

Julia Evetts

Similarities in Contexts and Theorizing: Professionalism and Inequality

Abstract: For a long time sociologists of professions have differentiated Anglo-American and European contexts for professional work. The article will address this distinction and argue that processes of convergence now render such differences somewhat obsolete except in historical accounts. In addition the convergence of professional systems and of regulatory states is also generating new inequalities both between professional groups themselves as well as within the organizations in which practitioners work.

The article will examine convergences and inequalities at the macro level. Aspects to be considered include the changing role of the nation-state, the internationalization of markets, the increased significance of the work organization and the different logics of professionalism. The extent of convergence and continuing divergences will be explored and social inequalities indicated. Macro level processes and procedures including the growth of 'hybrid' organizations and new forms of managerialism can constitute new types of inequality and forms of stratification both within and between professions. The historical starting points within Europe, and nation-state differences in professional systems, make convergences and inequalities both highly complex and extremely variable.

Keywords: professionalism, inequalities, nation-states, markets, organizations, logics.

Julia Evetts
School of
Sociology and
Social Policy,
University of
Nottingham

Contact:
School of
Sociology and
Social Policy,
Law and Social
Sciences Building,
University Park,
Nottingham NG7
2RD
Julia.evetts@nottingham.ac.uk

For a long time, sociologists of professions have differentiated Anglo-American and European contexts for professional work. For example in 1990 Collins (p. 98) was able to distinguish 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Continental' modes of professionalism. In Continental modes the state was the main actor while in the Anglo-Saxon model self-employed practitioners had freedom to control work conditions. The paper addresses this distinction and argues that similarities in theorizing are now more important than the different starting points. In previous papers (see Svensson and Evetts, 2010 and 2003) it has been argued that convergence of theorizing is now more significant in the intellectual field of sociology of professions.

In addition the similarities in theorizing of professional systems and of regulatory states are also generating new inequalities both between professional groups themselves as well as within the organizations in which practitioners work. Macro level processes and procedures including the growth of 'hybrid' organ-

Received:
26 April 2012

Accepted:
4 November
2012

izations and new forms of managerialism can constitute new types of inequality, competition and forms of stratification both within and between professions.

The paper examines the theoretical similarities in contexts and inequalities at the macro level. The first section begins by examining the historical reasons for emphasizing the differences between analysis of professions in Continental Europe in contrast to Anglo-American societies. It continues by considering the growing similarities in contexts and aspects to be considered include the changing role of the state and regulation; the influence of markets, managerialism and consumerism; the increased significance of work organizations; and professionalism as a discourse and ideology. The second section of the paper considers the forms of inequality both between professional groups themselves and the forms of competition and stratification developing within professions as well as in organizations in which practitioners work.

The paper argues that the traditional historical differences between Anglo-American and Continental European systems of professions are mostly being superseded by structures and processes, questions, issues and concerns which are common to all social systems. The structures and processes producing inequalities, old and new, are illustrations of issues common to all societies.

Similarities in contexts and theorizing

Historical reasons for theorizing the differences

There have been fundamental historical reasons for different concepts, theories and analyses of professions in Continental European societies (particularly Germany and Scandinavian countries) in contrast to Anglo-American societies (see Svensson and Evetts, 2010; Svensson and Evetts, 2003). The Continental functional proximity between state government bureaucracies, public state universities and professions created a minority of free professions ('freie Berufen' and 'professions liberals'), and favoured sociology of class and organization to the disadvantage of sociology of professions (Burrage, 1990). The Anglo-American less centralized state governments, private or at least relatively independent universities and free professions, on the other hand, created a majority of market-related professions and an elaborated sociology of professions, which has had strong impact worldwide.

Continental and Scandinavian professionalism has been more closely connected to the growth of the state and to state bureaucracies, where university-educated officials executed public authority legitimized by their credentialing, the bureaucratic legalistic hierarchy, and their aristocratic or elite status, where trust is related to the delegated legal authority and legitimacy is parallel to professional knowledge and competence. Government-regulated training and examination of civil servants became a model also for academic occupations outside the civil service, and guild-like apprenticeship systems were confined to skilled occupations. Close cooperation emerged between professional associations and government bureaucracies favouring the professionalization from above of a number of academic occupations (McClelland, 1990).

In comparison the decentralized Anglo-American state government and system of higher education favoured a guild-like and market related development of

professions, where the professional association or institution became more in charge of education, examination and licensing. The Anglo-American model or ideal type has been characterized by the freedom of self-employed practitioners operating in a market for services to clients and related to a self-regulated professional association, controlling a monopoly and creating prestige and trust, which leaves more responsibility to citizens and clients.

These two different status structure models have been labelled «bureaucratic office-holders», and «licensed market-monopolizers», respectively (Collins, 1990, p. 18). Caricatured and polarized, they could also be phrased as «performance of legal functions to the benefit of all» versus «selling qualitative services to the best price». In terms of analytical logics, the Continental affinity between state government, state universities and professions resulted in close connections between the logic of bureaucracy or hierarchy and the logic of professionalism or occupational control, and distant connections with the logic of market or customers' freedom to choose (Freidson, 2001). On the other hand, the Anglo-American affinity between professions and market, and distant connections with state bureaucracy and universities, gave instead close connections between the logic of market and the logic of professionalism.

The changing role of states

The role of the nation-state has always been critical in theorizing about professions and, in particular, differentiating between Anglo-American and European systems of professions (Burrage and Torstendahl, 1990a and b). The role of the nation-state had been seen to be paramount: states had granted legitimacy, for example, by licensing professional activity, setting standards of practice and regulation, acting as guarantor of professional education (not least by giving public funds for academic education and scientific research), and by paying for services provided by professional experts and practitioners. But the internationalization of markets required the reconceptualization of traditional professional jurisdictions and the increased mobility of professional practitioners between nation-states necessitated recognition and acceptability of other states licensing, education and training requirements.

The concept of regulation has a long history but it is a concept which is used increasingly and particularly in the context of professional work and practitioners. Essentially regulation is rule-governed activity in which the work of a professional group comes to be defined in terms of its extent and coverage. Regulation also extends to the education and training of practitioners as well as to the rights, demands and sometimes complaints of customers and clients.

Professions have been described as self-regulating occupations in that professional institutions have monitored education and training requirements, accredited institutional provision of training, awarded and renewed professional licences, controlled aspects of professional practice and disciplined recalcitrant members. These aspects of internal or self-regulation have been zealously guarded by professional bodies working to prevent intervention by state governments. This form of regulation has reflected the importance of trust and confidence in relations between professionals and their clients (Dingwall and Fenn, 1987). It has also reflected trust between states and professions where aspects of the social control of

practitioners and service work regulation could be decentralized and delegated, with confidence, to the professional institutions (Dingwall, 1996). In addition, these forms of self-regulation have reflected the authority and legitimacy of professions and professionals to organize and run their own affairs. It is, however, this willingness by states to concede professional powers and regulatory responsibilities, and for occupational groups to construct and demand professionalism 'from within' (McClelland, 1990) that is now almost universally in question.

In a paper published in *Work, Employment and Society* in 2002, I argued that regulation of professionals and professional work has always been a mixture of external regulation (imposed by those outside the profession, if only by the procedure of establishing Charters, and so on) and self-regulation. Some writers on the professions have argued that the extent of self-regulation defined a 'real' profession. Currently the move is towards the increased vigour of regulation (of whatever type) and inspection of the actions of professionals. A number of different reasons are given, such as deregulation; or that professions generally have lost the ability to mystify or otherwise fend off unwanted enquiries into their member's actions; or that we no longer trust professionals. It is claimed, for example, that the increased resort to litigation by clients against professional practitioners is indicative of a decline in professional authority and legitimacy in Europe as well as in North America, and Power (1997) has talked about audit as the technology of mistrust.

In the same paper I also suggested that the term 'acquired regulation' was a better concept than the idea that external forms of regulation or external control mechanisms (such as government department, statutory body or quango) were increasing. The term 'acquired regulation' can better represent the balance of responsibilities between professions and states, and can also incorporate international as well as state forms of authority and regulatory institutions. Acquired regulations can include state legislative and European directive requirements for professions as well as recommendations from European professional federations. State professional institutions continue to operationalize such acquired regulations.

It should also be noted, however, that political scientists have been discussing the changing role of the state and, in particular, the rise of the regulatory state in Europe. McGowan and Wallace (1996, p. 562) list the characteristics of regulation as: rule-based behaviour; the use of institutions for scrutiny and enforcement; and the promotion of specific public objectives. They describe the regulatory state as one which attaches relatively more importance to processes of regulation than to other means of policy making (such as government as welfare provider, as strategic planner or as owner). The regulatory state, they argue, is a rule-making state, with an attachment to the rule of law and, normally, a predilection for judicial or quasi-judicial solutions.

Majone (1994) has argued that regulation has become the appropriate mode of governance both for individual European states and for collective policy management through the institutions of the EU. McGowan and Wallace (1996) focus on the 'two-tier' character of the process where «national regulation focuses on firms and citizens while the European level increasingly focuses on regulating the regulators». This two-tiered system allows continued scope for national differences in style and substance of regulation but also gives the EU much of the character of a regulatory state in its own right.

Professional regulation fits well into this two-tier model. It can be seen as a prototype for a regulatory model of the state, with the state acting at arm's length through its control of licensing powers rather than on its own initiative through bureaucratic employees. Professional regulation remains dependent on member state institutions and professional bodies for implementation, allowing continuing scope for national variation. On the other hand the power to regulate increasingly derives its foundation from and is answerable to the European level of governance which relies overwhelmingly on regulatory means to control the activities of member states and their institutions.

The influence of markets, managerialism and consumerism

In general bureaucracy and professionalism – more integrated as in Continental societies or more divided as in Anglo-American societies – are two different and efficient methods to delimit markets and market forces, and as such are a challenge to actors in the market. This is one good reason for the critique of and threats to professional occupations and their self-control of their fields during the last three decades – and conversely, a road to integration between professional groups and between professions and organizations. This also explains the similarities in theorizing between Continental and Anglo-American societies, and makes Anglo-American sociology of professions more widely applicable.

Some convergence between Continental and Anglo-American societies, and between the nation-states within Europe, has taken place during the last three decades. Neo-American capitalism in the forms of Thatcherism and Reaganomics started to invade the Continental, Alpine or Rhine model of capitalism in the 1980s. After one century of capitalism disciplined by the state, the state was now no longer seen as a protector and organizer but as a parasite and a straitjacket on the development of the economy (Albert, 1991, p. 253). Thus the power of the state had to be reduced by cutting taxes and social insurance and by deregulating business and industry. Market forces were proposed to substitute for state regulations. These changes may be particularly important for professionals, as they have one foot in the market and the other in general ethics based on solidarity and citizenship – and according to the Continental tradition, backed up by state regulation. The move by American lawyers from free professions to sellers of services in the market could be dated from the event when the Supreme Court in 1977 authorized them to advertise on television.

A more detailed picture of the same shift from so-called social service professionalism to so-called commercialized professionalism is demonstrated in England (Hanlon, 1999; cf. Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000). To an extent professions occupied the space that was left after the nation-state governments restricted the freedom of the market in the 1950s. In recent years the importance of the professions has been questioned and «a real battle is being fought to determine who controls professions and professionals, how they are assessed, what their function is, how their services are to be delivered and paid for, and so on» (Hanlon, 1999, p. 1; cf. Freidson, 2001).

Welfare state professional occupations diverged considerably from the free profession model (e.g. law and medicine) and thus became an element of similarity between Continental and Anglo-American professional systems. Eventually, they

controlled growing resources and demanded even more on behalf of public interests and disadvantaged individuals and groups as well as their own interests. Opportunities for services expanded and appeared to have no limit or growth maximum, since they concerned human needs, difficult to assess and define as these are. The lobby for continued growth of the public sector was, however, not strong enough to oppose – and in many cases supported – the new forces at hand in the era of post-Fordism since the 1970s in the British case, and since the 1980s in most Continental and Scandinavian countries, often labelled the New Right or Neo-Liberalism, which set the agenda for much of the public discussion on professions and exploited the so-called New Public Management (Lane, 2000; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000; Taylor-Gooby, 2001).

Actions were taken and measures were implemented according to this ideology in many Western countries. Among them were: cut-backs on funding the public sector and especially large areas such as education, health and social welfare and local governments; downsizing, starting on lower layers and continuing on management levels; flexible labour market strategies such as part-time work, externalising or outsourcing; changing certain public service provisions into private enterprises; divisions into purchasers and providers of services; introducing quasi-markets, accountability, and quality measurements (Power, 1999). It is important to note, however, that welfare state professional occupations and particularly health professions are crucially influenced by gender differences. If traditional forms of professionalism (including high status, rewards and autonomous decision-making) are currently experiencing a decline, this is happening alongside other changes in some feminized health professions which are achieving re-formation, new controls over their work and upward social mobility. There are then large variations in the consequences and effects for particular occupational groups.

In terms of logics again, the following can be identified starting firstly with the logic of the market and consumerism. Market-like forms or quasi-markets of control in public professional services have been implemented in many countries. These include: privatization of service production to various degrees; divisions between politicians and executives as purchasers and professionals as providers of services; competition, bidding, contracting and marketing; payment by results to smaller units; internal markets; accounting (often only in economic terms); and freedom of choice for clients, or rather customers. These are the most prevalent forms of market directions, creating new relationships between the government, the public and the professionals. Thus, market closure and occupational control tend to erode, and professionals are confronted with the logic of the market threatening to un-make the professions in several ways (Fournier, 1999).

Secondly, the logic of bureaucracy and management has been emphasized. The importance of administrative management in contrast to professional discretion has been firmly emphasized in many areas and countries (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000). Thus, the role of managers and supervisors has been regarded as much more significant and the strong tradition of recruiting managers in professional organizations from within the occupational group was broken. This went together with a decline in trust in professional workers and an increased resort to litigation by client/customers. A closure of career development into management has also resulted, which means that the control of professional production is taken over by others. The bonds between the professional group and the employment organ-

ization in those cases will be different, and the collegial relationships between different layers in the organization are replaced by more formal bureaucratic relationships. The management control models of audit and accounting have been replacing models of trust between managers and professionals (Power, 1999; Jary, 1999). What has been labelled hard managerialism has displaced trust with various criteria of performance and indicators for review and accounting, based upon more explicit forms of rationality in management by objectives, target-setting and evaluations.

The impact of organizations

Marketization and managerialism are condensed in the process of increasing the degree of organization, in work organizations in general and professional work organizations in particular, creating more efficient and delimited units in markets. Public administration and bureaucracies have been lacking, however, in many of the aspects of identity, hierarchy and rationality that characterize complete organizations. The entrepreneurial actors (usually found among private companies which are the prototype used in the theories of organizations) are also lacking. An entrepreneurial organizational actor would have independence, autonomy and self-interested goals having rational means, commanding independent resources within clear boundaries (Brunsson and Sahlin-Andersson, 2000, p. 731). In contrast public administration involves agents fulfilling given tasks and often several inconsistent objectives, and following given rules leaving little space for their own intentions and rationality. An organization is incomplete when members are recruited, guided and controlled according to external rules, values, norms, standards and interests instead of an internal policy, as in the case of many professional occupations. Hospitals, universities and schools may for example be described as arenas, where the members have considerable autonomy towards local managers and instead are controlled by external parties such as professional associations and state authorities.

Incentives for this reconstruction process could be explained in different ways: as an intentional policy and strategy aimed at constructing complete organizations; as a side-effect of introducing markets instead of politics, customers instead of clients, auditing instead of rules, and managers and expertise instead of orders and binding rules. All these factors can be both causes and effects in a dialectical relation – reinforcing the idea of constructing organizations with a discourse on enterprise and being reinforced by it, where front-line autonomy is partly taken back by bureaucratic means (Fournier and Grey, 1999, p. 112). Many of these reforms have met surprisingly little resistance from professionals in most parts of the Western world, and have been introduced at great speed by central and local governments of various political orientations.

Organizations require certain features, however. Firstly, to see something as an organization means to endow it with identity, which in turn means emphasizing autonomy and defining boundaries and collective resources. Many reforms represent an attempt to install or reinforce these features of identity in the public services. Local autonomy has been increased in the public services e.g. in schools in many countries. Deregulation of rules and decentralization of the decision-making have also taken place. Staff are employed by the units, and the division of labour among professionals is determined locally by managers rather than by

central or professional regulations. Single units have become economic entities with budgeting, resource allocation, local accounting and auditing. Boundaries to the environment have been constructed in policy documents, defining assets, members and results as external or internal. Providers of services have been separated from purchasers and customers. Public services have been more or less forced to formulate special profiles emphasizing the differences from other similar service providers for their own marketing, contracting and auditing.

Secondly, organizations co-ordinate objectives and activities, and co-ordination is achieved by an authoritative centre in a hierarchy, directing the actions of the members. Various reforms have tried to enforce co-ordination by, for example, creating local internal working teams, which should be guided by organizational policies and values rather than central rules or professional norms. New managerialism has defined executives as managers with freedom to manage rather than civil servants following and implementing central directives (Webb, 1999, p. 727). Leadership and management training have been the first priorities for further education of the personnel, which has been conspicuously evident in allocation of resources for competence development.

Thirdly, complete organizations are assumed to be rational in the sense that goals, preferences, alternatives and consequences should systematically be forecasted and evaluated. Management-by-objectives has replaced rules and directives. Various and inconsistent objectives have been subjected to attempts to simplify them and to make up hierarchies of goals. An alternative strategy has been to break down the service provider into smaller units in order to create clearer objectives – for example into inspection and service-supplying units, or purchasing and providing units. Organizations are expected to account for their actions, and to be efficient. A focus on results passes responsibility on to the local managers, and managers free to choose the means are also responsible for the results of the choices made. The idea of accountable managers and professionals is promoted, which further constructs the idea of the rational organization. Output results have to a great extent replaced organization by rules and regulations; professional competence is measured according to specific organizational goals of efficiency instead of professionally controlled credits, performances and values; and efficiency is linked to individual rewards and privileges in the context of the specific work organization. Total quality management emphasizes the demands and the satisfaction of customers rather than competence according to professional standards, and front-line autonomy and discretion is controlled by work organization managers (Frenkel et al., 1999). Professional competence as standardized credentials before entry into professional work organizations has partly been replaced by control of results and a culture of performativity (Ball, 2003).

Thus, similarities between Continental and Anglo-American societies, and between states in Europe, has to a great extent been executed by management consultants and their operationalization of worldwide models of organizations. Simultaneously, deregulation (including professions and their educational and occupational controls) have reduced the importance of the national level, especially in Continental countries.

Professionalism as discourse and ideology

Another aspect of similarity is a new and broader quest for professionalism embedded in a general discourse emphasizing knowledge and competence in organizations and among professionals at work. This discourse on knowledge, competence and professionalism has demonstrated a number of trends and processes. One is the emphasis on the alleged importance of knowledge and human capital – frequently exaggerated – in the so-called knowledge, learning, and service society (Bell, 1976; Senge, 1990; Brint, 2001; Fuller, 2001). There is a new quest for professionalism in the sense of self-regulated competence in autonomous individuals or teams. In so-called knowledge-based companies, the dependence on such individual or team competences is regarded as a crucial issue, and much effort is put into strategic recruitment and socialization by culture and values, and other methods of binding those employees into the firm (Sveiby, 1997; Frenkel et al., 1999). Many of these changes connect professionals with their work organizations rather than with their professional occupations and associations, and professional work competence becomes primarily defined and assessed by the work organization.

The quest for professionalism as a discourse has also been changed by new public management with its emphasis on internal as well as external markets, on entrepreneurs, economic contracting, and privatization. This movement includes new forms of management and control such as tendering, accounting and audit for managers and other parties, which require professionals to codify their competence for contracts and evaluations (du Gay and Salaman, 1992; Lane, 2000; Freidson, 2001). Professional work is defined as service products to be marketed, price-tagged, and individually evaluated and remunerated, and is in that sense commodified (Svensson and Evetts, 2003, p. 11). The new public management is redefining the construction of professional organizations into more full-fledged organizations as enterprises in terms of identity, hierarchy and rationality.

Through the establishment of quasi-markets and payment by results, and the development of professionalism as a discourse used by managers, the relationships between clients and professionals have in many areas turned into customer relations. The production, publication and diffusion of quality measurements are, thereby, crucial indicators for transforming welfare services into a market (Considine, 2001). The relationships between consumers and professional producers are shaped by the interest of the consumers in the product or the service provided. The service in itself is strongly focused and has to be compared with equivalents provided by other producers. The marketing of an occupational group and its service is expected to be more closely related to work organizations, and to the needs of the potential group of clients or customers, rather than to the competence of the professionals in relation to regulations and standards managed by professional associations and state authorities. Entrepreneurial forms individualize work relations, making rules and regulations less determining, and informal networks, personal qualities and negotiating skills more important (Webb, 1999, p. 756). This entails an increase in the responsibility of the individual clients or customers to estimate the quality of the services and the competence of the professionals, which partly solves the old problem of professional hegemony and paternalism, but to the possible disadvantage of professional occupations and their exclusive control of certain bodies of knowledge and values.

In general, then, it seems that similarities in contexts and theorizing are becoming increasingly important in macro analyses of professions, professional work and practitioners. Similarities in the contexts for and in the professional work itself imply that similar concepts and explanatory theories might be used in both Anglo-American and Continental European explanations and analysis. Changes, contexts and theories have been examined at the macro level. It might well be the case that important differences and divergences remain at mezo and micro levels and variations continue in different work places and local organizational contexts.

Inequalities: fissure, stratification and competition

The similarities between Anglo-American and Continental models would also seem to necessitate more emphasis on continuing and new forms of inequality. The previous analytical focus on the structural differences between professions were criticized for their relative neglect of other social processes including gender dimensions. There are several different aspects to such gender dimensions which include women's progress in achieving more equal access to professional training; the sex ratios of practitioners at different levels and professional positions in the organizations where professionals increasingly work; the professionalization of occupations formerly classified as at most semi-professional (such as for example nursing, midwifery, physiotherapy, teaching and social work); and the growing acceptance that some men, as well as women, desire family-friendly professional work which contrasts with the ideal of total service commitment of the professional practitioner. There have also been contradictory interpretations of the impact of women in the professions (Blättel-Mink and Kuhlmann, 2003). Women are sometimes viewed as change agents – or perhaps as mitigators against or resistant to market and managerialist logics – while in contrast their entry into professions is often seen to result in the downgrading in status of the professional group (de-professionalization). The feminization of professions has tended to focus on the caring aspects of professional work as well as sometimes on the emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983) of service work. The more general processes of changes in professional work such as increased bureaucratization, the intrusions of the market and managerialism, and the logics of organizations continue to impact and affect these gender dimensions, however. It is also the case that gender analyses of professional work and occupational groups did effectively bridge some of the differences between Anglo-American and Continental models of professions and professionalism. However, similarities in context would seem to encourage and necessitate more analysis of inequalities both old and new.

What is of interest in this section are the processes, structures and strategies in professional occupational groups (both Anglo-American and European) which are producing new as well as continuing existing forms of inequality. The processes which would seem to be important are internationalization which is creating a new category of powerful occupational groups beyond the reach of nation-state regulatory means (e.g. occupations in IT, security, law, accountancy and finance). Another process is occupational fissure and specialization within an occupational group which is resulting in forms of occupational stratification. A third would seem to be the new forms of competition between and among professional practitioners developing within professions themselves as well as in the organizations in which

professionals now work.

So, which are the newly powerful occupational groups at both national and international levels? The medical, health and legal professions have been prominent, even dominant, in sociological theorizing about professions at nation-state level. It is worth emphasizing, however, that the medical and legal professions within nation-states seem to have been the only occupational groups able to exercise power, authority, control, dominance and closure. Other occupational groups (and including new groups) are unable to exercise such powers.

In addition, it is this willingness by nation-states to concede professional powers and regulatory responsibilities, and for occupational groups to construct and demand professionalism 'from within' that is now almost universally in question. The consequence of this is still diversity in balances of power and authority in the construction of professionalism between different occupational groups – although this diversity might be reducing. The legal profession now (in contrast to medicine) is perhaps the best example of an occupational group in a relatively privileged position and still able to construct professionalism 'from within'. There are, however, numerous occupational groups within the profession of law and in general these occupations can be categorized as social service, or as entrepreneurial (Hanlon, 1999). Those law professions which are publicly funded compared with commercial practices are occupations where the rewards, status, standing and authority are less high.

The medical professions are likewise highly stratified and differentially powerful in the sense of being able to construct and demand professionalism 'from within'. It is also interesting to observe that the professional groups who are becoming powerful in international markets (for example some accountancy, legal and financial professions) might be different from the occupational groups who have been powerful at state levels in the sense of constructing and demanding professionalism 'from within'.

Other occupational groups (such as teachers, engineers, social workers) and including new occupational groups (such as in human resources and career counselling) are unable to construct and demand professionalism 'from within' or to demand occupational control of their work. For these occupational groups, dominance and closure have never been a feature of their occupational strategies either inside organizations or in other places of work. So what occupational strategies are now emerging in work and organizations and what forms of inequality are developing as a consequence?

Occupational fissure and internal specialization which result in stratification within an occupational group seem to be becoming more and more prominent although Witz (1992) and Annandale (1998) were probably among the first researchers to document these occupational stratifications in respect of the medical and nursing professions. Medicine, nursing, law, teaching, social work, engineering all have different specialisms and sections or segments, different layers and levels, which are concerned with different kinds of tasks, job descriptions, and responsibilities, and are rewarded (and regarded?) differently. As professions splinter and processes of fissure and specialization result in different interests within an occupational group, then stratification within a profession will develop. There are already numerous examples of new specialist occupations within previously existing professional occupations including in health, teaching, training

and counselling, psychology and psychiatry. This is likely to result sometimes in conflicts of doctrine and in conflicts of interests and influence within occupational groups (for example psychology in Portugal) and this is likely to become a new focus for research and analysis in professional occupations.

Then there are new, as well as existing and continuing, occupational strategies which are operating particularly in the organizations where professionals now work, and which are resulting in inequalities. The medical profession – particularly doctors employed by the state – continue to use their cultural authority and legitimacy to maintain dominance (Larkin, 1983; Freidson, 2001; Coburn, 2006). For the most part, however, it seems that new or certainly different strategies are now needed to exercise power in the work organization. Occupational groups such as teachers, engineers and social workers, and including new groups, have been unable to use cultural authority to maintain dominance in their negotiations and interactions with states, managers and other occupational groups. For other occupational groups their strategies are, of necessity, competition – and competition within the organization (rather than in the market and the economy as Abbott, 1988, described). These professional competitions (Muzio and Kirkpatrick (Eds.), 2011) in respect of influence, power and authority within the organization are also more likely to rely on professional knowledge bases and competences, practitioner experiences and expertise.

In addition, as Muzio and Kirkpatrick (2011) have argued, organizations can constitute sites for (and objects of) professional control and domination, and hence competition and inequality. Ackroyd (1996, p. 600) describes this as a form of ‘dual closure’ where access to labour markets (through registration and credentialism) is combined with informal control of access to particular work tasks and divisions of labour within the employing organization. Brint (1994, p. 73) explained how, in the corporate sector, «high value-added applications within organizations can be more successful in enhancing status than closure in the labour market». Similarly, Faulconbridge and Muzio (2008) have shown how managers and administrators benefit from their ability to control, devise and construct the bureaucratic machinery as well as to resolve central problems of their organizations. In addition it is important to recognise that organizations can constitute sites for the re-development of professional forms and methods of control (rules, values, norms and standards) to supplement or replace the organizational forms (hierarchy, management, efficiency and target objectives) (Svensson in Svensson and Evett, 2010).

Other processes also explained by Muzio and Kirkpatrick (2011) refer to jurisdictional disputes and negotiations – again originally described by Abbott (1988) but this time played out within organizations rather than in the wider arena of labour markets and education systems. Within organizations, occupations seek to process and control tasks and task divisions to suit their own occupational interests. Armstrong (1985) describes competition between professionals in management (accountancy, engineering and personnel) in colonizing key positions, roles and decision-making within large organizations. In these ways organizations constitute arenas for inter-professional competitions as well as professional conquests. Or, as Muzio and Kirkpatrick explain (2011, p. 393), organizations can «provide a means through which traditional objectives of collective mobility, status advancement, financial reward and service quality can be better served».

Conclusion

The paper has examined similarities in contexts and theories of professionalism in Anglo-American and European societies, and the structures, processes and strategies which produce inequalities at the macro level. It has argued that the traditional, historical differences between Anglo-American and Continental European systems of professions are now mostly being superseded by structures and processes, questions, issues and concerns which are common for all social systems. Old and new forms of inequality are one such issue.

The meaning of professionalism is not fixed and sociological analysis of the concept has demonstrated changes over time both in its interpretation and function. All of these different interpretations are now needed in order to understand the appeal of professionalism in new and old occupations, how the concept is being used to promote and facilitate occupational change and, at the same time, to generate different forms of social inequality.

If similarity in theoretical modelling is now more appropriate than emphasizing the differences between Anglo-American and Continental European systems of professions then these common theoretical interpretations can have much wider relevance and reference. The differences and inequalities between and within occupational groups can also be examined, analysed and applied in other societies and parts of the world where issues to do with the closure of markets or the 'capture' and manipulation of states never occurred. Thus Freidson's analysis (2001) of professionalism as the third logic warrants further elaboration. It could be argued that occupational control of the work is the new test for occupational power, authority and status. Control and order of the work and work processes and procedures by the workers, employees, practitioners, occupational group and profession might constitute the criteria for assessing the extent and exercise of professionalism in work.

References

- Abbott, A. (1988). *The system of professions: An essay on the division of expert labor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ackroyd, S. (1996). Organisation contra organisation: Professions and organisational change in the United Kingdom. *Organisations Studies*, 17(4), 599–621. [doi:10.1177/017084069601700403](https://doi.org/10.1177/017084069601700403)
- Annandale, E. (1998). *The sociology of health and medicine: A critical introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Albert, M. (1991/1993). *Capitalism against capitalism*. London: Whurr Publishers.
- Albert, M. (1991). *Capitalisme contre capitalisme*. Paris: Le Seuil.
- Armstrong, P. (1985). Changing management control strategies: The role of competition between accountancy and other organizational professions. *Accounting, Organization and Society*, 10(2), 129-48. [doi:10.1016/0361-3682\(85\)90012-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0361-3682(85)90012-1)
- Ball, S. J. (2003). *Professionalism, managerialism and performativity. Professional development and educational change*. Copenhagen: The Danish University of Education.
- Bell, D. (1976). *The coming of post-industrial society*. New York: Basic Books.

- Blättel-Mink, B. & Kuhlmann, E. (2003). Health professions, gender and society: Introduction and outlook. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 23(4), 1–21. [doi:10.1108/01443330310790480](https://doi.org/10.1108/01443330310790480)
- Brint, S. (1994). *In an age of experts: The changing role of professionals in politics and public life*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Brint, S. (2001). Professions and the «knowledge economy»: Rethinking the theory of post-industrial Society. *Current Sociology*, 49, 101–32. [doi:10.1177/0011392101049004007](https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392101049004007)
- Brunsson, N. & Sahlin-Andersson, K. (2000). Constructing organizations: The example of public sector reform. *Organizational Studies*, 21(4), 721–46. [doi:10.1177/0170840600214003](https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840600214003)
- Burrage, M. & Torstendahl, R. (Eds.) (1990a). *Professions in theory and history: Rethinking the study of the professions*. London: Sage.
- Burrage, M. & Torstendahl, R. (Eds.) (1990b). *The formation of professions: Knowledge, state and strategy*. London: Sage.
- Burrage, M. (1990). Introduction: The professions in sociology and history. In M. Burrage & R. Torstendahl (Eds). *Professions in theory and history: Rethinking the study of the professions*. London: Sage.
- Coburn, D. (2006). Medical dominance then and now: Critical reflections. *Health Sociology Review*, 15(5), 432–443. [doi:10.5172/hesr.2006.15.5.432](https://doi.org/10.5172/hesr.2006.15.5.432)
- Collins, R. (1990). Changing conceptions in the sociology of professions. In R. Torstendahl & M. Burrage (Eds). *The formation of professions: Knowledge, state and strategy*. London: Sage.
- Considine, M. (2001). *Enterprising states: The public management of welfare-to-work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dingwall, R. (1996). Professions and social order in a global society. Plenary presentation at ISA Working Group 02 Conference, Nottingham, 11–13 September.
- Dingwall, R. & Fenn, P. (1987). A respectable profession? Sociological and economic perspectives on the regulation of professional services. *International Review of Law and Economics*, 7, 51–64. [doi:10.1016/0144-8188\(87\)90006-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0144-8188(87)90006-8)
- Evetts, J. (2002). New directions in state and international professional occupations. *Work, Employment and Society*, 16(2), 339–351.
- du Gay, P. & Salaman, G. (1992). The cult[ure] of the customer. *Journal of Management Studies*, 29(5), 615–33 (September). [doi:10.1111/j.1467-6486.1992.tb00681.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.1992.tb00681.x)
- Faulconbridge, J. R. & Muzio, D. (2008). Organizational professionalism in globalizing law firms. *Work, Employment and Society*, 22, 7–25. [doi:10.1177/0950017007087413](https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017007087413)
- Fournier, V. (1999). The appeal to «professionalism» as a disciplinary mechanism. *Social Review*, 47:2, 280–307. [doi:10.1111/1467-954X.00173](https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.00173)
- Fournier, V. & Grey, C. (1999). Too much, too little and too often: A critique of Paul du Gay’s analysis of enterprise. *Organization*, 6, 107–28. [doi:10.1177/135050849961005](https://doi.org/10.1177/135050849961005)
- Freidson, E. (2001). *Professionalism: The third logic*. London: Polity Press.
- Frenkel, S., Korczynski, M., Shire, K., Tam, M. (1999). *On the front-line: Patterns of service work organization in comparative perspective*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

- Fuller, S. (2001). A critical guide to knowledge society newspeak: Or, how not to take the great leap backward. *Current Sociology*, 49(4), 133–149. [doi:10.1177/0011392101049004010](https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392101049004010)
- Hanlon, G. (1999). *Lawyers, the state and the market: Professionalism revisited*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1983 / 2003). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
- Jary, D. (1999). The implications of the audit society? The case of higher education. In M. Dent, M. O'Neill, & C. Bagley (Eds.). *Professions, New Public Management and the European welfare state* (pp. 29–52). Stoke-on-Trent: Staffordshire University Press.
- Lane, J-E. (2000). *New public management*. London: Routledge & Kegan.
- Larkin, G. (1983). *Occupational monopoly and modern medicine*. London: Tavistock.
- McClelland, C. E. (1990). Escape from freedom? Reflections on German professionalization 1870–1933. In M. Burrage & R. Torstendahl (Eds.). *The formation of professions: Knowledge, state and strategy* (pp. 97–113). London: Sage.
- McGowan, F. & Wallace, H. (1996). Towards a European regulatory state. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 3(4), 560–76. [doi:10.1080/13501769608407053](https://doi.org/10.1080/13501769608407053)
- Majone, G. (1994). The rise of the regulatory state in Europe. *West European Politics*, 17(3), 77–101. [doi:10.1080/01402389408425031](https://doi.org/10.1080/01402389408425031)
- Muzio, D. & Kirkpatrick, I. (Eds.). (2011). Reconnecting professional occupations and professional organizations. *Current Sociology*, 59(4), Monograph 2, July.
- Pollitt, C. & Bouckaert, G. (2000). *Public management reform. A comparative analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Power, M. (1997). *The audit society: Rituals of verification*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Power, M. (1999). *The audit society: Rituals of verification*. 2nd Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Senge, P. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Doubleday.
- Sveiby, K. E. (1997). *The new organizational wealth: Managing & measuring knowledge-based assets*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Svensson, L. & Evetts, J. (Eds.) (2003). Conceptual and comparative studies of continental and Anglo-American professions. *Göteborg Studies in Sociology No 129*, Göteborg University.
- Svensson, L. & Evetts, J. (Eds.) (2010). *Sociology of professions. Continental and Anglo-Saxon traditions*. Daidalos: Sweden.
- Taylor-Gooby, P. (Ed.) (2001). *Welfare states under pressure*. London and Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Webb, J. (1999). Work and the new public service class? *Sociology*, 33(4), 747–66. [doi:10.1017/S0038038599000474](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0038038599000474)
- Witz, A. (1992). *Professions and patriarchy*. London: Routledge. [doi:10.4324/9780203167786](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203167786)