

This Week's Citation Classic

CC/NUMBER 51
DECEMBER 22, 1980

Wilensky H L. The professionalization of everyone? *Amer. J. Sociol.* **70**:137-58, 1964.
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The traditional model of professionalism emphasizes autonomous expertise and the service ideal. Historical data show a typical process by which the established professions have arrived; deviations are explained by power struggles common to all occupations. Other data suggest that (1) bureaucracy enfeebles the service ideal more than it threatens autonomy; and (2) a client orientation undermines colleague control. The main theme: very few occupations will achieve the authority of the established professions. [The *Social Sciences Citation Index*[®] (SSCI[™]) indicates that this paper has been cited over 195 times since 1966.]

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November 7, 1980

"The ideas were developed in the 1950s in my courses on industrial and occupational sociology and in a little noticed book.¹

"I had long felt that talk of 'the expert society' or the 'technocratic society' was misleading. In their enthusiasm about the upgrading of skills in modern society some students had even written of 'the professionalization of labor.' Such notions are still prominent in social science. For instance, Kenneth Calbraith's 'technostructure'² and Daniel Bell's 'postindustrial society'³ depict a vast expansion in numbers and power of professionals and scientists.

"For many decades ideological passion and intellectual mood have burdened discussions of professionalism. Such theorists as Parsons accent the service ideal and technical knowledge as bases of professional practice.^{4,5} However, critics such as C. Wright Mills sound a skeptical note: the established professions, they argue, display the venality and fakery of a used car dealer while professional knowledge is often mystification in the service of monopoly privilege.⁶

"My article discounts both views, provides an empirical test of ideas about the process of

professionalization, and synthesizes findings on the structural and personal roots of three role orientations (discipline-professional, careerist, missionary). By analyzing barriers to professionalization, I suggest that future occupational groups will combine elements from professional and bureaucratic models; the average professional will combine professional and nonprofessional orientations; and the typical occupational association will be a hybrid—neither a trade union nor a professional association.

"Perhaps the article is cited frequently because it (1) succinctly covers issues important for both social theory and public policy; (2) provides simple measures of typical orientations of professionals toward their work; and (3) shows that although some growth in professionalization continues, there are profound limits to the achievement of both an exclusive jurisdiction and a credible moral claim like those of medicine, law, or the clergy (and even their authority is not secure).

"I was surprised that my measures of role orientations and summary of received notions about professionalism have been cited far more than what I consider the most original and subtle theme, that the ideal base for a claim to exclusive jurisdiction and professional authority is knowledge that is neither too general and vague (thereby familiar to laymen) nor too narrow and specific (thereby easily programmed). What makes long training necessary and persuades the public of the mystery of the craft is both intellectual and practical knowing, some explicit (learned from books and demonstrations), some implicit (intuitive understanding acquired from supervised practice and observation).

"I was astonished by the number of professional association leaders who read it and asked me to solve their problem of achieving professional status—an invitation I have resisted.

"An alert reader caught a minor statistical error. See an exchange between Richard J. Hill and myself where I show that correcting the error leaves the conclusions intact.^{7,8}

1. **Wilensky H L.** *Intellectuals in labor unions: organizational pressures on professional roles.* New York: Free Press, 1956. 336 p.
2. **Galbraith K.** *The new industrial state.* New York: New American Library, 1968. p. 282-95.
3. **Bell D.** *The coming of post-industrial society: a venture in social forecasting.* New York: Basic Books, 1973. p. 136-7, 143-5, 374.
4. **Parsons T.** *The social system.* Glencoe, IL: Free Press. 1951. p. 433-9, 454ff.
5., Propaganda and social control. *Essays in sociological theory* Glencoe, IL: Free Press. 1954. p. 142-76.
6. **Mills C W.** Old professions and new skills. *White collar.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1953. p. 112-41.
7. **Hill R J.** The professionalization of everyone? Reply to Wilensky H L. *Amer. J. Sociol.* **71**:84-6, 1965.
8. **Wilensky H L.** Reply to Hill R J. *Amer. J. Sociol.* **71**:84-6, 1965.