



The sociological approach to the concept of the professional identity of the actors within the organization

Haouari Fouzi Djamel Eddine *

University Mohamed Elbachir El Ibrahimi of Bordj
Bou Arreridj (Algeria)
Studies and research laboratory in rural development

faouzidjameleddine.haouari@univ-bba.dz

D. Milat Nadra

University Mohamed Elbachir El Ibrahimi of Bordj
Bou Arreridj (Algeria)
Studies and research laboratory in rural development

milatnadrabba@gmail.com

Abstract ;

The sociological approach to professional identity is based on a brief history of theoretical work conducted in sociological and psychological research. Notwithstanding, this history has been complicated, composed, and characterised by theoretical uncertainty when it comes to dealing with this concept as opposed to being brief and easy to understand.

On this basis, the present study aims to estimate and combine the elements of the concept of professional identity, through the establishment of the sociological approach, in order to be a theoretical base that can be used in field research that studies organisation from the perspective of the professional identities of its actors.

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*Corresponding author



Introduction

According to the nature of the relationship that binds the actors with the organisation, and specifically in terms of the nature of the work relationships by which the individual's performance is secured in the organisation, it generally represents an area of great importance in shaping the self and perceiving it cognitively and emotionally. The limits of the specific organisational and technical tasks to position individuals within the specified hierarchy by dividing Work and its conditions, and according to the technical design and management model of the institution as well as the value and knowledge capital circulating in the organisational environment that defines the identity of the institution, its culture and objectives (Bagami, 2021, p. 14), which constitutes a baseline given in building the identity of the actors.

Many theoretical and empirical dissertations used the topic of professional identity as the basis for their analysis. These dissertations aimed to demonstrate the concept's theoretical underpinnings and connect it to ideas like culture, efficacy, and loyalty. soft and firm. Therefore, we find that every time domain in which some concepts dominated the organisational reality, and most of the organisations in each time domain tend to try to build an understanding that responds to these concepts and define their role in the organisational process, but any understanding that goes beyond starting from a precise definition of the sociological approach is a path that may refer us to results Not satisfactory or

sufficient, which prompts us to try to present the sociological approach to the concept of professional identity of the actors within the organisation.

1. The concept of professional identity

There has been significant discussion surrounding the classification of "**occupations**," since several researchers have proposed various factors that set one profession apart from another. Rather than referring to a particular form of employment, the word "occupation" is used as an adjective to describe how people carry out their tasks with knowledge and skill (Caza & Creary, 2016, p. 02)

The term professional is often used in the literature without a clear definition or with conflicting definitions, and according to Merriam-Webster the word "professional" has four meanings in current usage:

- (a) "to act for gain or to make a living in an activity or line of business";
- (b) "A profession or business is a means through which an individual possesses characteristics and traits that distinguish him";
- (c) "by following a line of systematic behaviour as if it were a profession";
- (d) "by a person who is or seeks to become a professional" (Fitzgerald, 2020, p. 03).

Whereas professional identity is defined as "attitudes, values, knowledge, beliefs, and skills shared with others within a professional group" (Matthews et al., 2019, p. 01).

An essential cognitive mechanism that affects how employees behave both within and outside of the office is occupational identity. Therefore, Gikas (1982) described occupational identities as "the various meanings and representations in which a person sees himself and others, most importantly, where identity is defined through An individual's subjective psychological experience, rather than a particular idea of the objective reality of the **"true self"**"

According to Dutton et al. (2010), professional identity refers to those meanings that individuals associate with themselves in the context of work, and from which individuals derive personal traits, group membership, social standing, and work roles to assign a meaning to who they are and what they do in the workplace. Professional identities can also be considered as Social identity as occupation identification allows individuals to enter into a particular society's understanding of individuals who share a common approach to a particular type of work. (Caza & Creary, 2016, pp. 04–05)

The foundation for creating an accurate perception of professional identity is made up of some key presumptions. The professional identity of a person must first be understood as a self-construction that is shaped by their interpersonal contacts with others over their employment. The idea that people discover who they are through observing themselves through the eyes of others is highly popular. Actors can find ways to adjust or deviate from these expectations by interacting with others and learning

about their expectations. According to this viewpoint, professional identity is founded on the individual but is created and sustained by social interactions.

Moreover, individuals have the ability to have multiple professional identities, and for the sake of simplicity, we must start from a basic understanding that an individual may have more than one identity in the field of work, and this plurality can be in different stages of the psychological and social structure of the actor within the organisation , as well as in building the organisation itself, and introducing the hypothesis of the potential plurality of identities in understanding the issue of professional identity is a primary goal for building a correct and comprehensive perception. (Caza & Creary, 2016, pp. 04–05)

2. The theoretical construction of the concept of identity

The structure through which employees tie their goals, interests, and skills to the recognized professional positions for themselves has traditionally been referred to as identity. Instead, it is the assimilation of experiences since they will be shaped throughout time by a variety of personal experiences (PHENG, 2015).

Furthermore, professional identity is an individual concept that has recently appeared in the literature and remains largely unknown. Our current understanding of this new concept may not be sufficient to help us understand the mechanics of its construction. First, there is a gap in the literature on the concept of professional identity. In general, when professional identity is studied in the

literature, studies tend to focus on career development and employability. Similarly, the literature on changes in occupational identity mainly focuses on occupational adaptation to new roles, and we do not know whether outcomes related to adaptation to roles within an organisation or even within professions can lead to adaptation to roles within new organisations or new professions.

Consequently, the literature currently offers insight and temporal confinement rather than a comprehensive understanding of professional identity and how an individual gives meaning to their career. This concept does not yet have a large number of publications and there is not yet a consensus on its definition. It is therefore difficult to understand how professional identity develops or evolves in individuals (PHENG, 2015).

2.1. Identity from Sainsaulieu's Perspective

Based on the perspective of the sociological theory of the institution, identity according to "Sainsaulieu" is the social and relational experience of power, as it represents the multiple standards, values, customs, rules and affiliations that are the references through which the members of the work group are defined. He showed through his book "**Identity at Work**" that it is a system of power and leadership relations that affects the worker's behaviour and culture at work, and the organisational professional status has a role in determining the professional and social identity of the worker at work. He also defined it as "a historical process and social interactions in the field of work and organisation, and these interactions

generate common meanings, values and experiences among individuals to give us, in the end, specificities that ensure their continuity. Social and professional integration (Oroia & Maedan, 2020, p. 543)

San Soleo considers the institution as a place for cultural learning and building a professional identity, and in his book "Identity at Work" refers to four forms of identity at work, where he explained that collective actions at work are a place for cultural learning and a tool for combining collective identities, and here lies the importance of the institution and departments as places for the production and identification of identities. Thus, the institution is considered, in the concept of San Soleo, as "a space for changing individual identities and creating a collective identity, in which values, rules and representations are acquired, which work to structure forms of solidarity between the members of the institution and their relationships at work, and to establish four principles of professional commitment, individual project, professional achievement, The objective of the institution is collective integration, and the vocational project and how to achieve it is considered the real bet of the positions of individuals in the organisation of work." Thus, in the view of San Soleo, the institution becomes a place for changing identities and acquiring new values and culture by belonging to labor groups and integrating with them through the forms of cooperation and solidarity granted by work relations within the groups. Socioprofessionalism (Bagami, 2021, p. 80)

2.2. Identity as seen by Claude Dubar

The emergence of the professional identity within organisations is addressed in Claude Dupar's book *"Sainsaulieu Renaud, Sociologie de l'organisation et de l'entreprise"* (Chapter IV, "Diagnosing the human potential for change") 1988, which begins with a kind of synthesis of the three modes (organisation, power, and culture) on defining "three functions of the organisations' social system," including specifically the "identity" function, where identity is not defined in terms of the production of an organisation's culture, but in terms of the production of multiple actors "with their own principles of belonging and intrinsic understanding." Thus, from multiple subcultures of active groups within the organisation, they search with great interest for the definition of their own identity" (Dubar, 1988).

Dubar believes that identity is built by individuals during the social process, and, at the same time, as a result of a process of internalisation of past social conditions and as an expression of individual and subjective forms. Yet the issue of identity transcends the distinction between psychology and sociology. It exists at the crossroads of both of these fields as well as in collaboration with other sciences. Therefore, identity is built from the social paths of individuals in light of past situations and circumstances, and it is also a result of the intersection of the psychological and social fields with the rest of the other sciences, which means that the social path of the individual contributes to building his social identity, as Dubar presented a similar perception to

Durkheim, as both focused on the importance of the historical dimension (socialisation) in building and shaping social identity (Bagami, 2021, p. 25)

2.3. The sociological approach to professional identity

The American psychoanalyst Erickson (1956; 1959) became interested in the development of identity over the course of life. He studied the topic of the ego (ego-identity), which allowed him to publish a series of documents that are the basis for current thinking on this topic. A distinctive feature of his approach to identity is his distinction between common identity and identity in specific spheres, or spheres of life, namely (1) occupation, (2) ideology and (3) family.

There are significant differences of opinion on the interpretation and operationalization of certain of Erikson's writings on identity and its evolution in the three spheres of life. For instance, Archer (1989) discovered that there are more than three domains of life that are pertinent to the development of identity in addition to demonstrating that the development of identity may differ for various domains of life.

Erikson's theory examines the development of identity resulting from the interaction of social, historical, and psychological factors. Here she presents a framework for integrating career development with identity development, as well as making a contribution by offering a perspective on the integration of social factors and personality development with career development. Contributors to

the professional literature when discussing this concept.

Numerous empirical studies have been influenced by Erickson's theory, the most well-known of which is the Marcia Identity Modes model. Marcia (1966) attempted to conceptualise and apply Erikson's theory by putting forth two fundamental requirements for the presence of identity development, namely crisis (later termed as exploration) and engagement, in order to support the central idea of the ego. The author defines a (identity) crisis as a time when a person must make a decision between a number of significant options, typically during adolescence, and he defines commitment as the level of personal investment a

person demonstrates after making a decision (PHENG, 2015)

Marcia, in his research, (1966, 1980) focused on the behavioural level, pointing out that the relationships between these two criteria determine the modes of identity development, and these states are defined in terms of the presence or absence of a decision-making period (crisis) and the extent of personal investment in two areas of life, They are the professional and the ideological field. Thus, he developed the concept of identity in more detail by describing the main components by identifying and quantifying the identity states (see Figure 1), these states being (1) realised identity, (2) endowment, (3) established identity, and (4) diffused identity.

Figure 1: Marcia's Model of Identity Cases (1980)

		Crisis (Explore)	
		no	yes
Commitment	no	Identity achievement	Moratorium
	yes	Forcollosure	Identity diffusion

Source: PHENG, P. (2015). *LES MÉCANISMES DE CONSTRUCTION DE L'IDENTITÉ DE CARRIÈRE [MÉMOIRE PRÉSENTÉ COMME EXIGENCE PARTIELLE DE LA MAÎTRISE ÈS SCIENCES DE LA GESTION, UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL, p 9.*

The worker who has a fulfilled identity has gone through a crisis and is devoted to a professional and ideological route in this way; in other words, he has "seriously studied numerous career choices and made a decision on his terms." The person with a diffuse identity, however, does not provide any ideological or professional orientation. He "has not chosen any job route," in other words, and "doesn't care much about it." According to

Marcia (1966), a lack of commitment, if not outright absence, is a distinctive feature of the widespread identity in the individual.

Between the two identity states at the "extreme" poles defined above, there are two more "*intermediate*" identity states. Marcia (1966) defines a discontinued individual as an individual who has difficulties confronting professional and/or ideological questions.

He is in a period of crisis and seems to be finding it difficult to make commitments. On the contrary, the individual with a defined identity adheres to professional and ideological positions, which are positions he has taken based on the orientation of other people important to him (his parents for example) without there being an exploration of alternatives on his part. Thus, this individual "distinguishes himself as having not gone through a crisis phase" (PHENG, 2015).

It is critical to emphasise that identity exploration and crises must be viewed as a continuous process rather than as the culmination of identity circumstances. In fact, Marcia's model is frequently viewed as a developmental model, meaning that the formation of identity would be a process of hierarchical stratification. Identity development starts with "less developed" forms of identity and progresses to "**more developed**" forms in the following order of ideas:

The diffuse identity first, then the specific identity, the moratorium and then the realised identity last. Thus, identity is achieved once the individual faces choices, questions his capabilities, and makes the decision himself. (PHENG, 2015).

3. Discussion

Evaluating identity, or the professional identity of the actor inside the organisation, is a complex and challenging task since identity is subject to numerous circumstances during its formation within the factory or the organisation. Claude Dubar asserts that the components of

identity formation are based on a social context and certain roles, whether they are associated with public life or In the area of work, where it concentrates on the fundamental aspects of socialisation as well as the existence of organisational structures and methods, as well as relational forms of cognitive development both inside and outside of the structures. Individuals employ professionalism, socially accepted behavioural standards, to set themselves apart from one another in the workplace.

From this current perspective, we realise that the person has two options. Given that identity is a dynamic variable in terms of its building process and a fixed and temporary product at the same time, as well as individual, collective, and subjective in relation to the biography, we find that the dilemma is where the two routes intersect. These several socialisation pathways all contribute to the systematic development of individuals and subsequently of institutions (Oroia & Maedan, 2020, p. 546)

The degree to which actors relate to the current human relations is specifically related to their sense of identity within the organisation. These actors' identities are broken down into two main categories: identities based on formal relations, those that are specified in formal work requirements, and identities based on informal relations, those that are formed naturally between individuals at the time of job performance. This leads to the development of a two-dimensional picture of the social organisation of labour and,

by extension, a two-dimensional vision of the professional identity of actors.

ability to broaden and accept a variety of non-binary viewpoints given that the establishment of one's professional identity may be influenced by other factors, such as the function of the work's physical structures (the type of technology used, the degree of inclusion of the rational organisation of the work, etc.). (Bélanger, 1975, p. 548.548-548.549) As a result, we might discover a unique class of professional identities for each of these characteristics.

Despite the importance of the concept of professional identity, understanding the organisational reality requires broadening the perspective to include other related concepts, such as organisational culture. Its composition and preservation (Lfhal, 2018, p. 45).

The solutions of problems for the institution in a certain way are actually determined by the extent of the emergence of the culture of the institution, and therefore it is what gives the organisation its specificity and distinction from other organisations, especially with regard to its ways of behaving in normal or unusual situations in the life of the organisation. A cultural construct that connects a group of actors and very different factors without any of them constituting the only guide to the system." This is what sociologists tend to organise, "such as Michel Crozier," as they do not view the organisation as mere legal rules, internal bodies, and management models, but rather as a field of social relations. that promotes systemic

social stability (Badran, 2017, p. 124). All of them are involved in building and shaping the professional identities of the actors in order to consolidate and preserve this structure.

4. Conclusion

Today's workplace is becoming more dynamic, thus in order to succeed, people must be more adaptive. Researchers have therefore shown a correlation between organisational stability and actor's organisational flexibility, indicating that organisational stability is a reaction to environmental change. Researchers describe the actors who respond to environmental change as more proactive (Bastid & Bravo, 2006), that is, they will initiate change by taking into account many factors, such as goals, hopes, and fears, as well as their personality traits, values, beliefs, and patterns of interaction. This is crucial to the survival and operation of regulation.

Actors must manage a significantly greater number and diversity of role transitions as the rate of change quickens, blurring the lines between employment, organisations, and personal and professional responsibilities. Employees must continually manage change through their abilities and desire to adapt in order to survive in this frenetic environment, which is crucial to professional success. A transferable skill set is typically developed by educated actors, who are now entrepreneurs in their careers and need to retain and raise their market value.

They must choose jobs appropriate to their personal goals as market

conditions allow. On the other hand, organisations use various strategies, such as making the contemporary organisation more flexible, in order to retain the employees they value most in the labour market and offering temporary contracts to the majority who can be easily replaced. Negotiating their working conditions and subsequent development opportunities (PHENG, 2015), and contemporary organisations try to polarise their actors around common values and identities, and the problem, according to Rono Sansilio, lies in “the success of building collective representations of all actors in the organisation around a common meaning or common values” in merging their strengths around the development of a common project” (Dubar, 1988), which is something that no organisation can do, especially those organisations that are associated with traditional management practices.

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