Recontextualisation and professionalising regions

Jim Hordern

Bath Spa University, U.K.

This is an author's copy of: Hordern, J. 2017. Recontextualisation and professionalising regions. In Barrett, B., Hoadley, U. and Morgan, J. *Knowledge, Curriculum and Equity: Social Realist Perspectives*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Introduction

Work in the sociology of professional occupations suggests that forms of specialised knowledge are vital for the development of solutions to new and existing problems encountered in occupational practice (Abbott 1988, 52-57; Friedson 2001, 32), for enhancing societal trust in professional judgement and maintaining professional jurisdiction. Contemporary studies of professional knowledge and expertise have profiled the character of this specialised knowledge, while foregrounding the relation between propositional knowledge and forms of 'know-how' (Winch 2010; Young and Muller 2014). Professional specialised knowledge can be seen as 'real' and 'material, but also 'emergent' and 'systematically revisable' (Young and Muller 2013, 236-8), and thus differentiated from the unstructured 'local' and 'everyday' (Bernstein 2000), a distinction as important for education for the occupations as it is for other forms of education (Young and Muller 2014). The context in which this specialised knowledge is produced is important, but knowledge cannot simply be reduced to its producers and their interests. While the 'originating contexts may leave their mark on the knowledge' (Young and Muller 2013, 237) specialised knowledge acquires value beyond those contexts. In Young and Muller's (2013; 2014) terms it is specific forms of 'sociality' (or perhaps 'disciplinarity' or 'disciplined social activity', broadly defined) that shape specialised or 'powerful' knowledge. However, how this shaping occurs for professional, vocational or occupational knowledge may differ from 'purer' academic disciplines, because of a need for that knowledge to take account of the needs of the occupation and its stakeholders (Muller 2009; Barnett 2006; Gamble 2006).

This suggests that work is needed to conceptualise those circumstances and processes that lead to the constitution of knowledge value for occupations, and to examine the forms of social organisation that shape knowledge production and curriculum development in educational institutions and occupational communities. In an attempt to advance this, this paper focuses on Bernstein's (2000) notions of 'recontextualisation' and the 'region', identifying these as socio-epistemic phenomena through which specialised occupational knowledge is constituted (Muller 2009; Young and Muller 2014). It is argued that regions have characters which reflect their orientation to disciplinary singulars, their relation to other regions, and their historical context. Regions are socio-epistemic sites within which struggles over knowledge validity and utility are played out. They can be distinguished by the extent to which the recontextualisation agents acting within them can select and transform knowledge in accordance with an accurate evaluation of the circumstances of occupational practice, and by whether they harbour a logic that can promote the disciplined evaluation of knowledge claims. Difficulties may arise where knowledge is recontextualised for the region without taking account of the conceptual relations with other forms of propositional knowledge that ascribe that knowledge with its meaning (Winch 2010; Young and Muller 2014). Furthermore, recontextualised knowledge may not reflect advances in knowledge within source disciplines if recontextualisation processes are not continual, leaving practitioners with an outdated knowledge base. Examples of regions and their recontextualisation processes illustrate the argument, drawing on occupations facing jurisdictional challenges and/or engaged in professionalisation projects, including project management, human

resource management, chartered surveying, early years education and teaching. These demonstrate how dynamics relations between recontextualisation agents, including educational institutions, professional bodies, employers and government can shape recontextualisation process and the character of the region, and thereby the knowledge base for the occupation.

Bernstein's region and recontextualisation

As part of a discussion on 'pedagogising knowledge', Bernstein introduces three 'performance modes' which have distinct forms of 'knowledge base, focus and social organisation' (2000, 51). The first mode is the 'singular', roughly equated to a 'pure' discipline (Becher 1994), with examples given of 'physics, chemistry, history, economics, psychology) (Bernstein 2000, 52). Singulars have 'creators who have appropriated a space for…a specialised discrete discourse with its own intellectual field of texts, practices, rules of entry, examinations, licences to practice….'; they are 'narcissistic, orientated to their own development, protected by strong boundaries and hierarchies' (52). The second mode is the 'region', which is 'constructed by recontextualising singulars into larger units which operate both in the intellectual field of disciplines and in the field of external practice' (52). Regions are thus at the 'interface between disciplines (singulars) and the technologies they make possible' (52). Bernstein identifies 'engineering, medicine, architecture' and 'cognitive science, management, business studies, communication and media' (52) as regions. Regions thus encompass a broad range of occupational areas, including the traditional or 'classical' professions and newer, more commercially-orientated occupations, and emerging fields of work that may relate to scientific, technological or policy-related developments.

The process by which a region is formed is worthy of some scrutiny. Those that Bernstein terms 'recontextualisation agents' are involved in 'selectively' appropriating aspects of the singulars to constitute the region (Bernstein 2000), cognisant of what Muller terms the 'supervening purpose' (2009, 213) of the occupational practice or field of work. These agents may, in terms of occupational knowledge, entail an array of agencies, institutions, academics, employers and their representative bodies, professional associations and the suchlike. The particular constellation of agents may vary both by occupation and over time, so that the processes by which the elements of the singulars are 'selected', 'appropriated and 'transformed' may be highly variable and potentially highly contested (Hordern 2014a; 2014b). The process by which the knowledge base is shaped contrasts therefore with that of the 'singular', which enjoys a more 'bounded' form of social organisation where generally disciplinary communities have unilateral control over what counts as valid knowledge, rules of entry and academic practices. As the processes of recontextualising aspects of the singulars take place, elements of practices customary to the singulars may be translated into the context of the region. Alternatively, agents within the region may be involved in deriving their own practices in ways that suit the region's particular social organisation. Barnett's (2006) notion of 'reclassificatory recontextualisation' is useful here in identifying how disciplinary knowledge is brought into relation within the 'organisational and technological problems' of occupational practice, resulting in a 'toolbox' of applicable knowledge, which could also be seen as a form of occupational 'subject' (Winch 2010), comprising the basis for the

curriculum. How these organisational and technological problems (Barnett 2006) of occupational practice are defined has considerable bearing over which aspects of singulars are selected and transformed in the recontextualisation process. Perspectives on these problems or practice 'purposes' may differ considerably amongst recontextualisation agents, leading to preferences for selecting specific aspects of singulars. However, the region may also produce its own knowledge and recontextualise knowledge from other regions operating in similar fields or 'sectors', in addition to drawing on singulars (Hordern 2014b). While the rules by which knowledge is structured and recontextualised may rest ultimately with the 'purer' disciplines (Muller 2009; Bernstein 2000), this does not mean that regions are impotent in their own knowledge production.

The third and final mode, the 'generic' is also important. This is a 'recent construction' that 'can be distinguished from other modes' in terms of its 'location' and 'focus' (Bernstein 2000, 53). The generic is 'constructed …outside, and independently of, pedagogic recontextualising fields', and therefore outside of spheres of disciplinary knowledge production or curriculum development in educational institutions. The generic is 'essentially directed to extra-school experiences' and is 'produced by a functional analysis of what is taken to be the underlying features necessary to the performance of a skill, task, practice or even area of work' (53). Bernstein (2000, 53) provides an example of how government agencies have acted to constitute generics in the U.K., developing narrow competency-based qualifications that are sceptical of the value of any form of educational knowledge (Young 2006). These developments are fuelled by arguments that suggest we have entered a 'new education (or learning) paradigm' in which 'subject-based curricula' are 'outdated', 'irrelevant' and responsible for the 'mismatch' between the outcomes of education and the requirements of the labour market (Allais 2012, 254-5) . The generic thus advances a belief in the 'inevitable obsolescence of accumulated knowledge' (Beck and Young 2005, 191), suggesting that for 'work' and 'life' what is needed is 'flexibility' and 'trainability' (Bernstein 2000, 53). There are obvious attractions in such a mode for those employers and governments that seek to minimise the costs of educational programmes and develop workforces (or citizens) that can be easily motivated towards the next objective without any resistance or unnecessary intellectual 'baggage' that might be seen as superfluous to their occupational role.

Generics, in contradistinction to regions, sit outside modes of knowledge production and recontextualisation developed through disciplinary communities and educational institutions. Regions, on the other hand, remain connected to notions of disciplinary community and institution, but at the same time must grapple with the complexities of occupational practice. While singulars are located fully within disciplinary ambits and generics located fully outside of them (and may be seen in opposition to them), regions are in a more challenging position of being partially 'inside' and partially 'out', needing to 'face both ways' (Barnett 2006, 152), to the disciplines and to the field of practice. This may be a particularly difficult balancing act in many occupational areas, if we consider the logics of traditional professionalism, the market and bureaucracy to be in tension (Friedson 2001). While the classical professions and their regions may have a longstanding relation with notions of

disciplined thought and community (Beck and Young 2005), for newer or less secure occupations this relation may be more difficult to justify in the face of demands to maintain 'market share', for efficiency and effectiveness, and for a role in the implementation of policy. For professionalising occupations regions may be in a state of considerable flux, and the locus of contest over curricula and knowledge value. There may be pressures to become increasingly 'generic' in outlook, leading to greater distance from disciplinary thought and practice.

The three modes can be further differentiated in terms of knowledge purpose and structure. Bernstein, echoing Durkheim's distinction between the sacred and the profane, distinguishes between vertical discourses, which have 'coherent, explicit and systematically principled' structures (1999, 159), and horizontal discourses, which represent 'everyday or common sense knowledge' which is 'oral, local, context dependent' (159). Vertical discourses can be furthered delineated between 'hierarchical knowledge structures' which proceed theoretically through the development of 'greater and greater integrating propositions' (i.e. the physical sciences), and 'horizontal knowledge structures' which 'consist of a series of specialised languages' each with their own theoretical perspective (i.e. Sociology, Philosophy) (162-3). While singulars are comprised of specific vertical discourses which could be either 'hierarchical' or 'horizontal' in structure, generics are orientated towards forms of horizontal discourse, implicitly valuing the 'everyday' more than the 'systematically principled' disciplines. Regions, on the other hand, are involved in bringing together different elements of vertical discourse, which might include both elements of 'hierarchical' and 'horizontal' structures, and relating these to occupational practices. Nursing, for example, has a knowledge base that draws on the differing knowledge structures of the physical, biological and social sciences (McNamara and Fealy 2014), although this may be partially through recontextualisation from other regions, such as medicine and pharmacy, a point returned to below.

The region conceived socio-epistemically

To better understand the forces that may affect the development of a region and related recontextualisation processes it is important to conceptualise the relationship between regions, singulars and the field of occupational practice. This also entails identifying how regions relate to other regions within sectoral fields.

Firstly, regions can be said to have a 'proximate' relationship to singulars or a 'distant' relationship (Hordern 2014b). A proximate relationship suggests that a singular or group of singulars are principal sources of knowledge for the region. In such a scenario, knowledge is recontextualised consistently from singular to region, with disciplinary advances systematically taken account of in the developing knowledge base of the occupation concerned. The relation between medicine and the physical and biological sciences is perhaps the paradigmatic example. Indeed, here the concerns of the disciplinary singulars and the professional region have increasingly overlapped, partly as a consequence of strengthening knowledge-based professionalism in medicine over time but also by influences on research funding which shape the patterns of knowledge production (Foray and Hargreaves 2003;

Hordern 2014b). On the other hand, a 'distant' relationship between singulars and regions implies that knowledge flow from singular to region may happen intermittently or sporadically, meaning that recontextualised disciplinary knowledge in the region may become outdated or be inconsistent with the original knowledge structure. For example, it could be argued that some management-related occupations experience a relatively distant relationship with the disciplinary theories of economics, psychology and sociology (Oswick et al. 2011; Hordern 2014c), appropriating theories that are then selectively incorporated into the management curriculum in ways that often do not acknowledge alternative theoretical perspectives (Hordern 2014c), or the broader debates which led to those perspectives.

The relationship between singulars and regions is also shaped by the structure of the knowledge involved. Where the singular disciplines have a hierarchical, 'integrated', knowledge structure which requires a particular sequencing within curricula, then the occupational knowledge base needs to take account of that integration and sequencing when recontextualising that knowledge. For example, the sequence in which key concepts in an engineering curriculum are introduced needs to take account of the structure of knowledge within the physical sciences that contribute to the knowledge base. If concepts are introduced without some understanding of how they relate to other concepts within the broader structure of engineering knowledge, their significance can be misconstrued by novice engineers, as may be seen in forms of 'problem-based learning' (Case 2011). On the other hand, when singulars have a horizontal structure based around a series of specialised languages then it is quite possible to perceive that a region may recontextualise certain languages to a greater extent than others, as discussed in the case of management studies above. The 'segmented' structure of the disciplines such as sociology lend themselves to this selective recontextualisation – 'languages' can be abstracted from the discipline and relocated in the requisite region with minimal reference to the original context of production. Examples may be found in the regions of teaching or social work, where certain sociological or psychological languages may be more easily applied to practice contexts than others or pressures on curriculum space may result in the recontextualisation of particular languages to the exclusion of others. Considerable recontextualisation and curriculum development challenges may be experienced in regions where knowledge is sourced from singulars with contrasting hierarchical and horizontal structures. For example, tensions resulting from differing structures and disciplinary practices may be contributing to polarising debates around the future of nursing knowledge, and uncertainties about the credibility of 'nursing science' (McNamara and Fealy 2014).

Regions may also be strongly influenced by other regions, particularly if they are concerned with similar aspects of work. For example, within the health (medicine, nursing, pharmacy) or construction sectors (architecture, surveying, construction management) there are occupations with concerns and jusrisdictions that overlap, and this may result in some similarities in their knowledge base. Regions within the same sectors may be 'cognate', sharing aspects of their knowledge, practice and social organisation, and potentially also recontextualising knowledge from each other as much as from 'pure' singular disciplines. These intra-sectoral relations are not necessarily reciprocal, in that the recontextualisation

may be uni-directional with one region dominant over another. Thus, more classically professional regions such as medicine and architecture may be recontextualising knowledge to more weakly professionalised regions in their respective sectors, for example nursing or surveying. In the case of nursing, there is a degree of 'boundlessness', which readily accepts knowledge flow from the stronger medical region underpinned by the 'epistemic power' of its singulars (McNamara and Fealy 2014, 163), while higher education programmes in building surveying incorporate elements of architectural knowledge (Hoxley and Wilkinson 2006).

It is also important to consider the relation between the region and the world of occupational practice. In many occupations time spent within workplace practice is key to the development of capability as a practitioner, and yet workplace practices vary considerably in the extent to which they afford opportunities to accumulate valuable knowledge (Billett 2006; Hordern 2015a). These practices may vary by sector, employer or national context, and may be strongly shaped by occupational norms and cultures. Using Friedson's (2001) terms, the 'logics' of professionalism, bureaucracy and the market may co-mingle variably to orientate the nature of occupational practice. The logic of 'professionalism' with its 'independent moral voice' and emphasis on trust (Friedson 2001, 197) shares much with disciplinary practices and communities, notions of 'inner dedication' (Bernstein 2000) and conceptualisations of 'internal goods' (MacIntyre 1981 cited in Winch 2010). However, this contrasts with the drive for efficiency, productivity and advantage that symbolises the logics of market and bureaucracy. Thus, while the practices and expectations of disciplinary singulars may point the region in one direction, it is entirely possible that forms of occupational practice driven by 'non-professional' logics orientate the region in another direction. Defining what Barnett (2006) calls the 'organisational and technological problems' of an occupation is a significant element of the recontextualisation process, but this may be undermined if the problems as defined are not perceived to require disciplinary knowledge. If it is a form of immersion in practice that is seen as the key pathway to occupational expertise (i.e. as can be inferred from the work of theorists such as Dreyfus and Dreyfus (2005) or Lave and Wenger (1991) then what use recontextualised knowledge from disciplinary singulars? If recontextualisation from the singulars into the region is particularly 'distant' then forms of practice can intrude that sit in opposition to the disciplinary or traditionally professional logics, dominating the nature of the region and downplaying the role of disciplines. On the other hand, if the relation between singulars and region is much more 'proximate' then one might expect more sustained resistance within the region to moves to introduce more marketised or bureaucratic logics.

The extent to which occupational practice is clearly underpinned by recontextualised disciplinary knowledge is significant here. In some occupations, professional judgement is inextricable from the use of recontextualised disciplinary knowledge – and is differentiated 'from an ordinary judgement' located 'primarily in experiential knowledge' (Shalem 2014, 93). In other words, in such occupations it is impossible to practice without the capacity to use specialised forms of knowledge to make decisions. Such occupational practices usually clearly acknowledge the value of specialised knowledge, demarcating it from the merely

experiential, or what we might term the 'occupational everyday' (Hordern 2015b). If the role of this recontextualised disciplinary knowledge is secure within occupational practice then this will support the processes by which the problems of practice are defined and solutions identified. Practitioners encountering problems are able to frame and refine them more thoroughly, thinking through potential solutions via their familiarity within the broader conceptual field that underpins their practice. In some professions (such as Medicine, Law, Engineering or Architecture) forms of knowledge classification are clearly a 'necessary condition for practice' (Shalem, 2014, 98), but the development of such schema rely on processes within the 'region' that assemble the knowledge base for the occupation. What Shalem (2014, 97) terms the 'epistemic rules and criteria specific to the subject matter' emerge through activity within the region and these have character that reflects how recontextualisation has occurred and which forms of social organisation and community 'sociality' have eventuated. Some occupations may fail to develop the classificatory schema that can support professional judgement in practice, or may seek to supplant disciplinary-based schema with others that are based on contrary 'logics', such as those that emerge from the market or 'bureaucracy' (Friedson 2011). In a marketised or corporate profession, if a 'disciplined' classification is deemed to not support market or corporate objectives effectively, it is likely to be jettisoned, and new bodies of knowledge developed that are more 'fit for purpose' (Muzio et al. 2011).

Recontextualisation and knowledge structure

The process of recontextualisation itself requires some further examination, particularly in terms of how knowledge structures are selected, appropriated and transformed. Bernstein uses the notion extensively in his elaboration of the 'pedagogic device', describing it as relating to a 'principle which selectively appropriates, relocates, refocuses and relates other discourses to constitute its own order' (2000, 31). As noted above, Bernstein talks of 'agents with recontextualising functions' and a 'recontextualising field' in which agents are engaged in struggles to select, appropriate and transform discourse. The notion is substantively used in Bernstein's work to explain the development of educational knowledge in the context of the pedagogic device, but the brief discussion of the constitution of regions (2000, 52) is a distinctive application. In Bernstein's work the 'rules' by which knowledge can be recontextualised are only present in the vertical discourse of disciplines, as horizontal discourse lacks the characteristics that would provide guidance as to how knowledge should be sequenced as it is 'relocated' to a new knowledge structure (Young 2006; Muller 2009). As noted above, vertical discourses can be hierarchical or horizontal in structure. Horizontal structures can be further differentiated in terms of 'grammar', with those that have 'explicit conceptual syntax capable of relatively precise empirical descriptions' described as 'strong grammars' (i.e. 'economics, linguistics and parts of psychology') and those with a less systematic relation between their internal theoretical development and empirical referents denoted 'weak grammars' (Bernstein 1999). The unstructured, local, 'everyday' horizontal discourse does not transcend its context – it has no conceptual architecture and therefore cannot form the basis for recontextualisation to a new knowledge structure.

The implication of the above discussion is that in the process of the development of a 'region' there is the potential for the recontextualisation of knowledge to be carried out inappropriately if the conceptual structure of knowledge is not accounted for. Elements of a 'singular' knowledge structure may be selected and relocated to the new 'regional' knowledge structure without acknowledging that to extract elements of propositional knowledge independently from the systems in which they are located is to detract from the value of that knowledge. As Winch (2010) emphasises, propositional knowledge (know that) only really makes sense if we understand what we can infer from that knowledge – thus we need familiarity with a related web of propositions, and the nature of the relations between them, to truly understand the significance of that proposition. Thus we may foresee that 'agents' involved in the recontextualisation process may potentially make 'errors' while selecting and appropriating knowledge from one structure to the next if they are not cognisant, or respectful, of the underlying character of the source knowledge structure (Hordern 2014a). This also suggests that the recontextualisation 'capability' of agents within the region can be evaluated (Hordern 2015c) – we can ask whether the 'agents' influencing recontextualisation are sufficiently aware of knowledge characteristics and whether they are employing the necessary recontextualisating practices that will enable them to select, appropriate and transform knowledge in accordance with underlying structural principles.

It is also salient to ask whether recontextualisation of knowledge from singulars to regions is a 'one-off' or continual process. While regions that are 'proximate' to singulars may have the connections and capabilities in place to interpret knowledge developments in related disciplines, other regions may take conceptual architecture from a discipline at one point and then build a knowledge base in the region around that (recontextualised) conceptual architecture without taking account of how debates may advance within the original disciplinary source. This phenomenon, which may lead to outdated and misaligned curricula and qualifications can be related just as acutely to awareness of the problems and purposes of practice. If the estimation of these problems and purposes is flawed or highly contested this will have significant impact on the selection, appropriation and transformation of knowledge.

'Professionalising' regions: some brief examples

This section concentrates on some brief examples of regions and recontextualisation processes, with a particular emphasis on 'professionalising' occupations, particularly those that are strongly affected by market logics, governmental intervention or intra-sectoral dynamics. The first example, Chartered Surveying, represents a region that has a degree of cognancy with (i.e.) those of architecture, planning and civil engineering, sharing aspects of the knowledge base within a broader construction-related sector (Hordern 2014d). The region requires recontextualised knowledge from various singulars, including from hierarchical structures such as the physical sciences and from horizontal structures such as economics or geography. Arguably, there is a limited need for the most recently produced knowledge from these disciplinary singulars, with the general principles sufficing. Therefore the region could be said not to require a very 'proximate' relation to those disciplines, and recontextualisation

may be intermittent. What may prove more important is recontextualisation of knowledge from the cognate regions, particularly those which are more proximate to related disciplines, so that the occupation is able to maintain the currency of its knowledge. While this cognancy may seem advantageous, it is also evident that there is considerable concern about the future of the surveying profession (Hannah et al. 2009; Ratcliffe 2011), with challenges to professional jurisdiction from other related occupations and pressures to adapt to market and technological change.

Within the region of Chartered Surveying, at least in the U.K. recontextualisation processes benefit from specific circumstances. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) is a respected professional association with a large membership amongst the surveying community, although it should be noted it is possible to practice as a surveyor without membership of RICS as there is no legislative restriction on use of the title 'surveyor'. Strong links have been maintained with a range of higher education institutions around the country that offer surveying degrees at undergraduate and postgraduate level and conduct research into aspects of surveying (RICS 2008), enabling a knowledge base to be developed that recognises the value of research-based knowledge and is well-positioned to take account of differing knowledge structure across disciplines. Equally important for the recontextualisation 'capability' of the region is the extent to which the professional association (the RICS) maintains a key role in respect of regulating and supporting surveying practices, particularly those that have over 50% of partners and directors that are qualified Chartered Surveyors (RICS 2012a). Additionally, qualification as a Chartered surveyor through the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) requires a 'sponsor' who is a member of the RICS (RICS 2012b) and a range of professional experience that is aligned with underpinning surveying qualifications. This suggests that novice surveyors can be steered towards learning from more specialised aspects of practice. Connections between employers, surveyors, institutions and the professional association are sedimented through a regulative framework and control of professional formation through a capable professional association (Hordern 2014d).

While Chartered Surveying can be seen as retaining a commitment to a knowledge-based professionalism, occupations such as project management and human resource management possess knowledge bases and occupational cultures that are more closely related to market logics. Human resource management (HRM) has become more closely entwined with achieving market advantage for organisations, shedding much of the more 'welfarist' ethos that sometimes characterised its early iterations (Francis and Keegan 2006; Gilmore and Williams 2007). The HRM region is thus distant from singulars, relying on recontextualisations of elements of psychological, sociological and economic theory, in addition to appropriated knowledge from a more general 'management' body of knowledge (Hamilton 2012; Hordern 2014c, 2014d). Recent developments in HR qualifications in the U.K. make it possible for HR practitioners to achieve professional status through the validation of workplace experience in ways that put considerable responsibility on the practitioner to make sense of what is specialised or knowledgeable about the practice they experience (CIPD 2012; Hordern 2014d). Project Management, meanwhile, has grown from

origins in the engineering and IT industries, seeking to advance its status as an independent occupational area. It has little obvious connection to any disciplinary body of knowledge, primarily recontexualising knowledge from general management theory, but also developing various indigenous theories which often overlap with, or strongly relate to, particular methodologies (Winter et al. 2006; Hordern 2015d). What characterises the development of the knowledge base in project management is an emphasis on meeting employer requirements (Morris et al. 2006; Hordern 2015d). Higher education institutions do have a role, but it seems that critical theoretical perspectives are seen as irrelevant for qualifications, despite the fact that it seems that it is micro-sociological and organisational factors that contribute most to project failure (Winter et al. 2006). One might argue, therefore, that a stronger, more proximate link to related disciplines would greatly benefit project management theory in terms of understanding issues of power and control in organisations and how broader social, economic and political frameworks influence project dynamics.

Other regions are strongly influenced by governments and their agencies, impacting on decisions about what is selected for the occupational knowledge base, and affecting the roles of professional communities and associations. In the case of early childhood education in England, governments have sought to remodel the workforce through initiatives such as Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) and, more recently the Early Years Teacher (EYT). Higher education institutions had some input into the development of the EYPS and were substantively involved in curriculum reforms through the sector-endorsed foundation degrees (Miller 2008). However, the development of the EYT, and more recently the Early Years Teaching Standards have asserted the primacy of government in shaping early years professionalism (Hordern 2013, 2014e). These most recent policy developments can be seen as part of a drive to focus early childhood education wholesale on ensuring that young children are ready for schooling, in contrast to the more holistic ambitions of many traditions of early years education. The early childhood professional and higher education community is also perhaps weakened by arguments for local or 'relational' professionalisms (i.e. Urban 2008) which implicitly question the role of substantive research-based knowledge generated in higher education (Hordern 2014e), forms of knowledge that are clearly important for advancing professional jurisdiction and for examining practice problems (Abbott 1988). The consequence is that there is some distance between the early childhood professional region and related disciplinary singulars such as sociology and psychology, a weakened knowledge base, and opportunities for governments to orientate professionalism towards particular policy objectives. England is notable for the dominance of private sector early years providers (Penn 2014), many of whom may prefer the rudimentary standards-based professionalism that government currently advocates, as it minimises the costs of initial professional formation and professional development.

Teacher education is another region that is strongly influenced by the role of government in many countries. An emphasis on 'technical preparation' (Tatto 2006, 237) and a reduction or 'elimination' of 'important components in the teacher education curriculum' (Beach and Bagley 2012, 289) that were derived from disciplinary singulars has stemmed from policies that seek to remodel teaching to achieve specific, measurable educational outcomes (Tatto

2006; Whitty 2014). Beach and Bagley (2012) identify the increasing incursion of horizontal discourse into the region of teacher education and the marginalisation of vertical discourses. In England the 'elimination' of aspects of disciplinary-based education studies has been made easier, it can be argued, by the horizontal knowledge structures of the contributory singulars of sociology, psychology and (to some extent) philosophy, which led to certain specialised languages achieving prominence in the teacher education region to the exclusion of some alternative disciplinary perspectives (Furlong 2013; Hordern 2015e). It can be argued that the lack of coherence of the disciplinary base that resulted from the recontextualisation of these disparate 'languages' led to socio-epistemic conditions in the region that were unable to withstand the onslaught of governments bent on reforming how teachers were educated. In other words, those within the region were unable to convince external stakeholders of the robustness and value of the knowledge base, and therefore teaching was weakened as a profession.

Concluding remarks: why it matters

Better understanding how occupational knowledge is constituted is important for identifying how practitioners can achieve high standards of work. As Clarke and Winch (2004) note, it is forms of theoretical knowledge that are increasingly important for workplace practice, and therefore understanding how practitioners can access this knowledge is of critical importance for the future of work. Without strong conceptual foundations it is impossible for practitioners to make sense of the various contexts of work. These concepts provide a robust underpinning for managing unforeseen workplace contexts, in addition to diagnostic capabilities that enable practitioners to evaluate cases (Abbott 1988; Shalem 2014). Although this conceptual knowledge may be classified as part of the 'professional', 'vocational' or occupational knowledge base, it is often recontextualised directly from disciplinary singulars or has its origins in those disciplines. This suggests the paramount importance of disciplinary knowledge and disciplined organisation for the constitution of occupational knowledge. Without the acknowledgement of the importance of the disciplinary connection the quality of professional formation cannot be guaranteed. The preceding discussion has outlined the various structures of this conceptual knowledge, and also drawn attention to how knowledge of propositions only becomes possible through the capacity to draw inferences from those propositions (Winch 2010). This suggests that it is the assembly of a web of interrelated concepts with which practitioners have familiarity that is a key foundation of high quality practice. In order to achieve this, regions need to sustain aspects of a 'professional logic' (Friedson 2001), concomitant with forms of occupational sociality that can husband conceptually powerful knowledge and engender professional commitment.

Offering inherently valuable knowledge in professional and vocational curricula is also vital for reasons of equity and social justice. Without access to forms of disciplinary-based knowledge in supportive occupational communities those experiencing professional and vocational formation are short-changed; left without the foundation to respond to changes in the nature of work, and without the forms of knowledge that enable thinking beyond immediate experience (Wheelahan 2010). They are also prevented from contributing fully to the ongoing development of their occupation and its broader societal role (Winch 2010).

More ‘generic’ modes, with their championing of undifferentiated validation of whatever is found currently in practice, are increasingly providing a template for forms of professional and vocational education, much of which is bereft of valuable knowledge as a consequence of assumptions that education must always be shaped by the demands of the market (Bernstein 2000; Young 2006; Allais 2012; Wheelahan 2010). As knowledge is evacuated from qualifications, it is those who are socio-economically most vulnerable who are likely to suffer most.

Finally, it is clear that how knowledge is constituted is important for the status of a profession and its capacity to find solutions to emerging problems (Abbott 1988). While market logics may suggest that knowledge value is ephemeral, and disciplined inquiry increasingly obsolescent (Friedson 2001; Beck and Young 2005; Muzio et al. 2011), professions that rely predominantly on forms of market validation for their knowledge base seem unable to advance their ‘projects’ (Larson 1977), leaving themselves vulnerable to other professionalising occupations seeking to expand their jurisdiction (Abbott 1988). In essence the ‘status’ and ‘resourcing’ purposes of disciplined specialised knowledge are intertwined. At the heart of professionalism is a social contract of trust between an occupation and society, and this trust is only built through efficacy in the performance of the occupation and commitment to the professional role. Without forms of specialised knowledge that we can rely on, that efficacy and commitment cannot be demonstrated, and therefore professionalisation cannot be advanced.

References

Abbott, A. (1988) *The system of professions: an essay on the division of expert labour*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Allais, S. (2012) “‘Economics Imperialism’, education policy and educational theory.” *Journal of Education Policy* 27 (2): 253-274.

Barnett, M. (2006) “Vocational knowledge and vocational pedagogy.” In M. Young and J. Gamble (Eds.) *Knowledge, qualifications and the curriculum for South African further education*, pp.143-157. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Beach, D. and Bagley, C.A. (2012) “The weakening role of education studies and the re-traditionalisation of Swedish teacher education.” *Oxford Review of Education* 38(3): 287-303

Becher, A. (1994) “The significance of disciplinary differences.” *Studies in Higher Education* 19 (2): 151 – 161.

Beck, J. and Young, M.F.D. (2005) “The assault on the professions and the restructuring of academic and professional identities: a Bernsteinian analysis.” *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 26 (2): 183-197.

Bernstein, B. (1999) “Vertical and horizontal discourse: an essay.” *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 20 (2): 157-173.

Bernstein, B. (2000) *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity* (Revised Edition). New York and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

Billett, S. (2006) “Constituting the workplace curriculum.” *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 38(1): 31-48.

Case, J. M. (2011) “Knowledge matters: interrogating the curriculum debate in engineering using the sociology of knowledge.” *Journal of Education* 51, 73-92.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). (2012b) *About Experience Assessment*. www.cipd.co.uk/experience-assessment/about-experience-assessment.

Clarke, L. and Winch C. (2004) “Apprenticeship and Applied Theoretical Knowledge.” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 36 (5): 509-521.

Dreyfus, H. and Dreyfus, S. (2005) “Expertise in real world contexts.” *Organization Studies,* 26(5): 779–92.

Foray, D. and D. Hargreaves. (2003) “The production of knowledge in different sectors.” *London Review of Education* 1 (1): 7-19.

Francis, H. and Keegan, A. (2006) “The changing face of HRM: in search of balance.” *Human Resource Management Journal* 16 (3): 231-249.

Friedson, E. (2001) *Professionalism: The third logic*. Cambridge: Polity Press

Furlong, J. (2013) *Education: an anatomy of the discipline. Rescuing the university project.* London: Routledge.

Gamble, J. (2006) ‘Theory and practice in the vocational curriculum.’ In Young, M. and Gamble, J. (eds.), *Knowledge, Curriculum and Qualifications for South African Further Education*, Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council, pp.87-103.

Gilmore, S. and Williams, S. (2007) “Conceptualising the "personnel professional": A critical analysis of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's professional qualification scheme.” *Personnel Review* 36 (3): 398 – 414.

Hamilton, S. (2012) *An investigation into the relationship between professional knowledge and the transformation of Human Resources into a profession*, unpublished MA Thesis. London: Institute of Education.

Hannah, J.; Kavanagh, J.; Mahoney, R. and Plimmer, F. (2009) “Surveying: A profession facing a global crisis ?” *Survey Review*, 41 (313), 268-278.

Hordern, J. (2013) ‘A productive system of early years professional development.’ *Early Years* 33 (2): 106-118.

Hordern, J. (2014a) “How is vocational knowledge recontextualised?” *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 66 (1): 22-38.

Hordern, J. (2014b) “Regions and their relations: sustaining authoritative professional knowledge.” *Journal of Education and Work*. DOI:10.1080/13639080.2014.958653

Hordern, J. (2014c) “Management studies educational knowledge: technical, elite or political?” *Teaching in Higher Education* 19 (4): 385-396.

Hordern, J. (2014d) “Productive systems of professional formation.” In *International Handbook of Research in Professional and Practice-based learning*, eds. Billett, S., Harteis, C. and Gruber, H. Dordrecht: Springer.

Hordern, J. (2014e) “Knowledge, practice and the shaping of early childhood professionalism.” *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*. DOI:10.1080/1350293X.2014.975939

Hordern, J. (2015a) “Teaching, teacher formation and specialised professional practice.” *European Journal of Teacher Education*. DOI:10.1080/02619768.2015.1056910

Hordern, J. (2015b) “On the making and faking of knowledge value in higher education curricula.” unpublished paper.

Hordern, J. (2015c) ‘Regions and recontextualisation capability.’ In Pilz, M. and Berger, S. *Youth in transition: VET in times of economic crisis*. Doredrecht: Springer, forthcoming.

Hordern, J. (2015d) “Higher apprenticeships and the shaping of vocational knowledge.” *Research in Post Compulsory Education* 20 (1): 17-34

Hordern, J. (2015e) “Bernstein’s sociology of knowledge and education (al) studies.”, paper presented at Seminar entitled ‘Educational Studies – the university project in different jurisdictions’, Green Templeton College, University of Oxford, 16th July.

Hoxley, M. and Wilkinson, S. (2006) ‘The employers' perspective of the impact of RICS education reform on building surveying.’ *Structural Survey* 24 (5): 405-411.

Larson, M. (1977) *The rise of professionalism: a sociological analysis*. Berkley: University of California Press

Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McNamara, M. and Fealy, G. (2014) “Knowledge matters in nursing.” In *Knowledge, Expertise and the Professions*, eds. Young, M. and Muller, J. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 157-170.

Morris, P.W.G., Jamieson, A. and Shepherd, M.M. (2006) “Research updating the APM Body of Knowledge 4th edition.” *International Journal of Project Management* 24 (6): 461-473.

Miller, L. (2008) “Developing professionalism within a regulatory framework in England: challenges and possibilities.” *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 16 (2): 255-268.

Muller, J. (2009) “Forms of knowledge and curriculum coherence.” *Journal of Education and Work* 22 (3): 205–26.

Muzio, D., Hodgson, D., Faulconbridge, J., Beaverstock, J., and Hall, S. (2011) “Towards corporate professionalisation: the case of project management, management consultancy and executive search.” *Current Sociology* 59 (4): 443-464.

Oswick, C., P. Fleming, P. and G.Hanlon. (2011) “From borrowing to blending: rethinking the processes of organizational theory building.” *Academy of Management Review* 36 (2): 318-337.

Penn, H. (2014) “The business of childcare in Europe.” *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*. 22 (4): 432-456.

Ratcliffe, J. (2011) *Just Imagine! RICS Strategic Foresight 2030 report*. London: RICS. http://www.rics.org/Global/Just_Imagine_RICS_Strategic_Foresight_2030_report_May_2011.pdf

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). (2008) Policy and guidance on university partnerships. London: RICS.

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). (2012a) Regulation UK. London: RICS. http://www.rics.org/uk/regulation/regulation-uk/

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). (2012b) Professional Experience Route: Sponsor and Proposer Guide. London: RICS. http://www.rics.org/Global/PER%20pathway%20guides/Professional_Experience_Applicant_Handbook_Proposer_and_Sponsor_Guide_130612_dwl.pdf

Shalem, Y. (2014) “What binds professional judgement: the case of teaching.” In *Knowledge, expertise and the professions*, Young, M. and Muller, J., eds., 93-105. Abingdon: Routledge.

Tatto, M. (2006) “Education reform and the global regulation of teachers’ education, development and work: A cross-cultural analysis.” *International Journal of Educational Research* 45 (4-5): 231-241.

Urban, M. (2008) “Dealing with uncertainty: challenges and possibilities for the early childhood profession.” *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 16 (2): 135-152

Wheelahan, L. (2010) *Why knowledge matters in curriculum: a social realist argument*. London: Routledge.

Whitty, G. (2014) “Recent developments in teacher training and their consequences for the ‘University Project’ in education.” *Oxford Review of Education* 40 (4): 466-481.

Winch, C. (2010) *Dimensions of Expertise: A conceptual exploration of vocational knowledge.* London: Continuum.

Winter, M., Smith, C., Morris, P. and Cicmil, S. (2006) “Directions for future research in project management: The main findings of a UK government-funded research network.” *International Journal of Project Management* 24 (8): 638-649.

Young, M. (2006) “Conceptualising vocational knowledge: some theoretical considerations.” In *Knowledge, curriculum and qualifications for South African further education*, ed. M.Young and J. Gamble, 104-124. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Young, M. and Muller, J. (2013) “On the powers of powerful knowledge.” *Review of Education* 1 (3): 229-250.

Young, M. and Muller, J. (2014) “From the sociology of the professions to the sociology of professional knowledge.” In. Young, M. and Muller, J. (Eds.) *Knowledge, Expertise and the Professions.* Abingdon: Routledge, 3-17.