

The was the pre-publication edition that was later published as:

Covrig, D. M. (2000). Professional relations: The multiple communities for reform and renewal. *Professional Ethics*, 8(3/4), 19-56.

Professional Relationships: A Communitarian Ethic for Professional Reform and Renewal

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Abstract: This article uses concepts from sociology and ethics to interpret the nature of contemporary professional practice and reform. Professionals maintain many fundamental relationships, each of which influences professional judgment and action. The nature of these professional relationships are explored in this paper and used to generate a communitarian ethic for professional reform. However, our communitarian argument differs from others who would give supreme primacy to the civic responsibility of professionals. We argue that professionals need to participate in and respond to multiple communities and because of that must balance civic interests to that of other interests. This paper argues that responsiveness to multiple relationships creates on-going sources of legitimacy as well as tension and suspicion for professionals. These suspicions generate on-going calls for reform within and outside the professions. Professionals must adjudicate between competing communities and that process itself is a reforming mechanism for the professions. The paper concludes by outlining the implications such a view of professionalism has for the education of professionals.

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Introduction

Interest in professional ethics has intensified over the last several years. Stories of sexual misconduct among military professionals, illegal billing practices by health care providers, and indiscretion among lawyers and educators have raised doubts about the moral standing of the professions. One fundamental fear seems to have developed that the breaches of trust evident in the news are not just idiosyncratic and isolated cases of misconduct but examples of epidemic moral impropriety in the professions. Regardless of the truth of these fears, it is evident that much concern has been generated about the moral awareness, reasoning, motivation, and behavior of professionals. This has led to calls for professional reform and groups have challenged professionals to show a greater responsibility in their work.

However, a question persists: Responsibility to whom for what? This paper provides a socioethical analysis of one of these calls of reform, the communitarian call for professionals to be more responsive to civic or societal needs. William Sullivan's (1995) *Work and Integrity* is used to frame this civic perspective. Once we analyze his work we attempt to create an alternative communitarian view which argues that participation and commitment to multiple and diverse communities creates a network of responsibilities and value commitments. Responding to those networks of relationships gives professionals opportunities to garner wide ranging support and legitimacy for their practice. However, responsiveness to multiple communities also provides ample occasions for professionals to step on the toes of others and violate one groups expectations while trying to pursue the expectations of others. As such, suspicion and distrust also develop as a result of responsiveness to these networks of relationships. We argue that these tensions between legitimation and suspicion will continue to characterize the professions and will lead society to perpetually expect more from professionals and perpetually be disappointed in their responsiveness.

To present its argument, this paper builds on literature primarily from health care. However, the ideas developed here are sufficiently general to be applicable to other professions. Indeed, throughout this paper literature from other professions is used. In the first section, we start with a critique of Sullivan's work. Next, we argue that professionals must remain

responsive to three general areas or levels of ethical analysis. The third and largest part of this paper attempts to detail nine types of relationships within these three levels and delineate the moral responsiveness each relationship implies for professionals. The fourth section uses these observations to suggest an “alternative” communitarian ethic which takes into consideration multiple communitarian concerns, not just civic issues. We conclude with suggestions on how these views of professional ethics and professional practice might influence the education of professionals.

Professional Communitarian Ethics and Sullivan’s *Work & Integrity*ⁱ

Sullivan (1996) provides an introduction to professional reform in his book *Work & Integrity*. In this book he continues the communitarian argument he made with Bellah and others in the two contemporary classics— *The Habits of the Heart* and *The Good Society*. Those previous books stress the fragmentation of society by the forces of individualism and suggest the need to rebuild a sense of community and civic responsibility. Sullivan applies that theme to the professions. His historical analysis of American professionalism suggests that professionals are thinking less about the welfare of society, and more about their own needs. They are more concerned about lobbying for professional advantages than for developing solutions to major social problems. Professionals have lost their ability “to strengthen society’s common purposes against the anarchic tendencies of the market” (1995, p. 23). “The hedonism of consumer culture” has shriveled their communitarian spirit, and created a moral lethargy and apathy among the professions (p. 23). Sullivan calls for a communitarian revival of civic-mindedness.

He contrasts his call for reform to those proposed by James Fallows, Barbara Ehrenreich, and Christopher Lasch. Fallows argues that professionals are perpetuating a caste-like social structure which protects their interests via a control over credentialing and licensing. His solution is more deregulation. The monopoly held by professionals, he argues, needs to be broken up by allowing other competent groups of skilled artisans and individuals to provide important social services formerly restricted to professionals. For example, restructuring teacher preparation laws would allow more competent instructors into the nation’s classrooms even if they don’t have degrees and training in colleges of education.

Sullivan thinks Fallows naively places too much trust in the ability of the market to foster reform. Sullivan feels that it is community bonds, not market exchanges, that most indicate the strength of a good society. Markets may increase utility and efficiency, but they do not necessarily increase cooperative behavior and the pursuit of moral ideals. Removing “impediments to the rapid exchange of goods” is not the same as developing a culture of social trust, interpersonal concern and expert care (p. 18). In fact, this market metaphor and the “anxieties and fevers” it creates are beginning to erode the basic values which would actually promote a good society (p. 21). The “unintended consequences” so often promised in the free market, are more often than not “inequalities of wealth, power, and skill” (p. xiii) and not necessarily social well-being. John Glaser (1994) said it well:

“The common good is not achieved by some invisible hand as we each pursue our own individual good. Societal beneficence brings heart, mind, imagination and hands to the nurturing of this common good.....An iron law of common good solutions is that some individuals must always sacrifice their own personal interests to the community’s best interest” (pp. 15, 19).

Sullivan suggests that professionals are the ones best able to understand community need and sacrifice for that need. Markets don't foster such a noble impulse to sacrifice for the common good and ultimately Sullivan rejects Fallows call for "market" reform.

Sullivan then dismisses Ehrenreich's call for reform. Ehrenreich calls for individual professionals and professional organizations to rediscover the essence of their calling, history, and heritage and to let that rediscovery reform their practices. Here, soul-searching among individual practitioners and better visioning, training and policing by professional organizations promise to make the necessary changes that would restore the professions to their noble standing. Sullivan rejects Ehrenreich's ideas as too narrow. They are a band-aid on a rather large sore. As Sullivan argues, they leave untouched "the larger, more complex field of civic interaction" and don't develop a plan for a societal wide change (p. 225). According to Sullivan, structural changes are needed, not just individual revival. We believe Sullivan fails to appreciate the structural changes professional organizations can facilitate because of their connection to universities and the government. We will discuss this connection later.

Finally, Sullivan remains most intrigued and sympathetic with Lasch's appraisal that the professions foster an elitism that destroys civic life and creates "an undemocratic contempt for the people" (p. 227). Sullivan and Lasch agree that the spirit that lived in the Progressive Era is the spirit of the professions. However, Lasch sees that "Progressive" spirit as promoting cynicism, criticalness, exclusivity, exploitation and avarice (Lasch, 1991, Introduction). The Progressive spirit is "predisposed to degenerate into cynicism and opportunism," snobbery, hatred for the uneducated and poor, and "unfounded confidence in the moral wisdom of experts" (Sullivan, 1995, pp. 24, 25, citing Lasch). Sullivan agrees that "the habit of criticism, transmitted by the university and often glorified as the greatest spiritual achievement of modernity" can corrupt professionals (p. 24). Sullivan also concedes that Lasch may be correct that "professionals have impoverished rather than enriched modern life by their ascendancy over the culture of work, family, and local community" by continual criticism (p. 27). However, Sullivan believes Lasch distorts the potential benefits such a "Progressive" spirit can bring to professional renewal and reform.

Fallows wants to end professional monopolies, Ehrenreich desires individual and corporate level reform, and Lasch wants the Progressive spirit of elitism cut out of the professions. However, Sullivan wants a rebirth of the communitarian spirit that characterized the Progressives. He wants a spirit that looks beyond the market for a vehicle of civic reform. He wants structural change and not just simple personal revival. He calls for professionals to rediscover their connectedness with each other and those they serve and use that connectedness to bring progress to social life. Unlike Lasch, Sullivan finds in the Progressive Era a movement "to bring the giant financial powers of the corporation economy within the American civic order" and attempts to create better "social justice" (p. 64). Sullivan concedes that professionals have succumbed to the great temptation of status and money but he believes a reinvigorated communitarian spirit—the reincarnated spirit of Progressives—can once again guide professionals back to their place of moral leadership in society.

We agree with many of Sullivan's sentiments. However, we find his allegiance to the civic good to be too absolute. We believe that a healthy communitarian responsiveness means professionals must be responsive to multiple communities and that the inherent conflicts that come from involvement in multiple communities creates the dynamic tension that brings moral direction and reform to the professions. The civic community is only one community with a moral claim on professional action. Furthermore, we believe the reforms suggested by

Ehrenreich, Fallows and Lasch can be useful in keeping professionals sensitive to these multiple communities. Each of their reforms targets an area of responsiveness that promises to help keep professionals “plugged in” to their constituents. Ultimately, we believe that the claims of any one community can not have carte-blanche power to nullify the claims of other communities. A professional operates in a dynamic network of multiple relationships and must continually adjudicate between the claims of each.

Three General Areas of Ethical Analysis and “Claims” in Moral Practice

In this and the next section we detail the multiply communities and the multiple claims professionals experience in their practices. This section breaks down this analysis into three levels—the local, meso and societal levels. The first level is the personal or interpersonal level, the “individual” level. The second is the “institutional” level (or the organizational). The third level is the “societal” level. The dynamic professional-client relationship characterizes the first level of professional practice. The employment environment characterizes the second level of professional practice. Culture and social institutional norms frame professional practice in the third level. These three levels of analysis—individual or interpersonal; organizational or group; and social institutional or societal—need to be understood in order to appreciate the array of moral demands professionals experience.

Glaser’s (1994) little book Three Realms of Ethics introduces these three levels of analysis. Glaser argues that moral claims arise from these three general realms. He also suggests that moral moral claims that originate in any of these three levels must then be examined in reference to the other levels. Glaser feels that professionals need to be aware of the moral implications of their actions for each of the three levels. Glaser sides with Sullivan on the importance of the societal level of analysis and the claim it makes on professional choice. He argues that the “iron law of common good solutions is that some individuals must always sacrifice their own personal interests to the community’s best interest” (p. 19). Glaser concludes that more societal and civic sensitivity is needed in moral discourse. He even suggests that “ethics has benefitted from the service of academic ethics and law, but as we move into the wider spheres of beneficence, the importance of these disciplines will legitimately wane as the role of other enabling disciplines waxes” (29). He suggests that sociological work will more and more frame ethical discourse as professionals and those who write about them realize the need for civic sensitivity in understanding and prescribing professional behavior. Once again, we agree that the common good needs to be a part of professional ethical discourse. Our concern is merely that all levels of analysis get attention.

We find Glaser’s frame of analysis to provide an excellent vehicle for understanding the social context of professional practice. The central contribution of Glaser’s ideas to our discussion here is that there are multiple moral benefactors— individuals, organizations and society—who are benefitted by professional actions. We believe professionals should act responsively to each of these three areas. However, we acknowledge that each level may bring conflicting demands to professionals. Serving individual needs may not be serving organizational and societal needs.

Professionals must also realize that their interaction at one level will influence their moral sensitivity and action to the other levels. We believe that in profound ways, individuals, organizations and societies are also moral agents that act upon professionals. At times this interaction is subtle and imperceptible, but at other times it is forceful and coercive. Professionals are recipients as well as agents of moral action at all levels. Individual action is

nested in organizational as well as societal processes, and organizational and societal moral claims are evident in individual claims of professional care. Ultimately, calls for professional reform must be analyzed across these three levels. At times, calls for reform will focus more attention on one level than another. Currently the call for communitarian reform has refocused attention on societal demands. The calls of reform in the 1960s seemed to focus more attention on individual rights. And employers continue to make forceful claims on professional practice.

Glaser's simple frame of analysis keeps all of these levels in our analysis. It remains us that the terrain of professional relationships is elaborate, complicated and multifaceted. Pervasive institutional forces frame professional action and influence local relationships. All of these influences work together to create conflicting claims on professionals. In the next section we detail more thoroughly these relationships and the network of norms and values they bring to professional practice.

The Communities of Professional Practice

Professional commitments can be categorized into at least nine basic relationship units. Each of these relationships build on and in turn nurture specific ethical norms, the realization of which bring fulfillment, conflict, legitimation, and reform to professional practice.

Table 1 outlines nine types of professional relationships and the general claims each makes on professionals. It also sketches out some threats to legitimacy professionals face if they do not respond to each relationship claim. Unfortunately, the table only captures a static portrait—a snapshot—of what is very dynamic—a “movie.” Nonetheless, it does provide a skeleton of the complex relationships which frame the lives of professionals. Furthermore, the lines of distinction between individual, organizational, and societal levels are not always clear cut. The dotted-lines attempt to denote the fact that some relationships share explicit factors in multiple levels.

The relationships of self, family, clients, and co-workers frame the inner circle of personal relationships. Coworkers, the employing organization, the professional organization and the institutional sector in which the organization operates create the intermediating or organizational relationships that frame local practice. The professional organization, the institutional sector, government and societal/civic issues provide the social frame that provides the fundamental moral and technical ethos of professional practice. Below, we describe each level in some but not complete detail to merely underscore the central role each plays in professional practice.

Table 1 here—see bottom of document for 2000 and 2005 versions

The first commitment individuals probably experience is that which arises from contact with their first primary care giver as a child. However, that relationship is beyond the scope of this paper except how it influences and nurtures a self-understanding and a self-relationship. Our discussion starts with this self-relationship. The self develops from experiences of primary relationships and, to some degree, through the contact we have with media. Our self-knowledge and our early experience in care-giving relationships provide the fundamental building blocks of the self which is the first relationship professionals bring to their training and to their practice.

A commitment to the self involves a responsiveness to one's developing personal identity. Integrity is often the moral phrase most often associated with this first level of

relationship. It denotes a faithfulness to the self. It suggests a consistency in action that is guided by one's personal identity or moral self-statement. Integrity is often listed as one of the virtues that empowers individual professionals to deny the irresponsible or immoral claims of other individuals, groups, or his or her employing organization. The claim of integrity also allows professionals to tie their work to their own life history and their own spiritual journey as well as their own sense of who they are. Nevertheless, the claim to integrity may not exclusively suggest a list of high moral values. It merely suggests a consistency in action and consistency in one's modus operandi. One can be consistent and hold true to very questionable values, such as racism, a stubborn unwillingness to listen and learn from others, and careless disregard to one's own physical and emotional needs. Nevertheless, integrity is the defining value claim in the self-relationship of professional practice. Without it, the legitimacy of the professional is questionable.

The idea of a "calling" is also another concept related to the discussion of the self in professional practice. This idea involves a sense of a personal meaning one gains from one's labor. While the concept of "calling" is an idea most often reserved for the discussion of professional clergy, it may be argued to be a key component of professional work. It connotes a commitment to a profession, a commitment that goes beyond salary and includes a life work or vocation. Teachers, physicians and others, as well as clergy, often speak of their work as God ordained for them. The notion of calling also suggests the idea of a primary relationship in professional practice not listed on our Table. That is a sense of relationship with a divine or supernatural power. This primary relationship is not explored here but is explored by other writers (see Gini, 2000 for a most recent bibliography of these works).

In addition to the notion of integrity and calling, we would add the importance of self-awareness as it influences professional norms and judgements. This idea involves a critical self-awareness of what one brings to professional practice and how that self shapes professional practice and how the self in turn is shaped by practice. Konrat (1999) captures both parts of this dynamic when she advances a critical theory perspective of professional self-awareness. Writing to social workers she argues that professionals need to heed the call to "know thyself" in several different ways in order to improve their professional practice. She works through each of these different ways of knowing the self, ending with the critical reflectivity approach.

The first way is one of simple conscious awareness that is a "here-and-now contact with the environment" (p. 452). The goal in this self-awareness is to "clear away obstacles assumed to disrupt attention to the here and now" through activities of careful listening and observation. The common practice of verbatim recording and interpretation of professional-patient interaction is a way towards helping professionals understand this way to self-knowledge in professional practice (p. 453-4).

A second way is reflective awareness. This way is suggested by George Herbert Meads "I" and "Me" distinction. Here, the professional is challenged to distance the I and Me and pursue objectivity by understanding the I and Me in relationship to the Other. Here, "the practitioner is expected to be as objective as possible in reflecting on practice behaviors, attitudes, interactions, and accomplishments" and "to increase the distance between the reflecting-self and object-self and to reduce any negative impact of the subjective self on the practice setting." This is done by "using one's colleagues to provide objectivity, eliciting feedback from clients...engaging in good supervision, examining cognitive products of the self...and attending to the practice knowledge" (p. 455).

The third way of self knowledge in practice according to Konrat is reflexive self-awareness by which professionals began to realize that objectivity is tenuous. “Any self-observation or self-critique is shaped by the identical social conditions that influence all learned characteristics of the self, including the very behaviors being observed” (457). This view “challenges the notion of a self-contained and transcendent self able to stand apart from experience and observe the ‘world’ from some privileged and ‘uncontaminated’ viewpoint” (456).

Konrat acknowledges that “each of these notions about practitioner self-awareness has an important role in assisting the social worker to learn about aspects of his or her performance in immediate practice settings” (459-460). However, Konrat then uses Anthony Giddens’ structuration theory to suggest a criticalist’s perspective of the self. This is a view of the self as social recipient as well as an agent of social change. She suggests that professionals need to know their place in the world and see how deeply structural ways their actions perpetuate the social worlds in which they have lived. However, they must also see in that reality of the social self, that their actions can also work to challenge and change the social world they inherited. This activist conception of the self is “a self whose actions have importance not only for his or her immediate relationships but for the maintenance and alterations of society itself” (p. 465). Professionals can become agents of change even though they must also acknowledge that their selves are captive to the social structures they seek to change. Self understanding can work to reframe their knowledge of themselves and of the world. Her conclusions for social workers apply to most professionals. Professionals are “always involved in social change” as well as “social stability” and “the key choice, then, is not whether to be an agent of change but whether to be a more conscious agent of change,” aware both of the power of society on the self and the ability of the self to reframe society (pp. 471, 472).

In addition to the self, the second major relationship that frames professional life is the relationship one maintains with one’s immediate family. Here, personal circumstances vary widely from person to person. There are professionals who have forgone the development of their “own” families or marriage in order to develop professionally. Their decision and their accomplishments are often admirable. Nevertheless, most professionals are busy developing both a career and a family. Sometimes one’s profession provides the resources needed to nurture a family. Sometimes family experiences provides incentives that lead persons back to school in order to develop a professional career. Families make fundamental moral claims on the life, time, and resources of professionals. Often these claims generate conflicting demands for professionals. The family-professional career conflict merits more discussion in the literature. It appears to be a central topic of discussion among professionals with whom I have worked.

Simply put, professionals could always work longer hours in order to gain more economic resources for their family but their families need their time and personal care as well as their money. On a more complex level, some employment demands not only deplete the time and energy professionals need to spend with their family but also impede the development and exercise of skills and attitudes necessary for nurturing families. I have found these tensions to be especially evident among women professionals who continue to shoulder most of the burden of domestic duties and child rearing.

Feminist critiques of the professions have been helpful in understanding professional-familial relationships. Noddings (1990) examines the role of feminist perspectives in law, nursing and teaching. She notes the growing concern among some legal scholars for “the need to maintain a personal identity while building a professional one” which can be used to develop

“reciprocity in the professional/client relationship” (p. 399). Familial relationships are central in personal identity and provide a key source in creating the ground work for an emerging professional identity. This point is especially clear in her reference to nursing and teaching, two professions which are predominantly female. Women in nursing and teaching often “derive deep satisfaction from their nurturing roles” often experienced at home in raising children and in the work setting (415). “The picture of deeply committed nurturers is” central in these professions but “the centrality of caring in teaching and nursing has contributed to the devaluation of both occupations” (415). Noddings then contrasts the two professions. “Nursing is attempting to hold its ground” against elements that would either devalue it or lead it to exchange the ethic of care for other authoritarian models of professionalism. It is doing so through “the development of sophisticated models of human caring.” Unfortunately, she feels “teaching is given way to the domination of scientific methods and a medical model of professionalization” (415).

Noddings correctly notes that nurturers

“feel considerable anger when they are pressed to give up what they regard as central to their work. Their fear is that, in the new move to professionalization, teachers who move farther from actual contact with children will be regarded and rewarded as “more professional” than those who work directly with children. This is a potentially devastating criticism of the new recommendations” (415).

She argues that there is “conflict between two models of professionalism,” especially in teaching. One model fosters at its core a “commitment to children” and the caring professional and the other stresses a professionalism as measured by “more hours on the job site, more years of study, a visible drive to advance in a hierarchy, and some detachment from direct contact with students” (p. 416). These observations suggest the need to frame calls for professional reform within a relational model. They also suggest professionalism can not be just about life at work or a career. It is about basic and fundamental responsiveness to others. Familial responsiveness may very well be a central source of the skills and insights that some professionals can build on to form a professional ethic.

The next relationship unit we discuss here is the professional-client relationship. This is probably the most well-documented core relationship in professional practice. We will use writings in the field of health care to explore this relationship more closely. Beauchamp and Childress, in their classic text *The Principles of Bioethics* (1992), provide the best frame for understanding the values and principles most often used to frame professional relationships, in this case with patients. These authors stress the importance of beneficence, nonmaleficence, respect for client and family autonomy, practices of confidentiality, informed consent, truth-telling, due process, fiduciary responsibility, and just allocation of scarce resources. Do good, don’t harm, preserve autonomy and seek justice are the four central ethical guides in the professional-client relationship. Doing good is a basic concept in the annals of medical ethics. That principle seems to apply across the board to other profession—teaching, nursing, lawyering, etc. However, the clarity of that dictum does not itself translate into clearly stated course of action in every professional situation. Good is a constructed reality and we often vary on what is good and what is not good for another. Add to that demand to do good the demand to respect the autonomy of the clients and the professional life often becomes even more complicated.

These two key guiding ethical standards for the professional-client relationship—do good and honor autonomy— frame the fundamental professional-client relationship. These two basic principles of beneficence and autonomy may also point the professional in opposite directions of

action. As a result, this relationship has internal conflict from the start. This moral ambiguity and internal conflict is further amplified by conflict values experienced in the wider culture. Emanuel and Emanuel (1992) illustrate this fact as they discuss four models for the physician-patient relationship which can be applied to most professional-client relationships. In the paternalistic model, professionals use their knowledge of their discipline to guide the patient's choices, but the welfare of the patient is more important to the professional than the patient's choice or autonomy. Beneficence predominates even though patient autonomy is not absent. In the informative model, the physician provides, as objectively as possible, the facts and lets the patient select, without the physician giving much of his or her own values to the decision process. In the interpretive model, the professional draws the patient into a discussion of that patient's values and helps the patient relate the current problem to his or her life story. Finally, in the deliberative model, the interpretive process occurs but the professional plays a stronger role in clarifying the values the patient enumerates which appear most defensible and more easily fulfilled by clinical practice.

These authors note a gradual move away from paternalistic models as a result of the rights movements in the 1960s and 1970s. However, they suggest that the interpretive model is not as widely practiced as some may think. They conclude that circumstances and the context of the doctor-patient relationship often determines which model predominates in guiding the relationship. In short, even within this most basic professional relationship, confounding and conflicting norms exist and the wider social influence help to influence which conflict value is most legitimate in guiding a professional judgement. Professionals are influenced by the aggregate of social structures and values which sociologists but also by the immediacy of the client relationship. As we will see in the next few pages, the intermediating social structures of coworkers and employing organizations play a key role in dictating what aspects of societal values influence the professional-client experience and frame legitimacy for the professional.

The fourth relationships/commitment that frames professional practice is that made to coworkers. Here the idea of "being a team player" is central to the ethic of professionalism. Team playing requires that a professional 1) understand and execute their designated role on the team, 2) support the general goals of the group, and 3) seek to defend the group as a way of defending the goals of the group. Here, at least three ethical violations of this accountability to the group may occur. First, an individual seeks to do something outside of their prescribed role in the group. Second, the individual free-loads on the group and in actuality do not contribute their part to the fulfillment of group goals. Third, the group or members in the group are not fulfilling the stated goals of the group, or the group seeks an unethical end, and the professional refuses to challenge the group to refocus in the fulfillment of its more positive goals.

The fifth commitment is to the employer. James Coleman, in his 1992 presidential address to the American Sociology Association, argued that organizations are the new social building blocks of modern society (1992). They have taken over many of the functions previously fulfilled by the simple institutions of home, church and neighborhood. For example, hospitals more and more serve the health needs of humans, schools have become part of larger districts united to serve children's educational needs, and other organizations have grown up as social structures in which professionals operate to meet human needs. Professionals have had to learn to be responsive to these employing organizations as well as to their clients needs. Popular sentiment seems to suggest that client interest and employer interest are at odds with one another. However, we see both positive and overlapping claims between that made by clients and organizations, as well as conflicting claims between the two.

Employing organizations typically desire professionals to accomplish, with efficiency and honesty, the goals of the organization. Here, a “work ethic” is often explicitly or implicitly encouraged. Attention to customer or client satisfaction has also been a factor as organizations compete for “market” share. Such organizational demands for survival create pressures to remain competitive and challenge professionals to pay attention to the most important aspects of their work and “cut out the fat.” However, this pressures also leads professionals to “cut corners,” for the sake of the organization and for their own sake as they try to remain competitive within the organization. Several observations suggest that on balance, the influence of organizations on professionals has been good.

First, organizations provide many important services for preserving professional expertise, ability and legitimacy. Organizations are vehicles for disseminating information and new practices to a field of professionals, often at their own cost. In a significant way this act supports the advancement of the professional and the profession in general. Furthermore, by grouping professionals together within large-scale organizations, greater specialization has occurred. This gives professionals greater personal opportunities than they would have in private practice, further advancing not only the knowledge base of professional practices but also the effectiveness of services rendered. Organizations also allow close monitoring and supervision of professionals. As Williamson (1975, 1981) argued, organizations are better than markets in supervising and ensuring quality control. Close monitoring helps to control personally opportunism and unethical activity. In addition to more effective monitoring practices, organizations can take certain actions and use financial leverage to control periods of uncertainty and stabilize the delivery of services.

DeLeon (1998) notes that health care organizations have given bureaucratic structure to “healing” and have helped in many ways to make health care more efficient and professionals more accountable for the use of scarce resources. Furthermore, organizations have worked to control health care cost, increase professional accountability to more groups, and add to the emergence of evidence-based standardization as a means to evaluate professional practices. The same may be true of other professions like law and business. Large-scale care organizations have also aided in the emergence of new professions. In health care, many allied-health professions have been spawned in relationship to the emergence of large-scale hospital services. This has created more types of co-workers that facilitate greater efficiency and check points for quality control.

Furthermore, the emergence of larger organizations has allowed greater diversity in career path formation for professionals. This includes greater specialization, more fulfilling identity formation with a specific client population or need area, and flexibility in moving between organizations for career enhancement (see Becher, 1999, chapter 4, pp. 91-113; and Leicht and Fennell, 1997). Organizations have played a central role in helping professionals improve their practice, find fulfillment and boost their own legitimacy in society. However, not all organizational influences have been welcomed by professionals.

Despite these contributions, there is a growing literature base that details the role organizations are playing in restricting professional judgment and practice. Leicht, Fennel, & Witkowski (1995), Light (1993), Scott (1983) and Tolbert & Barley (1991) have documented the conflicting demands organizations create for professionals. Stressful and demanding work loads are one way organizations frustrate professional practice. Too many people to care for means that less time and attention can be spent on each client/patient. Paper work is another diversion from professionals care. Many reports from home health care professionals suggests that filling

out forms, filing forms with appropriate organizations, and documenting actions have created significant time constraints on actual delivery of care. Teachers also know all too well the demands of grading papers (although in this case, “paper work” may be more central to the professional process than in other areas).

Another concern expressed by some private practitioners is that organizations have increased specialization to the point that “specialists can’t see the connections” and can’t look at the client or patient as a whole (Becher, 1999, p. 101). Furthermore, organizations have their own need for maintenance and often suck the best and brightest professional from their work into “administrivia.” As Becher notes, “many of the most able practitioners [are] drawn out of the work in which they are particularly skilled into [management] activities with which they are generally unfamiliar” (p. 105).

All these factors, positive or negative, indicate that special purpose organizations have played a central role in the growth of the professions and in their legitimacy to the modern industrial state. As May (1997) notes, “the increased power of the professions in the modern world coincides and intertwines with the emergence of the modern marketplace and with the still later emergence of the winner in the marketplace, the modern, large-scale corporation” (p. 3). However, organizations have also changed the nature of professions even as they have legitimated them.

Leicht and Fennell (1997) believe “that the relationship between professions and complex organizations is changing rapidly” and that the socialization processes and norms that most significantly guide professional practice may be coming more from organizations that employ professionals than from the professional associations that claim to foster the professional ideal (p. 216). Control structures and accountability frameworks in organizations are central mechanisms for controlling professional activity. Increasingly, hierarchical controls are developed by well-trained but not necessarily “profession-specific” administrators (pp. 217-220). This creates its own socialization process. For example, “pressure for revenue generation and accountability” affects professional processes in health care where “the primary ‘norms’ and emphases of the sector have shifted from access and quality issues to cost containment and service reduction” (p. 219). Thus, organizations have come to greatly influence professional practice and therefore provide a socialization process that may very well be more powerful than that provided by the professions.

Hafferty and Light’s (1995) excellent article captures some of the tensions and negative effects such organizational control brings on professionals, especially those in health care. “The historical record makes clear that during the first half of the twentieth century medicine did acquire an extraordinary degree of cultural legitimacy along with extensive legal protections and legislative based entitlements” (p. 132). Here, self-organization and the power of the state organization, gave great autonomy to medicine. A “highly complex web of occupational groups, each seeking to establish a distinctive sphere of work (and thus influence)” emerged in health care as a result of power of organizing and for a while that power allowed professionals “to bask in the sun of professional prerogatives” (p. 137, 138). As more and more organizations emerged the autonomy of even organized professionals was curtailed. Hafferty and Light point to two powerful sources of such change—the administrative and knowledge elite. The latter primarily exist in academia and produce research that increases standardization of practice and constricts discretion in “rank-and-file” professionals. The former are organizational agents who seek to control professional practice by controlling referral, reimbursement and availability of services (pp. 193, 140). This is why Hafferty and Light echo the findings of others that the “current work

environment” is “more influential than education and prior socialization both in determining and explaining ‘professional performance’” (pp. 139, 140). Education and “degree attainment (MD or otherwise)” is not as critical in practice as the “notion of orientation toward work, toward organization and power, and toward those who pay one’s salary” (p. 140). Incentives from employers or third-party payers, and effectiveness research from universities combine to decrease professional autonomy in medicine.

Even public institutions and “civic” professions like education and public service are experiencing the influences of market pressures. Public schools are having to justify their existence in new ways and typically have to express their reforms and changes in marketplace terminology. School choice issues, for some market sensitive individuals, promise to create structural changes in public education that will raise the level of accountability for professional educators and increase the efficient use of public resources. Furthermore, as businesses see schools more and more as market segment and less and less as “sacred” public space, further market metaphors are being used to change the moral landscape of educational practice. The increase in attention on market competition and market metaphors inside and outside of education are raising concerns about the dependability and trustworthiness of professionals. Oddly, in health care, the greater the market forces the greater the concern some have about the moral trustworthiness of health care professionals. They fear they are acting out of self-interest or bending to the pressures of a greedy organization. In education, the reverse seems to be occurring. The greater the resistance teachers show to market influences the more they are held suspect as unresponsive to the public’s needs. Often they are portrayed as agents of a gloated bureaucratic system. These are conflicting voices on the role of organizations on professionals and lead us to the need to view organizations as operating in social institutional circles of influence with each circle of influence manifesting its own value centers and influencing moral activity within that sector. In order to understand that dynamic we turn now to the general societal influences that frame professional practice.

The sixth through ninth areas of influence on professionals are less “concrete” than the previous five but no less real. While the “one-on-one” human contact is not as evident in these last areas of influence there is nonetheless pervasive social structures, norms, mimetic imitation and conformity issues at work which constrain professional practice. Many of these influences impact the life of the professional through his or her host organization. There is much overlap between these four areas such that it makes it difficult to clearly distinguish between these areas. However, we address each below.

The first area of influence, professional organizations, influence human behavior more directly than the last three areas discussed below. The reason professional organizations have such influence is because they are centrally involved as accrediting agencies for professional education, work for strict licensing and continued education requirements, and set and police codes of conduct. All of these activities create coercive as well as mimetic and normative controls on professional practice. Creating and enforcing professional standards of practice give professional organizations the ability to control consistent across broad areas of geography and specialization. This also, at least ostensibly, allow them to control, stabilize and improve the reputation and influence of the profession on societal interests.

Sociologists have been interested in the way professional organizations have worked to control practice and in turn create sheltered labor markets for professionals. Brint’s (1993) synopsis of Freidson’s work provides a useful starting place.

“Freidson’s conception of professions as a socially constructed connection between tasks, advanced training, and markets seems to me to avoid many of the problems associated with previous conceptions [of the professions which relied on] empirically dubious ideas of trait theories...high ethical standards, and collegial control [and it still allows] the likelihood that some or all of these [other] attributes may” exist (p. 265).

The key idea here is that professionals operate in a sheltered market (p. 260). This shelter arises as a result of “knowledge monopolies and gatekeeping activities” which allow professionals to retain power and privilege over their work (p. 260). As Brint notes, the “professions, in short, are occupations that the higher education system chooses to treat as requiring advanced formal training” (p. 263) and thus, the resulting “institutionalized association with...the universities, the professional associations, and the state” provides the protective mechanisms that keep the professions sheltered and their members elevated in status (pp. 263, 264). Here, Brint introduces three relationships that exist to provide professionals some protection against the “money hungry” beasts of the market. These three are educational institutions, professional organizations, and government agencies.

The professional organizations need the universities and the government in order to make a sheltered market work. The government helps to enforce certain courses of instruction and limit who have authority to practice. However, governments depend on the universities and professions to determine who are ready to practice. Like all forms of dependency, there is a price to be paid by each of these three entities for their dependency on each other. “Countervailing controls,” which can threaten professional power, emerge from these dependent relationships (p. 264). “Practicing professionals have little control over policy making, little capacity to define general public needs and problems, and little power over the allocation of resources except those immediately at hand” (pp. 268, 269). Universities continue to control, to a significant but not exclusive degree, the production and dissemination of research and knowledge and governments continue to be the final regulators of professional practice. Professional power is both strengthened and simultaneously weakened by the presence of these entities.

We believe that these sheltered markets are closely linked to another artifact labels by sociologists as “social institutional.” Social institutions are constructed realities and social structures that constrain behavior around an area of certain activity or human invention. These social structures are best understood by looking at what organizational theorist call societal sectors. Scott and Meyer (1991) labelled similar organizations in one area of work as operating in “societal sectors” (p. 120). Societal sectors are understood by the services they provide and/or the products they create (p. 117). The environment to which an organization responds is classified by its function. Organizations with similar functions are part of the focal organization’s institutional environment. This functional approach allows “apparently dissimilar but functionally equivalent” organizations to be in one sector, such that in some ways medical care and faith healing organizations can be seen as operating in the same sector even though they have vastly different modes of action (p. 118).

Scott and Meyer extended the concept of sector to include more than just those with functional similarities but also all “those organizations that critically influence the performance of the focal organizations: for example major suppliers and customers, owners and regulators, funding sources and competitors” (p. 117). This definition extends the circle of potential institutional influences which impact focal organizations and in turn influence professional

practice. This may be called the operational definition of an organization's experience of social institutionals.

Scott and Meyer make a key contribution in providing a structural/functional understanding of an organization's environment. Rowan (1982) added yet another dimension to thinking about the institutionalized environment. He found that when organizational environments were "balanced" they were more likely to influence similar structures or units across similar organizations. The less "balanced" an environment was the less likely it was to have a direct impact on the focal organization. His understanding of balance did not center around functionality or even operational processes but around shared ideology among organizations about the appropriate work of those organizations. "Balance is defined as the establishment of ideological consensus and harmonious working relations among" key actors and agencies in an organization's environment (pp. 259, 260). An organization's environmental actors may not all serve the same function but must be connected through a network of influence and if they are connected and simultaneously ideologically committed to a common value then there is an increased chance that individual structure of each organization under the influence of these environments will be similar. We think this argument can also apply to professional practice. Societal sectors which create a "balanced" environment may create more unified demands for professional practice than one's with less balanced demands.

Furthermore, there is more to social institutions than just organizations or societal sectors. First, organizations usually involve formalized and fairly specific goals, rules, policies, and procedures but social institutions include much more. They include norms and values that do more than create social structures but also guide paradigms and the way problems get solved. Second, organizations usually entail a formal definition of membership, complete with "job" descriptions, pay scales, and grievance processes, and the relationship between organizations is usually set by contracts and law. However, social institutions include these factors but also involve pervasive sanctioning processes as well as morally rich linguistic and cognitive meanings and traditions.

Lenski, Nolan & Lenski (1995) and other sociologists have argued that social institutions consist of "people, culture, the material products of culture, and social organization" (p. 50) that operate together to provide "durable answers to important and persistent problems" (p. 49). Social institutions solve social problems. They are the building blocks of a society. Social institutions have many elements—technical, social and cultural—linked together to help societies fulfill their needs. Societies may differ in the types of elements used to make up social institutions but most societies have six to eight fundamental social institutions. Kinship, religion, economy, politics, law, and education, are basic to almost all social groups and modern societies have emerging social institutions in medicine and science (for full treatment of social institutions see Turner, in press).

Maryanski (1996) clarifies a further quality of social institutions:

"From a purely structural perspective, a social institution can be viewed as composed of networks of status positions in which individuals are incumbent (and to which normative and value elements are attached). These networks of positions are organized into diverse types of social units ...with each institution focused on a specific set of adaptive problems faced by a society (p. 79).

Within these "social institutions" there exist micro institutions which guide specific practice:

“institutions are intimately related to, and, in part at least, derived from ultimate value attitudes common to the members of a community. They are thus, in a strict sense, *moral* phenomena. This implies further that the *primary* motive for obedience to an institutional norm lies in the moral authority it exercises over the individual. That is, his attitude to it is one of disinterestedness—he obeys it because he holds it, or the principle embodied in it, good for its own sake, not merely as means to some further end in the intrinsic common value-attitudes of which the institutional system is a manifestation, and in so far as the former effectively governs his conduct” (Parsons 1990, p. 326).

The construct of social institutions is important in understanding professional reform because it sets the “stage” on which professional practice occurs. Professional practice is measured against that stage. For example, Sullivan agrees partially with Lasch (1991) that “specialists came to exalt competence as judged by their professional peers above the old moral norms” (Sullivan, 1995, p. 94). This led to a “decomposition” of the social order and that “the old moral core of American democracy, centered on the town, the church, and the household seemed to be giving away” (p. 93) to a new order of social institutional forces. Both Lasch and Sullivan saw this fragmentation of specialization negatively and offer different solutions. For Sullivan, the market was destroying the community and that professionals need to reinfuse professional practice with societal or civic concern in order to stop this fragmentation. For Lasch, the elitism of professionals was destroying the community and the best cure for elitism is maintain popular critique of the cynicism of professionals. Both are partly correct. However, both fail to see that the forces that drive professionals away from the sense of civic community are as much communitarian influences as the influence Lasch and Sullivan desire professionals embrace.

Fragmentation results as a function of attention and responsiveness. Institutional shifts in society have focused professionals on certain aspects of societal needs at the exclusion of others. A central concern by both Lasch and Sullivan about fragmentation, leads them to neglect to see the moral benefits such fragmentation has created for professionals. In reality, complex civilizations and its moral claims have been narrowed to a manageable level. The emergence of social institutions have allowed moral claims to be centralized more specifically around specific functions and processes in society. These social institutions have worked to focus moral sentiment, moral awareness, moral judgement and moral responsiveness into manageable areas of professional responsiveness.

In other words, the Progressive Era can be blamed for some of the fragmentation of modern society because they exalted “competence as judged by their professional peers above the old moral norms” (Sullivan, 1995, p. 94). However, this fragmentation allowed moral focus. Even while it probably led to a distancing of professional practice from local public (civic) processes, it also fostered a focused sense of moral duty among professionals. Efficacious standards of practice emerged, sometimes even in conflict with old moral norms. These standards, from personal hygiene to mental health, from child discipline to marital counseling, have created a new moral sensitivity, first among professionals and then eventually in society at large. The fragmentation that resulted characterizes and will probably continue to characterize the modern world, postmodernists notwithstanding. But this can have good impact on professional practice.

Lasch was right—professionals led the exodus out of localized communities, but other communities soon developed around them to frame their moral duty. As such, the aggregation of people into urban centers, the fragmentation of people’s lives into more varied communities, and the plurality of communities (organizations, clubs, etc...) as a result of urbanization created new moral ideals even as they challenged others. An individual could now experience multiple communities, not fewer communities. These communities might not be as universal in a persons life but they could extend moral demands nonetheless.

With these detailed descriptions, we now return to Sullivan’s arguments about social well-being and attempt to present an alternative communitarian perspective of professional practice. We can extend the observation that professionals experience society through its component social institutions to suggest how these influences and their interactions with the others create both the modern angst of professionalism as well as the fuel which keeps the engines of professional reform running. It is these networks of communities that guide professional practice, and sensitivity to these demands promise to keep professionals receptive to moral changes.

Toward a “multi-communitarian ethic” for professional practice

Feminist ethicists provides an appropriate starting point to understanding how to build a community sensitive professional ethics. Feminist argue that their is a need for professionals to think more wholistically about their professional relationships and the need for professionals to attend to these networks in making moral choices. As Nodding (1990) argues:

“The feminist contribution to ethics and moral education is clearly relational; it rejects the traditional image of a lone moral agent struggling to sort principles and commit himself to a logically justifiable course of action. It concentrates on needs rather than rights....dialogue among moral agents rather than the internal debate of a single moral agent... [And] the strength of maternal thinking...” (409-410).

Selznick (1992) and May (1996) also write from a communitarian tradition of relationships. May rejects the idealized vision which presently dominates the field of professional ethics and communitarian though. He underscores the inherent conflicts that make professionals more arbitrators of theirs and other’s interests than blind servants of client or societal interests. Selznick’s work provides the best presentation of a socioethical theory which weaves together social analysis with moral critique to suggest the nature of our moral lives in community.

The communitarian professional ethic we offer is less global than Sullivan’s. It is, however, sympathetic to many of his basic concerns about community responsiveness. However, it acknowledges the unavoidable conflicts of professional life and the unrepairable fragmentation of modern society. Professional ethics isn’t an idealized pursuit of either the client’s interests or society’s best interests but the on-going adjudication of all community-driven commitments.

Rose Laub Coser’s (1991) work *In Defense Of Modernity: Role Complexity and Individual Autonomy* makes some helpful observations in this regard. She is interested in the multiplicity of roles individuals experience in modern society. She sees this multiplicity in a positive light. She sees it as a potentially enriching source for moral creativity and reflexivity. In her view, contemporary arrangements in Western civilization allow for the accumulation of a variety of roles where as *Gemeinschaft* —closed structured societies— do not. As such, in her analysis, a variety of roles breeds more moral possibilities. As such, professionals may be

enriched by the diversity of value communities in which they participate. She spends the remainder of her book talking about the potential moral advances this can bring to a professional ethic.

Coser argues that “individuation, the awareness of who one is in relation to others, takes place under conditions of role segmentation” (p. 20). This makes for a higher self-consciousness about role articulation (p. 20). Having multiple roles may enhance moral awareness. Multiple roles bring conflict but this may be good. “The lack of a basic source of disturbance is also a lack of a basic source for reflection” (p. 25). Furthermore, “complex role sets make it possible to use legitimate excuses or to claim legitimate commitments in selecting among one’s multiple obligations” (p. 24). Furthermore, there may be less alienation as a result of multiple roles because alienation is more “likely to occur where the conditions for individuation are absent” (p. 26). Multiple roles bring meaning too to the self and its actions.

This process may also be seen in how professionals operate within organizations. The work of Barnard (1938/68) is useful here. He wrote about one breed of professional—organizational administrators. He argued that effective administrators were ones who were able to respond with multiple moral codes to any given experience because they had participated in a variety of communities and learned from each unique moral ideal. This allows administrators to see conflict and to use a variety of perspectives to resolve much of this conflict and to articulate the reasons for their resolution to their employees.

“Conflicts of codes in organization are inevitable. Probably most of them are solved by substitute action. Largely a matter of technological decision. But often the requirements of technology (in the narrow sense), of organization codes, and of personal codes, press in conflicting directions. Not to do something that is technologically ‘necessary’ because it conflicts with an organization code (as expressed for example in an economic interest) does great violence to the moral codes arising from technological fitness...To do something that is technologically ‘sound’ but is economic heresy similarly destroys the general sense of economic appropriateness....To do something that is required obviously for the good of organization but which conflicts with deep personal codes—such as the sense of what is honest—destroys personal probity; but not to do it destroys organization cohesiveness and efficiency.....(p. 280)

The “damned-if-I-do, damned-if-I-don’t” predicament is not solved by silencing one code over another. It is resolved by adjudicating between multiple codes and the formation of a decision which offers the prospect of being morally defensible to those most affected by the decision.

“The judicial process...is one of morally justifying a change or redefinition or new particularizing of purpose so that the sense of conformance to moral codes is secured. One final effect in the elaboration and refinement of morals...That it can degenerate into mere subtlety to avoid rather than to discharge obligations is apparent... The invention of the constructions and fictions necessary to secure the preservation of morale is a severe test of both responsibility and ability, for to be sound they must be ‘just’ in the view of the executive, that is, really consonant with the morality of the whole; as well as acceptable, that is, really consonant with the morality of the part, of the individual” (pp. 280, 281).

In the fragmentation of simple communal life by urbanized life, multiple communities have developed. Professionals, by living in multiple communities, experience the diversity of its

moral claims. This promises to promote greater moral creativity and reflexivity. This forces a process of evaluation which demands that the decision-maker respond to his or her own complex socialization in these multiple communities. This socialization is not limited to either one's role within a professional association, or to one's organizational role, but involves all the roles in which one acts. It is in this web of relationships that one learns the complexities of morality and develops a professional ethic.

The idea that one's moral obligations stem from participation in various communities is the central contribution of the communitarian view. Responsiveness to multiple communities is the main issue. A communitarian ethic need not require that an individual act, at all times, purely for the sake of the good of the "society" or generalized civic good. A communitarian ideal requires community responsiveness in determining what the good is. The communities to which one references one's decision, as we have argued, is probably many in number. We now turn to the work of two communitarians Philip Selznick and Larry May, to nuance this idea.

Selznick's work is helpful in understanding the community versus individual conflict. He rejects the idea that communitarian values require a disregard of the basic values of self-interest. "Rational self-preservation" is a "reliable, if limited, source of moral ordering....it is self-interest, not virtue, that underpins reciprocity, compromise, and fidelity to obligation" (1992, p. 208). However, this self is a socially anchored self. Real self-interest appreciates the need for community if self is to be protected. "Morality is not an enemy of the self; on the contrary, it is a kind of self-enhancement" (p. 212). His communitarian theory

"takes seriously the idea that persons are at once socially constituted and self-determining. To be socially constituted is not, in itself, to be imprisoned or oppressed; it does not require that people be puppets or act out prescribed roles in excruciating detail. Nor is self-determination properly understood as gratification of impulse, compulsive, dependency, or opportunistic decision. Insofar as it has moral import, the theory of social self makes plain that a morally competent self must be a product of affirmative social participation and of responsible emotion, belief and conduct" (p. 219)

Selznick then pulls from the diverse traditions of Buddhism and pragmatism to characterize this "responsible self" as manifesting "other-regarding" and "self-regarding" via "character-defining choice, self-affirming participation, and personal statesmanship" (p. 227). His ideas are detailed:

"Character-defining choice. The primary responsibility of moral persons is to look to their own salvation, that is, to form selves capable of making moral choices. This consciousness of character—of structured selfhood—gives center stage to integrity. When a person's integrity is at stake, there is responsibility *for* the self (what I have become), *to* the self (sustaining and strengthening my moral character), and *of* the self (accepting as my own the consequences of my existence and my acts)....the examined life is a life open to reconstruction in a spirit of critical affirmation, within a framework of order, not in anguished flight, defense, desire, or aggrandizement.

"Self-affirming participation. Integrity, personhood, and character gain substance from the experience of belonging to a specific moral community. In core participation, responsibility runs three ways: to the particular others in whose lives one's own is implicated; to the moral order as a common mooring that establishes the shared premises of selfhood and thereby transcends individuality; and to personal integrity and moral autonomy.

“Responsible participation is not supine obedience; neither is it unreflective acting-out of prescribed roles. The perspective of critical affirmation applies to moral rules not less than to the self. It entails, at least, looking not only to the letter but the spirit of a rule, and assuming personal responsibility for exercising judgment to fill gaps in the normative order and reconcile its conflicting messages.

“*Personal statesmanship*. Moral competence and well-being are something more than the control of passions or the achievement of blissful harmony. The former is too narrow an objective, the latter too fleeting or of doubtful relevance to everyday life. More pertinent is the task of recognizing and managing the recurrent antinomies of moral experience... such as the tension between ...narrow and broad self-interest....The antinomies make choice difficult, and sometimes tragic, because they put integrity at risk. Personal statesmanship is governance of the self in the light of moral *ideals* and not only in conformity to moral *rules*. Its great aim is to find a healing balance between nonattachment and attachment, alienation and reconciliation. Moral commitment, whether other-regarding or self-regarding, cannot be made without reserve or limit. If we go too far in one direction we suffer loss of self; in the other direction we slight the claims of others. Virtue and commitment are inescapably in tension; therefore irony and distance are essential ingredients of moral experience. Ultimately the moral person must be, as Walt Whitman wrote in Stanza 4 of Song of Myself, ‘both in and out of the game and watching and wondering at it.’” (pp. 227, 228).

Larry May (1996) follows Selznick’s basic theme when he attempts to use the communitarian tradition to create what he feels is a more realistic professional ethic than that offered by most professional associations. (May never directly cites Selznick’s ideas but his views are very similar). May criticizes the “idealized vision of the professional” that most professional associations promote because it is an “impossible” ethic “to be actualized” (p. 5). The “view of the self as singularly motivated and unconflicted is a paradigmatically modern conception and one in need of serious reexamination” (p. 5). Like Selznick, May views the self as socially situated and this provides the foundation for a communitarian professional ethic. The situated self maintains integrity by commitments to various others, but integrity does not require “these commitments” to be “unbreakable” “because this would be both psychologically implausible and morally pernicious” (p. 23). “The self is a web of commitments....[that] does not have a core of commitments that are unshakable” but that are fundamental and present and guide the self and its development of an ethic (p. 25). “Moral responsibility” for this situated self is a “negotiated compromise in ethics” within this web of commitments (p. 107).

May applies these ideas to professional ethics by arguing that professional integrity is not simply “doing what is right regardless of expected benefit or loss” as defined only by one’s own professional community (p. 110) but it is responding to a variety of claims from the self or others. Professional ethics is more “a difficult balancing act” in which webs of commitments are used to ultimately guide conduct “rather than slavish conformity to one principle or to a narrow set of principles” (p. 122). In this process, “the integrated professional must also be true to the principles of his or her society and family” (p. 122). (We argue that the social institutions help us understand which values and principles will be most readily evident to a professional.)

In this position, neither the societal claim for well-being nor the professions claim for standards of practice, nor the clients claim for its best interests dominate. Professionals are in the position to adjudicate between all these claims in such a way that a legitimate outcome occurs.

“The person of integrity, on my communitarian view, is responsive to all of the various social groups that have been instrumental in forming his or her ‘core’ self. Contrary to what is sometimes said, professional integrity does not require that people steadfastly stick to the standards commonly recognized for members of a particular profession” (p. 26).

For May, conflicts of interests are always at work in professional practice, and this is the way it must be. Professional ethics is not the removal of these conflicts, but rather, the working through these conflicts, to appropriate ends. There is a need for a judicious disclosure of these conflicts to clients, and an attempt to manage these conflicts in a way that is agreeable to clients, but there is no need to think that one can, or must, escape these fundamental conflicts of interest.

“Professionals have for too long mistakenly thought that they can and should avoid all conflicts of interests” (p. 137). Professionals deceive clients and themselves by fostering a belief that these conflicts do not exist. It is better to foster a professional ethic that realizes the inevitability of conflicts of interests than to deny their existence and not be ready to manage them or to warn clients of their presence.

Responsiveness to multiple communities is the central communitarian concern. It is not necessarily the abandonment of all other interests for the sake of personal interests that concerns communitarians. It is the abandonment of any community commitment *carte blanche*. Professionals must continue to live with the anxiety of living in multiple communities that demand accountability to a variety of relation-driven norms. They must not escape that anxiety through the total abandonment of the self nor through the exaltation of the common good over the client’s best interest nor necessarily over their own personal interests. They must participate in this existential dilemma and continually be aware of the roles they have and the commitments those roles bring. Adjudication of each conflict must be such that a defensible claim can be made to the key communities to which one responds.

As such, societal well-being will be served and a civic-mindedness will be evident, but it ought not trump all other “community” claims made on the time and talents of professionals. While a primary task for professionals can be understood to be the fulfilment of important social institutional needs, they have other legitimate commitments to self, family, the profession, their employers or the client that may take primary precedence over the more general need of society for professional structure. No final fiat of “always act in the best interest of the patient” or “always act for the good of society” can, or should, take away the nagging pull of community responsiveness. That anxiety is inherent in the professional life and that anxiety is a source for on-going reform.

Conclusion and implications for the education of professionals

This paper has attempted to develop a communitarian professional ethic that calls for responsiveness to multiple communities not just to the claims of the civic good. Professionals seek a livelihood, and their families seek the benefits such a livelihood brings. Clients want their best interests served and their autonomy protected by professionals’ judgements and actions. Co-workers don’t want free-loaders on their team nor professionals who practice outside their roles. Employing organizations must survive and maintain their efficiency as well as their own legitimacy. That leads them to make claims on the moral actions of professionals. Professional organizations want to ensure that their members uphold shared standards of practice and contribute to the status of the profession. Institutional sectors reinforce standard practice

throughout an “industry” through mimicry and normative expectations while governments seek to protect the interests of their citizens through regulations. Finally, governmental demands and societal well-being must be served. The government seeks to protect its interests and those of its citizens. Societal norms and values are experience through broad social institutional frameworks and civic claims are a product and a producer of governmental and institutional concerns. Within all this, professionals work, at times dodging the moral claims they experience and at other times embracing them. This provides the sources of fulfillment, conflict, legitimacy, and reform.

The portrait of professional relationships this paper has developed provides a frame by which professionals can talk about their professional demands and conflicts. Helping professionals be responsive to webs and networks of people is a central concern of communitarians. Such webs of relationships keep professionals connected, obligated, but also confused. This is good. This is the stuff of a healthy society, and the stuff of a robust professional practice. Furthermore, having multiple commitments helps professionals avoid blind obedience to any one community. There are dangers in strict loyalty and cohesiveness. Webs can entangle and suffocate. Space is needed even in the web of relationships and sometimes one relationship provides professional space from other relationships. “The holes in the web are as important as the strands, for the holes tell us quite a bit about how pervious and adaptable to changing context a particular self is likely to be” (see May, 1996, p. 25). Communities feed off of their own foul beliefs as well as their own good ideas. Participating as they are in multiple communities, professionals act as brokers for varying relational values, articulating to one group the values of another. As such professionals have the opportunity to enrich society, not always in direct fulfillment of some generalized good or civic duty, but in linking varying community interests. Corruption has a harder time developing and spreading because such a web consists of multiple centers of interests and value foci. Such networks prevent professionals from either drifting into an communitarian idealism that promises more than it can deliver or into an opportunism that promotes self interest over all other interests. This multiple community perspective promotes a realistic professional ethic in response to the myriad of calls for professional accountability.

We believe that such a perspective of professional life raises significant concerns about for the education of professionals. At least 5 suggestions seem appropriate:

1. More interprofessional experiences and training is needed in professional schools. More programs like that at The Ohio State University are needed. The Interprofessional Commission of Ohio has developed effective curriculum and projects that bring together students from different disciplines to talk about and work on common social problems. Aspiring professionals have much to gain as they see how other professional view common social problems of urban renewal, child health care, and social security from multiple perspectives. One can also imagine the depth of perspective seasoned professionals and university instructors would gain by hearing their colleagues across the professions articulate their solutions to these social problems. Such dialog would warm the heart of any communitarian.

2. Professional schools should teach students about the history and community fostered within their profession. A little idealism and nostalgia can go a long way to providing a “home” for newbies, a place where traditions have developed that protect against some of the rude claims of the marketplace. A strong fortress of ethical duty can be developed as one is introduced to the knowledge that the goals of one’s profession have been hammered out in long fought battle of competing ideals. Learning historical arguments may provide moral support for current

decisions. It is good for students to buy into their identity as members of professional groups. Joining their professional organizations as students is a must. While we would not elevate this relationship above other relationships, it is a new relationship that often needs more developing in these formative years. Professional solidarity is essential.

3. For professional schools which operate within a religious tradition, an added benefit can be secured by introducing students to a religious heritage which defends professional practice as service to God and humanity. While we have not directly dealt with that heritage in this paper, a growing body of literature indicates that religion is an important source of ethical direction and personal fulfillment for professionals as well as a source of comfort for clients. Tapping into this religious heritage may further bolster a commitment to service that goes beyond self-interest.

4. Since relationships dominate professional practice, professional education needs to explore relational issues. Often in debates about approaches to ethical judgement and practice, the ethics by principles and ethics by relationships arguments are dichotomized. An ethic of care for another is set as more empathetic than an ethic guided by principles, principles that are either rules based or ends based. We think such polarization of these ways of working through moral issues disappears as we view relationships as guided by principles and moral principles developed around relationships. It is unnecessary to distort a natural synergy between the two (See Noddings, 1994, and Kidder, 1994 for a richer discussion of these routes to morality).

If professionals operate in multiple relationships with each relationship guiding the development of moral principles and in turn moral principles guiding relationships, courses in relational ethics makes sense. Noddings (1990, citing Rhodes, 1998) notes “concerns about care, context, cooperation, and relationships historically associated with women have been undervalued in professional cultures, and changes in that value structure need to begin in professional school and continue in professional organizations” (p. 398). Families count. Professional schools need to help professionals learn to maintain this wholistic perspective. Loma Linda University has set some ideal directions in this regard. They offer courses in their several schools of medicine, dentistry and nursing to help students reflect on their wholeness as a person in these multiple relationships. Having taught.....

This also suggests that paradigms other than ends based and rule based ethics need to be taught in professional ethics courses. Virtue ethics, natural, narrative and relationship ethics and the growing literature on holistic care provide students with metaphors, ideas, and mechanisms of conflict management, interpersonal care and spiritual self-understanding.

5. Furthermore, some structures and the pedagogy in professional education needs to be changed so that the hidden curriculum and the social routines of education don't obviate the values and relational skills professional need to nurture in their formative years. As Noddings (1990) notes:

“Feminist pedagogy involves a shift from teacher to students as the center of attention; openness and dialogue; student-to-student talk; increased participation of students in the choice of questions, topics, and projects; more opportunities for direct contact in the field; variable modes of evaluation; more generous and direct help in learning; and a reluctance to grade on the basis of ‘natural’ talent or test scores” (400).

6. Professional schools should teach students about the organizational context of modern professional practice. Organizations have become the dominant players in professional practice. Helping students appreciate the dynamics of organizational processes—culture, structure and

function—may do much to prepare them for organizational life. It may also help in three other ways. First, students may learn how to modify their professional practice in a way that preserves their professional standards while working within organizational policy. Second, they may also find creative ways to get involved in altering organizational policies so that professional norms and corporate goals both are more easily obtained. Finally, they may deliberate more extensively about who they select as their employer. There is more to a good job than just the salary and benefits package an employer offers.

Students should also be introduced to the impact of organizations on ethical decision making (Jones, 1991 provides the best introduction to this issue). While abstract rules of ends-based, rule-based, and care-based ethical decision making are useful (Kidder, 1994), emphasis on the impact of working environment on professional behavior may help students prepare for professional practice. The complex professional demands required in professional practice require creative professional preparation!

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ⁱ For a critique of Sullivan's book see Covrig (1998).

Table 1-2000 Version
Professional Relations:
The Communities and Commitments that frame Professional Practice

AREA	Type	Descripto rs	Legitimacy Sources	Threats to Legitimacy
Individu al	Self	-Integrity, self- actualization, personal gain, meaningful ess	-Fit w/ personal mission -Spiritual fulfillment -Material gain -Creative expression	-Stress or apathy about work -Limited control over action/choices -Bureaucratization, administrivia, paper work that decreases meaningful action
	Family	-Care, respect, quality time, communicati on	-Family-esteem -Material support -Encourage/Respect Cycle	-Work robs time from family -Marginalization of nurturing skill -Career related "family-altering" changes
	Client	- Beneficence, care autonomy, respect, trust,	-Expert service and advice -Successful client outcomes -Interpersonal rapport	-Minimal time/resourse spent on client -Violate autonomy -Poor social skills or rapport -Malpractice
Organiz ational & Institio nal	Co- Worke rs	- Cooperation, compatibility, collaboration, unity	-Team-player -Works within training area -Shares successes and blame -Provides constructive feed back to others as needed	-Detachment and aloofness -Competitiveness -Vidictiveness -Unclear or unfair role set/description -Free-loading

	Emplo yers	-Security, dependability , loyalty,	-Productive “work” ethic -Alignment with policy/goals -Agreement with, fulfilment of, organizational mission	-Inefficiency -Incongruent actions toward organization -Pilfering of resources
	Profes sional Organ izations	- Standardizati on in practice -Codes of ethics -Norms of behavior	- Upholds Code of Ethics - Add to practice standards - Supports professional organization with time, money and research	- Abuse of professional power - Malpractice or quackery - Personal actions that delegitimation the profession as a whole (Drunk driving, felonies, etc.)
Societal Level Relation s	Institu tional Sector s	-General institutional norms, social structures, goals	-Follow social expectations within institutional frame -Differentiate social action within social institutions	-Incompatible values resident in another institutional sector brought into ones own profession -Violation of social institutional norms
	Gover nment al	-Law, policies, due process, proper training	-Consumer protection -Law abiding action inside and outside profession	-Criminal behavior -Malpractice -Selfish pursuit violates national interest
	Societ y- Civic	-Serve social needs and human causes -Macro allocation	-Global or holistic thinking -Responsiveness to public opinion but not unprincipled	-Loss of efficacy -Imbalance of resources taken from society to the profession

Table-2 Now Used since 2005 to appropriately place God at top.

Person	Value Need	Legitimacy Builders	Threats to Legitimacy
God	-Worship -Love -Justice	-Sabbath -Devotion, Prayer -Obedience	-Non-resting Sabbaths -Too busy to read, pray -
Self	-Integrity -Success	-Fit w/ personal mission -Spiritual fulfillment -Material gain -Creative expression	-Stress or apathy about work -Limited control over action/choices -Bureaucratization, administrivia, paper work that decreases meaningful action
Family	-Care -Commit	-Time (eat together) -Material support	-Work always overrides family -Marginalization of your nurturing skill - “Family-altering” changes
Client	- Do good, avoid harm, up quality) -Autonomy	-Expert service -Good client outcomes -Interpersonal rapport	-Minimal time/resource spent on client -Control their choices (stop autonomy) -Poor social skills or rapport

Co-Workers	-Teamwork -Respect -“Stay in your lane”	-Collaborate on decisions -Works on mutually agreed tasks -Shares successes/awards -Gives feed back to team	-Detachment and aloofness -Competitiveness -Blame others for failure -Free-loading
Employer	-Work ethic -Legal action -Reasonable cost	-Alignment and shared fulfillment of group mission	-Inefficiency -Incongruent between personal and professional goals. -Pilfering of resources
Profession	-Codes of ethics -National standards	-Upholds Code of Ethics - Add to knowledge base - Supports professional organization with time, money and research	- Abuse of professional power - Malpractice or quackery - Personal actions that delegitimize the profession
Society-Civic	-Obey Laws policies, due process -Serve need	-Consumer protection -Global sensitivity -Local & National service	-Selfish pursuit violates national interest - -Push for over-allocation of resources from general society need to own interests
Global	-Respect differences -Protect Earth	-Eager to learn about other cultures/nations -Adventist ecumenicalism	-Excessive Patriotism -Anti-Environmentalism -Inability to challenge other cultures