Foreword

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The division of labor represents two of the most fundamental characteristics that mark human life off from that of other animals—the capacity to create tools that aid in the performance of specialized tasks, and the capacity to cooperate with others in the performance of complementary tasks that yield a joint product. It exists in some form in every human society, but wherever society is complex and reasonably large it is composed in large degree of formally defined, stable occupations in which workers specialize in various tasks that produce the goods and services on which human life depends. The division of labor is thus the *generic* basis for differentiation in human life. While it is possible to imagine a society undivided by class inequality, we cannot imagine a viable society undivided by specialization. And if we wish to imagine a society with a rich material and cultural standard of living, we could not imagine one without a fairly stable structure of differentiation by specialization.

As fundamental as is the division of labor in the human scheme of things, it has not been the focus for much thought and study. Of the classic writers, Durkheim provides us with the idea that the number of different specializations in a division of labor can be explored as a function of size and density

of population, but that idea does not allow us to understand why the particular specializations arise in the first place and why they assume the form they do. Adam Smith considered its growth to be a critical prerequisite for increased productivity and "universal opulence," but did not address it directly as a topic for analysis. His comments on "combinations" and mercantilism were, as usual, shrewd, and his emphasis on the role of self-interest and competition in the offering and consumption of goods and services in the free market provides us with one set of possible tools by which the development and maintenance of a particular division of labor can be traced. But his emphasis on an ideal free market prevented him from developing concepts capable of dealing with the way real markets are actually constituted and operated. And while Karl Marx did suggest a rudimentary typology of various ways in which divisions of labor may be organized, his primary focus was on the detailed division of labor of the industrial enterprises of his time, the concept of division of labor remaining vague and contradictory in his work. Obsessed with capital and its role in creating the basic order of industrial society, Marx provided some understanding of why the detailed division of labor developed in factories but little or no understanding of how or why the particular social division of labor of a given time and place and even any particular detailed division of labor in a given factory develops, maintains itself, and changes. Classic theorists thus give us only modest help.

In order to understand the division of labor better, it seems clear that some basic facts must be taken into account. Above all, it is essential to recognize that divisions of labor are socially organized. One cannot merely add up all specialized occupations or jobs into a sum and declare that to be the division of labor. After all, insofar as they are specialized, occupations are interdependent and thus must have socially organized relations with one another. In one way or another specialized tasks must be coordinated for some common outcome. A number of jobs in a given enterprise, then, must be part of a coordinating social organization. That coordinating social organization, however, is clearly a historic variable and not a universal constant: just as there is more than one way to skin

a cat, so there is more than one way to organize a division of labor.

Similarly, the elements constituting the division of labor—the particular assortment of individual tasks that gets collected into a job or work role—may not be thought to be constants. While there are certainly spatial, temporal, and material limits to the number and variety of tasks that possibly can be performed by an individual worker, and while there are certainly other purely mechanical or technological constraints, there is nonetheless a broad area of indeterminacy which allows a number of possible combinations of various tasks to be crystallized into the social role bundles we call jobs, occupations, trades, or specialties. The question is, what is the process by which those bundles are made up and by which they are organized into a functioning social system? Who are the effective actors in that process, what powers do they exercise and how do they exercise them? These are some of the questions we must answer if we are to gain a better understanding of the division of labor.

At present we have only the crudest of tools with which to fashion a theory by which we can guide our efforts at answering such questions. In the face of the obvious fact that divisions of labor can be constituted and organized by different social agents, we can invoke the accepted distinction between bureaucratic and craft, or administrative and occupational, principles of organization. The bureaucratic or administrative method invokes the monocratic exercise of economic and political power to create and control a rational-legal system of formulating, organizing, and controlling the work which people do in public and private firms. In that case the division of labor is a creation of the management of the firm, and serves the interests of its owners more directly than it does the interests of those who do the productive work. The jobs in such a division of labor are in theory formulated as precisely and simply as possible so that supervision and control are facilitated. Supervision, control, and the very division of labor itself are organized hierarchically.

As a model, this bureaucratic concept of Max Weber's does not reflect the wide empirical deviations that exist in the real world, but it does help us conceive of the way the division

of labor is created and organized in the vast majority of large firms of both capitalist and state socialist industrial nations. Neither the particular jobs of the division of labor nor the coordinative organization of their interrelations are created by those who perform them. Rather, the jobs are created by others in order to serve the ends of investors or the Party. And understandably enough, those who fill such jobs in such hierarchically structured divisions of labor sometimes lack the enthusiasm which their superordinates would like. They are objectively alienated by virtue of their relation to their jobs and subjectively alienated by virtue of their response to that relation.

This bureaucratic or administrative principle for developing, organizing, and controlling a division of labor has been studied and discussed extensively by business management and organizational theorists. It is marked by the assertive and controlling role of managers and the passive role of workers. In contrast, the craft or occupational principle for organizing work has been studied and discussed far less but, when it has been, it marks active attempts at control on the part of the workers themselves, who form occupational groups and negotiate the substance and shape of the division of labor. One historic version of that method is to be found in the guilds of an earlier day, another in the organized crafts today, and still another, of far greater theoretical and practical importance, is to be found in the rapidly growing professional-technical segment of the labor force. A particular group of workers becomes joined together around a common occupational title and attempts to gain more or less exclusive right both to the title and to the right to specialize in the performance of a specific set of tasks associated with it. Only professional and sometimes technical workers today, along with those in the crafts, have the capacity to organize what Max Weber called "social closures," or shelters, in the labor market that protect their titles and their job rights. All others, including managers and administrators themselves, are almost wholly at the mercy of the policies of the particular public or private firms that employ them.

Since specialization presupposes interdependence, part of the process of establishing the boundaries of a specialty inevitably requires negotiation among contiguous occupational groups over the lines demarcating their efforts one from the other. And since coordination of interdependent efforts is essential, part of the negotiation must deal with the issue of responsibility and control. Will the division of labor among interdependent occupations be coordinated by the collective judgment of the participants as the flow of work proceeds, or will there be key occupations whose members are responsible for coordinating and controlling the efforts of others? The issues of jurisdiction—that is, the particular tasks claimed by the members of a particular occupation—and of control have been especially problematic in the creation of occupational methods of constituting divisions of labor simply because the method itself, unlike the bureaucratic or administrative method, presupposes no hierarchical authority that has the legitimate right to determine them. Thus, a great deal more overt competition and conflict is likely to be evident in the formation of an occupationally controlled division of labor than in an administratively controlled system.

Gritzer and Arluke's book may be taken as a case study of the process by which an occupationally controlled division of labor was formed. It provides us with a detailed view of how the people now providing what are known as rehabilitation services came to be organized into particular occupations with limited jurisdictions and specific positions in the health division of labor mandated by public or private law. It is thus a history of the development of a formal division of labor, the structure of which is stabilized through the creation of social closures, or shelters, in the labor market. The characteristic method employed by occupations in the general area of health care, though less common in other areas, is to seek legally enforced shelters through state licensing or the establishment of standards for staffing jobs that require specific credentials.

Beginning with physicians who took up the technology of electrotherapy as a specialty in the late nineteenth century,

this book traces the vicissitudes of their attempts to establish a secure position in the medical marketplace, first as electrotherapists and then as physiotherapists. The security of such a position depended on the recognition and acceptance of other physicians: willingness not to treat patients themselves, but instead refer them to a specialist, can make the difference between success and failure. Related to recognition and acceptance by other physicians is the issue of excluding potential competitors from practice—something that requires political action on the part of an organized group. And if not exclusion from competition entirely, negotiation can lead to subordinating potential competitive practice by putting it in a place in the division of labor where it is subject to the supervision and control of physicians. The American Medical Association, representing practitioners, and the American Hospital Association, representing employers, were key agents in the process of political negotiation that shaped the division of labor that emerged—a division of labor constituted by a particular set of occupations (many of whose names or titles changed over time) and structured by both referral and supervisory relations.

This is not the place to deal with the details of the process by which that particular division of labor emerged. That, after all, is what the book does. Nor is it the place to discuss the complexity of the relations between medical specialties, nonmedical occupations that have found a subordinate niche in the medically controlled segment of the health division of labor, and nonmedical occupations that stand outside it and act as real or potential competitors to those inside. Instead, let me comment briefly on several important themes in Gritzer and Arluke's book.

One theme is the role of the state in the formation and maintenance of the division of labor in general and the division of labor in the professional trades in particular. That topic has been seriously neglected in the American literature, for most of it has been created in the context of the special circumstances of the United States where the role of the state has not been conspicuous until very recently. But even in the United States the state has always provided the foundation

for establishing and sustaining divisions of labor. The powers which employers have to create and control the jobs that constitute the division of labor in their firms rest on legally defined rights of property-owners. Even labor law designed to provide workers with rights to organize and negotiate with employers reserves to management rights to define and supervise the division of labor.

An even more obvious role is played by the state in those instances where the division of labor is controlled by occupations. While firms exercise control through the constitution of their own internal labor markets, occupations have to develop methods of carving out a social closure or shelter in the general or external labor market from which labor consumers seek workers. A conspicuous method by which this is done relies on occupational licensing, a method that requires the support of law and therefore of the state. Licensing attempts to establish the boundaries of the bundles of tasks that may be performed exclusively by a given occupation, and if that occupation can also restrict entry so as to keep supply adjusted to demand, then its economic security is assured. Licensing is especially conspicuous in the field of health, where arguments of protecting the public are especially persuasive, and there it sustains the position of occupations like medicine and dentistry and also establishes the subordination of occupations like nursing and dental hygiene to their "superior" occupations in the division of labor.

The importance of licensing has been exaggerated, however. Far more important in the United States is a less conspicuous system whereby the state does not itself create labor market shelters by licensing but rather adopts and ratifies the procedures and criteria for qualification created by private professional associations and the associations representing both educational (that is, credential-producing) institutions and those employing professionals. Thus, the many private "specialty boards" in medicine are all recognized by both the federal government and the states, as are a variety of forms of accreditation of professional institutions and certification of professionals. Such recognition is not very important unless significant benefits are attached to it, however, and there is

where the role of the state in influencing the substance and organization of the professional division of labor has been changing rapidly since World War II, particularly in the field of health.

Since the federal government has taken to paying for some of the health care bills of patients, it must decide which are legitimate to reimburse and which are not, and what kinds of credentials attest to the legitimacy of those providing services. This means that even self-employed practitioners develop an economic stake in possessing the credentials that the state recognizes. However, the vast majority of all professions and professionals in the United States is typically employed. It is for this reason that the greatest impact of the state on the division of labor is to be found in its capacity to create and sustain specialized jobs in its own agencies, and to specify the credentials necessary for jobs in private institutions that require its approval and support.

Gritzer and Arluke's study is very clear about the importance of the state in the development of the division of labor in the rehabilitation services. The two World Wars vastly expanded the market for such services, and they presented opportunities for the creation of new specialties and the expansion of established specialties. Furthermore, facilities to provide services to veterans continued after hostilities ceased, so that after each war jobs for rehabilitation occupations continued to be provided by the state. The struggle among contending occupations and specialties was over whose credentials would be chosen for the jobs, who would have commissioned rank in the armed forces, and which occupation would be in control of the relevant division of labor. The choices that were made during mobilization lived on in the postwar period, only slowly changing in the course of later events.

When the federal government began to finance civilian health care expenditures in the 1960s, however, the role of the state extended far beyond that of being an employer, which was the case in wartime and in postwar veterans' facilities. In reimbursing for health services provided by self-employed practitioners, it had to settle on criteria by which it could determine the ligitimacy of claims. Its choices had critical economic importance for occupations offering services,

and were the focus of the political activities of the professional associations representing them. For the occupations engaged in providing services related to rehabilitation, however, by far the most important role of the state was in determining the criteria that would justify reimbursing the claims of health care organizations like hospitals. In that instance the issue becomes institutional staffing—what occupations, with what titles and credentials, should be employed by the institution to provide the services for which the state is billed. There too we find complex lobbying efforts on the part of professional associations seeking to gain exclusive recognition of their own and those allied with them, and to defeat the efforts of other occupations to gain recognition. The prize thus created is the virtual requirement imposed by the state on employing organizations like hospitals that certain jobs will be filled only by those with certain credentials on pain of losing the right to reimbursement. In the struggle among occupations and between occupations and organizational managers to establish the content and structure of the division of labor, then, the state can become a critical arbiter even when it does not have the direct power to command the division of labor. Gritzer and Arluke provide plenty of grist for those who wish to explore that relationship more deeply.

Another issue raised by Gritzer and Arluke is at the core of their general argument—namely, the role of technology, scientific knowledge, and skill in determining the direction of the development of new techniques and specialized occupations in the division of labor. They provide details in their history which allow laying the ghost of technological determinism in explaining the specializations that emerged in the division of labor in the field of rehabilitation. They show that it could easily have been otherwise. One may lay the ghost of crude technological determinism, however, and still not destroy the value of the idea that available knowledge, skill, and technology do place limits on the variety and type of specialties that develop in any given time and on the exact substance of the division of labor.

One may think with some justice that the aim or goal of work places some limits on what work will be done and how it will be organized. While there is more than one way to skin

a cat, if the aim is to skin a cat, there are only a limited number of possible ways of choosing, dividing up, and performing the tasks of doing so. If, on one hand, an aim is very concrete and limited, then the possibilities for variation must also be limited. If, on the other hand, it is poorly delineated, vague, and shifting, the possibility for variation in the tasks to be performed and in the organization of task performance into division of labor is much greater.

"Rehabilitation" is a vague and poorly delineated concept, and its concrete aims subject to a fair degree of variation. It has included physical training as well as vocational education, concrete surgical repair and correction as well as psychotherapy. Given such a variety of procedures connected with the overall field, one should expect many kinds of occupations to have a potential contribution to make, and thus a fairly large number of possibilities for constituting a division of labor. It would improve our understanding of the process by which a division of labor is constituted and sustained if we were to replicate the Gritzer and Arluke study in other health fields, and most particularly fields whose aims are more determinate and concrete. A history of the division of labor in surgery, for example, would be a useful comparison. I suspect that it would certainly show some of the same arbitrariness in the formation of specialties and their domains and in the distribution of specific tasks that Gritzer and Arluke uncover. Nonetheless, I suspect also that variation in the division of labor and in the agents empowered to control and coordinate it would operate within narrower limits than was the case for rehabilitation, and would show a certain technical logic that is much more difficult to find in rehabilitation. But that is speculation on my part and I may very well be wrong. Gritzer and Arluke's study fairly begs for others in the same tradition that would begin to allow systematic comparisons. Comparative analysis is essential for developing a more sophisticated and better grounded conception of the limits that knowledge and technique impose on specialization and the division of labor.

Finally, I wish to comment on the issue of interpreting the motives of members of occupational groups which is raised by Gritzer and Arluke's study and most other studies that

adopt a "market approach" to the analysis of occupations. The emphasis of such an approach is on how members of an occupation manage to gain a reasonably steady living from it, an emphasis that is entirely justified by the fact that without a living its members are unlikely to continue to work at that occupation and the occupation is therefore unlikely to survive. The survival of occupations depends upon establishing a viable place in the labor market.

The market approach is without doubt an indispensable element of analysis. Its danger, however, is that by its selective emphasis it gives the impression that members of the occupation are motivated primarily by material self-interest and that their efforts to extend the application of their skills to new fields are fueled primarily by the desire to improve their own position in the labor market, or to expand the number of available jobs so as to expand the ranks of the occupation for the sake of expansion alone. Plausible as the idea of material self-interest is to our twentieth-century Anglo-American minds, it constitutes only a partial and highly selective characterization of the complexity of human activity. It is best fitted to analyze something that has never existed in reality—namely, the totally fluid conditions of a truly free market. In present-day reality, it is probably best fitted to the circumstances of casual labor—those who are physically, psychologically, and socially free of all other commitments but income and who can therefore shift from one kind of work to another solely on the basis of maximizing income. In contrast, the idea of material self-interest is probably least fitted to members of occupations who have become committed not only to their occupations as a source of income but also to the work itself. Well-organized occupations like the professions and the crafts are characterized by such commitment to "intrinsic" as well as "extrinsic" rewards, as are those special and poorly organized occupations surrounding the arts whose behavior Adam Smith ascribed to overweening conceit rather than to rational self-interest, and whose Bohemian status Marx assigned to the Lumpenproletariat.

One cannot read the documents left by past members of such occupations without having to recognize commitment to and concern with their work. Nor can one interview con-

temporary members without recognizing frequent expressions of interest in the work itself and genuine belief in its value and importance. Claims for the work certainly can function to advance the economic fortunes of the occupation and its members, and they may be made consciously to serve the end of economic advancement, but they are likely to be believed by those who advance them. The motives for advancing them cannot be exhausted by imputing economic self-interest and status-striving alone. Self-interest is in interaction with commitment to the occupation, its particular set of tasks or techniques, its characteristic work-relations and work-settings. While the market approach to the study of the professions has been invaluable in clearing away some of the pious ideological fog surrounding them in past work and in revealing their economic foundation, it needs to be integrated into a more subtle and complex framework that includes attention to the very real effects of noneconomic motives—cognitive as well as noncognitive—in establishing, advancing, and changing the work of occupations and their place in the division of labor. Gritzer and Arluke's book takes the first step of analyzing the markets involved. Let us hope that they or others will take the next.