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*The Routledge Companion to the Professions and Professionalism*

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What makes an occupation a profession? What are the criteria that distinguish certain activities from the standard white-collar worker? Specialised knowledge, social prestige or strategies of social closure? These questions have been behind the birth of the sociology since its very beginning, starting from the pioneering book of Carr-Saunders and Wilson (1933) and the just slightly more recent article from Parsons (1939). However, the sociology of professions urges to renovate its own debate (Butler *et alii* 2012), as post-industrial labour markets and globalisation have so profoundly changed its research object. Not only because in the last decades there has been an increasing interest around processes of professionalization in emerging professions (Maestripieri 2016), but also because established professions have not remained unchanged by the recent transformation determined by knowledge society (Cucca, Maestripieri 2014). Processes of hybridisation (Noordegraaf 2007 and 2011) have also inherently altered the way in which professionalism is performed in private and public sector, as market logics and organisational principles have been progressively introduced in the “third logic” that characterises professions (Freidson 2001).

The book here presented tries to fulfil part of these theoretical gaps, by collecting contributions from sociologists working on professions from all over the world. Editors affirm that this book aims to address «the question of ‘what are and whither go’ the professions and professionalism in this new, rapidly globalising age (Dent *et al.*, 2014: 6)», by focusing on contemporary theories, changing models of professionalism, relationship between organisation, management and professions through analysis not confined, as it usually happens, to Europe and Anglo-Saxon countries. Over the 25 chapters that compose the book, the contemporary debate about professions is dissected in details and all the main theoretical nodes are discussed, along with relevant case studies of emerging and established professions.

It is especially noteworthy chapter 4 from Hearn *et alii*, which tries to incorporate the concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991) into the debate of professions by examining the case of an established male-dominated profession as law facing feminisation versus female business managers who decide to opt out successful careers. Their work shows the potential fertility of this concept coming from feminist debate in the renovation of the sociology of professional groups, especially in the light of the progressive individualisation that neoliberalism has impressed to professions. In chapter 10 authored by Carvalho and Santiago, the focus is about knowledge and its peculiar role in the study of professional groups at the lights of theory dealing

with the knowledge society. The authors reflect on the changing role of knowledge in recent development of theories about professions, as in early studies knowledge was limited to formal and abstract knowledge necessary for acquiring credentials, while the contemporary focus is now more about other forms of knowledge including practical and tacit one in the definition of professional autonomy – as it happens in their research about nurses in Portugal. Lastly, chapter 15 from Denis *et alii* explores the role of professionals in organisational change, overturning the usual narration by which professionals are the victims of this process that results in the underestimation of their agency. Authors show that more optimistic views on the relationship between organisations and professions are equally empirically grounded as the long-standing concepts of de-professionalisation (Haug 1975), as strategies of co-evolution between professional and organisations take place.

Finally, the book is also completed by a series of in-depth case studies oriented to emerging and established professions: accountancy, academic professionals, teachers, health practitioners, social work, and journalists. Authors are definitely confirming their premises of proposing the necessary companion for junior and senior scholars dealing with professions.

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