

Current Sociology Monographs Series

Special Issue: “Professionalism beyond the Global North: a space for new theoretical developments”

Call for Papers

This special issue invites papers that advance sociological research on professions, professionalism and expertise in the Global South—broadly defined to include Africa, Asia, Latin America, as well as Southern/Eastern Europe, and Oceania. As with other fields within the social sciences, scholarship on professions has largely been grounded in a Western-centric perspective. Not only did the earliest studies emerge with a distinctly Anglo-American focus, but the classical theoretical approaches that continue to organize the field today were largely developed to make sense of societies in the Global North. While these approaches have undoubtedly proven useful for studying other regions of the world, they have not been free of biases. They have often treated characteristics specific to professional groups in certain (northern) regions as if they were universal, and have also tended to overlook important factors shaping professions simply because they were less influential—or visible—in the contexts for which they were originally conceived. This narrowing of focus has constrained both the scope and potential of the field.

As postcolonial perspectives have argued (Connell, 2007; Go, 2016; Svampa, 2016), examining the diverse realities of the Global South can introduce new themes and research avenues, while also fostering broader frameworks that mitigate underlying Western biases. Moreover, studying professionalism and expertise in the Global South can help to challenge “methodological nationalism.” After all, in peripheral economies—where professions were largely shaped by colonialism and, later, by globalization and neo-imperialism (Bonnin & Ruggunan, 2019; Chorev & Schrank, 2017)—experts often looked outward, whether in search of inspiration, training, or material support. In this context, the “illusion of autarky” (Heilbron, 2015)—the notion that each national society develops largely autonomously—was far less applicable (Blois, 2020). This insight is especially relevant today, in a world where digital technologies increasingly blur the boundaries between professional systems and reshape the global division of expert labor (Bellini & Maestriperi, 2023).

This special issue aims to bring together contributions that address the current state and evolution of professions, professionalism, and expertise in the Global South. We believed that expanding the spatial scope of inquiry can help reinvigorate scholarship on expert work—a field that, as many observers have argued (Bellini & Maestriperi, 2023; Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2011; Mieg & Evetts, 2018; Muzio et al., 2019; Noordegraaf, 2020), is in urgent need of renewal. A more robust and sustained dialogue between scholars from the North and South can, in this vein, foster a sociological “global imagination” (to use C. Wright Mills’ formula) that offers new conceptual lenses for the study of expert work in the contemporary world.

We welcome papers that address one or more of the following topics:

- Processes of differentiation within professions: working conditions, autonomy,

diversification, intersectionality, precariousness, intraprofessional conflicts, etc.

- Processes of differentiation between professions: conflict of jurisdiction, processes of professionalization, international relationships, professional mobility/migrations, etc.
- The impact of professionalism beyond professional groups: their role as “lords of the dance” of individuals and organizations, their activism, their influence on the design of policies, etc.
- Technological changes (digitalization, automation, platform economy, etc.) and their impact on established and emerging professions in the Global South.
- State intervention and its impact on the consolidation or weakening of professions, considering the rising global spread of market-oriented ideologies and New Public Management.
- Professional identities and professional enclaves (and their intersection with class, gender, and race) in different world regions.
- Professions and globalization: the transnational division of expert labor and its effects on the emergence and crisis of professional groups.
- The international circulation of experts and the production of expertise *vis-à-vis* the role of the local and international professional associations.

Abstracts should clearly outline the significance of the proposed article within the framework of the special issue, specify the theoretical background, research design and methods, and present the main results. Please note that generic or incomplete proposals will not be considered.

Important dates

- Abstract deadline: November 10, 2025 (minimum 500 words)
- Full paper submission: March 15, 2026 (maximum 7,000 words, including bibliography)

Please follow all submission guidelines for *Current Sociology Monographs*. When submitting your manuscript, please indicate that the paper is intended for the special issue on “Professionalism beyond the Global North: a space for new theoretical developments.” For further information, authors are encouraged to contact the special issue editors:

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