

# EDGE DEBATE 54

*The Building Centre, 20 February 2013*

## **A NEW PROFESSIONALISM?**

*Chair – Rab Bennetts*

1. Introductory papers
  2. Panel discussion
  3. What next?
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Edge Debate 54 – A New Professionalism?  
20 February 2013

# THE CONTEXT FOR A NEW PROFESSIONALISM

**Bill Bordass and Adrian Leaman**

*Guest Editors, Special Issue*

*Building Research & Information Jan-Feb 2013*

*the* **USABLE BUILDINGS TRUST**  
[www.usablebuildings.co.uk](http://www.usablebuildings.co.uk)

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# Better building performance in use *is in the public and global interest*

- Buildings last a long time, well beyond the time horizons of the business of their creators.
  - As building users, everybody has an interest in them working better in every respect.
  - The industry and policymakers have taken little interest in evidence from building performance in use ...  
*a disastrous oversight, now there are urgent priorities to improve sustainability massively, with much less money.*
  - Building professionals must do things very differently, with vision, integration and proper engagement with outcomes.
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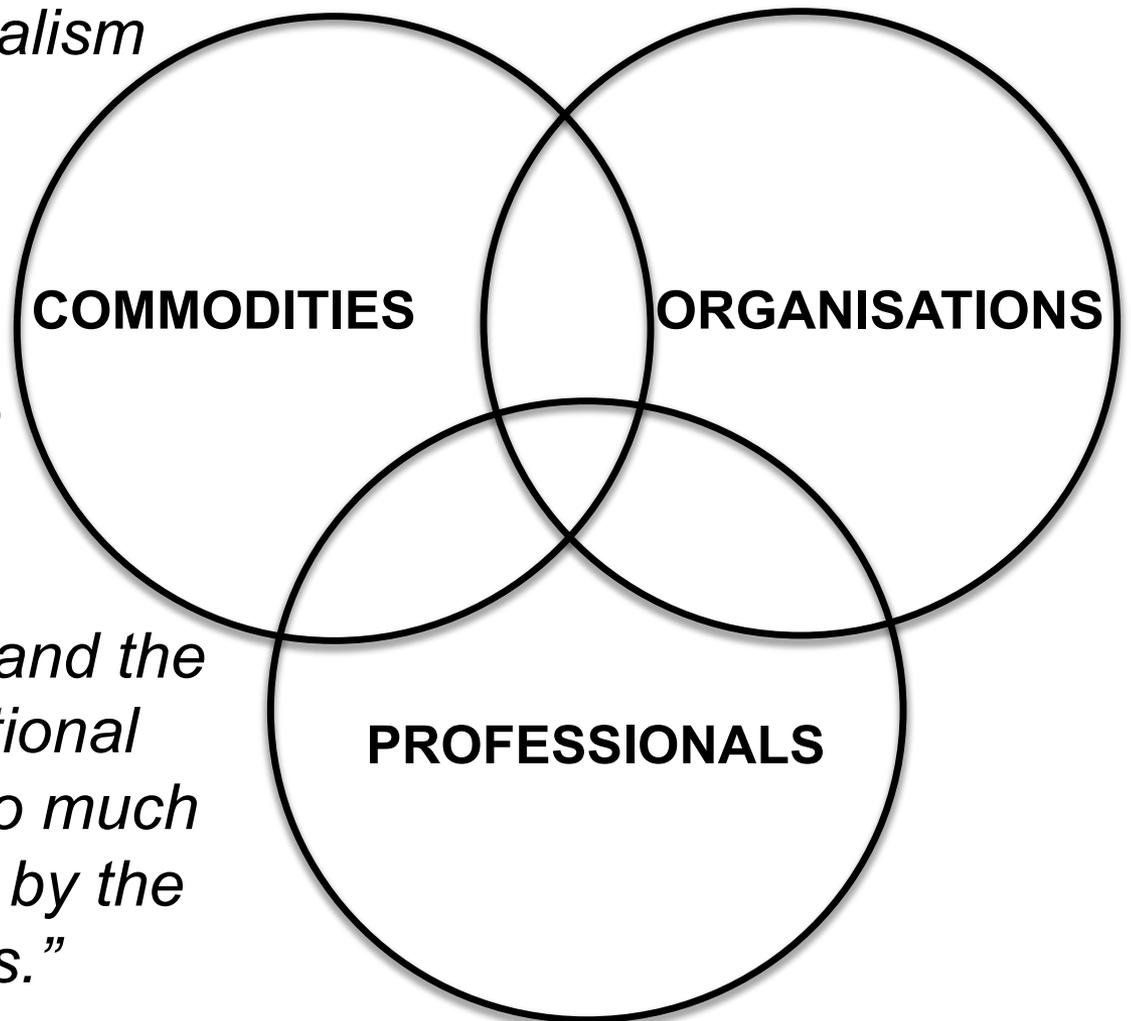
# How societies structure expertise

*“At present, professionalism seems to hold its own.*

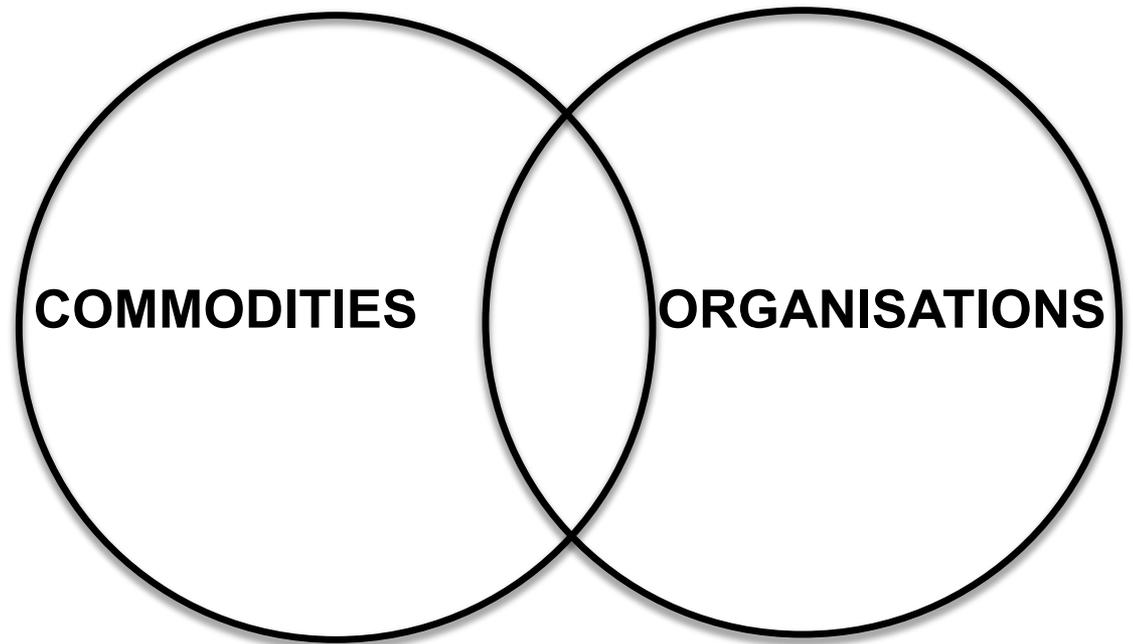
*It has stayed ahead of commodification ... but may ultimately lose out to organisations ...*

*new hiring patterns ... and the loose form of organisational professionalism point to much weaker control of work by the professions themselves.”*

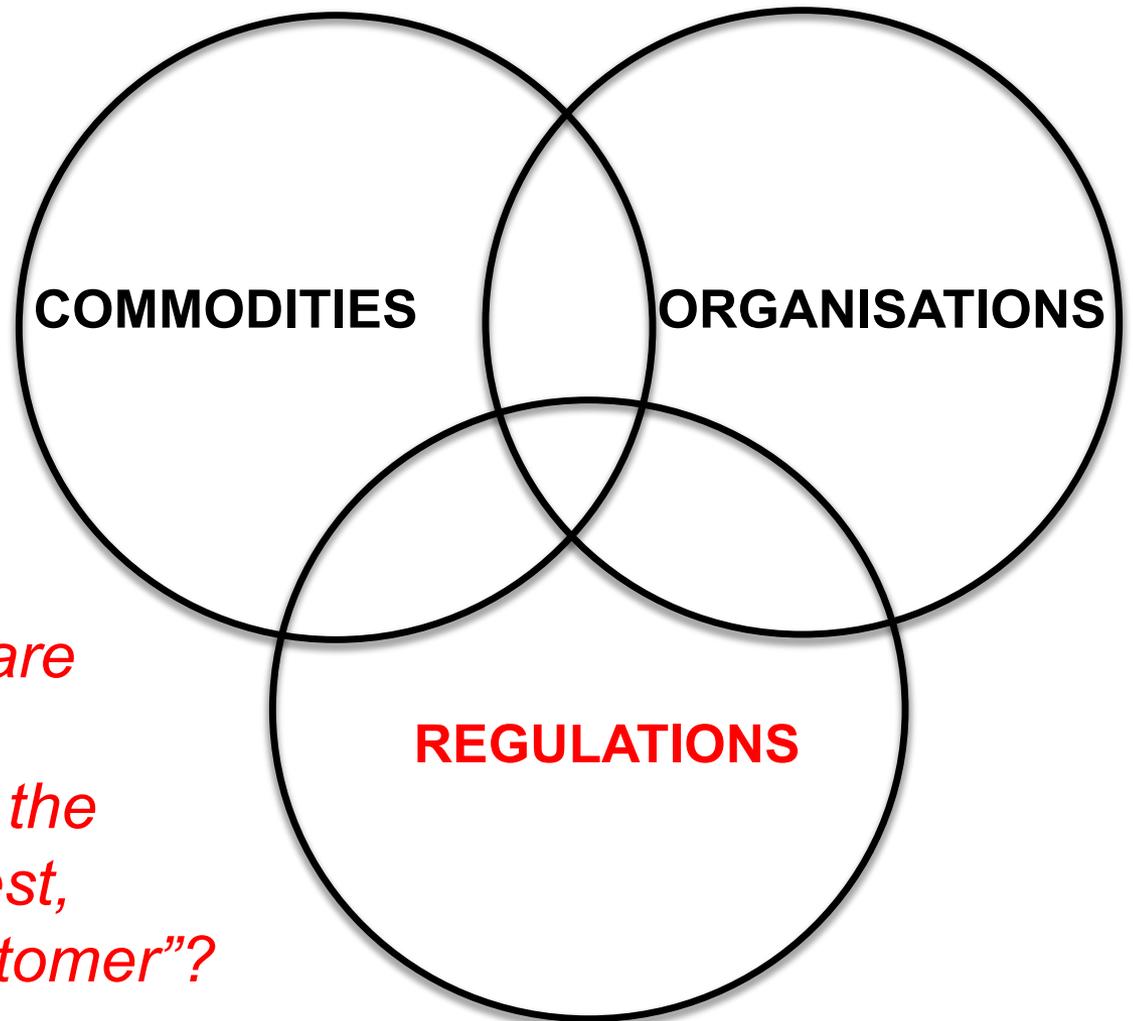
**ABBOTT (1988)**



# Where we seem to be now ...



... or perhaps



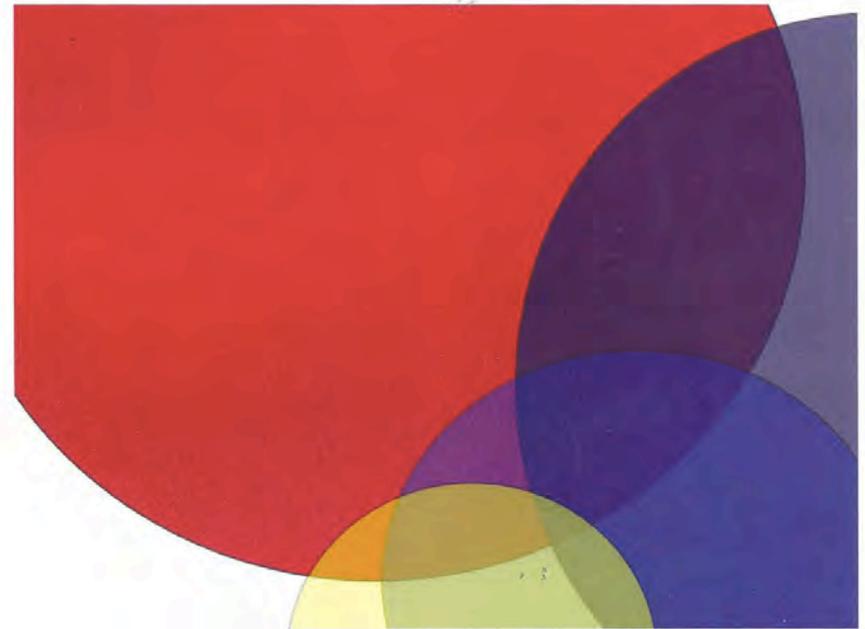
*But do the regulators understand what they are doing? With so much outsourced, where are the vision, the public interest, and the “intelligent customer”?*

# Is this really enough?

- How do you take proper account of context?  
*This is where professionalism comes in and artificial intelligence has been struggling.*
  - Caring is not something you can reduce to rational procedures and rule systems. It needs ethics,  
*as we have seen recently in many other sectors.*
  - You can't predict everything in complex systems,  
*there will always be unexpected consequences.*
  - You can't legislate for innovation,  
*and innovation in buildings is not just technical.*
  - **Big myths and category errors result, and the processes can become the disease they hoped to cure.**
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Can  
building professionals  
and their institutions  
rise to the occasion?

*If they do,  
will anyone  
take any notice?*



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Volume 41 Number 1 January–February 2013

ISSN 0961-3218, [www.rbi.co.uk](http://www.rbi.co.uk)

EDITOR: Richard Lorch

**[www.tandfonline.com/r/bri-41-1](http://www.tandfonline.com/r/bri-41-1)**

# SPEAKERS

*(and contributors to the Special Issue)*

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KATY JANDA  
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WILL HUGHES  
*University of Reading*

FRANK DUFFY  
*Founder DEGW and Past President RIBA*

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# PANEL DISCUSSION

MICHAEL BROWN

*Chief Deputy Director, CIOB*

KEITH CLARKE

*Former CEO Atkins and former Chair, CIC*

KENNETH CREIGHTON

*Director of Professional Standards, RICS*

DAVID FISK

*Imperial College and President, CIBSE*

HARRY RICH

*Chief Executive, RIBA*

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**WHAT NEXT?**

The background features a large, solid red circle on the left side. To its right, there are several overlapping circles in shades of purple, blue, and green. The circles overlap in a way that creates various colors, such as dark purple where the red and purple circles meet, and lighter shades where multiple colors intersect. The overall composition is abstract and modern.

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