

Guest Editor's Introduction

The studies presented in this issue of *Professions & Professionalism* are parts of a larger research program called *The Professional Landscape in Sweden*. This program presently comprises two research projects: a qualitative project called *Carriers of Knowledge* and a quantitative project called *The Conditions and Values of Professions* (see www.profland.net for more information). We believe that our project is of interest to an international audience for the following reasons:

- Although the empirical material concerns Sweden, the project also generally reflects the processes of professionalization behind the emergence of the Nordic welfare states. Hence, the importance of the project extends beyond the Swedish context; indeed, the histories of professionalization follow broadly similar trajectories in not only the Nordic countries but also the Continental European countries.
- Our theoretical approach is of relevance in that we seek to construct concepts suitable for applying a macro perspective to professions in general.
- Our comparison of professions and professional fields makes it possible to identify common patterns, similarities, and differences, thus facilitating general explanations of the histories, origins, and evolutions of professions.
- Our use of a comparative method may help inspire and invite other scholars to conduct similar comparative studies, that is, transnational comparisons of professions and professional fields.

Guest Editor
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