cambio

Rivista sulle Trasformazioni Sociali

... siamo [costantemente] di fronte a un giudizio di valore preconcetto...
[che attribuisce] implicitamente un valore superiore a ciò che
non cambia rispetto a ciò che cambia
Norbert Elias (1970)

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Monographic Section

Professions Within, Between and Beyond. Varieties of Professionalism in a Globalising World

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Abstract. This article introduces the monographic section on the varieties of professionalism in a globalising world. The monographic section aims to explore new theoretical perspectives and analytical approaches in the field of the sociology of professions, by collecting both theoretical and empirical contributions focusing on different professions (either established or emerging ones) and topics, from various geographical regions. In the first part of this introductory article, we discuss professionalism as a concept that needs to be theoretically redefined in the context of post-industrial society after the crisis. For this purpose, we propose to refocus the discourse about professionalism on the process of *differentiation* and the *increasing heterogeneity* it is bringing about, within and between professional groups. Additionally, the changed societal conditions imply a changing role for professionals in society, beyond professionalism, which is an area worth being explored. Thus, we outline possible developments of the academic debate in three main analytical dimensions, labelled as *within*, *between* and *beyond*. The second part charts the nine contributions included in the monographic section, while trying to reconduct them to the dimensions mentioned above. Three orders of themes have thus been identified, concerning: (1) the redefinition of the concept of professionalism as a "practice", highlighting the practicality of the wisdom used by professionals in performing their everyday tasks; (2) the analysis of regulation processes, focusing on what happens when institutions shape professionalism; and (3) the investigation of the dynamics of transnational mobility, in the context of globalisation processes.

Keywords. Professionalism; social change; inequality; market; technology; globalisation.

INTRODUCTION

An important legacy of the global crisis of 2008 is the increased average level of qualifications among the labour force (Gallie 2013). The crisis

mostly impacted on low-skilled profiles, implying a decline in employment in manufacturing and construction. As a consequence, the composition of the labour force has changed: employment in advanced business services has grown, and a general upskilling of workers has occurred – although to a different extent in each country. However, the crisis of the last decade only magnified a trend that had already been present since the rise of the "knowledge society" (Machlup 1962; Drucker 1968; Bell 1973). The growth of business service sectors is a long-standing phenomenon, which has brought about a transformation of the labour market in the last three decades: while organisational hierarchies flatten, services – even of a high-skilled nature – once provided in-house by permanent employees, are now more and more outsourced to specialised firms or subcontracted to independent professionals (Leicht, Fennel 2001). The crisis accelerated this process, so that outsourcing is, nowadays, the dominant mode to meet the needs for professional services, hence determining a growth in employment in this sector.

Expert labour, thus, has gained new centrality, and professionals lie right at the heart of this change. At the same time, the post-industrial transition has changed the nature of professional work profoundly: first, because those who define themselves "professionals" are more numerous than ever; second, because not all expert labour is easy to acknowledge in a traditional professionalisation model, based on strong institutions and peer control; and, third, because professional jobs no longer ensure prestige and prerogatives like high salaries, interesting work, high levels of autonomy or job security. Even though this situation seems to fulfil the prophecy of Wilensky (1964), the recent rise in knowledge work has changed what we mean by professionalism, challenging its very conceptualisation.

REDEFINING PROFESSIONALISM

It is not the intention of this introduction to draw a comprehensive history of the concept of professionalism (in this regard, see Evetts 2003; Saks 2010; 2012; 2016). We, however, believe that it would be useful to provide our readers with some theoretical tools for understanding the most significant trends and changes that have affected professions in relatively recent years, stemming from the current debate on professionalism.

Since the Seventies, several scholars have highlighted the declining centrality of the "classic" model of professionalism (to cite just a few, see Haug 1972; 1975; Oppenheimer 1973; McKinlay, Arches 1985; Navarro 1988), theorised as a separate logic from market and bureaucracy and defined by peer control (Freidson 2001), in favour of new conceptualisations that have progressively accepted the interpenetration of organisational logics with professionalism (Evetts 2004; Faulconbridge, Muzio 2007). This turn has resulted in lesser importance for the traditional loci of professional dominance (i.e. professional associations) in favour of a multiplication of professionalisms, defined by the reinterpretation of professionalism operated by the organisations in which professionals provide their services. The resulting hybridisation (Noordegraaf 2007; 2015) has led to a rise in new concepts like *commercialised professionalism* (Hanlon 1996; 1998) or *corporative professionalism* (Muzio *et alii* 2011), stressing the increasing role of the market as a form of professional regulation. Previously protected by the success of their professional projects (Sarfatti Larson 1977), professionals have been increasingly exposed to the market and affected by intra-professional competition and the loosening of regulative protections against inter-professional conflicts, with the consequential erosion of their privileged labour market position. On the one hand, professional dominance has been losing ground in traditional professions, although, in isolated cases, powerful professional groups have proven able to resist the erosion of their power by lobbying governments to obtain re-regulation, in order to combat their increasing labour insecurity and strengthen their threatened jurisdictions (as an example, see the case of Italian lawyers, in Bellini 2014; 2017). On the other hand, brand-new occupations with a new centrality in the post-industrial economy have set out with their own professionalisation projects, while privileging market success and the acknowledgement of specialised expertise, but rejecting peer control. *Emerging professionals* (Maestripieri, Cucca 2018) have assumed the market logic as naturally constituting their essence, while not perceiving the insecurity determined by exposure to the market as problematic in an era of hegemonic neoliberalism (Murgia *et alii* 2016).

Generally speaking, professionals have had to deal with a pervasive process of *differentiation*, affecting professional groups. At present, professions can hardly be considered homogeneous and cohesive groups, which calls

into question the feasibility of pursuing strong professional projects. As a natural consequence, less power implies a weaker association between professional status, social status and financial rewards. In fact, professions and professionals are increasingly exposed to processes of "marginalisation" (Butler *et alii* 2012). Despite their diversity, emerging and traditional professional groups have been joined by concomitant processes of differentiation among their members. Indeed, among traditional professionals, the differentiation has been determined by the loosening of professional power, while, in the case of emerging professions, the dominance of the market logic and the increasing competition to which professionals are exposed have brought about rising inequalities. This ongoing process has produced an *increasing heterogeneity* among professionals.

Our argument is that differentiation and heterogeneity are occurring in *multiple dimensions*, all of which are worth exploring. The aim of this introduction, indeed, is to conceptualise the processes of differentiation and indicate possible directions for future research, while the selection of articles included in this issue represents the vanguard of the growing interest of scholars in what lies behind the supposed privileged status of professions.

THREE DIMENSIONS FOR THE ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY PROFESSIONALISM: A PROPOSAL

Given the above theoretical premises, three main analytical dimensions can be identified that delineate the loci of differentiation and heterogeneity in the field of the sociology of professions.

1. The first area of analysis is the *within* dimension: what types of process differentiate professionals within professions? The rise of a post-industrial society has implied not only a higher level of qualifications among the labour force, but also its increased diversity and mobility. The professions do not exclude women, minorities or the children of lower- and middle-class families anymore.

But, "differentiation within" also regards the positions in the labour market that each practitioner can access: while practitioners from marginal groups, like women and minorities, may find it easier to access the professions, this does not necessarily mean that they can access the same favourable conditions reserved for professionals with insider positions. There is a rising heterogeneity in the way professional work is contracted out, which also increases the degree of insecurity of expert labour (Murgia *et alii* 2016). Technological change has brought about a further opening of the professional labour markets: now, practitioners just need a personal computer and relatively easy-to-use software to be present and compete on the market. Being on the market, however, is not always sufficient to ensure adequate income levels and access to welfare (Maestripieri, Cucca 2018). Not all practitioners within a profession enjoy the same stability, income and centrality in their communities of peers (see Alacevich *et alii* 2017): professions are not immune to institutional power struggles and social inequalities, which structure gender-, generation- and race-based exclusions, affecting the broader labour market (Butler *et alii* 2012).

Additionally, neoliberal processes of deregulation have eroded the capacity of professional groups to secure their status: this process magnifies the insecurity experienced by practitioners in their careers (Maestripieri, Cucca 2018). Differentiation "within" can thus occur over time, when regulation intervenes to loosen the boundaries of a professional activity or to modify the terms by which social closure is put into practice. In this sense, institutional change can be seen as a form of change which shapes professionalism *from within*.

An unexplored field is the way technological change interacts with socio-professional stratification principles. New technologies, in effect, can reproduce or even increase the inequalities between those who have resources to invest in innovation or, in any case, have the capacity to keep pace with technological advancements, and those who have not. On the other hand, technological change offers those who are at the margins of the professional field new opportunities to promote their businesses or directly sell services, reaching a wider audience at a low cost. Among the so-called "disruptive" technologies (Christensen 1997) – namely innovative technologies that make it possible to offer low-cost, high-quality services and, thus, activate a latent demand for services – online work platforms take the externalisation trend to the extreme, so you can hire the expert you need, for a single, often simple

task, without even knowing who he or she is. In this sense, digitalisation exposes professional workers to a process of polarisation between bad and good jobs, with the consequence of putting them or, at least, some of them, in a precarious work situation. The growing quota of self-employed professionals without employees should be regarded as a possible warning signal as to the deterioration of their working conditions.

2. A fundamental feature that scholars have taken into consideration to distinguish professions from occupations is the capacity of specific occupational groups to secure social recognition and control association membership (Johnson 1972; Freidson 1994), thus ensuring their members stable and remunerative jobs by reducing the number of acknowledged practitioners and, as a consequence, internal competition. This takes us to the second dimension: professionalism changes *between* professional groups. These are indeed characterised by different degrees of protection against market risks, which depend on public regulation, but also on the capacity to organise collectively and exert control or influence over a certain field of expertise (Butler *et alii* 2012). Regulation provides differential advantages and/or disadvantages to those who benefit from public acknowledgement of their market closure and those who, instead, rely only on the market as the dominant regulatory mechanism.

This is a typical neo-Weberian analytical perspective, with its focus on the interactions between different occupational jurisdictions (Abbott 1988), in particular the dynamics of professional power (Johnson 1972) and the mechanisms of exclusionary social closure (Parkin 1979; Macdonald 1995) which determine the success of a "professional project" (Sarfatti Larson 1977). In this view, professions are depicted as hierarchically differentiated groups, and the analysis is centred on inequalities between professional groups (Saks 2015). That said, if we assume that professional groups are historically and locally situated – both enabled and constrained by nationally-based professional systems, and embedded in specific institutional and sociocultural contexts – we deem it convenient to extend the discourse on "differentiation between" to include the rising inequalities between professionals who belong to the same professional groups but to different professional systems, put under pressure by globalisation processes.

Globalisation (Dent *et alii* 2016), in effect, has changed the composition of the professional labour force and the size of professional service firms. It is now easy for professionals to travel outside their countries to provide their services: not only because services are increasingly supplied by global corporations dominating the markets in their home countries and abroad (Muzio, Kirkpatrick 2011), but also because individual careers are becoming boundaryless and globally mobile (Cohen, Mallon 1999). It is now common for professionals from different countries and educated within different systems of professions to provide professional services side by side in the same global professional service firm. This means that professionalism, as we traditionally know it, is performed under different regulations and various cultures. New "local" ways of interpreting what professionalism is therefore emerge: as such, the same regulative framework can have different outcomes, when "imported" from one country to another.

3. The third dimension concerns what lies *beyond* professionalism. The term "beyond", it is worth noting, does not mean the denial of the value of professionalism as a heuristic category, nor the transition to any form of post-professional society. On the contrary, it implies the assumption of the persisting significance of professionalism as a conceptual tool that can be used to analyse and interpret social change. Furthermore, it indicates the necessity to shift the focus of the academic discourse from professionalism, in a strict sense, to the relationship between expert labour and society, that is, the way social change influences professionalism, and its implications for society as a whole.

This aspect has to do with the forms of "social control" already enumerated by Goode (1957), in particular the "indirect" control exerted by society on professionals through the clients' choices. The same phenomenon can be observed from a different perspective, as a matter of power in the "social exchange" between professionals and clients, understood as the autonomy of the former from the latter (Forsyth, Danisiewicz 1985). In this case, the focus is on the changing relationship between professionals and clients, and the effects of change on trust relationships and the dynamics of social recognition. Indeed it is true that so far the academic debate has not been able to fully

take into account the extent to which professionalism has changed in the light of the decline in trust relationships and the public recognition of the value of professional work.

An influential factor to consider is, once again, technological change. It is a pervasive phenomenon that affects professionals as well as clients: on the one hand, it has created new channels to express the demand for professional services; on the other, it has offered professionals new instruments to respond, in a prompt and low-cost manner, to the demand for professional services, which has, in turn, become more sophisticated and sensitive to price variations. Furthermore, new technologies have changed the ways expert knowledge is produced and conveyed, impacting significantly on the power balances between professionals and clients. Technology has made "esoteric" knowledge more easily accessible, so that the relationship between professionals and clients is, by and large, mediated by technology. In this sense, technology is a vector of irreversible change, which involves the way expert knowledge is made available to the public, and new organisational models designed to increase the access to professional services (see Susskind R., Susskind D. 2015).

Taken all together, the trends described above reveal the need for further theoretical advancements and indicate new empirical research directions. In the special issue we are presenting here, we have collected some promising studies that go in the directions of research mentioned above.

UNPACKING THE TOOLBOX: AN OUTLINE OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS

The issue we propose to our readers aims to illustrate the potential of a research agenda resting on three dimensions, *within*, *between* and *beyond*, as analytical tools to allow an overview of the complexity of contemporary professionalism. The nine articles included in this issue present investigations on both established and emerging professions, conducted in Western and non-Western countries. They can be ideally divided into three groups of three contributions each, as they focus on the three aspects of change that we consider crucial to understand the social and cultural transformations occurring in the field of professions.

Professionalism as a practice – "beyond" as a latent dimension

The first three articles depart from the conception of professionalism as an "institution" to instead focus on professionalism as a "practice", highlighting the practicality of the wisdom used by professionals in performing their everyday tasks.

In the first article, Florent Champy provides a valuable theoretical contribution which consists of an original attempt to redefine what we mean by professionalism. Champy borrows the concept of "prudentiality" from Aristotelian philosophy to reframe and better understand the current changes in professionalism. The author, it is to be noted, refers to a particular type of professionalism, which better adapts to those work activities undertaken in situations of "irreducible uncertainty", which he, indeed, calls *prudential professionalism*. Such activities, he says, require a particular way of reasoning, namely "practical wisdom", which enables the mistakes arising from uncertainty to be limited. Starting from an analysis of Abbott's theory and taking the case of American medicine as an example, Champy shows the intrinsic vulnerability of work activities and the related weakness of professional domains. He then notices how the principles of New Public Management and organisational professionalism, which affirm the dominance of the value of objectivity and aim to reduce contingency, have affected the professions that rely on prudential practices, making them weaker. The contribution of Champy is of particular interest in the context of this issue, since it includes the "beyond" dimension as a latent – not focal – analytical dimension. The author, in effect, declares his intention to emphasise the connections between the developments in professionalism and wider social change, underlining that the valorisation of objectivity to the detriment of prudentiality impacts the whole of society.

Champy's conception of prudentiality is also used by Tatiana Saruis in her contribution, as a theoretical basis to show how alterations in discretional power, in conditions of increasingly complex contexts and tasks, affect street-level workers in social welfare – their roles, responsibilities, working conditions and protection from risks. After defining the concept of "discretion" in relation to the institutional factors – laws and procedures – that define its spaces and influence its use, Saruis examines the conditions that make it a problematic issue in this policy field. These include inadequate resources, ambiguous and undefined aims, results that are difficult to measure, in addition to an inherent asymmetry of information between workers and users. She then shows how significant changes in welfare systems have produced multiple pressures on discretion, which has reflected on the professionalism of street-level workers. In this case too, it is easy to make out the tension between professions and society in the background of the article. As the author notices, indeed, the "spaces" of discretion have widened due to social change, namely with an increase in and diversification of the demand for welfare services. On the other hand, discretion is a constitutive element of the power relationships between street-level workers and citizens.

The contribution of Irmgard Steckdaub-Muller differs from the previous ones as it poses the question of redefining professionalism at its limits, beyond the comfortable boundaries of acknowledged professions. The author presents a case study on tattoo artists to show how this particular kind of practitioners, who suffer from an essential lack of social recognition and constantly fight against deep-rooted prejudices and stereotypes, use professionalism as a "discursive" practice to conceptualise their work activity and construct a professional identity. Once again, the concept of prudentiality proves to be useful to capture the essence of working in complex and variable environments, in conditions of "irreducible uncertainty". The comparison with medicine follows on naturally from the interview extracts reported in the text.

The "within" dimension

The second ideal group of three articles explores the *within* dimension in relation to regulation dynamics, focusing on what happens when institutions shape professionalism.

The article written by Wang and Stewart investigates the reasons that impeded the British Association of Project Management (APM) from fully succeeding in raising the status and performance of project management in the UK. For this purpose, it adopts an original analytical approach. The authors apply the actor-network theory (ANT) to reframe the historical actions of professional associations. They identify a range of "human" – i.e. practitioners, clients, employers – and "non-human" actors – i.e. certifications, membership, tactics – which, when combined, can address and solve the concerns of the market. Then, they look at the process of professionalisation as a process of "value-translation", structured in four phases: *problematisation*, *interessement*, *enrolment* and *mobilisation*. Wang and Stewart apply this approach to an analysis of the historical evolution of the cost accounting profession and its association (the Cost Accounting Professional Association, CIMA), and use this case study as a comparator for the case of project management and the APM. This way of proceeding allows the authors to identify the weaknesses of the process to professionalise project management in Britain, reframed in terms of a lack of recognition in the network of actors to which project managers belong.

Clementina Casula presents the singular case of Italian classical musicians. The classical music profession in Italy, the author observes, is undergoing profound changes. Adopting a neo-institutional perspective, she explores the processes that are reshaping the profession, focusing on two of them: neoliberal trends, bringing about the marketisation of the performing arts and reframing the idea of classical music as a productive factor in the rhetoric about the creative industries; and "cultural declassification", that is, the weakening of the cultural authority of classical music. Casula argues that, in the light of these changes, the transformation of the institutions designated to train musicians – the Music Conservatories, promoted to the tertiary level of education – has produced the paradoxical effect of "deprofessionalising" classical musicians. She then examines the strategies pursued by both musicians and music teachers to cope with these changes.

In the following article, Bronzini and Spina challenge the notion of "transition" in teachers' professionalism and try to identify possible emerging features of the teaching profession in Italy. For this purpose, they develop a theoretically-based analytical framework, which tries to combine different *phases* and *forms* of professionalism, by comparing the types already identified by Hargreaves and Noordegraaf. This approach sets out to enable the conduction of a systematic historical-processual analysis of professionalism in the field of teaching. The main aim of the article is to test this approach through a pilot case study, using mixed methods. The analysis provides significant indications on how the profession is changing, revealing different ways of understanding and practising the profession itself. As the authors demonstrate, the transition process is incomplete. Elements of "pure" professionalism persist, although generally hybridity seems to prevail.

The "between" dimension

The last three articles explore the *between* dimension, with specific reference to the dynamics of transnational mobility that occur in the context of globalisation processes, also implied by the growing importance of the seemingly "peripheral" area of geography in the professional debate.

The contribution of Bédard and Massana investigates the phenomenon of transnational mobility – understood as mobility across nationally-based professional systems – and the related problems of the socio-professional integration of established professionals, such as engineers. The authors propose an in-depth analysis of the reasons and implications of the difficulties encountered by French engineers moving to Canada, against the backdrop of the functioning of the France-Quebec Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA). They thus focus on the interaction between two dimensions: a *structural* dimension, related to the mechanisms of regulation and governance of the professions; and a *cultural and relational* dimension, related to the processes of learning social and cultural codes and building networks of personal relationships. The article draws interesting conclusions. The MRA indeed facilitates the access of foreign engineers to the domestic professional labour market, but it does not provide mechanisms to support their social integration, nor to avoid potential professional deskilling. In this sense, it discloses the existence of processes of social closure owing to socio-cultural barriers, which make integration problematic even for highly qualified migrant professionals speaking the same language as the domestic workers.

Erwin Rafael instead calls attention to the outcomes resulting from the movement of institutions. His article shows what happens to professionalism when a regulative framework created for one country is imported to another. For this purpose, it reports the findings of a case study on accountancy in the Philippines, which the author indicates as a "peripheral" professional group in a globalised professional field aiming to strengthen its occupational authority by managing its knowledge standards. More precisely, Rafael conducts a historical reconstruction to show how Philippine accountancy ended up cutting off its post-colonial ties with US practice – which he defines as an "unsustainable reliance" – and decided to harmonise the Philippine Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) with the International Accounting Standards (IAS). He then interprets this strategic choice as the outcome of a complex mix of structural changes in the core of standards development, resource constraints on peripheral organisations such as the Accounting Standards Council (ASC) and the pursuit of a professional project by the local professional group.

Last but not least, the article authored by Esther Ruiz Ben investigates the global interstices in which professionalism sprawls, looking at the professional boundaries that emerge when professional activities are performed transnationally. Borrowing the concept of "linked ecologies" from Abbott, the author focuses on transnational IT workspaces as "inter-ecological" spaces where experts and employers belonging to different, nationally-based institutional settings interact within the framework of transnational projects. Ruiz Ben assumes that the struggle for professional boundaries takes place in three dimensions: in the linkages between tasks and organised action (jurisdiction), the mechanisms for legitimising work (control of work) and the search for professional identity. She then shows that, to deal with these problems, the IT managers working in transnational workspaces combine organisational rules and occupational knowledge, as a particular form of hybrid professionalism. They emerge, she says, as

"hinges" linking not only different organisations, but also bodies of knowledge, areas of expertise and geographical locations.

VARIETIES OF PROFESSIONALISM: REFINING THE RESEARCH AGENDA

The collection of articles presented in this introductory contribution is intended to account for the *varieties of professionalism* emerging as an implication of pervasive globalisation processes which are increasingly connecting professionals, professional groups and professional systems from different world regions.

We have nevertheless taken this occasion to reflect on the status of the sociology of professions and the capacity of its heuristic categories to explain the changing social reality. In particular, we felt the necessity to try to broaden our consideration of the problem of professionalism as a concept that needs to be continuously redefined. For this purpose, we proposed to refocus the discourse about professionalism on the process of *differentiation* and the *increasing heterogeneity* it brings about, within and between professional groups. We then drew possible paths of development of the academic debate in three analytical dimensions, labelled as *within*, *between* and *beyond*. Finally, we outlined the nine articles, trying to reconduct them to these dimensions.

Three orders of themes have thus been identified. The first field deals with *the redefinition of the concept of professionalism as a "practice"*, highlighting the practicality of the wisdom used by professionals in performing their everyday tasks. The three contributions that deal with this problem, particularly those of Champy and Saruis, it is to be noted, show that assuming the idea of professionalism as a practice implies reflecting on the "beyond" dimension as well; professional practice and social change, in this view, are directly connected with each other. The second dimension concerns *the analysis of regulation processes*, focusing on what happens when institutions shape professionalism. In this regard, the collected articles present a variety of cases, pertaining to the role of key institutions, such as professional associations and training institutions, against the background of significant changes in the regulatory frameworks. The third area investigates *the dynamics of transnational mobility*, in the context of globalisation processes. Here, the contributions focus on the mobility of both practitioners and – in a figurative sense – of institutions, and on the way transnational workspaces shape professionalism.

A further remark must be made concerning the types of professions studied. As can be seen, four contributions out of nine deal with emerging, unprotected and unregulated professions (i.e. tattoo artists, classical musicians, project managers and IT experts). This should induce scholars in this disciplinary field to reflect on the convenience of loosening the requirements for defining what we mean by professionalism. In this respect, we argue that the notion of professionalism as a "discursive episteme" (Butler *et alii* 2012) may be a valid investigative tool to understand a higher number of occupations: not solely professions, strictly speaking, but all those occupations that use *expertise* as a way of distinguishing themselves on the labour market. If we were to stick to an institutional definition, in effect, we would run the risk of underestimating certain phenomena occurring outside a (historical and situated) model, based on established professions.

Despite introducing innovative elements to the debate, however, the collection of articles presented here leave some questions unresolved. As regards the *within* dimension, none of the articles deals with the precariousness of professional workers. This is still an unexplored issue, with few notable exceptions (see, for instance, Ballatore *et alii* 2014). In terms of *between*, none of them proposes a comparison between countries in the same professional field or between professions in the same country. However, comparative studies are the key to abstracting from country- and profession-specific trends and bringing to light the subterranean transformations affecting professionalism at a macro-global level. Lastly, none of the articles assumes the dynamics occurring *beyond* professionalism as a focal point of its analysis. Essential questions concerning the changing nature of the demand for professional services, its impact on the relationship between professionals and clients or users, and the consequences on the broader society therefore remain unanswered.

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Monographic Section

What Are the Issues of Focusing on Irreducible Uncertainties in Professional Work? A Historical Outline of "Prudential Professionalism"

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Abstract. This article brings into view "prudential professionalism", a particular type of professionalism needed in situations of irreducible uncertainties, presents the philosophical concept of prudentiality on which this is based, and seeks to clarify both the theoretical and practical issues associated with this professionalism. A discussion with Abbott's book, *The System of Professions,* is used to argue that revisiting the theme of professionalism is needed. Then a historical outline of prudential professionalism brings some empirical material to support the theoretical arguments. This historical outline sheds new light on the current difficulties of professionals faced by demands from new public management they cannot meet and by the values of organisational professionalism. Finally, a method to rethink the social conditions of professional work is proposed.

Keywords. Professional work; New Public Management; uncertainties; practical wisdom; medicine; organisational professionalism; casework.

Professionalism has always been of great interest to the sociology of professions (Bledstein 1977; Sarfatti Larson 1977; Freidson 2001). More recently, sociologists have uncovered a new emerging form, "organisational professionalism", which greatly differs from "occupational professionalism" (Fournier 1999; Evetts 2003). This new professionalism has actually resulted in a decline in the autonomy professionals enjoyed in their work. Organisational professionalism calls upon the benefit of users in order to generate greater self-discipline by enforcing ever increasingly pervading criteria of quality: predictability of the working process and its results, deadlines, compliance with quality standards, efficiency. New Public Management (NPM) has supervised the development of this new professionalism and implemented monitoring and evaluation tools which make it possible for the management to call professionals to account for the work they do.

The many studies carried out on NPM have contributed to making the

reforms and the evolutions responsible for this decline in autonomy widely known (Ackroyd *et alii* 2007). Nevertheless, the opposition between organisational and occupational professionalism in terms of actual knowledge and practice has but been studied very little. How does organisational professionalism fundamentally challenge some tasks, ways of reasoning or the capacity to keep up with some of the objectives characterising occupational professionalism? The question has not been given a systematic theoretical answer, whereas the issues at stake are far more critical than those involved in professional autonomy (Champy 2018a). Moreover, activities are unevenly affected by the evolutions of management and organisations. The most impacted are often occupations that could be seen as professions in a functionalist perspective, such as medicine, magistracy or research work. Yet, the functionalist approach to professions has been so heavily criticised that there is no point in taking that up again. Hence, my second question: why should some activities more than others be impacted by the attacks launched against professional autonomy and by the demands of organisational professionalism? I believe that a theory of professionalism should ambition to address this kind of issue.

This article means to bring into view a particular type of professionalism, better adapted to working in situations of irreducible uncertainty, with the ambition to help provide an answer to these difficulties. I will argue that bringing to light this type de professionalism is crucial to fully understand the way professions and their regulation had developed from that time when they were protected, by the late Nineteenth century, up to the current difficulties faced by professionals to meet the demands made on them. It is also of critical interest to gain an understanding of the ongoing reflection launched by some of them in an attempt to overcome these difficulties. I call this professionalism "prudential professionalism", with reference to the Aristotelian concept of "prudentiality" or "practical wisdom", which precisely points to the very reasoning required to act in situations of irreducible uncertainty.

Any human activity is likely to result in practical wisdom. Yet, practical wisdom is unequally important according to activities, and this may have significant consequences. The idea that uncertainties or contingencies play a more significant role in some activities is not a new one. In 1985, together with his three colleagues, Strauss was already writing:

> There are two striking features of health work shared only with certain other kinds of work. One consists of the unexpected and difficult to control contingencies stemming not only from the illness itself, but also from a host of work and organizational sources as well as from biographical and life-style sources pertaining to patients, kin, and staff members themselves. A second and crucial feature of health work is that it is "people work". (...) Taken together, both features insure that trajectory work harbors the potential for being complex and often highly problematic. (Strauss *et alii* 1985: 9)

Prudential professionalism is thus very close to occupational professionalism as designed along the example of medicine[1]. But the analysis of Strauss and its possible theoretical consequences have been overlooked by the sociologists of professions, who stuck to Hughes' recommendation to study all activities in the same way (Hughes 1958). The idea of practical wisdom provides sociology with new insights and can truly expand the study of those activities faced with specific difficulties arising from complexity and contingencies. The three objectives of the article are as such: report on a kind of professionalism based on this ancient observation, help clarify its close connections with practical wisdom as characterised by Aristotle's commentators (Aubenque 1963; Broadie 1991), and illustrate how professionalism and practical wisdom brought together can enrich the conventional issues of the sociology of professions.

I propose to take a three-stage approach. First, I will introduce the concept of practical wisdom and the ideas of prudential activities and prudential professionalism. Secondly, I will endeavour to demonstrate that the idea of prudential professionalism is as instrumental as the notions of science or efficiency in envisaging the history of pro-

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[1] In a broad sense, these two kinds of professionalism may be seen as similar. But arguing so would give prudential professionalism a position in the sociological analysis which is not granted by current studies. Most of all, whether both systematically blend or not is but a scholastic issue, taking us back to the longstanding debate over the adequate definition of professions that has long kept sociologists busy without any conclusive results. For a more in-depth presentation of a possible way out of this old debate as provided by the use of the concept of practical wisdom, see Champy (2018b).

tections granted to some activities. To this end and starting from Andrew Abbott's theory, I will first demonstrate that using the scientific or objective dimension of work to account for protections is not analytically convincing. I will then move on to show that the idea of uncertainty was still shaping the way professionalism was reflected on by the late Nineteenth, early Twentieth century, precisely when a number of professions were undergoing protection, clearly influencing discourses and leading to concrete measures, even though the concept was not developed as such. I will use the case of medicine in the United States as particularly relevant to highlight the history of actual protections, with references to social work to show how much the idea of practical wisdom permeated discourses at that time. The third section will demonstrate how a much simpler discourse finally prevailed and contributed to undermining these professions by confronting them to a conception of professionalism which fails to reflect the difficulties met in professional activities. My conclusion will outline the main features of a programme meaning to reconsider the organisation of professional work (or its regulation in the broad sense), based on an analysis of the social conditions conducive to practical wisdom.

PRACTICAL WISDOM AND PRUDENTIAL PROFESSIONALISM

Practical wisdom is the translation of the Greek concept *phronesis*, which is used by Aristotle to refer to a way of reasoning that allows for action in situations of irreducible uncertainty. Another possible translation is prudentiality. When action is required in highly singular and complex situations, common solutions that can be automatically inferred from routines, rules or scientific knowledge, might lead to mistakes and damages. Indeed, the singularity of the situation may imply that those solutions are not necessarily appropriate. Besides, the complexity of the situation does not allow for a high degree of certainty. Hence, this type of situation requires an approach, a way of reasoning that enables professionals to act while limiting the mistakes and damages that may arise from the uncertainty they are confronted to and which they have to accept as partly irreducible. Practical wisdom is precisely this particular way of reasoning. It is a type of modest rationality as it does not claim to provide certainty, which would be impossible, nor objectivity, since situations of uncertainty sometimes lead to making speculations. But this type of rationality is both more realistic and more challenging than the approach which consists in denying the uncertainties faced by actors. It should be added that it does not contradict established knowledge, protocols, objectivization techniques, not even science. On the contrary, it implies relying on the knowledge available, among which scientific knowledge. But it cannot be restricted to science itself since it actually becomes necessary in the very situations which science fails to solve. This is what makes practical wisdom a very particular way of reasoning, meeting a set of requirements whose phenomenology has been proposed by philosophers (Aubenque 1963; Broadie 1991). We shall examine these requirements later.

Medicine is the ultimate prudential activity. The human body and psyche are always singular and particularly complex, which means that both medical diagnoses and the adaptation of treatments to each individual patient prove to be more sensitive than most tasks in other activities[2]. That is the reason why practical wisdom is required. Furthermore, adapting treatments gets even more difficult when the patients' social and economic situations are to be taken into account, since one has to take into consideration her/his lifestyle and its possible impact on the care path: uncertain compliance with treatment, ability to sustain it that may be affected by housing conditions and poor nutrition, erratic family support, etc. When considering those difficulties, one understands that medical work cannot be simply restricted to implementing what biomedical knowledge prescribes. In other words, there is more to medical practice than a mere technique; it is also a matter of proper judgment[3].

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[2] That is what Strauss and his colleagues had realised but without making the connection with practical wisdom.

[3] Judgment may concern the advisability of a treatment. Aggressive and hopeless life-prolonging measures (a borderline, yet quite common, case) demonstrate how far the automatic reflexes of curative performance can go. The next footnote will explain how therapeutic obstinacy is iconic of a lack of practical wisdom.

The relevance of the concept of practical wisdom for sociological work lies in the fact that philosophical work provides us with an understanding of the main characteristics of this way of reasoning (Aubenque 1963; Broadie 1991). Practical wisdom requires for instance that all the dimensions of a situation should be examined. Also, a possibility to rule out ready-made prescriptions and favour tailored solutions should be introduced. Acting prudentially is what is required in order to avoid those mistakes that would reduce the case to only one of its dimensions, and to prevent any hasty decision. And yet, one should also move on despite uncertainties and come to terms with the risk of being mistaken. Consequently, acting prudentially sometimes means making bets on what seems to be the most acceptable risk. In some situations, if you want to act prudentially, you will definitely have to be daring.

Another feature of practical wisdom is of great value to the sociologist as it enables her/him to distinguish from other activities those for which practical wisdom plays a major role (Champy 2018b). The objectives of the activity should also be prioritised: in prudential activities, the complexity of the cases often makes it impossible to fully meet every single objective the professional should ideally pursue. Thus, he must make choices according to the emphasis he places on the various objectives of his activity. In medicine, tension may arise between the patient's life expectancy, his/her comfort and dignity, reducing risks of accident, etc[4]. Research, teaching, social work and architecture, for instance, also provide examples of debates focusing on the prioritisation of the objectives of the activity, whereas prioritisation is not debated in other activities, such as more exclusively technical crafts activities. My previous work has shown that these activities experiencing debates on their objectives are the ideal type of prudential professions as they provide the basis for fruitful research work on the concept of practical wisdom (ibid.).

What are the qualities of the prudential professional? The command of scientific knowledge may be required for many activities, but it is never sufficient. Experience is also crucial in the making of a prudential professional. The members of prudential professions are better able to solve some problems and carry out some tasks, both because they enjoy highly qualified expertise, and because their training and their practice provide them with experience that strengthens their judgement. Confronted to the complex cases they have to handle, their contribution cannot be interchangeable with other actors'. Thus, the prudential approach of those particular professionals must be encouraged, so as to limit mistakes. However, the uncertainties they have to contend with confront them with a number of sources of vulnerability. There is first a risk that concrete working conditions may stand in the way of prudential practice. More significantly here, due to the nature of their activity, even the most competent professionals may be mistaken in their unavoidable speculation. If so, any accident or controversy can damage the confidence of public opinion. In addition, intraprofessional exchanges debating between several conceptions of effectiveness resulting from different ways of prioritising the objectives of the activity may also be detrimental to the image of the profession as efficient. We argue that exposing this vulnerability is crucial to gain a better understanding of the evolutions of professionalism and to reflect on its regulation. This conception of professionalism has so far been overshadowed by the emphasis laid on the scientific or objective dimension of protected professional activities by a number of theories.

OCCUPATIONAL PROFESSIONALISM: SCIENCE (AND OBJECTIVITY), PRACTICAL WISDOM OR BOTH?

The sociological theories of protections granted to some professions have insisted on the decisive, even exclusive, importance of either science (Parsons) or of so-called objectivity (Abbott). Both science and claimed objectivity do play a crucial role in the history of the emergence of professions and its accompanying discourses. But, by insisting only on these two dimensions, one tends to bypass a significant dimension of professionalism, which is the vulnerability of activities. Relying on Abbott's theory, I will first illustrate and demonstrate that referring to the efficiency of professional work cannot actually account for protections. I will secondly focus on the history of

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[4] The doctrine of palliative care claims that the doctors who want to set the comfort and dignity of at-end-of-life patients as a priority demonstrate more judgement and prudentiality than their colleagues determined to continue curative measures that no longer work.

professions during the late Nineteenth, early Twentieth century and evidence how strongly they were aware of their vulnerability: when medicine gained its first protections in the United States, medical science was in its infancy, and the awareness of its limits far exceeded the belief in its efficiency. Then, broadening the scope to other activities, mainly to social work, will enable us to observe the prime role played by casework in teaching and discourses about professionalism. And casework is brought forward by a conception of work which lays the emphasis on the relation to the concrete aspects, with characteristics that are very close to practical wisdom.

Competing for jurisdictions in the System of Professions

Abbott begins his book with a criticism of the functionalist analysis of professionalisation and its attempt to describe a typical unidirectional process characterised by immutable stages (Abbott 1988). Similarly to interactionists, he draws attention to the contingency that may characterise the outcomes of professional competition. Jurisdictions are not defined by an essential nature of work, but depends on the way a system of interdependent professions emerges over time. And yet, one should not consider Abbott only as an interactionist. On the contrary, he breaks away with the relativism of the interactionist perspective, particularly Becker's (1962), when sharing the functionalist assumption that the boundaries of jurisdictions are ultimately set by effectiveness. Therefore, the issue to be addressed is whether the interconnection between ideas that belong to two wholly different theoretical propositions which appear contradictory may prove robust. We shall see how Abbott manages to go beyond this apparent contradiction.

The cornerstone of Abbott's innovative approach lies in the reintroduction of actual work activities at the core of his analysis when dealing with the uneven capacity of professions to achieve dominance over jurisdictions and to protect them against attacks launched by competitors. Interprofessional competition is made possible by the very fact that different professions may provide different "treatments" to the same problem. Abbott describes these variable treatments as "subjective", as opposed to problems seen as naturally or technologically more "objective". This means that treatments are social constructions, hence partly contingent, but that the range of socially acceptable treatments is limited by the characteristics of the problem to be dealt with, at least in the short term. For example, according to Abbott, the diagnoses and treatments for alcoholism are subjective, but the "objective qualities" of the problem imply that not all solutions are possible. To claim a jurisdiction, professionals strive to demonstrate that their definition of the problem is more objective than those provided by competitors.

By reintroducing actual work in his analysis, Abbott is led to go further than simply examining the part played by the professions' interaction with the legal system when professional status is being negotiated. More precisely, three arenas prevail in shaping the future of professions: the workplace, where interactions between the members of various professions generate, duplicate or make divisions of labour evolve, hence contributing to defining each profession's actual tasks; the arena of public opinion which, through trust and the actual demand, validates the connection between a group and a task; last of all, the relation to the legal system, as formalising the boundary of a jurisdiction makes it more difficult to be pre-empted.

The key to Abbott's successful reconciliation of apparently contradictory ideas rests on his emphasis on the role played by time. In the short run, competition impacts the division of labour and generates possible contingent effects: jurisdictions may be unreflective of the unequal effectiveness of solutions provided by various competing professions; a profession may take advantage, for a while, of an acquired position even though its solutions are not the best. Besides, the "social environment" (that is the techniques, the organisations and the culture of public opinion and the State) impacts competition and allows for disparities between the most relevant solutions and those acknowledged as such. It may prevent the recognition of some appropriate solutions, when, for example, public opinion and the legal system shaped by their cultural environment are not prone to accepting them. These disparities allow for competition in which dissimulation, rhetoric and alliances play their part. Abbott defines professional power as the capacity to maintain control over a jurisdiction whereas the system should have forced it out (ibid.).

On the contrary, in the long run, those disparities, hence power, vanish. Abbott precisely characterises the three arenas by a specific temporality. The workplace is where jurisdictions adapt most rapidly to what effec-

tiveness prescribes. Indeed, daily relationships at work make it impossible in the long term to ignore treatment failures. However hard they try, professionals cannot keep on deceiving if what they do is irrelevant. According to Abbott, it takes two or three years for effectiveness to prevail in the workplace. The necessary solutions that emerge in the division of labour are then the most appropriate to the current social environment, which is the restrictive framework for cooperation. Temporalities are different in the other two arenas. The image a profession gives of its work is more stable in front of the lay public than at the workplace since Abbott considers that ten to twenty years are necessary for the public to be aware of changes in the role performed by professions competing at the workplace. Finally, the arena of the legal system fixes things even further: twenty to fifty years are actually necessary to adapt the institutional system, particularly the law, to changes in the division of labour. But, however heavy the inertia of the legal system, the social utility of work, hence its effectiveness, is the main decisive long-term factor in distributing jurisdictions. To summarise, the demand for effectiveness constrains the construction of jurisdictions first at the workplace, next in public opinion which gradually comes to understand the new distribution of tasks, and finally in the law. By emphasising both effectiveness and contingency, Abbott's theory achieves a *tour de force*. It is a highly significant contribution to the sociology of professions, but this does not mean that it is fully satisfactory.

This theory is convincing in its description of the processes at work for conquering jurisdictions in the first two arenas, the workplace and the public opinion. One clearly understands how professionals manage to convince people that the solutions they provide for a problem are the most appropriate as opposed to their competitors'. Besides, the actors of the legal system may also be convinced of their effectiveness. But it is not clear for which reason these actors might want to secure formal protections. On the contrary, protections do not seem necessary: professionals will have secured their jurisdictions well before formal protections are set up. In addition, a great number of other occupations, particularly artisans, manage to secure a jurisdiction fully recognised in the first two arenas without seeking protection from the legal system.

Going further, the legal system would have reasonable grounds not to act since legal protections are likely to hinder effectiveness. To make things clearer, one has to consider the intricate temporalities of the processes at work in the three arenas. When the State grants a legal boundary to a jurisdiction after several decades of competition, how does one know for sure that this formalised division of labour is not already obsolete? It may no longer be in line with the latest solutions adopted, or in the process of being adopted, at the workplace, since the actual division of labour may keep evolving. By hindering possible later changes in the division of labour, legal formalisation is likely to interfere with its necessary adaptation to new relevant solutions. Thus, formal protections seem to go against effectiveness by making adaptation more difficult and slower.

These protections make sense only if clients find it very difficult to identify which professional is competent and who is not. But, the quality of work is harder to assess for some activities (Karpik 2007), which is exactly the case of prudential activities, since the quality of the work performed is more a matter of judgement than one of applying knowledge or specific and unquestionable procedures. The limitation of Abbott's theory calls for a two-fold remark: effectiveness as such cannot justify the necessity for protection. In addition, by over-emphasising the effectiveness of professional work, one has masked its fragility, which is a significant dimension, necessary to carry out a reflection on professions.

It is worth noting that the mere idea of protection encapsulates that of vulnerability. If the legal system feels the need to protect, it does mean that something is under threat. In addition, the idea that work activities are vulnerable is present in Abbott's study. First of all, effectiveness is not always sufficient to keep the control of a jurisdiction, which means that jurisdictions are weaker than they first appear to be. In addition, professionals have to protect themselves from other interferences by making their actual tasks arcane. Inference (that is the reasoning process taking place between diagnosis and determination of an appropriate treatment) and abstract knowledge play a major part in Abbott's theory. But their importance varies according to professions, and also within a single profession according to periods and cases to be addressed. The length of inference and the level of abstraction are crucial to making professional jurisdictions more resilient to external attacks. Without any inference, tasks become mechanical and easy to duplicate. On the contrary, an excessively lengthy inference process may weaken the juris-

diction by exposing a connection between diagnosis and treatment which is far too uncertain to convince public opinion of the professionals' competence. My argument is that the need for protection of some activities comes from the unusual uncertainty of the connection between problems and treatments in these activities. To support my argument, I will now show how this fragility was at the core of the way professions thought of themselves towards the end of the Nineteenth century.

Uncertainties in the American medicine of the Nineteenth century

Medicine as such is a particularly relevant instance, both because it is an iconic profession and because its achievements are seen as epitomising the benefits derived from scientific knowledge and progress. Paul Starr's (1982) work on the history of American medicine shows how the profession, poorly considered in the early Nineteenth century, gained authority and recognition by relying on modest thinking and a careful approach very much akin to that of practical wisdom. Obviously, the concept of practical wisdom is not referred to as such whether during the Nineteenth-century discussions or in Starr's book devoted to describing them a century later. But both the ideas developed, and the measures taken closely connect medical professionalism to practical wisdom.

The first regulations gained by physicians for their activity at the very end of the Nineteenth century followed on from an aggiornamento brought about by a greater concern for the reality accompanied by an overall distrust of the early-century metaphysical abstraction (ibid.). Hence, as early as the first decades of the century, stress was laid on clinical observation, rather than on scientific knowledge. Besides, these efforts to obtain recognition went hand-in-hand with some therapeutical scepticism that lived on up to the end of the century. Medicine was unassuming, and physicians paid particular attention to the social conditions of illness, which exemplifies a more holistic than technical approach, closer to prevention than to therapy and which clearly makes it prudential.

Starr also presents the actual measures and changes implemented that preceded the recognition awarded to academic medical training and led to the disappearance of all the training courses that did not comply with established standards by the turn of the Nineteenth and Twentieth century. Two places did play a major role in encouraging innovations by the end of the Nineteenth century: Harvard University and John Hopkins University, through the strong influence of respectively William Welsh and William Osler. A closer connection with science was gradually introduced and radically changed the training: universities equipped laboratories and scientific research became part of the future physicians' training programme. But that very move also expressed a determination to move away from didactic lectures in favour of greater concern for actual work. Back then, the prevailing conception of medical work used to be largely empirical and based on experience. In 1893, a training reform at the John Hopkins University granted "scientific research" and "clinical instruction" equal importance. Out of the four training years, two were devoted to practising on the spot. Starr particularly insists on that aspect: «though Hopkins accentuated science, it did not stand for a narrowly technical vision of medicine; this was the secret of its special éclat» (ibid.: 116). Another feature of the late Nineteenth-century programme clearly illustrates the degree of awareness of the non-technical dimension of the activity: Welsh and Osler both placed particular importance on general culture as necessary to help guide judgment.

By insisting on experience and general culture, Welsh and Osler demonstrated that they wanted physicians to be trained as prudential professionals, even though, here again, the concept was not mentioned. That representation of the physician prevailed at least until the early 1900s. In other words, the implementation of the institutions of professionalism in the second half of the Nineteenth century (creation of the American Medical Association, growing connections between universities and hospitals, minimum standards for officially recognised courses) took place before the emergence of medicine as exclusively scientific, such as developed in the Twentieth century. What's more, back then, both the public and the States understood the necessity to entrust specialists with healthcare, even though their competences were still looked upon as rather vague: «there was hardly an advance in medical science whose introduction into medical practice was not initially marred by uncertainty and disillusionment because of errors in application or failures of quality control». (ibid.: 138)

Finally, over the whole half of the Nineteenth century, medicine was characterised by its diversity of approaches and practices relying on different general principles. Starr describes three main groups: regulars, homoeopaths and the "eclectics". He stresses that the respective principles which regulars and homoeopaths relied on were antinomic. Nevertheless, for political reasons (they needed to strengthen their position), those groups got together against their competitors without proper training, to the extent that homoeopaths were granted access to universities. Far from being considered as abnormal, the diversity of those practices was encouraged by the States. Thus, in those days, fundamental medical principles were controversial issues, and those controversies were seen as a necessary step towards the development of an activity still trying to figure out its own scientific base. It was also because this base was still uncertain that the solutions experienced physicians using their sense of discrimination managed to patch up were greatly valorised.

Casework as a prudential device for training

The conception of professionalism which emerges in this briefly sketched history is particularly embodied by the specific practice of casework, so commonly used in the professional world. I will provide three examples of its use in three different fields. As a matter of fact, medicine was overrun by law, but became the reference for social work.

Law has paved the way by its use of casework in training, under the form of commentaries on judgements or, to put it more clearly, by discussing *jurisprudence*. Judgement is definitely the central element. The subtlety required for this exercise is quite remarkable. The difficulty lies in how to fit a concrete case into an abstract rule which has not been written to deal with this particular case. Selecting the appropriate rule entails avoiding quick simplification of the case, whose complexity is the very reason for practising the exercise. Case law commentaries imply mastering both legal concepts and case analysis since its particulars may be determining.

In medicine, training by the patient's hospital bed used to be the prestigious form of casework. It has long played a fundamental part in the training, even though it is less so now for reasons that will be partly developed (Peters, ten Cate 2013). What's more, this type of training leaves room for thinking ethics out (Siegler 1978), hence room for considering that several solutions are possible and that the elements to be taken into account are not exclusively scientific. According to Osler (1905: 331-332), «for the junior student in medicine and surgery it is a safe rule to have no teaching without a patient for a text». The interpretation of that "text" relies on observation, a key competence to understand the case. No automatism, no systematic approach is possible. This is both the greatness and the vulnerability of clinical medicine.

That central character of the late Nineteenth, early Twentieth century medical professionalism was used as a model for other activities. Social work failed in its attempt to be regarded as a profession, but it is iconic insofar that it went down the path initiated by doctors, so as to put forth the complexity of the tasks and the prudential dimension of the activity. In 1915, Flexner argued that social work lacked the basic attributes needed to be considered as a profession. Richmond's answer to Flexner represents a textbook case for our field (Richmond 1922). In her arguments to claim recognition of social work as a profession, casework is so central that it even provides the book's title. In Richmond's book, there is no substantial reference to the scientific knowledge required. On the contrary, she insists on the complexity and resulting uncertainties social workers have to be able to handle. One chapter is devoted to individual differences and shows that no individual case can be compared to another one without a prudential approach. All the dimensions of the environment in which people live are described, highlighting complexity. The interdependent connections between all the actors are also described as they often generate many contingencies. Thus, Richmond attempted to obtain the recognition of social work as a profession not by insisting on the scientific certainties supposed to solidify the tasks, but, following in the steps of medicine, by focusing on the complexity of the activity generating uncertainty (Gravière 2014).

During the Nineteenth century and early Twentieth, when professions were trying to gain access to a legal status that would protect them from competition, considerations on professionalism were far from the applied sci-

ence model. This model, whose importance was demonstrated by Schön (1983), will only become dominant later. At first, professional rhetoric went for a description of work activities where contingencies (to use Strauss's word) played a major part. Richmond's or Osler's approaches to professionalism are very different from what functionalists described later. Theirs demonstrated that the claims for legal protection actually came from those professions that were made vulnerable by the contingencies they had to face. This does not mean that any professional action would be equally relevant. But reflexive practice and experience are particularly valorised against merely implementing scientific knowledge or rules as the only tools to determine what should be done. Objectivity is not a professional value because neither any rule nor any knowledge likely to establish this objectivity can adapt to the complex reality of those activities.

Practical wisdom as described by the Aristotelian philosophical tradition is strong attention given to the singularity and complexity of the actual situations to be addressed. That is why the prominent role granted to casework in both training and discourses so as to gain public and State recognition is strong evidence of the way those activities were guided by a prudential approach. But the representations of professionalism were to change radically in the Twentieth century. I will now show how science gained a core position in these representations, at the expense of the understanding of the prudential dimension of professional work, and to what extent that contributed to the emergence of organisational professionalism.

SCIENCE, OBJECTIVITY AND ORGANISATIONAL PROFESSIONALISM

By the end of the Nineteenth and early Twentieth century, the concept of practical wisdom was no longer to be found except in philosophical work. But the idea of practical wisdom still prevailed in the way actions in situations of uncertainty were addressed, as illustrated by the debates carried out in the fields of medicine and social work. We will now see how, in the Twentieth century, the idea of practical wisdom declined in favour of what Schön called the applied science model in those very activities standing for the ideal type of prudential activities, in particular medicine. That decline of the idea of practical wisdom paved the way for the growing success of organisational professionalism, as opposed to occupational professionalism, the former advocating values that are often difficult to reconcile with a prudential approach.

I will once again take up the case of medicine, which illustrates particularly well this development for three reasons: because it is the ultimate prudential activity; because scientific medical progress has greatly contributed to mask the prudential dimension of its work; because it is still often used as a reference for other professions. But the developments described here have a broader scope. They impact society as a whole: the inability to understand practical wisdom is a "total social fact", to borrow the expression of Marcel Mauss[5]. In addition, these developments are both cultural and social under a variety of aspects (in technical devices, rules, division of labour), hence reinforcing their impact. The decline of the prudential approach is evidenced in so many intricate ways that it would be pointless to try and bring to light any specific chronology nor any unidirectional causalities: the developments in the medical field have been affecting other professions and, beyond, a broader cultural context which, in turn, has impacted medicine.

The emergence of a scientist conception of professional work will not be systematically studied here as it would necessitate some considerable historical survey which is not needed here to support the theory. My ambition is simply to emphasise the connections between the developments in medicine, wider social changes, the emergence of organisational professionalism and the current difficulties met by professionals in a number of activities to act in a prudential way in situations of irreducible uncertainty.

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[5] On this point, allow me to refer to my work in the sociology of risks, on the misuse of the precautionary principle (Champy and Lepiller 2016) and the type of rationality adopted in the issues of food safety (Champy 2018c). Finance, whose risk models are basically non-prudential or even antiprudential, would be another relevant instance, as already exemplified by Nicolas Bouleau's research or Nassim Taleb's famous essay (Bouleau 2009; Taleb 2007).

Scientific medical breakthroughs

At the beginning of the Twentieth century, scientific medical progress was much faster and more significant than in the Nineteenth century, when improvements mostly concerned hygiene, hence preventive healthcare. In the Twentieth century, the authority of physicians increasingly relied on their capacity to cure patients, and scientific progress was the key element of this capacity.

> The continuing growth of diagnostic skills and therapeutic competence was sufficient to sustain confidence in their authority. And with the political organization they achieved after 1900, doctors were able to convert that rising authority into legal privileges, economic power, high incomes, and enhanced social status. (Starr 1982: 142)

From the 1910s onward, medical innovations contributed to the development of an increasingly shared scientific base which helped reduce the diversity in training programs. The number of hospitals increased, and residential training in hospitals became a more widespread teaching practice. That was how the institutions which were later to be used as a base for the growing technologisation of medicine were gradually set up soon after the training reforms promoted by Osler at John Hopkins and by Welsh at Harvard.

Medical breakthroughs were even more decisive after the Second World War. «Americans now gave science unprecedented recognition as a national asset» (ibid.: 334), and medicine played a major part in this cultural development, thanks to penicillin, sulphonamides, better vaccines, etc. Physicians gradually gained further authority. What is more, in the years following the Second World War, hospitals reinforced their influence through an increasingly technical organisation. Finally, later in the second half of the Twentieth century, Evidence-Based Medicine decreased the uncertainty related to the choice of treatments, thanks to therapeutic trials to assess their respective effectiveness. This technique is iconic of the new dominant paradigm.

Technically-focused hospitals and Evidence-Based Medicine are by no means representative of the whole healthcare activity. Instances of alternative trends do exist as well, as we will see later. But these two trends are iconic of the paradigm, whose impact, far from affecting only medicine, is spreading to other fields of activity.

Professionalism and the siren song of objectivity

Indeed, medicine is not the only professional activity in which objectivity is being increasingly valued. On the contrary, in the second half of the Twentieth century, the theme of objectivity widely established itself both in professional rhetoric (Sarfatti Larson 1977; Paradeise 1985; Abbott 1988) and in professional practice. To have a better idea of this valorisation of objectivity, architecture may be a clearer illustration than medicine, as one would have expected this activity not to be affected, considering its aesthetic dimension. The following is taken from two successive surveys concerning public procurement in France (Champy 1998; 2011). In the 1980s and early 1990s, state administrations selected architects after their proposals were assessed by a technical committee and thoroughly discussed by a jury. Discussions clearly revealed that the proposed projects could neither be measurable nor objectively comparable. One of them could be more satisfactory in terms of proper functioning, whereas another one would be much better in terms of aesthetic criteria. The choice actually depended on the way the qualities expected from the project were ranked, and there was no question of assessing a project as *objectively* better than the others. In the contests of the early 1990s that were observed, the uncertainty inherent to the architectural activity was accepted.

In the early 2000s, the procedure used to select projects evolved. The work carried out by the technical commission held before the jury grew more systematic. It particularly consisted of assessing the project compliance with the programme by measuring the difference between the surfaces proposed by the project and those required by the programme. Conversely, the jury's deliberation got shorter. Besides, in a number of contests, the chairman of the jury would remind his colleagues that their judgement should reach the greatest possible objectivity. Hence, the construction of a collective judgement gradually vanished to be replaced by a decision based on a technical approach.

The dominance of the value of objectivity has seriously impacted the conception of professionalism. Without claiming to be exhaustive, I will focus on medicine again to develop several consequences. First, the growing representation of medical work as relying on objectivity is leading to changes in teaching. The training at the bedside, enabling students to gain clinical expertise, is being gradually replaced by a focus on scientific knowledge. This knowledge is indeed necessary, and the medical breakthroughs achieved clearly account for the increasing part it plays in medical training. But the part it plays in the students' assessment and selection is nonetheless quite striking. In France for instance, their choice of a career as a specialist depends on their ranking in the national classifying end-of-study test taken at the end of their sixth year and based on multiple choice questions. But MCQs are made up of questions about schematic cases for which only one answer is possible. They consequently convey a simplified image of the medical activity whose complexity and contingency are definitely underestimated, when not ruled out. They select and train assertive doctors, convinced that their knowledge would provide *the* best possible answer.

Broadly speaking, systematically looking for objectivity is achieved at the expense of the prudential dimension of the activity, i.e. of the awareness of the irreducible uncertainties that make it impossible for decisions to be objective. The determination to obtain results that would conform to so-called objective criteria may lead to bypassing the complexity of the situations or of the cases addressed by the activity, since these criteria can only account for a few dimensions of the case. Porter's book *Trust in Numbers* (1995) is a clear illustration both of the triumph of this idea of objectivity far beyond professions and of its actual limits. Porter used historical examples to show that this confidence in numbers has nothing to do with their reliability. On the contrary, figures, as well as their uses, are socially constructed, and the modalities of their construction always alter and provide a partial view of reality. Even though they may prove useful, believing in their objectivity is often naïve.

Some professionals are trying to react against an increasingly oversimplified technical practice. For instance, since the 1990s, narrative medicine has paid particular attention to the patients' own story of their illness. The purpose is to help physicians get a better idea of the psychological and social dimensions of each case, as opposed to a strictly biomedical approach to illness. First initiated at Columbia University Medical Centre, narrative medicine has further been taught in other universities. Similarly, in order to help the students to realise that, because of some uncertainties about diagnoses or of the respective effectiveness of various treatments, it may be relevant to propose several clinical judgements for ill-defined cases, Montréal University has designed script concordance tests (SCTs). The examinees can provide several likely solutions, and they receive, for each item of the test, a credit that depends on the number of the panel of experts who chose the same solution. SCTs are gradually being adopted in France and meant to replace MCQs. Finally, in many countries, physicians are promoting an interprofessional deliberative practice which enables them to take into account all the dimensions of the cases. But these developments are unable to counterweigh the trend towards reducing medicine to the mere technical application of scientific knowledge.

Being trapped into unreachable objectivity

Finally, the most significant consequence to be noted is that the image the claim for objectivity gives of medicine, and of professions in general, makes them vulnerable. It accounts for most of the difficulties many members of prudential professions face, particularly in organisations. Medical achievement is seen as the achievement of science, which is true but only partly, as irreducible contingencies also remain, making the use of judgment still necessary. And yet, that science should have limits seems to be almost inconceivable. The development of knowledge and technical performance has given rise to growing expectations: patients have experienced impressive breakthroughs as a promise, hence their increasing difficulty in accepting the limitations of care. Yet, the discrepancy between discourses valorising objectivity and the actual tasks for which objectivity cannot be reached exposes professionals to some degree of risk. They make promises they cannot keep. And if they disappoint the public, they are all the more unable to defend themselves as they are no longer aware, as they used to a century ago, of the prudential nature of

their actual work. Scientific progress also makes it more difficult to say that the actual work has both an intuitive and a political dimension.

The criticism by interactionist sociologists of professional work evidences the inadequacy of presenting prudential activities as scientifically objective. As early as 1970, Freidson's criticism of medicine focused on the diversity of practices[6]. He first acknowledged that doctors relied on scientific, hence objective knowledge. His main argument was that, by contrast, their practices lacked objectivity since professionals went beyond what could be strictly determined by their knowledge. This is where the concept of practical wisdom is useful to throw some light on this criticism. First, what Freidson describes is nothing else than the difficulty faced by anyone dealing with a situation which requires an approach based on practical wisdom. In these uncertain situations, in which scientific knowledge alone is not enough, one is bound to go beyond scientific prescriptions. Thus, Freidson's criticism does imply the idea of a prudential profession. But when one is familiar with the concept of practical wisdom or merely acknowledges the significant part played by contingency in medicine (following Strauss for example), his criticism loses some of its relevance. Professionals cannot be blamed for lacking objectivity, since science precisely fails them. Moreover, making decisions that are not predefined by science does not mean they are arbitrary. The concept of practical wisdom helps define conditions for acting reasonably, aiming at adapting decisions in the best possible way to concrete individual cases. The professional's judgement, enhanced by the experience gained in the course of both training and practice, is one of the prerequisites for practical wisdom. The concept helps to realise that if professional action cannot be satisfactorily legitimised by scientific knowledge, experience may well make up for the deficit. Finally, keeping in mind the unavoidable obstacles to objectivity in situations of irreducible uncertainty, criticising professionals for their lack of objectivity is not relevant. Thus, the actual problem is not so much what they are doing but what they claim to be able to do when they pretend to give in to the demands for objectivity.

As the increasing valorisation of objectivity impacts the whole of society, all prudential activities may be affected by their inability to meet people's unrealistic expectations. It has been demonstrated that, even some activities with an artistic dimension, such as architecture, are not spared. However, the threat to those professionals working in organisations is particularly serious. Now, let us see why it is so and how the idea of practical wisdom could help rethink the organisation of their work environment.

Adapting the regulations of professional work to the need for practical wisdom

Freidson's criticism would have had little impact if it had been confined to sociology. Similar themes have fuelled the offensive launched by management against the autonomy of professionals. The undue diversity of professional practices is being criticised (Kerleau 1998). New control "at a distance" (Evetts 2006; Fournier 1999) is meant to make work more predictable and more consistent with a conception of professionalism enforced from the outside[7]. It aims at reducing professional autonomy and the diversity of practices, while demanding increased performance and better adaptation to users' real or imagined expectations. To this end, tools (rules, technical monitoring systems, evaluation indicators) have been adopted, making professionals accountable. The use of the concept of practical wisdom allows for further observations on the consequences of NPM and organisational professionalism for professional work.

One would be unable to understand why professional activities are differently affected by cultural change by resorting to the uniform view of occupations as inherited from interactionists. On the contrary, the concept of practical wisdom helps to understand why those activities are particularly vulnerable both to the control of NPM and to the rise of the values of organisational professionalism, that is «bureaucratic, hierarchical and managerial controls rather than collegial relations; budgetary restrictions and rationalizations; performance targets, account-

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[6] His main arguments will be presented again, later, in a more general study (Freidson 1986).

[7] The similarity between the sociological and management arguments is all the more striking as management usually does not enjoy a good reputation among sociologists.

ability and increased political control» (Evetts 2003: 407). Professions with a prudential practice (medicine, magistracy, architecture, social work, police, research, etc.) are the most affected precisely because organisational professionalism aims at reducing contingency in their tasks. Professionals are required to progress towards meeting the promised goals: predictability and objectivity. Indeed, the more uncertain the actual work, the more likely it is that NPM will try to regain control so as to put an end to the diversity of practices seen as a breach of objectivity. These prudential activities are also the most vulnerable to the attacks which insist that professional tasks should be predictable, which is impossible. It means that any member of a prudential activity may be held accountable for the consequences of any error of judgement. For example, psychiatrists have sometimes been blamed for releasing involuntarily committed patients who later perpetrated acts of violence. It is, of course, quite normal that professionals should be held accountable, yet the way they are being confronted clearly shows that the constraint of irreducible uncertainty characterising their task is not taken into consideration. They are not being blamed for some irresponsible decision they would not be able to justify, but simply for making a mistake, as if mistakes could be completely avoided in such activities. They are not actually often given a chance to explain their decisions. Finally, the difficulty they are now confronted to is that, no longer being aware of the prudential dimension of their activity, they are not in a position to refuse these orders. How could one claim not to be objective, efficient or predictable? Yet, at the same time, professionals keep experiencing their inability to meet these demands, their tasks being far too complex. The increasing distance between the reality of prudential professionalism and the image it is given in discourses has led them to a deadlock.

One cannot construct any alternative discourse to the conception of organisational professionalism without revisiting the theme of professional autonomy discredited by the misuses it has been criticised for[8]. Constructing such discourse implies breaking away with what is disseminated as self-evident by both management and professions, and leaving out the idea that rationality can be reduced to the implementation of scientific knowledge or rules and the search for objectivity. An important contribution of the concept of practical wisdom is to provide an alternative approach to this inadequate conception of rationality. In a situation of irreducible uncertainty, it is pointless to wonder whether one's treatment of a problem is objective: it cannot be. Practical wisdom is rationality in contingent situations: unassuming rationality (without any claims to universal production), but realistic and challenging (taking full responsibility for the complexity and the singularity of the world). Thus, the remaining question is then to know whether work is carried out in a prudential way. The phenomenology of practical wisdom proposed by Aristotle's specialists, particularly by Aubenque, allows opening specific research avenues on the actual work of professionals as well as on the work environment which constrains them. It can also be used to help build more favourable social conditions that would facilitate prudential work.

The key social conditions for allowing practical wisdom are as follows: an overall view of a case; sufficient attention paid to evidence (even minor details) showing that the case may be more complex and difficult than it appears at first sight; enough time to deliberate on the case as required; the ability to deliberate, not only on the suitable means to achieve the goals of professional work, but also about the way that these goals should be prioritized; and the ability to criticise, avoid and replace the usual solutions when there are justifiable reasons to believe that they are ill-adapted (Champy 2018a). When studying professions more concretely, these general conditions may contribute to defining research programmes on rules, the division of labour or professional training.

Let us take the example of the division of labour. Looking at it from the point of view of practical wisdom, I will argue that it is justified: it ensures that each task is performed by a specialised actor mobilising the knowledge available in his/her field. But the division of labour may pose a threat to other prudential dimensions, such as

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[8] Professional autonomy cannot be restored after it has been so repeatedly criticised over the last decades. Freidson's latest work illustrates this difficulty (Freidson 2001). Freidson attempts to approach professionalism by stressing its complementarity with both market and organisation logics. He seems to be going back to the defence of professionalism as if aware of the necessity to fight the concrete consequences of a criticism he pioneered. But, because he fails to grasp all the significance of complexity and uncertainty and as he does not know the concept of practical wisdom, his defence is mostly the same as functionalists' and falls under similar interactionist criticism. The book is not Freidson's best nor the most successful one.

in hospital work. The split between the medical and the social fields and the growing number of specialities have given birth to a very technical "organ medicine" as opposed to global healthcare, even though treating a problem exclusively at a medical level also has its limitations (Ricœur 2001). It is particularly the case of chronic diseases for which medical education and the way patients relate to their disease over time are crucial: proposing some medical treatment without considering how it can effectively be adapted to the patient may prove harmful in several ways. The first one concerns the patient's consent: is the biomedical logic underlying the chosen treatment accepted by the patient? If not or if the patient accepts without understanding well enough what it implies, he/she may not properly adhere to the treatment and this may hamper its effectiveness, cause harmful effects and extra charges. Last of all, the treatment resulting from the exclusively biomedical approach of organ medicine may be totally ill-adapted to the situation of some patients. For example, an aggressive treatment that would suit a patient with decent living conditions may not be adapted to a homeless patient whose lack of socialisation makes him extremely vulnerable: without some social support, the treatment would prove useless and dangerous.

The phenomenology of practical wisdom developed by philosophers highlights four major issues of the division of labour. First, despite the increasing specialisation of professionals, the division of labour should enable them to comprehend all the dimensions of the cases they have to deal with. Then, despite the constraints of hierarchy and the requirements of efficient coordination, minority views must be allowed and listened to so as to avoid mistakes. Thirdly, the division of labour, even though involving an ever-growing number of actors, must not hinder decision-making and accountability. Finally, to ensure that the division of labour will not prevent making decisions grounded in actual situations, every time managers have to make choices that could affect the organisation of work, they must listen to professionals, to the ones closely involved with the actual cases.

CONCLUSIONS

What can be the contribution of the concept of practical wisdom to the sociology of professions? I shall first make it clear that the identification of prudential professionalism does not aim at proposing another answer to the longstanding debate about the definition of professions. My approach, on the contrary, shows that new research subjects with theoretical objectives can be constructed without reviving that debate (Champy 2018b). As noted by Strauss and his colleagues, the difficulties caused by complexity and contingencies greatly vary according to occupations. We have seen the reasons why the most heavily impacted activities should be referred to as prudential. Those activities do not match the traditional sense of professions[9]. Therefore, what we need to do is to construct a new research subject associated with specific and innovative research programs. Compared to what Strauss and his colleagues noted over thirty years ago, the philosophical concept of practical wisdom brings in three sets of advantages.

It first allows understanding why the specificities of these activities have long remained little known. They have been made difficult to identify because of the growing incapacity of our societies to consider the usefulness of practical wisdom. The second contribution of the concept of prudentiality is more crucial. It enables to open up specific areas of research about the current working conditions of members of prudential activities, particularly about the concrete factors making practical wisdom vulnerable in these activities. Sociological studies could thus use the prism of the philosophical descriptions of the conditions required for practical wisdom to investigate which processes and which social factors are likely to stop using prudentiality: excessive division of labour preventing professionals from having an overall view of the cases; far too rigid rules hindering prudential adaptation required by each case; authority restraining discussions that might have helped to avoid mistakes, etc. The concept of practical wisdom is crucial both to identify societal concerns that go beyond mere professional work and to raise specific questions suitable for actual empirical research.

Last of all, beyond university work, exposing the significance of prudentiality for some activities may give the actors some necessary insight. I do not think that sociology should commit itself to support some causes. But clari-

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[9] Practical wisdom is central to occupations such as the police or social work.

fying what is at stake both in terms of theory and practice may strengthen the legitimacy of our field. In France, making explicit the concrete conditions required to act prudentially has already enabled professionals to better adapt their response to those management requirements they feel are undue. This allows them moving away from traditional claims for autonomy, often perceived as corporatist. An area for discussing work activities could then open up, free both from these claims for autonomy and from the attempts to control (through benchmarking for example) which make it difficult to take into account the complexity of situations.

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Monographic Section

Street-Level Workers' Discretion in the Changing Welfare

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Abstract. A crisis and deep re-organisation of European welfare systems started in the 1970s. Both the demand for and supply of welfare intervention are involved in relevant transformations, and the street-level workers are placed right at the crucial point where which they meet. They have to accomplish their complex mandate in a changing context and cope with multiple pressures. In order to carry out this task, they manage a certain degree of discretion (Lipsky 1980) that is shaped by the legal, organisational, cultural, social and economic context in which they are embedded. These conditions' change tends to modify the "spaces" and the use of discretion. Usually, the street-level perspective studies the effects of discretion on policy implementation, services and users. This article focuses on how discretion produces feedback on the same street-level workers, modifying their role, work conditions and risks.

Keywords. Street-level bureaucracy; social workers; welfare crisis; discretion; professional risk.

1. THE TOPIC AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The street-level perspective assigns a key role in the complicated process of policy implementation to professionals who interact directly with citizens and take relevant decisions about their requests or conditions on the basis of a public mandate but through a certain degree of discretion. They represent their organisations' interface with citizens. They are teachers, police officers, judges, welfare workers and other professionals who hold a relevant discretional power «in determining the nature, amount, and quality of benefits and sanctions provided by their agencies» (Lipsky 1980: 13). As professionals, their essential task is to apply general indications and abstract knowledge to concrete cases, by adapting their decisions to specific characteristics and contextual conditions. This makes their mandate complex and the results of their decisions (at least partially) characterised by

an irreducible uncertainty: Champy (2018b: lines 58-60) defines «the very reasoning required to act in situations of irreducible uncertainty» as "prudential professionalism" or "prudentiality". He also describes the development of appropriate evaluations and solutions in relation to complex tasks and contexts as "practical wisdom" (Champy 2018a; 2018b).

In order to cope with complexity, these figures manage a "space" of discretion shaped by formal and informal indications and boundaries. It is variable but unavoidable, as it is essential to carry out their tasks (Lipsky 1980; Evans, Harris 2004). In effects, whenever a task is delegated, part of the control is lost in favour of the delegated agency or person (Ham, Hill 1986).

These professionals can be employed in the public administration[1], but they also belong to external agencies that provide benefits and sanctions on behalf of the public administration and contribute to making policies concrete. Taking both into account, this article uses the expression street-level workers (SLWs hereafter). The same agencies may involve a set of professionals with different qualifications. For example, in the welfare policy sector (which will be analysed in the following paragraphs), they may include social workers, caseworkers, educators, psychologists, mediators and so on. All of these figures interact directly with citizens to provide benefits and apply sanctions on the basis of a public mandate and manage a variable "space" of discretion.

In almost forty years, the street-level perspective has produced interesting studies[2] in various policy fields that focus on policies and their implementation and outcomes. How the "spaces" of discretion are shaped, controlled and used in SLWs' decisions are analysed to investigate the complex process of implementation, to grasp not only the micro-dynamics, conditions and products but also the consequences of a long "chain" of upper choices and meso-macro-factors that influence policy practices (Saruis 2015).

This perspective helps to overcome the underestimation of discretion due to an unrealistic vision of SLWs as being relegated to executive roles and tasks (Ham, Hill 1986). Discretion should be considered both a professional "tool" with which to accomplish the assigned tasks and take complex decisions and for its negative potential due to its excessive increasing or decreasing or misuse. The "spaces" and the use of discretion are influenced by the legal, organisational, cultural, social and economic context in which SLWs are embedded. Changing conditions can introduce new pressures and implicit and not immediately evident modifications and produce unattended risks and opportunities for both citizens accessing services and SLWs. For this reason, a better awareness of and capacity to observe discretion and its effects are advisable.

This article moves the focus from the effects of discretion regarding policy implementation, outcomes, applicants and users to the effects it produces on SLWs. The aim is to show how this key concept can be relevant not only for the policy analysis to which it is usually applied but also in the study of professionals and workers. It aims to contribute to the debate between occupational and organisational professionalism about the transformations of professions and the professionals who deal with complex contexts and tasks, new work conditions and risks (Champy 2018b).

In order to conduct this reflection, the concept of discretion and its different declinations are presented in the first paragraph, as emerged from the literature. This paragraph also problematizes the effects of discretion on SLWs. The second paragraph summarises the characteristics of discretion in welfare policies and services, highlighting the reasons why this is a particularly interesting field in which to study discretion. The third paragraph applies the concept of discretion on the study of SLWs in the welfare field. A literature review about the trends in welfare crisis and transformation is aimed at describing how these may affect SLWs' work conditions, changing—formally or informally—their "spaces" of discretion. This analysis highlights how the concept of discretion can help to identify overlooked aspects about these figures, offering a framework for empirical studies and opening up research issues.

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[1] These are the street-level bureaucrats, as adequately defined by Lipsky in 1980 and, recently, by Hupe *et alii* in 2015.
[2] Many studies about the effects of street-level bureaucrats' discretion on the welfare policy implementation processes and outcomes will be presented later into this article. Some examples among the most recent and relevant publications about this topic are: Van Berkel *et alii* 2018; Hupe *et alii* 2015; Brodkin, Martson 2013; Brodkin 2011.

The research questions that drive the reflection are as follows: How can the concept of discretion support the study of SLWs? What kinds of consequences could discretion have on them as workers? What are discretion's characteristics in the welfare field? How can the crisis and transformation of welfare modify SLWs' discretion? What consequences can this transformation have on their role, responsibilities, work conditions, risks and guarantees?

Finally, a short conclusion summarises the main aspects that emerge from the article about the use of discretion in analyses of SLWs.

2. DISCRETION AS A KEY CONCEPT TO STUDY STREET-LEVEL WORKERS

Discretion is generally defined through a three-type declination (Dworkin 1978; Ham, Hill 1986; Evans, Harris 2004; Kazepov, Barberis 2012). a) Discretion *within* the laws and procedures, which is assigned to SLWs because it is necessary to adapt general legislation to variable concrete situations. b) Discretion *among* laws and procedures. This plays out in the interstices of the norms (contradictions, inconsistencies or lack of legislation), which allow decisions based on the selection, interpretation or construction of the missing references to cope with specific or unexpected situations. c) Discretion *out of* laws and procedures. This constitutes violations, whose purpose could favour or penalise citizens and whose effects can only be evaluated in specific cases (Evans, Harris 2004).

Laws do not only define the "space" and influence the use of discretion by SLWs. Formal and informal factors contribute to shaping them, which can be classified as: a) indications and boundaries established by laws, policy programs and other formal rules; b) organisational assets, rules, roles, relationships, and mechanisms of accountability; c) professional and personal cultures and ideas, as their values, perceptions and convictions contribute to shaping SLWs' decisions; and d) the external pressures and conditions in which their agencies are placed, *in primis* the pressure of demand for intervention (Hill 2003; Saruis 2015). For this reason, they are often represented as being at the centre of a sphere of influence, pointed to by arrows that represent the pressures exerted on their decisions.

Managing discretion somehow represents the essence of SLWs' mandate, in the sense that their professional task is exactly to reconcile, as best as possible, all of these pressures in accomplishing their tasks. For this reason, too, they usually must undertake long and demanding training and selection courses, which should prepare them adequately for this function (Brodkin, Martson 2013).

The contribution of the street level in shaping agencies' and services' procedures has a significant and not always predictable impact on policy outputs and outcomes. That is why they have often been considered co-policy makers and holders of a crucial dimension of citizenship (for example, in Maynard Moody, Musheno 2003).

The literature based on the street-level perspective usually looks at policies, services, outcomes and users. Scholars have only rarely highlighted the effects of discretion on SLWs, mainly individuating defensive or shirking strategies to carry out their tasks and cope with multiple pressures and frustrations (Maynard-Moody, Musheno 2003; Satyamurti 1981; Lipsky 1980). If these aspects emerge, they are usually considered minor aspects or details of more important findings, functioning to underline more relevant consequences on policy processes, services, practices and users.

The street-level perspective helps to overcome the idea of discretion as violation and arbitrariness, linked to a vision of the street level as purely executive, particularly in the public sector (Ham, Hill 1986). It underlines the unavoidability (Lipsky 1980; Evans, Harris 2004), but also the usefulness and even "desirability" of discretion, especially in complex situations, as it makes implementation work and adapts to contingencies (Brodkin 2008).

At the same time, the problematic potential of discretion remains in the possibility to control policy implementation and outcomes but also to guarantee citizens' rights and their equal and fair treatment, which depends, at least partially, on street-level decisions.

The overall idea of discretion, in these different declinations, emerges as sort of "hidden" and "mysterious" power that SLWs can use in the best of cases to accomplish their mandate and, in the worst, to impose self-centred and unjust decisions (Brehm, Gates 1997).

Moving the focus to the effects of discretion on SLWs complements this idea. On the one hand, it reinforces the consideration of discretion as a "space" for personal and professional creativity to deal with complexity. On the other hand, it makes the "weight" of discretion emerge, as a responsibility to take "fair" decisions that may respect the rules, interpret and readapt them to contingencies, construct them in un-ruled situations or go beyond them (Kelly 1994; Paraciani, Saruis 2018). Finally, the defensive strategies re-emerge as passive or active attitudes aimed at avoiding or neglecting the assigned role and tasks.

In this regard, Lipsky (1980) argues that the daily effort to make continuous decisions produces a sense of overload among SLWs. This leads them to develop routine strategies and standardised practices to reduce the tensions and stress.

Champy (2018a: 2) argues «autonomy is an unambiguous issue only for professionals». This suggestion implies that, on the one hand, SLWs should be aware of managing discretional power, but on the other hand, their managers and policymakers, who take decisions about their tasks and the work context, probably do not or not always. They often see SLBs as executors of higher decisions and technical protocols. Both of these conditions should be proved case by case. However, the awareness of discretion would help SLWs to apply their "practical wisdom" (ibid.) consciously, and help policy makers and managers to take into account the potential positive and negative effects of discretion in their decisions and better control the implementation process. A weak recognition of discretion as an essential aspect of street-level work has relevant consequences, both on policy implementation and outcomes and on SLWs' possibilities to manage it properly and legitimately (Vinzant *et alii* 1998).

3. STREET-LEVEL WORKERS IN THE SOCIAL WELFARE FIELD

Scholars' interest for the street-level perspective within welfare studies is probably because the conditions which make discretion problematic in this policy field, listed below, are particularly evident.

First, in this policy sector, the available resources are often inadequate to satisfy the demand for intervention. Lipsky (1980) has dedicated special attention to the resources issue, connecting their shortage with growing discretion. This statement has different declinations in more or less generous welfare contexts. However, the resources are limited, and partial control over them is delegated to SLWs who take decisions about evaluating applicants' demands and assigning measures. They perform a fundamental function of welfare systems: redistribution. They decide on citizens' possibilities to access social rights, contribute to the quality of services and provisions, shape routines and practices of the agencies in which they work and finally influence the policy output and outcomes. In recent decades, many efforts have been made to control SLWs' use of discretion in managing resources, but these efforts have obtained only partial results (see, for example, Evans, Harris 2004; Ellis 2007; Brodkin 2008).

Secondly, discretion increases in contexts in which the aims to be pursued are ambiguous and undefined. Lipsky (1980) explains that this ambiguity is implicit to the very essence of welfare services, in which the tension between the human care of the most "fragile" parts of the population and the treatment's impartiality (especially within public services) creates a more or less implicit conflict that SLWs have to cope with. This is a challenge they should face as individuals, with their own ideas of fairness and social justice (Kelly 1994; Paraciani, Saruis 2018); as professionals trained to apply models and methods to pursue ideal and concrete aims; and as parts of organisations with specific combinations of opportunities, boundaries and limits (Brodkin, Majmundar 2008).

Thirdly, still according to Lipsky, the results and effects of welfare policies and services are difficult to measure and, consequently, to control with accountability tools. This condition is directly linked to the abovementioned ambiguity of welfare aims, as if they cannot be univocally and clearly defined, their assessment also will be difficult or partial. This is also connected with the complexity of the social intervention design, which often includes different and potentially conflicting aims such as social assistance and autonomy and/or attempts to integrate social, health and work measures. The need for personalisation and the complexity of social intervention often need "open" laws and regulations and thus a large "space" for SLWs' decisions. This makes it difficult to standardise and

evaluate the results of their choices and strategies to elude control or to control the information provided for the assessment (Brodkin 1997; 2008).

Furthermore, Lipsky highlights the asymmetry of information between SLWs' and citizens (in particular between bureaucrats and service' users), as a condition increasing discretion. This condition has a special declination in the field of welfare services: here, the applicants are often "fragile" people in difficult conditions and with reduced negotiation capacity. This asymmetry is not only informative but also relative to power, cultural resources, relational capacities, linguistic competencies, and so on.

The last condition that makes discretion problematic in this policy field is linked to SLWs' professional status. The Welfare State development in Europe has implied a process of professionalisation (Weiss-Gal, Welbourne 2008), as in other work sectors, that has had different results, timing and contexts variations.

Reconstructing this process and the correlated debate between occupational and organisational professionalism, Champy (2018b) underlines that social professions' requests for formalisation and protection have hesitated between the claim of scientific knowledge and technical objectivity and (differently for example from the medical professions) the awareness of their tasks' irreducible complexity and uncertainty. The consequence is that, at least partially, «social work failed in its attempt to be regarded as a profession» (ibid. lines 395-396).

This process has produced various declinations of social professions (social workers, social assistants, educators, mediators, and so on) and education and training for specialised profiles, roles and tasks have been gradually instituted. These figures have assumed key roles in the welfare services, often in the public sector, with the task of translating policies into concrete social rights. These figures have assumed key roles in the welfare services, often in the public sector, with the task of translating policies into concrete social rights. However, their profiles are characterised by a variably balanced dichotomy between the need for professional discretion and "practical wisdom" to deal with the complexity and contingency of human problems and care, on the one hand, and the necessary systematisation of professional knowledge and the creation of formal protocols and rules to be included within a policy and legal system, on the other.

This specificity helps them to carry out their tasks, but weakens their status, leaving them partially unprotected from work risks and blamed for decisions that cannot be based on strict criteria and defined protocols. Furthermore, as the following paragraph will explain, this status exposes them to the current criticism of public spending and to the calls for standardisation aimed to reduce welfare costs and increase efficiency and effectiveness. These trends are requesting new balances between SLWs' professional discretion and their bureaucratic mandate.

Starting from these assumptions, the following paragraph analyses the influence of changing welfare contexts on the conditions in which SLWs make decisions. It describes how their "spaces" of discretion are modified and what the effects on these figures can be.

4. STREET-LEVEL WORKERS' DISCRETION IN THE CHANGING WELFARE

Since the 1970s, European welfare systems entered a crisis and started a long process of transformation. Similar trends of reform have concerned all European countries (Esping-Andersen 1994; 1996; Esping-Andersen *et alii* 2002), even with variations linked to timing, national models and local specificities (Barbier 2008; Kazepov 2010). In general, the complex and structural reconfiguration of welfare systems has been aimed, at the same time, at meeting the new demands of interventions created by changing risk profiles (Ranci 2010), containing public expenditures and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of policies' and services' supply (Gilbert 2004; Jenson 2004).

The street level constitutes exactly the cross-point at which the demand and supply of welfare interventions meet. Here, the consequences of these transformations tend to converge: at this point, all of the uncertainties, misalignments, open issues and unresolved problems must finally come to some solution. The street-level workers have to manage their everyday tasks and simultaneously 'absorb' these changes, in a complex process that affects learning and practice.

The transformation of welfare systems is analysed here in detail, to highlight how it challenges the street level and modifies discretion and consequently SLWs' role, responsibility, risks and work conditions.

1) Individualisation of the demand for welfare and the increase of SLWs' discretion

In the mid-1960s, the so-called "second demographic transition" began in Europe, which was related to changing family patterns and social behaviours (Lesthaeghe 2010; Golini *et alii* 1991). The declining marriage' rates and the increasing numbers of divorces and cohabitations indicate the diffusion of less stable and plural family ties, less rigid than traditional models but also more fragile. Social and relatives' networks have become less extensive than in the past and are not always able to support the weakest members. In addition, women—traditionally delegated to free family care—started to take part in paid work. This has always led to a redistribution of workloads within the family or adequate support from institutions, depending on the different welfare contexts (Lewis 2001).

These new social conditions also increase the demand for childcare services, especially for preschool-age groups, but also for assistance to elderly and disabled people (Bambra 2007; Fargion 2000; Rostgaard 2002). Thanks to progress in medical science and improved living conditions, the average age has increased. Therefore, the demand for social provisions (especially in terms of retirement and pensions), and healthcare services has grown. At the same time, especially in some countries, the fertility rates tend to decrease and only the contribution of immigration helps to balance the workers financing public expenditures and the welfare-supported group. But the integration processes require proper investments (Melotti 2004).

Furthermore, the global market trends are inspiring reforms aimed at flexibility and lowering labour costs. Consequently, participation in the labour market no longer guarantees protection from poverty. The need is growing for measures aimed at readapting welfare provisions to new vulnerabilities, strengthening empowerment and activation policies and facilitating entry and re-entry into the labour market (Kluve *et alii* 2007).

In short, the protections that were once secured by stable jobs and by wide and solid family and social networks have weakened in favour of a less regulated labour market, unpredictable guarantees, territorial mobility, less close relationships and less mutual help at difficult moments. These conditions are producing a process of individualisation of biographies and job careers, characterised by complex, variable and specific mixes of individual potentials and needs. This social change reflects the (expressed or unspoken) demand for welfare intervention.

The applicants' "profiles" are becoming less standardised and more specific, complex and unpredictable; furthermore, the segment of the population exposed to vulnerability is expanding (Ranci 2007; 2010; Saraceno, Negri 2003). Thus, the demand for welfare intervention is not only tending to grow but also to diversify, requiring more adaptable measures to social diversification. Therefore, policies should respond to the request of "tailored" provisions. These conditions question the previous balances between equity (different treatment for different citizens) and equality (same treatment for all citizens) underpinning welfare policies.

Welfare interventions for individual cases should reconcile multiple aims, such as social support, economic sustenance, psychological help, attention to healthcare and activation in the labour market, depending on applicants' needs and resources. In the last thirty years, activation has become a priority in this policy mix, in all European countries, although with different strengths (Jenson 2006; Serrano Pascual, Magnusson 2007). The literature has shown that if this aim is not part of multidimensional support which considers all aspects of applicants' fragility (and resources), it will probably fail (Thorén 2008; Brodkin, Martson 2013). The labour market and social context's potential for inclusion is important, but adequate individual projects and support are essential for the success of these pathways.

In relation to the street level, all of these complicated requests tend to widen the "spaces" of discretion, to increase the possibility of interpreting, adapting and applying general provisions to concrete cases' specificities. The conversion process for the formal general rights in substantial support and opportunities becomes crucial. Considering the changed conditions, a redefinition of the balance between equality, as impartiality in citizens' treatment, and equity, as interventions targeted at individual specificities, is unavoidable. This redefinition can be formal and

explicit or informal and implicit, in the sense that the welfare system will adapt to social change with or without political decisions and reforms. If the demand for intervention changes, then the street level will use uncertainties, inconsistencies and voids in the laws, rules and standards to build and motivate new answers. Lowi (1979) argues that politicians can be more interested in gaining consensus than in finding real solutions to difficult situations; thus, they tend to move the conflicts towards other decisional arenas «as far down the line as possible» (ibid.: 55). This means the unresolved (for many reasons) political or social conflicts at the political level can be postponed towards the street level. Here, decisions about the access, priorities and quality of provisions must be unavoidably taken to respond to citizens' requests. In this sense, the failure of welfare systems to formally adapt to social change ends up increasing the "spaces" of discretion, the responsibility assigned to street-level workers and also, as we will see more deeply in the following section, the risk of blame on them.

2) Control over public expenditures and the uncertain effects on SLWs' discretion

If the goal of sustainability of public expenditures is widely accepted, on the contrary, it will be more difficult to achieve, within the political arena, balanced agreements on the selection of priorities and clear definitions of included and excluded target groups regarding access to services and measures. This difficulty may create political and social conflicts and curb the development of clear reforms. In fact, as told just some lines above, postponing responsibility can be a strategy aimed at suspending political and social conflicts. This strategy has two additional advantages:

> First, when an issue blows up in a major way, and it's established that there has been a departure from procedures, blame can be allocated at the street-level. Second, it can be in senior managers' and politicians' interest to leave individual decision about resource allocation to professionals, distancing themselves from the awkward day-to-day consequences of their strategic goals. (Evans, Harris 2004: 887)

The blame-avoiding strategy by the political levels moves the risk linked to important choices about reducing funding to the implementation phase and to those who take decisions at this level.

In recent decades, relevant reforms have been introduced in a context of economic crisis and budgetary constraints that are not particularly favourable to redistribution, equality and social citizenship. Vested interests and strong lobbies' reactions are often aimed not only at resisting the retrenchment logics, but also at influencing the reallocation of the available resources. This makes the welfare reforms "viscous" and difficult to re-adapt to changing and complex needs (Bonoli 2001; 2007).

The availability of resources should be intended not only in terms of monetary or in-kind benefits to be distributed to the applicants, but also in relation to the "human" resources: the available professionals, their competencies and skills, their workloads, the availability of their time to process their decisions and so on. Labour costs usually represent a major expenditure on welfare services. Attempts to reduce the costs have induced the conversion of social work tasks into definite aims and standardised measures to, first, control and evaluate the distribution of benefits and reduce the time needed for procedures and, second, make it possible for them to be managed by less-skilled, lower-cost workers (Folgheraiter 2007).

As we will see below (in more detail), this strategy has introduced two contradictions in services that affect discretion: on the one hand, the definition of rigid standards contradicts the already explained need to adapt welfare interventions to the increasing complexity and individualisation of the demand; on the other hand, the literature has highlighted that weak professional competencies make street-level workers' decisions more likely to be guided by their own perceptions, judgments, beliefs and personal values (Thorén 2008; Carrington 2005). The combination of these conditions risks SLWs' discretion being underestimated and its management being assigned to unprepared street-level workers. The management of great discretion usually leads SLWs to elaborate routines and informal practices (Lipsky 1980), individually or to share the heavy responsibility with peers within the service. But a big difficulty of managing great discretion can also create frustration and stress among street-level work-

ers, which risk triggering self-protection mechanisms, such as rigid conformism and attachment to the rules or discouragement of citizens' access demands, and/or lead to burnout.

3) The managerialisation of public institutions and the risk of underestimating street-level discretion

The introduction of managerial logics inspired by the private sector has brought relevant organisational changes to public institutions. New Public Management (NPM) especially contributed to re-drawing public administration to increase its efficiency and effectiveness through standardisation and de-bureaucratisation. These have been common trends in Europe, starting from the 1980s, and have even produced variable effects in transforming the different welfare contexts.

On the one hand, NPM reforms aim to standardise criteria, measures and practices in order to contain the services cost through the control of decision-making processes and their outputs. It has been already highlighted the incoherence created by the attempt to standardising interventions and the increasing individualisation and multidimensionality of welfare demand. According to Champy (2018b), if an "unreachable objectivity" is imposed (through rigid protocols, sectoriality and technicality) on prudential professionals' decision-making processes, they will be more exposed to work risks and blame.

On the other hand, NPM has a de-professionalising agenda (Guidi 2012) in relation to welfare services: it has inspired reforms that problematize the roles of SLWs (especially their discretion) in public administration. In order to control the implementation process, NPM tries to move discretion from the front-line to the managers and (as mentioned above) to convert SLWs to "executors" of policy aims, converted to standardised measures and procedures (Brodkin 2008). In this sense, they do not need to be expert professionals trained to manage the autonomy recognised for professional practitioners (Pollitt 1990; Cataldi 2013).

The result is a fragmentation of their professional functions: on the one hand, managers' roles are strengthened to provide strong control over respect for policy aims and defined standards; on the other, hand the (apparently) most "executive" tasks in social intervention are externalised to private (profit or non-profit) organisations. Within this organisational design, discretion should move to the managers, while the public professionals, SLWs included, should be especially engaged in planning, coordinating and networking tasks, guided by policy aims and standards rather than professional orientations (Baines 2004; Kirkpatrick 2006; Guidi 2012; Castro 2014).

According to the investigations about this topic, the reforms inspired by NPM have encouraged an interesting reflection on SLWs' discretion, but the attempts to eliminate it do not seem to have achieved the desired results (see, for example, Evans, Harris 2004; Brodkin 2008; 2011). An exclusive orientation towards the policy aims and rigid standards tends to lead SLWs to distort the procedures to improve their own performance and protect themselves from negative evaluations or sanctions, even worsening the services' efficiency and effectiveness (Brodkin 2011; Soss *et alii* 2011). So-called "creaming" strategies for the achievements, standards and clients remain at least partially under their control (Lipsky 1980). For example, SLWs may tend to discourage access to services for complex cases, which should be dealt with for longer and with a greater commitment of resources (Brodkin 2008). Or they could select among the aims and targets, abandoning those they consider impossible to reach (Brodkin 2011; Soss *et alii* 2011). Moreover, the general conviction of having overcome the "problem" of discretion may lead to this issue being underestimated and consequently increase the available "spaces" for autonomy: «the discrepancy between discourses valorising objectivity and the actual tasks for which objectivity cannot be reached exposes professionals to some degree of risk. They make promises they cannot keep» (Champy 2018b: lines 568-570). Ellis (2007) suggests that reforms inspired by managerialisation have simply changed SLWs' dilemmas, given the modified conditions of services.

Furthermore, as we will see below, the externalisation processes of "executive" tasks, once belonging to public institutions, has moved part of discretion to non-public bodies, transforming the composition of welfare SLWs.

4) *Vertical and horizontal subsidiarisation and the rescaling and externalisation of SL discretion*

In the last forty years, public institutional competencies have been rescaled concerning welfare systems (as with other public sectors) (Jessop 2002; Swyngedouw 2009; Kazepov 2010). With national and local specificities, this process has increased the complexity of welfare systems. The public competencies regarding policies and the responsibility for their implementation are split up in complicated and multilevel systems. Within this organisation, the local contexts represent the best dimension to both meet citizens' needs and mobilise awareness, networks and resources to face problems (Kazepov 2010; Andreotti *et alii* 2011). The central layers maintain more or less strong functions of providing common legal frameworks, coordination and equalisation.

Within this complexity, the coherence of the implementation process appears more difficult to control and govern. The decisional "chains" become longer, including new intermediaries and consequently new "spaces" of discretion. The further the legal "source" of the policy aims and programs is from the street-level, the more difficult it will be to control the implementation process and to obtain coherence in the concrete outcomes. This vertical complexity increases the interstices in which discretion takes place (Winter *et alii* 2008).

Furthermore, as it is well-known, the externalisation processes foresee the inclusion of private for-profit or non-profit organisations in designing, planning and implementing welfare measures and interventions. This strategy is aimed at increasing the effectiveness, efficiency, flexibility and transparency of welfare policy and is considered one of the key solutions to the welfare crisis. The involvement of private organisations in the implementation process is aimed at diversifying and expanding the supply of provisions, to contain costs in a period of budget reduction. In fact, complementary public-private networks are supposed to better meet the complexity of individual needs by combining competencies and resources in more flexible, diversified and specific arrangements (Ascoli, Ranci 2003).

Increasingly, the task of delivering has been at least partially moved from public to private organisations. This means that the crucial relationship and interaction between welfare services and citizens transfer to the latter. The outsourcing logics open up a "space" in which the public responsibility in terms of policy aims and outcomes is shared with private organisations (Goodin 2003; Guidi 2012).

The street-level perspective is usually applied to the study of public agencies (Lipsky 1980; Hupe *et alii* 2015). However, parts of the street-level tasks traditionally assigned to welfare bureaucrats are actually carried out within private organisations. This makes the former's characteristics easily applicable to the latter, as both act on behalf of public institutions and thus take decisions based on a public mandate, interact directly with citizens and have discretion in carrying out their tasks. They contribute to shaping the quality and connotations of welfare provisions and practices and to influencing policy outcomes. Including them in a broad definition of the street-level helps to build a more complete map of the redistribution of discretion among SLWs who are in different positions and conditions within the labour market (Härenstam *et alii* 2004).

The private SLWs, first, have to take in account not only their professional mandate and the public aims they are required to reach, but also the corporate mission and the requests of the organisation to which they belong. These overlapping pressures may not coincide or, at least, be consistent with one another. For example, a private organisation charged with "activating" the unemployed could apply creaming processes to achieve better results and thus exclude the most vulnerable people, who should be privileged targets for public institutions. The more complicated and contradictory the context becomes, the more discretion will increase, due to the possibility that SLWs will select priorities, interpret conflicting aims and indications and create boundaries and limits to cope with complexity (Lipsky 1980; Hupe *et alii* 2015). Second, private workers usually have less guaranteed job conditions compared to the civil servants. This means that if their discretion increases, they will be vulnerable and exposed to suffering personal consequences for their decisions. Furthermore, they should respond to a dual mechanism of accountability and evaluation, by both public and private organisations' supervisors (Goodin 2003). In order to reduce the risks connected with high complexity, they could tend to conformism and risk-avoiding strategies. The effect would be weakened service flexibility and reduced access and available opportunities for applicants and users. In any case, a multilevel and complicated organisation with overlapping and/or contradictory indications and limits in which to "play" their discretion will be easier to be deceived, exploited and re-shaped through SLWs' decisions.

5. A VERY BRIEF CONCLUSION

To summarise, European welfare systems are facing relevant mutations that, with national and local variations, are influencing the SLWs' conditions, producing multiple and maybe incoherent pressures on discretion. On the one hand, the complexification and individualisation of the demand for social intervention need increasingly flexible and interconnected services; on the other hand, the attempt to control resources tends to introduce standardised measures and protocols, sectorialisation and rigid accountability systems. These changes are introducing both formal and explicit policy reforms and implicit and not immediately evident adaptations, which produce new pressures on the street-level.

SLWs have to go on accomplishing their complex mandate in a transforming context, managing their everyday tasks while re-adapting to changing conditions and social needs at the same time. In a similar situation, a solid professional awareness is crucial to managing discretion as a "tool" to cope with complexity and the "weight" of responsibility.

The analysis conducted on welfare studies was aimed, on the one hand, at providing a framework for empirical research and, on the other hand, at showing how the street-level perspective and the concept of discretion could help the study of professions and professionalism, taking into account complex and changing conditions and contexts.

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Monographic Section

«You've Got to Do This like a Professional – Not like One of These Scratchers!». Reconstructing the Professional Self-Understanding of Tattoo Artists

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Abstract. This article investigates the professional self-understanding of tattoo artists, an occupational group that has been expanding rapidly in recent years. Despite ongoing discussions on health and safety risks, tattooing does still not require a recognised licence in most European countries. Tattooists respond to public prejudices concerning their potentially dangerous work practices by referring to their responsibility towards clients and the complexity of their work, which qualify them as professionals. In narrative interviews, tattooists stress that the high standards of artistic quality, craft skills and service orientation, which their customers expect, require their individual professionalisation. Their accounts reveal their notions of professionalism and the rhetorical strategies of boundary work, which they employ to construct their professional identity. The study provides an example of how the practitioners of a non-regulated professional group, whose work has been considered as unskilled and even deviant, adopt and interpret the concept of professionalism to legitimise their status as professionals.

Keywords. Tattoo artists; professionalism; professional identity; biography; qualitative research; professionalisation.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last thirty years, the number of tattooists has been growing continuously, and tattoo parlours have sprouted like mushrooms in cities, towns and even in the country-side. Induced by the cultural change, which developed in Western societies from the 1980s and which is in social and cultural science known as the *body turn* (see Ghigi, Sassatelli 2018; Gugutzer 2006; Turner 1992), getting tattooed has become increasingly popular among people of all ages, social positions and milieus. As a result of the tattoo boom, tattooing has turned into an attractive and lucrative job

opportunity. This has led not only to more people taking up the craft, but also profoundly changed tattooing as an occupation and made it more competitive.

With the popularity of tattoos, concerns about safety and health risks have generated endless discussions and criticism of the non-regulated work practices of tattooists, but also initiatives to inform on tattooing. An example is a website[1] for consumers, launched by the German Department of Health, Environment and Consumer Protection, which not only provides all-round information on tattoos, the tattooing procedure and aftercare but also the strong recommendation to choose only a "professional tattoo artist". Likewise, the German Tattoo Association[2], which was founded in 1995, introduces itself on the internet as an organisation of "professional" tattoo artists. At their third Tattoo Conference, which the association hosted together with dermatologists, physicians, chemists and psychologists at the University Hospital of Bochum in February 2017, one of the panels was titled *The Professionalization of the Tattoo*[3]. Likewise, professionalism is an omnipresent category on studio websites of individual tattoo artists, who advertise their work as "professional"[4] to distinguish themselves from those, who just "have a go" and are "inking"[5] with cheap and uncertified tattooing sets from untraceable sources on the internet. On the meso level, the tattooing scene responded with various strategies such as founding associations for professional cooperation and representation[6] and establishing collaboration with other professionals such as physicians, lawyers and politicians[7], but first and foremost by being visible in the media and presenting themselves as professionals. Since in most European countries there is no formal vocational training and practitioners do not need a recognised licence, their credibility and service quality are permanently in the crossfire. Therefore, the tattooists' fight against prejudices and their self-presentation as a professional and safety-conscious occupational group has been one of the key issues over recent years. Furthermore, even though the present tattoo boom has led to more tolerance and acceptance towards the practice of tattooing, the occupation itself is still often associated with working class and/or rebellious and deviant subcultures (see Atkinson 2003; De Mello 2000) – stereotypes, which many tattooists seek to challenge.

However, since institutionalised capital (Bourdieu 1983) and working in an acknowledged profession are crucial aspects of a person's personal and social identity, because they determine one's status and social position (Hughes 1958), the occupational situation outlined above raises the question of the professional self-understanding of tattoo artists: what does professionalism mean in their everyday practice? And how do they interpret and translate and employ the concept for themselves? In other words, what constitutes their professional identity?

To address these questions, I have structured my article as follows. After a brief description of tattooing as a profession, I introduce professionalism, professionalisation and professional identity as interrelated categories, which provide the theoretical framework for my analysis of the empirical data I collected for my PhD project between 2014 and 2017[8]. Subsequently, the research method and the composition of the sample are detailed. Then follows the analysis of interview passages, which concentrates on the reconstruction of the respondent's notions of professionalism and the concept's impact on their construction of a professional identity. Furthermore, their individual professionalisation is considered in terms of their self-understanding as professionals.

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[1] https://www.safer-tattoo.de (2018, February 1st).
[2] Deutsche Organisierte Tätowierer e.V.: https://www.dot-ev.de/ (2018, May 25th). Bundesverband Tattoo e.V.: http://www.bundesverband-tattoo.de/ (2018, May 23rd).
[3] Tattoo-Tagung Bochum 2017: http://tattoo-tagung.de/ (2018, May 25th).
[4] Interestingly, at the beginning of the 20th century, one of the most famous German tattoo artists already referred to himself as «Christian Warlich. Professional Electric Tattoo Artist», on his business card (Schönfeldt 1960: 63).
[5] Idiom for "to tattoo".
[6] An example is the German Tattoo Association and German Tattoo Union e.V.: https://www.dot-ev.de/ (2018, May 23rd).
[7] Meeting of Daniel Krause, Associate of the Bundesverband-Tattoo.de and Christian Schmidt, Ministry for Food and Agriculture in August 2016: https://www.taetowiermagazin.de/szene/kommt+die+berufsausbildung+fuer+taetowierer_168.html (2018, June 15th).
[8] PhD project, *Tattooing as Paid Labour. Between Occupation and Vocation*, at the Institute of Sociology, Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen Nürnberg.

TATTOOING AS GAINFUL WORK

In 1960, the German dermatologist Walter Schönfeldt (1960) stated that in no European country tattooing was recognised as a "profession"[9], referring to the fact that no formalised training or education existed. Not much has changed since then although nowadays many people consider tattooing as a "somewhat" professional occupation. Drawing on the definition of the German constitutional law[10], which defines a profession as an occupation, which someone practises for a "longer period of time"[11] and provides his/her main income, tattooing counts as a profession.

Tattooing, one of mankind's earliest aesthetic practices, developed as an occupation during the tattoo boom of the Nineteenth century (see Oettermann 1979; Jung 2007). From the Seventeenth century onwards "tatuages" or "tataus"[12] – the exotic body decoration of the natives in the Far East, Polynesia and New Zealand - had been introduced to Europe by sailors, adventurers and traders, who returned from their expeditions with tattoos. Although tattooing had been practised in Europe before (Oettermann 1979)[13], the seamen's strange and mystical decoration evoked enthusiasm and tattoos became fashionable as an aesthetic expression of individuality, popular across all social classes (Petermann 1993). With this tattoo boom, tattooing developed from a side-line job into a gainful full-time occupation and tattooists began to offer their bodywork in tattoo rooms and bars or opened shops. From the 1850s onwards, most harbour cities – among them, San Francisco, Tokyo, New York, Liverpool and Hamburg, to name but a few (Heinzl, Pinkl 2003), had well-frequented tattoo parlours. «The first documented professional tattooist in Britain was Sutherland Macdonald, who operated out of a salon in London beginning in 1894» (Clark 2016). In the 1890s, the invention of the tattooing machine, which advanced and facilitated the tattooing procedure considerably, drew a growing number of people to tattooing as gainful work (Schönfeldt 1960). However, by the beginning of World War I, the tattoo fashion had receded, and tattoo studios disappeared from city centres and tattooing only "survived" in some marginalised subcultures (e.g. bikers, rockers, Punks) and among the working poor. Throughout most of the Twentieth century, getting tattooed was associated with rebellious and even deviant behaviour and being tattooed marked you as an outsider (Pullen, Simpson 2018). This changed strikingly during the 1980s, when the individualisation of all realms of life (Beck 1986) led to a new perception of the body as a means of self-presentation and expression of identity. In this context, techniques of "body modification" (see Featherstone 2000; Kasten 2006) became increasingly popular in all social milieus and tattoos were no longer seen as subcultural markers but as fashionable beauty and/or identity symbols, which turned tattooing into a mass phenomenon[14] (see De Mello 2000; Atkinson 2004; Fisher 2002). This brought about two developments: firstly, tattooed people and tattoo artists began to be more tolerated and secondly, the growing demand turned tattooing into an attractive job with lucrative income prospects. Supply materials – until then, only available for those who had contacts in the tattooing scene[15] – were suddenly offered on the internet and imported very cheaply from China. When TV formats such as L.A. Ink and Miami Ink[16] began to portray tattoo artists and their way of working

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[9] The English translation for the German term "Beruf" is "profession". A "Beruf" refers to the occupation someone is trained for, and/or provides his/her main income for a longer period of time.

[10] BVerfGE 7, 377, 397: Beruf iSv Art. 12 I GG ist jede auf Dauer angelegte, der Schaffung und Erhaltung einer Lebensgrundlage dienende, Betätigung anzusehen, die nicht schlechthin gemeinschädlich ist. (vgl. BVerfGE 7, 377 (397)); v. Münch/Kunig/Gubelt, Art. 12 Rn. 8 (https://www.jurawiki.de/DefinitionBeruf, 2018, November 16th).

[11] https://www.sowi-online.de/node/431#ueb1 (2018, November 29th).

[12] "Tatau" is a Polynesian verb and means "to knock", "to pound" (see Jung 2007; Heinzl, Pinkl 2003).

[13] Examples are the crusader's Jerusalem tattoos. Tattoos were common as markers for family and/or tribal rank, status, religious or social position. Furthermore, tattooing was applied as a stigmatization and punishment (cf. Heinzl, Pinkl 2003).

[14] According to the so far largest study on *Tattooing and Piercing* in Germany, which was published by the University of Leipzig in October 2017, every fifth German has got one or more tattoos. http://www.uni-leipzig.de/service/kommunikation/medienredaktion/nachrichten.html (2018, April 8th).

[15] Information from interview respondents, who have been tattooing for more than twenty years.

[16] TV formats: Miami Ink on TLC from 2005-2008, and L.A. Ink on TLC from 2007-2011. http://www.highvoltagetattoo.com/#artists-front (2018, June 10th).

in a reality show, some of them even became celebrities. However, despite this attention from the public and the media, in most countries, tattooists continue to work without a licence or a registration. In Germany, for example, tattooists work without any formal education or training and consequently without recognised credentials, which means that the term is not legally protected, and anyone can call him/herself a tattoo artist. The purchase of a trade licence legitimises to open a tattoo studio, which is then registered and regularly checked for hygiene and safety by local health authorities, but a first aid certificate is not obligatory.[17] This is insofar remarkable as during the tattooing procedure quite serious problems such as skin irritation, excessive bleeding and nausea can occur. Interestingly, from the perspective of insurance law tattooing counts as "physical injury by agreement"[18].

PROFESSIONALISM, PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND PROFESSIONALIZATION

In recent years, numerous studies have examined professionalism as an attractive value and ideology (Evetts 2013), as a discursive formation (Adams 2012) and as a disciplinary mechanism (Fournier 1999) in a variety of occupations. The body of research includes the impact of the concept on occupations in the art and culture sector (Svensson 2015), knowledge and service work (Maestripieri 2016), care and bodywork (Black 2004; Sanders, Vail 2009) and even volunteer work (Nittel, Seltrecht 2008). This research shows that professionalism is no longer primarily used as a set of criteria to distinguish professions from other occupations, but has become a flexible category to analyse the organisation of knowledge and work skills of other occupational groups (Evetts 2003), particularly, as many of them are striving for the recognition and status of a profession (Dewe, Stüwe 2016). However, the fact that «secretaries, restaurant staff, security personnel, furniture retailers (among others) are all allegedly offering "professional services"» (Fournier 1999: 281) also leads to the question whether professionalism has been changed into a marketing strategy or is just an empty label. Fournier denies the question and explains professionalism referring to Foucault's (1978) concept of "governmentality" as an appealing "discursive resource" that leads to the construction of «appropriate work identities and conducts» (Fournier 1999: 284 ff.). Freidson (2001) describes professionalism as a mode of working and identifies it as a "third logic" beside the logics of the market and the organization. From an interactionist perspective, professionalism generally refers to the quality of front-line service work (Frenkel *et alii* 1999) and is the result of an interaction, where the professional actor solves a given problem with his field-specific competences and skills (Nittel 2002). The application of «somewhat abstract knowledge to particular cases» (Abbott 1988: 8) is often characterised by complexity and "irreducible uncertainty", as Champy (2018) points out, since the practitioner who works with patients, students or clients can never predict the outcome of his/her action for certain. According to him, dealing with the specifics of individual cases requires the professional's "practical wisdom" and the way they accomplish this challenge should be one of the critical issues of the sociology of the professions.

The attribute "professionalism" is always associated with a skilled performance of competences and expertise, which explains the omnipresence and the frequent usage of the term in everyday contexts (Pfadenhauer 2005). Particularly in occupational contexts, it is essential to convince the patient or client that the professional's decision, treatment and/or judgement is correct and the best (Hughes 1958). According to Fournier (1999), this credit of trust contributes to the appeal of professionalism as a value for nearly all occupational groups (Pfadenhauer 2005). In the field of body and beauty service work, where vocational training programmes and qualifications are rare, it is challenging to convey trustworthiness and expertise (Liebold *et alii* 2018). Therefore, the successful practitioner requires a coherent professional identity, since the «attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences» the «professional self-concept is based on» (Slay, Smith 2011: 86) frame the professional context and influence the self-perception and actions of the service provider (Schmidt 2012). Without institutional or organisational regulations and role models, professional identities are constructed through interaction and actively working (Pratt *et*

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[17] Information from a public health authority during an expert interview, in March 2018.
[18] Bundesministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft: https://www.safer-tattoo.de/sichergehen.html (2018, April 29th).

alii 2006). Processes of professionalisation, defined as the accumulating and systemising of knowledge and practical skills in a specific area (Kalkowski 2012), do no longer really follow the pattern, which Wilensky identified as an overall "model" in his famous article: *The Professionalization of Everyone?* (1964). Therefore, «doing [s.th.] full time» (ibid.: 142) and identifying oneself with a body of professional knowledge remain core aspects of the process that follows miscellaneous pathways nowadays. Nevertheless, despite this flexibility of sequences occupations continue to strive for social acknowledgement and «legal recognition» (Maestripieri 2016: 34) and professionalising oneself and eventually achieving certified qualifications count as essential aspects in modern societies (ibid.: 35).

The diverse forms and paths of professionalisation can be classified as two dimensions: the "collective" and the "individual" professionalisation (Mieg 2016), which are interrelated. Any collective professionalisation refers to the process by which a professional group tries to achieve public and political recognition and institutionalisation, whereas the individualised process consists of the «role-making» (Nittel 2004: 348), and is defined as «[...] the education, training and maturation of an individual that is not necessarily academic, but still leads to a status, to professional practise and a self-image, which derives from it» (Nittel, Seltrecht 2008: 134). Usually, this process begins with an initial interest and the motivation to learn more about it, which is followed by a period of studying and the accumulation of professional knowledge and practical skills (Nittel 2004). Eventually, this process leads to the development of a professional identity and habitus.

RESEARCH METHOD AND SAMPLE

The empirical material of this research project consists of two kinds of data. Between 2014 and 2017, I conducted twenty-six biographical narrative interviews with male and female tattoo artists and two expert interviews with a lawyer and a health official for my PhD project. The verbal data has been complemented with material from participant observation at four tattoo conventions, two in big cities and two in smaller towns in Germany, which includes visual material such as brochures and photographs plus ethnographic notes on tattooing procedures in situ, tattoo contests, background music etc.

The data collection began at a tattoo convention, where informal conversations with tattooists at their exhibition stands led eventually to appointments for narrative interviews. Concurrently, the focused search for studio websites and blogs on the internet helped to find interviewees thus facilitating a theoretical sampling (Glaser, Strauss 1978) since most tattoo artists introduce themselves with some biographical information on their studio homepages. Also, experts such as board members and lawyers of tattoo associations were found via the internet and contacted per email or by phone. The interviewees were aged between 23 and 48, and their work experience ranged from one and a half to almost thirty years at the time of the interview. The sample includes men, women, one transgender person with different social backgrounds and educational achievement, as well as various nationalities[19].

The narrative interviews with tattooists provide their perspective on their working career, biographical resources and work experiences, which influenced and shaped their self-framing and professional self-understanding. What and how they choose to narrate from their work as tattooists is instructive for a reconstruction of their ideas on professional conduct, work practices and thus eventually the construction of their professional identity (Bohnsack 2008; Nohl 2006). Visits to tattoo parlours and attendance at conventions provide an opportunity to study how tattooists perform, translate and implement their understanding of professionalism while working. Watching tattooing procedures in situ reveals professional practices and routines, which are accomplished through tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1958) and therefore not necessarily described in an interview. Furthermore, being present during client consultations and tattooing sessions helps to understand what professional conduct consists of in routines of service work, usage of equipment and in interaction with customers and colleagues.

The data has been analysed with the documentary method (Garfinkel 1967), which Bohnsack (2008) developed for group discussions and visual material and was further elaborated for the interpretation of interviews by

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[19] The interviewees come from the United Kingdom, Russia, Croatia, Slovakia, Italy, Austria, the US, and Germany.

Nohl (2009). As an interpretative paradigm verbal statements, as well as visual data (e.g. ethnographic observations), are considered as documents, which allow the reconstruction of interpretative frames, self-theoretical concepts and orientations.

<center>FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION</center>

This section of the article focuses on the interviewed tattoo artists' perspective on their work and aims to reconstruct aspects of their professional self-understanding. In their accounts the tattooists describe their motives for working as full-time tattoo artists, the quest to find someone and somewhere for an apprenticeship and their everyday experiences as (self-)employed practitioners. The analysis of the narrative interviews reveals two aspects, which all tattooists address either directly or indirectly.

Professionalising in tattooing

Since tattooing is not a formalised and recognised career, advantages such as financial security, promotion prospects and social recognition - often decisive criteria for a career choice – are missing. Therefore, it is rare that young people take up tattooing as gainful work directly after they finish school. All interviewees had been trained and worked in another profession prior to their career as tattoo artists, had gathered professional experiences and possessed a recognised qualification – "just in case" – as some interviewees put it. Also, all respondents recalled that they realised at some point that they do not want to work "forever" in their job, but at the same time they considered choosing an occupation that did not require a vocational training and a recognised qualification might cause financial and/or social difficulties. Most tattooists recalled their love of and/or talent for drawing and sketching as a reason, why they searched for an occupation in the art sector, which eventually sparked their interest in tattooing. One interviewee recalls:

> Well, the reason I started tattooing was definitively my love for tattoos. I was hooked by the material – the imagination to scribble on the skin, the technique itself fascinated me – I was interested in learning how it works. (M, 47)

This tattoo artist, who has been in the tattooing business for over 25 years, states his attraction to the skin as a work material and claims his interest was mainly technical although he admits his emotional motivation as well. The skin as a canvas for experimentation (to scribble) attracted him, and he pursued a "learning-by-doing" process.

All tattooists describe the skin as a challenging material which they needed to learn about, since the texture of the skin is determined by age, thickness and sex, all of which must be taken into consideration when deciding on the size and placing of a tattoo. Tattooists, who have not experienced it themselves (when getting tattooed themselves)[20], learn at the latest that tattooing on ribs, ankles or the instep is particularly painful, when their customers groan with pain. Failed tattoos, skin irritation or excessive bleeding are common experiences for beginners and referred to as important "lessons" in the narratives since their mistakes taught them what kind of motifs can be placed on which body part[21] and/or how deep they must stitch. Comments such as "no one was born a master" and "learning never stops" compare tattooing to a classical apprenticeship:

> Tattooing simply is a handcraft, which you just learn like a carpenter learns how to work with wood. (M, 32)

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[20] Most of the tattooists, whom I met in tattoo parlours are tattooed themselves. In the interviews, the respondents confirmed that only a few tattooists do not have any tattoos.
[21] According to the interviewees, the skin texture of the body parts varies. Particularly care is required when choosing motives for round limbs, such as arms, wrists or ankles.

The comparison with a traditional craft that in Germany requires a three-year-long training period and leads to a recognised qualification implies that tattooing should be considered as a craft that requires not only specific knowledge, but also tuition. However, the same tattooist takes this argument even further:

> One must also consider that you're working on the organ of a living human– the biggest organ! Not just a piece of paper, which you can chuck out. (M, 32)

By contrasting tattooing with drawing on paper, the interviewee depicts his craft as demanding and sophisticated. Tattooists have to work with extreme accuracy and meticulous (hygienic) care – every insertion must be exact. As outlined above, working with people means dealing with complexity and as each client (and his skin) is different, it is unpredictable whether the tattoo turns out exactly as desired. In this context, Champy's (2018) concept of "prudential professionalism" is instructive as it points exactly at this "irreducible uncertainty", which requires "practical wisdom" through work experience. In fact, most tattooists claim to have some basic dermatological knowledge, which only helps to some extent as the texture of skin is infinitely variable. In this context several interviewees suggested similarities to the work of medical practitioners, exemplified is this statement:

> It's not like you can learn to tattoo in a weekend course, just as no physician can operate after a year of studying. It requires a long process of learning; best is to find a tattoo studio, which is of course not so easy, because only a few tattoo artists take apprentices. (M, 47)

It is noticeable that he compares tattooing with studying medicine and becoming a medical practitioner, a classic profession, which is renowned for its long and demanding professionalisation. Thus, he suggests that professionalising in tattooing requires not only time but also tuition. Most tattoo artists begin their tattooing 'career' as autodidacts, and some shared their early experiments with handmade tattooing devices and ordinary sewing needles. The decision to look for someone, who introduces them to the craft, is depicted as a turning point and an act of responsibility in their narratives. An apprentice, who started with self-tattooing as a teenager, admits:

> I had no idea what I was doing. At some point, I told myself: «Enough, I don't want to butcher any more people. I've got to find someone, who shows me properly what to do». (M, 28)

The respondent frames his decision to find a "master"[22] and commit himself to a period of professionalisation, which is not imposed "from above", as an act of taking responsibility for his future clients. The autonomy to organise how and where they learn their craft and to determine the beginning and end of their apprenticeship counts for many tattooists as one of the most attractive aspects of their non-regulated work. Professionalising in tattooing consists primarily of "on-the-job learning" in different studios, and whoever can afford it, goes abroad for some time. Gaining work experience and specialising in tattoo-styles determines whether tattoo artists identify themselves primarily as an artist, craftsman and/or a body service worker. Tattoo conventions serve as a stage, where tattooists demonstrate their technique and artistic style in public, which in some ways resembles an exam setting, since the painful tattooing procedure is exposed to external judgement and public recognition counts as a form of symbolic capital. After all, apart from experiencing being part of a professional community, self-marketing and networking go hand in hand at conventions.

Professionalism in everyday practice

Once tattoo artists have finished their apprenticeship, they either stay in the shop where they were trained or leave to open their own studio. Running a studio and making a living from tattooing requires some basic knowl-

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[22] Many tattoo artists refer to the people, who taught them tattooing as "masters" thus suggesting a novice-master-relationship.

edge of accountancy, which several interviewees described as their hardest challenge and they elaborated about how they accumulated know-how on bookkeeping and taxes.

Usually, tattoo artists specialise in one or more artistic tattoo styles and to try to get a regular clientele. One young tattooist, who opened his studio only a few months before the interview, explained, what he is trying to achieve in future years:

> I actually want that clients choose me, because they value my work. The ones, who come and say: Hey, I looked at various studios, and you are doing the best work. (M, 28)

Prior to this statement, he had sought to distinguish himself from those tattooists, who are ready to "ink" whatever their customers want, which is not where he wants to end up. At the same time, he has to compete against them since customers have a choice. His somewhat ambitious "business plan" is based on his artistic talent and skilled artwork that will single him out as an outstanding artist. The quote above shows that this young man's professional identity relies on social recognition and is connected to artistic quality.

The interview extract below (from a different interviewee) highlights a quite different aspect:

> [...] you've got to handle the whole thing properly and make a good fist of it, you know, to do the whole thing professionally and not just tattoo some rubbish or whatever, no, this craft you have to carry out cleanly and well, you know [...] we try to introduce compulsory standards for hygiene and the quality of tattoos. (M, 47)

This tattoo artist, who has been in the tattooing business for almost thirty years, not only demands hygiene-guidelines, but also entitles himself the right to set standards and to judge the (un-)professional work of others. His firmness suggests that he is convinced to meet these targets, whereas others do not, which shows his self-confidence as a professional. Thus, his distancing and distinguishing himself from those, whose work he despises as "rubbish" and considers as "scratchers" highlights that he is aware of his responsibility towards his clientele and commits himself to ethical values. Othering and downgrading are rhetorical strategies, which all interviewees employ, to suggest they recognise the "bad seeds", because they know what quality is:

> But – (deep breath) because there're too many backyard-tattooists, who have never learned the craft or just on YouTube. They've got no idea, but think tattooing is cool now, order a machine on the internet and then cause much harm. (M, 27)

Although there seems to be some overall guidelines and rules concerning hygiene and work ethics, which most tattooists commit themselves to, on a micro-level they establish their own standards and benchmarks for their professional practice. Here, the process of professionalisation serves as a criterion to draw boundaries between "good" and "bad". The "others" are autodidacts, who neither care about the quality of their work nor their responsibility. Instead, their motivation is self-centred (tattooing is "cool") and egoistic, which suggests that the narrator dedicates himself to the craft of tattooing for the sake of it.

The examples show how tattoo artists use notions of professionalism as discursive formations (Adam 2012) to position themselves within the competitive field of tattooing. In their self-presentation they define their professional identity through rhetorical strategies such as "othering", assessing and evaluating the work of others against their self-imposed benchmarks.

Tattooing is a specific form of front-line service work (Frenkel *et alii* 1990) and counts within the segment as bodywork (Gimlin 2007). As high-touch work (Mc Dowell 2009), it involves physical closeness, skin contact and touch, which means that the service product consists not only of the finished tattoo, but also the tattooing procedure itself. Drawing on numerous examples from their everyday practice, the investment of time and affective capital (Penz, Sauer 2010) in their interactions with customers is illustrated and compared with similar requirements in recognised body service work, for example in the health and care work sector. For example, in this description:

> There are still many people, who sneer at you and say: «Tattoo artist? Hmm. Nothing else achieved in life!». You're just scribbling around on people's skin and taking money for it. [...] This pigeonholing – you're just like drug dealers or pimps for them. But a job

like tattooing is also demanding and exhausting: you've got to be nice with your clients, you can't just sneer at them, you must always be sensible about what suits them, what is appropriate, to make them feel comfortable. [...] (F, 35)

With reference to stereotypes that tattooists are either confronted with or just anticipating, this interviewee feels that she has to clarify that she commits herself to the principles of service work by illustrating her emotion work (Hochschild 1983; Black 2004) with classic examples and legitimize her status as a professional service provider, including the exhausting nature of her bodywork.

The initial consultation and negotiating about the desired tattoo is often depicted as an expert-client relationship, where the tattoo artist seeks to develop the "best" tattoo "solution" with the customer. The intimacy of the conversations, which can get very personal (and depressing) when clients are lying on a lounger for hours in pain – a position that triggers talking and getting emotional. The challenge of coping with traumatised and/or simply talkative costumers and their stories[23] requires a professional framing of the intimate situation. As an invasive treatment of the skin, the tattooing act is often described by customers and service providers alike as a physical transgression of the "territories of the self" (Goffman 1971) thus interpreting it as "entering" the inner life of a person (Bidlo 2010). All interviewees stress this side of their work as a form of emotion labour that goes beyond the service contract and is considered as challenging as psychological and/or psychiatric counselling. The comparison with recognised professions, which involve a long academic education and work experience seeks to upgrade and legitimise tattooing as an occupation, which also requires a professional habitus and the competence to frame physical closeness and intimacy in a "professional" way. In this context, this means conveying that they care without getting personally involved.

CONCLUSIONS

Tattoo artists are confronted with increasing competition and, at the same time, they are challenged to convince the concerned public of their professional conduct despite the lack of formal education and recognised credentials. By referring to the safety and health risks of their skin-invasive bodywork, they stress the responsibility and complexity of tattooing, which they tend to compare with medical practices. Furthermore, the tattoo boom generated an increasing demand, but also led to an individualisation of the tattoo as a symbol of individuality. Personalised and unique tattoos are in great demand and require artistic expertise and meticulous craft work. In their accounts, tattoo artists describe how they have to meet high standards of artistic and craft skills as well as the clientele's expectations of good service quality (e.g. good hygiene, expert consultations), which requires their self-managed and time-consuming professionalisation.

The reconstruction of argumentative referents from the empirical material also indicates that professionalism operates as a "discursive formation" (Adam 2012) among tattooists. Frequently, they describe aspects of their professional identity by contrasting it with an "unprofessional other", the "scratcher", who matches all prejudices and stereotypes and is, therefore, the "bad seed" in the tattooing community. In this context notions of professionalism become evident through rhetoric strategies such as "othering", assessing, judging, which are employed as a means of occupational closure.

To conclude, although tattoo artists are ambivalent about a formalised and institutionalised process of professionalisation "from above", they individually adopt professionalism as a concept to construct their professional identity. Eventually, their professional self-understanding as artists, artisans and/or service workers is based on their boundary work (O'Mahony 2013), which helps them to position themselves within a growing and competitive occupational field.

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[23] All interviewees stated that, over the last decade, the demand for tattoos as a creed or symbol for grief, internal or status passages has increased considerably.

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Monographic Section

A Royal Charter Is Not Enough – How PM Professional Associations Can Continually Show the Value of Professionalisation to the Markets

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Abstract. The Association for Project Management (APM) is engaged in the process of raising the status and performance of Project Management (PM) in the UK. They have obtained a royal charter, regarded as the "locus of professionalisation", but can the APM really assist PM to achieve "a world where all projects succeed", when there is no provable link between professionalisation and performance of practitioners? This current claim alone (along with chartership) will not improve the profession's market reputation, which also raises concerns regarding the APM tactics for growth by engaging practitioners and corporate partners. This article uses actor-network theory to re-frame a historical case of the major UK Cost Accounting Association (ICWA), identifying the tactics this association used to effectively represent the value of the occupation/profession and influence their markets. Parallels and recommendations are generated for the APM, research directions are proposed for PM professionalisation and associations' tactics for building market value.

Keywords. PM professionalisation; professional associations; historical case; cost accounting; actor-network theory.

1. PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS: REPRESENTING THE VALUE OF PROFESSIONS

Professional associations are usually regarded as a fundamental part of the development of a profession, as professional associations usually act as the governor for intra-profession behaviours and as a promoter of the profession to the outside environment. By being the governor and the promoter, professional associations act to explain why becoming a profession should matter to the practitioner of the particular occupation itself and to explain the benefits of this to the contexts of that occupation. For example, professional associations commonly work to raise the standards of practice of member practitioners within their area, then make the claim, to con-

cerned stakeholders, that those practitioners, now "professionals", will deliver the desired services to a superior level (Greenwood *et alii* 2002), thus raising the status of the occupation.

During the professionalisation of occupations, the stakeholders who receive the value of this action vary; accordingly, the value professional associations present to their particular markets also has to vary. The value of traditional professions such as law and medicine was described as maintaining the stability of society (Parsons 1939). The associations of those professions, therefore, needed to demonstrate to the government and public that their members would always prioritise the public interest and protect its social functions (Merton 1969). Later the commercialisation and industrialisation of society created new kinds of occupation, which in time also entered the process of professionalisation. These occupations, supporting the entrepreneur and capitalist in making exchanges in markets, had "exchange" written into their souls. In their own case, the exchange was expert knowledge and skill being traded for monopoly control over the market for their labour (Suddaby, Muzio 2015) and the advantages associated with that.

As part of their professionalisation process, the associations of these occupations have to compete to present superior knowledge and skills as the value of the profession attuned to the concerns of two markets – their clients and the individual practitioners to be drawn into membership. This value often becomes processed into entrance examinations, credentials and qualifications that become the offerings of the association to their markets. By doing so, professional associations provide a "market shelter" for the individuals who join their credential system, which should act as a guarantee of performance to the market (Birkett, Evans 2005). In the market of management services, large organisations determine the market value of the services. In this situation, the standards of the professional works are significantly influenced by employers, professions emerging in such environments engage in "corporate professionalisation". With tight relations to the employers of practitioners, the market is extended to internal-company context; therefore, the activities of professionalisation operations are associated with "corporate procurement and recruitment policies" (Hodgson *et alii* 2015). So, during corporate professionalisation, professions need to present the value to the internal market to promote their career as well as to external market like older professions.

Corporate professions, such as PM (Hodgson *et alii* 2015), management consultancy (Kipping *et alii* 2006) and executive search (Muzio *et alii* 2011), supply the managerial needs of employers and stakeholders in technical problem-solving (Hodgson, Muzio 2011), but they are rarely the monopoly provider of these solutions, nor can they prevent provision. The value needs to be presented here, are the "indicators of desirable working orientations" (Brint 1996). This becomes the market reputation built during professionalisation and a defensible position when facing competition from other management practitioners (Maestripieri 2016), associations, or even perhaps non-associated individuals in the same occupation. Better career opportunities are a desirable outcome from corporate professionalisation, professional practitioners achieving more senior positions is one of the signs of effectiveness in showing value (Stewart 2011). In this context, professionalism is related to individual behaviour and career path in the workplace. Without the ability to monopolise or control access to solutions and credentials being no barrier to entry, the role of professional associations becomes weaker or useless in management occupations (Reed 1996; Maestripieri 2016).

Professionalising PM requires the combination of both "old professionalisation logic" and specific internal market concerns (Hodgson *et alii* 2015). In terms of old professionalisation logic, the external market will require PM associations to "[act] as a way of promoting and proving to the market the worth and value-added delivered by professional service providers" (Muzio *et alii* 2011: 454). According to old logic of professionalisation, Hodgson *et alii* (2015) regard the success of the Association for Project Management (APM) in obtaining a Royal Charter as one of the key conditions for acceptance of PM as a profession in UK society. As clients and employers in the market demand the guarantee of project success, the APM proposes "a world where all projects succeed"[1] (Hodgson, Muzio 2011). In these ways, the association attempts to continually build a reputation for assisting PM professionalisation. Specially for internal markets, as internal markets are an important characteristic for emerging corporate professions, professional associations in the areas of PM offer and interpret the market needs (Hodgson *et alii*

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[1] https://www.apm.org.uk/blog/all-projects-succeed-what-are-we-aiming-at/.

2015) and through developing corporate memberships and embedding certification in career schemes (Muzio *et alii* 2011; Hodgson *et alii* 2015), knowledge development with practitioners (Konstantinou 2015) and intra-organisational identity construction (Hodgson, Paton 2016; Paton, Hodgson 2016)with particular concern to bridge the rift between abstract theory and practice (cf. Morris 2006; 2011; 2013.

Despite the views that obtaining a Royal Charter is a milestone of professionalisation (Hodgson *et alii* 2015) and that to some extent PM has shown value in solving technical and managerial issues (Hodgson, Muzio 2011), PM is not a traditional profession hence the obtaining Royal Charter should not be recognised as the sign of complete success of corporate professionalisation. If the royal charter is not attached to the market (especially internal) and value of PM professionalisation, then it is not enough. PM is a young profession, so the end stage of effective operations of the professional associations is still undetermined. Especially, APM's apparent aim in replicating the professionalisation logic of the more mature corporate professions can be observed, but the tactics it is deploying have not been examined and may not be completely compatible with the internal markets that it faces. This will be elaborated upon in the following sections of this article.

This article will focus on evaluating the APM's current tactics for making the value of PM professionalisation more widely accepted by their markets. This article is organised as follows: firstly, a review of the literature on PM professionalisation will be conducted to identify the market the PM associations are facing and the relevance of their tactics; secondly, ANT will be introduced with its utility for constructing an understanding of the conduct of professional associations; then, ANT will be used to reframe a historical case of how the main UK cost accounting association assisted their occupation to gain the acceptance of their markets, especially internal markets, as a valued profession; finally, parallels for the APM will be identified to uncover possible ways in which the APM can better assist PM professionalisation and achieve its own goals as an organisation.

2. PROFESSIONALISING PROJECT MANAGEMENT:
UNIVERSAL MARKET GOALS WITH PARTICULAR PROBLEMS IN DELIVERY

PM and its associations face dual markets. Firstly, external markets where the professions exchange their final product with the clients, which almost all professions need to cope with. The market value is not only determined by the clients who buy the production of the project, but also by the employers who own the project practitioners (Hodgson, Muzio 2011). Therefore, attention needs to be paid to the specific technical and managerial needs of the employing company (Hodgson, Muzio 2011), which is the second, the internal market.'.

For the external market, PM associations apply tactics that other professional associations commonly use; for example, establishing a body of knowledge and professional certifications. From the external market perspective, the BoK and certifications are the main carriers of value, as is the potential guarantee on practices of the project manager. Konstantinou (2015) pointed out that the practice and performance of PM changes according to the different contexts it is conducted in. Traditional professions distinguished themselves by emphasising standards such as service to the public and competence in their field, and by ensuring that their membership meets these standards. An important element of a profession is ownership of a body of knowledge that is distinctive to the professional group. Project management associations have spent considerable time and effort in developing Body of Knowledge (BoK). However, it is also noticed this situated characteristic of PM lead to that standardised BoKs may lose their relevance when being applied to the "real world" of different industrial and commercial sectors. The capability of professionals to judge situations in their context and apply their distinctive skills is more important than systemised knowledge itself. However, PM knowledge has to be practised in and shaped by a context owned by the employer, so it is hard for PM professional associations to establish one knowledge system alone that covers all the needs of employers, but over which, they are gatekeepers. The associations are therefore deprived of "executional power" of building standards and excluding practitioners who do not meet the standards (Konstantinou 2015). Morris *et alii* (2006) warned that generalising PM knowledge will indicate that the exper-

tise of PM practitioners can be codified, hence available to anyone and no barrier to practice. Blackler (1995) argued that a powerful profession would be able to develop a "system of persuasion" based on an "enigmatic" knowledge foundation. Codification works against this, making BoK seem to be less valuable as a carrier of value created by PM professional associations in the market. Ultimately, any human being could manage a project if so motivated. Additionally, when investigating the relations between PM certifications and project outcome, Aranyossy *et alii* (2018) found that PMP certification was trivial in their list of project success factors when compared to the experience of project practitioners. Therefore, the ability of PM professional associations to hold claims of value to the external market is weak.

The value of professionalisation is further questionable because a better practice cannot be guaranteed by a standardised BoK or certification (Hällgren *et alii* 2012)using short examples of four different areas (education, research, certification and practice. As Tucker (2013) stated "receiving training in formal PM principles is one thing; applying them within an organization is another". Certification, a key element in an association's claims to improving individual members status and performance does not make certified practitioners outstanding in the labour market, or more able to perform successfully. In Starkweather and Stevenson's study (2011) with recruiters and corporate IT executives, the PM Professional (PMP) certification was not the priority consideration when recruiting project managers, whereas soft skills such as leadership, communication skills, written skills and attitude ranked highest. These soft skills of project managers, critical for successful practice, are hard to examine in traditional written exams commonly associated with certification or accreditation.

Likewise, Joseph and Marnewick (2017) observed that PM professional certifications do not influence PM performance in terms of time, budget, scope and quality. Even though PM professional associations are attempting to certify project managers via involving the consideration of competences, PM certifications cannot realistically assist practitioners to have higher levels of performance; hence, these cannot help the profession advance its reputation the market. This also means that certification cannot assist the certified practitioners to be recruited by employers, which makes the claims of power over internal marketplace reputation for PM association more questionable.

For the internal market, the APM has conducted unique tactics to assist the process of professionalisation. Within the internal market, employers are the key stakeholders and their concerns determine their perception of the value of the associations' offerings; hence, associations have innovated by creating "corporate membership" (Muzio *et alii* 2011). Further, Hodgson *et alii* (2015) noted that PM professional associations now attempt to embed their certification programmes in the career path of PMs in a given organisation. To illustrate, professional associations can convince companies to integrate the different levels of certification to their internal promotions process, which, they intend, will demonstrate the power of the professional association to assist the professional members or certificated practitioners in securing more strategic and senior roles in an organisation in such a context.

In developing tactics for internal markets, barriers were identified arising from the unique background of project management, which leads to less acceptance of the value of PM professionalisation. It has been pointed out that the path towards professionalisation of PM is significantly influenced by its technical background (Morris *et alii* 2011). Originally emerging from aerospace engineering and construction industries, early project manager roles were assigned to engineers (Stretton 2007; Morris 2011). Even today, positions of PM are often obtained from a temporary transfer or a secondary career choice, so that such project managers could view PM as "accidental" or an alternative career plan for engineers (Hodgson *et alii* 2011). Such a project practitioner may choose to join an engineering institution (i.e. IMechE) due to their former experience or education or acculturation within their company, rather than join a PM professional association. These professional associations in well-developed technical occupations want to determine the value of PM by developing their own PM branches (Hodgson, Cicmil 2007). We explore the standardization of contemporary management knowledge, focusing in particular upon the role of 'standards' in creating and reifying 'organizational objects,' with powerful consequences and with often unrecognized ethical implications. It is our argument that modernist beliefs in 'general, abstract and timeless ideas' (Brunsson et alii). These make it harder for PM associations to create internal structure within a company than for other managerial occupations. Therefore, particularly in engineering-based firms, PM as a profession has "competition" from other technical professions within the internal market that manage projects, which requires PM professional

associations to provide more assistance to enhance the reputation of PM as both a rational career choice and a desirable professional identity.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN – APPLYING ANT TO RE-FRAME THE HISTORICAL ACTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

The intentions of PM associations are to assist in showing the value of professionalisation of PM to both external and internal markets and raising its status in corporate organisation, and to make the reputational outcome of professionalisation desirable to individual PMs and demonstrable through the preferential attitudes of employers and project clients towards members of the association. With different internal and external markets, the professional standards, practice and identity need to be defined and negotiated, shaped and flowed according to the contexts of the markets (Cooper, Robson 2006). BoK, certifications and memberships are the main interactions between PM professional associations with the markets that PM is in. The effectiveness of the interactions between PM associations and their contexts have a significant impact on the how the recognition of the profession is built; hence, as has been said, there is a need of an evaluation what tactics are useful in building stable relationships within the market to enhance the reputation of the association.

Current research in professionalisation usually follows the actions of practitioners in the area, i.e. identity construction and knowledge co-production. Research into tactics of professional associations such as certification tend to be a quantitative analysis of the attitudes of practitioners, i.e. the influence of certification on PM practitioners' performance, which limit the analysis to a time point. However asserted by Abbott (1988) that professionalisation is a continual negotiation process between professions and the contexts they are in. The static approaches do not help in theorising tactics' effects in the process of engaging wide participation in professionalisation (Ruming 2009). A theoretical framework acting as a basis for guiding the conduct of PM professional associations to maximising the effectiveness of their tactics is needed – to link these factors and the actions of practitioners in professionalisation together in a process view. To construct social products that can effectively solve existing 'concerns', or problems, of people, whether society, organisations or individuals, it is most often required to combine a range of human and non-human materials or artefacts into a network to address these concerns. This is the basic assumption of ANT, according to Priyatma (2013). Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (Latour 1987), originally generated from the field of science and technology, responds to the needs of understanding the current effectiveness of PM professional associations' tactics and could be used to predict what can be a potential next step for the area of PM. ANT has been applied in understanding the processes of engaging actors by understanding the actors' concerns, such as market (Callon 1999), brand building (Vollero *et alii* 2016) and professionalisation of accounting (Mihret *et alii* 2017).

ANT examines the interactions between actors and the network they are in, where alliances are built between heterogeneous elements (Vicsek *et alii* 2016). Asserted by Law (1992), networks involve not only human actors, but society, organisational machines, knowledge, technology, texts or money. Human actors, defined by Callon (1984), are any element that will have its own definition of and position vis-a-vis the concerns. The paper does not attempt a full overview but concentrates on the notion of power relations. Foucault's work and actor-network theory (ANT, ANT explains "how any actors…come to be, and act like an actor". The factors passing between the actors and defining the relationships are 'intermediaries', including texts, technical objects, money and human/skills, are also essential to understanding the process (Callon 1990). According to Safty (2009), intermediaries are the language of the network that enables actors to better interact together. He further noted that the intermediaries can be the non-human actors themselves within the network.

Chua (1995) suggested that ANT provides an opportunity to explore how and why a 'fact-building network' is being constructed and finally gets acceptance. Acceptance is the desired end-state for the network – the concern that drives the network is finally ameliorated to the satisfaction of the human actors, who despite having their own concerns and interests, sublimate these to the ideal of the network. Ultimately, when the human and non-human

actors involved together function towards the same goals with other human actors, this indicates the actors accept each other for being in the same network and construct stable relations (Latour 1987). The well-developed network has longevity when the ideas that are shared are accepted by all actors in the network. This is regarded as the "sociology of translation". Lying at the centre of ANT, the concept of 'translation' is important during the process of actors shaping each other's roles and the relationships. Callon (1984) stated the translation process as:

1. *Problematisation* – The issues are defined by the actors according to a specific context, and the actors make themselves as indispensable solutions to the defined problems; meanwhile, actors make themselves as "obligatory passage points" through the negotiations;
2. *Interessement* – In this stage, the positions of actors in relations become more stable;
3. *Enrolment* – More negotiation takes place in this stage, which enables a better definition of interrelation;
4. *Mobilisation* – The collectiveness is achieved, and actors gained more confidence in the collective entities.

The case of a professional association's successful professionalisation project is now presented, and ANT will be used as a basis to reframe it to act as a comparator to PM. The concepts from ANT will be used to interpret the sequence of events and, accordingly, tactics conducted by the cost accounting professional association will be identified. The CIMA, the cost, later, management accounting professional association in the UK, achieved chartered status within five decades of the emergence of the main institution. Having longer experience after obtaining the royal charter, valuable lessons can be concluded from the CIMA for the APM.

The situation of the CIMA with cost accounting is suitable as a comparator for the APM with PM for the following reasons: the occupation was born of industrial change; the occupation had to develop a rhetoric of service to capitalistic interests, particularly those of the business owner; there were also forces against its professionalisation, arising from a shared overlapping working context and career path with a better-developed profession, chartered accounting; clients (business owners) initially were quite able to replicate the value of the occupation or even succeed without it. It also had to convince practitioners that their concerns would be best addressed as members. All of these find ready parallels to the professionalisation project of PM. Unlike the APM however, the CIMA has established its members in some of the most senior positions in the UK cross different industrial companies and holds this as a possible outcome to its membership. This indicates the association effectively translated the value to employers, who is the most important value decider in internal markets, and hence enjoyed high acceptance in internal and external markets of the profession, which is desired by PM and the APM. Based on these historical parallels, new or different tactics for how the APM can move PM forward to in the UK and by extension the status of their association can be proposed.

4. THE HISTORICAL CASE OF THE COST ACCOUNTING PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION

The process of gaining acceptance and building reputation of the profession is a dynamic process with the interaction of both human and non-human actors; therefore, it can be considered as a value-translation process. The markets are where the value of actors can be exchanged, and the actors are transformed into the "commodities in the markets" (Callon 1999). The human actors include professional practitioners, clients in the external market, employers in the internal market, non-human actors include the certifications, memberships and other tactics that can present solutions to the concerns of the markets. In addition, the intermediaries such as texts in documentation and reports, money invested in the projects, may also have important functions during the process.

4.1. Problematisation

In this stage, the professional association of cost accounting emerges, through the work of a small elite, collecting the concerns of other actors within their context, and building a network that can offer a common solution for the diverse concerns of all of the relevant actors. It is generally held that modern cost accounting began with the

rise of the factory system in the Industrial Revolution, from 1875 (Solomons 1952; Banerjee 2006) in response to challenges emanating from growth and downward pressure on profit margins, i.e. the need for operational information systems to support strategic decision-making by locating and containing costs and monitoring performance of new technologies (Garner 1947; Armstrong 1985; Boyns, Edwards 1996) and the problem of how overhead costs should be dealt with (Solomons 1952; Kaplan 1984)including the demands imposed by the origin of the railroad and steel enterprises and the subsequent activity from the scientific management movement. As production runs increased, budgetary control was necessary to fix selling prices long before production (Boyns 1998). WWI cost-plus standard on government munitions contracts required men who could price these, so as to prevent profiteering (Banerjee 2006; Loft 1986). Sudden government influence and individualism in practice, a cultural feature of British entrepreneurs, owners and managers alike, had caused manufacturers to respond haphazardly to the need for cost accounting. At this time, Chartered Accountants, represented by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW) amongst others, were appointed to senior positions in government, munitions, food and coal (Loft 1986) and given powers to inspect the cost management of British manufacturers working for the war effort. The Institute of Cost and Works Accountants (ICWA) was founded in 1919 based on the dissatisfaction with costing methods made apparent (Boyns, Edwards 1997).

Most publicity for the ICWA in its early days came from a debate in the newspapers and "derogatory insinuations" in the ICAEW journal *The Accountant* (Loft 1986). The prestige and institutional strength of the ICAEW were such that they were able to block the ICWA from obtaining a Royal Charter in 1919. Control over work was threatened by chartered accountants leaving professional practice to work full time in business and finding interest in cost issues. Contact with chartered accountants, although initially adversarial, put the ICWA messages into the elite institutional fabric of the British economy. The involvement of the chartered accountants with costing during the Wars gave the cost accountants working in industry a powerful professional model to copy (Loft 1986). Also, many chartered accountants in industry took the ICWA examinations signifying that they had practical experience of their industry. Between 1950 and 1975, 11 of the 26 ICWA Presidents were chartered accountants (Morrow 1992). So the ICWA turned the potential stumbling block of a mature rival profession into stepping stone.

In the problematisation stage, all the human actors have their different concerns such as practitioners concerned with personal status while clients wanted better methods of cost management. To start the network, the ICWA defined a common goal ameliorating the diverse concerns of actors. The ICWA promoted their systematic cost management methods to solve the concerns of governments, business owners and practitioners. Non-human actors such as exams and certifications of the ICWA had been defined with the concern of certifying good cost accounting practice. What needs to be highlighted here is that the ICWA managed to involve the other actors by providing the solution of standardised and enhanced cost management methodologies. Presenting a superior solution compared to "home grown" methods makes the actors begin to become aware of the role of the ICWA and slowly enter the network. This convergence of interests created the basis for more responses and support from actors in the network.

4.2. Interessement

The movements from problematisation were under threat from ICAEW, also until WWII membership uptake was slow. There was resistance from the institutional fabric and even experienced practitioners that could see no value in standardised practice, examination, or membership of the association. The ICWA had to promote not only cost accounting as a practice, but its own knowledge base and system of education as the best preparation for it (Armstrong 1985; Jones 1992). The ICWA elite had proposed to practitioners that they were capable of obtaining status and rewards and that this could be most effectively done as a member. In terms of ANT, the network maintained debate on what exactly was contained in an occupation concerned with costs and the appropriate nomenclature to describe someone with that role. The ICWA needed to strengthen the mobilisation and utilisation of their network. This required "intermediaries" to flow around the network to further lock actors in and to

make the positions of actors clearer. Standardisation of terminology in the network was a priority and, therefore, the materials of this debate were important intermediaries.

The ICWA had a journal, *The Cost Accountant*. The ICWA also ran conferences nationally and internationally, to disseminate new techniques and encourage networking, beginning with the annual National Costing Conference in 1922. From the first costing conference, there was a lot of debate, but little agreement on what "cost accounting" truly referred to. The aims all had in common the ascertaining of costs of operation for the support of management, but were unclear on «the precise area of work which connects him/her with those outcomes» (Boyns, Edwards 2013: 208). "Scientific costing" was a popular term but fell into disuse by the recession of the late 1920s (Boyns, Edwards 2013). There was a debate between "costing" and "cost accounting", that one is handled by a clerk gathering data but the other prepared management information from the data. This separation was confirmed later in statements of definitions released every few years in a publication called *Terminology* in 1937, 1952, 1966, 1974 and 1982 to reflect the evolving consensus on these important boundaries of the occupation and also aspects of identity. There was a real enthusiasm for this, "to be progressive you must have a classical nomenclature or terminology which will convey to all persons the same thing the same way" (Fells 1919: 548; quoted by Boyns, Edwards 2013: 219). This effective conduct located non-human actors in place.

To further make the goals of the network clearer, conferences featured the research of famous practitioners such as Perry-Keene, of Austin Motors, industrialists such as Lord Leverhulme (Loft 1986) as well as the ICWA commissioned research studies into budgetary control and standard costing (Boyns 1998). Professionalisation was made as an explicit concern; according to Boyns and Edwards (2013: 211), a leading figure in the ICWA stated: «it was the ethical route that was going to rescue the cost accountant from the stigma of sordid money grubbing and was going to make cost accountancy a profession and not a trade». There was a notable increase in texts written about costs in the inter-war years in a range of industries and increasing demand for talks and speeches given by ranking the ICWA members. Reports on visits made to exemplary companies were made in their journal. By recording the knowledge and experience of experienced elite managers associated with costing into texts promoted through seminars and conference, the ICWA showed that the identity they were creating for the occupation was desirable, that it was a desirable group to be a part of for an individual interested in costs, and that there were opportunities to communicate with and learn from the elites and, therefore, obtain better status within their own work context.

4.3. Enrolment

In this stage, more negotiations and changes occur to are made the relations between the actors more stable, the value of cost accounting professionalisation was made more explicit. The UK government, inspired by the achievements of American management methods after WWII, changed the context for cost accounting. A key offensive tactic, which symbolised the aspirations of the ICWA, was the change of identifying terminology from "cost accounting" to "management accounting". The term emerged from the ICWA *Productivity Report on Management Accounting*, following a team trip to the US under the post-WWII Marshall Plan. This report can be considered an important intermediary as it changed the "language" of the whole process of professionalisation and initiated more moves to strengthen the relations among actors. The ICWA made its professional "collective mobility project" explicit by associating cost accounting with the terms "productivity" and "management".

From the 1940s, the Institute actively promoted the idea that British industry and commerce would be benefited by an expansion of the managerial role of cost accounting, and that its qualifications were suitable for careers in senior management. This was reflected in the articles of their journal which sought to heighten the aspirations of their membership and demonstrate that members were able to achieve senior positions in management. Being the only source of standard costs legitimated the claims of the institute to be the only professional body which catered for cost accountants. Further, it disciplined the client. Through developing a standard cost method, the ICWA began to determine the client's ways of thinking about their own concerns. As the importance of management

accounting diffused through the business community, the latest techniques become one of the most important considerations when an actor was enrolled. This culminated in the renaming of their journal *The Cost Accountant* to *Management Accounting* in 1965, the renaming of the Institute to the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants (ICMA) prior to securing its Royal Charter in 1975 and then renaming again, as the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) in 1986.

4.4. Mobilisation

The debate over the emergent brand image also enabled the ICWA elite to demark higher status activities into the definition of management accounting so that these could become a recognisable and reproducible entity in the minds of British senior management. In this, they were shaping the market for their expertise. The cost accountants control over the work of other occupations increased as line management became heavily reliant on budgets for control of operations (Wilson *et alii* 2010). Budgeting could be used to discipline, evaluate and reward the managers of other occupations within the organisation. In this way, management accountants would be able to demonstrate their competence and place in the organisational elite by monitoring the exploitation of labour and resources. These changes were embodied in the content of ICWA examinations. Their new exams included papers on financial management and management principles and practice, particularly "long-range planning" – the precursor term to "business strategy".

By use of the keywords – "chartered" and "management", the CIMA assisted the profession to gain acceptance from internal markets and further distinguish the profession from chartered accounting. Management accountants were acquiring the vocabulary of higher-level management. Despite this, "costing" as a term to describe the occupation persisted into the 1970s, there was, according to Boyns and Edwards (2013) no evidence of a move away from this term. There was no real evidence of significant changes in the content of the occupation running in parallel with the terminology, which leads to the explanation that the changing of nomenclature was a conscious choice by the occupation elites to elevate the occupation in the markets that are served, rather than a response to development within the occupation.

Having senior management accountants at the highest levels in an organisation, at the head of a distinct accounting or finance function, enabled them to monopolise the competence in that organisation but also define the effects that they would have and judge the results of that practice – a key professional attribute (Armstrong 1993). It would also indicate a route to the top for management accountants. By 2018, the cost accounting role had been transformed from that of a practical man with an affinity with manufacturing to boardroom professionals whose senior members occupied such positions as Financial Controller, Finance Director and Chief Financial Officer, according to the CIMA.

The sequence of the tactics of the professional association are shown in figure 1, and the main intermediaries and its primary functions that moved the value translation process forward are shown in Figure 1.

Other intermediaries during the process can be seen in the following Figure 2.

5. COMPARISONS BETWEEN COST ACCOUNTING AND PM'S PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION IN THE UK: LESSONS FOR THE APM

It can be seen in the case that the ICWA builds the network by identifying human actors (such as capitalists, factory owners, managers, the State and also individual practitioners) and proposing a shared common solution, which is improved performance in accounting for cost, for diverse concerns in problematisation. Non-human actors were also enrolled in the network – the ICWA clarify the roles of the actors much through debate from interessement to enrolment. The ICWA was able to create debate on, compile and eventually communicate its superior cost methods and the implementations of new techniques, such as standard cost and budgetary control.
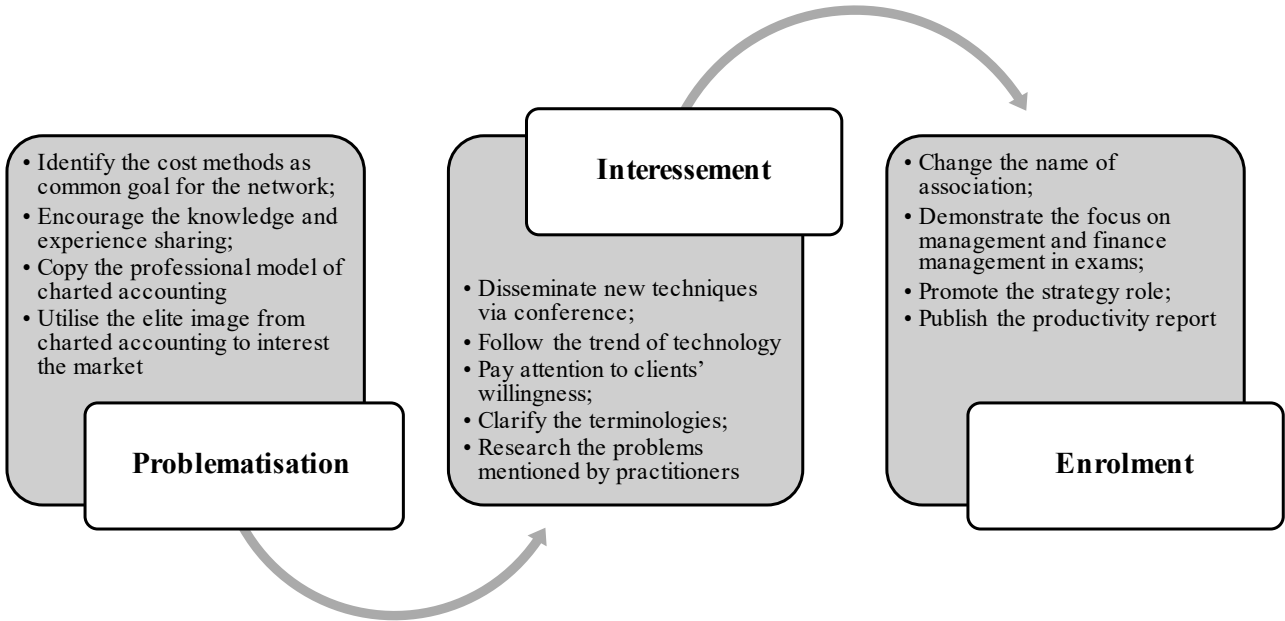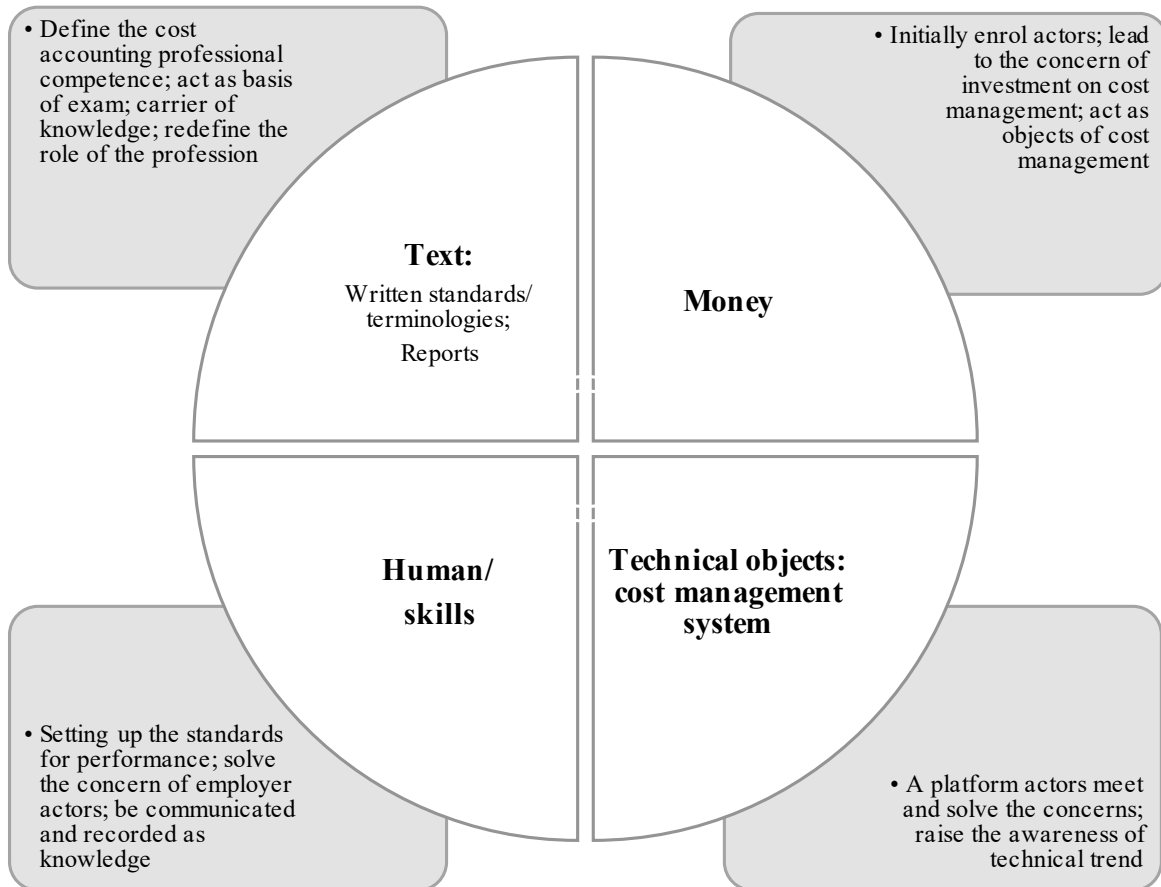
Figure 1.

Figure 2.

It also led the debate on exactly what the "costing" occupation was, determining the terminologies in conferences, journal, their "terminology" publications. These were the intermediaries flowing enabling translation of the concerns of practitioners, managers, owners and the State. The value of professionalisation of cost/management accounting was successfully transferred, as the professional practitioners would be able to access greater rewards from their employers and greater status in the industrial organisation and the class structure. Given this high acceptance of the operations of the CIMA, mobilisation status has been achieved.

The APM has problematised the concerns of individual PMs, employers of PMs, clients of projectised organisations and the State, mostly by evoking concerns over the state and economic impact of project performance in the UK. The APM hold numbers of events and conferences to communicate the PM practice each year and engage in discussion and case-building around the tools and language of PM. The academic discourse of PM was established, beginning with a paper about critical path management, in 1958 (Kwak 2005). The APM has tapped into this as well, drawing Higher Education into its network to perform research and to support the teaching of PM at PG level and private companies to provide its accreditations to practitioners. Certainly, the interessement stage has been achieved.

A strange situation exists with the APM, where it appears to have achieved the nadir of professionalisation in the UK, a Royal Charter, with the number of individuals obtaining certification increasing and membership increasing (Joseph, Marnewick 2017). According to a survey of the APM, the top one reason, which occupied 52 per cent, for renewing the APM membership is "to be a member of a chartered body"[2]. Current text intermediaries now published by the APM, around getting the Royal Charter, are a set of papers named *Road to Chartered Series*[3]. In this set of publications, several factors about the key competences of being a chartered body and the importance of making PM as a chartered profession have been identified, such as professional code of ethics, project professionals in digital future and the public good.

Despite these things, though, there are several ways in which the APM has not completed cycles of interessement and enrolment, or has done so weakly and so brings into doubt their appearance of mobilisation, or the sustainability of the degree of mobilisation achieved, therefore threatening their position as the premier PM professional association in the UK. Especially the fundamental claim the APM has proposed to the network, "creating a world where all project succeed" cannot be achieved. Although PM knowledge can be codified into a BoK, success in PM depends on experience, actors from the market do not have to join the PM professionalisation network to obtain this or even practice as a PM at all. Although the APM is engaging in debate over PM practices, the actual practice of PM is mostly a "solo practice". These are certainly interessement and enrolment activities, but there is no necessity to use the intermediaries, nor is there evidence that they create superior outcomes. There clearly are concerns within the network that are not well addressed by the APM and non-human actors as intermediaries do not function in stable positions yet. These mean the value claimed by the APM for the profession is not fully recognised by the network yet. It is hard for the APM to effectively highlight the value of the professionalisation with current operations and move PM professionalisation forward to the next stage.

For the internal market, the role of certification in the network is not clear, and employer actors are not in a stable position. As this article has already identified, the value of professional PM certification has not been well translated (Starkweather, Stevenson 2011). The internal market for PM skills can easily replicate its value without the association or its certifications. Moreover, there are many examples of people refusing the identity of PM, for example in companies where there are significant overlaps with engineering PM is not a first-choice career, practitioners have the career of PM but choose engineer as their professional identity. Many also find themselves accidental PMs and so are drawn in by accident than by desire, therefore not attuned to seeking professional status through project work. In addition, PM has long been influenced by its different technical backgrounds, the position of PM in the internal market is sometimes a second choice of career or a short-term assignment; hence, the APM cannot fully enrol these actors. Project managers have different career paths, and different employers have different requirements from PMs in terms of project implementation; it is thus difficult to determine truly general-

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2 https://www.apm.org.uk/news/apm-building-a-reputation-to-be-proud-of/.
3 https://www.apm.org.uk/resources/find-a-resource/thought-leadership/road-to-chartered-series/.

ised, common goals for the network. These block the APM from moving PM from interessement to enrolment, as it can be seen in table 1.

Table 1.

Translation process stage of ICWA/CIMA	APM current tactics	Checklist
Problematisation: define a common goal	Associate slogan with project success	√
Interessement: promote the methods and motivate communications	Promote BoK, certifications and memberships	√
Enrolment: separate management accounting with a focus on strategy	Make PM more independent from roles of engineering	Not fully
Enrolment: keep the profession with concerns and follow the newest technology	Link the BoK, certifications and memberships to project success	X
Mobilisation: highly accepted by internal market (employers) and the actors are all well identified	Attempt to embed qualification in procurement process and career path	X

So, how can the APM complete interessement and enrolment? The cost accounting association has provided lessons learned framed by ANT, as shown in figure 3. The ICWA was able to separate the cost management experience from chartered accounting. For the APM, the overlap with engineering can also be used as a tactic to enrol more actors. Being influenced by the engineering background, a shared concern caused by this background is "career change" from engineering to management (Hodgson *et alii* 2011); hence, the APM can work on this point. To do so, the assistance of management career preparation for engineering-background companies and individuals can be added to the tactics. This tactic can reduce the possibilities for actors move to another network and make PM network more separate from engineering's network. More actors from the market can be attracted and the network developed by PM, as now the network covers not only the concerns of PM performance but also career change, which creates the possibilities for PM associations to move to next stages, which is enrolment. While the CIMA later takes management accounting into the financial management of business, with members locked into senior positions, the PM area over-focuses on external market actors while seeming less concern internal actors like the CIMA did, there are few similar examples of elite PMs achieving such positions. Therefore, an important actor has been neglected in the PM network.

According to Preston (1992), the texts in the translations should be able to create such discourse to influence and convince the actors to explain themselves in the approach texts has delivered. For example, cost accountants, after the productivity report, changed their title to management accountants, then the roles of practitioner began to more associated with management and strategy. Compared to the productivity report of cost to management accounting, whether the texts produced by the APM made actors within the network redefine and apply different interpretation for their position is also not clear and requires research and critical examination.

To achieve the next stage, enrolment, the APM needs to pay more attention to non-human actors, as human actors are currently the main focus. Project failure often causes a large amount of loss of money. For example, the failure of NHS record systems cost the taxpayer nearly 10 billion pounds. This means that money can be a strong intermediary in PM when defining what the concerns within the network are. PM associations can further promote the "language" of money-relevant concerns. Like the management accounting report writing team, who played an important role in re-naming the profession, re-defining the level of cost accounting's work content and hence able to change the relationships to where practitioners can enjoy a higher status. PM may also further rethink the claims (Morris 2014) by a better choice of terms used, making the network more stable.
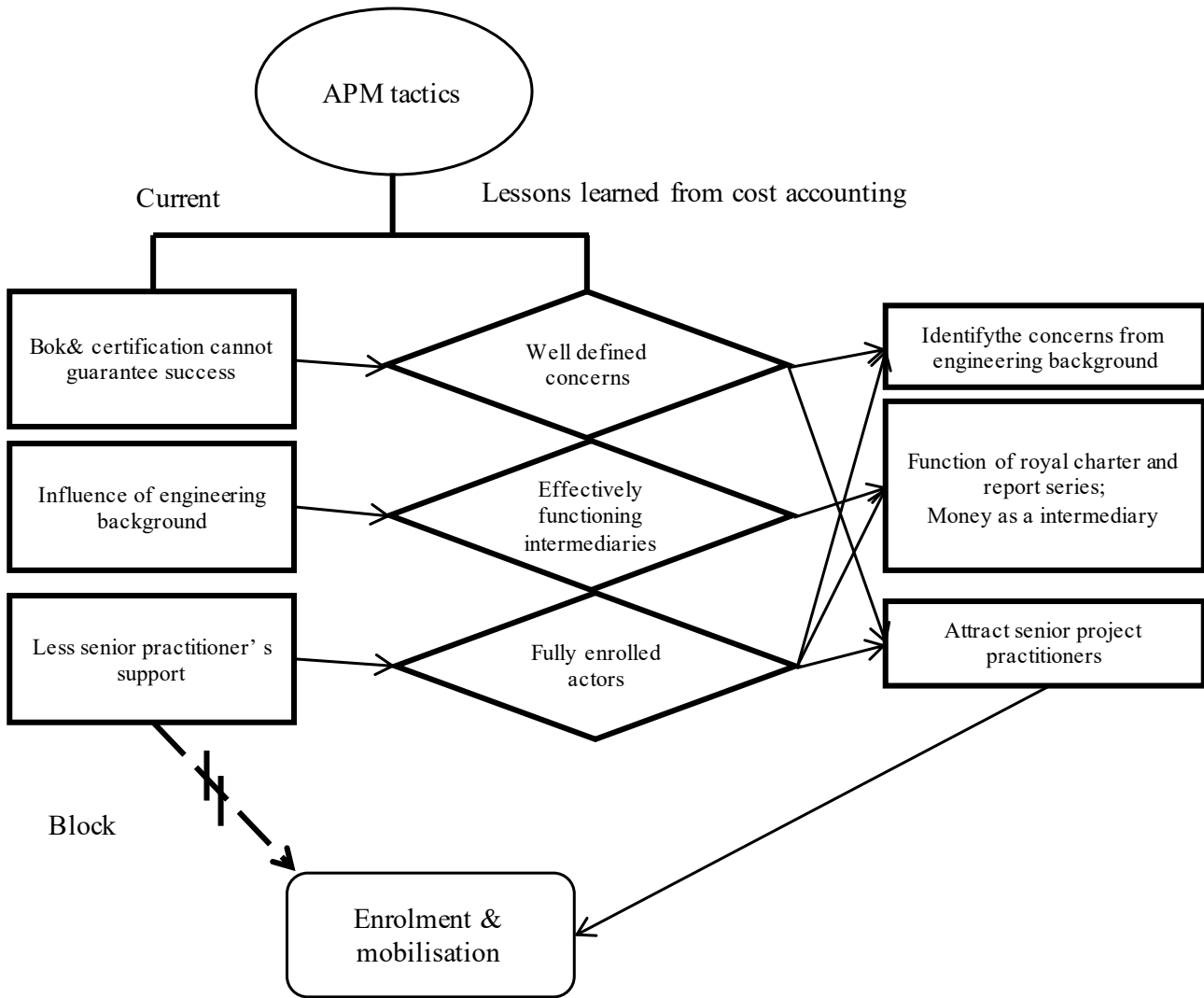
Figure 3.

6. CONCLUSIONS

PM as a corporate profession has hybrid concerns during professionalisation in both traditional professionalisation logic and market logic. Although in the traditional views that obtaining a Royal Charter is a locus of the APM operation and PM professionalisation, playing this older professionalisation logic's success is at risk of blocking the APM from presenting the value of professionalisation to the markets. Emerging concepts of corporate profession demonstrate the importance of the combination of being professionals and adapting to the workplace and concerns of the employer. To become more powerful in the labour market, employers as the main actor in the internal market, are a special concern for PM associations, for example, PM associations are now attempting to embed their professional certification level into the selection process of employers (Muzio *et alii* 2011). PM professional associations are attempting to base their certifications on demonstrable competencies rather than examined knowledge (Hodgson 2008), but such certification is rarely the top consideration when employers select project practitioners. There are still efforts to be made for the APM to move PM professionalisation forward.

ANT was adapted to frame the key events and value translation process during the professionalisation of cost accounting. The outcome of this analysis was a means to conceptualise professionalisation actions in sequence, helping the APM to determine the direction and tactics to engage their stakeholders and deliver the objective of becoming a market-recognised profession. It has highlighted the need to identify a better solution for both the external and internal market as performance in PM professionalisation is hard to guarantee. Meanwhile, some non-human actors and intermediaries (i.e. exams, reports) need to be updated with new tactics to enable better identification of roles these actors need to take in the network.

Other similar professional associations of corporate professions may be able to find guidance from the process shown here and hence be able to further advance their position in their markets. The focus on the construction of market reputation and relations to actor networks leads to further interesting research questions such as what is the common solution can be provided to the network by the APM when performance cannot be guaranteed by its body of knowledge and certifications? Specifically, what difference does the Royal Charter as a new intermediary make? What of project practitioners or employers that decline the translation process, who perhaps perceive no value in the offerings of the associations – are there distinctive differences between these and association members?

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Monographic Section

Torn Between Neoliberal and Postmodern Trends, Corporatist Defence and Creative Age Prospects: The Ongoing Reshaping of the Classical Music Profession in Italy

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Abstract. In modern industrial societies, strongly associating work to tangible productivity and professions to formal regulation and protection of membership, the music occupation has represented a conundrum for theoretical analysis. In post-industrial societies, however, musicians are being recognised a pivotal role in capitalist economies, as part of a creative class sharing working conditions already defining artistic labour markets, but within a significantly changed regulative framework. Drawing on the literature and her field research, the author adopts a neo-institutional perspective to consider the reshaping of the classical music profession in Italy, exploring how collective and individual actors are responding to neo-liberal trends extending market logic to a music world crossed by processes of cultural declassification. Conclusions reflect over the ambiguities created by creative age prospects, in applying principles of economic hierarchisation within the field of musical production, and over the transient nature of professionalisation processes.

Keywords. Artistic occupations; classical music profession; creative economies; neo-institutionalism; neo-liberalism; cultural declassification.

INTRODUCTION: THE NEW INTEREST ON MUSICIANS AS CREATIVE WORKERS

Within the ideological framework of industrial capitalist societies, setting an oppositional relation between leisure and work and praising productive labour, occupations in music, arts and culture have represented a challenge for theoretical analysis, because of their atypical features and liminoid positioning (Freidson 1989; Turner 1974). Even when scholars have looked at musical and artistic activities as "normal" work resulting from collectively organised action, rather than as the creation of individual genius and exclusive talent, they have emphasised the specific language and conven-

tions organising its production and consumption (Becker 1974; 1953; 1982), often inverting the market logic of the wider economic field (Bourdieu 1983). Similarly, within the debate over professionalism, given the relevance recognised to formal regulation and protection of membership in the creation of market closures and boundaries within different groups (Saks 2016; Abbott 1988; Maestripieri 2016), the music occupation was decried for its defective control over the making of musicians, whose specialised knowledge and skills are often learned outside the paths of standardised curricula of certified training (Frederickson, Rooney 1990), hampering to set a clear line between amateurs, semi-professional and professional workers (Perrenoud 2007).

In post-industrial societies, however, the debate on the strategic development of creative economies assigns a central role to the work of artists and musicians, inserted within the new "creative class"[1]. The debate presents human creativity as the ultimate economic resource of contemporary capitalist societies, whose consumption rather than leading to its exhaustion – as for land, labour and capital – feeds virtuous circles of reproduction (Howkins 2001; Florida 2002). Creative workers, however, seem to face a conflicting status: on the one side presented as self-directed primary drivers of development, on the other kept in precarious and socially vulnerable working conditions (Murgia *et alii* 2016; Bellini A. *et alii* 2018). This paradox has also been debated with reference to musicians, whose labour markets display since a much longer time the occupational features describing today's creative workers: non-routine activities, high levels of unemployment, diffused precarious and undeclared work, strong seasonality, wide income differentials (Menger 1999; Turrini, Chicchi 2013). It is no coincidence that the expression "gig economy", clearly borrowed from the field of music, is increasingly popular in the debate over creative industries to describe the spread of precarious labour conditions (Cloonan, Williamson 2017; Haynes, Marshall 2018). Despite musicians' familiarity both with precarious, fragmented and vulnerable labour conditions as well as with the entrepreneurial skills and portfolio careers (Weber 2004), as required by creative economies, studies have outlined the novelty of the gains and strains deriving from the application of economic production logic to the field of artistic production (Banks, Hesmondhalgh 2009). Research, however, has mostly dealt with changes concerning "musicians of the bars and clubs", i.e. popular, independent or jazz musicians (Coulson 2012; Umney 2016; Haynes, Marshall 2018; Tarassi 2018), leaving largely unexplored the case of "the gentlemen of the musical elite" (Cloonan, Williamson 2017), namely classical musicians, who historically attained a widespread recognition as a professional group.

The article offers a contribution for a widening of the debate, considering the ongoing reshaping of the classical music profession in Italy. The issue is considered adopting a neo-institutional perspective (Powell, DiMaggio 1991), soliciting to look at the changing relationship between professions, organisations and society through time and space, while investigating the role played by professionalisation in broader projects of institutionalisation (Saks 2016). This approach also informed the research on which the article is based: a broad study on modern Italian Conservatories of Music, considered as legitimised organisational forms for the training of professional musicians (Casula 2018). While the research followed a mixed method approach gathering qualitative and quantitative techniques within a common research strategy (Bryman 2012), the article only refers to qualitative evidence, reporting a few excerpts from the semi-structured interviews and focus groups realised with nearly 100 Conservatory students, teachers and other Italian professional musicians from the spring of 2013 to the winter of 2017. Interviews, started through personal contacts, proceeded following snowball sampling, asking first interviewees to suggest further contacts, matching the profiles defined in order to account for the existing variety of groups within the organisational unit considered. Questions aimed at reconstructing musician's professional path, mainly focusing on the mechanisms defining the phase of recruitment, the training period, entrance and permanence in the labour market. Interviews, of the average duration of one hour and a half, were tape-recorded, transcribed, and analysed following an inductive and comparative approach, based on the coding and assessment of the main sub-categories and the thematic areas emerged (Brinkmann, Kvale 2015).

The article follows five main argumentative steps. First, it sketches a reconstruction of the historical process leading to the professionalisation of the classical music occupation in Western capitalist societies. Second, it out-

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[1] The category of "creative class" may include workers associated to both new and traditional occupations in the fields of arts, cultural goods and services, toys and games, research and development (Howkins 2001).

lines the shift from a consideration of classical music as an unproductive but socially valuable activity, justifying State funding in the field, to the deregulation suggested by neo-liberal trends, heading musicians to creative productivity. Third, it clarifies in what ways processes of cultural declassification are undermining the hierarchies founding the exclusive prestige of the classical canon within the field of musical and cultural production. Fourth, it explores how collective and individual actors within the field of Italian classical music are responding to those changes, adopting new strategies to define their professional careers, within the ongoing reshaping of the profession. Conclusions reflect over the ambiguous prospects opened up by the debate on creative economies for a new pivotal role of musical work under the rules of economic production, and over the transient nature of professionalisation processes.

THE PROFESSIONALISATION OF THE CLASSICAL MUSIC OCCUPATION

The historical process reconfiguring the musician from a provider of leisure services for a master to an autonomous worker performing a socially recognised activity has been gradual, diversified and uneven (Goldin 2018; Bellini P.P. 2005; Coulangeon 2004; Rink 2002). In modern Western societies, this was first achieved within a process of cultural legitimation of "classical music", a specific canon defined since the second half of the Nineteenth century, based on the organisation in repertoires of great musical works from the past, becoming sources of authority on musical taste (Weber 1992; 1994). From a socio-economic point of view, the musical canon allowed to establish a highly valued and neatly defined product – i.e. classical music – in the field of organised music production, increasingly integrated within a market economy. A series of processes concurred to build the cultural legitimisation of the canon: the diffusion by the aesthetics of Romanticism of an ideal of "absolute music"; the ritualization of performance emphasising the distance between the public and the artists; the sanctification of the great masters of the past (Frederickson, Rooney 1990; DeNora 1995). As well-argued by Weber (1994: 189), those «ceremonial aspects of classical taste provided a grand new means for public spectacle» meeting «the need of the new industrial society to manifest its economic and cultural potency through its grand rites of secular religiosity». However, because also cultural capital, as other forms of capitals, requires valorisation, the musical canon needed a significant institutional effort in order to define and maintain its value (Di Maggio 2009; Bourdieu 1979). Therefore, most Western States, supported by a bourgeoisie eager to assert the new symbols and values of modern industrial societies, enhanced the establishment and development of legitimised organisations for the reproduction and diffusion of a hierarchical system of artistic classification, based on the distinction between high and popular music, setting the classical canon at its summit (DiMaggio 1987; Weber 1992). From the second half of the Nineteenth century, concert-halls and opera-houses – the latter, until then, a typical form of entertainment for the upper classes – were reconfigured as civic "temples of the arts" with exclusive cultural aims (Santoro 2010; Della Seta 1991). Conservatories of music, meanwhile, were turned from vocational music schools based on craftsmanship tradition to élite organisations for the specialisation of talents devoted to the highest form of art[2]: their training became defined as a selective and lengthy process, increasingly certified by culturally legitimised organisations[3], leading classical

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[2] The strategy of converting vocational works in respectable careers to meet bourgeois aspirations, by lining them to a high culture defined in opposition to qualified craftsmanship – already traceable in the process of professionalisation of liberal professions (Freidson 1986) – was particularly evident in the founding of the Paris *Conservatoire*, which became a model for modern Western Conservatories of Music. This passage was only partially realised in Italy, where Conservatories, while granting an average level of professional training, remained strongly linked to the craftsmanship tradition (Maione 2005; Casula 2018).

[3] The variation in time and space of the positioning of professional music training in national systems of education (public vs. private funding) or labour markets (compulsory vs. optional certification) has led authors to question the status of the classical music occupation as a profession, on the grounds that «[t]he failure to monopolize and to control the production of musicians remains a central reason for the music occupation's ambiguous status today» (Frederickson, Rooney 1990: 198). However, as for other artistic fields, and especially for the so-called "fine arts", where canons are more deep-seated, «there are implicit and informal requirements, which in practice makes formal education almost compulsory» (Svensson 2015). In Italy, for instance, Conservatories are State funded, and

musicians to master a highly specialised and esoteric body of practical and theoretical knowledge and allowing to a strong control over professional jurisdiction (Kingsbury 1988; Hennion *et alii* 1983). On the same vein, general education in classical music, offered privately or within school curricula, established the canon and its rituals as a universal model of musical taste (DiMaggio 1987).

THE "COST DISEASE" AND ITS TREATMENTS: FROM WELFARISM TO NEO-LIBERALISM

From the Twentieth century, with the expansion of modern industrial societies, the work of classical musicians results unsuitable to the logic of productivity, given its inability to introduce labour-saving innovations feeding the accumulation process through the production of surplus-value (Savran, Tonak 1999). The same number of musicians needed to play a Beethoven's string quartet in the Nineteenth century was also needed a century later, when the real wages of the musicians playing it – following those of productive workers – had meanwhile greatly raised. As such, classical music production was diagnosed – together with the wider performing arts sector – a "cost disease" (Baumol, Bowen 1966), whose treatment was found in public assistance, motivated by the recognition of its social value, and legitimised by the support of Keynesian economics and labour movements[4].

In Italy, since the end of the 1940s, a social security fund was established for Entertainment and Sports Workers (ENPALS)[5], though measuring artistic working time with the categories of office jobs. At the end of the 1960s, a specific law was defined[6] to finance a selection of public theatres for opera and symphonic concerts. The welfarist treatment to the "cost disease", however, entailed a series of adverse side effects: a taken for granted reliance on public funding; a bureaucratization of the organisations and their workers; an expansion of the costs for artistic productions artistic often wanting in terms of creativity and unable to create synergy with other cultural organisations (Serano 2008; Severino 2010). In the mid-1980s, a new law (No. 163/1985) sets the Unique Fund for the Performing Arts (FUS), financing different performing arts areas (lyric and symphonic Foundations, music, theatre, dance, circus) and the movie sector, but concentrating the bulk of its resources in classical music production (Montecchi 2004). With the delegitimisation of Keynesian ideology, the neo-liberal creed increasingly gains ground, recommending an alternative treatment of de-regulation, gradually administered through the decentralised management of publicly funded organisations for musical production and the flexibilisation of their labour force[7].

The same trend is traceable in another crucial area of public support to the classical music profession, namely the subvention of organisations for the training of professional musicians. The establishment of State recognised Conservatories of music, as said, represented for classical musicians a crucial step in the in the path towards professionalisation, but also the opening of a prestigious and coherent "pool profession"[8], in view of the uncertain waters

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their certification is a formal prerequisite for classical musicians to access sought-after positions (as in the case of prestigious orchestras or, more recently, music teaching in public schools).

[4] In Italy, the most influent trade union organisation for musicians were the Sindacato Nazionale Musicisti (SNM), founded in 1946, the Sindacato Musicisti Italiani (SMI), founded in 1954, and the Unione Nazionale Arte Musica e Spettacolo (UNAMS), founded 1979, today the most representative in the sector.

[5] The ENPALS, established in 1947, was suppressed in 2011, when its functions were transferred to the INPS. The fund entitles artists, after 20 years of contributions, to a State pension; contributory years, however, are made of 120 working days identified with the days of artists' performances in Italy, without considering the working time needed to prepare their performance, nor the fact that it might be staged abroad.

[6] The first article of the Corona Law (No. 800/1967) stated: «The State considers opera and concert activities of relevant general interest, in that they encourage the musical, cultural and social education of the national community. For the protection and development of these activities, the State intervenes with suitable provisions».

[7] During the 1990s, three out of the four radio orchestras owned by the National Radio and Television Company (RAI) were closed, while Lyric-Symphonic Foundations were turned from public to semi-private bodies, increasingly using short fixed-term contracts to hire untenured orchestra members (Cerulli Irelli 2012).

[8] According to Freidson (1986), the teaching required from academics trained to do research in their respective fields responds to the need to support economically – through the provision of their services to students – their largely unproductive vocational activity.

of artistic labour markets. This was indeed the case for classical musicians in Italy throughout the Twentieth century, when Conservatories were gradually established all over the territory, in order to meet an increasing demand for a (mainly non-professional) music education, largely lacking in school curricula: the growth of the student population, particularly sound between the 1960s and the 1980s, supported the creation of a significant number of tenured positions for classical music courses[9]. At the end of the century, however, a law is approved (No. 508/1999) inserting Conservatories and other State recognised Arts Academies within the higher level of the education system, contemporarily undergoing an extensive reorganisation guided by neo-liberal models of public management (Lynch 2006; Viesti 2016). While the original law draft foresaw the advancement to the tertiary level of education only for a selection of the nearly eighty Italian Conservatories, the powerful action of the trade union of artists and musicians (UNAMS) attained the inclusion of all Conservatories, in the aim to upgrade the legal, economic and social status of their teachers to that of University professors. The paradoxical result of this change, as we shall see, was however a deprofessionalisation of classical musicians, changing the profile of Conservatory teachers and their students (Demailly, Broise, 2009; Casula 2015).

CULTURAL DECLASSIFICATION WITHIN THE MUSICAL FIELD

Challenges to the classical music profession do not only come from neo-liberal pressures for de-regulation and flexibilisation of the sector, but also from the weakening of its cultural authority. The technological innovations brought to the broadcasting industry after World War II lead to the rapid diffusion of various musical genres, besides classical music (from jazz to country, from rock to popular music) increasingly shaping the life of younger generations. At first condemned by critics of capitalism as a product of commercial marketing destined to passive and uneducated audiences, unable to grasp the technical and intellectual complexities of "authentic culture" (Horkheimer, Adorno 1944), those processes are increasingly interpreted in light of post-modern approaches, outlining the coercive power inherent to modern "grand narratives" (Lyotard 1979). As in other fields, also in the musical one, the universality of the legitimised canon is questioned and unravelled as a social construction derived from an ethnocentric civilisation, structured in relations of dominion based on race, social class and gender (Citron 1991; Bradley 2015; Bull 2018). As a result, a valorisation of the multiplicities found in the "little narratives" is sought (Leicht 2016), endorsing approaches considering music-making as part of the human condition, transcending social divisions (Blacking 1973) or looking at music consumption as a practice of negotiation and transformation of social identities (Hall, Jefferson 1976; Santoro 2006). In broadening the field defining arts and culture, the diffusion of less hierarchical and more differentiated systems of cultural classification triggers spirals of cultural inflation in the performing arts sector (DiMaggio 2009) and puts policymakers in front of the dilemma of having to divide an increasingly reduced pie of public resources with a growing number of potential beneficiaries.

In the case of Italy, the dilemma of cultural inflation is largely avoided, by reiterating in the allocation of the FUS the old model favouring the classical music sector, more on the grounds of institutional path dependency – supported both by larger cultural organisations and the bureaucracy – (Giarda 2007), than for the social rootedness of an "art music" tradition (Nettl 1995). Path dependency also prevails in the case of Conservatories of music, remaining structured for the whole Twentieth century within the traditional classical canon. After the 1999 reform, inserting Conservatories within the level of higher education, curricula are entirely redefined, widening the repertoire and career patterns of the classical canon, including and legitimising courses associated to different musical genres (such as jazz, pop music, new technologies), matching the practical study of music with a variety of exams on analytical and theoretical subjects. Despite the wide-ranging breadth of the reform on paper, its implementation followed public management prescriptions aiming to offload the costs of public education from the State to organisations and their actors, from students to teachers (Lynch 2006).

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[9] See Salvetti (2000). In the school year 1966-67, in Italy, there were 35 Conservatories of music, counting 6.026 students and 1.279 teachers; twenty years later, the number of Conservatories had doubled, students were 33.884 and teachers 5.352 (Casula 2018).

THE PROFESSIONAL MUSICIAN: CREATIVE ENTREPRENEUR, MULTI-SKILLED ARTIST OR
PRECARIOUS WORKER?

The professionalisation of the classical music occupation historically set as aspirational career model that of
the virtuoso solo player, responding to the Romantic ideal of the solipsistic artist (Kingsbury 1988; Wagner 2015).
This model was reproduced within Conservatories, where the most demanded classes were those of instruments
with a soloist repertoire (such as the piano or the violin) and training was mainly focused on individual perfor-
mance, even in the classes of typical ensemble instruments. In Italy this model remained dominant throughout the
Twentieth century. For students aspiring to a soloist career, the achievement of the Conservatory diploma was fol-
lowed by further specialisation, typically foreseeing advanced training with internationally well-known musicians,
while preparing for competitions allowing to find a position in the most prestigious segments of the classical music
market. Another privileged end market for students of instrumental courses was offered by symphonic orchestras,
where most proficient students were given – often through the mediation of their teacher – temporary posts, in the
prospects of a viable stabilisation. Public and private teaching, as mentioned, represented a precious "pool profes-
sion", offering young classical musicians a fundamental economic and reputational resource to sustain the launch-
ing and the maintenance of their artistic careers. The relatively young age at which Italian classical musicians were
concluding their studies at the Conservatory – paralleling secondary school cycles – allowed them to dispose of an
interim period to further adjust their aspirations to the reality of the labour market, sometimes devising new tra-
jectories, often better matching their personal abilities and life skills (Menger 1999; Miller 1984).

> When you undertake the study of something, you do it because you like it, or you are passionate or interested. However, during the
> journey – which for music is very long – deviations are also created. I say this because I did the Conservatory and continued with the
> [Pianistic] Academia, thinking and deceiving myself to be able to make a solo career, which I did or do, but obviously is not the first
> source of income... In the path, I realised that there was a variety of job opportunities, which I had not even considered before, that
> I would have liked and would have better adapted to my peculiarities. For example, I discovered the fact of reading quickly [music
> at first sight] only afterwards [...], the fact of playing chamber music – done at the Conservatory, but not very much – I developed it
> with very good musicians, and I realised that doing a concert in a duo takes the most out of myself, rather than doing recitals alone.
> [Pianist, orchestra member, female, 35]

These career patterns radically change from the 1980s, when the exponential growth of Italian Conservatories
in the previous decades creates in the labour market of classical music an inflationary spiral of oversupply (Menger
1999), given by a growing offer of classical musicians in front of a contraction in demand, both in orchestras and in
teaching. As a result, classical musicians' careers become increasingly liable to long-lasting precariousness, dividing
and multiplying work time in search of economic subsistence, forms of self-exploitation and psychological distress
from the need to keep together a fragmented professional identity. Those professional and existential conditions,
already experienced by musicians working in less prestigious fields of musical production, anticipated those cur-
rently faced by "creative workers" (Murgia *et alii* 2012; Turrini, Chicchi 2013): «We were pioneers!», laughs with
sarcasm the clarinettist of the following excerpt.

> I was *precario* [i.e. on a fixed-term contract] from the mid-1980s till 2011, when I became a tenured teacher, both at the Conservatory
> and at the school, which I then left. [...] I remember the fatigue, the engagement: because I was doing three or four [different] things
> where music was the leitmotif – I have also worked in social centres with children with disabilities, for instance –, but each one was
> different from the other... I realised that I wasn't doing well any of them, because there was a great waste of energies, since I had to
> travel to reach the school, I played [elsewhere] in the symphonic orchestra [...] Then, I realised that my blood pressure was high, I was
> a bit stressed out: but I couldn't give up anything, because all five things kept the economic balance! [Clarinet player, Conservatory
> teacher, male, 50]

The crisis of the sector at the national level is set into a broader scenario of growing global competition,
enhanced by the expansion of the information and communication infrastructure, dramatically raising the tech-
nical standard of classical music performance. For those students aiming at developing a successful soloist career,

early professional music training becomes a crucial asset. In Italy, however, the insertion of Conservatories of music within the tertiary level of education delays students' entry into the labour market. To avoid this competitive disadvantage, families of promising young soloists often turn to private individual teaching, unable to create a sense of belonging to a broader professional community. Increasingly, students of the classical courses are asked to develop, similarly to their colleagues from the new courses, a multi-skilled profile, ready to be flexible to the fluctuating requests of unstable and uncertain creative markets (see the first of the following excerpts). Multi-skilled profiles are also required to be entrepreneurially promoted through a competent strategic use of communicative tools, creating a brand allowing musicians to connect with differentiated audiences, increasingly searching for immediate emotional experiences from cultural consumption (see the second excerpt). Those strategies, meeting the profile of workers required by creative economies (Burnard 2015), need to be carefully managed by classical musicians, in order to avoid deskilling processes, questioning the legitimacy of their status as professional artists (Turrini, Chicchi 2013; Becker 1992).

> Today, I was talking with [Marco], a twenty years, old student passionate about music technology. [...] I told him: «[...] See, as [Luca], who has the classical music [career] as his goal, but at the same time plays with me in a popular music group. You have to widen your horizons, because if you also know pop music or jazz, in the classical context, when you happen to play Gershwin or other modern authors you know how to behave, and you don't do the [typical] classical musician, who pretends to speak the jazz language but is not able to...». [Trombonist and composer, Conservatory teacher, male, 40]

> If you ask my opinion, the public wants to imagine before hearing. [...] Visual communication in an artist serves to strike the imagination of the listener and brings the listener to the concert or to buy the CD. [...] We, [classical] musicians of my generation, we had to learn how to do this, because I was totally unprepared for this kind of communication... My students getting ready for competitions are very well prepared: they have photos where they seem Hollywood divas or *fin de siècle* writers. [...] We live in a society in which 70-80 per cent of the people attending a concert, on average, don't understand what you're doing. So, in cases such as that of Y [*he names a young, well-known classical musician*], the imagination of the pictures totally stands above the artistic part, I mean: graphics and style are so beautiful, that once they play the concert almost doesn't matter... [Pianist and conductor, Conservatory teacher, male, 55]

The precarisation and individualisation of careers in classical music concern not only students, but also their teachers. The 1999 reform of Italian Conservatories was realised following two opposite logics: on the one hand, unions' claims to safeguard benefits and status for pre-reform teachers; on the other hand, neo-liberal recommendations on budget restraints and flexibility, allowing to set up new courses only with temporary contracts paid with local funds. In this way, the only chance for new teachers – usually of non-classical courses – to aspire to a tenure-track becomes the replacement of a tenured colleague from a classic department, whose course is suppressed. These trends enhance competitive self-interested action resulting in conflictual intra-professional relations (Abbott 1988), among young and old classical musicians, or classical and non-classical musicians (as in the first of the following quotes). The pervasiveness of the neo-liberal approach of the reform is also traceable in the increasing number of technocratic tasks required – after the digitalisation of education management systems – to the teachers, experiencing a decrease of autonomy in their work (as in the second quote); or in the adoption of a logic of marketing, where education is conceived as a commodity whose costs are offloaded onto the students, mainly considered as customers (as in the third quote).

> To me, it would have been better to make another music school [for jazz], in order to avoid this conflict [between classical and jazz professors]. Because it's always a matter of [financial] resources, then quarrels [among colleagues] rise, [...] because the jazz department has many professors paid on fixed-term contracts, as external teachers, with the resources of our Conservatory. Therefore, we need to convert the posts of retired tenured professors from the classical department, in order to have tenured jazz professors directly paid by the State. [Today] you can still make it, because there are too many classes of classic instruments [with few students], [...] but from here to make a war to decide which classes are more needed... [Conservatory teacher, classical department, male, 60]

> Since the Reform [of Conservatories] my printer has no rest... But: was I a musician? What have I become? It's a continuous: «Fill in the form, the model, the declaration, the evaluation and the report»! (...) With these e-mails, certainly great, but, frankly, I can't take that anymore, because I'm afraid to look to what has arrived (...) always problems in sight, it's not simple... and that's also work;

it steals your time. For me, that I'm a pianist, let's be realistic: if I have to practice a piece, I'm not able to reply every half an hour… [Conservatory teacher, pianist, female, 50]

All these problems are a reproduction of what is already happening at the University, where if the Greek epigraphy course has few students, it closes, while communication sciences faculties etc., those that are trendy, they thrive. […] Like the audience for television, now we have a share: «How many students do you have? Then, your course is activated!». It's madness, because if one teaches a discipline that is elitist, but finds its own necessity within an artistic field… [Conservatory teacher, pianist, male, 50]

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In modern Western societies classical musicians – differently from most other types of musicians, sometimes striving even to simply get their activities recognised as work – have achieved recognition as an exclusive occupational group, carrying out a socially recognised activity and exerting a jurisdiction over a specialised body of legitimised knowledge. Supported by welfare systems during the golden age of post-war capitalist expansion, in the light of the alleged unproductive nature and the recognised social value of their work, classical musicians are today being included within the class of creative workers, considered as primary drivers of economic development. The article focuses on two main dimensions of change in the sphere of classical music work: neo-liberal trends prescribing deregulation and marketisation in the performing arts and higher music education sectors, and processes of cultural declassification, undermining the hierarchies founding the exclusive prestige of the classical canon.

Evidence brought by the article shows that, in the Italian case, the response to these changes has mainly followed a conservative approach, supported by bureaucratic powers and by artists' unions, respectively trying to preserve the existing cultural order and to defend the entitlements previously acquired by older professionals, in front of a broader picture of retrenchment of public intervention and increased cultural declassification. The analysis of the interviews with professionals offers a sample of the complex picture deriving from the intersection of these processes, each one growing in a different direction: the adoption of an insider-outsider logic in the protection of working conditions, for instance, while hampering the assumption of the meritocratic logic expected by market regulation, fosters individualistic and conflictual intra-professional relations, eroding the sense of belonging to a shared working community.

Classical musicians seem to be left with their own individual resources to reposition themselves within a professional field ongoing a significant reshaping prospected by creative economies, devaluing their highly specialised knowledge and skills, while asking for a flexible multitasking profile, and challenging a professional identity typically shaped by vocational and non-commodified values with strong pressures for the adoption of a competitive self-entrepreneurial attitude, leading to the commercialisation of every transaction. Younger professionals appear to be better equipped than their older counterparts to respond to creative markets' requirements, constructing cross-cultural portfolios managed through a proficient use of communication and technological skills. The adequacy of this equipment and the conditions of feasibility and sustainability of its application, however, may significantly vary according to the distribution of personal and social resources and the (structural and infrastructural) endowments of their territorial context. In a scenario of dominant neo-liberal ideology, this unfair distribution of assets is left open to the development of free market forces, creating further social divides in the distribution of career opportunities (Scharff 2018; Bull 2018; Haynes, Marshall 2018).

In conclusion, a first general consideration emerging from the article is that, also for classical musicians, the renewed interest brought to the musical occupation by its insertion within the debate on creative industries does not translate into a greater interest on its specificities and enhancement of its role as producer of culture, but rather on the attempt to superimpose on it heteronomous principles of hierarchisation, derived from the field of market economy. As already noticed in the case of non-classical musicians, market pressures from training or funding organisations asking musicians to be multifaceted entrepreneurs, developing their brand and converting capital, imposes upon them alien categorisations, considering their work to be worth only when having an economic

impact and their entrepreneurial skill as chiefly moved by competitive self-interest (Coulson 2012; Haynes, Marshall 2018). This tension is even more felt in the case of classical music which, like other so-called "fine arts", is strongly symbolically associated to a "reversed economy", pursuing the "interest in disinterestedness" as a value (Bourdieu 1983).

A second general consideration is that the neo-institutional approach adopted allows following the parabolic path of the process of professionalisation of the classical music occupation in Western societies, tracing through time and space the different and complex phases of its contingent and transient dynamic. From this view, professions seem better understood as social constructs not having to adapt to a universal and static model (Wilensky 1964), but varying according to original institutional paths, which may include their emergence, growing and establishment as well as their reconfiguration, decline or demise (Abbott 1988; Santoro 1999; Butler *et alii* 2012; Cucca, Maestripieri 2014; Bellini A. 2017).

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Monographic Section

Italian Teachers: A Profession in Transition?

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Abstract. The teaching profession, like many others, is involved in a deep process of change. The sources of pressure are manifold: top-down, as a consequence of neo-liberalist policies and of the implementation of the logic of New Public Management and, later, of New Public Governance; bottom-up, as a result of the socio-demographic and cultural changes affecting the relationship with end-users. All of these elements are challenging teachers' professionalism. The article questions whether teaching in Italy is currently a profession in transition and, if so, which new features are emerging. To do so, we present a locally-based case study that draws on both Hargreaves's and Noordegraaf's theoretical frameworks.

Keywords. Teachers' professionalism; post-modern professionalism; organising professionalism; Italian teachers.

1. PREMISE

Teaching has long been considered a "semi-profession" (Etzioni 1969), or a profession *sui generis* (Colombo 2005), due to the absence of some key features of professionalism: a training path shorter than that of other professions (at least initially and for certain grade levels of teaching); a less specialized body of knowledge; reduced autonomy, as the role is enacted within hierarchically structured, formal organisations; minor status; and less powerful professional associations and unions. However, when abandoning the functionalist approach and embracing other analytical perspectives that look at professionalism as a process and at professions as conflicting segments that continuously renegotiate their identity (Strauss 1978), the dimensions of analysis change as well as the professional status attributable to occupational groups. On this basis, teaching can be considered a profession (Argentin 2013). Furthermore, the case of teachers is particularly interesting, since, from the beginning, teachers have worked within welfare institutions, and have thus been required to reconcile professional autonomy and collegial coordination, which are typical elements of professional-

ism, with bureaucratic regulation[1]. Therefore, they have faced one of the central issues in the recent debate regarding professions: the emergence of an organisational professionalism, in contrast to the traditional occupational professionalism (Evetts 2011), and of hybrid forms. Moreover, similar to many other professions such as health professions, teaching is currently involved in a deep process of change (Hargreaves 1994; Whitty 2000; Gewirtz et al. 2009). The sources of pressure are manifold: top-down, due to the implementation, even in education, of New Public Management (NPM) (Pollitt 1990) and, later, of New Public Governance (NPG) (Osborne 2006), and bottom-up, as a result of socio-demographic and cultural changes affecting the relationship with end-users (students and their families).

In regard to the former, the endless reforms of the Italian educational sector in the last two decades have affected both the macro level, that is, the governance of the system (Grimaldi, Serpieri 2014), the micro level, i.e. working practice, and the meso level, reshaping teachers' subjectivities and professional identity (Pitzalis 2016). In Italy, a "(soft) decentralisation process" (Benadusi, Serpieri 2000) began in the late Nineties: the turning point was marked by the passing of Law 59/1997, also known as the School Autonomy Reform, which introduced school autonomy and fostered localism. The law resulted in the devolution to schools of some responsibilities, such as management of their own budgets, defining the annual educational plan, and many organisational aspects. However, the greater autonomy of schools has been counterbalanced by the limited autonomy of teachers. Although the reform had only small effects and mainly involved headteachers, NPM tenets and recipes (entrepreneurial logic, marketisation, managerialism, etc.) entered the educational system for the first time (Grimaldi, Serpieri 2010).

The neoliberal agenda has been fostered at the beginning of the new millennium in the wake of austerity policies that brought about cost-cutting (e.g. Law 133/2008 increased the teacher-student ratio), stronger performativity, a rewarding system both for schools, headteachers, and teachers but also increasing standardisation of educational practice, internal and external accountability, and enhancing competition among schools for funding. In particular, the need for a new culture of evaluation has been stressed, thus justifying the introduction of centralised systems for measuring and monitoring the performance of schools. Key aspects were the introduction of performance management techniques and the standardisation of educational outputs through national tests managed by INVALSI (the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education System). Schools have also been responsible for the implementation of improvement plans according to a self-evaluation annual report. Furthermore, the new discourse on public governance entailed the active involvement of service users and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders (Durose 2011; Whitty 2000; 2006b).

To sum up, the Italian educational system, like many others, is currently characterised by the «apparent paradox» (Whitty 2006b: 4) of "centralised decentralisation" (Grimaldi 2012; Karlsen 2000), as a consequence of the re-regulation of some aspects of teaching and «the introduction of new coercive "metagovernmental" mechanisms of control» (Grimaldi, Serpieri 2014: 135), in order for the state to maintain strategic control over educational outputs (ibid.). According to Grimaldi and Serpieri (2014: 120), «schools and professionals are increasingly being pushed to adapt to goals and targets coming directly from the government, as an ongoing result of the introduction of managerialist devices».

A new "moral environment" has also emerged, giving rise to public opinion complaints regarding the alleged ineffectiveness of teachers, and more generally in regard to their professional identity (Grimaldi 2012; 2014). Both the neo-liberal logic and socio-demographic changes contributed to this moral environment, first and foremost in terms of the higher investment in children (because parents often have just one child, conceived late), as well as an increase in the levels of schooling among the population. These factors have modified the expectations of the public toward the school system and the attitude toward teachers (Pitzalis 2006).

All of these elements are currently challenging teachers' professionalism. Against this background, this article questions whether teaching in Italy is currently a profession in transition. The article aims to develop a framework to typify traits of the teaching profession and to understand which phase/model of professionalism, according to Hargreaves' (2000) and Noordegraaf's (2007; 2015) theorisations, respectively, applies to Italian teachers today.

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[1] For fields such as the school or the hospital, Mintzberg (1992) coined the term "professional bureaucracies".

In order to do so, the next section (§ 2) provides the theoretical backdrop to teachers' professionalism and the tool that we developed to grasp the characterising traits of teachers' professionalism according to the two theoretical models proposed. The main changes occurred in the Italian context will then be briefly introduced (§ 3), before moving to the empirical section concerning the methodology (§ 4) and the main results of a pilot project research (§ 5). The article concludes (§ 6) by arguing that different aspects belonging to distinct phases and models of professionalism do indeed overlap at the moment.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: TEACHERS' PROFESSIONALISM

Our theoretical framework is based on both Hargreaves' and Noordegraaf's theoretical perspectives on professionalism. It is argued that Hargreaves' (2000) theoretical framework can be integrated with the existing school of thought on new professionalism and, in particular, with Noordegraaf's (2007; 2015) theorisation. The underlying idea is that the two theories are interrelated and complement each other, and that they must be in dialogue with each other in order to avoid the risk of losing some relevant dimensions of analysis. The processual, longitudinal approach, which is substantive in Hargreaves' work, enhances the theoretical proposals on new professionalism. It gives dynamism to the analysis, allows events and processes to be examined from the perspective of causality, taking into account the commonalities in order to arrive at a complete understanding of the social worlds that are being studied (Strauss 1978). In this regard, it should be noted that, where the diachronic dimension is more explicit in Hargreaves' theoretical framework, even Noordegraaf believes that the ideal-typical models of hybrid and organisational professionalism are today more representative of reality, implying a change of paradigm, which embeds a dynamic character. On the one hand, Hargreaves' phases succeed one after the other; on the other, Noordergraaf's models can coexist, despite their fluctuating relevance depending on historical phase and on socio-institutional context.

Therefore, the integration of the two approaches appears necessary in order to acquire as much information as possible to read the transformative processes that are underway. After all, the substantive changes that are occurring in the teaching field are impacting on professional behaviour, on the practice of the profession, as well as on professional identity. The transition that teachers (and the school system more generally) are experiencing can then be analysed with the aid of conceptual categories offered by studies on new professionalism, such as hybridisation.

Hargreaves (2000) provides an interesting theoretical framework for examining the evolution of teachers' professionalism from a historical perspective, focusing on English-speaking countries. The long-term focus and the consideration of the wider institutional context reinforce the validity of the decision to compare this model with a more general one, such as Noordegraaf's model. Hargreaves distinguishes four phases: the "pre-professional" phase, the phase of the "autonomous professional", the "collegial professional" phase, and the final phase, which is ongoing and is still open to different scenarios that the author defines as "post-professional" or "post-modern". Since his analysis considers English speaking countries, it would be interesting to verify if this typology can also be used to interpret the changes that have occurred in Italy. In particular, the authors question if, in the Italian case, some elements suggesting an evolution from the collegial professionalism toward a post-professionalism or, by contrast, toward a post-modern professionalism, can be found. In order to do so, it is worth briefly recalling the three phases of Hargreaves' theorisation, linking them to Noordegraaf's models of professionalism. However, before doing so, it is worth outlining that the features of different stages do not replace each other but can accumulate over time due to "each phase carrying significant residues and traces from the past" (ibid.: 152).

The third phase of the *collegial professional*, which like the previous one of the *autonomous professional* recalls many elements of Noordegraaf's (2007) model of "pure professionalism", took shape in the mid-Eighties, at least in the English speaking countries studied by Hargreaves. In this period, pedagogical and methodological approaches become more pluralist, while both the educational work and the need for a more personalised and inclusive didactic increased. In order to handle these changes, teachers opened up to greater collaboration with colleagues but still maintained their role as "guardian" of public services and public interest (Hendrikx, van Ges-

tel 2016). New burgeoning managerial views favoured, at least formally, teamwork and the collective engagement of teachers in decision making as well. However, this often meant the transmission of technical tasks to collegial bodies, without time and space being devoted to real confrontation in order to permit shared reflection on the ultimate goals of the educational-learning project. As a result, these forms of forced participation and imposed collegial activation were ultimately experienced with scepticism and regarded as a waste of time, at best, or as «a form of exploitation and enslavement» (Hargreaves 2000: 169), at worst, rather than as a possibility for effective self-governance.

The following phase, that is still ongoing, is considered by Hargreaves as remaining open to opposite outcomes, depending on whether managerialism or cooperative form of organising teachers' work will prevail.

The first scenario is defined as "post-professional": teachers' work would become more regulated and would increasingly be subject to performance management measures, with the additional tasks being related more to form-filling than to teaching. Increasing control from outside, declining support, excessive workloads, reduced and individualised forms of professional development would indeed lead to the de-professionalisation of teaching. According to this managerial view on teaching, teachers have been described as "service providers" (Hendrikx, van Gestel 2016), while schools are expected to become «more productive and competitive institutions» (Fischer 2009: 114). The post-professional phase corresponds to what Noordegraaf defines as "controlled professionalism", as individual professional autonomy, which was a constitutive element of "pure professionalism", is strongly limited by external accountability (Ablemann, Elmore 1999) of activities and performances.

In the second, "post-modern", scenario, teachers' professionalism would become more flexible and inclusive, with a greater consideration of the collegial nature of teaching, and would be better connected with the surrounding territorial context and its societal stakeholders. This would mean, for example, recognising the need for networking with other social agencies and moving from a strenuous defence against external interference towards a valorisation of surrounding resources. Teachers are thus redefined as "network partners" (Hendrikx, van Gestel 2016) and schools as "educational communities" (Fischer 2009). In this perspective, families would be considered as a proper asset to be involved in decision making, rather than merely an outside support for learning processes or extracurricular activities. Moreover, collegial work would become a necessity and the scheduling of such work would be formally envisaged, and not just left to the will of individual teachers (or even imposed) beyond formal working hours. This cooperative and collaborative dimension would overcome the borders of the single school in order to create networks that would be able to self-define (and improve) professional standards. Professional development would draw not only on life-long learning, but also on reciprocal learning from colleagues, parents and communities (Hargreaves, Lo 2000). Other important aspects of post-modern professionalism are concerned with the care of and responsiveness to more diversified learners, rather than with control and discipline, and an expansion of the primary role of teaching in which the question of meanings and ends would be embraced (Hoyle 1975). So defined, post-modern professionalism shares many common features with other conceptions of the alleged "new professionalism", which has referred to education and other professions as well. In particular, it echoes the "democratic" (Whitty 2000; Dzur 2004a; 2004b; Day, Sachs 2004; Gale, Densmore 2003), "civic" (Sullivan 2004) or "activist" (Sachs 2000; 2003; Tonkens *et alii* 2013) professionalism. The post-modern professional phase also resembles that "hybrid" professionalism (Kuhlmann 2006; Noordegraaf 2007; Evetts 2011; Kirkpatrick, Noordegraaf 2015; Vicarelli 2016), which has been recently redefined as "organising professionalism" (Noordegraaf 2015). The factors that characterise the latter are indeed: horizontal partnerships with users and colleagues, collegiality, the joint definition of guidelines in strong connection with research (instead of both the complete discretional power and of standardisation), a shared process of peer-self-evaluation (that differs from both unconditional confidence and managerial performance evaluation), active responsibility and organising connections with outside stakeholders.

Particularly relevant in this regard is the argument put forth by Elmore (2004; 2008) who suggests that collegiality, if properly sustained and developed, can lead to a redefinition of teachers' autonomy, which would become collective, rather than individual. This is a key aspect of the distinction between pure, controlled and organising professionalism. The new emphasis on collective autonomy leads to internal accountability – i.e. an actual openness

to peer discussions concerning contents, results, and evidence of learning – that differs from the external accountability of controlled professionalism.

To sum up, drawing on the existing literature and in particular on Hargreaves' and Noordegraaf's theoretical frameworks we tried to identify some items that could represent the pillars of each phase/model of professionalism, which have been summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Phases and Forms of professionalism: main features.

Noordegraaf' s types:	Pure professionalism		Controlled professionalism	Hybrid/Organising professionalism
Hargreaves' ages:	Autonomous professional	Collegial Professional	Post-professional	Post-modern
The societal contest	Unconditional trust; improving status		Widespread distrust, discourses of derision, lowering of the status	Active trust to be rebuilt on the base of active, mutual responsibility
Organisational model and coordination mechanisms	Hierarchical coordination: the school as a public bureaucracy; standardisation of skills		Managerialism: the school as a company; standardisation of output	Horizontal partnership: the schools as a network; network mechanisms for coordinating
Professional autonomy	Professional autonomy based on expertise and service ethic		Reduced autonomy by performance management	Collective self- regulation based on reliability and evidence based methods
Evaluation	Individual self-assessment		External assessment	Peer-assessment
Professional Development	Off-site: workshops and courses	In-site: embedded in the daily activities of the school	Market-driven: individual vouchers; training targeted to school managers more than to rank and file teachers	Life-long: action research, self-study, peer learning, etc.
Relationship with colleagues	Individualism: isolated professional	Collegiality and collaboration	(forced) Cooperation: teamwork and collaborative planning reduced to technical tasks	Collaborative community: shared and participatory forms of inter and intra- professional learning and planning
Relationship with outside stakeholders	Isolation: teachers 'insulated' from communities, avoiding interferences		Contractualisation: market relationships with external stakeholders	Connectivity: breaking down the barriers of schooling, openness to local contexts and stakeholders
Professional identity: teachers' role and responsibility	Primary role of teaching	Primary role of teaching and 'social work'	Role expansion: role diffuseness, with no sense of where commitments and responsibilities end	Role enlargement: as researchers, innovators, collaborators of principals; secondary roles explicitly recognised
The pedagogical view	The transmission- teacher still prevails; polarised pedagogical views emerge	Combined pedagogical approaches; more individualised learning	Standardisation and centralised curricula	Reciprocal Learning; personalised curricula
The role of end users: students and families	Passive users		Clients	Co-producers

The first column shows the dimensions based on which the different phases and models can be compared. The cells were filled based on the existing literature, integrating those features that Hargreaves specifically relates to teachers (teachers' role and responsibilities, the pedagogical view and the role of students, professional development) with more general aspects, derived from both Hargreaves and Noordegraaf, that have been adapted to the case of teachers: the societal contexts, the organisational model and the mechanisms of coordination, professional

autonomy, evaluation, the relationship with colleagues, end users, and outside stakeholders. These features were used in the pilot project research to understand the current situation with regard to teacher professionalism in Italy. It is worth noting that the table is a simplification, produced for analytical reasons, as the two frameworks do not perfectly overlap: Noordegraaf's pure professionalism does not distinguish, for instance, between the autonomous and the collegial professionalism; by contrast, Hargreaves' post-modern professionalism does not capture the differences between hybrid and organising professionalism, as Noordegraaf properly does.

3. AN OVERVIEW OF THE ITALIAN CONTEXT

As shown in the literature (Grimaldi, Serpieri 2010; 2012; Pitzalis 2006; Landri 2009; Argentin 2013; 2018), the recent history of the Italian school system can be divided into two macro-phases. Grimaldi and Serpieri (2012) define these as ages, which can be distinguished by different traits, values, and characteristics, although there are also different interests at stake, different philosophical-cultural approaches and political positions within each.

The first macro-phase covers the period from post-Second World War to the early Nineties, but is marked by breaks and discontinuity. During this period, in light of the constitutional authority, education was considered a lever of social mobility and the most critical means to counterbalance inequalities and support students with fewer cultural, economic, and social resources. In regard to governance, the Italian education system was highly centralised and bureaucratic. The Ministry of Public Education was the main decisional centre of the system and controlled both human and financial resources through its local bureaucracies; however, at the same time, a high degree of professional autonomy for headteachers and teachers was guaranteed (Grimaldi, Serpieri 2012). The first important reform of this period came in 1962 when the tripartite lower secondary school was unified and made compulsory; in addition, the curriculum of the new secondary school was re-shaped, with the scope to adapt the contents of teaching to the needs of the new economic environment and the development of the new Fordist mode of production. The second reform took place in 1974, when the school governing bodies were reformed in a more democratic fashion, a unified professional status of all teachers was recognised, and decentred regional agencies were established whose aim was to promote bottom-up teaching innovation, pedagogic research, and professional development in schools. This, however, was not sufficient to counterbalance the authoritarian and centralistic path dependencies of the school system. After a few years, it became clear that the whole governance of the system had not changed. Finally, during the Eighties, a silent reform of upper secondary school occurred. Due to the continuing political instability and the conflicting positions within successive governments throughout this period on education, upper secondary school was transformed through small changes to curricula, administrative acts, and the logic of pilot innovation programmes (Benadusi 1989).

The second macro-phase, defined by Grimaldi and Serpieri (2012) as "the era of restructuring of education", was characterised, on the one hand, by an increasing pressure exerted by international organisations (the OECD, World Bank, etc.) and, on the other hand, by the advent of the neoliberal wave that introduced new values, new principles, and new priorities. In this context, the reform of autonomy took place with the aim of easing the hierarchical relationship between the Ministry of Education and schools, as well as opening up new autonomous spaces for schools. In this context, the School Autonomy Regulations (Legislative Decree 275/99) strongly emphasised the possibility of schools establishing networks with other schools and public or private actors in pursuit of their educational aims. The role of headteachers decisively changed, too, according to the New Public Management paradigm, with emphasis on the managerial aspects of headship: responsibility for the results obtained; efficiency and effectiveness in the management of resources (whether financial or human); and entrepreneurship. Professional issues simply disappeared (Barzanò 2011). The new headteacher had the potential to become an "entrepreneur" with several imperatives. However, this managerialism encountered strong opposition. Bureaucratic path dependencies and the hostility of the main professional unions and groups, as well as the relative weakness of the managerial discourse, resulted in a messy situation where contrasting evidence led to the enactment of changes in different directions.

The most recent reform, which is referred to as *The Good School* has been delivered in July 2015, but its implementation is still ongoing. School autonomy has increased: school principals now have greater autonomy in the management of human, technological, and financial resources. On the other hand, they have been subject to annual external evaluation. Merit-based components have been introduced in teachers' salaries too: the best-performing teachers in each school have received a one-off bonus. However, this incentive might have only a limited impact on motivation and on the attractiveness of the profession as the career system has not changed. A teacher does not have, in fact, a real possibility of career unless (s)he decides to become a headteacher. However, new managerial roles were introduced, the so-called *funzioni strumentali*, a sort of middle managers in the school hierarchy, which can be considered a first attempt to differentiate and stratify the careers.

Another important aspect of the reform is the provision of the National Teachers Training Plan, which introduces compulsory continuous professional development for all teachers, according to nine national priorities: foreign languages, digital skills and new learning environments; school and work; didactic and organisational autonomy; assessment and improvement; competency-based education and methodological innovation; integration; citizenship and global citizenship; inclusion and disability; and social cohesion and prevention of juvenile discomfort. Customised paths for each teacher have been devised; in addition, they have received a personal Teachers' Card to the value of 500 euro, with which they could freely purchase training content (music, books, theatre performances, or proper training courses). In the future, each teacher will have his/her own Individual Training Plan that will form part of a digital portfolio containing his/her training and professional history. These individual training needs will be gathered together in the plan of each school. *The Good School* law also set out a plan for recruitment: approximately 90,000 teachers who had been employed on short-term contracts were recruited on a permanent basis in 2015-2016. While around 45 per cent of these filled existing positions, the remainder entered new posts, in order to strengthen the educational programme of each school, in accordance with the three-year school development plan. These additional teachers allow for enhanced educational and organisational flexibility in line with school autonomy. For example, they could facilitate the organisation of additional school activities and initiatives targeted at students and families, beyond the statutory timetable. In future, new recruitment and in-service development plans will be implemented: a new open competition to recruit around 64,000 teachers on a permanent basis has already taken place during the summer term of 2016.

4. METHODOLOGY

In the light of the theoretical framework presented in the second paragraph, we conducted an exploratory research on a specific case study involving a local network of schools in the city of Ancona (Marche Region). This network consists of three primary schools, two lower secondary schools and one upper secondary school. According to Stake's (2005) and Thomas' typology (2011), it is an instrumental case study comprising *explorative* elements, the approach being *theory-testing*. The selection of the subject was due to the «researchers' familiarity with it» (that is, a *local knowledge case*) (ibid.: 514). The aforementioned network of schools indeed requested help with their improvement plan, and the researchers thus decided to investigate the changes occurring in the profession.

The empirical research has been articulated in three steps, integrating qualitative and quantitative methods. Firstly, we organised a focus group involving 14 teachers (4 primary schools teachers, 6 lower secondary, and 4 upper secondary schools). The participants were selected by the headteachers following the researchers' request to have both younger and older teachers, as well as those more involved in the process of change and those resistant to it. The aim of this focus group was to investigate the principal changes (if any) that have occurred in teaching and in the professional identity. A questionnaire was then developed based on the most interesting findings of the focus group, the literature review, and on similar surveys. The main aim of this questionnaire was to analyse teachers' professional experience and the main changes that have occurred in teaching, in school organisation, in teacher-family relationships, in teacher-territory relationships, training needs and professional identity. The self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the teachers participating in a training event, which was provided in

the improvement plan of the schools involved and was addressed to anyone interested. In total, 82 questionnaires were completed by 52 primary school teachers, 17 lower secondary school teachers and 11 upper secondary school teachers[2]. This sample, which is not a random one, cannot be considered representative of the teaching staff population; moreover, the choice to attend the training event represents a strong bias if one takes into consideration the propensity towards change and the interest in new teaching methods of the attendees. Even if the results cannot be generalised, they shed light on an under-explored issue.

The third phase aimed to provide a deeper understanding of some topics through in-depth interviews. 15 teachers, selected by school managers were involved: 5 teachers were selected from each grade of school, and they had different characteristics, both in terms of gender (8 females and 7 males) and seniority. In the following section, we will present the main findings of the empirical research, according to the dimensions of analysis previously identified in Table 1, above. As we have already said, our research findings cannot be generalised. However, our main aim was to build an analytical framework to be tested subsequently and also the empirical research served to this goal.

5. MAIN RESULTS

In order to assess which phase/model the teachers involved in this research could be placed within, the dimensions presented in Table 1 were considered. For the purposes of the analysis, a distinction was drawn between a macro (changing context), meso (changing organisation), and micro-analytical perspective (changing roles), as will be explained in the following paragraphs.

5.1. Changing contexts

From a macro perspective, as far as the so-called "social contract" is concerned – that is, the acknowledgement of the important social function that teachers perform as the basis for the trust placed in them and for the legitimation of a higher status – according to the participants to the research, currently the "discourse of derision" (Ball 1990) prevail, together with a lower status. Public trust is at stake, thus reflecting a key dimension of "controlled"/"post" professionalism. When asked to use a metaphor to describe their figure, the images recalled by respondents highlight the undervaluation of teachers in public opinion: «a trampled flower», «a mule: he works like a donkey and never rises to the dignity of a horse». Disappointingly, the interviewees produced a long list of negative characteristics generally attributed to teachers, in line with the results of other studies (Bonetto 2011). According to Argentin (2018), the crisis of teachers and teaching is a persistent character at least in Italy, but interviewees stressed the worsening of the situation in the last few years. In the in-depth interviews, this delegitimisation was mainly connected to the widespread perception, outside the profession, of reduced working hours (18 teaching hours per week, long summer holidays, etc.), and to the undervaluation of the time spent on preparatory work done at home and of teachers' personal investment in continuous training. A couple of interviewees suggested that there was a wider explanation: the minor recognition of the usefulness of the educational system and, even more broadly, the devaluation of the role of knowledge in today's society.

5.2. Changing organisations

From a meso-organisational perspective, in order to assess the eventual effects of neo-liberalisation and managerialisation on the education sector, or the emergence of an alternative "post-modern" pattern, we considered dif-

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[2] There are significant differences between primary and secondary schools when it comes to teacher professionalism, *in primis* because the former has become an "all-graduate" profession only recently. However, the results will be discussed together, as the researchers were interested in understanding if both are experiencing a transformation in their professional identity.

ferent dimensions: the organisational model and coordination mechanisms; autonomy and discretion; the relationships with colleagues; assessment and professional development; the relationships with external stakeholders.

With regard to the organisational model, the literature claims that schools have undergone a change in three stages, from being a public bureaucracy to becoming a company and, finally, developing into an inter-organisational network. Accordingly, the methods of coordination are also expected to evolve from "vertical partnerships" to "managerialism", in the first instance, and subsequently to "horizontal partnerships". In our case study, the "business model" and managerialism do not appear to be well developed among rank and file teachers. They have not been socialised towards managerial skills and they have not been given full responsibility over costs. However, the growing autonomy of schools and the managerialisation of school principals are having an impact on the work practices of front-line teachers. This has been proven by the explicit reference, made in some interviews, to the language drawn from business:

> It has become a company, if you work hard it's ok, otherwise... In other words, everyone is worried about money; there is a lot of worry about money, maybe this is autonomy: because each school is autonomous and has to manage its money. (Female, 27 years of experience, primary school)

The respondents' opinions on school autonomy are heterogeneous. Some of them stress that the too rapid pace of transition has caused schools to experience an excessive burden of new responsibilities. They fear that excessive autonomy would lead to a sort of "anarchy". For others, the supposed autonomy exists only on paper, because schools lack economic resources and cuts in public spending continue to be made at the central level. Many others, on the contrary, recognise that increasing autonomy has allowed to improve and to be more responsive to the local needs of their communities.

The further shift towards a new network-based model has even been sketched, as new horizontal partnerships are emerging. In particular, the reorganisation of primary education has brought together formerly autonomous schools and has fostered greater vertical integration, thus allowing schools to plan a wide range of activities together. On the other hand, those networks involving secondary schools are still seen as being more "institutional" ("purpose networks" as one interviewee defined them) than effective.

Professional autonomy is another central issue. As we have previously said, it is expected that this would be reduced and controlled by way of performance management in the scenario of a "controlled"/"post" professionalism or would be expressed through new forms of collective self-regulation in the "organising"/"post-modern" professionalism. According to more than six respondents to the survey out of ten, professional autonomy still characterises their profession, despite the ongoing changes. Moreover, just under half of the respondents believe that safeguarding the freedom of teaching must be a priority, even over the process of sharing decisions with colleagues.

One out of two respondents think that professional autonomy is currently threatened by external interferences; these can be both top-down (ministerial rules) and bottom-up (parental requests). However, just one third feel that they are affected by centrally-imposed learning standards or by the learning expectations of families. All in all, they do not feel to be subjected to a performativity regime. Only a few believe that the greater decision-making power attributed by the law to the headteacher limits his/her own autonomy. Nobody referred to a direct control of time and working modalities, nor to a performance management regime. However, some spaces of individual autonomy seem to have been reduced because of the introduction of interdisciplinary teaching methods, formally envisaged in the planning of class councils. This can be considered as a form of collective self-regulation and is closely connected with the changing relationship with colleagues.

The teachers involved in our research are still firmly masters of their autonomy, but they are not anchored to the traditional vision of a «privatised idiosyncratic practice» (Elmore 2008: 50). Collaborative working with colleagues is considered an inevitable part of current professional practice. However, the transition to a truly interdisciplinary way of working, even if formally professed, is not always effectively practised:

> Interdisciplinarity, which is so often discussed but not always performed, is fundamental: truly interdisciplinary work is missing: even though we compile diagrams concerning interdisciplinarity, everyone closes the door and does what he wants. (Focus group; upper secondary school teacher)

There are still difficulties, therefore, in making the collegial and cooperative model effective. Although almost all respondents are willing to confront colleagues on personal teaching practices (contents and/or methodologies), when asked «to what extent confrontations, collaboration and sharing information, materials and experiences with colleagues are practised», affirmative answers did not exceed one out of two. In any case, the interviewees do not agree with the stereotyped view that teachers work in isolation: most of them gave an affirmative answer to the question if they knew the content and teaching methods of their colleagues. However, the interactions mainly focus on the individual problems of students and on curricular objectives, while contents, materials, devices and teaching methods are discussed to a lesser extent.

In-depth interviews confirm this scenario. On the one hand, almost all of the respondents recognise the move away from the individual pattern of teaching and depict a "before" and an "after" in this regard.

> Before, the school system was individualist. It was made up of many individual teachers and each of them went his own way. Then, as a consequence of the new way of planning, innovations, and legislative decrees, it has approached a collegial model. (Male, 10 years of experience, primary school)

On the other hand, this process is not complete. It has been noted that close relationships only concern a very small number of colleagues, and they are often based more on personal affinities than on formalised modes of collaboration.

The differences in the perspectives on this topic also reflect a generational gap, contrasting the youngest participants, who had been socialised to a collegial model during their education, and those of greater seniority, who are more used to individualistic, rather than shared, practices. In summary, these elements emerging from the empirical research seem to place the participants in a phase of transition between "autonomous" and "collegial" professional models, as defined by Hargreaves.

Moreover, some features of the "forced cooperation" that characterises the "post-professional"/"controlled" scenario have also emerged, as teamwork and collaborative planning have been imposed within a logic of further exploitation and enslavement, rather than "acted".

> [*Interviewer:* is school currently more open towards comparison among colleagues?]
> Very. In the sense that we meet each other at 4:00 pm. It's all formal. [...] a fortnight ago, a younger colleague told me: «I would be so happy if you could see my stuff, because I would like to hear your opinion». Do you want to know how these things go? That we are so overburdened with formalities and paperwork that I couldn't find five minutes to talk with her. And I'm so sorry for this. But you have to do the "vertical departments", to do... a bunch of things. (Female, 40 years of experience, primary school)

Evaluation is another area that is expected to be deeply affected by the transition between "pure" professionalism (based on self-assessment), "controlled"/"post" professionalism (dominated by a pervasive external evaluation system), and "organising"/"post-modern" professionalism (strongly oriented towards continuous improvement and internal evaluation). In this regard, more than seven out of ten respondents to the survey agree with the statement that «continuous improvement and its inter-professional and inter-professional evaluation characterise the teaching profession today». Furthermore, seven out of ten respondents believe that the process of school self-assessment is important for improvement and think that peer-review and peer-learning are useful. However, only four out of ten agree that teaching is characterised by the external control of the quality.

Nevertheless, the qualitative analysis shows that there are some limitations of the current evaluation system. Moreover, some interviewees assert that the evaluation should concern the teaching that is carried out in the classroom, which, by its nature, evades such a possibility:

> The school must evaluate what the teacher does. And this almost never happens. In the sense that we are not evaluated on how we work.
> [*Interviewer:* not even now that evaluation is much discussed?]
> Absolutely not. We are evaluated on the basis of generic indicators: the quantity of the activities we perform, the projects we adhere to, or of which we are promoters. But not on what we actually produce, didactically. An evaluation that also implies the attention to all the components of the didactic. (Secondary school, male, more than 25 years of experience)

As far as professional development is concerned, a certain disappointment emerges. The interviewees, especially those who had been teaching for many years, express their frustration about the concrete possibilities for professional development. They complain about the inadequate economic reward and about the lack of recognition of the work that they do in preparing lessons and organising activities and projects. Interestingly, in several interviews, professional development was linked to proposals for reorganising teaching: laboratory activities, new teaching patterns that go beyond the idea of the unity of the class, classes with fewer students, and even open classrooms have been suggested. This is in line with other initiatives emerging in the international debate (Parding *et alii* 2012) on how to transform the traditional individual structure of teaching. However, the openness to change is not unconditional, as many respondents expressed strong concern regarding the need to verify that the proposed changes do, in fact, bring about effective improvements. In other words, resistance to change, which does not appear to be attributable to generational differences, is presented as a demand for evidence-based educational models.

The need for lifelong learning has also been recognised. In conjunction with training methodologies that are more traditional, new training activities, based on peer comparisons, are spreading. In the context of upper secondary schools, the Erasmus experience in which some teachers had participated was highly appreciated, especially because it allowed them to gain direct experience of how didactics work abroad and to participate directly in classroom activities. With regard to the limits of professional development offered thus far, respondents complain that it has been left, for the most part, to individual initiative, without a common school plan being in place. Initiatives for professional development are poorly designed and are not formally shared with colleagues, not even within the same discipline.

To conclude, a key aspect of Hargreaves' perspective of a post-modern profession is the openness to the local and global context. As we have already said, post-modern professionals are called upon to engage in dialogue with the surrounding context, to recognise its needs and its resources, and to "absorb" social variability. In this regard, the empirical research gives the impression of a generational difference between those who would like the school able to withstand environmental turbulence, and those who wish for greater openness:

> Schools that want to develop over time must try to make partnerships with the community as much as possible. (...) For example, soon after explaining the circulatory system, I organise a first aid course with the Red Cross. (Male, 10 years of experience, lower secondary school)

Overall, however, the positions expressed with respect to the dialogue with other interlocutors of the community are very tepid. Less than one out four among survey participants would consider it useful to participate in initiatives with neighbourhood associations, only one-third thought it would be useful to dialogue with migrant associations, and a little more with parents' associations. Teachers are more interested, instead, in initiatives with cultural associations (one out two respondents) and professional associations (two-thirds).

The main perceived limitation of those initiatives that have been actually activated within the community stems from the fact that these projects are mostly implemented from the top down. There is no real possibility for rank and file teachers to have an impact from the bottom up, and to choose those projects that they deem to be most appropriate. The perceived risk is that these partnerships fall within the scope of "institutional marketing", in line with the "managerial" turnaround, rather than being an effective co-production of certain training paths with local stakeholders.

Upper secondary schools are also developing a new relationship with the labour market, due to the introduction of the so-called *Alternanza Scuola Lavoro* (ASL) (learning and working) and guidance activities. However, even in this case, the teachers involved expressed concern regarding the effectiveness of ASL, which, it seemed to them, was not formative as in many cases students were asked to perform very simple tasks.

5.3. Changing roles

The changes that are taking place at the macro- and meso-level are reflected in professional identity and the way in which teachers interpret their role, as well as in the representation of the role of students and families. In

their answers to the first question of the focus group, «What does it mean for you to be a teacher?», a strong perception of change by teachers didn't emerge, where all participants defined "being teachers" in terms of professional practice and, in particular, the relationship with the students. Their professional identity seems mainly, if not exclusively, to be played out in the educational relationship. In this regard, the survey confirms that is the teaching practice and the relationship with the students that make the respondents feel "teachers". Participation in the life and in the management of the school was mentioned significantly less often.

With regard to the way in which teachers perceive the increasing organisational functions attributed to them, two thirds of interviewees think that they can make a real contribution to the improvement of school organisation, although less than four out ten respondents believe that they have adequate knowledge about the organisational functions of the school. Nonetheless, only one third agrees with the "traditional" vision that limits their role to issues that concern their own class, and which assigns to others the responsibility for the organisation of the school. On the other hand, eight out ten believe that, in recent years, they have experienced an expansion of their role and of their duties, without a clear limitation of their involvement and their responsibilities. The in-depth interviews confirm the concern that this would lead to teaching being overshadowed and sacrificed:

> Everything has a limit and now the requests that are made to us are exceeding this limit, requests that very often are not aimed at achieving something positive, but only bureaucratic things that do not lead to anything (...) considering that we have to compete with other schools, considering that we have to catch the students and make the guidance, our time is taken up by a thousand activities that there weren't before (...) it was only a burden of work without a real possibility of... what can we do to change the school? We cannot do anything. In my opinion, the work you do in the classroom is worthwhile. (Female teacher, more than 25 years of experience, secondary school)

Hence, strongly critical positions emerge toward this increase in tasks that respondents, individually, try to resist.

Even those involved in new managerial roles, i.e. the *funzioni strumentali*, responsible for organising and coordinating school projects and resources, expressed their concern, defining these tasks as a burden that takes time away from working in the classroom, in return for only a modest economic reward.

Finally, an evolution of the role of the "teacher as researcher" (Elliott 2009; 2012) was only evident in one case, while the survey confirms that the teachers are not very involved in research activities: fewer than half of the respondents said they were involved, often or sometimes (individually and/or collectively), in research activities on didactics.

If, therefore, the reference is to the primary role of teaching, the ways in which the educational role and the relationship with the students are interpreted have been modified and expanded. The term of comparison is the representation of the teacher as a mere transmitter of knowledge, which is now considered outdated (Fischer 2010). Participants in the focus group described themselves as "facilitators", "mediators", "ferrymen" in a process of education that is not limited to the didactic-disciplinary content but embraces the personal growth of students (the pedagogue model, see Hirschorn 1993).

> He is a facilitator. He has the role of facilitating students and of accompanying them towards an education that concerns not so much content, but the education of the person, a ferryman, a mediator with everything to which children are exposed daily. (Focus group; primary school teacher)

The survey confirms that this innovative view of the role of the teacher coexists together with more traditional positions. Some metaphors used to describe the teachers of today – "commander of a ship", "expert helmsman", "pilot indicating the route" – continue to confine them to a position of solitary protagonist hierarchically over-ordered. However, alternative images to portray the ongoing changes were also proposed: a "compass", a "radar", a "chalk that every student can choose to handle". The reference to their "enabling" role, in other words the idea of being instrumental, rather than central, was thus frequent. Furthermore, the concept of reciprocal learning was also very present, for example, «a director who predisposes the learning environment and learns with the students».

Many respondents made it clear that, in order for this re-definition to occur, an empathic relationship of mutual trust must be created: eight out ten of survey participants indicated that empathy towards the students and the relationship of mutual respect were elements characterising the profession. Staying in this relationship of reciprocity, however, is not always simple, especially for younger teachers who are still learning to strike the necessary balance between emotional closeness and authority.

In any case, the empirical research testifies that an evolution had occurred from the age of the autonomous professional, when students were conceived as passive users, to the phase of the post-modern professional. In particular, the in-depth interviews underline the importance of collaborative and reciprocal learning, with some reference made to the idea of co-production. However, the survey shows that the construction of educational situations that are inspired by problem solving or that require a shared and cooperative construction of knowledge, even those that rely on peer learning, happen "sufficiently" but not "very" frequently. Just one out of two respondents answered affirmatively to the question «Do you usually activate educational situations involving students presenting challenges of knowledge or problem solving?», and even less «plan and manage situations where students are engaged in building knowledge through collaborative and cooperative processes, including mutual teaching activities».

Furthermore, there is no real reflection on which kind of knowledge is useful to meet the demands of the economic and social system, or of the local context. Only one teacher expressed his concern about:

> Poor connection with the labour market. We live in Italy, in a society, in Europe, where the individual establishes himself through work (...) but do we prepare young people for the labour market? (Female, 27 years of experience, lower secondary school)

To conclude, teachers' conception of the role of families appears full of ambivalences. Only a few participants (considering both the focus group and the in-depth interviews), especially among the youngest, stressed the importance of intensifying the dialogue with families and of building a relationship of mutual trust and sharing with them the choices made:

> I like that there is transparency and clarity so that they understand what we are doing. Otherwise, when meetings with the teachers take place, should I simply communicate the grades? Or should I explain the context of our work that we must know together? (Female, 27 years of experience, lower secondary school)

The interviewee above seems to be an outside voice: the majority of participants, despite recognising that families are potential resources to be activated alongside professionals, tend to point out the perceived deterioration of the relationship with families and their lesser willingness to be involved.

> This drift, this decline, began a decade ago (...) and it has progressed very quickly in recent years, very quickly (...) parents are not able to be parents today. Can I say it? They cannot be parents; they do not feel parental responsibility. I would like a class of orphans (...) today parents mostly want to be left alone. (Female, 40 years of experience, primary school)

The most frequently recurring representations were those of families who are "distrustful" or "in trouble" and in need of help. The possibility that families could be partners, bearing resources as well as problems, does not really seem to be fully recognised.

The relationship with families, therefore, appears to be contradictory: seven out ten respondents argue that parents should respect the school's role and refrain from interfering with the choices made, and only just under a fifth think that parents should be more involved in school life.

As has previously been mentioned, teachers also highlight the risks of customisation of the relationship with families as they begin to be considered "clients" to be first grabbed and then satisfied, rather than partners.

> To me, the school seems to be very cautious [towards families], sometimes even too much, in some ways... the risk is that you want... to please them (...) This opening to families, I imagine, represents an aspect of that focus on... perhaps, in business language, we would say focusing on users. (male, 14 years of experience, secondary school)

6. CONCLUSIONS

In our article, we have attempted to give an original reading of the professionalism of Italian teachers, using both the theoretical frame proposed by Hargreaves (2000) and that of Noordegraaf (2015). The picture that emerges is that of a profession involved in a process of change and extensive modification. However, while new and innovative features allow the profession to face the current challenges from "above" and "below", some traditional characteristics still survive. Moreover, the previous analysis shows that a different phase/model seems to prevail according to the dimensions one uses.

In the light of the latest debate on the new professionalism, our main results outline that typical traits of distinct forms of professionalism are simultaneously at play (Hendrikx, van Gestel 2016), revealing how different ways of understanding and practising the profession coexist within the profession itself. Some of the more traditional features of the pure professionalism model, even in the form of the autonomous professional depicted by Hargreaves, persist, such as the sense of individual responsibility toward users, professional autonomy, resistance toward external intrusions, and traditional patterns of professional development.

Other dimensions seem to place the participants in a transitional phase between the autonomous and collegial professional. In fact, the increase in educational work, the need for more personalised and inclusive teaching, and greater collaboration with colleagues have repeatedly been emphasised. However, this transition appears to be currently incomplete, and full collegiality is still at stake.

The typical features of post-professionalism or controlled professionalism appear to be less characterising. Nonetheless, the intensification and bureaucratisation of work and "managerial impulses" (Apple 2009) were also evident. Teachers complain about the surrounding climate of distrust, as well as the expansion of their role and in particular the burden of form-filling activities that take time away from teaching. Professional development is more market-driven than in the past, and team working is often perceived as more formal than substantial. However, external assessment is still weak and managerial elements are not so strongly present.

The exemplary aspects of post-modern professionalism or organising professionalism have also been highlighted: the importance attributed by the respondents to the relationship with users (no longer based on an asymmetry between the two parts), as well as the importance of undergoing continuous improvement through inter- and intra-professional evaluation processes, and the emphasis on connections with the societal environment. However, only younger teachers seem to have a truly open perspective regarding the involvement of families and the community in the effective co-production of teaching activities. Lastly, in light of the debate on globalisation involving other professions, it should be noted that, in the case of teachers, precariousness does not appear to be an element of novelty, as traces of it are very much recognisable in the stories of older teachers.

To conclude, neither of the proposed models of professionalism seems dominant and the current phase appears to be blurred. This article is in agreement with those arguing that hybridity and the intertwining of different principles prevail: in particular, the expected participation of end users and external stakeholders goes hand in hand with centralised standardisation of output (Hendrikx, van Gestel 2016). This sometimes causes professionals to feel subjected to contradictory roles and actions; however, perhaps, as argued by Noordegraaf, this is precisely what the new professionalism consists of.

It is necessary to note that our analysis is based on a single, local, case study. Therefore, its outcomes cannot be extended to the wider teaching population. More in-depth research through a survey on a representative sample is needed in order to validate or refute what, at least for the moment, remains a research hypothesis.

This small-scale study, however, was very useful, because it paved the way for experimentation based on the integration of two different analytical approaches, allowing the researchers to study this profession in an original way. It provides food for thought that would not otherwise have emerged, first of all regarding the importance of path dependency in shaping, containing, and hybridising the application of NPM principles to the Italian context.

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Monographic Section

Socio-Professional Integration and International Mobility: The Case of French Engineers Under the France-Quebec Mutual Recognition Arrangements

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Abstract. This article examines the dynamics of admission into the professional practice of French-trained engineers into Quebec's professional system. It also looks at the socio-professional integration of these engineers who have sought admission through the France-Quebec MRA since it went into effect on July 18, 2013. Therefore, we consider not only conditions of admission in the professional system, but also factors facilitating or impeding their socio-professional integration, and the impact of these factors on the entry into professional practice. This article also considers the roles of some stakeholders involved in the MRA process and the dynamics among them, as well as the effectiveness of policies that regulate immigration and the labour market, looking at the socio-professional integration as a multi-faceted process that brings together actors mainly from immigration, the professional system, the training establishments and the employers themselves. By analysing these professionals' trajectories, we also look at the impact of institutional disjunctions, with the aim of identifying solutions towards a more efficient integration of these foreign-trained professionals (FTPs). Our methodological protocol involved a case study approach (Creswell 2007) combining semi-structured interviews, participant observation, informal meetings with some stakeholders and documentary analysis about professional systems, focusing on the dynamics between regulation of professions and the socio-professional integration of FTPs in this context.

Keywords. Foreign-trained professionals; regulation of professions; socio-professional integration; mutual recognition arrangement; France; Quebec; governance.

INTRODUCTION

This work is part of various research projects that started in 2012 (Bédard, Roger 2015; Houle 2014), which analyse the admission processes

of French professionals into Quebec's regulated professions' system, through mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs) between France and Quebec. These arrangements aim at facilitating entry into professional practice among 26 regulated professions in each territory. Our research projects examine trajectories of various regulated professionals, mainly doctors, nurses, engineers, architects and lawyers, from immigration to actual employment, through admission by the regulating body, completing required courses and training and negotiating their integration into workplace and society, in Quebec and comparing with other Canadian provinces on some aspects. Our starting point looks at the equilibrium between two contrasting objectives in this context: the regulated professions' aim at protecting the public (closure and control), and the admission of regulated professionals trained abroad (opening through legal and political measures). Through this mitigation, regulating bodies operationalise protection of the public, but also a selective closure about the eligibility of candidates and conditions of admission. Meanwhile, they also put forward requirements to fulfil through other institutions, mainly training establishments (universities and colleges) and workplaces (mostly private firms, in the case of engineers). Such requirements include various processes of evaluating gaps between the country of origin's prevailing initial training system and professional practice, and the host country's corresponding characteristics. This article specifically examines the trajectories of French-trained engineers migrating to Quebec, by comparing the discourse of stakeholders in Quebec's professional system and that of French-trained engineers that enter professional practice, after admission first for immigration, then by the regulating body through the France-Quebec MRA, and further continue by fulfilling the required training prior to hiring and entering professional practice. After presenting our theoretical framework, we situate this agreement and its arrangements in the context of Quebec's professional system. We then outline our methodological approach before presenting data from interviews with French engineers and stakeholders in the Quebec professional system. The subsequent analysis offers an opportunity to examine the distance between policies and practices, the focus on economic dimensions neglecting other, more critical dimensions, as well as the actions of various institutions in Quebec's professional system, in order to identify critical steps towards these immigrants' socio-professional integration. By analysing these professionals' trajectories, this article also examines the impact of institutional disjunctions, with the aim of identifying solutions towards a more efficient integration of these foreign-trained professionals (FTPs).

REGULATING PROFESSIONS, PROTECTING THE PUBLIC, AND THE MARKET

Regulated professions constitute a closed market based on asymmetry of information regarding specific areas of knowledge (Akerlof 1970). Our research draws from the sociology of professions' literature, in particular to analyse its territories' closure and related justifications, beside the State and the market (Freidson 2001) and in terms of distinct cognitive processes and work practices (Abbott 1988). Admission of foreign-trained professionals needs a specific set of justification for the required supplementary training and further measures of adaptation (for example, working under the supervision of a licensed professional during a few months or a year), in order to protect the public, which is the professional system's official main objective. Implementation of these measures includes various institutions, mainly colleges and universities for training, and workplaces for supervision.

To implement this closure, there are of course great variations between countries, reflecting historical and cultural differences that have led to varying mechanisms (legal, political, and symbolic) (Champy 2009; Freidson 2001; Saks 1995). In Canada, each province and territory rules over its own professional system, known to be highly regulated and formalised. Among them, Quebec's professional system appears to be the most complex and regulated (Bédard *et alii* 2018). Its actors (regulating bodies, legislator, professional associations, training facilities, employers and professionals) operate within the legal context dictated by the *Professions' Code* (*Code des professions*), making explicit every regulating body's functions and rules to follow. It is through this legal context that the work of 46 bodies (*ordres professionnels*) regulate 54 professions in Quebec, for a total of over 380 000 professionals. The engineers' regulating body, the *Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec*, is the second-largest one, with some 64 000 members. Some of the smaller *ordres* have as few as 200 members.

Our research also draws from studies on global migration of foreign-trained professionals, which mostly look

at conditions of integration into the receiving country. Since entry into professional practice is also tributary to conditions of social integration (for example, at the workplace, but also for spouse and family, housing, schooling, etc.), our objectives are to analyse foreign-trained professionals' conditions of entry into professional practice in that global sense. We, therefore, hope to contribute to both of these fields by our outlook, considering that the most efficient, just or transparent mechanism for admitting a professional into a profession's regulating body is useless if other institutions are not "at par" in their own actual measures and practices towards these foreign-trained professionals. In other words, since entry into professional practice does not depend solely on the regulating body's actions, these interrelations must be considered in the research agenda on foreign-trained professionals' trajectories. Our approach seeks to bring together the literature about the global movement of skilled workers and recognition of foreign-trained professionals who seek to practice a regulated profession.

SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION OF REGULATED PROFESSIONS

We understand integration as a process and state to include multiple dimensions or spheres that are part of a larger social structure. This process also includes an interactive component between the different dimensions, actors and institutions that compose them. Individual integration into a social structure comes into effect under a multilevel and multi-sectoral approach. The systematic approach of Lockwood (1964) allows us, empirically, to carry out an analysis of the "integration system" as processual and multidimensional.

Several models aim to explain the migrant's integration in a social structure (Esser 2004, in Heckmann 2005). All of these models share a multidimensional conception of integration (Esser 2004, in Heckmann 2005; Heckmann, Schnapper 2003; Heckmann 2005) and their focus on the consequences of the migrant's integration on host society.

We have adopted an analytical model based on work by Friedrich Heckmann (2005). This author identifies the existence of four dimensions of immigrants' socio-professional integration: 1) a structural dimension; 2) a cultural dimension; 3) a relational dimension; 4) a dimension of identification, related to feelings of belonging in the host society; and 5) a dimension that sees integration as a process of learning and socialisation.

For data analysis, we group these five dimensions into two broad categories. The first one includes structural aspects of integration (structural dimension) and the second one includes all socio-cultural and relational aspects, as well as those related to socialisation in the host society (cultural and relational dimension).

We define the structural dimension as the set of laws, regulations, administrative procedures and governance concerning immigration, admission to the profession and the labour market, as well as access to host society's institutions. This is particularly relevant in the case of professionals trying to enter a regulated profession through the MRA between France and Quebec.

The cultural dimension refers to the learning and understanding of cultural codes, related to employment as well as to the way of interacting with the host society in general. The relational dimension includes all kinds of migrant workers' relationships with members of the host society (social ties with colleagues, but also with their superiors, friendships, family, etc., so as their involvement in civil society). The reason for operationalising these dimensions responds to an integrated understanding of the processes of socialisation, which is enacted through structural, cultural, relational and identity aspects.

The socio-professional integration of foreign-trained engineers

There is a large body of literature about the integration of skilled migrants, particularly in Europe, which discusses the short-term internships of foreign workers (Beaverstock 2011; Findlay *et alii* 1996; Walsh 2006), inter-company transfers (Millar, Salt 2008), and professional service firms (Faulconbridge *et alii* 2009). These studies emphasise the temporary and international nature of immigration. Other studies attempt to understand state pol-

icies for attracting skilled migrants (Kofman 2005; Hawthorne 2013; 2015). These policies aim to recruit skilled migrants, but do not examine their long-term trajectories nor their retention in the host country. Despite their privileged status, skilled migrants must adjust to the professional norms and practices in the host country (Walsh 2006).

In the United States as well as in Canada and Quebec, several studies demonstrate the importance of informal and interpersonal networks for facilitating an immigrant's professional integration (Lin 1999; Arcand *et alii* 2009; Pellerin 2013).

More specifically, Friesen (2011) has documented the importance for foreign-educated engineers of learning the appropriate behavioural codes pertaining to the local work culture, which are potentially very different from those in their country of origin. They become competent in interpreting the hierarchical and social codes and behaviours in their workplace.

As for junior engineers trained abroad, recent studies demonstrate that this group encounters the most difficulties finding employment as compared to those with Quebec diplomas. For example, in 2013 the rate of unemployment for FTP members of the Quebec Order of Engineers (*Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec*, OIQ) was 6.5%, compared to 2.5% for all members of the Order. Nonetheless, once foreign-trained engineers are admitted to the Order (OIQ), their employment rate tends to be equivalent to that of engineers trained in Quebec. Some foreign-trained engineers even have an advantage, due to their previous work experience. This shows the difficulties faced by engineers trained abroad at being admitted into professional practice. Instead, they often turn to second-hand employment niches to survive and provide revenues for their family, thereby waiving off the required processes towards admission to practice engineering, at least officially and legally.

Nearly two-thirds (64.8%) of all professional engineers work in jobs that require membership in the Order (OIQ). Yet, according to this same study, belonging to the Order does not translate necessarily into a salary raise: «There is no significant difference between salaries and overall earnings according to these criteria [membership in the Order], except for the 10% who are most highly paid, for whom membership creates a salary raise of 6.26%» (Racila 2015: 10, our translation).

Mutual recognition arrangements in Quebec: history, guiding principles and procedures of recognition

Signed in 2008, the France-Québec Agreement is a prime example of an international agreement aiming to facilitate the movement of skilled workers across territories. To paraphrase Quebec's International Relations and Francophony Ministry[1], this Agreement aims to address skilled labour shortages and to respond more efficiently to the needs of both Quebec and French companies. Following the signing of the Agreement in 2008, the main actors within both territories' professional systems were pressured from both governments to examine quickly the feasibility of implementing the Agreement through profession-specific mutual arrangements. Furthermore, this Agreement has since been presented as a step towards «negotiating an economic partnership between the European Union and Canada»[2], now commonly known as CETA. The CETA (*Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement*) partnership now being under the process of ratification by each jurisdiction concerned, these regulatory changes are part of a larger plan, aiming to support the movement of workers in the context of an economic partnership between the European Union and Canada.

In Quebec, in order for the negotiated MRAs to become effective in Quebec, specific regulations were developed and applied to each of the professions involved, in accordance with Quebec's *Codes des professions*. To date, MRAs involve mutual recognition for 27 professions regulated by professional orders (and for 36 regulated trades) in Quebec.

Instead of processing cases one by one as in a more traditional approach, each MRA conducts a comparative

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[1] Website of the *Ministère des relations internationales et de la francophonie*. http://www.mrif.gouv.qc.ca/Content/documents/fr/2008-12.pdf (in French), consulted on April 18, 2016.
[2] Website of the *Ministère des relations internationales et de la francophonie*. http://www.mrif.gouv.qc.ca/en/ententes-et-engagements/ententes-internationales/reconnaissance-qualifications/entente-quebec-france, consulted on May 21, 2018.

analysis that defines the differences between professional practice in each jurisdiction (France and Quebec). This analysis then defines the additional training and/or internships needed to enter professional practice in the host society for all eligible candidates. Therefore, it includes the need to coordinate with other institutions (mostly, training and internship). Each MRA follows five guiding principles: protect public health and safety; maintain the quality of professional services; equity, transparency and reciprocity; compliance with French-language standards, and efficacy of mutual recognition of professional competence[3].

Protecting public health and safety is the cardinal principle of the professional system and is thus logically found at the heart of the MRA. For workers already holding professional permits in France, MRAs create an accelerated process for obtaining a professional permit in Quebec (as compared to the process required for other foreign-trained professionals, FTPs), while also assuring the protection of public safety (Sweetman *et alii* 2015).

In order to guarantee that the recognition of professional skills upholds the principle of protecting the public, the various professional orders in Quebec have developed "compensatory measures" when facing "substantial differences". To this end,

> in order to meet the substantial differences concerning training or apprenticeship[4] programs, the Agreement establishes that the regulating organisations must determine if these differences can be compensated for by the applicant's professional experience. If this measure is judged inadequate, they can require other compensatory measures, such as an adaptation period, an aptitude test, or additional training. (Houle 2015, our translation)

For engineers, a list of over 400 French training institutions, periodically updated, states the recognised establishments. Upon establishing their eligibility, each French-trained candidate must work for a full year under the supervision of an engineer who is a member of the Quebec Order of Engineers (*Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec*, OIQ). Upon completing this internship and passing the Order's admission exam, the engineer is entered on the Roll of the OIQ.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This article draws from data collected through mainly two research projects. The first one ran from 2012 to 2015 and was financed by the *Office des professions du Québec*, the *Conseil interprofessionnel du Québec* and the *Institut national de recherche scientifique* (INRS). The second one, from 2015 to 2018, was a larger partnership financed by Canada's Social and Human Research Council (SSHRC), in partnership with the *Office des professions du Québec*, the *Conseil interprofessionnel du Québec* and the *Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse*. Two smaller projects also completed specific issues around admission and recognition of foreign-trained professionals in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada, between 2015 and 2018. Certificates of ethics obtained for each project specify that we offered conditions of participation under free and informed consent, with the usual anonymity of participants. All first names used here are pseudonyms; we translated verbatims from French.

This article examines the dynamics of admission into the professional practice of French-trained engineers into Quebec's professional system. It also looks at the socio-professional integration of these engineers who have sought admission through the France-Quebec MRA since it went into effect on July 18, 2013. Therefore, we consider not only the conditions of admission in the professional system, but also the factors that have facilitated or impeded their socio-professional integration, as explained above (Heckmann 2005), and the impact of these factors on the retention of professionals and their families. We also take into account the roles of some stakeholders involved in the MRA process and the dynamics among them, as well as the effectiveness of policies that regulate immigration

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[3] Website of the *Ministère des relations internationales et de la francophonie*. http://www.mrif.gouv.qc.ca/en/ententes-et-engagements/ententes-internationales/reconnaissance-qualifications/entente-en-details, consulted on May 21, 2018.

[4] Website of the *Ministère des relations internationales et de la francophonie*. http://www.mrif.gouv.qc.ca/Content/documents/en/procedure_commune_entente_qualif_prof_FrQc_en.pdf, consulted on May 21, 2018.

and the labour market. This includes the *Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec*, the *Conseil interprofessionnel du Québec*, community organisations, French-trained engineers and their employers. We subscribe to the neo-institutionalist approach (Rizza 2008), examining how various institutions contribute to or impede such integration.

Our methodological protocol involved the case study approach (Creswell 2007) combining semi-structured interviews (14), including eight engineers trained in France and admitted through the MRA, and six key informants. Among the eight engineers, three were civil engineers, three electrical engineers and two from other engineering fields. Among the six key informants, three were stakeholders in the Quebec professional system, two from community organisations and associations involved in the integration of skilled immigrant workers, especially French engineers, and one from an employer (who employed two of the engineers interviewed). We added participant observation at meetings held by community organisations and the *Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec* about our study's object. We also met informally with three other actors involved in the France-Quebec MRA's governance, and documentary analysis was included as well. This methodological protocol was developed to validate data collected through triangulation (Céfaï 2003).

We selected engineers through a first round of call for participation with the help of the *Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec*. Afterwards, the snowball method allowed us to reach a sufficient number of participants to ensure data saturation.

We first interviewed the key informants, gathered and analysed the relevant documentation, and finally conducted semi-structured interviews with engineers. Most of the interviewees are just starting their careers, after some years of work in France, with the exception of three, who arrived in Quebec by their mid-careers.

Two factors limited the scope of our data collection. First, due to the MRA for engineers' recent implementation, we had to wait for sufficient cohorts of French-trained engineers to go through this new arrangement. Second, despite a positive response to our research initiative, representatives of the employers were relatively reluctant to participate in interviews.

ANALYSIS: THE PROCESS OF SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION

a) Structural dimension

This dimension includes all government structures related to professions' mechanisms of regulation and governance, the dynamics between actors and normative and legal guidelines related to socio-professional integration of French engineers eligible to MRA process.

The aspects of structural integration analysed here are the following: 1) the effect of certain policies pertaining to immigration and the integration of skilled migrants in Quebec; 2) the specific MRA process for engineers; 3) the coherence of political discourse with the reality of lived experiences, both in terms of the labour market and at a social level; 4) the practice of the profession and its differences between Quebec and France; and 5) the effect of other policies on the integration socio-professional workers – including education and recognition of diplomas, access to social services, housing, etc.

Various institutions, lack of coordination. A wide range of diverse institutions and actors play a role in the development, implementation and application of the MRA. They likewise play an important role in the processes related to the socio-professional integration of French-trained engineers in Quebec under this arrangement. This study finds that employers – and the services they have established for welcoming and integrating French professionals – play a very important role in these migrants' processes of socio-professional integration. A few firms have developed expertise in welcoming French engineers, where a designated employee accompanies and supports the integration of French employees, both in the workplace as well as in Quebec society, providing valuable information and helping them with the process of finding housing, a physician, and so forth.

> We do not have a formal welcoming program. We act according to each case. I make sure, well, how and where he arrives, is there someone who accompanies him on his arrival. I did it once; one person arrived during the Christmas season. At that moment I went to pick him up at the airport and brought him to his apartment. I welcomed him as best I could. (André, key informant)

Other companies offer the services of a lawyer to assist French-trained engineers with the necessary steps for immigration beyond the procedures related to the MRA. Those engineers who have had access to such services are unanimous in stressing their benefits. Due to this assistance, they were able to focus instead on preparing their dossier for becoming a member of the Order (OIQ). These types of practices are more frequent in engineering firms that are part of a French company or which have subsidiaries in France, and accordingly are familiar with integrating professionals from France into their team.

As for the steps required to enter the Roll of the *Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec* (OIQ), most of the engineers interviewed stressed the importance of preparing their dossier in advance, so as to accelerate the process once they arrived in Quebec. Several of them had already started to prepare their dossier a year in advance:

> My wife and I, we had already prepared one year before while we were still on Reunion Island. That's why, once I arrived I quickly got my junior engineer title, and after that, I passed the exam, and that's it! (Victor, engineer)

Lack of MRA awareness among employers. Some informants also addressed the obstacles and problems caused by the lack of awareness among certain employers about the MRA process and required documents, especially concerning recognition of their academic qualifications. Several engineers who obtained/benefitted from an MRA and who obtained a restrictive temporary permit, nevertheless were asked to request another comparative evaluation of their academic qualifications by the Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion (MIDI). Considering the existence of the MRA this process is unnecessary. Engineers and key informants have underlined this issue. The large number of complaints about this has led the OIQ to organise information sessions concerning the MRA for employers. In a previous study, a similar lack of understanding about the MRA among employers was also reported with the cases of social workers and architects (Bédard, Roger 2015).

This study thus demonstrates that the employer becomes one of the central actors for developing the professional and socio-cultural knowledge, playing an important factor helping or hindering these professionals in their workplace integration and the receiving society in general. It is a critical step towards getting familiar with the culture at work and outside of work. Difficulties experienced in these steps can lead to misunderstandings, frustrations and further disillusion, even to failure of the immigration project and return to France. Therefore, these key steps need to be included, along with the usual requirements for immigration and admission into the professional system per se.

Academic, social and legal differences between France and Quebec. There are many differences between France and Quebec's regulations for the engineering profession and between the academic training of engineers in each country, which make it difficult to understand each country's systems and the requirements put in place by the Quebec Order of Engineers (OIQ) to admit French candidates. In France, engineers are initially trained in the *Grandes Écoles* system, which is part of the professional schools, apart from universities. Afterwards, they receive their engineer titles from the *Commission des titres d'ingénieurs* (CTI). Each of these numerous *Grandes Écoles* has varying levels of prestige. Moreover, marks are somewhat unimportant; the degree, title and mostly, the name of the training establishment are paramount. In Quebec, the title of engineer ("Ing.") is issued by the OIQ upon completion of an engineering faculty or school, which is part of a university. Its importance is somewhat equivalent to that of the transcript for admission by the Quebec Order of Engineers. However, among employers, it is with recognised skills and experiences that an engineer succeeds in securing a position. In other words, once admitted by the Order, academic documents become less important and demonstrated skills are key to professional advancement. Therefore, French engineers need to put forward concrete accomplishments instead of their *Grande École* based on which the CTI issued their title. This emphasis on demonstrated accomplishments is much more present in Quebec than in France, echoing a North-American work culture.

An additional difference is that the OIQ requests a copy of each student's academic transcripts, a common practice in North America. These documents are routinely kept by individuals after completing their studies. In contrast, very few French-educated engineers keep a copy of their transcripts, and requesting them years later can be a burden, thereby delaying the engineer's entry on the Order's role.

It is also difficult for these engineers to produce proof of their previous professional experience, as required by the OIQ. In some cases, this is a sensitive problem for an engineer, since they must reveal their plan to leave France to their employer. In recognition of this problem, the OIQ has reconsidered the requirements they have set concerning engineers' previous professional experience. Likewise, other frustrating administrative aspects of the MRA are being reviewed, as experience shows these shortcomings.

Another great difference relates to the amount of responsibility assumed by the individual engineer. In Quebec, each engineer takes personal responsibility for their work when they sign off on projects and cost estimates. In contrast, in France, each engineering firm assumes full legal responsibility for the actions of its engineers. Accordingly, as noted by the informants in this study, the work of an engineer in Quebec is much more regulated than in France, particularly due to the fact that each engineer holds individual responsibility for their work and their mandate to protect the public, whereas in France, the engineering firms take responsibility for their engineers' professional actions.

> I discovered – personally, I didn't know – that engineering is highly regulated in Quebec. It's not that way in France; an engineer is an engineer. There is no order, and there are no restrictions for signing documents, etc. This is truly specific to Quebec. (Luc, engineer)

The engineering association in France serves more of a support role for professionals, whereas in Quebec the Order's primary task is to ensure public safety. Besides, its membership is mandatory to exercise the engineering profession in Quebec. This helps explain the OIQ's strict admission requirements for foreign-trained engineers:

> I was surprised because I thought the OIQ was an organisation that protected engineers. And no, it is an organisation that protects, rather, the public. (...) It exercises strong control over engineers. (Luc, engineer).

Alignment of political discourse with reality of lived experiences. Several informants in this study also noted that the discourse promoted by the Ministry of Immigration (MIDI), which aims to attract foreign professionals to work in Quebec, presents false information, can lure immigrants and does not correspond to the multi-layered realities of integration. There seem to be many discrepancies between this discourse and the lived experiences of migrants during their first months of integration, notably concerning the availability of places in government-subsidised day care centres for their children and the length of the workday (not shorter than in France).

> There are many, many frustrations that are experienced in relation to the image that Quebec gives in France as being the host country facilitating the recognition of skills. When people come here, it's not always so easy; people are realising that the process is very long and it creates a lot of difficulties for themselves, for the immigrant who comes to work, and for the partner who comes to work, who often leaves a job in France and comes to Quebec. We do not recognise that person's profession, especially in the area of health. That, I would say, creates a lot of frustration. (André, key informant)

In addition, some engineers note their deception in coming to Quebec and trying to balance their work and family life:

> In terms of work and family conciliation, it's the same (...). Yes, I work as much as in France, but I have fewer holidays. That's it (Victor, engineer).

Professional integration of partners. In most cases, these engineers' plans to migrate includes moving their families, which thus holds implications for their partners and children. This aspect adds to the relationship between engineers' retention in Quebec and the conditions that favour the social and professional integration of these

workers and their families. Consequently, a strong factor for retaining these engineers in Quebec is the possibility for their partners to have their academic credentials recognised and to be able to practice a profession similar to their field of experience from France. Yet many obstacles impede their partners' socio-professional integration, since having their academic and professional credentials recognised entails further requirements, costs, and delays.

> We also did a comparative evaluation of diplomas at the MICC. In this case, it's the same, it's necessary to prepare a big paper folder, which needs to be certified by a commissioner, blah blah, with copies of the diplomas, the identity, the schools' reports translated by trimester, by who knows who, reviews of courses, stuff, things. They took about a year to study the file (...) to give a kind of equivalence. But, as her profession is not recognised, well, the training was not recognised either. (Victor, engineer)

The difficulties these engineers' partners face concerning their labour market integration in Quebec thus represents an additional barrier to their social integration. Furthermore, according to our field research, interviews and conversations with key informants, French workers are nonetheless less inclined to access job search services than are immigrants from other countries. Moreover, French-trained engineers have access in Quebec to specific support groups such as the association *Francogénie*, which offers integration support and job search assistance.

b) Cultural and relational dimension

The cultural and relational dimension brings our analytical focus from a macro to a micro level. We examine here the role of individuals in their experience of using structures set up for professional and social integration.

This second dimension includes: 1) the process of learning social and cultural codes related to employment and wider social life; 2) relational, personal and professional dynamics as well as the role of networks on the experience of integration into Quebec society. Concerning the first aspect, this research highlights the cultural differences between working in France and Quebec. Our interviews reveal that several engineers who have obtained employment in Quebec experience culture shock, which adds to their difficulties in integrating professionally and personally. The key informant cited here represents an association with expertise in this field of adapting to workplace culture in Quebec.

> But what I can tell you is that after a year, we find these engineers in the offices of organisational psychologists because they have an attitude problem. Attitude, not skill. Why attitude? Because their "French behaviour", it doesn't work (...) with their bosses, it doesn't work with their employees, etc. I've seen many of them, who have passed by, and each time they were given my name saying: «So, go see him in this organisation to explain to you how to change to eliminate this attitudinal problem». I have never seen them. Never. (Marc, informant)

This informant argues that while the MRA is useful for recognising academic qualifications, it does not address what he considers the greatest challenge for French engineers migrating to Quebec: adapting to a new environment and workplace culture. This reminds us that the MRA for engineers aims at technocratically facilitating admission to the OIQ for French-trained engineers, without measures or programs intended to ease steps further down the road to regulated professional practice.

> The courses leading to the professional practice of French workers in Quebec (...) is broader than the MRAs, (...) the MRA allows to enter the Order without a problem, [but if] we talk about integration (...) it goes further. (...) we have a path, there. That's three to five years. (Marc, informant)

Several of the interviewed engineers also noted differences in Quebec's workplace culture that they appreciate, such as less hierarchy than in France. In addition, workplace culture in Quebec is generally based on performance and skills, as mentioned above, rather than on the origin of training (*Grande École* x or y), as opposed to the French system:

Here, they put your expertise and your skills in front, while in France the diplomas and the educational establishment where you studied is the first thing you look at. (Denis, engineer)

These perceived positive differences in workplace culture partially help these engineers to counter the effects of deskilling following the first years they work in Quebec. Besides, as shown by Hawthorne (2013: 13), «migrants can become marooned in conditional status for years, left in an invidious professional situation that may be associated with lower wages and the under-use of skills».

Engineers experience such professional deskilling especially during the period before they pass the Order's admission exam. They then hold a restrictive temporary permit that requires them to work under the supervision of an engineer who is a member of the OIQ, regardless of the number of years of work experience they might have already accumulated. Similarly to local graduates accessing the job market, they are considered a "junior" engineer, although they often are older and have more professional experience (even managerial experience) than their supervisor. Indeed, the dynamic interactions among colleagues and employers that characterise workplace culture in Quebec, as well as possibilities for internal mobility and advancement within the company, could also contribute to attenuating the constraints felt by many engineers during the restrictive permit period. Especially at first, supervision by an OIQ member can seem to constrain and give these engineers the impression that they are losing valuable time for their professional integration. Furthermore, while an engineer's salary raise in France is related to their title and level of academic credentials/studies, in Quebec as elsewhere in North America, their performance in the firm is the main determinant on their revenue. For instance, a Master's degree acquired in France has little relevance to an employee's initial salary level. However, pending use of these skills in engineer's tasks and mandates, performance should be valued and rewarded with time.

Besides, for these migrant workers, one of the key factors for integrating socio-professionally is their proactivity in formal, informal and social arenas. While only a minority of the interviewed engineers utilised the services of organisations that assist immigrants, those who did stress their effectiveness in terms of increasing their understanding of Quebec society and how it functions, as well as job search strategies.

She (my wife) went to see the neighbourhood associations and others, and in particular, next to where we lived, there were workshops, a kind of community association where she went, and where she came to know a lot of people. So very quickly, yes, she met people who became friends. (Denis, engineer)

Skilled workers coming from France must also learn the particularities of the job search process in Quebec. While in France a worker searches for a job mainly by sending their CV to firms, in Quebec one's job search is based more on networking - through attending information sessions and networking events, through social media online, and so forth. In this context, a worker's individual proactivity becomes essential to finding a job in Quebec. Accordingly, the majority of our interviewees stressed the effectiveness of social media such as LinkedIn for their job searches, as well as networking events and information sessions with potential employers.

Lastly, the French-trained engineers note that the Quebec job market is more flexible and entails more mobility than in France. The mobility of workers throughout their careers is valued more than in France, which is a much-appreciated aspect that French professionals acknowledge as they experience socio-professional integration in Quebec.

CONCLUSIONS

French engineers seem to initially underestimate the differences when adapting to their profession in Quebec. This study demonstrates that it is much a more difficult and complex process.

Most differences concern academic training, the context of professional practice, and work regulations. The processes put in place by the OIQ for obtaining a professional permit reflects these considerations. They seek to aid French professionals' adaptation to working in Quebec, while at the same time upholding the Order's primary reason for existence: protecting public safety.

The socio-professional integration of engineers under the France-Quebec MRA, and by extension their retention in the host country, results from a combination of structural, socio-cultural and relational dimensions. Concerning the structural dimension, as shown elsewhere (Gabriel 2013), our analysis of the France-Quebec MRA for engineers demonstrates that such arrangements facilitate admission to regulating the body's role but do not provide mechanisms to facilitate the social integration of these workers and their families into the host society. These agreements are designed solely in terms of integrating an individual worker into the labour market, considering only its economic dimension, leaving behind social and civic aspects of their integration. However, such a "labour division" between institutional levels has secondary effects, as we have tried to show from our data. The international movement of regulated professionals has implications that reach beyond the strictly economic sphere. Above all, once admitted into a profession through its regulating body, the retention of these professionals is linked to their capacity – and most often that of their families – to integrate into the host society in many different ways (related to housing, schools, etc.). Therefore, a technocratic treatment of professionals' admission into practice seems counter-productive or at the very least, because of its blindness regarding other dimensions of integration. In turn, these neglected dimensions can put in jeopardy the whole project of practising a regulated profession in the host country.

In this context, the absence of an international body for regulating labour markets leaves this regulation to national governments. This implies a reconfiguration at the state level, with new forms of governance and new stakeholders involved. In the case of Quebec, the professional orders have taken on an important role in governing the admission of foreign-trained professionals (FTPs). These organisations need to consider various interests: those of their professional field, the pressures of both public and private sectors, as well as the government, to admit FTPs, and their principal mandate of protecting public safety. In regulating the recognition of foreign qualifications, they seek to benefit firms, professionals and the public, both at local and international levels. Thus in this context, the notion of protecting public safety takes on great importance. The result is the implementation of measures encouraging mobility that are linked with enhancing the efficiency of the labour market on the one hand, and protecting local interests (essentially the public) on the other hand (Hawthorne 2013).

In contrast, public and media discourse advocate for admission of more foreign-trained professionals (FTPs), where the professional orders are often seen as primarily defending their members' interests. Owing to the principle of protecting public safety, the regulations restricting the admission of FTPs are often perceived as excessive constraints, leading them to experience underemployment, exemplified by the image of the foreign-trained professional working as a taxi driver.

As this study demonstrates, for engineers benefitting from the France-Quebec MRA the legal notion of protecting public safety is expressed by the OIQ's imposition of rules, responsibilities, obligations and limits to professional practice. In the eyes of these newly arrived migrants, such measures seem contradictory to the spirit of mutual recognition arrangements.

Many of the OIQ's requirements for admission to the order seem to create obstacles for entering professional practices for these MRA professionals, particularly through the need to present their academic transcripts from France and proof concerning their prior work experience. The OIQ has identified these problems and is proceeding to revise the compensatory measures they will require. This article notes the absence of measures within the MRA providing for the cultural and relational dimensions of engineers' socio-professional integration.

Firstly, the Agreement does not provide measures to assist the family members who accompany these engineers (mainly partners and children) with their social and professional integration. This especially discourages their partners, which can lead to a reconsideration of their initial plan to migrate and establish a new life in Quebec. As noted above, for most of the engineers interviewed, their plan to migrate is part of an overall plan for the future that includes their entire family. Employers' services for welcoming and integrating French professionals, when present, play a very important role in the process of integrating these professionals and their family members. Employment assistance organisations and community organisations working with immigrants are also valuable/interesting resources for these professionals and their families, even if – as this study has shown – French-trained professionals are less likely to access these services/organisations than are other FTPs who immigrate to Quebec.

Secondly, the logic underlying international agreements such as the France-Quebec MRA neglects to consider other effects on FTPs, such as the culture shock that they may experience upon migrating. Many of the engineers interviewed in this study discussed experiencing such culture shock, due to often-unsuspected differences in cultural codes for the profession and the workplace.

In addition, the MRA (at least at the start) did not consider the impacts of professional deskilling – whether real or symbolic – for these workers during the time they hold a restrictive temporary permit. Nevertheless, our interviewees have noted that several other factors specific to work in Quebec can alleviate the constraints created by the MRA requirements: a job market with greater flexibility and mobility than in France, the existence of better salary conditions, less hierarchical dynamics in the workplace, and greater possibilities for advancement within companies.

These professionals' skills that are required to access engineers' labour market are not linked to competencies associated with mainstream cultural codes in their host society. In other words, success in being admitted in a regulated profession offers no indication of retention, as failures in other dimensions of integration might void this initial success. Since the process of socio-professional integration ideally goes both ways, involving interaction between migrants and the host society (Béji, Pellerin 2010), it would be useful to further develop this investigation with the non-governmental actors involved in this process (employers, community organisations working with immigrants, organisations representing the interests of FTPs, etc.). It will also be important to compare with other jurisdictions (provinces, states) and professions (architects, nurses, doctors, etc.), considering the recent implementation of the engineers' MRA. This will enhance understanding about what elements of socio-professional integration are specific to engineers and what overlaps are found with FTPs in other professions.

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Monographic Section

Managing Knowledge Standards at the Periphery of Professional Knowledge Development: The Case of the Philippine Accountancy Profession and International Accounting Standards Harmonisation

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Abstract. This article is a case study of how a peripheral professional group, the Philippine accountancy profession, managed its knowledge standards to strengthen its occupational authority despite lack of control on standards development. It focuses on explaining the decision to harmonise the Philippine Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) with the International Accounting Standards (IAS), which overturned postcolonial dependence on the US GAAP as a model for standards development. The harmonisation of the Philippine GAAP with the IAS is the outcome of a complex mix of structural changes in the core of the accounting standards development field, resource constraints on domestic accounting standard-setters, and the local professional group's efforts to advance its professional project. Local conditions that favour adoption of a model and the active pursuit of occupational authority by local actors are just as crucial as pressures from the external global environment in decisions leading to harmonisation with international standards.

Keywords. Peripheral professions; knowledge standards; standards harmonisation; occupational authority.

INTRODUCTION

Control of the cognitive base is often theorised as an essential component of professionalisation (Sarfatti Larson 1977; Abbott 1988; Eraut 1994; Freidson 2001). Gaining occupational authority for a profession entails not just gaining an exclusive right to perform specific tasks but also an exclusive right to define the nature of these tasks (West 2003). Knowledge standards play a key role in a profession's management of its cognitive

base, serving as the intellectual foundation for claims of cognitive superiority over laymen in interpreting esoteric bodies of knowledge (Sarfatti Larson 1977). By promulgating «rule systems designed in the broader social interest which only the professionals understand» (Suddaby, Viale 2011: 432), professions define the boundaries of their power and expertise.

Most sociological studies of professionalisation focus on the experience of professionals in Western Europe and North America (Kuhlmann 2013; Svensson, Evetts 2010). In these regions, many professional groups engage in active standards development due to intense inter-professional jurisdictional competition (Abbott 1988) and the efforts of practitioners to exert professional autonomy from actors outside the profession (Burrage *et alii* 1990). The experience of professional groups at the core of professional knowledge development largely informed the theorising of the linkage between professionalisation and knowledge standards. However, this model of active standards development is inadequate in capturing the experience of peripheral professional groups, most of which depend on standards developed at the core when making their own local knowledge standards.

How is the relationship between knowledge standards and occupational authority managed by professional groups that are in a peripheral position of knowledge dependence? Are peripheral professional groups mere passive recipients of standards developed at the core? This article offers insights to these questions through a case study of one such peripheral professional group, the Philippine accountancy profession, and how it managed its knowledge standards, the Philippine Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

I argue that, while constrained by structural dependencies brought about by its peripheral position, the Philippine accountancy profession's decisions concerning knowledge standards were not just driven by developments at the core of the accounting standards development field, but also by practical and strategic considerations aimed at strengthening the occupational authority of Filipino accountants. To bring out this argument more clearly, I focus on explaining how the Philippine Accounting Standards Council (ASC or the Council), in 1995, ended up deciding to harmonise the Philippine GAAP with the International Accounting Standards (IAS, later renamed the International Financial Reporting Standards or IFRS), a turnaround from the Philippine accountancy profession's post-colonial dependence on the United States of America (US) GAAP for standards development. The harmonisation of the Philippine GAAP with the IAS is the outcome of a complex mix of structural changes in the core of the accounting standards development field, resource constraints on the ASC as a peripheral organisation, and the local professional group's pursuit of its professional project.

This article aims to enrich the discussion on the management of knowledge standards by professionals with a view from the periphery, responding to Kuhlmann's (2013) call for more international context-sensitive approaches to the sociology of professions. It is imperative to give cognizance to peripheral professional organisations not just because of the growing number of professionals outside Western Europe and North America but also because their position in the field translates to a different set of experiences with respect to contemporary issues faced by professions in an globalised world, including the growing influence of supra- and transnational actors on professional practice (Faulconbridge, Muzio 2011), the standardisation of professional knowledge across national borders (Botzem 2014), and the increasing cross-border mobility of practitioners (Bourgeault *et alii* 2016).

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Professions are distinct occupational groups that have institutionalised their occupational authority over specific knowledge-based services, earning them social and economic rewards in the process (Rafael 2014). Occupational authority refers to the exclusive right of a group to perform and to define the nature of specific tasks (West 2003). Knowledge standards play a key role in institutionalising and enhancing a profession's occupational authority, particularly in defining the body of esoteric knowledge which the group is claiming expertise on. Standards help professions carve out clear jurisdictional boundaries (MacDonald 1995; Abbott 1988) to marginalise competing occupational groups from making similar claims of monopoly expertise (Rafael 2014) and to assert cognitive superiority over laymen, particularly its clientele, on technical matters (Sarfatti Larson 1977).

The relationship between knowledge standards and occupational authority is very acute in the profession of accountancy. A series of high-profile financial reporting scandals in the 1930s and 1940s in the US and the United Kingdom (UK) led to the formalisation of accounting standards, which were packaged by accounting professionals as technical solutions to financial market failures (Birkett, Walker 1971). Since the post-World War II era, formal accounting standards have proliferated worldwide, with the practices of rule-making and rule-compliance being used and promoted by the profession of accountancy to bolster its claim of occupational authority on financial reporting (West 2003).

A core-periphery distinction formed in the global accounting standards development field after widespread standards formalisation. I use here the core-periphery concept to describe relations of dependence between professional groups in the development and propagation of professional knowledge. Core professional accounting organisations in the global accounting standards development field were situated in countries like the US, Canada, UK, Australia, France, Germany, and Japan, which had relatively large and active capital markets that extensively utilised financial reporting services. The core produced standards that served as models for local standards developed by peripheral professional accounting organisations. Core-periphery relations of dependence in accounting standards development were especially pronounced between professional groups from countries with colonial histories. Zeff (2012: 808) noted that in the first few decades after World War II, in many former colonies, «financial disclosure was minimal and there was little that could be called GAAP beyond what they might have inherited from former colonial masters».

The growth in operations of multinational enterprises and the increased international mobility of capital in the 1960s led to efforts within the accountancy profession to harmonise standards across different financial reporting jurisdictions. The core took the lead in the harmonisation initiative, as evinced by the history of the body that eventually became the focal organisation for accounting standards harmonisation, the International Accounting Standards Committee (IASC, later dissolved and reconstituted as the International Accounting Standards Board or IASB). The dominance of the core in standards harmonisation was challenged in the 1980s by peripheral associations through the International Federation of Accountants (Camfferman, Zeff 2006), which tried to take the IASC under its wing. The impact of the challenge made by the periphery was minimal, as the standards issued by the IASC and later the IASB, still substantively followed the direction and content of the accounting standards produced by the core.

The diffusion of accounting standards from the core to the periphery, particularly the IAS/IFRS, has been explained in many cases as a process of institutional isomorphism (Dufour *et alii* 2014; Albu *et alii* 2011; Lasmin 2011; Judge *et alii* 2010; Hassan 2008; Irvine 2008; Mir, Rahaman 2005). A consistent finding is that the desire to gain legitimacy in the globalised economy, particularly in the global capital market, underlay standards harmonisation decisions. Coercive isomorphic forces were particularly found significant in driving accounting standards harmonisation after the financialisation of capitalist economies (Krippner 2005) and the neoliberal turn in economic governance at the end of the 20th century. Harmonisation of national accounting standards with the IAS/IFRS gained momentum globally in the wake of the 1997 East Asian financial crisis, which triggered a widespread restructuring of capital market governance systems into privatised modes of market discipline in which accounting standards served as a technical foundation (Wade 2007). Supranational governance organisations like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank were key influencers in pushing IAS/IFRS adoption through the leveraging of loans (Albu *et alii* 2011), development aid (Mir, Rahaman 2005), and the issuance of favourable assessments of a country's regulatory environment that serve as endorsements to investors in the international capital market (Irvine 2008).

The Philippine accountancy profession's harmonisation of the Philippine GAAP with the IAS in 1995 stood out as a curious case of early adoption as it preceded by a couple of years the East Asian financial crisis, the key event that triggered global accounting standards harmonisation. At the time that the ASC made its decision, the IASC was barely making inroads in making countries adopt the IAS (Alfredson *et alii* 2005). Efforts to gain the endorsement of the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) for the IAS had not progressed as expected despite almost a decade of standards improvement and lobbying by the IASC (Camfferman,

Zeff 2006). Further confounding the puzzle of the Philippine shift to the IAS as primary model was the favourable assessment of the US GAAP-based Philippine GAAP in the mid-1990s by the World Bank (Saudagaran, Diga 1997) and the Asian Development Bank (1995), two organisations which were found in many other cases as key actors in the push for IAS/IFRS adoption (Arnold 2012).

With no obvious impetus from the global external institutional environment, I referred to the theorised relationship between knowledge standards and occupational authority to explain the harmonisation of the Philippine GAAP with the IAS in 1995. I explored the idea that standards modelling in the periphery, just like active standards development in the core, form part of the repertoire of actions available to professional groups to advance their professional projects. Standards-setting decisions, including choices of models, have strategic value in strengthening occupational authority in peripheral settings. Domestic conditions that favour external model adoption and the active advancement of the professional project by the local profession are just as crucial as pressures from the global institutional environment in explaining decisions leading to the adoption of international standards.

METHODS

In reconstructing the events that led to Philippine IAS harmonisation, I had to reckon with a major challenge: the lack of surviving official documentation of the activities of the ASC. When the ASC was dissolved in 2006 and succeeded by the Philippine Financial Reporting Standards Council (FRSC) as the Philippines' official accounting standards-setter, the organisation's archived documents including minutes of meetings and official communication were disposed upon the instruction of its lone Chair for more than two decades, Carlos Alindada. I had to rely extensively on key informants to generate accounts of the discussions that led to the decision to harmonise the Philippine GAAP with the IAS in 1995. In the interviews, I explored the dynamics of the ASC's operations and the shared understandings between the members of the Council, the differing perspectives, the interests pursued, and the points of contention on accounting standards harmonisation. I managed to interview three of the five surviving members of the ASC that made the harmonisation decision: Carlos Alindada, the Council's long-time Chair, Alfredo Parungao who was the representative of the financial executives, and another member who did not wish to be named and shall be referred to as Louise in this article. In addition to the ASC members, I also interviewed David Balangue, former chair of the FRSC, Benjamin Punongbayan, an influential figure in the Philippine accounting industry and known critic of the ASC during the 1990s, and Romulfo Villamayor, Alindada's former staff in SGV & Co. who did research and standards-writing work for the ASC. All interviewees, except for one former ASC member, gave their permission to be publicly identified for this research. The interviews were conducted from August to September 2015.

Data generated through interviews about events that happened more than twenty years ago are exposed to the risk of misremembering by key informants. Past events may also be reframed by informants using the lens of their present context and to reflect an image that supports their own interests. To address these reliability issues, I validated claims made by key informants by comparing the interview accounts with each other and cross-checking with publicly-available records about similar subjects that were published around the time of the IAS harmonisation decision. I acknowledge the epistemological disadvantages of information generated from interviews compared to written documentation but contend that such limitations should be squarely faced in peripheral conditions of under-resourced professional standards-setting organisations such as the ASC. The interviews proved to be important in piercing the veil of the positive image of Philippine accounting standards development painted in officially-sanctioned pronouncements (e.g. Fajardo 2009; Vicente 2002), thus bringing out the internal dynamics of ASC operations and a more plausible explanation of how the harmonisation decision was arrived at.

For the archival research, I examined Philippine laws and official documents relevant to financial reporting and professional regulation, bound volumes of the officially approved Philippine GAAP, and the publications of the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA), the umbrella organisation of professional accountants in the Philippines. Particularly useful in reconstructing the events that led to IAS harmonisation

was the Accountants' Journal, the quarterly magazine of PICPA, which contained research articles, published versions of speeches made by key personalities in the Philippine accountancy profession, and annotated reprints of standards released by standard-setting bodies, including the ASC and the IASC. I also examined documents from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the IOSCO to see if there were any policy recommendations for the Philippines to adopt the IAS leading to the harmonisation decision in 1995 but found no significant pronouncements to that effect.

SETTING THE CONTEXT: PHILIPPINE ACCOUNTANCY'S HISTORICAL TIES WITH US PRACTICE

Like many countries that experienced Western colonisation (Baydoun *et alii* 1997; Annisette 2000; Zeff 2012), the profession of accountancy in the Philippines initially bore the imprint of the professional practice of its former coloniser. The financial reporting needs of US businesses, which accounted for much of the demand for the Philippine accountancy profession's services in its early years (Dyball *et alii* 2007), shaped the contours of local professional accounting knowledge (Asian Development Bank 2002). The US influence was reinforced in the system of formal accounting education through the extensive use of US-sourced teaching materials and the employment of US-trained accounting professionals as teachers (Diga 1997).

After US colonisation, the Philippine accountancy profession flourished and aimed for leadership in the Southeast Asian region. Many large Philippine accounting firms established international linkages by networking with transnational accounting firms (Tullao *et alii* 2001). Sycip, Gorres, Velayo and Co. (SGV & Co.), the undisputed leading firm of the Philippine accountancy profession to this day (Borja 2015), built its own international practice by establishing the SGV Group, a technical cooperation network of accounting firms in East Asia (SGV & Co. n.d.), before it became part of the Andersen and later the Ernst & Young transnational network. The Philippine accountancy profession also sought regional leadership through active involvement in international professional associations. The success of Filipino accountants after World War II nationally and internationally is partly attributable to the strong technical foundations laid early during the US colonial era in terms of professional training, practice, and knowledge (Diga 1997).

PICPA was one of the first accounting organisations in Asia to codify its knowledge standards, issuing recommendatory bulletins as early as 1949 (Asian Development Bank 2002). The development of a codified Philippine GAAP was formally institutionalised and systematised with the creation of the PICPA Committee on Accounting Principles in 1968. While PICPA was not mandated by Philippine law at the time to issue GAAP, it chose to issue the bulletins to fulfil its organisational objective of promoting high standards for the Philippine accountancy profession (Committee on Accounting Principles 1978) and, more importantly, to support the Philippine profession's claim of being the industry leader in the Southeast Asian region (Punongbayan 1996).

The PICPA Committee on Accounting Principles used the US GAAP as a model for its standards not just due to the embeddedness of US practices in the Philippine accountancy profession (Diga 1997) but also because the US GAAP, then the most comprehensive among the standards developed in the core (Pereira *et alii* 1994), proved to be a rich and immediately available resource that allowed for the quick development of Philippine GAAP. From the time of its founding in 1968 to its dissolution in 1981, the PICPA Committee on Accounting Principles was able to issue 24 regular bulletins, and three special bulletins, all except one of which was based on the US GAAP (Committee on Accounting Principles 1978; Diga 1997).

Because of the productivity of the PICPA Committee on Accounting Principles in terms of the number of standards issued, the Philippine GAAP at the time of the committee's dissolution in 1981 was relatively more robust compared to the GAAP of similar peripheral groups in the accounting standards development field, particularly those in other Southeast Asian countries (Baydoun *et alii* 1997). The topic coverage of the Philippine GAAP in 1981 was more comprehensive even compared to the IAS (Committee on Accounting Principles 1978; Diga 1997; Accounting Standards Council 1999; Camfferman, Zeff 2006). The use of the US GAAP as mod-

el accelerated the development of Philippine GAAP and reinforced the Philippine accountancy profession's drive to be considered the industry leader in Southeast Asia (Punongbayan 1996; Balangue, personal communication, August 19, 2015).

BUILDING UP AUTHORITY OVER THE CLIENT BASE: THE FOUNDING THE ACCOUNTING STANDARDS COUNCIL

Even though the Philippine GAAP was relatively well-developed by the end of the 1970s, which helped the Philippine accountancy profession claim regional leadership, it did not translate into strong occupational authority with respect to the profession's main clientele: the Philippine businesses required by law to submit audited financial statements. PICPA, as a private organisation, did not have official authority to require financial statement preparers to comply with the PICPA Accounting Principles Bulletins. The legal mandate at the time to issue standards for financial reporting practices rested with the Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission. Because of the lack of statutory authority behind the Philippine GAAP, professional advice that referred to the PICPA standards were treated by many audit clients as mere recommendations (Banaria 1983; Carlos Alindada, personal communication, August 23, 2015).

In 1979, PICPA commissioned its Committee on Accounting Research and Special Studies to conduct a study on the accounting standards-setting situation in the Philippines in order to address the problem of standards enforceability (Banaria 1983). The committee was headed by Alindada, who at the time was also the head of SGV & Co.'s Accounting and Auditing Standards Group and, in the said position, experienced first-hand the difficulty of enforcing the Philippine GAAP on audit clients (Alindada, personal communication, August 23, 2015). The committee found that the key to making Philippine GAAP enforceable was ensuring the support and participation of government regulators in the standards-setting process and recommended the formation of an inclusive standards-setting organisation. As Alindada (personal communication, August 23, 2015) put it, «we [the PICPA members] had the knowledge but do not have the authority. They [the regulators] had the authority but do not have the knowledge. It was a perfect match».

The recommendations made by the PICPA Committee on Accounting Research and Special Studies led to the founding of the ASC, an independent non-profit private organisation tasked to establish and improve the Philippine GAAP, which would be called the Philippine Statements of Financial Accounting Standards (Accounting Standards Council 1999). The decision by PICPA to create a standards-setting organization that had the statutory backing of relevant regulatory authorities was primarily motivated by professionalization concerns, particularly the Philippine accountancy profession's goal of making its standards enforceable and thereby strengthening its authority over its client base (Banaria 1983; Carlos Alindada, personal communication, August 23, 2015). This reflected in the ASC's organizational structure, with the Council being composed of senior officers from organizations with a stake in financial reporting, namely PICPA, the Philippine Board of Accountancy, the Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission, the Philippine Central Bank, and the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines (Accounting Standards Council 1999). The Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission and the Philippine Central Bank further legitimated the ASC's mandate by coming up with policy pronouncements requiring compliance with the Philippine Statements of Financial Accounting Standards for financial reports submitted to their offices.

The ASC's official rules specified a relatively wide base of references for developing standards (Accounting Standards Council 1999). However, the ASC in its first decade of operations remained primarily reliant on the US GAAP as a model just like its predecessor standard-setting body, the PICPA Committee on Accounting Principles. The continuing US GAAP dependence by the ASC was largely brought about by its decision to jumpstart standards development work by revising first the old PICPA Accounting Principles Bulletins (Banaria 1983). Of the first 11 standards issued by the ASC between 1983 and 1984, only one was not a revision of an existing PICPA Accounting Principles Bulletin. All were modelled after the US GAAP (Accounting Standards Council 1999; Asian Development Bank 2002).

The decision to use the PICPA Accounting Principles Bulletin as a basis for the Philippine Statements of Financial Accounting Standards was fruitful at the start, resulting to 19 standards promulgated in a span of just five years (Accounting Standards Council 1999). The quick pace of standards issuance built up the reputation of the ASC as a credible official accounting standards-setter, the issuances of which helped a great deal in improving financial reporting in the Philippines (Punongbayan 1994). The ASC's initial productivity along with the new-found statutory enforceability of the standards bolstered the Philippine accountancy profession's claim of occupational authority in financial reporting matters in the early 1980s.

QUICK DECLINE IN THE ASC'S STANDARDS PRODUCTIVITY

The ASC's enthusiastic start to standards development was not sustained. Succeeding years saw a substantial reduction in the number of new Philippine Statements of Financial Accounting Standards issued (see Figure 1). Alindada (personal communication, August 23, 2015) maintained that the ASC managed to issue standards as the need arises. However, Benjamin Punongbayan (1996; 1994; personal communication, September 9, 2015), a former PICPA president and vocal critic of the ASC, disagreed with Alindada's positive representation, and argued that the Philippines did not have a comprehensive, all-inclusive Philippine GAAP in the first decade of ASC operations because standards formulation became slow and selective. The sharp deterioration in the ASC's standards-writing productivity as shown in Figure 1 supports Punongbayan's claim.

The steep decline in the number of new standards issued was indicative of the ASC's lack of capacity to carry out independent standards development work. The ASC did not have resources to employ full-time staff to do research and standards-writing work, as the regular financial support from PICPA of around 2,000 USD annually (Fajardo 2009) was enough to fund only monthly meeting expenses (Alindada, personal communication, August 23, 2015; Balangue, personal communication, August 19, 2015). The prioritisation of ensuring standards enforceability over building up standards development capacity in the ASC's organisational design also adversely affected its productivity, as the ASC was composed of individual part-time members who occupied high-ranking positions in other organisations. Belying the image of an active standards-setting organisation as described in official documents (Accounting Standards Council 1999), the ASC's members did not do much standards development work themselves because of the limited time they could devote to Council activities (Louise, personal communication, August 3, 2015).

Faced with part-time membership and the lack of funds to hire dedicated personnel, the ASC relied heavily on Alindada's staff from the Accounting and Auditing Standards Group of SGV & Co. for research and standards-writing work (Louise, personal communication, August 3, 1995; Villamayor, personal communication, August 27, 2015). Punongbayan (personal communication, September 9, 2015) described the ASC's strong dependence on SGV & Co. for administrative support as a form of "regulatory capture", which was par for the course for the firm's long dominance of key leadership positions that were crucial to the Philippine accountancy profession (Dyball, Valcarcel 1999; Louise, personal communication, August 3, 1995).

The informal research team of the ASC within SGV & Co. did their standards development work on company time on top of their obligations as full-time employees of the Philippines' largest accounting firm. Labour time that could be devoted to

Figure 1. Number of approved Philippine Statements of Financial Accounting Standards per year, 1983 to 1995. Source: Accounting Standards Council 1999.

developing standards was limited, making it particularly difficult for the research team to exert the necessary effort to produce new standards that were not mere improvements of the Philippine GAAP previously issued by PICPA. Thus, the pace of standards issuance by the ASC considerably slowed down after most of the Philippine Statements of Financial Accounting Standards that were based on the old PICPA Accounting Principles Bulletins were issued[1] (Asian Development Bank 2002; Accounting Standards Council 1999; Committee on Accounting Principles 1978).

The ASC's sharp decline in standards productivity threatened not just its legitimacy as a standards-setting body but the Philippine accountancy profession's occupational authority on financial reporting matters. It is important to note that the pressure to address the productivity problem in the mid-1990s did not come from external parties, which looked favourably on the Philippine GAAP (Saudagaran, Diga 1997), but from influential personalities within the Philippine accountancy profession who were concerned with the impact of the ASC's poor performance on the local profession's credibility and reputation. Punongbayan (1994: 9) criticised the ASC openly in a public speech during a PICPA event and lamented that «years ago, we [Filipino accountants] were considered to be the vanguard of development in the accounting profession in this part of the world. I believe this is no longer so». Motivating Punongbayan's criticisms at the time was the ASC's failure to address the need for accounting standards to guide financial reporting in the pre-need industry that sold educational, memorial and life plans which hit its peak economic activity in the early 1990s (Punongbayan, personal communication, September 9, 2015). Another notable public criticism of the ASC was made by Conchita Manabat (1995), a former head of the Philippine Board of Accountancy and member of the ASC, who, in a lead article for an issue of the *Accountants' Journal*, called for a rethinking of the resource support of the organisation to enable it to achieve its objectives.

UNSUSTAINABLE RELIANCE ON THE US GAAP

While the ASC was dealing with internal capacity problems, the US GAAP which served as the Philippine GAAP's traditional model was undergoing significant changes. The financialisation of the US economy (Krippner 2005), combined with the shift to neoliberal modes of capital market governance (Wade 2007), led to both quantitative and qualitative changes in the complexity of US standards. In terms of number of standards, the US GAAP was already fairly complex when the ASC drafted its initial set of standards in 1982. By 1994, it became even more complex as the number of pronouncements constituting the US GAAP more than doubled in just over a decade (Financial Accounting Standards Board 1982; Delaney *et alii* 1995). The "standards overload" (Alindada, personal communication, August 23, 2015) in the US GAAP was largely brought about by a qualitative change in complexity of economic transactions in the US capital markets with the increasing sophistication of financial instruments, lease financing, the reporting of fair values, and financial risks (Delaney *et alii* 1995).

The change in complexity of the US GAAP brought out a significant disconnect between US and Philippine financial reporting needs. Diga (1997) noted that the relatively underdeveloped state of the capital market, the lack of sophistication in financing arrangements, and the dominance of family-held instead of publicly-traded enterprises in the Philippines accounted for substantive differences in the environment underlying financial accounting practice in the US and the Philippines in the mid-1990s. Complex financing arrangements were not prevalent in Philippine capital markets. There was also a lack of demand in the Philippines for many types of information required to be publicly disclosed in the US GAAP, such as information on the operations of business segments, compensation of employees, and detailed earnings-per-share, because the dominance of family-held enterprises over publicly-traded firms in the Philippines «does not necessarily encourage widespread disclosure of internal business affairs» (Diga 1997: 212).

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[1] Of the eleven Philippine Statements of Financial Accounting Standards issued between 1983 to 1984, ten were based on the PICPA Accounting Principles Bulletins. In contrast, only five of the twelve standards issued from 1985 to 1995 used the old PICPA standards as reference.

As the pronouncements comprising the US GAAP significantly increased in number and became more specific to the US context, modifying the US GAAP to develop standards that fit the Philippine context increasingly required more research effort from the ASC. Sifting through the literature and weeding out inapplicable provisions became quite tedious for the part-time research team of the ASC who squeezed in research and standards development work for the Council in between performing full-time responsibilities as employees of SGV & Co. By the mid-1990s, in terms of sophistication and topic coverage, the US GAAP was still the most technically superior model for accounting standards development (Camfferman, Zeff 2006), but the question for the members of the ASC was the practicality of always having to modify the increasingly complex US GAAP to make the standards applicable to the Philippine setting (Alindada, personal communication, August 23, 2015).

By the mid-1990s, reliance on the US GAAP for standards development was becoming unsustainable. However, the US GAAP cannot just be dropped as a model because the Philippine GAAP was assessed favourably by supranational organisations influential in financial reporting matters, particularly the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (Saudagaran, Diga 1997; Asian Development Bank 1995). To keep the stature of the Philippine GAAP, a replacement model should be perceived to be of comparable internationally accepted legitimacy to the US GAAP (Alindada, personal communication, August 23, 2015). It is at this point that the IAS emerged as a viable option to become the primary model for the Philippine GAAP.

HARMONISATION OF THE PHILIPPINE GAAP
WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTING STANDARDS

By the early 1990s, the IAS had considerably improved topic coverage and quality compared to its state when the ASC started developing the Philippine Statements of Financial Accounting Standards in 1982. The marked improvement in the IAS was brought about by the IASC's active bid to become the leader in the field of global accounting standards development. Recognising the growing importance of capital market regulators as legitimators of financial reporting standards in a financialised neoliberal global economy, the IASC in the latter half of the 1980s actively pursued the endorsement of the IOSCO for the IAS to be used for cross-border listings (Camfferman, Zeff 2006). The IOSCO was then a fledgling association of securities market regulators positioning itself to become the world's «genuine international securities watchdog» (ibid.: 294). The IASC and the IOSCO entered into a strategic partnership in 1987, leading to the IASC Comparability and Improvements project that resulted in a set of substantially revised IAS in 1993.

Despite the improvements in the IAS, the IASC failed to gain IOSCO's endorsement during the original target year of 1994 (Camfferman, Zeff 2006). However, this did not stop the partnership between the IASC and IOSCO. On July 11, 1995, the IASC and IOSCO announced that they have come up with a work plan that «will result, upon successful completion, in IAS comprising a comprehensive core set of standards» by 1999, which «will allow the [IOSCO] Technical Committee to recommend endorsements of IAS for cross-border capital raising and listing purposes in all global markets» (IOSCO Technical Committee 2000: 106).

Early significant support for the Core Standards Project came from Europe through the European Commission. After the IASC-IOSCO joint press release, the European Union's financial services commissioner, Mario Monti, expressed support for the initiative (Camfferman, Zeff 2006). This was later formalised in a November 1995 official communication where the European Commission committed that it is «putting the [European] Union's weight behind the international harmonisation process which is already well underway in the International Accounting Standards Committee» (European Commission 1995: 2). The European Commission was motivated by its desire to reduce the financial reporting costs of European companies listing in US capital markets that had to report under different financial reporting regimes, and to ensure that the European voice would be felt in the formulation of the IAS given the ubiquity of the US Securities and Exchange Commission in the activities of the IASC (Camfferman, Zeff 2006; European Commission 1995).

The growing interest by European companies to be listed in US capital markets shaped the US Securities and Exchange Commission's response to the Core Standards Project. Key to the response was the New York Stock Exchange, which has long held the view that the US Securities and Exchange Commission's strict US GAAP financial reporting requirement was an obstacle in its bid to become the world's leading capital market for foreign companies (Cochrane 1993-1994). With increasing pressure from the New York Stock Exchange and faced with the prospect of dealing with a wide variety of national accounting standards from foreign companies seeking listing in US capital markets, the US Securities and Exchange Commission publicly declared its support for the IASC Core Standards Project and even encouraged the IASC to accelerate the project's pace, offering to help raise the additional funds needed to ensure the release of the complete IAS before the original target date of June 1999 (Camfferman, Zeff 2006).

Alindada broached to the ASC in 1995 the idea to shift from the US GAAP to the IAS as the primary model for all subsequent Philippine GAAP issuances and received no opposition (Alindada, personal communication, August 23, 2015; Parungao, personal communication, August 11, 2015). While the IAS had been a practical low-cost option (Saudagaran, Diga 1997) that had relatively comprehensive topic coverage since the completion of the IASC Comparability and Improvements project in 1993, the ASC was concerned with its legitimacy as a suitable replacement model for the well-established US GAAP given the lack of endorsements from major capital market regulators. The positive responses to the IASC Core Standards project by the US Securities and Exchange Commission and the European Commission were taken by the ASC as legitimation of the IAS as a global standard and strong indicators of the inevitability of IOSCO endorsement by the turn of the 21th century (Alindada 1995; Parungao, personal communication, August 11, 2015).

Modelling local standards to the IAS was viewed by the ASC members as a pragmatic decision considering developments in the global economy which were creating conditions that would make widespread accounting standards harmonisation an eventual reality (Alindada 1995; Parungao, personal communication, August 11, 2015; Louise, personal communication, August 3, 2015). For the ASC members, not harmonising with the IAS meant losing opportunities for the Philippine accountancy profession in a globalising world. «If you look at the globe, the Philippines is just a dot. So, we cannot, I mean, pragmatically, we do not make a difference. This will be driven by the big and the powerful...We cannot be different, we are just a small country, so we would have lost opportunities»[2] (Louise, personal communication, August 3, 2015).

Despite the largely positive response to the IASC Core Standards project, no country other than the Philippines decided to immediately harmonise their standards with the IAS within the first couple of years of the project's announcement (Camfferman and Zeff 2006; Alfredson et alii 2005). Explaining the ASC's decision to harmonise before the completion of the Core Standards Project, Balangue (personal communication, August 19, 2015) laughingly recalled that «we were showing off a bit»[3]. Reflecting the long-standing belief within the profession of the country's status as the industry leader in the region, the members of the ASC viewed the Philippine GAAP at the time as being advanced compared to the standards of other accountancy bodies in Southeast Asia[4]. Harmonising immediately with the IAS after the announcement of the Core Standards Project was seen by the ASC as necessary to maintain the Philippine accountancy profession's regional leadership (Alindada, personal communication, August 23, 2015; Balangue, personal communication, August 19, 2015).

Finally, harmonisation with the IAS was viewed as a practical solution to address the ASC's lack of independent standards development capacity. As Alindada (1995:30) succinctly put it in a speech before the ASEAN Federation of Accountants explaining Philippine IAS harmonisation, «Why reinvent the wheel when the research and

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[2] Translated from Filipino.
[3] Translated from Filipino.
[4] This is not to discount the accounting standard-setters of Singapore and Malaysia, both of which used the IAS as a model before the Philippines did (Baydoun et alii 1997). Alindada (personal communication, August 23, 2015), however, distinguished them as different cases, as they modelled their standards after the IAS since the start of their formal accounting standards development, unlike other Southeast Asian countries like the Philippines which had to transition from an old model.

development has been already undertaken by the IASC?». The informal research team of the ASC in SGV & Co. was relieved of the considerable burden of weeding out provisions not applicable to the Philippine setting with the shift from US GAAP to the relatively less complex IAS. The IAS harmonisation decision had an immediate positive effect on the productivity of the ASC. From 1996 to 2000, seven new Statements of Financial Accounting Standards that were based on the IAS were issued, which was almost double the ASC's output during the similar five-year period of 1991 to 1995. Because of the improved performance, even Punongbayan, the ASC's vocal critic, lauded in public the IAS harmonisation decision, as «earlier concerns about the organization and related issues of ASC had become unimportant and did not pose a threat anymore» (Punongbayan, personal communication, September 9, 2015). The threat to the profession's occupational authority on financial reporting matters because of the ASC's capacity problems has been deemed resolved.

Influential figures within the Philippine accountancy profession immediately put their weight behind the ASC's decision. The Philippine Professional Regulation Commission, which oversaw the Board of Accountancy, committed to extending the necessary institutional support to update the Philippine GAAP in relation to the IAS (Pobre 1996). Distinguished figures in the profession also publicly expressed their support for the ASC's decision (Acyatan 1996). The Philippine accountancy profession closed ranks on the issue of IAS harmonisation, which was viewed as an important update in the practice of Filipino accountants that would enable them to compete in a globalising world (Acyatan 1996).

CONCLUSIONS

In the ensuing years, more than the resumption of regular standards issuance, the significance of the IAS harmonisation decision to the professional project of Filipino accountants was its prefiguring of the global pivot towards the IAS/IFRS by the turn of the 21th century. The IASC substantially completed its set of core standards by the end of 1998 and gained IOSCO endorsement for the IAS in May 2000 (Camfermann, Zeff 2006). The Philippines achieved full convergence of the Philippine GAAP with the IAS/IFRS by the year 2005, the same year set by the European Commission for full European Union adoption. Full harmonisation with the IAS/IFRS opened new professional spaces for Filipino accountants, most crucially jobs in other countries that adopted the IAS/IFRS (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration). To what extent these opportunities for Filipino accountants were anticipated by the ASC members who made the harmonisation decision is up for debate. What was undeniable, though, was that the IAS harmonisation decision was made with advancing the professional project in mind, cognizant of developments in both the local and global institutional environment.

Philippine accounting standards development started out during the post-World War II era unmistakably bearing the imprint of its former colonial master just like other formerly colonised countries. However, unlike Zeff's (2012) passive characterisation of GAAP development in the periphery, the Philippine accountancy profession actively turned the relatively sophisticated cognitive base left behind by the US colonisers into an advantage, using it as a springboard to gain industry leadership in the Southeast Asian region. Philippine GAAP was codified as a national standard much earlier than its counterpart standards in neighbouring countries (Baydoun *et alii* 1997). Regional leadership was pursued not by developing knowledge standards with original content but rather through strategic utilisation of a foreign model to bolster the profession's status. Major standards-setting decisions, like the founding of the ASC, were made with the intention of bolstering the profession's occupational authority.

The lack of resources to independently develop local knowledge standards was a condition shared by the ASC with many other peripheral professional organisations that harmonised their national GAAP with the IAS/IFRS (Albu *et alii* 2011; Hassan 2008; Mir, Rahaman 2005; Saudagaran, Diga 1997). Just like these other organisations, practical considerations played a big part in the decision to transition to the IAS. However, the Philippine case showed that aside from practicality, legitimacy was also a major consideration in the ASC's decision. While the IAS has long been indicated as a possible reference for developing the Philippine GAAP in the ASC's by-laws and despite practical problems faced by the ASC in producing new standards based on the US GAAP, the IAS was

seriously considered as a primary model only after the announcement of the IASC Core Standards project and the expression of support by the US Securities and Exchange Commission and the European Commission. In the pre-1997 East Asian financial crisis economic environment, the desire to gain both legitimacy and efficiency through modelling best explains the strategic decision of the peripheral ASC to harmonise its standards with the newly-legitimated standards of the IASC.

The widespread adoption of IAS/IFRS is theorised in many cases as standards diffusion primarily driven by coercive institutional isomorphic processes (Dufour *et alii* 2014) initiated by supranational organisations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Arnold 2012). Arnold (2009) suggests that the tie between financial reporting practice and the process of financialisation of capitalist economies explains the rapid harmonisation of accounting standards starting in the last decade of the Twentieth century. Power (2009) offers an even more intriguing proposition that financial accounting practice had already been a highly rationalised practice at the world level as part of the global expansion of a universalistic and commercial culture even before the so-called internationalisation of standards. Without denying the importance of these macro-processes highlighted by institutionalist explanations of global accounting standards diffusion, the intentionality of the actors on the ground, specifically peripheral professional accounting organisations that had to make harmonisation decisions, should not be overlooked. Despite the widespread standardisation of the knowledge base and the transnationalisation of professional organisations in the accountancy profession, GAAP enforcement and jurisdictional issues for public accountancy practice outside the European Union are still largely parochial affairs determined within national boundaries. Decisions concerning knowledge standards should be explained not just considering pressures from the external institutional environment but also the effects of the local profession's internal dynamics and how such decisions serve the collective interest of the local professional group. In the case of the peripheral Philippine accountancy profession, choices on primary models were made by the ASC based on a strategic and pragmatic reading of the institutional environment, both internal and external, taking note of the prospects for collective advancement and the risks of lost opportunities for the profession.

In conclusion, the management by a professional group of its cognitive base need not equate to the full control of the standards development process. For a peripheral professional organisation such as the Philippine accountancy profession, modelling local knowledge standards with those developed and legitimated at the core may prove to be an effective pragmatic strategy to strengthen occupational authority. In globalised professional fields with defined core-periphery distinctions in knowledge standards development, position in the field matters in determining which types of action concerning knowledge standards are effective in advancing the local professional project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Monographic Section

Professional Boundaries in Transnational IT Workspaces

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Abstract. In this article, I analyse the formation of professional boundaries in the dynamic of globalisation and the internationalisation of work concentrating on the question of how professional boundaries emerge in transnational workspaces constituted by heterogeneous actors from different institutional and socio-cultural backgrounds. Theoretically, I depart from Abbott's notion of 'linked ecologies' and focus on three dimensions of professionalism (the *linkages between tasks and organised action* or professional jurisdictions, the *mechanisms for legitimating work* or control over work and the *search for professional identity*) as basic mechanisms of professional boundaries formation in transnational workspaces. Retrospectively, I show focusing on the case of IT project management how employers and practitioners combining organisational and occupational professionalism contribute to form professional boundaries in workspaces that emerge in globalisation processes. Based on the research results and comparing them with the current situation of transnational IT project management, I conclude that the processes of formation of professional boundaries in the IT sector are historically situated in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Keywords. Professionalism; professional boundaries; transnationalisation; IT work.

INTRODUCTION

IT work, particularly in the areas of software development and IT services, has experienced a very rapid occupational diversification and a broad internationalisation during the last decades fuelled by the possibilities of global working that the internet allows. Whereas the analysis of organisational implications of the internationalisation of work has very much developed, the particular consequences for the transformation of professional boundaries in emerging transnational workspaces have been widely overlooked.

Professional boundaries are meant in the sense of understanding how task areas come to be distinguished from one another (i.e. experts from laymen) and more generally how classification systems emerge and interrelate

to each other based on professionalism. Professionalism understood as both occupational value for working practice and means of practitioner/employee control (Evetts 2011) constitutes a basic mechanism of professional boundaries formation. In everyday work interactions between practitioners and employers, different sorts of boundaries (socioeconomic, moral, cultural, symbolic) interrelate leading to work differentiation and classification systems that change and remain permeable and relative regarding their importance.

Professional boundaries have for example changed due to the increasing involvement of professionals in enterprises and to knowledge and technological transformation. Occupational and organisational professionalism came closer to each other. Difficulties of management of professionals in the service sector lead to recreate professionals as managers and to manage using normative techniques (Evetts 2011; Noordegraaf 2007) as well as linking organisational discourses with professionalism, quality or customer services (Evetts 2011). Moreover, in the dynamic of knowledge and technological change, some tasks disappear while others emerge with still no abstract knowledge base (Abbott 1988) or recognised credentials (Freidson 2001). New occupations emerge and challenge those fields while at the same time they compete with each other or cooperate. In emergent occupations, organisational control through professionalism discourses replaces occupational professionalism and discretion (Evetts 2006). Market-oriented organisational objectives and culture integrated into the discourse of professionalism limit professional discretion. Professionalism can thus adopt a mixed form of occupational and organisational features combining permeate boundaries between organisations and occupations. This kind of professionalism represents the control basis of emerging occupations and constitutes an especial mechanism for facilitating and promoting occupational (Evetts 2006; 2003) as well as organisational change.

Another important factor contributing to the change of professional boundaries has been the internationalisation of work. Professionals are increasingly employed in international operating enterprises that challenge the traditionally national situated boundaries of occupational professionalism based on state licensing of abstract knowledge and practice. Processes of internationalisation cause tasks and knowledge to be redefined and redistributed, thus questioning bureaucratic and expert power as well as the balance between the normative and the ideological dimensions of professionalism. Transnational jurisdictions emerge in which experts and specialists from different occupations and organisations interact.

Particularly knowledge-based expert occupations in the service segment of the IT branch such as project, quality management or consultancy have experienced a rapid internationalisation in recent years and a growing uncertainty related to international markets and global economies. This results in the need for a social order to control work processes and outputs. Employers exert bureaucratic pressure and control over work "from above" (McClelland 1990). However, this means of control is very much limited, as short innovation cycles in production drive a steady transformation of occupation and require ongoing creative efforts and a high level of individual engagement from employees. Experts gain a relatively powerful position in emerging transnational workspaces and open chances to voice claims of professionalism due to the rapidly changing and subjective nature of their expertise, thereby resisting bureaucratic control and standardisation processes. The main question at this point is how professional boundaries emerge in transnational workspaces constituted by heterogeneous actors from different institutional and socio-cultural backgrounds.

A relational perspective on organisational and occupational professionalism as basic mechanisms of the formation of professional boundaries in different workspaces is needed to analyse this question. Abbott's notion of "linked ecologies" offers a theoretical basis for such an analysis. Actors within different "linked ecologies" co-ally in so-called "hinges" influencing practices and gaining control of over particular professional policy locations. Professional boundaries and professionalism based on exclusionary closure (Saks 2015) are in continuous contested processes of defining and redefining (Abbott 1988; 2005). In this article, I apply this approach to the analysis of professional boundaries in the internationalisation of IT work focusing on software development and IT consultancy.

The question of how experts from different national settings working in transnational workspaces contribute to professional boundaring is ultimately one to be resolved empirically. Focusing on three main components of professionalism – linkages between work and organized action in transnational workplaces, mechanisms for legitimating work, as well as practitioners' search for a particular professional identity (Noordegraaf 2007) – and taking

project and quality management in the software segment of the IT sector as empirical examples, I outline the contours of professional boundaries of these two emerging professional groups.

The article is structured in three sections. In the first section, I begin by explaining the theoretical approach for the analysis of professional boundaries in the internationalisation of IT work. Following these theoretical clarifications, which serve as basis for the formulation of my research questions, I focus on a case study in a large IT multinational enterprise in the third section. The article concludes with a discussion concerning professional boundaries for emerging professionals in transnational workspaces comparing it with the current situation of transnational IT management.

THEORETICAL APPROACH

My theoretical approach to analyse the formation of professional boundaries in the internationalisation of work emphasises the idea that the key to understanding this process is in the relational strategies between actors in linked ecologies (Abbott 2005).

Drawing from the concept of Abbott (2005), transnational workspaces can be viewed as a "linked ecology". Ecology involves actors, locations, and a relation associating the first two elements. Locations in Abbott's terms refer to the actors' definition of how a concrete task should be legitimately and inter-subjectively understood (Abbott 2005). This means, what kind of strategy or replication of certain concepts should create the most legitimately practice for solving particular problems. Tasks are, in Abbott's (2005) conception, an example for a location in the professional ecology that is not pre-existing but emerging in the process of constructing both the tasks themselves and the actors who carry them out. In this relational process, which Abbott (2005) calls "ligation", actors and locations are constituted and delimited. In the case of professions, such a ligation takes the form of a jurisdiction, which in turn can also vary as to the exclusivity of control over work, the division of labour, distinguishing features of client bases etc. Ligations, but also actors and locations, are linked to different temporal structures. In the case of professional and occupational ecologies, particularly actors have experienced a rapid historical acceleration (ibid.). Abbott (2005) takes information work as an example for such an acceleration hindering the emergence of an information profession.

Particularly important for the analysis of professional boundaries in the internationalisation of work is Abbott's idea that expertise, resources and concepts may be expanded internationally by alliances rather than in an isolated national context, which is the case in the institutional approaches (Hall, Soskice 2001) emphasising the idea of the seek for complementary partners in given institutional contexts.

The "linked ecologies" approach distinguishes between "hinges", understood as issues or strategies that can operate within different ecologies at the same time and "avatars", which replicate the ideas and skills of one profession or knowledge area into a new ecology. Both strategies are used by coalitions in an ecology to transform concepts and practices in another ecology, whereas they provide contestation grounds. In the inter-ecological process between professions and universities, professions can create a kind of institutional hinge, which Abbott (2005) calls an "avatar" of the professions. This is, for instance, the case in information work, in which the lack of academic foundations for the emerging practice of computer programming and system analysis gradually demanded the existence of a discipline based on mathematics and electrical engineering. However, the differing development rhythms of professional and academic spheres resulted in a permanent decoupling between the two, while professional practice retained its relative dominance. In Germany, a similar development happened in the 1970s (Ruiz Ben, Claus 2005).

In sum, the "linked ecologies" approach offers the opportunity of analysing how practices emerge across ecologies and how they contribute to form professional boundaries. Moreover, Abbott's approach emphasis on competition between field actors rather than the reproduction of domination structures allows understanding social change and innovation dynamic in linked organisations, industrial areas and policies.

With specific regard to the internationalisation of IT work, I consider transnational IT workspaces as those "inter-ecological" spaces where experts (from the ecology of IT occupational groups) and companies from different

national settings interact in project-based work. I argue that ligations, using Abbott's (2005) term, emerge due to project imperatives and can take the form of a business area with the characteristics of a "jurisdiction". This means that both employers and experts compete for the control of work and expertise in such a business area. Thus, ligations can be very fragile depending on the degree of temporal stability that project tasks and related expertise requirements accrue in a given business area. Due to the permanent desynchronisation of knowledge development between academics and experts, whose work is mostly situated in company projects, companies play a crucial role in the governance of knowledge and expertise through "hybrid professionalism" (Faulconbridge, Muzio 2006; Evetts 2006), and in the institutionalisation of professional boundaries. In turn, due to the predominance of project-based work organisation and the heterogeneity of the actors involved, experts are accorded a key position in the control of emerging expertise and professional boundaries. IT Experts from different international settings contribute through the day-to-day practices to form professional boundaries claiming for the exclusiveness of their knowledge and expertise. Institutional professionalism domains in which IT experts work are not congruent in international companies. They have different temporal and spatial reach that employers supervise. Thus, employers also contribute through organisational discourses of professionalism and the definition of career paths to the formation of professional boundaries.

In sum, both IT experts and employers from different institutional backgrounds struggle for the formation of professional boundaries that are reflected in the following dimensions of professionalism[1].

First, the *linkages between tasks and organized action* or professional jurisdictions (Abbott 1988; Fourcade 2006) that employers (through the definition and categorization of tasks as well as through allocation of work) and practitioners (such as project or area managers or potential entrants into the emerging professional jurisdiction through, for instance, the diffusion of norms or the pursuit or not of established careers) attempt to demarcate.

Second, the *mechanisms for legitimating work* or control over work (Freidson 2001) that employers (in form of bureaucratic established norms and rules such as those included in quality management systems) and practitioners (in form of expertise and their decision autonomy for the application and implementation of quality standards and quality management systems' rules) aim to establish in relation to the market pressure from clients and competing jurisdictional fields (Abbott 1988).

Third, the *search for professional identity* based on a knowledge corpus that employers (formal qualification requirements, internal training) under market-related time pressure and practitioners (tacit knowledge, continuous training, experience, competences) use for justifying career prospects and that states with increasing pressure from supranational institutions implement in official curricula.

And fourth, the professional associations in which practitioners engage and which support a particular occupational identity and from a long term view a "professional project" (Witz, 1992).

The focus on these professionalism dimensions serves as an operational empirical heuristic to analyse how professional boundaries form in the transnational workspaces that emerge due to the internationalisation of work. Thus, for example, the strategies for linking ecologies in the process of internationalisation of work will be reflected in the linkages between tasks distributed in different geographical locations.

In this article, I focus on the first three dimensions mentioned above in relation with IT work in Germany and more concretely IT project management. In the next pages, I illustrate this case with empirical results of my research about the internationalisation of the IT industry in Germany and the transformation and categorisation of tasks and employees. In the next section, I focus on the particular case of the internationalisation of IT work in Germany.

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[1] Following Abbott (1988: 30), professionalism relates to abstraction power of the professions' knowledge systems and their ability to «define old problems in new ways». I consider professionalism as a particular way of organising work (Friedson 2001; Noordegraaf 2013) by heterogeneous "jurisdictions" (Abbott 1988) struggling to establish a definition of work and a recognised effective way to implement it.

THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF IT WORK IN GERMANY

Rapid growth in terms of value added, employment, wages, R&D intensity, patents and investment has characterised the IT sector since the last decade (OECD 2002). This situation was also reflected in the development of international labour markets: employment increased significantly in the whole sector. New tasks emerged, in particular after 2000, because of the development of the internet and its expansion into diverse fields and everyday life and in global value chains (Castells 2001; Alvesson 2005; Walby 2007; Shire 2008; Huws 2013; Lee *et alii* 2016).

Such an emergence of new tasks necessitated an increasing supply of IT workforce with new skills' profiles difficult to find and to define due to the rapid dynamic of knowledge development and project work demands. In Germany, in particular, the lack of IT specialists was especially acute during the late nineties (Dostal 2002). The development of special programmes to encourage the immigration of foreign IT specialists (Green Card Action) started in Germany in 2000 represents an example of how the sector reacted to this problem with government support. In addition, numerous other official initiatives aimed at handling the shortage of IT specialists during this period of expansion. Established university credentials had to compete with a huge number of technical credentials granted by companies, business associations and commercial IT groups. The high number of side-step workers employed in the software sector without an academic computer science background grew and influenced both expertise in software development and professionalisation. The gap between established qualification standards offered by recognised institutions and the requirements of the IT industry widened.

An additional strategy to face the lack of IT specialists during this expanding period was next to the development of numerous official initiatives the beginning of private ones (on a smaller scale) in order to achieve the enrolment of women who are traditionally at a distance from computing in the IT industry and in the IT educational field.

Another strategy to confront workforce shortage in the German IT sector and at the same time to reduce costs was the export of work into lower costs countries. Particularly after the global crisis of the sector at the beginning of the new millennium, the externalisation of work known as outsourcing that began during the late eighties became crucial for supporting changing labour demands. Moreover, outsourcing, as well as the immigration of foreign IT specialists supported by the Green Card Action, represented to some extent a preparation for the internationalisation wave of the sector. Such internationalisation wave was also enabled through the expansion of the internet as global virtual work platform as well as by standardisation of production processes allowing the migration of tasks to lower cost countries. Multinational corporations used their long experiences in international arenas to rapidly expand in new markets such as, from the particular perspective of Germany, Eastern Europe (Bitkom 2009; DB Research 2005).

However, IT workforce shortage persists (Bitkom 2016). German computer science graduates represent a minority within the national IT workforce. The curricula in educational institutions, and especially in universities, are not designed to respond to the current demands and developments in the IT market (Dostal 2006; Bitkom 2016). At the same time, the standardisation of work processes, especially in software development, has made it easier to export tasks to foreign countries. After 2004, IT companies, mostly multinationals, used their previously built capacities in lower-wage countries, optimised with technical support, to tackle labour shortage risks and to save costs, starting by exporting standardised tasks (Ruiz Ben 2005; Boes 2006). Since then, numerous projects have been developed involving diverse international partners. Currently, companies export not only standardised tasks, but also crucial management tasks in order to increase their competitive edge in new and expanding markets (Boes, Kämpf 2010).

From a long term perspective, the internationalisation of the IT industry has led to the creation of transnational workspaces and to a broad occupational change in the national contexts it involves, challenging the already fragile professional identities of IT specialists in different countries. However, the question of how professional boundaries in these transnational workspaces are formed is still open.

In the next section, I concentrate on the empirical approach used for the analysis of this question based on the three dimensions of professionalism explained above.

EMPIRICAL STUDY

Design and methods

The empirical research that I present in this article is based on a case study developed in the framework of an analysis about the transformation of tasks and demands for related qualifications and skills ensuing from the internationalisation of the German IT sector with a whole sample of six IT companies. The case study took place in one German software company (B1) with subsidiaries in Poland.

The quantitative data for the case studies is comprised of internal personnel data from the enterprises and was used as a basis for the design of the qualitative interviews and interpretations of the qualitative materials. The qualitative materials are based on document analysis, including the long-term analysis of homepages and online job announcements over a six-month period, as well as expert interviews (12 personnel and area managers, 6 project and 6 quality managers, 16 software developers, 4 labour council delegates and 6 external consultants), 3 group discussions and workplace observations in different national settings (Germany, Slovakia, Romania). I interviewed two different employee groups: the first group consisted of employees involved in personnel issues, including personnel and area managers, as well as employee representatives. The second group was composed of personnel directly employed in software development, including project and quality managers, and software developers. The interviews lasted between one and two hours and were conducted during 2006 and 2007 (the formation phase of professional boundaries in the transnationalisation of IT work which is crucial for understanding the global professionalization processes of IT work) using an open-ended, semi-structured questionnaire, focused on thematic blocks and reflecting the perspective of the groups of experts under consideration. The interviews and group discussions were subsequently fully transcribed.

The methodology for analysing the expert interviews was distilled from the theoretical corpus of Meuser and Nagel (1991). According to this perspective, experts are consulted as suppliers of insider information. After the early analysis and coding of the transcribed interviews supported by the software package Atlas.ti, I focused, in a second analytical step, on two thematic groups: the first group consisted of the employment and labour-related decisions as well as interpretations given by personnel managers and labour council delegates. The second thematic focus was comprised by working practices, control aspects related to distributed work and the career aspirations of project and quality managers, software developers, and external consultants. The results were internally discussed among the members of the research group, beginning with each case separately and moving on to compare the two cases of software development and IT services, and finally comparing the different sub-areas of the IT sector, including IT consulting. We discussed the results of our analysis with the interviewed experts in the respective companies.

My focus in the following discussion is threefold. First, I examine the related perspectives of personnel and project managers regarding the linkages between work and organised action. Concretely, I examine the demarcation of tasks and the status of project management work, as well as systems used to acknowledge expertise in project and quality management.

Secondly, I look at the mechanisms for legitimating work and, concretely, definitions of expertise as well as the characteristics of quality systems used to evaluate work practices. Thirdly, I focus on the search for professional identity, thereby concentrating on the perspectives of software developers and project managers with regard to becoming "situated professionals" as project managers in international environments. The focus on these three dimensions serves as a basis for the further discussion on professional boundaries in the internationalisation of work. Before commenting on the interview results, I explain the characteristics of the company in question, referred to in the following as Enterprise B1.

Enterprise B1

Enterprise B is an affiliated company of a multinational IT service enterprise comprising many establishments in diverse locations around the world. Enterprise B1 was founded in the early 1980s by former academics in computer science and electronics. The company's academic origins are still evident and reflected, for example, in the links to academically based professional federations (GI – Gesellschaft für Informatik) and the strikingly high portion of academic personnel amongst the enterprise staff (90 per cent). During the 1980s and 1990s, the enterprise expanded, establishing six further locations in Germany, Switzerland, and most recently in Eastern European countries. In particular, the availability of infrastructure in diverse countries provided by the leading enterprise represents an important advantage for the acquisition of projects and the ability to offer competitive prices when compared with other service providers. The primary motivation for the internationalisation of work is represented by concomitant cost reductions which serve to stabilise the demand for projects, but also the expansion of the firm's market base and, moreover, the opportunity to remain innovative in the rapidly internationalising environment of the ICT sector.

The two main working areas of B1 are software engineering and IT consulting. The company's main clients are large companies in diverse industrial and service sectors. Software engineering relates to the adaptation of software products to the individual client needs in order to attain a competitive advantage or due to the lack of necessary products and features on the market. IT consulting relates to the entire technical (architecture, security etc.) adaptation process of the client firm and the individual software products.

B, the leading enterprise, and B1 are independent companies, although they exchange resources for the different projects that they develop together. Since 2004, the German enterprise B1 has experience exporting work to Eastern European countries (nearshore regions) as well as to further located countries (offshore regions) of the leading enterprise, B, including India and South Africa. The experiences with nearshoring in Poland have provided a basis for further developments related to the enterprise's work exporting practices and relationships. During the initial construction phases of the Polish nearshore centre, the enterprise was able to use the platforms of the multinational enterprise of which it is a member, which brought advantages regarding the availability of adequate personnel, infrastructure, and knowledge management. In 2006, B1's nearshore establishment employed almost 50 people. These employees spent an initial training year in Germany, where they were introduced to the project and the quality standards of the enterprise. Today the whole company belongs to a multinational IT consulting company with headquarters in France. This integration of a former German IT company into a large multinational company belongs to a very rapid and dynamic process of expansion of large international IT companies (see the section *Discussion*).

Following the three dimensions mentioned above (linkages between tasks and organised action; mechanisms for legitimating work; search for professional identity), I show the results of the analysis of the qualitative materials of the case study in the next sections.

The linkages between work and organised action

A highly significant transformation regarding the reorganisation of work due to offshore processes in B1 is the increasing demand for tasks whose profile presents a mixture of consulting and management. IT project managers working in the German headquarters of B1 must maintain direct contact with clients and, at the same time, manage several projects involving specialists in various locations. The expertise required in this case is thus not limited to strong qualifications in computer science. Instead, for the enterprise, such qualifications represent a basic entrance factor that must be complemented by soft skills training. For B1, it is very difficult to find personnel with these types of mixed profiles on the German labour market due to the persistent skill gap between university qualifications and the skills demanded in the workplace (Dostal 2006; Ruiz Ben 2005; 2013; 2017). Thus, there is a high pressure to recruit software developers for managerial careers, as these positions, in particular, are suffering the consequences of the workforce shortage:

the young computer scientist with a good or very good university degree and at the same time with a will to work in both engineering and consulting. So, there are not enough persons with such a profile in Germany. We would like to get more. (Personnel Manager in Germany)

A distinctive characteristic of B1 regarding qualification and skill requirements is its "generalist principle". Employees in all company locations (in Germany) must have actively worked in every phase of software development, rather than specialising and only working in one particular area. With this philosophy, the firm can implement personnel capacities more flexibly for different projects or, in other words, it can time the availability of its expertise. On the other hand, this philosophy only enables German employees to change among the different tasks to a certain extent:

> Because tasks will not necessarily be offshored for every project, every software engineer should be ready to work in every project phase. (Female Area Manager in Germany B1)

Moreover, in B1, task allocation practices are strongly oriented towards the subjective impressions of the area managers, quality managers, and, most intensively, project managers, who directly observe employee performance in running different projects. The project managers gather on a weekly basis in a "disposition round" to discuss the performance and potential of the employees as well as possible vacancies in the near future for promising candidates.

Project managers thus play a crucial role in allocation practices, while at the same time this role is very important for their own career opportunities, because the quality of their own projects, which serves as a criterion to evaluate their own career potential, depends on the personnel resources they receive for their own projects in such "disposition rounds". Moreover, in the course of these negotiations, the budget and the stability of the project in the firm are crucial factors in defining the relative power of the different actors involved in these meetings.

Task definitions depend, in part, on project demands. Short-term needs are defined by project managers and subsequently integrated into the career structures of the enterprise once they gain stability through the consolidation of the project and client contacts:

> After some time, or when we feel that something is needed, then we make the roles explicit. (Personnel Manager in Germany)

On the other hand, the definition of tasks is linked to existing career paths in the enterprise. B1 basically has two general career paths: a professional track ("Fachlaufbahn") and a managerial track ("Linienlaufbahn") which are accorded comparable levels of acknowledgement and esteem. Both career tracks exhibit a similar hierarchy in terms of internal incentives; in the professional track, however, employees do not have any managerial responsibilities. Moreover, participation in external professional communities is expected of persons working in the professional track:

> These are no lone fighters in the sense that they are alone in their discipline. They are popular experts who are called to work in projects for particular technological questions, but they have also to be available for the company in general, in the so-called communities. (Personnel Manager in Germany)

Project and currently also quality managers follow the managerial track. At the top of the hierarchy in such a path, project managers eventually become directorates. Thus, project managers are integrated into a clear hierarchical structure. While they are required to have strong qualifications in computer science or related disciplines, other explicitly formulated requirements for project managers include a high level of motivation and social skills. The latter requirements can be attributed to needs for both internal and external communication in different contexts of the enterprise, as well as of coordination of work, persons, and projects.

Project and quality managers are accorded a central position within the managerial track. The tasks they carry out are increasingly time-consuming and complex. Particularly challenging are the positions occupied by project

and quality managers who are required to coordinate several projects in different locations while working with middle-project managers. The latter actors, however, are not on a managerial, but a professional track. For this challenging task, project and quality managers often need additional intercultural skills.

Managerial performance in several different projects and project phases is particularly important for climbing career-related ladders. Demonstrated achievements serve as evaluation criteria for ascending to successive career levels.

For employees working in the nearshore centre in Poland, the enterprise plans a long-term integration of particular specialists into project management careers. The reason for this is threefold. First, B1 wants to position itself in the flourishing Polish IT market and, for that, the company needs experts who are socio-culturally based in Poland. Second, long-term career perspectives represent a source of motivation to prevent attrition, which has become a common occurrence in offshore Eastern European locations. Moreover, career perspectives represent a basis for approximating Polish and German specialists, and thus avoiding transnational conflicts in everyday project work emerging among "pseudo" or "would-be experts."

Considering the links between tasks and organised action, project managers have certain autonomy when it comes to the definition and allocation of tasks, as well as the evaluation of work and, with that, the construction of business areas as types of long-term work jurisdictions (Abbott 1988; 2005). However, the increasing importance of quality systems places limits on project managers' discretion. Both quality and project managers, as well as all B1 employees, must legitimate their work based on the recently established B1 quality management system.

Mechanisms for legitimating work

For the coordination of international teamwork between German and Polish software developers in its nearshore centre, B1 implements institutionalised German best practices and especially a strong hierarchical system for quality management issued by the multinational owner enterprise. This system was developed and established within the enterprise over the years using internationally recognised quality standards as its basis. The system works as an internal control instance for work processes and outputs.

However, a project manager responsible for a business area in B1 argues that these kinds of systems can tend to render the organisation "blind" to its own functioning. This critique is based on the argument that the quality system does not permit reflexive action from the bottom up which would lead to specific solutions for problems that emerge in everyday project work. The system is also purported to restrict the general overview of complex international projects. In addition, due to the strong fragmentation of work in offshore projects, project documentation ends up being highly fragmented and difficult to interpret as a whole:

> the larger picture is lost, that means, what is really important at this moment? What is the "whole thing" doing? How does it work together as a whole? This aspect is clearly lacking. (Quality manager, Germany)

Thus, quality managers not only use formal quality criteria when they evaluate work processes in international projects. They act as "reflective practitioners" drawing from different knowledge sources including informal talks with practitioners while trying to form "project communities" in order to create a productive and communal transnational work dynamic.

Therefore, the quality managers have suggested the integration of software developers in developing of the company quality management systems in order to increase their motivation to document their work more consistently and precisely and, at the same time, to give them feedback on the quality of their work and their role in B1. Such a practice has been implemented sporadically in individual projects, also as a means to prevent or dampen existing conflicts between Polish and German software developers. Thus, project and area managers have designed common "corporate rules" for international projects that were developed "ad hoc" within the projects, while also drawing from international quality standards as their basis. Moreover, a repository was built up for encoding,

updating, storing and retrieving codified project-related information such as documentation, quality management patterns, coding standards and reviews or recommendations for intercultural collaboration.

In sum, project and quality managers correspond to the image of «bureaucracies in action» suggested by Courpasson (2003: 14). On the one hand, they are aware of the ad hoc practices and expertise which emerge in projects; at the same time, they use existing organisational bureaucracies as a basis to control expertise and to legitimate their own practices, thereby preventing potential resistance on the part of specialists. Both project and quality managers contribute to the establishment of corporate communities in transnational workspaces. At the same time, they develop their own expertise in interaction with peers, who do not work exclusively for the corporation, but come together in transnational workspaces "ligated" through projects. Common quality criteria developed ad hoc in such projects serve as a legitimate source for their work practices and expertise.

The search for professional identity

The work of the project and quality managers has changed due to the internal division of tasks in terms of expertise requirements, formalisation and intensification. Both project and quality managers are responsible for linking tasks and organised action. In addition, they must coordinate mid-level project managers in international locations. Thus, they must combine communication and intercultural skills with technical competencies in order to optimise the definition of project tasks and coordinate project processes and outputs, and further selling them to customers. Required skills for this task go beyond their normal activities as computer scientists and also do away with "normal" time schedules. Working overtime is expected by the firm, a fact that is taken for granted by quality managers, and particularly project managers:

> it is practically the expected attitude and, I mean, in the higher career levels the wages are higher. (Project Manager in Germany)

Pressures to adapt individual profiles to B1s increasingly international needs did not present a problem from the perspective of the interviewed project and quality managers. These two managerial groups consider this transformation a normal process. Particularly, the project managers exhibited and voiced a strong personal identification with their tasks and, more concretely, with the establishment of a practice domain in the form of business areas to which they feel they belong and are responsible for constructing on their own. Thus, the relative freedom to build long-term business areas and criteria to judge the quality of work processes has identity-related and motivational effects for project and quality managers, even if they must implement external or corporate rules in the course of their constructive efforts as well. At the same time, the feeling of responsibility for the trajectories of future experts working in their business areas in transnational workspaces serves to create a sense of community among expert project managers and potential experts with the common goal of establishing a kind of transnational "jurisdictional area" (Abbott 1988; 2005).

However, it remains to be seen when and how candidates in Poland will officially become experts, not least because the IT specialists in B1's Polish nearshore centre are still very young, and their qualifications must be adapted to German requirements:

> If in the end the Polish overtake the complete implementation and we make the specification, with it the complete environment will be shifted towards consulting, towards professional head designers and project managers, away from development and technical design. Well, when that change will come ultimately depends on the qualifications of the Polish. (Quality Manager in Germany)

Thus, questions regarding the stability of emerging professional identities in the transnational workspaces of business areas remain unanswered.

Regarding the professional associations capable of supporting the establishment of an occupational identity beyond the organisational identity (Hodgson 2008), project and quality managers comment that membership in professional associations is rather unusual in the enterprise. However, several German employees are in contact

with universities or with the Society for Informatics (Gesellschaft für Informatik), which has a very academic character. Since its foundation, the enterprise has traditionally been linked to academic institutions. B1 uses such contacts both for the recruitment of personnel and knowledge transfer, and to build a kind of common identity for the employees, who have sometimes known each other from their shared time in university classrooms.

Specialisation in a business area (for instance, automotive) represents an incentive for knowledge exchange between experts from different companies at specialised conferences and for potential horizontal mobility beyond organisational boundaries.

Moreover, attrition at higher levels of the managerial hierarchy is very low and at the entry level, the quota personnel who returned after a period of working in other enterprises is relatively high, according to a German personnel manager.

Considering that career opportunities in Germany and in Poland are expanding in both the managerial and professional tracks due to B1's expansion plans in new areas requiring specialist expertise (automotive, finance, medicine etc.), there is an added potential to prevent attribution, among both German and Polish employees:

> It is, of course, a perspective for the others, who see that if it (the company) growths further, then there are more good positions (...) and this is, of course, a perspective for those who are waiting in the eaves. These tasks initially emerge in projects, but also in the line. (Project Manager in Germany)

However, the transfer of tasks and projects to the nearshore centre in Poland depends on market needs or, in other words, on client orders. One Polish software developer commented that the projects delivered to Poland normally are those that are already in the red, whereas important and strategic projects remain in Germany.

DISCUSSION

In this article, I have explored the question of how professional boundaries emerge in transnational workspaces constituted by heterogeneous actors from different institutional and socio-cultural backgrounds. Departing on Abbott's notion of "linked ecologies" and focusing on three dimensions of professionalism as basic mechanism for professional boundaries formation, I have shown an empirical example of how project and quality managers, as well as employers in a German IT company, contribute to the construction of professional boundaries in transnational workspaces emerging due to globalization processes. Tasks and organised action are dynamically linked through international projects at the lower levels of the hierarchical occupational structure of the enterprise. Particularly for project managers, the management of these variable dynamics is part and parcel of their expertise, since they are directly involved in the allocation of personnel resources. These managers negotiate the organisational trajectories of the employees, while at the same time retaining the responsibility for coordinating projects and creating and maintaining contacts with clients in different countries. Thus, they combine organisationally established bureaucratic rules with ad hoc decisions in projects. They also contribute to establishing professional boundaries in the negotiation with personnel managers through the international allocation of tasks and expert evaluation of international employees on the basis of quality systems and in terms of organisational career options. Similar to Hodgson's (2008) ideas about "projectification" and, particularly, in line with his research about project management, the results of the analysis show that, in the case of international IT software development, project management professionalism establishes mixing organisational rules and occupational knowledge from other management areas. This combination enables emergent project manager professionals in transnational IT workspaces to define «old problems» of IT project development in new ways (Abbott 1988: 30).

Project managers combine bureaucratic organisational rules with occupational professionalism based on management and computing expertise as a particular hybrid professionalism that corresponds with the forms of legitimating work in international project work. Project managers construct a kind of "soft bureaucracy" involving the employees in the development of working rules as a rationale for increasing tasks' standardisation by motivating

documentation practices, which functions as a non-coercive basis for controlling emerging expertise. Quality criteria present grounds for legitimating work practices as well as for supporting a hybrid professional ideology. Both project and quality management emerge as "hinges" (Abbott 2005) linking not only diverse organizations, but also different knowledge, expertise areas and geographical locations.

Regarding occupational identity, project and quality managers in my empirical example do not seek out the support of professional associations in order to establish their occupational identities outside the enterprise. These findings contradict the assumed importance of international project management associations for professionalism in the area of project management (Hodgson 2008). Knowledge exchange at conferences and through academic associations, with former study colleagues or with peers and potential experts in common thematic areas are more important for the construction of a common expert identity, which facilitates horizontal as well as vertical mobility. Professional boundaries remain thus permeable.

In sum, hybrid professionalism as the combination of organizational and occupational expertise to organizationally, occupationally and individually controlling work represents an appealing foundation for the identity of international IT experts working in transnational workspaces in the IT third sector, in which they build a sense of common experiences, understandings and knowledge as well as shared ways of perceiving problems and possible solutions (Evetts 2006; Hughes 1958; Huws 2013).

Project managers apply bureaucracy and contribute to its development creating "soft bureaucracies", whereas at the same time such "soft bureaucracies" serve to legitimate their own practices and are a part of their professional identity.

Nevertheless, the analysis I have presented here is limited to a single enterprise in the context of IT work, which also represents a very specific form of project management (Ruiz Ben 2013). The analysis of the other five case studies in German IT enterprises in different industry segments results in a less cohesive and more dissonant picture regarding control over work and expertise and professional boundaries. Moreover, the international expansion of IT consultancy that has taken place since the end of the analysis presented in this article has contributed to globally establish the expertise of project managers in the IT sector. Project management is nowadays a crucial expertise in the company in which the presented case study was carried out which merged into a multinational IT consultancy. Project management has expanded its hybrid characteristics however with other expertise (software development, quality management) building the more flexible and "generalizable" profile of IT consultants as professionals who can "translate" knowledge from different areas in which digitalisation requires computing skills applied in a particular domain area (i.e. automotive, health, public administration, infrastructure security, urbanism in the case of smart cities etc.). Moreover, recent research about the transnationalisation of IT project management work (Schulz-Schaeffer, Bottel 2017) shows that technology and standards (i.e. scrum methods) have contributed to establish flexible "soft bureaucracies" for remote software development that constitute a current crucial source of legitimising professional boundaries for project management already formed during the first decade of the present century.

A presentation and discussion of such related issues exceed the available space and main thematic focus of this article.

Finally, the question remains of whether similar forms of professional boundaries are exhibited by other areas of project management and further expert occupations which also play an active role in international work contexts.

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Eliasian Themes

Towards process-figurational theory in organization studies

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Abstract. This paper outlines the significance of Elias's work as an alternative solution for many of the core conceptual problems in organization studies as well as the distinctive contribution of *The Court Society*, sketches the main elements of the ways in which his ideas have been taken up by organisation scholars to date, concentrating on a selection of studies drawing on Elias, and concludes with some reflections on the future directions that process-figurational theory might take in organization studies. The core line of argument is that Elias provides a range of powerful theoretical resources to transcend many of the problems usually addressed through the work of Foucault, actor-network theory, postmodernist and post-structuralist theory, especially the supposed agency/structure problem, constituting an alternative and effective analysis of organizational life that is anchored in the relational and processual strands of classical sociological theory.

Keywords. Norbert Elias, organization, process, relation, figuration, habitus, civilizing process, power.

PREFATORY NOTE

This piece has been written in the first place for a particular readership: researchers and scholars in management and organization studies who are presumed to be unfamiliar with the work of Elias. The sections concerning the outline of Elias's ideas have, then, been excluded here, since most readers of *Cambio* will already be familiar with Elias's work, with the exception of the section on court society, which is particularly important in relation to the sociology of organizations. I took the decision to label the approach «process-figurational theory» because that seemed to address the differing

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[1] A shorter version, under a slightly different title, is to be published in *Management, Organizations and Contemporary Social Theory* edited by Stewart Clegg & Miguel Pina e Cunha, London: Routledge, 2019, which will include chapter objectives, a glossary, and discussion questions.

possibilities in the most economical way, and sounded like the kind of term that would appeal to organization studies scholars, as well as avoiding the kind of automatic resistance that the term «civilization» usually generates.

INTRODUCTION

Sociological theory has been characterised at least since the middle of the twentieth century by an ongoing concern with dualisms: individual/society, micro/macro, agency/structure, which have been a source of never-ending and indeed irresolvable debate. Michael Reed has observed that it is a genuine puzzle why agency/structure is such a dominant theme in organization theory. «Why», he asks, «do we keep returning to it like an old pimple or sore that we can't resist picking? Why not let it alone when we know only too well that further probing will only make matters worse?» (2005: 2). Why indeed, since it is anchored in another equally false dualism, that of individual/society (Collins, 1992). However, his answer is simply to search for more effective ways to pick at that sore (Reed 1996; 2005).

I trace the source of this ultimately artificial problem back to Talcott Parsons (1937), who placed a huge conceptual boulder in the middle of sociological theory by refusing to take Georg Simmel seriously, constructing the sociological canon around the holy trinity of Marx/Weber/Durkheim[2]. He was succeeded a generation later by Anthony Giddens (1979; 1984) doing the same and insisting that there was a problem to do with the supposed 'two sociologies' of action and structure (Dawe 1970; 1978), to which, naturally, his theory of structuration was the solution.

The siren call of agency/structure dualism drives many of the problems in organization theory, in the form, for example, of the reification of institutions (Suddaby 2010) and entanglement within an opposition between institutional isomorphism and entrepreneurship (Clegg 2010). The current situation in (neo-)institutional theory, as Alvesson and Spicer observe, is that of a mid-life crisis, caught up in vague and tautological understandings of the core concept, «institution», resulting in «a body of research which seems to produce much more heat than light» (2018: 5). As Michel Callon and John Law (1997) have observed in relation to dualisms such as individual/collective, and as I have argued elsewhere in relation to action/structure (van Krieken 2000), the supposed valiant efforts to bridge the two sides of the dualism do what all bridges do, they keep them in their place, and the problems simply get displaced and reproduced in an endless loop[3].

The theoretical move most commonly pursued to move organization theory beyond a static and reified conception of organizations has been a turn to writers such as Foucault, actor-network theorists such as Callon, Law (Callon, Law 1997) and Latour (1993), philosophers such as Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Serres, Derrida and Deleuze and Guattari, or ethnomethodologists such as Harold Garfinkel (Chia 1995; 2005; see also Weick 1969; 1995; 2012), often broadly captured under the headers of post-structuralism and postmodernism.

However, an effective alternative or complement to the postmodern and actor-network turn is Norbert Elias's approach to sociology, which provides a rich body of conceptual tools and means of orientation for organisation theory that help transcend these tired and ultimately pointless disputes in organization studies and generate significant new insights and conceptual innovations in the study of organisational stability and change[4]. His analysis of «court society» is usefully read alongside Weber's account of the rationalization process and bureaucracy; his account of the process of civilization has various linkages with both Weber and Foucault on the historical develop-

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[2] For an outline of everything wrong with Parsons's *Structure*, see Camic (1989): Parsons's neglect of social psychology (Mead, Dewey, even Freud), politics (Tocqueville, Michels), relational thought (Simmel, that aspect of Marx), and the ahistorical nature of his understanding of human habitus, not mention 'the problem of social order', all mistakes which have tended to be reproduced in subsequent social theory, including in organization studies.

[3] For a discussion of the operation of the agency/structure dualism drawing on Latour's (1993) concept of 'the modern constitution', see van Krieken 2002.

[4] There are now a number of useful general introductions and overviews of Elias's sociology, including Fletcher (1997), van Krieken (1998), Mennell (1999), Dunning & Hughes (2013); Loyal & Quilley (2004).

ment of a disciplined psychic apparatus (van Krieken 1990); his theory of figurations is in many ways stronger than the concept of «network» in actor-network theory as well as Bourdieu's (1985) concept of «field»; he was emphasising the importance of the concept of «habitus» long before Bourdieu took it up, while his theory of power is a useful alternative to that of Foucault or Latour.

Most of the problems in social and organization theory stem from a failure to rise to the challenge of the 'relational' and 'processual' turn in science, philosophy, sociology and psychology around the turn of the twentieth century, in the work of Einstein, Wittgenstein, Cassirer, Dewey and Bentley, Simmel, to some extent Marx, a conceptual shift that Elias did pursue in a consequential way, and which underpins the power and utility of his theoretical orientation today. As Tim Newton and Dennis Smith have argued, Elias weaves together a number of otherwise disparate theoretical concerns in organization studies – power, subjectivity, networks, processes of change, subjectivity and the self, strategy and leadership, emotions, violence (Newton, Smith 2002: viii) in a single conceptual framework.

If, as Stewart Clegg and Ad van Iterson have argued, organization studies can now usefully be reinvigorated through a «creative re-reading of the sociological classics» (2013: 623), Elias's particularly imaginative mobilisation of development of sociological and psychological thought from Marx, Weber, Simmel, William James and Freud onwards is one of the better ways of engaging in such a re-reading, constituting a valuable «source of inspiration for organizational studies» (van Iterson 2009).

Many of his arguments find resonances in the work of other social and psychological theorists, indeed in some organisational theorists as well, so it is not really the case that he is the sole proponent of any of his ideas. What makes him distinctive is the way he combines a variety of important conceptual innovations. Bourdieu, for example, also thinks in terms of *habitus*, his concept of 'field' has a lot in common with Elias's figuration, and they both use the concept of 'game' to capture the dynamics of human action. But Bourdieu is not very interested in history, and leaves out the long-term processual aspects of how human habitus and fields have developed over time. Bourdieu (1985: 16-17) attributes the concept of a relational approach to the philosopher Ernst Cassirer, who Elias had read as a PhD student and whose discussion of Albert Einstein's theory of relativity has a strong influence on Elias, but for Elias it was crucial to move that idea in a sociological direction, to deal with «real events, such as power struggles between human groups, such as cycles of violence.....or with long-term social processes such as state formation processes, of knowledge growth, of urbanization, of population growth and of dozens of other processes, now in the centre of process sociology, its theory, its empirical work and its practical applications» (Letter to Mike Featherstone, 15 November 1986, in Kilminster, Wouters 1995: 101) It is useful, then, to see Elias's sociology as a nodal point in the larger network of lines of sociological theorizing, not such the sole repository of a range of conceptual positions, but a distinctive and quite powerful combination of the most important ones.

Although Elias was content initially to present his approach as organised around the concept of «figuration», he grew to dislike the term «figurational sociology» and ended up preferring «process sociology». Both terms are equally important, which is why I am using the admittedly clumsy term «process-figurational» theory to come as close as possible to a convenient label[5].

COURT SOCIETY AS AN ORGANIZATIONAL FORM

The Court Society was Elias's first major sociological work, completed in 1933 as his *Habilitationsschrift* under Karl Mannheim. It was the foundation upon which Elias's *On The Civilizing Process* was built and for organizational theorists it is probably one of the better places to start reading Elias, since it is precisely about a particular mode of organizing social relations of power. There are three aspects of Elias's account of court society that are of particular significance for organizational theory:

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[5] The term should probably be 'relational-processual-figurational', but that's even more unwieldy.

–   His argument for identifying royal and aristocratic courts as key social organizational units that played a vital role in the emergence of modern bureaucratic society
–   The differentiation of the concept of «rationality» into two forms: a «courtly rationality» that both preceded instrumental-legal rationality and continues as an undercurrent to it
–   The identification, in the dynamics of social relations in court society, of particular mechanisms of power, competition, distinction and social differentiation which continue to operate in contemporary social and organizational life.

Elias extends our understanding of the development of modern societies by highlighting the ways in which the aristocracy and its organizational setting, court society, should be understood as far more than an outmoded form of ostentatious consumption, not just a feudal relic destined for the historical scrap heap. Court society, Elias argued, was a historically significant form of social organization, with a dual relationship to the bourgeois society that followed it.

On the one hand, bourgeois morality and forms of life – the distinction between public and private life, the organisation of life around criteria of instrumental, economic rationality, and the placement of a dedication to work at the centre of human existence – were developed precisely in *opposition* to those of the courts. On the other hand, Elias saw that many features of the forms of social relations in court society also continued into the post-Enlightenment world, so that an understanding of court society also illuminates many aspects of contemporary social relations which are less visible to us precisely because we, as good citizens of the Enlightenment, believe we have left the world of *Dangerous Liaisons* and the *Ancien Regime* in the past. «By studying the structure of court society and seeking to understand one of the last great non-bourgeois figurations of the West», argued Elias, «we indirectly gain increased understanding of our own professional and commercial, urban-industrial society» (2006 [[1969]: 44).

The social process of «courtization» which underpinned the transformation of feudal society subjected first knights and warriors and ever-expanding circles of the population to an increasing demand that expressions of violence be regulated, that emotions and impulses be subjected to ever-increasing self-reflection and surveillance, and placed ever more firmly in the service of the long-term requirements of complex networks of social interaction imposing increasingly ambivalent expectations. In court society we see the beginnings of a form of mutual and self-observation that Elias referred to as a «psychological» form of perception, which is now analysed in terms of reflexive self-awareness.

Elias's analysis of court society reveals more than simply the pre-history of bourgeois society; it also reveals a deeper layer of social relations that continues to the present day. The organisation of power relations around the representation of social prestige still plays an important role in contemporary societies, despite the lack of fit with our self-image as instrumentally rational moderns. Much of the dynamics of court society can still be seen today in the day-to-day workings of any organization, with success in contemporary social life maybe more dependent on adept display, performance and representation than we are usually willing to admit. As Elias put it:

> Despite their formal organizational framework based on written contracts and documents, which was developed only in rudimentary form in the state of Louis XIV, in many organizations of our time, even industrial and commercial ones, there are rivalries for status, fluctuations in the balance between groups, exploitation of internal rivalries by superiors, and other phenomena that have emerged in the study of court society. But as the main regulation of human relationships in large organizations is formalized in a highly impersonal manner, such phenomena usually have a more or less unofficial and informal character today. In court society we therefore find quite openly and on a large scale many phenomena that exist below the surface of highly bureaucratized organizations. (2006 [1969]: 152)

The roots of informal organisational structures and organisational culture can, therefore, be seen to have originated in the dynamics of court society, continuing an older form of rationality beneath the surface of the instrumental-legal rationality which modern organisations are supposed to revolve around.

Reinhard Bendix, for example, pointed to the parallels between the transformation of fighting knights into restrained courtiers and the shift from an approach to authority in the workplace framed in muscular terms of

dominance and obedience to one framed in terms of the considered, self-reflexive management of human relations. Referring to Elias's account of the «courtization of warriors», he argued that the model managerial *habitus* had come to take the following form:

> The calm eyes which never stray from the other's gaze, the easy control in which laughter is natural but never forced, the attentive and receptive manner, the well-rounded, good-fellowship, the ability to elicit participation and to accomplish change without upsetting relationships, may be so many devices for personal advancement when the man is on his way up. (Bendix 1974 [1956]: 335)

As Tim Newton and Dennis Smith argue, *The Court Society* is an important case study in the 'crystallization' of other fluid networks, how the distinctive dynamics of court society, organized around language, etiquette and ceremony, drove the production of a particular kind of organizational subjectivity, that of the courtier. Elias' insights have the potential, they suggest, to inform the analysis of corporate takeovers, large-scale meta-organizations such as the European Union or the World Trade Organization (Newton, Smith 2002: ix); really, the analysis is useful for grasping the varieties of «rationality» in any organization.

ELIAS AND ORGANIZATION STUDIES

Although discussions of Elias and organization theory are often prefaced with the observation that his work has had limited impact, in fact there is now quite a rich body of process-figurational literature covering a wide variety of topics. The topics covered have included the relationships between Elias's theoretical orientation and that of Foucault in relation to organizational subjectivity (van Krieken 1990; 1996; Kieser 1998), the comparison of Weber and Elias in relation to organizations (Breuer 1994), transformations of the NHS and the medical profession (Dopson, Waddington 1996; Dopson 1997; 2001; 2005), the longer-term history of organizational forms, emotional management, and management discourses (Mastenbroek 1993; 1996; 2000; 2002a; 2002b; 2005) the Lillehammer winter Olympics, and the Sydney 2000 Olympics (Lesjo 2000 and Frawley 2015), shame and humiliation in organizations (Smith 2001; 2002), the film industry (Blair 2003), Elias' concept of «survival units» (Kaspersen, Gabriel 2008), a critique of governmentality approaches in relation to urban regeneration (Lever 2011), talent management (Lever, Swailes 2017), medical unionism in Belgium (Gourdin, Meul 2013), gossip in organizations (Soeters, van Iterson, 2002), corporate governance (Stokvis 2002), Elias's and Wouters' concept of *informalization* (van Iterson, Mastenbroek and Soeters 2001), the wine market in China (Smith Maguire 2017), firms' online communities (van Iterson, Richter 2017), corporate responsibility and unintended outcomes (Vertigans 2017), organizational learning and complex responsive processes (Stacey 2003; 2012) and violence in organizational life (Costas, Gray 2018).

In what follows the focus, albeit brief, will be on the following five bodies of work to clarify exactly what process-figurational theory contributes to organization studies: (1) Tim Newton's theoretical arguments about how Elias's work can be mobilized in relation to organizations, (2) Wilbert van Vree's analysis of how meetings shape the dynamics of organizational life, (3) Ralph Stacey's theory of complex responsive processes, (4) Paddy Dolan and John Connelly's critique of institutional theory and (5), Stewart Clegg and Ad van Iterson's use of Elias to analyse increasingly fluid and liquid organizational forms.

Tim Newton – Power and subjectivity

One of the first organization theorists to examine how Elias's work could be drawn upon was Tim Newton, who from around 1998 onward has drawn attention to the importance of the relationship between interdependency, power, and subjectivity in organizations, partly in the context of a critique of Foucauldian approaches to power and subjectivity. Over the course of his engagement with the question of Elias and organizations, Newton has argued for a number of points of contact with questions such as organizational strategy, emotions and violence, and discursive change, making the following points.

First, that Elias's analysis of the broader social forces driving the historical formation of subjectivity within asymmetrical relations of power and interdependence is crucial for any linkage of the study of organizations and behaviour within organizations to their changing social contexts, with his relational theory of power deserving as much, if not more, attention in organization studies as Foucault's account of the relationship between power and freedom in his theory of governmentality. Elias thus helps to places shifts in organizational life in context of broader lines of social transformation – the process of civilization, changes in *habitus,* and the shifts from external to internal compulsion, with our relationship to time a key dimension of the longer-term shift from external to internalised restraint. Newton suggests that it is important to place any discussion of corporate culture in the context of a changing balance between collectivism and individualism (1999: 432) and he sees *The Court Society* as a highly instructive case study of how emotions and subjectivity constitute the heart of the exercise of power in organizational settings.

Second, that there are strong parallels and connections between Elias's critique of the *homo clausus* conception of human beings as well as his concepts of interdependence and figurations and the understanding of networks in the work of actor-network theorists such as Callon and Latour. Michel Callon, for example, notes how the arguments of Elias, Granovetter and actor-network theory all share a critique of the «person closed in on himself - *homo clausus*, to use Elias' expression» (Callon 1999: 185), with John Law commenting that «the explanatory attitude of [actor network] writers is not so different from that of Norbert Elias» (Law 1994: 113). As Newton argues, «there is a close correspondence between the Eliasian emphasis upon interdependency networks/chains and *Homines aperti*, and that observed in actor network theory. Both question the sovereignty and independence of the individual actor, since the actions of any actor are seen continually to condition, and be conditioned by, the wider networks in which they operate» (1999: 428). However, Elias's particular concept of figurations of interdependent actors, in *The Court Society* and in his game models, adds sensitivity to the dimension of asymmetrical power relations, alerting us to «the likelihood that actor networks will be characterised by social hierarchies» (1999, p 429).

Third, that his critique of the *homo clausus* conception of human beings, his emphasis on the interdependence of human action and his stress on the frequent disjunction between planned action and its outcomes is enormously important for the understanding of how and why organizational change take place and how we should approach the concept of 'strategy'. As he puts it, «strategic change is always likely to be a fraught process because strategic 'outcomes' often represent the interweaving of action and argument between numerous 'players', such as competitors, clients, suppliers, different professional groupings, government agencies» (2001: 482), rather than being the rational result of strategic action driven by decisive actions of especially insightful and effective managers and CEOs. This does not mean, however, that the relationship between strategies and plans is entirely opaque, merely that is it complex; thus, his analysis of different types of game configurations (2012 [1978]) aims to provide a range of models for how the analysis of strategic action can be undertaken.

Wilbert van Vree – the meetingization of society

Wilbert van Vree's (1999; 2002; 2011) work on meetings in organizational life is another especially important contribution to process-figurational theory in organization studies. He points out that studying meetings is a strategic means of grasping the inner dynamics of organizations. The everyday activity in all forms of organizations is dominated, observes van Vree, with, if not actively taking part in meetings, preparing for them or processing their results (van Vree 2011: 242). Meetings are an essential aspect of lengthening chains of interdependence, constituting the means by which interdependent interweaving actions are realised and negotiated (van Vree 2011: 245). Looking at the long-term history of meeting behaviour, he draws attention to gradually changing standards of behaviour expected of meeting participants, especially the restraint of violence and outbursts of emotion. When one sees opposing politicians in a legislative assembly break out in physical assaults on each other, these cases are especially notable because they are exceptions to the rule of the enormous number and variety of meetings that take place around the world in an entirely pacified way – usually to the point of tedium.

Van Vree highlights a particular historical shift, from «parliamentary» to «professionalised» meeting styles. The parliamentary style, which dominated meeting styles from 1750 to 1950, is highly rule-governed, with rules and formal codes designed to restrain highly oppositional adversaries within a workable framework of regulated debate, decision-making and action, orientated to the principles of democratic politics, with clear voting procedures and decision-making rules. An important part of the courtization of warriors, then, was also their «parliamentarization» (van Vree, Bos 1989), where courtiers had to extend their regulation of their emotions in the interests of peaceful negotiation of all the issues underpinning the exercise of governmental power and authority, such as taxation, military service, education, health care, social welfare, police, the regulation of property rights, and so on. It was this parliamentary meeting style that then served as the template for a wide variety of other types of meetings through society, of civil associations and business firms.

Looking at manuals for associations and meetings, rules of order and meeting textbooks (such as Zelko, 1969 [1957]), van Vree observes that these meeting manuals show that meeting manners have shifted significantly over the last 50-60 years. Rather than deliberative assemblies, «more differentiated, especially professional and business meetings; from formal rules to informal codes; from debating to discussing; from majority decisions to consensus; from the attitude of parties, administration and opposition to the behaviour of individual meeting participants; and from a chairman's function to the duties of ordinary meeting participants» (2011: 255). Organizations now require a different kind of habitus and a different, more professionalised and business-like meeting style, orientated towards efficiency and effectiveness rather than due process and democratic decision-making. As van Vree puts it, «[c]ompared with parliamentary-like meetings, company-like meetings demand more knowledge and abilities, more team spirit, more mutually anticipated self-control and flexibility» (2011: 258). Referring to Elias's and Cas Wouters's (1986; 1999) theory of informalization and the development of a «third nature», he highlights how it is no longer just a matter of internalising social rules but also of developing a highly strategic, flexible understanding of how the rules are to be mobilized, perhaps in fact broken or adjusted, in particular circumstances and local conditions. As networks of interdependence become larger and broader and power differentials decrease, the role of meetings in social coordination becomes increasingly significant, «an ever increasing precise, more equal and more embracing regulation of impulses and short-lived affects» (2011: 259), exactly what Elias analysed as the long-term process of civilization.

Meetings are «the frontline of civilization» and the obligation to attend meetings «has become the fate of civilized people» (2011: 250), because «the development of meeting behaviour is a process in which people constrain each other towards control of their mutual relations and thus also of themselves, by orientation to ever-longer, more permanent, and more differentiated chains of action» (2011: 245). Indeed, given the globalisation of organizational structures, van Vree also refers to meetings as «the trailblazers of contemporary, continental and global, integration processes». (2011; 257). He draws the obvious parallel with court society, observing that:

> Courtiers gathered in set places and at set times to perform specific acts according to exact rules. They bitterly complained about these useless rituals, but went through them again and again. The court etiquette endured as a 'ghostly perpetuum mobile' (Elias 2006 [1969]: 95) because of the current power relationships between the most important social groupings. The slightest modification of a ritual might have been interpreted by a group or faction as an attempt to upset the shaky social power balance. In the same way contemporary organization men seem to be socially fated to meet and to meet again with the same colleagues at set places and set times to perform similar acts every time (van Vree 2011: 253).

We saw earlier how Bendix noted, with the spread of meeting activities in business firms, the emergence of an upper class of 'moderate' managers, «even-tempered when others rage, brave when others fear, calm when others are excited, self-controlled when others indulge» (Bendix, 1974 [1956]: 332). Today it is those individuals who are most skilled in this management of emotional style who are most successful in organizational life. Being a successful manager, then, means being 'good at running meetings', having a high tolerance for their tedium and repetition, being skilled at managing the emotional dynamics of a smaller or larger group of members of the organization. Van Vree, agreeing with Bendix, notes the historical emergence of an 'upper class' of professional chairmen (and increasingly chairwomen) functioning at the top of a wide variety of organizations, part and parcel of the

phenomenon of interlocking directorships and the 'revolving door' between management positions in government, the public sector and private corporations.

Ralph Stacey – complex responsive processes

Ralph Stacey begins by questioning the notion of organizational learning, observing that «the claim that organisations learn amounts to both reification and anthropomorphism» (2003: 326; also 2012: 1). However, it is also incorrect to say that only individuals learn, since this overlooks social processes and social interdependence, making it necessary to reject the separation of individual and group/organization/society. Stacey then argues for a way of thinking in terms of paradox in which individual and group/organisation are aspects of the same processes of interaction between people (Stacey, 2001), finding that he can derive this way of thinking from the work of G. H Mead (1934) and Elias, where self and other are interwoven with each other, in mutual interaction (2007: 294). In contrast to Aristotelian logic, where A ≠ Not-A, Stacey proposes thinking in terms of a Hegelian dialectical logic of paradoxes, «in which two diametrically opposing forces/ideas are simultaneously present, neither of which can ever be resolved or eliminated».

Stacey (2005) engages with Elias's *On the Process of Civilization* not so much with regard to changes in *habitus*, but more as a source of methodological inspiration, to illustrate that Elias, with his incessant macro-micro linking, has also dealt with 'global patterns' and 'local interaction', which are Stacey's central conceptual concerns. Agreeing with Elias's conception of power as a relationship, and in contrast to the tendency «to talk about an organization as a living thing, a living system just like the systems in nature» (2007: 298). Stacey thus defines organizations as «patterns of power relations sustained by ideological themes of communicative interaction and patterns of inclusion and exclusion in which human identities emerge» (2003: 329). For Stacey there are clear resonances between Elias's concept of unplanned order and the constant interweaving of the actions of interdependent individuals, and the understanding of self-organisation and emergence in complexity theory (2007: 295-6), as well as his own theory of «complex responsive processes» (2012: 2).

Stacey (2005) calls upon Elias's essay on involvement and detachment (Elias 2007 [1956]) to affirm that mainstream organizational literature and development programs are still promoting «magico-mythical thinking» concerning the possibility of control, predictability and rationality, with managers «always calling for practical 'tools' and techniques so that they can achieve success», usually presented as «a list of actions or behaviors, for example, the seven habits of effective people, and the ubiquitous two by two matrix» (2007: 297-8). To think about organizations in terms of inspired and strategic leadership and design and confers an 'illusion of control' and is thus a far cry from a rational, detached mode of thinking recognizing the elusiveness of such control, and here he sees Elias's arguments for a dialectic between the «involvement» that manifests itself in the pursuit of rational control and the «detachment» of Elias's concept of unplanned order as a useful way to counter that illusion.

John Connolly and Paddy Dolan – beyond agency/structure

In a number of articles since around 2010, John Connolly and Paddy Dolan have significantly developed a process-figurational approach in organization studies, with a particular focus on two Irish case studies: the development of the Gaelic Athletic Association from the late nineteenth century to the present and the changing approach to advertising and marketing amongst the management of the Guinness brewery between the 1880s and the 1960s (Connolly 2016; 2017; Connolly, Dolan 2011; 2012a; 2012b; 2016; 2017; Dolan, Connolly, 2017). There is not the space here to discuss their close analysis of organizational change in these two settings but it is possible to identify the key conceptual points that they make. First, they draw attention to the continued heavy reliance in institutional theory on dualisms such as structure/agency, individual/society and micro/macro, dualisms which essentially misperceive social reality, failing to grasp the multi-polarity and multi-directionality of power relations, the long-term historical processes within which organizational change is always embedded. In relation to Arthur

Guinness and the company's approach to advertising, for example, they argued that changes within the organization need to be understood in relation to shifts in class relations in England, a «changing power ratio between bourgeoisie and those above (the aristocracy and gentry) and those below (lower class groups)», which «shaped, propelled and constrained opportunities for innovation across a myriad of social spheres» (Dolan & Connolly, 2017: 142). In relation to the professionalisation of the GAA, they argue that the changes which took place can only be properly understood in relation to Elias's conception of a broader process of civilization, in the sense of lengthening chains of interdependencies underpinning increased requirements for foresight and management of one's emotional life.

Second, while Bourdieu's concept of *field* has frequently been turned to in order to resolve the problems besetting the structure/agency dualism, they point out that *fields* are relatively constrained and closely-defined social spaces – art, education, sport – and the concept is less suited than figuration to capture the overlapping of fields, as well as the social spaces between fields (Dolan, Connolly 2017: 143). They illustrate the difference between Elias's emphasis on long-term processes and the ways in which institutional and organizational change is usually explained by contrasting Rao, Monin and Durand's (2003) account of the shift towards nouvelle cuisine in France from the 1970s onwards – focusing on how the nouvelle cuisine movement was driven by the anti-authoritarian ethos of the May 1968 student movement – with the way Elias would have approached the same question, by suggesting the geological metaphor of change resulting from an earthquake (in this case, May 1968), to change resulting from the much slower and more gradual movement of tectonic plates – in this case, gradually shifting power balances between different social, professional and consumer groups (Dolan, Connolly 2017: 145). While Dolan and Connolly do not mention this, a striking absence in Rao et al's account is the diner, and their explanation is framed almost entirely in the 'great man' terms of the culinary concepts, norms and orientations of activist chefs, a *homo clausus* type of explanation which ignores the broader figurations – linking them with diners, food and alcohol producers, hotels, cafés, food journalists – and the changing competitive logic of these various intersecting figurations – as a Bourdieusian would say, *fields*.

Stewart Clegg and Ad van Iterson – liquid organizations

For Stewart Clegg and Ad van Iterson (2013), agreeing with Tim Newton, Elias's analysis of the place of habitus and subjectivity within power relations has significant implications for organization theory, both over the long term and with respect to the arguments concerning *informalization* in the civilizing process. They are especially concerned with an understanding how self-regulation has been transformed within the long-term shift from 'iron cage' organizations such as monasteries, armies, factories and Weberian bureaucracies to the de-differentiated, de-specialized, decentralised, organic and networked organization characteristic of 'liquid modernity' (Clegg 1990; Clegg, Baumeler 2010; Clegg, Cunha 2010). They examine aspects of Elias's arguments in relation to the question of the salience of proximity versus distance in relations of interdependence, as well as reflecting on the tightness of the connection between lengthening chains of interdependence and the forms taken by self-regulation. For Elias, longer and more complex interdependence chains lead to greater self-regulation, but Clegg and van Iterson point out that it is possible that this depends on proximity and visibility. To the extent that interdependence and its supposed constraints remain invisible, it may be that the effect is the reverse, lessening self-regulation. They refer here to Mouzelis's (1995) and Newton's (2001) critical accounts, arguing that it appears that «not all interdependence leads to a conversion in self-regulation and subjectivity. The hypothesized relation has to be tested everywhere, in various time periods, to assess whether a connection exists, and, if so, to assess its exact nature and form» (Clegg, van Iterson 2013: 629; see also Breuer 1991: 407, who makes the same point).

One the one hand, then, they agree that non-hierarchical relationships do require higher levels of informalized self-regulation – Wouters (2011) would use the term «third nature» – to function effectively (van Iterson 2009: 337-338; see also van Iterson, Mastenbroek and Soeters 2001). In loosening organizational structures and making them more flexible and fluid, there is an effective transfer of the regulatory mechanisms from the organi-

zational structure to the level of self-regulation – exactly what Elias was referring to in the shift from external to self-restraint. «Postmodern organizations thus represent increasingly lengthy and complex webs of interdependency that require people to take each other into greater consideration», and de-specialized workers have to be as proficient as 'network players' as were the courtiers at Versailles, needing to juggle «anxious, disciplined behavior and relaxed, informal behaviour» (Clegg, van Iterson 2013: 629).

On the other hand, the opposite effect can also be discerned, given how abstract and purely functional the organizational constraints have become. «Why be concerned», ask Clegg and van Iterson rhetorically, «with people whom you only see once a week or month? ... with people with whom collaboration will end in the very near future? ... with people who hardly understand what you can do or what you actually do?» (Clegg, van Iterson 2013: 630). The potential for increased rather than decreased violence of various sorts – bullying, abuse, anger – is then as much part of liquefied organizational relationships as increased self-regulation and it remains an open question exactly how the two possibilities are balanced out. They conclude by indicating an important line of future research in organization studies drawing on process-figurational theory: the possibility of working to «unravel the dynamics between the two faces of civilizing processes» (Clegg, van Iterson 2013: 631).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

I would like to conclude with some reflections on the points raised by Paddy Dolan and John Connolly towards the end of their 2017 *Cambio* paper. They suggest a number of explanations for what they call the invisibility and marginality of Elias in organization studies, referring to Richard Kilminster's (2007: 152-3) arguments concerning the possibility of a «commitment to an Eliasian perspective», including «the abandonment of philosophy, Marxism and fashionable social theory, the suspension of political ideologies, developing a distance from economics, history and psychology, and the realisation that one's reputation and academic career could be stalled» (*ivi*: 146). It is possible, however, to see things differently. It is not obvious to me, in principle, why one would need to 'abandon' all the approaches and disciplines Kilminster lists, nor why an organization scholar could not approach an engagement with Elias as a route towards enhancement of one's reputation and academic career. Maintaining that an engagement with Elias is by definition a fatal career move strikes me as a sure-fire way to ensure that his marginality is sustained forever and a day. A central point made by Tim Newton, for example, concerns precisely the overlaps between actor-network theory (doesn't get more fashionable) and Elias's concepts, so the problem is not one of choosing the latter over the former, but of drawing attention to the connections. Relational and process-oriented approaches are also fashionable enough, and what Elias brings to the table is the combination of the two and linkages with a range of other, equally important, theoretical concerns. For me Elias captures a particular orientation to sociology that was in fact quite widespread at the turn of the twentieth century, but which got buried in the Parsonian turn, with the latter given new life by Giddens and others, and his writing is the most thorough and systematic representation of that orientation, but not the only one. In my view, it is not necessary to commit to an Eliasian perspective to the exclusion of all others, but precisely to develop the connections and overlaps between Elias's approach to sociology and an array of very similar, but otherwise disconnected, endeavours to solve the same conceptual and empirical problems.

My aim in this paper has been, then, to provide some useful reflections on the various ways in which Elias's process-figurational theory might be equally, if not more effective, in overcoming the main theoretical problems in organization theory. Elias provides a conceptual toolbox well suited to overcoming stubborn theoretical difficulties, dissolving, indeed rendering meaningless, the supposed agency/structure problem. The absence of discussions of power is already an important problem in organization theory, as Stewart Clegg has been arguing for some time now but in addition to turning to theorists such as Foucault and Latour, Elias's theory of power is also a valuable theoretical resource. His work helps address the question of how organizations have been transformed from rational, mechanistic forms to networked forms (Clegg 1989), their anchorage in surrounding social dynamics and relations and above all, the constantly increasing interdependence of human action. His ideas constitute a powerful

critique of much management thinking as 'magico-mythical' (Stacey, 2007) and constitute theoretical foundations that make it possible to see a range of different things about organizational life and change, as well as seeing things we are used to, more clearly, that otherwise become caught up in tired and irresolvable conceptual disputes.

It should also be said that the relationship between Elias and organization theory is most productive when it is critical and two-way, when a clearer focus on the organizational dimensions of social life might enhance Elias's analyses, perhaps nudge them in new directions. It is true that Elias's often placed the institutional form taken by social relations and processes very much in the background of his account and his emphasis on the unintentional, unplanned nature of social order often underplayed the ways in which intentions are in fact realized (van Krieken, 1990). It is not, then, simply a matter of looking at organisations in terms of process-figurational theory but also of reading Elias through an organisational studies lens.

There are a variety of possible directions into which organizational research drawing on Elias might travel, including:

· How Elias's account of the structure and dynamics of court society can be used to analyse contemporary organizational forms, the performative dynamics of organizational culture.

· How the concept of figurations can be used as an alternative to the agency/structure dualism, to analyse what writers like Karl Weick (2012) term the 'impermanence' of organizations.

· How Elias's concept of unplanned order as the interweaving of intentional action by figurations of interdependent individuals and groups can be used to analyse the emergence of new organizational forms such as Google, Facebook, and Uber.

· How Dolan and Connolly's close analysis of the Gaelic Athletic Association and the Guinness brewery can be drawn upon to develop similar analyses of other organizations, using process-figurational theory.

· The broader implications of Wilbert van Vree's account the 'meetingization' of society, how decision-making processes in different organizations revolve around the formation of particular kinds of habitus and psychological disposition. Judith Brett (2002), for example, drawing on van Vree, highlights how the disjunction between the parliamentary and professional styles of meeting affect how the realm of politics is perceived and how it might play a role in the declining legitimacy of political parties and governments.

· How Elias's theory of power-in-figurations can provide alternative explanations to those dependent on theorists such as Foucault.

· How changing forms of the organization of work can be analysed with an emphasis on long-term processes, figurational relations, and the changing formation of habitus. Elias's conceptual approach would generate a range of new insights into, for example, the emergence and spread of «McDonaldization» (Ritzer, 2013) and the «deformalisation» of organizations in the «Uberfication» (Fleming, 2017: 34) of forms of work.

· The ways in which the expression of various forms of violence and emotions more broadly are both continually re-shaped in organizations and also continue to play a important role, the dialectic of civilizing and decivilizing processes, and informalization.

· The impact of social media on organizational dynamics, power relations and the formation of subjectivity both within organizations and linking with broader social relations.

· The ways in which the connections between process-figurational and actor-network theories – so far only lightly observed – can be developed into a more robust dialogue with empirical applications.

· How networked, postmodern organizations balance the opposing tendencies generated by postmodern organizations. Clegg and van Iterson, for example, note that «[h]ow the tension between discipline and expression in postmodern organizations will affect organizational members' disposition is an intriguing issue for further study» (Clegg, van Iterson 2013: 631).

· In terms of methodology and possible research projects, Clegg and van Iterson point to the possibility of following Elias's own method and examining etiquette manuals and their equivalents over time, management texts, as well as surveys and interviews, and ethnographies. One could add to those empirical sources studies of 'how to succeed' books, Ted talks, the organizational rules and norms built into popular culture (*Mad Men*, police dramas, films, and so on), the discursive performance and impact of public figures such as Jordan

Peterson, Donald Trump, as well as the narratives around celebrity CEOS, the likes of Richard Branson, Elon Musk, etc.

The potential of Elias's process-figurational theory for organizational analysis is really only in its early stages, and hopefully this paper has sketched the basic contours of how Elias's sociology can contribute to both theoretical development and empirical research in organization studies.

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Eliasian Themes

La paura della morte

Norbert Elias

(Traduzione a cura di Vincenzo Marasco)

C'è un'antica leggenda che narra del tempo in cui gli esseri umani erano ancora in contatto con il demone creatore del mondo. Di tanto in tanto, gli uomini inviavano una delegazione presso di lui, per chiedere consiglio o presentare delle lamentele. Così, un giorno, mandarono messi per lagnarsi del tempo atmosferico. E dissero: «Non è che tu l'abbia fatto troppo bene, sai? A volte c'è troppa pioggia in un posto e poca in un altro, o troppo sole da una parte e troppo poco da un'altra». «Be'», rispose il demone, «mi spiace che non gradiate come ho organizzato le cose. Vedremo che cosa è possibile fare al riguardo, non appena mi avrete detto qual è il tempo che preferireste». E, così, la delegazione tornò dalla propria gente, che per poco non venne alle mani e quasi non scoppiò una guerra – in nessun modo, riuscirono a raggiungere un accordo su quale fosse il tempo migliore. La delegazione si recò, allora, nuovamente dal demone e disse: «Il popolo non riesce a raggiungere un accordo e, così, il tempo continuerà a rimanere insoddisfacente». In un'altra occasione, la delegazione visitò il demone per lamentarsi della morte – ed è questo il motivo per cui vi sto raccontando questa storia. «Perché mai hai fatto una cosa del genere?», chiesero. «Non è molto carino da parte tua aver disposto che noi si debba morire, che si debba prima invecchiare e poi spirare». «Be'», disse il demone, «io ho fatto un'invenzione che speravo avreste apprezzato: quella di darvi un grande piacere quando vi riproducete. E, in effetti, mi è stato detto che lo apprezzate, così come lo fanno gli altri animali che pure lasciano questo mondo. Dunque, visto che voi, così come le altre creature viventi, gradite riprodurvi,

se non esistesse la morte non rimarrebbe più un angolino di spazio sulla terra». «Ma lascia perdere gli altri anima-li», disse la delegazione, «non siamo forse differenti, noi?». «Sì e no», rispose il demone, «sì e no. Per certo, come gli altri voi siete nati, e come le altre creature mangiate e digerite il vostro cibo, e come loro – su questo concordo – morite». «Ma noi possiamo parlare e loro no, loro nemmeno sanno della tua esistenza», replicarono. «Sì, questo è vero», riprese il demone, «voi avete la conoscenza, avete una premonizione della morte che loro non hanno. Posso capire che questo renda la faccenda assai difficile. Facciamo così: vi farò un dono tale da far sì che voi non vediate più la morte in maniera così chiara, tale da far sì che, se vorrete, avrete modo di tenervi nascosto ciò che non amate del mondo. Io vi darò il dono della fantasia. Attenzione, però: si tratta di un'arma a doppio taglio. Ve lo dico in anticipo: potrete usarlo nel caso abbiate intenzione di mascherare la morte e le altre cose che trovate spiacevoli di questo mondo, per creare il quale io ho cercato di fare del mio meglio. Ma potrete anche utilizzare la fantasia per vedere come il mondo è veramente e per rendere poi il mondo migliore di quanto abbia fatto io: potrete inventare delle cose. Anzi, questo mi recherebbe un grande piacere, poiché sono molte le invenzioni che io debbo ancora fare e non potete lasciare tutto questo lavoro solo a me. Sarebbe molto gentile da parte vostra, se faceste voi alcune di queste invenzioni. Così, vi dono la fantasia e sta a voi decidere se usarla più per nascondere il mondo o più per farne uno nuovo e migliore di quello che io ho creato».

Bene, questa è la storia e io credo che illustri bene i problemi centrali che dobbiamo affrontare quando ci accingiamo a parlare della morte o della paura della morte. Vogliamo noi davvero vedere la morte così com'è o vogliamo invece ricoprire questo fatto disdicevole con le nostre fantasie e i nostri desideri? Che cosa preferiscono gli esseri umani? Vedere il mondo così com'è, il mondo che indubitabilmente, in molti aspetti, non corrisponde ai nostri desideri, oppure mascherarlo dietro alle fantasie che amiamo o, così come diceva il demone: «usare il dono della fantasia per rendere il mondo un posto migliore in cui vivere». È una domanda sincera e io penso che sia la questione chiave, in particolare quando si ha a che fare con il problema della paura della morte. Dobbiamo, infatti, chiederci: le paure sono fantasie? C'è davvero qualcosa di cui avere paura? Be', per quanto si possa guardare indietro nello sviluppo dell'umanità, gli esseri umani non hanno saputo opporsi al desiderio di essere immortali, di vivere per sempre. Parlando socialmente, questo fatto rappresenta una grande realtà sociale, visto che molte delle nostre istituzioni sono progettate per dare sostanza al desiderio degli esseri umani di vivere per sempre, di essere immortali. Io penso che quando ci troviamo a discutere della paura della morte, si dovrebbe prendere atto che una delle paure più grandi, forse l'essenza stessa della paura, è messa in evidenza proprio dall'enorme quantità di immaginazione che gli uomini hanno convogliato nel desiderio, nella speranza, nella realtà di vivere in eterno, anche dopo la morte. Penso quindi che il cuore di quella paura sia la paura della propria estinzione, l'idea di non esistere più, l'idea che il mondo possa andare avanti senza la nostra personale presenza. Questa paura della scomparsa personale sembra essere una delle componenti costitutive della paura della morte.

Un secondo aspetto che la compone, riguarda invece cosa accadrà dopo la morte, cosa succederebbe se fossimo immortali, con la punizione che noi immaginiamo, o possiamo immaginare, ci venga inflitta per i peccati commessi in questa vita. Mi sembra che la paura della morte non consista solamente della paura della scomparsa, ma anche, ed in misura sempre maggiore, del timore per l'incertezza su ciò che può accaderci dopo la morte, il dubbio di dover terribilmente soffrire per le trasgressioni che abbiamo commesso prima della nostra dipartita. Così, queste due componenti – paura della scomparsa personale e paura dell'incertezza riguardo alle punizioni che dovremo ricevere dopo la morte – mi paiono le due componenti centrali della paura della morte. E sono, certamente, molto antiche. È sicuramente corretto affermare che la paura della punizione dopo la morte non è sempre esistita. Nello sviluppo degli esseri umani, delle società umane, noi possiamo seguire il percorso attraverso il quale gli esseri umani hanno sviluppato ciò che, con le parole di oggi, potremo definire la nascita di una solida coscienza. Noi sappiamo che, probabilmente, questa coscienza è apparsa per la prima volta in una forma complessa nella società degli antichi egizi.

Esiste un libro – un tempo molto noto ed ancora assai leggibile – intitolato *L'alba della coscienza*, dell'egittologo americano J.H. Breasted. A suo modo di vedere, e penso avesse ragione, gli antichi egizi furono i primi ad introdurre un clero e una dottrina dello Stato secondo la quale gli esseri umani sarebbero stati puniti per le trasgressioni terrene nell'aldilà. È un documento sorprendente, perché, nell'antico Egitto, questa formazione

della coscienza, questo sentimento di non dover trasgredire un determinato codice, risultava strettamente legato alla giustizia sociale. Quella egizia è stata una società sicuramente autoritaria e autocratica, in cui i poveri erano oppressi, così come lo sono stati in tutte le società antiche, ma in cui era anche presente la percezione che le persone non avrebbero dovuto andare troppo in là nello sfruttare il povero e l'infelice. Lo si può illustrare con la seguente citazione da un testo trovato in una tomba dell'antico Egitto piuttosto sontuosa, approssimativamente dalla seconda metà del terzo millennio prima di Cristo.

> Non ci sono state figlie di abitanti (cittadini) di cui ho abusato, né vedove che ho afflitto; non ho sfrattato contadini, né allontanato mandriani; a nessun sorvegliante, su cinque, ho portato via delle persone per tasse (non pagate). Nella mia comunità nessuno è stato miserabile, né alcuno è stato affamato durante il mio tempo ... Ho dato alla vedova come a colei che aveva marito e in ogni cosa che ho dato, non ho glorificato i grandi uomini più dei piccoli.

Ci sono centinaia di documenti dalle antiche tombe egiziane con frasi quali «ero giusto, non ho mai fatto niente di sbagliato, non ho oppresso i poveri, non li ho sfruttati, non ho trasgredito le richieste degli dei». Ci sono miniere di alabastro con centinaia e centinaia di documenti di questo genere del «sono stato giusto». Certamente, non c'è bisogno di credervi. La corruzione era elevata nell'antico Egitto, e c'erano metodi che i sacerdoti dell'antico Egitto avevano messo a punto per purificare ognuno dalle prevaricazioni commesse. Ad esempio, in una delle grandi città dell'antico Egitto, c'erano due famose vasche: bagnandosi in queste vasche si veniva ripuliti da ogni trasgressione. Erano, dunque, molti i modi attraverso cui un uomo poteva risultare giusto. A questo, voglio aggiungere che ciò che noi traduciamo dall'antico Egitto col termine di «giusto», non può che essere più di un'approssimazione al significato originario. Ma è la parola migliore che abbiamo per esprimere la nozione di una persona che è stata purificata davanti agli dei e non ha bisogno di temere alcuna punizione nell'aldilà. Questo significato è, ovviamente, emerso con evidenza dalla mitologia egizia. Per esempio, gli antichi egizi avevano una mitologia centrata sul culto di Osiride. Osiride fu ucciso e il suo feretro vagava per il Nilo; così suo figlio Horus combatté il suo avversario Seth e offrì il suo stesso occhio ad Osiride, suo padre, che poté in tal modo tornare in vita. Per dimostrare alla popolazione che anche loro avrebbero potuto risorgere si teneva uno spettacolo di otto giorni, in cui erano messi in scena la morte e la resurrezione di Osiride. In effetti, un dono alla morte era chiamato «un occhio di Horus». Ed essi chiaramente immaginavano che i loro cuori sarebbero stati esaminati nell'oltretomba. In una delle immagini di un antico papiro, se ne trova una descrizione. Si può vedere il deceduto, Ani, venire condotto all'interno – abbastanza stranamente assieme alla moglie; ed entrambi guardano ansiosamente il cuore di Ani che viene posato sui piatti di una bilancia; si può vedere il dio con la testa di sciacallo manovrare la bilancia, e il dio scriba, Thoth, in piedi, immobile, mentre gli dei, seduti in alto, osservano la cerimonia. È una vivida rappresentazione di ciò che la gente pensava e temeva. La scena successiva mostra che il cuore di Ani è stato retto, ed egli è così il benvenuto. Vorrei anche richiamare la vostra attenzione sulla Divoratrice[1], l'animale con la testa di coccodrillo, il lato anteriore di leone e quello posteriore di ippopotamo, che assiste attenta per divorare coloro che sono invece stati trovati ingiusti. Così, c'erano tormenti e paure vere, e possiamo probabilmente convenire che questi sogni erano quindi, socialmente parlando, davvero reali.

Rimane ovviamente la questione del perché, ad un certo punto dello stadio dello sviluppo sociale, sia emersa questa formazione della coscienza. È una configurazione molto differente da quella degli antichi babilonesi che, per quel che sono in grado di dire, non sperimentarono un tale sviluppo, né qualcosa anche solo di simile. Tale sviluppo ha a che fare con l'intera struttura dello Stato. Anche ai nostri tempi, l'intera struttura dello Stato è strettamente connessa al processo di formazione della coscienza delle persone. E la presenza, nell'antico Egitto, di uno Stato piuttosto autoritario e di un clero forte, ha probabilmente qualcosa a che fare con tale sviluppo, ma non è questa l'occasione per entrare nel dettaglio. Il mio intento è solamente portare la vostra attenzione al fatto che i sentimenti riguardo ciò che ci accade dopo la morte sono, in maniera evidente, strettamente intrecciati con la struttura della società in cui si manifestano.

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[1] Conosciuta anche come Ammit [NdC]

Forse posso illustrare al meglio questo punto facendo riferimento ad alcuni documenti da una società totalmente differente, sempre dell'antichità. La società Romana del primo secolo avanti Cristo mostra una formazione della coscienza completamente differente, che si è protratta per almeno altri due secoli, i primi due successivi all'avvento di Cristo. È stata una formazione della coscienza in cui la paura della vita dopo la morte è quasi completamente scomparsa. Esisteva un qualche tipo di culto degli antenati, in latino *dii manes*, che aveva a che fare col grande valore che essi avevano in particolar modo per i romani della classe superiore o della classe medio-superiore. Sono queste le classi che noi conosciamo di più, perché ci hanno lasciato alcuni documenti scritti o lapidi. E, nel loro caso, essi avevano sì una specifica forma di adorazione degli antenati, ma vaga e non particolarmente emozionale. Sentivano che, forse, nell'aldilà, avremmo nuovamente incontrato i nostri cari. C'è un poema molto bello di Properzio [trad. it, 1957], in cui il poeta si rivolge alla sua amata Cinzia, ormai morta, e le confida che spera di vederla ancora, nell'aldilà, quando anche lui sarà spirato. Vorrei citare alcuni passaggi da un epitaffio Romano. Possediamo dozzine di questi epitaffi e in nessuno di essi rintracciamo la benché minima traccia di paura dell'oltretomba; vi troviamo, in varie forme, una tenue credenza nella possibilità di incontrare ancora i propri cari, ma molto spesso anche solo semplici espressioni dell'idea che questa è la sola vita di cui possiamo godere.

> Ai riveriti spiriti della Morte...
> Valeria prima pose questa
> A suo marito con cui visse 15
> Anni 3 mesi e 20 giorni.
> La ha ben meritata.
> (Benevento, Italia)

> Amici, voi che leggete, ascoltate il mio consiglio:
> Mischiate il vino, legate ghirlande sulla vostra testa,
> Bevete a fondo. E non negate
> Alle belle fanciulle le dolcezze dell'amore.
> Quando la morte viene, la terra e il fuoco
> Ogni cosa consumano.
> (Roma)[2]

Così, già nell'antichità, esisteva una società estremamente secolarizzata in cui, benché la religione di Stato ancora avesse un valore cerimoniale e benché fossero eseguite comunemente liturgie per gli antenati, l'investimento emotivo delle persone in tali cerimonie era assai superficiale. Non c'era più una partecipazione emotiva duratura e profonda. E già in Grecia – luogo in cui il processo di secolarizzazione ebbe per la prima volta inizio – noi troviamo filosofi come Epicuro che si batterono contro la paura della morte. In seguito, durante la Repubblica Romana, nel primo secolo avanti Cristo, troviamo uno dei più famosi epicurei, Lucrezio, che, nella sua opera ancora ampiamente letta, il *De rerum natura* [trad it, 2003], afferma: «Nil igitur mors est ad nos» – «La morte dunque non è nulla per noi». E poi ancora: «Non c'è niente di cui aver paura dopo la morte». Lucrezio esplicitamente sostiene che, non avendo memoria di ciò che succede prima della nostra nascita – noi non ricordiamo l'ultima guerra, dice –, anche se gli atomi di cui siamo composti saranno, dopo la nostra morte, nuovamente riorganizzati in un'altra persona, costui non sarà te o me, ma un *altro*, proprio perché diversa sarà la memoria. Una volta che il corpo è disintegrato la memoria se ne va, e se la memoria si disperde l'identità della persona se ne va con essa: per tali ragioni non c'è niente da avere paura dell'aldilà, né è presente una qualche idea di resurrezione. Non si potrebbe esprimere il concetto con maggiore chiarezza. Vale la pena di osservare che, tre secoli dopo, la paura dell'aldilà era nuovamente divenuta molto forte nella società, e vorrei illustrare questo con la seguente citazione dal V secolo d.C., da un uomo chiamato Salviano, che scrisse che le persone ricche avrebbero dovuto dare di più alla chiesa, lasciarle

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[2] Gli epitaffi sono ripresi da Hopkins 1983, la traduzione dall'inglese è nostra [NdT].

maggiori ricchezze, una volta morte. E poi aggiunge: «Oh, quando brucerai all'inferno, griderai: "Padre Abramo, lascia che Lazzaro venga a dissetare le mie labbra secche"»[3]. E così, una teologia interamente nuova stava venendo alla luce, soppiantando la precedente tradizione romana. Nel giro di tre o quattro secoli il breve momento di secolarizzazione era stato spezzato, e una nuova paura della punizione dopo la morte era tornata ad essere non solo una fantasia personale, ma una fantasia collettiva supportata dalle istituzioni dello Stato; in questo senso, una fantasia del tutto reale.

Si può notare come anche le fantasie di un genere veramente negativo, fintanto che garantiscono una qualche forma di sopravvivenza personale, sono comunque preferite alle paure della scomparsa individuale. Ora, la domanda è: come e perché le credenze di questo tipo cambiano nel corso dello sviluppo sociale dell'umanità? C'è, come ho detto, una connessione molto chiara tra la formazione della coscienza e la struttura della società, e io intendo qui riportarvi solo dei fatti e non le spiegazioni, che mi porterebbero troppo lontano. Ma vorrei connettere tutto ciò con alcune esperienze del nostro tempo. Ai giorni nostri, noi molto spesso troviamo una sviluppo della coscienza che è parte di una forma di coscienza altamente individualizzata. Troviamo, per esempio, alcune persone che sono individualmente estremamente preoccupate della propria morte, estremamente preoccupate che qualcosa di terribile accadrà loro dopo morti, pur senza aderire ad alcun credo particolare. È una paura nevrotica, connessa con i loro sensi di colpa individuali, un sentimento generale di aver in qualche modo compiuto un qualche tipo di trasgressione, che ingenera ansia e di cui si preoccupano. Anch'essi hanno molto spesso paura della morte; non possono sopportare di sentire nulla che sia connesso con la morte. Non è cambiato ciò che in epoche precedenti è stato un credo istituzionalizzato, che è rimasto come tale, anche se in misura minore; tuttavia, oggi, noi molto spesso possiamo ritrovare un atteggiamento simile anche tra i non credenti, come una forma personale di nevrosi o in qualunque modo la si voglia chiamare: un momento individuale di sofferenza. Il più delle volte, tali persone si troveranno, infatti, di tanto in tanto, a commettere qualche piccola trasgressione. E le volte che questa non verrà scoperta, quando si troveranno a non essere puniti per queste piccole trasgressioni, si sentiranno rassicurati, poiché questo significa che essi non saranno puniti neppure per la trasgressione immaginaria a cui il loro senso di colpa è correlato. Ovviamente, l'essere scoperti accrescerà al contrario le loro paure.

Io penso che non possiamo considerare molto bene i problemi dei nostri stessi tempi senza dire che, in qualche misura, la paura della morte è connessa con un'attitudine generale verso noi stessi, verso ciò che potrei chiamare la nostra stessa animalità. Ricordiamoci della replica del demone a quando gli umani esclamarono «ma noi siamo differenti dagli animali». Egli rispose «Sì e no». E ciò davvero è uno dei problemi che, a parer mio, non sono ancora chiaramente risolti al giorno d'oggi. In molti aspetti, gli esseri umani sono normali mammiferi; sono però mammiferi che hanno mangiato il frutto dell'albero della conoscenza. Sono le uniche creature viventi che sanno che dovranno un giorno morire. E, infatti, questo è il nostro grande problema.

Avete probabilmente già sentito resoconti di scimmie madri che continuano, per qualche tempo, a portare sul dorso i propri cuccioli morti, non essendo consapevoli della loro sorte. Col passare del tempo, il piccolo perde la presa e cade giù, e la madre è a malapena se ne rende conto. Le scimmie non sanno cos'è la morte. Solo gli esseri umani hanno questa conoscenza, e in questo aspetto certamente noi siamo differenti dalle altre creature. Noi siamo differenti dalle altre creature anche nel fatto che noi possiamo parlare in un linguaggio eseguito socialmente – non il linguaggio specifico di una particolare specie. Siamo anche gli unici, tra tutte le creature, a seppellire i nostri morti. Più che questo, forse, il principale aspetto della nostra unicità è che noi possiamo trasmettere la conoscenza da una generazione all'altra. Questo è, infatti, uno degli elementi base della vita umana. Trasmettere conoscenza significa anche una crescita di tale conoscenza. Affermare ciò è qualcosa di molto diverso dal dire che un qualcosa come «un'anima» è stata aggiunta al nostro corpo; ed è piuttosto differente anche dal descrivere specificamente in quali aspetti noi differiamo dagli altri animali – dai quali sicuramente discendiamo, pur essendo diversi da loro – per avere fatto, per così dire, un salto nell'evoluzione biologica, che ci ha permesso di fare cose che nessun altro animale può fare – un salto che, per dirla in breve, ci ha permesso nel corso del tempo di diventare la specie dominante su questa terra. Abbiamo gradualmente eliminato la maggior parte dei nostri avversari tra gli animali. Abbi-

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[3] Si tratta di Salviano da Marsiglia. La citazione è dal suo *Ad ecclesiam*, la traduzione dall'inglese è nostra [NdT].

amo trasformato la maggior parte della terra in un modo che nessun altro animale è capace di fare. Come società, abbiamo, infatti, adesso ottenuto una posizione dominante in questo pianeta, senza però accettare la responsabilità che viene da questa tale posizione.

C'è un modo, come probabilmente saprete, per rappresentare questa attitudine più realistica verso la morte che ho descritto. In alcuni casi essa è indicato come se fosse un credo filosofico come un altro. Uno dei nomi dati all'attitudine di cui ho parlato è «nichilismo», e in effetti ai nostri tempi esiste un lungo movimento che si muove a partire dall'accettazione dell'assunto che la morte è definitiva e irrevocabile, se la si guarda senza coprirsi gli occhi d fantasie. Di fatto, viviamo in un periodo in cui l'abbandono di vecchie credenze e l'arrivo di una attitudine più correlata ai fatti nei confronti della morte sono viste semplicemente come un ulteriore «-ismo». E l'intero movimento, il teatro dell'assurdo, è come se fosse votato al lamento, ad un lamento incessante, perché – ora che vediamo il mondo in un modo più realistico, ora che le vecchie credenze nell'aldilà sono sparite – il mondo è diventato senza senso. Penso che questa sia una fase di passaggio. Possiamo comprendere che lo shock di essere messi di fronte alla realtà evidente della propria esistenza finita, possa, per qualche tempo, aver creato un vuoto. E così noi troviamo autori come Camus, Sartre o Beckett – autore di *Aspettando Godot*, ovvero "aspettando Dio", che se ne è andato – disperati perché questa nuova posizione sembra essere vuota di ogni significato.

Io penso che, prima o poi, ci accorgeremo che questo atteggiamento di sconforto, di cordoglio per un passato denso di significato, durerà solamente fintanto che noi saremo incapaci di vedere con chiarezza un significato nuovo. Questo è il nuovo obiettivo che abbiamo di fronte adesso. Infatti, io credo che ciò che abbiamo oggi sia in parte il risultato di un eccessivo sviluppo dell'individualismo. Noi prestiamo troppa attenzione, noi sovrastimiamo, se possiamo porla in questi termini, l'importanza della nostra vita individuale. So che queste sono parole pericolose da pronunciare: sono completamente d'accordo con tutti coloro che combattono per i diritti umani in paesi in cui gli individui sono oppressi dallo Stato – non c'è dubbio che ciò debba essere fatto. Cionondimeno, mi piacerebbe lo stesso aggiungere che noi, molto spesso, trattiamo le nostre azioni individuali, i nostri risultati come se fossero la fine di un processo. Ciò che assolutamente manca nel nostro tempo è il sentimento che noi siamo, di solito in misura maggiore di quanto le nostre riflessioni ci suggeriscano, dipendenti dagli altri, e viviamo assieme agli altri. E, nei fatti, se ci pensiamo, è una strana forma di dimenticanza. Nella nostra vita quotidiana ognuno di noi sa bene fino a che punto è dipendente dalle altre persone: viviamo con altre persone, siamo, come individui, completamente immersi nelle vite di altre persone e la nostra condizione in relazione ad altre persone è, nella realtà pratica, uno dei principali aspetti della nostra vita. Nonostante ciò, a livello della riflessione, a livello filosofico o persino artistico, noi ci comportiamo, o pensiamo, o ci rappresentiamo come se fossimo unità isolate.

Io penso che debba essere ribadito ancora una volta che, su due livelli, sia quello del nostro destino individuale, sia quello della nostra personale realizzazione e il nostro personale senso, siamo interamente dipendenti dalla nostra relazione con altri esseri umani. È risaputo che molti filosofi, per esempio Husserl[4], usano la parola «senso» come se indicasse qualcosa di completamente individuale. Eppure possiamo vedere, quando studiamo le parole o il linguaggio, che una parola che non significa per uno ciò che significa per un altro è priva di senso alcuno. Quando ascoltiamo un'altra lingua sentiamo i suoni, ma dal momento che riceviamo i suoni come su di un'altra lunghezza d'onda, quelle parole sono senza significato. Qui, ad esempio, vediamo quindi fino a che punto il significato è dipendente dalla reciprocità tra le persone. E così, quando ci troviamo a pensare che il significato delle nostre vite come distrutto perché distrutto sarebbe il senso di una vita dopo la morte, dovremo porre maggiore attenzione al significato e alla realizzazione della nostra vita che ci deriva dalla consapevolezza che quale senso possa o non possa avere per noi tale vita è dipendente dal significato che essa ha o meno per gli altri. Su due dimensioni: in primo luogo nello spazio, in cui noi viviamo come in una serie di cerchi concentrici, con una serie di persone nel nostro cerchio più intimo, la nostra famiglia, i nostri amici. E le condizioni di questo cerchio intimo per la nostra vita personale, per la nostra personale soddisfazione, sono di immensa importanza. Ma, attraverso una serie di cerchi intermedi, noi ci muoviamo verso l'intera umanità. Ai giorni nostri, l'umanità è divenuta, forse per la prima volta, non

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[4] Hedmond Husserl (1859-1938) fondatore della fenomenologia filosofica; Elias seguì un seminario tenuto da Husserl su Goethe nel 1920, nel momento in cui era a Friburgo per un semestre di studio [NdC].

solo una parola vuota, ma una realtà sociale. Ciò che succede in Australia, ciò che accade alle Ebridi è importante per noi; e ciò che accade a noi è importante per persone che vivono in luoghi lontani. Le distanze sono divenute più brevi. Stiamo dunque vivendo, nei fatti, in un mondo in cui il network di interdipendenze si è diffuso sullo spazio di tutto il globo. E lo stesso possiamo dire in termini di tempo. Per molte persone, la nostra interdipendenza con le generazioni passate e con le future può non sembrare così immediatamente intelligibile come la nostra inter-dipendenza crescente nello spazio con gruppi umani che secoli fa sarebbero apparsi ai nostri avi come gruppi così distanti da essere virtualmente senza alcun interesse per loro.

Se però consideriamo il processo delle nostre vite un prodotto che si sviluppa gradualmente nel tempo, anche in questo caso, le distanze diventano più piccole. Io penso, e non posso che parlare solo per me, che avremmo la sensazione di una vita realmente realizzata o soddisfatta se, invece di agire solamente per i propri contemporanei, avessimo anche qualcosa, un proprio obiettivo, una propria conoscenza da poter trasmettere – in quanto padri, o madri, o semplicemente in quanto persone istruite – alle prossime generazioni. Anzi, mi sembra di poter dire che una delle sofferenze dei nostri tempi origina dal fatto che le catene delle generazioni sono state allentate o rotte e si ha la sensazione che tali catene non esistano più. Le persone credono di poter cercare appagamento per le proprie vite qui ed ora, al giorno d'oggi; non vedono che nessuno dei loro obiettivi è una fine, che esso diviene privo di sig-nificato se non è preso in carico dalla generazione che li segue. Viviamo, infatti, in un modo in gran parte oscuro. L'oggettivo compito sociale con cui dobbiamo fare i conti richiede una pianificazione di lungo termine. Sia essa una pianificazione cittadina o una pianificazione Statale, in ogni caso richiederà di tener conto di una, due, tre gener-azioni, laddove nella nostra vita individuale, la nostra costruzione di noi stessi è diretta verso il soddisfacimento di ciò che vogliamo qui ed ora, nella nostra stessa vita. Eppure molto spesso ciò non può essere realizzato, proprio per-ché, ancor più di prima, il nostro mondo è organizzato in modo tale che ciò possa avvenire solo dopo molte gener-azioni. Non c'è bisogno che vi dica che negli anni Sessanta – e per ottime ragioni – questa catena delle generazioni è stata, in qualche maniera, come interrotta.

C'è stata una generazione più vecchia che ha vissuto con l'autorità o con i modi autoritari in una forma tradizionale. C'è stata una generazione più giovane che ha provato ad abbattere la struttura di autorità di quella più vecchia. E questo ha condotto al fatto che questa dipendenza dalle prossime generazioni non sia più sentita oggigiorno. Sento che molto del significato della nostra vita individuale dipende dalla ricostruzione delle catene delle generazioni come eguali, e non di una vecchia generazione in possesso dell'autorità con una più giovane che deve obbedire. E non possono che essere uguali, poiché hanno bisogno l'una dell'altra. È male per la generazione più vecchia così come per la più giovane, quando la catena delle generazioni si rompe. Ma io penso che la paura della morte diminuirebbe sensibilmente se, alla stregua di quanto è accaduto in altre società, le persone in Europa riuscissero a riguadagnare consapevolezza che noi umani assolviamo i nostri compiti e facciamo la nostra piccola parte non solo per la nostra generazione, ma anche per quella successiva; e che il fare questa piccola parte – e farla per gli altri – regala un senso di soddisfazione e realizzazione, ma solamente se questa è portata avanti criticamente dalle generazioni che seguono. Dico qui criticamente perché, ad esempio, nel caso degli intellettuali, il mio stesso caso, io sento un certo sentimento di realizzazione, grazie ad alcune delle cose che ho fatto. Esse hanno un signifi-cato, mi donano soddisfazione. Ma questo non significa che io mi aspetti che ogni cosa che ho detto sarà adottata o portata avanti dalla prossima generazione. Mi aspetto che alcune di esse siano adottate o portate avanti in lavori di ricerca o artistici o in qualsivoglia altro tipo di lavoro e io penso che questo sia, se si vuole, il messaggio con cui voglio concludere: il messaggio è che noi potremmo fare di più per la nostra stessa realizzazione in questo mondo se potessimo essere certi della continuità tra le generazioni. Continuità su tutti i livelli, a livello della famiglia, della nazione, a livello europeo e soprattutto a livello dell'umanità. Ovviamente, se finiamo per spazzarci via, ogni cosa che ogni essere umano abbia mai fatto diverrà insignificante – perché tale significato esiste solo tra gli esseri umani. Così, io spero che mi permetterete di dirvi quanto segue e di rifletterci: cosa possiamo fare per far in modo di raf-forzare nuovamente la continuità tra le generazioni e così forse rendere anche quelle piccole cose che possiamo real-izzare come individui più cariche di senso?

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Open Essays and Researches

Gender Barriers at Work: A Comparison Between Women Train Drivers and Women Garage Mechanics in Spain

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Abstract. Occupational segregation persists despite continuous promotion of equal opportunity policies. This article describes various barriers that have stood in the way of women train drivers' and women motor vehicle mechanics' entering and remaining in employment. The results are based on case studies of these two occupations in Spain and primarily on the analysis of in-depth interviews of female and male employees in these occupations. The comparison is justified because of the companies' similarities in terms of underrepresentation and yet their dissimilar organisation in terms of both size and management style. The findings indicate the presence of at least two types of obstacles: 1) *explicit barriers* related to personnel selection and the material characteristics of workplaces; and 2) *implicit barriers* associated with attitudes and practices in the relationships between the minority of women workers and the male majority.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last five decades, the Spanish job market has experienced major changes, one of which is the gradual entrance of women. In 1980, the *female economic activity rate* was 27.1 per cent (Puy 2000). Thirty-five years on, in 2015, this same indicator has doubled (53.7 per cent, INE 2015). Several factors have impacted this change: changes in labour legislation; equality in accessing education (MEC 2016); improvements in job opportunities; and a change in mindset, such as women's desire for independence through employment and cultural changes involving women's disposition to hold jobs (Prieto 2007). However, this does not mean that equality has been achieved.

Occupational segregation tenaciously endures, particularly in certain niches of employment. Thus, there are several occupations where either males or females heavily prevail no matter what country is examined

(Hegewisch *et alii* 2010; Ibáñez 2008). In aggregate terms, males continue to reign in the economic spheres whose social and monetary recognition is the highest while occupations that are considered "male" offer the highest salaries due to their "superior" management or technical skills (Fagan 2010). Occupations where women prevail are those that offer lesser opportunities for promotion (Rosenbaum 1985; England 2010) and more modest remuneration (Levanon *et alii* 2009).

Understanding why this occupational segregation endures is an important matter for at least two reasons. First, failure to foster equal opportunities, one of the causes of inequality between men and women, is of concern for governments and social institutions because it is associated with labour market rigidity and causes economic inefficiency (Anker 1997). Secondly, women continue to bear an unfair subordinate status owing jointly to redistribution, i.e. economic policies, and recognition, i.e. cultural androcentrism (Fraser 2007).

This article presents a comparative analysis of two extremely masculinised occupations. Railway driving in Spain accounts for a mere 1.5 per cent of female workers[1], while female employment of motor vehicle mechanics or machine adjusters stands at 3.7 per cent[2].

Several factors pointed to examining these two occupations jointly. First, the characteristics of the companies in rail transport and vehicle reparation are very different in terms of both their size and their types of organisation. Yet the occupational segregation effect is similar. It also seemed of interest to examine whether there were any commonalities between the entrance barriers found by women in obtaining and remaining in these jobs.

Diverse sources of information consulted by the researchers included specialised literature, labour statistics, company reports, and so forth. Perhaps potentially of greatest value was the production of a set of oral documents generated between 2012 and 2014 through individual in-depth interviews using a similar script.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Since the 1960s, various social sciences have gradually begun to devote attention to labour segregation by gender and gained an interest in identifying entrance barriers faced by female workers seeking or attaining employment in occupations where males prevail has gained ground. The main androcentric arguments justifying occupational segregation can be grouped into three inter-linked categories: 1) "women aren't able", 2) "women don't want to", and 3) "women can't take it".

1) *Women aren't able* refers to the effects of a division of labour by gender and its resonance in subjective perception when attributing skills to men and women. While males will be socialised to develop their strength and command of technical and leadership skills, virtuous women must cultivate sensitivity, emotion and household-based skills involving cooking or supervising meals, bringing up children and caring for family members (Kmec *et alii* 2010; Waite, Berryman 1985). These stereotypes regarding the male and female essence continue to hold and have a significant bearing on people's choices in education and jobs (England 2010).

2) *Women don't want to* is revealing of conflicts in availability and gender hierarchies in assigning roles. Women's confinement to private, domestic spheres involves socialisation of femininity that pre-establishes the essential priority of the home. Not fulfilling or poorly fulfilling that role in the face of demands on the job, therefore, would unleash symbolic violence requiring female workers to relinquish what is secondary, i.e. work outside the home, and a return to their natural "habitat". Impacts on time/availability conflicts, perversely known as work-life balance, continue to prevail when women choose their employment (Jacobs, Gerson 2004; Percheski 2008). Throughout the world, statistics prove that women continue to devote most of their time to taking care

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[1] See Renfe Grupo (2013). These dismal figures repeat themselves in highly developed Western countries such as: France, 5 per cent (Blandín 2013); Norway, 5 per cent (ITF 2010); the United Kingdom, 5.2 per cent (Robinson 2012); and the USA 2.8 per cent (Starustka 2013).

[2] The figures in regard to the occupation are no more encouraging in other European countries. In France only 18.7 per cent of the mechanics were women in motor vehicle maintenance and repair garages in 2014, while the figures from Germany were 16.1 per cent and Sweden 12.8 per cent (EFT, Eurostat).

of their homes and families, which in turn proves that the gender division of labour ideology maintains its hold (Sayer 2005).

3) *Women can't take it:* the time and effort that "rough" "man's" jobs require is the rationale behind the normalisation of gender-based labour spheres. Any transgression of this division would initially create problems for women to be accepted and integrated into masculinised occupations (Kanter 1977; Moore 1988; Pesce 1988; Maume 1999; McPherson *et alii* 2001; Taylor 2010). Opposition and harassment are among the causes for certain women to drop out in these occupations (Torre 2014).

There are different theories that have tried to explain gender occupational segregation in the last decades, among others, for example, the Human Capital Theory (Becker 1987), that points out factors as the employment guidance or the individual preferences; the Labour Market Segmentation Theory (Doeringer, Piore 1985), that focuses in companies' characteristics; or the Labour Queue Theory (Thurow 1975), that emphasises the influence of social stereotypes in the employers' personnel recruitment and retention. In any case, segregation, by its very nature, has a host of causes whose factors vary over time and, of course, have not disappeared. Gender-driven socialisation, organisations' lack of information, female workers' lack of visibility in male-dominated occupations, barriers to obtaining jobs in certain occupations, and a mistrust of women's competence and continuation on the job all come into play. They are all factors that contribute to the fact that only 23 per cent of the existing occupations were not segregated by gender and 50 per cent of female workers were concentrated in 13 out of the 169 occupations of the Spanish National Occupation Classification List in 2011 (Census 2011). In reality, there are quite a lot of occupations in the Spanish labour market that are practically closed to women: pilot, bricklayer, train driver, garage mechanic etc. (Ibáñez *et alii* 2017; Aguado *et alii* 2018).

Anyhow, it is important to highlight that occupational segregation implies not only inefficiencies in assigning available resources, but it also perpetuates a context of discrimination against women, thereby maintaining the "male" privilege for certain jobs.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

This article is based on two case studies about the barriers that women garage mechanics and women train drivers usually face in two masculinised occupations: garage mechanic and train driver. These case studies implied qualitative fieldwork that was carried out in different cities of Spain between 2012 and 2014. We conducted six individual in-depth interviews to women and men garage mechanics; five in-depth interviews to women and men garage supervisors, managers and owners; nine individual in-depth interviews to women and men train drivers; and twenty-one e-interviews (by e-mail) to women and men train drivers based on a structured guide. We used the structural sampling technique to choose workers with different labour trajectories. It was not difficult to contact women and men train drivers through the Spanish state-owned company Renfe, but was rather problematic to find women mechanics in garages, which are most micro businesses (with nine or less employees) in Spain (97 per cent) (see Table 1)[3].

Table 1. Interviews by occupation.

Occupation	Individual in-depth interviews	e-interviews based on a structured guide
Women and men garage mechanics	6	–
Women and men garage supervisors, managers and owners	5	–
Women and men train drivers	9	21

Source: Project results MICINN-12-FEM2011-25228.

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[3] See Annex, for the socio-demographic characteristics of persons interviewed.

WOMEN MOTOR VEHICLE MECHANICS AND WOMEN TRAIN DRIVERS.
A BRIEF CHARACTERISATION

Motor vehicle repair and train driving are highly masculinised occupations for which technical training, ability in handling tools and specialised machinery and strength are touted. These trades may appear to be "dirty" given that handling of lubricants stains one's clothing and body. This strays considerably from the expectations generated by traditional female socialisation. In our societies, gender stereotypes attribute certain skills to women such as care, treating others well, meticulousness and cleanliness while males are attributed physical strength and handling manual tools, machinery and technology (Daune-Richards 2000; Cáceres *et alii* 2004). Thus, cleaning work in general and body cleanliness more specifically are categorised as feminine. By working in certain professions, women break a negative gender stereotype establishing that they are not willing to get themselves dirty on the job. And this stereotype has acted as a significant access barrier to many occupations.

Furthermore, there are certain myths hinging around male and female physiology, and it is assumed that males are endowed by nature with physical strength while females are not. What is not conceived is that strength is developed and is to a great extent a fruit of bodybuilding, which both men and women can do. Gender socialisation and social disapproval prevent women from developing their strength, leading them to believe it is unattainable (Brace-Govan 2004).

There is often a mystification of certain masculinised occupations that work as a barrier to women's entry. This often occurs with many women in industry and construction (Paap 2006). It is assumed that masculinised occupations are much more physically and psychologically demanding than feminised occupations are, while the hardship of feminised occupations is slighted. Yet, certain research has blasted these myths and has underscored the severity of certain feminised occupations in health care where far more weight is lifted in highly uncomfortable positions when patients must be moved, where many hours are spent standing, where work is done on night shifts and at weekends, and where the emotional load is heavy. It is thus common for both the qualifications and the roughness of feminised jobs to be undervalued. According to the *Safety and Health and Work Survey* (2007) published by Germany's Federal Institute of Safety and Health at Work (BAuA), a significant percentage of workers in the health system lift more weight, day in and day out, than construction workers (Schneider 2015).

It is interesting here that on the job, when males cannot lift a certain weight or perform a given task due to hardship, they turn to others without problematising the situation. Yet when women cannot, they are singled out because it is attributed to their weakness. In this androcentric world, males stand as ostensibly neutral figures serving as a point of reference for normalcy (Maira-Vidal 2018; 2017a; 2017b; 2016; 2015).

What follows is a succinct description of the sub-sectors and occupations analysed in this article.

1. Women garage mechanics

In motor vehicle maintenance and repair in Spain, there is significant fragmentation among companies. 97 per cent are micro-businesses with nine or fewer workers. Indeed, in 2014, 42.8 per cent of the companies in this sub-sector had only one or two salaried workers while 35.5 per cent had none.

Furthermore, over time, women's underrepresentation in industry has been noteworthy, particularly in the automotive industry and its various subsectors: manufacturing of motor vehicles, chasses, components, spare parts and accessories; and motor vehicle and motorcycle sales, repair and maintenance. According to figures published by Spain's *Encuesta de Población Activa* (INE – Labour Force Survey), women's employment rate in the motor vehicle and motorcycle sales, repair and maintenance subsector was 14.5 per cent in 2014, and many women had administrative or sales positions. The proportion in the motor vehicle manufacturing subsector is even lower, and female occupation is estimated to stand at 23.9 per cent. In fact, according to Spain's census, only 4.9 per cent mechanics and adjusters were women in 2001, and by 2011 this percentage had sunk to 3.7 per cent.

The female occupation rate in the motor vehicle sales, maintenance and repair subsector in Spain is very similar to that of the European Union, which was 16.1 per cent in the third quarter of 2014 (EFT-EUROSTAT). No

significant variations are to be found between a member state and another. The rate is very low across the board. Slovenia has the highest percentage of female workers, 21.2 per cent, while Poland, with 10 per cent, has the lowest. Therefore, it can be concluded that this subsector is highly masculinised across the European Union.

The prevailing industrial relations system in the motor vehicle maintenance and repair shop subsector in Spain is known as the "low-road type", based on on-the-job training, subcontracting and a lack of job stability, as opposed to the "high-road type" characterised by formal worker qualifications provided through educational credentials, good working conditions and job stability. Trade unions usually play an important role in this last type, as they are involved in the design of the educational credentials and guarantee formalised procedures and protocols in the personnel recruitment processes (DYNAMO 2007)[4]. Access to a job in the motor vehicle maintenance and repair shop subsector comes through contacts made in informal networking[5]. Most often, for hiring workers, private micro-businesses in Spain invest very scant amounts in resources, infrastructure and personnel. Hiring is done by the business owner or manager who usually has neither human resource training or objectivity to ensure that the principle of equal opportunities between men and women is upheld, as required by legislation. This type of access to employment significantly harms women since a tendency to reproduce staffing patterns can be seen. Employers tend to hire males both out of gender prejudice and given their conviction that including women may jeopardise group cohesion.

Thus, in Spain, women are faced with great difficulties in obtaining jobs as garage mechanics because their hiring depends on individual managers who tend to rule out potential workers who do not fit the social stereotype. This holds particularly true in small businesses that prevail in the sector. Major or expanding companies are generally subject to greater changes and at times tend to take atypical decisions, although this usually occurs during expansive economic cycles (Devine 1992; Baron *et alii* 1991; Bygren, Kumlin 2005).

2. Women train drivers

Rail transport began to develop in Spain during the second half of the 19th century. Five major private equity companies controlled the business (Ballesteros 2015). After the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), railways were nationalised by the dictatorship, and a single company was formed in 1941: Renfe, *Red Nacional de los Ferrocarriles Españoles*. In addition to cleansing the company of "disaffected workers", the military regime transferred recruiting and training military workers over to the army. For this reason, until the first democratic constitution was approved in 1978, women were side-lined from access to railway driver employment.

In Spain, at the end of the 1970s, feminist movements had attained the power of public representation and had staked claims for equal opportunities (Scanlon 1990). Furthermore, over that same period, the country underwent a severe crisis, unemployment was rampant, and everyone, especially the younger generations, applauded any job opportunity. Between 1979 and 1981, these circumstances fostered several dozen young women's applying for jobs under three different calls for employment made by Renfe for driver's assistants/second men. Since then, this public company's industrial relations have since been characterised by providing workers stability and opportunities for promotion, and by selection processes done according to a formalised protocol[6].

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[4] The "low-road" type of industrial relations is more widespread in Mediterranean countries while the "high-road" type prevails in Nordic and Germanic countries. The "superior" industrial relations model is more inclusive of women and involves formalised hiring procedures following protocols and criteria that attach value to acquired qualifications, and it has less horizontal gender segregation. Personnel screeners are usually instructed to reduce or minimise subjectivity in their choices and potential prejudice (Devine 1992).

[5] Data and statistics in this section provide information on the motor vehicle sales, repair and maintenance sector overall. We have not had access to disaggregated statistics that would allow us to exclude sales and make reference to only the garages that do exclusively motor vehicle maintenance and repair.

[6] The research enabled the identification of a number of women who became drivers during this period: 12 in 1979; 16 in 1980; and 14 in 1981. A further 11 women must be added to this minority, because they were promoted to drivers as station agents or specialised workers in Renfe.

After three decades, most women who joined Renfe as assistants between 1979 and 1981 continue to be active train drivers (71 per cent). This high remain rate could serve as evidence that the process achieved optimal integration, unlike Great Britain, for instance, where the dropout rate of the first train drivers was very high (Wojtczak 2005). Therefore, it is as important to examine the female dropout pace and rate for these occupations as it is to examine the rate at which women accessed these jobs (Jacobs 1989; Torre 2014).

Working conditions for train drivers have their advantages and disadvantages. On the downside, the job involves shifts, including a night-time shift, and may require nights spent away from home and in certain cases moves in the event of a promotion. On the positive side, the job is stable, affords opportunities for promotion, high wages and social prestige.

In addition to bearing the same working conditions as men, most women train drivers in Spain became mothers. While they report that bringing up children was difficult, they were able to lean on family networks and partially externalise care. It can, therefore, be said that Spanish women train drivers' labour integration has been optimal. Nevertheless, this positive experience did not eliminate occupational segregation for train drivers. Again, in Spain, women hold only 1.5 per cent of these positions (Renfe Grupo 2013). According to the annual report published by the company Renfe-Operadora (2015), out of 4,887 drivers, only 85 were women. This figure speaks for itself in illustrating the effective discrimination in women's obtaining positions as train drivers.

BARRIERS FOR WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE. ANALYSIS

The term "barriers" is used here to refer to what prevents or thwarts women both in obtaining and remaining in certain jobs, thereby leading to occupational segregation. The barriers are challenges faced by women in their attempt to successfully integrate into workplaces dominated by men because of both organisational considerations and social and cultural factors in companies and in households and society.

This section presents two factors to be taken into account when analysing the persistence of a segregated labour market: 1) mechanisms coming into play in accessing a given occupation; 2) women's integration into masculinised occupations.

1. Mechanisms involved in access

In this comparative analysis between women garage mechanics and train drivers, we have signalled that the type of "access barrier" is highly related to organisations' characteristics including their size and management style. While the women train drivers joined a large company whose industrial relations conforms to a "high-road" type, women garage mechanics were inserted into a business fabric woven by very small productive units normally lacking formalised structures and standard procedures, which can be considered a "low-road" type.

The bureaucracy examined by Weber (1922) boasts a rational, efficient, success-oriented model where objective standards and impersonal rules ensure an organisation's reliability and predictability. "Theoretical bureaucracy" knows nothing of gender or ethnicity and therefore has no scope for discrimination. Nevertheless, bureaucratised organisations have been denounced on occasions for gender discrimination (Ferguson 1984; Tanwir 2014).

In Spanish railways, job recruitment is formalised and involves an application process, aptitude testing and meeting certain social and demographic criteria that may vary according to the job in question (Ballesteros 2016). In Spain, until the 1978 Constitution was passed, this bureaucratic model explicitly excluded women from all railway occupations because it was the army that selected workers[7]. With the advent of democracy, Renfe had to accept women's applications, and between the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s the entry of women into

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[7] Except for the divisions handling administration, cleaning and oversight of railway crossings.

jobs in track maintenance (specialised workers) and as train drivers (Aguado, Ballesteros 2018) stands as a fact. Yet, this opening up to women stalled, as was also observed by Paula England (2010), on the United States job market.

The current inequality balance owes not to direct but to indirect exclusion mechanisms. At present, as opposed to being legal or administrative in nature, the factors preventing women from choosing employment in railways are associated with several processes acting jointly. First of all, avoidance in the dissemination of information or publicity regarding job offers must be cited. Railway companies are not transparent in their job offerings and have come up with inventive procedures to keep the sector a male preserve. Since 1989, Renfe has made no external job offer for drivers and has met its needs through in-house job offers. The internal market rationale prevailed where jobs are off-limits for those outside the organisation and expectations for an in-house career generate both cost-savings and worker loyalty.

Secondly, an endogamic culture maintains workers' notion of their "entitlement" to pass down a trade (Dex 1991). For five decades, Renfe had transferred job recruitment to the army and, in addition to standing as a mechanism that excluded women, this fostered the passing down of jobs from fathers to sons. It is standard for railway workers to boast of a family history in the trade. This lends them an identity and leads them to stake a claim for this privilege. Over Spain's forty years of democracy, the company management has made no effort to modify this androcentric culture, and despite the manifest gender inequality among its personnel, it has implemented no active policies to reduce discrimination that makes the occupation remain a "boy's club".

Spain's business fabric, woven of small and medium-sized entities in garage mechanics, does not allow for formalised job selection processes. Selection is therefore heavily influenced by the subjective, personal criteria of shop managers or owners. Experience takes precedence over qualification when hiring in the motor vehicle repair and maintenance subsector. This is one of the main characteristics of an "inferior" industrial relations system where the training that entrepreneurs appreciate is mainly on-the-job experience and not so much training courses in schools. In this subsector, informal networking prevails over formalised job selection processes. Both have a negative bearing on women. Women mechanics are not taken into account in the personal networks that these businesses turn to (Marsden 1999; Dainty *et alii* 2004; Byrne *et alii* 2005; Berik, Bilginson 2006). It is important to remember here that employers' decisions are impacted by the degree of their gender stereotypes (Todaro *et alii* 2001; Maruani 1993; 2002). Garage owners and managers do not trust women's professionalism and consider them unable to hold masculinised jobs (Davies 1996). The garage owner and supervisor interviewed referred, in the following quote, to the alleged poor quality at an ITV[8] garage located in the Madrid metropolitan area, where there are only female employees:

In fact, there is an ITV on Avenida de Andalucía (Madrid), and all of the women who work there… they're women! This ITV used to be number one, it's true that there used to be only two ITVs, and since they went with all women, it hasn't worked the same, it's gone down a whole lot (…) Because of the women and because there were also more ITVs. Now, we have about thirty ITVs in Madrid. But I also think it's because of the women. And you should know it's the ITV where they give you the least hassle to pass. There they're more lenient. (I9, garage owner, manager and supervisor, age 47)

Really, if you went to a garage and you knew that the one working on your car was a woman, you would think twice. You would. (I9, garage owner, manager and supervisor, age 47)

Having said this, the strategy to overcome access barriers to the occupation that women mechanics who do not work in the subsector face has been to invest all they can in getting solid formal training. But their results have been frustrating. Therefore, one of the strategies that some of them consider in the medium term is self-employment, to set up their own garage. However, these women normally do not have the capital to realise the project. Many are unemployed or have been working at other occupations for a long time, so in a way, they are losing the skills and experience they acquired during their training.

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[8] *Inspección Técnica de Vehículos* (ITV- Technical Inspection of Vehicles) performed as provided by law by garages authorised by Spain's Regions (*Comunidades Autónomas*).

These two case studies corroborate the fact that while in the subsectors and occupations examined there belong to two different industrial relations systems, one "high" and the other "low", horizontal gender segregation continues to hold its grip both in publicly owned companies and in various private branches and sizes in Spain.

2. Women's integration into masculinised occupations

Women's access to male-dominated jobs is not the end of a journey, but a mere phase along the way. Being a minority in a male-dominated sphere means experiencing estrangement, voids, indifference, questioning, mocking, insults, and in the worst of all cases, harassment.

In performing masculinised jobs, women face many types of barriers put up by their bosses or co-workers. Particularly noteworthy is that fact that women's entry into masculinised occupations implies greater competition for male workers who at times consider their jobs or promotions may be jeopardised. Males also generate part of their own identity in contrast to female identity and, just as women do, base their identity on their profession. Therefore, in certain cases, they may feel a jolt to their identity and may seem reluctant or even violent when women workers access spheres they consider to be their own (Akerlof, Kranton 2000).

Difficulties cited by women entering male-dominated working spheres can be placed in two different categories: a) *explicit barriers*, inappropriate space and a misfit in terms of clothing not fitting women's bodies; b) *implicit barriers*, attitudes and relations between men and women. A third dimension related to work-life balance conflicts could also be cited, but will not be addressed in this article.

2.a. Explicit barriers

When women enter a male dominated workplace, they discover there are no gender-specific toilets or dressing rooms. This is something they often cite as uncomfortable or unpleasant and has been signalled in other case studies on women train driver's working conditions (Wojtczak 2005; Starustka 2013).

It is also very common for regulated work attire to be made for male anatomy. One-piece work overalls are barely, if at all, functional for women when they need to go to the toilet since taking off their overalls leaves them half naked. Furthermore, available shoe and uniform sizes are generally too large, forcing women workers to uncomfortably improvise with the oversized garments that were not designed for slim petites:

> The work overalls were huge on us, we would wear a belt and underneath a T-shirt and joggers. After two years working there, they started to bring us two-piece suits. (EI3, woman train driver, age 51)

This experience was related by British train drivers. English train driver Anne Winter, for instance, associated the company's lack of response to overt scepticism towards women and expectations that they would leave:

> Being new, and as a woman in the industry, it took many years for me to feel I could request my rights and so I was rather a downtrodden member of the grade. The general attitude was that, as a female, I would not be around long enough to warrant the expense of toilets or regular uniform issue.[9] (Wojtczak 2005: 320).

A great deal of symbolic significance can be attached to the fact that there is no specific space or work clothing suited to female workers in masculinised productive sectors and occupations. The implicit message is that these women are not where they should be, that they are misfits, that there is no place for them in these sectors and

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[9] At the commercial tailor's they explained to this worker that the company had doubts about how much longer she would remain on the job and had, therefore, agreed not to make any additional garments to replenish the clothing when she was hired but postpone making the garments, if need be, until the annual order that was to be placed in the future.

occupations and, in short, that they are out of place. These are barriers, or dissuasive or expelling mechanisms, which together with others, make women feel uncomfortable and hamper them in remaining in these jobs.

2.b. Implicit barriers

Because most of our behaviour involves what is predictable, attempting to infringe a social norm is received with incredulity at best. Most men perceive the mere fact that women purport to penetrate "men's work" as a folly. When certain women turned to railway organisations to see how they could access employment, their requests were received as a folly and, more often than not, the intention behind their request was distorted. When in the summer of 1979, Anne Winter, the first English train driver, went to a *British Railways* delegation to ask about how she could become a train driver, she met with hysterical laughter (Wojtczak 2005). Sylvie Gueudeville, the first French female driver of a high-speed train, was accused of wanting to enter the traction service with the intention of finding a husband[10]. Analogously, women mechanics have withstood explicit barriers when seeking employment and have been overtly excluded because of their gender. It is far easier for males to find employment as mechanics:

> You go to a garage to give them your CV, and they say: «We don't need cleaning ladies, or secretaries...». There are all sorts of reactions. The other day I went to leave off a CV, when it's a woman who takes it from you, they are usually more cheerful «Hey look, a woman mechanic», but the other day I went to leave off a CV at a garage where they were looking for mechanics, and the guy's whole facial expression changed. (I3, mechanic, age 20)

The workers concurred in citing that their arrival was received with hostility. They said they felt incessantly observed and had to prove the skills they had obtained just like their male counterparts in the same courses. «A man is accepted from the outset and then judged. A woman is received suspiciously and then has to prove her worth» (Renfe 1983: 12-14). The female workers were subjected to on-going evaluation of their skills that forced them to make more of an effort than their male counterparts to make sure these skills were apparent (Kanter 1977).

> I have felt observed, but it's because there are so few of us. I've felt under a lot of pressure, because of the "on-going exam" I've been exposed to. My feeling was that I had to give 120 per cent in order to be acceptable. Over the years this feeling has evaporated. (EI7, woman train driver, age 53)

Estrangement does not only occur in the workplace per se, but also is perceived through users, i.e. passengers (in the case of train drivers) and customers (in the case of garage mechanics).

The confusion generated when they saw women on the tracks was contested not only by railway workers but also by passengers on the train[11]:

> I can't believe that a woman is driving the train! (EI5, woman train driver, age 52)

> When I was working on the engines (1982-1988), some users, especially the passengers, didn't like it for a woman to be driving the train. (EI2, woman train driver, age 53)

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[10] Sylvie Gueudeville became a train driver after several years in the company. When she was 19 years old and had a degree in electro-mechanics she requested a position as an equipment technician at the (SNCF) workshop in Périgord, and she was told «It wasn't appropriate to hire a woman». Availing herself of a push for change begun by Simone Veil to feminize masculine bastions in the labour market, she threatened to file a complaint for discrimination and obtained a post as a cashier in the commercial service (*Les infos*, Journal Interne de la SNCF, 27 April 2007).

[11] Stéphanie Larcier, an SNCF train driver since 2002, asserted in the magazine *L'Express*: «When customers discover that a woman is the train driver, they are often very surprised. The group currently has 1 per cent of women train drivers but my experience proves that women can access this type of job without any problem. And the company is very much in favour and I confirm that there really is room for women in this trade» (*En ligne avec Stéphanie, conductrice de train à la SNCF*, 04 November 2011, http://www.lexpress.fr/emploi/en-ligne-avec-stephanie-conductrice-de-train-a-la-sncf_1047631.html#mazHZPzwivPTBPMk.99, accessed in June 2014).

Also significant are fears on the part of garage employers and managers regarding customers' potential reaction should they hire female mechanics understanding this would hurt business. Here, we should point out how hard it has been for women who have accessed the occupation to have clients (particularly men) accept their skills and trust their professionalism:

> *Interviewee:* It was time for me to get down to work, to get my hands on a car and of course the customer couldn't be standing there over me, of course, «How is a woman going to fix a car?». And it's taken me a lot to prove that I can do that. For the car owner to admit that I could do it just like a man could. It was hard. It was hard. It wasn't easy. In the end, I was able to, sure. I did it. But it wasn't at all easy.
> *Interviewer:* Was that fact that you were the one who fixed the car initially kept from the client?
> *Interviewee:* Yes, it was. In fact, I stayed on, I closed the garage and continued to fix this and that until midnight or one in the morning (...). They would say to me: «But are you going to fix it yourself?». «Yeah». «Well, I don't know, you know...». And then my father (the owner of the garage) would come out and stand next to me and say: «Don't you worry. I'll be watching over all of this, okay?». (...) «Don't you worry, I'm going to be on top of this. Don't you worry, there'll be no problem...». And little by little people started accepting it. (I1, female garage supervisor and mechanic, age 62)

Discrimination and harassment have been or continue to be fairly more common barriers for the motor vehicle mechanics than for the Renfe train drivers. There are situations in which their co-workers and/or bosses have isolated them socially both in the workplace itself and in informal meetings or events organised outside work. The women have been deprived of information important to doing their work, or have been denied help or support, or have been denied the clothing and tools they need for their work. They have received contradictory requests; they have been continuously reprehended and not congratulated on their successes; they have been given different treatment than their male counterparts; their self-esteem has been degraded and undermined to the point of generating major occupational health problems; they have been made the butt of mockery, jokes and comments, at times sexual, or have been prevented from or thwarted in keeping their jobs or getting promotions.

> I got there on a Monday (the first day of work), no one gave me overalls or work gloves, no one showed me where anything was in the garage (...). I didn't know any of the co-workers, or what there was in my toolbox. I didn't know anything. (I3, woman mechanic, age 20)

These situations are particularly harmful in many ways, both psychologically and socially and also occupationally speaking, where there is a negative impact on the chances for remaining on the job or being promoted (Kanter 1977; Dainty *et alii* 2004).

Dropouts are more common among mechanics given that high salaries for female train drivers serve as an incentive to endure the hostile attitudes from workmates, as explained by England (2010).

DISCUSSION

Labour statistics confirm that occupational segregation persists, and with it, mechanisms triggering and upholding inequality. The comparative study of the two different occupations allows us to conclude that because the androcentric cultural model discriminating against women endures, barriers to equal employment opportunities remain irrespectively of differences in size, type of industrial relations and business management style.

The barriers identified in both of the occupations analysed have elements in common, such as the lack of trust in women's professional skills on the part of bosses, co-workers, users and customers. Although certain differences can be noted, in most males, this generates hostility vis-à-vis the female minority. While the railway companies maintain a "high" system ensuring formalised personnel and protected working conditions that have enabled women train drivers to solve their work-life balance conflict, this has not spared the sector from remaining a male preserve due to indirect mechanisms such as internal promotion competitions for train drivers. Meanwhile, motor vehicle maintenance and repair garages have a "low" system hampering women who aspire to a job opportunity although their skills from formal training are accredited.

As things currently stand, and as Margareta Kreimer (2004) has asserted, any equal employment opportunities policy must be combined with policies to reduce gender segregation. This remains something that neither companies nor labour authorities pursue. How much longer will we need to wait for male privileges to be broken?

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ANNEX: INTERVIEWEES' SOCIAL AND OCCUPATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Table A.1. Individual in-depth interviews with women garage mechanics (2012-13).

Code	Gender	Age	Current job status	Highest professional category attained
I1	F	62	Retired	Garage manager
I2	F	37	Active	Garage manager
I3	F	20	Active (as a waitress)	Mechanic's assistant
I4	F	21	Active (as a waitress)	Studied mechanics and has not found employment as a mechanic
I5	F	20	Unemployed	Mechanic's assistant with no employment contract (black economy)
I6	F	40	Active	Head panel beater and painter.
I7	M	32 22	Active	Subordinate Mechanic apprentice
I8	M	28	Active	Head mechanic
I9	M	47	Active	Garage owner and manager
I10	M	50	Active	Garage owner and manager
I11	M	50	Active	Cooperative member and garage manager
I12	M	40	Active	Sales representative for products sold in garages

Table A.2. Individual in-depth interviews with train driver workers (2013-14).

Code	Gender	Age	Current job status	Highest professional category attained
I13	F	57	Active	Railway manager
I14	F	57	Active	Train driver
I15	F	24	Inactive	Driver's assistant
I16	F	42	Active	Train driver
I17	M	48	Inactive	SEMAF trade union member
I18	M	46	Inactive	SEMAF member
I19	M	57	Inactive	SEMAF member
I20	M	71	Inactive	Retired
I21	M	47	Inactive	CCOO trade union member

Table A.3. E-interviews based on a structured guide on train driver workers (2013-14).

Code	Gender	Age	Current job status	Highest professional category attained
EI1	W	55	Active	RENFE nurse
EI2	W	53	Active	RENFE salesperson
EI3	W	51	Active	Train driver
EI4	W	56	Active	Train driver
EI5	W	52	Active	Train driver
EI6	W	52	Active	Train driver
EI7	W	53	Active	Train driver
EI8	W	52	Active	Train driver
EI9	W	55	Active	Station master
EI10	W	50	Active	Train driver
EI11	W	54	Active	Train driver
EI12	W	59	Active	Train driver
EI13	M	48	Active	Train driver
EI14	M	52	Active	Train driver
EI15	M	58	Active	Train driver
EI16	M	53	Active	Train driver
EI17	W	34	Active	Train driver
EI18	W	57	Active	Train driver
EI19	W	38	Active	Train driver
EI20	M	53	Active	Train driver
EI21	W	54	Active	Train driver

Open Essays and Researches

The Shaky Social Citizenship of Early-Career Independent Professionals: Work Transformation, Career and Life Uncertainty, Unrepresented Rights

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Abstract. The combination of a segmented and flexible labour market and a fragmented welfare system has given rise to an unprecedented risk of uncertainty for the new generation of independent professionals. Independent self-employment frequently conceals precarious working conditions, low wages and limited protection; tasks, knowledge, networking and creativity are deteriorating, with an evident decline in autonomy often leading to entrapment in poor occupational careers. A qualitative research, involving 72 early-career I-Pros in Milan, argues that the new generation of professionals is undergoing a crisis of social citizenship – since social integration through labour market inclusion, structured representation of interests, welfare protection, are lacking – and it is also showing a "culture of uncertainty", a day-by-day approach to life and career. Beyond a group of fully integrated I-Pros, most professionals show to suffer from economic and work vulnerability as well as relational fragility, whereas the weakest part of interviewed I-Pros experiences social and professional vulnerability, strong isolation at work and renunciation of personal objectives.

Keywords. Independent professionals; self-employment; social citizenship; uncertainty; vulnerability.

Until almost two decades ago, young people who were starting their professional careers were normally entering a linear and satisfying path. The combination of a segmented and flexible labour market, which inadequately rewards qualified jobs, and a fragmented welfare system, has given rise to an unprecedented risk of instability and poverty for professionals in their early careers. The current economic phase has led to an exacerbation of previous difficulties, due to post-industrial changes affecting labour market, school-work transitions and social protection.

The nature of professional jobs is itself under pressure: early-career professionals receive low salaries which do not fully acknowledge their skills;

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the tasks, knowledge, networking and creativity aspects of professions are also deteriorating, with an evident decline in autonomy (Fellini 2010; Mandrone, Marocco 2012). Indeed, the "professional" label frequently conceals an employment position characterised by precarious working conditions, low wages and limited protection (Kallberg 2009; Armano, Murgia 2013), often leading to entrapment in poor occupational careers (Borghi *et alii* 2016).

Self-employment played an important role in the Italian social class composition in the industrial phase, but many changes have occurred over the past few decades. New forms of self-employment have produced a stronger differentiation within the post-industrial middle-class in terms of economic conditions and representation. Early-career professionals and atypical workers experience poor working conditions, economic hardship and a lack of union representation, which makes it more difficult for them to defend their rights and improve their welfare entitlements. In this sense, we argue that this new generation of professionals is undergoing a crisis of social citizenship, conceived as full participation in social life through labour market inclusion, structured representation of interests, welfare protection and support.

A qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews with early-career independent professionals working in the urban area of Milan (Italy) addresses the effects of economic and social constraints on their capability to plan career and life paths and to access social citizenship.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT: TRADITIONAL AND NEW FEATURES

A high level of self-employment is a historical feature of the Italian labour market and social class composition (Sylos Labini 1974). This category has become extremely heterogeneous, including traditional self-employed (craftsmen; traders), "small" employers, new freelancers, and autonomous workers in each of the three main economic sectors.

The transition to post-industrial society (Bell 1973) or a flexible regime of accumulation (Harvey 1990) produced new forms of self-employment, which are experiencing a more problematic social integration process compared to traditional middle-class jobs (Bagnasco 2008). The old regulative pattern was based on controlled markets, social homogeneity, traditional habits, social and political representation – professional orders and associations, political parties, relations with local and national institutions. The current Italian social system reveals strong market competition and social differentiation in the middle class: high-level professionals have increased their income during the last twenty years, whereas a quarter of self-employed people are at risk of poverty[1]. The self-employed have become extremely diversified even considering the most qualified professionals, as individualisation has increased and autonomy decreased (Ranci 2012). Important issues are at stake, but the representation of the interests of the self-employed is a serious problem.

Labour market flexibility has been pursued particularly in Mediterranean countries through a "partial and selective" form of deregulation (Esping-Andersen, Regini 2000), which has extended the possibility to use temporary employment. In Italy, however, during the period from the mid-Nineties to at least the onset of the current crisis, there was no "explosive" growth in temporary employment (Reyneri 2009). Besides the deregulation of temporary contracts, the "Italian path to flexibility" exploited the usual preference for self-employed labour as a way to elude legal regulations and taxation on waged employment (Reyneri 2011; Ranci 2012).

More than elsewhere in Europe, Italy has seen the spread of self-employment based on service contracts and one-off jobs that once were limited to the traditional professions. This trend has been facilitated by various changes in the nature of work and its organisation in the post-industrial order (Piore, Sabel 1984) that have modified the structure of employment opportunities. On the one hand, a model of flexible production has emerged, where firms externalise production on a wide scale, sub-contracting to other firms or single workers, a model that is quite different from vertically-integrated Fordism (Pallini 2010; Muehlberger 2007). On the other hand, most jobs have been affected by changes in both the nature of work and its organisation. In the area of skilled work, for example,

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[1] 27 per cent of self-employed people had incomes under 75 per cent of equivalent median income in 2008, according to the Bank of Italy (Ranci 2012).

there have been not only far-reaching changes in many of the traditional liberal professions, but also new types of work, new non-regulated professions and new occupational areas have emerged, often cutting across existing sectors (Bologna, Fumagalli 1997). A new model of professional work has emerged which requires autonomy, flexibility, specific and specialised technical skills, together with a solid foundation of knowledge, trust, reputation and social abilities (Butera *et alii* 2008).

At the European level, where the regulatory and welfare regime pictures are very uneven[2], similar critical issues emerge: the fragmented status of independent professionals and the consequent dualism in the professional system; the weakness of social protection, and the scrappy collective representation (Borghi *et alii* 2018). The definition of "economically dependent self-employed" has been used to single out a grey (and highly heterogeneous) area between employment and self-employment. In this area, self-employed professionals do not fully enjoy the inherent advantages of their formal position – job autonomy and high salaries – and, although their conditions are similar to those of employees, labour protection, forms of representation, social rights and access to welfare are limited, if not lacking altogether (Eurofound 2002).

Self-employment is considered to be "resilient" to economic crises, although not in all countries (European Commission 2010). The recent trend in Europe is, in fact, contradictory, as the overall incidence of self-employment decreased in many countries (Italy included), but increased in other countries, leading to an overall situation of stability. However, if we consider knowledge-based sectors (information-communication technology; financial activities; real estate activities; professional, scientific and technical activities; administrative and support service activities), professional self-employment confirmed its resilience, even in a long-lasting recession (Isfol 2013; Borghi *et alii* 2018).

SOCIAL EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC AND LABOUR MARKET CHANGES ON INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONALS

Structural economic changes, production reorganisation, new forms of inequalities and social risks require proper theoretical attention on the post-industrial social dynamics and their consequences to individuals' lives.

Two contrasting theoretical arguments aim to clarify what kind of transformations have been occurring in advanced Capitalist societies. On the one side, the more fashionable "New Capitalism" approaches postulate qualitatively different employment and social relations (Doogan 2009) and, among them, the Risk Society theory (Beck 1986) describes the process of democratization of social risks and social class as a «zombie category» (Atkinson 2007: 354), arguing that people in post-industrial societies face a pervading insecurity due to deep changes in lifestyle, power, institutions, social participation, work and social relations. Individual biographies are more uncertain than in the industrial phase, when transition to adulthood, labour market entry and work careers were structured in typical and recurrent patterns, differentiated by social class and gender. On the other side, the class analysis scholars *rematerialise* the understanding of social development (Doogan 2009), assuming the continuity of class structure in the capitalist societies, even if affected by change processes in the last decades. According to this last argument, the involvement of independent professionals, among others social groups in the middle class, in economic risks and social uncertainty does not necessarily show the end of class cleavages, but the need for a redefinition of their effects. A qualitative and specific analysis is obviously not appropriate to provide a solution to this relevant debate, but it is just able to offer some empirical evidence supporting the resistant relevance of class cleavage to the opportunities and constraints of the new generation of independent professionals.

Castel (1997) identifies three tendencies towards the instability of work, which affect, in particular, unskilled workers and the unemployed, but also involve qualified young people still in transition towards a possible (and promised), but tangibly uncertain, stabilisation in the labour market. The first is the "destabilisation of permanent

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[2] While Austria, Italy, Portugal and Spain have brought in legislation to incorporate these forms of employment through specific work contracts, most European countries have not provided them with any legal basis (Eurofound 2002).

workers", which involves the working class, some industrial sectors and older workers who have been expelled from the production system. This concept can be extended to early-career professionals: even if the self-employed cannot be made redundant, they face the difficulties of labour markets which are increasingly characterised by low remuneration, strong competition and economic fluctuations. The relative stability of professionals in the past – in terms of their ability to develop a coherent, long-lasting, continuous and upwardly-mobile career – has been replaced by uncertainty and a higher risk of failure. The second turn regards the "endurance of precariousness", which directly affects younger generations and is defined as the transformation of an exceptional or transitory situation into one which is considered normal. The third trend is represented by the "return of a supernumerary population" in the labour market after the (supposed) full employment during the Glorious Thirties (Fourastié 1979). It does not apply to all qualified self-employed people, but supports the assumption that the crisis of specific professional systems, due to strong internal diversification and competition (Sennett 1998), has impacted on professionals' career prospects. In some sectors (for example, in publishing), the Marxian "industrial reserve army" recurs under a qualified but devalued guise.

As Castel (2004) indicated, the crisis of the "salary society" led to a "fragmented society", where inequalities and risks do not produce clear-cut separations between *in* and *out* positions, but a complicated situation of vulnerability and social insecurity with an extended – if not pervasive (Beck 1986) – risk of personal and professional crises.

The "decomposition of wage-earning society" described by Castel (1995) seems to affect also the independent professionals' citizenship. Classically defined as the access to civil, political and social rights, where these last mentioned are conceived as welfare rights (Marshall 1965), citizenship is far from the overcome of inequalities, but corresponds to the liberal idea of full social participation and mitigation of market inequalities through a welfare state (Therborn 2009). The most recent generation of professionals in Italy is irremediably undergoing a crisis of social citizenship, since their participation in social life – through labour market inclusion, interest representation, welfare protection and social networks support – is not fulfilled. The uncertainty associated with unemployment or having precarious jobs has negative effects, in particular, on young people and, among them, those who are trying to develop a freelance career. Whether they belong to the lower or middle classes, as we noted in the interviews, both categories have to face private and professional challenges.[3] The application of Castel's approach to early-career professionals allows us to combine social relations (in a rather broad sense) and working conditions in order to observe whether people are socially integrated or at risk of exclusion. During the Glorious Thirties social inclusion was based on a strong connection between employment and social protection (Castel 2009), embodied by different welfare patterns, all inspired by a universalistic concept of citizenship (Crouch 1999). This institutive relation fell into crisis with the transition to post-industrial society and its fragmentation (Mingione 1991). Full social inclusion depends on job stability and social participation (that is, strong and reliable social ties); vulnerability arises when work and social relations become unstable. Disaffiliation – the extreme adverse condition – is due to unemployment or occasional jobs, on the one hand, and social isolation, on the other hand (Castel 1995).

One of the more dramatic effects of post-industrial flexibility on individuals regards the capacity of workers to plan their careers and lives according to personal preferences. The new generation of independent self-employed has been strongly affected by these radical changes concerning their personal and work prospects. Social scientists usually focus on the weakest sections of the workforce, including unskilled workers, the low-educated and intermittent workers. In this paper, we look at the weakest section of self-employment – independent professionals in the early stages of their career – which can adequately show the relevant transformation occurring to the whole professional group. Economy and labour process restructuration, labour market changes, lack of welfare protection and social representation clearly reinforce social risks and their consequences. Given that they are still at an early stage in their career, these professionals face difficulties entering into specific labour markets, creating and stabilising relationships with clients and colleagues and, more generally, achieving career continuity as well as professional objectives. This uncertainty also invades their personal life and ability to start a family, to purchase a house and more generally to plan their future (Borghi *et alii* 2016; Sennett 1998).

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[3] However, social class seems to affect their capacity to overcome these challanges.

Following these theoretical issues, two research hypotheses were identified, in order to better interpret the impact of so radical changes on the new generation of independent professionals:

1. A "day-to-day orientation" has been adopted by new professionals, giving rise to a sort of "culture of uncertainty" (Castel 1995; 1997);

2. The social citizenship of early-career professionals is strongly challenged, due to difficult working conditions and weak social relations; scarce revenue, job discontinuity and professional dissatisfaction, on the one side, combined with insufficient economic and relational means provided by personal and professional networks and fragmented supply of welfare protection and representation, on the other side, expose independent professionals to economic and social risks.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This article deals with two groups of independent professionals, I-Pros (Rapelli 2012), namely managers, professionals, technicians and associate professionals who work as own-account self-employed or (few cases) with temporary contracts: the self-employed in the traditional "liberal" professions and the new, highly-qualified, self-employed freelancers or those with temporary contracts in the recently regulated[4] "new" professions of service and innovative sectors (technical services for companies, creative sectors, ICT, financial activities, welfare and healthcare services).

72 semi-structured interviews were carried out in 2013-14[5] with a view to exploring the relationship between major life choices, economic and professional constraints and coping strategies. Biographies – education and working careers, transitions to adulthood – resources and limits, expectations, social needs were analysed in order to study professional and biographical patterns and the most relevant working and social issues for early-career independent professionals. The relationship between working conditions, choices and opportunities reveals early-career professionals' life plans and career strategies, as well as related constraints and coping strategies.

The qualitative analysis involved independent professionals in the early stages of their careers[6] working in the Milan urban area, where qualified service and intellectual activities are strongly concentrated and therefore represents an interesting case to observe economic, social and working trends related to independent professionals. The sample's characteristics reflect the increase of female participation in the qualified labour market in Northern Italy and demographic changes: around half of interviewees were women; half of them had no children even if they lived in cohabitation or were married; one interviewee out of five was single. The interviews with independent professionals lasted 1.5-2 hours on average and allowed detailed self-reported careers, including information on education and training, the first job and the most relevant career's stages until the current status. Even the though general bias of self-reported histories, interviews proved to be very effective for a rich reconstruction of career dynamics. They were codified and analysed with NVivo software, aiming at identifying homogeneous profiles of subjects according to the two research hypotheses.

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[4] These professions were regulated by the 2013 framework law (Law No. 4/2013), strongly demanded by some professional associations, which introduced the possibility to organise the "new" professionals in associations recognised by the State.

[5] The author cooperated with the local research unity at the University of Milano-Bicocca within a national research project (2011-14), financed by the Italian Ministry of University and Research, on the working conditions and interest representation of weak and unrepresented groups in the Italian labour market.

[6] Individuals were selected on the basis of their career's duration as independent professional: they have been working as independent self-employed/freelancers (or collaborators) for at least five years and 10 at most (few outliers with 15 years seniority), regardless of their age (between 32 and 49 years old).

A "CULTURE OF UNCERTAINTY"? HOW EARLY-CAREER PROFESSIONALS DEAL WITH THEIR LIVES AND WORKING CAREERS

Our qualitative analysis focused on professionals' attitudes toward planning work and personal trajectories. In particular, we aimed to understand whether early-career professionals express a "culture of uncertainty" (Castel 1995), based on the subjective assimilation of the increased labour flexibility and social risks: an enduring condition of precariousness produces anxiety for the future and a tendency to live a "day-by-day" existence. Castel explicitly refers to the effects of the transition from the "salary society" to post-industrial society, in particular on young people with flexible and low-paid jobs, who often experience periods of unemployment. We suggest – on the basis of the deep transformations already described and of our analysis – extending the theory of the "culture of uncertainty" to that part of early-career professionals who have not yet achieved a successful career and to those who are closer to atypical workers.

From our analysis, it is possible to understand whether and how these early-career professionals have planned and continue to plan their lives and careers. Three profiles of independent professionals emerge from this analysis. Two of these include individuals who do not plan objectives and careers, representing variations on the hypothesised "culture of uncertainty"; only one involves professionals who are able and willing to make plans.

1. Individuals who are "trapped in the present" are professionals who are not capable of making plans because of their work situation. They have scarce career possibilities and low incomes, which leaves them with little leeway to imagine changes, to think of exit strategies and to remain optimistic, at least in the short term.

My partner and I live totally by the day, and we decided that this is better than to be too distressed or to make ourselves ill over that situation. A couple of years ago, we tried to buy an apartment, but nobody granted us a mortgage because I am precarious in the publishing sector and my partner is a precarious school teacher; they laughed in our face, literally (...). (Int. 41, F, 35, publishing industry, self-employed)

Economic difficulties prevent them from planning their personal lives and professional projects:

Working as a solo self-employed is a condition imposed by the market. (...) The negative aspect is the precarity: I cannot forecast my professional activities in the next month. Maybe I will work a lot, but I cannot forecast it. (Int. 23 architect F, 23, self-employed)

Economic and professional difficulties also contrast with personal priorities:

[...] luckily, I do not have any maternal instinct, and I wonder how people who want children can manage it, because they can be blackmailed [by employees or clients]; moreover, many of them can count on economic supports. (Int. 42, F, 36, publishing industry, unemployed)

[...] Also to decide to have children, you need a discrete dose of imprudence, and I cannot afford to be imprudent; I am barely able to feed myself, how can I decide to have a child? (Int. 41, F, 35, publishing industry, self-employed)

As regards their careers, professionals can just imagine the chance to protract their (or their partners') contracts and achieve short-time job continuity:

My view of the future is that things are worsening, my partner will not have his contract renewed at the end of the year; therefore, we have to move to the Marche [Italian Central Region]. That would mean that we will not need to pay a rent. I get by, but my partner has not found any job openings. The prospect that I am hoping for is that my partner's contract will be renewed. (F, 35, architect, self-employed)

Ultimately, even individual expectations risk falling victim to precariousness: it seems to be hard to elaborate and maintain initial ambitions, with the result that some professionals are forced to adopt a day-by-day construction of their future:

> With regards to aspirations, what drives me mad is that I do not have great aspirations: I would like job supply to increase a bit and for it to be possible to work more in the social research sector. (Int. 55, M, 36, social researcher, self-employed)

2. Professionals who "identify with the present" are those who concentrate on the "here and now", considered not as a constraint but as the essential focus of their efforts. Their personal and professional lives are conceived as step-by-step processes: each relevant work or life step can open up new possibilities, and a mid- or long-term project cannot even be conceived. Compared to the first group, these individuals do not suffer as a result of their short-term prospects; they are completely aware of their individual and collective condition and prefer to use their energies to find solutions to current obstacles or to take decisions for the next short period.

> I am a convinced precarious of self-employment, I would never work as an employee. (Int. 18, M, 42, psychologist, self-employed)

Each personal and professional step thus becomes of the utmost importance, because it determines their chances along a sort of unclear chain of events. To select an academic degree course or another, to accept a job proposal, to complete a project or to establish a new job contact, all appear as *ad hoc* decisions without any link to mid-term plans. Professional opportunities arise purely as a consequence of choices made by following personal desires and aspirations:

> My story is quite specific; I have not taken a linear path as others in the design sector – I studied as an accountant [...]. I've never been someone who makes plans for their career, I've always worked with a passion for my job, I've always liked working on good projects without even thinking about visibility and economic returns. Results come later, because if you work well and are lucky to some extent, then things happen, but there are some rules to the game: you have to be at the top [...]. [...] I wanted to do something important for society, and I was passionate about design, so I said to myself: I am at home [for health problems], let's try to do something. (Int. 58, F, 43, Designer, self-employed)

A lack of "dynamism" with regard to professional networking can become a disadvantage in the long term, as professionals who have never faced market problems or had difficulties with career development risk finding themselves trapped in a dependent relationship with clients (often with a single client) with limited opportunities. In this sense, social relations are essential not just for finding a job (Granovetter 1973), but also as a social resource more generally (Sennett 1998; Giddens 1990).

> I am very lazy in that kind of thing [networking]. Now I regret it – I should have cultivated more relationships, but I have never done that. For example, I have never insisted on going to conventions and presentations. (Int. 57, M, 49, publishing industry, collaborator)

Some professionals included in this group are simply happy with their current situation and have no problem living "day by day", and this does not appear to prevent them from achieving their short-term goals. This attitude reveals an internalisation of the spirit of job and life flexibility, namely, according to its proponents, the ability to be ready to change and adapt to new situations and economic needs (Sennett 1998).

In some (borderline) cases, professional success is so strong that the independent workers do not need to plan nor to make any effort, as they constantly receive invitations to work, and have the chance to improve their professional career.

> When I started in the earlier Nineties, I used to receive 4-5 calls a day offering jobs. Moreover, when I went to interviews, they would ask whether I had any friends who could do the same job, as there was strong demand. Moreover, I had the chance to choose what project I wanted to work on. I wrote my first CV after working for three years – earlier I did not need one, since so many offers were coming in. (Int. 15, M, 44, IT consultant, self-employed)

3. "Future planners" are those who consider their careers as a direct outcome of rational and well-constructed plans. These independent professionals perceive a causal relation between decisions and consequences: in most cases, they have succeeded in reaching their objectives and tend to rely on a strong link between education, training and career.

Insurance broker was a good position, I had no problems, but I wanted to do something else... The transition to financial promoter came because I saw an ad in a newspaper. [...] I did the State certification exam because I wanted to achieve a personal goal. I did study a lot, and I enjoyed it. (Int. 5, M, 42, financial promoter, self-employed)

Some of these professionals have a sort of list of priorities that guides their decisions. Their careers seem to be the outcome of a consistent relationship between educational goals and job content.

My education path is coherent with what I'm doing now. I am less technical and scientific than when I was at university. After graduation, I collaborated for one year with a university laboratory – it was sort of in preparation for a PhD I did not really want to do, and then I started to search for work, I shifted to something else and moved to Milan. [...] I did enjoy what I was studying at Environmental Science – I was really free to choose my own study plan, inserting focused courses as much as possible. (Int. 50, F, 37, consultant for sustainable development, self-employed)

I took this kind of decision [to study Economics at an English university in Milan] because I knew I wanted to do this kind of job. It has been my dream since I was eight years old. Well, I realised over the years how lucky I have been. Talking with young people who have just finished secondary school or were starting university, it was astonishing to find out that they did not know what they wanted to do. [...] I enrolled at the university that seemed best to me, and it gave me the education I absolutely needed [...]. I graduated quickly, and the day after, I started my own company. (Int. 51, M, 34, film-maker, self-employed)

"Future planners" show a strong dynamism in the labour market with frequent job transitions. They prefer to change client than to maintain a satisfying professional assignment when there is a risk of failing to make progress in remuneration or work satisfaction. Even risky or seemingly inconvenient choices are part of this approach to career planning:

After one year [working as an employee] in the agency – the one I am currently collaborating with – I wanted to do something else in my life. I understood that if I kept working 12 hours a day, I could never achieve this. As a manager and permanent employee, I went to the director and asked to switch to freelance status. He tried to discourage me very politely, saying that it was not a good idea for me. I explained that I wanted to work as a freelance, but not in the fake way of many others who are de facto employees. I wanted to work X days for the agency as a consultant, to have an assured income to survive on, while opening up the possibility of working from home and managing my job in complete autonomy, to be there and not to be there... (Int. 52, F, 37, strategic planner in the advertising sector, self-employed)

Unlike other professionals, the members of this group see self-employment as a voluntary condition, never imposed by clients; the freelance status is perceived as a chance to be free to define prospects, objectives and the right path to achieve results. There is a certain pride in being self-employed and adopting an entrepreneurial approach. Self-promotion is obviously very important, but not at all costs: proficiency is the best strategy and a priceless resource. In fact, these professionals are not willing to sacrifice job quality and its full acknowledgement by clients.

There is sort of cliques; there are major league and minor league photographers [...]. Now, I do not candidate myself to companies in this area [near Milan, less demanding but also not disposed to pay well] as I've done before; if they want to, they contact me, but at this point, it's me the one who dictates the rules. (Int. 31, M, 33, photographer, self-employed)

These professional abilities represent an important element to invest in, in order to make steps forward and to stabilise the career.

In this career, my current one, I am trying to improve my abilities as much as possible, without resorting to training courses, unfortunately... to direct my knowledge towards the world of the iPad and eBooks... because the natural course of things is leading publishing in that direction. (Int. 45, M, 40, publishing sector, self-employed)

SHAKY SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP: PROFESSIONALS BETWEEN INTEGRATION AND VULNERABILITY

Social inclusion of the new generation of independent professionals seems to be at risk, as their vulnerability arises as a consequence of labour market hardship and weak social protection. In order to verify our second hypothesis about their shaky citizenship, we look at the new professionals' working conditions in terms of revenue, job continuity and professional satisfaction, and try to understand whether these professionals have already fulfilled their objectives or whether they seem to be able to reach them.

Social relations are analysed in two aspects. First of all, they are conceived as comprising the resources that early-career professionals can resort to in order to cope with work problems, to overcome financial and practical difficulties and to fulfil their goals. These resources, which may be used by independent professionals during their early careers or subsequently to overcome obstacles, include: a) ascribed family resources, in terms of economic and relational means provided by parents and relatives; b) professional networks, which may be useful in finding out about work opportunities and receiving help from colleagues. Social relations also include interest representation and collective support (Mingione *et alii* 2014a; 2014b; Borghi, Cavalca 2015; Borghi, Cavalca 2016); the issue of social representation expands Castel's original model to encompass the following questions: do I-Pros need representation? What kind of collective organisation do they consider helpful? In what situations have they identified satisfactory solutions involving representative organisations? The possibility of resorting to collective organisation represents an important potential resource to contrast professional isolation, to obtain qualified support and protect rights and professional claims.

The qualitative analysis helped to identify three profiles of professionals, differentiated by the combination of resources that they have access to working conditions and expectations, on the one hand, social relations and collective support, on the other[7].

1. Accomplished individualist professionals: people who do not claim any kind of social or work protection and do not seek collective representation of their interests, as they feel capable of defending these by themselves. They rely on personal skills and professional networks without drawing on family, economic and relational resources or collective organisations, in faithful alignment with the "new spirit of Capitalism" (Boltanski, Chiapello 2005). They present themselves as the masters of their own destinies, aware of risks, happy to face challenges, but also satisfied to have already achieved professional goals (or confident about achieving them in the future). These are arguably the winners of market competition or, alternatively, the "individual in excess", a narcissistic subject exclusively engaged in her/his self-realisation, resulting in an inflation of subjectivity (Castel 2009).

According to our interviews with professionals, this profile emerges as a combination of individualism – defined as the attitude and behaviour of considering mainly one's own interests without considering those of other people – and taking responsibility for (possible) risks and (expected) results. They are not at all naïve, as they have typically experienced contrasts and difficulties during their careers. The individualised professional does not ignore the rights issue in general, nor the difficulties in obtaining specific rights in their own situation; nevertheless, they prefer individual action to cope with problems and conflicts and typically choose to negotiate individually with clients and employers.

2. The second profile consists of "twice-betrayed" professionals. They experience difficult careers and face a considerable risk of failing as a freelance professional, on the one side, and show weak social networks and a lack of social representation.

Their income is quite low and can be compared with the poor working conditions of temporary workers in the unskilled service sector. They are "economically dependent freelancers" (Eurofound 2002): formally self-employed, they are generally dependent on a single employer for their income. Moreover, their job autonomy, in terms of concrete ability to organise their own work tasks, is purely formal, as they work continuously in a single workplace, where they are typically under direct supervision, with timetables and tasks imposed by their client/

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[7] The profiles' denomination refers to these two dimensions.

employer. In other words, they work under a fake freelance status or with some other type of self-employment arrangement.

Even if they know many colleagues in their own sector and may even share the same workplace, these independent professionals usually work alone and are rarely motivated or able to aggregate other professionals in order to discuss work conditions and problems. They resort to limited personal and family resources – revealing vulnerability – and inadequate social representation claiming general rights – unfulfilled "universalism".

In the face of difficulties, these vulnerable professionals cannot rely on social networks. In fact, their family ties prove to be useless in terms of social capital in the labour market and limited in their capacity to provide economic support. These professionals had received limited help from their families, but in many cases this was simply to leave home or in the case of extreme economic difficulties. They can sometimes find support within their new household, rather than their family of origin, such as partners who have a stable job or a property which represents an economic and psychological guarantee. Ultimately, social class shows to bear on working outcomes and social inclusion.

The "twice-betrayed" professionals do not feel protected by any representative organisation, neither professional associations nor unions, but would like to receive some collective protection from a different form of organisation. They are very critical of existing professional orders and associations. Orders are considered conservative organisations, managed by old professionals who defend their privileges and do not support young professionals' claims or even exploit them as collaborators, while granting low remuneration and scarce autonomy. Some associations are criticised because they include the professionals and studios they work for, and because they seek to control their members for political reasons (lobbying activities) rather than supporting them. Then, the "betrayed" professionals can be considered the natural target of new organisations that have arisen in the last two decades, partly occupying the space left by traditional representative organisations. Nonetheless, these organisations have encountered many difficulties in establishing themselves and involving professionals on a stable basis, due to scarce financial resources and staff, since they often depend on voluntary activities[8] (Mingione *et alii* 2014a; 2014b; Borghi, Cavalca 2015; Borghi, Cavalca 2016).

3. The last profile includes "confident familist-corporatist" professionals, who experience rather good professional satisfaction and are optimistic in terms of career development but still in search of a consolidated status through stronger professional integration. They resort to family support and personal networks – "familism" and the strength of weak ties (Granovetter 1973) – and participation in professional orders or associations – "corporatism" – in order to find *ad hoc* solutions to career problems.

Even if they perceive difficulties in fulfilling private and professional objectives, these professionals experience moderate levels of job satisfaction and feel rather optimistic about their prospects. Nonetheless, they seem vulnerable in terms of professional networks and support; in their work spheres, they show a relational fragility. They see interest groups and professional networks as important, and with regard to working problems ask for support from professional associations. These professionals aim for corporative protection through self-organised associations or, more rarely, professional orders. They seek targeted services and specific welfare protection but rule out the intervention of unions or any form of universal support. They are ready to turn to professional associations whenever they encounter specific problems, demanding qualified support in order to overcome their inexperience with technical issues and to help in the full development of their career. In fact, they often ask for support from other professionals, like lawyers or fiscal consultants and seek to expand their professional contacts. Members of associations are obviously concentrated in this subgroup and are more frequently members of new, specialised (occupational) associations rather than cross-sectional associations.

They benefit from their family and social ties as a form of support at the beginning of their careers as well as to consolidate these. Some remain as long as possible with their parents, in order to save economic resources and gain

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[8] These organisations are professional associations founded by young independent professionals/freelancers or broader associations that organise professionals and/or atypical workers. The former have grown mostly within regulated professions, as an alternative to professional orders, while the latter have a distinct political identity and demand radical reforms of the Italian welfare system.
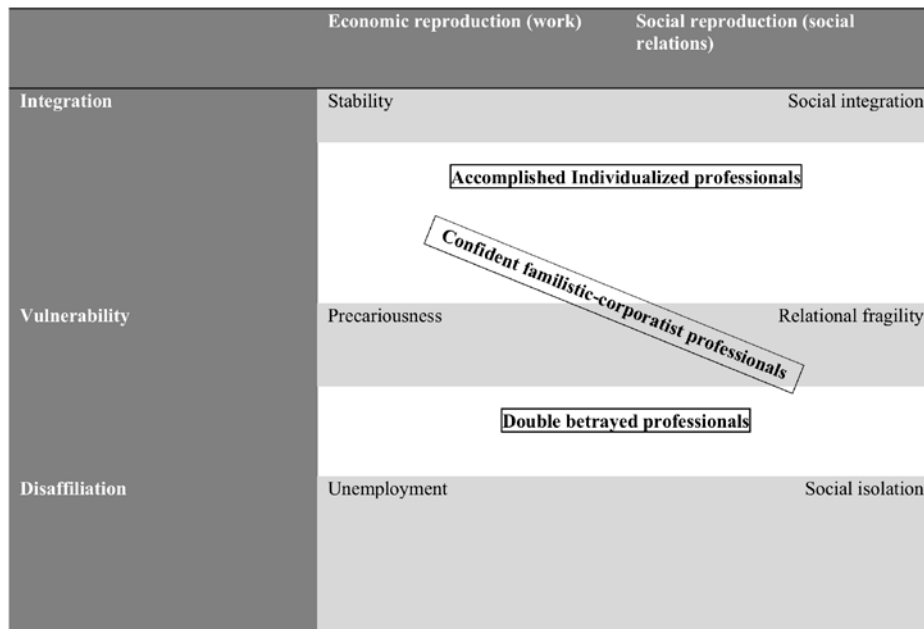
Figure 1. I-Pros profiles in the Castel's "disaffiliation" approach.

job experience, waiting for the right time and adequate economic strength to become independent, increasing their possibility of success. Strong economic support from their families is also useful during critical periods such as the transition between assignments or jobs, and such support can last for long periods, enabling independent professionals to pay for training courses or to bear other professional expenses.

Returning to Castel's disaffiliation approach, it is possible to insert these professionals' profiles in the original theoretical scheme (see Figure 1).

None of the interviewees' profiles can be situated in the "disaffiliation" area, even if some individuals among the "twice-betrayed" professionals seem to be at risk, at times, of sliding into this condition. As Figure 1 shows, whereas the first two profiles can be placed within a single area – the "individualist" professionals within the integration area, and the "betrayed" independent professionals within the vulnerability area, the "familist-corporatist" profile is cross-cutting, because it shows integration in terms of working conditions but vulnerability with regard to professional networks and prospects. In fact, these professionals are mainly interested in finding specific and qualified forms of support, as they are perfectly aware of the decisive role that relational resources play in creating new job opportunities and achieving professional accomplishments.

CONCLUSIONS

The younger generation of professionals is undergoing a crisis of social citizenship as a consequence of social, economic and labour market changes, on the one hand, and a lack of representation of their interests and rights, both as workers and citizen, on the other. Focusing on the early stages of their career permitted to understand those mechanisms which shape independent professionals' vulnerability, clearly distinguishing the second generation of professional labour from the traditional one, which used to be performed with work and organisational autonomy, with a wide portfolio of clients and to enable social integration.

Vulnerability and shaky citizenship originate from the interaction between market risks (instability, extreme competition among an increasing number of freelance, low remuneration of qualified work), intensified by structural economic and organisational changes, on the one side, and a lack of Welfare protection. Those independent

professionals with few relational and economic resources (class matters, in this respect) and scarce professional network (few clients and inadequate development strategies) are particularly exposed to risks of professional failure and economic fragility, often forced to be dependent on client(s), and to rely on their own personal, familial and social resources. This happens especially in the Southern European countries, and Italy can be considered one relevant case study. These trends are shared by all of the economic sectors involved in our research – all affected by liberalisation and deregulation processes – but some specific markets prove to increase professionals' exposure to risks, such as publishing and journalism among the recently regulated professions, or architecture and legal sector among the traditional liberal professions.

The analysis on the Milan case shows that a "culture of uncertainty" has become familiar among the early-career independent professionals, who are used to tackle their personal and work objectives on a day-by-day basis. Some of them deliberately choose this approach, considering life essentially a step-by-step process; others are forced to adopt this stance by scarce career prospects and poor levels of remuneration.

With regard to social integration, beyond a group of fully successful solo self-employed, most of the interviewed professionals show to suffer from economic and work vulnerability as well as relational fragility. Some independent professionals seem to be rather confident in fulfilling their professional objectives, but perceive a relational fragility concerning their professional context and demand specific professional representation and qualified support. Others experience social and professional vulnerability, strong isolation at work and renunciation of personal objectives.

The interaction, observed by this qualitative research, between a culture of uncertainty and lacking resources to cope with professional difficulties and to develop satisfying careers, contribute to foster the risk of entrapment into fragmented work and personal paths among a consistent part of the new independent professionals.

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Points of View

Il Mediterraneo e l'Europa. Intervista a Román Reyes

EDITED BY PAOLO GIOVANNINI E VINCENZO MARASCO

Cambio [C]: *Nelle precedenti interviste a intellettuali europei, CAMBIO ha di regola focalizzato la discussione sulla rispettiva situazione nazionale e sul tipo di relazioni che il loro paese aveva stabilito con l'Europa. Nel tuo caso, essendo tu presidente dell'EMUI (e molte altre cose ancora), vorremmo sviluppare l'intervista avendo come riferimento principale la complessa situazione euro-mediterranea e i suoi rapporti con l'Europa. Comincerei col chiederti di abbozzarare un breve quadro – economico, sociale, culturale – di questa area geografica e politica.*

Román Reyes [R]: Il Mediterraneo è tragicamente testimone di flussi che vanno al di là di quelli economici, sociali e culturali. Nel Mediterraneo stiamo vivendo una tragedia umanitaria che riguarda non solo il cambiamento antropologico di chi fugge dalla miseria o dalla barbarie, in un tentativo disperato in cui la morte è paradossalmente e spesso il destino più contraddittorio. Riguarda anche i modelli di stabilità sociale e culturale delle popolazioni circostanti, i cosiddetti «spazi di accoglienza». La storia sembra avere poca importanza ora, specialmente in tempi di omologazione borghese. Si è persa la memoria di quanto avvenuto in Africa durante i vari cicli della colonizzazione, che non ha comportato solamente lo sfruttamento esaustivo delle risorse naturali. Senza alcuno scrupolo e rispetto dei valori tradizionali, i paesi che per decenni hanno colonizzato l'Africa hanno esportato un modello di organizzazione politica mascherato da «protezione religiosa e culturale». Questo modello continua ad essere il punto di riferimento per i regimi dittatoriali della zona, per uno sfruttamento moderno delle risorse, per una corruzione più degenerata e per le macabre pulizie etniche. I paesi del Nord del Mediterraneo si sentono impotenti di fronte a tali effetti, e non riconoscono che l'Europa ha un debito residuo nei confronti dell'Africa, che i politici ora ignorano.

L'UE rimane ancora un progetto di convergenza in cui le posizioni non sono così omogenee e sono spesso contrastanti. L'uniformazione delle strutture di gestione politica ed economica sembra non essere così facile, nem-

meno con politiche aggressive. Vi è quindi la tendenza ad uniformare il tipo di «difesa» di questo disegno a colpi di direttive e con specifici organismi politici, sociali e giuridici. La diplomazia non è sempre sufficiente. Ma la piattaforma che sostiene il progetto comunitario non sta ancora realizzando un modello di gestione democratica e solidale di questi diritti sociali di cittadinanza. È vero che stiamo omologando la "barbarie" (la tirannia e la xenofobia), che consiste in una presunta redistribuzione della ricchezza di cui beneficia in realtà solo una piccola percentuale della popolazione. Ogni volta più piccola. Al costo della progressiva "omologazione" della povertà.

C: *Vorremmo chiederti di evidenziare i principali cambiamenti intervenuti in questi ultimi decenni e quali sono in questo momento gli aspetti cruciali dell'area.*

R: Un cambio di mentalità, di prospettiva: un adattamento forzato all'immagine edonistica che diffonde specialmente la TV, al consumo immediato dei prodotti che generano "benessere", prima che raggiungano la loro data di scadenza, vera od imposta. Quindi, una svalutazione del passato in nome di un futuro, "pieno di promesse", che si riduce al consumo, immediato e tempestivo. Il piacere è, quindi, fugace. [Assistiamo, così,] ad una riconversione dei valori tradizionali, senza che questa riconversione generi alternative. Ad uno sbilanciamento ideologico: caduta dell'URSS, riconversione accelerata dei partiti comunisti europei (sempre meno forti) e "recupero selvaggio" dello spazio lasciato libero. Ridefinizione di concetti fondamentali come «democrazia», «uguaglianza» o «dignità». Ma anche di valori etici ed estetici. La bontà e la bellezza non sono più qualcosa di così compatto da garantire la stabilità morale ed emotiva della cittadinanza. Una subalternità della speranza all'utopia. È quindi impossibile proporre il progresso come risultato di una ostinata «lotta di classe», perché il progresso è ora subordinato a uno sviluppo disumano. Edonismo e fatalismo. Purtroppo, il presente viene inteso come una transizione disperata verso una condizione che non cambia, a favore di una "identità moderna", dove nessuno è lo stesso dell'*altro*.

C: *Vorremmo ora che tu ti soffermassi a considerare separatamente tre problemi che da tempo caratterizzano l'area mediterranea. Primo: il problema della coesistenza democratica, anche alla luce dei rapporti tra Mediterraneo e Medio Oriente.*

R: Il "problema" della «coesistenza democratica» è un problema mal posto, non so se deliberatamente o meno. Direi che si pone da una posizione che lo rende non rilevabile. Non è necessario elaborare programmi di risoluzione dei conflitti (politico-mediatici) o di prevenzione *à la carte* di tali conflitti. Le teorie del conflitto si fondano su contraddizioni (teoriche) escludenti, e non su contraddizioni dialettiche. Proiettano sulla realtà schemi o modelli concettuali non conflittuali, anche se certamente su ipotesi plausibili. Visioni autoriflessive del mondo esistente, che ignorano sia la storia del mondo che è, sia la possibilità della sua progressiva crescita. La coesistenza è, per definizione, democratica. A meno che non si intenda la democrazia alla luce di sfumature che risultano ovviamente xenofobe: sesso, età, posizione sociale, origine, abitudini e costumi… La mia percezione è che non ci sia la volontà (politico-mediatica) di "risolvere il problema" sulla base delle molteplici e accreditate analisi della situazione e delle proposte (anch'esse accreditate) per neutralizzarlo.

D'altra parte, il «conflitto arabo-israeliano» è *il* conflitto che genera l'intervento squilibrante delle grandi potenze (alcune geograficamente estranee all'area), che, a loro volta, possono rendere redditizia questa "protezione". Questo conflitto storico spesso distoglie l'attenzione dalla tragedia del Mediterraneo come cimitero galleggiante. È conseguenza del controllo del flusso di notizie, attraverso la censura delle informazioni e dando priorità a quelle che meno danneggiano gli interessi degli amministratori e dei padroni; è il caso, soprattutto, della televisione (non dimentichiamo che la televisione fissa modelli di comportamento "borghesi", estranei alla storia e ai sentienti dei cittadini, e che spesso non rispettano i diritti umani fondamentali). È vero, tuttavia, che ci sono comunità arabe e israeliane che lavorano per un approccio diverso al problema, che garantisca i diritti fondamentali di ciascuno. Ma l'eco di questo impegno non è sempre riconosciuta o rispettata da coloro che sono in grado di realizzarla.

Un'altra prospettiva (forse plausibile) sarebbe quella di "territorializzare" l'analisi dei diritti umani in relazione alle Diaspore, vale a dire mettendo l'Europa *vis a vis* col Medio Oriente. Sebbene gli studi sulle diaspore, l'etnia e l'immigrazione abbiano consentito di approfondire la comprensione delle identità delle minoranze e del loro rapporto con i processi sociali, politici ed economici nelle società di residenza a confronto con le società di

origine, è necessario ampliare la discussione sul rapporto tra diaspora e diritti umani. Ad esempio, in che misura la mancata considerazione delle particolari esigenze dei gruppi non nazionali implica una violazione dei diritti umani? In che misura è possibile, e/o necessario, considerare i diritti dei gruppi di sfollati, originari del Medio Oriente, all'interno di specifiche categorie dei diritti umani? Di questi temi tratta specificamente il Master Internazionale che l'EMUI_EuroMed University offre sotto il titolo *Human Rights in the Mediterranean*[1], inserito all'interno di un'area prioritaria, genericamente chiamata «Mediterraneo: Uguaglianza_Diritti Umani» (Linee prioritarie EMUI).

C: *Secondo problema: la difficile convivenza tra la ovvia multiculturalità dell'area e le forti e forse crescenti identità nazionali.*

R: La cosiddetta "identità nazionale" – che, nelle sue origini, sarebbe un'identità collettiva – in un quadro ampio come quello dell'UE, non può essere soggetta a modelli o protocolli di chiusura o esclusione geografica o politica. L'identità è complessa, poiché le identità del passato sopravvivono in spazi diversi pur nell'omologazione delle identità prodotta dai consumi. Processo in cui i media svolgono un ruolo importante, lo sottolineo ancora una volta. Il "conflitto d'identità" sorge quando un'identità è transfrontaliera, o quando tale identità è il frutto di un "adattamento" a un'identità *altra*, il cui esito non sarà mai "integrazione" *stricto sensu*.

D'altra parte la «nazione» può essere intesa in molti modi. La «nazione politica» ha dei confini, che sono difesi dagli eserciti corrispondenti. La «nazione culturale» non ha altra frontiera che l'uso di una lingua, o di un modo di parlare, specifici, frutto del rapporto della cittadinanza con il suo ambiente, cioè con la storia che fa di un mezzo (come il linguaggio) uno spazio "particolare" di convivenza. Questi spazi, tuttavia, sono "aperti", ricettivi rispetto a spazi più generali, che rappresentano la "cultura ufficiale" del paese. Diremmo che questa cittadinanza vive due percezioni di forte carattere emotivo, religioso o estetico: il sentirsi particolare e la perplessità (a volte) di fronte alla pretesa di globalità dell'altro.

C: *E, infine, il problema delle disuguaglianze economiche e sociali dell'area: quali i mutamenti di maggior rilievo, i processi in corso e le tendenze che sembrano dover prevalere nel prossimo futuro?*

R: Le disuguaglianze economiche e sociali fanno purtroppo parte del modello di coesistenza imposto dalla società dei consumi. Il "disuguale" può (e deve) aspirare ad essere "uguale". Un'uguaglianza che si misura dal livello di consumo a cui punta il cittadino, se vuol godere delle garanzie di questa società dello spreco, che consiste nel «dimmi quanto e come consumi e ti dirò a quale livello di felicità puoi aspirare». I processi che definiscono questa situazione sono di una provvisorietà tesa e instabile: l'immediato è la norma. La velocità, l'angoscia, sono il supporto. La speranza è solo uno sfogo, che non si ferma nemmeno davanti alla pietà – termine già svalutato dalla sua interpretazione laica. La religiosità insita in ogni sentimento estetico si ritrova nelle chiese, annacquata nell'euforia dei mercati. Niente è più santo: ora tutto è merce, una serie di oggetti intercambiabili.

Non sono capace di fare previsioni, di anticipare cosa può accadere nel breve termine. L'intellettuale ha perso il suo status di referente della cultura dello Stato. Dica o scriva quello che scrive e dice, è comunque catalogato come "funzione superflua", che potrebbe solo compensare una già abbondantemente svalutata "funzione del predicatore". Posso solo sognare un mondo migliore, pensando che il mio sogno sia stato un sogno del passato, con la possibilità di diventare realtà nel momento presente.

C: *Prima hai parlato dei cambiamenti culturali intervenuti negli ultimi decenni. Potresti approfondire un momento questi aspetti, e in particolare dirci la tua opinione sui più cruciali mutamenti valoriali, con specifico riferimento alle relazioni di classe e di ceto, a quelle familiari, di genere e di generazione?*

R: I cambiamenti interessano tutte le sfere dell'identità moderna. Ecco perché sto parlando di un vuoto antropologico. I «valori» vengono liquidati senza prima proporre alternative: il «valore» diviene la negazione dei valori ereditati. I rapporti di classe non sono governati dal confronto, ma dalla lotta per l'uguaglianza, sotto l'egida del-

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[1] emui.eu/humanrights/master.html

la tolleranza e dell'omologazione borghese. E la borghesia non è una classe sociale, ma il male peggiore possibile, «una malattia contagiosa», come direbbe Pasolini.

I rapporti a livello di famiglia, fede o generazione non possono essere compresi senza un impegno per l'integrazione della dimensione di genere. La cultura, il sostegno naturale di questa trasversalità, viene tagliata fuori dal rispetto di una dignità implicante l'uguaglianza nella differenza. Senza categorizzare, e "arrampicarsi", come fatto finora, in funzione delle posizioni di forza, secondo lo status, la condizione naturale o la fede.

Una rottura intergenerazionale è ora la norma: una lotta contro il padre, che è come dislocare l'oggetto da combattere. Si sa ciò che abbiamo ereditato, ma non si è in grado di progettare nuove frontiere da trasgredire, dal disegno ormai chiuso della generazione precedente – che è stato messo in scena con il Maggio francese del '68. Alla fine, è stata una rivoluzione borghese, perché ha cercato solo di «trasformare l'esistente», non di generare un'altra forma di esistenza, capace di dialogare con le forme che hanno reso valide fino ad oggi le tracce culturali del passato.

La famiglia non è più fonte di affettività reciproca. Gli affetti sono promiscui. L'incorporazione nello spazio della tolleranza ha invertito il concetto di «peccato»: la trasgressione è ora la norma. Quindi è inutile che le nuove generazioni incorporino nei loro desideri elementi come il perdono o la giustificazione.

Il Vaticano II ha cambiato i rituali e le prospettive della religiosità secolare. Ma si è fermato ad un formalismo puro, che ha finito per imporsi come alternativa alla "religione del nostro tempo" praticata dai giovani: una dipendenza – insisto – dall'immediato e dal superfluo. L'ostentazione e il consumo di bellezze simulate, di passioni senza *pathos*.

C: *Più in generale, quali sono a tuo parere le principali rotture intervenute nella tradizionale configurazione di valori dell'area?*

R: In effetti, c'è stata una rottura con quelle che sono state considerate «rovine» dell'immediato passato e che solo adesso valgono come riferimento a ciò che «non dovrebbe» continuare ad essere. L'impostazione dei modelli è congiunturale ed escludente: determinata dall'interesse del momento, che richiede che i valori tradizionali, così come le loro modalità di consolidamento, siano definiti «storici». Compresi i valori che sono prodotti dall'esclusione dei valori tradizionali, progressivamente marginalizzati. Non c'è tradizione. I fatti narrati e le storie diventano materiale da museo, reale o metaforico che sia In questo contesto, un intellettuale può riferirsi solo al "discorso", un sistema di segni più simbolici che normativi. I valori del linguaggio, del gesto o dell'espressione corporea sono tra quelli già "svalutati". L'unico supporto che gli è rimasto, è proprio questa possibilità di evocare *altri luoghi*, come il linguaggio del teatro, o del cinema, come lingua scritta della realtà.

C: *In questo quadro, ritieni possibile/auspicabile una cooperazione euro-mediterranea? A quali ostacoli va incontro questo obiettivo?*

R: È possibile un "discorso" sulla cooperazione euromediterranea, se questo discorso si basa sulla solidarietà, il che significa ammettere la *diversità* come elemento di arricchimento, come ho già detto in precedenza. La tendenza, tuttavia, è quella di una "integrazione", che (non tanto a livello formale, quanto nella pratica) richiede al migrante un "mettere tra parentesi", una "rinuncia", ai valori di origine, cioè alla loro cultura – se è vero che questi valori rimangono nascosti quando il migrante deve agire negli spazi di accoglienza.

Il migrante si manifesta nei suoi "spazi riservati" o nelle nicchie etnico-religiose e culturali di origine. È la sua "fuga", o riunione simbolica, puntuale o rituale, con le origini. Doppia tragedia del migrante: scindersi, generare nuove nicchie negli spazi di accoglienza, mentre la nicchia di origine (un patto sacro tra uomo e natura) si ferma nel tempo, nel momento dello strappo, della partenza. Dell'esilio. Il migrante, tuttavia, resiste a negare la possibilità di ricongiungimento (e riconciliazione) con il ritmo della storia – che non si è fermata quando se ne è andato. Un evento di traumatico, quando – e se – ritorna, e verifica di non essere stato né protagonista né complice dei cambiamenti che, nel frattempo, sono stati registrati.

La cooperazione euromediterranea può essere possibile al di là del discorso su cui si basa. Ma dipende dalla volontà degli attori coinvolti. In altre parole, dall'"opportunità" che credono di avere per questa cooperazione senza alterare le precedenti strategie di potere.

C: *Un problema che è al centro degli interessi di EMUI è quello dei diritti umani. Puoi illustrarmi questo punto e le ragioni di questo vostro impegno?*

R: Ciò che definisce l'UEMUI è l'uguaglianza e i diritti umani. Su questa base abbiamo progettato azioni o programmi che vanno al di là di altri disegni più convenzionali. Abbiamo già pensato ai destinatari per dare un senso al nostro impegno e raggiungere gli obiettivi che ci siamo prefissati. Senza rinunciare ai disegni curricolari in vigore nello spazio europeo, diamo, tuttavia, priorità alle alternative educative e formative che garantiscono la copertura dei bisogni reali della domanda o delle situazioni di vulnerabilità.

I diritti umani sono diritti delle persone. Le persone sono soggetti che chiedono che siano rspettate la loro dignità e i loro diritti fondamentali. Ciò a volte comporta la forzatura di un certo ordine giuridico (quello in vigore negli spazi di accoglienza, che è necessariamente politico e partigiano). La stessa pretesa di un'omologazione degli interessi e dei programmi nell'Unione europea, rimane poco più di un progetto, un consenso debole su ciò che si suppone sia comune ai paesi che fanno parte della Europa comunitaria. L'EMUI è impegnata in un dialogo praticabile. Tale dialogo deve essere improntato al rispetto della storia e del presente delle identità. Soprattutto quando si tratta del dialogo Sud-Nord.

C: *Questo ci porta, mi pare, a parlare del problema migratorio, campo dove specificamente si assiste a una continua violazione dei diritti umani. Quali caratteristiche presenta oggi e come potrebbe essere meglio governato?*

R: La diversità delle prospettive dei governi europei genera violazioni dei diritti umani, proprio applicando altre leggi di spiccato carattere politico e interesse di partito. Oppure interpretando i diritti umani secondo "regole" che questi governi antepongono a persone in situazioni di grave emergenza.

È facile trarre conclusioni da questo presupposto: la prospettiva comunitaria deve emergere da un consenso stabile sulla gravità del problema. In un mondo globalizzato, non si tratta di una questione in senso stretto di frontiere. Perché i confini nascono quando ci sono interessi che non vuoi condividere: violando, se necessario, i diritti fondamentali di coloro che migrano in questi spazi privilegiati. Per questo motivo, il problema non può essere ridotto a un controllo di polizia dei flussi. Questa è una scappatoia per paesi o regimi che – erroneamente – vedono il migrante come una minaccia alla loro fragile coesione sociale ed economica.

C: *Passiamo ora a un punto fondamentale, quello del rapporto tra area euro-mediterranea ed Europa come entità socio-economica, ma anche come costruzione politica. Che relazioni con l'Unione Europea? Quali con i singoli paesi del Centro-Nord Europa?*

R: I paesi del Centro-Nord sono tradizionalmente meno sensibili ai problemi che richiedono solidarietà politica e sociale. Progettano proposte di "integrazione" che non sempre rispettano la ricca unicità del migrante. Programmi di integrazione, spesso simbolici, che sembrano più un controllo che un diritto. È il caso, ad esempio, della salute e dell'educazione "universale".

L'Europa è certamente un'entità economica che aspira ad essere, in parallelo, un'entità sociale. Si parla di «costruzione», fragile pretesto per ritardare soluzioni e compromessi, anche a medio termine. La burocrazia europea è un muro che non è facile da abbattere. È interessata molto più alle forme di gestione che all'oggetto da gestire. I politici danno un'immagine di fluidità, che spesso rimane puro volontarismo. Un "equilibrio" simulato, che genera rabbia e impotenza.

C: *Scendendo ora sul piano operativo. Mi pare di poter dire che l'EMUI concentra la sua attività nel campo dell'educazione, della formazione, della cultura, della innovazione tecnica, promuovendo in particolare innovative attività di insegnamento e di crescita professionale. Potresti illustrarci la ragione di queste scelte?*

R:Abbiamo fatto progressi parlando di diritti umani. Modelli educativi o formativi cercano di rendere omogenei i curricula con il pretesto della mobilità, al di là, a volte, di reali esigenze sociali. D'altra parte, il ruolo del corpo studentesco si riduce ad assimilare la conoscenza pregressa, dimenticando che questa conoscenza deve diventare uno strumento per rispondere efficacemente ai bisogni del nostro tempo. Dimenticando inoltre che le giovani gene-

razioni accedono alla scuola con una "saggezza" che acquisiscono quando si tratta di risolvere le tensioni, in relazione all'ambiente in cui si muovono realmente, generando, se necessario, "linguaggi strumentali". Le teorie sulla vita (stili di vita e organizzazione della convivenza) cambiano (o dovrebbero cambiare) tanto quanto evolve il tipo di rapporto dell'uomo con la natura.

Questo è lo sfondo. Qualcosa che l'EMUI non sempre riesce ad affermare di fronte alle amministrazioni che pure riconoscono la sua posizione e addirittura valutano il rischio che assume. Quelli di noi che hanno reso possibile l'EMUI sanno che la resistenza di alcune amministrazioni è forte, ma noi resistiamo e stiamo raggiungendo obiettivi precisi. I nostri risultati sono registrati sulle pagine di *Nomads. Mediterranean perspectives*[2], in *Nòmadas. Critical Journal of Social and Juridical Sciences*[3], e altre pubblicazioni della nostra casa editrice.

C: *È possibile a tuo parere costruire reti euro-mediterranee di ricerca, insegnamento, professionalizzazione? A quali condizioni? Con quali difficoltà?*

R: Dobbiamo renderlo possibile. Questa è la nostra battaglia. Stiamo ottenendo qualcosa con la nostra rete, lentamente[4] e con i nostri contatti[5]. L'EMUI ha anche un proprio programma di ricerca e un lungo elenco di ricercatori[6]. Spesso ci troviamo di fronte a resistenze istituzionali quando si tratta di inserire i nostri programmi (critici, per definizione) in protocolli standard. A poco a poco, tuttavia, stiamo raggiungendo degli accordi.

C: *Infine, guardando al futuro. Secondo te, da quale soggetto sociale e politico pensi ci si possa aspettare che si inneschi un processo di cambiamento (donne, giovani, intellettuali, lavoratori, altro)? Ed eventualmente per quali ragioni?*

R: Il cambiamento è all'ordine del giorno. Lo stesso EMUI è un punto di riferimento in questo senso. È, a nostro avviso, una piattaforma di incontro e di lavoro, spesso controcorrente. Ovviamente diamo priorità alle questioni di uguaglianza e sviluppo sostenibile. Ecco perché siamo preoccupati per le questioni che riguardano i diritti delle donne, purtroppo ancora negati o violati, così come dei giovani, i garanti del cambiamento. Gli intellettuali hanno la loro responsabilità in questo processo di cambiamento. Anche se la loro voce non si sente sempre quando è più necessaria, dobbiamo rafforzarla. Siamo anche noi: gli intellettuali e coloro che gestiscono i diritti dei lavoratori, così come i politici che li rappresentano.

C: *E per chiudere, almeno per quanto mi riguarda, come immagini il futuro, dell'area euro-mediterranea e più in generale della situazione di contesto europeo e mondiale, tra 10 anni?*

R: Non mi arrischio a fare da profeta del nostro tempo. C'è qualcosa che mi impedisce di essere ottimista. La malattia, forse, di quelli di noi che hanno vissuto così a lungo. Desiderare, desidero; ma non ho molta fiducia nella volontà di cambiare di chi gestisce il potere a proprio vantaggio. Un cambiamento, è vero: ma non per "neutralizzare" la nostra lotta e il nostro sogno. Spero di sopravvivere ai miei sogni, anche quando saranno solo storie interpretate da altri.

C: *Grazie mille dell'intervista e della collaborazione.*

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[2] www.emui.eu/nomads
[3] www.emui.eu/nomadas
[4] www.emui.eu/bodies/academic.html
[5] www.emui.eu/network_consortium.html
[6] www.emui.eu/research/index.html

(Re)Reading the Classics

Cent'anni dopo. Max Weber e la politica come professione e vocazione

Dimitri D'Andrea

Esattamente cento anni fa, il 28 gennaio del 1919, nei giorni che separano il rapimento e l'assassinio di Rosa Luxemburg da quello di Kurt Eisner (primo Presidente del Libero Stato di Baviera), Max Weber tiene a Monaco di Baviera, su richiesta della sezione bavarese del *Freistudentische Bund* (Libera associazione studentesca), la conferenza sulla *Politica come professione*. Nei mesi successivi, Weber rielabora ed amplia considerevolmente la schematica traccia predisposta per la conferenza e, nell'estate del 1919, pubblica presso Duncker & Humblot quello che può essere considerato il suo testamento spirituale, il testo nel quale in modo più esplicito vengono formulate le sue prese di posizione ultime sulla politica e sul mondo.

PROFESSIONE E LAVORO

Al centro di percorsi genealogici della modernità, ma anche dell'analisi della soggettività contemporanea e delle sue potenzialità, il concetto di professione (*Beruf*) costituisce uno dei fili rossi dell'intera produzione weberiana. In *Politik als Beruf* Weber utilizza il concetto di professione in due accezioni nettamente distinte: la prima *analitico-descrittiva*, la seconda esplicitamente *normativa*. Mentre nella prima parte della conferenza l'oggetto della riflessione weberiana è costituito dalla individuazione delle caratteristiche oggettive (materiali e ideali) che definiscono l'esercizio professionale dell'attività politica, nella seconda, in particolare nelle ultime venti pagine, il ragionamento si dispone su un piano apertamente normativo e procede alla caratterizzazione dell'esercizio professionale dell'attività politica che Weber ritiene adeguato alle sfide del suo tempo e capace di dare un senso alla vita di chi vi si dedica in modo continuativo. Nella dimensione sociologico-descrittiva della sua riflessione Weber punta sia ad individuare le caratteristiche oggettivo-esteriori (necessarie e sufficienti) che fanno dell'attività politica una professione – che trasformano, cioè, l'agire politico

in un'attività professionale –, sia a descrivere i diversi atteggiamenti soggettivo-interiori (le motivazioni, i contenuti di senso) che accompagnano l'esercizio professionale della politica. Nella dimensione normativa, invece, il ragionamento weberiano si carica di indicazioni relative a come l'esercizio della politica debba essere interpretato oggi per far fronte alle minacce di insensatezza che incombono sull'esistenza del singolo e sulla società nel suo insieme.

Sul piano descrittivo, la condizione oggettivo-esteriore dell'esercizio professionale dell'attività politica consiste essenzialmente nel suo carattere *continuativo*. La professione rimanda, innanzitutto, all'idea di un'attività che costituisce l'asse intorno al quale si organizza la vita quotidiana e che viene esercitata in modo stabile e durevole nel tempo: «Esattamente come accade nel campo del profitto economico, si può fare "politica" [...] sia in modo "occasionale" [*"Gelegenheits"-Politiker*] sia in modo "professionale", e in questo secondo caso dedicandosi ad essa come ad una professione secondaria [*nebenberuflicher*] oppure principale [*hauptberuflicher*]» [Weber 2004: 56]. Se con politici occasionali si intendono tutti coloro che esercitano un'attività politica in modo saltuario – dai semplici elettori a tutti coloro che sporadicamente compiono azioni più o meno attivamente politiche –, i politici di professione in senso proprio sono soltanto coloro che esercitano l'attività politica come professione principale, ovvero a tempo pieno. L'esercizio professionale della politica indica, dunque, una dedizione alla politica non soltanto di tipo non occasionale, ma anche a carattere esclusivo. Il tempo – la stabilità e l'esclusività dell'esercizio di un'attività – costituisce il criterio definitorio della professione: una professione part-time non è propriamente una professione.

La sottolineatura esplicita di una perfetta sovrapposizione con quanto accade nel campo economico – e più specificamente in relazione alla ricerca del profitto – consente di estendere anche alla politica la definizione di professione proposta in *L'etica protestante e lo spirito del capitalismo* e di cogliere così una dimensione ulteriore dell'esercizio professionale di una certa attività: *Beruf* è «l'attività durevole [*dauernde*] di un uomo, fondata sul principio della divisione del lavoro, che (normalmente) è per lui al tempo stesso fonte di reddito e quindi fondamento economico durevole [*dauernde*] dell'esistenza» [Weber 1982a, vol I: 61]. In quanto definita nel contesto della divisione del lavoro, la professione è un'attività durevole specializzata che comporta il conseguimento di un saper fare, che veicola, attraverso l'esercizio e l'apprendimento, l'acquisizione di conoscenze teoriche e pratiche. Sotto questo profilo, dilettante significa incompetente o, comunque, non perfettamente competente. Anche quando lo svolgimento di una certa attività professionale richiede una dotazione preliminare di conoscenze teoriche, l'esercizio quotidiano, la ripetizione continuativa, la dedizione durevole procurano un sapere e un saper fare inaccessibili a chi pratica quell'attività in modo saltuario, occasionale, sporadico. Professionista allude, così, anche ad una qualificazione cognitiva, ad una specializzazione, al possesso del livello di conoscenza legato alla continuità dell'esercizio. Esclusività, specializzazione e competenza costituiscono le coordinate di una forma di esistenza che materialmente dipende dalla saturazione del tempo di vita da parte di un certo tipo di attività: il *Beruf* è un'attività specializzata esercitata in modo esclusivo e stabile nel tempo.

C'è poi la relazione con il lavoro (*Arbeit*). Nelle *Soziologische Grundkategorien des Wirtschaftens* di *Economia e società* Weber definisce il lavoro come tipo specifico di «prestazione umana di carattere economico» [Weber 1980, vol. I: 110]. L'idea di fondo è che il lavoro indichi la dimensione dell'attività soggettiva, della erogazione di energia connessa all'agire economico inteso a sua volta come agire *strumentale* finalizzato a soddisfare una esigenza di prestazioni di utilità (materiali e personali, ovvero beni e prestazioni) che vengono desiderate: «La definizione di "agire economico" deve configurarsi in modo da comprendere la moderna economia acquisitiva, e quindi non deve *partire* dai "bisogni di consumo" e dalla loro "soddisfazione", ma deve muovere da una parte dal fatto che vi sono prestazioni di utilità [*Nutzleistungen*] le quali vengono *appetite*, e dall'altra dal fatto che si cerca di assicurare la copertura di questa richiesta mediante uno sforzo [*Fürsorge*] inteso a procurare i mezzi necessari (per quanto esso sia primitivo o acquistato su base tradizionale)» [*ivi*: 58]. In *Economia e società* il termine lavoro viene riservato, sulla base di quello che Weber ritiene l'uso linguistico affermatosi «per motivi sociali» [*ivi*: 110], soltanto a quell'attività, quella fatica (*Anstrengung*) finalizzata all'acquisizione di prestazioni di utilità che si svolge in forma eteronoma e subordinata, vale a dire in base a disposizioni altrui. Questa limitazione, tuttavia, non cancella il fatto che anche le prestazioni economiche di carattere *disponente* possano essere considerate forme di "lavoro", ovvero di dispendio di tempo e fatica in vista di un'acquisizione di prestazioni di utilità che nell'economia monetaria avviene attraverso la mediazione del denaro.

Normalmente il lavoro – l'agire economico – si configura come una professione in senso esteriore[1], ma non sempre, né necessariamente. Un lavoro si presenta oggettivamente una professione quando diventa *specializzato* e *continuativo*: «Si deve definire "professione" ogni specificazione, specializzazione e combinazione delle prestazioni di una persona, che costituisca per essa il fondamento di una possibilità continuativa [*kontinuierlichen*] di approvvigionamento o di acquisizione» [*ivi*: 180]. A fare di un agire economico – dell'investimento di tempo e fatica in una attività tesa a conseguire opportunità di approvvigionamento o acquisizione – una professione è, ancora una volta, il carattere continuativo e specializzato del lavoro. In una economia monetaria la prestazione volta al conseguimento di un compenso in denaro viene qualificata come professione soltanto se possiede i caratteri della non occasionalità e della specializzazione (sapere).

Allo stesso modo, normalmente la professione è un lavoro, ma non sempre, né necessariamente. Il compenso monetario – il fatto cioè che una determinata attività costituisca, nel contesto della divisione del lavoro, il fondamento economico dell'esistenza, il modo attraverso il quale si ottiene il necessario per il proprio sostentamento – non è un requisito indispensabile della professione. Il lavoro è il paradigma dell'intensità e della durevolezza dell'impegno, non una condizione di possibilità della professione. È un indicatore della «posizione di vita» [1982a, vol I: 60], un sinonimo per qualcosa che materialmente costituisce il centro strutturante l'intera vita, non l'indicazione che la professione deve necessariamente essere collegata all'acquisizione di denaro o al procacciamento dei mezzi di sussistenza. Il lavoro indica il perimetro temporale dell'attività professionale: la professione è un'attività specialistica la cui intensità e continuità è quella del lavoro, di una attività cioè che occupa la quasi totalità della giornata e della vita attiva e cosciente di un individuo. In definitiva, professione è qualunque attività venga svolta *come se* fosse un lavoro, *come se* fosse cioè l'attività dalla quale otteniamo i nostri mezzi di sostentamento, quella attività che ci occupa sistematicamente ogni giorno. La professione non deve essere necessariamente lavoro.

Dal punto di vista materiale, il lavoro non è quindi una condizione necessaria e neppure sufficiente per la professione. Si *può* svolgere un lavoro come una professione, così come si *può* svolgere una professione senza che questa costituisca un lavoro, una forma di agire economico.

VIVERE «DI» E VIVERE «PER» LA POLITICA

Lo scarto fra professione e lavoro è, in qualche misura, lo sfondo su cui si articola la distinzione fra vivere «di» e vivere «per» la politica che attraversa tutta *Politica come professione*. Il concetto di vivere «di» politica («*"von" die Politik leben*») [Weber 2004: 58] si riferisce essenzialmente alla dimensione economica dell'esercizio professionale dell'attività politica. Vivere «di» politica significa aver fatto della politica il proprio lavoro. Vive «di» politica chi con la politica si procura il proprio sostentamento economico: chi ha fatto della politica la sua fonte di reddito. Vivere «di» politica è la condizione necessaria per dedicarsi continuativamente alla politica per tutti coloro che devono lavorare per vivere, cioè, in buona sostanza, per tutti coloro che non vivono di rendita. La questione decisiva non è, infatti, la ricchezza, ma la disponibilità di tempo. Al di là della diversità delle rispettive condizioni economiche, infatti, operai e imprenditori condividono una dipendenza dal lavoro che preclude loro la possibilità di vivere «per» la politica, senza contemporaneamente vivere anche «di» politica. E lo stesso si può affermare anche per molti liberi professionisti come, ad esempio, i medici. In questo senso «la direzione di uno Stato o di un partito a opera di persone le quali vivono (nel senso economico del termine) esclusivamente per la politica, e non della politica, implica necessariamente un reclutamento "plutocratico" dei gruppi politicamente dirigenti» [*ivi*: 60].

Il concetto di «*"von" die Politik leben*» non è, tuttavia, privo di un riferimento alla dimensione motivazionale: «"della" politica come professione vive colui che cerca [*strebt*] di trarre da essa una fonte durevole di *guadagno*» [*ivi*: 58]. L'impiego del verbo *streben* introduce nel concetto di vivere «di» politica anche l'indicazione di uno specifico *proposito*, di un atteggiamento soggettivo di tipo puramente strumentale. Nelle pagine iniziali della conferen-

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[1] Sugli aspetti interiori, sui contenuti di senso del lavoro come professione il rimando è, ovviamente, a Max Weber 1982a, vol. I, in particolare pp. 60-6.

za Weber aveva proposto una tripartizione delle motivazioni della ricerca del potere che costituisce la filigrana della distinzione fra vivere «di» e vivere «per» la politica: «Chi fa politica aspira al potere [*Macht*], o come mezzo al servizio di altri fini – ideali o egoistici –, o "per il potere in se stesso", per godere del senso di prestigio che esso procura» [*ivi*: 49]. Vive «di» politica chi aspira al potere in vista di un guadagno, in funzione di fini egoistici. Un politico che aspira al potere per l'utile che ne può trarre non ha nessuna passione specifica per la politica. La possibilità che la politica costituisca per lui una professione è legata esclusivamente al fatto che essa divenga un lavoro e che non si dischiudano prospettive alternative di guadagno più vantaggiose. La pura strumentalità del vivere «di» politica configura un rapporto del tutto contingente con la politica e condiziona il carattere professionale-continuativo del suo esercizio all'esistenza di una necessità di tipo materiale e alla stabilità di un lavoro.

Di contro, il concetto di vivere «per» la politica («*"für" die Politik leben*») [*ivi*: 58] si riferisce esclusivamente alla dimensione spirituale, interiore della dedizione continuativa all'attività politica. Che sia o meno materialmente autonomo, che tragga o meno dalla politica i mezzi per il suo sostentamento, vive «per» la politica chi è mosso da una passione che ne struttura l'esistenza, da un interesse che lo costituisce: «chi vive "per" la politica costruisce in senso interiore "tutta la propria esistenza intorno a essa"» [*ibidem*]. Indipendentemente dalla dimensione materiale, vivere «per» la politica significa, dunque, fare della ricerca del potere il centro della propria esistenza e della propria vita spirituale, significa avere un rapporto con la politica costitutivo di sé: non soltanto non occasionale, ma neppure contingente. Vivere «per» la politica significa non poter vivere senza la politica.

Di questa inestinguibile aspirazione al potere, di questa passione per la politica capace di saturare l'intero spazio identitario divenendone il principio organizzatore unico si danno due forme distinte. La prima riprende l'ultima delle motivazioni che Weber aveva introdotto a proposito della ricerca del potere, ovvero il desiderio del potere fine a stesso e del prestigio che questo procura: vive «per» la politica, in questa accezione, chi «gode del puro possesso della potenza [*Macht*][2] che esercita» [*ibidem*]. Su una linea di ragionamento tipica del realismo politico da Tucidide a Hobbes, Weber indica qui nella gloria, nell'interno compiacimento di sé che deriva dal potere, una delle ragioni della dedizione alla politica. Chi ricerca il potere come fine in sé aspira al prestigio come fonte di quello specifico piacere che consiste in un più alto senso di sé. Se il potere è piacevole perché ci fa sentire migliori, il potere politico procura la forma più intensa di piacere perché coincide con la forma più alta di potere: la diposizione sulla vita e sulla morte degli uomini. La ricerca del potere per il puro piacere del suo possesso incatena alla politica – configura una dedizione costante e duratura all'agire politico anche in assenza di una dipendenza materiale - perché il potere politico è il potere *par excellence*, la forma più pura di potere e, quindi, quella che più di ogni altra procura prestigio e autostima. Chi aspira al potere per fini materiali, o con motivazioni esclusivamente utilitaristiche, può trovare occupazioni e strategie sicuramente più efficienti della politica. Il denaro, ad esempio, può essere di gran lunga più efficiente in termini strumentali, ma la sua piacevolezza rimane incomparabile con quella legata al potere di governare gli uomini.

In questa accezione meramente *analitico-descrittiva*, dunque, chi ricerca il potere politico come fine in sé, chi aspira al potere per il piacere che ne deriva, deve essere considerato per Weber un politico di professione sotto l'unica condizione che riesca a dare alla sua attività – indipendentemente dal fatto di vivere anche di politica – la continuità necessaria.

La seconda forma di dedizione alla politica come professione è legata, invece, alla sua capacità di servire una causa: «alimenta il proprio equilibrio interiore e il proprio sentimento di sé con la coscienza di dare un senso alla propria vita per il fatto di servire una "causa" [*Sache*]» [*ibidem*]. Il potere può essere, infatti, ricercato anche come mezzo per fini ideali, come strumento per perseguire finalità ideali capaci di dare un senso alla vita perché capaci di trascenderla. Proprio in una prospettiva *realistica*, occorre prendere atto che la politica può avere finalità diverse da quelle della semplice acquisizione di potere fine a se stessa. La politica diventa una professione, la ricerca del potere un'attività continuativa, anche quando costituisce una fonte di senso per la vita nella sua interezza, quando

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[2] L'edizione italiana di *Politik als Beruf* traduce *Macht* alternativamente con *potenza* o con *potere* a seconda dell'uso linguistico italiano. In relazione alle tematiche affrontate in questo contributo il termine tedesco che Weber usa è sempre *Macht* e la distinzione fra *Macht* (*potenza*) e *Herrschaft* (*potere, dominio*), come tematizzata nel primo volume di *Economia e società*, non possiede alcuna rilevanza.

il potere non serve all'individuo e al suo piacere, ma viene posto al servizio di una causa, di qualcosa che eccede la sua vita.

Sullo sfondo della distinzione fra «*"für" die Politik leben*» e «*"von" die Politik leben*» Weber definisce sia le modalità normali, sia quelle possibili dell'esercizio dell'attività politica come una *professione*: «ci sono due modi per fare della politica la propria professione. Si vive "per" la politica oppure "di" politica. Le due alternative non si escludono affatto l'una con l'altra. Al contrario, accade di regola che si facciano – per lo meno idealmente, ma per lo più anche materialmente – entrambe le cose» [*ibidem*]. Di norma, chi esercita la politica come una professione vive, dunque, contemporaneamente «di» e «per» la politica. Ciò non esclude, tuttavia, che l'attività politica possa configurarsi come una professione anche per chi vive esclusivamente «di» o «per» la politica. Le due modalità di esercizio professionale della politica sono spesso congiunte, ma ciascuna di esse è in grado di determinare anche autonomamente il carattere professionale dell'attività politica. Questo significa, *in primo luogo*, che la politica può essere una professione anche in quanto è *soltanto* un lavoro. Chi trae dalla politica il proprio reddito e quindi vi si dedica con continuità e intensità, anche soltanto per ragioni strumentali o con finalità egoistiche, svolge a tutti gli effetti la professione del politico. La politica può essere un esercizio professionale anche quando è soltanto un modo per procacciarsi un reddito, anche quando chi la pratica è qualcuno che vive soltanto «di» politica.

In secondo luogo, la politica può essere una professione anche *senza essere un lavoro*, può essere una attività esercitata continuativamente anche in assenza di un compenso monetario. La continuità dell'esercizio professionale non dipende necessariamente dalla costrizione materiale, da una dipendenza economica insuperabile: può configurarsi semplicemente come la manifestazione di una personalità unitaria, di un'identità personale strutturata da un interesse primario ed esclusivo. L'unità di vita che si manifesta nell'esercizio continuativo di una professione può non riposare su alcuna necessità economica ed essere piuttosto la forma di esistenza di un'identità unitaria e monoliticamente organizzata intorno ad un nucleo costitutivo. Alla base di una professione può esserci anche soltanto una passione che lega l'individuo a quella determinata attività.

L'atteggiamento soggettivo-interiore della dedizione appassionata alla politica (comunque definito) può dare forma ad un esercizio professionale soltanto se esistono i presupposti per soddisfare il requisito indispensabile (oggettivo-esteriore) per il carattere professionale di un'attività (politica), ovvero la *continuità*, con modalità diverse dalla coincidenza fra professione e lavoro. Si può essere politici di professione vivendo esclusivamente «per» e non anche «di» politica se e solo se la *continuità* dell'attività politica come condizione necessaria e sufficiente per il suo esercizio professionale viene soddisfatta in virtù della passione e della libertà dal lavoro. Detto altrimenti: la dimensione economica dell'attività politica è il modo normale-prevalente – ma non necessario - di realizzare quella continuità di esercizio della politica che costituisce l'elemento oggettivo-esteriore (necessario e sufficiente) per la sua qualificazione come professione. Chi si trova nella condizione di non essere costretto a lavorare e sente un'attrazione specifica per la politica può farne la propria professione anche senza farne il proprio lavoro. L'esercizio professionale della politica al di fuori del lavoro è legata, così, ad una doppia condizione: la possibilità di vivere senza lavorare e l'esistenza di un interesse – di senso o di potere – non contingente o transitorio che incatena l'individuo all'agire politico.

PROFESSIONE COME VOCAZIONE

Fin qui la dimensione analitico-descrittiva del discorso weberiano sulla professione e sulla politica come professione. Nelle venti pagine conclusive della conferenza, tuttavia, il ragionamento weberiano assume un andamento esplicitamente normativo, interrogandosi non su che cosa sia un esercizio professionale della politica e quali siano le sue forme normali o prevalenti, ma su quale *debba essere* il profilo del politico di professione. In questa prospettiva Weber rivisita e caratterizza in modo profondamente diverso la dimensione del vivere «per» la politica: «Si può dire che tre qualità sono soprattutto decisive per l'uomo politico: passione, senso di responsabilità, lungimiranza» [*ivi*: 101]. Si può descrivere la logica complessiva della riscrittura normativa della professione politica in termini di ridimensionamento del ruolo del soggetto, delle sue esigenze e della sua prospettiva.

Esemplare di questa trasformazione è il registro con cui Weber rivisita il tema della passione: «passione nel senso di *Sachlichkeit*: dedizione appassionata ad una "causa" [*Sache*], al dio o al demone che la dirige. Non nel senso di quell'atteggiamento interiore che il mio amico Georg Simmel era solito chiamare "agitazione sterile", propria di un certo tipo di intellettuale russo (ma certo non di tutti) e che ora, in questo carnevale che si adorna del nome maestoso di "rivoluzione", ha un ruolo così grande anche presso i nostri intellettuali» [*ibidem*]. La passione rimanda sempre ad una dimensione di eteronomia, di perdita di possesso del soggetto su di sé. Passione indica invariabilmente uno stato di passività: qualcosa che non si sceglie, ma da cui si è scelti, agiti. Tuttavia, la relazione alla *Sache* consente quel guadagno di trascendenza che trasforma la semplice passione in vocazione. Con la causa irrompe la dimensione della dedizione (*Hingabe*), del servizio (*Dienst*) a qualcosa che eccede il piacere – materiale o simbolico – o i bisogni vitali del soggetto, che possiede una validità sovraindividuale capace di conferire senso alla vita nella sua interezza. La *Sache* costituisce qualcosa che ha valore al di là dell'individuo, qualcosa che non soltanto lo occupa, lo invade, lo definisce, ma anche lo eccede, lo oltrepassa. La causa non è centrata sul soggetto, è piuttosto il soggetto a gravitare intorno ad essa. La trascendenza del fine segna la distanza fra la passione e la vocazione. Se la passione vede ancora l'individuo al centro, la dedizione ad una causa configura una vocazione (*Beruf*) nel senso più pieno, qualcosa che chiama il soggetto ad un servizio, ad essere strumento e non fine.

Dedizione appassionata ad una causa significa mettersi al servizio di qualcosa di ulteriore, di esterno all'individuo, di eccedente il suo piacere, le sue esigenze, la sua vita. Qualcosa che possiede una sua oggettività, una sua logica, di cui l'individuo può e deve soltanto prendere atto. Qualcosa che ci chiama e a cui dobbiamo rispondere, di cui, cioè, dobbiamo assumerci la responsabilità (*Verantwortung*): «la semplice passione, per quanto autenticamente vissuta, non è ancora sufficiente. Essa non crea l'uomo politico se, in quanto servizio per una "causa", non fa anche della *responsabilità* nei confronti per l'appunto di questa causa la stella polare decisiva dell'agire» [*ibidem*]. La causa è, dunque, ciò a cui si deve rispondere, l'entità esterna che ci interpella, il criterio e la ragione, il senso ultimo dell'agire politico come esercizio professionale.

Di oggettività ci parla, infine, anche la terza qualità che il politico di professione deve possedere: la *lungimiranza*. Proprio per servire al meglio la causa che lo ha scelto e per adempiere alla responsabilità che porta nei suoi confronti, il politico di professione deve avere la «capacità di far agire su di sé la realtà con calma e raccoglimento interiore: dunque, la *distanza* tra le cose e gli uomini» [*ivi*: 102]. In questa declinazione la lungimiranza è la percezione dell'oggettività della realtà, la consapevolezza che realtà e passioni, mondo e ideali dell'uomo politico non sono la stessa cosa. Comprendere i processi oggettivi del mondo è l'unico modo per intervenire su di essi, scambiare i propri desideri per la realtà del mondo è l'anticamera del fallimento politico. In questo senso dedizione appassionata e fredda conoscenza della realtà, ardente passione e freddo disincanto sono gli opposti che il politico di professione deve riuscire a tenere insieme.

Il passaggio del discorso sulla politica come professione dal piano descrittivo a quello normativo si manifesta nella forma più evidente nelle parole con cui Weber, in questo contesto, prende posizione rispetto a chi ricerca il potere come fine a stesso, come semplice fonte di prestigio e di autocompiacimento: «proprio *perché* il potere costituisce il mezzo inevitabile di ogni politica e l'aspirazione al potere una delle sue forze propulsive, non vi è deformazione più pericolosa della forza politica che il vantarsi del potere come un *parvenu*, del vanitoso compiacimento nel sentimento del potere e soprattutto di ogni culto del potere in se stesso. Il mero "politico della potenza" [*Machtpolitiker*], come cerca di celebrarlo un culto praticato con zelo anche da noi, può esercitare una forte influenza, ma in effetti opera nel vuoto e nell'assurdo» [*ivi*: 103]. La ricerca del potere come fine in sé viene non soltanto espulsa dall'idea di professione, ma addirittura indicata come la sua nemica mortale. Il *Machtpolitiker* costituisce per Weber il rovescio negativo dell'idea normativa di professione. La vanità [*Eitelkeit*] che spinge alla ricerca del potere per il «senso di prestigio che esso procura» [*ivi*: 49] può condurre ad un esercizio descrittivamente-esteriormente professionale della politica, ma in nessun modo rientra nell'idea di politico di professione normativamente difesa da Weber. Anzi, l'incapacità di autotrascendimento, di porsi al servizio di qualcosa di ulteriore, costituisce il peccato mortale, l'esatto opposto dell'idea di professione che Weber difende: «L'aspirazione al *potere* [*Macht*] è lo strumento con cui egli [l'uomo politico] inevitabilmente si trova ad operare. L'"istinto di potenza" ["*Machtinstinkt*"] – come si usa dire – fa perciò in effetti parte delle sue normali qualità. E tuttavia il peccato contro lo spirito santo

della sua professione ha inizio là dove questa aspirazione al potere diviene *priva di causa* [*unsachlich*] e si trasforma in un oggetto di autoesaltazione puramente personale, invece di porsi esclusivamente al servizio [*Dienst*] della "causa". Vi sono infatti in ultima analisi soltanto due tipi di peccato mortale sul terreno della politica: l'assenza di una causa e – spesso, ma non sempre, si tratta della stessa cosa – la mancanza di responsabilità. La vanità [*Eitelkeit*], vale a dire il bisogno di porre se stessi in primo piano nel modo più visibile possibile, induce l'uomo politico nella fortissima tentazione di commettere uno di questi due peccati, se non tutti e due insieme» [*ivi*: 102-3].

Se il *Beruf* deve essere qualcosa di più del semplice esercizio continuativo di un'attività, se la dedizione alla politica deve configurarsi come una *vocazione* e possedere un contenuto capace di dare senso alla vita nella sua interezza e, nel contempo, tenere aperti margini di libertà in un mondo sempre più dominato da logiche tecniche e impersonali, la risorsa fondamentale non può che essere l'etica. Se l'uomo politico può mettersi al servizio di cause dei tipi più diversi – nazionali, umanitarie, sociali, etiche, culturali, intramondane, religiose [cfr. *ivi*: 104] -, la scelta di Weber,, in un mondo segnato dal pluralismo degli ordinamenti di vita e dei valori, è apertamente in favore dell'etica. È l'etica la risorsa di senso e la tipologia di normatività alla quale per Weber il politico di professione deve attingere per sottrarsi alla minaccia di insensatezza. Le ultime quindici pagine della conferenza altro non sono, infatti, che un serrato confronto con la questione decisiva di quale debba essere un'etica adeguata alla politica, di quale debba essere l'atteggiamento etico adeguato ad un agire politico che si configuri come professione in senso proprio.

ETICA E POLITICA

L'anomalia, l'eccentricità del realismo politico weberiano sta non soltanto nel nesso costitutivo fra politica ed etica, ma anche e soprattutto nel modo in cui questo rapporto viene tratteggiato nel quadro della distinzione fra etica dell'intenzione (*Gesinnungsethik*) ed etica della responsabilità (*Verantwortungsethik*), ovvero fra due opposte modalità di relazione ai valori etici. L'etica dell'intenzione è un'etica dell'attenzione esclusiva al *senso (Sinn) intrinseco* dell'azione, e dell'indifferenza per i suoi risultati. La bontà di un'azione viene misurata esclusivamente sulla adeguatezza, la coerenza del suo significato rispetto al valore etico in cui si crede. È in qualche misura un'etica del disinteresse per il mondo, come testimonia una delle massime che la riassume – *fiat justitia, pereat mundus*[3] –, ed è al tempo stesso un'etica *assoluta* perché indifferente alla diversità dei contesti spaziali e temporali in cui l'azione si inserisce. La responsabilità di chi agisce secondo l'etica dell'intenzione non riguarda gli effetti che l'azione produce nel mondo, ma la congruenza fra comportamento e valore. Si tratta di un'etica della pura razionalità rispetto al valore: «"il cristiano opera da giusto e rimette l'esito nelle mani di Dio"» [*ivi*: 109]. Disinteressata a cambiare il mondo, l'etica dell'intenzione è un'etica dell'*esemplarità*, della *testimonianza* della capacità umana di agire in modo eticamente puro. La responsabilità per le conseguenze eticamente perverse che un agire *gesinnungsethisch* spesso finisce per produrre non ricade sul soggetto agente, ma sul mondo, sulla sua irredimibile corruzione, sulla stupidità e malvagità degli esseri umani. Il mondo è un *palcoscenico* in cui occorre dar prova della capacità di fare la propria parte, ma di cui non si aspira a modificare il funzionamento perché, in definitiva, non risulta investito di valore. Il fine non giustifica mai i mezzi perché non esistono né fini, né mezzi.

Di contro, nell'etica della responsabilità la razionalità rispetto al valore riguarda non il significato del comportamento, ma gli effetti che tale comportamento produce nel mondo. La qualità etica dell'azione non dipende qui dall'adeguatezza della *singola azione* al valore, ma dalla coerenza fra gli *effetti dell'azione* e il valore etico che orienta l'agire. Qui l'imperativo morale è cambiare il mondo, renderlo eticamente migliore, producendo trasformazioni che possono essere valutate positivamente dal punto di vista dei valori etici. Non il mondo, ma il singolo individuo sarà, dunque, responsabile delle conseguenze prevedibili del proprio agire. L'etica della responsabilità è, così, un'etica del *contesto*: non si inchioda ad imperativi assoluti, ma si modifica in funzione della *contingenza* e presuppone, perciò, il costante riferimento a conoscenze di fatto. La conoscenza fattuale è qui una componente essenziale della scelta etica. Sapere come funziona il mondo è un requisito indispensabile per un agire interessato agli effetti. L'etica

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[3] Cfr. Max Weber 1981, pp. 36-7.

della responsabilità è interessata al mondo, gli riconosce valore e dignità, ed è orientata in base all'idea di poterlo, se non redimere integralmente, almeno cambiare in meglio. Alla domanda "il fine giustifica i mezzi?" l'etica della responsabilità risponde "dipende": dipende dal valore del fine, dalla natura dei mezzi, dagli effetti collaterali indesiderati ma prevedibili dei mezzi. In una parola: dal contesto e dal caso specifico.

Dopo aver enfatizzato la fondamentale diversità e l'inconciliabile opposizione fra le due etiche, nelle pagine conclusive della conferenza Weber ne caratterizza, invece, la relazione in termini di complementarità: «Pertanto l'etica dell'intenzione e l'etica della responsabilità non costituiscono due poli assolutamente opposti, ma due elementi che si completano a vicenda e che soltanto insieme creano l'uomo autentico, quello che *può* avere la "vocazione per la politica"» [*ivi*: 119]. La tesi della complementarità coglie indubbiamente di sorpresa il lettore per più di una ragione. Innanzitutto, perché si tratta di una posizione inedita. Nelle diverse occasioni (pubbliche e private) in cui Weber aveva tematizzato il possibile dualismo dei modelli di normatività etica, il tema della loro complementarità non era mai stato nemmeno adombrato[4]. Ma, soprattutto, perché in *Politica come professione* Weber sviluppa una polemica esplicita contro l'inadeguatezza dell'etica dell'intenzione che non sembra certo preludere ad un suo, sia pur parziale, recupero.

Come dobbiamo intendere, allora, la tesi della complementarità delle due etiche? Sicuramente, non come superamento della loro irriducibile opposizione. Il reciproco completamento di *Verantwortungsethik* e *Gesinnungsethik* si realizza proprio in virtù del fatto che la loro logica di funzionamento rimane opposta e non allude né ad una sorta di conciliazione in un punto di vista terzo, né all'adozione, in relazione alla singola azione, di una postura che risulti da una ibridazione, da una mescolanza fra questi due atteggiamenti etici[5]. La forma della complementarità è, piuttosto, quella della coesistenza conflittuale, della presenza residuale, ma inespungibile, della logica e del paradigma etico-intenzionale a correzione ed emendazione dei limiti del realismo della responsabilità. Inoltre, la complementarità non rimanda neppure all'equilibrio, non significa che le due etiche possiedono lo stesso peso, che occupano spazi equivalenti nella definizione dell'agire politico: «Suscita invece un'enorme impressione sentir dire da un uomo *maturo* – non importa se vecchio o giovane anagraficamente – il quale sente realmente e con tutta la sua anima questa responsabilità per le conseguenze e agisce in base all'etica della responsabilità: "non posso fare altrimenti, di qui non mi muovo"» [*ibidem*: 119]. L'orientamento etico prevalente del politico di professione deve essere per Weber di tipo etico-responsabile: l'azione politica deve tendere ad un miglioramento del mondo che impone il realismo dei mezzi e la disponibilità a ricorrere al male (*in primis* alla violenza) per realizzare un bene più grande o per scongiurare un male maggiore. Per Weber è il realismo della responsabilità l'atteggiamento di fondo che chi si dedica alla politica deve assumere: la determinazione in base alla razionalità rispetto al valore dello scopo dell'agire politico, la valutazione degli effetti diretti e indiretti (collaterali) dei mezzi necessari, la valutazione finale sulla legittimità dei mezzi a partire dalla comparazione fra il male diretto e indiretto che essi procurano e il bene dello scopo che consentono di realizzare.

AL DI LÀ DEL REALISMO

E tuttavia l'etica della responsabilità da sola non basta. Per Weber il suo limite di fondo è un eccesso di realismo, una eccessiva internità alla logica del mondo che finisce per riprodurre l'esistente nella sua immutabilità. Anche se sceglie i suoi fini non in base alle *chances* di successo, ma in base ai valori, il realismo dell'etica della responsabilità presenta per Weber un profilo eccessivamente *adattivo*. Questo eccesso di realismo si articola su tre questioni cruciali per l'agire politico e trova il suo correttivo proprio in una presenza marginale, ma decisiva dell'etica dell'intenzione. Il primo limite dell'etica della responsabilità è la sua incapacità di dire un no assoluto e definitivo all'uso di certi mezzi. Misurato esclusivamente in funzione del valore del fine, il ricorso a mezzi "estremi" può essere rifiutato

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[4] Cfr. Max Weber, *Intermezzo. Teoria dei gradi e delle direzioni del rifiuto religioso del mondo*, in Max Weber 1982b, vol. I, pp. 540-1 e Idem, *Il significato della "avalutatività" delle scienze sociologiche ed economiche*, in Max Weber 1974, pp. 329-30.
[5] Per una lettura di questo tipo cfr. invece Pietro Rossi 2018, p. 39.

soltanto se – e fintanto che – gli effetti positivi (beni da conseguire, mali da evitare) risultano comparativamente inferiori. L'etica della responsabilità è incapace di approdare a un rifiuto assoluto e irrevocabile di mezzi eticamente estremi: proprio perché sempre relativo al contesto, pragmaticamente orientato al fine da realizzare o al male da evitare, per la *Verantwortungsethik* il rifiuto di certi mezzi è sempre e soltanto contingente. Il mezzo che non può essere giustificato da un fine può sempre esserlo da un altro e il proposito di realizzare un grande bene o di scongiurare un grande male può legittimare il ricorso a mezzi eccezionali. La contingenza della decisione sui mezzi lascia aperta la possibilità dell'impiego di mezzi terribili per evitare mali ancora più grandi o per realizzare fini sublimi.

Figura emblematica dei paradossi del realismo della responsabilità e della sua incapacità di porre un limite assoluto ai mezzi dell'azione politica è il personaggio letterario evocato di passaggio – ma in un luogo cruciale dell'argomentazione – del Grande Inquisitore di Dostoevskij[6]. Il vecchio cardinale è la figura simbolo di tutti i realisti etico-responsabili – conservatori o rivoluzionari che siano – che con i migliori propositi di aiutare i dannati della terra finiscono per riprodurre, in virtù dei mezzi che usano, né più né meno che un potere come tutti gli altri. Per Weber la figura del Grande Inquisitore mette in scena la tragedia del realismo dei mezzi, gli effetti perversi e incontrollabili del ricorso, intrinsecamente privo di limiti, alla logica del fine che giustifica i mezzi: una tragedia che accomuna rivoluzionari e conservatori, comunisti e antiutopisti radicali, in una parola tutti coloro che decidono di governare o di cambiare il mondo servendosi di tutti i (soliti) mezzi che la politica mette a disposizione. Il Grande Inquisitore – politico realista e rivoluzionario insieme – incarna per Weber la tragedia degli effetti inerziali dei mezzi sui fini, segnala come l'impiego degli stessi mezzi conduce, al di là dei propositi degli attori, agli stessi risultati, ricorda che fini nuovi e diversi non possono essere realizzati con i mezzi di sempre: «non vediamo che gli ideologi bolscevichi e spartachisti, proprio in quanto fanno uso di questo mezzo della politica [la violenza], giungono esattamente agli *stessi* risultati di un qualsiasi dittatore militare? In che cosa, se non nella persona di chi detiene il potere e nel suo dilettantismo, si differenzia il potere dei consigli degli operai e dei soldati da quello di un qualsiasi detentore del potere del vecchio regime?» [*ivi*: 106-7].

La prima capacità che l'etica dell'intenzione abilita nel politico di professione è, dunque, per Weber quella di stabilire un limite assoluto e invalicabile in relazione ai mezzi utilizzabili. L'etica dell'intenzione, in virtù della sua estraneità alla logica mezzo-fine, consente di rifiutare in modo incondizionato e definitivo il ricorso a certi mezzi, sottrae alcuni strumenti dell'azione politica ad ogni possibile giustificazione in base ad un fine. Il realismo della responsabilità comporta per Weber una riduzione eccessiva della trascendenza etica che la politica deve avere rispetto alla fatticità del mondo: accetta non soltanto di essere *nel* mondo, ma, in qualche misura, anche di essere *del* mondo. L'etica dell'intenzione come componente della vocazione per la politica allude, così, alla necessità di mantenere alla politica la capacità di rifiutare certi mezzi, anche se questi dovessero servire a scongiurare mali effettivamente e realmente più grandi. Detto altrimenti: ci ricorda che per il politico weberiano ci devono essere mezzi che nessun fine può giustificare. La necessità di una dimensione etico-intenzionale - residuale, ma indispensabile – dichiara così la convinzione weberiana che il rifiuto di certi mezzi può cambiare il mondo più della realizzazione degli scopi che il ricorso a quei mezzi potrebbe consentire. I paradossi tragici in cui si avviluppa il vecchio cardinale sembrano indicare che non c'è reale cambiamento del mondo senza che ci sia anche una *resistenza* sui mezzi, senza una rinuncia assoluta e incondizionata ad *alcuni* dei mezzi che l'agire politico può utilizzare.

Il secondo limite dell'etica della responsabilità è, per Weber, la sua incapacità di trascendere l'orizzonte del possibile. Certo, il realismo della responsabilità non è quello che sceglie i propri obiettivi sulla base delle tendenze di sviluppo, adattandosi così al corso degli eventi. Tuttavia, non è neanche un realismo che riguarda soltanto i mezzi: per un'etica della responsabilità sarebbe impensabile una giustificazione di mezzi eticamente sospetti in funzione di un fine impossibile. Di per sé un atteggiamento etico-responsabile non contempla la possibilità di scopi impossibili, è vincolato ad una comparazione fra mezzi, fini ed effetti collaterali in cui l'impossibilità del fine delegittimerebbe immediatamente qualsiasi mezzo. All'interno di un atteggiamento etico-responsabile la causa dell'agire politico viene scelta in base a criteri etici, ma pur sempre all'interno del campo del possibile.

[6] Fedor Dostoevskij, *I fratelli Karamazov*, Einaudi, Torino 1981, vol. I, pp. 330-52. Fra i pochi interpreti ad aver colto la centralità di questo riferimento cfr. Roberto Esposito 1993, pp. 63-73 e Giuliano Marini 1988, pp. 514-22.

L'etica dell'intenzione corregge questo eccesso di realismo, dotando il politico di professione della capacità di opporsi all'esistente anche in vista di qualcosa che nella sua impossibile realizzazione non è tuttavia sprovvisto di effetti di realtà: «È certo del tutto esatto, e confermato da ogni esperienza storica, che non si realizzerebbe ciò che è possibile se nel mondo non si aspirasse sempre all'impossibile» [*ivi*: 121]. Per Weber la politica non deve essere *soltanto* l'«arte del possibile». O meglio: potrà essere capace di produrre ciò che è possibile soltanto se riuscirà a mirare all'impossibile al di là di esso. Il realismo, comunque declinato, finisce sempre per configurarsi come una profezia che si autoavvera, come un atteggiamento che, limitando le speranze, comprime il potenziale di cambiamento. Per questo, chi ha la vocazione per la politica deve per Weber poter selezionare i fini dell'agire politico anche al di là del perimetro del possibile, ma questo, a sua volta, può accadere soltanto in virtù della capacità dell'etica dell'intenzione di non assolutizzare la realtà, neanche come limite per gli scopi, aprendo lo spazio per l'anelito a qualcosa che sta addirittura al di là di ciò che possiamo sperare. Grazie alla complementarità conflittuale fra etica dell'intenzione ed etica della responsabilità il politico di professione weberiano riesce a coniugare il realismo dei mezzi con la ricerca di qualcosa che eccede non soltanto il reale, ma anche il possibile.

Su questa linea si dispone anche l'ultimo limite dell'etica della responsabilità: una ridotta capacità di resistere alle sconfitte. L'etica della responsabilità attribuisce un ruolo centrale al momento cognitivo, alla conoscenza del funzionamento del mondo proprio perché la valutazione etica dell'azione dipende dagli effetti che questa produce nel mondo. L'aspirazione a produrre effetti di realtà eticamente qualificati impone il confronto con il mondo così com'è, costringe all'apprendimento dei nessi oggettivi fra gli eventi e fra i processi al fine di evitare fallimenti e insuccessi. Conoscere il mondo, apprendere la concatenazione fra i fenomeni, imparare dall'esperienza divengono così presupposti di un'azione efficace nel promuovere una trasformazione eticamente orientata della realtà. Il realismo dei mezzi e degli scopi possibili ha il *dovere* di imparare dagli insuccessi, dalle lezioni della storia al fine di ricalibrare scopi e mezzi in funzione del successo dell'azione politica. Esperienza e prudenza giocano da sempre nella stessa squadra del realismo e della responsabilità e imparare dai propri errori è la forma più elementare e immediata di apprendimento. Essere responsabili significa non ostinarsi negli errori, non resistere alle sconfitte, e invece, imparare dai propri fallimenti. Il realismo, anche quello eticamente orientato, è sensibile al perimetro del possibile, impone di considerare i rapporti di forza, costringe a prendere atto di ciò che non è stato possibile realizzare.

L'ultima prestazione che l'etica dell'intenzione consente al politico di professione è, invece, proprio quella di resistere alle sconfitte, di *non imparare* le lezioni dei fatti e della storia. Nessuna lezione della storia implica di per sé l'abbandono di un ideale e il politico di professione deve avere la capacità di «resistere al naufragio di tutte le speranze»: «[...] soltanto chi è sicuro di poter dire di fronte a tutto questo: "Non importa [*dennoch!*] andiamo avanti", soltanto quest'uomo ha la "vocazione" per la politica» [*ibidem*]. Se i fini possiedono come unico fondamento la loro razionalità rispetto a valori etici, la sconfitta e il fallimento non sono, in un mondo eticamente irrazionale, argomenti validi per cambiare gli obiettivi dell'agire politico. L'etica dell'intenzione fornisce al politico responsabile la capacità di non farsi sconfiggere dalla realtà, di pronunciare il *dennoch* di chi persevera nonostante i fallimenti.

In conclusione, la lezione weberiana si può riassumere in una esigenza di contenimento della pressione adattiva a cui anche l'uomo con la vocazione per la politica finisce per essere esposto se il suo atteggiamento rimane ancorato esclusivamente all'etica della responsabilità. Per scongiurare l'eccesso di realismo insito nella logica della responsabilità, la ricetta weberiana consiste in un recupero, circoscritto ma vitale, dell'etica dell'intenzione e delle sue prestazioni più proprie. Weber non ci fornisce la formula chimica di questo strano impasto. E non esplicita neppure come questa esigenza dovesse tradursi nella difficile temperie politica in cui la conferenza venne pronunciata. Ci suggerisce, tuttavia, che la politica per tenere aperta una dimensione di libertà in un mondo sempre più governato da logiche sistemiche (burocratizzazione)[7] e per dare senso alla vita di chi la pratica non può essere niente di meno che un'attività che tiene insieme, in equilibrio precario e conflittuale, un'esigenza di realismo e il rifiuto di farsi risucchiare interamente dalla logica del mondo.

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[7] Su questo cfr. Max Weber 1982c, pp. 37-8.

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Book Review - Debates

Emiliana Armano, Arianna Bove, Annalisa Murgia (Eds.)
Mapping Precariousness, Labour Insecurity and Uncertain Livelihoods: Subjectivities and Resistance
Routledge, London 2017, ISBN 978-1-4724-7156-7

Two visions predominate in the sociological literature on professionalism (Evetts *et alii* 2009; Saks 2016). An optimistic one, representing the line drawn from Durkheim, going through Carr-Saunders and Wilson, Talcott Parsons, Wilensky or the Chicago School; all of them emphasising the autonomy of professionals, their competence in their field of knowledge, the associationism and their willingness to serve their client over their own interests. Conversely, there is a more pessimistic or critical conception which follows the lines of Weber (power, rationality, bureaucracy) or Marx (control); here, professionals are seen as maintaining an ambivalent relationship between knowledge and power, a relation which allows the social and public recognition of their knowledge and competence to establish a monopoly over a segment of the labour market. This happens by controlling the access via university careers, the establishment of mandatory requirements which need to be met in order to belong to an association or through the control of their own professional practice. In this sense, a good part of professional associationism is dedicated to the drawing of borders between professions, an endeavour leading to (non-permanent) forms of social closure set to last until the next battle over jurisdictional borders. The State, in the exercise of its sovereignty, keeps for itself the role of setting the game's rules and legitimising the closures mentioned above. Additionally, the sets of ideas related to human capital (accumulation of knowledge and experience) and meritocracy – which are supposed to enable professional achievement – have accompanied a debate which has also dealt with professional ethics and its relationship with economic interests.

However, these dilemmas are transforming very quickly as globalisation and financialisation affect economic activities, the accompanying requirements of flexibility and precariousness are breaking professional horizons in terms of privileges, competence and deontology. While both the sociology of professions and institutional and organisational analysis continue to focus on the work of professionals with and within institutions – incorporating some references to currently occurring changes – the labour relationships that can be actually observed in the labour market (or the commercial relationship between professionals and companies) are undergoing

profound changes which, ultimately, could have an extraordinary impact on the very concept of "profession" and "professional".

The interest of Armano, Bove and Murgia's book lies at this point. Both Annalisa Murgia and Emiliana Armano are recognised specialists in the field of precariousness, with a most notable contribution in the form of their two volumes entitled *Mappe della precarietà* (2012) –especially volume two, dedicated to knowledge workers. For her part, Arianna Bove, with a background in philosophy, has specialised in the field of ideas and social movements. This is, thus, a book edited by female authors in which both the gender perspective and the connection between work/occupation and life (family, households) are also present.

From a descriptive point of view, the text provides us with experiences and reflections concerning three complementary aspects: a) the experiences in different countries and the different subjectivities associated to them; b) the forms of resistance and the social movements derived from them and, finally; c) the conceptual perspectives. Concerning the latter, it is worth mentioning Isabell Lorey's proposal – found in the *Chapter 15* – which differentiates between three dimensions of the precarious: *precariousness*, *precarity*, and *governmental precarisation*. According to the author, *precariousness* «describes a socio-ontological level (…) is shared with others; it points out the fundamental connection with others, but does make everyone the same» (200). It is a dimension of life which is being devaluated by capitalism. *Precarity* «designates conditions of legal, political, economic and social inequality (…) in short, (…) designates the conditions of domination that are divided up and distributed through protection, care, and safeguarding» (ibid.). *Governmental precarisation* «emphasizes how the conduct of state governance and individualised self-governing are intertwined in a mode of governing that uses insecurity as its main tool» (ibid.).

But the text also entails an epistemological rupture, as it directly addresses the roots and foundations of these changes. Thus, while a good part of the academy continues its production as if nothing was shaking the ground beneath their feet, the text's authors take into account the flexibility-precariousness coupling implemented by neoliberal thought and practice, and complement it with a wake-up call: if in times of globalisation, financialisation, and new technologies (ICT, AI), the market, the black box or the invisible hand are the arbiters of the professional field, then qualifications, associationism, ethics or professional honour may be under a devaluation process or may even no longer count at all. This process could gradually drag with it both the expert field and the very voice of the experts.

This becomes apparent in Armano and Murgia's *Chapter 3* on the hybrid areas of work found in Italy. Here, the authors emphasise how, in these areas, time control is replaced by objectives, results and projects. In a certain way, the implacably timed rhythm of the Fordist assembly line is replaced by an internalised form of cadence and discipline. Although we could also argue, following the example set by the contrast between manual and non-manual work (whether linked to knowledge or not), that this succession of projects could be considered a form of piecework. There, apparently, time does not count, just because the hybrid zone professional owes all of its time to its employer. However, Armano and Murgia propose an additional second characteristic, understanding that the introduction of precariousness in the professional field entails an identification of the professional with their work activities which, in turn, leads professional competencies and qualifications, personal qualities and emotions to become subsumed in the very act of carrying out said projects. An exercise of *artistic critique* (Boltanski, Chiappello 2001) that leads to self-exploitation or, in terms of La Boétie, to voluntary servitude. This is the sort of free work that is also spreading throughout universities and research centres, or that often serves as an access requirement for professional practice (assistants, scholarship holders and other similar formulas that substitute former guild or industrial apprentices). The Australian university's case presented by Morgan and Wood (*Chapter 6*) illustrates this phenomenon; here, the scholarship acts as a bait linking the academic world with professional values, not only for the acquisition of skills or human capital, but mostly for the modulation of attitudes needed to face the fluid world of flexibility and professional precariousness. This new managerialism, when applied to the universities, generates a period of learning and accommodation to the new procedures found in professional relationships, which are in turn linked to the neoliberal bureaucracy. This has all been excellently described by Graeber (2015) and precisely reflected in the experiences of Di and Marian postdocs, the cases presented in Morgan and Wood's chapter.

A third characteristic of these new times can be taken from Papadopoulos' contribution in *Chapter 10* of the book:

(in front of) the contentious mobilisations of the working classes and subaltern populations of the 1960s and 1970s (...) we see two main transformations unfolding as a response of these mobilisations: stagnant wages, underemployment and the flexibilisation of labour markets as well as finance-led accumulation with the introduction of securitisation and increased consumer, corporate and sovereign lending. (138-139)

Capital's response to the problems in profitability or the increases in workers' bargaining capacity has resulted in the outsourcing of the production of goods and services, but it has also caused a displacement of the workplace towards the workers home's and daily life, effectively blurring the lines between production and reproduction.

The consideration of work as a commodity is the euphemistic resource that legitimates the relationship between employer and worker as a mere result of the market, as it is assumed that the employer and the employee carry out an exchange under the same conditions of freedom. Nevertheless, as the authors point out, in the hybrid areas such supposed freedom – to offer one's labour power – goes one step further in the euphemistic ladder, so that the candidate under the "syndrome of free labour" ends up carrying out projects for free, with the promise of – hopefully – better-remunerated ones at some point in the future.

Several chapters throughout the book follow Foucault in their notion of a new form of government driven by neoliberalism. For example, the French Business and Employment Cooperatives (BEC), presented by Corsani and Bureau (*Chapter 4*), «constitute a political laboratory for experimentation and institutional innovation so as to prefigure a new horizon of emancipation beyond salaried work and individual entrepreneurship» (61).

Its use as an instrument of workplace and welfare discipline in an era of declining wages and rising insecurity means that positive psychology, like employability, has moved out of the pages of self-help manuals and into the public sphere. As Barbara Ehrenreich puts it in *Smile or Die*, a study of the positive thinking industry in the United States, in recent years the pressure to «act in a positive way has taken on a harsher edge». (73-74)

In more specific terms we can find the case of Greek media workers, reported by Spyridakis (*Chapter 7*), in which self-employment and freelancing lead to precarious work: lacking any guarantee of continued employment, carried out in unpredictable locations, with low – or very low – income and low to non-existent access to social protection (although, at least, the workers are free from unemployment).

Of course, the scenarios posed by the authors are also contradictory, as Richter stresses in *Chapter 9*, dedicated to Japan:

This model is simultaneously shaped by the informationalization and computerization of production and communication processes, facing workers with new challenges that paradoxically take the semblance of both impositions (intensification of work and control) and opportunities (autonomy, creativity, self-responsibility, flexibility). (125)

A paradox that leads young Japanese to a variety of flexible jobs, that ultimately brings the author to talk about the existence of "working poor" and a "lost generation".

The commodification of all aspects of human life entails a sort of vulnerability (precarity and precariousness) that erodes safety nets and legalises the reproduction of poor work as a pure commodity not embedded in society (Spyridakis). However, it is possible to build new networks after the destruction of traditional communities; this is why Papadopoulos points out how, in the face of risk and uncertainty, *people mobilise*. But, at the same time, companies and the very economic system are in turn transformed into what the author – following Foucault, Butler and Lorey – calls «biofinancialisation: the financialisation of everyday life, subjectivity, ecology and materiality» (140).

During the Fordist period, the labour market functioned as a hinge between two separated and distant worlds, that of occupations and that of households, which also divided productive from reproductive work (care and assistance). Neoliberalism, by implementing flexibilisation and precarisation, has managed to establish a direct link between life and work, appropriating people's existential continuum through the quantitative evaluation of our actions, the expropriation of community structures of cooperation and reciprocity and through the individualisation and privatisation of social reproduction. Moreover, neoliberalism is also tied to a subjectivity built on the

accommodation or adaptation to these new circumstances. In a recent study, a young unemployed man whom we interviewed told us the following – which we consider very illustrative of the contradictions this book analyses and which we would like to highlight (Jódar, Guiu 2018):

> This idea that work gives you dignity and rights does not make much sense when work is something secondary, because you last three months in a job. And this was already happening before the crisis. A young man who is 25 years old and is not working does not consider himself unemployed, he is simply not working. He is studying for a master's degree, a short course (...) or, now, "just working to give it a try" (...) It is a generational issue. Also, all this governments' ideology about the need to be an entrepreneur, to educate yourself and to become a self-made man are a laughing stock (...) in a city like Barcelona, this whole hipster thing (the gentrification apparent in design bikes and cool clothing stores, etc.) responds to a generation of young people whose aspirations (at least for the most elitist, those driven by meritocracy) are to own an illustration studio or to become a liberal professional, in other words, to become an own-account worker! Some succeed, but the majority doesn't, and anyway the "cultural model" penetrates. In a way, it is not just about values, they are the true idols of this generation. Choosing between being unemployed or feeling like an entrepreneur – even if you only make 300 euros per month – the choice is clear (...).

It can thus be appreciated how the necessity to show professionalism – or professionalisation – even when the conditions of a certain job, project or entrepreneurial venture are highly precarious, turns the presentation of oneself as a professional into something attractive enough as to make one experience – and accept – the syndrome of free labour discussed by Armano and Murgia. Additionally, this way one's presentation becomes – both symbolically and materially – far removed from the poorly-esteemed wage labour or the dreaded unemployment. And yet, precariousness is acquiring an important dimension among professionals and senior technicians (those with higher education), as we have also observed in a recent survey conducted in Barcelona (Bolíbar *et alii* 2018).

Graziano (*Chapter 12*) points out Negri's question: «Who is the worker and who is the boss today?». He argues that the violence and suffering have not vanished from labour relations, no matter how much the narrative or the dominant form of common sense try to disguise them. It is at this point where the existence of prefigurative practices of reaction to the discomfort generated by the rapid mutations of financial capital is posed. The new managerialism, the *artistic critique*, captures not only peoples' bodies, but their hearts and souls too. The society of the spectacle trades not only in fetishes and fictitious commodities, but it also enshrouds us in a hazy dream of godly markets descending unto the earth to save us from our miseries and, while their mirages seduce us, inequality skyrockets and, perhaps – as the author explains, mentioning Fredéric Lordon (2010) – so do the alienation and the subjugation of workers and citizens of societies where democracy has been steadily devaluating.

The portrayal of the migratory experience in Spain made by Casas-Cortés and Covarrubias (*Chapter 13*) also shows a new and interesting facet of the contradictions expressed so far. It is a round trip experience: on the one hand, that of the immigration of non-EU workers and refugees, who are being stigmatized from xenophobic positions and, on the other hand, that of the emigration of young Spanish university students (after the crisis of 2008), whom the Spanish labour minister characterized as people of "adventurous spirit" in search of new (formative) experiences. The authors cite the *prec-mig hypothesis*, which

> posited that «working conditions suffered by migrants today (such as informality contracts, vulnerability in the workplace, intense links between territory and employment, low salaries, lack of union rights, temporality, demand of total availability, etc.) are spreading to the rest of the population, including natives from the EU». (171)

However, this does not bring together migrants and natives but, instead, it rather diversifies citizenship depending on the several institutionalised discrimination processes (visas, permits, legalisation etc.), which only increase the number of atypical occupations and experiences of illegality.

Although perhaps it is Ross' exposition on the expansion of free work (*Chapter 14*) that upon which anyone who has recently entered the professional world – or who intends to do it once completed the mandatory academic and associative procedures – should reflect the most. According to Ross, free work is grounded in the mechanisms of debt expansion (see Soederberg 2014), which begin to act as ways of financing higher education and that are then carried on through the financing of housing needs or the many kinds of unforeseen expenses which cannot

be covered given the precariousness of most jobs and the reality of low wages and professional income. There are two other remarkable reflections in Ross' contribution: first, around the free labour we carry out for the so-called GAFA (Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon), as every connection established with their services produces marketable data which we voluntarily give away; second – and last – on the changes introduced by the expansion of free work in the way professionalism and career prospects are being developed.

Concerning professional work carried out in the digital realm of big data or big tech, e-lance programs (mechanical turk, task-rabbit etc.) can decompose a wide array of professional tasks into few minutes long micro-tasks – in the best Taylorist tradition – effectively turning them into a form of piecework which is then arranged at very low prices. In any case, ICT (and AI) join forces in questioning professionalism through organisational – and not exclusively technological – techniques, of which outsourcing constitutes a good example (even if it expands in apparently "friendlier" formats of crowdfunding or collaborative economy). These new technologies allow the manager to take control of a process in which tasks have been decomposed, disqualified, dispersed and even deprived of the knowledge supposed to be fundamental for their execution; this way, the actions of the multitude of "taskers" only make sense in the hands of the controller. Furthermore, the AI's can de-professionalise not only professional tasks, but even the most creative and artistic ones.

In reference to the changes in professionalism, Ross introduces us to a variety of free professional work, starting at the University through the use of – mostly unpaid – internships in companies and institutions (to this we could add, however, that in Spanish high schools there already exist "business management" subjects that include short business internships). This trend persists in most universities for scholarship holders, PhD students and post-docs, who function as a source of both precarious labour and drivers of change in professional subjectivities by reproducing compliant attitudes with the current state of affairs. A different problem affecting already established professionals (especially those working for a salary but, naturally, also those working in projects and as subcontractors) is the need to carry out endless working-days; often just out of sheer presentism. This affects both the private sector's companies and the public administration's experts and managers. Ross also highlights here how the collaborative economy, under its facade of cooperation and mutual aid, is actually hiding the presence of large companies which are opening up highly profitable markets and generating new services consumption habits (Airbnb, UBER etc.), all while subjecting their workers to draconian conditions of false or dependent self-employment. In these activities, paid work is offered just as freely as the contracted obligations: in most cases, it turns out to be "voluntary" work devoid of legal protection, trade unions, or any form of collective bargaining.

This new managerialism, bound to neoliberal common sense, has generated its own vocabulary revolving on efficient management. This entails a specific demand for professionals endowed with skills and competencies such as a capacity for negotiation, leadership, communication, strategic vision, client orientation, empathy, teamwork or entrepreneurial spirit. Some of these abilities have already been introduced in both secondary and higher education. But perhaps more important than the knowledge itself is the acceptance of a set of authority-based rules and forms of behaviour which have the acceptance of the world "as it is" as their core value. Talent or intelligence, the "artistic" virtues that professionals should have acquired, serve little purpose when what matters is the market and not the professional code, when it is the economy, and not society, that which establishes the rules. Failure, then, will ultimately be attributed to those workers and professionals unable to be sufficiently entrepreneurial.

Armano, Bove and Murgia have published a book that presents us with different cases of expansion of precariousness in occupations, professions and labour-related activities in different countries far away from each other, as well as diverse forms of resistance (mostly centred in Europe). It is a work without a universalist vocation, but it does allow us to understand the multiple facets and dimensions of the phenomenon, as well as its significance for those who work precariously. It is a good example of how qualitative insights on selected case studies enable a rich description and further theorisation of complex emerging realities. By so doing the whole book and particularly, the third – and conceptual – part provides us with the much necessary tools of analysis for future research. In short, this book represents an important work if we are to understand the transformations happening in the world of work, of professional life and, also, its repercussions in everyday life and the sphere of reproduction and care. Let us think of the paradox that is leaving our children, our elderly and dependent parents, or our sick family members

under the tutelage of private services were low wages and business mentality prevail, whereas what they really need (and, ultimately, what we all need), both for our wellbeing and our peace of mind, is simply a professional treatment guided by the, now abandoned, moral and ethical criterion.

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Book Review - Debates

Emiliana Armano, Arianna Bove, Annalisa Murgia (Eds.)
Mapping Precariousness, Labour Insecurity and Uncertain Livelihoods: Subjectivities and Resistance
Routledge, London 2017, ISBN 978-1-4724-7156-7

The book edited by Armano, Bove, and Murgia explores the critical phenomenon of precariousness with the aim of mapping its various repertoires and meanings: as an existential problem; as a worsening of labour conditions caused by deregulation as the most relevant outcome of thirty years of neo-liberal convergence; as a new frame/issue that embodies and generate alternative form of resistance and struggles going beyond traditional unionism. According to *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (Boltanski, Chiappello 2005), uncertainty and individualisation risks shape subjectivity, social reproduction and strategies of resistance within the conventional frame of la *cité par projet*. The book chooses to use mainly the Foucauldian categories of *subjectivity*, *governmentality*, *counter-conduct*, and *techniques of the self* as the most reliable "lenses" to read the phenomenon of precariousness in its various nuances and repertoires. In doing so, it brings together academic and non-academic essays as well as speculative and descriptive analyses, mixing micro and macro perspectives, mainly through a case study approach.

The book addresses the issue through three main steps: 1) how to reconceptualise the semantic and analytical boundaries of terms such as precariousness and precarity, security and uncertainty, autonomy and subordination (see *Introduction* and *Part III*); 2) how precariousness and subjectivity are configured in different contexts, analysing a vast variety of national case studies (from Africa, Japan, China, Australia, to European and Mediterranean countries, such as Italy, Greece, and France) and sectors (higher education, media, and manufacturing) (*Part I*); 3) and finally, how the experiences of collective action have brought up the issue of precariousness on the political agenda, by trying to develop a cohesive constituency and a coherent proposal of (re-)action in an era of declining power of unions' representativeness (*Part II*).

The *Introduction* and *Part III* represent the key parts of the book. They illustrate and clarify precariousness as a polysemic and multidimensional concept. Particularly interesting, with regard to this matter, is Leroy's suggestion of distinguishing *precariousness*, as a socio-ontological concept, both from *precarity*, as a condition of domination, and from *governmental pre-*

carisation, as a processual "art of governance" (Foucault 1991: 166) where insecurity becomes a political and economic tool. Technology has played an important role in this disruptive process, and it is only evoked in some sections of the book. Digital transformation, in particular, represents the main tool and *dispositif* (in the Foucauldian sense) used to promote the progressive *art of the self*. In many cases, the concept of *precariat* (Standing 2011) overlaps (and increasingly will overlap) with the concept of *cyberiat* (Huws 2009) through a growing number of *digital nomads* who will be looking for a job or several cumulative jobs through the web, aiming to handle precariousness through further precariousness and in the name of rational myths such as *personal branding* (Vallas, Cummins 2015), *gamification* and *self-entrepreneurship* (Scholz 2013).

Parts I and II focus on a vast number of case studies, analysed mainly from a micro perspective. In *Part I*, the book focuses on representing the plurality of precarious scenarios, especially in less explored and particularly interesting contexts, such as Africa or China. Overall, more similarities than differences tend to emerge from these analyses. The book seems to highlight above all the *isomorphism* of the precarious subjectivities and how insecurity and uncertainty at the micro level clash with the typical rhetoric of neo-liberalism at the macro level: the hype concerning the virtuous relationship between competition and performativity (see, in this regard, the chapter on the Australian academic system or the workers in the media industry in Greece); the shift in public and political debate from the target of full employment to that of employability, which better suits a society in which work is increasingly fragmented, strategies are organised according to specific tasks and targets are constructed as projects (Southwood's chapter); the emergence of a regressive regulation at the level of job protection and welfare, justified in terms of unaffordable costs but also through the rhetoric of autonomy (see, for example, Armano and Murgia's chapter on the Italian case). The emerging picture is one where neo-liberal capitalism almost seems to reproduce a revival of the pre-industrial society, based mainly on rent, multiple jobs, domestication or casualisation of work, and weaker cohesion among workers.

However, the historical and regulatory peculiarities of the multiple contexts analysed do not emerge with the same strength and evidence within the book. China, Africa, India, Japan or Italy represent very different socio-economic environments where labour structures, job matching, industrial relation and regulation are configured differently, producing effects and dynamics which are difficult to compare. Moreover, not all the professions and jobs are affected in the same way by precariousness; instead, they are differently affected by institutional arrangements (the leading concept of this special issue) that, at the formal or informal levels, define not only the actions, but also the moral justifications of precariousness. Therefore, the choice not to refer in any way to the contributions developed by the studies about *varieties of capitalism* (Crouch 2005; Hancké *et alii* 2014; Burroni 2016) or *welfare production regimes* (Esping Andersen 1990) seems less understandable, at least as a useful frame to interpret precariousness in the analysed contexts. While mostly developed in the context of macro analyses, these studies could provide excellent insights in order to contextualise the concept of precarious subjectivity also at the micro level. Despite the hypothesis of convergence, precariousness does not affect all workers or sectors in the same way. Similarly, neo-liberal reforms do not produce homogeneous results in all countries, but they rather define *multiple equilibria regimes* (Hirschman 1958). For example, the Mediterranean countries seem to be mostly characterised by an *inflexicurity model* (Muffels, Luijkx 2008), where insecurity emerges more as the combined result of limited wage differences between different levels of labour qualification, a stagnating job demand, and an unequal distribution of forms of employment protection among different types of workers (according to the sector, company size, seniority etc). Similarly, in an even more dualistic labour market, particularly in Southern Europe, precarity is configured in a different way because of a clear political choice protecting a male-breadwinner model (Rueda 2005), while instruments such as the French business cooperatives (analysed in *Chapter 4*) are mostly used either by outsiders or by the weakest segments of the labour market (Hausermann, Schwander 2012). Correspondingly, as argued by several scholars (Nee 1992; Bhappu 2000), in the Asian context the role of the Confucian culture, the paternalism of the factory (i.e. in the Japanese context), and the relevance of family or local networks (i.e. the role of *guanxi* social capital in the Chinese entrepreneurship) all represent elements that allegedly provide further insights to read precariousness and insecurity in Asia. In the several cases presented in the book, the Foucauldian "lenses" have the function of structuring and shaping the main aim of the book, that is mapping the diversity of precarious subjectivity.

Moreover, in the book, *precariousness* is not interpreted by taking into consideration the traditional cleavages – gender, age, ethnicity, centre-periphery – which only marginally emerge in the text and do not represent the specific object of analysis in any of the chapters. If precariousness is also linked to the concept of power, it is obvious that the condition of women, young people, migrants, or those living in developing countries is different compared to the condition of those who, although they are precarious, are male, older, native and living in affluent countries. Interpreting precariousness through these cleavages is undoubtedly one of the most recurring themes in the current scientific literature (Reyneri, Baganha 2001; Young 2010; Martin, Lewchuk 2018). However, an interpretation of these phenomena from a Foucauldian and a comparative perspective would have indeed provided further interesting insights.

Furthermore, the book does not seem to be interested in dealing with another fundamental issue concerning the relationship between labour insecurity and uncertain livings. If coping with precariousness means building biographical coherence and reflexivity that may challenge individual insecurity and systemic inequalities, the relationship between job insecurity and consumption becomes crucial. If, in the past, stable jobs and welfare redistribution represented two of the pillars for the development of a mass consumer market during *les Trente Glorieuses* (Fourastié 1979), what happens when these pillars are challenged if not eliminated by deregulation and welfare retrenchment? Several scholars in the social sciences seem to have underestimated this issue. As a consequence, the relationship between the emergence of precariousness and consumer behaviour remains today a topic hardly explored by sociology (Arcidiacono 2009). Such an epistemological gap is explained by two main factors: the theoretical distinction between working time and consumption time and the greater importance that has been attributed to the working sphere in the definition of people's individual identity. These two factors are put into question precisely by the de-regulation of the labour market; firstly, because the differences between labour time and consumption time become all the more fluid determining a new "social rhythm" that tends to overlap the two spheres of action; secondly, because precariousness weakens the role that work possesses in defining individual identity in favour of an identity which is also substantially built through consumption. As observed by Sennett (1999; 2006), the immediate gratification through the consumption of goods could represent one of the viable pathways in the construction of one's own subjectivity for the "flexible self", because he/she is subjected to the fragmentary nature of precarious work. If the Foucauldian framework applied in the book justifies, at least in part, the analytical choice to "remove" consumption by the argumentation, the link between capitalist transformation and mass consumption is extremely relevant and inevitable, as widely highlighted by classical and contemporary sociological literature (Bourdieu 1981; Miller 1987; Zelizer 2005). Some scholars highlighted how consumption is not only a product of capitalism, as underlined by Marx, but it could also be seen and interpreted as a space of emancipation, freedom, and resistance (De Certau 2001) even for the *precariat* (Standing 2011). This space might have a variable geometry, compressed but also reconfigured by precariousness. It engages the sphere of individual capabilities (Sen 1992) and reflexivity (Giddens 1990), class identity and self-consciousness (Sassatelli *et alii* 2015), social vulnerability and welfare policies (Castel 1997) differently. The relationship between uncertainty and lifestyles appears to be even more central in the post-Fordist age, both to examine the disembeddedness generated by the new spirit of capitalism and to assess the impact on the daily choices of precarious people. Moreover, precariousness and insecurity are based on the exploitation of free labour in various and eclectic forms, as clarified in Ross' chapter, and, in many instances, this type of labour is a form of *consumer labour* (Glucksmann 2016; Ritzer, Jungerson 2010). *Prosumers* and capitalist transformation are strongly related redesigning traditional distinctions of the industrial society between formality and informality, autonomy and subordination, or paid and unpaid work (Arcidiacono *et alii* 2018). It is precisely in this hybridisation that the pitfalls of precariousness and the logic of neo-liberal capitalism lie; a logic which was able to take advantage of the circumstance that consumers and workers are not actors with divergent interests, despite bending this convergence to the sole aim of profit.

In *Part III*, the experiences of mobilisation and social movements are taken into consideration, by questioning the different phases of resistance to the neo-liberal transformation. However, the book mostly explores the experience of several collective protests that have raised the issue of precariousness in the political arena (for example the Occupy Movement in USA or May-day parade in Europe) beyond the role of unionism. While this choice is

indeed understandable for different reasons, the reader is left with the impression that something is missing here. It is not clear, for example, what is truly new in this type of protests and what is the attitude of traditional unionism towards them. The role of the unions, at least from a comparative perspective, should have been taken into consideration. In particular, a critical analysis of the role of unions in this transformation would have been necessary as well as a description of their reactions and organising strategies to face the issue of non-standard work in an era of declining representativeness (Hyman, Gumbrell-McCormick 2013). Similarly, a discussion of the emerging forms of organisation in the field of self-employment or autonomous workers (Bologna, Banfi 2011) – only mentioned in some instances (see *Chapter 3*) – would have been welcome. Lastly, in this part of the book, the lexicon merges solid academic argumentations with a political afflatus, switching from a scientifically rigorous analysis to a sort of political manifesto.

In conclusion and overall, the book is a *must-read* book, because of its considerable scientific relevance and the unparalleled richness of the cases and analyses it offers. However, the lack of discussion of some relevant issues, such as the theme of consumption and the unions' role, and the limited contextualisation of the different cases (in some chapters) undermine, at times, its strengths. Moreover, a concluding chapter trying to sum up such an interesting variety and complexity and outline a clearer positioning both in terms of research agenda and policy recommendations would have been useful.

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Book Review - Standard

Francesco Calderoni
Le reti delle mafie. Le relazioni sociali e la complessità delle organizzazioni criminali
Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2018, ISBN: 9788834335550.

In questi ultimi anni si ha l'impressione che lo studio dei fenomeni criminali organizzati sia entrato in una fase adulta. Ad alcuni questa affermazione sembrerà avventata, considerati i problemi metodologici generati da questo particolare oggetto di ricerca. Altri la riterranno un'affermazione tardiva e scontata, poiché la letteratura sul tema è molto ampia e si basa su tradizioni di ricerca consolidate, portate avanti in centri di ricerca accreditati a livello internazionale. È probabile che la verità stia nel mezzo. Possiamo dunque affermare che recentemente le pubblicazioni sulle molteplici sfaccettature del crimine organizzato abbiano fatto un salto di qualità, pur mantenendo alcune problematicità strutturali. Del resto, anche nelle scienze sociali intese in senso stretto il crimine organizzato occupa ormai un campo di studi, in cui sono riconoscibili alcune coordinate di fondo: 1) il tentativo di applicare strumenti di analisi tipici delle scienze sociali e criminologiche, dunque la rinuncia a costruire una nuova e originale "sottodisciplina" chiusa in se stessa (cosa che rischiava di diventare la mafiologia, per esempio); 2) la volontà di adottare un approccio che integri il contributo delle diverse discipline; 3) lo sforzo di produrre sistematizzazioni analitiche e teoriche, che ha dato luogo anche a un filone di carattere manualistico.

Il volume di Francesco Calderoni è congruente con queste caratteristiche. L'autore è un criminologo di professione e di vocazione, giurista di formazione, ma attento conoscitore dei contributi sociologici. Ha dunque le spalle sufficientemente larghe per realizzare un volume che dica la sua intorno a un crocevia di temi. Vediamo di ricostruirne alcuni. Il presupposto dell'analisi riguarda un fatto sociale, per dirla *à la* Durkheim. I fenomeni criminali sono eminentemente relazionali e interpersonali: la gran parte dei «reati è commessa da più di una persona, in forma di collaborazione simultanea, ovvero di collaborazione precedente o successiva alla commissione del crimine» (p. 27). Pertanto, le dinamiche di tensione tra individui singoli e i gruppi sociali sono essenziali per la comprensione di molti processi di devianza. Coerentemente è utile assumere una prospettiva che presti attenzione a ciò che accade *tra* gli attori sociali, vale a dire nello spazio delle loro strutture di interdipendenza. Per fare ciò l'autore propone in diverse parti del

libro i contributi di un ampio filone di ricerca che risale a uno dei padri fondatori della sociologia, Georg Simmel. Centrale è dunque l'intuizione che i fenomeni sociali – di cui quelli devianti sono una fattispecie – non siano la mera sommatoria di azioni individuali, ma si generino dall'effetto aggregato di interazioni multiple, che vanno colte mediante l'osservazione dei loro aspetti formali. Entrano dunque in campo le tecniche dell'analisi di rete, che si sono dimostrate potenti strumenti per spiegare come la morfologia delle strutture reticolari in cui sono collocati gli attori plasma il corso delle loro azioni. Detto in poche parole, il libro sistematizza il tema della criminalità organizzata in riferimento alle relazioni sociali, con un'attenzione alle tecniche di network analysis. A tal fine, esso viene costruito attraverso una progressiva articolazione dei modelli teorici di riferimento, che vengono sviluppati nella prima parte (in dettaglio, nei primi tre capitoli), per poi assumere un taglio empirico, che si dispiega nella seconda parte (esattamente, dal quarto al sesto capitolo).

Dapprima si affrontano le questioni basilari, ovvero gli atomi dei fenomeni di criminalità collettiva, le gang e le dinamiche di funzionamento dei mercati illegali. Entrambi i fenomeni testimoniano la natura centrifuga e dispersa delle strutture organizzative di questi gruppi criminali. Al netto degli aspetti idiosincratici, queste acquisizioni mettono in guardia di fronte alla tentazione di sopravalutare la robustezza organizzativa dei nuclei criminali, che faticano ad andare oltre alla dimensione molecolare, e la capacità di controllo dei mercati illegali, che sembrano piuttosto soffrire di deficit di coordinamento, e essere contraddistinti da una governance pulviscolare. Eterodosso rispetto alle precedenti considerazioni è il fenomeno mafioso, la cui dimensione organizzata richiede analisi più approfondite, anche se tutt'altro che scontate. Su questo punto viene avanzata una suggestione rilevante, che costituisce un monito per le future indagini. Negli Stati Uniti la stagione di ricerca sulla mafia italo-americana dominata dal paradigma dell'*alien conspiracy* ha prodotto una ingenua reificazione dell'appartenenza etnica e una sovrastima della unitarietà organizzativa del fenomeno mafioso, trascurando – senza confutarle – le precedenti elaborazioni, che invece avevano accentuato gli aspetti dinamici e flessibili dei gruppi criminali, anche di matrice prettamente mafiosa. Una via di uscita da questa trappola viene offerta dall'analisi delle reti sociali applicata ai fenomeni criminali organizzati. Questa infatti permette di superare due dibattiti inconcludenti. Il primo soffre di un'ingenua ossessione per la delimitazione di una soglia, ossia la velleità di definire una volta per tutte quanto sia elevato il tasso di organizzazione nei fenomeni criminali. Il secondo è limitato dal tentativo di indentificare in via definitiva quale è il tipo di organizzazione che più si attaglia ai fenomeni criminali collettivi. L'analisi delle reti sociali, per contro, è compatibile con l'idea di approfondire la dimensione organizzativa senza un modello precostituito, bensì intendendo l'organizzazione come organizzare, ovvero come l'istituzionalizzazione di pratiche di interazione, forme di scambio, assetti gerarchici, repertori di ruoli. Per definizione, tali questioni si risolvono solo in modo parziale e in sede di ricerca empirica. Si tratta dunque di approfondire come le attività influenzano la struttura dei gruppi criminali, il modo con cui si fa ricorso ad attori esterni, e come si combinano efficienza e segretezza (p. 77). I complessi rapporti tra queste due sfere vengono approfonditi mediante una ricerca su due gruppi di 'ndrangheta coinvolti in traffici internazionali di droga, arrivando ad alcuni esiti rilevanti. Si conferma l'esistenza nei gruppi mafiosi di sistemi plurimi di gerarchia, alcuni connessi con forme di dominio e di potere in senso proprio, altri invece più soggetti alle attività condotte dai singoli mafiosi. Ricaviamo così una idea duplice: da un lato non bisogna sovrastimare le catene di comando all'interno dei gruppi di mafia, posto che vi sono mafiosi che hanno ruoli ordinari ma che sono preminenti nella conduzione dei business. Dall'altro lato non bisogna immaginare che i gruppi mafiosi siano ormai liquidi, ovvero che abbiano totalmente perso la loro dimensione strutturata e organizzata, per diventare degli agglomerati acefali di individui. L'indagine si conclude con un'ulteriore approfondimento empirico su vicende giudiziarie esemplari (Infinito, Crimine, Minotauro e Aemilia) che hanno riguardato la 'ndrangheta e che si prestano a mettere a fuoco il tema della leadership. Come si può comprendere, si tratta di un tema di grande rilevanza in relazione ai gruppi mafiosi, i quali hanno il "pregio" di proporre in modo accentuato alcuni temi classici sulla questione del comando (il binomio *Macht* e *Herrschaft*, secondo l'approccio di Weber): il riconoscimento, l'esercizio di potere attraverso forme più o meno intense di coercizione e di violenza, l'attribuzione di legittimità da parte dei sottoposti. Sono parametri questi ultimi che si lasciano riportare all'antinomia tra efficienza e segretezza – qui intesa come una tensione insolubile all'interno delle strutture mafiose – posto che chi occupa le posizioni apicali all'interno di una struttura mafiosa deve rendersi parzialmente visibile agli accoliti, ma questo espone al rischio di

renderersi maggiormente tracciabile e identificabile da parte delle forze dell'ordine e degli inquirenti. In questo senso, l'autore mostra come possa esservi un utilizzo differenziato da parte dei boss degli incontri di persona e di quelli mediati dalle conversazioni telefoniche. I primi sono più virtuosi nel combinare efficienza e segretezza, mentre più cautela pare emergere nell'uso del telefono. In altre parole, sembra che vi sia più timore verso le intercettazioni telefoniche che verso quelle ambientali, o che si cerci di evitare il rischio prodotto dalle prime, mentre bisogna sottostare a quello imposte dalle seconde.

È ormai chiaro che il volume ha una serie di pregi, non ultimo la sua struttura snella, che lo rende uno strumento utile a fini di didattici e in grado di stimolare il dibattito tra i diversi campi di sapere che studiano il crimine organizzato. Se si dovesse identificare il principale punto di forza del saggio di Calderoni, si direbbe che ha il merito di far crescere la voglia di fare ricerca sul fenomeno mafioso. Non è un pregio da poco: si tratta infatti di un genere di ricerca talvolta frustrante e molto dispendioso, considerata la difficoltà a raccogliere dati robusti. Sicuramente la suggestione secondo cui le organizzazioni mafiose sono contraddistinte da sistematiche incoerenze di status, dovute ai molteplici e contraddittori livelli gerarchici, merita di essere approfondita. Questi aspetti, infatti, si intrecciano con altre variabili solo evocate dall'autore. Come in tutte le organizzazioni complesse, anche nella mafia i livelli e le logiche di azioni degli attori sono multipli: si può agire per finalità meramente individuali, eventualmente strumentalizzando l'appartenenza a un collettivo e la forza del marchio mafioso; oppure si può operare per conto, e in quanto, membri di un'organizzazione, dunque sostenendo un interesse collettivo; o si può essere attivi per difendere interessi confederati, all'interno di reti di clan. Questi diversi livelli di azione sono immersi in una struttura di incentivi complessa e molto mediata dall'ambiente esterno. Calderoni evoca il binomio sicurezza/segretezza, che può essere inteso anche come l'insieme di opportunità e vincoli che derivano ai mafiosi dalle caratteristiche del contesto, dalla forza delle attività inquirenti, dalle soglie di attenzione della società civile, dalle dinamiche di mercato. Provare a identificare i meccanismi di funzionamento di porzioni circoscritte di queste variabili è sicuramente un compito urgente, per cui serve buona ricerca. L'analisi di rete e dei processi relazionali situati continueranno ad essere, rispettivamente, una tecnica e un approccio fertile. Al riguardo possiamo concludere con una nota di fiducia, paradossalmente esito di una debolezza. Raccogliere dati di rete è sempre complesso, tanto più nel caso dei reticoli criminali. Questo genera dei limiti riguardo alla possibilità di spingere l'analisi verso i livelli più sofisticati da un punto di vista tecnico, ma incentiva l'esercizio di immaginazione sociologica, dando verosimilmente vita a nuove combinazione tra la network analysis formale e le tecniche di indagine qualitativa. Una prospettiva promettente per leggere i meccanismi relazionali sullo sfondo degli ambienti sociali in cui sono collocati.

Luca Storti

Book Review - Profiles

J. Dagnes, *Ai posti di comando. Individui, organizzazioni e reti nel capitalismo finanziario italiano*, Bologna: il Mulino, 2018, pp. 192, ISBN 9788815279194.

In this sociological research on the assets of Italian financial capitalism, the author explores an invisible network linking groups and companies that are – apparently – in competition with each other. This study, in particular, is focused on a network of 60 managers and professionals simultaneously present in various boards of companies listed on the Stock Exchange. The book exposes some features and the structure of this network, showing how the most relevant companies under the point of view of economic performances tend to connect with each other, creating a net able to direct the Italian financial market. Through in-depht interviews with the select group of "big linkers", Dagnes investigates the importance of personal relationships and individual career strategies in determining the functioning of corporate bodies, decision-making processes and the balance of power among different actors involved.

Chambost, M. Lenglet, Y. Tadjeddine (eds.), *The making of finance. Perspective from the social sciences*, London: Routledge, 2018, pp.308, ISBN 9781138498563.

Relying on a variety of theoretical frameworks drawn from the social sciences, the contributions included in this book offer a critical perspective on the dominant paradigms used in contemporary financial activities. Contributions presented in this volume are from authors working within the 'social studies of finance' tradition, a research programme emerged twenty years ago with the aim of addressing a diversity of financial fieldworks and related theoretical questions. The whole set of contributions let the reader shift attention to different areas that are representative of contemporary financial realities. Through different detailed studies of financial employees (traders, salespeople, intermediaries, investment managers, financial analysts, investment consultants, etc.) and financial instruments (financial schemes and contracts, financial derivatives, socially responsible investment funds, as well as market rules and regulations), the contributors analyse 'finance in the making', by shedding light on the structuring of banking and financial systems, on their capacity to prescribe action and control, on their modes of regulation and, more generally, on the process of financialisation.

M. Colucci, *Storia dell'immigrazione straniera in Italia. Dal 1945 ai giorni nostri*, Roma: Carocci, 2018, pp. 243, ISBN 9788843093014.

The author provides a historical reconstruction of foreign immigration in Italy, starting from 1945 up to the most recent and current transformations of the phenomenon. The volume shows the quantitative dimension of foreign migrations to Italy highlighting the changes and evolution over time, the rooting in the territory, the policies adopted by institutions, the controversies that have arisen in the public and political debate, the impact of immigrants on local societies. Colucci takes different sources in order to retraces the history of foreign immigration: from social investigations to political debate, from personal testimonies to the statistics, from institutional archives to newspapers. What comes to light through the book is the multifaceted profile of a great transformation, that is essential to know as crucial step for a better understanding of the Italian today society.

E. Kraus (ed.), *Tight Knit. Global families and the social life of fast fashion*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018, pp. 314, ISBN 9780226558073.

Krause offers a revelatory look into how families involved in the fashion industry are coping with globalization based on long-term research in Prato, the historic hub of textile production in the heart of metropolitan Tuscany. She brings to the fore the tensions – over value, money, beauty, family, care, and belonging – that are reaching a boiling point as the country struggles to deal with the same migration pressures that are triggering backlash all over Europe and North America. *Tight Knit* tells a fascinating story about the heterogeneity of contemporary capitalism that can interest social scientists, immigration experts, and anyone curious about how globalization is changing the most basic among human conditions: making a living and making a life.

S. Bertolini (a cura di), *Giovani senza futuro? Insicurezza lavorativa e autonomia nell'Italia di oggi*, Roma: Carocci, 2018, pp. 216, ISBN 9788843093274.

The representation of young Italians as "bamboccioni" - recurrent in the media and revived in the speech of some politicians - does not account for the complexity of the interaction among many cultural, institutional and economic factors affecting the transition to adulthood. The contributions of this volume provide a composite picture of the multiple current challenges faced by youth, between the desires of a desirable job and the need for autonomy. Through the analysis of quantitative data and the collection of almost 400 interviews in nine different European countries, the book explores these issues focusing on the peculiarities of Italian society, such as the late exit from the family of origin and the efforts of youth to build a career in an increasingly flexible labor market. The analysis of the Italian situation opens up a final discussion on policies to support young people and on the need to guarantee the new generations the possibility of building a better future.

S. Floriani, P. Rebughini (a cura di), *Sociologia e vita quotidiana. Sulla costruzione della contemporaneità*, Nocera Inferiore: Orthothes Editrice, 2018, pp. 172, ISBN 9788893141710.

This book focuses on "sociology and daily life", referring to everyday life as an epistemic, theoretical and methodological key issue, and not as a simple area of interest for the social sciences, ie the sociology of everyday life. The book intends to revisit the theme "daily life" beyond its more consolidated research fields, linked to the phenomenological, interactionist and dramaturgical perspectives, investigating in particular the reconceptualization and the renewal of more conventional themes for the study of daily life - such as space-time coordinates, housing, the ordinary, routines and common sense - but also more collateral issues such as material culture and the relationship with objects, social change and the possible, the symbolic sphere, the role of Eurocentrism , cultural pluralism and the perspectives developed by postcolonial studies.

L. Wirth, *L'interazione sociale. Il problema dell'individuo e del gruppo*, Calimera: Kurumuny Edizioni, 2018, pp. 60, ISBN 9788885863330.

"Social interaction: the problem of the individual and the group" (1939) is an essay analysing the work carried out

during the "American Journal of Sociology" Symposium on "The individual and the group", highlighting form different points of view one of the main problem for the sociological theory. Wirth's work on social interaction has tended to capture his interest in how people developing relationships with other people and/or influencing others or are influenced by them, in relation to an identity that is not given once for all but is built continuously. Wirth does not draw a definition of unequivocal and definitive social interaction. The readers can instead note how the dimension of the relationship cannot be detached from the meeting between an ego and a group, and from a specific social and cultural context. The context is an organized construction of values, norms and sanctions that allows actors to recognize themselves in a group and in a specific relational context, without which there would be no interaction, reciprocity and relationship.