NEW PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIOLOGY

Edited by John Wakeford

This series provides an opportunity for young sociologists to present original material and also to summarise and review critically certain key themes and controversies in their subject. All the authors are experts in their own field and each monograph not only provides in an accessible form stimulating ideas for the specialist but also represents in itself a significant personal contribution to the discipline.

Students of sociology will find the series invaluable. For non-specialists the monographs provide a clear and authoritative insight into the concerns and perspectives of the modern sociologist.

Other titles in the series

Published

Colin Campbell: Toward a Sociology of Irreligion

David Chaney: Processes of Mass Communication

Bob Jessop: Social Order, Reform and Revolution

Jennifer Platt: Social Research in Bethnal Green

Barry A. Turner: Exploring the Industrial Subculture

In preparation

David Marsland: Contemporary Sociology Theory

H. Ticktin: Studies in the Social Structure of the U.S.S.R.

David Weir: Theory Workshop

The Sociology of the Professions

PHILIP ELLIOTT

Centre for Mass Communication Research,
University of Leicester

Macmillan Education

© Philip Elliott 1972

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 1972

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced
or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without permission.

First published 1972 by

THE MACMILLAN PRESS LTD

London and Basingstoke

*Associated companies in New York Toronto
Dublin Melbourne Johannesburg and Madras*

SBN 333 10215 0

ISBN 978-1-349-00713-4

ISBN 978-1-349-00711-0 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-00711-0

For my mother

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	ix
1 Introduction	1
2 The Development of the Professions in Britain	14
An Historical Perspective – The Emergence of Separate Professions – Social Status of Pre-Industrial Professions – Other Occupational Groups and the Guild System – Patronage and Professional Recruitment – Professional Expertise and Professional Education – The Change from Status to Occupational Professions – The Case of Medical Practice – Change in Other Professions – Professional Education, Examinations and the Education System – The Professions in Industrial Society	
3 Selection, Recruitment, Education and Training	58
Professional Income and Prestige – The System of Social Selection – Recruitment to the Professions – Occupational Choice/Occupational Commitment – Issues in Professional Education – The Military Academy as a Socialising Institution – The Study of Professional Socialisation	
4 Professional Practice	94
The Idea of Professionalism – The Settings for Professional Practice – The Components of the Professional Role – Relationship with the Client – The Professional Career – Orientations and Reference Groups – The Process of Professionalisation – Culture and Performance in the Medical Profession – Culture and Performance in the Legal Profession – Discipline, Performance and the Client – Insecurity in Professional Roles – Professional Knowledge, Ends and Means – Professional Identity – Professional Ideology – The Centrality of Work – Empirical Variations on an Ideal Type	
5 The Professions in Society	143
<i>Notes</i>	153
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	171
<i>Index of Subjects</i>	173
<i>Index of Authors</i>	177

Preface

It is now nearly forty years since Carr-Saunders and Wilson completed their comprehensive work on the British professions. This book is not intended to replicate their empirical survey but to provide a sociological survey of recent writing and research on professions and professionalism. The aim is to review the main issues which have exercised sociologists, to contrast the various perspectives and approaches used and to point the way towards further development in the field.

It does not seem too much of an exaggeration to say that increasing interest in the sociology of the professions has been accompanied by a growing sterility in the subject. This has been partly due to a preoccupation with the form of professional phenomena and partly due to the way in which the field has been dominated by small-scale empirical studies and *a priori* statements about the structure and function of professions. The energy which has gone into the empirical work could well be channelled, as in some cases it already has, towards more interesting and significant questions about the organisation of professions and the behaviour of professionals. These in turn would have wider implications for assessing the place of professions in society and professionalism in the social culture. The gradual routinisation of the sociology of the professions has meant that these wider horizons have largely slipped from view.

Initially my interest in this subject was awakened during the time I spent at the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology in the University of Manchester. I am particularly indebted to David Morgan, who supervised my work there, and to Professor Peter Worsley, Colin Lacey and Bryan Roberts. I am also grateful to my colleagues at the Centre for Mass Communication Research for help and collaboration in various studies which while only tangentially related to the subject of this book have played a large part in crystallising my ideas on the subject. I am indebted to John Wakeford for continual encouragement and for commenting

helpfully on an earlier draft. I am also grateful to the secretarial staff at the Centre for patiently typing successive versions of the manuscript.

PHILIP ELLIOTT

Leicester, 1971