical, stipulative, and empirical orientations respectively. As will be seen below, each

type has its own characteristic focus for analysis and questioning that distinguishes it from alternative approaches. Having briefly outlined each approach, we will then analyse how these intersect in practice within the context of an empirical study that follows.

Lexical definitions

A lexical definition is concerned with “the setting of bounds or limits” or rendering “an object or image distinct to the eye” (Tweed, 2006, p. 33). As noted by Taylor and Le Riche (2006), the search for some such conceptual clarity in relation to partnership has in practice proved to be somewhat elusive. One might begin such an exercise through the act of distinguishing different kinds of partnership such as those of a marriage or business. It is noteworthy that in this kind of legal contract the precise details are frequently worked out in practice; in other words, the partnership is performed into being. This might be contrasted with, for example, contract theory in law, where—typically—precise expectations are set out in advance of signing an agreement. Following on from this, one might begin to draw an initial contrast: if contract implies precise roles and responsibilities, partnership in practice might appear to enact more open, and some might even say, equal and reciprocal forms of collaboration. Then, in terms of distinguishing concepts, there is a question as to how and when collaboration translates into partnership. There would appear to be considerable slippage between the two terms, such that the two are sometimes used interchangeably; however, the former might appear less formal and thereby possibly pre-figuring the latter. Given such apparent vagueness, it is perhaps not surprising that within the literature, approaches to the concept of partnership tend to be resolved into a variety of “models of partnership” approaches, such as the six models of school-university partnerships proposed by McLaughlin and Black-Hawkins (2004) or the area groupings outlined by Baumfield and Butterworth (2007). In relation to this study, we were somewhat suspicious of the precise ways in which models of partnership approach appears to definitively “cut” a given network in precise ways (Barad, 2007); our own analysis of the data below did not appear to warrant the production of such clear boundaries and demarcations. However, a somewhat less definite lexical approach did appear to be useful in pointing up a contrast between different relational configurations, which we characterize as a move from a grammar of participation to a grammar of representation.

Stipulative definitions

A stipulative definition provides a series of specific statements or principles that set out what a particular partnership *should* be or adhere to. To this extent, a stipulative approach is concerned with issues of power and politics in regard to whose understandings get promoted and in practice. It is in this sense that partnership becomes linked with policy and can itself become a gathering point for the enactment of new forms of governmentality (Dahlstedt, 2009). An example of a stipulative definition can be seen in Billett, Ovens, Clemans, and Seddon (2007, p. 637) where, based on their study of ten longstanding social partnerships, they identify five principles and practices that appear most likely to support and guide the development, continuity, and evaluation of social partnerships that are judged to be effective. According to Billett et al.’s (2007) study, these principles and practices consist in shared goals, relations with partners, capacity for partnership work, governance and leadership, and trust and trustworthiness.

Within the study that we report on here, a stipulative account of partnership became associated with the aftermath of a “signature event” (Gherardi & Landri, 2014) where partners signed an agreement to co-operate and to become constituted as a formal partnership. This, we argue, re-configured practices around a set of principles that distilled certain features that *should be* translated into practice, if the partnership

was to be deemed effective through its alignment with policy.

Empirical definitions

Empirical definitions of partnership work are concerned with how a concept of partnership is mobilized in practice within specific contexts and with identifying particular issues, tensions, and understandings that emerge. Another way of putting this would be to approach partnership as a situated practice within specific organizational settings, exploring the kinds of material arrangements and practices to which this gives rise. An example of such an approach would be the act of analysing particular models of partnerships in practice, teasing out particular traits, such as in McLaughlin and Black-Hawkins' (2004) study that outlines six models with specific traits that frequently represent school-university partnerships.

Although three distinct orientations to thinking about partnership can—for heuristic purposes—be outlined, in practice each of the three orientations mutually informs the subsequent analysis, characterization, and critical evaluation of the effects of partnership in the longitudinal study that is analysed below.

Theoretical and methodological framework: how might an empirical approach to partnership be theorized?

Before describing the empirical study in greater detail, it is necessary to say something more about the kind of theoretical and methodological framing that informs our account. In terms of theory, we draw upon recent work in empirical philosophy that maps the movements, gatherings, and outcomes associated with mobilizing projects associated with partnership. Much of this draws upon Bruno Latour's (1999; 2013) work on relations and translations that has, in recent years, become influential within educational circles (e.g., Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Fenwick, Edwards, & Sawchuck, 2011; Sorensen, 2011). Gherardi and Landri (2014) is of particular relevance here, as a study that draws upon socio-material theory to make sense and to identify the new (and binding) relations that emerge as a consequence of an act of signing. We argue that Gherardi and Landri's (2014) approach provides insight into some of the different grammars of partnership as these became enacted and differentiated. So, in what ways might such a theoretical and methodological orientation be resourceful?

As Gherardi and Landri (2014, p. 7) observe, "signature is a mechanism to reduce uncertainty and distribute accountability, to validate documents by proving professional competence, and to assign responsibilities." This derives from the fact that professional signatures are not only social fabrications, but also "'stable traces resistant to disputation that 'make' the professional accountable" (Gherardi & Landri, 2014, p.1). In other words, an act of signing (whether by pen, seal or digit means) can lead both to a new inauguration—revealing "complex negotiations among professional knowledges, practices, and identities" *and* work to stabilize these arrangements (Gherardi & Landri, 2014, p. 4). As such, the focus upon an act of signing provides a form of analysis that begins "in the middle of things" (Gherardi & Landri, 2014, p. 4; Latour, 2005) rather than with some outside framing or definition, which can then investigate what is achieved in and through the practice of signing for all that become implicated. To this extent, the analysis focuses on socio-material effects of a partnership as these are played out within a particular association, network or assemblage.

A focus of our empirical inquiry into partnership is a signature event in which five local authorities signed an agreement with a university to work together. From this event, we worked backwards and forwards; backwards, in terms of the kinds of relations that obtained prior to this formal agreement; and forwards, in order to trace

the emergence of a new partnership assemblage as marked by the signing event. This enabled us to investigate the socio-material effects of this act of signature (Gherardi & Landri, 2014) so as to identify the new relationships and practices to which this gave rise. As such, our methodology also draws extensively upon Bruno Latour's (2005; 2010; 2013) ethnographic practice that is focused upon material, relational and human gatherings, together with tracing the various translations that take place and their effects. In taking an empirical approach to partnership, therefore, we explore some of the ways that human and nonhuman materialities combine to produce particular purposes and effects in education (Sorenson, 2009). Thus, rather than assuming a particular account of partnership *a priori*, the paper reports on the socio-material effects of a partnership as enacted through time. We then draw upon a lexical account in an effort to characterize some of the differences wrought in the aftermath of a signature event (Fenwick *et al.*, 2011; Fenwick & Landri, 2014).

More specifically, the paper is concerned with the effects of 'partnership' as the focus of recent policy imperatives within a Scottish educational context (Scottish Government, 2011). The partnership in question consisted of educational officers representing each of the Local Authorities, and lecturers representing initial and professional education programmes at the university. The authors, as university lecturers in the Partnership Steering Group thereby occupied, simultaneously, multiple roles as participants, observers, and analysts of the processes that are recounted here. This positioning as researchers was not, however, covert, and focused upon the socio-material relations that were in play as evidenced by the kinds of artifacts selected for this study. The data that was analysed between 2011–2015 includes

- field notes taken by the authors at the time;
- minutes taken from partnership meetings, as agreed by participants;
- notes from meetings with Directors of Education, by the Chair of the Steering Group;
- artifacts produced by Local Authority and University participants at scoping events;
- documentation produced in connection with a formal "Aspect Review" of the partnership;
- relevant emails and letters (between external stakeholders and the Steering Group);
- key policy texts.¹

These data were analysed as an exercise in "practical ontology," to borrow Jensen's (2010, p. 5) description, so as to trace and explicate relations (Nespor, 1994) and the different ways in which people, materialities, and their interactions changed through time (Fenwick, Edwards, & Sawchuck, 2011). The challenge in all of this was to try and surface the taken-for-granted and to notice the emergence of new configurations within the traces left by these educational events. As such, the examples given might best be considered "case studyish" (Wortham, 1999) rather than as constituting a formal case study as such. Our analysis is, we hope, illustrative of some of the distinctions and contrasts that we draw in relation to the enaction of partnership.

Longitudinal study: How might different partnership assemblages be characterized?

In this section, we initially provide some background to the policy context in Scotland in relation to partnership and teacher education as this bears upon the study in

¹ Key policy texts produced during this period include Scottish Government (2011, 2013) and Education Scotland (2015).

question. Within the Scottish context, *Teaching Scotland's Future* (often referred to as *The Donaldson Review*) (Scottish Government, 2011) was a major review of teacher education in Scotland where a series of policy recommendations were made alongside a detailed discussion of the implications of this for future practice. Readers of the report become immediately aware of the key role that partnership plays in this imagined future; indeed, partnership is mentioned on no fewer than 70 occasions throughout the report, and a call is made for:

New and strengthened models of partnership among universities, local authorities, schools and individual teachers. These partnerships should (*sic*) be based on jointly agreed principles and involve shared responsibility for key areas of teacher education. (Scottish Government, 2011, p. 48)

Given the report's importance, a National Implementation Group was formed to implement its recommendations, especially in relation to identifying the principles that would, in turn, constitute "a new concept of partnership" (Scottish Government, 2011, p. 11). The National Implementation Board (NIB) (Scottish Government, 2013) was subsequently charged with identifying the ten overarching principles (see summary below, Figure 4) that would constitute partnership in relation to Early Career Partnerships between universities and local authorities, with the intention of ensuring closer working between initial teacher education and the induction year of teaching. Henceforth, partnership policy was to be "rolled out" in practice, with each university–local authority partnership expected to align with the aforementioned principles. This entailed each university–local authority partnership becoming formally constituted as such, and in the following section, we describe how this became instituted in one such partnership.

Partnership signatures: A grammar of participation

From our analysis, we provide three illustrations of the assemblage that was in place prior to the formal signing and constitution of the partnership that characterized the kinds of open-ended discussions and relational practices from 2011 until February 2014. The first traces how an evaluative framework emerged through partners' engagement with an academic text through time (November–December 2011), while the second illustration describes an artifact that was used at a whole day event between partners at the university and local authorities (16/5/2011). Our third example describes a specific dialogue between partners that emerged in relation to understandings of literacy that draws upon field notes taken at the time (20/5/2013). Each of these narrations is illustrative of an assemblage that we characterize as a grammar of participation, in which open-ended dialogue about matters of mutual concern informed the kinds of relational practices that took place prior to the signature event.

Prior to the formal act of signing, and in response to the publication of *Teaching Scotland's Future* (Scottish Government, 2011) conversations took place between local authority and university participants that were only loosely based around agreed principles, that were not written down in any formal sense. In addition, there were fewer boundaries drawn in respect of who might participate within the partnership meetings. Thus, the minutes of these early meetings record the participation not only of representatives from a wider range of local authorities than the five that subsequently became formal signatories, but also a broader range of university personnel, including several professors, who attended either out of interest, or when the topic was of direct relevance to their research. The Director of Partnerships summarised one such meeting on 2nd July 2012, noting that "the discussion was animated and we agreed that this kind of [open] dialogue is a useful partnership activity in itself." Thus, prior to the signature event, commitment to the partnership had not involved the signing of a formal agreement but was enacted through a series of spe-

cific actions and commitments, many of which appeared to be routine, such as agreeing to meet at a specific time, producing, reading, and commenting on records of proceedings, and contributing to the discussions that took place.

Such a partnership assemblage also enabled and promoted an open-ended exchange of views around a series of matters of mutual concern. An illustration of this was a meeting (15/11/2011) where both local authority and university participants identified “evaluation of professional development” as a key theme and decided to draw upon an academic text to inform discussion at the following meeting. The text in question was Guskey’s (2002) five critical levels of professional development evaluation that was the focus of a meeting held on 19th December 2011, with the intention of both reaching a shared understanding and responding to a pressing concern as to how both universities and local authorities might, in practice, evaluate the impact of professional development. The minutes from this meeting describe a collective wish “not to simply share what we are doing, but ... working together to do productive things” (Minutes, 19/12/2011). It is noteworthy that the approach taken to “doing productive things” was to invite a gathering around a particular research text in which different participants shared their readings and translations in an open-ended way. As will be seen below, this offers an instructive point of comparison with the relational dynamics that informed the post-signature meetings that were instead concerned with alignment with an externally given text, with priorities set by the government, rather than with an open-ended scoping and exploration of an issue at hand.

Our second illustration is an artifact produced for a day seminar entitled *Curriculum for Excellence: Implementation Through Partnership*, that took place in 16th May 2011, designed to specifically address the questions: “What kind of partnership do we want to develop? What for? What are our expectations of each other? What are the issues?” (Minutes, 17/3/2011). These questions were characteristically open-ended, and it was up to the participants, working together in small groups, to discuss a specific thematic such as the focus of the artifact included here (Please refer to Figure 2).

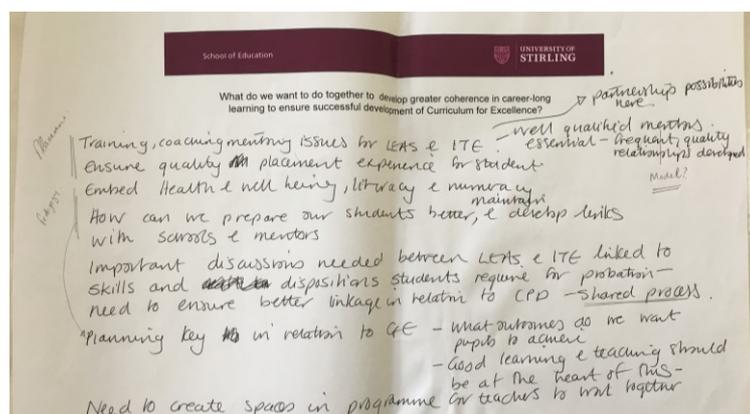


Figure 2. Artefact from seminar event, 16th May 2011.

The artefact illustrates the open-ended discussion that characterised events prior to the signature event.

One of the outcomes of this seminar was a vision that foregrounded “partnership based upon collaborative learning rather than simply systemic efficiencies” (16/5/2011). A summary of the points raised by participants at this event was intended to inform the ongoing working of the partnership.

Our third illustration depicts how a shared matter of concern around literacy practices uncovered two radically different interpretations. Minutes from a meeting on

20th May 2013 note that one of the partnership local authorities had reported that “there is a gap in the probationer’s knowledge around the teaching of reading, so they have implemented a major literacy strategy.” In the light of this, it was agreed that literacy become a shared focus of concern, especially given that this was also a priority issue that had been foregrounded in the Scottish Government’s (2010) *Literacy Action Plan*. Literacy as a thematic was first discussed at a subsequent meeting held on 24th September 2013. However, it was only as the discussion progressed that participants realized that—although all present referred to literacy—they were not, in fact, talking about the same concept or token (Edwards, 2011). Whilst there was some overlap in terms of reference that included, for example, specific acts of writing, university colleagues assumed a more theoretical, multi-modal conception of literacy that included readings of practice in a broader cultural sense (e.g., Certeau, 1984; Jewitt, 2009) whereas local authority colleagues tended to draw upon more traditional understandings of literacy as currently practised within schools. The possibility of such an exchange led to an acknowledgment of the different forms that literacy can take, and, arising from this, a new appreciation of some of the tensions and challenges faced by education students and early career teachers, who have to mediate between these competing understandings.

Whilst in each of these three illustrations, the precise focus for deliberation differed, a common relational dynamic can nevertheless be discerned, which might be characterized as both open-ended and dialogical in form. We have summarised this relational dynamic in Figure 3 below.

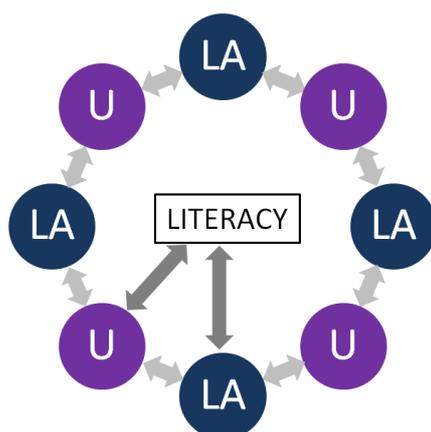


Figure 3. *A grammar of participation. The diagram illustrates ongoing relational practices focused upon a matter of mutual concern such as the evaluation of professional development, understanding of partnership or literacy (LA = Local Authority U = University).*

To this extent, a partnership assemblage was formed through engagement with—and collective working at—shared matters of concern. Partnership, and the new knowing and insight to which this gave rise, in other words, emerged through on-going relational practices that were not in any exhaustive sense pre-defined or aligned with stipulative principles. Such an approach to practice would appear to have affinities with a “grammar of participation” informed by “motion, pedagogy, and benevolent heteronomy” (Candler, 2006, p. 6). According to Candler (2006), a grammar of participation is a mode of inquiry in which relationality is foregrounded and in which knowledge and insight emerge fundamentally in and through the on-going exploration of those relations. In the context of our present discussion, we argue that such a notion also affords a contrast between different ways in which partnership might be assembled, as became clear when this university and local authority partnership became formally constituted.

Partnership and a signature event

In September 2012 the National Partnership Group (NPG), which was set up to implement the recommendations of *Teaching Scotland's Future* (Scottish Government, 2011), issued a recommendation to the Cabinet Secretary which stated that

it is ... proposed that all local authorities and universities providing ITE should enter in formal partnership arrangements by the start of the August 2013 academic year. (Scottish Government, 2012, p.8)

From this point on, the minutes of the Steering Group at first note this recommendation (7/11/2012) and then begin to work out the implications of formally constituting such a partnership. Thus, a partnership meeting held on 22nd April 2013 was given over to discussing the implications of the draft *National Framework Agreement for Partnership*, and two subsequent meetings (22/5/2013 and 17/6/2013) also devoted a considerable time to this. In these minutes, it is noticeable that earlier topics of discussion, and the somewhat *ad hoc* way in which new issues emerged, no longer feature. In their place, the NIB Principles of Partnership (Scottish Government, 2013; see below, Figure 4) gain currency as a key focus of concern, and the local authorities attending now become restricted to the five that will enter into the upcoming formal partnership.

- *Quality of student learning experience.* All partnership arrangements should be aimed at enhancing the quality of the learning experiences of teachers in the early phase of their professional learning and arrangements should include a clear commitment to the evaluation of the impact of these arrangements.
- *Clarity.* All partnership arrangements should ensure that the roles to be adopted by the different parties are clearly stated and understood by all concerned.
- *Reciprocity.* The arrangements made for partnership should be based on the principle of reciprocity and care should be taken to ensure that there are clear reciprocal benefits to the schools/local authorities and the universities.
- *University academic standards.* All partnership arrangements must ensure that the resultant student learning can be assessed by processes that meet the universities' quality assurance standards.
- *Professional standards.* All partnership initiatives must have due regard to the professional standards and guidelines set out by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), in order to ensure that programmes may be fully accredited by the GTCS.
- *Continuity.* Partnership arrangements should be designed in such a way as to enhance the continuity between Initial Teacher Education ... and Induction.
- *Collaborative engagement.* Partnership arrangements should be developed and implemented through the fullest possible collaborative engagement of all parties.
- *Joint assessment.* The assessment of student teachers during placement and, where appropriate, of probationers during induction should be a shared responsibility.
- *Training and support.* Partnership arrangements should be designed in such a way as to take account of the professional support, development and learning needs of those who take on the role of mentoring, supporting and/or assessing professional learning across the early phase.
- *Need for clear and consistent documentation.* All initial teacher education and induction programmes must provide a clearly documented account of the partnership arrangements in place

Figure 4. *National Implementation Board principles (summarised from Scottish Government, 2013, pp. 2–3).*

In response to these requirements, a formal act of signing up to a partnership agreement took place on 21st February 2014 between senior representatives of the university and the five local authorities (University of Stirling, 2014). This agreement formally constituted the Central Local Authorities Partnership (the acronym CLASP was subsequently used) as a distinct entity: through this signature event (Gherardi & Landri, 2014) the 5 local authorities and university committed to working together as a partnership. However, the understanding of partnership to which all signed was that enumerated in the ten NIB Principles (Figure 4)—a stipulative definition of partnership that had not, hitherto, played a significant role in this particular assemblage, as we have seen. Thus, the official signature event acted as a catalyst for recognizing the NIB principles, which would, henceforth, gain both currency and status, thereby becoming an undisputed way of both constituting and evaluating partnership. Through the act of signing, in other words, all became linked, professionally responsible, and accountable to these ten NIB principles. This act of signing, therefore, led to new alignments and translations that re-configured how partnership might—and should—be practiced in future.

Partnership signatures: A grammar of representation

Signatories, therefore, committed their respective organizations to work together in multi-lateral partnerships, and to a stipulative understanding of what mobilizing that partnership might consist in. In this connection, the language deployed in the ten NIB Principles (Scottish Government, 2013) is noteworthy: its forms of expression are non-negotiable, with the repeated use of command language such as “should,” “must,” etc. Beyond the specific choice of principles that, taken together, are taken as constitutive of partnership *per se*, it is also noteworthy how often the metaphor of clarity is deployed—both explicitly (on five occasions) and indirectly (at least twice)—in relation to the principles. This change in register from the informality that had preceded the signature event was also linked to the new directives and forms of accountability that followed in its wake.

An analysis of documentation showed that soon after the establishment of the formalised partnership, the Scottish Government issued an invitation for partnerships to bid for substantial funding to develop “sustained models of partnerships focusing on the early career phase” (Scottish Government, 2014), which would specifically address the beginning teachers’ transition from ITE to the first year of professional practice in school. Whilst there was no stipulation as to what form the project could take, a key condition of any bid was to show how that proposal would address the ten NIB Principles. An earlier statement from the Learning Directorate made it clear that:

[f]unds will only be released where there is evidence of progress in developing the particular partnership and that it is working to the principles set out in the National Framework Agreement for Partnership in the Early Phase of Teacher Learning (attached). (Scottish Government Learning Directorate, 2013)

As a consequence, the partnership now became subject to new alignments, expectations, and accountabilities as members constructed a proposal which would map the experiences of early career phase teachers in their first year of practice (after completing ITE). Thus, the discourse and dialogue of partnership working was now aligned to the principles and the agenda stemming from the recommendations of the Donaldson Review (Scottish Government, 2011).

Minutes of meetings from 24th January 2014, immediately prior to the signature event, onwards, document how the workings of the partnership assemblage became increasingly oriented to the ten NIB Principles. Regular updates from the National

Implementation Group, together with progress reports on the partnership's implementation of the principles, now took center stage; these principles were also implicated in the funded projects that now became a central concern of the partnership's work. To the extent that relations within the partnership became aligned *with a text* (the ten NIB Principles), the dynamics became structured around a "grammar of representation" (Candler, 2006). A grammar of representation is a relational economy in which (an independent) text is foregrounded, which becomes the arbiter and measure of truth.

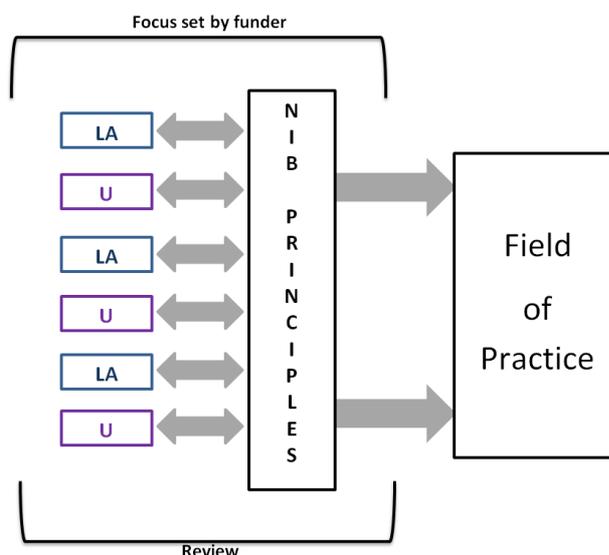


Figure 5. *A grammar of representation.* The diagram shows how the focus of attention is upon a text (the NIB Principles) rather than between partners (as in Figure 3). (LA = Local Authority; U = University)

According to Candler (2006, p. 34), within these terms:

Representation assumes a neutral and unequivocal register across which descriptions can be ferried from a code or tableau of knowledge to the mind, regardless of either the temporal identity of the mind or the temporality of texts themselves, which print is supposed to overcome. Representation, then, is a matter of immediate apprehension by virtue of an exterior sign and is removed from the variables of time and human communities. (Candler, 2006, p. 34)

To this extent, grammars of participation and representation can be regarded as two distinct orientations to knowledge and practice. In the following section, we will argue that the contrast between these different grammars can help in distinguishing the shift in partnership assemblage that the formal signature event brought about.

New alignments, responsibilities, and performativities: What are the broader consequences and implications of the move from one partnership assemblage to another?

One of the key translations that the shift from a grammar of participation to that of representation effects is the move from the uncertainties of practice to a 'readable space' (Certeau, 1984, p. 36, quoted in Candler, 2006, p. 30). This makes possible, in Certeau's (1984, p. 36) words:

[a] panoptic practice proceeding from a place whence the eye can transform foreign forces into objects that can be observed and measured, and thus control and 'include' them within its scope of vision. (Certeau, 1984, p. 36)

In other words, a move towards a grammar of representation can be regarded as strategic since once a defined understanding of partnership is produced it becomes possible to judge the extent to which particular practices conform and correspond to a particular text. In this connection, an aspect of the Donaldson Review (Scottish Government, 2011, Recommendation 19) that had not been especially noticed previously, came increasingly into view (minutes and field notes, 22/1/2014, 2/4/2014, 16/6/2014). This concerned measures to ensure the accountability of partnerships arrangements:

Stronger quality assurance of the effectiveness of partnerships should be applied by GTCS² through their accreditation procedures and HM inspectors in their inspections of teacher education and of schools. (Scottish Government, 2011, p. 44)

In the following section, we illustrate how policy imperatives were mobilized in ways that ensured alignment with official partnership discourse, thereby joining up governance apparatus with government intentions.

The extension of the quality assurance role signaled by "inspections of teacher education," marked a notable shift from the less formal *Aspect Reviews* that had hitherto been a feature of HMIE involvement in higher education. The increased role of the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) in relation to partnership arrangements led to revised *Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education Programmes in Scotland* (GTCS, 2013, p. 4) that reflect this change, with successful accreditation now requiring that programmes

have effective partnership arrangements which address the key principles of partnership as identified in the National Implementation Board... National Framework Agreement for Partnership in the Early Phase of Teacher Learning.

A formally constituted partnership arrangement aligned with the ten NIB principles was henceforth a necessary condition for universities being accredited to offer teacher education *per se*.

Soon after the release of funding to develop the early career phase, the Scottish Government announced that each university and local authority partnership would be subject to an Aspect Review of partnerships which would use the ten NIB Principles as a frame/benchmark from which to judge areas of good practice and to identify issues faced by the university and local authority partnerships. Whilst the formalization of partnership working around the early career phase had at first given rise to new opportunities and possibilities in terms of funding; this now ushered in new forms of governance and accountabilities not foreseen by the stakeholders in the partnership. Signing up to the ten NIB Principles embodied in the formalized partnership agreement, now issued in a new form of inspection that, in turn, would lead to a public report on the effectiveness of the partnership's working.

With the announcement of the Aspect Review, a new series of meetings took place that were focused on preparing for the review, and on two occasions an HMIE inspector attended partnership meetings in both an observational and advisory capacity for the upcoming review (2/4/2014, 16/6/2014). Preparation for the Aspect Review included work on setting up a series of focus groups that might reflect the

² The GTCS (General Teaching Council for Scotland) is the official registration body for teachers in Scotland. All teacher education programmes are officially accredited by the GTCS.

work of the partnership for the inspection³. The focus of all these discussions at partnership meetings was now mediated via the NIB Principles, which became both a point of reference, focus, and means of evaluation (see Figure 4). In short, the perceived success (or otherwise) of the early career phase project was directly aligned to these principles. Thus, the socio-material translations that were made (in relation to the principles) led to new working practices within the partnership assemblage, which also became subject to scrutiny and reporting.

Although at first it appeared that there would be some freedom and flexibility in identifying how the Aspect Review focus groups were to be constituted, it soon became apparent that specific groups of professionals such as Head Teachers, students, and core staff were preferred, so that the review team (from Education Scotland) might make clear judgments in relation to the ten NIB principles in relation to each stakeholder. Indeed, the questions used for each of the focus groups drew directly upon these principles. Whereas the university had hoped to constitute the focus groups around distinct partnership projects—which might give evidence of collaboration across stakeholder groups—it was clear that the review team had a clearly differentiated governance structure in mind that could be matched to the ten stipulative principles rather than being matched to the specificities of each project (Field Notes, 12/9/2014).

Through such measures, the CLASP steering group was now held directly accountable to the ten NIB Principles embodied in the formalized partnership agreement. The Steering Group meetings from 2nd April 2014 onwards, aligned their discussions to the NIB Principles and how best to prepare the focus groups for the upcoming Aspect Review, rather than open-ended dialogue around the newly created spaces and opportunities the early career phase had provided.

The new accountability agenda thus translated a partnership assemblage, which was, in lexical terms, structured around an on-going practice of collaboration, into something that was quite different: a stipulative understanding of partnership that drew upon a grammar of representation. The partnership assemblage changed significantly through the addition of the ten NIB Principles as an authoritative text, with the new assemblage, in turn, becoming explicitly linked to official organizations such as HMIE and GTCS, that ensured accountability. In becoming accountable, clear and pre-defined principles identified by external actors became foregrounded, to which alignment was sought. If the partnership assemblage prior to the formal act of signing appeared closer to a grammar of participation in Candler's (2006) terms, the formal act of signing henceforth committed stakeholders to a grammar of representation in which a stipulative text became a key element in the practice of partnership.

As noted above, the formal act of signing also became a precondition for access to new funding from the Government, which in turn led to new alignments, expectations, and accountabilities. The effect of this, at a strategic level, was to relocate thinking about future priorities away from each University-Local Authority partnership to the Government. Setting the future agenda was achieved through an official announcement that made available particular funding streams, whose focus was dependent upon current government priorities. Under the new arrangements, the partnership appeared to be guided at each step, with doors in particular directions being mysteriously opened and closed, producing a kind of *Alice in Wonderland* effect. And so this, in turn, produced both new forms of governance as well as new forms of unknowing. As regards the latter, if, under a grammar of participation, there were uncertainties as to what might transpire within a meeting, dependent upon which contingent matter of concern might arise, under a grammar of representation,

³ Although technically a “review,” the “Aspect Review” was an inspection in all but name; in the planning meetings with government officials that preceded this, there was repeated slippage between the use of the terms “review” and “inspection.”

the map of significant concerns was only available piecemeal, and in retrospect, once a new priority had been set by the government. Henceforth, the new partnership assemblage was not only beholden to a stipulative text and the grammar of representation which came in its wake, but stakeholders found themselves more closely linked to the whims of future government priorities.

Notwithstanding the Scottish Government's (2013, p.1) intention that the establishment of a principles-based approach "enhance consistency of standards, while at the same time allowing sufficient flexibility," since "the NIB is not promoting a particular model of partnership working," in practice, our analysis suggests that the new alignments and accountabilities associated with a grammar of representation that we trace here, qualitatively changed the practice of partnership in this setting. Thus, a research project (titled the Integrated Early Career Phase)—funding for which was awarded after the signature event—was formally evaluated according to its alignment with the NIB Principles rather than, for example, an increase in collaborative working—or the development of trust between partners. The shift from a grammar of participation to that of representation also brought significant change as regards the focus of ethical practice involved in becoming professionally responsible. In place of responsibility to fellow stakeholders to support professional learning and practice, as foregrounded within a grammar of participation (illustrated in Figure 3), the move towards clearer governance of partnership shifted professional responsibility to faithfulness to a particular policy lexicon instead (illustrated in Figure 5).

Conclusion

This paper offers a distinctive approach to understanding educational partnership that is focused upon a reading of empirical happenings and their bearing upon a critical analysis of two successive partnership assemblages. Having initially distinguished between three types of approach to understanding partnership, the lexical, stipulative and empirical, which variously inform and interplay in the construction of partnership and the kinds of assemblage to which these give rise, we then traced how a new partnership assemblage came into being through a signature event. This partnership assemblage, in foregrounding a stipulative text, enacted a more formal approach in which its success or otherwise was judged according to how well practice might be aligned with an authoritative text; this we characterized, following Candler (2006), as enacting a grammar of representation. In direct contrast, the partnership assemblage that pre-dated this formal act of signing, and the new alignments and responsibilities to which this gave rise, was much less formal; partnership within these terms was characterized as enacting a grammar of participation, which was performed through a negotiation of emergent matters of concern.

The formal signature event both marked, inaugurated and bound stakeholders to a new partnership assemblage that materially changed ways in which partnership might be performed and the responsibilities—and accountabilities—to which this gave rise. Rather than uncritically assuming partnership to be an unquestioned good, our analysis encourages a more cautious approach. Partnership might be viewed as an ambivalent achievement in so far as this issues in new forms of university and local authority governance that involve subjection to externally produced, audit cultures without clear justification or critical rationale (Strathern, 2000). Partnership, depending on which grammar is mobilized, might be seen as giving rise to both new insight and relational possibility or a further extension and intensification of governance that issues in a more coherent regime of regulation (Ranson, 2003). As such, partnership may be a mixed blessing indeed.

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How Has the Emergence of Digital Culture Affected Professional Magic?

Abstract: We examined how the emerging digital culture has affected magicians' careers, the development of their expertise and the general practices of their professions. We used social network analysis ($n=120$) to identify Finland's most highly regarded magicians ($n=16$) representing different generations. The participants were theme interviewed and also collected self-report questionnaire data. The results revealed that digital transformations have strongly affected the magical profession in terms of changing their career paths and entry into the profession. Magic used to be a secretive culture, where access to advanced knowledge was controlled by highly regarded gatekeepers who shared their knowledge with a selected group of committed newcomers as a function of their extended efforts. Openly sharing magical knowledge on the Internet has diminished the traditionally strong role of these gatekeepers. Although online tutorials have made magical know-how more accessible to newcomers, professional communities and networks play a crucial role in the cultivation of advanced professional competences.

Keywords: Digital culture, expertise, gatekeeping, internet, professional magician, professionalism

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The purpose of this article is to examine how the emergence of digital culture has affected professional pursuit of magic. Magic is a performative form of art and entertainment that relies on sophisticated competences cultivated across years of training (Rissanen, Palonen, Pitkänen, Kuhn, & Hakkarainen, 2013; Rissanen, Pitkänen, Juvonen, Kuhn, & Hakkarainen, 2014). Magic diverges from traditional creative professions in that it lacks formal education, formal credentials, and institutionalized career paths. However, magic shares important professional characteristics, such as earning a living through magical performances, having recognized, yet informal professional competences, belonging to a collegial network of trained experts, and practitioners identifying themselves as belonging to skilled professionals in the field. Magicians are usually self-employed autonomous entrepreneurs and constitute an important part of the creative sector of society (Lindström, 2015; Svensson, 2015). Whilst it is questionable as to whether magicians are a real profession, we consider magic a creative occupational group with a high degree of professional competence and autonomy, which can easily be compared to other performing artists.

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Expertise and professionalism in the field of magic

By relying on cultivated professional knowledge and skills, magicians earn a living by performing in front of physical or virtual audiences. Reaching top-level expertise relies on the sustained cultivation of personal competences, which are typically guided by mentors. Top-level magicians reach their expertise in similar ways to other creative professionals (e.g., writers, actors) and sports masters (Ericsson & Pool, 2016; Ericsson & Starkes, 1996; Larsen, 2016). The field of magic is interesting because the process of becoming a professional magician is less structured and occurs without formal organized training and education. Professional magicians invest vast amounts of time and resources into developing their skills. In accordance with other domains, it takes approximately 10 years of cultivating skills and competencies before one can become an expert magician (Rissanen et al., 2013). The field of magic involves developing professional methods and techniques for deliberate human deception. Highly regarded magical performances rely on a sophisticated understanding of human cognition, especially thinking and perception (Kuhn, Almani, & Rensink, 2008). Developing this professional expertise is a multi-faceted process involving interdependent technical (mastering tricks), artistic (developing performative programs) and entrepreneurial (making a living) competencies. These competences are further developed through progressive and target-oriented deliberate training (Rissanen et al., 2013).

The magicians' working field can be seen as a battleground on which continuous professional claim-making and negotiations takes place. According to Bourdieu (1996), artistic professionals and stakeholders safeguard their specific interests and struggle for influence through subconscious processes of symbolic boundary work. A field is an enclosed social system of positions occupied by specialized agents and institutions, struggling for common field specific resources, assets and acknowledged reputation (Bourdieu, 1986, 1993a; Broady, 1990, p. 270; Gustavsson et al., 2012, p. 13). In fields of creative entrepreneurship, reputation-related symbolic capital is arguably more valuable than economic capital. In the magician's world, the agents are magicians, performance sellers, show producers, TV producers, arrangers of competitions, and critics writing about their performances and members of magic associations. In the magicians' autonomous subfield, there is also a division between well-known "old school" magicians and younger performers, who lead target attacks towards the "establishment," aimed at acquiring the sub-field's valued assets. This is where the strategic importance of the name, the CV, the personal branding, habitus or other forms of self-commodification become valuable.

Digital transformations in the field of magic

Magic is one of the oldest forms of entertainment, and throughout history, magicians have embraced new forms of technology (During, 2002). Over the last 10 years, major advances have also been made in our scientific understanding of magic (Rensink & Kuhn, 2015), and insights into the cognitive mechanisms behind these principles have recently been combined with developments in artificial intelligence to produce new types of magic tricks (Williams & McOwan, 2014) as well as new technologies that use principles common in magic (L'Yi, Koh, Jo, Kim, & Seo, 2016). These changes do not only concern magical instruments and tricks but also collegial relations between what were previously relatively isolated actors as well as relations between magicians and their audience. Personal social networks play a critical role in fields, such as magic, where there are no formal training and educational resources (Gruber, Lehtinen, Palonen, & Degner, 2008; Nardi, Whittaker, & Schwarz, 2000; Rissanen, Palonen, & Hakkarainen, 2010). Currently, the pursuit of professional magic is embedded in a multifaceted network of expert magicians who engage in a plethora of activities such as conferences, workshops, and online magic forums.

The digital culture has radically transformed the power relations within the professional field of magic. Magic has traditionally been a closed and secretive subculture, where knowledge has only been transferred between individuals who have established a significant level of trust in each other. The necessarily secretive nature of magic implies that magicians were required to closely guard most of their knowledge about their own magic tricks. Although access to this secretive information used to be largely restricted to expert magicians (Rissanen et al., 2014), the digital culture in general and Internet, in particular, have changed the ease with which this information can be accessed. Before TV, videos and the Internet, learning magic relied on a fragile mentor relations and the support of senior experts who held strong gatekeeper positions. These gatekeepers (Bourdieu, 1993a; 1993b) acted as inspectors, evaluating the newcomers' competence and willingness to enter the magicians' profession. For newcomers, this trust was established through sustained efforts and socially recognized achievements. In the past, geographical constraints made it difficult for newcomers to find an adequate mentor, and gaining access to advanced knowledge was a slow process; such individuals depended upon a high level of trust that they gradually obtained through informal networking efforts (Rissanen et al., 2013). In this article, we examine how the digital culture has changed the role of the traditional gatekeeper guarding this secret magical knowledge. The Internet has created a so-called 'amateur pro' culture, where professional knowledge across all domains, including magic, is available to anyone (Gee & Hayes, 2011); this has radically changed the culture of magic and associated power relations. Although sharing complex professional knowing may still require significant effort and motivation, the digital culture has significantly lowered the cognitive cost of sharing one's knowledge (Shirky, 2010). Such sharing provides social recognition of one's accomplishments, and there is a strong motivational incentive for doing so.

In the present article, we examine the effect of the emerging digital culture on professional pursuit of magic. We interviewed highly regarded Finnish magicians to explore how the digital culture has changed their professional pursuits. We examined their reflections on the changes that have modified the processes of becoming a professional magician in different areas. The research questions guiding our investigation are as follows:

- How has the digital culture changed the role of the traditional gatekeeper, whose task it was to guard secret knowledge?
- How have online magic tutorials changed the way new magic tricks can be learnt, and what are their limitations?
- How has the digital culture changed the entrepreneurial activity of magicians representing different generations?

Methods

Participants and the context

We used four bodies of dataset to analyse how the digital culture has transformed the culture of professional magicians. Firstly, the social networking questionnaire was administered to 120/148 well-known Finnish magicians and other influential background people (response rate: 81%; age distribution: 17–86 years) (Rissanen et al., 2010). Secondly, on the basis of the social network data, we identified 16 professional magicians as subjects for semi-structured thematic interviews focused on the effects of digital technological transformations not addressed in our earlier published studies (Rissanen et al., 2013; Rissanen et al., 2014). Thirdly, we carried out supplementary interviews on 10 of the 16 previously interviewed individuals since the first round did not provide sufficiently detailed information. All interviews were analyses as one integrated dataset. Fourthly, 16 magicians were sent a questionnaire about how they currently use digital technologies, but since one respondent who had

ended his career as a magician data from this participant was excluded.

Figure 1 presents a social network graph representing the social recognition of magic expertise; the participants selected for the interviews to represent different generations are marked by coloured nodes. The magicians' peer evaluations were used to create indicators for nominating prominent magicians (i.e., number of peers recognizing their professional accomplishments). The analyses indicated that social recognition was not correlated with age. Most of the magicians were males. We, therefore, decided to include two female magicians in the interview sample to compensate for the gender imbalance. Although one of the interviewees was somewhat peripherally located in Figure 1, the magician was selected because of his or her "rising star" status in the industry. The overall sample of participants was selected for analysis because the interviewees were earning a living as highly regarded professionals in the field. The interviewees represented different generations: one was born in the 1940s, and the others were born in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. In order to protect participants' anonymity (M1–M16), some of the information (e.g., gender) is not reported in the article. The interviews were carried out in Finnish, and the Finnish authors assumed responsibility for analysing the qualitative data.

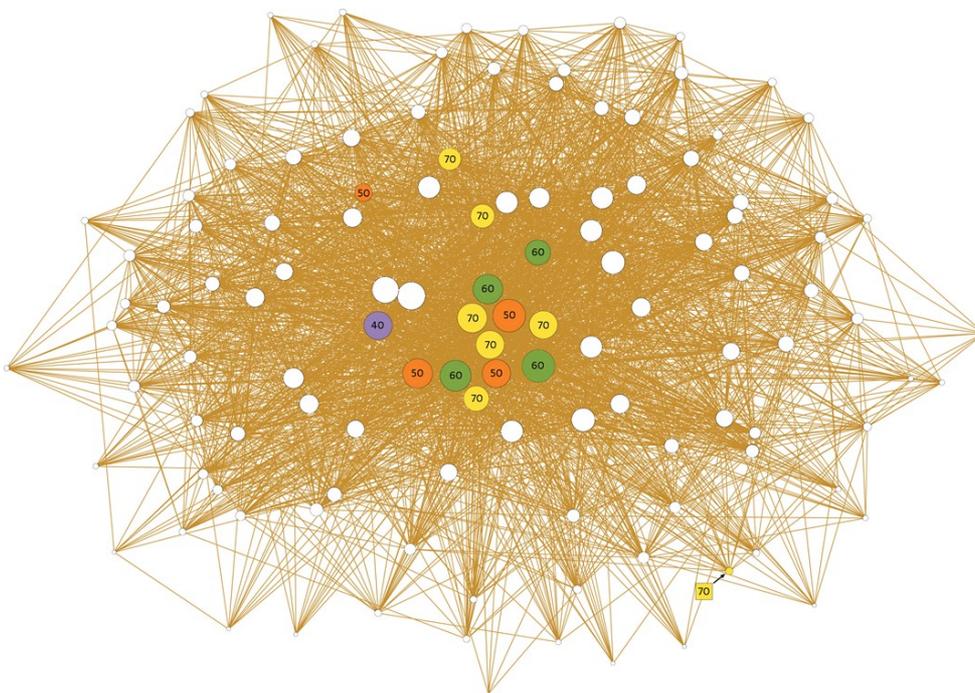


Figure 1. *Social network graph detailing social recognition of magical expertise (n=120).*

The size of the nodes was determined according to the degree of regarded professional recognition. White nodes represent a magician working in the field (n=104), and coloured nodes represent highly regarded participants (n=16) selected for interviews according to the different decades (1940s–1970s) in which they were born (1940s: lilac; 1950s: orange; 1960s: green; 1970s: yellow).

Data acquisition and analysis

Various aspects of the magicians' professional expertise were examined through the semi-structured interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The interview was designed to address the participants' ways of experiencing technological, social and cultural

changes in the magical field as well as their use of the Internet. We addressed nine main themes considered to be relevant for assessing the transformation of the culture of the professional pursuit of magic: (1) beginning a career as a magician, (2) the nature of the magical performances, (3) respecting the magician's profession, (4) facing the professional challenges, (5) magic as a profession, (6) the emergence of magical societies, (7) entrepreneurial issues, (8) the role of digital culture and (9) anticipated future of the field. The length of the interviews ranged from 57 minutes to three hours and 37 minutes. The length of all of the interviews together was 41 hours and 28 minutes.

The transcribed interview data were qualitatively analysed using the ATLAS.ti 6.2 program (see www.atlasti.com). The program allows transcribed interview text to be presented in one column, which facilitates identifying and marking qualitatively different text segments. The coding of each text segment is presented in another column. Initially, the interviews were read several times to get an overview of the central contents and themes. Subsequently, the data were analysed to find common themes and distinguishing features in accordance with the data-driven approach (Frank, 1995). The analysis was partially data-driven and partially theory-informed in nature.

Categorisation of the data was conducted independently by two coders who repeatedly met, compared observations and resolved disagreements. Next, the text segments relevant to the purposes of the present investigation were categorized into the same hermeneutic category to exclude irrelevant material, such as detailed personal recollections of one's career. On the basis of the coders' mutual discussions, the data were categorized according to three main themes: (1) cultural changes, (2) digital culture, and (3) entrepreneurial transformations. Investigating changes in the culture of professional magic (1) emerged themes related to gatekeeping and restricted knowledge closely related to Bourdieu's field theory. Digitalization was connected with the emergence of knowledge sharing culture. The development of digital culture (2) broke importance of gatekeeping and knowledge control because formerly secret knowledge has become available to everybody.

Each category was analysed in detail to identify sub-themes. Interesting observations occurring during the analysis were documented in the associated to new ATLAS.ti codes. Finally, the data were screened for quotations and compressed descriptions regarding various aspects of the magicians' activities. The quotations were selected at research meetings to accurately describe the findings by using the participants' own words. Table 1 provides an example for qualitative analysis of the data regarding gatekeeping and knowledge control.

Table 1.
An example of categorizing gatekeeping related themes.

	<i>Data excerpt</i>	<i>Compressed content</i>	<i>Subordinate categories</i>	<i>Superordinate category</i>	<i>Main category</i>
Theme 1. Cultural changes	Yes it was quite a difficult situation, when there was no place where you could receive instruction and there was not Internet in those days. When the books were read, it was a difficult stage to get forward.	Difficulty of getting information about magic.	The limited availability of professional material.	Gatekeeping resulted to restricted access to magical materials and information.	The connections between Bourdieu's field theory and the digital culture.
	Then it was also so, that no magic tricks and gadgets were sold to you until you became somehow known, that everyone knew that you are a magician as a hobby.	The gadgets and tricks were only sold to known newcomers.	Information restricted to trusted newcomers.		
	If you started by calling xxx and tried to order Chinese Rings, he didn't sell them to you. You had to be a hobbyist for some time to be able to buy some of these fine, better tricks.	Newcomers have to indicate serious hobbyism for getting better tricks.	Controlling newcomers level of interest and commitment.		
	He didn't send the Joker or the magic trick when you tried to order something. He could even say that this trick is not sold to amateurs.	Certain tricks were not sold to amateurs.			
Theme 2. Digital culture	After the YouTube became available, you can find anything there if you hit the right search terms. This has created an illusion, that knowing is the same as being able to perform tricks. When you know some secrets, of course does not imply you can perform them. But gaining knowledge and information is much faster than in the old days.	The easiness of getting information from YouTube. Confusion between knowing and competence. The relation between the books and video.	Accessing knowledge and instruments became easier.	The digital culture resulted to free distribution of magical knowledge and knowhow.	
	The magician ship somewhat loses its glamour or mysteriousness, when all the information about magic and tricks are so easily available, and it doesn't require much efforts and trouble. You just check on YouTube, and there are all the magicians in the whole world. In the old days, you had to do a lot of hard work before you could reach at least some unstable, shaking VHS-video, or when a magician performed on TV, we waited weeks before we could see it.	The magical knowledge is easily available on the Internet. It used to be necessary to do tremendous amount of work for finding relevant information.	Magical information spreads freely after the emergence of internet. The role of YouTube in finding secrets.		
	In principle, anyone can find any trick on YouTube and maybe even find a hundred versions. He can watch it so many times that it (secret) somehow opens up. Earlier this was impossible, we had no chance of getting information about the tricks at all.	The easiness of discovering the secrets of any trick.			

All of the targeted participants (n=15/16) responded to the questionnaire aimed at examining the role of digital technology and culture in the professional activities. One professional magician had ended his career as a magician and was therefore

excluded from the analysis. The magicians were sent an e-mail asking them to answer the Google Form questionnaire online. The questionnaire included two main themes: First, the respondents were asked to assess the significance that digital technology and associated applications had in their work as professional magicians. The respondents could choose one or more of six possibilities, including (1) finding information about magic, (2) becoming familiar with the work of other magicians, (3) improving their own performance, (4) improved marketing or sharing of performances with the audience, (5) creating novelty or (6) no particular significance. This section included 20 items. Second, they were asked to assess the level of intensity of engaging in different types of digitally mediated activities in their professional lives. This section included 13 items addressing various digital applications, such as e-mail, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. Each item required assessment of use on a seven-step scale: (1) never, (2) once or twice per year, (3) monthly, (4) weekly, (5) daily, (6) many times per day and (7) continuously.

Results

The results section is organized as follows: Firstly, we explore how digitalization has affected ways of transmitting magical knowledge and especially examine the changing role of gatekeeping in the professional pursuit of magic. Secondly, we examine how online tutorials have changed the learning of magic competences. Thirdly, we analyse how the transformed environment has affected the magicians' entrepreneurial activities.

How has digital culture changed the role of the traditional gatekeeper?

We examined the effect of the digital culture on professional practices by asking the interviewees to reflect on the corresponding themes included in the self-reporting questionnaire ($n=15$). Our sample represents several generations of magicians. Between 1970 and 2016, the most important sources of professional information were obtained from books, TV, videos, DVDs, PC programs, mobile devices, the Internet and associated digital applications. The technological changes followed each other in 10- to 20-year periods, and the magicians were forced to adjust to the socio-technological infrastructure changes in their professional activity. Figure 2 relates to the interviewees magic careers with digital transformations in the field.

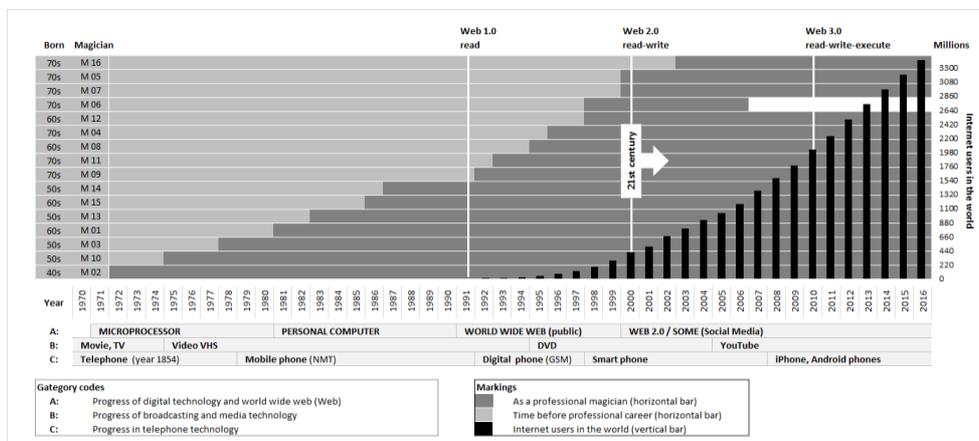


Figure 2. *Relations between professional careers of the interviewed magicians and technological advances from 1970 to 2016 (ICT Lounge, 2016; Internet Live Stats, 2016; Rissanen et al., 2013).*

Our analysis revealed that the emergence of books, TV, videos, DVDs, and social media significantly affected ways of transmitting professional knowledge and documenting and sharing magical performances. The emergence of video-based culture, which was followed by DVD technology in the following decade, replaced the role of books as the main pathway for learning about magic tricks and performance culture. Magicians from younger generations have been socialized to work through TV, DVDs and Internet applications, such as YouTube, from the very beginning of their careers. In the past, most magicians solved problems by discussing them personally with other magicians or through engaging in critical self-reflection. Currently, the Internet is considered to be the most important means of finding information ($n=15/15$), getting to know the work of others ($n=14/15$), marketing and sharing performances ($n=14/15$), sharing one's own performances ($n=12/15$) and creating new tricks ($n=10/15$).

The digital transformation entailed radical changes in gatekeeping practices. In the past (up to 1980s), the best-known magicians and magic associations (e.g., the Finnish Magic Circle) acted as gatekeepers in terms of deciding who was allowed to obtain the magicians' secrets, join the associations and participate in their joint meetings. Gatekeeping enabled the established magicians to protect their secrets and carefully select collaborating partners and those who got to know the secrets of their tricks:

I was trying to subscribe to the Jokeri-magicians' journal, which could not be done without being a "real" magician. Then, Solmu (famous highly regarded magician) recommended me, and I got the journal. Another time, I tried to become a member of the Performing Artists association, but I was too young, probably the youngest ever selected as a member, but that was not possible before Solmu's recommendation, which opened up the possibility of membership for me. (M6, 1970s)

A novice magician had to demonstrate to the society, through his or her own actions, including success in a contest and highly regarded public performances, that he or she was sufficiently suitable and skillful to enter the association's membership. The gatekeepers' control functioned on two levels: control of the individuals and control of the materials. Before the time of the Internet, information was shared piece by piece on the basis of merit:

The older magician told me about the magicians' journal *Genii*, and he told us the address of the journal, and we got in touch with it and were able to order it, noticing that there are hundreds and hundreds of magic stores around the world. It all came in small pieces: one magician told you this, and another showed you that to get one step forward in magic. (M10, 1950s)

In the earlier decades, magic props were sold (or shared) only with those whom the older magicians knew to be real enthusiasts and committed to the practice and cultivation of their competencies. If you wanted to order Chinese Rings, for instance, that was not possible until you had practiced enough and had been a hobby magician for a long time.

No tricks or other gadgets were sold to you until you had been known somehow as a hobby magician. (M7, 1970s)

The digital transformation changed the role of gatekeeping. The power of the former gatekeepers (professional magicians) dwindled because everything was suddenly available via the Internet, and anything could be studied without their approval. In the past, magicians commonly solved problems by discussing them personally with

other magicians or through engaging in mere self-reflection. Today, the Internet has become the primary place from which answers about professional problems and inquiries are sought. Although one can easily acquire information from the Internet, it does not replace the expertise of fellow magicians. For knowledge-sharing and protecting professional secrets, magicians have created trusted partnerships with their colleagues.

I don't ask for advice anymore, but if do I ask, I get the advice—maybe I should ask more. I don't know. There are some colleagues with whom I discuss, maybe one to three people with whom I discuss the techniques and different methods, etc. (M16, 1970s)

The emergence of the digital culture unlocked all of the secrets of the magic profession; this may potentially undermine the very basis of the magical professions. However, there is a very low level of quality control, because all of the tricks and their secrets are available and can be bought online by virtually anyone. Simply buying magic tricks and knowing their secrets does not, however, turn people into professional magicians. Many of the interviewees were worried that, in many cases, practitioners' know-how remains superficial because true mastery of magic requires a deeper understanding that is only gained from the inner circles of the magic community. This only becomes possible by entering the magic associations, participating in international conferences and by establishing confidential contacts and relations with real professionals. While the Internet has made much of the material available to the masses, the gatekeeping structures are in some way still present today, although in a more hidden form.

Online magic tutorials change to learn magic

Learning magic increasingly takes place through digital networks that provide tools and applications for easily appropriating magical know-how. The interviewees strongly highlighted the significance of YouTube for learning magic tricks and for sharing magical competence. All of the respondents used YouTube ($n=15/15$) to learn about other magicians' work. They also commonly used it to find information and marketing ($n=13/15$) as well as to share their performances with new audiences ($n=12/15$). YouTube offers a vast library of magic performances and tutorials that magicians can use to learn new tricks and methods. YouTube provides easy access to vast bodies of information, and many novice magicians use it as an online portal to access magical knowledge. Learning practical aspects of performing magic tricks (i.e., how a trick should be implemented in practice) becomes much easier with YouTube compared to written instructions. Our interviewees were accomplished magicians who had already acquired their expertise before the invention of YouTube. Consequently, they did not talk extensively about personal experiences learning tricks via online tutorials but nevertheless acknowledged the importance of online tutorials for newcomers.

Learning tricks from YouTube has substantially and qualitatively transformed the way magic is learnt. Although the availability of a wide variety of magic tricks on the Internet facilitates learning many aspects of magic activities, the interviewees highlighted that its usage could also lead to more shallow professional competence in terms of recycling ready-made tricks and performances:

And then there is an embarrassing amount of everything available, so you don't know where to start. It was somehow good that at that time there were not so many opportunities, and one had to focus on only a few things. Now there is this fast food phenomenon: right away, to the next and next, which created new challenges. (M5, 1970s)

The vastness of the online resources does not compensate for their lack of quality, and it is often difficult to use the information provided effectively:

Knowing a trick is not the same as mastering it. When a trick is directly taken from the Internet as a whole, it easily becomes a clone rather than one's 'own thing'. A trick should be personal, and self-invented, and it should include your own stamp on it. (M16, 1970s)

The above examination indicates that the digital culture has significantly changed how magic is learnt as well as many other aspects of the professional activity. While heavily inspired by the new possibilities that the digital culture provides, magicians also use traditional media such as books and journals in their professional activity. All of the interviewees still use books to discover information about magic ($n=15/15$), to get to know the work of others ($n=15/15$), to find inspiration for their performances ($n=12/15$) and to create new performances ($n=12/15$). Other print sources were also considered important in creating new performances ($n=12/15$). Magic journals were seen as important for finding information ($n=14/15$) and getting to know about the work of other magicians ($n=13/15$), and in this sense, digital and traditional media complement one another. Many magicians expressed worry that so few books are currently used for studying magic. They felt that when novices move too quickly to DVDs and YouTube for easy access to magical knowledge, professional competencies may not develop, or their development gets truncated. As stated by M16 (1970s), books are more useful, even when read online, because "when using a book, you have to be more creative." A book, whether it is a hard copy or digital, assists in the process of developing new tricks and encourages the reader to reflect on an issue from many perspectives. In M7's view,

If you read something from a book, you have to build a picture in your head yourself, and it may happen that this picture changes from the one which the writer has in mind while writing the text (M7, 1970s).

It is challenging for a novice to manage the huge amount of information that is so easily accessible on the Internet. Where an experienced magician is able to use the Internet to support the continuous development of professional competence, it can be a trap for inexperienced magicians. Just like in any other network store, the ordered item is not, in the field of magic, always as expected or promised:

And of course, if you are a beginner, it will be easier to fool you on the Internet. You see a trick, read the manual, and order it just to see— it wasn't what you were promised. Now I have learned to see what is worth ordering. (M5, 1970s)

The interviews worried that because the readily available professional resources are often not at all curated, they can lead to wider spreading of shallower professional competences. When there is a large selection of tricks available, it is harder to make decisions about how to begin, advance, and create innovative performance programs. Increased autonomy of magicians may lead to aimless jumping around instead of deepening expertise. Limited availability of professional knowing forced practitioners of the field to put tremendous effort for developing their skills and competences.

How has the digital culture changed the magicians' entrepreneurial activity?

The present section addresses the changing role of marketing and visibility in pursuit of professional magic in the digital culture. The results revealed that the technolog-

ically mediated practices were heterogeneous rather than straightforwardly following generational lines of progression. Almost all of the participants use the Internet on a daily basis ($n=12/15$), especially for information seeking. All of the interviewees recognized the importance of the Internet and social media, and they all used email and had their own websites. Everybody had a Facebook profile, but only a few of them actively used it to keep up with contacts, update their statuses or to market themselves. Some of the interviewees had their own personal Facebook pages as well as a separate magician profile, which they used for marketing and branding. Five magicians shared their work and updated their statuses on a weekly basis; seven magicians used YouTube monthly, and eight magicians used it weekly.

Variation in Internet skills and uses within each generation was often bigger than the variation between the generations. Yet, the results revealed that the three youngest magicians included in this study (M5, M7, and M16), who were born in the mid-1970s, took the most advantage of technology. Internet and social media use was reportedly more natural and easy for these younger participants than it was for the older generation. One magician born in the 1970s reported using Facebook and Twitter intensively when making performance contracts. Another talked about his versatile use of web applications:

Yes, I use them all the time. I have a mobile phone with Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, a homepage and an official page, and that is quite enough. I am most active on Facebook, but I also go directly to Twitter when I upload something so that I don't have to put everything in two places. Sometimes I put a funny picture on Instagram, but not very often. (M16, 1970s)

The interviews indicated that using the digital resources was more natural and easy for participants representing the younger generations than it was for the older ones. However, the data indicated that some of the participants representing the older generation were very active on the Internet, whereas some of the younger participants were not. A magician born in the 1940s sees the technology not as a threat, but as an adjunct for the profession:

Digital technology is no threat, from my point of view—rather, I see it as new possibilities. All these technological things have taken things forward and brought new approach to the business. We should still always remember that magicians' skills are mostly, in principle, manipulation. The ability to perform miracles is at such a high level that it cannot be beaten with any kind of technology or electronic gadgets. The skill of performing cannot be replaced with these devices. We must remember that they are servants, not masters. (M2, 1940s)

Another magician from the older generation sees social media as a necessity for the younger generation. He does not consider this to be important for himself because his customers and the amount of engagements he gets have stabilized over his long performance career:

When talking about social media today, if you are on top of your professional activity, you just have to be present in the media. For the younger generations, it is a must. Of course, they have the abilities, as they have grown up with social media. There is a certain difference between the generations in this matter—if you belong to the young generation, I think they all are inside the media. (M10, 1950s)

Interview analysis revealed that the digital culture has transformed all of their entrepreneurial activities. All of the interviewees had a Facebook profile, but only a few of them used it actively to keep up contacts or to market themselves. Some of the interviewees had both personal Facebook pages and a separate magician profile that

they used for marketing and branding. Interviewee M16 reported that advertising has become more challenging, somewhat more aggressive in nature and competition between magicians tighter. One has to continuously keep up people's interest and ensure continuous visibility of one's accomplishments:

Now we have to be on social media all the time and advertise, put up links and share them—that's the way it has changed. It has become more demanding because all the time you have to be thinking and advertising this and that here and there. It has become more complicated—earlier it was simpler and easier. We only had the Internet pages and cards, and that was all. Now you have to do a lot more yourself to keep the interest up and [to keep] people knowing about you. (M16, 1970s)

The magicians reported that they constantly have to be reachable in a way that they did not in the past. If they do not respond to an offer quickly, the customer selects another performer. Because of digital technology, life has gradually become faster and faster. In addition, the magic field is affected by its fragmentation, an increased number of magicians and the fact that there are many other performers, such as stand up comedians and performing musicians, competing for the same performance opportunities:

It has changed a lot. It has become quicker as Internet pages have become even more important. Video has become very important because it shows what kind of things you are able to perform. It has also become more aggressive in the way that the competition uses dubious mediums such as running off at the mouth, for instance, in the media. (M7, 1970s)

YouTube offers the possibility to quickly reach a large audience, and revealing magic tricks online can attract a large number of online visitors. Magicians constantly have to upload new material to remain relevant (e.g., news, pictures or videos of performances), and while Facebook is an important marketing tool, other online forums are equally important, as they increase one's visibility on Google searches (e.g., blogs, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter). Social media enables effective marketing and branding, as the magicians' homemade videos may get a large number of views through YouTube and social media. For example, the Finnish magician and mentalist Jose Ahonen (born in 1979) gained a worldwide audience through social media using one single 1 minute and 49 seconds video clip called *Magic for Dogs*. The aim was to reach 10,000 views for the video. It took less than 24 hours to get 320,000 clicks, more than five million clicks in three days and more than 10 million clicks in one week (Sirén, 2014). Furthermore, Internet services provide meta-information about potential customers that can be used for marketing. For the younger generation, this is a commonplace everyday activity. It is a truly novel phenomenon in the world of magic that a viral YouTube video can almost instantaneously lead to international recognition.

Discussion

We examined how the digital culture has transformed the professional practices of prominent Finnish magicians who represent generations born between the 1940s and 1970s. We used semi-structured interviews and self-reporting questionnaire to explore the Internet's impact on various aspects of professional magic. The emergence of TV, videos, personal computers, DVDs and especially the Internet has considerably changed the professional pursuit of magic. Although all the interviewees were born before the emergence of the digital culture and changes in the associated technologies, these technological advances have significantly affected their professional

work. Simultaneously with technological transformations, the nature of magic performances has changed from stage magic performed with background music to close-up magic and mentalism, both of which involve more improvisation and audience interaction. The rise of the digital culture and associated online resources has transformed the traditional methods of learning magic through personal contacts and reading books. The Internet enables immediate access to extensive information and online tutorials, allowing for the quick spread of ideas, tricks, and performances.

The results confirmed our expectations that practitioners in the field openly share a great deal of their knowledge through video-recorded performances and YouTube videos, which may significantly facilitate newcomers' learning and development. Gatekeepers no longer play as important a role as they used to – a great deal of information and instructions are now easily available on the Internet. Our results revealed that online magic tutorial videos have transformed how magic is learnt, and YouTube videos have drastically transformed the magician's learning experience. In the past, most sleights had to be learnt from books, and describing these complex motor movements through static pictures and text alone was very challenging. The digital culture now allows newcomers to learn magic tricks by watching online video, as well as copy entire magic routines, which greatly facilitates the learning experience.

The digital culture has affected practices of becoming and maintaining membership in the magician's professional community. Newcomers may enter the field by gaining a reputation through their public and online performances without necessarily initially earning the trust and respect of the senior magicians and magic associations. The interviewees reflected on the various ways that magical activity is valued, from the initial efforts of the seminal magicians widening the scope of magical performances and shows to the present Internet-mediated global culture. One example of modern magic is the internationally recognized Finnish magician Janne Raudaskoski's performance of *The Outsider*, which connects techniques from theatre and movies with magic, technology, and clowning.

Professional conditions are related to strategies and negotiations of different interests and therefore are a part of historical change (Brante, 2010). In the digitalized field of professional magicians, there appear to be new types of struggles of recognition and associated symbolic capital. Some of the old-timers felt that the easy access of professional knowledge in the digital culture might lead to shallower professional competencies. Many of the interviewees highlighted risks of openly sharing magical knowledge; it may lead to underdeveloped performances and shows. The complete availability of magic knowledge may harm the excitement of magic shows and lead to excessive copying of tricks and performances. There are, however, no shortcuts to become a respected professional magician. Technical skills and the laws of performance have remained the same, and they form the indispensable basis of becoming a professional magician. Many veteran magicians consider the open mode of knowledge sharing to be at odds with an artistic ethos valuing hard work, individual initiative and originality in the appropriation of tradition. According to such views, the accelerated digital circulation of magicians' secrets may ultimately imperil the practice of magic itself (Jones, 2011).

Because the Internet involves infinite amounts of potentially relevant information, it is challenging to find material suitable for developing one's own creative performances. The interviewees' skepticism regarding the value of digital culture and associated capabilities of junior magicians may at least partially reflect their efforts of demarcating professional boundaries. According to Lamont and Wiseman (1999), the dangers of revealing secrets on the Internet are easily exaggerated, as the methods have also been exposed in books and television.

Although digitalization has radically altered the secretive culture of professional magic, the magic community still intends to protect intellectual property rights of professional magicians (Loshin, 2010). Although it is acceptable to share and adapt a trick developed by a fellow magician, copying another magician performative style

(or whole performance programs) is considered inappropriate. Although magicians freely share basic and less advanced tricks, truly innovative and advanced material used by top performers is usually shared through informal channels. This indicates that advanced professional knowledge in the field is still protected. The innovative magicians put systematic effort into improving the new tricks they learn and adapting them to fit their personal style of performance. In many cases, professional magicians keep a novel trick or performance as an exclusive part of their performance repertoire and share the secret with colleagues only after personally capitalizing on it for a while. It follows that many mechanisms of professional cultures, such as proprietary knowledge, are still prevailing in the field of magic.

Furthermore, the interviewees reported tailoring their performances according to the audience and closely interacting with them. The digital culture opened up new channels for marketing their activities and branding themselves as representatives of certain magic styles. They could build their fame through constant publicity on social media. In this more competitive environment, a magician must always be reachable. The technological developments have also affected the professional magicians' entrepreneurial activities in terms of making their practices visible through social media and the Internet, and by allowing them to keep in contact with their audiences. The gatekeepers, whose position in the field of magic has already been widely established, were able to limit admission to the magicians' club earlier on, but today, their influence has changed and become largely redundant mainly because of the Internet.

Conclusions

Reaching professional level requires years of professional training and acquisition of a multifaceted body of cognitive, motoric, social, and performance-related know-how. In this regard, magic shares important characteristics with other fields of creative professional expertise. However, magic diverges from many other fields of creative work in that it entirely relies on informal cultivation of professional competence without formal education or legislated credentials.

The professional community of magic relies on secret knowledge that has been challenged by information made available on the Internet. Magical associations guarded key secret, or at least esoteric knowledge of the field. Traditionally, the knowledge monopoly of established magicians functioned to control access to the field and advanced magical know-how. The digital transformations has made it much more difficult to gatekeeping and secure the "tricks of the trade." The digitalization and the Internet may have undermined the very basis of professions.

Our results also illustrate that the professional communities and magical networks still play an important role in the development of professional competences. YouTube alone does not offer the beginner answers to the questions of where to start, and what to learn next. It does not provide novices the pedagogical key to cultivate professional competencies in magic and growing up to be members of the magic community. Although YouTube enables access to magic tricks and their secrets, it does not offer a comprehensive picture about what it takes to be a professional magician, which is much more than simply learning the tricks and the secrets. Although the interviewees felt that the digital culture provided many new possibilities, they were also concerned about easy access to this knowledge, the ill-structured nature of information repositories and the opportunities for building virtual reputations too quickly. The availability of a wide variety of magic tricks on the Internet will not necessarily deepen the magical know-how without deliberate training and support from expert colleagues (Rissanen et al., 2013). Although the ways of learning, and the places of performances changed, the peer support among the magicians still remains. This is an important finding that may be interesting for other professional fields as well.

The digital transformation has increased national and international visibility of magic and valuing it as an art form. There has been a radical shift from local experiences to continuous online presence. Many high profile magic shows attract huge audiences that follow performances in real-time and shared their expectations. Finnish magicians reach international audiences in a way that was not possible in the past. Magic phenomena attract a great deal of curiosity at the age on uncertainty and rapid societal changes that are hard for anyone to understand. Branding and high-profile visibility may be seen as efforts of the magical community to increase its symbolic capital and improve societal valuation of professional work in the area. Rather than undermining the magic profession, the digital transformation appears to strengthen and expand the field. After giving up tight gatekeeping the magical community has attracted many new practitioners as well as serious hobbyists and active followers.

Limitations of the study

The limitation of the present article was that we examined the effects of digital transformations within only one creative occupation, in other words, professional magic. The digital transformation are likely to have had similar impact on other creative professionals, such as writers, visual artists, actors, performing musicians, dancers, stand-up comedians, and directors. The present investigation involved interviewing a relatively small number of magicians. Yet the professional positions of the interviewees as the most highly regarded magicians were socially validated by relying on peer recognition of practitioners of the Finnish magical network. Because the field of magic is international, we do not have any reason to assume that interviewing only Finnish practitioners would have affected the results. The effects of digital transformations were analysed by relying on the participants' retrospective reflections during the interviews. Overall, the interviews were extensive and provided content-rich material about various changes within the field. The interviewees represented different generations of magicians; this allowed accounting socio-historical transformations relevant for the emergence of audio-visual TV and video as well as subsequent digital culture. The older magicians had witnessed and also reflecting on radical transformations of the field across their lifespan whereas the younger ones necessarily had a historically more limited view and appeared to take the digital culture more as a given reality. Although more systematic ethnographic studies of professional practices in the field of magic would be useful, we maintain that the present data provided valuable scientific data regarding the effects of digitalization on the field of magic.

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