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Defining a Profession: The Role of Knowledge and Expertise[1]

Abstract: The paper highlights the importance of resurrecting the debate about how to define a profession. The drive to define a profession is traced back to the taxonomic approach – encompassing the work of trait and functionalist writers – in which professions were seen as possessing unique and positive characteristics, including distinctive knowledge and expertise. A range of critical challenges to this approach are then considered, particularly as they relate to the role of knowledge and expertise in defining a profession, covering interactionism, Marxism, Foucauldianism and discourse analysis. However, the most effective challenge to the taxonomic approach is considered to be the neo-Weberian perspective based on a less broadly assumptive and more analytically useful definition of a profession centered on exclusionary closure. With reference to case studies, the relative merits of neo-Weberianism compared to taxonomic and other approaches are examined in relation to the role of knowledge and expertise and delineating professional boundaries.

Keywords: defining professions, knowledge and expertise, taxonomic approach, neo-Weberianism, theoretical perspectives

It has long been suggested in the sociology of professions from various theoretical vantage points that debating the definition of a profession is a sterile exercise (for example, Johnson 1972). Now, with some notable exceptions (for instance, Sciulli 2010; Brante 2011), the field has moved on and this has become a subject that is rarely discussed. However, it is argued here that defining a profession is not a pointless exercise in relation to knowledge and expertise and other claimed features of profession – as it is actually at the root of understanding what professions are about and how they operate. The main issue is the terms on which definitions of professions are constructed in the Anglo-American and Western European context. It is this area that is explored in this paper from both an historical and contemporary perspective before building to a conclusion advising on future studies of this field.

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The taxonomic approach

Although earlier observations were made on professions as a distinctive group in the division of labour – as exemplified by Carr-Saunders and Wilson (1933) who

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saw the professions as a stable force in society – the task of defining professions seriously began with the taxonomic approach of the 1950s and 1960s. Professions within this approach were seen as possessing a diverse range of characteristics differentiating them from other occupations. These characteristics centrally encompassed knowledge and expertise – as well as others such as playing a positive part in the community. The emphasis that taxonomic contributors gave to knowledge and expertise was understandable as recognised professions typically had a stronger formal knowledge and higher educational base than other occupations (Freidson 1986). Identifying this was perhaps one of the strengths of the taxonomic approach in the context of this paper – especially in versions of the approach that presented such characteristics in the form of an 'ideal type', against which professions could be judged (as illustrated by Parsons 1952), as distinct from describing presumed features of professional groups.

There were two broad variants of the early taxonomic approach. The first involved trait writers who generated many differing ad hoc lists of attributes of professions (for instance, Wilensky 1964). Most lists included high level knowledge and expertise or related items as special features – alongside other characteristics such as codes of ethics, altruism, rationality and educational credentials. In this vein Greenwood (1957) felt that knowledge organised into a body of theory based on abstract propositions was important in defining a profession, in which preparation for practice was intellectual. Functionalists presented more theoretically coherent accounts, seeing a functional relationship between professions and society (for example, Goode 1960 and Barber 1963). Specifically in this context, occupations with very esoteric and complex knowledge and expertise of great importance to society were usually seen as being granted a high position in the social system with state sanction in return for protecting the public and/or clients. Herein for the functionalists lies the functionality of knowledge and expertise.

However, the rather uncritical and ahistorical taxonomic perspective has rightly been criticised – not least in terms of the centrality of knowledge and expertise to the professions. The critique of such an approach was highlighted by the focus of some writers within the trait approach on constructing league tables glorifying one or other professions, depending on the range and weighting of elements (Millerson 1964). A number of the characteristics were also often assumed rather than established, including aspects of knowledge and expertise – with trait and functionalist writers opening themselves up to the argument that they were reflexively presenting professional ideology rather than reality. In this regard, the critique of taxonomy can probably best be explored through the variety of alternative, sometimes intersecting, but less complimentary perspectives that subsequently emerged in the sociology of professional groups.

The critics of the taxonomic approach

Of the early critics of the taxonomic approach, interactionism based on labelling theory drew attention to the parallels rather than differences between high flung professions and more stigmatised occupations such as garbage attendants and prostitutes, including in making sense of their work (for instance, Becker 1962 and Hughes 1963). This theme has more recently been resurrected by Brante (2010) who has noted, amongst other things, that the knowledge and skills of auto mechanics are not as distinctive as supposed, having many features in common

with professional practitioners like doctors and lawyers – not least in being classified into generalists and specialists. It was through such examples that the early writing of the interactionists prompted sociologists to view trait and functionalist contributors as being the 'dupe' of professions in terms of knowledge, expertise and other characteristics in legitimating their dominance by reifying their uniqueness without too much empirical analysis (Roth 1974).

Interactionism, however, had the downside of being micro oriented and viewing a 'profession' simply as a socially negotiated label based on occupational ideologies, not least in terms of the knowledge and skills involved. It did not therefore offer a structural explanation of success or failure in relation to the state in terms of winning professional spurs. The Marxist approach, though, undoubtedly does take a macro structural approach – even if it often has a self-fulfilling view of the state as serving capitalist interests and has become politically questionable with the recent demise of state socialist societies (Saks 1998). It has diverse strands, ranging from professions being seen as skilled agents of surveillance and control for a dominant class (for example, Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich 1979) to being conceptualised as increasingly de-professionalised under capitalism as their knowledge and expertise is rationalised (for instance, McKinlay and Arches 1985). This view of de-professionalisation is most starkly represented by Braverman (1974) who argued that skilled professional tasks were being broken down as a result of managerial strategies for controlling the labour process under capitalism.

A somewhat different take is provided by Foucauldians, who challenge the rationality frequently assumed by taxonomic contributors as regards the scientific progress associated with professions in prisons, schools and other institutional areas (Foucault 1979) – for example, by highlighting the destructive rather than positive force of psychiatry (Foucault 1973). This more critical approach is in part centred on 'governmentality', involving the 'institutionalisation of expertise', in which the state is seen not as a coherent calculating entity, but as an ensemble of institutions, knowledges and procedures derived from the outcome of governing. This approach has its own difficulties in terms of empirical operationalisation, not least because of its conceptual integration of the state and the professions (Saks 2003a). However, critically in this context, the position of professions is not here defined as being inherently generated by knowledge and expertise per se; rather, this group of occupations is seen as based on the selective political incorporation of expertise into state formation as a key resource of governance (Johnson 1995).

Leaving aside the highly abstracted Marxist and Foucauldian approaches (Macdonald 1995), a perspective currently more in vogue in offering an alternative to the taxonomic approach is centred on the discourse of professionalism. This is illustrated by Fournier (1999) in recruitment and advertising, who accentuates the importance of the ideology of professionalism in work contexts. Cohen, Wilkinson, Arnold and Finn (2005) build on this approach in analysing architects' accounts of the purpose and process of their own occupation in the public and private sector, which are particularly focused on the role of creative knowledge and expertise. In providing greater insight into the culture of professionalism, this perspective opens up a wider range of occupations to the purview of the sociology of professions. Even if it lacks the analytical insights provided by some other, more tightly drawn, approaches (Saks 2010), it again fruitfully goes beyond the taxonomic reification of knowledge and expertise and other attributes in defining a profession.

The neo-Weberian approach

As has been seen, therefore, the four mainstream approaches to professional definition identified and examined above challenge – each in their own way – the more traditional trait and functionalist notion that knowledge and expertise in itself plays a critical role in professionalisation. What they variously highlight is that the articulation of the role of knowledge and expertise is more complex than taxonomic writers typically set out – whether because of the more nuanced macro political base of professions or the way in which they use these concepts ideologically to legitimate their standing. The critics thereby question the centrality of knowledge and expertise per se to the definition of a profession. It is argued here, though, that the analytically most helpful perspective going beyond taxonomy in defining professions is the neo-Weberian approach (see, for instance, Parkin 1979). This will now be considered in more detail, especially in this paper from the viewpoint of knowledge and expertise where it has particular benefits.

It should initially be said that professions are normally defined at root by neo-Weberians in terms of exclusionary social closure in the marketplace sanctioned by the state. As such, the neo-Weberian approach is centred on the tenet that we live in a dynamic and competitive world of macro political power and interests, in which occupational groups gain and/or maintain professional standing based on the creation of legal boundaries that mark out the position of specific occupational groups – be they in accountancy and architecture or law and medicine. Professionalisation in this sense is centred on attaining a particular form of formal legal regulation with registers creating bodies of insiders and excluding outsiders. This, moreover, is typically linked to improved life chances for members of professional groups in the wider society – not least in terms of enhanced income, status and power (Saks 2003b).

As with other approaches, there are differences within the neo-Weberian perspective as to how exactly a profession is conceived and defined. The definitions themselves span from control by the producer over the consumer (Johnson 1972) and market control of particular services by a body of self-governing equals (Parry and Parry 1976) to legitimate, organised autonomy over technical judgements and the organisation of work (Freidson 1994). Intriguingly in this context, none of these interpretations put knowledge and expertise at the heart of the definition – although they may be used ideologically as political weapons in both winning and legitimating their much coveted professional standing. Rather, the key to the definition of a profession remains the sheltered position of professions in the marketplace, with entry to the professions usually gained through obtaining relevant higher education credentials. This concept also has the potential to be adapted to encompass more state-led models of the professions where market control is less central in certain national contexts, including in Nordic countries (see, for example, Erichsen 1995).

The advantages of the neo-Weberian approach in defining professions are manifold. In the first place it avoids the unduly complimentary assumptions of many taxonomic writers by providing the basis for empirically assessing the role of knowledge and expertise, as well as other factors traditionally linked to professions. Moreover, unlike interactionism, this approach considers the macro structural and historical processes underpinning professionalisation. It also avoids the restrictive assumptions about the state inevitably acting in capitalist interests in relation to

knowledge and expertise typically incorporated in the Marxist perspective, while sidestepping the methodological problems associated with conflating the state and professions in Foucauldian conceptualisations. Finally, a neo-Weberian approach provides greater precision in delineating professional boundaries and more policy leverage in its focus on state underwriting than discourse analysis in considering the control of knowledge and expertise (Saks 2010). The benefits of the neo-Weberian approach to professions can also be illustrated in practice – not least in relation to taxonomy – as highlighted in the next section, which focuses primarily on a range of examples drawn from the health arena to provide greater coherence to the argument.

The benefits of neo-Weberianism in practice

In relation to knowledge and expertise, one advantage of neo-Weberianism is that it shows that professionalisation does not always follow the linear process based on knowledge and expertise as depicted by Wilensky (1964) in his classic functionalist overview of professions. Freidson (1970), for instance, in comparing pharmacy and optometry in the United States, found that members of these occupational groups had similar training and specialisation, but different legal diagnostic and prescription powers. However, if this suggests that the process of professionalisation has differential socio-political dimensions, so too does the fact that not all learned occupations necessarily become professions. This point is more recently underlined by the comparison of herbalism and acupuncture in England, where herbalists alone have been earmarked by government to gain legal closure through statutory regulation given a perceived need for greater public protection in this area – despite having equivalent knowledge and expertise and arguably less rigorous and unified occupational organisational structures to those of the acupuncturists (Saks 2011).

These examples indicate that professionalisation is a socio-political process, involving power and interests in the market at a macro level. For neo-Weberians, then, definitions of professions cannot be pivoted on knowledge and expertise per se. Although it may be important to demonstrate some knowledge or expertise related to educational certification in making a successful case for professionalisation, this is seen more as part of the credentialist ideology linked to professional projects than a claim necessarily reflecting substance. This is exemplified by the professionalisation of medicine in 1858 in Britain before asepsis, anaesthesia and effective medical knowledge and expertise – at a time when hospitals were gateways to death, fifty years ahead of parallel trends in the United States (Saks 2003c). Explanations of professionalisation therefore are sought less in concrete knowledge and expertise and more in a profession's tactics of competition and the prevailing socio-economic conditions – which in the case cited led the British medical profession to seek a de facto, as opposed to a de jure, monopoly in face of nineteenth liberal attacks to ride the waves of the political sea (Berlant 1975).

For neo-Weberians, attention also needs to be paid to the ideological dimensions of professions above and beyond knowledge and expertise in understanding the success and failure of professionalisation in defining professions. This can be illustrated with reference to altruism, so often put forward by taxonomic writers as a distinctive actual professional characteristic (Saks 1995). The case of herbalism and acupuncture underlines its potential importance, as the British government has

placed a heavy emphasis on the protection of the public in modernising the health professions (Baggott 2004). However, the level of altruism of professions relative to other occupations – as distinct from the legitimating ideological claim itself – has rarely been systematically scrutinised. Interestingly, while a recent replicated Swedish survey of a range of professions, semi-professions and pre-professions – from lawyers to graphic designers – unusually analysed the amount of public trust given to such groups, it did not examine the relative position of non-professionalised occupations (Svensson 2011).

Flexing the neo-Weberian definition of a profession

Although the view that knowledge and expertise is a sine qua non in professional formation can therefore be challenged from a neo-Weberian perspective in light of the foregoing discussion, it should be stressed that the definition of a profession within this approach is much wider than just outlining what is a profession. Professional definition can also be conceptually considered in terms of boundaries within a neo-Weberian perspective in a range of other ways – which may be more or less strongly related to knowledge and expertise. These can be illustrated within a neo-Weberian frame of reference by the definition of the boundaries of some specific professions in terms of dual closure. This concept refers to semi-professional groups which contain elements of exclusionary closure of a classic profession like law or medicine, but are also mixed with aspects of usurpationary closure based on the collective action taken by groups of industrial workers (Parkin 1979).

This kind of differentiation of professional boundaries can be exemplified further by work inspired by a neo-Weberian approach on the divisions in some countries with greater devolution like the United States between federal and state-level professionalism (Freidson 1986); the differential historical and contemporary gender base of certain professions (Witz 1992); the ongoing interplay of the system of professions and their various jurisdictions (Abbott 1988); interprofessional working that may make for more or less permeable professional boundaries (Barrett, Sellman and Thomas 2005); organisational professionalism as distinct from occupational professionalism with the rise of powerful corporations and greater managerial accountability (Evetts 2006); and international as opposed to national patterns of professionalism related to the development of the European Union and more global points of political reference (Kuhlmann and Saks 2008).

Although Brint (1994) has argued that there has been a shift towards expert professionalism in contemporary society, these and other cases of how professional boundaries can be flexed underline that the way a profession is defined is more than just a primary function of its knowledge base. They also highlight that the boundaries of such occupational groups are fluid and in a state of on-going flux. The direction and rapidity of this flux is influenced by many factors spanning from technological change and the historical position of specific professions to political lobbying by professions themselves and the stance of representatives of the state (Macdonald 1995). Part of this process may of course also involve shifts in the basis of professional knowledge and expertise, but the role and pace of such movement should not be assumed; rather, it should be seen in a more holistic perspective centred on empirical investigation within the clear theoretical and methodological parameters of the neo-Weberian approach.

Conclusion

This is not of course to say that neo-Weberian analyses in defining professions have always been meticulously carried out when considering knowledge and expertise and other areas of professionalism. The limits of neo-Weberianism in defining professions are underlined by, amongst other things, its lack of empirical rigour in practice, which has on occasion involved substituting one ill-founded conventional wisdom for another (Saks 1983); its sometimes excessive and unjustifiably critical stance on professional groups, including its own assumptions about the negative role of professional self-interests and the lack of public benefit of professionally driven outcomes (Saks 1998); and its frequent failure to link analyses to the wider occupational division of labour in examining professionalising and/or marginal occupational groups (Saks 2003c).

For all the critiques, though, we should not accept the claim by Evetts (2003) that the neo-Weberian approach is of limited relevance and it is now time to move on from definitions of professions based on market closure which neglect other occupations and issues – whether in terms of knowledge and expertise or any other axes in this area. These weaknesses in fact relate to the inappropriate operationalisation of neo-Weberianism in practice and are not intrinsic to the approach. As has been seen, there is no reason in principle why a neo-Weberian study of the role of knowledge and expertise in professions cannot be suitably scoped and empirically grounded. More enlightened neo-Weberian writers, moreover, acknowledge not only that professions can have very positive influences on clients and/or the wider society, but also that this may sometimes be entirely compatible with the pursuit of group interests (Saks 1995). Moreover, the whole essence of the neo-Weberian approach is based on a wider concept of closure, covering both positively and negatively privileged classes (Parkin 1972). It thereby prompts the examination of a much wider vista than simply those occupational groups that have formally achieved professional standing.

While other perspectives – including those centred on a looser categorisation of professions – offer useful insights, we should not 'throw the baby out with the bath water'. This is underlined by the many exemplary neo-Weberian analyses that have been produced, not least in relation to knowledge and expertise in a range of fields from the examination by Halliday (1987) of the governance of the legal profession in the United States to the consideration by Larkin (2002) of the establishment of the professions allied to medicine in Britain, in addition to other studies referred to in this paper. The conclusion therefore is that neo-Weberianism remains one of the most incisive approaches for understanding how professions are both defined and define themselves, including in terms of the role of knowledge and expertise. But, whatever the perspective adopted, it is vital to have these debates about this subject as they are at the heart of addressing in the most incisive way key issues related to the definition of professions and the role of knowledge and expertise in their construction.

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The Professional Landscape: The Historical Development of Professions in Sweden

Abstract: This special issue of *Professions & Professionalism* seeks to explain the transition of occupations from non-professions to professions and the conditions and causes that generate professions (i.e., the bases of professionalization). Empirically, we use the histories of the Swedish professions, positing that these histories have several close similarities (and, of course, differences) with those of other nations, thus making this project of international interest. Theoretically, we define a number of general concepts that are employed to explain the processes of professionalization. The most general concept, which covers the professional layer, is called the *professional landscape*. It is divided into a number of professional fields and generations, creating a typology of professions. The fields that are presented, together with the professions assuming key positions in the fields, are technology, health, social integration, social regulation, education, and academia. The historical emergence of the fields and the transition from occupation and pre-profession to full profession are outlined.

Keywords: profession, professionalization, professional landscape, professional field, periodization

The articles published in this special issue of *Professions & Professionalism* attempt to answer the most basic questions in the study of professions: What constitutes a profession? How do professions emerge? Why do professions emerge? In this endeavour, we are strongly inspired by two books on the professions edited by Rolf Torstendahl and Michael (1990).[1] More precisely, our study seeks to describe and explain the transition of occupations from non-professions to professions and the conditions and causes that generate professions (i.e., the bases of professionalization). To accomplish this task, a number of theoretical concepts and empirical material are required.

The empirical material collected for this study includes the histories of the Swedish professions. Sweden is chosen as a case study for several reasons. Apart from the most obvious reason (we, the authors of this study, are Swedes), Sweden is an appropriate choice because it is a modern, highly industrialized European country that, in general, shares many features with countries at similar socioeconomic levels. With regard to the processes of professionalization, many

[1] We are particularly interested in following up their attempts to focus more on professionalization processes outside the Anglo-Saxon world.

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similarities exist between Sweden and the other Nordic countries, and Continental Europe, and, to some extent, the Anglo-Saxon nations. For instance, at approximately the same time, most of these nations experienced a welfare society period and currently, many are experiencing a period of neoliberalism - two social formations, or allocative regimes, having strong effects on the conditions and possibilities of various professions. We further elaborate on some of these similarities and differences below. This study should therefore be of interest to those conducting international research on the professions, and our hope is that it will inspire parallel comparative studies in and between countries.

Recent research on the professions has produced many excellent case studies of individual professions. We argue, however, that a need exists for comparative studies between professions. Like all social phenomena, professions must be understood by being situated in their relevant contexts. Thus, we agree with Andrew Abbott, who claims the following:

> The history of individual professions is dominated by [a] broader ecological history of the system of professions. We should be writing histories of arenas or zones in that ecology, not of individual professions and occupations. The latter are not where causality lives. (Abbott, 2010, p. 176)

Therefore, a more comprehensive approach would constitute a useful background to specific studies on single professions. The basic unit of analysis we use is not ecology or arenas but professional field (for further elaboration, see below).

Methodologically, we are inspired by George and Bennett (2005), who put forward a procedure they call "structured, focused, comparative studies of cases." The aim of this procedure is to find shared and dissimilar forces to explain historical processes. Our "cases" are professions, fields, and generations, and we perform both a "within-case analysis" and a "between-case analysis" of them. For the between-case analysis, a number of shared questions applied to each case bind the parts and cases of the study together.

Theoretically, we primarily need a set of useful macro concepts. The concepts of professional landscape, competence field, profession, professional type, professional generation, and "take-off", as well as a periodization of historical phases characterizing the development of competence fields, are delineated and defined below. The concepts relate to one another like Chinese boxes (i.e., the broader concepts encompass the narrower ones). We begin our analysis at the most comprehensive level.

The professional landscape

Professional landscape, a macrosociological concept, purports to capture the professional layer in its entirety and place it in a larger societal context. Thus, it is a successor to Talcott Parsons's concept of the professional complex and to Andrew Abbott's concept of the professional system. Other suggested labels are cluster, professional-managerial class, and even New Class. Emile Durkheim (1893/1984) used the term *corps intermédiaires* to signify specific occupational associations between the state and individuals. These concepts are employed to indicate that professions are situated between the social (economic, political) elites and the people, or between the upper and lower socioeconomic layers, or between the two main classes. As parts of the middle layers, they have also been called

the educated middle class, or *Bildungsbürgertum*.

The geographical metaphor *landscape* is employed for several reasons. The Swedish Heritage Board aptly clarifies the meaning of this metaphor in the following description:

> A landscape is an area . . . the character of which is the result of influences and interplays between natural and/or human factors. . . . Landscapes are the result of interaction between man and environment for thousands of years. Traces of the past are everywhere around us. . . . Thus, the depth of time is an important dimension in landscapes. . . . Landscapes change their appearances in tandem with changes of society.

Landscapes are terrains that have been cultivated by humans in various ways. Exploration of these terrains reveals that they involve a number of components that, depending on perspective, can be systematically observed, categorized, and named, and from which patterns can be discerned. Maps can be drawn of patterns that reside in landscapes. The platform for our study is precisely a pattern, a matrix, or a *typology* of professions.

The typology is constructed with one diachronic (vertical) and one synchronic (horizontal) axis. The synchronic axis is divided into a number of fields (in Pierre Bourdieu's sense), in which professions represent key actors. Thus, a field is located between landscape and profession, constituting the immediate environment of a profession that may involve other professions and assisting occupations, as well as clients: Essentially, a field involves interrelations between acting units. This axis comprises the fields of aesthetics, communication, economy, technology, health, social integration, social regulation, education, and academia. The diachronic axis is divided into three segments, professional types, or generations (in Karl Mannheim's sense[2]): classic professions, semi-professions, and pre-professions:

Fields / Generations	Aesthetics	Communication	Economy	Technology	Health	Social integration	Social regulation	Education	Academia
Classic									
Semi									
Pre									

Table 1. Scientific research and education

This typology is merely an initial blueprint. Its lines and boxes should not be seen as inflexible delineators; sometimes the boxes overlap, and relationships within and between them change over time. At the same time, as history shows, they depict real differences between fields and generations or professional types. Moreover, the typology can be extended, for example, by dividing generations into subcategories and by adding more fields. The present study focuses on the six fields to the right, which currently should be considered key professional fields. In this issue of *Professions & Professionalism*, we do not address occupations that have a more doubtful professional status.

[2] Karl Mannheim defines the term *generation* as a social, not a biological, phenomenon, signifying individuals "with a common location in the historical dimension of the social process" (1952, p. 290). This term refers to individuals with shared experiences and modes of thinking, similar to the influence of "class" upon individual cognition. Having a specific position in a professional field at a certain historical time period provides individuals with a generation-specific professional *Weltanschauung*.

Professions

Professions are knowledge-based occupations, where knowledge is abstract, systematic, and often esoteric (Siegrist, 2002; Torstendahl, 1991). More often than not, professions are science based (Brante, 2010). The term *science based* signifies that practices are built upon and adhere to scientifically established principles and findings. In well-functioning professions, scientific theories are "integrated" with practices and vice versa. Know-why is united with know-how when both are based on a shared model, paradigm, or *Denkstil*, a concept put forth by Ludwik Fleck (1979).

A more general or universal definition, which would also hold true in the pre-scientific era, would contend that professions are mediators and appliers of *the highest knowledge* in various social domains. There is no higher authority, no greater profound source of knowledge to which to turn. In other words, professions are *asset points* to what is regarded as higher (better, more certain, most acknowledged) theoretical principles that can be converted into practical action. Conversely, professionals *represent* higher theoretical principles.

During the pre-scientific era, professionals did indeed represent higher theoretical principles. Priests were the primary, sometimes only, asset point to the highest knowledge—that is, the words and will of God. Shamans and other knowledge elites also built their status on esoteric, secret knowledge and skills, which also characterized the practices of the masters of the medieval guilds. After the Scientific Revolution of the 17th century and the Age of Enlightenment of the 18th century, these status groups gradually lost their knowledge monopolies and occupational privileges. As a secular form of knowledge slowly started to gain ground, the professions gradually became science-based.

Ordinarily, cognitive definitions are supplemented with a set of social attributes characterizing professions. Some of the most frequent suggestions are as follows:

- Professions are organized into associations that unite members and take care of their interests. Simultaneously, associations can govern and sanction various kinds of unprofessional conduct by members.
- Associations have ethical codes included in their statutes.
- Professions control their division of labour.
- Professions have a traditionally high degree of autonomy and are collegially organized, implying that their work is difficult to control from the outside. The exclusive nature of their skills and knowledge entails that practices are discretionary; that is, professionals have a mandate to make their own choices and decisions about proper interventions (Svensson 2010
- Professions are politically constituted; the state provides them with an exclusive right to jurisdictions. Using strategies of social closure, professions seek work and knowledge monopolies.
- Professionals have been exposed to long, specialized, systematic, academic training followed by examination.

For these and more attributes, see, for example, the works by Burrage, Jarausch, & Siegrist (1990), Freidson (2001), and Grimen & Molander (2008).

Professional types

Professions have cognitive and social properties and are legitimized both cognitively and socially. Consequently, they should be analysed from cognitive and social aspects, and the dialectics between the cognitive and social properties is a crucial area of research for studies of the professions. After making this first delineation, we now take a closer look at the three generations, or professional types, mentioned in the typology. The concept of professional type refers to one, two, or a cluster of professions included in fields having evolved as answers to profound societal development and change, often together with adjacent and assistant occupations. Hence, a professional type involves several professions with some shared basic characteristics, most often developed during the same period of time and under similar social conditions.

Classic professions

Classic professions most often have their organizational origins in the 19th century. These professions arise from occupations with traditionally long university training and high status, such as physicians, engineers, architects, scientists, and lawyers. In Sweden, the Association of Physicians (*Läkarförbundet*) was constituted in 1807, the Lawyers Association (*Juridiska föreningen*) in 1849, and the Association of Engineers (*Teknologföreningen*) in 1861.

Cognitively, classic professions build on basic, generally recognized, "robust" paradigms that unite and standardize practices. At the same time, increased professional specialization tends to generate characteristic tensions between a shared, integrated cognitive base and differentiated divisions of labour. Socially, classic professions have generally been successful in "closing" their fields and jurisdictions, thereby obtaining licensing that provides work and knowledge monopolies. Their scientific capital and cultural capital have generated comparatively high social rewards (income, status, prestige, and influence). In studies of the professions, classic professions have constituted the very prototype of what a profession is, implying that the general definition of a profession is, to a great extent, a description of the classic professions. At the same time, the description, to some extent, constitutes an ideal type. Later in this article, we describe how the conditions and the autonomy of the classic professions have changed drastically in recent decades.

Semi-professions, new professions, or professions of the welfare state

During the second half of the 20th century, the development of welfare systems and higher education led to the strong expansion of a new generation of professions, which includes nurses, schoolteachers, social workers, and librarians. Since the Swedish Higher Education Reform of 1977, education programs (complete with their own research specializations, professorships, and doctoral degrees) for this "second" generation have been systematically organized and integrated into universities: nurses under nursing care science; teachers under pedagogics, didactics, and then educational science; social workers under social work research; and librarians under library science.

So what distinguishes semi-professions[3] from classic professions *at present*? From a *cognitive* point of view, the differences can be summarized as follows:

- Based on scientific knowledge and theoretical training, semi-professions are now closer in definition to the classic professions. At the same time, there is no robust, systematic, generally recognized, shared paradigm that unites practices. Rather, the disciplines/practices are multi-paradigmatic; that is, paradigm candidates linked to various opposing semi-professional groups (e.g., social workers and teachers) compete over jurisdiction and the basic *doxa*.
- Knowledge and authority are subordinated to another profession, which implies that the profession is not the primary asset point for the highest knowledge in the field (e.g., nurses).
- Semi-professional knowledge concerns, to a greater extent, the context of problems.
- For interventions and treatment, communicative methods are employed to a greater extent.

From a *social* point of view, semi-professions can presently be described and compared with the classic professions as follows (inspired by Etzioni, 1969):

- Semi-professions have less autonomy with regard to politics and bureaucratic administration as well as to other professions; they are considerably more subordinated and under greater supervision.
- Semi-professions are, to a larger extent, organized as traditional trade unions rather than professional associations.
- Semi-professions have been less successful—in some cases less interested—in "closing" their jurisdictions.
- Education is not as specialized and is, to a larger extent, interdisciplinary in semi-professions.
- Semi-professionals are greater in number, which decreases exclusivity.
- Whereas classic professions belong to the "upper-middle" class, the semi-professions belong to the "middle-middle" and "lower-middle" classes.

Because of the recently formed connections between semi-professions and university training, tensions have developed between the academic and the practical sides of their subjects. All subjects involve groups contending that it is vital to improve the theoretical base continually by expanding and intensifying

[3] It should be stressed that the concept of semi-profession is used in a value-neutral manner. There is reason to replace the concept with another one such as welfare profession or "new" profession, but this is not quite adequate either. The use of the term *value-neutral* here implies there is no assumption that classic professional practice is better or more valuable or more effective than semi-professional practice. The difference between them is analytic, not normative, merely contending that one practice is, to a greater extent, based on a robust scientific core. Employing another delineation—for instance, that professions are defined as morally conditioned "callings", where income, status, and science are subordinate aspects—would probably imply that some semi-professions constitute definitional prototypes.

research, whereas opposing groups maintain that practical experiences, or moral or political convictions, provide the basis upon which the *Denkstil* as well as future practice must rest.

Pre-professions

In recent decades, a third generation of occupational groups has attempted to obtain professional status (Ackroyd, 2012; Fournier, 1999). Newly formed expert groups provide specialized skills to public and private organizations by functioning as "flexible, knowledge-based organizations" (Duyvendak, Knijn, & Kremer, 2006). These groups have yet to obtain their associational community and social recognition in the form of certification; most often, their undertakings are not "closed."

Contemporary pre-professions operate in environments in which the welfare state has ceased to expand; these environments have instead become increasingly privatized. Government policies are more market oriented, seeking to stimulate entrepreneurship and private initiatives for the creation of new business. In contrast to the professions of the welfare state, new and emerging professions often have to create niches for themselves in the market. As Gerald Hanlon (1999) notes, the transition to neo-liberalism for many professions also entails a transition from service professions to commercialized professions.

Cognitively, pre-professions seek to develop aspects of paradigms; combine paradigms with interdisciplinary modes of thinking and acting; or use discoveries, inventions, or rationalizations to develop their own paradigm. Generally speaking, pre-professions are "preparadigmatic"; there is no clearly delineated, scientifically anchored platform, and practices are often comparatively open and fragmented. In many cases, there is no ambition to construct more abstract systems of knowledge. This lack of ambition implies that many pre-professions do not always seek to develop professionalism in the classic sense.

Currently, many pre-professions have their own occupational programs at institutes of higher learning. An overview of the fields of health and society demonstrates that in 2008, there were 248 educational programs of this type in Sweden (Olofsson, 2008).

Thus, the term *pre-professions* refers to the heterogeneous spectrum of novel occupations and expert groups presently expanding into a neo-liberal market, often accompanied by the establishment of a multitude of newly constructed courses and special training programs at universities. The following situations have led to the creation and growth of many pre-professions:

- There is an escalating demand for pre-professionals, such as computer experts, computer programmers, software experts, and systems analysts, who possess the skills needed to develop and implement new technology.
- The increasing scope and importance of the financial sector has led to a need for expertise in internationalization, marketization, and financialization. The growing importance of the stock market at national, communal, and individual levels has elevated demands for workers with financial competence (e.g., finance analysts, funding managers, accountants, insurance consultants, investment planners, capital advisers, experts in international business transfers).

- New modes of rationality in the public sector (such as New Public Management) have generated demands for various types of leadership experts, management consultants, specialist consultants.
- Advances in communication have led to a demand for workers with new communications expertise (e.g., specialized journalists, informants, managers, public relations experts, human resources consultants).
- The emergence of social problems relating to the environment, migration, and international crime has resulted in demands for developers and implementers with expertise in resolving these types of new problems.
- The development of new profitable areas such as the adventure industry, tourism, food, and wine has prompted calls for innovators in these and similar areas.
- There is a demand for innovators who capture the margins of established professional domains. These innovators include naprapaths and chiropractors, experts in herbal medicine and healing, various kinds of coaches, those who perform cosmetic surgery for beauty purposes, and certified "feel better" consultants for those seeking assistance in dealing with existential problems.
- The professionalization of older occupations in the public sector, such as the police.

Some of these endeavours will fail, whereas others will organize and form established professions, complete with their own truth regimes and fields. (It should be remembered that medicine and engineering were once pre-professions.)

Relationships among the three generations or professional types must not be understood in a linear, functional, or evolutionary manner—for instance, that classic professions come first, and the others are on their way toward achieving that target. Given time, a pre-profession may conceivably reach the highest values with regard to attributes such as status, income, and useful knowledge. Hence, the relationships among the professions might rather be depicted as a triangle.

Although the relationships among these three generations or professional types are variable and changing—and they achieve new attributes with the development of science, technology, and social rationalization—there are undoubtedly enduring differences among them. One reason for these differences is that the three generations, in their mode of organization and world-view, tend to correspond to the social formations of their origin. As Hannes Siegrist explains, professions are "specific to certain types of societies but may survive the society in which they form a structure of long duration" (1990, p. 193). Tensions arise between origins in an older social formation and the conditions of a new social formation. For instance, professions and professionals of the welfare state are presently beset by new demands, a new instrumental ethics, and modes of governance pursued by a new market-oriented regime, giving rise to occupational ambivalence.

Fields

Professions are not situated in a social vacuum but are embedded in contexts called fields. In the social sciences, the concept of field has been employed in various dissimilar ways. Most familiar is Pierre Bourdieu's use of it, in which he distinguishes among literary, scientific, juridical, bureaucratic, political, and other

fields. Although what follows is inspired by Bourdieu, there is no pretension to an orthodox reading of his theory.

According to Bourdieu and Wacquant, fields are configurations of "objective relations between positions," which are structured by "the distribution of species of power (capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field" (1992, p. 97). Fields emerge and expand as a result of struggles for symbolic or material assets; Bourdieu also calls them fields of forces, fields of struggles, and fields of power. Competition involves struggles for re-cognition and, thereby, higher positions, power, and capital within the field. Positions in a field concern not only individuals but also groups—or, for our purposes, professions.

Bourdieu stresses that struggles are not only strong characteristics of fields but also their primary defining property. However, cooperation and a functional division of labour also take place within fields. Professions cooperate with other professions, semi-professions, pre-professions, and assisting occupations within the field, as well as between fields. Even though cooperation can be the result of previous struggles, this attribute should be included in the delineation of a field. Richard Scott summarizes it well in the following description of what he calls arenas:

> Every professional arena [field] is crowded with a number of competing and/or defeated contenders who exist alongside or have settled for subordinate roles in the division of labour. In the case of medical doctors, we have such additional occupations as osteopaths, chiropractors, alternative healers, pharmacists, and, nurses, who fill a variety of parallel or subordinate functions. In addition, we have the much larger, and ever-growing cadre of semiprofessionals, allied health workers, and medical technicians. (Scott, 2008, pp. 229-230)

Occupations can be subordinated to other occupations with the understanding that the subordination is just; it is a matter of legitimate power, or authority. Thus, a professional field can comprise several professions, semi-professions, and pre-professions in cooperation and conflict. We stipulate that a field is defined as professional if it comprises at least one semi-profession.

Fields—and professions—involve a specific organization of work, of external and internal divisions of labour. They also involve collective cultures, that is, specific ways of understanding the social functions and meaning of their work. Through socialization and training, the field or profession provides individual practitioners with a specific cosmology and dispositions to act and evaluate. Consequently, fields and professions are institutionalized and routinized organizationally, culturally, and individually; fields comprise "institutionalized subjects" with work-specific habits.

Professional fields are oriented toward comprehensive values—or, in the words of Parsons, "generalized cultural values"—like health, control of the non-social environment, socialization, social control, and even beauty. Thus, fields have specific functions and tasks for the social whole, tasks that are considered to require particular skills based on lengthy education and training. Therefore, we suggest a shared name for these fields: *fields of competence.*

To summarize, professional fields of competence have the following features:

- An orientation toward generalized cultural values (with an aim to fulfil vital social functions).
- Institutionalized truth regimes.
- One (or more) *doxa*, that is, "self-evident" truth claims, notions of right and wrong.
- Power structures, cultural schema, and actors.
- One or several professions and assisting occupations.
- A division of labour and cooperation.
- Tensions, competition, and struggles between individuals, groups, and professions about positions and the *doxa* of the field, as well as about jurisdictions over the most important problem areas in the field.

Six fields of competence

In the present study, the history of six professional fields of competence is described: technology, health, social integration, social regulation, education and academia. The functions of the fields are most often obvious; the field of health involves competencies for curing and preventing illness, the field of technology includes competencies for controlling the non-social environment, and so forth. However, we must point out the following about the fields: First, the academic field is special. It is not only a field of competence in its own right but also a meta-field, serving as educator and provider of knowledge bases for the other fields. (Harold Perkin, English historian of professions, thus gives his book on academy and university lecturers the appropriate title *Key Profession* (1969). See also the article by Agevall and Olofsson in this issue of *Professions & Professionalism*.)

Second, the fields of social integration and social regulation require further elaboration. Sociologists have employed the concepts of social integration and social control to explain the classic problem of how social order is possible (or even how society is possible). Whereas consensus theorists have explained social order by emphasizing shared fundamental values based on socialization, conflict theorists have understood social order as resulting from the political, economic, and ideological dominance of one group (the elites) over other groups. Historically, integration as well as regulation and control have been provided for by families, kinship groups, tribes, churches, schools, media, and the police, that is, by means of upbringing, governance, steering and sanctions, collective taboos and norms, rules of behaviour, mores, beliefs, and values that have been impressed upon individuals. Today, both these functions have been professionalized into specialized competences and skills, based on scientific research. Because social order is also secured through socialization, school education is a third field that has social order as one of its fundamental objectives.

In the world of the professions, disturbances of social order are most often conceived at the individual level, as effects of various kinds of deviance. Aberrant behaviour, which is seen as a departure from normality, takes two main forms, criminality and mental disturbance. Correspondingly, professional work is divided into two fields, social regulation and social integration.

Consequently, the concepts of social regulation and social integration refer to two dissimilar conceptions and courses of action for restoring social order. Primarily, social regulation is carried out by exerting discipline via coercion, punishment, and separation. The state's monopoly on violence—manifested in the field of social regulation by the police, prisons, courts, judges, and lawyers as well as social workers—governs deviance by repression or threat of repression. Historically, the most common form of repression involves acts of physical violence and separation, ranging from short-term imprisonments to torture to the ultimate form of separation, execution.

The field of social integration includes occupations such as psychiatrists, psychotherapists, social workers, and treatment assistants—a group of occupations sometimes referred to as "the psy-complex."[4] In our context, integration primarily implies employing various kinds of therapies for readjusting individuals' behaviour and understanding of reality to society's preferred modes of conformity and normality.

Empirically, integration and regulation often overlap, and most institutions comprise elements of both, for instance, psychiatry of law. Regulation and control are sometimes understood as forms of integration, and integration is sometimes understood as regulation and control, for instance, in the Foucault tradition (see the dramatic quotation in the next paragraph). The field of education also has such functions (for more information about this topic, read the article by Margareta Nilsson-Lindström and Dennis Beach in this issue). The ultimate goal of reproduction of social order by seeking conformity around "normality", defined by law or psychiatry or psychology and so on, ties the fields together. Hence, the demarcations drawn between the fields are analytic, based on their different fundamental strategies for attaining (re)adjustment and regulation. Whereas integration and education primarily seek to transform individual consciousness, regulation seeks to transform the social conditions of individuals through the exercise of coercion (for further information, read the articles by Eva Johnsson and Lennart Svensson and by Kerstin Svensson and Karsten Åström in this issue).

The role of the fields as guardians of normality is nicely captured in the following quotation by Michel Foucault, in which education, integration, and regulation are linked to normalization:

> The judges of normality are present everywhere. We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the "social worker"-judge; it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based; and each individual, wherever he may find himself, subjects to it his body, his gestures, his behaviour, his aptitudes, his achievements. (Foucault, 1979, p. 304)

[4] The term *psy-complex* may refer to the various theories existing in the field, but, in this context, it is used as a label for the various occupations in the field.

Take-off

In the ensuing articles in this issue, the historical development of a number of professions and professional fields are mapped out and analysed by "starting from the beginning", that is, prior to the time a field has been formed. To identify underlying conditions, processes, causes, and mechanisms of professionalization, we seek to discern the forces that convert an occupation into a profession. Most simply put, by conducting a "before-after" analysis (from non-profession to profession), we try to explain the conditions and dynamics of such events.

A core concept for the analysis is take-off. The concept is borrowed from Walt Rostow's theory on the five stages of economic growth. In this theory, take-off signifies what can also be called a qualitative leap, for instance, the English Industrial Revolution (Rostow, 1960). In our study, take-off implies that a field, or an occupation included in the field, has a breakthrough in some sense. The concept is employed to designate a *formative moment* in history. It generates the establishment of a new, relatively enduring structure, cognitively as well as in work practice, for instance, when a new paradigm provides grounds for the evolution of one or several new professions. In the terminology of French epistemology, there is a *historical discontinuity*. Thus, a qualitative leap may involve a scientific discovery or a radically new mode of cognition, implying that theory can be united with practice in a new, more systematic and "robust" manner. In addition, it can be a product of technological innovations. Political decisions can also produce altered, propitious conditions for professionalization.

Qualitative take-offs imply deepened and radically novel knowledge for the purposes of understanding, controlling, and intervening in parts of reality, followed by demands for new occupational practices and practitioners, as illustrated in the articles by Carina Carlhed and Glenn Sjöstrand in this issue. Quantitative take-offs, which can be the results of qualitative take-offs, imply that the number of practitioners quickly increases. However, strong professional associations can oppose increases in the number of practitioners; that is, associations may seek to preserve the exclusiveness of their profession.

Professionals such as physicians, engineers, and teachers have existed since antiquity; however, their historical take-offs have occurred considerably later, through transformations implying expansion in numbers as well as social importance. Hence, take-offs can be qualitative or quantitative, or both. Furthermore, take-offs can originate as a consequence of a governmental ambition to scienticize an occupation so as to provide it with professional status and skills (for examples, see the article by Margareta Nilsson and Dennis Beach in this issue).

Take-offs are *collective* phenomena. For instance, a scientific breakthrough needs to "be taken care of" in that individuals and groups must support and propagate it; networks need to be mobilized; alliances with power holders of the state, the private sector, and academia need to be established; and opponents to a new paradigm—the traditionalists—need to be combated. [5] A discovery without the support of active advocates quickly disappears into the mists of history.

[5] One theory of many describing how this can come about is Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, exemplified by Louis Pasteur's mobilization around his own discoveries (see Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, 1988, and his more theoretical work, *Science in Action*, 1987).

To summarize so far, professions (like all occupations) have a cognitive base; however, in the case of professions, the cognitive base is linked to scientific paradigms, or, as Brint, Proctor, Murphy, and Hanneman specify it, "discovery-led innovations" (2012, p. 276)—although this is not true for all professions. A crucial social base for professions is the existence of credential-based occupational closures, which implies occupational and knowledge monopolies. Successful interplays between paradigm and closure take place in relatively autonomous fields of competence, which in turn generates strong professions.

Periodization

Our historical writings are prepared by sorting the empirical material into a number of broad and roughly hewn categories. Categorization enables a first overarching periodization, facilitating comparative analyses of the fields in line with the aforementioned methodology of George and Bennett (2005).

The periodization outlined below describes an evolutionary development and can thus be criticized for being linear. Therefore, it should be emphasized that history is, of course, full of impasses and can develop forward, backward, and sideways, which we also discuss in the articles. As Charles Tilly expresses it, "History winds and snarls like a proliferating wine" (2008, p. 122). Nevertheless, from a macro perspective, it also does come in huge chunks. For instance, the occupations and fields we describe are indeed professionalized, which they have not always been. A certain "evolution" can be discerned, thus providing some support to the periodization. Modern professions have experienced a long period of institutionalization—historical processes that we seek to identify and describe in this study.

Early history

The early history phase involves the first manifestations of the activities leading to practices. These practices are now known as professional fields—that is, undertakings by individuals and groups so as to fulfil a "generalized cultural value" (e.g., curing disease, punishing criminals).

Formation of fields

Fields begin to format when a certain division of labor has been developed and relationships involving dominance and subordination have been established. For many professions, their fields were formed during the medieval guild systems with their hierarchical order of masters, journeymen, and apprentices. The guilds constituted a kind of mini-societies, often enjoying the exclusiveness and autonomy that also characterize professions. They could create their own rules, determine products and prices, decide who would be eligible to enter the guilds, choose what was taught; that is, they controlled various aspects of organization, markets, workplace, and knowledge (e.g. Krause, 1996).

Consolidation of fields

As the restrictions of feudalism are lifted, fields start to assume more modern shapes and become institutionalized as relatively autonomous fields of competence that are increasingly based on secularized knowledge. Cognitively, the consolidation phase is characterized by the absence of a generally recognized theoretical platform that is integrated with practice. This phase can often be described as pre-paradigmatic; there is no "robust core" of shared knowledge but rather a number of theories and practices with weak internal connections.

By forming their own associations, the occupations become *constituted*, which is decisive in terms of the social aspect of consolidation. In addition to guarding and reinforcing the interests of their members, associations strengthen individual identities, a process sometimes called the transition from an "occupation-in-itself" to an "occupation-for-itself". Within the field, status hierarchies are established between occupations. The constitution of associations, which occurred in the 19th century for many classic professions, involves material as well as symbolic values. Identity formation and the development of esprit de corps are invigorated by sets of rituals and solemn ceremonies. They include rites of passage, such as the acceptance of new members to the association, celebration of special anniversaries, distribution of prizes, creation of traditions, assurances of the great social utility, elite status, and high moral worth of the tasks and practices in question.

In general, the phase of consolidation implies that a field is socially strengthened and acknowledged as a necessary social institution. Consolidation contributes to the creation of preconditions for the next step, professionalization and take-off.

Professionalization of fields

Processes of professionalization primarily imply that occupations are scienticized by means of scientific research, by the introduction of systematic education and training, by requirements of formal credentials for conducting practice, and by the quest for monopoly status and autonomy via the state. Furthermore, specialization is developed and linked to further education, and specific career paths emerge, which are connected to new qualification demands (Elzinga, 1990). Ideologies appear, stressing that the occupation is indeed a profession involving exclusive expert knowledge. Frequently, scienticization generates paradigm candidates that compete for hegemony and for the claim to represent the basic truths in the field, its *doxa*. In this phase, fields and professions become increasingly ripe for (perhaps another) take-off, in turn producing good conditions for the next phase.

Professionalized fields

A professional field may include several sub-paradigms but is clearly dominated by one basic hegemonic paradigm. Systematic research is linked to and integrated with practice, as manifested in, for example, clinical research. There is a comparatively unanimous research community, and concomitant practices are characterized by authority, autonomy, discretion, and control of internal as well as external divisions of labour. Strong professions have succeeded in closing their fields; that is, they have obtained knowledge and work monopolies. Collegiate decision making balances vertical, bureaucratic decision making. Specialization is highly developed, and social rewards are comparatively high.

De-professionalization of fields

De-professionalization implies a decrease in autonomy and discretion together with an increase in external governance concerning organization, transparency, auditing, etc. Fields and professions become controlled by other power holders in the private and public sectors; professional logic is subsumed under the logics of the market or of bureaucracy (Freidson, 2001, p. 179-196).

* * *

The historical development of fields and occupations/professions can be accounted for by several parameters. Professional mobilization and struggle is one, the progress of science and technology another, the needs and interests of the state a third, market conditions a fourth. Therefore, the contexts of professional development are of crucial importance for understanding similarities (e.g. professional types) and differences between professions. A simple, but for the writing of the histories of professions clearly significant, sketch of the transformations of social formations could start with the guild system and autocratic, absolutist states during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, followed by liberal but interventionist states of the 19th century, the construction of broad welfare-state systems in the middle of the 20th century, and neo-liberal states advocating the market as the primary mechanism for the production and distribution of goods and services in the final decades of the 20th century up to today.

Three general results

To a greater or lesser extent, the articles in this issue of *Professions & Professionalism* follow the periodization outlined in the preceding section, which therefore facilitates comparison between fields and professions. However, it is imperative that the empirical material is not forced into uncomfortable, rigid boxes. Variations, of course, exist among the articles. Primarily, the periodization is a means for comparing fields; the theoretical purpose of the articles is not the periodization per se but rather the identification of the formative moments and common denominators of professionalization. Three general conclusions can be drawn:

First, the powerful role of the state in all phases of professionalization in Sweden (as well as in the other Nordic countries and Continental Europe) is quite palpable, making our writings of the histories of our professions considerably different from Anglo-Saxon writings which place a much heavier emphasis on the professions' own activities. Furthermore, struggles between occupations are not as decisive for the successes of professions in Sweden. Rather, negotiations and contracts with the state are of crucial importance. Ordinarily, the state fulfils the roles of initiator of the formation of fields, organizer of education and training, licensor of degrees, controller, and, in several cases, the primary employer. Historically, state management and control constitute the typical pattern. In other words, professionalization processes tend to go from top to bottom in Sweden, as well as in the Nordic countries and in several countries of Continental Europe.

Second, the articles in this issue of *Professions & Professionalism* demonstrate that professionalization is a complex *process,* making it very difficult to determine a specific point in time for its occurrence. It is possible to determine when occupations are not professions and when they have reached professional status, but such transitions are drawn out, involving several cooperating factors. Such difficulties are pertinent in all historical writings, for instance, when seeking to establish dates for the initiation and completion of a political revolution. Another example is Thomas Kuhn's (1970) analysis of scientific discoveries and revolutions. In contrast to other historians of science, Kuhn argues in his analysis of the chemical revolution and the discovery of oxygen that this process spanned 40–50 years and, thus, cannot be understood as a sudden event.

Third, there are *different avenues* for becoming a profession. Technology and medicine have been based on profound scientific and technological breakthroughs, paving the way for new practices and new professions. To some extent, the new statuses of these professions at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century are the effects of negotiations with the state and attempts at occupational closure. However, they were elevated primarily because of broad and rapid social changes generated by technical and medical discoveries, necessitating professionalization and new expert knowledge.

If technology and health are based on discovery-driven innovations, another group of fields, social regulation and social integration, is primarily a product of the state's political will, decisions, and investments. In other words, it is another type of professionalization process. A third "group" includes education and the academia, both of which provide the conditions for professionalization of other fields of competence. Political decisions to increase the number of practitioners and to professionalize them constitute the basis for these fields.

Thus, there are several ways for a profession to come into existence. In our periodization, both cognitive and social criteria are used, which increases the difficulties to make clear-cut categorizations of phases. Employing only a cognitive criterion and one type of indicators—for instance, the academization of occupations—would generate a simpler kind of periodization. Employing merely social criteria and indicators—for instance, monopolization, autonomy, and control of practices—would generate another, quite dissimilar periodization. However, such procedural methods could amount to historical reductionism, which is why we instead preserve complexity.

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