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Editorial: Professions and Professionalism in Market-Driven Societies

Social, political and economic transformations in contemporary society create instabilities, ambiguities, and uncertainties that bring significant challenges to professionals, professional groups, professionalization processes, and professionalism. Social notions, institutionalized during industrial capitalism, are now put in question. That is the case for the concept of a welfare state; the regulatory role of the nation-states, the dominant processes of work rationalization and control that along with the intrusion of market and management narratives in the structuring of societies, challenge the traditional role, power, and autonomy that professional groups had in the society.

Eliot Freidson (2001) is among the authors who claim that professional values are—and should be—autonomous from the market and bureaucratic-administrative structures, as a condition to assure the quality of knowledge and similar conditions of access to services. However, it is no longer possible to think about work and professions without taking into account the current global context of market expansion into different dimensions of individual and collective everyday life. The states' roles, particularly welfare governance, are changing accordingly (Kuhlmann, 2006), as are work models that are increasingly shaped by entrepreneurial and network-based values aiming at emancipating individuals from organizational control. Not surprisingly, such competing logics are likely transposed to individuals, therefore affecting how they perceive and act as users and professionals (Ward, 2012).

The way these macro-structural changes affect professional groups, professionals and professionalism, has been a core concern for the sociology of professions in more recent years (Brock, Leblebici, & Muzio, 2014; Carvalho, 2014; Correia, 2013; Evans, 2016; Noordegraaf, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2016; Skelcher & Smith, 2015; Kuhlmann et al., 2013). This special issue intends to further contribute to the discussion of market-driven societies through the lens of the sociology of professions.

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Market-driven societies

In contemporary societies, there is an institutionalized and hegemonic idea that the traditional model of state organization based on welfare principles is no longer capable of creating solutions to face the socio-political problems and conflicts generated by recent transformations in capitalist and global economies (Carvalho & Santiago, 2016b; Clarke & Newman, 1997; Offe, 2018). As a consequence, different and sometimes inter-related proposals have been presented, discussed, and implemented to restructure the welfare state.

Traditional welfare state interventions are now presented as linked to economic inefficiency, lack of innovation, dependency on professionals' power, lack of individual freedom to make informed choices, the/a "fat and big state" and irrationalities

in cost-benefits of public services (Carvalho & Santiago, 2016b). To overcome these disadvantages, several proposals have emerged, relying mainly on the attempts to transfer the managerial assumptions and devices from the capitalist enterprise to public systems and institutions. This transference resulted in attempts to privatize some public institutions, specifically in the Anglo-Saxon context in the 1970s, leading to the transfer of its activities from the public to the market realm. However, other transformations were also tested that, although not implying privatization, promoted quasi-market mechanisms in the public sector (Exworthy, Powell, & Mohan, 1999; Le Grand, 1991). Mechanisms such as separating providers from purchasers, emphasizing business-like accountability systems, concentrating policy and strategic power at the top of organizations, and promoting entrepreneurial cultures represented attempts to rule public systems under private models logic. These mechanisms are included in New Public Management (NPM) tendencies (Carvalho & Santiago, 2016b; Deem, Hilliard & Reed, 2007; Pollit & Boukaert, 2000).

The way NPM has been conceptualized and interpreted is not consensual. While some look at privatization and marketization as merely an economic and management response to the welfare state “crisis,” based on efficiency and cost concerns (Bartlett & Le Grand, 1993; Hood, 1995; Le Grand, 1991), others interpret it as part of a specific political agenda intending to restrict the economic, administrative and social roles of the state (Carvalho & Santiago, 2016b; Collyer, 2003). In this perspective, privatization and marketization are assumed as instruments of an ideological project aiming to promote the state disengagement from the public sector (Dardot & Laval, 2009). In overall terms, market and quasi-market mechanisms are said to induce transformations in the way society and different social and professional agents make use of public services—from a “public space” to a “private like space” of activities constructed outside the traditional values of the welfare state. In this context, market mechanisms have an increasingly relevant role in the provision, steering and organization, not only of private for-profit organizations but also in private and non-profit organizations. These general tendencies promoted by policy reforms and supported by technical innovations and globalization are said to deeply transform both the environment of institutions and professional work.

The new social and institutional order is presented as one of the major challenges to professionals and to professionalism in current times. New forms of professional development involving increasing flexibility, mobility, and individualization have been developed (Kuhlmann & Saks, 2008) along with the imposition of new cultural values and professional practices, compelling professional groups to pursue competitive and enterprising modes of conduct and to adopt more “business-like” practices (Boyce, 2008; Fournier, 1999). The traditional *professional (self) regulation* based on voluntary activities carried out by professional bodies is increasingly substituted by *market regulation*, sustained in competition principles and performance evaluation measures aligned with standardized professional practices.

Recurrent in the literature is the discussion on the effects and challenges that these market-oriented reforms, both at the system and institutional levels, have on professionals’ core values and norms and on their professional practices. Professionalism can be defined, according to Evetts (2003), as a discourse consisting of a set of normative values and identities. But it can also be conceptualized, according to Fournier (1999, 2000), based in the Foucaultian (1991) notion of governmentality, as a mechanism of control of work and workers. In other words, professionalism can be interpreted as a form of self-discipline for employees (Fournier, 2000). The objective is to self-regulate the subject. In this perspective, market-oriented reforms may change professionals’ behaviour by affecting their autonomous subjectivity (Freidson, 2001).

Simultaneously, there is also a dominant idea that professional power is being diluted, currently analyzed in the scientific literature under the de-professionalization thesis (Clark, 2005). However, social dynamics are not linear, nor are they unequivocal regarding this issue. Dimensions such as the increase in the level of education and training, the expansion of professional characteristics to groups that

traditionally did not have them, and the way professional frontiers are negotiated to maintain traditional borders, are nothing more than a few examples of the complex dynamics of presence in professionals groups. Furthermore, the empirical analyses of these changes are not so linear in their conclusions and tend to defend the existence of hybrid forms and mechanisms translated in the coexistence of different institutional logics (Bruckmann & Carvalho, 2018; Noordegraaf, 2007; 2015).

Contributions to the sociology of professions have already highlighted some market-driven policies and practices in different countries (Bonnin & Ruggunan, 2016; Korableva, 2014) and professional groups (Carvalho, 2011; Carvalho & Santiago, 2016a; Correia, 2013; Correia & Denis, 2016; Mausehagen & Smeby, 2016; Schnell, 2015). Building on this evidence, this special issue aims to provide a comprehensive approach to the interplay between professions and the market.

Market influences in the professional world

The collection of articles in this special issue aims to broaden the theoretical and empirical understanding of the market in the world of professions. The analyses show that the market-professions relationship is a global phenomenon that crosses different regulatory models and historical trajectories of professionalization, but also that renewed insights are necessary due to differences in processes and outcomes of professionalization. Indeed, the market—defined as a competing, for-profit-driven rationale apart from the bureaucracy and the professions—is making itself visible in professions in various ways: in training and workplace settings, structurally in occupational values and individually in professionals' agency, and more and more in regulated professional groups.

The studies also show that competition and the for-profit-driven rationale is increasingly present in the governance of public institutions, and thus that the dichotomous view of the public-private boundary is blurring. Increasingly, state-owned and subsidized institutions look for financial self-sustainability, compete for limited resources, and sustain on public-private relationships with their operations.

The studies look specifically to the education sector, journalism and advocacy, and empirical research reports on Denmark, Portugal, and Germany. The underlying argument that crosses all studies is that professions deeply embed in concrete realities. Therefore, the operationalization of key concepts (e.g., professionalism and professionalization) needs to be grounded in and build on specific contexts. The debate traditionally considers categories linked to broad specific regulatory models (e.g., the Anglo-American model, the Continental European model, the Russian model) (Larson, 2018; Saks, 2015; Sciulli, 2005; Torstendahl & Burrage, 1990). Recently, the literature is increasingly pointing to organization-driven differences (Reed, 2005; Thomas & Hewitt, 2011).

This analytical displacement towards organizational settings, which is often called the *neo-institutionalism turn*, highlights the living nature of organizations in which bureaucratic, professional and market logics stand closely together. Macro-micro relationships then need reconsideration, and the classical structure-action dichotomy that has to a large extent prevailed in the sociology of professions is called into question (Correia, 2017).

Methodologically, the studies focus exclusively on qualitative approaches (e.g., interviews, focus groups, discussion panels, literature reviews, and ethnographic observations), which is likely to provide a comprehensive, in-depth analysis of the theme.

Three of the articles provide different yet complementary insights into the education sector. Samuelsson reviews the literature on teacher collegiality to better frame the increasing influence of the market on teachers' workplace settings and professional cultures. The argument derives from the overall trend of opening public

administration to governance mechanisms and principles of New Public Management (NPM). The link of NPM-driven reforms and the market in the education sector is detailed, as well as in the analysis by Stoleroff and Vicente, which generally speaks to the loss of employment security, increased competition among professionals and institutions, and changing practices in teaching cultures towards less collaboration and more individualism.

The question Samuelsson raises is how to make sense theoretically of teacher collegiality in empirical realities increasingly complicated by seemingly contradictory forces: collaborative practices on the one hand, and competition and accountability on the other. The answer lies in treating collegiality as a *boundary object*, which basically means that bureaucracy, professionalism and the market are adaptive rather than static analytical categories, thus embracing collegiality in specific institutional logics. The review of studies shows the extent to which collegiality articulates with in-market competition, strengthened hierarchical procedures and shared learning, insofar as new challenges are posed to work models, occupational values and solidarity.

These general trends are given greater visibility in the articles authored by Duch, and Stoleroff and Vicente who conducted empirical studies on the education sector in Denmark and Portugal, respectively.

Duch focuses on changes in the training program of teachers, in particular, the effects on teachers' transition from training to the workplace. The market is made visible in the analysis through the governance of these programs, which were once state-regulated and now are under the influence of vocational colleges. Despite vocational colleges continuing in the public sphere, the training programs have become more decentralized and dependent on the views of the in-charge managers of vocational colleges. Additionally, private stakeholders increasingly play a role in the activity of vocational colleges, hence the growth of public-private relationships in the provision of public services.

Theoretically speaking, the article fosters debates on changing professionalism, which is empirically explored through whether and how managers' views of organizational professionalism influence teachers' occupational professionalism. The contribution to the debate is three-fold. First, it highlights the extent to which the market is making itself visible in professions during preliminary stages of occupational socialization, even before professionals enter the labour market. Therefore, changes in teachers' occupational professionalism are likely to be taking place from within the profession. Second, the evidence also uncovers differences in training models, which highlights the trend of decentralization and the importance of in-charge managers of vocational schools in setting training programs. In this sense, more and more teachers' occupational professionalism comprises different values and pedagogic skills. Third, these structural changes do not necessarily affect teachers' individual constructions of professionalism in similar ways. Therefore, it is necessary to look closer at the interplay between professionals' individual trajectories and occupational values. By giving professionals a more active status, the analyses more likely reveal different ways by which occupational and organizational professionalism relate to each other.

Stoleroff and Vicente focus on academics in higher education institutions, in particular, the discourses of union representatives and academics on performance assessment models for academics. Theoretically speaking, the study aligns with the overall argumentation by Samuelsson regarding New Public Management and blurred public-private boundaries. The aim is to understand how more traditional collegial governance models of higher education institutions coexist with the reinforced managerial-bureaucratic model in the discourses of some of the players.

As for the main results, the institutional position of unions accepts the need for performance assessment in higher education institutions out of respect for broad principles of competition and meritocracy. However, unions are critical of the aim,

criteria, and procedures of assessment models. The discourse analysis of union representatives was done in two moments to capture possible variations in time. In fact, the discourses reveal growing conformity or acceptance of the assessment models set in place. A similar ambivalence is found in academics' discourses. One possible explanation is that the implementation of performance models did not fulfil its initial goals, hence leading to professionals' accommodation. Another possible explanation is that academics routinized the new procedures in their daily practice, hence leading to deeper interconnections between collegiality and managerialism.

Next, Schnell provides a comprehensive approach to journalism built on previous empirical studies in Germany. The added value of the analysis crosses national borders, as it regards more broadly how professionalism and professionalization of journalism interconnect with the public interest, democracy, and the market economy.

The article also offers a historical perspective of the differences and intersections between the Anglo-American and Continental European models of the professionalization of journalism, and the extent to which in different countries these models have turned out differently. One important argument is that the creation and development of journalism were built and continues to build on tensions between public duty and market-oriented principles.

The influence of the market on the analysis is made visible in four ways. The first is the global growth of the media economy and the influence of international-level corporations on journalism. The second is the spread of the liberal scope of the Anglo-American model of professionalism of journalism to Continental Europe, where traditionally the activity was more corporative. The third is competition among journalists in the labour market as forms of social closure did not narrow down diverse trajectories and training. The fourth is the digital era, in which journalism is increasingly made accountable to technology, different industries, and more demanding participating audiences.

In sum, the professionalization of journalism, unlike other professional groups, has never resulted in effective strategies of social closure regardless of the defence of occupational values of public service, autonomy, and ethics. This distinctive trait of journalism reflects, on the one hand, the importance of ideals of freedom and the adaptive nature of the practice. On the other hand, it reflects structural constraints imposed by the global economy in control of the media and by the new roles of active consumers/citizens.

Lastly, Santos provides an analysis of the legal sector in Portugal. The focus is on young lawyers' views of professionalism, notably the cross between organizational dynamics and high exposure to competition. The provocation is patent right in the title: the ideal of unstoppable workers. One key point of the analysis is to trace the construction of lawyers' professionalism through different instances of occupational socialization. Another key point of the analysis is to better understand the influence of workplace contexts in lawyers' occupational values given the diversity of labour settings and resources at their disposal.

Similar to the previous empirical studies, the relevance of the analysis is beyond national borders. In this case, the core argument builds on the overall influence of the market on the professions and the states: not only is advocacy the archetype of the liberal profession in Portugal and in many other countries, but also the internationalization and financialization of the economy makes lawyers a centrepiece in the functioning of modern states (e.g., for the defence of citizens' rights, for the functioning of public-private relationships, for the governance of public administration, for the definition of social policies).

The results detail the processes through which lawyers are socialized in organizational professionalism, including how to meet clients' needs and better respond to professional-based hierarchical relationships in workplace settings. Aligned with the previous studies of this collection, tensions between forms of individual and institutional competition stand out for lawyers, as well as forms of collaboration.

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