Chapter 2
The Concept of Professionalism: Professional Work, Professional Practice and Learning

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Abstract For a long time, the sociological analysis of professional work has differentiated professionalism as a special means of organizing work and controlling workers and in contrast to the hierarchical, bureaucratic and managerial controls of industrial and commercial organizations. But professional work is changing and being changed as increasingly professionals (such as doctors, nurses, teachers, social workers) now work in employing organizations; lawyers and accountants in large professional service firms (PSFs) and sometimes in international and commercial organizations; pharmacists in national (retailing) companies; and engineers, journalists, performing artists, the armed forces and police find occupational control of their work and discretionary decision-making increasingly difficult to sustain.

The paper begins with a section on defining the field of professional work, professional practice and its learning. The paper continues with a second section on the concept of professionalism, its history and current developments. The third section of the paper considers the changes, challenges and opportunities of the practice of professional work within employing organizations. The fourth section of the paper identifies some of the important contributions made by researchers on professional work to public policy developments, assessment and evaluation.

Keywords Professionalism • Professional work • Professional practice • Learning

For a long time, the sociological analysis of professional work has differentiated professionalism, as a special means of organizing work and controlling workers, and in contrast to the hierarchical, bureaucratic and managerial controls of industrial and commercial organizations. Change is a constant feature of professional work but the speed and prominence of change is growing as increasingly professionals

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(such as doctors, nurses, teachers, social workers) now work in employing organizations; lawyers and accountants in large professional service firms (PSFs) and sometimes in international and commercial organizations; pharmacists in national (retailing) companies; and engineers, journalists, performing artists, the armed forces and police find occupational control of their work and discretionary decision-making increasingly difficult to sustain (Adler et al. 2008; Brante 2010; Champy 2011). How, then, are current changes affecting perceptions of professionalism, professional practice and learning?

There also have been a number of policy and societal developments and changes, and increased complexities in the contexts and environments for professions. This makes it necessary to look again at the theories and concepts used to explain and interpret this category of occupational work. Some long-established differences are becoming blurred. For example, there is no longer a clear differentiation between the public and the private sectors of professional employment. Private funding is now operational in public sector work places and PPP (public/private partnerships) (e.g. in schools, universities and hospitals) enables the promotion of new capital as well as other policy developments (Farrell and Morris 2003; Kuhlmann 2006).

Another complication and variation is the increased emphasis on and calls for professionalism in the voluntary sector, charities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Langer and Schrőer 2011). Wherever trust, transparency and accountability need to be demonstrated, then increased regulation, audit and assessment seem to follow (e.g. social work and aid agencies, national and international). In addition, there is wider accessibility to internet knowledge which renders the importance of professional and expert, tacit and experiential knowledge and expertise more open to challenge (Olofsson 2009; Verpraet 2009).

The role of the nation-state, has always been critical in theorizing about professions and, in particular, differentiating between Anglo-American and European systems of professions (Burrage and Torstendahl 1990a, b). The role of the nation-state had been seen to be paramount because states had granted legitimacy, for example, by licensing professional activity, setting standards of practice and regulation, acting as guarantor of professional education (not least by giving public funds for academic education and scientific research), and by paying for services provided by professional experts and practitioners. But the internationalization of markets required the reconceptualization of traditional professional jurisdictions. In addition, the increased mobility of professional practitioners between nation-states necessitated recognition and acceptability of other states licensing, education and training requirements (Evetts 2008; Orzack 1998). Again, the convergence of professional systems and of regulatory states has required the reconceptualization as well as new theoretical and interpretational developments in the sociology of professional occupational groups (Brint 2006; Noordegraaf 2007; Svensson and Evetts 2003, 2010).

The chapter begins with a section on defining the field of professional work, professional practice and its learning. Three concepts (profession, professionalization and professionalism) will be identified and explored. The difficulties associated with the concepts of profession and professionalization will be indicated and

the advantages of the concept of professionalism will be explained. The chapter continues with a second section on the concept of professionalism, its history and current developments. Three phases will be identified: an early phase which defined professionalism as an occupational or normative value; a second negative phase of critique when professionalism was dismissed as ideological and promoted in the interests of professional practitioners themselves; the third phase which constitutes a reappraisal and a return to professionalism and combines both the ideological critique and the normative value interpretations of professionalism. In this third phase professionalism is defined as a discourse, used by managers in organizations, and reclaimed as an important and distinctively different way of organizing service sector work, which is in the best interests of customers and clients as well as practitioner workers themselves. Professionalism, like professional work and learning, is changing and being changed particularly in the organizational contexts in which practitioners currently practice.

The third section of the chapter considers the changes, challenges and opportunities of the practice of professional work within employing organizations. The need to reconnect professional occupations and professional organizations will be identified and the challenges this presents to professionalism as a normative value, which implies occupational control of the work practices and procedures, will be explained. The opportunities presented for professional practitioners working in organizations will also be discussed.

The fourth section of the chapter identifies some of the important contributions made by researchers on professional work to public policy developments, assessment and evaluation. The idea of professionalism as an occupational and normative value can be linked with public policy concerns about competences at all levels of occupational work. Perhaps the reclaiming and recreation of professionalism in work and occupations will be one of the most important tasks for policy makers and practitioners over the next few years.

2.1 Defining the Field and Clarifying Concepts

The concept of profession is much disputed (Sciulli 2005 and Evetts' 2006 response) and this is a difficulty for defining the field of professional work, professional practice and professional learning. For a period in the 1950s and 1960s, researchers shifted the focus of analysis onto the concept of profession as a particular kind of occupation, or an institution with special characteristics. The difficulties of defining the special characteristics and clarifying the differences between professions and other occupations (particularly other expert occupations) troubled analysts and researchers during this period (e.g. Greenwood 1957; Etzioni 1969; Wilensky 1964). It is generally the case, however, that definitional precision is now regarded more as a time-wasting diversion, in that it did nothing to assist understanding of the power of particular occupational groups (such as law and medicine, historically) or of the contemporary appeal of the discourse of professionalism in all occupations (Champy 2009). To most researchers

in the field (e.g. Brint 2001; Olgiati et al. 1998; Sciulli 2005) it no longer seems important to draw a hard and fast line between professions and occupations but, instead, to regard both as similar social forms which share many common characteristics (Olofsson 2009).

Hughes (1958) was probably the first sociologist to argue that the differences between professions and occupations were differences of degree rather than kind. For Hughes not only do professions and occupations presume to tell the rest of their society what is good and right for it, but also they determine the ways of thinking about problems which fall in their domain (Dingwall and Lewis 1983: 5). Professionalism in occupations and professions implies the importance of trust in economic relations in modern societies with an advanced division of labour. In other words, lay people have to place their trust in professional workers (electricians and plumbers as well as lawyers and doctors) and some professionals must acquire confidential knowledge. Professionalism, therefore, requires those working as professionals to be worthy of that trust, to put clients first, to maintain confidentiality and not use their knowledge for fraudulent purposes. In return for professionalism in client relations, some professionals are rewarded with authority, privileged rewards and high status. Subsequent analysis has interpreted high rewards to be the result of occupational powers rather than professionalism, but this was one result of the rather peculiar focus on medicine and law as the archetypal professions in Anglo-American analysis, rather than a more realistic assessment of the large differences in power resources of most occupational groups (Freidson 1983; Hanlon 1999; Johnson 1992).

The comparative work of Hughes, and his linking of professions and occupations, also constitutes the starting point for many micro level ethnographic studies of professional socialization in work places (e.g. hospitals and schools) and the development (in new) and maintenance (in existing) workers of shared professional identities. This shared professional identity (which has been a major research focus for French researchers) is associated with a sense of common experiences, understandings and expertise, shared ways of perceiving problems and their possible solutions. This common identity is produced and reproduced through occupational and professional socialization, by means of shared educational backgrounds, professional training and vocational experiences, and by membership of professional associations (local, regional, national and international) and institutes where practitioners develop and maintain a shared work culture.

One result of all these factors is similarities in work practices and procedures, common ways of perceiving problems and their possible solutions, and shared ways of perceiving and interacting with customers and clients. In these ways the normative value system of professionalism in work, and how to behave, respond and advise, is reproduced at the micro level in individual practitioners and in the work places in which they work (Abbott 1988; Hughes 1958). Some of the differences in occupational socialization between occupations have been identified, but the general process of shared occupational identity development via work cultures, training and experience was regarded as similar across occupations and between societies. Research into occupational identities has been prominent in

French analyses (e.g. Dubar 2000) because the rather peculiar emphasis on occupational privileges and powers, in Anglo-American research, has had less influence on the definition of the field in France.

Many researchers focus on a particular case study professional/occupational group and handle the definitional problem in different ways. Some avoid giving a definition of profession and instead offer a list of relevant occupational groups (e.g. Hanlon 1998 claimed to be following Abbott 1988). Others have used the disagreements and continuing uncertainties about precisely what is a profession, to dismiss the separateness of the intellectual field, although not necessarily to dispute the relevance of current analytical debates. Crompton (1990), for example, considered how paradoxes and contradictions within the sociological debates about professions actually reflected wider and more general tensions in the sociologies of work, occupations and employment.

For most researchers, professions are regarded as essentially the knowledge-based category of service occupations which usually follow a period of tertiary education and vocational training and experience. A different way of categorizing professions is to see them as the structural, occupational and institutional arrangements for work associated with the uncertainties of modern lives in risk societies. Professionals are extensively engaged in dealing with risk, with risk assessment and, through the use of expert knowledge, enabling customers and clients to deal with uncertainty. To paraphrase and adapt a list in Olgiati and colleagues (1998), professions are involved in birth, survival, physical and emotional health, dispute resolution and law-based social order, finance and credit information, educational attainment and socialization, physical constructs and the built environment, military engagement, peace-keeping and security, entertainment, the arts and leisure, religion and our negotiations with the next world.

In general, however, it no longer seems important to draw a hard definitional line between professions and other (expert) occupations (see Svensson and Evetts 2003). The operational definition of profession can be highly pragmatic. The field includes the study of occupations which are predominantly service sector and knowledge-based and achieved sometimes following years of higher/further education and specified years of vocational training and experience. Sometimes professional groups are also elites with strong political links and connections, and some professional practitioners are licensed as a mechanism of market closure and the occupational control of the work. They are primarily middle-class occupations sometimes characterised as the service class (Goldthorpe 1982).

In sociological research on professional groups, three concepts have been prominent in the development of explanations: (i) profession, (ii) professionalization, (iii) professionalism. The concept of profession represents a distinct and generic category of occupational work. Definitions of 'profession' have been frequently attempted but sociologists have been unsuccessful in clarifying the differences between professions and other occupations and identifying what makes professions distinctive. Definitions of professions as institutional remain unresolved though particular generic occupational groups continue to form the case studies in which to examine and test sociological theories and explanations.

The concept of professionalization is regarded as the process to achieve the status of profession. It has been interpreted as the process to pursue, develop and maintain the closure of the occupational group, in order to maintain practitioners own occupational self-interests in terms of their salary, status and power, as well as the monopoly protection of the occupational jurisdiction (Larson 1977; Abbott 1988). This interpretation was prominent in the field in the 1970s and 1980s and was associated with a critique of professions as ideological constructs (Johnson 1972). This interpretation has declined in popularity recently (e.g. see themes of papers presented at recent international conferences) although sociologists interested in gender issues and differences continue to critique the idea of profession as a gendered (historical) construct (Davies 1995; Witz 1992), and sometimes as the opposite – as a process that has benefited particularly female-dominated occupational groups (e.g. midwifery) in competition with medical dominance (Bourgeault et al. 2004). In addition, the concept of professionalization continues to be important in the analysis of newly emerging occupations (e.g. IT consultancy, human resources management, psychology and social care work), perhaps seeking status and recognition for the importance of the work, often by standardization of the education, training and qualification for practice (Brint 2001; Ruiz Ben 2009).

A third concept is professionalism which has had a long history in the disciplinary sub-field and is examined in the next section. Professionalism was usually interpreted as an occupational or normative value, as something worth preserving and promoting in work and by and for workers. Then later developments interpreted professionalism as a discourse and, to an extent, this has combined the occupational value and the ideological interpretations. Certainly there are real advantages in the analysis of professionalism as the key analytical concept in explanations and interpretations about professional knowledge-based work, occupations and practitioners.

In current work and employment contexts (such as professional work in organizations) it is the increased use of the discourse of professionalism, in a wide range of occupations and work places, which is important and in need of further analysis and understanding. The discourse of professionalism is used as a marketing slogan (e.g. 'have the job done by professionals') and in advertising to attract new recruits (e.g. 'join the professionals' – the army) as well as customers (Fournier 1999). It is used in occupational recruitment campaigns, in company mission statements and organizational aims and objectives to motivate employees. The discourse of professionalism has entered the managerial literature and been embodied in training manuals. Even occupational regulation and control (both internal and external forms) are now explained and justified as means to improve professionalism in work. The concept of professionalism has an appeal to and for practitioners, employees and managers in the development and maintenance of work identities, career decisions and senses of self.

If the focus of analysis is shifted away from the concepts of profession (as a distinct and generic category of occupational work), and professionalization (as the process to pursue, develop and maintain the closure of the occupational group), and towards the concept of professionalism, then different kinds of explanatory theory become apparent. Then the discourse of professionalism can be analyzed as a

powerful instrument of occupational change and social control at macro, meso and micro levels and in a wide range of occupations in very different work, organizational and employment relations, contexts and conditions.

2.2 Professionalism : History and Current Developments

The concept of professionalism has a long history particularly in Anglo-American sociology. In Europe the concept has been less prominent until recently. The continental functional proximity between state government bureaucracies, public state universities and professions created a minority of free professions ('freire Berufen' and 'professions liberals') and favoured sociology of class and organization to the disadvantage of sociology of professions (Burrage and Torstendahl 1990a). The Anglo-American systems of less centralized state governments, private or at least relatively independent universities and free professions, on the other hand, created a majority of market-related professions and an elaborate and detailed sociology of professions, which has had strong impact worldwide.

When considering the history of the concept of professionalism, three phases can be identified: an early phase which defined professionalism as an occupational or normative value; a second negative phase of critique when professionalism was regarded as ideological and promoted in the interests of professional practitioners themselves; a third phase which combines both the ideological critique and the normative value interpretations of professionalism. These three phases are considered next.

2.2.1 Early Phase: Professionalism as a Normative Value

In early British sociological analysis, the key concept was 'professionalism' and the emphasis was on the importance of professionalism for the stability and civility of social systems (e.g. Tawney 1921; Carr-Saunders and Wilson 1933; Marshall 1950). Tawney perceived professionalism as a force capable of subjecting rampant individualism to the needs of the community. Carr-Saunders and Wilson (1933) saw professionalism as a force for stability and freedom against the threat of encroaching industrial and governmental bureaucracies. Marshall (1950) emphasized altruism or the 'service' orientation of professionalism and how professionalism might form a bulwark against threats to stable democratic processes. In these interpretations professionalism was regarded as an important and highly desirable occupational value and professional relations were characterized as collegial, co-operative and mutually supportive. Similarly, relations of trust characterized practitioner/client and practitioner/management interactions since competencies were assumed to be guaranteed by education, training and sometimes by licensing.

The early American sociological theorists of professions also developed similar interpretations and again the key concept was the occupational value of professionalism based on trust, competence, a strong occupational identity and co-operation. The best known, though perhaps most frequently mis-quoted, attempt to clarify the special characteristics of professionalism, its central values and its contribution to social order and stability, was that of Parsons (1939). Parsons recognized and was one of the first theorists to show how the capitalist economy, the rational-legal social order (of Weber), and the modern professions were all interrelated and mutually balancing in the maintenance and stability of a fragile normative social order. He demonstrated how the authority of the professions and of bureaucratic hierarchical organizations both rested on the same principles (for example of functional specificity, restriction of the power domain, application of universalistic, impersonal standards). The professions, however, by means of their collegial organization and shared identity demonstrated an alternative approach (compared with the managerial hierarchy of bureaucratic organizations) towards the shared normative end.

The work of Parsons has subsequently been subject to heavy criticism mainly because of its links with functionalism (Dingwall and Lewis 1983). However, the differences between professionalism and rational–legal, bureaucratic ways of organizing work have been examined in Freidson's (2001) analysis. He examined the logics of three different ways of organizing work in contemporary societies: (i) the market, (ii) organization and (iii) profession and illustrated the respective advantages and disadvantages of each for clients and practitioners. In this analysis he also demonstrated the continuing importance of maintaining professionalism (with some changes) as the main organizing principle for service sector work. Freidson does not use the term 'occupational value' and instead focused on the importance of knowledge and expertise, but he maintained that occupational control of the work (by practitioners themselves) is of real importance for the maintenance of professionalism. Practitioner occupational control is important because the complexities of the work are such that only the practitioners can understand the organizational needs of the work, its processes, procedures, testing and outcomes. It is by means of extensive (and expensive) systems of work place training and socialization that new recruits develop the expertise to put theoretical knowledge into practice and to use and control the work systems and procedures.

This interpretation represents what might be termed the optimistic view of what professionalism and the process of professionalization of work entails. It is based on the principle that the work is of importance either to the public or to the interests of the state or an elite (Freidson 2001: 214). According to Freidson, 'the ideal typical position of professionalism is founded on the official belief that the knowledge and skill of a particular specialization requires a foundation in abstract concepts and formal learning' (2001: 34/5). Education, training and experience are fundamental requirements but once achieved (and sometimes licensed) then the exercise of discretion (i.e. discretionary decision-making rather than autonomy) based on competences is central and deserving of special status. The practitioners have special knowledge and skill and, because of complexity, it is often necessary to trust professionals' intentions. One consequence is that externally imposed rules (from states or

organizations) governing the work are minimized and the exercise of discretionary decision-making and good judgment, often in highly complex situations and circumstances, and based on recognized competences is maximized.

It can also be argued that professionalism represents a distinctive form of decentralized occupational control and regulation which constitutes an important component of civil society. Professions create and maintain distinct professional values or moral obligations (e.g. codes of ethics), which restrain excessive competition by encouraging cooperation as well as practitioner pride and satisfaction in work performance – a form of individualized self-regulation. Indeed it could be argued that professional commitment (professionalism) has frequently covered for the various failures of statutory and organizational forms of work regulation. Where statutory and organizational forms have been seen to impoverish the quality of work, and increase the bureaucracy, professionalism can be defended as a uniquely desirable method of regulating, monitoring and providing complex services to the public (Freidson 2001).

2.2.2 Critical Phase: Professionalism as Ideology

There is a second more pessimistic interpretation of professionalism, however, which grew out of the more critical literature on professions, which was prominent in Anglo-American analyses, in the 1970s and 1980s. During this period professionalism came to be dismissed as a successful ideology (Johnson 1972), and professionalization as a process of market closure and monopoly control of work (Larson 1977), and occupational dominance (Larkin 1983). Professionalization was intended to promote professional practitioners' own occupational self interests in terms of their salary, status and power as well as the monopoly protection of an occupational jurisdiction (Abbott 1988). This was seen to be a process largely initiated and controlled by the practitioners themselves and mainly in their own interests although it could also be argued to be in the public interest (Saks 1995).

Critical attacks on professions in general as powerful, privileged, self-interested monopolies, that were prominent in the neo-Weberian research literature of the 1970s and 1980s, resulted in a general skepticism about the whole idea of professionalism as a normative value. Johnson, for example, dismissed professionalism as a successful ideology which had entered the political vocabulary of a wide range of occupational groups in their claims and competition for status and income (1972: 32). More recently Davies (1996) has urged researchers to abandon claims to professionalism and instead to recognize the links between such claims and a specific historical and cultural construction of masculinity which fits uneasily with newer and more feminized professions.

During the 1970s and 1980s, when sociological analysis of professions was dominated by various forms of professionalism as ideology theorizing, one concept that became prominent was the 'professional project'. The concept was developed by Larson (1977) and included a detailed and scholarly historical

account of the processes and developments whereby a distinct occupational group sought a monopoly in the market for its service, and status and upward mobility (collective as well as individual) in the social order. The idea of a professional project was developed in a different way by Abbott (1988) who examined the carving out and maintenance of a jurisdiction through competition and the requisite cultural and other work that was necessary to establish the legitimacy of the monopoly practice.

Larson's work is still frequently cited and MacDonald's textbook on professions (1995) continued to use and to support her analysis in his examination of the professional field of accountancy. The outcome of the successful professional project was a 'monopoly of competence legitimised by officially sanctioned "expertise", and a monopoly of credibility with the public' (Larson 1977: 38). This interpretation has not gone unchallenged. Freidson (1982) preferred market 'shelters' to complete monopolies in professional service provision, which indicated the incomplete nature of most market closure projects. It is also the case that Larson's (1977) careful analysis has been oversimplified by enthusiastic supporters such that some researchers talk about the professional project, as if professions and professional associations do nothing else apart from protecting the market monopoly for their expertise.

Another version of the professionalism as ideology interpretation has been the notion of professions as powerful occupational groups, who not only closed markets and dominated and controlled other occupations in the field, but also could 'capture' states and negotiate 'regulative bargains' (Cooper et al. 1988) with states in the interests of their own practitioners. Again this was an aspect of theorizing about professions in Anglo-American societies which began in the 1970s (e.g. Johnson 1972) and which focused on medicine and law. It has been a particular feature of analysis of the medical profession (e.g. Larkin 1983) where researchers have interpreted relations between health professionals as an aspect of medical dominance as well as gender relations (e.g. Davies 1995).

Since the mid-1980s, the flaws in the more extreme versions of this professionalism as ideology view have become apparent. Annandale (1998) has queried aspects of medical dominance and has linked this with diversity, restratification and growing hierarchy within the medical profession itself – namely only some doctors can become dominant, along with some nurses and some midwives. More generally, it has turned out that radical governments could successfully challenge the professions. Professions do sometimes initiate projects and influence governments but, as often, professions are responding to external demands for change, which can be political, economic, cultural and social. This has resulted in a reappraisal of the historical evidence, which is still incomplete. One line of development has been the view that the demand-led theory of professionalization needs to be complemented by an understanding of the supply side (Dingwall 1996). Instead of the question – How do professions capture states? – the central question should be – Why do states create professions, or at least permit professions to flourish? This has resulted in a renewed interest in professionalism as normative values interpretation, and in the historical evidence about the parallel processes of the creation of modern

nation-states in the second half of the nineteenth century and of modern professions in the same period. It is suggested, for example, that professions might be one aspect of a state founded on liberal principles, one way of regulating certain spheres of economic life without developing an oppressive central bureaucracy. The work of the English sociologist Herbert Spencer has provided a useful starting point for this analysis (Dingwall and King 1995) and Dingwall (1996) takes this argument further by considering the need for social order in the rapidly developing global economies and international markets, and how professions might make a normative and value contribution in meeting this need.

In the 1990s researchers began to reassess the significance of professionalism and its positive (as well as negative) contributions both for customers and clients, as well as for social systems. This re-examination indicates a return to the professionalism as normative value system interpretation. One result of this return and re-appraisal is a more balanced assessment, however, (Dingwall 2008; Evetts 2003; Fournier 1999). Thus, in addition to protecting their own market position through controlling the license to practice and protecting their elite positions, professionalism might also represent a distinctive form of decentralized occupational control which is important in civil society (Durkheim 1992). It has also been argued that the public interest and professional self-interest are not necessarily at opposite ends of a continuum and that the pursuit of self-interests may be compatible with advancing the public interest (Saks 1995). Professionalism might also work to create and represent distinct professional values or moral obligations which restrain excessive competition and encourage co-operation (Dingwall 1996).

The claim is now being made (for example, Freidson 1994, 2001) that professionalism is a unique form of occupational control of work which has distinct advantages over market, organizational and bureaucratic forms of control. In assessing the political, economic and ideological forces that are exerting enormous pressure on the professions today, Freidson (1994) has defended professionalism as a desirable way of providing complex, discretionary services to the public. He argues that market-based or organizational and bureaucratic methods impoverish and standardize the quality of service to consumers and demotivates practitioners, and he goes on to suggest how the virtues of professionalism can be reinforced. Thus, professions might need to close markets in order to be able to endorse and guarantee the education, training, experience and tacit knowledge of licensed practitioners, but once achieved the profession might then be able to concentrate more fully on developing the service-orientated and performance-related aspects of their work (Evetts 1998; Halliday 1987). The process of occupational closure will also result in the monopoly supply of the expertise and the service, and probably also to privileged access to salary and status as well as to definitional and control rewards for practitioners. In respect of these privileges, it is necessary to remember the dual character of professions which include both the provision of a service (and the development of an autonomous form of governance) as well as the use of knowledge and power for economic gain and monopoly control (which pose a threat to civility). The pursuit of private interests is not always in opposition to the pursuit of the public interest, however, and indeed both can be developed simultaneously (Saks 1995).

Halliday (1987) also argued that the emphasis on market monopolies underestimated the breadth of professionalism, especially concerning professional influences on states and legislative bodies. For Halliday the closure of markets might only be an issue during the early stages of professional development. In his analysis of the Chicago Bar Association, the preoccupation with market dominance was confined to early developmental stages and, once completed, its importance declined. In the later phase of 'established professionalism' the professional projects are different and a broader range of work is undertaken. Indeed, he (1987: 354) stated that 'if it can secure its occupational niche and protect its vital economic interests, then a profession's resources can be freed from market concerns for other causes'.

In general, then, some recent Anglo-American analyses of professions have involved the re-interpretation of the concept of professionalism as a normative value system in the socialization of new workers, in the preservation and predictability of normative social order in work and occupations, and in the maintenance and stability of a fragile normative order in state and increasingly international markets. This current interpretation has built on earlier (perhaps less critical) analyses but the result is now a more balanced and cautious reappraisal. There is due recognition, for example, of the power and self-interests of some professional groups in wanting to preserve and indeed promote professionalism as normative value system. This current interpretation of professionalism as value system involves a re-evaluation of the importance of trust in client/practitioner relations (Karpik 1989), of discretion (Hawkins 1992) as well as analysis of risk (Grelon 1996) and expert judgement (Milburn 1996; Trépos 1996). It also includes a reassessment of quality of service and of professional performance in the best interests of both customers (in order to avoid further standardization of service provision) and practitioners (in order to protect discretion in service work decision-making) (Freidson 1994).

2.2.3 Third Phase: Professionalism as a Discourse

A third development involved the analysis of professionalism as a discourse of occupational change and control – this time in work organizations where the discourse is increasingly applied and utilized by managers. This third interpretation is a combination of the previous two and includes both occupational value and ideological elements. Fournier (1999) considered the appeal to 'professionalism' as a disciplinary mechanism in new occupational contexts. She suggested how the use of the discourse of professionalism, in a large privatized service company of managerial labour, worked to inculcate 'appropriate' work identities, conducts and practices. She considered this to be 'a disciplinary logic which inscribes "autonomous" professional practice within a network of accountability and governs professional conduct at a distance' (1999: 280).

It is also the case that the use of the discourse of professionalism varies between different occupational groups. It is possible to use McClelland's categorization (1990: 170) to differentiate between professionalization 'from within' (that is,

successful manipulation of the market by the group e.g. medicine and law) and 'from above' (that is, domination of forces external to the group e.g. engineering and social work). In this interpretation, where the appeal to professionalism is made and used by the occupational group itself, 'from within', then the returns to the group (in terms of salary, status and authority) can be substantial. In these cases, historically, the group has been able to use the discourse in constructing its occupational identity, promoting its image with clients and customers, and bargaining with states to secure and maintain its (sometimes self) regulatory responsibilities. In these instances the occupation is using the discourse partly in its own occupational and practitioner interests but sometimes also as a way of promoting and protecting the public interest (e.g. medicine).

In the case of most contemporary public service occupations and professionals now practicing in organizations, however, professionalism is being constructed and imposed 'from above' and for the most part this means by the employers and managers of the public service organizations in which these 'professionals' work. Here the discourse (of dedicated service and autonomous decision making) is part of the appeal (or the ideology) of professionalism. This idea of service and autonomy are what make professionalism attractive to aspiring occupational groups. When the discourse is constructed 'from above', then often it is imposed and a false or selective discourse, because autonomy and occupational control of the work are seldom included. Rather, the discourse is used to promote and facilitate occupational change (rationalization) and as a disciplinary mechanism of autonomous subjects exercising appropriate conduct.

This discourse of professionalism is grasped and welcomed by the occupational group since it is perceived to be a way of improving the occupations status and rewards collectively and individually (e.g. aspiring caring occupations). It is a powerful ideology and the idea of becoming and being a 'professional worker' has appealed to many new and existing occupational groups particularly during the second half of the twentieth century (e.g. social work and social care occupations throughout Europe and North America).

However, the realities of professionalism 'from above' are very different. The effects are not the occupational control of the work by the worker/practitioners. Instead the emphasis is control by the organizational managers and supervisors (e.g. health and social care work). Organizational objectives, which are sometimes political, define practitioner/client relations, set achievement targets and performance indicators. In these ways organizational objectives regulate and replace occupational control of the practitioner/client work interactions, thereby limiting the exercise of discretionary decision-making, and preventing the service ethic that has been so important in professional work. Organizational professionalism is clearly of relevance to the forms of public management currently being developed in the UK, Europe, North America and more widely, in educational institutions (schools and universities), hospitals and primary care practices.

The appeal to professionalism can and has been interpreted as a powerful motivating force of control 'at a distance' (Burchell et al. 1991; Miller and Rose 1990). It is also effective at the micro level where essentially it is a form of inner-directed control

or self-control where close managerial supervision is not required – professional workers do not need supervisors. Organizational professionalism will be achieved through increased occupational training and the certification of the workers/employees – a process labelled as credentialism by Collins (1979, 1981). In these cases the appeal to professionalism is a powerful mechanism for promoting occupational change and social control.

But the appeal to the discourse by managers in work organizations is to a myth or an ideology of professionalism (Evetts 2003). The myth includes aspects such as exclusive ownership of an area of expertise, increased status and salary, autonomy and discretion in work practices and the occupational control of the work. The reality of the professionalism is actually very different. The appeal to professionalism by managers most often includes (i) the substitution of organizational for professional values; (ii) bureaucratic, hierarchical and managerial controls rather than collegial relations; (iii) managerial and organizational objectives rather than client trust and autonomy based on competencies and expertise; (iv) budgetary restrictions and financial rationalizations; (v) the standardization of work practices rather than discretion; and (vi) performance targets, accountability and sometimes increased political control.

The use of the discourse of professionalism as operationalized by managers in work organizations is also a discourse of self-control which enables self-motivation and sometimes even self-exploitation. Born (1995) illustrates this process in the work context of French professional music practice and it is present more generally in the work culture of artists, actors and musicians in general. Once self-defined as a professional artist, imposing time or other limits on one's efforts are rendered illegitimate. This is also the case with professionals in general. The expectations by self and others of the professional have no limits. For the professional, of all kinds, the needs and demands of audiences, patients, clients, students and children become paramount. Professionals are expected and expect themselves to be committed, even to be morally involved in the work. Hence managers in organizations can use the discourse of professionalism to self-motivate, inner-direct and sometimes to exploit professionals in the organization.

The analysis of professionalism has, then, involved different interpretations – sometimes positive, sometimes negative, and in the latest interpretation combined – of what the professionalization of an occupational group entails. The characteristics of occupational professionalism which made it distinctive and different to organizational means of controlling work and workers were somewhat idealistic (probably ideological) and based on a model and image of historical relations probably in the medical and legal professions in predominantly Anglo-American societies in the nineteenth century. The image was of the doctor, lawyer and clergyman, who were independent gentlemen, and could be trusted as a result of their competence and experience to provide altruistic advice within a community of mutually dependent middle and upper class clients. The legacy of this image, whether in fact or fiction, has provided a powerful incentive for many aspiring occupational groups throughout the twentieth century and helps to explain the appeal of professionalism as a managerial tool.

The image or the ideology of professionalism as an occupational value that is so appealing involves a number of different aspects. Some might never have been operational; some might have been operational for short periods in a limited number of occupational groups. The range of aspects include:

- control of the work systems, processes, procedures, priorities to be determined primarily by the practitioner/s;
- professional institutions/associations as the main providers of codes of ethics, constructors of the discourse of professionalism, providers of licensing and admission procedures, controllers of competences and their acquisition and maintenance, overseeing discipline, due investigation of complaints and appropriate sanctions in cases of professional incompetence;
- collegial authority, legitimacy, mutual support and cooperation;
- common and lengthy (probably expensive) periods of shared education, training, apprenticeship;
- development of strong occupational identities and work cultures;
- strong sense of purpose and of the importance, function, contribution and significance of the work;
- discretionary judgment, assessment, evaluation and decision-making, often in highly complex cases, and of confidential advice-giving, treatment, and means of taking forward; and
- trust and confidence characterize the relations between practitioner/client, practitioner/employer and fellow practitioners.

These aspects are not intended to be regarded as the defining characteristics of a profession. Rather these are aspects of the image and the ideology of professionalism which can account for the attraction and appeal of professionalism as an occupational value and increasingly as a managerial tool in work organizations. In previous publications I have referred to these aspects as ideal-types of occupational professionalism and contrasted these with organizational aspects of professionalism (Evetts 2006). But professionalism is changing and being changed. The next section examines some of the changes to the occupational value aspects of professionalism.

2.3 A New Professionalism? Changes and Continuities

Professionalism has undergone change and these changes have been seen as part of a governmental project to promote commercialized (Hanlon 1998) and organizational (Evetts 2006, 2009) forms of professionalism. Within this context Brint (1994) has discussed an epochal shift from the rhetoric of trusteeship to the rhetoric of expertise. Organizational principles, strategies and methods are deeply affecting most professional occupations and expert groups, transforming their identities, structures and practices. Whether a 'new' form of professionalism is emerging is debatable since there are elements of continuity as well as of change. It is important,

therefore, to clarify what exactly has changed and what continues in order to be able to assess the likelihood (or otherwise) of professionalism surviving as an occupational value.

Aspects of change certainly include elements of hierarchy, bureaucracy, output and performance measures and even the standardization of work practices, all of which are more characteristic of organizational rather than professional forms of occupational control. When service sector professionals have proved enduringly difficult to manage and resistant to change, then an important part of the strategy became to recreate professionals as managers and to manage by normative techniques. The discourse of enterprise becomes linked with discourses of professionalism, quality, customer service and care. Professionals are also tempted by the ideological components of empowerment, innovation, autonomy and discretion. Furthermore, attempts to measure and demonstrate professionalism actually increase the demand for explicit auditing and accounting of professional competences. Thus, managerial demands for quality control and audit, target setting and performance review become reinterpreted as the promotion of professionalism. It is necessary to recognize, however, that output and performance measures also represent a 'discourse of competition' (Hoggett 1996: 15) or what Broadbent et al. (1999) termed 'individualization'. The danger is that social cohesion and institutional action are undermined whilst competition threatens both team working and collegial support. Thus, the quest for professionalism and accountability is highly competitive and individualistic, but it is also a bureaucratic means of regaining and exercising control of a market-directed enterprise staffed by professionals.

In addition there are other characteristics (particularly the professionalism developed under the guise of New Public Service Management (NPSM)) which seem to point to a new and distinct variant of professionalism. The emphasis on governance and community controls, the negotiations between complex numbers of agencies and interests, and the recreation of professionals themselves as managers, are all examples of these variants. Thus, in public sector professions, control is increasingly achieved by means of normative values and self-regulated motivation. In professional services firms a discourse of enterprise is fitted alongside the language of quality and customer care and the ideologies of empowerment, innovation, autonomy and discretion. In addition, this is also a discourse of individualization and competition where individual performance is linked to the success or failure of the organization. These factors all constitute powerful mechanisms of worker/employee control in which the occupational values of professionalism are used to promote the efficient management of the organization.

In numerous ways centralizing, regulatory governments, intent on demonstrating value from public service budgets seem to be redefining professionalism and accountability as measurable. But before we acknowledge the decline (and possible demise) of occupational forms of professionalism, it is necessary also to acknowledge some of the ways in which occupational professionalism still continues to operate. Adler et al. (2008) argue that the market, hierarchy and community are not necessarily mutually exclusive but can be mutually supportive. More market pressures often lead to more community based practices such as multi-disciplinary

teams and cooperative working which are consistent with occupational forms of professionalism.

In addition the occupational control of work is still important in some traditional professions such as law (though less so for medicine). It is also of increased importance in some newly powerful professional groups such as international accountancy. The organization can provide new territories and opportunities for professionalization (e.g. management and personnel management) and there are examples of attempts by some occupational groups to reclaim professionalism. In these cases both national institutions and European professional federations are involved in aspects of the regulation of the occupational groups including the development of performance criteria, target setting and continuing professional development (CPD). In assisting governments to define and construct these regulatory systems, these national professional institutions and European federations are continuing to exercise occupational control over work whilst constituting a form of moral community based on occupational membership. In addition there are also examples of the sharing, modification and adaptation of particular regulatory regimes between different professional institutions and federations (Evetts 1994; Flood 2011).

Other continuities characteristic of occupational professionalism remain and seem resistant to change, sometimes despite clear policies and incentives for change. Gender differences in professional careers and occupational specialisms, continue, although some interesting variants are emerging and situations are complex. Women are entering established professions in larger numbers and proportions, and men are entering female professions, and many are successfully developing careers. Other professionalizing occupations (often where women are numerically dominant) have utilized professionalism in order to secure new tasks, responsibilities and recognition. Women are increasingly becoming managers, but management itself is being changed and standardized such that it might be the case that men are leaving this (less interesting and powerful) field and moving upwards where they can and sideways (e.g. into consultancy or private practice) when they cannot.

The following table summarizes aspects of change and continuity in the interpretation of professionalism as an occupational value in service professions. This is a simplification of what is, in fact, a highly complex, variable and changing situation. Professional occupations are different both within and between nation-states and contexts are constantly changing as new nation-state and European policies emerge, develop and are adapted and modified in practice and in local work places. Used with care and due caution, these aspects might enable an assessment of the prominence of organizational and occupational professionalism to be made in different occupations and work places (Table 2.1).

These changes and continuities include both structural and relationship aspects and characteristics, although, importantly, the changes are more structural while the continuities tend to focus on relations. In addition these changes and continuities have been identified and illustrated at macro (i.e. societal) and mezo (i.e. institutional/organizational) levels of analysis but there might also be significant micro (i.e. work place) variations in different places of work and local organizational contexts (Liljegren 2012).

Table 2.1 Changes and continuities in professionalism as occupational value

Changes	Continuities
Governance	Authority
Management	Legitimacy
External forms of regulation	Prestige, status, power, dominance
Audit and measurement	Competence, knowledge
Targets and performance indicators	Identity and work culture
Work standardization, financial control	Discretion to deal with complex issues, respect, trust
Competition, individualism, stratification	Collegial relations and jurisdictional competitions
Organizational control of the work priorities.	Gender differences in careers and strategies
Possible range of solutions/procedures defined by the organization	Procedures and solutions discussed and agreed within specialist teams

What, then, are the consequences for practitioners and clients? Is occupational professionalism worth preserving as a distinct alternative and contrasting way of controlling work and workers (compared with organizations and markets) and with value for both practitioners and their clients? What are the challenges and opportunities of changing aspects of professionalism as an occupational value?

2.3.1 Consequence and Challenges

The consequences of, and challenges to professionalism as an occupational value, are being documented by researchers interested in different occupational groups in Europe and North America (e.g. Bolton 2005; Bourgeault and Benoit 2009; Boussard 2008; Champy 2008; Dent et al. 2008; Schepers 2006; Wrede 2008;) and research links with sociologists of organizations are strengthening (Faulconbridge and Muzio 2008). There are also some early indications of what might be a retreat from or a substantial redefinition of certain aspects of managerialism and New Public Service Management (NPSM) by policy-makers in respect of some service work (e.g. Dahl and Hanne 2008). There is, as yet, no established causal link between the organizational changes and challenges to occupational professionalism and a deteriorization of professional values so, as yet, any linkage remains speculative. Also there are several complicating factors which make a causal link difficult to establish. Complicating context factors (some general, some nation-specific) include the demystification of aspects of professional knowledge and expertise; cases of practitioner malpractice and 'unprofessional' behaviour; media exaggeration and oversimplification; political interference; large fee and salary increases in particular professional sectors; and divisions between commercial (corporate clients) and social service (state-funded) practitioners; increasing trade union activism on behalf of professionals; all of which carry a perception of self rather than public interest.

It is also the case that powerful professionals have often been resistant to managerial intervention and organizational controls. Many organizations in the public services (e.g. hospitals and universities) are complex professional bureaucracies (Mintzberg 1983) characterized by the involvement of a number of different professional groups. These groups have a history of relative autonomy over their working practices and often have high status which gives them both power and authority. In addition, the 'outputs' of these organizations (and the professionals in them) are not easily standardized and measurable. When the ability to define and standardize the nature of the work process is limited, and the definition of the outputs of the work (and what constitutes success) is problematic, then such service work would seem to be unsuitable for both market and organizational controls.

A decline in occupational professionalism and the possible expansion of organizational forms of professionalism is, then, one of a number of complicating factors (also see an alternative interpretation in Adler et al. 2008). It can be stated, however, that organizational techniques for controlling employees have affected the work of practitioners in professional organizations. The imposition of targets in teaching and medical work – and indeed for the police (see Boussard 2008) – have had 'unintended' consequences on the prioritization and ordering of work activities, and have brought a focus on target achievement to the detriment or neglect of other less-measurable tasks and responsibilities. Bureaucracy, increased regulation and form filling take time which might arguably be devoted to clients. The standardization of work procedures, perhaps using software programmes, is an important check on the underachieving practitioner but can be a disincentive to the creative, innovative, and inspirational professional.

It is important to remember also that the way professionals regard their service work and their working relationships are also being changed and this is an important consequence of redefining the occupational value aspects of professionalism. An emphasis on internal as well as external markets, on enterprise and economic contracting, are changing professionalism. In tendering, accounting and audit management, professionalism requires practitioners to codify their competence for contracts and evaluations (du Gay and Salaman 1992; Freidson 2001; Lane 2000). 'Professional work is defined as service products to be marketed, price-tagged and individually evaluated and remunerated; it is, in that sense, commodified' (Svensson and Evetts 2003: 11). Professional service work organizations are converting into enterprises in terms of identity, hierarchy and rationality. Possible solutions to client problems and difficulties are defined by the organization (rather than the ethical codes of the professional institution) and limited by financial constraints. The role of organizations as institutional entrepreneurs has also been identified and includes the lobbying of the state by professional institutions in order to change professional regulation in their favour.

The commodification of professional service work entails changes in professional work relations. When practitioners become organizational employees then the traditional relationship of employer/professional trust is changed to one necessitating supervision, assessment and audit. Relationships between professionals and clients are also being converted into customer relations through the establishment of

quasi-markets, customer satisfaction surveys and evaluations, as well as quality measures and payment by results. The production, publication and diffusion of quality and target measurements are critical indicators for changing welfare services into a market (Considine 2001). The service itself is increasingly focused, modeled on equivalents provided by other producers, shaped by the interests of the consumers and increasingly standardized. The increasing focus on marketing and selling expert solutions (Brint 1994) connects professionals more to their work organization than to their professional institutions and associations. Clients are converted into customers and professional work competencies become primarily related to, defined and assessed by, the work organization.

2.3.2 Opportunities

The challenges to professionalism as an occupational value seem numerous but are there any opportunities associated with these changes which might improve both the conduct and the practice of professional service work and be advantageous for both practitioners and their clients? Are there some advantages in the combination of professional and organizational logics, of hybrid organizations and organizationally located professional projects, for controlling work and workers?

Using the list of changes and continuities already identified, it would seem important to try to retain some form of occupational control both of work processes and relations. All aspects would need evaluation and assessment by research but it is possible to argue that identity, work culture, specialist team working, discussions among specialists, knowledge and expertise formation and its maintenance all improve the conduct of professional work and its practice while being of benefit to both practitioners and their clients. Other items apparently of importance to organizations would seem to be of less relevance and indeed to have a detrimental affect on professional control of their work. These include auditing measurement, targets and performance indicators. In several instances, these aspects have been shown to distort work processes, procedures and work priorities producing ‘unintended’ consequences for practitioners and clients. Other aspects of organizational change, including credentialism, governance and external forms of regulation, would seem to produce some benefits (for example of transparency and control of more extreme professional powers) while, at the same time, resulting in detrimental effects such as increased bureaucracy, form-filling and paper-work. These all take time which, arguably, could be better spent in client contact and service work as defined by the profession itself rather than by the work organization. These aspects would seem to have benefits and costs, therefore, and their appropriateness for professional work would need to be monitored over time.

There are other opportunities which might prove to be more beneficial from the combination of the logics of professionalism and the organization which might prove advantageous. One of these is the incorporation of Human Resource Management (HRM) from the organization into professional employment practices,

processes and procedures. Job contracts, job descriptions, formal interview and selection procedures, employment rights and benefits, appeals procedures, sickness benefit and cover, maternity, caring and other absences, are all examples which have benefited the majority of professionals working in organizations and have for the most part replaced less formalized social networking and informal recommendation procedures. Indeed, human resources procedures have contributed to the spectacular growth in professional employment over the last 20 years and have improved diversity and equal opportunities.

Standardization and formalization of selection, retention and career development procedures have also increased the transparency of what were often hidden, even 'mysterious' arrangements in respect of promotion, career progress and departmental relationships and links within the organization. Less formalized procedures benefited only a select few privileged practitioners and were perceived as unfair and inequitable by the majority. Increased transparency can then result in more emphasis on career choices, dependent on personal circumstances, rather than the sponsorship of the privileged few. Career inequalities clearly continue (including in respect of gender and ethnicity), as well as some reliance on networking, informal advice and recommendations but, in general, the incorporation of HRM procedures and regulations from the organization into professional employment practices have been an opportunity and of benefit for practitioners and their work.

Other opportunities would seem to be explained by the increased recognition that organizational management and managerialism is not only complex but is also multi-layered and multi-dimensional. Management is being used to control, and sometimes limit, the work of practitioners in organizations but, in addition, management is being used by practitioners and by professional associations themselves as a strategy both in the career development of particular practitioners and in order to improve the status and respect of a professional occupation and its standing.

As a micro-level strategy, there is some evidence, particularly from health professionals such as nursing and midwifery (Carvalho 2008; Bourgeault et al. 2004) but also now from medical doctors (Kuhlmann 2008) and teachers (Gewirtz et al. 2009), of individual practitioners acquiring qualifications in management (e.g. the MBA or other professional doctorates) with the clear intention of furthering their careers. In the case of health professionals, such as nurses and midwives, this can also be interpreted as a collective mobility strategy as increasingly hospital management at middle and senior levels is perceived as a career opening for those with appropriate management credentials, experience and motivation.

As a mezo level strategy, it is also interesting to note the work of Langer (2008) in respect of social work in Germany. Masters level programmes for social workers in Germany are incorporating management training as a way of increasing the status, standing, reputation and respect for social work as a professional occupation in the field of social services work. Following European Union attempts to standardize higher education levels in Europe, in Germany there is a large development of Masters programmes which qualify (in this case) social workers to apply for leadership positions in non-profit organizations and social services departments. These

developments can be interpreted, therefore, as both micro and mezo level strategies in respect of social work.

In addition, organizations can constitute sites for (and objects of) professional control and domination. Jurisdictional disputes and negotiations were originally described by Abbott (1988) but now they are being played out within organizations rather than in the wider arena of labour markets and education systems. Within organizations, occupations seek to process and control tasks and task divisions to suit their own occupational interests. The medical profession can continue to use its cultural authority and legitimacy to maintain dominance (Coburn 2006; Freidson 2001; Larkin 1983) but other professionals need to use competition, particularly in respect of competences, to acquire dominance in decision-making in the organization. Armstrong (1985) describes competition between professionals in management (accountancy, engineering and personnel) in colonizing key positions, roles and decision-making within large organizations. In these ways organizations constitute arenas for inter-professional competitions as well as professional conquests.

2.4 Policy Relevance, Assessment and Evaluation

In this section I identify some of the important contributions made by researchers on professional work to public policy developments, assessment and evaluation. The idea of professionalism as an occupational and normative value can be linked with public policy concerns about competences at all levels of occupational work.

In the field of sociology of professional groups a number of policy initiatives have been examined by researchers producing reports for policy-makers at both nation-state and regional (European) levels. Health policies particularly in respect of occupations in medicine, nursing, midwifery and alternative medicine and the regulation of these groups of workers have been of interest and have been debated and discussed by researchers. Discussion has also focused on changing modes of governance and of how best to administer professional groups and, in particular, the significance of managerialism and of organizations in public sector social service work (e.g. teaching and social work). Policies focused on recruitment and retention of key groups of service-sector workers, as well as issues to do with migration for both exporting and importing countries and their practitioners, have featured strongly in recent discussions and publications.

Professional work is generally perceived to be service-sector and essentially knowledge-based and where practitioner expertise and experience, both substantive and tacit, are valued and rewarded. The education and training of such practitioners, their credentialing and sometimes their licensing, and continuing professional development, are also policy-relevant issues. The production and certification of expertise, and the promotion of abilities to make expert judgments and assessments in highly complex cases, are regarded as extremely important in all occupations and professions. Yet these abilities are difficult to promote and encourage other than by means of long and expensive education, training and apprenticeships. Most of these

apprenticeships are, of necessity, perceived as vocationally specific. However a recent European focus on work and workplace competences seems to be attempting a more general focus (see Pavlin et al. 2010). Policy initiatives in respect of competences and where these are best facilitated and developed (e.g. in education, higher education or in work) are currently of interest to policy-makers and governments. In Europe, the Bologna Accord (which focused on educational mobility in Europe) and subsequent developments (e.g. in Lisbon) are also encouraging the standardization and regularization of higher education credentials and levels in order both to encourage mobility within the European Union as well as to promote higher education itself as a marketable commodity in international markets.

There are a number of other policy-relevant issues and questions in need of attention as systems of higher education expand and the numbers and proportions of educated individuals increase world-wide. Some of these can be listed and are being discussed by researchers in the field of sociology of professional groups. Examples include the following: what are the connections and linkages between the concepts of expertise, competence and professionalism? In the context of mass academic certification, the certified individual is not necessarily an expert whose judgment can be relied on to take decisions. Is trust in professionals worth preserving? Is professionalism as an occupational value worth protecting and promoting, and even expanding to all kinds of occupational work and workers? Are we able to define and categorize the notion of occupational competence and how do the different discourses of employers, managers, workers and customers vary in respect of how competences are perceived? If the occupational values of competences and professionalism are linked and worth promoting then in which institutional locations and stages of career are these best developed – in educational institutions such as schools and universities, in workplace organizations, or in vocational and training courses separate from schools and work? What is the function and purpose of professional institutes and associations? Are these of value and importance, and worth promoting and developing in societies where none have existed? Alternatively have these institutions become too powerful in closing markets and protecting jurisdictions from competition and other market effects? Where are the ethical dimensions of work and occupations best developed and maintained? Are customer complaints a good measure or indicator of the extent of professionalism in the workplace? Is the occupation (via its institute, guild or association) the best regulator of the work and workplace practice?

In general, then, service-sector occupations and knowledge-based work are increasingly seen to be marketable products in the global economy. Knowledge-based occupations are also the expanding employment categories and the growth sectors of labour markets particularly in developed societies but also in transitional and developing economies. Professions are essentially the knowledge-based category of occupations which usually follow a period of tertiary education and vocational training and experience. A different way of categorizing these occupations is to see them as work associated with the uncertainties of modern lives in risk societies. Professional workers are extensively engaged in dealing with risk, with risk assessment and, through the use of expert knowledge, enabling customers and

clients to deal with uncertainty. Sociologists of professional groups are increasingly involved in the evaluation and assessment of risk in social and public policy.

In conclusion, this chapter has explained professionalism as an occupational value and argued the importance of retaining and perhaps recreating this interpretation for service sector professional and occupational work. But professionalism is changing and being changed as service professionals now increasingly work in large-scale organizational work places and sometimes in international professional firms. The chapter examined the changes to and the continuities in the construction of professionalism in these organizational contexts. Also examined were some of the changes and challenges to professionalism as an occupational value as well as some of the opportunities for practitioner-workers and their clients in service work. It is important to remember that the redefinition of professionalism and its links with management present opportunities and benefits for professional work and workers as well as important challenges. Perhaps continuities, challenges and opportunities, for the maintenance of professionalism as an occupational value is one of the most important tasks for professional institutions and for governments over the next few years. Professionalism as an occupational and normative value is arguably fundamental for professional work, professional practice and learning.

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