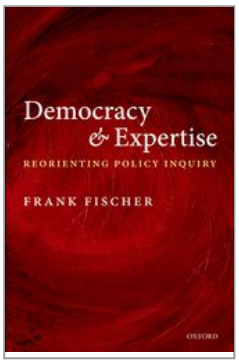

Democracy and Expertise: Reorienting Policy Inquiry
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Between Technical Knowledge and Public Responsibility: Professional Expertise in Critical Perspective

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter opens with an examination of the evolution of the professional orientation to public responsibilities, in particular civic engagement. The traditional commitments to serve the public are seen to have given way to more technical market-oriented approaches that emphasize the delivery of services on a contractual basis. The turn away from public commitments was challenged by progressive movements within a number of the major professions in the late 1960s and 1970s, but these efforts failed in part because of a problematic understanding of the relation of expert knowledge to the politics of community struggle and change. The chapter concludes by examining the less radical orientation that replaced the approach of these earlier movements, emphasizing newer forms of collaborative relations between citizens and experts.

Keywords: professions, policy expertise, technical knowledge, social movements, citizen participation, public responsibilities

The discussion in this chapter seeks to set the social and political context for an examination of professional policy expertise in a democratic society.[1] As such, it lays out the issues posed by professional expertise in general, which serve as a background for subsequent chapters. To begin, it is important to note that the topic of professional expertise is scarcely new in the social sciences. But most of the scholarship on the professions has been written from a sociological

perspective on occupations and work. In contrast to sociology, however, political science has largely ignored the professions (Dzur 2008). Despite the central role of professional expertise in the policy decision-making process, political scientists have traditionally considered this subject to fall outside their jurisdiction. There is thus little about the professions in the study of politics, although there have been some recent exceptions. The topic of policy expertise, if not the professions per se, has gained attention the field of public policy. It is increasingly recognized that as societies become more complex so does the importance of expert advice in matters related to governance. But professional expertise is also seen as a barrier to meaningful citizen participation. None of the more recent work, however, comes close to filling the gap in our understanding of the role of professional expertise **(p.18)** and its relation to the public realm. To help rectify this situation, it is important and useful to cast the question as part of a broader examination of the development of professional expertise in Western societies generally.

The modern professional society: From praise to critique

Western society has evolved as a "professional society" dominated by expert disciplines that speak to and regulate all aspects of contemporary life in Western societies.[2] Professional experts have a high degree of influence in most of the sectors of modern social systems; their skills are essential to the functioning of the complex institutions of industry, government, law, health care, and education, among others (Carr-Saunders and Wilson 1964). But this is not to imply that the professions are a relatively new phenomenon; the traditional professions emerged as part of the legacy of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Enlightenment in Europe, which called for the development of technical and social knowledge for human betterment (Tawney 1921; Perkins 1989). In the classical professions such as medicine and law, authority over the respective field is granted by the state through a process of licensing designed to ensure both competency and a commitment to act responsibly in the interests of those served (Friedson 1986).

A profession, as such, is an applied field founded on more fundamental sources of knowledge. The practice of medicine, for example, is based on the sciences of anatomy and physiology. A professional is thus someone who applies this particular body of knowledge, skills, and techniques to the problems confronting his or her clients. Today, professional associations and their practitioners leave few economic and social issues untouched. One measure of the significance of this development is found in the commonplace fact that the word "professional" is now so prominent that it is often used more simply to identify good conduct or practices.

The professions are thus the direct and indirect product of a long line of developments, moving from the Enlightenment in Europe through the Progressive Era in the United States to the modern administrative state in both

Europe and the US (Wagner 2006). In both parts of the world the professions emerged to deal with particular problems that relate to the application of knowledge to society, although the patterns have differed. **(p.19)** In Europe, the professions have evolved in close relation to the modern state and its institutions, often taking their identities from their service to these bodies. By contrast, they have developed in the US more as free standing bodies with a market relationship to their clients.

In continental Europe the professions grew up under the tutelage of the established institutions of church and state (MacDonald 1995: 66–99). As in the United States, modern European nations developed in response to both expanding economies and new state institutions. In both parts of the world scientific scholarship and professional expertise were embraced by the leading groups. But where the US has typically resisted the expansion of the state, European states have traditionally served as the carriers of collective purposes and values. In this respect, the state in Europe has a higher degree of relative autonomy than the American state. As such, European states have over centuries developed a core of institutions designed to deal with economic and social complexity. In the United States, this came only as late as the 1930, and even then in much weaker form. Since then, moreover, conservative groups have regularly sought to ensure that government remains weak.

From the late eighteenth century forward, European nations established new universities, or reoriented older ones to educate a new professional class: medical doctors, lawyers, religious pastors, career military officers, university professors, and civil servants; the latter group holding much higher status than their counterparts in the US. With great emphasis placed on higher education, typically elite education, the civil service in Germany, France, or Britain is widely considered a prestigious occupation and is sought after as a path to both social standing and economic security (MacDonald 1995). These public professions drew their authority more from the elite institutions and agencies that they served than to free standing associations and, as such, were “professions of office.” Still today, professional civil servants in Europe tend to identify themselves with state institutions and the universities closely related to those institutions.

By the end of the Second World War, the contemporary professions had emerged in full blossom. Talcott Parsons (1968), the leading sociologist of the time, spoke of a “professional complex” as the guiding model of the new techno-industrial society. Indeed, he sought to redefine or characterize modern Western society in terms of professionalism rather than capitalism; a discussion to which we return. Somewhat later, Daniel Bell (1960) wrote of the “end of ideology,” envisioning a new world in which the classic tensions between socialism and capitalism were beginning replaced by converging systems in **(p.20)** which the central questions became technical rather than political. Later Bell wrote of the coming of post-

industrial society which he described as a professional society. This was a society characterized as based on codified knowledge administered by professionals, who specialized in placing knowledge in larger applied contexts than do the scientists generating it.

The professions can be credited with fostering many important advances. About this there can be no doubt. Not only have they advanced the quality of life, they have been the carriers of particular social values. Because of the medical profession we live longer; because of the practice of law we can defend our basic political and social rights in court. Owing to the application of their skills for societal betterment, professionals have been the beneficiaries of high expectation and social trust on the part of the public. Professional practices, in short, have traditionally rested on a set of understandings about trust and good faith between the practitioners and the general citizenry. Where professions are formally licensed by the state, this compact may be quite explicit.

Despite their accomplishments, however, the professional experts have in recent decades confronted growing criticism (Rampton and Stauber 2001). This was especially the case in both popular and academic literatures in the 1980s and 1990s, although there is no sign that opinion has changed in the first decade of the new century. Often they have been accused of betraying their basic social responsibilities to society. Many complain that the professions have self-interestedly turned to earning money and perpetuating their own social status and power, a charge not taken lightly. Indeed, the classical professions, as licensed occupations, are legally accepted by governments and publics on the basis of their formal fiduciary responsibilities to protect and serve society at large. It is part of the bargain that grants them the power to practice in particular domains, medicine, law, architecture, and education being among the most important examples.

More specifically, the authority of professional expertise has been periodically challenged in the form of public protests against what is seen as self-serving and arrogant interventions in both public and private life. There is no shortage of examples to illustrate the point. They include concerns about chemical tests on unknowing citizens, doctors performing abortions, the genetic engineering of plants and animals, the irradiation of foods, the installation of hazardous waste incinerators, doctors denying their patients' wishes to die, professional educators busing children to distant neighborhoods, psychologists and social workers telling families how to raise their kids, lawyers helping corporations to hide excessive **(p.21)** earnings through illegal tax schemes, accountants fixing the books of business firms, journalists uncritically reporting the information that government supplies to them, and more.

In the case of the science-related professions, some of this might be associated with a larger techno-pessimism in modern society. Polls, in fact, show a large percentage of the adult population in Western societies to be skeptical about the increasing embrace of high technology and the professional emphasis on "technological fixes" to pressing societal problems, opposition to genetically modified foods being one of the most recent examples (Murphy and Levidow 2006). The percentage is even higher in Europe than in the United States, as documented by shelves of books, documents, and reports. Although open protests have tended to occur only sporadically, surveys show a steady decline in the public's confidence in and respect for the professions and their practices. This underlying lack of confidence is one of the primary reasons why otherwise isolated reports of professional malfeasance can excite dramatic displays of moral outrage.

The degree of intrusion of professional influence in modern social and political life has led many to express concern about an emphasis on status and gain over social responsibility. While the professions have traditionally been considered to be "competent, dependable, accountable, trustworthy, honest and loyal," as Berube (1996) put it, they are today seen by many as "arrogant, exclusive, self-serving, money-grubbing, careerists—and they purchase their status by discrediting everybody else as 'amateurs'." Ehrenreich (1989) similarly finds the professions to have become more the self-serving monopolies of particular services than forces for social equality and human betterment. The elitist, nonegalitarian, and often manipulatory tendencies of such experts and their methodologies have been a major focus of conferences, intellectual debates, and media discussions (Kanigel 1988; Evetts *et al*. 2006). Not only are they accused of lacking solutions relevant to the diverse range of interests in society as a whole, they have been charged with using their professional authority and methods to buffer economic and political elites against challenges from below. Professional experts, in short, have been portrayed as perpetuating, if not creating, many of the social injustices plaguing modern Western societies (Wineman 1984; McNeil 1987; Illich 1989). Radical critics frequently use phrases like "tyranny of expertise" and "conspiracy against society" (Lieberman 1972; Illich 1989).

In the professional disciplines, such charges have, to be sure, generated a good deal of concern. Alternative or movement-oriented professionals have commonly spoke of a "crisis of the professions" (Withhorn 1984). **(p.22)** Critics typically attribute these failures to overly technical and hierarchal conceptions of theory and practice. In the professional schools, this political strife has often centered on perceived normative and epistemological limitations, giving rise to demands for social and political relevance, most commonly defined as the pursuit of value-oriented, humanistic, and critical approaches to theory and practice (Schoen

1983; Fischer and Forester 1993). This has laid the groundwork for slowly but gradually emerging alternative practices in the professions.

For most of the critics the problem can be attributed, in one way or another, to the narrow forms of technical specialization that characterize professional education and practice (Fischer 2003). Because of the growing specialization, professionals neither learn much about broader social and ethical implications of their occupations nor are they earnestly counseled to take them seriously. Education related to social equality, ethics, and human betterment, if it emerges at all, is itself typically compartmentalized as part of the curriculum and thus not seen as part of the central concerns of professional activities as a whole. As a kind of compulsory add-on, such instruction takes a backseat to other more immediate practical issues. Fallows (1989) found this basic neglect of social and ethical values to not only create social inefficiencies, but also to reproduce and stabilize inequalities among the various groups in society. One clear manifestation of this was witnessed during the deregulatory climate of the 1980s, when lawyers and doctors rejected proposals to offset basic inequalities. Lawyers objected to an American Bar Association reform proposal requiring them to offset basic inequalities by engaging in pro bono work for fixed numbers of hours with those poorly served or neglected by the profession. Physicians, during the same period, rejected requests that they stop referrals to medical facilities in which they hold financial interests (Brint 1994). For those still ascribing a social trust to professions a social trust, the professionals are “in danger of losing their soul” in what one writer described as a “race to the bottom” (Caplan 1993: A29).”

For this reason, scholars, social movement activists, and professional reformers have at various times called for the reconstruction of the professions. The challenge, as they have advanced it, is a return to social responsibility and public commitment. Too often, though, the approach has been in the form of a moral appeal, missing the underlying technical and structural features that impede such change. To better grasp the nature of these barriers we need to look more specifically at the origins of the idea of the professional as “social trustee” and its evolution.

(p.23) From social responsibility to commerical practices

Professionalism, as an ideology and practice, has been advanced both in terms of technical skills and moral commitment. One the one hand, professions promise to engage in the competent exercise of skills based on complex, systematic knowledge obtained through formal training. On the other, they agree to be morally guided by an understanding of and commitment to socially accepted goals and the values upon which they rest. They also ask for the right to self-governance on the grounds that other groups are not qualified to judge either their knowledge and skills nor the exercise of their professional judgment. Professional activities, in short, are justified by the societal purposes to which

they are put. The British historian R. H. Tawney (1921: 92) captured the thrust of this in these words: professional practitioners such as doctors “may grow rich; but the meaning of the profession, both for themselves and for the public, is not that they make money, but that they make health, or safety, or knowledge, or good government, or good law…”

This social commitment of the professions has its origins in an earlier sense of *noblesse oblige* assimilated from the English gentry, which was often resistant—if not hostile—to the profit-oriented mentality of the entrepreneurial classes. The emphasis was on moral character, cultivated judgment, and social trust (Rothblatt 1968). Although these ideals were to erode under the influence of free-market capitalism, the idea of the professional as a “social trustee” remained important into the early twentieth century (Brint 1994).

Stress on moral character and social virtue was clearly present in the early American colonies as well, largely a legacy of British professional practices. Character was closely identified with class standing and the professions were mainly practiced by gentlemen. A portrait of this gentleman is also found in de Tocqueville's (1969: 264–7) writings about America in the 1830s. Taking Daniel Webster to be a model of such public virtue, Tocqueville saw the lawyer as an important professional figure holding together a society otherwise tending toward social fragmentation.

At roughly the same time that Tocqueville would write about his observations, however, the social status of the professions was beginning to suffer serious setbacks (Sullivan 1995). During the period of Jacksonian democracy, the idea that professions spoke for—or even should speak for—the public good fell out of favor. Given the politics of the era, focused on the “common man,” the legitimacy of the professions began to clash with the emerging values of both commercial entrepreneurship **(p.24)** and populist understandings of democracy. Jacksonian politics unleashed a considerable amount of hostility toward the ideal of leadership based on professional knowledge and judgment. After Jackson's presidential election, public opinion even turned openly against professionalism and its emphasis on education and merit. Against this new sense of egalitarianism, supported by the both ordinary citizens and small business entrepreneurs, the professions became the symbols of privileged elites and thus a direct object of this politics. Instead of wealth and money-making, special privileges became the objects of hostility and educational credentials were taken to be a form of privilege. So virulent was the reaction that many states ended the practice of licensing the professions.

The political implications of the period were most obvious in the public service. They were captured in the famous slogan “to the victors go the spoils,” which turned the civil service into a patronage system (van Riper 1958). In short, any citizen, it was argued, could do a government job and a constant turnover of

political appointees worked to prevent an entrenched, privileged bureaucracy. Although “muckraking” journalists targeted this practice in their challenge to the political “boss system” that dominated urban government later in the century, they made little headway with their reform efforts until a disgruntled office seeker shot President James Garfield. The public shock accompanying the shooting opened the way and gave impetus to the modern system of civil service testing and appointment based on educations and merit.

During the same period, professions such as medicine and law were compelled to look for new organizational practices. The new model was to take a commercial form, or what has been called the “free professions” (Sullivan 1995). So successful had been the Jacksonians in identifying individual economic opportunity with democracy that when institutionalized credentials and professions began their comeback at the end of the century, their advocates would justify the reassertion in terms of their utility for national economic progress rather than social trusteeship. Whereas earlier professionals had been judged as genteel, even inclined to purism, this new stress on applied technical expertise in the name of economic efficiency found legitimacy in both American and British culture. It was especially the case in the pragmatic, problem-oriented society of the United States.

In contrast to social trustee professionalism, “expert professionalism” needed no sharp distinction from business enterprise, and it required less separation from the idea of offering services for profit. One aspect of the complex movement toward expert professionalism therefore involved a **(p.25)** closer association between the major professions and business, along with the weakening of barriers to the pursuit of profit in competitive markets.

Professionalism in the progressive period: expertise as political ideology

Emphasizing technical expertise, the professions made a dramatic comeback in the latter part of the century, establishing themselves more and more on a national scale, especially in the United States. It is not that public responsibility or social trusteeship was dropped altogether, but it clearly took a backseat to an emphasis on technical expertise. By linking technical expertise to the impressive techno-industrial achievements of the time—from the spectacular constructions of modern engineering to the medical eradication of disease and the prolongation of life—the professions presented themselves as agents of the emerging industrial society (Wiebe 1967). Given that it was a period of considerable social chaos—resulting from vast immigration, and unregulated economic activity, the rapid emergence of the new and more monopolistic business corporation, and various social groups looking for protection against unregulated economic competition—the problematic societal consequences of the time led many to see the revitalization of technical expertise as a source of hope. In the context of an unruly, unregulated society, many social and political

groups believed that the technical expertise of the professions could provide the basis for far-reaching societal reforms.

Indeed, professional advice and practices, particularly of a technical nature, were often at the forefront of the Progressive Movement's efforts to find solutions to the growing problems that accompanied the industrial era. Basic to this period of American politics, the movement sought to position its reform agenda between the new corporation and the state via technical knowledge and professional skills based on educational credentials. It advocated techniques that its members believed could be employed to make industry more technically efficient and at the same time the economy more socially just.

In conjunction with this acceptance of the new corporate form of economic activity, professionalization itself took on new organizational dimensions. More and more the professions shed their earlier free-standing occupational status and tied themselves to organizations and institutions, often themselves becoming more managerial. This reflected in no small measure the ascent of scientific management, which emerged as one of the **(p.26)** hallmarks of the period. Influenced by the work of Frederick Winslow Taylor—the founder of scientific management and father of modern management studies more generally—efficiency became the reform gospel of the day (Hays 1964). Indeed, with assistance from movements such the Progressives, Taylorism spread throughout society. And as part of that phenomenon, the new organizational professionals often advanced themselves as experts in efficiency (Fischer 1990). Where many applied these techniques to private sector organizations, others in the new and emerging professions such as economics, social work, and public health applied their practices to public sector organizations. In the process, the rhetorical emphasis shifted from the man of knowledge and skill to the man who could apply the new techniques to get things done. It was, as Wiebe (1967) has argued, just the kind of orientation that the expanding techno-industrial order needed.

During this period, it is important to stress, the label of “profession” was extended beyond the traditional categories of medicine and law to new occupational groups. These new professions were more typically concerned with particular policy areas such as health, education, and social work. Described as the “weaker professions,” they generally concerned themselves with activities carried out in public organizations. Because they combine professional knowledge with the organizational criteria of the agencies for which they worked, they are generally not as independent as the stronger professions of medicine and law. In time, though, the management of organizations, both public and private, was itself to be considered a professional activity (not to mention that more and more doctors and lawyers began to work for organizations).

Part of what facilitated the appearance of the new managerially oriented professions was the dramatic specialization to which the industrial division of labor gave rise. Tasks were increasingly defined in narrower, technical terms. Another part was the profound shift in the modern university, especially the American university, to accommodate this new understanding of the relation of knowledge to problem-solving (Bledstein 1976). Drawing eclectically on practices of British, French, and German universities, especially the later, the focus was on advancing scientific research and the training of expert personnel based on it. Whereas the earlier more traditional universities mainly tended to educate upper class students (with learning and the pursuit of knowledge being presented for its own sake), the emphasis in the newer institutions shifted increasingly to problem-oriented training and appealed to the newly emerging middle classes. As the professional disciplines featured this more job related **(p. 27)** course of study, the middle classes flocked to them, given the upward career potentials they offered.

In the course of this development, US universities began to establish a new model for professional schools based on a standardization of curricula. Especially important were the new schools for the organizational professions, such as business management, public administration, social work, and public health. With these educational developments the professional orientation moved to center stage by mid-century. As Sullivan (1995: 58) puts it, “the new middle class of educated ‘knowledge workers’…was on the road to become a growing, confident, and successful sector of society, in particular more to the national system rather than local communities.” In this later respect, professionals become primary actors in this twentieth-century story, serving as bridges between the local communities and the national system—that is, as chief agents through which cosmopolitan values and practices would penetrate local life (ibid.: 60).

In the process, civic social responsibility increasingly became defined as making the capitalist system more fair and just. Given that social and economic problems abounded in nearly every sphere of American society, this concern was scarcely dismissed as capitalist ideology. But it was technocratic expertise rather than social engagement per se that was to show the way.[3] The organization and guidance of capitalism was to be made more managerial—then referred to as the “managerial revolution”—with management itself joining the ranks of the professions. The major institutional step designed to bring about this new commitment was the emerging graduate business school. The new professional managers would learn to combine scientific techniques with a new corporate social responsibility to society.

But not all of the emphasis was on the industrial system. Other Progressives emphasized public responsibility by stressing the social uplift of the lower classes, particularly through education (Haber 1964). Although they are best

known for their attacks on corrupt urban political machines and their uneducated immigrant supporters, they did not neglect the poor and down trodden. In addition to their new forms of technocratic governance, less than democratic in theory and practice, they sought to uplift the great unwashed by imbuing them with education. Often overlooked is the fact that the Progressive conception of public responsibility rested on a generally paternalistic understanding of service. In view of the class **(p.28)** struggle between the upper and middle classes against the lower classes that underlaid Progressive politics, the reformers sought to inculcate the poor with the values of the educated classes.

One of the most famous of the projects dedicated to this was the Settlement House movement, which sought to bring the middle and working classes together both socially and culturally. Settlement house social workers organized a range of uplifting educational and cultural activities, but rhetoric aside, democracy per se as such was not one of them. It is not a point that went unnoticed. Jane Addams, the famous settlement house leader and ardent advocate of democracy, expressed concern about the paternalistic attitudes that were behind the activities of many settlement houses (Knight 2006).

Without denying the value of many of these efforts, as she made clear, one of the regrettable results was more to show the enterprising poor how to escape the slums rather than deal with the problems of their urban environments per se. In this sense, civic-oriented professionalism under the influence of the Progressives accommodated itself to the values of dominant social and political elites.

Addams's friend and fellow reformer, John Dewey, also shared these concerns. Looking beyond the technocratic reforms of the period, Dewey called for new participatory forms of democratic governance. Indeed, he was worried more generally that the newly emerging technological society posed a serious threat to the very future possibility of a democratic public. He asked how the public could deal with the social and organizational complexities presented by a highly differentiated, technologically-driven society? Could citizens be adequately informed in such a social system? Could they participate in policy decision-making so obviously dependent on the knowledge of experts? The emerging society, increasingly defined as a mass society governed by economic and political elites, offered less and less political space for the individual citizen in the policy process. Moreover, the newly developing communications technologies all too easily facilitated political demagoguery, as made clear by the rise of European fascism.

The answer for Dewey was to rethink professional expertise, in particular that of the social scientists, educators, and journalists. As a counter to these trends, he called on them to do more than provide information for public decision-making and problem-solving. Beyond their traditional tasks, these professionals should

facilitate democratic deliberation and public learning. A democratic society, he argued, required a new cooperative division of labor between experts and citizens. On the technical front, **(p.29)** experts would empirically identify basic social needs and problems, as well as alternative solutions to address them. On the political front, citizens would democratically establish an agenda for dealing with these issues. To integrate the two processes, Dewey called for improvements in the methods and conditions of debate, discussion, and persuasion. The experts would have a special role in such deliberation, but it would take a different form. Instead of only rendering judgments, they would analyze and interpret them for the public. If experts, acting as teachers and interpreters, could decipher the technological world for citizens in ways that enabled them to make intelligent political judgments, the constitutional provisions designed to advance public over selfish interests could function as originally conceived.

The Progressive Movement died out after the First World War. But many of the ideas advanced by its advocates and the professionals to whom they had turned lived on and became important theoretical and political foundations of professionalism in subsequent decades. Among them, though, were neither Addams's emphasis on social commitment nor Dewey's call for participatory democracy. Instead the focus of the professional became increasingly technical. By the end of the Second World War, as Brint (1994) has pointed out, the idea of the professions as a status category became more and more disconnected from functions perceived to be central to the public welfare and more exclusively connected to the idea of expert knowledge. And, in just this regard, one of the most influential professional orientations today is that of the school of management, now prominently featured in the British and European academic landscape as well. Indeed, the phenomenon is global in nature; such schools, largely patterned after the American model, are to be found everywhere. Only in more recent times, in many ways thanks to the theorists of deliberative democracy, has Dewey's contribution been revitalized, a point to which we return in later chapters.

Post-industrial information society: Professionalism as technostructure

The experts of the Roosevelt New Deal of the 1930s, the so-called “Brain Trust,” played a major role in developing the welfare-regulatory system in the United States, a weaker form of that which was emerging in Britain as well (thanks to the Labor Government of that same period). Even more important during the 1940s was the role of scientists and other **(p.30)** professionals in the execution of the Second World War. These developments, taken together, gave shape to a new techno-industrial society which the leading sociologists in the 1950s and 1960s would depict as governed primarily by the professions. The professions had emerged as the dominant social institution; they were now central to the new techno-industrial society.

During the postwar years, there was a marked turn toward technocratic thinking among professionals. Besides Bell's (1960) “end of ideology,” Galbraith (1967) identified the “technostructure” of professional experts as increasingly guiding the corporation and the state. Price (1965) saw the rise of a “Scientific Estate” as posing worrisome political concerns for democratic governance, although on balance he was supportive of the development. Eulau (1977) spoke of the “skills revolution” giving rise to a “Consultative Commonwealth,” in which professional expertise would serve as the “solvent” for the political and social divisions of the new order. As he put it, reliance on professionals brings new “norms and modes of conduct” that become “acknowledged components of individual and collective choice-making at the level of both policy and administration.” These writers represent just a few of the theorists who have focused on the increasing importance of professional expertise in the Western postindustrial or information society.

Such ideas, moreover, did not just appear in the academic literature. They were also given expressions by leading politicians of the time. One of the most celebrated statements was a speech by President John Kennedy at Yale University. Kennedy argued that the tasks of government had transcended the more limited concerns of the traditional party orientations, namely liberalism and conservatism. As he put it, “the fact of the matter is most of the problems… that we now face are technical problems…” (Kennedy 1963). Another influential political writer at the time spoke of the “professionalization of reform” (Moynihan 1965). Indeed, this was the description applied to the President Johnson's “Great Society” of the 1960s, when policy professionals were generating and packaging the influential ideas that constituted the program of the Democratic Party.

If professionalism was celebrated during these years, its leading enthusiast was Talcott Parsons (1968), the dominant figure in sociology at the time. Parsons, as we already saw, spoke effusively of a “professional complex” guiding modern society. For him, the defining feature of the new postwar society was a shift from capitalism to professionalism. The latter, he argued, would work to alleviate the legitimacy problems confronting the economic corporation and the capitalist class. Toward this end, he **(p.31)** sought to re-emphasize the moral component of professionalism, although in the service of a particular economic formation. Indeed, Parsons argued that managerial capitalism was converging with professionalism. Both, he wrote, accepted the central importance of technical efficiency within relatively well-defined spheres of authority and competence; both were increasingly governed by general principles based on impersonal rules. As such, business was largely adopting the practices of professionalism, which was serving to soften—others would say conceal—business's overriding commitment to profit. By assimilating business to the “collectivity-centeredness” of the professions, and the social responsibility that accompanied it, Parsons

sought to provide a new legitimacy for the older established capitalist business class.

Parsons' conception of the professions' rigorous positivist science and codified knowledge was thus combined with a return moral character. Although his emphasis on moral character reads more like a normative prescription than an empirical description of professional practices, he saw the professional orientation giving rise to managerial social responsibility, a theme often intoned as well in the business literature of the time. Leading economics and business professors wrote extensively about the newly emerging corporation guided by socially responsible managers (Mason 1964). Parsons thus painted a picture of a new national elite drawn from a reoriented managerial business class, morally uplifted by and aligned with the professional classes generally. At the same time, the new class would take shape within a framework of concerns and commitments that broadly supported the imperatives of a managerially-oriented business society. While still bound by respect toward the established business class, the new professional-managerial class was portrayed as focused primarily on helping to expand the productivity of society rather than enhancing its own income. In short, the floundering legitimacy of the old business class was to be rejuvenated by uniting it with the knowledge and practices of the new class, that is by professionalizing it.

At best, though, this was a compromise between the newer claims of the professions and the more traditional ones of the old business elites. Gouldner (1979) described it as a backward looking compromise based on the assumption that the old class still had a future, and that its problem was one of legitimacy. Independent of the fate of the old class, Gouldner was correct to see Parson's theory as a professional ideology glossing over the professionals own self-seeking character as a status group with vested interests, thus ideologically romanticizing both the old and new classes. Moreover, Gouldner argued that Parsons ignored the tensions between the **(p.32)** old and new classes and the ways in which the new class ideology of professionalism tacitly subverts old class legitimacy by grounding itself in a moral collective orientation, scientific knowledge and problem-solving skills. Missing was the profit-pursuing egoism of the old class.

By the late 1960s, however, the debate took another turn with the rise of the student movements across elite universities in the United States and Europe. While Parsons was busy lecturing on the stabilizing role of the university system in American society, the students at many of these very universities were taking over their administrative offices and demanding social change. Fundamental to their critique was the kind of narrow, career-oriented training offered by the professional schools. For many students, the critique represented an articulation of their own personal experiences and more than a few of them turned to social movements and other projects dedicated to rethinking the role of knowledge and

the practices of professional expertise. In doing so, they emphasized the values of social equality and political democracy over the instrumental rationality and organizational imperatives of the techno-industrial system for which they were otherwise being trained to serve. It was an attitudinal shift that many of them brought into the professions themselves.

Activist professionals: Advocacy and deprofessionalization

In the latter part of the 1960s, and into the 1970s, there were an array of efforts on the part of activist professionals to work out alternative models of practice aimed more specifically at promoting social justice and democratic participation, particularly among the poor. Many of them were products of the social turmoil of the period, having been radicalized by the protest movements on university campuses. Those who entered one of the professions often brought their political concerns to the workplace, the result of which was a blossoming of activism within the various fields. While there were differing approaches to activism in the various professions, these efforts were particularly prominent in the fields of medicine, law, public health, urban planning, education, and social work. Many young professionals in these fields, affected by the social activism of the day—the civil rights movement, the anti-Vietnam War struggle, the woman's movement, and environmentalism—became political spokespersons for the poor and disadvantaged minority groups. In some cases medical doctors joined hospital picket lines, lawyers got themselves arrested, social workers helped unions organize disruptive **(p.33)** strikes, and urban planners assisted radical community activists, all activities otherwise seen as unbecoming to the members of the professions.

Organizations such as Health/Pac, the Lawyers' Guild, Planners for Equal Opportunity, and the Planners Network challenged the standard models of professional practices, particularly the emphasis on personal detachment, social status, and financial gain. Basic, in this regard, was a critique of the narrow focus on technical knowledge, purported to be value-neutral. The professions were criticized as impediments to progressive social change. In response, various universities set up curricular activities that directly and indirectly supported and advanced these new orientations. Law Schools, for example, established urban legal clinics that offered students opportunities to gain experience working with the poor and underprivileged.

It was a period defined in part by the redefinition of services as rights, by demands for community participation, local control, and efforts to radically transform the delivery and outcomes of social and medical services (Hoffman 1989). A representative statement from a California health project asserted that “the responsibility of the health professional goes beyond the provision of health services to political action: to obtain and insure the right to adequate health care for all members of the society; to provide programmes which extend adequate health care; to recognize and oppose those aspects of society which prevent

provision of adequate health care; to eliminate those conditions which destroy life and health" (cited in Hoffman 1989: 47). The free clinic movement was offered as the radical health alternative.

From within the ranks of the professions, both practitioners and academics attempted to bring about change by exhorting their colleagues to examine the ways their practices contributed to the inequalities of the larger social system of which they themselves were a part. Toward this end, they adopted an advocacy role. As Davidoff (1965) contended, the increasing movement toward advocacy planning in the name of poor people was an important advance in extending the planning process to include those previously unrepresented. They sought, as such, to incorporate the poor into the market of services by giving technical aid. Some argued for empowering the community by transferring professional knowledge to the citizens themselves. Beyond teaching people how to read maps, planners needed to help citizens "overcome the awe of professionalism, and develop the ability to question 'professional advice' and demand relevant explanations in place of technical language, and responsiveness from government agencies" (cited in Hoffman 1989: 83). Other pressed their **(p.34)** professional establishments—in particular schools of professional education and national associations—to fulfill their stated commitments to service.

Beyond the radicalism of the period, these professional challenges were driven by postwar federal interventions in professional training, research, and service delivery that generated contradictions in the functions and practices of the professions. Of particular importance were the interventions triggered by the anti-poverty programs of the 1960s. Prior to this period, the professions were sometimes accused of class bias, racist practices, and self-interest. But the expansion of professional services as part of the welfare state required turning many of the victims of these practices into clients. In the process, confrontations with low-income and minority groups became difficult to avoid. In so far as unequal treatment was structurally built into professional practices, these new associations created external demands for change and, at the same time, dissent within professionals on the part of the newly minted activist professionals (Hoffman 1989).

In response to the War on Poverty many young doctors demanded better medical care and service for their patients. Their legal counterparts set up law clinics to help people fight for their rights, some of them working out a new "critical legal theory." Radicalized city planners sought to help the poor revitalize their ghetto neighborhoods with the assistance of federal monies such as those provided for by the Model Cities program. Teachers developed innovative programs to help disadvantaged urban children cope with the problems of the ghetto. Social workers explored new ways of dealing with urban crime and delinquency. And so

on. Such efforts often involved a mix of alternative services, public demonstrations, and other direct political activities.

An important part of this orientation was an empowerment strategy that emphasized process as much as outcomes. Professionals were being criticized as bureaucratic actors working in agencies that served the dominant interests of an unequal society. Professionalism, in the process, came to be seen as part of a system of dominance and dependence; it was the culprit and deprofessionalization was seen to be the solution. In this view, the problem confronting the poor and minorities was a not lack of experts and services, but rather the dysfunctional, inhibiting power of the professional bureaucracies that were established to provide them. The alternative role of the activist was to mobilize these client communities by transferring expertise in ways that assisted them in taking control over their own affairs. Some spoke of democratizing service delivery.

(p.35) Connected to this strategy was a radical critique of society designed to inform strategies for changing the economic and political requirements of a capitalist society. The activist solution was to create a political movement for system-wide change. In some cases, it involved workplace organizing; in others it involved creating an intellectual cadre that worked to demystify and politically educate workers and clients. Particularly important was an effort to make transparent the technocratic character of the knowledge claims advanced by traditional professional approaches. The technical knowledge base of the various professions was portrayed as ideological; its applications were described as supporting—wittingly or unwittingly—the existing political-economic system seen to be responsible for the problems in need of amelioration.

Arguing that the poor and disadvantaged needed better and more equitable services, the activists saw the issue to be more a matter of sociopolitical orientation than the mainstream emphasis on technical knowledge and practices per se. Viewing professional knowledge itself as part of the problem, as Hoffman (1989) explains, they depicted it as a constraint on their efforts to address the issues posed by inequality. The problem, they argued, was lodged in the institutional and societal arrangements that both defined and managed these problems. Not only did technical knowledge fail to address these structural issues, even worse, it served and supported them—namely, the institutions of the very system that was the problem. As they began to more directly engage in efforts to change the social system itself, they thus attacked the knowledge bases of their own professional associations, accusing their members at the same time of adopting an overly narrow and often self-serving view of the problems of their clients. They were, in short, roundly chastised for advancing their own professional interests over the needs of those they were supposed to be helping.

In taking this political stance, the activists increasingly adopted the role of client advocates and, in many cases, community organizers. This, however, proved to be more problematic for this new cadre of professionals than it first appeared. It wasn't so much that they had difficulties developing the critique, but rather that it generated unanticipated consequences. The effort to weaken or transform the professions, in short, proved to be self-limiting. The undermining of the image and quality of professional knowledge claims worked unexpectedly to weaken their own base of authority. They discovered that dismissing their specialized knowledge tended to undercut their own status and legitimacy with the communities they sought to assist. As it turned out, the communities **(p.36)** wanted the technical knowledge and were less interested in having outside groups advocate their causes for them (Hoffman 1989).

This resulted in a precarious position that was to ultimately fail. On the one hand, members of the community started to view these professional activists as emerging political leaders seeking to intervene in struggles that belonged to the community. Unexpectedly, many local leaders argued that what they needed was the technical advice of the professional, rather than a new set of activists. They often defined the problem in terms of power and decision-making. In this view, the activists were seen as outsiders seeking to assume a political role that was unwanted. Community leaders wanted medical treatment and representation in the courtroom for local residences, but preferred that they themselves made their own social and political decisions. At the same time, they were being roundly denounced by their professional associations for criticizing the technical knowledge and practices of the field, the very things that otherwise would give them standing in the community. This left them adrift in a kind of no-man's land. Without the claim that they had important professional skills to bring to bear on community problem solving, and being rejected by professional associations, they lost their basis of legitimate authority. Without it, they were just another set of political activists seen to be competing with the communities own political activists.

Working within the system: Civic renewal, health, and environment

Activist professionalism, as such, died out. The reasons are various, but clearly an important one was the tensions between the communities and the activist professionals. Also important, the monies that made such activities possible began to dry up with the changing political climate beginning in the 1970s, a process that accelerated through the 1980s. As conservative governments assumed power, they quickly shut off these sources of funds and called for more traditional political and technocratic approaches to governance. This is not to say that there were no more alternative projects, but those who organized them tended to be less strident, seeking more moderately to draw lessons from the past in developing new alternatives. In the process, the focus of a new breed of civic activists also tended to shift away from advocacy and an emphasis on social

equality to democratic participation and deliberation on the part of the citizens themselves.

(p.37) While radical activists still exist in the professions, their activities are today a marginal endeavor in the larger picture. There are, however, a number of interrelated experiences that suggest that if or when another wave of such commitment comes back, it will be able to draw on a variety of collaborative experiences that could contribute to revitalizing a publicly oriented set of professional practices. Among the most important of these efforts have been the movements in civic renewal during the 1990, especially in community health, environmentalism, and journalism. As civically oriented journalists have developed the most elaborate, self-conscious theory and practice for public engagement, we take their activities separately in the next section.

The civic renewal movement has in large part emerged from citizens initiatives, although professional assistance has often facilitated their activities. This new relationship between citizens and experts has emerged from a more sober assessment of the earlier radical experiences of the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, Sirianni and Friedland (2001) show this to be the result of a broadly gauged social learning process involving groups across the country based on the collection, interpretation, and assimilation of successes and failures. This social assessment and the political knowledge drawn from it, as they show, have given rise in various ways to a new civic oriented movement. Shedding much of the radical activism of the earlier period, the emphasis shifted to a more cautious but yet innovative strategy of building *within* the system. Absent is the more explicit emphasis on societal transformation; in its place the basic self-propagated values of the system are stressed, democracy in particular. Driven more by the middle classes than the poor and their leaders, social equity is still an issue but the focus has shifted more to citizen engagement. Participatory democracy is still the goal, but it is no longer *radical* participatory democracy. Now it is much more closely geared to the specific tasks of community-building. As such, the movement bases its legitimacy on its effort to fulfill the political system's own unfulfilled commitments to local self-governance. In this sense, its advantages are also its limitations. Without denigrating these efforts, they focus more on reforming liberal capitalist democracy rather than changing it in more fundamental ways, to which we return later in the book.[4]

(p.38) The number of activities across the country, many sponsored by major nonprofit foundations, are too numerous to discuss in any systematic way. But it is important to take note of some of these innovations in community development, health, and environmental protection. In community development, the Community Development Corporations of the 1980s and 1990 built on lessons from the Federal Community Action and Model Cities programs of the 1960s, which emphasized “maximum feasible participation” and facilitated much of the advocacy professionalism in urban planning during that period. As

Sirianni and Friedland explain (2001), it became clear in the 1970s and 1980s that the knowledge base for policy to promote the development of social capital and community problem-solving was poorly developed. Protest politics and radical community participation, in short, were not enough, a realization that led to a period of learning and capacity building. Although the federal government had withdrawn much of its money, the period saw many new collaborative efforts to rethink old strategies and to innovate new ones, thanks in significant part to philanthropic organizations that stepped in to supply resources. Just to mention a few of the kinds of new programs that emerged, John Kretzmann and John McKnight (1993) at Northwestern University developed an “assets–based approach” that offered a broad inventory of effective practices, along with an institute to assist communities in identifying their resources. Kenneth Reardon (1997), then at the University of Illinois, forged cooperative relationships between the planners at the university and community members in East St. Louis in what came to be a model for new forms of cooperative community development. Norman Krumholz, former director of the Cleveland Planning Commission and later president of the American Planning Association, developed and locally introduced an innovative model of “equity planning” based on trust building strategies among community groups, political officials, and agency planners (Krumholz and Clavel 1994). Many similar activities were supported by nonprofit foundations such as the Pew Charitable Trusts, particularly by the foundation's program for “Partners in Civic Change” (Sirianni and Friedland 2001).

Community health also experienced dramatic changes over the subsequent decades (Sardell 1988). Moving away from the medical activism of the 1960s, community groups and health networks generated a range of participatory innovations, organized around community health centers delivering medical care for the poor. Emerging from the Community Action Program of the 1960s, federally funded Health System Agencies promoted citizen participation in health planning in communities across **(p.39)** the US. The Health Decisions movement in Oregon, for example, institutionalized civic deliberation about basic health values before the practice spread to other states; and the healthy communities movement, emphasized participation and self-help approaches in areas such as AIDS prevention, disability, woman's health, and independent living for the elderly (Sirianni and Friedland 2001). Although there are numerous differences among these programs, they have typically brought together community members and professionals to deliberate and plan health decisions. In one health community initiative, for instance, health practitioners identify and develop leaders from the community who can define their own problems, assume ownership of strategies, including coalition building, policy and media advocacy. According to one official programmatic statement, “In many ways the practitioner's function is to produce community organizers.” It is “not to ‘do’, but to ‘enable.’ ” Health professionals “serve as facilitators while

the community does the work." As Sirianni and Friedland (2001: 170) sum up their investigation of these efforts, they involve "a health reform process that educates citizens…as well as health care professionals and nonprofessional employees who will collaborate in building healthy communities." These sustained public discussions help citizens learn about "the social determinants of health, the limits of medicine, and the deeper civic, cultural, and religious traditions and assets that can be mobilized through shared public work." It challenges them to move beyond a narrow consumer orientation to medical care.

In environmental protection "civic environmentalism" emerged as a project to bring together citizens and experts to monitor environmental matters at the community level (John 1994). Combined with the "environmental justice" movement, originated in black and minority communities, the success of such efforts convinced the US Environmental Protection Agency to establish an office of community liaison that sponsors similar projects across the country (Foreman 1998). In many of these projects citizens and professional experts work together to monitor particular levels of degradation, including watersheds, environmental habitats of diverse species, forest protection, and toxic wastes. Especially important in the case of toxic hazards has been the development and use of "popular epidemiology." In this approach citizens learn to do their own research in the areas in which they live. With the assistance of trained scientists, they design research strategies, collect data through a variety of methods, make the results known, and discuss them in public fora (Brown 1990).

(p.40) We find in these illustrations a more system-oriented approach, working with the institutions rather than challenging them directly as was the case in the 1960s. Professionals and their skills are involved but they are usually not *the* driving force. These efforts emerge more typically from community groups, which seek to draw on professional skills as needed. In a sense, this corresponds to earlier community demands, although the transition was scarcely smooth. If local citizens were to learn to get more involved in the renewal of their own communities, a good deal of that has taken place. The professionals are now there as facilitators and educators assisting them along the way. But here again, this does not involve all professionals. It is mainly the work of a smaller number who recognize the need for social change and have committed themselves out of a sense of civic responsibility.

These three sketches scarcely exhaust the discussion of new civic activities involving professionals. To this list we can add the efforts on the part of lawyers and psychologists to develop alternative dispute resolution procedures, a restorative justice movement innovated by criminal justice professionals, deliberative consensus conferences and citizens juries designed by policy oriented social scientists, deliberative polling developed by political scientists, and the bioethics movement by applied ethicists (some of which we return to in following chapters). But most important for present purposes is public

journalism, which has gone furthest to offer both a theory and practice for democratic professionalism. For this reason, we single out public or civic journalism (depending whose terminology one uses) for a somewhat more detailed discussion in the next section.

Public journalism and social responsibility: Facilitating citizen engagement and public deliberation

An especially important professional commitment to social responsibility in recent years has been the public or civic journalism movement (Sirianni and Friedland 2001; Haas 2007). Advanced by reform-oriented journalists, the movement represents one of the most impressive attempts by professionals to work cooperatively with citizens, in this case readers, listeners, and viewers. Beginning with a controversial set of experiments in the early 1990s, some of which were funded by the Pew and Kettering foundations, public journalism has been a part of the activities of many newspapers, radio, and television stations an effort to establish a more **(p.41)** democratic relationship with their publics. Practiced by journalist in numerous parts of the US and in other places around the world, its practitioners have developed both a theory and set of practices aimed at facilitating citizen engagement and public deliberation (Schaffer and Miller 1995; Friedland and Nichols 2002).

In terms of theory, they advance the view that engagement should be part of the journalist's role in a democratic society (Rosen 2001). At its core is the belief that journalists have a responsibility to public life—a special obligation that extends beyond just reporting the factual news (Merritt 1998). Journalism and democracy are seen to function at best when the media offer more than a portrait of the dominant culture and the issues as its representatives define them. When citizens are encouraged and assisted to move beyond political consumers of the news, it is argued, they can become full-scale participants in political society (Public Journalist Network, http://pjnet.org). Journalism, in this view, has a strong impact on how citizens see themselves and their environment, which, in turn, significantly influences whether or not they engage in the kinds of civic life essential to a democratic society. Public journalists, in short, reject the idea that their readers are mere audience in political and social processes and seek to help them find ways to become active citizens. The press should transformatively engage their readers through spirited engagement of the civic issues that influence their own lives. As part of an effort to increase a community's social capital, readers and other community members are engaged as cooperative participants in the gathering and reporting of the news.

Newspapers and their journalists, as Perry (2003) writes, are thus situated “as activist participants in community life, rather than detached spectators.” In the process, the newspaper or television becomes a forum for collaborative discussion and debate of community issues and problems, which sometimes take place as a town meeting in places like the community center or local library.

Some see this public journalism partnership as an adversarial form of activism in which journalists drop their independence to put forth the specific interests of the community (Hoyt 1995). This is surely true in many cases, but the specific interests are in large part those expressed by the citizens with whom they engage.

Although many traditional journalists have accused public journalists of violating the established canons of objective reporting, they reply that their emphasis on lay participation and public involvement strengthens rather than weakens objectivity and fairness. They contend, in this regard, that the social trustee model of professionalism no longer works when **(p.42)** journalists become pressured or driven by market forces. Where journalism becomes a business, largely the standard model today, journalists are compelled to trade the public interest for the narrower concerns of the media owners and the business community. Under such circumstances traditional understandings of objectivity and independence only prove to be a guise for bias. (Typically they point to the very narrow framing of political issues in US journalism, particularly in the so-called “horse-race” coverage of American electoral politics that often takes the form of public entertainment.) The movement, so argue public journalists, is an effort to extend the news and the discussion of it to include a wider range of social and political interests in an effort to reintroduce objectivity and fairness.

With regard to specific practices, public journalism begins with a process of “public listening” (Charity 1995). The approach is to listen to the issues and concerns on the minds of the community members with whom they are working. Carried out through collaborative discussions to elicit the problems confronting the community, what the issues and options are, and how people think they might be dealt with, these “community conversations” involve different journalists focusing on different issues. As a rule, the meeting times and lists of events are published in advance in an effort to help a large number of participants make plans for attending.

The aim of this practice is related to a second task of civic education (Dzur 2008). The goal here, as Charity (1995: 2) puts it, is “to make it as easy as possible for citizens to make intelligent decisions about public affairs and to get them carried out.” Toward this end, public journalists also seek to move beyond the immediacy of the current news cycle and prepare longer stories that provide more depth and insight into the issues at hand. Here, as Dzur (2008: 159) writes, such journalists “are not responding to the immediate wants of their readers so much as what the journalist consider to be their readers' long-term interests as citizens.” Both of these practices, listening and civic education, provide the substantive context for public deliberation.

Public deliberation, the most controversial aspect of this new journalistic role, is designed stimulate civic engagement. The basic task is to provide fora in which members of the community can deliberate and debate the problems and solutions identified during the public listening phase. In the process, the journalist serves as moderator and catalyst for the exchanges. One the one hand, the role of the moderator is to give citizens an unmediated form in which ordinary citizens can meet and talk about their own views in their own vernaculars. On the other, the role of catalyst is to stimulate informed discussions. As Rosen (1996: 55) writes, when **(p.43)** public journalists convene community meetings they "are to act not merely as facilitators but as cultivators as of civic dialogue," which he defines as holding the participants "to a respectable standard of discourse." It should be "a dialogue that can bring together citizens across economic and social divisions in an effort to find and combine common interests."

For some, this worrisomely means that journalists can end up providing their readers and viewers with the news that they themselves think the citizen should know. A tension can arise here, as Dzur (2008: 243) points out, between the role of moderating a community forum and informing the participants about both the important issues and the ways they should talk about them. The moderator's role "assumes that citizens voices must be heard along with official and expert voices" while the catalyst role "assumes that these voices must be informed and trained." This later role can provide a fair amount of guidance, sometimes into the considerations of what is important and what is not. Dzur (2008: 160) thus sees the need for establishing "standards of public engagement to determine what projects are suitable for the organizational capacity of news firms and the role of the journalist in a democracy." Indeed, the establishment of such standards of engagement would seem to be a fundamental task for democratic professionalism generally. Public journalists have so far tended to avoid this issue, mainly arguing that their practices are still evolving and that it is too early in the experimental stages to nail down specific methods and procedures. The position is understandable, but it is a task that should begin to make its way onto the agenda.

At this point, it is fair to judge these methods and practices of public journalists as an exemplary illustration of a profession engaging its public more democratically. Nothing would seem to come closer to the kind of professional reorientation that Dewey called for in the early decades of the twentieth century, namely the professional as facilitator of public learning and democratic deliberation.[5] Beyond helping citizens to engage the issues, however, one further question remains. Some see the need to democratize the professions themselves. Speaking of "democratic professionalism," they seek to take the project further —indeed, a dramatic step further—by calling for the democratization of the practices through which professionals go about assisting their clients. Can professionals, for **(p.44)** example, democratize their own relationship to citizens

and what would be the practical consequences? Should they do it? And if so, what would this involve? We turn to this question in the final section of the chapter.

Democratizing professional expertise?

When we speak of a new democratic role for the professions in a democratic society, how then should we understand the relationship? Are we talking mainly about a more elaborate effort on the part of professionals in helping citizens participate in the decisions that affect their lives? Or are we speaking even more fundamentally about democratizing professional expertise as well (Liberatore and Functowicz 2003)? More recently, in this regard, Dzur (2008) has called for a new “democratic professionalism.”

This work shies away from calling for the democratization of the professions. It does so for a number of reasons related to the nature of the professions themselves. For one thing, if the professions were to contribute more directly to democratic participation, public deliberation in particular, this would only involve one aspect of what the professions do. Professions provide a wide range of services that have little to do with democracy, from diagnosing illnesses, assessing the durability of physical infrastructure, and advising clients in personal matters, and the like. Such activities do not require public participation and would not be, most would argue, the better for it. The term “democratic professionalism” thus seems inappropriate for professionalism generally. Others, of course, will argue that we don't live in a participatory society. This criticism, while valid, is less problematic, as the goal is to help bring about a more participatory society. Another argument, one with more traction, has to do with establishing a special relationship between the professions and democracy generally. Why, many will ask, should professionals have such a role in something that belongs to everyone?

While the democratization of the professions can sound attractive from the perspective of participatory democratic theory, it tends to redefine professional activities in terms of a theory rather removed from traditional understandings of professional functions. Given that many professional tasks do not lend themselves to democratic practices, Sullivan's (1995; 2004) concept of ‘civic professionalism’ would seem more appropriate. In his conceptualization, emphasis is placed on public responsibility than a specific understanding of democracy. As such, it is more geared **(p.45)** to serving the public good than facilitating political participation per se. In this regard, it nicely resonates with the civic renewal movement. It includes democratic participation, but is not limited to it. As a public good, participation stands alone side of other public values, social justice in particular.

In the view adopted here, a strong democracy would not require participatory discussion of every issue. But it should include open deliberation about which

decisions should be dealt with democratically and which need not. No decision would be taken for once and all. Every decision not to debate an issue could be reopened whenever those affected deem that to be appropriate. In significant part, the decision to deliberate or delegate would depend on the nature of the issue or problem itself. In some cases, traditional patterns of expertise may be fully consistent with the nature of particular forms of problem-solving. In other cases, problem-solving might be collaborative but not altogether democratic. Recognizing these aspects of problem-solving would seem to increase the chances that professionals might take an interest in more democratic approaches to dealing with their respective problems. Toward this end, democratic deliberation is understood here to be one—but only one—of the important practices—involved in a more general task of reconstructing the public responsibilities of the professions, which would also include such things as assisting the poor with health care, financial assistance, and legal services. In the case of many client-oriented practices, this would involve deliberative consultations, but not necessarily be democratic per se. In the public realm, it would be mainly restricted to those aspects of their respective professional practices that directly affect the public generally, matters affecting public policy. From this perspective, as an effort to facilitated democratic practices, expertise would be judged as politically legitimate when it supplied the full range of participant s clear and transparent advice open to discussion.[6]

Given that most professionals are not well-suited by either training or task orientations to carry out public deliberation, there is a need for a more specialized role for such public deliberative practices. In view of the importance of the objective for a democratic society, it makes little sense to focus the role on professions that actually have little time—and probably interest—in carrying it out. This would most likely insure the failure of such a project from the outset. For this reason, the approach follows **(p.46)** Dewey's lead and seeks to establish a new professional role for the social scientist, including social-scientific specializations such as urban planning, public health, public administration, social work, education, and journalism, given their direct relation to public discourse. This would not rule out the possibility of other professions participating in this task. But when it comes to facilitating public deliberation, the professional practices of social-scientific groups seem to be more suited to the kinds of activities involved.

This is not to suggest that the social sciences have thus far had a particularly good record in facilitating democracy. Although better equipped to deal with this role than are doctors, lawyers, or architects, the mainstream social sciences have themselves not been that sympathetic to a strong conception of democracy. By and large, they have tended to support a more elitist form of democracy. It is important, in this regard, to be clear that the task is to create a new role. For this reason, the role needs to become a research topic unto itself. Such research has to begin with the fact that advanced Western countries such as the United

States, Britain, France, or Germany are not as participatory as they might be; despite all of the rhetoric about democracy we still need to learn how deliberative democratic politics might or might not work. One emerging model for this would be the public policy mediator developed by urban planners. Although dispute mediation itself is not democratic public deliberation, given its narrower emphasis on conflicts of interest, the role of the mediation practitioners could be restructured to serve as a model for developing a broader professional practice of public democratic deliberation.[7]

Democratic political theory, particularly its contemporary emphasis on deliberative democracy, would provide one foundation for the development of this role. But so also would recent research and experimentation with deliberation, as well practical work in citizen participation. Coupled with the contributions of the social constructivist understanding of knowledge and the argumentative approach to policy analysis, these lines of investigation open considerable room for innovation. They constitute an interrelated set of experiences and findings for rethinking the public **(p.47)** dimensions of professional expertise. In the follow chapters, the discussion attempts to bring them together in a productive dialogue.

Conclusion

The chapter has examined the central role of the professions in modern society, along with the critique of contemporary practices. The critique, as we saw, focused on the failure of the professions to make good on their role as social trustees. In this regard, the discussion examined the evolution of the tensions between the professions' early nineteenth century promises of civic responsibility and their twentieth century turn to a commercial orientation emphasizing technical knowledge. The focus then turned to some of the primary alternative efforts to develop alternative practices. It outlined the radical alternatives to established professional practices in the 1960s, and 1970s, in particular the attempts on the part of young professionals to speak on the behalf of the poor and disadvantaged. It concluded with a discussion of the more reform-oriented collaborative approaches that followed in the in the 1980s and 1990s.

Throughout, the underlying question has been whether or not the primary professional associations can make good on their earlier promise of social responsibility. And if so, what might the methods and practices be that could support it? While we have bits and pieces that suggest an emerging outline of some of them, there is still no organized body of knowledge or commitment in the professions to address these issues. Much of what follows thus continues to pursue this question. Following the lead of Dewey's earlier commitment to both participatory democracy and the development of a more normative conception of the social and policy sciences, the focus is on one important aspect of such a

project—namely, the challenge of assisting citizens to understand and deliberate public problems, both their own and those of the larger society a whole.

This book offers no program for civic professionalism per se; this is something that should better emerge in the context of practical experiences. But it does seek to address and workout various issues, particularly procedures and methods, that would be central to that effort. Toward this end, we turn next to a discussion of citizen participation, exploring both its potentials and limitations. After that, continuing this line of inquiry, Part I closes with an examination of the theory of deliberative democracy and practical deliberative projects such as citizen juries and consensus conferences.

Notes:

(1) There is no one firm definition of expertise. In general, it refers to a widely acknowledged source of reliable knowledge, skill, or technique that is accorded status and authority by the peers of the person who holds it and accepted by member of the larger public. The expert is a well-informed person, skilled in a particular field of knowledge or practice. He or she is distinguished from the less experienced novice (see Ericsson *et al*. 1991, 2006).

(2) Especially important here has been the path-breaking work of Michael Foucault, whose historical and sociological research has revealed the deep-rooted “disciplinary power” of expertise and its role in the shaping and guidance of modern society.

(3) Technocratic expertise refers to an emphasis or reliance on technical knowledge as basis for decisionmaking and governance (Fischer 1990).

(4) This does not always mean that these newer activists have a less critical view of capitalist democracy. Some would rather emphasize a different theory and strategy for achieving more fundamental changes. Rather than radically confronting the institutions, as they argue, they seek change through them.

(5) It should be noted that after the several major US news syndicates that gave public journalism it's major push discontinued their support, the practice is no longer as extensive in the country as it was. This, however, in ways undercuts the validity of the model and the theory on which is based.

(6) To use Jasanoff's (2003: 160) words, expertise would be legitimate when carried out in a way “that makes clear its contingent, negotiated character,” leaving “open the door to critical discussion.”

(7) A conference sponsored by the urban studies program at MIT in 2005 explored the relationships between dispute resolution and deliberative democracy. Bringing together both dispute mediators and political theorists, the discussions largely demonstrated the distance between these two different

concerns, one practical and the other theoretical. While some of the dispute mediation participants had hoped to display their methods as a contribution to deliberative democracy in action, the argument was rather roundly rejected by the political theorists who argued that a focus on interests and stakeholders was too narrow to constitute a genuine theory of public deliberation, let alone deliberative democracy.