International
Sociological
Association

RC52 Sociology of
Professional Groups

Interim Meeting
University of Florence (Italy), 4-6 July 2019

Call for Papers

Professions and Society

Facing the challenges of marketization, globalization and digitalization

– EXTENDED DEADLINE –

Theme of the conference

Professions are facing multiple challenges. The neoliberal rhetoric in Western societies modified the equilibria between agents of regulation, undermining social closure mechanisms, which are typical of classic professions, and discouraging the institutionalization of new ones. Both old and new professions are thus more exposed to market regulation and a process of rationalization, associated with the promotion of managerial/organizational cultures. Marketization and managerialism imposed new objectives. Organizations became the places of change, challenging professionalism as dominant logic, offering new sources of identity and power to professionals. Public sector services also developed forms of "hybrid" or "new" professionalism. Recently, technological change affected both professionals and customers. Professionals found in the ICTs new modes of expression to respond effectively to the growing demand for professional services. Digitalization, then, brought along substantial changes in the ways expert knowledge is produced and transmitted, and implied a democratization of knowledge, which modified the power balances between professionals and clients/users. In the background, globalization and the rising number of professionals in developing countries led to a new division of labor between Global North and South. The combined effects of these processes are producing radical changes in the relationship between professions and society. Such changes affect practitioners' careers, roles, and tasks, as well as their earnings and statuses. Trust relationships are also called into question.

Call for Papers (UPDATED)

We invite papers focusing on either a single professional group and country or adopting a comparative perspective. The proposals must be sent in a word file, be written in the English language, and include:

- Preferable session (see the list and detailed descriptions below);
- Title of the paper;
- An abstract of no more than 250 words;
- Name(s) and contact details (affiliation, country, e-mail) of the author(s).

Please, **submit your proposal** via email to the conference organizer (rc52florence2019@gmail.com), no later than **12 April 2019**.

All submitters will receive an e-mail notification on the acceptance or rejection of their paper proposals by **26 April 2019**.

The authors of the selected proposals can send a full paper (at their discretion), possibly no later than 15 June 2019, in order to make it available to the participants in due time.

Online registration opens on **27 April 2019** and closes on **31 May 2019**.

Please, note that **all presenters are required to register and pay the registration fee**.

The conference website is now available: http://www.rc52florence.unifi.it.

The Call for Papers will be available also on the RC52 website (http://www.isa-sociology.org/rc52.htm) and blog (https://researchcommittee52.wordpress.com/).

Save the dates!

Deadline for the **abstract submission**	**31 March 2019**
E-mail notification on the acceptance or rejection of paper proposals	**26 April 2019**
Deadline for the **online registration**	**31 May 2019**
Deadline for sending a **full paper** (at the author's discretion)	**15 June 2019**

Local organizer and contact person:

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Grants for Early Career Researchers (NEW)

Travel grants and free registration

The RC52 board will provide **four travel grants of 250 euros**.

Being awarded a travel grant, then, will entitle the applicants to **free registration** at the conference.

All PhD students who will be selected to present a paper at the conference will nevertheless benefit from a discounted registration fee.

Eligibility criteria

Being a PhD student or having received the PhD since 2016.

How to apply

All those interested to apply for a grant must submit an abstract proposal following the instructions included in the call for papers (see above), complemented by a short paragraph about how the participation in the Interim Meeting will help them further their research.

Selection procedure

A special committee will evaluate the applications. The results of the selection procedure will be communicated via e-mail on **April 27**.

Special Session for Early Career Researchers

The selected proposals will be included in a Special Session for Early Career Researchers, chaired by **Alexandra Vinson**, University of Michigan.

Duties of grant beneficiaries

Those who will be awarded a grant will be required to send a full paper by June 15.

Additional notes

Please, note that the travel grants will be paid in the form of reimbursement of travel expenses.

For further information, contact **Alexandra Vinson** (ahvinson@med.umich.edu), RC52 Representative of Early Career Researchers/PhD Students.

List of sessions

S1   Varieties of Professionalism. Exploring heterogeneity within and between professions

Andrea Bellini, University of Florence (Italy)
Lara Maestripieri, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain)
Karolina Parding, Luleå University of Technology (Sweden)

Labour markets are facing increasing challenges, nowadays. For instance, tertiarization, globalisation and feminisation change the structure and composition of the labour force, the digitalisation implies the growing importance of platforms as labour providers, the increasing resistance towards public regulation puts in question the feasibility of pursuing an ideal-typical "traditional" professionalisation for emerging professions. All those trends have changed profoundly the way people enter paid work and experience their professional employment throughout their careers. The instability in employment and working conditions, the rising polarisation between bad and good jobs, the declining role of intermediate bodies, such as trade unions, and professional bodies are pieces of evidence fiercely debated since a long time in the sociology of work. On the other hand, they are still under-investigated in the field of sociology of professions, as if professionals were immune from those trends.

We argue that a rise in heterogeneity in professionalism derives from the trends mentioned above across two dimensions; within and between. "Within" because there is an increasing fragmentation experienced within professional groups, among those who can secure a good job, and those who cannot (i.e. freelance, short-contractors/temps, collaborators, providers of digital services), but there is also an increasing fragmentation among insiders and outsiders, like women, practitioners of migrant or working-class background. "Between" because there is an increasing differentiation across professional groups and professionals practising in different national contexts (i.e. Southern and Eastern Europe, emerging economies and the LACs), interested to a different extent in the processes of de/re-regulation. But, also, because traditional and emerging professions experience change in different ways, reacting differently to the digitalisation, marketisation, and precarization of professional services for instance.

In this session, we invite both theoretical and empirical papers that aim to investigate heterogeneity, differentiation and change among traditional and emerging professions. We are particularly interested in comparative studies, either across professions within the same national context or within the same professions across nations. We also warmly invite contributions that explore professionalism and its national/local/contextual peculiarities in Southern and Eastern Europe as well as in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

S2   Inequalities and the professions: patterns and processes in the Global South

Debby Bonnin, University of Pretoria (South Africa)
Shaun Ruggunan, University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa)

Processes of globalisation create patterns of inclusion and exclusion in the professions. These are manifested in the ways that occupational closure and social exclusion operate and reflect wider national and global inequalities. Specifically, this panel is interested in how these inequalities operate in the Global South and/or between the Global South and North. Papers that do not draw empirically from the South but are able to provide new insights into developments in the global south are also welcome. The global south has different economic, historical, social and cultural trajectories. If professions are bonded to societal developments, then, in what ways do the societal developments in the global south influence the ways in which we understand professions in these countries? Is there necessarily a difference, or are these understandings universal?

Inequalities may operate in terms of race, nationality, class, divergent economic histories, gender, linguistics differences, divisions between the global north and global south, sexuality amongst, migrant identities other forms of identities. What forms do these inequalities take? What progress has been made to reduce these inequalities in the professions? What can we learn from comparative perspectives?

This session welcomes empirical and theoretical papers that address any of the above themes.

S3   New challenges for professionals, new standards, new work routines?

Marlot Kuiper, Utrecht University (The Netherlands)
Mirko Noordegraaf, Utrecht University (The Netherlands)
Anne Mette Møller, Aarhus University (Denmark)

Many scholars studying professional work underscore pressures on professionals when they perform daily work. Cases have become more complex, transcending professional and service boundaries. Clients have multiple care demands and information on how to "treat" them is overwhelming. In addition, professionals face ethical questions, new technologies, and must manage costs and cope with accountability requirements. To organize complex tasks and allow for organizational monitoring, work processes become increasingly programmed, by protocols, (team) checklists, and algorithms.

Scholars tend to highlight professional resistance and recalcitrance, backed by empirical illustrations of how professionals refuse standards and maintain professional autonomies. Increasingly however, this (theoretical) divide between "organizations" and "professionals" is overcome. Notions such as "hybrid professionalism" and "connective professionalism" portray interrelation of logics: professionals incorporate standards and organizational values like efficiency and effectiveness, to deal with increasingly complex service demands.

This panel invites contributions that focus on these conceptualizations and their implications for academic insights as well as practices. What does "hybrid professionalism" look like? How do new technologies transform professional practices? How do checklists transform professional routines? We invite theoretical and empirical contributions within and across professional fields, including micro-level perspectives on professional practices.

S4   Spatial and temporal aspects of welfare sector professional work

Karolina Parding, Luleå University of Technology (Sweden)
Anna Berg Jansson, Luleå University of Technology (Sweden)

This session focuses on welfare sector professionals, their working conditions and employment conditions. To better understand these, it becomes essential to take a closer look at the local, regional and national contexts in which workplaces are situated. Conditions for professionals' work have previously to a large extent been studied without specific workplace context (with its local and regional circumstances) taken into consideration. As a response, calls for contextualized studies have been made. In agreement with Ellem (2016: 932), who claims that 'where work literally takes place is important', we therefore, in this session invite papers with a spatially-informed frame of reference; a focus on contextualizations of welfare sector professional work. Comparative studies are especially welcomed.

A number of factors can be argued to impact on how conditions for welfare sector professional work are played out differently in different workplace contexts. For instance, many welfare sector professionals, across nations, have been subject to governance reform, involving choice, competition, privatisation, marketization and devolution. These reforms can be argued to bring differentiation in various ways, and thus impact on working conditions, as well as employment conditions- and arrangements. In this session, papers focusing how governance reforms such as the above mentioned, but also other differentiating factors, are played out in various workplace contexts are welcomed.

S5   Professions, power and the market

Mike Saks, University of Suffolk (United Kingdom)

This session examines the direct and indirect impact of the market on the power of professional groups, both in a positive and negative direction. In recent years it has been claimed that the power of a number of professional groups has been reduced by increasing exposure to market forces in organizational and other settings. This has variously been expressed in terms of the concepts of deprofessionalisation and corporatization. However, such trends have not been straight forward as they have often been mediated by the state and, indeed, the strategies employed by professional groups themselves. In this process, some occupational groups have managed to newly professionalize or augment their position of exclusionary social closure in the market, with all the typical consequences for enhancing income, status and power. Papers are invited that critically explore such trends either in terms of individual case studies of specific professions in a single society or in a comparative context. The key overarching question for this session is how far professions have gained and retained power in increasingly marketized societies. Theoretical analyses of the wider relationship between professions, power and the market are also welcome, not least from a neo-Weberian perspective.

S6   Takeover, cooperation, hybridization? Professional jurisdiction and boundary work in the digital era

Christiane Schnell, Goethe-University Frankfurt (Germany)

Changing societal conditions have an impact on professions: Regulations are changing, hierarchies in between the world of professional work might change, and oftentimes professional practices have to adjust. We learned that with the emergence of Business Administration as an agent of Neoliberalism and the overall demand for Managerialism, as a new task within professional roles or as a new competing force, tending to subordinate professions. But what impact will data science have on the professional field of work? The current debate on digitalization indicates, that the new challenge to professions is the relation to so called artificial intelligence and those professions and corporate bodies (as google) leading the development of the digital era. The session is dedicated to discussing questions as, for example, if we observe a new dimension of hybridization or if this development just leads to cooperation between professions and data science.

S7   Professional power matters. Connecting professions and organizations in the context of managerialism

Helena Serra, New University of Lisbon (Portugal)

Professional work has been permanently challenged. Very often managerialism has been referred as the main driver for changing patterns of professional work. Managerial reforms make organisations more efficient and effective; yet, professional work appears to be affected by broader social forces, than only managerial principles. The emergence of new forms of professionalism can be explain from the reconfiguration of professional work. Concerning professional autonomy and power, despite the recent developments in the fields of professions and organisations, much controversy persists, and some others arise regarding professionals' actions and roles. Are professionals' strategies been increasingly shaped by managerial values? On the other hand, are professionals still using both individual and group strategies to unsure their objectives and to keep their autonomy?

This session invites both theoretical and empirical papers, in diverse country contexts, addressing this topic, particularly the issues connecting professions and organisations in the context of growing managerial rationale. Key for submissions is focusing on issues related to the challenges that organisations pose to professions; the extent to which organisations stimulate and/or constrain new forms of professional autonomy and power; and the rebuilding of professions-organisations connection.

S8   Between techno-optimistic and techno-pessimistic perspective. A third way to consider ICT in health professional-patient relationship

Giovanna Vicarelli, Marche Polytechnic University (Italy)
Micol Bronzini, Marche Polytechnic University (Italy)
Elena Spina, Marche Polytechnic University (Italy)

The recent debate on ICT seems to be crystallized on two antithetical positions. On the one side those who argue that it will lead to greater democratization of physicians-patients relationship and intra-professional relationships (techno-optimistic perspective); on the other side those who believe that it will increase, in an asymmetric way, the power held by the different parts of the relationships (techno-pessimistic perspective).

Neither interpretation takes into account the complexity that characterizes the introduction and the increasing use of technology and the concrete negotiations that accompany it; we believe, therefore, that this dualistic view must be overcome. In order to get out of this debate, which risks becoming sterile and self-referential, a meso- and micro-analytical look should be adopted. Patients-health professionals relationships should then be observed focusing on the type of technology used, the organizational contexts, the different professions involved and the pathologies treated. Using the Elias' approach, which suggests looking at power not in substantive terms but in relational terms, it will be possible to understand how much the use of ICT will increase or, on the other hand, reduce the power held by the two parts of the relationship. The session welcomes contributions that deepen this aspect from a meso and micro analytical perspective focusing on concrete empirical cases.

S9 Feeling professionalism: emotional aspects of professional identity

Alexandra Vinson, University of Michigan (United States)

The cognitive, organizational and epistemic aspects of professionalism have received the majority of attention from scholars of professions. But a long-standing tradition of research also examines emotional aspects of professional identity (e.g. Hochschild 1983; Hafferty 1988; Wharton 1999; Underman and Hirshfield 2016). Focusing on emotion can help us understand significant phenomena in professional work: how organizational feeling rules and display rules impact the way professional work is done, how precariousness and insecurity in work conditions shape professional subjectivity, and how the changing relationship between professionals and clients affects professional work. This session invites papers that attend to these and other areas related to the emotional aspects of professional identity. The goal of the session is to highlight current research that provides historically situated analyses of individual professionals' subjectivity in the context of the organizations and professional groups these individuals belong to.

S10 Open session

Andrea Bellini, University of Florence (Italy)

Paper proposals are invited on and around the main theme of the conference, also in the case that they do not fit into any thematic session. These will be collected in an open session. Special discussants might be identified, according to the topics of the papers.