



Sociology of
Professional Groups

NEWSLETTER

July 2017

RC52 Sociology of Professional Groups

Established in 1992

Objectives

To establish contacts and to encourage collaboration among scholars working in the field of sociology of occupational/professional groups throughout the world; to encourage the international exchange of research findings in the sociology of occupational/professional groups.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the RC52 President	2
Board Members	5
ISA RC52 Interim Conference	6
XIX ISA World Congress of Sociology	11
Notices	14
Forthcoming Conferences	15
Recent and Forthcoming Publications	16
ISA RC52 Blog	20
Membership	21

Letter from the President of ISA RC52

Dear Colleagues members of RC52,

I am very pleased to welcome the June 2017 issue of the Newsletter for Research Committee 52 (Sociology of Professional Groups).

Just arriving from Oslo, where ISA RC52 Interim Conference took place (8-10 June, 2017). The conference has been organised and hosted by Jens-Christian Smeby (RC52 Executive Board member) at Oslo & Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Norway. In this Newsletter you find a Report of this conference that attracted more than 100 participants from many countries – many thanks for the warm hospitality and a stimulating meeting!

We are also busily preparing for the next ISA World Congress in Toronto, Canada, July 15-21, 2018. **Call for abstracts in now open!** RC52 will contribute with 18 sessions, 3 joint sessions and a Business Meeting. Please save the deadline **30 September 2017 (24:00 GMT)** for abstract submissions via Confex platform:

<https://isaconf.confex.com/isaconf/wc2018/webprogrampreliminary/Symposium489.html>

Please also have a look at the Notices section where you can find information on forthcoming events; recent and forthcoming publications; RC52 Networks across globe; and many more. You also can follow RC52 activity on RC52 blog (researchcommittee52.wordpress.com). The blog provides news and welcomes debates and announcements on the professions and professionalism; please contact blog Administrator Lara Maestriperi (lara.maestriperi@gmail.com).

Let me take the opportunity to express my thanks to all colleagues who contribute in different ways to the achievements of RC52. We can do even better in future with more members, so anybody who is interested in ISA RC52 is very welcome; please contact RC52 Secretary/Treasurer Jens-Christian Smeby or see the subscription form at the bottom of the Newsletter.

With all the best wishes
Helena

Helena Serra
ISA RC52 President
helena.serra@fcsh.unl.pt

Carta de la Presidente del Comité RC52 de ISA

Estimados Colegas, miembros del RC52:

Me complace dar la bienvenida a la edición de junio de 2017 del Boletín del Comité de Investigaciones 52 (Sociología de los grupos profesionales).

Recién estoy llegando de Oslo, donde se celebró la Conferencia interina del ISA RC52 (8-10 de junio de 2017). La Conferencia fue organizada y conducida por Jens-Christian Smeby (miembro del Consejo Ejecutivo del RC52) en el Akershus University College de Ciencias aplicadas, de Oslo, Noruega.

En este boletín encontrará un informe de esta conferencia, que atrajo a más de 100 participantes de muchos países: ¡muchas gracias por la cálida hospitalidad y una estimulante reunión!

También afanosamente nos estamos preparando para el próximo Congreso Mundial de ISA en Toronto, Canadá, del 15 al 21 de julio de 2018. ¡La convocatoria a la presentación de resúmenes ya está abierta! Nuestro Comité, RC52, contribuirá con 18 sesiones ordinarias, más 3 sesiones conjuntas y una reunión del Comité. Por favor, tenga presente la fecha límite del **30 de septiembre de 2017 (24:00 GMT)** para las presentaciones de resúmenes (abstracts) a través de la plataforma Confex: <https://isaconf.confex.com/isaconf/wc2018/webprogrampreliminary/Symposium489.html>

Por favor, eche un vistazo a la sección de noticias, donde encontrará información sobre próximos eventos, publicaciones recientes y futuras, redes del RC52 por el mundo y mucho más. Usted también puede seguir la actividad del RC52 en el blog del Comité: researchcommittee52.wordpress.com. El blog proporciona noticias y alberga debates y novedades sobre las profesiones y el profesionalismo. Para más informaciones, por favor, póngase en contacto con la administradora del blog, Lara Maestriperi (lara.maestriperi@gmail.com).

Aprovecho la oportunidad para expresar mi agradecimiento a todos los colegas que contribuyen de diferentes maneras a los logros del RC52. Podemos hacerlo incluso mejor en el futuro, con más miembros, así que todo el mundo interesado en nuestro Comité ISA RC52 es muy bienvenido. Para inscribirse, por favor comuníquese con el Secretario/Tesorero Jens-Christian Smeby o consulte el formulario de suscripción en la parte inferior del boletín.

Con los mejores deseos,
Helena

*Translated by Javier Pablo Hermo
Member of RC52 Country Experts Advisory Group
Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina*

Lettre de la Présidente du RC52 de l'AIS

Chers et chères collègues membres du RC52

Je suis très heureuse d'annoncer la parution de la Newsletter de juin 2017 du Comité de Recherche 52 (Sociologie des Groupes Professionnels).

Nous sommes de retour d'Oslo, en Norvège, où la conférence intermédiaire du RC52 a pris place du 8 au 10 juin. Cette conférence a été organisée et hébergée par Jens-Christian Smeby (membre du bureau du RC52) à Oslo & Akershus University College of Applied Sciences. Dans cette Newsletter, vous trouverez un compte rendu de cette conférence, qui a attiré plus de cent participants de nombreux pays. Un grand merci pour l'hospitalité chaleureuse et une conférence stimulante !

Nous sommes actuellement très occupés à préparer le prochain Congrès mondial de l'AIS à Toronto, Canada, du 15 au 21 juillet 2018. **L'appel à communications est ouvert !** Le RC52 va contribuer au Congrès avec 18 sessions, 3 sessions partagées (joint sessions) et un Business Meeting. Notez bien la date limite : **30 Septembre 2017 (24:00 GMT)** pour la soumission de votre proposition de communication sur la plateforme : <https://isaconf.confex.com/isaconf/wc2018/webprogrampreliminary/Symposium489.html>

Merci de regarder aussi la section des Notices, où vous trouverez des informations sur des événements à venir, des publications récentes ou à venir, les réseaux proches du RC52 dans le monde, et beaucoup d'autres sujets. Vous pouvez aussi continuer à suivre l'activité du RC52 sur son blog (researchcommittee52.wordpress.com). Ce blog vous alimente en informations et accueille des débats et des annonces sur les professions et le professionnalisme. Merci de contacter son administratrice, Lara Maestriperi (lara.maestriperi@gmail.com).

Permettez-moi de saisir l'occasion d'exprimer ma gratitude aux collègues qui ont contribué, d'une façon ou d'une autre, aux réalisations du RC52. Nous pouvons faire encore mieux dans le futur, avec des membres plus nombreux. Toute personne intéressée par le RC52 de l'AIS est bienvenue. Merci de contacter le secrétaire du RC52 Jens-Christian Smeby ou de remplir le formulaire de souscription à la fin de cette Newsletter.

Bien à vous
Helena

*Translated by: Florent Champy
Board member of RC52*

RC52 Board 2014 - 2018

President Helena SERRA, New University Lisbon, Portugal), helena.serra@fcsb.unl.pt
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(*until 2016*)

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Virendra P. SINGH, University of Allahabad, India



ISA RC52 Interim Conference
Oslo & Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Oslo, Norway
8-10 June 2017

**Change in Professions and Professionalism –
Signs and Directions**



More than 120 participants attended the Interim Conference in Oslo. In addition to the keynote by Kevin Leicht, there were more than 100 paper presentations. The final program for the interim conference is available online (<http://www.hioa.no/Om-HiOA/SPS/Interim-Conference-of-the-ISA-Research-Committee-52-Sociology-of-Professional-Groups/Program2>).



Keynote: *Kevin T. Leicht*: The Future of Professional Work: It's not what you think.

Welcome reception Oslo City Hall

Travel grants

Four early career researchers were awarded travel grants for the conference. They are:

- Duncan Honore-Morris, University of Melbourne, Australia.
- Marco Bottura, EM Lyon Business School, France.
- Wiljan Hendrixx, Tilburg University, The Netherlands
- Alexandra Vinson, Northwestern University, United States



You find the abstracts of the papers they presented in Oslo below:

Translating public policy to professional practice: professional identity within secondary education policy reform

Wiljan Hendrikx

This paper examines the professional identity of Dutch secondary school teachers in a context of a policy paradigm shift towards 'professionalization' introducing professional registration and more professional leeway for secondary school teachers. Thereby, this paper contributes to the sociology of professions, in particular the debates on professionalism and public sector reform. Based on insights from the literatures on professionalism and teacher identity, it is argued that professional identity can be understood as a dynamic relationship between abstract self-image and workaday role and that it is a crucial element to understand how and why professionals interpret and 'enact' their tasks. Using the American 'good work' framework of *excellence*, *ethics* and *engagement* as a means to examine professional identity, a qualitative study with interviews as main method of data-collection will be conducted to examine Dutch secondary school teachers' perceptions of their professional identity empirically. Although its exact results are in this stage still unknown, this study holds two main contributions. First, it adds to our understanding of public sector reform's micro-level impact showing whether and how a policy paradigm shift towards professionalization influences the lived experience of professional identity by professionals themselves. Second, despite teachers' professional identity being well-studied in the field of teacher education, almost none of its insights are being used in the literature on professionalism. This study's focus on Dutch secondary school teachers offers the opportunity to bring these fields together, especially enriching the literature on professional identity with insights from professional identity's micro-level (re)construction in the field of teaching.

The Semiotics of the Short White Coat

Alexandra Vinson

Although it is one of the most recognizable symbols of the Western medical profession, the white coat has received relatively little attention in the sociological literature. In this paper, I argue that for junior medical students, the white coat is an indicator of medical knowledge and identity change. Past work on the relationship between medical students' knowledge and their changing professional identity portrays the acquisition of medical knowledge as an individual endeavor or as a source of conflict between medical students and more experienced doctors. This paper revisits and expands upon this theme in order to show that, while acquiring medical knowledge is a perennial problem, the process is more social than previously portrayed. The data for this paper were gathered as part of a four-year ethnography of medical education during which I followed one cohort of medical students through their training at West Coast Medical School (WCMS). The interviews and observations I focus on in this paper come from the students' first year in medical school. I found that students made complex articulations of the semantics and pragmatics of white coat wearing: where and when to wear the coat, what the coat signified in certain settings, and how this was linked to medical knowledge, peer relations, patient relations, and membership in the medical profession. These findings contribute to a more nuanced understanding of this prominent medical symbol by showing both semantic and pragmatic aspects of this artifact and how this relates to professional knowledge and membership in the early career trainee.

Institutional change and general practitioners' role in the Italian primary care system

Marco Bottura

Organizational scholars have extensively analyzed dynamics of change in professional fields (Goodrick & Reay, 2010; Reay, Golden-biddle, & Germann, 2015; Suddaby & Viale, 2011) and how dominant professions and their professional associations impeded (Micelotta & Washington, 2013) or foster change (Greenwood, Suddaby, & Hinings, 2002), in order to protect or extend their professional jurisdiction (Abbott, 1988). We focus our attention on a specific field, the primary healthcare and its pivotal but still understudied (Casebeer & Reay, 2004) profession: the general practitioner. Our study looks at the involvement of specific professional groups which proactively favor field change (Lockett et al., 2012) and on the repercussions on the organization and identity of the profession. We therefore try to answer how do professional groups proactively organize themselves to cope with contrasting field level changes?

To illustrate our theoretical idea, we look at changes in the professional identity, role and organization of the Italian general practitioner, using archival and interview data. Archival data look at the top-down change through the analysis of the six National Collective Agreements between 1978 and 2016. Field data look at the bottom-up change in a particularly innovating Local Health Authority in the Lombardy region, in which two co-operatives of physicians started to get organized in the middle '90s. Data, collected between May 2014 and October 2015, encompass 85 semi-structured interviews with 67 different professionals (33 GPs) belonging to 13 different occupational groups, focusing especially on the changing role of the Physician and on the role of the co-operative as an organizational form. We aim to end up with a process model which unifies the two types of professional change in the field

Should the criterion used by sociologists to traditionally delineate professions from occupations be equally weighted and will they remain important in the future? A Delphi survey of experts in the field.

Duncan Honore-Morris

Within the workforce of society, professions play a significant role; whether they are called professions, semi-professions, quasiprofessions or expert-occupations. Professions are a specialised form of labour and have, in sociological terms, several key criteria or characteristics that have been used to traditionally delineate them from occupations. These nine-essential criteria are: (i) theoretical esoteric expert knowledge, (ii) advanced educational requirements, (iii) reasoning and judgement, (iv) monopolistic powers, (v) exclusionary powers, (vi) professional association or colleges, (vii) fiduciary relationships, (viii) ethical standards, and (ix) professional culture.

These nine criteria, may or may not be equally weighted within 'a' profession; or for that matter in 'the' profession; and if these will remain important or lose their significance in the future. There is little in the literature to indicate what weighting should be given to each criterion. Using the Delphi technique based upon a Weberian conceptual

framework, these actualities have been sought from sociologists and other experts on professions across several countries.

In this rapidly evolving global community, professions need to adapt to societies demands. Given the changing face of the workplace, pressures to rationalise and marketise the delivery of professional services, professionals being subjugated to managerial performance controls, globalisation of professional bodies, the rise of post-industrial information societies, professional mobility, changing technology and the increasing hybridisation of professional roles; this research helps to enrich our understanding of the professions through a sociological lens.

This survey is part of my PhD studies into the sociology of the professions, education and specifically accounting education.

Jens-Christian Smeby, local conference organizer
Lara Maestriperi, photo



XIX ISA World Congress of Sociology Toronto, Canada (15-21 July 2018)

Power, Violence and Justice: Reflections, Responses, Responsibilities

Power and *Justice* have been central themes on the study of professions. Contemporary social, economic and political change, clearly challenge and enhance their relevance. Across the globe, professional work has been effected by broader social forces. New forms of professionalism have been associated to the influence of these current trends, translated in ambivalences of reducing/expanding professional power. At the same time, new arrangements of weakening/strengthening inequalities by professions are yet not clearly understood.

RC52 Program Coordinator: Helena Serra, New University of Lisbon, Portugal,
helena.serra@fcs.unl.pt

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS IS NOW OPEN!

<https://isaconf.confex.com/isaconf/wc2018/webprogrampreliminary/Symposium489.html>

Deadlines:

- **Abstract submission:** 25 April - 30 September 2017 (24:00 GMT)
- *Notification letters:* 30 November 2017.
- *Registration deadline for presenters:* 20 March 2018

Participants must submit abstracts on-line via the Confex platform - only abstracts submitted on-line will be considered in the selection process. Abstracts cannot be longer than 300 words and must be submitted in English, French or Spanish.

<http://www.isa-sociology.org/en/conferences/world-congress/toronto-2018/call-for-abstracts/>

There are 18 planned sessions, including 3 joint sessions (with RC15 and RC17) and the Business Meeting:

Professions, Power and (In)Justice

Organiser: Helena SERRA, New University of Lisbon, Portugal,
helena.serra@fcs.unl.pt

□ **Changes and Challenges in Theories and Concepts for Professions and Professionalism**

Organiser: Julia EVETTS, University of Nottingham, UK, julia.evetts@nottingham.ac.uk

□ **Professions and Power: Challenge and Change**

Organiser: Michael SAKS, University of Suffolk, UK, m.saks@uos.ac.uk

□ **Power: Exclusions and Interventions in the Professions and Professional Labour Markets**

Organisers: Debby BONNIN, University of Pretoria, South Africa, debby.bonnin@up.ac.za; Shaun RUGGUNAN, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, ruggunans@ukzn.ac.za

□ **What Is New in Professional Work? Rebuilding Professions-Organisations Ties**

Organiser: Helena SERRA, New University of Lisbon, Portugal, helena.serra@fcsb.unl.pt

□ **Beyond the Closed Shop? on the Challenges of Organising Professionals in Contemporary Societies**

Organiser: Christiane SCHNELL, Institute of Social Research at the Goethe-University Frankfurt, Germany, ch.schnell@em.uni-frankfurt.de

□ **Professions and the Grey Zone of Employment: A Blurring Frontier between Subordination and Independency. a Special Focus on Europe and Latin America**

Organisers: Christian AZAIS, Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers (CNAM), France, christian.azais@cnam.fr; Tania TOFFANIN, University of Padova, Italy, tania.toffanin@unipd.it

□ **Rise and Fall of Professional Authority**

Organiser: Lars Thorup LARSEN, Aarhus University, Denmark, lars@ps.au.dk

□ **Professional Work in a Globalized World: Migration, Cross-Bordering and Globalization of Knowledge Workers. El Trabajo Profesional En Un Mundo Globalizado: Migración, Transnacionalización y Globalización De Los Trabajadores Del Conocimiento**

Organiser: Javier HERMO, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina jphermo@gmail.com

□ **Transformation and Restructuring of Professions in Globalizing World**

Organisers: Virendra Pal SINGH, Centre for Globalization and Development Studies, IIDS, University of Allahabad, India, etdrvps@gmail.com; Parvez Ahmad ABBASI, VNSG University Surat, India, parvezabbasi@yahoo.co.in

□ **Professions and the State**

Organiser: Tracey ADAMS, University of Western Ontario, Canada, tladams@uwo.ca

□ **Varieties of Professionalism: Developing Theory through Comparative Analyses**

Organiser: Gitte Sommer HARRITS, Aarhus University, Denmark, gitte@ps.au.dk

□ **Current Challenges to Professions and Their Regulation, through Transnational Mobility and Inter-Professional Tensions**

Organisers: Jean-Luc BEDARD, TÉLUQ - Université du Québec, Canada, jean-luc.bedard@teluq.ca; Tracey ADAMS, Sociology - University of Western Ontario, Canada, tladams@uwo.ca

□ **Professionalization, Professional Ethics and Semi-Professions: Emerging Issues in Developing Countries**

Organiser: Arvind CHAUHAN, Barkatullah University, India, drarvindchauhan@gmail.com

□ **Professions in a Time of Crisis**

Organisers: Tania TOFFANIN, University of Padova, Italy, tania.toffanin@unipd.it; Christian AZAIS, Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers (CNAM), France, christian.azais@cnam.fr

□ **Creating a Sustainable and People-Centred Health Workforce: Connecting Global and Local Perspectives** (Joint Session with RC15 as host committee)

Organisers: Ellen KUHLMANN, Goethe-University Frankfurt, Germany, Kuhlmann@em.uni-frankfurt.de; Viola BURAU, Aarhus University, Denmark, viola@ps.au.dk

□ **Health Professions: Future International Directions** (Joint Session with RC15 as host committee)

Organisers: Michael SAKS, University of Suffolk, UK, m.saks@uos.ac.uk; Mike DENT, Staffordshire University, UK, mike.dent@staffs.ac.uk

□ **Professions and Professional Service Firms: Private and Public Sector Enterprises in the Global Economy** (Joint Session with RC17 as host committee)

Organisers: Michael SAKS, University of Suffolk, UK, m.saks@uos.ac.uk; Daniel MUZIO, Newcastle University, UK, Daniel.muzio@newcastle.ac.uk

□ **RC52 Business Meeting**



NOTICES

RN19 Summer School (2018)

Teresa Carvalho, Co-ordinator RN19



European
Sociological
Association

In 2018, RN19 will organise a Summer School in Portugal. The Summer School will address theoretical perspectives in the study of professions. By bringing together both early career and senior researchers, the Summer School provides unique learning opportunities to researchers in sociology of professions. This exchange of perspectives will advance our understanding of sociological theorisation of professions and foster the integration of early career researchers into our international research community. The format includes seminars, discussions of participants' research projects and master-classes on theoretical approaches to the sociology of professions.

African Network

Debby Bonnin, University of Pretoria, South Africa

A further call to those working in the area of work and professions based on the African continent or researching any aspect of the professions in Africa. We are wanting to start a network

The idea is to share experiences and work with the intention of putting together a database of researchers/academics. If you are such a researcher please do send your contact details to Debby Bonnin debby.bonnin@up.ac.za. We would particularly encourage post-graduate students researching in this area to get in touch. Please share this message to anyone who you think might be interested. We would like to grow our research network as widely as possible.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions to the *RC52 Newsletter* are very welcome. These could feature news, new developments in the field, publications, forthcoming events including conferences, report-backs. Anything that you think might be of interest to members and help fulfil the objectives of RC52.

Please email, as a word document, your contribution to the Newsletter Editor Debby Bonnin debby.bonnin@up.ac.za

Deadline for next newsletter: 12 November 2017.

Forthcoming Conferences

Pre-Conference to the 10th European Public Health Conference

Stockholm, 1 November 2017

Creating a sustainable people-centred health workforce in Europe: how to make it happen?

EUPHA Working Group 'Health Workforce Research' of HSR section in collaboration with the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, the OECD, and the WHO Regional Office for Europe, Chair: Ellen Kuhlmann

Please visit the EUPHA conference website <https://ephconference.eu/> for further information or contact Ellen (e.kuhlmann@em.uni-frankfurt.de).

Colloquium on 'A Southern African Dialogue on the Professions and Professional Work'

18-19 September 2017, University of Pretoria (South Africa)

The colloquium aims to initiate a discussion amongst scholars and practitioners on the changing nature of professions, professional work and professionalisation projects. It situates the discussion in a Southern African context specifically and a Global South perspective more broadly. Given that much of the work in this area is empirically and theoretically based in contexts outside Southern Africa and the Global South, this colloquium asks two questions 'What would a Southern African sociological project on professions and professional work look like from a theoretical, empirical and methodological perspective? Second what are policy implications of this work in the context of a developmental state? The Colloquium will be accompanied by a capacitating workshop for emerging scholars including PhD and Masters students working on the professions.

Deadline abstracts: 20 July 2017.

Contact Debby Bonnin (debby.bonnin@up.ac.za) or Shaun Ruggunan (ruggunanS@ukzn.ac.za) for more information.



European
Sociological
Association

The 13th Conference of the *European Sociology Association*
(Un)Making Europe: Capitalism, Solidarities, Subjectivities
will be held from 29 August – 1 September in
Athens, Greece

The program of “the Research Network 19 Sociology of Professions” for the 13th Congress of the European Sociology Association (Un)Making Europe: Capitalism, Solidarities, Subjectivities 13th in Athens, Greece, (Aug. 29–Sept. 1 2017) will be published in June. We received over 60 proposals to our session titled “*Professions - professionalism - professionalization and the current challenges of European societies*”. Besides this, a joint session will be held together with the Research Network 16 “Sociology of Health and Illness” titled “*Valuable health care? Curing and caring in the shadow of the social and economic crisis.*”

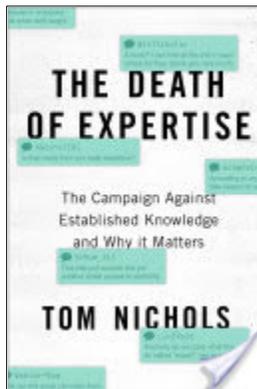
The RN19 conference coordinator is Christiane Schnell (Institute of Social Research at the Goethe-University of Frankfurt, Frankfurt/Main, Germany) Ch.schnell@em.uni-frankfurt.de

For further information please visit: www.esa13thconference.eu

Recent and Forthcoming Publications



The latest issue of the Journal of Professions and Organizations
Volume 4 Issue 1 March 2017 is available at
<http://jpo.oxfordjournals.org/content/current>



REVIEW OF: Nichols, Tom. (2017). The death of expertise: The campaign against established knowledge and why it matters. New York: Oxford University Press.

Edgar Burns, La Trobe University, Australia

This is not a review but introduces some of the issues and tropes in this recent volume. It reminds me of O'Neill's (2002) A Question of Trust. Neither authors are sociologists but each picks out an issue of great sociological importance: Nichols - contemporary active opposition and disrespect of expertise and experts; O'Neill - the burden of bureaucratic compliance that ironically problematises trust in professional functioning.

The continual use of 'America' is, I guess, up-front but bespeaks the inversion of United States particularism for universalistic claims for the case proposed. The word 'death' is also a national-local signifier - Ehrenberg (2013) observes this United States tendency to dichotomise failure and redemption as national tropes which limit analysis. Perhaps it is in the tradition of Bloom's (1987) The Closing of the American Mind - scholarly, lucid but invoking a national-cultural conservatism that holds many assumptions contemporary sociology does not.

I'm keen, nevertheless, for colleagues to read this book, as I have, for its commentary on many topics relevant to studying professions. The indictment of tertiary education, for example, makes points sociologists need to reflect upon about the production of professionals. The emphasis on generic expertise echoes Dingwall's shift over decades from a more contained definition of professions to the ubiquity and utility of technical knowledge in current society. Sociological study of professions, however, recognises this but seeks to anchor analysis in institutional and discursive forms. For instance, professions and organisations, professions in organisations, professionals as leaders of organisations, not functionalist-era professions versus organisations.

Let me unpack this point in relation to Nichol's discussion. Expertise is more than some self-evident-everywhere phenomenon. It is socially generated and applied to socially defined problems. It does not play equally to the benefit of everyone. It has national, classed, raced and gendered incarnations. Today's expertise is distinctively modern and evolving; the absence of the text's recognition of these structural elements in how knowledge is produced, controlled and distributed and for whose benefit, is a warning signal.

A late chapter covers professionals making mistakes. The sympathetic narrative cries out for, first, a distinction between generic technical expertise and, second, recognition of positioned expertise, in and servicing corporations and organisations. This would help counter naturalised expertise. This takes my comments back to the defence of expertise. My habitus, too, prefers modern expert advice in my life and for the economy,

polity and technology around me; but let's avoid projecting personal dispositions. Sociologically we must see expertise as pre-eminently a social phenomenon changing, and being changed, socio-culturally over time similarly to any other part of society.

Production of expertise and its reception and distribution will inevitably be different from previous times and places. Increasing dependence on specialisation allows new possibilities to speak to societal wellbeing, or its contrast, than pre-modern-pre-global eras and becoming more so in the digital/roboticised age. But linear change is only part of interpreting expertise. Dialectic engagement with modern expertise has been a central part of contestation for more than two centuries: Luddites, Jacksonian United States' antipathy to experts, professions attacking 'quacks', regulatory separation of business and professions, re-merging of expertise with corporate interests, professional 'knows best' v client empowerment... the counters and counter-counters are continual, endless.

On this view, challenge and rejection of expertise is not necessarily the 'death of' anything. Some things cease, other things arise; groups are differentially advantaged or disadvantaged. Combining linearity with ongoing dialectic assemblage seems a more robust sociological framing. Education, in tertiary and media-learning forms (including fiction and entertainment), democratises knowledge in the way printing, paperbacks, radio, television, internet—an endless succession—have always done. Ipso facto knowledge and expertise are positioned differently today. Granted the big issues of global environment and governance give a particular focus to the current pushback Nichols describes.

But United States' civilisational decline narratives and political pusillanimity in the face of self-interested corporations are not acknowledged as drivers of the putative death of expertise. Much more than the 'bad apple' professionals Nichols refers to, the continual organisational malfeasance and denials across the twentieth century—smoking, lead in fuel, DDT, car safety, asbestos risk, oil and coal interests, banking behaviour, the list goes on—headed by experts of those times and places, make non-expert scepticism of invested interest actually more coolly rational, beyond individual or political resistance events and social movements.

Fair enough denunciation or lamentation of mindless rejection of expertise but a larger sociological frame may be useful.

P & P PROFESSIONS PROFESSIONALISM

Professions and Professionalism (P&P) is an open-access online journal that invites research-based empirical, theoretical or synoptic articles focusing on traditional professions as well as other knowledge based occupational groups approached from any perspective or discipline. The journal creates a space for development of the research field, prioritizing no single theoretical horizon or methodological approach. All articles are peer-reviewed.

A new issue Vol 7, No 2 (2017) is out now:

Annika Lindh Falk, Nick Hopwood, Madeleine Abrandt Dahlgren: [Unfolding Practices: A Sociomaterial View of Interprofessional Collaboration in Health Care](#)

Eva Bejerot, Maria Gustavsson, Hans Hasselbladh, Tina Forsberg Kankkunen & Kerstin Ekberg: [Occupational Control on Drift—National and Local Intervention in Clinical Work at Emergency Departments](#)

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ISA RC52 Blog

The ISA RC52 blog researchcommittee52.wordpress.com has been available online for the past two years and provides a space where all those interested in professions can participate and put a step forward in the debate about professions.

PhD students and early career researchers are especially invited to participate, but the blog is open to everybody who is interested in the sociology of professions. It welcomes notices (max 1000 words) about professions in Europe and in the world, in which RC52 members and non-members can present their recent work in the field of sociology of professions and/or exchange of research findings. There are three main sections:

- **Conferences:** write about your national and international forthcoming conferences on professions
- **Publications:** present your recent books about relevant topics for RC52.
- **Debates:** introduce your research, discuss 'hot spots' in the area of professions and professionalism, propose a new debate, or search for research project collaborators.

Everybody interested in participating the blog, please send a brief summary of your idea (max 150 words) to Lara Maestriperi (l.maestriperi@gmail.com), member of the ISA RC52 Executive Board and Representative of PhD students and early career researchers.

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Membership

We strongly encourage you to rejoin RC52 and ISA when your membership is due for renewal. Do also inform your colleagues about RC52 and ask them to join RC52 so that we can increase the strength of the group. To join the ISA please visit the ISA website and register online. The regular affiliation fees for RC52 specifically are an additional USD 40 for a 4 year period:

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