

**London and New York's advertising and law
clusters and their networks of learning:
relational analyses with a politics of scale?**

James R Faulconbridge

Department of Geography

Lancaster University

Lancaster

LA1 4YW

Telephone: +44 (0)1524 592203

Fax: +44 (0)1524 847099

Email: j.faulconbridge@lancaster.ac.uk

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Abstract

A preoccupation in cluster literature has been with theorising the way learning occurs and knowledge is produced. Studies have highlighted the complementary local and global learning networks involved. This paper engages with this debate through empirical examination of the networks of learning that exist within and between the clusters of advertising and law firms in London and New York. Based on data gained from interviews, the paper shows that existing literatures devalue and differentiate local versus global learning networks, ignoring the way both the organization and nature of learning and knowledge production at local and global scales can be similar and equally valuable. It therefore suggests using relational conceptualisations to understand and describe the trans-local relational learning networks. It also shows, however, that a politics of scale influences the behaviours of actors in these networks, suggesting recent calls to completely jettison scale from geographers analytical toolkits might be too hasty.

London and New York's advertising and law clusters and their networks of learning: relational analyses with a politics of scale?

1) Introduction

Academic interest in clusters, learning regions and associated ideas is evidenced by the volume of scholarship and intensity of debate about the usefulness of, and spatial characteristics and practices related to such concepts (see Martin and Sunley [2003] for a critical review). A primary preoccupation has been with better theorising the complementary local (cluster/region) and global (stretched) spaces of knowledge production and flow and the way this informs competitive and flexible responses to changing marketplaces (Keeble et al., 1999; Saxenian and Hsu, 2001; Sturgeon, 2001). Consequently, to suggest that such spaces are knowledge 'nodes in global networks' (Amin and Thrift, 1992) is now somewhat banal. As Nachum and Keeble (1999, 12) suggest, "Networking and collaboration with other local firms and organisations...play[s] a major role in recent theories of local clusters...However, such linkages are also becoming a global phenomenon, one that has come to coexist with networking and collaboration within particular localities". It has proven somewhat more pertinent to engage in explorations that attempt to deepen understanding

of the different *practices* involved in the local and global geographies of learning (Leamer and Storper, 2001; Storper and Venables, 2004). Such studies now commonly refer to the differentiated 'urban buzz' and 'global pipelines' of knowledge creation and 'flow' that together sustain successful clusters but through dissimilar forms of learning (Bathelt et al., 2004).

This paper uses case studies of advertising and law professional service firms (PSFs) in London and New York to explore, but also suggest ways to subtly reconfigure the way we theorise the geographies and practices involved in such local-global, 'buzz' and 'pipeline' learning. It suggests that recent conceptualisations have effectively deconstructed one misleading dichotomy (that of locally bound, impervious clusters) but created another by suggesting there are dichotomised practices of learning at local (buzz) and global (pipeline) scales. The paper therefore calls for recognition of the scale transcending practices of learning and the relational forces that render less meaningful local-global distinctions (Amin and Cohendet, 2004). In doing this it follows the logic of calls for the avoidance of scalar binaries (Brenner, 2001; Jessop, 2000; Massey, 1999; Swyngedouw, 1997) whilst also, to a certain extent, being sympathetic towards suggestions that the concept of scale itself might be misleading and counterproductive (Thrift, 1995; Marston et al. 2005). It does this by promoting a relational methodology where *a priori* assumptions of scale-defined practices are replaced with analyses of the

various length networks of social practice (Amin, 2002; Dicken et al. 2001; Murdoch, 1995), as inspired by work on actor-network theory (Latour, 1987; Mol and Law, 1994). This reveals, however, a socially constructed politics of scale within the networks of learning studied that suggests discussions of scale might be valuable for explaining subtle variations in not the value or fundamental relational practices of learning, but in the behaviours and influences on certain actors involved in the learning process.

The rest of the paper, therefore, develops this argument over four further sections. Section two reviews extant literatures describing the local and global practices of learning that influence the competitiveness of firms in urban clusters. It suggests analyses are needed that prioritise a relational, network perspective so as to acknowledge the scale-blurring practices involved in learning and avoid creating a value-laden, hierarchical binary between local and global spaces of learning. It also suggests, however, that discussions of the politics of scale may yet still be valuable in such analyses. Sections three and four develop this idea through an exploration of empirical material collected from interviews with advertisers and lawyers in London and New York. This shows that the form and outcomes in terms of learning of the embedded network architectures that exist within and between the regions studied are fundamentally the same. Therefore, it is argued that distinctions such as 'local buzz' and 'global pipelines' might obscure

important continuities in the nature of learning at local and global points in relational networks. This analysis also shows, however, that understanding of the social construction and effects of a politics of scale continues to be important because of the way scale rhetoric's inform the behaviour of actors in relational networks. Therefore, it is suggested that purging scale for geographers' analytical toolkits may result in throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Section five draws these ideas together and suggests ways forward for analysing such learning ecologies and the relational spaces that define learning as a social practice.

2) Scale transcending networks of knowledge and learning?

The practices of learning performed at the local scale have been widely described under the rubric of 'urban buzz' (Bathelt et al., 2001; Henry and Pinch, 2001; Storper and Venables, 2004). This gossip, rumour and discussion of industry specific topics involved have been described as a uniquely local asset for two reasons. First, buzz is said to be the result of serendipitous encounters facilitated by spatial proximity between individuals working in the same professional domain (Henry and Pinch, 2001; Leamer and Storper, 2001). Studies suggest chance encounters, for example on the street or in restaurants and bars of a city, create the 'networks' that enable learning and the informal 'flow' of tacit knowledge. As a result, "participating in the buzz does not require particular investments. This sort of information and communication is

more or less automatically received by those who are located within the region” (Bathelt et al., 2004, 38).

Second, buzz is said to also benefit from a number of complementary factors that enable individuals to make sense of conversations and, therefore, learn. ‘Shared heuristics’ possessed by those working in the same region “enable firms to understand the local buzz in a meaningful and useful way...Firms develop similar language, technology attitudes and interpretative schemas” (Bathelt et al., 2004, 39). In addition, both Morgan (2004) and Storper and Venables (2004, 353-354) argue that face-to-face contact, facilitated when individuals work in close physical proximity to one-another, also eases learning because of the trust-rich reciprocal relationships it produces. Consequently, this means “Buzz cities...are places where, more than ever, critical problems of coordination in the modern economy are resolved through F2F [face-to-face] contact” (Storper and Venables, 2004, 366).

The value of such local ‘buzz’ has increasingly been suggested to be complemented by what Bathelt et al. (2004) describe as learning through ‘global pipelines’. This idea draws on long-developed arguments about the simultaneous importance of local but also global relational spaces of learning in economic activities (Amin and Thrift, 1992; 2002; Gertler, 2004; Simmie, 2003) and suggestions that knowledge production “involve[s] a complex and evolving integration, at different levels, of local,

national and global factors [not] exclusively at one particular scale but instead across various spatial scales simultaneously” (Bunnell and Coe, 2001, 570). However, descriptions of the integration of local buzz with global pipelines often continues to suggest that there are stark contrasts between ‘local’ buzz and “nonincremental knowledge flows [that] are often generated through ‘network pipelines’, rather than through undirected, spontaneous ‘local broadcasting’” (Bathelt et al., 40). The implication of global spaces of ‘pipeline’ knowledge being ‘nonincremental’ is that whilst “[l]ocal buzz is beneficial to innovation processes because it generates opportunities for a variety of spontaneous and unanticipated situations...global pipelines are instead associated with the integration of multiple selection environments that...feed local interpretations and usage of knowledge” (Bathelt et al., 42). In effect, globally stretched learning is said to be of a lower order of value, complementing but only consolidating what can be gained from local buzz. Indeed, Nachum and Keeble (2000, 28) conclude their analysis of the global integration of London’s global advertising agencies by arguing that “non-codified, not easily transferable, types of knowledge, are best transmitted when the parties involved are in close geographical proximity, and internal linkages within the TNC cannot provide similar benefits to those accruing through local interaction”. In effect, they return to the troublesome local-tacit/global-explicit binary scholars have strived to deconstruct in recent times (Allen, 2000; Amin and Cohendet, 2004).

2.1) Relational, non-scalar, analyses of learning

This paper argues that setting up the geographies of knowledge as local-global (buzz and pipeline) serves to create a new and unhelpful qualitative dichotomy in relation to the practices of, and value-added gained from, local and global spaces of learning. This is problematic for two reasons. First, studies such as that of Grabher (2001) suggest the practices and nature of learning at both urban (village) and global (group) scales share similar architectures and characteristics. Conceptualising the social space enabling learning as a heterarchy¹, Grabher argues that the same forms of social organization allow advertisers working in London's Soho district to learn from conversations with both their local rivals and distant members of the global advertising group. Conversations thrive on rivalry, can involve disagreement, but benefit from highly convergent logics, motivations and heuristics whether with other members of the London village or the global group (see also Saxenian and Hsu, 2001). Amin and Cohendet (2004, 86) summarise neatly such arguments when they state that it is misleading to "assume that knowledge falls into bundles organized along neat geographical scales and contours...Instead, [we] defines spaces of knowledge and learning in terms of the traces of corporate organization and

communication – that is, as organized spaces of varying length, space, and duration”.

Second, creating scalar binaries in analyses of the value of learning ignores calls for analytical approaches that do not assume geographies of economic, political and social practice delimited by bounded, discrete, spatial scales (Jessop, 2000; Marston, 2000; Swyngedouw, 1997). This requires a new spatial ontology to overcome distinctions such as local and global, as prescribed to local buzz and global pipeline learning, and to recognise the long and short, local but also global nature of many practices. Indeed, it has long been recognised that the use of the concept of scale requires recognition of three presumptions (Marston, 2000, 221-222):

1. That scale “...is not simply an external fact awaiting discovery but a way of framing conceptions of reality” (Delaney and Leitner, 1997, 94-95).
2. That a politics of scale acts as a social framing device and has material effects on practice.
3. That the framings created by scale are contingent and contested and should not be assumed to be universal or enduring.

Recently, however, Marston et al. (2005, 417) have gone beyond simply recognising such contingencies and called for “a flat ontology, one that does not rely on the concept of scale”. Here, the major critique of existing

scalar ontology is that they combine, confuse and misappropriate 'horizontal' or 'size' measures of scale that describe spatial reach with 'vertical' or 'level' analyses of power where assumptions of hierarchy exist between local and global. For Marston et al. both approaches do the same work and describe the variable capacity of scale-defined practices, as is the case in the local-buzz global-pipeline distinction. However, as we know from discussions of the 'glocalization' of economic and political processes (Jessop, 2000; Swyngedouw, 1997), such binaries are misleading. We also know, as Marston et al. also go on to argue, that a binary between micro-level, local scale action and macro-level, global action is equally problematic. As Brenner (2001, 602, original emphasis) describes this problem:

"The tendency to blend scalar concepts into other geographical categories continues to be prevalent in contemporary human geography...I believe the problem results in no small measure from the circumstance that our most elementary scalar terms (e.g. local, urban, regional, national and global) are also commonly used spatial qualifiers to connote the substantive sociological content of particular social, political and economic processes...Unfortunately, this grammatical inconvenience has significantly compromised the theoretical precision of many otherwise highly illuminating contributions to sociospatial theory".

We can see such a compromise when local, cluster-based learning gets described as incremental, in-depth, trust-based, meaningful and facilitated by a rich social ecology, whilst learning facilitated by non-local practice is described as being nonincremental, based on scanning and plagued by uncertainty. In this sense, the flat ontology of Marston et al. (2005) seems particularly useful. This takes inspiration from actor-network theory and in particular Latour's (1987) call to 'follow the networks' and approach spatial analyses without any pre-ordained ideals about the scaled nature of space. Such analyses are based on what Thrift (2000b, 222, original emphasis) calls a "*topologie sauvage* which cannot be fixed or frozen, but can only keep on making encounters". For Murdoch (1995, 749) this means "[t]he question of scale (global, local), therefore, can be posed in another way: what links local actors to nonlocal actors...and how do these nonlocal actors effect [actions] at a distance?" As a result, "the words 'local' and 'global' offer points of view on networks that are by nature neither local nor global, but are more or less long and more or less connected" (Latour, 1987, 122; cited in Murdoch, 1995, 750).

For Marston et al. (2005) a flat ontology follows such an approach whilst also recognising the influence on the behaviours of actors of geographical 'sites' such as cities in which social action unfolds. Their *ontology* and any associated *methodology* do not frame geographical research in terms of scale (regions) but instead in terms of practice

(learning). Marston et al. (2005, 423) add a caveat to this argument, however, and emphasise that “While we do not find ourselves at odds with the possibilities of flow-thinking *per se*, we are troubled by what we see as liberalist trajectories (absolute freedom of movement) driving such approaches”. Consequently they also suggest acknowledging the “large variety of blockages, coagulations and assemblages...that congeal in space and social life”. This leads them to talk of ‘milieu’, ‘neighbourhood’ and ‘locales’ as ‘sites’ that influence social practice (Marston et al. 2005, 426). The question this raises is whether, on occasions, such analyses require discussions of the material effects of socially constructed politics of scale. They suggest these sites are “actualized out of a complex number of connective, potential processes” (Marston et al. 2005, 426). However, Collinge (2006, 249), also drawing on the ideas of actor-network theory, reminds us that a socially constructed view sees scale in a similar light, as “a function of network connections, connections in which physical boundaries and differences of scale are achieved through the differential enrolment of objects within these networks”.

Perhaps, then, what this discussion of a flat ontology provides is, first, a reminder of the importance of ontology and methodologies that prioritise social practice rather than scale, something widely promoted for some time within geography (Amin, 2002; Amin and Thrift, 2002; Murdoch, 1995; Thrift, 1995; 2000). Second, it also prompts us to be clear in our *definition* of the concept of scale. Geographers ‘fuzzy

concepts' have received much attention (Markusen, 1997) and whilst the debate about scale has been long and intense, many of the conversations have talked past one-another using different conceptualisations of scale itself (Brenner, 2001). There now seems little doubt that horizontal or vertical definitions of scale are misleading, and most geographers have purged these from their discussions. However, discussions of the material effects on individuals and groups of socially constructed politics of scale continue (e.g. Collinge, 2006; Mansfield, 2005). Indeed, some time ago Swyngedouw (1997, 141) suggested that, "In short, scale (at whatever level) is not and can never be the starting point for sociospatial theory. Therefore, the kernel of the problem is theorizing and understanding 'process'". He, therefore, called for "the abolition of the 'global' and the 'local' as conceptual tools and suggest[ed] a concentration on the politics of scale and their metaphorical and material production and transformation" (Swyngedouw, 1997, 142).

Here I argue that the importance of using a (flat) *ontology* and *methodology* and that prioritises social practice and not scalar units is evidenced by the insights such an approach provides into the trans-scalar practices of learning and their horizontally and vertically indistinguishable characteristics. However, I also show that, on occasions, a politics of scale has material effects on the behaviour of individuals and groups. This does not create a local-global binary in the value or fundamental practice of learning, but does mean scale is a useful analytical device

from which we can leverage explanations of social practice and the subtle spatial variations that exist. Such assertions can, however, only be made *a posteriori* based upon empirical knowledge of the networks of social practice. As Bathelt et al. (2004, 37) acknowledge, there have been few detailed empirical examinations of how learning takes place in clusters and through globally stretched networks. As a result, it has proven difficult to apply a practice-focussed methodology that focuses upon the fine-grained social interactions that allow learning. Here I want to attempt to provide such an analysis that allows the long and short networks of social practice to be examined with, where empirically proven to be relevant, *a posteriori*, discussions of the effects of a socially constructed politics of scale included.

3) 'Buzzing networks' in and between London and New York's advertising and law clusters

It is timely to explore the geographies of learning in advertising and law PSFs because of the increasing recognition of their vital role in the global economy (OECD, 2000; UNCTAD, 2004). As 'lubricators' of the economic activities of other capitalist actors, these firms provide knowledge-rich services to clients in the form of professional advice that enables the most effective management of business activities (Morris and Empson, 1998). For advertisers, this is advice to clients about how to

effectively market products and solicit demand from consumers. For corporate lawyers it is advice about how clients might complete major transactions that allow, for example, the merger of two firms or the financial restructuring of an existing business entity.

The importance of advertising as a global industry is demonstrated by the value of the combined annual revenue of the World's 50 largest agencies. This totalled over US\$36 billion in 2005 (*Advertising Age*, 2006), much of which is concentrated in the top 10 firms (see table 1). London is well recognised as one of the key international centres of advertising expertise and activities (Clarke and Bradford, 1989; Grabher, 2001; Leslie, 1995; Nachum and Keeble, 2000) with, particularly during the early 1990's, firms tending to locate themselves within the Soho district of the city. Grabher (2001) notes that this 'ad village' is a vital source of learning because of the social interaction and 'buzz' like conversations that occur. New York plays a similarly important role in the global advertising industry. Leslie (1997) notes that, reflecting the trend in London, advertising agencies traditionally clustered around the thoroughfare of Madison Avenue in New York and, more recently, around the southerly districts of Manhattan's cultural quarter (part of which is ironically called SoHo, an acronym for South of Houston Street). Here, individuals and firms again profit from interactions that allow collective learning in a similar way to in Soho, London.

[Insert table 1 here]

At the same time, Faulconbridge (2006), Grabher (2001) and Leslie (1995; 1997) also note that globally stretched learning is equally important to the competitiveness of these firms. This is facilitated, in particular, by the corporate networks of the transnational advertising agencies/groups working in each city. Firms such as Saatchi and Saatchi and McCann Erickson are at the centre of the advertising clusters, as are the major media groups such as WPP and Interpublic that the transnational agencies are a part of (see table 1). Grabher (2001) describes how important inter-personal networks develop between individuals in different offices of global advertising firms and groups, thereby locating individuals in complex local-global webs of learning. Leslie (1995) suggests the emergence of such transnational networks of knowledge was one of the major outcomes of the intensive period of globalization effecting advertising agencies in the 1980's.

The clusters of legal PSFs in London and New York have, surprisingly, been less well explored in academic literatures and, despite their documented existence (The Corporation of London, 2003; Warf, 2001), uncertainty exists as to whether any form of collective learning occurs. Extant literatures reveal that London is an important location for the activities of transnational law firms and is also a highly interconnected location in a global network of legal practice. 17% of US law firms'

overseas offices are in London (Beaverstock *et al.*, 2000), as are 16% of US law firms overseas workers (Warf, 2001). A massive 80% of total FDI by US law firms is focused on London (Cullen-Mandikos and MacPherson, 2002)². New York is recognized as similarly important for the activities of transnational law firms (Beaverstock *et al.*, 1999; Warf, 2001). However, for both cities there is little, if any, literature that examines the affect of the clustering of legal PSFs and the potential it creates for collective learning. Nor is there analysis of whether the firms present, such as Clifford Chance and Baker and McKenzie (see table 2), benefit from globally stretched knowledge networks. This seems somewhat surprising and troublesome and is a void this study can begin to fill.

[Insert table 2 here]

This paper, therefore, draws on insights gained from 58 interviews with advertisers and lawyers working for transnational advertising and legal PSFs in London and New York to examine the long and short networks of learning and professionals draw upon. Interviews were conducted between September 2003 and June 2004, lasted between 30 and 80 minutes (50 on average), and were tape recorded and latterly transcribed. Interviewees were questioned about: the extent to which they talked to and learned from other advertisers or lawyers; what type of architectures (events) facilitated this learning; and the spatial reach of

these interactions. The aim was, drawing on the flat ontology and network methodology outlined in the previous section, to understand the various spaces of learning without resorting to analyses of local versus global scales. To maintain anonymity, the quotes from interviewees used here are identified only by the prefix A for advertisers and L for lawyers and interviewee number.

3.1) Geographies of learning

The advertisers interviewed confirmed previous suggestions, whilst lawyers illustrated the logical suspicion that the clusters of each industry in London and New York result in a form of urban collective learning. The knowledge this produces is valuable because it informs decision making, strategy and understanding of the challenges all advertisers and lawyers working in each city's marketplace share. Conversations focus upon pertinent issues such as, for lawyers, changes in legislation, and for advertisers, the reactions of consumers to recent adverts. As two interviewees described their conversations:

"I keep my ears open and you learn things. You tend to talk about issues you're all talking about, it's more like what are the issues, big issues that agencies are facing. So discussing how people deal with these things, these 'hot topics'... It's a forum in which I think people cement their views" (A4).

“Conversations with other lawyers act as a sounding board for second opinions, discussions of black letter law. So when we need to address the detail of a development it’s useful to discuss the detail...Legal or regulatory questions, transactional questions we’re not sure of the answer to, its useful to see if anyone else out there knows the answer” (L8).

In the same sentence, however, interviewees would often also describe the importance of conversations with overseas colleagues that prove equally valuable. These conversations would usually take place between counterparts doing the same job but in different offices. For advertisers in London this often meant talking to someone in New York or another European office whilst for advertisers in New York it usually meant speaking to someone in London or one of the Latin and South American offices. Conversations allow learning in relation to issues such as: the most effective way to deal with the affects of global media events on the behaviours of consumers throughout the World (e.g. the September 11th terrorist attacks). For lawyers conversations were held with colleagues in other major financial centres such as Frankfurt, Paris or Hong Kong and dealt with, for example, innovations in the structuring of cross-border deals. As one lawyer noted:

“So when you’re up against a problem, first you walk down the corridor and talk to your colleagues, but if they can’t find a solution, and you think there is more mileage to be had out of this, you pick up the phone and

talk to the partners who you think might have something to offer here, and they might be in Germany, in New York, or in France” (L9).

All of the firms studied also engaged in various form of ‘best practice’ transfer within the firm (Gertler, 2001) which included the use of standardised client relationship management systems, financial management tools and human resource practices. The extent to which standardization was possible varied between advertising and law with more use of best practice in the former. However, best practice transfer wasn’t the primary objective of conversations between colleagues. Rather, as one interviewee, whose comments were representative of all those interviewed, described the value of globally stretched conversations (and compare this to the earlier quotes in relation to the nature of ‘urban’ buzz):

“It’s very easy to get on with people, very easy to share stuff, but because, although there tends to be quite fundamental differences with that markets relationship with a brand or product, there are useful approaches to a certain extent that are shared. So you talk to people to hear about their experiences with the same product or brand or with a similar strategy or idea. And that colours your thinking, adds flavours to the way you understand the issues” (A8).

Interviewees described, then, the equal value of local and global, long and short, networks of learning. This is significant because of how they

also described the similar architectures associated with 'urban' and 'global' conversations that together informed their work.

4) Architectures of learning

4.1) Inter-personal networks of learning

Various forms of *interpersonal network* facilitate learning from buzz in the advertising and law clusters in London and New York. One of the architectures of learning was a result of the internal churning of regional labour markets in each city (Keeble et al., 1999). The professionals interviewed had worked, on average, for three firms within London or New York during their career. Staying in contact with past colleagues was a valuable way of participating in discussions about shared advertising or legal challenges. This principally took the form of infrequent luncheon or after work meetings with, on average, interviewees having one meeting a week with a past colleague and meeting the same individual once every two or three months. Several interviewees suggested they would strategically arrange such meetings when they had a particular issue they wanted to share with, and 'pick the brains' of, a past colleague. As one interviewee described such meetings:

"It's the friends and colleagues you meet and then people move and you stay in touch and that becomes an industry network...and talking about

advertises is useful because you get an opinion from someone you respect, an opinion that is reasonably informed and probably slightly different from the ones you'll get from people who work at the same place as you. " (A2).

As suggested above and in extant literatures (Grabher, 2001; Leslie, 1997), these conversations develop the ability of individuals and firms to respond effectively (in a 'protean way') to the latest client demands and evolving marketplaces. Also, as Rantisi (2002) described in relation to the fashion industry, keeping up with rival firms and both knowing about and, where appropriate, adopting and adapting their strategies is vital. Of course, for advertisers and especially lawyers, maintaining client confidentiality means it is not possible to hold conversations that reveal the details of a specific campaign or transaction. However, all interviewees agreed that it was possible to describe the situation without divulging confidential material, therefore still being able to hold a conversation at a level of detail that allows learning³.

The lawyers interviewed also have a number of non-transactional, untraded, relationships with professionals outside of the legal industry that provided an additional form of inter-personal network. The corporately orientated work of global legal PSFs means that it is essential to understand the thinking and norms of major financial institutions involved in, for example, the financing of the mergers and acquisitions

global legal PSFs specialise in structuring. Consequently, the bars and restaurants were important places where lawyers would meet with professionals working for financial institutions to discuss the latest gossip, thinking and product developments in large investment banks such as Merrill Lynch. Lawyers developed such contacts by cultivating relationships with members of financial institutions involved in past transactions and staying in touch with past colleagues who leave to become 'in house' lawyers for financial organizations. As one lawyer described this facet of urban buzz:

"You often get to hear tip-bits or have good friends who are at clients. I've got a very good friend who's at one of our major investment bank clients who I talk to regularly. It's the only way you're going to see what products are being developed by the banks and the legal approaches associated with them and the expectations about how we'll handle them. Also, he inevitably, as well as being a client of ours, is a client of all the other magic circle firms and in the same way that we'll be wining and dining him he'll be wined and dined by lots of other firms. So he's a very useful source of knowledge about what other people are up to in the law industry too...and these kinds of insights are what keep you at the cutting edge in the law community, right up to date with how things are evolving" (L3).

In this sense, then, the bars and restaurants of London and New York are, as others have suggested, important for knowledge production

through buzz. However, the empirical material suggests such meetings are *not* serendipitous encounters but, instead, *planned interactions* between previously familiar parties. Indeed, of all the advertisers and lawyers interviewed, only two advertisers suggested they benefited from frequenting coffee houses, bars and other public places. However, this was not because of the other people they serendipitously met, but because of the inspiration gained from watching the general public and from being in a different environment to that of the everyday office. As interviewees frequently commented, there is rarely time to frequent the local bars and restaurants surrounding the clusters in London and New York because of the pressures to complete projects⁴. Moreover, interviewees suggested they only wanted to have such conversations with 'trusted confidantes', something that further meant serendipitous encounters were unproductive.

The empirical material also highlighted the fact that such interpersonal networks and meetings are not exclusively local architectures and practices of learning. Both advertisers and lawyers hold conversations with colleagues, but this time present colleagues, working in an overseas office of the same firm. These people form a network of overseas peers that are regularly spoken to and, based on the insights gained, learned from. Such networks are formed in two ways. First, as a result of the cross-border project teams used in both advertising and legal PSFs to meet the needs of transnational

corporations for integrated global services. The constant formation and reformation of such teams, and the churched of individuals between teams, allows advertisers and lawyers to work, meet and develop friendships with a number of their overseas counterparts. As one interviewee noted:

“People develop relationships in the team, get to know each other and talk about problems, share ideas and get a lot by learning from one-another’s insights. They’ll then stay in touch when the team splits up, and just because one person is say working on a confectionary product and the others doing cars doesn’t mean they can’t learn from each other”
(A2)

As Grabher (2004) has shown, there is much greater complexity to this process of relational network formation, something that cannot be fully explored here except through a few key illustrations. For example, whilst the exchange of insights between individuals within teams is commonplace and extensive, most individuals only maintain one or two of the relationships once the team is disbanded and the project completed. For those networks sustained, however, interviewees described how they spoke to their overseas colleagues *at least* once a week and usually for between 15 and 45 minutes, sometimes to ask for specific advice, and other times for a general chat that might incidentally lead to an informative discussion that resulted in valuable learning. This would also be supplemented by email-based interactions, something that often

involved the sending and receiving of documents, case studies and, for advertisers, images, diagrams, and even adverts themselves. In the terminology of actor-network theory these acted as 'immutable mobiles', helping 'stabilise' interpretations (see below) and reinforce the learning process (Latour, 1987). All interviewees agreed, however, that such 'virtual' communication and the use of documents was only beneficial when coupled to the telephone conversations described previously.

The second way of developing relational networks with overseas colleagues was through the global practice group used by the firms studied. In both advertising and law firms each individual is part of one or more practice groups which bring together individuals with shared lines of work (e.g. account planning in advertising and mergers and acquisitions in law). These more permanent teams also lead to the cultivation of a number of inter-personal networks that, through regular conversations outside of the formal activities of the practice group lead to learning. As one interviewee noted:

"We're divided into practice groups and then in each of those global streams you will have different practice areas and then within those smaller groupings it's much easier to get people together so that at least if all your capital markets partners worldwide sort of know each other... Then if you get stuck on something in London and you need some help you've got someone to call and I'll call the same people several times a week when I'm doing something particularly difficult"
(L2).

Talking to fellow professionals with whom a long-term relationship has been nurtured is not, then, a practice that can be defined or delimited by scale or spatial (metric) categories and cannot solely be associated with the local scale. Moreover, as the quotations used show, the quality of the learning cannot be differentiated based on a scale register with both local and global points in relational networks having equal value. This would seem to support suggestions that a 'flat' ontology is needed when approaching research so as to prioritise the spatial dynamics of social practice. The next section builds on this idea to further highlight the scale transcending architectures of learning

4.2) Coordinated learning events

The empirical material explored above questions the importance of serendipitous encounters in the learning process, something that can be further reinforced by examining the role of coordinated learning events and the learning they facilitate. Conversations and meetings mediated through the professional associations for advertisers and lawyers in London and New York are key coordinated learning events facilitating buzz. In each city a number of professional associations exist. In London, the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising and Account Planning Group were regular mentioned by advertisers, whilst for lawyers The City of London Law Society and the Networking for Know-how group were important. In New York, advertisers drew attention to the role of the

American Association of Advertising Agencies whilst lawyers described the importance of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York.

For all of these professional associations, whilst have differing structures, key activities include: lobbying regulators to promote the adoption of preferable legislation; providing guidance about management issues; and providing training to members in relation to common areas of need. To fulfil these roles, the professional associations use various forms on social gatherings that bring together individuals from a range of firms within the city's they are based (i.e. London and New York). These events take the form of discussion forums, committee meetings and training events that take place on a frequency varying between weekly and quarterly. Those interviewees that participated in the activities of professional associations (42 out of the 58 interviewed) attended all events when they are less frequent but only selected events (on average once a month) when they are more regular.

One of the affects of such events is to facilitate the forging of new relationships between professional working at rival firms and, through the presence of several professionals in one room, to stimulate conversations about shared challenges (Faulconbridge, 2007). This is typical of the inter-firm, horizontal and vertical cluster-based learning described in existing literatures (Bathelt et al. 2004; Henry and Pinch, 2001) and provides the opportunity to benefit from timely and relevant conversations with knowledgeable peers. Consequently, the buildings of professional

associations are filled with 'urban buzz' during the events organized. As one interviewee described the benefits of professional associations for catalysing such buzz:

"...increasingly it is a knowledge exchange and we get together and have meetings focussed on a particular topic, a topic that's challenging all of us at the time. And we use the time before and after the meetings to talk about our respective experience on particular topics" (L20).

Interviewees also described conversations with their overseas colleagues that were facilitated through similar coordinated learning events. In the global practice groups discussed earlier formal interaction between members occurs in a number of ways. Telephone conference calls in which all members of the team join in take place, normally on a weekly basis and lasting up to one hour. Surprisingly, video conferencing continues to play a negligible role in facilitating such interactions. Two factors are significant here. First, and less significant, the limited availability of videoconferencing suites, even in the biggest firms. Second, and of greatest importance to all interviewees, the continued poor quality of many videoconferencing links. At the time of interviews (2003 and 2004), despite recent advances in technology, there was still general dissatisfaction at fragmented picture and sound quality. Clearly this situation is changing rapidly and may have changed significantly since the interviews were conducted.

In addition but less frequently, normally annually, residential practice group conferences also provide a forum for such learning but on a face-to-face basis. The ensuing discussions mirror, as the following quote from an advertiser suggests, those held at the professional associations in London and New York:

“There’s an international planning group [in the firm] called [group x] that try to help each other out with case studies and ideas when we’re doing something and that becomes very useful because you get different perspectives...it’s really useful to know who’s doing the same thing as you but say in London because they might talk about something that really makes you stop and think about what you’re doing” (A29).

The empirical material suggests, then, that buzz from a network of peers has both local and global geographies with slightly recalibrated, but fundamentally the same organizing architectures. Existing studies often fail to fully document these social practices that facilitate learning. As the detailed empirical examination provided here shows, when done this questions both the architectures of local buzz that are often described (serendipitous meetings) and the local contingency of such network practices. For interviewees, it was the ability to learn from both urban and global buzz simultaneously (as well as from conversations with colleagues working in the same office), thus resulting in a synergistic form of learning, that was key to successfully meeting clients needs. This, and the commonality of the practices involved in these various learning

networks, suggests that drawing a binary between local and global practice is misleading and, therefore, that a flat ontology potentially provides a valuable way of placing practice at the centre of geographers attention, rather than scale . The discussion below exploring the social spaces constituting these networks reinforces this idea. It does, however, also suggest that scale might still be an important analytical tool but only when used to examine the material effects of a politics of scale on the practices of the advertisers and lawyers studied.

5) The embeddedness of learning networks

5.1) Mutual understanding and shared cognition

As has been noted elsewhere (Amin and Cohendet, 2004; Bathelt et al. 2004; Blanc and Sierra, 1999; Leamer and Storper, 2001), for learning to occur in any group or community it is vital that conversations are smoothed by the existence of a form of shared cognitive space. For advertisers and lawyers in London and New York such spaces existed in both the local and global networks of learning described because of the common professional interests of those interacted with. The majority of advertising and legal PSFs in London and New York serve marketplaces dominated by large (often global) corporate clients whose projects can

involve budgets of millions of pounds or dollars. As a result, everyone in these cities faces similar challenges both in terms of client demands and market related issues (i.e. consumer responses to adverts and legislatives hurdles and changes). Meanwhile, whilst advertising and legal marketplaces have important and continued local specificities, there is some degree of similarity in the problems faced by all advertisers and lawyers throughout the World working for the type of transnational firms studied (Faulconbridge, 2006; Trubek et al., 1994).

Consequently, sense making, understanding and learning is facilitated in conversations between advertisers and lawyers within the same, and also located in different cities throughout the World by the fact that individuals share: understanding of the challenges faced and their likely solutions; experience of the practices involved in serving such a marketplace; aims and aspirations in relation to advancing both the industry and the products offered to clients; and understanding of the context, norms and conventions of service production and delivery. Blanc and Sierra (1999) refer to this as various forms of 'relational proximity'. As two interviewees described this embedding force, the first two about the local dimensions and the second two the global dimensions:

"...we sit down and say 'how do we think this particular section of the act is actually going to work, what do we think these words actually mean?'
And in that environment [of a professional association], it made sense for

people to say 'well I think is maybe this, possibly this' because it was new to all of us but we all understand the implications and issues it creates...It's a mixture of learning and sharing your views and thoughts" (L3).

"Its very easy to get on with people [in other offices], very easy to share stuff, but because although there tends to be quite fundamental differences with that markets relationship with a brand or product there are useful approaches to a certain extent that are shared and can be used to target consumers anywhere in the world" (A8).

These shared practices are, in particular, tied to the different professional roles in advertising and law firms (e.g. account planner or merger and acquisitions specialist). A common analogy used repeatedly by lawyers summarises this idea nicely. Interviewees repeatedly suggested (using variations on the theme) that, for example, a corporate lawyer in London has more in common with a corporate lawyer in New York than an immigration lawyer at London's Heathrow Airport. The same idea was echoed by advertisers (i.e. two planners, one in London one in New York, have more in common than a planner and a creative both in London). Again this suggests that a flat ontology is important to tease out the subtleties of this type of social space and its effect on practices and networks of learning. However, as the discussion below shows, this does

not necessarily mean discussion of socially constructed politics of scale should be eradicated.

5.2) Trust

Interviewees suggested they had to be able to trust the judgment of those they spoke to and learned from and, in particular, be sure these individuals were not misleading them or failing to be reciprocal in the sharing of insights. Consequently, urban buzz produced through interpersonal networks was lubricated by trust produced in various ways. For interpersonal networks with past colleagues trust existed because of previously established relationships, whilst also being reinforced over time as individuals benefited from the advice and ideas gained in conversations. Inevitably, this meant that most networks were based on personal preferences and restricted to below ten people in number. In the professional associations that facilitate learning, trust grows over time as regular attendees get to know one-another and a community forms, gelled together by reciprocal relations, the genuine helpfulness of other members and, consequently, the advantages gained from insights shared (Faulconbridge, 2007). Those who do not display such behaviours are quickly excluded from the type of relationships and interactions that produce buzz. As two interviewees described these trust-filled relationships and their importance in facilitating learning from buzz:

“...you have to understand, respect and like them [past colleagues you stay in touch with]. For me it’s the trusting and respecting part that’s important, valuing their opinion, and knowing from past experience you can rely on them ” (A8).

“Trusting people [spoken to at a professional association meeting] is vital, it won’t work without that. You’re not willing to give up any of your information to people who you don’t trust or who will abuse it and also you’ll only do it once or twice to people who don’t return it” (L8).

The trusting relationships that emerged between individuals participating in the activities of professional associations was also further consolidated by recognition of the fact that everyone present was working in the same local context with the same ambitions and challenges. This further reinforced relationships because, as one advertiser put it, “we talk about shared experience, and what we have in common is that we all work in advertising in London and face the same challenges, do similar kind of work” (A17). Of course, at the same time it is also important to note that a form of self-selection takes place in these groups which can make them hard to break into, particularly for those who do not fit the social model for members of the group. Junior professionals have to ‘prove’ their worth in terms of their willingness and ability to provide useful insights; women (particular in the legal industry but less so in advertising) have to deal with the often masculine environment and behaviours associated with

such groups (see McDowell, 1997); ethnic minority groups, that are significantly underrepresented in the social makeup of these industries, are nearly always absent. Indeed, it is symbolic that whilst those interviewed as part of this research were selected randomly all were white and only 17 (29 percent) were female. Of those attending the events organised by professional associations only seven (17 percent) were female.

Interviewees suggested it was similarly essential that the advice and ideas gained from non cluster based buzz could also be relied upon in the same way and, therefore, that relationships were again embedded in trust. The process of developing trust in overseas colleagues was a tri-part process. First, trust developed over time as a result of recurrent interactions in much the same way as it did in relationships producing urban buzz. As one interviewee described the importance of overcoming any challenges faced so as to develop such 'strong' relationships:

“So over time you build a significant network of people which allows you to be a lot more effective because they know and understand what you're dealing with, they accept your work when you say something and that's incredibly important. and it would be naive to imagine there aren't cultural differences but I think they are less acute if you are working in an organization where people are spending more time getting to know each other through one means or another ” (L21).

Secondly, trusting relationships with overseas colleagues were reinforced by the security of speaking to someone working for the same firm. Maister (2003, 307) suggests a 'one-firm-firm' logic often exists in PSFs which encourages everyone to trust and respect all colleagues. This is based on the fact that in all PSFs both securing and then maintaining employment in the leading firms, such as those studied here, is only possible through a high level of profit generating professional performance⁵. The majority of interviewees reflected this idea and, whilst always being more cautious of previously un-encountered individuals than well known colleagues, to some degree felt they could automatically trust overseas colleagues. As one lawyer put it

"I think everyone feels pretty prized as a [firm x] lawyer so you can always pretty much guarantee that you can ask a question to someone that you've never met nor had any contact with and you'll get something back. So I think there is a big mutual respect" (L8).

Finally, trust in overseas colleagues was developed through face-to-face contact. Contrary to the argument put forward in some literatures (e.g. Morgan, 2004), interviewees suggested that occasional face-to-face encounters at practice group conferences or during business trips could also cement relationships into trusting, reciprocal and socially embedded foundations that then smooth the non face-to-face, telephone based, learning. As two interviewees commented:

“At our conferences, so say for example the recent European conference, the chatting, exchanging ideas over coffee, lunch etc is more important than the actual speakers. Getting to know these people socially, having a drink with them is really important. Then you’ve got someone to call in the future” (A4).

“its important to have met with them before, you know their approach and you have trust in them... It’s a matter of building up trusts, building up relationships...That familiarity, that ability to judge the person, to judge whether they’re taking the right decisions” (L7).

The empirical material reveals, then, that to understand the influences of trust on practices of learning and the spatiality of trusting relationships it is important to approach research with the type of ‘flat’ ontology Marston et al. (2005) describe. This prevents *a priori* assumptions being made about the scale-boundedness of such social phenomena. In particular, suggestions that trust can only be produced through spatial proximity and regular face-to-face contact (Morgan, 2004; Leamer and Storper, 2001) would seem to oversimplify the processes involved in its production and create an unnecessary local fetish. This analysis also begins to suggest, however, that *a posteriori* discussions of the material effects of a politics of scale, used to understand the socio-spatial nuances involved in such processes, are not necessarily as misleading as some might suggest. The development of trust between individuals present at the events of

professional associations is, in part, facilitated by recognition from professionals that everyone in the city faces a number of shared challenges. This produces an important shared sense of ‘imagined’ or ‘epistemic’ community’ (Anderson 1992; Knorr-Cetina, 1981).

Interviewees suggested that feeling part of a defined local community encouraged collaboration and the sharing of ideas and insight with individuals at rival firms (see Faulconbridge [2007] for more detail). This imagining of a *local* community in the minds of professionals also often gels around a desire to make the community *globally* competitive. In this sense it transcends hierarchical representations of scale but reveals the importance of a politics of scale as a metaphorical device for facilitating collaboration between competing firms and creating a valuable ‘institutional thickness’ that lubricates the learning process (Amin and Thrift, 1994). As one interviewee noted:

“It’s a very small market place with probably 15 or less trying to be that type of [large corporate law] firm and we all know each other because we deal with each other all of the time. We all face similar challenges need to find solutions to common problems so it makes sense to be open and share things” (L9).

A number of the London and New York branches of the professional associations that advertisers and lawyers talked about often (but not always) played a supplementary role in this process, championing discourse that creates a politics of scale and reinforces the idea that

benefits can be gleaned from contributing to the local community. As table 3 suggests, those promoting such a message highlight the role of their activities in maintaining and strengthening the *local* community. Here, then, we see the potential material effects of a *politics of scale* on actors in relational processes. This should not be used as an excuse to create a dichotomy between local and global practices of learning. The effects described have also been used by transnational professional associations associated with advertising and law firms and, as table 3 also suggests, The International Competition Network and The Account Planning Group all refer to the global in relation to their activities and use rhetoric of global community to bring advertisers and lawyers together from different firms and countries. Moreover, a similar process and effect can also be seen in relation to the use of the 'one firm-firm' rhetoric described as creating trust in 'global' relations. For advertisers particularly, the 'one global firm' ideal described is a social construction – both in terms of the 'safety' it provides but also in terms of its boundaries. Advertising agencies are part of larger global groups (table 1) and, in reality, the global firm is all agencies within this group. However, all advertisers agreed that trust only existed between those working for the same agency brand, not everyone within the real firm, the holding group. Meanwhile, lawyers often extent the one firm-firm logic to lawyers working at alliance firms, even though they are not part of the formally defined firm itself. This suggests, then, that exploring the effects of the heuristic

value of scale and the associated politics of scale that contribute to the construction of this can potentially help us understand empirical findings when used in such a retrospective, reflective analytical fashion, rather than as an ontology that informs methodology and analysis.

6) Discussion and concluding thoughts

The remit of this paper was to explore the opposition between 'local buzz' and 'global pipelines' that has come to represent the way learning and knowledge are discussed in relation to clusters. Through analysis of case studies of advertising and law PSFs in London and New York the empirical material analysed reveals important similarities in the way 'buzz' is produced in long and short, local and global learning networks. Indeed, this in-depth examination of the practices of learning, something often missing in existing studies of clusters and trans-local learning networks (Bathelt et al. 2004), reveals that similar architectures of learning exists between individuals in close and less close physical proximity with relational proximity being the defining factor in the success of learning (Amin and Cohendet, 2004; Blanc and Sierra, 1999; Faulconbridge, 2006). In particular, planned interactions are shown to be more important than serendipitous encounters whilst shared cognitive spaces and trusting relationships exist at all points in the learning networks studied. This contradicts a number of existing arguments (Bathelt et al. 2004; Morgan, 2005; Storper and Venables, 2004). Of

course, there are complex influences and how relational learning networks emerge. In particular, this paper highlights how the development of such networks takes place over an extended period of time and also involves important socio-political dynamics that can both exclude individuals and complicate the development of embedded network forms. But, nevertheless, this still suggests that using metric measures of proximity as a proxy for degrees of social proximity are problematic.

It is important to recognise that some of these findings might be particular to PSFs and, in particular, global PSFs. However, studies of, amongst others, the software (Orlikowski, 2002) and oil industries (Bridge and Wood, 2005) have yielded similar findings. The arguments put forward also reflect those in a range of other debates with, for example, there being recognition (e.g. Amin and Thrift, 2002) that urban spaces cannot be adequately understood through spatial binaries or spatially (locally) constrained studies. In its place, studies of the porosity and fluidity of urban space are suggested. The findings presented in this paper indicate that, more than ever, the competitiveness of a city's clusters is influenced by the tying-in of firms to organized spaces of learning that create networks of buzz with both local and global dimensions.

This brings us back to questions about the role of scale in such discussions. The contention that the geographies of learning and

knowledge should not be typified by scale based delimitations such as local-global (Allen, 2000) and instead be recognised as contested, fluid and dependent on the spatial organizational of learning practices (Amin and Cohendet, 2004) are reinforced by the findings of this paper. It seems wise, then, to avoid the *a priori* association of socio-spatial practices such as learning with labels derived from a scalar ontology such as 'local-incremental' and 'global-nonincremental' (Jessop, 2000; Marston et al. 2005). However, as the empirical material suggests, this does not mean jettisoning scale from geographers' lexicons is necessarily the best way forward. Rather, we must avoid preordained scalar specification and delimitation of the networks by tracing the practices of, and constraints on social endeavours such as learning so as to fully understand the intricacies involved. As was shown above, this can lead to important scalar reflections being made *a posteriori* based on discoveries of the material effects of a socially constructed politics of scale. As suggested then, recent calls for a 'flat ontology' (Marston et al. 2005) provide an important reminder about the importance of choosing appropriate ontology and methodologies when engaging in geographical research. They also highlight the importance of clarity in the meaning and use of scale terminologies. Nevertheless, this should not lead us to ignore the important role for scale as an analytical device for exploring and understanding the material effects of scale politics (Collinge, 2006), something that means throwing the baby out with the bath water and

completely purging scale from our vocabularies might be inappropriate. It would seem, then, that the future challenge for geographers involves the adoption of suitable practice based, network methodologies for research, such as that proposed by Dicken et al. (2001), that allow both the particularities of place and scale to be understood but without resorting to misleading spatial fetishes.

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TBC

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[bin/cbr_wp3.pl?conf_file=cbr.conf&terms=1999&series=camdae&criteria=creation-date&boolean=AND&case=Insensitive](http://www.econ.cam.ac.uk/cgi-bin/cbr_wp3.pl?conf_file=cbr.conf&terms=1999&series=camdae&criteria=creation-date&boolean=AND&case=Insensitive)

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Company	Holding company group	Worldwide Revenue (millions in 2005)	Global offices	Key global clients
Publicis worldwide	Publicis	\$2,685	170	Allied Domecq Hewlett Packard Ericsson
McCann-Erickson worldwide	Interpublic	£1,461	417	Coca-Cola Mastercard Cereal Partners
BBDO worldwide	Omnicom	\$1,259	283	Mars Gillette Guinness
J Walter Thompson	WPP	\$1,313	227	Vodafone Shell Diaego
TBWA	Omnicom	\$950	233	Addidas Sony News International
Leo Burnett worldwide	Publicis	\$807	480	Heinz Proctor & Gamble Morgan Stanley
Ogilvy & Mather worldwide	WPP	\$801	314	Ford BP American Express
Grey worldwide*	WPP*	\$629	237	Glaxosmithkline Proctor & Gamble Nokia
Euro RSCG worldwide	Havas	\$496	84	Intel Danone Cadbury Trebor Basset
Young & Rubicam	WPP	\$413,678	3083	Colgate-Palmolive Colgate-Palmolive LEGO

Table 1. The 10 leading global agencies by turnover.

Source: Advertising Age (2006); Fieldwork.

* Grey Worldwide was original part of the 'Grey Global group' but was acquired by WPP in 2005.

Firm	Global turnover (£m) (2004)	Global offices
Clifford Chance	914	34
Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom	785	23
Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer	780	28
Linklaters	805	31
Baker & McKenzie	670	69
Allen & Overy	666	26
Latham & Watkins	658	22
White & Case	520	39
Weil Gotshal & Manges	494	16
Jones Day	649	18

Table 2. They 10 key global law firms as of January 2005.

Source: The lawyer (2005) and Fieldwork.

Professional association	Role of scale	Rhetoric deployed to promote association's aims
The City of London Law Society	Local politics of scale - 'The City' acts as a device to identify a community, spatially signified by the contemporary boundaries of the City of London. However, the global reach of the association's actions also point to the dangers of conflating such a politics of scale with hierarchical or vertical scalar binaries and divisions.	"We are a powerful force in ensuring that the views and concerns of City solicitors are represented and heard in national and international debates which affect their practice...Through the work of sixteen specialist Committees, the Society researches and debates current legal issues and makes recommendations on new developments. The Committees produce work of national and international significance which is available to members" (http://www.citysolicitors.org.uk/Legal_activities/default.asp?s=3 [accessed 23/10/06])
The Association of the Bar of New York City	Local politics of scale - Again, 'the city' and its 'community' is used as a symbolic device to justify the existence of the association.	"In December 1869, a letter was circulated among some of the city's lawyers addressing those improprieties. It called for the creation of a new bar association to 'sustain the profession in its proper position in the community, and thereby enable it . . . to promote the interests of the public' Because of the strength and dedication of its members, the Association continually renews its spirit and that of the community it serves" (http://www.nycbar.org/AboutUs/index.htm [accessed 23/10/06])
The Account Planning Group	Global politics of scale - Justification for engagement with the overseas members of the group comes from being part of a global community.	"The UK APG is, as the name suggests, a UK-based organisation, but we have members all over the world, and we're keen to support Planners and other Account Planning organisations around the planning planet" (http://www.apg.org.uk/about-us/international.cfm [accessed 23/10/2006])
The International Competition Network	Global politics of scale - taking part in the activities of the association benefits the global community of lawyers and traders	"The ICN brings international antitrust enforcement into the 21st century. By enhancing convergence and cooperation, the ICN promotes more efficient, effective antitrust enforcement worldwide. Consistency in enforcement policy and elimination of unnecessary or duplicative procedural burdens stands to benefit consumers and businesses around the globe" (http://www.internationalcompetitionnetwork.org/ [accessed 23/10/06]).

Table 3. The role of a politics of scale in encouraging engagement with the activities of professional associations.

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¹ Grabher (2001, 353-354) defines a heterarchy as a form of social organization. This has five characteristics that affect how the system operates: the tolerance of internal diversity; rivalry between members and groups; tags that define the rules and protocols used to condition understanding; project organization that allow for collaboration; and reflexivity that allows the appropriateness of assumptions to be challenged.

² This process was, in part, driven by the deregulation of the Law Society in the UK in 1990 in what was referred to as the legal 'big bang'. For the first time foreign practitioners were permitted to become registered lawyers on completion of transfer tests or, where the

individual was suitably experienced, through an interview assessment (Cullen-Mandikos and MacPherson, 2002).

³ For a number of lawyers in particular, there was always concern that the type of conversations described above might be counter-productive. As one lawyer put it, “it’s a pride point... I’d be very surprised if someone from a big firm rang me and said ‘I don’t know what’s going on here’ I’d be very surprised, I mean I’d be rubbing my hands with glee” (6). This was a minority view (expressed by only five lawyers) but an important caveat to discussions about such extra-organizational interactions.

⁴ This is, for lawyers, in part a consequence of the way lawyers charge for their services. Clients are billed by the hour and, therefore, all lawyers are under pressure to put in as many billable hours as possible. On average, firms expect lawyers to bill somewhere in the region of 2000-2500 hours a year to clients. This works out at between 38 and 48 hours a week, excluding any holidays. With four weeks holiday this increases to 41 and 52 hours a week. However, particularly in New York, holidays were a privilege not an expectation and often not taken.

⁵ PSFs generally use the ‘up or out system’ (Morris and Pinnington, 2002) whereby individuals only secure and maintain employment if they demonstrate the potential to attract clients,

develop in their level of competence and gradually gained promotion as a reflection of this, becoming partner within a set period of time. Those unable to 'move up' in the firm in this way are 'forced out', thereby ensuring everyone in the firm is a high performer.