

## Call for papers

**CAMBIO. RIVISTA SULLE TRASFORMAZIONI SOCIALI, December 2018**

### Special issue on

***Varieties of Professionalism in a Globalising World:  
New Theoretical Perspectives and Analytical Approaches***

#### Guest editors:

*Andrea Bellini*  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
University of Firenze  
[andrea.bellini@unifi.it](mailto:andrea.bellini@unifi.it)

*Lara Maestripieri*  
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow  
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona  
[lara.maestripieri@uab.cat](mailto:lara.maestripieri@uab.cat)

The sociology of professions is at a crossroads. Dealing with multiple complexities, an update of its theoretical and conceptual tools seems necessary.

The rise of the knowledge society has led to a new division of labour (see Machlup 1962; Drucker 1968; and Bell 1973). From this perspective, the increasing number of professionals in all developed countries can be explained by both the emergence of new professions, as well as the expansion of more traditional ones. After all, these processes are associated with growing segmentation and stratification of professional labour markets (Brint 1994). Moreover, the economic crisis has induced an increase in the average level of workers' qualification due to the growth of employment in advanced business services, while simultaneously it has led to a corresponding loss of low-skilled employment (Gallie 2013). Therefore, the dimension of expertise has gained new centrality, with the study of *expert labour* receiving renewed scholarly attention (see Muzio *et al.* 2008).

At the same time, the hegemony of the neoliberal discourse (Butler *et al.* 2012), the call for a "global professionalism" within emerging economies (Dent *et al.* 2016), and the increasing precariousness of knowledge workers (Murgia *et al.* 2016) put into question some theoretical assumptions associated with the study of professionals.

For emerging professions, the neoliberal rhetoric discourages the process of institutionalisation that had characterised the establishment of liberal professions (Wilensky 1964): instead of peer control, the newly established professionals rely on market reputation for the definition of their professional identity and for grounding their acknowledgment (Maestripieri 2016). However, the growing role of the market logic leaves room for the upsurge of intra-professional conflicts (Cucca and Maestripieri 2014) and for the increasing exposure of professionals to precariousness (Murgia *et al.* 2016).

For acknowledged professions, the protection derived from social closure mechanisms is in decline, leaving ground for the rise of new inequalities among professionals (Leicht 2017). In some cases, the growing insecurity that follows from a diminishing capacity to secure professionals' markets has provoked a call for "re-regulation", as if such stronger regulation will constitute a winning strategy to compensate for the increasing instability of professional markets. In continental European systems of professions in particular, the most powerful professional groups have succeeded in "softening" the process of liberalisation of professional service markets, but with increasing inequalities within and between groups (as in the case of Italian lawyers: see Bellini 2014; Alacevich *et al.* 2017).

Finally, the globalisation of the economy and the growing number of professionals in developing countries puts into question the heuristic capacity of monolithic and "Western-centric" theories of professionalism. New forms of embodying professionalism are establishing in emerging economies, which requires a renewal of the theoretical debate that now mostly focuses on advanced capitalist Western countries.

The special issue here presented aims to deal with the multiple complexities that are now emerging in the sociology of professions: the acknowledgement for emerging professions; the eroded power of peer-based systems of professionalization; the growing inequalities among professionals; the rise of precarious employment among *expert* labourers; the increasing entanglement of professional jurisdictions, which stems from conflicts between locally-, nationally- and globally-based professional activities; the emerging professionalism in developing countries.

For this purpose, we invite both theoretical and empirical contributions, presenting comparative analyses or case-studies, conducted at global, national or local level. Contributions on emerging and/or acknowledged professions are equally welcomed. Papers comparing different types of professional groups and/or presenting research works conducted in emerging countries are warmly encouraged. Papers are expected to focus on the following topics:

- The growing role of the market as a base for legitimising professionalism;
- The trends of *de*-regulation/*re*-regulation in professional acknowledgment;
- The increasing inequalities within and between professional groups;
- The upsurge in precariousness and insecurity for professionals;
- The effects of globalisation in defining new forms of professionalism.

Important dates:

30/11/2017: deadline for the extended abstract of your proposal (max 1.000 words)

15/01/2018: communication of the pre-selected contributions

15/05/2018: deadline for submitting your paper (max 8.000 words)

Send your proposal to the following e-mail address, specifying in the object "CfP CAMBIO – Paper proposal": [andrea.bellini@unifi.it](mailto:andrea.bellini@unifi.it)

Please, note that:

All selected papers will be submitted for double-blind review. The review process will take up to 8 weeks. The editors will notify the author(s) about the acceptance/rejection decision. Subsequently, the author(s) will have 4 weeks to submit a revised version of the paper, if required.

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