

Something Old, Something New?: Competing logics and the hybrid nature of new corporate professions

Abstract

The professionalisation of certain management occupations, such as Project Management and HRM, has been neglected in recent debates on professions, which instead focus upon the de-regulation of collegial professions or the failure or unwillingness of new expert occupations to professionalise. Project management represents one of a handful of 'management professions' which confound this interpretation, explicitly pursuing a 'corporate professionalisation' project with some degree of success. This article focuses on the strategic activities of the principal British professional association in this field, the Association for Project Management (APM), as it negotiates a path between exploiting established sources of legitimacy and exploring a novel conception of professionalism. In the process, the association manipulates collegial and corporate logics of professionalism, in terms of its relationships with key stakeholders, its global orientation, its knowledge base and strategies of occupational closure. Drawing on interviews with APM officials and broader documentary analysis, this article analyses the conditions which have produced this hybrid model of professionalism, highlighting the pragmatic management of tensions through the combination of distinct, even contradictory, professionalisation logics.

Introduction

To rescue the legitimacy of management in contemporary society, there have in recent years been renewed calls for its establishment as a profession; self-regulating, socially responsible and committed to an ethical code (Khurana and Nohria, 2008). Little progress is apparent in the professionalisation of general management in the last century, with Reed and Anthony pointing to "formidable – some would say insurmountable – obstacles that stand in the way of managerial professionalization" (1992: 598). Despite this, a number of management's sub-disciplines, such as HRM (Wright, 2008), advertising (McLeod et al, 2011), strategy (Whittington et al, 2011; Noordegraaf et al, 2014), consulting (Sturdy, 2011), marketing (Walker and Child, 1979; Enright, 2006), public relations (Edwards, 2014) and project management (Hodgson, 2002), have indeed made strides towards professional self-organisation and the achievement of some form of professional recognition.

How such managerial occupations professionalise, and indeed why they might wish to, are difficult questions, particularly in the current institutional context which is seen to be particularly hostile towards professionalism (Reed, 1996; Broadbent et al, 1997; Hanlon, 1998). Professionalism, with its

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3 reliance on perceived anachronisms such as monopolistic closure, restricted practice and self-
4 regulation, is seen by many as no longer desirable or achievable for any occupation (Muzio et al,
5 2007). The question is more acute for management occupations, with many suggesting that
6 management and professionalism are fundamentally distinct occupational logics and work
7 organization methods (Freidson, 2001; Ackroyd, 1996; Ackroyd and Muzio, 2007). Despite all of this,
8 the cachet of the title of 'professional' seems to retain attraction for a number of specialist
9 managerial disciplines. Striving for the legitimacy that traditional professions like medicine and law
10 enjoy (or have enjoyed in the past), several contemporary management occupations are staging
11 their own professionalization projects (Kipping et al, 2006; Muzio et al, 2007; Muzio et al, 2011;
12 Sturdy et al, 2013; Thomas and Thomas, 2014).

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19 This article explores the professionalisation of management specialisms through an examination of
20 the case of project management, which has enjoyed a significant period of expansion and, as
21 indicated by the recent award of a Royal Charter, some considerable success against its occupational
22 objectives. In this context, we analyse the novel and distinctive professionalization strategies
23 deployed by the dominant association for this occupation in the UK, the Association for Project
24 Management (APM). We do so by engaging with the literature on corporate professionalism (Muzio
25 et al, 2011; Paton et al, 2013; Thomas and Thomas, 2014) which we develop by highlighting how
26 contemporary professionalization projects are not so much characterised by a shift from collegial to
27 corporate logics but by the ability to opportunistically draw on and recombine elements of these
28 distinctive logics to create a hybrid form of professionalism. As such, rather than reproducing
29 idealised models of professionalism (Fincham, 2012), this research highlights the work required to
30 balance and reconcile competing logics of professionalism and the competing interests of key
31 stakeholders (Kodeih and Greenwood, 2014), in particular those of the large corporations who are
32 the main employers and consumers of specialist managerial expertise including project
33 management (Veldman, 2013; Paton et al, 2013). In doing so, we make a number of contributions
34 towards better understanding the nature of professionalism and the prospects of
35 professionalization in the contemporary era. In particular, with reference to other knowledge-based
36 and managerial occupations, our case study indicates how successful professionalization projects
37 might be connected to the ability of professional associations to balance different professional logics
38 and their respective strategies and tactics and to manage the hybrid models of professionalization
39 that result from this.

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54 The article is organised as follows. First, we review the literature on professions identifying the key
55 features of collegial forms of professionalism and contrasting these with organizational and market-
56 based models (Reed, 1996; Fincham, 2006), which characterises new forms of expertise as radical
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3 departures from the collegial professions. Between these positions, we analyse the emergence of
4 corporate professionalism (Kipping et al, 2006; Muzio et al, 2011; Paton et al, 2013) and consider
5 the rise of project management as an example of a corporate profession. We then explore, drawing
6 on interviews with APM senior officials and the analysis of APM documentation published since
7 2001, the particular professionalisation strategy adopted by the APM and present its defining
8 characteristics. Our analysis highlights the interweaving of older 'collegial' and newer, 'corporate'
9 logics of professionalism within this professional association and the broader project management
10 community. We conclude by developing this model of professionalism, highlighting its necessarily
11 negotiated and hybrid character and discussing its broader relevance for the professionalization of
12 management specialisms.
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20 ***The Changing Landscape of Management and the Professions***

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22 Research into professions and the process of professionalization tends to be dominated by analyses
23 of a few showcase professions such as law and medicine in Anglo-Saxon contexts (Macdonald,
24 1995). While early work generally attempts to establish the essential qualities of 'the professions',
25 the key contribution of Johnson (1972) overcame these earlier taxonomic concerns and re-
26 orientated this field towards the recognition that professionalism did not refer as much to the
27 intrinsic nature of an occupation but to a 'peculiar type of occupational control' (1972: 45) open in
28 principle to a wide range of occupations.
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34 Traditionally, professionalisation is articulated along two key dimensions; the regulation of
35 production by producers and the regulation of the production of producers (Abel, 1988). The first
36 dimension refers to attempts to control how professional services are produced, distributed and
37 consumed. This involves a process of monopolization, whereby an occupational group seeks to carve
38 out a favourable jurisdictional settlement by advancing claims of exclusive authority over an area of
39 skill and expertise (Murphy, 1988). In its most accomplished form this will lead to a state-sanctioned
40 monopoly over the right to perform certain types of work (e.g. medical prescription) or use certain
41 titles (e.g. Chartered accountant). The second dimension, the production of producers, refers to the
42 attempt to regulate the production of professionals themselves (Abel, 1988), as professions seek to
43 control the supply of professionals by establishing who is qualified to enter the profession as well as
44 the credentials, skills and competences they should possess. This usually relies on a combination of
45 formal examination, testing the mastery of an official body of knowledge, and vocational training
46 designed to socialize the candidate in the norms of a particular community. Occupational closure
47 results from these activities, as professions 'seek to maximise rewards by restricting access to
48 rewards and opportunities to a limited circle of eligibles' (Parkin, 1974: 3). Thus this collegial form of
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3 professionalism seeks to create a labour market shelter for certain occupations, guaranteeing them
4 a high degree of discretion over their work and empowering them vis-à-vis their customers and
5 potential employers.
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9 However, globalization, deregulation and the rise of large professional services firms in the last few
10 decades (Evetts, 1995; Brock et al, 1999) have challenged this collegial logic in established
11 professions, at the same time that new expert occupations have emerged which defy easy
12 classification. As Fincham notes, these new expert groups are “annoyingly ‘different’ from each
13 other (...) analytic dimensions are blurred and cut the cards differently for different groups” (2012;
14 221). Certain new expert occupations have abandoned the template of the collegial professions and
15 have attempted to develop new forms of occupational control, leading to the formulation of a
16 distinct ‘knowledge worker’ thesis (Blackler, 1995; Reed, 1996). According to proponents, these new
17 symbolic analysts and knowledge brokers are engaged in activities far removed from the remit of
18 the collegial professions and therefore require more entrepreneurial, managerial and informational
19 configurations (Reed, 1996). The most detailed account of these debates is provided by Reed’s
20 (1996) typology of expertise. According to this model the ‘collegial professions’ have been joined by
21 two new occupational categories: ‘organizational professions’ and ‘knowledge workers’, which do
22 not rely on traditional occupational closure and collective mobility. Organizational professions, such
23 as personnel or supply chain managers, succeed instead by colonizing key organizational enclaves
24 and positions in the bureaucratic structures they inhabit. They do so by solving technical problems
25 for their employers and adding value through the delivery of efficiency gains (Armstrong, 1985). On
26 the other hand, knowledge workers or entrepreneurial professionals (Muzio et al, 2007), such as
27 management consultants and executive search consultants, eschew professionalisation entirely and
28 instead prioritise *marketization*, by engaging closely with clients and other stakeholders to
29 continuously develop new products and markets for their expertise (Fincham, 2006). Thus the new
30 forms of expertise compete by identifying and developing new fads and fashions and by tailoring
31 these to the unique circumstances of their clients (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2001). In this context,
32 the assumption in the literature (Reed, 1996; Fincham, 2006; 2012) has increasingly been that for
33 these new occupations, professional closure is neither achievable nor indeed desirable when
34 compared to other occupational strategies.
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50 Recently there have been several calls to reconsider the relationship between professions and
51 organizations (Barley and Tolbert, 1991; Suddaby et al, 2007; Muzio and Kirkpatrick, 2011). In
52 particular Suddaby et al (2007: 357) invite us to ‘revisit theories of professionalism, which did not
53 fully anticipate the shift of professional work to the context of large organizations’. Many
54 researchers have taken this up by focusing on contemporary processes of professional formation
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3 and development, driven by the realization is that 'those professional occupations that have more
4 recently emerged [...] structure themselves so as to accommodate corporate patterns' (Dacin et al.,
5 2002: 49). Accordingly a growing body of work (Kipping et al, 2006; Muzio et al, 2011; Thomas and
6 Thomas, 2014; Paton et al, 2013; Sturdy et al, 2013) have developed the concept of 'corporate
7 professionalism' to characterise new professional projects, such as management consultancy and
8 indeed project management. Whilst clearly an ideal type which has primarily heuristic value,
9 corporate professionalism brings together characteristics of Reed's organizational professionalism
10 and knowledge work categories. Thus, for instance, corporate professions tend to operate
11 organizational as well as individual membership schemes, tie membership structures to corporate
12 careers, actively involve clients in their own governance, and target transnational rather than
13 national jurisdictions (Muzio et al., 2011). Above all, as large organizations are the main users and
14 employers of their expertise, these new professionalization projects are intimately bound to
15 corporate settings, interests and practices (Muzio et al, 2011).

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17 Thus corporate professionalism, by opening up the possibility to some novel patterns of
18 professionalization, provides an alternative to the 'unwilling/unable to professionalize' thesis which
19 has dominated the debate on expert labour for some time. It helps us to understand the case of
20 newer forms of expertise such as management consultancy or project management which are
21 becoming increasingly institutionalized (Muzio et al, 2013) but do not conform with traditional
22 professionalization models. Yet whilst we have some tentative descriptions of what corporate
23 professionalism may entail, we lack an understanding of how this may emerge in practice, as new
24 occupations navigate the path between traditional routes to professionalization and more
25 contemporary marketization strategies. In particular existing research offers little consideration,
26 beyond a generic recognition of the growing influence of corporate stakeholders (Kipping et al,
27 2006; Kipping, 2011; Muzio et al, 2011), of the internal dynamics through which corporate
28 professionalism is defined and enacted. Thus, little is known of how corporate professionalism
29 draws on and combines the alternative strategies implied by distinct professional logics. This is
30 important if we are to move beyond an understanding of professions as static and abstract
31 categories and recognise them instead as the outcome of active, fluid negotiations between distinct
32 constituents and stakeholders (Burrage and Torstendahl, 1990; Becker et al, 1961).

51 **Methodology**

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53 To address these gaps in our knowledge, we examine the strategies adopted by one professional
54 association, the APM, representing the field of project management in the UK. The APM has been
55 chosen as it appears to have achieved a level of legitimacy through its efforts to professionalise, in
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3 terms of membership numbers but also, as indicated by the recent award of a Royal Charter, in
4 terms of institutional recognition. By examining how this professionalization project has unfolded,
5 the aim is to reveal the underpinning logics at play in this profession, while at the same time
6 examining the specific forces and processes which have shaped its development.
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10 This research forms part of a larger qualitative study into the dynamics of professionalization within
11 project management at an institutional and individual level. The APM is adopted here as a 'critical
12 case' (Yin, 2003) in the sense that it, as the main representative association for project management
13 in the UK, represents a managerial field which, against expectations, appears to have has some
14 success in its efforts to professionalise. Successful professionalization, here, is clearly a complex
15 issue, as the discussion below underlines, but is best captured by the legitimacy of claims to
16 professional status. Markers of legitimacy for the APM include the significant increase in individual
17 membership (legitimacy among practitioners), increase in corporate membership (legitimacy among
18 employers) and the approval of their application for Royal Charter (state legitimacy). As the study
19 focuses on a single case, the aim of the research is not generalisable findings; rather, the intention is
20 to gain insight into the dynamics affecting the process of professionalisation, taking into account the
21 specific context and history of this occupation.
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25 The study relies on interviews with senior representatives of the APM, alongside the archival
26 analysis of APM documents, publications and online material. A series of semi-structured interviews
27 were conducted in 2007-08 with seven individuals who held, or had held, the most senior positions
28 within the APM between 2000 and 2013. Given the small and high-profile sample, interviewees are
29 referred to simply by number to protect their anonymity. This was supplemented by analysis of
30 documentary materials published by the APM, focusing on the period 2007-2014, including a
31 systematic reading of APM annual reports, relevant articles published in the APM magazine
32 'Project', APM member blogs, 286 APM presentations on Slideshare, 10 APM webinars and other
33 APM website material and over 1500 contributions to online discussion threads on the APM
34 website. The key aim of this was to contextualise the interviews, and also to compare private and
35 public accounts of the rationale behind the strategies employed over this period.
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39 Semi-structured interviews were used to provide flexible and detailed accounts through the joint
40 construction of meaning in a social encounter, following Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) concept of
41 the 'active interview'. Through active interviewing, our aim was not to extract information or views
42 from a passive subject but to stimulate active narrative production, intentionally provoking
43 interviewees to articulate and reflect upon their position. Interviews followed a standard yet broad
44 protocol, lasted between 30 minutes and 2 hours and were recorded, transcribed, anonymised and
45 entered into NVivo for analysis. The outcome of each interview was a rich and grounded account
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3 which represents an articulation of the 'world-view' of informed and influential subjects in this
4 particular field, illuminating the formation and implementation of strategy here.
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7 The research questions for these interviews were derived from literature on the sociology of the
8 professions, focusing on five themes which are particularly prominent across this literature: the
9 philosophy underpinning the professionalisation strategy (e.g. Freidson, 2001), the historical
10 evolution of the association and the field (e.g. Larson, 1977), the jurisdiction of the association (e.g.
11 Abbott, 1988), the structure of credentials (e.g. MacDonald, 1995; Freidson, 2001), and the
12 association's key stakeholders (Burrage and Torstendahl, 1990). Two coders jointly analysed the
13 transcripts through an open coding strategy, which produced 50 codes. Through axial coding,
14 categories were created to group coded data; through this process, it was found that 40 codes could
15 be related to four core categories: (1) *governance*, (2) *stakeholders/relationships*, (3) *occupational*
16 *closure* and (4) *jurisdiction*; the remaining ten codes were collated within a broader category
17 covering *history, philosophy and professional status*. These categories were examined holistically by
18 a third researcher for discursive coherence and to establish a common lexicon for interpretation and
19 analysis. Then, through a process of selective coding, the four categories were built into an
20 emergent narrative (Strauss and Corbin, 1998), forming the structure for the analysis section below.
21 Issues related to (1) *governance* are dealt with alongside *history, philosophy and professional status*
22 in the introductory section below. The remaining three sections address, in turn, (2)
23 *stakeholders/relationships*, (3) *occupational closure* and (4) *jurisdiction*.
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35 **The Professionalisation of Project Management in the UK**

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37 Before looking in detail at key aspects of the professionalization strategies and logics within the
38 APM, it is necessary to introduce project management as a function, and to provide some context
39 on its evolution, both globally and within the UK itself, in order to locate some of the broader
40 occupational dynamics impacting on the profession. Project management combines managerial and
41 technical responsibilities, drawing on a proprietary body of knowledge and associated practitioner
42 methodologies to plan, monitor and coordinate projects in a range of sectors (Hodgson, 2002).
43 Project managers are typically employed within large organisations, where they help to realise the
44 objectives of their employers, with a minority serving such organisations from independent and
45 relatively small consultancies (Morris, 1997; Zwerman and Thomas, 2001). Project management
46 represents a weakly institutionalised occupational field (Greenwood et al, 2002), in that there is no
47 regulation of the production of producers in terms of occupational barriers to entry or no legal or
48 other institutionalised restrictions on the right to practice as a 'project manager'.
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3 Globally, project management tends to be represented by national associations, which vary widely
4 in size, influence and respectability. The dominant professional association for project managers in
5 the UK, the APM, was created in 1972 by a network of practitioners interested in a particular PM
6 methodology. Over the last forty years, the activities of the APM have broadened to cover many of
7 the functions of collegial professional associations, including the certification of knowledge and
8 skills, production of an official body of knowledge (APM, 2012) accompanied by an ethical code, and
9 representation as far as possible of the disparate elements of an occupation still dominated by
10 engineering, construction and IS/IT. The APM is currently the second-largest professional association
11 for PM in the world, and the largest outside of the US where the American Project Management
12 Institute (PMI) dominates (Hodgson, 2008; Hodgson and Muzio, 2011). With the exception of the
13 PMI, most national associations are members of the International Project Management Association
14 (IPMA), a federal umbrella organisation linking 55 national associations for project management.
15 The APM is by some distance the largest IPMA member, making up over 40% of the IPMA's 50,000
16 members worldwide.

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19 Through the 1970s/80s, individual membership of the APM expanded slowly and by the early 1990s
20 membership remained at a modest 2000 (see Figure 1). The decision was taken in 1991 to publish
21 the APM 'Body of Knowledge' (BOK), presented as 'the ontology of the profession; the set of words,
22 relationships and meanings that describe the philosophy of project management' (Morris et al,
23 2000: 156), and also to introduce a professional examination based on the BOK, covering key PM
24 skills such as planning, budgeting and risk management. Several in the APM leadership identify
25 these actions as triggering a sharp increase in APM membership from 1996 onwards, as many
26 practicing project managers were attracted by the prospect of formally accrediting their expertise.
27 Although slowing down for a period in the late 1990s, the association has continued to expand its
28 membership at a very healthy rate (see Figure 1), building to its present membership of over 21,000
29 individuals (APM, 2014a), with 90,000 qualified APM practitioners to date and a £7 million turnover
30 (APM, 2014b).

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52 While growth in individual membership can be pointed to as one indicator of the APM's success,
53 there are other indicators of its growing influence. Recent presentations at the APM's Annual
54 General Meetings have emphasised the wider impact of the APM beyond direct membership,
55 pointing to 28,000 LinkedIn followers of the APM, and 3.25 million hits per annum to the APM
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3 website (APM, 2013b). In addition, there has been a substantial increase in corporate membership
4 in the last decade, the APM now boasting over 570 member companies (APM 2013b). The APM have
5 three accreditation schemes; Corporate Accreditation which assesses and approves an organisations
6 professional development scheme for project management staff; Training and Development
7 accreditation where independent training providers have their course materials assessed against the
8 APM standards; and Academic accreditation where universities seek to have courses and modules
9 are aligned to the APM Body of Knowledge. To date, 50 major public and private sector
10 organisations have acquired formal APM accreditation for their project management development
11 programmes, including BAe systems, United Utilities, Shell and the UK Ministry of Defence, and over
12 90 universities and private companies have received APM Academic or Training and Development
13 accreditation (APM, 2014). With the increasing uptake of these schemes some industries are
14 adopting the APM as the de facto quality standard for project management practice with companies
15 in, for example, the oil and gas, defence and construction sectors now finding it necessary to
16 possess APM approval of system and staff to allow entry to the supply chain.
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26 In addition to its success within industry, the APM have also applied for status as a Chartered
27 professional body. A Royal Charter is highly significant here as it represents the highest form of UK
28 state recognition for an occupation and would symbolically place project management on the same
29 level as established professions such as accountancy and engineering. In July 2013, the APM was
30 informed that, the Privy Council committee had unanimously recommended that a Royal Charter
31 should be granted. Although delayed by an unsuccessful appeal from the UK chapter of the US-
32 based Project Management Institute the APM, in gaining Chartered status, should soon join a very
33 select group of just six Chartered management specialisms¹.
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40 Yet, throughout this period of substantial expansion and increasing legitimacy in the eyes of
41 practitioners, employers and the State, differing opinions existed within the APM around how
42 professionalism was understood and how it should be accomplished. This internal debate is
43 important as it explains how its journey to professionalism was to assume a distinctive character,
44 combining an attachment to the traditions of collegial professionalism with the development of
45 some new and decisively innovative features. Not surprisingly, the APM was inevitably influenced by
46 the existing recipes and models provided by the traditional/collegial professions, which acted as a
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54 ¹ The vast majority of the 115 Royal Charters awarded in the last thirty years have gone to professional bodies for technical
55 occupations (medical, engineering or accounting) (Privy Council, 2014). Only 6 of these 115 relate to what might be called
56 management sub-disciplines; the Chartered Institute of Marketing (1989), the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply
57 (1992), Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2000), Chartered Management Institute (2002), The Chartered
58 Institute of Public Relations (2005) and The Worshipful Company of Management Consultants (2007),
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3 template and reference point for its own occupational ambitions. This influence was apparent as
4 many project managers qualified or trained in other professional fields, such as engineering, and
5 therefore had exposure to the practices, discourses and structures of more collegial and established
6 models of professionalism.
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10 The best example of this influence is the pursuit of the Royal Charter itself, which traditionally
11 defined collegial professions in the UK and which the APM set out as its own core strategic objective
12 in 2007. The following quotes capture both the strategic importance that APM places on the Royal
13 Charter and the impact that this objective has had on its professionalization strategy:
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17 We would then be *the* body for project managers in the UK and nobody could argue
18 with that. We'd be up there as an equivalent professional body with all the others.
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20 (APM2)

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22 All the things that we were doing - enhancing and building the reputation, the strength
23 of the organisation and its finances - would contribute somehow or other to an
24 application for becoming Chartered. (APM3)
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27 The conditions associated with a Royal Charter, requiring that an association prove pre-eminence in
28 the field and its contribution to the 'public good' (Privy Council, 2014), had some important
29 consequences. In particular, as interviewees attested, it informed the APM's 'Delivering the Future'
30 campaign (APM, 2011), whereby the APM has recently begun to emphasize its public interest
31 credentials, positioning itself as a trustee of socially important skills which are fundamental to
32 individual and societal well-being (Brint, 1994). This emerges clearly from the following quote with
33 its references to public good, society and even civilisation.
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39 I think it's reflected in the strapline that they've been using about delivering the future.
40 The future has to be delivered, we are in constant change. (...). But that change is very
41 important and it is generally for the public good in the sense of developing civilisation. It
42 wasn't like that ten or 15 years ago (...) when we say we'd like to do it for the public
43 good, the public now generally says 'yes please', as opposed to 'who the hell are you?'
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47 (APM4)
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49 More recently the APM's "2020 Strategy", sets out an explicit 'public good' argument, identifying
50 'society' as one of the beneficiaries of its professionalization efforts; "With scarce resources and
51 infinite opportunity, society demands greater effectiveness, transparency, accountability and a zero
52 tolerance of failure" (APM, 2013a). The deployment of public interest arguments by the APM speaks
53 to a collegial model of professionalism and indicates a departure from the usual rhetoric of new
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3 forms of expertise which have tended to emphasize their problem-solving skills and ability to add
4 value in a narrow and technical sense (Brint, 1994).
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7 The pursuit of the Royal Charter, as an aspect of the APM's professionalization strategy, is thus both
8 a driver and an intended outcome, and on the surface appears to mark a commitment to collegial
9 models of professionalism and professionalization. However, our interviews reveal the articulation
10 of an alternative and rather different understanding of professionalism within project management.
11 This view implicitly rejects the pomp and symbolism associated with collegial British professions,
12 described by one interviewee as "limestone and gold chains and crests with funny animals", and
13 envisages a kind of modern 'greenfield' professionalism. Another interviewee captured succinctly
14 the radical nature of the thinking within sections of the APM:
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20 If you really sort of sat down with a blank sheet of paper and said what would modern
21 body be like and what would it do and how would you engage the majority of the
22 members? You would probably come up with something quite different from what any
23 traditional professional body does. (APM2)
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27 Importantly this scepticism questions the pursuit of a Royal Charter, as it embodies the collegial
28 understanding of professionalism. This is articulated by the following respondent who questions the
29 value of a Royal Charter in what is an increasingly transnational jurisdiction.
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32 There's nobody outside the UK would even know what Chartered status meant. And if
33 they asked you what it meant and you said 'this means the Queen has signed a piece of
34 paper, which says we're the professional body', they would think you were pulling their
35 leg! (APM2)
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39 As shall be discussed below, this tension between different logics of professionalism pervades the
40 recent history of the APM. The tensions between the collegial, organizational and entrepreneurial in
41 turn explain the complex character of this particular model of professionalism, where old and new
42 coexist. In the sections below, three aspects will be examined in turn and compared to collegial
43 models of professionalism, noting in each case the competing logics at play.
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48 ***Stakeholder Focus***

49 The most striking aspect of the APM's professional model relates to the renegotiated relationship
50 between the association and its three key stakeholders; the individual members, corporations as
51 employers or clients of project management services, and the state in the form of various UK
52 government agencies. Whilst historically the APM had, much like collegial professions, focused on
53 qualifying and regulating the individual practitioner, the recent priority has been to engage much
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3 more closely with major corporations, and to invite them to influence policy through the formation
4 of a Corporate Members Advisory Group in 2007, relaunched in 2013 as the Corporate Members'
5 Leadership Group. The rationale for this is articulated clearly below;
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8 APM would want to have corporate members as well as individual members because it
9 gives us a chance to expand our sphere of influence, into not just talking to individuals
10 but talking to some quite powerful 'structurers'. (APM3)
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13 Of course, the patronage of APM corporate members also helps in recruiting individual members,
14 who are likely to be encouraged in varying degrees by their employer or clients to become
15 accredited, with some employers paying membership fees for their employees. To further
16 encourage this corporate patronage the APM introduced a distinct corporate membership scheme,
17 which has grown rapidly in the last decade from 150 to over 550 members. Further this link to
18 corporations has recently been strengthened by the decision of the APM to directly accredit the
19 professional development schemes of corporate employers; at the time of writing, 20 companies
20 held APM Corporate Accreditation, including Shell, Fujitsu, Siemens and Rolls-Royce. Corporations
21 thus gain accreditation by providing evidence that their schemes are aligned with the APM's '5
22 Dimensions of Professionalism', itself built around the APM body of knowledge. As a
23 professionalization tactic this is innovative, as it empowers corporate members to qualify and certify
24 individual practitioners, a task which had traditionally been the exclusive remit of professional
25 associations.
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28 Further evidence of the increasing role of the corporation is found as various interviewees testified
29 to the powerful indirect influence of corporate members on APM policy. For instance, several
30 argued that pursuit of the Royal Charter was pushed most strongly by corporate members, who
31 even participated in funding the costs of this initiative;
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34 A number of (the corporate members) are prepared to sponsor the Chartered status
35 initiative by actually contributing money towards the cost of doing it. Quite significant
36 funds actually... So we don't look a gift horse in the mouth! (APM5)
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39 The benefits of a higher status for project management in the eyes of its corporate members are
40 made more explicit in the following quote, which connects the professionalization of project
41 management to the internal dynamics of the corporation;
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44 The view began to become more strident from corporate members and particularly
45 from people like BAe and Rolls Royce, that they needed 'Chartered' (*status*) ... and
46 therefore they expected APM to be moving down that road... Some of the corporates
47 are looking to APM to provide them with a means of leapfrogging their project
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3 managers over their engineering managers, in terms of status and influence... That's
4 one of the drivers for seeking Chartered status because that puts them at least on an
5 equal footing with a chartered engineer. (APM3)
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8 In this way, a Royal Charter becomes a resource that employers and employees can deploy to
9 enhance their control over major projects by enhancing the professional status of project
10 management vis-à-vis other technical professions.
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12 While relationships with corporations represent a major departure for more collegial models of
13 professionalism, corporate membership is not implemented fully at the expense of the individual as
14 corporate membership is subject to a degree of attenuation. Corporate members do not currently
15 hold formal positions on the APM's board, and as one interviewee explains, "corporates do not have
16 a say in any votes or issues that are put forward" (APM4). The relationship between stakeholders
17 can therefore be seen to be a mixture of those characteristics common to collegial professions with
18 some distinctively new features which are designed to recognize and accommodate the decidedly
19 corporate setting of project management.
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27 ***Occupational Closure***

28 Occupational closure regimes and the regulation of the production of producers within project
29 management reflect a more complex interweaving of collegial and corporate professionalization
30 strategies. The APM's efforts to develop a body of knowledge, and its emphasis on testing the
31 mastery of this body of knowledge to adjudge professional proficiency, reflects an orientation
32 towards collegial professionalization, although unlike collegial professions, this has been largely
33 effected without significant engagement with universities. The success of the APM in creating the
34 APM Body of Knowledge (APM BOK) sets it apart from several other management occupations
35 which have embarked in their own professionalization journeys but have struggled to bound and
36 codify their knowledge domain (Fincham, 2006). The implementation of the APMP, a stand-alone
37 test of a candidate's mastery of the BOK, was the initial mechanism to qualify for practice, reflecting
38 very collegial forms of occupational closure; interviewees described this as the initiative which
39 significantly accelerated the growth in individual membership in the APM. However, despite this
40 popularity, this did not lead to tight occupational closure, in the sense of a widely-recognised and
41 routinely-expected professional qualification found in collegial professions such as medicine.
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52 More recently, in project management, accreditation has shifted from input- to output-based
53 measures, with a greater emphasis on practice, experience and, importantly, value delivered to
54 client or employer. The publication in 2008 of the APM Competence Framework, which
55 differentiates technical, behavioural and contextual competences, introduces a shift from the APMP
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3 single point of entry to a 4-tier hierarchy of accreditation, with increasing emphasis on enacted
4 competences assessed through evaluations of performance (Hodgson and Muzio, 2011; APM,
5 2013a).
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8 Some interviewees suggested that the development of a hierarchy of accreditation and moves to
9 create products such as competence frameworks were again primarily driven by the needs of
10 corporate members;
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12
13 What I've found with corporate members mostly is that they actually seem to like the
14 certification. What everybody's looking for (is) somebody that can say if Joe Bloggs has
15 got a certificate, the likelihood of our projects being more successfully managed is
16 improved. (APM6)
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20 The APM BOK and competence framework combined with the 4-level accreditation structure
21 provide a valuable resource for corporations seeking to create internal labour markets supported by
22 their own competency frameworks for training and/or assessment. This tactic of pursuing
23 occupational closure through joint APM/corporate accreditation is further advanced where
24 corporations, as previously discussed, go on to seek explicit APM Accreditation for their
25 development programmes. Success here is built up a long-term process of convincing employers
26 that the APM can help them take greater control of the training, development and career structure
27 of project managers, by persuading them that;
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34 They needed to think about project management training and project management
35 staff but from a *corporate* angle rather than an *individual* angle. (APM7)
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38 Thus, a complex picture of professional enclosure emerges here; we have clear evidence of collegial
39 professionalism through the establishment and testing of an abstract body of knowledge, alongside
40 more innovative developments such as competence-based closure through the accreditation of
41 experience as valued by clients/employers, and the embedding of training/accreditation within
42 corporate career structures. These approaches exemplify the complex interweaving of strategies
43 built upon collegial and corporate professional logics.
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48 ***Jurisdiction***

49 Historically, the reliance of professions on the patronage of the state has rendered most professions
50 nationally-bounded, and the APM certainly retains a strong national identity, reflected in the fact
51 that the APM's individual members are overwhelmingly based in the UK (and certain
52 Commonwealth countries) (APM, 2014). The domestic boundaries of the APM are reinforced by
53 their membership of the International Project Management Association (IPMA), an umbrella group
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3 comprised of 56 national project management associations. While the IPMA provides a forum for
4 the coordination of activity between national PM associations, it also implicitly discourages
5 international expansionism on the part of any member association, adopting the 'one association
6 one nation' stance.
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10 The sustainability of this position on the part of the APM and the IPMA in an era of globalisation is
11 open to question, as project managers move internationally within and between multinational firms,
12 and routinely coordinate cross-border activity. Despite their current limited international reach, the
13 APM appears increasingly aware of the importance of the global, rather than domestic, scope of
14 their occupation; one interviewee thus describes PM as 'the first international profession' (APM2).
15 Here again the influence of multi-national corporations on the APM's model of professionalism is
16 key, as corporations demand consistency in how project managers practice as they engage in global
17 projects, maintain infrastructure in many countries and transfer staff across national boundaries. As
18 one interviewee predicts;
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25 We do get organisations that operate in many European countries and probably do
26 want at some point to come to a common platform of capability and process. (APM4)
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29 There are thus pressures on the APM to move towards a market-oriented model of professionalism
30 based upon the possibility of the worldwide promotion and marketing of the APM brand and
31 associated qualifications, freed from any reliance upon a national base. Developments such as the
32 creation of an ISO standard for project management (ISO21500, 2012) reflect demands for global
33 consistency in terminology and practice, and also highlight the need for not only domestic but
34 international reach to influence such developments. A professional association restricted by national
35 boundaries therefore appears as both a quaint anachronism and a less attractive business partner.
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40 Again, we find a complex pattern made up of old and new professionalization strategies; to a large
41 degree the APM maintains a national focus, with any international ambitions are bounded by and
42 channelled through the IPMA. In light of these global ambitions, as illustrated above, there are some
43 misgivings among APM senior representatives over the priority given to acquiring a Royal Charter,
44 whose credibility in the UK may have limited impact internationally. As one argued;
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49 Why should we just worry about a UK-only issue when in fact what we were trying to do
50 was promote project management to our membership - who work all over the world?
51 (APM4)
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55 By contrast, credibility based on corporate support drawn from multinational corporations is seen to
56 translate readily beyond national boundaries, and ironically, the price for such corporate support
57 may be the pursuit of a Royal Charter.
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Project Management in the UK as a Hybrid Profession

Our analysis above seeks to clarify the essential duality within contemporary professional projects (Kipping et al, 2006; Muzio et al, 2011; Thomas and Thomas, 2014) as exemplified by the case of project management. Professionalisation here is pursued through a strategy composed of various tactics, each reflecting particular logics. These logics are understood as a socially-constructed value and meaning system which serves to “provide taken-for-granted conceptions of what goals are appropriate and what means are legitimate to achieve these goals” (Pache and Santos, 2013: 973). Given that professionalism has constantly evolved as ‘the product of a dialectical relationship with its environment’ (Hanlon 1999: 3), it is no surprise that the APM’s strategy is by necessity hybrid, formed in negotiation with the changing demands of its fluid environment and heterogeneous stakeholders. Our analysis reveals two distinct professional logics at work within the APM, as indicated in Table 1. These provide different visions and normative prescriptions for the future of project management.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

We characterise the first logic as one of ‘collegial professionalism’, given its direct reference to established forms of professionalism. Indeed a number of our respondents explicitly state the intention to reach ‘equal footing with Chartered engineers’. Thus, there is continuity between their vision for project management and established patterns of professionalization, centred in particular on the model of Chartered engineering. We identify a competing logic, which following the literature (Kipping et al, 2006; Muzio et al, 2011; Paton et al, 2013; Thomas and Thomas, 2014) we define as one of ‘corporate professionalism’. This is still emergent and not as clearly articulated as the previous one but it signals aspirations for innovation and departure from established models of professionalization. Thus our respondents convey a sense of renewal when they refer to starting afresh ‘with a blank sheet of paper’ or advocate the need for a new model of ‘greenfield professionalism’ fit for the 21st century. Moreover, the renewal is in many ways presented as in opposition to the symbols and discourses of collegial professionalism such as the ‘limestone and gold chains and crests with funny animals’ or the endorsement by the Queen. In opposition to this the corporate logic suggests a more dynamic and internationally-oriented approach, whereby professions are expected to legitimize themselves by demonstrating their ability to add value by solving technical problems for their employers (Brint, 1994).

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3 Importantly, these logics inspire a range of distinctive strategies, which have shaped the
4 development of this particular profession. Thus on one hand, the 'collegial' logic supports strategies
5 associated with established forms of professionalism. Hence APM in its attempt to reach
6 equivalence with the 'old' professions is adopting many of their original features: it has successfully
7 developed a comprehensive and systematic body of knowledge (the APM BOK), it has devised a
8 closure regime centred on technical knowledge and formal examinations, and has obtained the
9 ultimate professional accolade in the form of a Royal Charter. Yet, on the other hand, the vision for
10 an alternative future embodied by the logic of 'corporate professionalism' inspires a series of new
11 and innovative strategies. These include: the development of competence-based qualification
12 processes which test real skills often in organizational settings, the introduction of corporate
13 membership schemes and the development of multi-tier membership propositions, tied to different
14 qualifications and linked to organizational career structures. Importantly, these new innovations
15 have a distinctive corporate dimension as they recognize the predominantly organizational context
16 and orientation of project management work. Accordingly, the APM has tried to devise new systems
17 to reflect, engage with and take on board corporate interests and practices.

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22 Beyond merely identifying a duality, it is important to illustrate how this new profession seeks to
23 reconcile this duality, pursuing aspects of both collegial and corporate professionalism in parallel,
24 often synthesising different logics so that "old and new coexist and co-penetrate each other" (Muzio
25 et al 2011: 459). The outcome of this process of synthesis is a *hybrid* model of professionalism
26 (Kurunmäki, 2004; Noordegraaf, 2007; Thomas and Hewitt, 2011), which combines elements from
27 apparently contradictory logics (Reay and Hinings, 2009) in an attempt to establish or maintain
28 legitimacy with multiple stakeholders in an increasingly complex social, political and organisational
29 environment. Critically, hybrids necessitate the management of tensions between distinct logics and
30 offer the promise of success through achieving complementarity out of contradiction (Fischer and
31 Ferlie, 2013). So, for example, Malsch and Gendron (2013) in their analysis of the development of
32 large accountancy firms, show how such organizations have to reconcile a process of commercial
33 expansionism with a defence of traditional professional practices, as they step out of the
34 accountancy field to expand into new areas such as management consultancy whilst at the same
35 time protecting and leveraging their traditional auditing monopolies. In this context 'neither the
36 commercial nor professional logic can afford to supplant the other. The two logics must coexist in a
37 precarious state' (Malsch and Gendron, 2013: 889).

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42 Similarly, in project management, APM seeks to claim the legitimacy of traditional professional
43 practices, discourses and accolades whilst at the same time stressing its modern, innovative and
44 cosmopolitan credentials. Thus, this is not a simple story of shifting logics, where a newer logic
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3 (corporate professionalism) becomes dominant and displaces a more established, traditional one
4 (Greenwood et al, 2002). Rather, this case indicates how key actors selectively and opportunistically
5 draw on and recombine elements of different logics to pursue desired outcomes. So, for instance,
6 the APM seeks governmental approval through a Royal Charter, and to do so must promulgate
7 public interest arguments, but it does so in part at the behest of corporate members to whom it
8 markets itself by stressing its ability to add commercial value. Similarly, new forms of competence-
9 based closure are overlaid on more collegial forms of accreditation whilst corporate membership
10 schemes are used to boost individual membership as corporate members are expected to
11 encourage their individual project managers to join the APM. Importantly, rather than presenting
12 actors as cultural dopes responding to the changing prescriptions of their institutional environment
13 (Suddaby, 2010), our story shows their active role as skilled agents stitching together competing
14 logics in the attempt to develop new occupational structures (Fligstein, 1997; McPherson and
15 Sauder, 2013), as evidenced in the accounts above. Thus, the same groups or individuals selectively
16 draw on distinct if not contrasting logics, pragmatically recombining their different motivations and
17 prescriptions as part of their drive towards professionalization.
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27 28 **Conclusion**

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30 Despite claims that professionalism is no longer viable for management specialisms, the case of
31 project management provides evidence of the successful professionalisation of a management
32 specialism in the UK, measured in terms of legitimacy among practitioners, employers and the State.
33 The approach to professionalisation adopted by the APM, however, defies easy classification. Our
34 analysis points to the emergence of a hybrid professionalisation strategy, driven by the need to
35 combine distinct logics and achieve and maintain legitimacy with different stakeholders.
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40 Our contribution is four fold. First, we respond to the call to revisit theories of professionalism,
41 (Suddaby et al, 2007) by providing an example of a recent successful instance of 'corporate
42 professionalism' (Muzio et al, 2011) whereby a new profession develops with reference to corporate
43 interests and practices. Second, we clarify the duality of corporate professionalism. In particular,
44 within this particular occupational context, two logics of professionalism coexist in a hybrid form, as
45 organizational and entrepreneurial strategies are integrated with more traditional/collegial ones.
46 Our third contribution is to illustrate how this new profession seeks to reconcile this duality,
47 pursuing aspects of both traditional/collegial and new/corporate professionalism in parallel, often
48 synthesising different logics to overcome apparent contradictions between logics. The outcome of
49 this process of synthesis is a *hybrid* model of professionalism (Kurunmäki, 2004; Noordegraaf, 2007;
50 Thomas and Hewitt, 2011). Our final contribution is to describe this hybridisation process, detailing
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3 how actors selectively and opportunistically draw on and recombine elements of different logics to
4 pursue professionalization. In doing so, the paper contributes in a distinctive way to a growing body
5 of work looking at institutional logics and their interaction (Reay and Hinings, 2009; Pache and
6 Santos, 2013; McPherson and Saunder, 2013; Kodeih and Greenwood, 2014).
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10 As an exploratory case study of a single profession, this study raises a number of avenues for future
11 research. Firstly it would be important to look in detail at other examples of new professionalization
12 projects, such as management consultancy or supply management, to look for similarities and
13 departure points with the strategies successfully deployed by project management. Such
14 comparative work will help to better understand both the characteristics of this corporate
15 professionalism and the conditions under which it can prosper. Secondly, as professions are
16 geographically-embedded institutions (Faulconbridge and Muzio, 2007) more cross-national
17 research is required to answer questions such as how are project management and other corporate
18 professions developing in continental societies characterised by high levels of governmental
19 involvement in professionalization projects? Thirdly, as project management is characterised by
20 multiple professional associations such as America's PMI, this would provide a unique opportunity
21 to study the staging of competing professionalization projects within an occupational remit. Do
22 these situations lead to arbitrage opportunities where members play off different associations
23 against each for better terms and conditions? Do they trigger a race to the bottom where
24 professional associations downplay their regulatory role? Finally, more research is required to
25 understand the consequences of corporate professionalism for practitioners and consumers alike.
26 Does it help to raise quality and ethical standards in a world where traditional professionalism is
27 increasingly de-legitimized? We hope these and other questions can be addressed in a rich
28 programme of further research.
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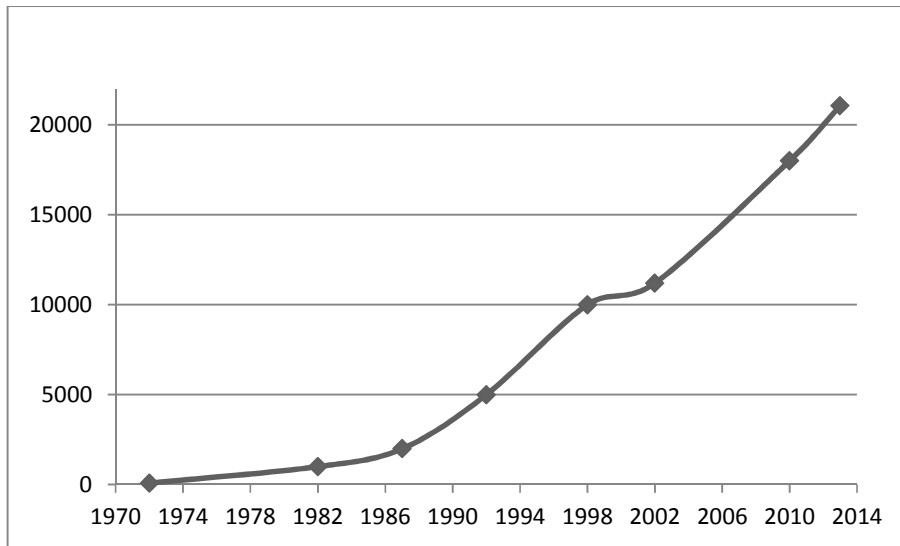
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Figure 1: APM Membership Growth 1972-2014 (Source: APM, 2011; 2014a)



Review Only

Table 1. Professional Logics at play within APM

	Collegial Professionalism	Corporate Professionalism
Mode of Professionalisation	Closure regimes supported by mastery of formal body of knowledge	Proactive engagement with organizations and markets and ability to add value to users
	Public good	Commercial value added and technical expertise
Model	Established professions like engineering.	New forms of managerial specialisms and knowledge based occupations
Stakeholder Focus	State, members and wider society	Domestic and multinational corporations
Occupational Closure and Membership	Single-tier membership	Multi-level membership structure
	Individual membership	Individual and organizational membership
	Knowledge domain captured in abstract body of knowledge, tested by written examination.	Co-production of situated knowledge with industry, focus on competences.
	Professional association regulates ability to practice.	Qualification embedded in corporate procurement and recruitment policies.
	Supported by royal charter.	Not licensed/regulated.
Geographical Jurisdiction	National	International

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