

# The Power of the Professions in American Society

Jai Poong Ryu\*

Power is conceptualized in terms of Weber's distinctions between class, status, authority. The relationships between the professions and clients, organizations, other professions, and society are examined from the perspective of class, status, and authority. The consequences of the power relationships for the parties involved are discussed. The approach to power used provides a greater understanding the role of professions within American society.

The professions are the most analyzed of all occupational groups. A wide variety of perspectives and methodologies have been employed. The perspectives vary from a view that the professions represent a classic rip-off of the public to one in which professions comprise a highly desirable future model for all occupations. Methods have included participant observation, surveys, historical analysis and probably the whole array of techniques available to the social scientists. There are extensive bodies of literature regarding single professions, such as medicine, law, or education. There is other literature which attempts to make comparative analyses across a range of professions.

Of particular interest to us is the literature on the power of the professions. This includes the many references to the status of the professions in society, community power studies in which particular professionals are identified as power holders, and the growing literature on the power of professionals over clients. In addition, Freidson's (1970) careful analysis of the field of medicine provides insights into the manner in which professions obtain power in the political arena. Bell (1973) has recently argued that certain professions will be the decision-makers in the post-industrial society. Trieman (1974) has provided evidence on cross-cultural comparison of the status of all occupations, including the professions. Palmore (1975) has analyzed gains and losses of power of several

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\* Fulbright Lecturer/Researcher, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea for 1982~83 academic year, on leave from Loyola College, Baltimore, Maryland.

professions.

Despite the extent and intensity of the research, a paradox exists that has not been systematically examined. The paradox is that all professions are both the wielders and the subjects of power. Many large law firms, for instance, are powerful in terms of their inputs into corporate or governmental decision-making. The firms and their members enjoy high standing within the profession. On the other hand, these same law firms and individuals serve business and government and are thus the servants of power. They are also dependent upon attracting clients.

The fact that this obvious paradox has been left unexamined reflects a lack of a schema by which the diverse research approaches can be brought together. Actually, a conceptual framework which allows such a schema is available. Numerous studies stressed the *relational* feature of social power (Bierstedt, 1950; Emerson, 1962; Lehman, 1969), which means that power is not operative until two or more social actors are in interaction. Power relationships are not static. Over time, the distribution of power among the actors can vary, as can the total amount of power in the situation. At a fixed point in time, the amount of power is fixed in a zero-sum game fashion. The present paper is an attempt to build upon this conceptual orientation and to provide a workable schema. The development of our schema involves two stages.

The first stage is an analysis of professional power in terms of Weber's familiar distinctions among class, status, and authority, or a slight modification of them. The second step will be addressed to an analysis of power relationships between the professions and other parties the professions are interacting with. When the relational feature of power is stressed, the importance of such interrelationships should be obvious. The major parties the professions are in power relationships with are clients, organizations, other professions, and the wider society.

The uniqueness of our perspective is that it is dualistic. On the one hand, we will examine the power that professions exert over clients, organizations, other professions, and the wider society. On the other hand, we will also look into the manner in which the professions are in turn subject to power exerted by clients, other professions, and society.

## I

As mentioned above, Weber's (1947) distinction among class, status, and authority is utilized for our analysis of the power of the professions in American society. These three dimensions represent analytically unique configurations of power. These are, of course, ideal types. Such pure, well-defined forms of power arrangement are empirically possible, but seldom found in actual world of social life.

It is also important to note that the *differentia specifica* among these three dimensions is in neither the resources nor the types of power, but the mode of interaction between two or more parties that are in power relationships with one another. This is why we call our conceptual schema an "interaction model of professional power." Figure I illustrates the basic features of the model. We will also describe below the essential nature of power dynamics of each dimension in relation to the professions.

Figure I The Interaction Model of Professional Power

		Dimensions of Power		
		Class	Status	Authority
		BOURGEOISIE	UPPER	HIGHER
		↓	↓	↓
		exploitation (down)	exclusion (down)	dominance (down)
Mode of Interaction	.....	.....	.....	.....
		↑	↑	↑
		rebellion (up)	emulation (up)	obedience (up)
		PROLETARIAT	LOWER	LOWER

1. The utility of the class concept for the professional power is not clear. The questions tend to center around the concepts of economic interest and conflict. The way we approach these two concepts would more or less determine whether we could speak of the "professional class."

Most authors seem to agree that one primary property of class dynamics is economic interest. Weber suggests (1947: 183) that "the factor that creates 'class' is unambiguously economic interest." C. Wright Mills argues (1951: 63:76) further that occupations, especially the professions, are "connected with 'class' position [...] for today, occupations rather than property is the source of income for most people." Recently, Freidson (1970 and 1973) argues strongly that an aspect of the power of the professions concerns their

place in the market. Even others who are not so emphatic do not deny the primacy of economic interest in class relations. Goode (1969: 269) points out that "[.....]merely clever transactions that yield power and money for an occupation are not sufficient to achieve acceptance as a profession." In other words, economic interest is necessary, although not sufficient, element in the formation of the professions. We agree with these authors that, if we are to speak of the "professional class," there must exist a strong orientation toward economic gains.

The concept of "conflict," however, presents a greater problem. According to the classical Marxian approach, the existence of class is usually preceded by conflict, not the other way around. Marx states (1953: 87): "increasingly the collision between the individual worker and the industrial bourgeois assume the character of collisions between two classes. The workers start forming coalitions against bourgeois; they join in order to maintain their wages." Such conflict has been identified between professions and their employing industrial or governmental organizations (Marcson, 1960; Kornhauser, 1962). Similarly, Freidson (1970) has identified the conflicts between the medical profession and other professions. Haug and Sussman's (1969) consideration of the "client revolt" against the professions is another example of conflict.

Most of these conflicts, however, do not seem to precipitate forming of classes. It may be due to the fact, in these cases of profession-organization, profession-profession, and profession-client conflict, the reason for the conflict is to gain authority rather than to pursue economic gains. While economic interests are important, they appear to be much more latent than the factor of authority and the salience of power in terms of class may be less than that of other forms.

Therefore, only when interacting parties are involved in conflict primarily for economic interest, some form of class action can be said to exist. Such conflicts tend to take a form of exploitation downward-rebellion upward. Other forms of conflict such as competition, role conflict, and bargaining display little class orientation.

Before turning to an analysis of professional power in terms of authority, we should note that we do not consider power and conflict to be necessarily linked. Many power situations are not conflict situations (Halpert, 1974). In the case of the medical profession, the majority of clients obey the physician's orders without an inkling of conflict.

2. Weber (1947: 325) states: "every (power) system attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its 'legitimacy,' but according to the kind of legitimacy which is

claimed, the type of obedience, the kind of administrative staff developed to guarantee it, and the mode of exercising authority, will differ fundamentally." In case of the professions, such a claim to legitimacy is largely based on expertise (French and Raven, 1959). Professional authority based on expertise seems to be a generally accepted notion in our society. Hall observes: "the professional can dictate what is good or bad for his client, who gives him authority in the belief that the professional's knowledge will enable him to make the correct judgment in matters affecting the client's life." Hence, the authority relationship of dominance downward obedience upward is clearly operative among the professions. Much of Freidson's (1970) argument that power, achieved through political process, is at the heart of the nature of the professions is an argument based around professional authority. The professions seek autonomy from the state so that they can have authority over areas of practice and knowledge, and hence over clients and other professions. Thus, in situations where dominance over certain areas of knowledge and practice becomes an issue, and where dominance and obedience is the major mode of interaction, we could speak of professional power in terms of authority.

3. The relationship between actors in a status hierarchy is one of exclusion downward and emulation-admiration upward. This is clearly operative in the case of the professions. The very fact that most of the so-called semi-, non-, or pre-professional occupations are trying so diligently to attain the status of "profession" through such symbolic means as occupational associations, annual conventions, journals, newsletters, etc. is indicative of the fact that an emulation tendency exists. The evidence of exclusion is also obvious, especially in light of Freidson's (1975) detailed analysis of the techniques which one profession, medicine, has used to exclude both other professions from its areas of practice and "unworthy" potential practitioners from its ranks through prolonged training, strict entrance examinations, and informal colleague networks.

## II

We will now apply our interaction model of professional power to the analysis of the relationships between the professions and clients, organizations, other professions, and society. Since the power is relational, the nature of power varies according to the types of relationship, and the professional power is no exception to this. Also, the varying nature of professional power tends to display varying configurations the three

power dimensions, i.e., class, status, and authority. It will be shown how a particular power dimension is more salient than others in a particular type of actors with which the professions are in power relationships. From the discussion thus far, it should be evident that this is the most useful manner of utilizing the three power dimensions which have been presented.

### Professions and Clients

The subject of the client has been receiving an increasing amount of attention in recent years. The increased attention has come about for a variety of reasons. The so-called "client revolt" in the form of welfare rights organizations, rape victim organizations, student organizations, and the like, has focused attention on the client. Analysts of the professions are increasingly interested in those situations in which the client is not an individual seeking professional services, but an employing organization, or, as in the case of research scientists, the society-at-large. In this section we are not going to attempt to develop a definitive classification of clients. Instead, we are going to examine the power relation between professions and clients of all types, realizing that the discussion is incomplete in the absence of a precise classification of clients.

Authority is most commonly thought of as at the heart of profession-client relationships. The client believes in the knowledge and right of the profession to prescribe, teach, conduct research, or make decisions regarding the accuracy of corporate records. As Freidson (1970) has pointed out, this is a more complicated matter than is commonly believed. The authority relationship is not negotiated each time the relationship is begun. Instead, the professions have had their power institutionalized through the legislative and governmental administrative processes so that jurisdictional lines are set and areas of professional expertise delineated in advance of particular profession-client relationships (the power relationships involved here will be discussed in the next section). Accountants have the legal right to declare financial records as accurate. Professors have the legal right to tenure. Employing organizations give their legal or engineering departments the right to make decisions in their areas of expertise. The authority of the professional seems to be a clear and distinct relationship.

The clearness and distinctness disappear, however, when some additional elements are introduced. Hasenfeld and English (1974) note that for professions in the area of human services the social distance that power relationships create inhibits the provision of

human services. Since the client is an actor in the situation, his reactions to the professional in question affect the manner in which services are delivered to him. The social distance created by the power relationship thus has a paradoxical result. On the one hand, distance removes the professional from manipulation by the client. On the other hand, "the greater the social distance, the more difficult it becomes for the staff to develop meaningful interpersonal relations with clients that could be intense enough to achieve desired client changes" (Hasenfeld and English, 1974:15).

Authority also becomes more problematic when clients begin to question the legitimacy of the professions. Ritzer, *et al.* (1974) note that there are two factors operative here. The level of education of the public has risen and there is a great deal of exposure to at least images of the professions through the mass media. The public thus becomes a more sophisticated user of the services of the professions and questions the authority of the professional. In a slightly related vein, public confidence in the professions, as well as other major institutions, appears to be on a downward slope. Situations such as the Watergate case have shaken many people's belief in and trust of the legal profession. Ritzer, *et al.* also suggest that the more general challenge of authority in the forms of the Black revolt, the feminist movement, and the student revolt contribute to the questioning of professional authority.

As we have noted previously, organized client movements are a direct threat to professional authority. While we can see that the client (s) may be trying to increase his power in this authority relationship in many instances, and does so unintentionally through his own increased knowledge level in other cases, we must not lose sight of the fact that professional authority still goes unchallenged in probably the vast majority of profession-client interactions. Smaller communities go to great lengths and expense to attract a physician. The United States government turns to science and technology in the course of energy or environmental crises. Individuals spend hundreds of dollars for "professional counselors" to solve their problems ranging from economic to sexual, not to mention hiring psychiatrists for their cats and dogs. People, even presidents, utilize the legal profession. Professional authority has thus not disappeared, nor will it in the near future. Indeed, some people have suggested that it will even increase in the next decades as the need for expertise increases (Bell, 1973).

Authority in many ways is at the heart of the nature and work of the professions. It is the expertise which a profession possesses which sets it apart from its clients. When the

profession moves beyond its areas of expertise or when the clients begin to gain their own expertise or question that of the professions, the authority relationship is threatened. In most cases, however, this particular power relationship probably remains quite stable.

Status is of less importance in the power relationships between professions and clients. It can, however, be useful in analyzing the interactions between individual professionals and clients. As we have already noted, status differences can interfere with meaningful interactions. Client-professional interaction appears to be most successful when both parties are of relatively equal status, (provided, of course, that the professional's authority is accepted).

Client status can yield power *over* professions. Much of Smigel's (1964) analysis of the Wall Street law firms is a confirmation of the power that the big business clients have over the legal profession in this setting. This power takes the form of power over individual professionals as they attempt to attract business and over the law firms themselves become increasingly dependent on large corporate conglomerates. While status power relationships can be important for the individual professional in his or her dealings with clients, in general status is less significant for professions in their dealings with clients than is authority.

Class-based power relationships between professions and clients are rare. The client revolt is primarily aimed at the authority of professions, rather than at the economic position of the professions. There are small elements of class relationships when welfare clients or parents of youths in local, lower socio-economic status neighborhood schools are concerned about the fact that the professionals who work "for" them do not live in the neighborhood or share other living experiences. These are more isolated incidents and there is little of a true class situation.

The relationships between clients and the professions are thus based primarily around authority issues. The power of the professions over clients will not diminish if the expertise of the professions remains critical for the client. If such expertise is increasingly required, as Bell (1973) suggests that it will, then this aspect of power of the professions will increase.

### **The Relationships among the Professions**

There is relatively little attention paid to the relationships among the various professions. The major exception is Freidson, who concentrates on just this issue. Freidson

emphasizes the power relationships among the professions in his analysis of the medical profession. In this analysis relationships with nursing, chiropractic, and osteopathy are frequently cited. In this section we will use Freidson's work as the major basis for analyzing class, status, and authority among the professions. Freidson correctly notes that it is ultimately the state that grants the professions power or autonomy. (We will continue to speak of power, while Freidson emphasizes autonomy. For our purposes the definitions are equivalent.) The relationships between professions and the state will be dealt with in a later section of this paper. In the relationships with the state professions are involved heavily in domain issues and it is to this that the present section is addressed.

Much of the domain issue involves determining which profession has the authority to perform particular types of practice. In discussing the profession of medicine and its primary professional organization, the American Medical Association (AMA) Freidson notes (1973:29-30): "It has also attempted to eliminate or limit the practice of competitors in the division of labor. In the case of chiropractic, which can be practiced legally in many states, AMA pressure is to limit practice to 'manual adjustment of the spiral column'. Osteopathic practice has also been limited, though like the homeopaths of the nineteenth century, osteopaths seem to be becoming absorbed into the medical profession, since osteopathic schools now mostly accept and conform to AMA standards. In the case of psychology, medical societies have on occasion attempted to prevent licensure, attempting to make a person bearing the M.D. degree legally competent to treat nervous and mental disorders. Finally, mention might be made of the role of the AMA in setting standards for the training, registration, licensing, or certification of a number of paramedical specialties—a direct formal collaborative role in medical record librarians, medical technologists, and occupational therapists, and an indirect but powerful role in the case of many others, especially those trained in hospitals, such as inhalation therapists and X-ray technicians."

These domain issues are not limited to the field of medicine. Montagna (1973) has noted that the accounting profession has successfully prevented other professional groups from engaging in corporate auditing. Goldner, Ference, and Ritti (1973), while not dealing directly with authority, have found that the priesthood is losing its authority in dealing with the needs of the poor, the lonely, and the psychologically disturbed to other professions, such as counseling, social work, and psychology. Hall and Engel (1973) suggest that the movement toward "team" practice in many professional work settings

will lower the autonomy and authority of individual professions as they are forced to share interpretations and ideas with other professions in reaching collective decisions.

The "weaker" professions fight back. The history of nursing, for example, is indicative of one of the strategies which weaker professions utilize to increase their own power (see Freidson, 1970: 57-66). Nursing has been continually redefining its mission trying to isolate a task or set of tasks which are unique to the profession.

An alternative strategy for the weaker profession is to attempt to gain power within the same domain and thus directly confront the more powerful profession. Social workers appear to be winning the covert battle with clergymen over the domain of the poor and helpless. Scholarly professions make sporadic attacks and retreats into the world of applied practice. Nurses sought greater autonomy in a strike in California in 1974.

The issues of domain among the professions are not settled on the basis of demonstrated expertise. As Freidson (1970) had demonstrated so well, the issues are fought politically, with the victor gaining authority (autonomy and domain) over an area of practice or knowledge. This in turn has direct consequences for the client and the society-at-large.

Status power relationships are operative among the professions. Lower status professions emulate the established profession as they attempt to model their occupation after those who have already been recognized as a profession. We thus see the pattern of post-graduate degrees being required for the practice of social work, nursing, and teaching where there is no demonstration that advanced degrees contribute to the practice of the profession. Advanced degrees do not necessarily enhance practice; continuing education would tend to do so. The search for a body of knowledge to include in the advanced degree programs is based more on the need to emulate than on the basis of an extant body of knowledge which is already available to be taught.

Exclusion-downward is another aspect of status. The established professions exclude outsiders as socially undesirable. Lawyers exclude real estate brokers and insurance agents; physicians exclude nurses and psychologists; academic professionals exclude those without the Ph.D. degree as unworthy; nurses exclude practical nurses; and so on.<sup>1)</sup>

Both emulation-upward and the exclusion downward are related to the professions'

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1) The interesting, but basically unexplored, relationships between professions of essentially equal status seems to be one of status rivalry. Two recent issues of *Medical Economics* (September 25, 1972 and June 24, 1974) have the intriguing titles: "Today's top lawyers: they never had it so good" and "The sick professions: America's lawyers." In both articles there is a clear attempt to demonstrate that the medical profession is still on top.

relationships with the public (Haug and Sussman, 1969b). Public recognition and reward are the consequence of being accorded status in the eyes of the public and the licensed or certified professions is more likely to be able to demand higher rewards.

The class dimension of power does not appear to be operative in interprofessional relations, except insofar as the previously discussed domain issues contain clear economic component.

### Professions and Organizations

We are concerned here with the power of professions as it is developed and maintained within organizations and not with the conditions under which conflict occurs. We are particularly concerned with departments of professionals within organizations. Thus, we will exclude the totally autonomous professional organization, such as a Wall Street law firm from the present analysis. We will include, however, hospitals, school systems, and social service organizations, since these organizations contain large units which are not staffed primarily by professionals. We are thus ignoring some of the useful distinctions made among autonomous and heteronomous professional organizations and among professional organizations and professional departments (Hall, 1969). This is done because the power issues appear to be rather similar in these apparently different settings.

Power in organizations is typically thought of in terms of the hierarchical arrangements which are established by the organization. It is equally important, however, to think of the power arrangements which exist among the units or departments of an organization (see Ferrow, 1970 and Hall, 1972). Departments have differing amounts and kinds of power within all organizations. Our purpose here is to examine the manner in which power arrangements are established and maintained among organizational departments comprised primarily of professionals. Examples of such departments are obvious, perhaps, but we want to spell out the kinds of contexts which will be discussed. Medical departments in hospitals, academic units within universities, legal departments in corporations, education departments or guidance departments in school systems, casework departments in public welfare systems, research departments in pharmaceutical firms, and surgeon general departments in the military are all parts of larger organizational structures in which the professional departments are just one of many departments. The power of these departments vary and it is our intent here to determine why the variations exist.

The organization in many ways is the client of the services of a profession in an organ-

ization. As Moore (1970:63) notes: "Where consumers of services are in fact highly organized, professional authority may be curtailed or possibly eclipsed entirely. Such indeed may be the case where the 'client' is a corporate enterprise and the professional its salaried employee." Departments of professionals may find themselves far down the organizational pecking order. In other cases, professional departments may dominate the total organization. The reasons for this lie within our framework of authority, status, and class.

Authority is the "natural basis for power differentiation in organizations. In a rational organization, authority is assigned in advance, with the division of labor and decision-making responsibilities designed in advance. In actual practice the acquisition and maintenance of authority is an ongoing process. Departments vie for power with each other. In a particular power situation, there is a fixed amount of power available to the actors, so that if one gains, the other loses.

A useful approach to the manner in which power is distributed among departments in organizations is the "strategic contingencies model" developed by Hickson, *et al.* (1971). This model suggests that a department gains power as it is able to control those contingencies which are crucial for the organization. When there is no ready substitute for the department in terms of providing the information and services needed and the department can perform its activities with certainty, its power is enhanced. Thus, in our terms, departments gain or lose authority in relation to one another. This is true for professional and nonprofessional departments within organizations.

These relationships are readily given meaning when some examples are considered. In large retail pharmacy corporations, the research departments (where the professional pharmacist is employed) is subordinate to merchandising departments. The latter are more central to the ongoing operations of the organization. In hospitals the medical department can control more strategic contingencies than nursing or housekeeping. In many universities medical schools are able to have more control of the strategic contingency of research funds and hence have authority over other units. Staying with the examples from the medical profession, medical departments in the military or industry have little authority, because they do not so control important contingencies.

The strategic contingency which the professional departments with power control is expertise of a particular type. If this expertise is crucial for the organization, the department has power. If it is not, it doesn't have power.

Control of strategic contingencies is only one aspect of departmental power within organizations, however, and it is here that the conflict side of power must be introduced. In organizations as in society at large, those units once in power tend to remain in power since they gain differential access to organizational resources. Those out of power who realize their condition and the fact that their rewards are not as large as those granted to those in power can try to improve their position. In many instances of decisions regarding collective bargaining at universities it is those departments weaker in power that are most strongly supportive of the collective bargaining effort, while those with power tend to be opposed to collective bargaining.

Authority is the major factor in the development and maintenance of unit power within organizations. It is a tribute to the lack of "total" rationality of organizations that class factors enter the picture, as they so clearly do. What appears to be missing in power relationships in organizations is the element of status. Other than those cases where a department is seeking professional status, the emulation-exclusion components of the status factor appears to be absent. An interesting exception to this is Goldner and Ritti's (1967) suggestion that organizations may confer professional status on such groups as engineers and sales personnel as a means of maintaining the personnel in a lower power position than those in the managerial hierarchy. In this sense the status given is a false status. This specific situation, of course, contains elements of class based power.

Organizational units, including those comprised of professions, are in power relationships. These relationships are based primarily on the issues of authority and class. This picture is altered as we consider the power relationships between professions and the society-at-large.

### Professions and Society

The power relationships between the professions and society are difficult to analyze for obvious reasons. The professions themselves are hardly a unified entity. Society contains multiple dimensions with which the professions could relate. In order to bring some coherence to the present study, the analysis will be based around the general power position of the professions in society, ignoring for the most part differences among the professions and distinctions among parts or elements of the society.

The place of the professions in society is not at all clear. On the one hand, analysts such as Bell (1973) see society as one increasingly dominated by the professions to the

extent that society becomes a meritocracy in which the major decisions are shaped by professionals. Freidson (1973) suggests that society has become so professionalized that the "occupational" principal will be the basis for organizations, rather than the more traditional "administrative" principle. Ben-David, on the other hand (1964) sees the professions as the servant of power interests in society, not at the bottom proletariat level, but in the middle and not at the top. Some light on these contrasting views can be shed if we utilize our authority-status-class perspective.

It has already been shown that it is society that grants the professions the authority to engage in whatever their practice might be. Through the mechanisms of the state, licensure can be granted or denied. Indirect and direct support in the form state tax revenues are distributed to colleges and universities and other of the scholarly professions, giving these professions, the authority to carry out their activities. This authority is granted after the profession has staked and been granted its claim to legitimacy. The establishment of legitimacy is a political process. So are the continuing struggles for financial support. One of the points that is missed in most analyses of the professions in society is that political decisions regarding budgets at the federal, state, and local levels reflect the authority claims of the professions. Since most budgets are of a fixed total, despite deficit financing, decisions to pour money into cancer research take money away from social programs which employ human service professionals. Decisions to emphasize explorations in space de-emphasize botanical research. Emphases on law enforcement means deemphases in education. During the early 1960's the academic professions were given authority in the form of rapidly increasing budget allotments. While budgetary allotments are not the total story, they are highly indicative of the relative ranking of different professions in the greater scheme of things.

At times professions seek to expand their area of authority much beyond their primary activities. Both Freidson (1970) and Moore (1970) demonstrate the manner in which professional associations take stands on and lobby for legislation which is far removed from their primary concerns. Typically, this represents the general political stance of the members, but as Moore notes, "the professional outside of his field of competence is a layman" (1970:238). While this certainly is the case, it does not prevent many professions from acting as though they have the moral and political issues under their own jurisdiction.

While the professions in some instances can be viewed as attempting to extend their domain and thus gather more authority in society, the society can threaten the domain

of the professions. The medical profession views the establishment of *Professional Standard Review Organizations* as a definitive threat to its authority. The PSRO's are designed to review the necessity, quality, and appropriateness of professional health services which are paid for by the government. This has the potentiality of having laymen review the work of physicians, cutting back on professional authority. The profession-society relationships is thus one of ebb and flow as both parties seek to extend their won authority or maintain what they have. The society-profession relationship is crucial for the professions, for here is the major source of authority. The relationship is reciprocal, of course, since society needs the services of the professions, even though the domain conflicts among the professions exist.

Status relationships with society have a different focus. The professions have high status in society as measured by almost any ranking system. They are thus emulated by other occupations and by individuals who seek to be recognized as professionals. "He or she is a professional" is about the highest accolade one can receive, except in terms of sexual relations. The agonizing efforts of many occupations to make themselves known as and to believe in themselves as a profession is further indication of the status of the professions. In most cases, there is little overt effort on the part of the professions to keep other occupations down, except where issues of authority are concerned. It is interesting to note that the status of professions involves more than socio-economic status. Although there is a close relationship here, the idea of a profession apparently conveys something over and above other considerations of socio-economic status. It would be interesting to know why through an analysis of this phenomenon.

Class relationships with society have been difficult to capture empirically. The professions seldom verbalize or publicize their power activities in terms of the class factor, but it is clear that economic interest is a major component of many activities of professions. The resistance of trial lawyers to no-fault insurance is an instance of this was organized medicine's apposition to federal medical programs. It appears that the physicians needn't have worried. Moves toward unionization on the part many professions also contain strong class elements. For academic professions, money appears to be the dominant issue in unionization. It is interesting to note that the conflict in these cases is directed against different parties. In the case of no-fault insurance and federal medical programs, the conflict is with legislators with particular positions and the lobbying groups which support them. In the case of college and university faculty, it is the administration of the college or

university which is the villain.

Analyses of the professions in terms of the class perspective seldom place the professions in the position of under-dog. Instead they are middle or over-dog, depending on who is doing the analysis. It appears to us that the professions cannot be viewed as comprising the dominant economic position in society. They do, however, serve the dominant elements in society and thus are a vital part of the economic power system. Smigel's Wall Street lawyers served industry and government. Physicians try to heal the sick and do not want to change the system. Educators prepare their students for the system. Social workers help the needy, but do not really question why the need. Each profession would like to see its own position enhanced within the system, but none save individual 'professional' community organizers, poverty lawyers, or radical academics work to change it. The professions themselves remain a working part of the ongoing system.

### Conclusions

We have tried to show the utility of using the concepts of class, status, and authority in analyzing the power relationships of professions with clients, other professions, organizations, and society. We believe that this approach allows greater understanding than an undifferentiated use of the power concept. We have also tried to indicate the manner in which these relationships continue to shift as the various parties gain or lose resources. We have also attempted to indicate the consequences of these power relationships for the parties involved. In so doing we have hoped to extend our understanding of the role of the professions in society.

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