

This chapter (Ch. 10) in Martin discusses basic and historical societal perspectives on professions (vs. trades). Martin proposes that professions have a much deeper controlling purpose, but the information below reinforces what we discussed in class on Wednesday: the main differences between professions and trades are 1) compensation and 2) control.)

*from Martin, Brian. 1998. Tied Knowledge: Power in Higher Education, University of Wollongong*

“The conditions of many workers are largely controlled by people *outside* the occupation. For example, management controls the basic framework in which factory workers carry out their jobs. By contrast, in what are called professions, such as medicine and law, the professionals collectively and individually make many more of the important decisions about what work they do and how. This control over the work serves to increase wages and status.”

“...Professions are founded on control over skills and knowledge...The occupations traditionally seen as professions—law, medicine, the ministry...use this control to extract resources from society. In other words, professions are engaged in an exercise of translating skills and knowledge into economic rewards and political power.”

“Professionals are different from knowledgeable but unlicensed people. A knowledgeable person relies on persuasion based on evidence and arguments to convince others. Professionals, by contrast, do not need to convince others (though it can be useful at times). Rather they rest on their collective authority based on occupational control. If professions have a high status and exclusive control over services, *clients assume that the professionals are competent.*”

“What is it that professions control? Basically, there are certain things which ordinary people might learn how to do themselves but which *professionals claim the exclusive right to do*. For example, in most courts only certified members of the legal profession are entitled to represent a person. This right of representation does not depend on tested superiority in knowledge or argument (though that may apply sometimes) but on membership in the profession.”

Strategies by professions

How do groups of people in an occupation go about establishing or increasing their control over their work conditions?

- Establishing a monopoly
- Licensing
- Training
- [an increased] Knowledge base
- [following] Professional ethics