



International Sociological Association



**Research Committee 52
Sociology of Professional Groups**

Newsletter December 2010

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF RC52



Welcome to the December 2010 issue of the Newsletter for Research Committee 52 (Sociology of Professional Groups). I am pleased to have coordinated the RC52 programme as President at the last World Congress in Gothenburg in July 2010, having been involved in planning the Congress since I took up office in 2008. A Congress report appears in this Newsletter – together with the notes of the RC52 General Assembly held at the Congress.

I am also delighted to announce the new Board that was elected during the Gothenburg World Congress, consisting of Charles Gadea (France - Vice President), Ivy Bourgeault (Canada), Julia Evetts (UK), Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova (Russia), Ellen Kuhlmann (Germany), Helena Serra (Portugal), Jens-Christian Smeby (Norway), Lorenzo Sperenza (Italy) and Sirpa Wrede (Finland).

I am pleased to note too that, when I complete my term as President in summer 2012, Ellen Kuhlmann has been nominated to take over as President for the next four years. Until that time she will be working with me as President-elect of RC52. Meanwhile, Jens-Christian Smeby has kindly agreed to become Secretary and Treasurer to the Group.

Thanks are due to current and previous Board members for taking RC52 to such a strong position, with close to a hundred members now drawn from over twenty-five countries – one of the larger International Sociological Association Research Committees. I would ask members of RC52 to encourage new members to join to add further to its size and diversity. Guidance on how to join the ISA and RC52 appear later in this Newsletter, as well as other matters of interest to readers.

With very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year

Mike

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Provost and Chief Executive, University Campus Suffolk
& President of RC52 (Sociology of Professional Groups)
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XVII ISA WORLD CONGRESS OF SOCIOLOGY

SOCIOLOGY ON THE MOVE
LA SOCIOLOGIE EN MOUVEMENT
LA SOCIOLOGÍA EN MOVIMIENTO

11-17 JULY, 2010
GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN



REPORT ON ISA WORLD CONGRESS, GOTHENBURG, 2010

The 2010 Congress in Gothenburg, Sweden proved to be a great success, following on from the 2006 World Congress in Durban, South Africa. The sessions organized by RC52 again were part of a much wider event, with several thousand participants from all over the globe.

The RC52 Group organized the following lively and well-attended sessions, comprising some 86 papers from 24 countries selected from almost twice as many submissions:

- Globalization and the Professions
- Professions, Regulation and the Public
- Challenges to Professional Competence
- Professional Identities on the Move
- Professions: Social Integration and Differentiation
- Professionalism, Social Theory and the Cultural Sphere
- Remaking the Health Professional Workforce*
- Université, profession et professionnalisation dans la société de connaissance
- Gender and the Professions
- Reconnecting Professional Organizations with Professional Occupations*
- Vingt ans de développement de la sociologie francophone des groupes professionnels. Quels changements?
- Knowledge Workers in the Knowledge Society

Amongst these were the two (asterisked) joint double sessions with RC15 (Sociology of Health) and RC17 (Sociology of Organizations) respectively.

Participants had the opportunity to catch up with many friends and colleagues at the Congress – not least at the RC52 dinner. Mike Saks also had the pleasure as President of playing a part in formulating future policy at the ISA Research Committee and in electing the new President of the International Sociological Association, Michael Buroway, and associated officers.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ISA RC52,
GOTHENBURG, 16 JULY 2010
NOTES**

1. Welcome

Members were welcomed to the meeting. Thanks were given to the many members who attended.

2. Minutes of the last meeting in Oslo on 13 September 2008

The minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising

There were no substantive matters arising.

4. RC52 update

It was noted that the 2006-10 RC52 Overview Report had been submitted to the ISA. This was circulated to the members present.

The main highlights were the growth in membership from an increasing range of countries under the Presidency of Charles Gadea (2006-08) and Mike Saks (2008-10). The Board had met on four occasions in the period 2006-10.

RC52 members had organized a wide range of international conferences, in addition to participating in the fourteen RC52 sessions organized at the ISA World Congress in Gothenburg. Many publications, including in themed journal issues, had also been produced by RC52 members – with the most recent RC52 Newsletters appearing in July 2009 and March/April 2010.

It was finally reported that a number of national groups on the sociology of professions had been formed – including in France, Germany, Portugal and Russia – and that RC52 was in sound financial shape.

5. Arrangements for 2010 World Congress

Participants complimented the organizers of the 2010 ISA World Congress on the smooth arrangements in relation to the RC52 sessions and more generally.

6. ISA membership developments

It was noted that membership of RC52 was running at close to one hundred. The level of membership had important implications in terms of the level of grant awarded and the number of sessions allocated at World Congresses – and was likely to become even more important.

It was noted that it was therefore still important to attract new members. The fee levels for joining the ISA and life membership were discussed.

7. 2012 Interim Conference

The 2012 RC52 interim conference was considered. It was agreed that it would be held at University Campus Suffolk in Ipswich, UK, at a date to be determined – depending on when the wider Interim ISA Conference was to be held for that year. A number of potential topics for the interim conference were discussed. The Board would consider the suggestions and take this forward.

8. Planning for Japan

The Assembly was alerted to the fact that the next ISA World Congress would be held in Yokohama in Japan (www.isa-sociology.org/congress2014). Preparations for this Congress will take place in due course, drawing on pre-existing networks in Japan as appropriate

9. Journal developments

It was noted that the future publication of Knowledge, Work and Society had been deferred for a variety of reasons, including difficulties with the French publisher, and consideration was being given by Charles Gadea to an online edition. Mike Saks and Julia Evetts meanwhile were exploring the possibilities of a new journal on the professions with Routledge and Emerald respectively.

10. Junior Researcher Award

It was agreed that the Junior Researcher Award should be pursued now that the ISA organizational barriers were easier to negotiate.

11. Election of new RC52 Board

It was reported from the RC52 Board that Mike Saks (President) and Charles Gadea (Vice President) will remain on the Board as of right. It was agreed by the Board that Julia Evetts as a previous President and Vice President of RC52 should also stay on the Board for another term. Sirpa Wrede, President of RN19 (Sociology of Professions) of the European Sociological Association, has been co-opted on to the Board to facilitate links between the two groups.

Elections were held for the other six positions on the Board. Votes for candidates were as follows: Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova 20; Jens-Christian Smeby 19; Ivy Bourgeault 19; Helena Serra 16; Ellen Kuhlmann 15; Lorenzo Speranza 11; Marc Zune 9; Gilles Verpraet 7; Luisa Veloso 3.

Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova (Russia), Jens-Christian Smeby (Norway), Ivy Bourgeault (Canada), Helena Serra (Portugal), Ellen Kuhlmann (Germany) and Lorenzo Speranza (Italy) were declared duly elected.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Date of next meeting

The next General Assembly meeting was planned to be held at the interim conference in 2012.

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

Call for Papers

European Sociological Association Conference on Social Relations in Turbulent Times

Geneva, 7-10 September 2011:

Research Network 19 (Sociology of Professions):

Whither Professions and Professionalism in Turbulent Times?

Globalizing societies are experiencing diverse forms of turbulence, causing diverse and differentiating processes of change concerning both the structure of professional occupations and the discourses of professionalism. There are transformatory changes occurring in the formal institutions that regulate, order and organize professional work. At the same time, the cultures of work worlds as well as professional identities are changing. Questions engaging researchers include: How do these turbulent times affect the contents of professional work? How does social, political and economic turbulence impact professional discretion? Despite the complex changes it is clear, however, that professions continue to be called upon to play important roles in the management of different kinds of turbulence. Sociologists who study professional occupations and professionalism are in the position to examine and make sense of the new trends that concern the object of their research. They are able to shed light on whether professions in turbulent societies can be seen as troubleshooters or troublemakers, paying attention to the social processes where these social roles are negotiated. Possible session foci include:

- Social insecurity and uncertainty: mobilising professional services and professionalising groups
- Professionalism as a mode of governing in turbulent times
- Reconfigurations of professional work and professionalism
- 'Boundary crossing': professions and management
- Professional knowledge, ethics and integrity in turbulent times
- Innovating the public sector: remodeling professional occupations and organizations
- New inequalities within professional groups and professional systems
- Intersecting 'turbulences' in the globalising professional workforce: gender, race/ethnicity and place
- Shaping of professional selves in turbulent times
- Professional careers and turbulent professional labour markets
- Public sector professions and changing governance
- Remodeling the health professional workforce (joint session with RN16 Health)

We invite papers addressing these and other issues related to changes in professionalism and professional groups either in a single country or occupation or in a comparative perspective. We especially encourage submissions from PhD students. Submission of the abstract will only be possible through the abstract submission platform of the conference. Abstract submission will open on the 10 January 2011 and close on the 25 February 2011. See <http://esa10thconference.com/submission.php>. For information about the conference go to <http://esa10thconference.com/> where the abstract requirements will be available.

**Sirpa Wrede
Ellen Kuhlmann**

Call for papers
European Sociological Association Conference, 7-10 September 2011, Geneva
Research Stream: The tacit-knowing approach –
An epistemological foundation for the exploration of professional practice?

During recent decades the concept of tacit knowing – and of course other related concepts such as implicit knowledge, know-how, or knowing-in-action – has spread among various scientific communities and found often application in professional and educational research. It has probably been successful because it indicates the complex dimension of any human skill and intelligence. However, its theoretical elaboration has been less intensive and was mainly focused on its historical origins, for instance in the works of Michael Polanyi, John Dewey, Gilbert Ryle, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, in the late philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein and recently in Pierre Bourdieu's praxeological approach.

This research stream aims to offer a forum for presentations related to recent developments theoretical elaboration on this topic as well as for presentations of empirical applications of the tacit-knowing-approach and its methodological challenges. The call for papers therefore invites scholars to send papers:

1. that will improve our understanding of tacit knowing: central concepts of epistemology of practice such as “experience”, “intentionality”, “practical reasoning”, “knowledge”, “skills”, “ability” and “competence” are interrelated. Their meaning and usage in empirical studies are not always clear; sometimes semantic contradictions appear due to basic misconceptions and misunderstandings. At the same time a purely theoretical interpretation of these concepts and their reciprocity without any empirical evidence will probably fail to illuminate the semantic complexity and ambiguity of tacit knowing.
2. that reveal the methodological challenges and the particularities of the applications (i.e. case studies) of the tacit-knowing approach: empirical research in professional practice, teaching and learning processes in education often construes tacit knowing as an elusive phenomenon. Indeed, it is elusive or intangible since by definition it is not represented by symbolic systems, in other words it is entirely incorporated in action. Thus there is an inherent challenge for any empirical study of tacit knowing.

Research Stream Conveners

Tasos Zembylas (zembylas@mdw.ac.at) and Christiane Schnell (ch.schnell@em.uni-frankfurt.de). This research stream has been submitted in cooperation with the Research Network Sociology of Professions – RN19.

Instructions

We invite abstracts of approximately 300 words. Please submit your abstract using the online abstract submission form at <http://esa10thconference.com> that will be available from the 10 January to 25 February 2011. The deadline for notification of acceptance of abstracts is 6 April 2011. Full papers should be submitted by 15 July 2011 (not mandatory). Further instructions and guidelines are on the conference website.

Christiane Schnell

Call for papers
International Labour Process Conference, Leeds, UK, 5-7 April 2011
(Re)organizing professional work:
The power of processes

Chairs

Prof Mirko Noordegraaf (Utrecht University)
Prof. Stephen Ackroyd (Lancaster University)
Prof Ian Kirkpatrick (University of Leeds)
Dr Justin Waring (Nottingham University)

Rationale

In recent years, there has been a marked increase in the number of studies focusing on professionals, professional work and professional services, not only in Anglo-Saxon countries, but also in continental Europe and other parts of the world. This both reflects and feeds attempts to develop few forms of professionalism and professional organization in both the private and the public sector. In particular the last 20 years or so have witnessed some radical changes to the structure and labour process of a number of professions whilst professionals themselves have been agents of broader patterns of economic and institutional change participating to the re-regulation of key institutions and practices within the political economy. However, scholarly work on the professions currently suffers from a number of shortcomings.

Theoretical approaches and research on the professions are often unconnected. Attempts to understand the professions as social groups or occupations, for example, make little reference to studies of the organizational aspects of professionalism. Insights on professional education, to name another example, are unconnected to understandings of managerial changes inside service organizations. Similarly, research focusing on the innovative capacity of professions and more broadly on the management of professional organizations has not always paid sufficient attention to the institutional underpinnings of professional work. Labour process analysts have, so far, been as guilty of this as many others. To the extent that they have analysed professional services at all, they have tended to make the professional labour process the exclusive concern and they have focused on one professional service at a time.

Key assumptions made about the professions can be accused of having certain 'mythical' aspects. There is a tendency, for example, to draw upon classic notions such as autonomy, control and power (coming from classical studies on professionalism and/or traditional labour process analyses). Yet these notions are rather sterile and outdated when applied to changing professional work in contemporary organisations. Indeed, much of the literature is characterised by a strong sense of nostalgia and a bias either against organizations and managers (who undermine professional freedom), or against irresponsible professionals who have too much autonomy.

In this stream we would like to encourage submissions of and to discuss papers that adopt different approaches. Specifically our aim is to draw connections between different theoretical perspectives and bodies of thought in order to stimulate an enhanced and more nuanced empirically grounded understanding of present-day professional work, and the restructuring of professional work within the broader political economy, as well as papers reflective on the understandings we have about how we analyze professional work.

We especially favour papers that focus on processes of change in the professions over time. By this we do not mean we simply wish to see more papers that discover (or discover more about) the professional labour process in different services, but papers which uncover new processes and make links with labour process ideas or other existing knowledge across theoretical and disciplinary boundaries. The main aim is to encourage papers which analyze how professional work is changing, and how professional relations, practices, power structures and boundaries are in the process of being reconfigured and for what reasons. By focusing on processes, the analysis of professional work and its implications for practices might itself become more adequate and influential.

Research themes

- More specifically, papers might focus on the following research themes:
- Developments in the labour process of professional firms and organizations
- The organizational re-stratification of professional work
- Accountability and control in/around professional work
- New boundaries in organizational and professional domains
- Relations between professionals and managers
- Changing ideologies and discourses of professional practice
- Conflicting professional loyalties and identities
- Professional teams and cooperation
- Professional education and implications for professional work
- Client and media pressures on professional work
- The role of professionals and professional organizations in broader economic practices and processes

Further information

For further information about the conference, please see:

<http://www.ilpc.org.uk/Portals/56/ilpc2011-docs/ilpc2011-callforpapers.pdf>. The deadline for abstracts is the end of December 2010. Please send these to: m.noordegraaf@uu.nl.

OTHER CONFERENCES/EVENTS

An international workshop on 'Qualifying for professional careers' was organized by Jens-Christian Smeby in Oslo on 13-15 December 2010. The 25th Conference of the Nordic Sociological Association is also to be held in Oslo on 4-7 August 2011, which has a track on 'Occupations and Professions', chaired by Jens-Christian Smeby.

There will be a European Sociological Association PhD workshop at the 10th ESA Conference in Geneva on 5-6 September 2011. Please visit the ESA Conference website for further information (<http://esa10thconference.com/>) or contact the PhD workshop organizers: Ellen Kuhlmann (e.c.kuhlmann@bath.ac.uk) and/or Elina Oinas (eoinas@abo.fi).

NOTICE OF PUBLICATIONS

Books

Anémone Kober-Smith Le système de santé anglais à l'épreuve des réformes managériales, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010.

Ellen Kuhlmann and Ellen Annandale (eds) Gender and health care, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Lennart Svensson and Julia Evetts (eds) Sociology of professions: Continental and Anglo-Saxon traditions, Daidalos, 2010.

Journals

The latest issue of the journal Comparative Sociology (Vol. 9, No. 6, 2010) is focused on the sociology of the professions. It contains the following articles:

- David Sciulli: Why Professions Matter: Structural Invariance, Institutional Consequences
- Vittorio Olgiate: The Concept of Professions Today: A Disquieting Misnomer?
- Thomas Brante: Professional Fields and Truth Regimes: In Search of Alternative Approaches
- Mike Saks: Analyzing the Professions: The Case for the Neo-Weberian Approach.

We have also been alerted by Daniel Muzio that two special issues of journals are in production on the professions. These are for the following journals: Gender, Work and Organization - Gender, diversity and inclusion in professions and professional organizations and Journal of Management Studies - Professions and institutional change.

Please note too that the most cited/downloaded paper in Current Sociology and International Sociology in recent years has been Julia Evett's paper in International Sociology on 'The Sociological Analysis of Professionalism: Occupational Change in the Modern World'. This is great news for Julia – as well as for the sociology of professions for the profile of our discipline.

OBITUARY: DAVID SCIULLI

It is a cause for great regret to announce that David Sciulli, Professor of Sociology at Texas A & M University in the USA, passed away in September 2010. Born in 1950 in Amherst, Ohio, David will be remembered for many things by colleagues – not least for his passionate interest in, and support for, the sociology of professions.

David gained his PhD in Political Science in 1983 and subsequently taught at the University of Wisconsin, University of Michigan, Georgetown University and the University of Delaware. He then accepted a tenured professorship at Texas A&M University.

He was a prolific writer dedicated to achieving the highest standards, whose contribution to the field of sociology is much respected. He was the author, co-author and editor of some fifty books, articles and other publications on the social impact and interaction of culture, professions, law, and political theory.

David served on the Board of the ISA and was Editor-in-Chief of Comparative Sociology and International Studies in Sociology. He participated in many ISA conferences – most recently that organised by RC52 in September 2008 in Oslo in Norway, which was the last of his many academic trips abroad.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL AND DEVELOPMENT

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 – of which there are currently 96 members.

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:

<https://secured.com/~f3641/formisa.htm>

Individual ISA membership is open to scholars and professionals of sociological teaching, research or practice. At present there are some 4,300 members from over 150 countries. Benefits:

- Subscription to ISA journals Current Sociology and International Sociology.
- The Directory of Members.
- Reception of isagram, an electronic newsletter containing announcements of the forthcoming conferences, calls for papers and manuscripts, prizes and competitions.
- Access to e-bulletin, ISA on-line publication.
- Access to the Sage Full-Text Collection which includes 31 journals with more than 12,500 articles.
- 35% discount on Sage Publications books.
- Special subscription rates to journals offered by various publishers.
- A reduction in registration fees at the ISA World Congress of Sociology.

All members may participate in the meetings of the ISA and its Research Committees – and Working and Thematic Groups upon paying an affiliation fee.

To apply for membership, submit an

- [electronic membership or renewal form](#)
- [membership form in pdf format](#)

or write to ISA at isa@isa-sociology.org

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If you change your email or postal address, please do not forget to contact us by email. Updated details should be sent to m.saks@ucs.ac.uk, copy to Jens-Christian.Smeby@hio.no.



**Happy Christmas and New Year to all recipients
of this Newsletter!**