

Knowledge and learning in professional service firms

James Faulconbridge, Lancaster University Management School, UK

j.faulconbridge@lancaster.ac.uk

Please cite as:

Faulconbridge, JR. (in press) Knowledge and learning in professional service firms. In Empson L. Broschak, J. Muzio, D. (Eds) Oxford Handbook of Professional Service Firms.

Abstract

This chapter reveals that three fundamental lines of research about professional service firms – (a) organizational form, management and governance, (b) the varying roles and effects of knowledge networking via databases versus knowing in practice through communities, and (c) the jurisdiction of a firm and claims about exclusive rights over a market - are all related to the key characteristics of knowledge and learning in such organizations. Perhaps most importantly these areas of research are all contested domains in terms of optimum modes of organizing and trajectories of change due to the ambiguous and heterogeneous nature of knowledge, leading to questions about the pros and cons of apparently growing bureaucracy, commodification and internationalization. The chapter thus identifies how such issues generate key future research agendas around organizational forms, knowledge management strategies, and the implications of change for service quality, professional jurisdictions and practices in a transnational age.

Keywords: knowledge, learning, professional services, communities of practice

Introduction

From Mintzberg's (1979) early work on professional adhocracies and bureaucracies, through to more recent work on strategic management (Løwendahl 2005) and internationalization (Hitt et al. 2006; Malhotra and Morris 2009), questions about knowledge base, knowledge management and learning have been at the centre of analyses of professional service firms (PSFs). Indeed, the main argument of this chapter is that it is difficult to understand the form, management, markets and ultimately the services produced by PSFs without analysis of the characteristics of knowledge and learning in such organizations. To develop this argument, the chapter begins by exploring the way issues of knowledge and learning in PSFs have been examined in literature emerging from work on the sociology of the professions and from management studies. This leads into the second substantive part of the chapter in which the implications of knowledge's centrality in PSFs are considered in relation to three distinctive issues.

First, impacts on organizational form are explored. Comparisons are made within and between both the 'old' (e.g. accountancy and law) and the new (e.g., advertising and management consultancy) PSFs (on which see von Nordenflycht, Malhotra and Morris, this volume) to reveal the way knowledge base influences organizational form, including in relation to issues of governance (see Greenwood and Empson 2003; Leblebici and Sherer this volume) and team structure (see Garder this volume; Malhotra and Morris 2009). Second, issues surrounding knowledge management and learning are unpacked. From explicit knowledge management and the database (Swart and Kinnie 2003), to tacit knowledge and the community of practice (Faulconbridge 2006 2010), tactics adopted in professional services to enhance and leverage the expertise of workers are explored and the reasons for variable levels of success and failure analysed (on such issues see especially Empson 2001a). The role of training in PSFs is used to illustrate such concerns. Finally, third, the embedded

jurisdictional nature of knowledge in professional service firms is examined. Here questions about both the forces regulating the market capture of particular professions and firms (Abel 1988; Larson 1977; Suddaby and Greenwood 2001), as well as the local-global dynamics of expertise (Evetts 1998; Faulconbridge and Muzio 2012; Quack and Schussler this volume), are outlined so as to reveal the way jurisdictionally structured knowledge prescribes in temporally fluid ways the domain of operation of professional service firms.

The chapter concludes by outlining a schema that characterises the relationships between knowledge and learning and different dimensions of the organization, management and jurisdiction of PSFs, and by reflecting on the future directions for research demanded by the uncertainties and conundrums that persist. The discussion draws attention, in particular, to the trajectory of change in the increasingly managed PSFs, the increasing role of technology, the growing transnationality of professional jurisdictions, and the implications of all of these for client services.

Professional services and knowledge I: Sociologies of the professions

The starting point for analysing the significance of issues of knowledge and learning for understandings of PSFs is an extensive body of work that can be broadly badged as studies of the sociology of the professions (Abbott 1988; Burrage et al. 1990; Johnson 1972; Larson 1977; Parsons 1963; MacDonald 1995; Evetts 2003). In this work, the primary preoccupation has been unpacking the way that the definition, protection and maintenance of a knowledge base, tied to a particular professional grouping, has allowed the carving out of a protected space of service production and delivery.

Suddaby and Muzio (this volume) offer a comprehensive review of the way the literature on the sociology of the professions has come to influence research on PSFs. It is, nonetheless, worth briefly returning to and interrogating further some of the issues they raise because of their importance to the topic of this chapter. The sociology of the professions literature highlights two fundamental ways that a codified and widely recognised core knowledge base plays within a profession. Firstly, the ‘traditional’ professions which emerged in the early 20th century or before, the likes of architecture, law, medicine and more recently accounting, have been used to exemplify the relationship between a codified knowledge base and the protection, through state supported monopolies, of certain types of service work. For instance, fundamental to some of the earliest work on the professions (e.g., Parsons 1963) was analysis of the way that doctors and lawyers used recourse to the importance of their core knowledge in protecting the public good to justify restrictions on who could join the profession and deliver services. Such restrictions were and continue to be at the heart of closure regimes through which a limited set of eligibles become members of a profession. Only those with the credentials, which in the present era predominantly exist in the form of a university degree, that confirm possession of a defined body of expertise have the right to be part of a profession and in turn be a practitioner in a PSF.

A second body of work documents attempts by aspiring professions to mimic the approach of ‘traditional’ professions and define a core knowledge base. For example, over the past fifty years management consultants have made several attempts through various professional bodies at defining the core knowledge base of consultants, the underlying motivation being to give legitimacy to and secure a market for services (McKenna 2006). Similar trends can be seen in executive search and project management (Beaverstock et al. 2010; Hodgson 2007; Muzio et al. 2011).

The fact that both the ‘traditional’ and the aspiring ‘new’ professions see fit to turn to definitions of knowledge base as a tool to justify claims to professional status confirms, despite powerful critiques of the fundamental logic that such knowledge is the basis for public protection (Johnson, 1972; Larson, 1977), tight connections between knowledge and the professions. There is, however, still much to be done to connect the understanding generated by the sociology of the professions literature to work on PSFs; most fundamentally because the literature does not explicitly consider organizations and specifically PSFs in its analysis, this being a well-recognised shortcoming (Faulconbridge and Muzio 2012; Muzio et al. 2011). The next section of the chapter considers why recent efforts to rectify this shortcoming are so important for understandings of knowledge and learning in PSFs.

Professional services and knowledge II: What is ‘knowledge’ and ‘learning’ in PSFs?

The fundamental idea that the professions are associated with specialist expertise, and that in turn professional work and practitioners are in some way ‘unique’, for instance when compared to non-professional service work or manufacturing work, penetrates to the heart of the organization and management of PSFs in a variety of ways. Yet, what exactly is meant by the term ‘knowledge’ is often unclear. Skirting around the edges of definitions of knowledge in PSFs is not unusual and is a widely recognised a problem in the existing literature (see Alvesson 2004; Morris and Empson 1998). Ambiguity plagues discussions of exactly what the knowledge base of a PSF is, and in turn how firms should organize to leverage this knowledge (Alvesson 2001). Perhaps most problematically, ambiguity surrounds understanding of what PSFs deliver in terms of knowledge to their increasingly savvy clients (see Broschak this volume; Empson 2001a; Løwendahl 2005).

The sociology of the professions literature would suggest that it is the value-added clients accrue when professional practitioners apply their formally defined knowledge bases to a particular business problem that should be the focus for analysis. This insight raises, however, as many questions as it provides answers. For instance, it tells us very little about what ‘applying’ knowledge means, or about what the value added of the deployment of the knowledge might be from the client’s perspective. Indeed, some have even suggested that, when unpacked, the work of PSFs is far less knowledge-intensive than we might expect (Alvesson 2001; Blackler 1995); thus questioning the meaning of and discursive construction of expertise in relation to the professions and PSFs. As such, there is a risk that ambiguity is reinforced by readings that purely focus on formally defined knowledge bases. It is, therefore, necessary to consider how some fundamental debates about knowledge and learning emerging from broadly defined management studies might help overcome this impasse.

Amin and Cohendet (2004) and Newell et al. (2002) provide useful overviews of debates about the nature of knowledge and learning. In the case of PSFs, three core questions framing these debates are of especial relevance. First, this literature forces us to ask a question that takes us back to but also beyond work on the sociology of the professions: *what form does knowledge take in PSFs?* At its most fundamental this requires attention to debates about the relationship between data, information and knowledge so as to develop a clearer sense of the different ways knowledge might exist and get deployed and developed in PSFs. Burton-Jones (1999, 5) provides us with a useful conceptualisation in this regard, suggesting that:

“...data are defined as signals which can be sent by an originator to a recipient – human or otherwise. Information is defined as data that is intelligible to the recipient. Finally, knowledge is defined as the cumulative stock of skills derived from the use of information by the recipient”.

Such differentiation matters because it reveals the centrality in the production of knowledge of “cognitive structures which can assimilate information” (Howells 2000: 53). Recognising the role of cognitive structures is important in the context of PSFs because it draws attention to the fact that the individual and their cognitive abilities needs to be a fundamental concern. The highly relevant distinction between ‘know what’ and ‘know how’ reiterates this point. In the case of PSFs the former is often associated with the knowledge new graduates arrive with when employed by a firm; this arguably being the defined knowledge base that work on the sociology of the professions puts so much emphasis on. The latter ‘know how’ form of knowledge most closely corresponds with the expertise or ‘grey hair’ accrued through years of experience of producing and delivering services (Marchant and Robinson 1999; Maister 2003). The distinction between ‘know what’ and ‘know how’ also corresponds broadly with the differences between explicit and tacit knowledge long ago identified by Polanyi (1967), with the tacit dimension and ‘knowing more than you can tell’ being shown to be at the heart of the production process in PSF (Faulconbridge 2006 2007; Marchant and Robinson 1999). Indeed, as Alvesson (2004: 50) notes, it is impossible to develop a handbook for a knowledge worker. Instead, judgement and the ability to use tacit ‘know how’, alongside the fundamental ‘know what’ knowledge base associated with a profession, is the key determinant for successful service production and delivery.

In sum, what this work tells us is that the answer to the question ‘what form does knowledge take in PSFs’ requires appreciation of a dialectic relationship between individuals and their explicit (formalised and profession specific) and tacit (individualised expertise) forms of knowledge; the latter type arguably being most crucial in terms of generating value-adding and innovative services, but being insufficient if not coupled to the former type (see Barrett and Hinings; Swart and Kinnie both this volume). This in turn means questions about

learning must consider the differential processes involved in individuals developing both explicit and tacit knowledge.

A second relevant question framing debates about knowledge and learning builds on the previous point about the role of individualised tacit knowledge in PSFs. Specifically, the importance of the individual leads to the following question: *what is the relationship in PSFs between individual and organizational knowledges?* At the heart of questions about knowledges that are more or less tacit or explicit are concerns about the extent to which an organization can capture, commoditize and reuse knowledge to gain competitive advantage in a market – this being organisational learning, “the vehicle for utilizing past experiences, adapting to environmental changes and enabling future options” (Berends et al. 2003: 1036). Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) in their influential book ‘*The knowledge creating company*’ addressed this dilemma by examining the extent to which ‘know-how’ can be captured through forms of database or other mechanism and then leveraged and combined in future projects. In particular, they consider how processes of externalization might be used to extract tacit understanding from employees, render it explicit, and in turn maximise the knowledge assets possessed by the organization. For PSFs such a concern is very real. The analogy that the assets of the firm leave via the elevator at the end of the day as employees go home very much captures the way that a heavy reliance on ‘know how’ renders PSFs fragile organizations, dependent on the retention of key individuals and their tacit knowledge (Løwendahl 2005; Maister 2003). To reduce this fragility, the creation of organizational assets out of individualised expertise would seem important. But, how realistic is such an externalization process?

Many have suggested externalization attempts are likely to have only limited success (Empson 2001b; Horvath 1999), some even suggesting that “tacit knowledge, though rare, non-substitutable, immutable and valuable (when used to advance corporate goals), does not

satisfy the ex-post conditions of a strategic asset” (Meso and Smith 2000: 232-233, emphasis removed). It is important to note, therefore, that when questions about the relationship between individualized and organizational knowledges are raised in relation to PSFs, answers tend to focus on the significant uncertainties that exist about whether firms can ever develop organizational knowledge-based competencies.

The challenge of managing a firm heavy reliant on tacit expertise, and potentially having few organizational knowledge assets, brings us to a final key question about knowledge and learning: *how can PSFs generate the conditions for new expertise to emerge?* Of particular significance when seeking to address this question are epistemological debates that distinguish between learning as a process of information acquisition and learning in practice (see Amin and Cohendet 2004; Brown and Duguid 2000). On the one hand, there are those who view learning as a process that requires knowledge to be transferred between individuals – this being a literature that tends to emphasise knowledge management as a technical challenge (e.g., Skymre 1999; Teece 2000). On the other hand, a more sociologically informed camp argue that learning is a social process that occurs as part of everyday practice, the implication being that rather than concerning ourselves with knowledge being transferred from one individual to another, focus needs to fall on “knowledgeability of action, this is on knowing (a verb connoting action, doing, practice) rather than knowledge (a noun connoting things, elements, facts, processes, descriptions)” (Orlikowski 2002: 250-251). Associated with work on communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998), the practice perspective conceives of learning as involving processes of continual sense-making by individuals as they develop their own tacit understandings through interacting with those around them. Such distinctions matter for PSFs because they cut to the heart of questions about how firms might engage in knowledge management and create a context in which collective learning and innovation can happen

through more or less technological or social systems (Faulconbridge 2010; Gottschalk 2000; Terret 1998). Specifically, these literatures suggest that responses to the question ‘how can PSFs generate the conditions for new expertise to emerge’ need to explore how the optimum organizational environment that facilitates forms of both explicit and tacit learning might be created.

Knowledge and its impacts on the organization of PSFs

At first glance, the issues discussed in the previous section of the chapter might be seen as a concern only to those charged with knowledge management. However, the existing literature also shows that such factors have much wider and fundamental implications that need considering. In particular, organizational theorists have explained through reference to issues associated with knowledge the apparently peculiar organizational form of PSFs. Two issues are important in this regard. Firstly, the direct implications of employing professionals – i.e., individuals who have gained membership of an exclusive occupational field with its own closure regime. Secondly, the effects on organizational form and control of reliance on the explicit and tacit knowledge of professionals. Both discussions reveal that having knowledge as the main input into the production process (the employment of knowledgeable individuals) and as the main output (advice that addresses a client’s needs) poses some unique challenges.

Defined, protected and maintained knowledge bases: implications for practice and governance

The fact that professions not only have defined knowledge bases but also actively protect and maintain their knowledge bases has, according to the sociology of the profession literatures,

several implications for PSFs. Most fundamentally, the ‘traditional’ professions and in some cases also the ‘new’ professions have well established institutions that both ensure connections between knowledge base and closure are upheld, and that the core defined knowledge base evolves in appropriate ways over time (see Suddaby and Muzio this volume). The role of professional associations in protection and maintenance work exemplifies such issues.

As Burrage et al. (1990) highlighted in their seminal analysis of key actors in professional projects, protection and maintenance work involves in many contexts professional associations acting as quasi-autonomous bodies that regulate the professions on behalf of the state. In doing this they become the agents that control definitions of knowledge base, the policing of closure regimes and the forms of evolution that occur over time in definitions of knowledge. Professional associations exert such control through regulative institutions, targeted both at individual professionals and the organizations that employ them; enforcement being through punishments ranging from fines to expulsion from a profession. For PSFs, because of their direct employment of professionals, the way knowledge bases are protected and maintained has several implications (on the implications see also Reihlen and Werr, this volume). Most fundamentally, by connecting to definitions of the core knowledge base of a profession, and often the ethical principles that go back to the public protection logics originally associated with the professions, associations create and police a set of rules which delimit the market jurisdiction of a PSF. This influence of associations has been demonstrated most notably through work on accountancy PSFs and the way changes to the jurisdiction of accountants’ professional expertise had to be negotiated by, in particular, Big Four firms seeking to also provide consultancy services (Greenwood et al., 2002). This demonstrates how ties between knowledge bases, professional jurisdictions and the role of

professional associations in defining and policing jurisdictional boundaries directly affect what PSFs can and cannot provide in terms of services.

Table 1 provides other examples of how the relationship between professions, knowledge and in turn the policing work of associations impacts upon PSF. The first three examples of ‘knowledge related issues’ in the table reveal the control of PSFs by professional associations. The fourth example reveals how the importance of knowledge leads to PSFs also being co-opted as regulators of professionals, their knowledge and the way this knowledge is exercised in practice. Combined, the examples reveal that there are significant effects of the association between professions and knowledge on the activities and also on the responsibilities and necessary organizational forms of PSFs. Further understanding these effects is the purpose of the next sub-section of the chapter.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Individuals and their knowledge: producing the aberrant PSF organizational form

Cutting across studies of the organizational form of PSFs is a common theme: the many aberrations that mark such firms out as distinctive compared to their non-professional service or manufacturing peers. The starting point for such studies was the seminal work of Henry Mintzberg (1979; 1983) in which he identified the distinctive features of the professional bureaucracy and adhocracy. Specifically, he pointed to the significance of professional standards as the main means of defining quality in both organizational forms, but also to differences between the two forms in terms of systems of control. In the bureaucracy attempts exist to organize production through the pigeonholing of client problems and solutions into categories of knowledge. A technostructure with managerial responsibilities also appears; its

role in part being to manage the pigeonholing process. In contrast, in the adhocracy problem identification and solution development are left entirely in the hands of professionals so as to be sensitive to the importance of the tacit knowledge of individuals in the professional production and delivery process. Professionals take on managerial responsibilities in the adhocracy, although usually individuals hold management responsibilities whilst continuing to also be involved in professional practice (they are not dedicated managers as is the case in the bureaucracy). The distinctiveness of the two forms of organization compared to that witnessed in manufacturing is usually explained as a product of the knowledge intensity of professional service work; this intensity meaning all organizational forms must place questions of how to manage knowledge at the forefront (Empson 2001a).

Mintzberg's insights were confirmed and developed by contributions from Freidson (1983) and Raelin (1991). For Freidson, professionalism acts a distinctive work logic in which the value of the knowledge of the individual practitioner is recognized through organizational arrangements designed to grant high degrees of autonomy. Reflecting Mintzberg's professional adhocracy, this means that in organizations in which logics of professionalism dominate, control over the entire production process is placed in the hands of the professional, whilst the quality of work is judged by peers against widely recognized professional knowledge-based standards, rather than organizationally-specific standards. Meanwhile, quality and ethical practice rather than efficiency are deemed to be the main priority in the design of organizational forms and control mechanisms. Raelin (1991) offered a subtly different but complementary take, highlighting the way that the underlying logic of professionalism produces unique management arrangements in PSFs. Specifically, for Raelin, the idiosyncrasies of PSFs and their reliance of individuals and their knowledge means that management without managers is typical. This involves the peer review control process Freidson identified, but also a participative and consultative form of management whereby

those in positions of authority represent (often following elections) their peers views and priorities rather than commanding and controlling the labour force. Lazega (2001) more recently has referred to this as the ‘collegial phenomenon’ based on insights from his study of legal PSFs. Such an approach to management is a response to the combined need to, first, maintain the autonomy and discretion of individuals to use their tacit knowledge to develop high quality services, and second, the need to maintain the commitment to the organization of individuals (so as not to lose their tacit knowledge through exit), giving professionals a sense of control over their own destiny being seen as an important in this regard.

The most important outcome of the work of Mintzberg, Freidson and Raelin was recognition that PSFs are distinctive organizational forms. This recognition spurred an important body of work on their specificities, a significant concern being the extent to which the organizational characteristics of PSFs are universal or variegated across the broad range of sectors subsumed until the category (for more on this see von Nordenflycht et al. this volume). Mintzberg (1983) problematized the homogeneous category by distinguishing between the bureaucracy and the adhocracy, but others have since gone further and pointed out how “Professional service firms differ substantially on a number of key dimensions, and these differences exist even if we compare firms from a single industry” (Løwendahl 2005: 118).

The several attempts made over the years to desegregate the PSF category are useful in furthering our discussion here of the centrality of knowledge to organizational form – table 2 gives just four examples of studies attempting this task. Significantly for this chapter, in all of the cases detailed in table 2 the nature of the knowledge needed to deliver the service in question is at the heart of the differentiations made. Specifically, the extent to which the tacit knowledge of individuals is crucial to the work of the PSF in question, and in turn the extent to which the autonomy, peer-control, and professional standards driven forms of governance

highlighted by Mintzberg, Freidson and Raelin are important is shown to vary. There are, however, also important variations in how these literatures understand the role of knowledge that are worth reflecting on. For instance, in table 2 the work of Løwendahl, von Nordenflycht, and Hansen et al. suggests that knowledge matters because of its implications for intra-firm organizational issues, whilst Winch and Schneider and Morris and Empson suggest the implications reach more widely, in terms of client experiences and benefits, and professional labour markets. This highlights potential questions about the extent to which knowledge, its nature and management is a concern simply for PSFs, or whether studying knowledge in PSFs is also insightful in relation to questions about the professions more widely and their relationships with other constituencies, including clients and regulators. Similarly, in table 2 the category distinctions made by different authors also vary in terms of the extent to which the production process or product distinguishes between types of PSF; Løwendahl, von Nordenflycht, and Morris and Empson emphasising more the former, Hansen et al. the latter, and Winch and Schneider a combination of the two. This suggests that different approaches might be taken in the management of PSFs depending on whether ideals about the process or product of professional work determine organizational form. These questions that are raised by table 2 are returned to in the conclusions section of the chapter.

[Insert Table 2 here]

In addition to the differentiations outlined in table 2, existing research also highlights several other fundamental relationships between understandings of knowledge in PSFs and in turn the organizational forms used. Greenwood and Empson (2003) compared law, accounting, architecture, advertising and management consultancy PSFs in order to analyse the varying

role for professional partnership, private, and public corporate forms. Results indicated variations ranging from 100 per cent use of the partnership model in law firms, to 100 per cent corporate form in advertising (77 per cent private, 23 per cent public), and a mix of all three forms in accounting. Of most significance here are the explanations of such variations. Whilst far from the only explanation, for instance regulation demanded partnership structures in law firms whilst issues of liability can encourage use of corporate forms, knowledge was identified as a crucial factor in all cases. For instance, partnership becomes more likely as the reliance on individuals and their tacit knowledge increases, the logic being that partnership provides the autonomy and collegial management that professionals value. Meanwhile, the more homogenous and commodifiable the knowledge needed to produce services, the less bespoke the services provided to clients, and the more reliance on assets such as equipment instead or as well as individual expertise, the more likely corporate forms become. This confirms, then, the close relationship between the nature and role of knowledge in PSFs and organizational forms.

Demonstrating similarly strong connections, a second study by Malhotra and Morris (2009) reveals that in addition to macro-scale structural differences, such as between partnership and corporate forms, micro-scale diversity including the use of more or less hierarchical and sequential team-working arrangements is connected to the effects of knowledge. By focussing on the degree to which individualized tacit knowledge matters, this time by differentiating between PSFs that rely on normative (value related), technical, and syncretic (both normative and technical) knowledges, Malhotra and Morris (2009) suggest that tendencies towards bureaucracy, hierarchy and sequential teams increase as reliance on technical knowledge decreases.

It is important to also note, however, that the kinds of variations noted by Malhotra and Morris (2009) are not just inter-sectoral. Several studies demonstrate that variations can

be as significant within a professional sector. The findings of Winch and Schneider (1993) relating to the case of architecture in which ‘strong delivery’, ‘strong experience’, ‘strong ideas’ and ‘strong ambition’ firms are distinguished, Faulconbridge (2010) who differentiates City of London and regional law firms in England along the lines of degrees of commoditized work, and Suddaby et al. (2009) who reveal distinctive priorities and practices between high profile large corporate accounting firms in Canada and their smaller counterparts, all indicate that the nature of knowledge and associated organizational forms vary within a PSF category.

Knowledge management in PSFs?

Embedded within the organization of most PSFs, whether more or less bureaucratic and hierarchical, are structures designed to facilitate the production of new and leverage of existing knowledge, when possible rendering it an organizational asset. However, as noted in the introductory sections to the chapter, such knowledge management tactics are far from straightforward and many uncertainties exist about the likelihood of success.

It is usually assumed that the explicit knowledge base of workers has its foundations laid and tested through the education needed to negotiate the closure process associated with becoming a professional. This means the activities of universities impact upon PSFs; universities having the role, according to the literature on the sociology of the professions, of instilling in new recruits to the profession the core knowledge base needed (Burrage et al., 1990; MacDonald, 1995). But, the role of universities relates to more than the core (more explicit) knowledge base of new professionals. Learning about how to deploy knowledge in practice is also a fundamental part of the education process, something which relates to everything from professional ethics, research and analysis processes, to expectations of autonomy, behaviour towards colleagues and legitimate forms of client relationships. Such a

role for universities in learning about practice is demonstrated by the distinctively different understandings of professional practice that are instilled by universities operating in common and civil law jurisdictions and the management challenges this poses global firms operating across the distinctively different professional worlds (Faulconbridge and Muzio 2007; Morgan and Quack 2005; Muzio and Faulconbridge 2013).

The baseline knowledge defined by universities in the jurisdiction a firm operates in defines the starting point for any efforts to train and enhance the knowledgeability of new recruits. Indeed, as table 1 notes, as the employing organization of professionals, PSFs have a responsibility to provide opportunities for employees to maintain their professional knowledge bases, for instance through continuing professional development training. In sum, PSFs face some unique knowledge management related challenges because of their employment of professionals who rely on a defined explicit knowledge base.

Moreover, PSFs also face the challenge, experienced by all organizations, of leveraging knowledge assets and seeding opportunities for new knowledge to emerge, the latter being intimately related to innovation processes (on which see Barrett and Hinings this volume). Specifically, how to balance the use of technocratic modes of knowledge management, which usually involve computer database systems, alongside ‘softer’ social processes of learning is a common conundrum. The rest of this section of the chapter considers these knowledge management challenges. It highlights how two starkly contrasting responses to the challenges exist, these corresponding with the distinction outlined earlier between learning as a process of information acquisition and learning in practice.

Knowledge networking: the knowledge management database

In PSFs, as in many organizations, the 1990s saw an exponential growth in interest in knowledge management and, in particular, in the role of computer databases in transforming firms' abilities to leverage the expertise of employees (Swart and Kinnie 2003; Terrett 1998). As Alvesson (2004) notes, this triggered a knowledge exploitation epidemic in which the knowledge management department in PSFs was (re)invented and took on a key strategic role. Morris (2001) associates such moves with a desire to generate organizational assets out of the previously hard to commoditize tacit expertise of employees.

Knowledge management database approaches involve attempts at knowledge preservation. Reflecting the fact that if an individual resigns, the PSF in question risks losing significant assets, efforts to render visible individualized expertise grew. Kaiser and Ringlstetter (2011) note that this often involves a 'people to document' strategy as databases are populated with texts that are supposed to reflect the insights of individual professionals. These texts can relate to profession-specific technical issues, often in the form of case studies of a project structured using 'lessons learned' templates, but also to insights specific to a particular client; both Løwendahl (2005) and Terrett (1998) pointing out that exploiting expertise that allows client relations to be best leveraged is as important in PSFs as technical knowledge.

Brivot (2011), using a study of law firms, notes how knowledge management databases are used by professionals, often as a starting point for the production of services. Databases, as well as providing ready made solutions on occasions, can provide "leads for developing answers to new questions of law" and the opportunity to "observe and monitor peers' work" (Brivot, 2011: 497). However, resistance to databases was also observed because of the control they seek to exert over knowledge; the lawyers studied holding a variety of opinions about the merits of the databases and displaying varying levels of willingness to contribute and use the databases. Such uncertainties are a result of the

fundamental irony of knowledge management efforts in PSFs: that they seek to render redundant the very assets – individuals and their judgement – this are widely recognized to form the basis of the competitive advantage of PSFs.

To some extent, the rise of knowledge management databases has been a fundamental feature differentiating between commoditized and bespoke service providers, the former tending to use computer-based systems more heavily to deliver quick and low cost advice to clients in relation to common matters, the latter whilst having such systems continuing to rely more heavily upon tailored advice produced using the individual expertise of a practitioner. Yet the existence of databases in both commoditized and bespoke service providing firms does bring into view critical questions about how much of the work of PSFs is actually knowledge intensive. Indeed, Blackler (1995) pointed out some time ago that the discourse of knowledge is as an important as the actual knowledge that exists and is produced in professional and other supposedly knowledge intensive firms. Perhaps, then, individual expertise is increasingly the icing on the cake offered by bespoke PSFs, with the fundamental process of baking the cake increasingly reliant in all PSFs on more explicit and commoditized forms of knowledge, managed by databases and other systems thanks to the affordances of technological change? This does not mean individuals and their tacit expertise is completely devalued. For instance, Newell et al. (2002) point out that the written form used in databases is probably the least appropriate way to capture insights from knowledge intensive workers, the risk being that the process is the reverse of learning and reduces knowledge to information. Such difficulties are exaggerated if professionals are guarded in what they reveal in the documentation process, although as Morris (2001) notes such issues are often mitigated by the fact that many professionals realize that the decay that occurs as part of documentation devalues what they share with the organization and renders it of limited value.

It would seem, then, that a nuanced view of the coexistence of explicit and tacit knowledge and associated management techniques in the work of PSFs is needed. Indeed, Kaiser and Ringlstetter (2011) suggest that one way of balancing the need for both explicit and tacit knowledge is the use of databases to allow forms of personalization; this being an approach that uses the database to put individuals who could benefit from one-another's expertise into contact (see also Brivot, 2011). Such an approach is significant because it potentially acts as a way of seeding the kinds of knowledge management and learning associated with tacit knowledge.

Knowing in action: the community of practice

Alvesson (2004) proposes knowledge exploration as an alternative and distinct approach to knowledge management. In such an approach, questions about whether knowledge can ever actually be managed because of the importance of its tacit dimensions are recognized and responded to through strategies designed to seed social processes of learning. Heavily influenced by work on communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) and more recently wider ideas about learning in practice (Brown and Duguid 2000; Gherardi and Nicolini 2006), knowledge exploration approaches emphasise the importance of forms of social interaction that allow individual and collective sense-making, something which helps develop tacit understandings.

Practically, the knowledge exploration approach promotes management strategies that focus on generating organizational conditions conducive to the kinds of social interaction that allow learning in practice. The personalization approach described by Kaiser and Ringlstetter (2011) can play a part in generating such conditions, creating social networks that act as the basis for collective learning. However, as if not more important are organizational

mechanisms that help ensure the kinds of social interaction that allow learning occur regularly and that the organizational cultures that maximize the value of such interactions exist.

In terms of mechanisms for ensuring social interactions occur, efforts tend to focus on seeding more or less formal interactions between professionals, whether that be the water cooler conversation, everyday mentoring relationships between senior and junior professionals (Marchant and Robinson 1999), the project team meeting or the practice group conference (Faulconbridge 2007a). This can be a logistical and resource challenge, but also a challenge because of the difficulties in ensuring such interactions are valued. Illustrating this, Faulconbridge (2006, 2010) shows that in PSFs the key to effective forms of learning in practice is the existence of a sense of mutual engagement (in a common task), joint enterprise (a common way of working) and shared repertoire (similar approaches to work); these being the basis for the emergence of a community of practice. Whilst such phenomena exist naturally in most PSFs thanks to the common professional background of workers, effort still has to be made to reinforce the bonds and provide a shared focus of attention. Tactics to do so can include the production of a common corporate ‘language’ and the sharing of newsletters that act as boundary spanners between individuals who may interact infrequently (whether that be due to office layouts, segregated projects or being based in offices in different parts of the country or world).

Importantly, though, mechanisms that ensure social interactions are only useful if supportive cultures exist in the organization. Seeding the conditions for learning in practice is, then, more than a logistical challenge. It also involves promoting a culture of sharing; something Swart and Kinnie (2003) suggest may be aided by the alignment of remuneration with the success of the overall firm. Such a culture matters because, as Empson (2001b) notes, professionals can feel exploited if their knowledge is ‘managed’ in a way they see as

inappropriate. Indeed, maintaining a sense of informality in the mechanisms used to manage learning in practice can be an especially important in maximising effectiveness.

In addition, a growing literature suggests that in PSFs the community of practice needs to be conceptualized as also including clients, regulators and competitors. Clients can act as co-innovators because of their ability to bring industry-specific understanding into the service production process, thus problematizing a linear understanding which conceives of PSFs working alone to produce and then deliver services to client (see Broschak this volume; Gallouj and Weinstein 1997). Regulators and competitors are important because of their role in shaping markets for PSFs. Interactions with regulators allow learning about and the influencing of regulatory priorities and perspectives that could affect a firm and its services (Greenwood and Suddaby 2006), whilst interactions with competitors provide insights into both how current market conditions and future trends are understood and being responded to (Grabher 2001), with the caveat of course that competitors will always to some degree be guarded about what they share with their rivals. The professional association often acts as an important forum where both regulators and competitors come together, interact and learn from one-another (Faulconbridge 2007b; Greenwood et al. 2002).

The learning in practice approach highlights, then, how any attempt to manage knowledge and learning has to operate in a way that reflects the particular nature of knowledge in PSFs. Hence 'hard' knowledge management database solutions are alone insufficient in many contexts given the reliance on tacit expertise and the difficulty of capturing such expertise in documents. This does not mean databases are of no value; they can help build the explicit knowledge of professionals and may play a role in seeding the informal interactions that allow learning in practice. But, a technocratic approach to knowledge management must exist alongside a 'softer' social approach that is generative of

the conditions of learning in practice. Training and professional development practices in PSFs exemplify such a balancing act.

Training as knowledge management

As noted above, PSFs are often compelled to provide training for their staff because of requirements imposed by regulators. Consequently, at one level training in PSFs might be seen as a strategy tied to the explicit knowledge associated with a profession, and as such may be seen as an information and fact transfer process. Indeed, technical briefings are common in many PSFs and serve just such a function.

In addition, though, a body of literature (Anderson-Gough 1998; Covaleski et al. 1998; Grey 1998; Faulconbridge et al. 2012) has emerged which, following the logic of ideas about learning in practice, identifies the more tacit learning role that training can fulfil. At one level this relates to training that allows practical skill to be developed – for instance simulation sessions in which junior professionals work alongside their seniors on a imaginary project, the idea being that in the process they develop through observation and direct experience the tacit expertise needed to handle the complexities of client problem solving (Faulconbridge and Hall, in press). In such scenarios, training provides the opportunities for social interaction that allow learning in practice. At another level, however, this literature highlights how learning in practice is as much about how to perform the role of a professional as it is about the technical expertise required to effectively advise clients. Specifically, studies have revealed that learning about legitimate ways of dressing, behaving, talking and approaching clients is a crucial component of training in PSFs (Anderson-Gough 1998; Grey 1998). Closely associated with idea of socialization, such insights begin to peel back the veneer which presents knowledge in PSFs as purely associated with profession-specific

expertise. For instance, Faulconbridge et al. (2012) reveal that in law firms training has two streams, one associated with the technical knowledge of ‘the law’, another associated with the skills needed to be an effective practitioner in the eyes of the employing organization. Meanwhile, Anderson-Gough et al. (2002: 47) argue that “For the trainees in our study [of accountancy firms], the significance of professional behaviour as a way of presenting activity rather than determining the content or quality of that activity was clearly dominant”.

The insights gained from studies of training in PSFs are important, then, because they not only confirm the challenge of managing the more or less explicit and tacit knowledge base of professionals, but also because they help to further de-mystify the tacit dimension to expertise, in the process problematizing the idea that all knowledge in PSFs relates to solving technical problems. The insights thus also further highlight the importance of questions about the ambiguity of knowledge and the apparently questionable discourse of knowledge intensity in PSFs discussed previously.

Knowledge, jurisdictions and the geographies of PSFs

The final implication of the particularities of the knowledge base of PSFs relates to the market reach of any organization. Two issues are important in this regard.

Firstly, the spatial jurisdiction in which any PSF is authorized to operate is intimately related to knowledge bases. PSFs, through their professionals, lay claim to monopoly rights over certain markets. Because such claims are based on ideas about the expertise needed to serve clients in a market, and this expertise is regulated by professional associations (see Table 1), barriers to the operation of PSFs emerge. For instance, German law firms were until 1989 restricted to operating in one Länder (region) as a result of rules that only recognized

the expertise of professionals in the Länder in which they qualified (Morgan and Quack 2005; Schulz 2005). This meant a law firm in Frankfurt was prohibited from advising clients outside of the Hesse Länder, and could not, for example, have clients in Munich. Whilst such barriers have now been removed, the example is indicative of the intimate relationship between knowledge and spatial jurisdiction (Krause 1996). Indeed, such issues continue to be highly significant for firms when new countries are entered.

Both Scott-Kennel (2012) and Malhotra and Morris (2009) highlight how the internationalization strategies of PSFs are intimately related to the characteristics of the knowledge base of the professionals employed by the firm (on internationalization generally see Boussebaa and Morgan this volume). This means that firms offering more commoditized types of service that have less normative (public protection) dimensions, in many cases these being firms more reliant on explicit knowledge in service production, are more likely to internationalize due to less regulatory controls on their practice. Underlying the greater likelihood of these firms internationalizing is the fundamental logic that overseas operations should leverage existing assets (Muzio and Faulconbridge 2013; Segal-Horn and Dean 2009), something only possible if regulatory constraints do not prevent the replication of home-country practices and models in a new market. When regulation of the jurisdiction of the knowledge base of the firm is strict, this usually being when more normative and tacit issues are central to the work of the PSF in question, internationalization become in some cases impossible (for example the barring of foreign lawyers and firms from India) and in other cases more challenging as rafts of locally qualified professionals have to be employed due to the multiple layers of adaptation required to reflect local knowledge and practice (for example law firms in China).

The second significant effect of knowledge-jurisdiction relationships concerns attempts to establish new transnational jurisdictions. Most extensively documented in relation

to the accountancy profession (Arnold 2005; Suddaby et al. 2007), but also being relevant to law (Morgan 2006; Quack 2007) and to a lesser extent architecture (Faulconbridge 2009), some important developments have characterized the early years of the new millennium. PSFs, both independently and through the extension of existing national or the formation of new transnational bodies (Evetts 1998; Faulconbridge and Muzio 2012), have sought to dis-embed expertise from regional or national jurisdictional boundaries. The exploitation of World Trade Organization rules associated with the General Agreement on Trade in Services has been a key mechanism for such developments. Most fundamentally this has involved seeking and establishing mobility rights for professionals which allow an individual educated and registered in one jurisdiction (usually a country) to move to another jurisdiction. This creates a transnational class of mobile, cosmopolitan professionals (Smets et al. 2012) who, with limited re-training and re-registration, can deploy their expertise in new jurisdictions.

Relatedly, PSFs have also sought to create and institutionalize new bodies of transnational knowledge (Suddaby and Greenwood 2001). Associated with attempts to create new jurisdictions in which the largest global PSFs can colonize profitable markets, regimes such as the International Financial Reporting Standards that global accounting PSFs have been integral to developing (Cooper and Robson 2006), and legal regimes associated with antitrust (competition) (Morgan 2006) and bankruptcy (Halliday and Carruthers 2009) that global law firms have helped engineer, create markets that transcend the historically national jurisdictions discussed above. Such bodies of knowledge locate key global PSFs at the heart of the production and maintenance of neoliberal capitalism (Faulconbridge et al. 2008), as well as at the centre of state-making projects in post-socialist and emerging economies (Halliday and Carruthers 2009). Such developments are significant not only because they transform the historically national fix of professional activity (Faulconbridge and Muzio 2012), but because they also further challenge the idea that professional knowledge is

associated primarily with fiduciary and safeguarding activities. Being complicit in neoliberal capitalism also means being complicit with the agendas of transnational corporations and a central role in the furthering of their economic projects. The global financial crisis and the centrality of accountancy and law PSFs in the production of the products that undermined the global financial system is illustrative of how a central role in the co-production of transnational capitalist regimes further problematizes the earlier discussed historical interpretations of professional projects as being in the public interest.

Intimately coupled to the development of transnational jurisdictions and the complicity of PSFs in neoliberal globalization is also the related expansion of the functional jurisdiction of PSFs. Such issue emerged at the turn of the new millennium as the multidisciplinary partnership gained hold, particularly in accountancy firms, as part of efforts to develop cross-profession organizations, for instance providing accounting but also legal and consultancy advice. To some extent curtailed by regulatory barriers, and by the fallout from the collapse of Arthur Anderson, there remain nonetheless ongoing efforts to redefine the functional jurisdiction of PSFs through the reworking of definitions of expertise. This is mostly clearly illustrated in relation to accounting PSFs who have sought to engage in strategic negotiations about the functional expertise of accountants, this being part of efforts to redraw the boundaries of work to encompass more and more domains that are not limited to audit (Suddaby and Greenwood 2005).

Conclusions

This chapter has demonstrated that intimate connections between PSFs and knowledge are crucial for explaining some of the most fundamental features of the organization, management and market reach of firms. Figure 1 captures these insights and the heuristic lens

that the chapter has developed by placing questions of knowledge at the centre of the analysis of PSFs.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

As Figure 1 reveals, the nature of knowledge is important in a series of crucial debates in existing literatures about PSFs, and also frames key future research questions. These future research questions relate primarily to the constant dynamics that define both the nature of knowledge in PSFs, and its influence on questions of organization and management. Figure 1 highlights three core areas in this regard.

First, important questions exist about the extent to which in general PSFs are becoming increasingly bureaucratic and managerialist, this having implications for the ability of professionals to deploy their tacit expertise for client benefit. In many ways this is not a new trend; Cooper et al. (1996) long ago reported on the growing trend towards managed professional businesses. However, the 2000s have seen such developments take on new trajectories. For instance, the financialization of PSFs (Faulconbridge and Muzio, 2009; Fleming and Spicer, 2012), with increased emphasis on both the financial performance of individuals and of the organization as a whole, has created new imperatives for bureaucracy and managerialism. Yet, the implications of this for the exercise of tacit expertise have been little considered. This matters for two reasons. First, because any such trend would potentially indicate an ever greater differentiation between bespoke and commoditised PSFs, with those in the former category becoming potentially more and more unique and niche in the kind of work they do. Or, put another way, this trend could mean that it is increasingly difficult to identify a PSF this does not in some way seek to commoditize knowledge.

Second, because new innovative techniques of organization are potentially needed to ensure that even in the most bureaucratized and managerialist PSFs spaces for autonomy still exist.

How this might be achieved alongside the fundamental efficiency and control logics underlying more bureaucratic forms is not clear, and thus is an important research agenda.

A second major future theme relates to the way technology is changing the production of services within PSFs. This has particular implications for the way knowledge is managed. For instance, the extent to which increased use of technology is associated with greater codification of knowledge, or might allow new ways of learning in communities of practice to occur is unclear. It is tempting to assume that the former rather than the latter scenario is most likely. But, research should investigate this more thoroughly. After all, in the web 2.0 era this is not a forgone conclusion. Thirdly, the evolution of the jurisdiction of PSFs, along spatial and functional lines, poses fundamental challenges to theoretical conceptions. It is now less of a question of whether change has occurred compared with the situation when the literatures on the professions and PSFs was born in the twentieth century, and more a question of the effects of change for how we understand the claims of PSFs over particular markets. Examining how the increasingly transnational domain of professional work reconfigures our understanding of the role of professions and PSFs in state projects, how attempts to expand the functional reach of firms into new domains challenges assumptions about these firms as sites of the exercise of defined bodies of distinctive professional knowledge, and in turn how all of this matters for the organization and management of the firms themselves seems crucial.

Cutting across all three of the previously mentioned areas for future research are also questions about the way the knowledge-based advice PSFs produce is consumed and valued by clients. This matters in terms of the impacts on clients of different organizational forms and knowledge management strategies, and in terms of the way redefined professional jurisdictions bring PSFs into interaction with changing client bases. In part such questions return us to the perennial difficulties of assessing the quality of the work of PSFs, as

discussed in the first half of this chapter. Nonetheless, it seems crucial to develop a research agenda and associated theoretical framing that allows the contribution of PSFs to clients' activities to be more effectively revealed. In part the challenge this raises is further capturing, methodologically as well as theoretically, the knowledge that PSFs produce and deploy on behalf of their clients. But it also means thinking about more tangible effects, in terms of the development of new products, markets and capabilities. Developing such research would help close the loop: existing research can tell us a lot about the knowledge raw materials that act as the inputs into the activities of PSFs, and thus it seems logical that the outputs should be better specified.

Acknowledgements

Some of the ideas outlined in this chapter were developed as part of work funded by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council through grant RES-000-22-2957. Feedback on an earlier version of the chapter from Laura Empson helped refine the ideas presented.

References

- Abbott, A. (1988) *The system of professions: an essay on the division of expert Labour*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Abel, R. L. (1988) *The legal profession in England and Wales*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Alvesson, M. (2004) *Knowledge work and knowledge intensive firms*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Alvesson M, 2001, Knowledge work: ambiguity, image and identity *Human Relations* 54
863-886
- Amin, A. & Cohendet, P. (2004) *Architectures of knowledge: Firms capabilities and communities*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Anderson-Gough, F., Grey, C. & Robson, K. (1998) 'Making up accountants: the professional and organizational socialization of trainee chartered accountants', Aldershot: Ashgate/ICAEW.
- Anderson-Gough, F., Grey, C. & Robson, K. (2002) 'Accounting professionals and the accounting profession: linking conduct and context', *Accounting and Business Research*, 32.
- Arnold, P. (2005) 'Disciplining domestic regulation: The World Trade Organization and the market for professional services', *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 30: 299-330.
- Beaverstock, J. V., Faulconbridge, J. R. & Hall, S. J. E. (2010) 'Professionalization, legitimization and the creation of executive search markets in Europe', *Journal of Economic Geography*, 10: 825-43.
- Berends H, Boersma K and Weggeman M (2003) The structuration of organizational learning. *Human Relations* 56(9) 1035-1056.
- Blackler F, 1995, Knowledge, knowledge work and organizations: an overview and interpretation *Organization Studies* 16 1021-1046
- Brivot M, 2011, Controls of knowledge production, sharing and use in bureaucratized professional service firms *Organization Studies* 32 489-508
- Brown, J. S. & Duguid, P. (2000) *The social life of information*, Boston, MA: Harvard Business school press.

- Burrage, M., Jarausach, K. & Sigrist, H. (1990) 'An actor-based framework for the study of the professions', In Burrage, M. & Torstendahl, R. (eds) *Professions in theory and history*. London: Sage.
- Burton-Jones A (1999) *Knowledge capitalism. Business, work and learning in the new economy*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Carnegie, G. D. & Napier, C. J. (2010) 'Traditional accountants and business professionals: portraying the accounting profession after Enron', *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 35: 360-76.
- Cook, A., Faulconbridge, J. R. & Muzio, D. (2012) 'London's Legal Elite: recruitment through cultural capital and the reproduction of social exclusivity in City professional service fields', *Environment and Planning A*, 44: 1744-62.
- Cooper, D. J. & Robson, K. (2006) 'Accounting, professions and regulation: Locating the sites of professionalization', *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 31: 415-44.
- Cooper D, Hinings C R, Greenwood R, Brown J L, 1996, Sedimentation and Transformation in Organizational Change: The Case of Canadian Law Firms *Organization Studies* 17 623-647
- Covaleski, M. A., Dirsmith, M. W., Heian, J. B. & Samuel, S. (1998) 'The calculated and the avowed: techniques of discipline and struggle over identity in Big Six public accounting firms', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 43: 293-327.
- Empson, L. (2001a) 'Fear of exploitation and fear of contamination: impediments to knowledge transfer in mergers between professional service firms', *Human Relations*, 54: 839-62.
- Empson, L. (2001b) 'Introduction: Knowledge Management in Professional Service Firms', *Human Relations*, 54: 811.

- Evetts, J. (1998) 'Professionalism beyond the nation-state: international systems of professional regulation in Europe', *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 18: 47-64.
- Evetts, J. (2003) 'The Sociological Analysis of Professionalism: Occupational Change in the Modern World', *International Sociology*, 18: 395.
- Faulconbridge, J. R. (2010a) 'Business services: driving the knowledge-based economy in the UK?', In Coe, N. M. & Jones, A. (eds) *The economic geography of the UK*. London: Sage.
- Faulconbridge, J. R. (2010b) 'Global architects: learning and innovation through communities and constellations of practice', *Environment and Planning A*, 42: 2842-58.
- Faulconbridge, J. R. (2009) 'The regulation of design in architecture firms: embedding and emplacing buildings', *Urban Studies*, 46: 2537-54.
- Faulconbridge J R, 2007a, Relational spaces of knowledge production in transnational law firms *Geoforum* 38 925-940
- Faulconbridge J R, 2007b, Exploring the role of professional associations in collective learning in London and New York's advertising and law professional service firm clusters *Environment and Planning A* 39 965-984
- Faulconbridge, J. R. (2006) 'Stretching tacit knowledge beyond a local fix? Global spaces of learning in advertising professional service firms', *Journal of Economic Geography*, 6: 517-40.
- Faulconbridge, J. R., Beaverstock, J. V., Muzio, D. & Taylor, P. J. (2008) 'Global Law Firms: globalization and organizational spaces of cross-border legal work', *Northwestern Journal of International Law and Business*, 28: 455-88.

- Faulconbridge J R, Hall S, in press, Reproducing the City of London's institutional landscape: the role of education and the learning of situated practices by early career elites *Environment and Planning A*
- Faulconbridge, J. R. & Muzio, D. (2007) 'Reinserting the professional into the study of professional service firms: the case of law', *Global Networks*, 7: 249-70.
- Faulconbridge, J. R., Muzio, D. & Cook, A. (2012) 'Institutional legacies in TNCs and their management through training academies: the case of transnational law firms in Italy ', *Global Networks*, 12: 48-70.
- Freidson, E. (1983) *Structures in fives. Designing effective organizations*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall International.
- Gallouj F, Weinstein O, 1997, Innovation in services *Research Policy* 26 537-556
- Gherardi, S. & Nicolini, D. (2006) *Organizational knowledge: The texture of workplace learning*: Blackwell Pub.
- Gottschalk P (2000) Predictors of IT support for knowledge management in the professions: an empirical study of law firms in Norway. *Journal of Information Technology* 15 69-78.
- Greenwood, R. & Empson, L. (2003) 'The professional partnership: relic or exemplary form of governance?', *Organization Studies*, 24: 909-33.
- Greenwood, R., Suddaby, R. & Hinings, C. R. (2002) 'Theorizing change: The role of professional associations in the transformation of institutionalized fields', *The Academy of management journal*, 45: 58-80.
- Grey, C. (1998) 'On being a professional in a " Big Six" firm', *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 23: 569-87.
- Halliday, T. C. & Carruthers, B. G. (2009) *Bankrupt: global lawmaking and systemic financial crisis*, Stanford: Stanford Univ Press.

- Hodgson, D. (2007) 'The New Professionals; Professionalisation and the Struggle for Occupational Control in the Field of Project Management' , In Muzio, D., Ackroyd, S. & Chanlat, J. F. (eds) *Redirections in the Study of Expert Labour: Medicine, Law and Management Consultancy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Horvath JA (1999) Preface. Tacit knowledge in the profession. In Sternberg RJ & Horvath JA (Eds) *Tacit knowledge in professional practice. Researcher and practitioner perspectives*. London, Lawrence Erlbaum associates, ix – xii.
- Howells, J. (2000) 'Knowledge, innovation and location', In Bryson, J., Daniels, P. W., Henry, N. & Pollard, J. (eds) *Knowledge, Space, Economy*. London: Routledge.
- Johnson, T. (1972) *Professions and power*, London: Macmillan.
- Kaiser, S. & Ringlstetter, M. (2011) *Strategic Management of Professional Service Firms*, Berlin: Springer-Verlag
- Krause, E. A. (1996) *Death of the guilds*: Yale University Press New Haven, Conn.
- Larson, M. S. (1977) *The rise of professionalism: A sociological analysis*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated learning. Legitimate peripheral participation.*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press.
- Lazega, E. (2001) *The collegial phenomenon. The social mechanisms of cooperation among peers in a corporate law partnership*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Løwendahl, B. (2005) *Strategic management of professional service firms (3rd edition)*, Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School.
- Macdonald, K. M. (1995) *The sociology of the professions*, London: Sage.
- Maister, D. (2003) *Managing the professional service firm*, London: Simon Schuster.
- Malhotra, N. & Morris, T. (2009) 'Heterogeneity in Professional Service Firms', *Journal of Management Studies*, 46: 895-922.

- Marchant G & Robinson J (1999) Is knowing the tax code all it takes to be a tax expert. On the development of legal expertise. In Sternberg RJ & Horvath JA (Eds) *Tacit knowledge in professional practice. Researcher and practitioner perspectives*. London, Lawrence Erlbaum associates, 3 –20
- Mckenna, C. D. (2006) *The world's newest profession. Management consulting in the twentieth century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Meso P and Smith R (2000) A resource-based view of organizational knowledge management systems. *Journal of Knowledge Management* 4(3) 224-234.
- Mintzberg, H. (1979) *The structuring of organizations*, London: Prentice Hall.
- Mintzberg, H. (1998) 'Covert leadership: Notes on managing professionals', *Harvard Business Review*, 76: 140-48.
- Morgan, G. (2006) 'Transnational actors, transnational institutions, transnational spaces: the role of law firms in the internationalization of competition regulation', In Djelic, M.-L. & Sahlin-Andersson, K. (eds) *Transnational governance. Institutional dynamics of regulation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Morgan, G. & Quack, S. (2005) 'Institutional legacies and firm dynamics: the growth and internationalization of UK and German law firms', *Organization Studies*, 26: 1765-85.
- Morris, C. & Empson, L. (1998) 'Organisation and Expertise: An Exploration of Knowledge Bases and the Management and Consulting Firms', *Accounting organizations and society*, 23: 609-24.
- Morris, T. (2001) 'Asserting property rights: Knowledge codification in the professional service firm', *Human Relations*, 54: 819-38.
- Muzio, D. & Faulconbridge, J. R. (2013) 'The global professional service firm: 'one firm' models versus (Italian) distant institutionalised practices ', *Organization Studies* 34 897-925.

- Muzio, D., Hodgson, D., Faulconbridge, J., Beaverstock, J. & Hall, S. (2011) 'Towards corporate professionalization: The case of project management, management consultancy and executive search', *Current Sociology*, 59: 443-64.
- Newell, S., Robertson, M., Scarborough, H. & Swan, J. (2002) *Managing knowledge work*, New York: Palgrave.
- Nonaka, I. & Takeuchi, H. (1995) *The knowledge creating company*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Orlikowski, W. (2002) 'Knowing in practice: enacting a collective capability in distributed organizing', *Organization Science*, 13: 249-73.
- Parsons, T. (1963) 'On the concept of political power', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 107: 232-62.
- Quack, S. (2007) 'Legal professionals and transnational law-making: a case of distributed agency', *Organization*, 14: 643-66.
- Raelin, J. A. (1991) *The clash of cultures. Managers managing professionals*, Boston, MA: Harvard Business School.
- Schultz, U. (2005) 'Germany, regulated deregulation: the case of the German legal profession', In Felstiner, W. L. (ed) *Reorganisation and resistance. Legal professions confront a changing world*. Oxford & Portland: Hart Publishing.
- Scott-Kennel, J. & Von Batenburg, Z. (2012) 'The role of knowledge and learning in the internationalisation of professional service firms', *The Service Industries Journal*, 32: 1667-90.
- Segal-Horn, S. & Dean, A. (2009) 'Delivering 'effortless experience' across borders: Managing internal consistency in professional service firms', *Journal of World Business*, 44: 41-50.

- Skyrme DJ (1999) *Knowledge networking. Creating the Collaborative enterprise*.
Butterworth-Heinmann, Oxford.
- Smets, M., Morris, T. & Greenwood, R. (2012) 'From practice to field: A multilevel model of practice-driven institutional change', *Academy of Management Journal*, 55: 877-904.
- Suddaby, R., Cooper, D. J. & Greenwood, R. (2007) 'Transnational regulation of professional services: governance dynamics of field level organizational change', *Accounting Organizations and Society*, 32: 333-62.
- Suddaby, R., Gendron, Y. & Lam, H. (2009) 'The organizational context of professionalism in accounting', *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 34: 409-27.
- Suddaby, R. & Greenwood, R. (2001) 'Colonizing knowledge: Commodification as a dynamic of jurisdictional expansion in professional service firms', *Human Relations*, 54: 933-53.
- Swart, J. & Kinnie, N. (2003) 'Sharing knowledge in knowledge-intensive firms', *Human Resource Management Journal*, 13: 60-75.
- Teece D (2000) *Managing intellectual capital*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Terett A (1998) Knowledge management and the law firm. *Journal of Knowledge Management* 2(1) 67-76.
- Von Nordenflycht, A. (2010) 'What is a professional service firm? Toward a theory and taxonomy of knowledge-intensive firms', *Academy of management Review*, 35: 155-74.
- Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities of practice: learning meaning and identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

