

JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES

Call for Papers

PROFESSIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

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There is a growing awareness of the critical role that professions play in advanced economies. Professionals and professional service firms are key advisors, analysts, defenders and developers of the major institutions that underpin capitalist economies. As gatekeepers to key financial institutions, the professions influence both the success and failure of capital markets. Professional service firms are also powerful economic actors in their own right, contributing over 3 trillion (USD) to the global economy. Professions influence more than the market system, however. They are also key agents of social change. As Scott (2008: 219) observes, “the professions in modern society have assumed leading roles in the creation and tending of institutions. They are the preeminent institutional agents of our time.”

Professions are, themselves, institutions which, over the last thirty years, have experienced profound changes. Professional service firms are increasingly adopting both the logic and structures of business corporations (Brock, et al., 1999). Professional identities are increasingly framed around logics of efficiency and commerce which have displaced traditional logics of ethics (Brint, 1994). Professional firms now tend to be multidisciplinary and transnational; a development which is eroding the value of traditional self-regulatory regimes and making the professional service firm the primary site of professional control and regulation (Cooper & Robson, 2006).

While we understand that professions are both key mechanisms for, and primary targets of institutional change, the precise role of professions and professional service firms in processes of institutional change remain under-theorized (Hwang & Powell, 2009; Scott, 2008). **In this Call for Papers we propose a substantial re-theorization and empirical re-examination of professions and professional service firms and their relationship to the dynamics of institutional change.**

Theoretically we seek papers that focus on the institutional work (Lawrence, et al., 2009) of professions in the context of business and the capital market system. Specifically, we are interested in research that theorizes the role of professionals and professional service firms in creating, maintaining and changing key societal institutions. We thus encourage submissions that focus on, but are not limited to:

- The role of professionals and professional service firms in creating, maintaining or changing key institutions within capital markets
- The role of professionals and professional service firms in creating, maintaining or changing key institutions within government and society
- The changing social, normative and ethical role of professionals and professional service firms
- The role of professionals and professional service firms in the diffusion of institutional logics
- Changes in status, identity, function and role of professionals embedded in corporations as in-house professionals (i.e. in-house lawyers, consultants, internal accountants etc.)
- The emergence of new forms of business professions and professional service firms

Empirically, we seek papers that document and analyse how broader institutional changes have impacted on professional services firms and their activities. We thus encourage submissions that focus on, but are not limited to:

- Changes in the structure and organizational design of professional service firms (including multidisciplinary firms, publicly traded professional firms and transnational professional firms)
- The emergence and role of new managerial practices within professional occupations and professional service firms
- Emerging networks of professionals and professional firms (including alumni networks and global professional firm networks)
- Changes in the nature of professional work (such as the off-shoring professional services and the impact of new technologies)
- Changes in professional identities as a result of the increasingly organizational context of professional work
- Changes in the status and perception of professionals as a consequence of the increasing deregulation and fragmentation of the professions
- Changes in the power relationship between professions and clients

While much recent research has focused on traditional business professions (consultants, lawyers and accountants) we also encourage studies of professionals and professions that have received somewhat less analytic attention – such as engineering, health care, information technology and lobbying. We also encourage studies that examine multiple professions or the field as a whole.

We also encourage papers that challenge the assumptions of this Call for Papers – i.e. papers that question the extent of change in professional service firms, their role as agents of institutional change or the relevance of professionals and professional service firms as a managerial construct.

Papers may take varying methods and approaches: conceptual, theory building, meta-analytical and empirical. Recognizing the multidisciplinary nature of this area, submissions may draw on history, geography, political theory, sociology, economics and organization theory.

Procedure:

Submissions should be prepared in accordance with the *JMS* Style Guide for Authors: see <http://www.wiley.com/bw/submit.asp?ref=0022-2380>. Manuscripts should be electronically submitted by e-mail to professions.special.issue@googlemail.com. **The deadline for submissions is December 31, 2010.** Papers will be reviewed by the guest editors as soon as they are received and, if suitable for the special issue, immediately entered into double-blind review processes in accordance with *JMS* standard procedures. Please direct any questions regarding this Special Issue to the guest editors Daniel Muzio at dm@lubs.leeds.ac.uk, David Brock at dmb@bgu.ac.il, or Roy Suddaby at roy.suddaby@ualberta.ca.

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