

Jordi Ludevid
A City of Professions

PROFESSIONS

MY16 EDIT

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Jordi Ludevid

To those who have said and continue to say,
«We aren't heroes, we're professionals.»

And of course to Roser,
my good luck charm.

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A democratic, equitable and sustainable city

A City of Professions, comes at a time of intense concern when the Covid-19 crisis calls into question some of the prevailing assumptions of recent decades about the role of urban density and its economies of agglomeration. The health crisis comes on the heels of the major impact of the 2008 crisis, so the sum of these two impacts is likely to have important effects on paradigms and theories of urbanization. For its part, the New Urban Agenda that emerged from Habitat III proposes a paradigm shift in urbanization based on a systematic review of the regulatory framework, urban design and financing, in order to achieve socially, economically and environmentally sustainable cities. The two crises mentioned above, in addition to climate change, will challenge the current model towards a more acceptable one, capable of articulating a new social contract. However, this transformation will not be easy given the highly diverse and complex interrelationships inherent in the modern social structure.

Professor Jordi Ludevid's book describes with special interest the contribution of the professions that contribute directly to urban construction, in its physical, civic and regulatory aspects. With an extensive professional, institutional and intellectual background, Jordi Ludevid has constructed this innovative reflection on the link between the professions and cities, which is undoubtedly of special interest in the current difficult and delicate circumstances, proposing a radical regeneration of the professional fact, betting in a clear way on their commitment and link with the cities, thus promoting the "new social contract". The knowledge developed and managed by the urban professions, in close relationship with the universities, has been a fundamental part of modern knowledge. If in the Middle Ages, convents were the guardian institutions of classical knowledge, since the 16th century the baton has been taken over by cities. This is how the author's thesis on the relevance of the professions resonates strongly when it comes to creating and reproducing cultural and

knowledge goods and to recognizing their positive impact on urbanization.

By reflecting on the collegiate professions and trades, but also on the professionals linked to municipalism and public institutions, and beyond that, by considering their relationship with universities and educational establishments, this book is of interest to a very broad and diverse public. It will undoubtedly be of interest to the professionals of the world, but also to all citizens committed to social and collective issues and who aspire to a democratic, equitable and sustainable city. A City of Professions will undoubtedly participate in a remarkable and significant way in the existing international debate on the present and future of professions... and cities...

JOAN CLOS

Medicine Doctor

Former Mayor of Barcelona

Former Executive Director of UN Habitat

A Social Category, an Alliance

Today, professional associations are a recognised social category, the result of a long historical evolution, which achieved its status in Europe with the Treaty of Rome (1957) and which has been reflected in different regulations and customs in the different countries across Europe. Subsequently, our country promoted extensive legislation on the professions, including the Law on Professional Associations (1974). Special mention should be made of the 1978 Constitution; Article 36 recognises the peculiarities of professional associations and the practice of the professions. Moreover, this social category has taken on meaning in specific areas: internationally, through the World Union of Liberal Professions (UMPL); in the European Union, through the European Council of Liberal Professions (CEPLIS); and in Spain, through the Unión Profesional (UP), an institution over which – here, I concur with the author – it is a privilege to preside. The different professions grouped together in UP thus share international, European and national space, but also regional space, forming an inter-association network of great social utility.

We can affirm, especially after having read *A City of Professions*, that the history of our professional culture can be built in parallel to the rise of cities. To this end, each and every one of the regulated professions needs a mission that «develops in the urban world», as the Catalan author describes it.

If the pandemic, which has shaken our socio-economic model, has taught us anything, it is that, as this book explains, «in the face of social emergencies, the professions always rise to the challenge», on behalf of citizens who, for their part, trust in professional work insofar as it is an act of doing good, a continuous pursuit of personal and social well-being. A commitment to society that is evident throughout the pages of this work, in which the inseparable relationship between the professions and human rights is alluded to on many occasions. In this sense, as the former president of UP, Jordi Ludevid, is well aware, the organization states that «human rights will

only become a reality if there is effective access for all people to basic professional services, on a universal basis». Seventy-two years after the Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the commitment to the protection of these rights is still valid for all the regulated professions, which are first and foremost human professions, because of their capacity to feel affection, understanding and solidarity towards others.

That commitment extends to global challenges, cited with well-aimed conviction in *A City of Professions*, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are inherent to the essence of the liberal professions, as specified by UMPL President Eric Thiry at the second edition of the National Congress of Professions (2020).

With this book, the architect Jordi Ludevid reflects with academic rigour, laudable enthusiasm and profound hope on the need to rethink the relationship that exists today between cities and the professions, highlighting the Greco-Roman origins and the ties that once existed between the burghs and the guilds, and proposing a roadmap to achieve the participation of our subsector in the decisions that both governments and public authorities have taken in the past and, unfortunately, are still taking in the present without taking into account the expert opinions of the people who dedicate their professional lives to safeguarding the general interest, protecting health and guaranteeing people's safety.

As a masterful thinker of our times, Jordi Ludevid does not remain anchored in the immediate future. After diving into the profession he knows best, architecture, he looks toward the horizon using the longest zoom lens, in order to recommend a more than likely antidote to the de-professionalisation that is creeping up on us: the alliance between professions. With social agents. With public and private institutions. All of this, to promote the foundation of a citizenry with critical thinking and, above all, with robust rights. The kind that the 21st century and the ever-changing world in which we live deserve.

VICTORIA ORTEGA

President of Unión Profesional

Vice-President of CEPLIS

Vice-President of UMPL

Our Common Space

Jordi Ludevid, my predecessor, a good friend and colleague, asked me as dean of the Architects' Association of Catalonia to write a foreword for his book *A City of Professions*. For me, it is both a duty and a pleasure. There is no doubt that one of the association's objectives is to give visibility to its professionals and their research. It is also a pleasure because Jordi Ludevid, an architect who has held every possible institutional post over 20 long years, and I have long shared a firm commitment to our beloved profession: architecture.

The structure and the summary of the book demonstrate the immense and original work it offers to us all. Where words bridge gaps and silences undermine, we have been silent for too long. From Hippocrates to Max Weber, understanding our origins has made us more human. Professional practice today shows us how the boundaries between different professional disciplines are blurring. And it also shows us how transversality is taking place in neighbourhoods and cities. And how professionals are joining forces, sharing and generating knowledge to respond to the needs of the present and, especially, of future generations.

In parallel, Jordi Ludevid describes a positive and important story for our profession as artisans of habitability: the main guarantor of the development of a modern institutional and professional project. Through a very detailed, in-depth and global analysis, he gives visibility to the professions, vindicating them as an integral and indispensable part of society – a part that is often invisible, forgotten or simply unrecognised. He describes six missions that support the participation of professionals as essential to the proper functioning of society because they provide practical knowledge and civic responsibility.

The analysis of the current reality of professional associations provides concepts to be debated in order to define the future of professional organisations in our current context. The tools are deontology, self-regulation and prescription at the European level.

And it falls to all of us to recognise the process of individualisation that is resulting, among other effects, in the diversification of the modes of professional practice. The underlying problem is the «real» reality, the civic knowledge that professionals represent; it is the citizenry, it is the city.

Professions and progress, as this book shows us, go hand in hand. From this convergence we discover how the role of professionals is and will remain key in the definition of medium and long-term social strategies characterised by innovation, creativity and the contribution of added value in a world that is facing pressing challenges.

The fight against climate change, social inequalities or the creation of sustainable communities are some of these challenges, already recognised among the Sustainable Development Goals. And the professions have a very important role to play in solving them. Cities are the setting and the point of intersection where all the resources must be employed with maximum agility and precision, with maximum efficiency. Today, as humanity is immersed in the struggle against the COVID-19 health crisis and the associated economic crisis, this book offers an exciting narrative and lays out paths that give us hope.

Thus, we should applaud it and give thanks for the generosity of the effort that went into this book and its content, which is unprecedented and original – and also necessary. In response, the COAC is reasserting its commitment to continue building bridges of collaboration with all the professions. After all, architecture is a spatial art, an art of space, where we all come together, where human rights and global challenges are decided and substantiated: the city. As we are all a part of the necessary change, there is no time to lose. Thank you, Jordi.

ASSUMPCIÓ PUIG I HORS

Dean of the Architects' Association of Catalonia

Filling a Gap

There are hardly any studies on the history, nature and function of the professions, despite the fact that the subject is of the utmost theoretical and practical importance. The professions are, from a private perspective, the way most people earn their living; and from a public perspective, the system of professions is what shapes a modern and prosperous country. This gap is brilliantly filled by Jordi Ludevid's book, which is particularly welcome for this reason. It is also on target in presenting its subject in the sphere that is most appropriate to it, the municipal sphere, hence the title *A City of Professions*. Moreover, it does not limit itself to an isolated presentation of the subject matter but links it to another issue that is of the utmost interest, the citizenry. Because the members of a community must aspire to be citizens as well as professionals: professionals who carry out a trade, in which they provide a service and receive remuneration and, at the same time, or even before that, citizens who are aware of their dignity, which is priceless. And this book does not merely lay the groundwork for a definition the professional fact and its characteristics; by connecting professional activity with the duties of citizenship, it creates the context for a civic vision of the professions.

JAVIER GOMÁ

Philosopher

Director of the Juan March Foundation

An Unprecedented Contribution

Jordi Ludevid's book is an unprecedented and original contribution to the study of professionalism as the constitutive virtue of a new citizenship, demanding and committed to the needs of our time. In the analysis of professional excellence, the usual approach is to focus on aspects related to expert or technical knowledge, not on the exercise of an activity that takes place in democratic contexts, and which answers to the common good. Beyond developing the specialised knowledge that attests to their competence in their field of work, good professionals contribute to generating an *ethos*, a way of being and doing, which lends a special character to the space in which they carry out their activity. That space is the city, the place where people with diverse interests live together under a shared commitment, by virtue of which, in addition to acquiring an identity as lawyers, journalists, architects or doctors, they assume their responsibilities regarding what we have come to call *civic* duties.

As an architect and a connoisseur of professional associations, the author of *A City of Professions* offers a reflection on the mission of professionals as the backbone of contemporary cities. Now more than ever, in the midst of the coronavirus crisis, we need texts like this one that force us to rethink the various missions of professional life as a whole, from a perspective that aims to show the values of interdisciplinarity and the ethical dimension inherent in human beings, whatever their profession and the work they do.

VICTORIA CAMPS

Philosopher

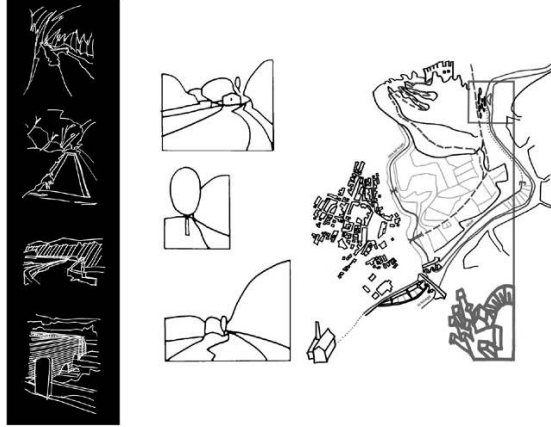
Justification

The images that precede each of the 10 chapters of this book correspond to the design panels for the 10 facilities included in the *Heritage Park Project of the Sèquia de Manresa* (2002). The director of the project was Jordi Ludevid, architect, and the author of the design panels was Cristina Murta, architect.

The *Sèquia de Manresa* is a medieval canal that has been carrying water taken from the Llobregat River from Balsareny to Manresa since the 14th century. It is 22.2 kilometres long and has a small difference in height of 10 metres; it has now been transformed into a scenic trail and a linear park. The 10 facilities, which were designed in collaboration with the architect Álvaro Siza Vieira, invite visitors to observe and appreciate the current complex landscapes through a detailed discovery of their structure, morphology and heritage. They form 10 stages of a single trail and a single journey. By the end of the route, they convey and fully explain the creation and meaning of the city at its heart, Manresa.

A City of Professions is also conceived as an itinerary and as a journey through the professional world, which ultimately leads to cities. In our case, the 10 chapters of the book are the 10 facilities. Each of them lets us approach a different layer of the varied and complex landscapes of professional activity. A professional fact that was born in the *polis* and that only makes sense within it.

JORDI LUDEVID



I. LA RESCLOSA DELS MANRESANS (13TH CENTURY)

The origins, the zero point, the source of the canal and the path of the water, an initial control and a transverse route.

I. Introduction

Today, professional activity directly affects more than two million members of professional associations in Spain, more than 350 million in the world. They make up 4.3% of the total Spanish population and 25% of the working population. If we add those professionals who are not members of a professional association, the figures double. And if we also consider those working in the many trades that are now considered professionals, the figures are even higher. Thus, the group ultimately makes up a very large, unsuspected, decisive majority, which easily exceeds 50% of the working population – and of voters – in large cities all over the world.

Professionals are not, therefore, a minority; they are a central core component of the middle classes and of society as a whole. As Talcott Parsons states, «the professional complex, although incomplete in its development, is already the most important component of the structure of modern societies.»¹ And yet, despite all this, the professional complex is still largely being neglected, if not blatantly ignored or even undermined.

In recent decades, there have been very few studies undertaken from within the professional world itself. In fact, they have been practically non-existent.² However, it seems clear that reflections «from the

inside» would offer a less disciplinary or academic vision; and although it might be less specialised, the perspective would be inspiring and much more practical and holistic, and more political.

In any case, if *professionalism* as a democratic virtue were recognised as a crucial, truly essential social need, as no doubt it should be, this recognition would soon be extended to professionals and professions, leading to a reconsideration of the professional fact as a whole.

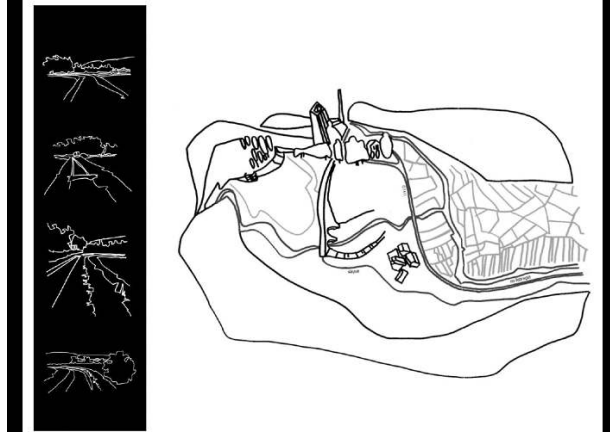
However, a number of disturbing questions come to mind, chaotically and in droves, in the face of this panorama: Do governments today guarantee the economic, social and educational rights of their professionals? Aren't the serious problems they are facing today also urban and global problems, social and political problems? Aren't the same problems experienced in other similar realities such as by the self-employed, small and medium-sized businesses, and civil servants? And, besides, isn't every city and every neighbourhood a site for the action, interaction, and amalgam of the practice of the different professions? And aren't the professions today practised within a globalised network society and in a completely different context? Finally, have national governments and cities around the world ensured the continuity of know-how and craftsmanship, trades and professions during the period from the 19th century to the present day?

One thing is clear: in the face of social emergencies and pandemics, the professions always rise to the challenge. But why do we only remember them in a crisis? What is a profession? How does a mere technician or expert differ from a professional? Is the professional fact relevant today in a world of cities and at a time that is completely conditioned by digital disruption and a public health crisis? What does it mean to say, «We are not heroes, we are professionals»?

Curiously, seeking out and finding answers to these troubling questions requires an unknown, long, uncertain and intense journey of discovery, not only into the past, but also into the very different, and sometimes dramatic, context in which professions and trades are practised around the world today.

1 Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) was an American sociologist who continued the work of Max Weber and Émile Durkheim, arguing that professional activity fundamentally shaped modern liberalism.

2 A recent reflection, somewhat difficult to categorise, seems to have been come from close to the professional world, although it does not have great faith in its future: *The Future of Professions*, by Daniel and Richard Susskind, Oxford University Press, 2015. In response, the psychologist Howard Gardner opened an interesting debate at Harvard University: *Is There a Future for the Professions? An Interim Verdict*, Harvard University, 2015, available at: <https://howardgardner.com/2015/12/11/a-future-for-the-professions/>.



II. THE CONANGLE AQUEDUCT
14th-century heritage element, masonry structure,
a car park, a belvedere.

II. Recovering the Words

Since the end of the 19th century and throughout the 20th, the professional fact has been studied extensively from the perspective of sociology and moral philosophy, from ethics and from the world of law. Herbert Spencer, Max Weber, Émile Durkheim and, more recently, Miguel Herrero y Rodríguez de Miñón, Richard Sennett, Donald Schön, Victoria Camps, Adela Cortina, Javier Gomá and Augusto Hortal are just some examples.

However, from the beginning of the 20th century to the present day, the period in which the professional phenomenon has grown exponentially, there have been practically no reflections that have come from within, and there have been very few congresses or colloquia on the subject. As a result, the professional phenomenon is, in reality, ostensibly unknown, even from within its own institutions.

In order to examine it, we will need to put together a puzzle of elements that are completely scattered, in order to construct a coherent and contemporary overview, which can offer a certain contrast with the academic studies that are currently available, developed mainly from the fields of sociology and moral philosophy. Reflections that will support dissemination and debate in a language that is much closer to the daily reality of professionals and citizens. It

is as though sociology and philosophy were never discussed by sociologists and philosophers, but only by others. It is odd.

The interpretation of this institutional silence regarding the professions is by no means self-evident. One should not assume that it is part of a decline, a dearth of proposals, a perplexity or an absence of enthusiasm and conviction that needs to be remedied. On the contrary, it is preferable to believe that the reason is not that institutions have nothing to say, or that they are afraid to say it, but that they are waiting for an opportunity to do so.

And yet, while all this is happening, the key words *professional*, *professionalism*, *professions*, seem to have been lost or overshadowed. These pages are a reflection that posits a possible, though by no means certain, recovery.

Thus, in the face of such a far-reaching challenge, it is inspiring to recall George Steiner³ and Paul Virilio⁴ in their shared answer to the question of how to regenerate democracy: «recovering the words». And furthermore, according to the urbanist Virilio, «by recovering the city». However, recovering the words is, in this case, a long and uncertain journey, a drawn-out exercise, which of course involves specific challenges.

³ George Steiner (1929-2020), humanist, writer and philosopher of language.

⁴ Paul Virilio (1932-2018), urban planner and philosopher.

The Challenges

Maps

The first challenge is precisely the complex nature of the professional fact, its variable geometry and its variable intensity, behind the three key words in question. Indeed, we must take into account the commonalities, but also the differences, between *professionalism*, *professionals* and *professions*, three words that define the professional fact as a whole, even if they evoke different worlds and have a bearing on different groups. And yet, in order to have a complete and sensible, useful and wide-ranging, meaningful vision of the professional fact, it is advisable to refer to all three, because as they are essential, they stand as complementary, interdependent and united.

Simplifying notably and following Victoria Camps and Donald Schön, *professionalism* would be «a democratic virtue available to all, but also an art»; a *professional* would be «an expert with values (virtues), committed to practical knowledge and to people and who does not act alone»; and, finally, a *profession*, «the set of professionals at the service of the same internal good or public mission, who share an institution and end up also sharing a common character (*ethos*)». The three words are certainly related and interdependent, but their actual sociological scope, their objective and subjective audience, is different. Who are we addressing, then? What and who are we really talking about?

To help us we can turn to maps. Although, as Paul Valéry argued, «the simple is false and the complex unusable», thinking by mapping has been established as beneficial in an intermediate space. Maps provide an interpretation of reality which, without exhausting it, also describes it. Often, a new and surprising vision appears before our eyes. Thus, reflecting on the professional fact would be based, first of all, on the maps corresponding to these three key words: *professionalism*, *professionals*, *professions*.

The map of professionalism would reflect the enormous potential importance of the professional fact, far beyond academia, with a