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Department of Management

**Culture and Professional Identity
in
Global Management Consulting**

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

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List of Abbreviations

BCBS	Basic Committee on Banking Supervision
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
CPA	Certified Public Accountant
CPP	Certified Pricing Professionals
ESOP	Employee Stock Ownership Plan
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GATS	The General Agreement on Trade in Services of World Trade Organisation
IAS	International Accounting Standards
IBA	International Bar Association
IFAC	International Federation of Accountants
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
MCA	Management Consultants Association
SEC	Security Exchange Committee
TNC	Transnational Corporation
UNCTCAD	United Nation Conference on Trade and Development
WMA	World Medical Association

Abstract

This thesis aims to explore the interplay between culture and professional identity in global management consulting with a focus on the power relations and conflicts. A number of research gaps are identified in existing literature from different domains in association with the strategic and structural implications of globalisation for the management consulting field; culture in management consulting; formation of professional identities in management consulting; and identity, capital formation and career in management consulting. Accordingly, four research questions are set for the purpose of addressing the identified research gaps. Bourdieu's notion of field, habitus and capital is adopted as the core theory to study the management consulting field in terms of culture and professional identity by linking the field, firm and individual levels relationally and holistically. I also draw on the writings of other influential theories, notably Giddens' structuration theory, DiMaggio's neo-institutionalism and Scott's concept of power relationships to complement Bourdieu's theories in relation to culture and professional identity.

This research contains two elements – quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative element is founded upon comparative case studies on six leading global management consulting firms with supplement of practice related data source. The qualitative element is built upon in-depth semi-structured interviews with consulting professionals at different levels in the management consulting field. An empirical analysis is conducted in order to obtain a comprehensive illumination and comparison of management consultants' live experience of, and insights on, the interrelationship of culture and professional identity in global management consulting. This research presents a number of novel findings which have theoretical and empirical contributions to enrich our understanding of different areas of management consulting.

This research contributes to the systematic analysis of the intellectual field that was not completed by Bourdieu. It also enriches the volume of organisation studies literature in relational approaches particularly in management consulting settings and encourages further research of the same kind.

Culture and Professional Identity in Global Management Consulting

Chapter 1: Introduction: Culture and Identity

‘There cannot be a culture unless there is a group that “owns” it’.

Schein (1984: 3)

‘Identity is people’s source of meaning and experience’.

Castells (1997: 6)

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this research is to examine the interplay between culture and professional identity in management consulting from a holistic and relational perspective. Six management consulting firms with global reach are purposively selected for this comparative study by relating the macro, meso and micro environments in an organisational context. It focuses on exploring the cultural homogeneities, heterogeneities and distinctiveness within the field of management consulting; the relationship among culture, corporate identity, professional identity and reputation in global management consulting settings as well as the tensions among these four aspects; how people carry out corporate and professional identities; and how far people work in line with the organisational mission.

This research aims to shed light on cultural reproduction and transformation as well as the formation of professional identity in management consulting with a focus on the power relations and conflicts at field, firm and individual levels relationally that are still scarce in the existing literature. The objective of this research is twofold. It contributes to the systematic analysis of the intellectual field that has been

uncompleted by Bourdieu as he dedicated his studies to the fields of academics (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1996), literature and publishing (Bourdieu, 1996a), religion (Bourdieu, 1991b), law (Bourdieu, 1987c) and photography (Bourdieu, 1965). Secondly, it responds to calls for more organisational studies in relational approaches which is still a minority position (Scott, 2004:13; Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008; Dobbin, 2008; Vaughan, 2008:79).

The purpose of this chapter is to set the scene for the rest of this thesis. It begins by presenting the background and rationale of this research. Review of the literature on management consulting from different perspectives to highlight some research gaps then follows. It then explicates the theories of the conceptual framework to be used for this research. Following this, the main elements of the research foundation are discussed. Finally, it outlines the chapter structure of the research.

1.2 Background and rationale

Professionals are ‘knowledge-workers’ (Drucker, 1993:5) representing individuals or a group of people who provide services to clients with their knowledge and expertise. In professions such as healthcare, law and accountancy, their members hold educational and professional qualifications in an institutionalised and legal form and with little doubt receive unequivocal and universal recognition as professionals by many other actors in society. Management consultants, as providers of business advisory services to senior executives, some whom are also professionals, of multinational corporations with multi-million dollar market values, however, are not

bestowed with the same degree of professional recognition as medical doctors, lawyers and accountants. Instead, the identity of '*Management Consultant*' attracts 'provocative and appealing' reactions from different groups in contemporary society (Alvesson and Johansson, 2002:229). As a matter of fact, the professionalism of management consultants was seriously under scrutiny in the early 2000s due to the shock of high-profile corporate scandals – especially Enron in 2000 and World.com in 2002, and the high rate of failure of consulting engagements in the US, Europe and Asia. This led to the legitimacy of their professional identity being questioned. From 1995 to 2007, in Hong Kong and UK, I had worked as an internal management consultant in various transnational corporations to work along with external management consultants and also as an external management consultant to provide business advisory services to well-known transnational corporations. During this period, I had seen both sides of the world in the management consulting field. On the one hand, I had challenged the external management consultants 'how they do things here', and on the other hand, I had been challenged on 'how we do things here' by clients. Seemingly, the work and cultural practices of management consultants was always problematic. Arguably, it also involved ethical dilemmas, power struggles and tension between identities of internal and external stakeholders, particularly, colleagues, vendors and clients. Moreover, most of the time, clients respected me as a trusted adviser because of my professional identity as a '*Certified Public Accountant*' (CPA) rather than '*Management Consultant*'. It inspires me to raise a primary concern to pursue this research: How do leading management consulting firms with global reach organise their professional work and train their members to become a professional consultant?

This research sets out to study the culture and professional identity in management consulting settings from a critical perspective. I argue that culture and identity are intertwined. As psychologist Erikson (1968:22) suggests, ‘identity is a process “located” in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture’. Culture has different definitions in anthropology (Benedict, 1934), sociology (Bourdieu, 1990c; Giddens, 1984; Martin, 1992), psychology (Keesing, 1974) and management (Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Hofstede, 1980 and 1991; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005; Johnson 1992; Peter and Waterman, Pettigrew, 1979; 1982; Schein, 1985, 1990 and 2004). In organisation studies, culture has widely been viewed as ‘how are we doing things here’ and formally defined as ‘deeper level of assumptions and beliefs’ that are shared and learned by members of an organisation for internal integration and external adaptation (Johnson, 1992:29; Schein, 1985:6 and 2004:17). These views on culture takes the psychological view of culture but also demonstrates ‘the existence of mental structure used to perceive, process, and retrieve information, and found ways to make inferences about such structures’ (DiMaggio, 1997:265) which is the core view of culture by sociologists such as Bourdieu (1977 and 1990c) and Giddens (1979 and 1984). In spite of the terms ‘organisational culture’ and ‘corporate culture’ being interchangeably used by management scholars to represent the culture of organisations, the term ‘organisational culture’ is used throughout this research.

Identity is ‘what it means to be who one is’ (Burke, 2003:1) and identities are ‘the sets of meanings people hold for themselves that define “what it means” to be who they are as persons, as role occupants, and as group members’ (Burke, 2004:5-6).

Organisational behaviour theorist Schein (1978:81 and 85) considers professional identity as the relatively stable and enduring constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, motives and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role. Some other scholars (Ibarra, 1999; Pratt and Dutton, 2000) view professional identity as an individual's self-definition as a member of a profession. In this research, professional identity is a name, which is a 'social essence' with legitimate professional power and authority, 'to invest to an individual to act on its representation and to transform the representation that the invested has of himself, and the behaviour he feels obliged to adopt in order to conform to that representation' (Bourdieu, 1992:119).

The management consulting field has constantly been changing since its emergence at the end of the nineteenth century. Its most remarkable change happened in the early 2000's after the Enron corporate scandal emerged. It resulted in the demise of the global professional service firm Arthur Andersen, the launch of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act in 2002 and drastic structural change of the field. At that time, the work and cultural practices, particularly, in terms of integrity and professionalism of both CPAs and management consultants were fiercely questioned. Following the demise of Arthur Andersen, the field of accountancy has become more consolidated and dominated by the 'Big Four' professional service firms in recent years. However, the field of management consulting has been more shaken up since then.

On the contrary, the field of management consulting has become more fragmented with a proliferation of different types and sizes of management consulting firms

within the field. The leading players of the field change every few years. Following a series of high-profile problematic consulting engagements in the US and Europe after the cases of Enron and WorldCom, management consultants have continuously been challenged by parties inside and outside the field. The challenges are particularly on the strategies they employ to convince clients of the value of their advice, their exercise of power over clients and the quality of their deliverables. To have an in-depth understanding of the field, this research goes beyond these challenges by engaging with the key issues concerning the strategy and structure, work and cultural practices in management consulting, demographics and career of management consultants, their experience and identity as well as their experience of major change that has been occurring within management consulting.

1.3 Debate on management consulting

Some scholars (Dunning, 1989; Morgan and Quack, 2005; Powell, Brock and Hinings, 1999:1-19; Rose and Hinings, 1999:41-67) argue that economic globalisation has driven change in the field of professions as professional service firms follow their clients into international markets to service their growing needs. Greenwood, Suddaby and McDougald (2006:1) define professional service firms as ‘organisations primarily comprised of professionals that facilitate economic and commercial exchange by providing advice to businesses’. Management consulting firms fall into their definition. Also, the management consulting field had evidently gained a decade-long expansion in the 1990s with a two-digit growth every year (www.datamonitor.com).

Malhotra and Morris (2009:896) argue that differences between professions on a number of dimensions can affect the conduct of professional work and, in turn, the organisation of firms across different professional sectors. Their systematic comparison of the types of knowledge, the degree of jurisdiction control and client relationship across the fields of law, accountancy and engineering consulting indicates that each of the three dimensions have direct and interdependent specific effects on organisational structure and system. It echoes Morgan and Quack's (2005: 283-300) proposal of forms of international coordination in four types of professional service firms. Following the same logic, it can be assumed that a number of dimensions should have special effects on the pace of globalisation of different professional services. However, the three professions that Malhotra and Morris (2009) select for their study are similar in terms of being traditionally accredited, and business-based professions, with the institutional apparatus to support them. Management consulting is business-based but without institutionalised accreditation and institutional apparatus. There is still a scarcity of systematic comparison on global tradability of management consulting services and other highly-institutionalised professional services such as healthcare, law and accountancy. How globalisation strategically and structurally affects the field of management consulting is still under-examined.

Over the years, management consulting has increasingly attracted academic interest from different domains. Studies from a business history perspective have focused on history, development and evolution of management consulting (Armbrüster and Kipping, 2001 and 2002; Kipping, 1999 and 2002: 28-49; McKenna, 1995, 2001 and

2006). This strand of literature aims to explore the emergence of management consulting in the US at the end of the nineteenth century, the internationalisation of US management consulting firms in the twentieth century, the changing demands on consulting services by clients and the responses of management consulting firms to such pressures over the years. These studies have a strategic focus either at industry or firm level. However, how do management consultants view the main outcomes of the change? What are their hopes and fears for the future in management consulting? How do management consultants or senior management of management consulting firms handle the change processes? What do management consultants feel about their working organisations based on the actions of senior management? These questions have not been answered by the literature yet.

Neo-institutionalists DiMaggio and Powell (1991b:63-82) argue that, in any organisational field, organisations move toward structural isomorphism through three mechanisms – coercive, mimetic and normative. However, Scott and Davis (2007:148) identify that professional service firms can be distinguished into two types – ‘autonomous’ and ‘heteronomous’. The structural and systemic organisations of the two types are significantly different. In reality, the management consulting field comprises firms in different legal forms. The sociology of professions literature has also acknowledged that substantial differences at the organisational level exists in internal structure, human resources policies and practices, and relations with contiguous occupations and clients, and even pricing systems among firms across and within professions (Blau, 1984; Galanter and Palay, 1991; Malhortra and Morris, 2009; Sherer, 1995; Sherer and Lee, 2002; Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). It is

argued that these differences stem from the culture of each organisation within a given professional field. Hence, how can we describe and typify the organisational culture in management consulting?

Previous studies in the sociology of professional literature (Carr-Saunders and Wilson, 1993; MacDonald, 1995) suggest that professions arise when an organised group possesses esoteric knowledge that has economic value when applied to problems encountered by people in a society. It echoes Abbott (1988:8 and 102-4) and Freidson (1970b) that professions should possess institutionalised expertise as the basis of their power to strengthen their jurisdiction. However, both volumes of literature primarily focus on the liberal professions such as physicians and lawyers. There is espoused interest in the issue of organisational identification in organisation studies, for example, Ibarra (1999:765) suggests that identification sometimes involves identity change. Unfortunately, most authors do not go very far in that direction, as Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003:1164) postulate. Therefore, there is still a paucity of literature in construction of professional identity in professional fields except for a very few studies (e.g. Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006) in the healthcare field.

Contemporary views on management consulting, no matter at the field, firm or individual level, are antagonistic. On the positive side, management consulting is considered as 'the world's newest profession' by McKenna (2006:8). Greenwood, Suddaby and Megan (2006a:2) see management consulting firms as sources and champions of ideas of management and significant influences on how corporations

are managed In the literature of organisation development, management consultants are viewed as ‘helpers’ (Schein, 1999b and 2002) to clients and ‘knowledge-workers’ (Drucker, 1993:5; Starbuck, 1992) with expertise and knowledge. Expert theorists (Kubr, 2002; Mills and Moshvi, 1999; Løwendah, 1997; Schein, 1987) articulate that management consultants possess autonomy and power due to the fact that clients are dependent on the credibility their expertise provides. Nevertheless, Schein (2002:22) argues that clients only put themselves temporarily into a dependent position and offer power to management consultants when seeking help from them. If management consultants misuse that power, consciously or unconsciously, it is difficult to develop a helping relationship. So, what is the power relation in a consultant-client relationship? Do management consultants have absolute or temporary autonomy and power over clients? Under what circumstances, are management consultants legitimized or de-legitimized?

Literature from a critical perspective has sought to examine the effectiveness and success of particular consultancy interventions in terms of how management consultants’ claim over success bolsters their knowledge (Clark and Fincham, 2002). This stream of literature studies management consulting firms and consultants from different approaches, including dramaturgy metaphor (Clark and Salaman, 1996 and 1998b), identity performativity (Alvesson and Robertson, 2006; Whittle, 2006), symbolic narrative (Clark and Salaman, 1998a and 1998c; Huczynski, 1993) and professional normative (Alesson, 1993; Leicht and Lyman, 2006), and has a rather negative evaluation of management consulting. Leicht and Lyman (2006:40) classify management consulting as a ‘quasi-professional group’. Alvesson (1993:1006-7)

characterises the management consulting firms as ‘ambiguity-intensive’ organisations and claim on professionalism relies on their resources that can be deployed to enhance management consultants’ authority and credibility (Alvesson and Johansson, 2002). Some literature has fiercely questioned the professional identity of management consultants. Clark and Salaman (1996:161-184) and Ashford (1998) label management consultants as witch doctors whereas O’Shea and Madigan (1997) describe them as conmen by using tricks to gain and retain clients. Some authors (Clark, 1995; Clark and Salaman, 1996, 1998a, 1998b and 1998c; Huczynski, 1993) argue that management consultants use rhetorical techniques to leave a good impression on their clients as their performance cannot be evaluated beforehand. Recently, Alvesson and Kärreman (2006:203 and 205) suggest that management consulting firms are ‘collectivities’ and highlight the importance of managing collectives to enhance ‘corporate loyalty’ and ‘a feeling of togetherness facilitating teamwork’. Alvesson and Kärreman (2006:208 and 209) define collectivity as ‘the interface between the social and the cultural’ and collectives as ‘a middle-range concept, less micro than social entities such as class, nation, or large organisations, and less micro than small groups’. Yet the assimilation and ejection processes of individuals from management consulting firms and the capital accumulative and de-accumulative processes that take place in leading management consulting firms are still under-explored in extant literature.

A number of research gaps have been identified from the existing debates on management consulting relating to its culture and professional identity. To address the research gaps, four research questions are set for this study: 1) What are the

strategic and structural implications of globalisation for the management consulting field, in particular, large scale management consulting firms? 2) How can we describe and typify organisational culture in management consulting? 3) What experiences are instrumental to the establishment of professional identity in management consulting? and 4) What are the assimilation and ejection of individuals from collectivities and capital accumulative and de-accumulative processes that take place therein leading management consulting firms?

1.4 Conceptual framework

This thesis is a problem-driven research investigation drawing on organisational mechanisms to explain social phenomena. Previous research have exemplified the suitability of mechanism-theorising approach for making sense of social change processes and are broadly applicable to organisational phenomena during a time of economic transition (Campbell, 2005; Hedstrom and Swedberg, 1998; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001; Stinchcombe, 2002). Davis and Marquis (2005:333) suggest that, to study the social phenomena at multi-levels in an organisational context, neo-institutional theory is most likely the best to accomplish the organisational theory as it takes the *field* as the unit of analysis that is compatible with mechanisms. The concept of field identifies an arena - a system of actors, actions and relations, whose participants take one another into account as they carry out interrelated activities. They further quote that a number of studies (Ahmadjian and Robinson, 2001; Hoffman, 1999, 2001a and 2001b; Lounsbury, 2001; Scott, Ruef, Mendel and Caronna, 2000) that have taken the field as the relevant unit of analysis to support

their proposal. However, I will argue that neo-institutional theory has its limitations on organisational heterogeneities, power relations and agency which could not fully support the purpose of this study.

Although DiMaggio and Powell (1983; 1991b:63-82) premise their argument on ideational assumptions and meaning systems, it contains a structural component which results in pursuing the structural isomorphism of organisations (Suddaby: 2010:16). It stems from DiMaggio's definition of how an organisational field is structured:

Fields only exist on the extent that they are institutionally defined. The process of institutional definition, or "structuration", consists of four parts: an increase in the extent of interaction among organisations in the field; the emergence of sharply defined interorganisational structure of domination and patterns of coalition; an increase in the information load with which organisations in the field must contend; and the development of a mutual awareness among participants in a set of organisations that they are involved in a common enterprise. – DiMaggio and Powell (1983:148).

DiMaggio appropriates Bourdieu's idea of field to define the organisational field but it is more like an industry or discipline. Bourdieu (1992:232) considers a field can only be established by the researcher in the research process based on the subjective understandings of the participants but not based on socially produced categories. It resembles Giddens' (1984:17) idea on structure as a 'virtual' existence. For Bourdieu, a field should also include all the kinds of actors who are not part of the industry or discipline because the behaviour and thinking of people and organisations that would not be considered be part of the field may be shaped (Dobbin, 2008:56 and 58). Due to this, Bourdieu does not delimit a precise area of agents and activity commonly identified in the functionalist tradition of sociology and considers that 'field' is a superior construct than that of 'institution' (Bourdieu, 1991c:19). For Bourdieu,

fields are not conceptually equated to institutions because the scope of fields can be inter- and intra-institutional. Fields can link institutions which may represent positions within fields (Swart, 1997:120).

Bourdieu's definition of 'field' thus covers the widest possible range of social spaces, not only for highly-institutionalised but also the weakly-institutionalised ones, without distinct boundaries which is the primary characteristic of the field of management consulting. Management consulting is a weakly-institutionalised field without any barrier to entry and is not governed by any professional organisation, on the one hand. However, it also accommodates a wide array of professionals from highly-institutionalised fields such as healthcare, law, accountancy, engineering, finance and banking, information technology and so forth, on the other hand. Given the breadth and scope of service offerings, management consulting is highly fragmented and its boundaries are permeable and, to a certain extent, overlap with other professional fields (Kubr, 2002:53-56). Therefore, management consulting falls into the definition of field by Bourdieu rather than DiMaggio.

The neo-institutional theory also under-emphasises the role of power and conflict as well as does not sufficiently attend to issue of societal-level power and constraints on organisations (Perrow, 1986:265-272; Stern and Barley, 1996). DiMaggio and Powell (1991a) and Scott (1991) defend institutional theory by asserting that it is applicable to issues of power, coercion, and diffusion via networks. Mizruchi and Fein (1999:679) support them with the findings on their study of operationalisation of institutional theory by different scholars. They contend that it is the users of

DiMaggio and Powell's concept of institutional isomorphism that have underemphasised the power elements of the argument by selectively appropriating the theory. Nevertheless, I agree with Clegg, Courpasson and Philips (2006:11) that the focus of institutional theory detracts from power after Meyer and Rowan (1977) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983) initiate its renaissance by asking why there are so few types of organisation. I argue that in a highly fragmented field such as management consulting, different types and sizes of organisations need to fiercely struggle for limited resources within the field to obtain or maintain their power.

Bourdieu's application of the field concept represents his version of institutional analysis on individual and group action in arenas of struggle. His sociological work is dominated by an analysis of the mechanism of reproduction of social hierarchies as he stresses the conflictual factor (power relation) of social life (Swartz, 1997:120). Power can be defined as a social relation between two agents in the positions of the 'dominant' and the 'dominated' (Scott, 2001:2). As Foucault (1982:790) confers, 'Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only in so far as they are free'. Hence, a dominant possesses power to freely pursue intentions and interests whereas a dominated possesses power of freedom to resist (Benton, 1981:167). For Bourdieu, 'the kinds of capitals, like the aces in a game of cards, are power which define the chances of profit in a given field' (Bourdieu, 1985:196). He stresses on the transmutation of capitals and importance of symbolic power for legitimacy. For Giddens, an agent exercises causal powers, which comprise the 'transformative capacity' (Giddens, 1984:33) possessed by human agents, that produce specific effects in the world (Scott, 2001:1). The specific effects are signification, domination

and legitimation. Scott (2001:12-30) further proposes the elementary and developed forms of power to demonstrate the process of power relationship in social interaction. These different forms of power proposed by Scott will be related to studying consultant-client relationship in management consulting and how management consultants exercise power over clients, in particular.

Neo-institutional theory also neglects the dynamics by which institutions are reproduced and altered (Barley and Tolbert, 1997:112). To address this gap, Giddens' theory of structuration provides a process-oriented theory that is attentive to points of intersection between two realms of social order (structure and interaction) by connecting the realms of structure and agency with 'modalities' (Giddens, 1984:29). Actors draw upon the 'modalities' in the reproduction of systems of interaction and by the same token reconstitute their structural properties. Notwithstanding, Giddens has been contested to conflate structure with action (Archer, 1982 and 1989; Callinicos, 1985; Layder, 1987). Moreover, the theory of structuration lacks the support of empirical research (Bryant, 1991:176-200; Cohen, 1986:127; McLennan, 1984). On this, Giddens (1991a:213) explains that 'the theory of structuration is not a research program as it touches at many points upon the conduct of social research. It should be regarded as sensitising devices, to be used in a selective way in thinking about research questions or interpreting findings'. By contrast, Bourdieu's primary concern of his 'reflexive sociology' is grounded firmly in reality and consistently adapted to actual social spheres (Lemert, 2000:103).

Bourdieu's concept of habitus offers a programmatic research agenda for addressing the structure/agency issue and points to an ideal-typical pattern of action (Swartz, 1997:290-291). Even DiMaggio and Powell (1991a:25-26) suggest that habitus can join with neo-institutional analysis to form 'a theory of practical action', filling in the micro-sociology of the new institutionalism as it 'offers a particular balanced and multifaceted approach to action'. It is the similar role of structural predispositions in both theories and their compatible positions on choice (agency, choice within limits, i.e. structural constrains) make habitus an appropriate link between structure and agency (Vaughan, 2008:79). Thus, 'habitus makes it possible to inhabit institutions, to draw on them practically, enacting their organising principles and thus reproducing them but at the same time allowing for revisions and transformation', as Bourdieu, (1990c:57) maintains. The notions of field and habitus therefore are valid for this study as they can be used to investigate the social structural and interactional revisions and transformation in the field of management consulting, relationally.

In spite of identifying considerable potential in the idea of habitus for organisation studies, DiMaggio's (1997) theory has not built in as fully developed a conception of capital as Bourdieu's when they attempt to bridge the divide between institutionalised fields and cognition. The cognitive part of that area only partially taps the dispositional character of Bourdieu's concept and the corporal dimension is frequently missing (Dobbin, 2008:59-60; Swartz, 2008:47-48). Bourdieu argues that 'capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field' and 'capital is not a thing, but a social relation of power' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:101). Actors in any field are empowered by their possession of different volume and combination of

the four kinds of capital identified by Bourdieu – economic, cultural, social and symbolic.

Giddens (1984:16 and 258) also put forward two kinds of resources – allocative and authoritative, upon which actors draw to reproduce relations of domination and through which power is exercised, as a routine element of the instantiation of conduct in social reproduction. Bourdieu's and Giddens' theories are seemingly, to a certain extent, compatible with each other. For example, Bourdieu's 'field' and Giddens' 'structure' are both 'virtual' as well as their 'capital' and 'resources' are both 'a social relation of power'. However, I am in agreement with Wacquant (1992) that it is erroneous to include Bourdieu among the proponents of structuration theory because:

Structuration theory, as its progenitor emphasizes (Giddens, 1990b:310), is centrally concerned with issues of social ontology and conceptualization; the impetus behind Bourdieu's theoretical moves has always been a desire to grapple with new empirical objects, and he has evidenced little interest in refining a conceptual scheme. Moreover, Bourdieu's theory of practice predates Giddens' (1979; 1984) theory of structuration by at least a decade, and is rooted in a different set of philosophical questions (though recently Giddens [1986] has fastened on the opposition of objectivism and subjectivism that forms the epicenter of Bourdieu's project). – (Wacquant, 1992:3)

Based on the above discussion, I adopt Bourdieu's relational notion of field, habitus and capital as the core theory for this study. At the same time, I align it with Giddens' structuration theory, DiMaggio's neo-institutional theory, and Scott's concept of power relationship to complement each other and to form the conceptual framework of this research. It provides a holistic, relational and comprehensive analysis of the field of management consulting in terms of culture and professional identity by

linking the field, firm and individual levels. The conceptual framework is depicted in Figure 1.1.

According to Bourdieu, a field is a 'virtual' structural arena at macro-level for a combination of actors to struggle for power. Fields transcend institutions as fields can link institutions which may represent positions within fields. To apply Bourdieu's notion of field to management consulting, it represents a field with permeable boundaries comprising different types and sizes of management consulting firms and organisations from other fields such as clients, vendors and government agencies, and other stakeholders. They are linked and are relational to each other. Since management consulting is human capital based, the source of power of each management consulting firm stems from its human capital. Power relations arise from social interaction between management consultants and internal and external stakeholders of their management consulting firms. The positions of management consulting firms and management consultants in the field are objectively defined by the volume and combination of capital that they possess. To study capital as a power relation is therefore to recognise the agency of social actors that is at the micro-level. Fields are sites of resistance and domination but not sites of social transformation without consideration of both field and habitus (Swartz, 1997:121). Structural and social transformation is enacted by habitus (Bourdieu, 1990:57) as it regulates actions and defines identities of actors within the field. To apply it to management consulting, the habitus refers to the organisational culture of management consulting firm. The field habitus is the shared cultural meanings available to its members which, I argue, is derived from the homogeneities of

organisational habitus of leading management consulting firms. Hence, it makes habitus locate at the meso-level to link the field and capital and act as a mechanism to explain structural and social transformations within the management consulting field.

1.5 Research Foundation

This research is an in-depth comparative study on six global management consulting firms that locate at different fragments within the field from the mid 1980s to 2010. The perspective of this research is critical. By examining the culture and professional identity in global management consulting, from a holistic and relational approach, this research aims to demonstrate the strategic and structural implications of globalisation for management consulting, in particular, the large scale management consulting firms; describe and typify the culture in management consulting; identify what experiences that are instrumental to the establishment of professional identities in management consulting; and illustrate the assimilation and ejection of individuals from collectivities and the capital accumulative and de-accumulative processes that take place therein leading management consulting firms.

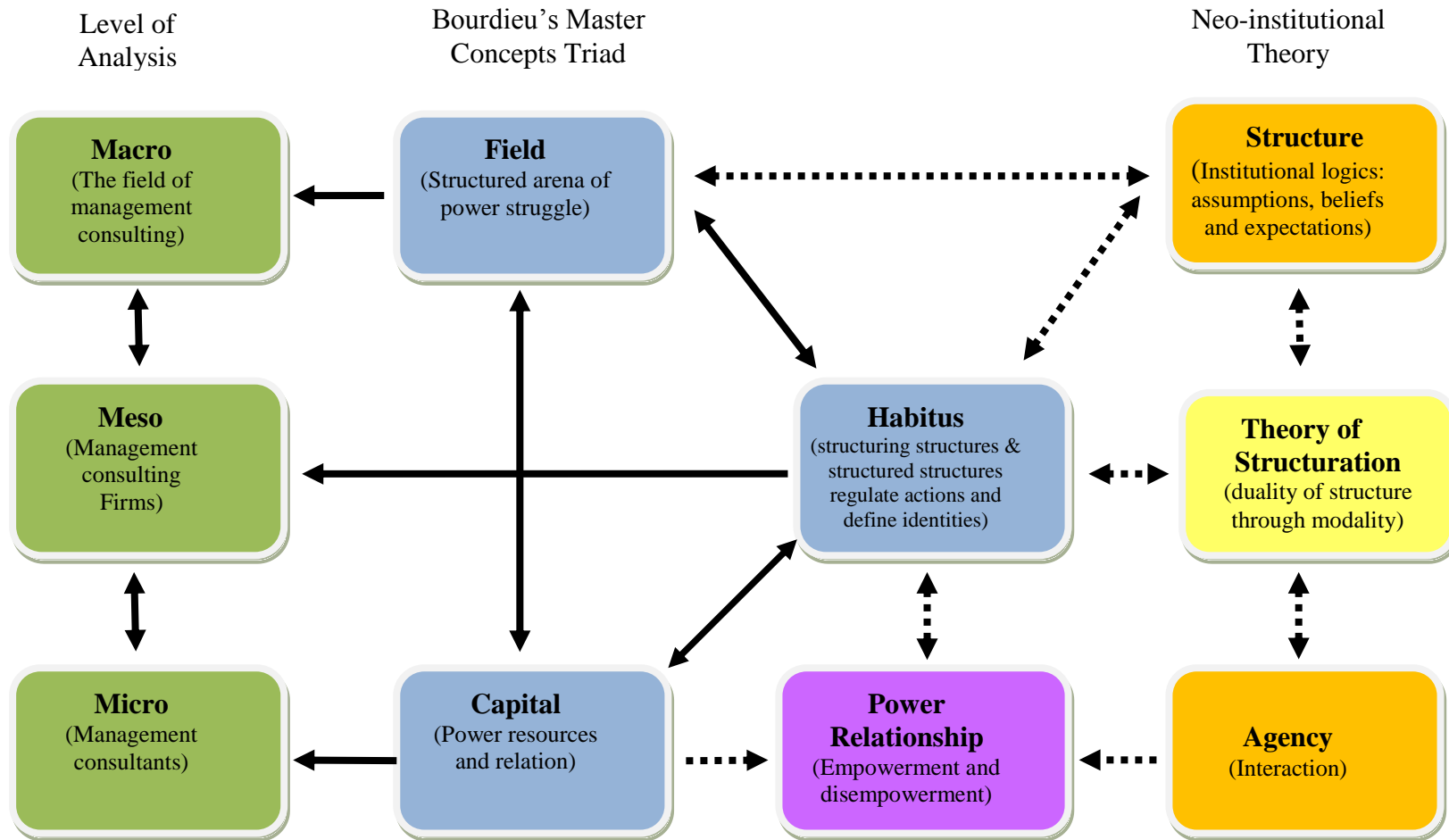


Figure 1.1 Alignment of Bourdieu's Master Triad Concepts, Giddens' Theory of Structuration, DiMaggio's Neo-Institutional Theory and Scott's Concept of Power Relationships

The research contains two main elements. The first one is quantitative and founded upon the creation of a database containing field characteristics among four professional fields – healthcare, law, accountancy and management consulting; organisational characteristics of the six global management consulting firms; and personal profiles of 25 management consultants from case and non-case global management consulting firms as well as 6 top members at the apex of each of the six global management consulting firms in this research respectively. The field characteristics of the database reveals the breadth of globalisation, strategy for globalisation, field structure, professional structure, professional legitimacy, models of globalised delivery of services, modes of services products and Code of Ethics/Principles of the four professions. It augments the in-depth comparison of tradability of services of the four professions under globalisation; analysis of the global strategic and structural change in management consulting; and identification of similarities and differences in the conduct of professional work among the four professions (see Chapter 4).

The organisational characteristics of the database disclose the company history, ownership, major business activities, financial and operational information of each of the six global management consulting firms. More importantly, the database also contains the intimately related cultural components - structure and systems, work and cultural practices, norm and values, and personal dispositions and behaviour of each of the six global management consulting firms (see Appendix I and Chapter 5). It enhances identification of cultural homogeneities and heterogeneities as well as strengths and weaknesses among the six global management consulting firms (see

Chapter 5). The personal profiles of the database divulges the age, education, profession and career of 25 consulting professionals from case and non-case global management consulting firms. It also includes the same information of the 6 top members obtained from their firms' corporate websites and other public sources of information. It enables the analysis and understanding of the formation of professional identities at organisational and individual levels (see Chapter 6 and 7).

The second main element of the research is qualitative and founded on a series of in-depth interviews with the 25 consulting professionals. The interviews were semi-structured which enriched the interactions between the author and interviewees in order to raise questions more than fundamental following the interviewees' responses. Among the 25 consulting professionals, 12 of them were at Consultant/Senior Consultant positions, 9 of them were at Manager/Project Manager/Senior Manager positions, and the remaining 4 individuals were at Partner/Senior Partner/Founder positions. The informants were located in North America, Europe and Asia at the time of the interviews.

More than fifty percent (50%) of the interviews were significantly over the time-limit set in advance. Interviews with three interviewees at senior levels were conducted two or three times due to their 'joy of expression' (Maclean, Harvey and Press, 2006: 9). The in-depth interviews provided interviewees an opportunity to 'explain themselves that is, to construct their own point of view both on themselves and on the world and fully to delineate the vantage point within this world from which they see themselves and the world' (Bourdieu, 1999b:615). Since I had been an internal and external management consultant, the semi-structured interviews also allows me

to participate actively and engage with the interviewees with a consulting conversational style. The quantitative database data and the qualitative interview data presented in this research complement with the data drawn from other public sources to enable me to burrow deeply to explain social phenomena in the management consulting field.

1.6 The structure of the thesis

This introductory chapter has set out the scene for the rest of the research. It has explicated the background and rationale of the research. The research gaps in existing management consulting literature have been highlighted. It has explained the conceptual framework used for analysis, the research foundation and the dual methodology used in the research. Chapter 2 builds upon this foundation to give a deeper review of the theoretical and empirical literature on globalisation, strategy, culture, identity, professionals, professional service firms and management consulting. The analytical approach and theoretical framework are explained, and the nature and sources of organisational culture and professional identity in management consulting are explored with reference to the concepts deployed by Bourdieu, Giddens, DiMaggio, Scott and others.

Chapter 3 describes and justifies the methodological foundation in detail. The research strategy and methods employed and sources of data are reviewed. It considers the two main approaches for business and management, positivist and constructionist, to provide a justification for the qualitative case study approach taken in this study. It also justifies the use of semi-structured interviews as the main

source of data. The interview selection process and the interview procedure are discussed. The chapter also explores the concept of triangulation to consider the validity, reliability and generalisability of the results.

Chapter 4 focuses on understanding the strategic and structural implications of globalisation for the management consulting field, in particular, large scale management consulting firms. It explores the debate on globalisation in two extreme perspectives of 'Sceptics' and 'Radicals' with reference to the views taken by Bourdieu and Giddens. Economic globalisation has nourished the globalisation of different professional services. However, different professional services have their own pace of globalisation owing to relevant institutionalised professional regulations. The chapter analyses the global tradability of four types of professional service - healthcare, law, accountancy and management consulting. It also compares the Code of Ethics/Principles of the four professions to identify how they conduct their professional work. It examines the historical development and evolution of management consulting especially global restructuring and strategic change within the field since the mid-1980s.

Chapter 5 focuses on describing and typifying the culture in management consulting. The chapter compares and contrasts the cultural homogeneities, heterogeneities and distinctiveness of the six global management consulting firms based on four closely related cultural components: 1) structure and system; 2) work and cultural practices; 3) norms and values; 4) personal disposition and behaviour. It includes discussion of the cultural homogeneities, heterogeneities, distinctiveness, strengths and

weaknesses of the organisational culture of each of the six global management consulting firms. The chapter further explores the alignment between espoused value and practically expressed values of each firm.

Chapter 6 relates culture to formation of professional identities in management consulting. It addresses what experiences are instrumental to the establishment of professional identities in management consulting. It first examines the interplay of culture and identity in management consulting. The consultant-client relationship is critical in any consulting engagements, the chapter explores the power relations in consultant-client relationships, the key attributes for making a good relationship with clients and reasons for legitimization and de-legitimization of management consultants. It also investigates the images of management consultants viewed by clients and their fairness and accuracy. The chapter also examines the establishment of professional identities in management consulting by relating culture, corporate identity, professional identity and reputation.

Chapter 7 links professional identity to formation of capital and career trajectory of management consultants. Becoming a professional management consultant is a process of identity identification and development. Given that only a small number of actors in the field can reach the apex, it explores the cultural practices such as the career stratification and identity assimilation in management consulting. The chapter also examines the processes of personal capital accumulation and de-accumulation in global management consulting firms. It inquires about the self-assessment of career success in management consulting, the sources of most satisfaction as a professional

consultant and the downsides of a consulting career. The chapter finally explores the reconciliation of tensions between personal and professional identities of management consultants.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has set the scene for the rest of this thesis. Despite scholars have widely studied different subject areas of the field of management consulting from different perspectives, a number of research gaps in the literature on culture and professional identity in the field have been identified. Four research questions have been set to address the identified research gaps. Drawing upon the related notions of field, habitus, and capital of Bourdieu, Giddens' theory of structuration, DiMaggio's neo-institutional theory of DiMaggio, and Scott's concept of power relationships, a conceptual framework is built and adopted to theoretically and empirically analyse the management consulting field by relating culture to professional identity from macro to micro levels. Empirical data from multiple sources of information and interviews with consulting professionals are used to generate the theory arising from this research.

Chapter 2: The Global Management Consulting Field:

Theoretical and Empirical Perspective

‘It is the symbolic scarcity of the title in the space of the names of professions that tends to govern the rewards of the profession (and not the relation between the supply of and demand for a certain form of labour)... It is not the relative value of the work which determines the value of the name, but the institutionalised value of the title which acts as an instrument serving to defend and maintain the value of the work’. - Bourdieu (1992: 241)

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I apply Bourdieu’s concepts of field, capital and habitus as the master theory to support the analysis and discussion. I also draw on the writings of other influential authors, notably Giddens, DiMaggio and Scott to complement Bourdieu’s theories in relation to culture and professional identity. I first review Bourdieu’s and Giddens’ views on globalisation. Secondly, I explore Bourdieu’s master triad of concepts, Giddens’ structuration theory and DiMaggio’s neo-institutional theory to explore how culture is produced, transformed and reproduced, and the relationship between culture and identity. I will apply these theories in the conceptualisation and analysis of culture and identity in management consulting. I then review Scott’s theory of power relations and examine the implications for the ways in which management consultants develop interpersonal power within their organisations, project teams, and client organisations. These relationships are seen as pivotal to the establishment of professional identity.

2.2 Globalisation and Management Consulting

Globalisation on Bourdieu

Bourdieu's theoretical apparatus has been applied in the study of numerous contemporary issues, including culture, gender, subjectivity, the body, citizenship and globalisation. He accumulated intellectual prestige from his extensive critical social scientific investigations and publications rather than teaching or institutional leadership. Although Bourdieu's foci of research were not in economics, in his later years, he developed his sharp criticisms of neo-liberalism and globalisation (Bourdieu, 2003; Calhoun, 2006). Before the 1990s, Bourdieu rarely participated in public activism such as political tracts, media orientation, street demonstrations and alike. However, in 1981, Bourdieu institutionally shifted from a position in a fairly low status intellectual enterprise to a central and leading position at the Collège de France, one of the most prestigious intellectual institutions in France. It represented a very important step in securing the scientific legitimization of his work. The shift was also a significant factor in his preparation for a public intellectual role. (Swartz and Zolberg, 2004:339–340).

A change in macro political and economic spheres is one of the attributing factors to Bourdieu's increasing public activism. Bourdieu had always been a political leftist. Although he once functioned as an expert advising political authority under a socialist government, he was traditionally critical of centralised and bureaucratised state power (Swartz and Zolberg, 2004:344 and 348). Bourdieu was always reluctant to take any official role to prevent him from becoming a kind of intellectual slave of political leadership in the Mitterrand government. Following the socialist leadership

during the Mitterrand presidency which had advocated market-oriented reforms that would reduce the size and responsibilities of the welfare state, Bourdieu was disillusioned with the leftist government. Those reforms included the 1983 policy of privatisation and a number of macro-economic policies of accommodation to international financial markets. He viewed socialists in France as losing their traditional role of ideological resistance toward capitalist trends (Bourdieu, 1998a: 42–44; Swartz and Zolberg, 2004:343–349). For Bourdieu, this kind of economic realism is ‘spineless abdication to the force of globalisation’ (Swartz and Zolberg, 2004:349).

‘Globalisation’ has feverously been debated by different thinkers who can be classified into two absolute opposite positions: the ‘Sceptics’ and ‘Radicals’, as labelled by Giddens (2002:7-8). Bourdieu’s position on globalisation is definitely sceptical whereas Giddens’ lies somewhere in between the two extremes but more towards the radical position. Some sceptics aim to assess how far contemporary trends match with an abstract or a priori model that builds on the globalisation thesis (Hirst, 1997a; Hirst and Thompson, 1996). Some others seek to compare the modern trends with the *belle époque* of globalisation, namely the period from 1890 to 1914 (Fergusson, 2004 and 2005; Hirst 1997b; Koechlin, 1995). I agree with Held and McGrew’s (2003: 4) challenge on these sceptics’ analysis as ‘a decidedly dismiss of the descriptive or explanatory value of the concept of globalisation’. The current wave of globalisation debate does not focus on its existence anymore, rather it centres on the consequences of globalisation for our day-to-day life, as Giddens (2002:8) contends.

Bourdieu holds a strong Marxist and realistic ontology to sharply criticise neo-liberalism and globalisation 'benefit the dominant' (Bourdieu, 2003:93). He is in the same vein as Beck (1990 and 1999a) and others (Callinicos, Rees, Harman and Haynes, 1994; Gordon, 1988; Hirst, 1997a and 1997b; Hoogvelt, 1997) whom consider that capitalism is a social order having a pathological expansionist logic to maintain profit and capital. To achieve this, capitalism has to exploit new markets constantly. Globalisation is, therefore, primarily an ideological construction and a convenient myth used by Anglo-Americans to justify and legitimize the neo-liberal global project (Bourdieu, 1998a:38-41; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:2). Bourdieu also views globalisation as a 'process of involution of the state' (Bourdieu, 1998a:32) as it is a political ideology propagated by neo-liberalists who wish to disassemble welfare systems and to deprive national politics of its power. I disagree with Bourdieu's views on globalisation as he simply overstates the power of neo-liberalism or any panel state. My position on globalisation is analogous with Giddens who takes a considerably different approach from Bourdieu.

Giddens' (1990a) conception of globalisation is in favour of the radicals. The radicals attach to a Weberian and/or post-Marxist and post-structuralist understanding of social reality as constituted by a number of distinct institutional orders or networks of power including the economic, political and cultural (Held and McGrew, 2003). Along with other radicals (Mann, 1986; Robertson, 1992; Rosenau, 1997), Giddens (1990a and 2002; Hutton and Giddens, 2001) does not deny that the discourse of globalisation may well serve the interest of powerful social forces in the West, but he also emphasises that globalisation reflects real structural changes in the

scale of modern social organisation. He recognises the differentiation, allowing for the possibility that it proceeds at different tempos, with distinctive geographies, in different domains. Giddens (2002:16) thus contends that there is no single nation or corporation that can dominate in political or economic spheres. This idea is supported by scholars (Hirst and Thompson, 1996; Kenworthy, 1997; Koechlin, 1995; Wade, 1996) who infer that convergence to a single most effective type of market economy is no more likely in the twenty-first century. Other academics (Best, 1990; Chandler, 1977 and 1990; Lazonick, 1990 and 1991) have also identified and characterised divergent capitalisms developed over the course of the twentieth century. Business-systems analyst Whitley (1999) further concludes that:

Internationalization, *per se*, is only one aspect of the development and change of business systems that is variously structured by different systems of economic organisation and institutional contexts – (Whitley, 1999:136).

Globalisation, thus, is a complex process not a single phenomenon. It is political, economic, technological and cultural. Globalisation pulls our world from different directions. It may pull away some power and influence from local communities and nations into the global arena. However, it also creates new pressures for local authority. In my view, national borders virtually disappear, as Ohmae (1995) describes, due to technology innovation but political power still remains in nation states. At the same time, globalisation also squeezes sideways to create new economic and cultural zones within and across nations. In the context of ‘neo-liberal globalisation’, whether the reconstitution of national elites and systems for training senior executives is inseparable from the dynamics of internationalisation is still unexplored (Lenoir, 2006:39). What is sure is that globalisation is less significant in

its scale and consequences than some enthusiasts have suggested. Divergent capitalisms and business systems have become established and persist across the world. This context of globalisation provides the opportunities for service globalisation of different professions.

Professionals as cultural producers

Over the past 50 years or so, scholars have begun to look at occupations and organisations as creators and dispensers of ‘culture’ (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Empson, 2001; Hofstede, 1983; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005; Huseman and Goodman, 1999; Jones, 2005; Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Ohmae, 1989; Schein, 2001; Zucker, 1977). Even at the Centre de Sociologie Européenne established by Bourdieu, one of their research strands is to study the phenomena of ‘globalisation’ of economies and societies relating to the transformation of the dominant classes. They focus on analysing the way in which transnational spaces are constituted, particularly through the phenomena of the import and export of symbols, in which some segments of the dominant classes and some ‘professions’ are the actors. They are particularly attentive to the sphere of public expert opinion, the legal world and the field of economists and economic policies (Lenoir, 2006:39).

Bourdieu suggests that two new figures of the cultural producer – ‘expert’ and ‘communication consultant to the prince’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2001:5) are supreme intellectual achievements under the imperialism of neo-liberal reason. He defines the ‘expert’ as consultants from different professions, with the support of scientific management methodology and economic science, to provide advisory

services to the dominant members in the political field and headquarters of economic organisations, or act as independent think tanks, to support their political agendas. The ‘communication consultant to the prince’ refers to those academics who shift to serve the elite members in political and economic fields as consultants and justify their political projects with an academic veneer. On this, Bourdieu, in particular, points to Giddens and explicitly criticises his close relationship to politicians such as Tony Blair, Romano Prodi and Fernando Cardoso which benefits Giddens’ emergence as ‘the globe-trotting apostle of a “Third Way” – “take a positive attitude towards globalisation”’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2001:6). Bourdieu argues that intellectuals cultivate more cooperative relationships with political and economic leadership at the expense of the autonomy of intellectual work.

In his later years, Bourdieu attempted to reaffirm the need to protect the autonomy of the intellectual field from outside economic, political, and religious forces and speak forcefully and critically of abuse of political power in whatever form. It was rooted in his basic concern for building up the scientific legitimization of sociology throughout his career (Swartz and Zolberg, 2004:349). He (Bourdieu, 1991a) defines what an intellectual is and what he could be:

The intellectual is a *bidimensional* being. To be entitled to the name of intellectual, a cultural producer must fulfil two conditions: on the one hand, he must belong to an autonomous intellectual world (a field), that is, independent from religious, political, and economic powers (and so on), and must respect its specific laws; on the other hand, he must invest the competence and authority he has acquired in the intellectual field in a political action, which is in any case carried out outside the intellectual field proper (Bourdieu, 1991a:656).

The ‘expert’ and ‘communication consultant to the prince’ defined by Bourdieu embrace individuals and academics from a wide range of professions including

management consulting. There are empirical studies by Bourdieu dedicated to the fields of academics (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1996), literary (Bourdieu, 1996a), religion (Bourdieu, 1991b) and law (Bourdieu, 1987c) but not management consulting.

Management consulting has been considered as one of the advance business service fields, along with accountancy, investment banking, law and IT consulting, to sell knowledge services to transnational firms and as such there is strong impetus to be able to provide 'international best practice' as a product to clients (Empson, 2001; Huseman and Goodman, 1999; Jones, 2005). Previous studies (Dunning, 1989; Morgan and Quack, 2005; Post, 1995; Powell, Brock and Hinings, 1999:1-19; Rose and Hinings, 1999:41-67) suggest that global professional service firms follow their clients to internationalise in order to continue to serve their clients. Morgan and Quack (2005:283-300) typify the forms of international coordination in four types of professional service firms – collegially coordinated international firms, hierarchically controlled international firms, financially controlled international firm, and reciprocity-based international networks of firms. Comparison of strategic or structural homogeneities and heterogeneities at field level tend to be focused across highly institutionalised professional fields, such as healthcare, law, accountancy and engineering consulting (Malhotra and Morris, 2009; Powell, Brock and Hinings, 1999).

Powell, Brock and Hinings (1999:2) maintain that the widely recognised professions - healthcare, law and accountancy, can be viewed as paradigmatic and

indicative of change in professional organisations in other fields. Malhotra and Morris' (2009:895 and 917) systematic comparison of the dimensions of knowledge, jurisdictional control and client relationship across the fields of law, audit and engineering consulting demonstrates that differences between professions on a number of dimensions affect the nature of professional work and, in turn, the organisation and management of firms across different professional sectors. In contrast to these traditional professions, management consulting is relatively weakly institutionalised as it is not governed by independent professional associations. Systematic strategic and structural inter-profession comparisons across the fields of healthcare, law and accountancy, and management consulting especially for global tradability are still missing in the existing literature.

Today, the large global management consulting firms, such as the six global management consulting firms in this study, *per se*, serve the majority of the Fortune 500 companies. I argue that management consultants are influential for cultural production and reproduction as 'today's cultural globalisation is driven by companies, not countries' (Held and McGrew, 2003:18). Both management consulting firms and their client organisations with global reach should be considered as 'sites for understanding the constitution and consequences of modern forms of power' (Lounsbury and Ventresca, 2002:6) as 'large organisations have absorbed society' (Perrow, 1991:2) by competing for our allegiances, offering opportunities and imposing constraints.

In previous studies, it is evident that change in the micro-structure of the field in response to competitive changes in the macro environment can change the aggregate structure of a field (D'Aunno, Succi and Alexander, 2000). If globalisation can cause the changes within intellectual and political fields in France which leads Bourdieu to shift his intellectual strategy from an expert attempting to speak to a left wing government to an activist developing a 'collective intellectual' (Swartz and Zolberg, 2004:348-349) strategy to defend the autonomy of intellectual work from political powers, then what are the strategic and structural implications of globalisation for the management consulting field, in particular, large scale management consulting firms?

2.3 Bourdieu on management consulting

Management consulting as a field

Drawing on the insights of Weber's sociology of religion, particularly his discussion of the relations between principal types of religious leaders, Bourdieu develops the concept of field (Bourdieu, 1987a:33; 1991b:49). He uses the concept of field to transcend the objectivism-subjectivism divide. It surpasses Weber's notion of ideal goods and interests and demonstrates a broader grasp of the structural conditions that shape the interactions of actors without their consciousness (Swartz, 1997:43). Bourdieu's concept of field has an institutional emphasis which calls attention to the positions of actors, organisations, resources, and their struggle in the production, transmission, and consumption of culture (Swartz, 1997:287). It therefore contributes to the shift in orientation towards the study of culture at the institutional level (Wuthnow, 1987).

Our modern world is seen as a social space highly stratified and differentiated, characterised by specialisation (Scott, 2002:23) and driven by interests (Bourdieu, 1992:229). Bourdieu (1987a:174) insists that the boundaries among fields are permeable and relationally defined. As a result, progressive proliferation and splitting of fields and sub-fields exist in a web of interweaving networks. As Bourdieu defines:

Fields are a network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.) – Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:97)

Therefore, fields are ‘relational and dynamic social microcosms’ (Everett, 2002: 60) within which constant struggles or manoeuvres take place over valued capital, stakes and access (Oakes, Townley and Cooper, 1998:260). Positions within fields constantly change to reflect the relations of power among actors. These positions are objectively defined by the kinds of capital that actors, no matter whether organisations, group, or individuals, possess to access to specific profits distributed within the field and by their positions relative to other positions such as dominant or dominated positions. Social stratification arises in any field as positions in fields are determined by the unequal distribution of relevant capitals which are ‘the set of actually usable resources and power’ (Bourdieu, 1984:114). In short, all social fields exist in a matrix of sub-fields horizontally and social-strata vertically.

To a certain extent, there are ‘structural and functional homologies’ on the relations among relatively autonomous fields which Bourdieu refers to as ‘a resemblance within a difference’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:105-6). The homology of position among individuals are ‘structural correspondence’ (Bourdieu, 1987c:822) to respective positions in other fields as ‘those who occupy inferior position in the field tend to work with a clientele correspond to social inferiors who thereby increase the inferiority of these positions’ (Bourdieu, 1987c:850). The homology in structural oppositions in the volume and structure of different types of capital across different fields is the ‘objective basis’ for the homology in symbolic oppositions (Bourdieu, 1989a:384). This theoretical reasoning is in line with Giddens (1984:89) that the ‘positioning’ of individuals in the time-space contexts of activity determines interaction since social relations concern the ‘positioning’ of individuals within a ‘social space’ of symbolic classification and links.

A degree of autonomy exists within fields. Specialists are the driving force for this autonomy development to progressively develop, transmit and control their own particular status and culture. Such autonomy can be independent from external environments as fields develop their own organisational and professional interests which may significantly deviate from external interests (Bourdieu, 1991b:35). This rejects the coercive isomorphism on organisational structure predicted by neo-institutionalism (DiMaggio and Powell, 199b:74). For instance, Greenwood and Suddaby’s (2006) study on institutional entrepreneurship in mature fields with a focus on the then Big Five¹ professional service firms informs this kind of field

¹ Big Five – PricewaterhouseCooper, KPMG, Deloitte Touché Tohmatsu, Ernst & Young, and Arthur Andersen.

autonomy. Their findings reveal that elite organisations were capable of mobilising asymmetry resources to overcome coercive pressures from regulatory agencies to preserve their own organisational and professional interests after the launch of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act in 2002. In 2013, the Big Four² professional service firms are still providing management consulting services to their clients. In other words, professional fields grow in autonomy from political and economic power, that is, in their capacity to legitimize existing social arrangements (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977:12). It results in professional fields obtaining considerable autonomy to control the recruitment, socialisation, and career of actors, and to impose its own specific ideology.

There are specific forms of competition within fields that are tacitly accepted by agents, no matter which institutions, organisations, groups or individuals. As Bourdieu describes the juridical field:

Entry implies the tacit acceptance of the field's fundamental law...to join the game, to agree to play the game, to accept the law for the resolution of the conflict, is tacitly to adopt a mode of expression and discussion implying the renunciation of physical violence and of elementary forms of symbolic violence, such as insults. – Bourdieu (1987c:831)

Hence, entry into a field, in particular, professional field requires tacit acceptance of competition and restriction of rules of the game considered as legitimate professional procedure. Any unprofessional forms of conflict, such as physical violence and personal insults are disallowed. Nonetheless, in his later writing Bourdieu (1990:126) suggests that there is visible physical or economic violence and the most refined

² Big Four – PricewaterhouseCooper, KPMG, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, Ernst & Young

symbolic violence coexists in all institutional characteristics of any economy and at the centre of each social relation.

I argue that symbolic violence is highly visible in professional fields such as healthcare, law and accountancy. The knowledge and skills of these professional occupations can only be acquired through a process of training or apprenticeship that is controlled by established members of the profession themselves and governed by the professional organisations (Friedson, 1970a; Johnson, 1972). Apprenticeship is ‘an activity enables us to pry into practice in the making and to realize that the ordinary knowledge that makes us competent actors is an incarnate, sensuous, situated “knowing-how-to” that operates beneath the controls of discursive awareness and propositional reasoning’ (Wacquant, 2005:466). Therefore, the process of training and apprenticeship is the means of cultural reproduction and professional identity construction for members in professional fields.

In the legal field, for instance, after having passed the academic and vocational stages, the final stage of training to become a barrister is ‘pupillage’. Being a pupil is similar to being an apprentice when barrister candidates gain one-year of practical training under the supervision of an experienced barrister or barristers (www.barcouncil.org.uk). It is similar in the accountancy field. To become a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), a CPA candidate, in addition to passing all the formal professional examinations, needs to acquire at least three years practical training under the supervision of an authorised employer/supervisor invested by the professional accounting associations (www.icaew.com and www.hkicpa.org) that the

CPA candidate belongs to. These mandatory initial career stages exemplify that the mentor/apprentice practice in the field of professions is an absolute dominant and dominated relationship where the mentor is the holder of the 'monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence' (Bourdieu, 1985b:205). Management consulting is loosely linked with industrial engineering, law and accountancy (Kipping, 2002 and 2011). Hence, it can be assumed that elements of the mentor/apprentice practice are also used as the means of cultural reproduction and professional identity construction.

The properties of the notion of field, I argue, can be found in the management consulting field. Management consulting is an autonomous field incorporated in the professional service field in modern society but it can also be treated as a separate field. It accommodates members with diverse professional backgrounds, for example, healthcare, audit and accountancy, legal services, investment banking, engineering consulting, information technology and so forth. Consequently, the scope and breadth of consulting services offered by firms within the field has increasingly been expanding into other professions and vice versa (Kubr, 2002:53). In other words, the boundary of management consulting with other professions is permeable. The field is fragmented as it encompasses different firms with different specialism, such as corporate strategy, corporate finance and financial management, human resources management, information technology, multi-disciplinary services and so on, embedded in it as sub-fields. Each subfield embraces many management consulting firms with different sizes. Each management consulting firm itself is a social space of relations among individuals who compete for personal and organisational advantages. With the assumption that symbolic violence exists, there

are numerous lines of power linking both the management consulting firms and management consultants within the field as a hierarchically stratified space of dominant and subordinate positions. Hence, the field of management consulting can be portrayed at three relational levels – field (macro), firm (meso) and individual (micro) as depicted in Figure 2.1.

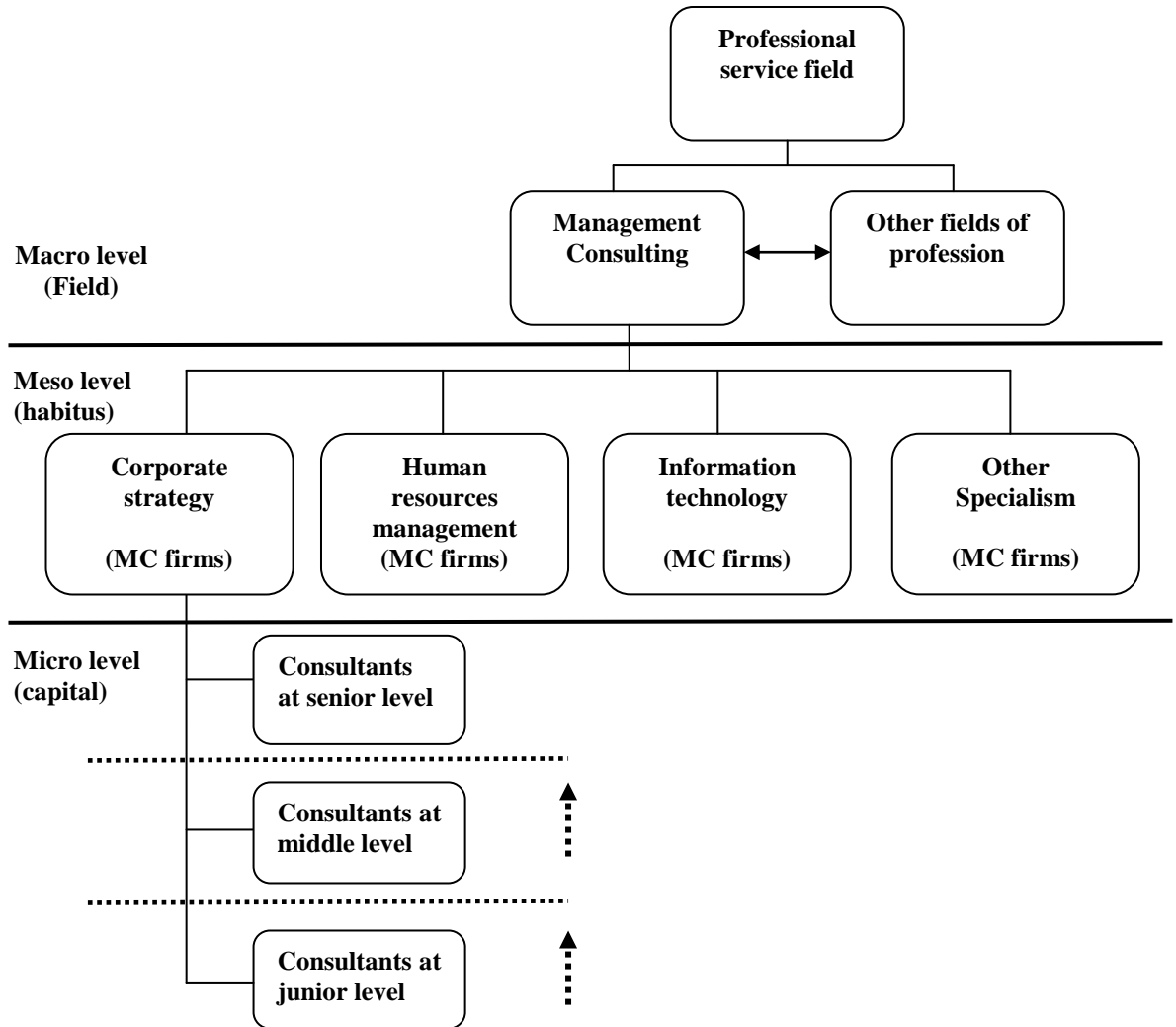


Figure 2.1 The field of management consulting

Management consulting firms as habitus

Following Bourdieusian assumptions and line of thought, fields are arenas of resistance and domination but not sites of social transformation (Swartz, 1997:121).

Bourdieu (1988b:784) conceives of ‘the field, as a structured space, tends to structure the habitus, while the habitus tends to structure the perception of the field’. Habitus is the cornerstone of Bourdieu’s theory of practice. DiMaggio and Powell (1991a:26) appreciate that the notion of habitus offers ‘a particularly balanced and multifaceted approach to action’ and can join with neo-institutional analysis to form “a theory of practical action”, filling in the micro sociology of the new institutionalism. They (1991a:27-28) then stress that ‘organisational environments are composed of cultural elements, that is, taken-for-granted beliefs and widely promulgated rules that serve as templates for organizing’. For DiMaggio and Powell, institutions are not only constraints on human agency but they are first and foremost products of human actions. Rules within institutions are typically constructed by conflict and contestation. However, as Swartz (2008:48) contends, DiMaggio and Powell’s cognitive turn in this area ‘only partially taps the dispositional character of Bourdieu’s concept’ but ‘the corporal dimension is frequently overlooked’. They have not built in as fully developed a conception of capital (i.e. power relation) as Bourdieu’s (Dobbin, 2008:60; Clegg, Courpasson and Philips, 2006:11) and how the ‘institutional logics are understood and influence at the individual level of analysis’ is thus omitted in neo-institutionalism (Suddaby, 2010:17).

To address this, Giddens’ theory of structuration provides a process-oriented framework to link structure and agency. In his theory of structuration, Giddens (1977:133) put forward three analytically distinguishable aspects of structure – signification, domination and legitimation. The three aspects of structure involve semantic rules, unequally distributed resources and moral, evaluative rules

respectively. The behaviour of agents is regulated and assessed by all types of rules under each aspect of structure. In all cases, rules and resources are understood to be the properties of communities or collectives rather than of actors. Giddens, however, does not emphasise the degree to which institutions vary in their normative power and their effect on behaviour (Barley & Tolbert, 1997:96). In line with DiMaggio and Powell, Giddens (1984:25) also considers structure is not to be equated with constraint but is always both constraining and enabling. Nevertheless, he sees habit as part of routine and strongly emphasises the importance of routine in social life. Giddens (1984:17) sees social systems, as reproduced social practices, do not have 'structure' but rather exhibit 'structural properties' and that 'structure exists, as time-space presence, only in its instantiations in such practices and as memory traces orienting the conduct of knowledgeable human agents'. Rules certainly impinge upon numerous aspects of routine practice, but a routine practice is not as such a rule. Giddens (1984:19-20) insists that rules are procedures of action, an aspect of *praxis*. In this sense, Giddens is associated with Bourdieu as both of them see institutions as 'practices' rather than 'structures'.

Bourdieu (1990:52) argues that habitus is the 'durably inculcated system of structured and structuring dispositions' found within a field. He views institutions as inseparable from distribution of dispositions and an institution can 'only become enacted and active if it like a garment or house, finds some who finds an interest in it, feels sufficiently at home in it to take it on' (Bourdieu, 1981:309). Despite Bourdieu also emphasises the doxa (taken-for-granted) of human action, he sees agents as practical strategists rather than as conformists to external sets of formal rules.

Agents' behaviour is cultural but also strategic, constitutive and adaptive to external structures (Swartz, 2002:62S). Bohman (1999:133) also advocates that habitus operates through the agents' own dispositions rather than coercion, and through 'generative and implicit schemata' rather than sanctioned rules. Bourdieu thus prefers to express his ideas in terms of strategies, habitus or dispositions, rather than in terms of rules. For Bourdieu, dispositions suggest a way of thinking about habit that is 'clearly different (more active) from the more popular idea of sheer repetition or routine' (Swartz, 2002:63S) as Giddens proposes.

Habitus, therefore, provides individuals with 'the feel of the game', a practical sense of how to think, feel and act in their daily lives, orienting their actions and inclinations but without precisely determining them (Thompson, 1991:13). As Bourdieu (1990) defines, habitus is:

A system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structure, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representation that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. – Bourdieu (1990:53)

Hence, habitus is the means by which life chances are 'internalized and converted into a disposition' (Bourdieu, 1984:170). One has a habitus for a thing only when the thing is normally done because of a disposition found in the agent (Leibniz, 1966:474). It is habitus that enacts structural and social transformation as it regulates actions and defines identities of actors within the field (Bourdieu, 1990:57). Furthermore, habitus is also 'one of the mediations through which social destiny is accomplished' (Bourdieu, 1996b:26). In sum, habitus is 'ingrained and socially constituted dispositions of social classes that lead actors to make choices and

decisions that reproduce existing social structures and status distinctions' (Harvey and Maclean, 2008:110).

Bourdieu (1990) argues that habitus of individuals in the same class will not be identical as it is characterised by a relationship of homology. As he explains:

The singular habitus of members of the same class as united in a relationship of homology, that is, of diversity with homogeneity reflecting the diversity within homogeneity characteristic of other social conditions of production. Each individual system of dispositions is a structural variant of the others, expressing the singularity of its position within the class and its trajectory. 'Personal' style, the particular stamp marking all the products of the same habitus, whether practices or works, is never more than a deviation in relation to the style of a period or class, so that it relates back to the common style not only by its conformity...but also by the difference that makes the 'manner'. – Bourdieu (1990:60).

Although Bourdieu acknowledges individual biographical differences, he always stresses the collective nature of habitus that the individual habitus tends to exhibit many group-specific characteristics by offering the image of 'conductorless orchestration' to emphasise the 'regularity, unity and systematicity to practices' without conscious coordination (Bourdieu, 1990:59). In this sense, I agree with Swartz (1997:113) and Bohman (1999:133-134) to challenge Bourdieu as he does not consider other organising modes of conduct in an extensive way and underestimates the power of individual habitus which, I argue, is the root of alienated behaviour of agents from any collective habitus. As Bohman (1999:133-134) argues, 'the dispositions still leave room for agents to be better or worse at achieving their strategic goals without altering the fact that they take their own identity as the definition of the situation as limits within which to act'.

In this research, management consulting firms are seen as habitus that tend to structure the perception of the management consulting field. Each management consulting firm has its own ingrained and socially constituted dispositions which draw upon power resources, or capitals, to enact practices. Members of each management consulting firm socialise into a collective or organisational habitus to share a specific culture and its practices, even when there are asymmetrical social positions and relations of domination. Every member of an organisation brings to it a habitus of their own, some of which will be shared with other members and some of which will differ from them substantially (Embairbayer and Johnson, 2008:4). However, in their efforts to become an ‘insider’ and ‘fitting representative’ of the firm, new members need to ‘decipher and adapt the culture, norms and values of the organisation; commit and with the best interests of the company at heart; sacrifice or reconcile personal needs in the wider organisation, assimilate the appropriate dispositions and behaviours’ (Maclean, Harvey and Press, 2006:40).

Management consultants as capital

According to Bourdieu, ‘capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field’ and ‘capital is not a thing, but a social relation’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:101). DiMaggio and Powell (1991b:65) refer to it as ‘totality of relevant actors’. As Bourdieu (1985a:724) conceives, ‘capital represents a power over the field...The kinds of capital, like aces in a game of cards, are powers that define the chances of profit in a particular field’. Therefore, capital is field-specific. Bourdieu (1986:241-258) identifies four kinds of personal capital – economic, cultural, social and symbolic, which are, to a certain degree, transmutable among each other. The

various types of capital have different properties - flexibility, fungibility, contextual, dependence and alienability characterise the four types (Savage, Warde and Devine, 2005:32).

Agents in any fields need to possess an appropriate combination and volume of capital to compete, collude, negotiate and contest for positions and possibilities. It is because 'any co-ordination of social systems across time and space necessarily involves a definite combination of [the resources]...they form the media of the expandable character of power in different types of society, something drawn on in the course of social interaction' (Giddens, 1979:91). In his structuration theory, Giddens (1984:258) also proposes two types of resources – allocative and authoritative. Both resources refer to 'sets of capabilities' (Allen, 2003:45) of their bearers to generate command over objects, goods, materials, persons and action. Nevertheless, in contrast to Bourdieu, Giddens' definition of his allocative and authoritative resources is relatively imprecise.

Bourdieu sees economic capital, in its different forms, as the most important resources in contemporary capitalist societies as it is the root of all other types of capital and can be immediately and directly convertible into money (Bourdieu, 1986:243 and 249). To a certain degree, economic capital is able to acquire other kinds of capital such as cultural and social capital. From the same logic, possession of other kinds of capital may lead to accumulation of economic capital. Cultural capital can exist in three forms – embodied, objectified and institutionalised. As Bourdieu elaborates:

In the *embodied* state, i.e. in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body, in the form of *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematic, etc.; and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee (Bourdieu, 1986:244-245).

Cultural capital in objectified and institutionalised forms has increasingly become the single most important development to shape the stratification structures and roles of cultural producers in the advanced societies (Bourdieu and Boltanski, 1977:33).

Social capital is ‘the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word’ (Bourdieu, 1986:246). Bourdieu (1984:476) holds that the distinction between membership and non-membership, inclusion and exclusion, is critical because social relationships arising from group memberships and social networks can improve the social position of the agents in a variety of different fields. Laird (2006:1-2) also claims that it is the rule of social capital that there is no exception from the necessity for ‘connections and connectability’ for all success stories, no matter of individuals, groups or organisations. In business, it is social capital that determines who advances and who does not (Finkelstein, Harvey and Lawton, 2007:112-120) and the ‘positioning’ of individuals within a field is an indicator of their level of social capital (Greve and Mitsuhashi, 2007:1202).

For Bourdieu (1986:246), social capital created by group memberships can also exert a ‘multiplier effect’ on the other forms of capital. The economic, social and symbolic ‘profits’ that follow from group memberships are the basis of solidarity. Granovetter (1973:1378) also identifies the ‘strength of weak ties’ arising from social networking as a powerful source of information to connect to more distant parts of a network through informal and interpersonal contacts. Thus, in modern societies, it is through all the institutions rather than the family which bring together individuals as homogeneous as possible in all the pertinent respects in terms of the production and reproduction of the group (Bourdieu, 1986:247). For instance, professional associations only admit individuals who possess the pre-requisite qualifications and experience as members.

The institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition of social capital make it possible to transmute into symbolic capital which is ‘the form of different types of capital once they are perceived and recognised as legitimate’ (Bourdieu, 1987b:3-4). It, in the forms of titles, honours, qualifications, reputation and alike, signifies legitimacy, the acceptance of domination by the subordinated in all fields (Bourdieu, 1992:239; Maclean, Harvey and Press, 2006:30). As such, symbolic capital is a form of power that is not perceived as power but as legitimate demands for recognition, deference, obedience, or services (Swartz, 1997:43). It is ‘the capital of recognition accumulated in the course of the whole history of prior struggles (thus very strongly correlated to seniority), that enables one to intervene effectively in current struggles for the conservation or augmentation of symbolic capital’ (Bourdieu, 1999a:337). In short, the volume and combination of the four

kinds of capital possessed by an individual defines one's power and positions in any field. Actors in the dominant positions are capital rich, in particular in symbolic capital.

According to the concept of field, actors in any field can be organisations, groups, individuals or institutions. Maclean, Harvey and Press (2006:29 and 31) transform Bourdieu's four kinds of capital into business. I argue that the dispositions of each management consulting firm are constituted by the clusters of the four types of organisational capital they possess which originates from its members as their principle product and resource is knowledge. At the same time, its members draw on the organisational capital for personal capital accumulation and de-accumulation. In this sense, I extend Maclean, Harvey and Press' (2006:29 and 31) capital transformation model to theorise that there is a dynamic and circular co-evolution between organisational and personal capital in the management consulting field, as exhibited in Figure 2.2.

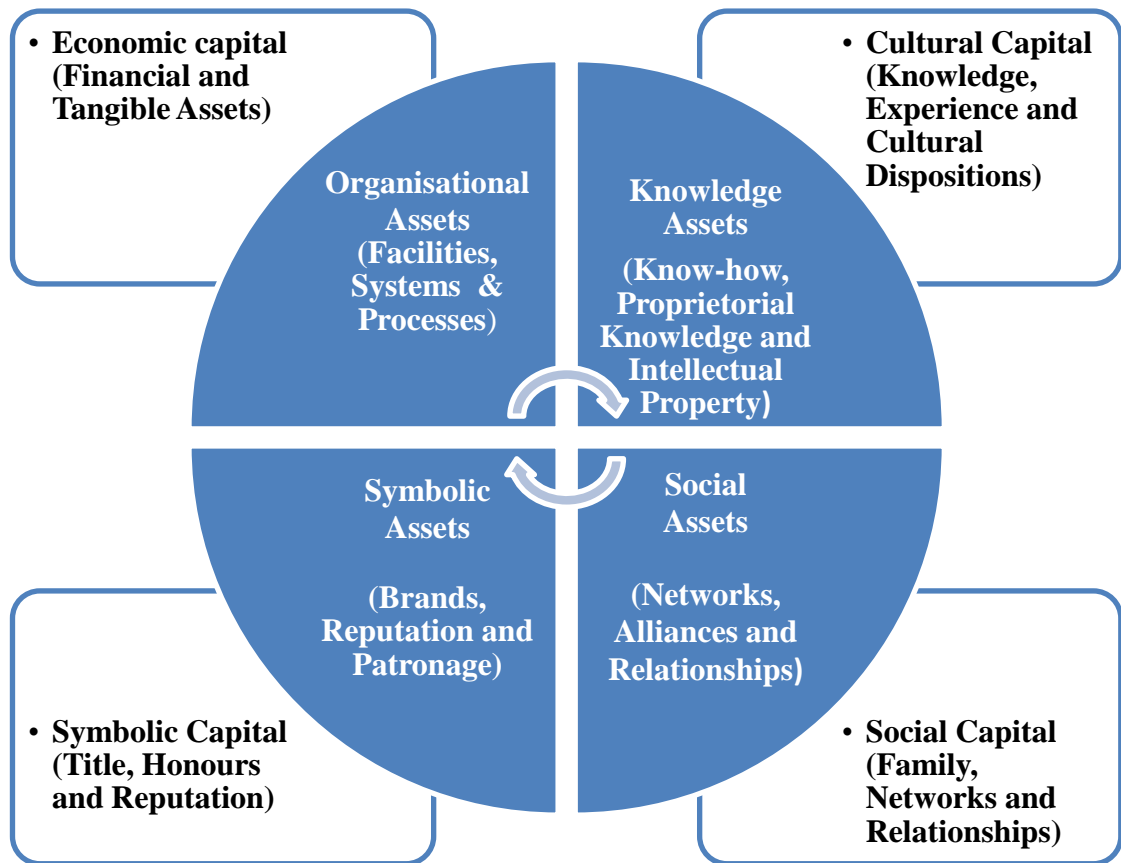


Figure 2.2 Co-evolution of organisational and personal capital

Source: Adapted from Maclean, Harvey and Press (2006:29 and 31).

Personal economic capital can be transformed into organisational economic capital through shareholding and personal investment in management consulting firms while organisational economic assets can be transmuted to personal economic capital in the forms of employment remuneration and benefits to individuals. Personal cultural capital in the forms of knowledge, experience and cultural disposition can be transmuted into the know-how, proprietary knowledge and property of organisations through formal and informal knowledge sharing, information input to and output from knowledge management systems within organisations, and vice versa. Personal social capital and organisational social assets can be transposed through internal and external personal and business networks, for example, family

network, voluntary or professional association memberships as well as business alliances and partnerships, which would realise life and career/business opportunities for both individuals and organisations. Any symbolic capital in the forms of recognisable titles, honours and reputation possessed by individuals can be transmitted into the brand and reputation of organisations resulting in increasing the trading strength of organisations. In the meantime, management consulting firms bring together a group of individuals and provide each of its members with backing of a 'name' to create a sense of solidarity among them.

To sum up, Bourdieu's notions of field, habitus and capitals are inseparably and relationally linked together. The properties of field can be found in the management consulting field as it is an autonomous field accommodating a wide array of professionals including those from highly institutionalised professions. Management consulting firms are seen as an adaptable business-oriented habitus to enact structural and social transformations as it regulates the actions and defines the identities of management consultants. Since the principle product and resources of management consulting firms is knowledge, management consultants are the capital of the field and source of power. The positions of the agents in the game define their symbolic strength in the overt struggle over the definition of the legitimate principles of division of the field (Bourdieu, 1985b:208). Habitus is a dynamic structure. Through it, the dynamic and circular co-evolution of personal capital and organisation capital enacts to define the objective positions and identities of management consultants, management consulting firms and the management consulting field relatively with

other fields. The representations of management consultants thus vary with their positions and with their habitus.

2.4 Culture and professional identity in management consulting

Culture in management consulting

The culture concept has been borrowed from anthropology, where there is no consensual meaning on it as it is a polemical concept. In anthropology, culture is the foundational term through which the orderliness and patterning of much of our life experience is explained (Benedict, 1934). In sociology, Martin (1992 and 2002) exhibits culture as fragmented across groups and inconsistent across its manifestations. DiMaggio (1997:264-265) argued that the sociological view of culture as ‘values that suffuse other aspects of beliefs and intentions which makes collective life (Bourdieu, 1990; Swidler, 1986) has succumbed to one of culture as complex rule-like structures that constitute resources that can be put to strategic use’. In psychology, culture is viewed as a system of behaviour pattern that is socially transmitted to serve to relate human communities to their ecological settings (Keesing, 1974). Culture has also widely been studied by scholars (Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Hofstede, 1980 and 1991; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005; Johnson, 1992; Peter and Waterman, 1985; Pettigrew, 1979; Schein, 1985, 1990 and 2004) in management and organisation studies over the years.

Organisational culture has been commonly defined as ‘deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs’ that are shared and learned by members of an organisation, that ‘operate unconsciously and define in a basic “taken-for-granted” fashion an

organisation's view of itself and its environment' and that are 'to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel for internal integration and external adaption' (Johnson, 1992:29; Schein, 1985: 6 and 2004:17). Organisational culture is intangible in nature and difficult to measure or explain. However, it is not static as institutionalised structure and behaviour are taken for granted and reproduced in everyday action (Giddens, 1984). Johnson (1992:31) and Schein (2004:26) have presented different cultural components in their 'cultural web' and 'levels of culture' frameworks respectively. Unfortunately, both frameworks lack the dynamism of culture and cultural reproduction. Building upon the ideas of field, habitus and capital of Bourdieu, Maclean, Harvey and Press (2006:41) put forward a culture and cultural reproduction framework which illustrates the dynamic engagement processes (see Figure 2.3) that Johnson and Schein have not clearly explained. In addition, the four intimately related cultural components in their framework embrace all the cultural elements that Johnson and Schein propose respectively in their own model.

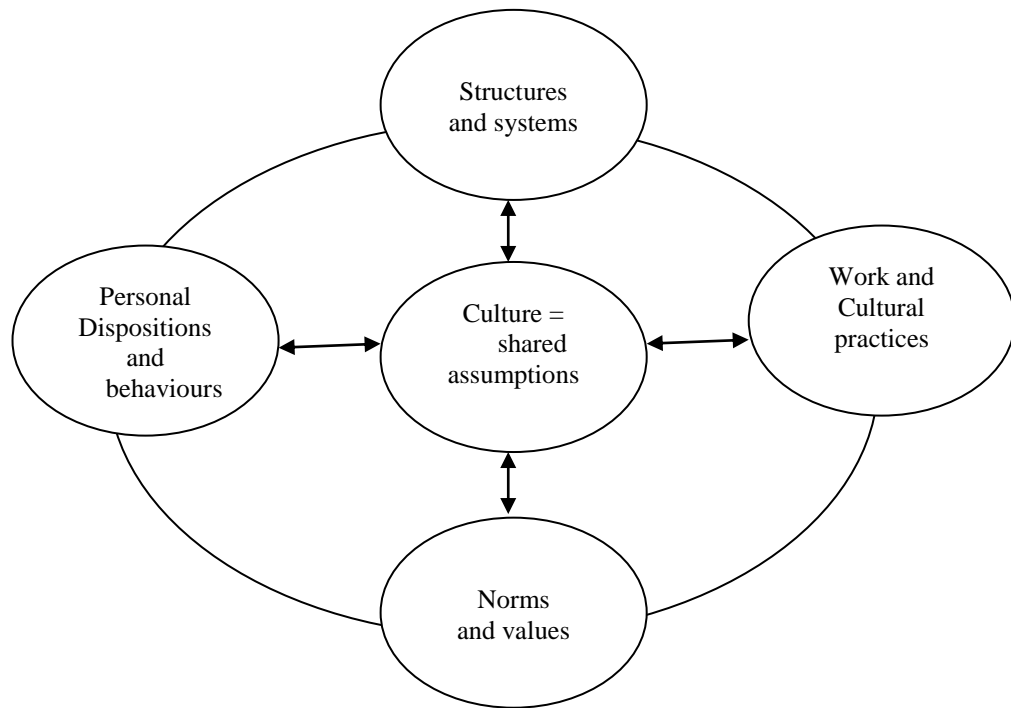


Figure 2.3 Culture and cultural reproduction

Source: Adapted from Maclean, Harvey and Press (2006:41)

In the same vein as Johnson and Schein, Maclean, Harvey and Press (2006: 41) also define culture as residing in the ‘common assumptions’ of organisational members but emphasise the process of formation of culture through personal engagement with four intimately related components of the organisation - structure and systems, work and cultural practices, norms and values as well as personal dispositions and behaviours. As they elaborate:

Firstly, it is through interaction with the main operating systems and processes of the organisation that members first learn ‘how things get done around here’...Secondly, assumptions about how to get things done are formed through involvement with the work and cultural practices of long-serving colleagues. Work practices involve such things as levels of consultation and information sharing with peers and superiors. There is an obvious direct link with the operating system and processes that establish the framework in which work practices evolve. Cultural practices, on the other hand, are voluntary yet obligatory, covering all the symbols and rituals, large and small, of organisational life. Thirdly, when recently recruited members have dealings with established colleagues, especially when decisions have to be made, they quickly learn the norms and values that prevail in the organisation, setting boundaries and conditioning future actions. Fourthly, there is the formative experience of inter-personal exchange with colleagues, of their personal

dispositions and behaviours, which are related but different, more rounded and expressive, from the revelation of norms and values. Language, conversation, humour and style are important and inform in turn such things as style of communication, the conduct of meetings, and human interaction and support more generally. – (Maclean, Harvey and Press, 2006:41-42)

This illustrates how organisational culture is produced and reproduced systematically through the two-way interaction between system components and assumptions commonly held by organisational members.

Hofstede (1994:11-14) argues that the business of international business is culture and structure should follow culture as the purpose of an organisation's structure is the co-ordination of activities. Chandler (1962:14 and 383) contends that a firm's strategy always determines its structure as new strategy creates new administrative needs including increase in new resources, new activities, and an increasing number of entrepreneurial and operational actions and decisions. Based on Hofstede and Chandler's arguments, organisational structure is determined by culture and strategy. It makes culture and strategy, to a certain extent, partly overlapping constructs (Weick, 1985). However, Johnson (1992:29) asserts that people create strategy and one mechanism by which this occurs at the cognitive and cultural level is the 'paradigm', the term used by Johnson to refer to culture of an organisation. Maclean, Harvey and Press (2006:245) postulate that 'cultural reproduction manifests itself at the boardroom as a common mindset and pattern of behaviours is required to formulate and execute strategy'. Bourdieu's concept of habitus allows me to reassess all these arguments as habitus enacts structural and social transformation.

The notion of habitus makes ‘a truly unified and relational sociology of organisations’ (Embairbayer and Johnson, 2008:4) in any field. There are so many management consulting firms existing within the management consulting field in a ‘relationship of homology’ but each firm has its own habitus that makes their own ‘manner’ (Bourdieu, 1990:60). Bourdieu (2005:195) argues that ‘the dominant firms exert their pressure on the dominated firms and on their strategies: they define the regularities and sometimes the rules of the game’. However, Leibniz (1966:548) argues that one must appreciate autonomous groups and classes and their overall similarities as ‘the practices of the members of the same group or the same class in a differentiated society always follow only his/her own laws, nonetheless each agrees with the other’. To decipher culture in the management consulting field, I value giving attention to the typologies of organisational culture, in particular, those of the major players in the field.

Previous studies in organisational culture have adopted typological categories to successfully classify the culture of different inter-organisation (Etzioni, 1975; Cameron and Quinn, 1999; Quchi and Johnson, 1978; Quchi, 1981; Williamson, 1975) or intra-organisation (Schein, 1996b) with dimensions. Typologies are useful for analysing multiple organisations because they ‘simplify thinking and provide useful categories for sorting out the complexities we must deal with when we confront organisational realities’ (Schein, 2004:199). More importantly, they ‘reflect organisational theory and can enhance theory’ (Schein, 2004:200). So, how can we describe and typify culture in management consulting?

Culture and formation of professional identities

Identity is ‘what it means to be who one is’ (Burke, 2003:1) and identities are ‘the sets of meanings people hold for themselves that define “what it means” to be who they are as persons, as role occupants, and as group members’ Burke (2004:5-6). Erikson (1968:22) suggests that identity is ‘a process “located” in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture’. Social class is contested identities that are constructed through symbolic struggles over the power to produce and to impose the legitimate vision of the social world (Bourdieu, 1989c:20). ‘Professions’ is a social class. Many previous studies on professions have attempted to generalise the characteristics of professions such as tabulating the elements included in various definitions of professions (Millerson, 1964:5), summarising important attributes of professional behaviour (Barber, 1963), and characterising the professionalization of one occupation (Hickson and Thomas, 1969:38). However, a uniform definition on professions is still non-existent as different professional characteristics are identified by different authors.

Abbott (1988:117-142) argues that each profession has its distinctive logic such as degradation, career pattern, demographic rigidity and power. More recently, Alvesson and Kärreman (2006:215) suggest researchers should avoid too strict a definition of professions as ‘it can be used for illustrating organisations in which a large proportion of the personnel belong to a well-paid, high-status occupation with a longer education who share an occupational community; but is not formally regulated or sanctioned’. However, Bourdieu (1992:247) asserts that:

All forms of recognized collective identity are the product of a long and slow collective development. Without being completely artificial (if it were, the attempted establishment of these forms would not have succeeded), each of

these representative bodies, which give existence to represented bodies endow with a known and recognised social identity, exists through an entire set of institutions which are just so many historical invention. – (Bourdieu, 1992:247)

An established collective identity is thus a kind of ‘distanciated’ power (Giddens, 1984:298) that can exert influence across time and space. Arguably, management consultants can exert power over their transnational clients across different offices and different periods of time.

On the conception of professional occupations, early studies primarily focus on the liberal professions such as lawyers and physicians (Carr-Saunders and Wilson, 1933; Parsons, 1939). Nevertheless, in our modern society, there are a number of occupations generally classified as a profession such as engineering consulting, investment banking, accountancy, information technology, management consulting and so forth. In organisation studies and literature on the professions, professional identity is defined as the relatively stable and enduring constellation of attitudes, beliefs, values, motives and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role (Schein, 1978) or as an individual’s self-definition as a member of a profession (Ibarra, 1999; Pratt and Dutton, 2000). In the sociology of professions literature, it is commonly agreed that professions have institutionalised expertise, which is founded in the impersonality of scientific knowledge, as the basis of their power to strengthen their jurisdiction (Abbott, 1988:8 and 102-4; Freidson, 1970b:109; Rueschemeyer, 1983:41). In general, professionals receive higher levels of prestige and autonomy in society than non-professionals (Larson, 1977).

Habitus produces practices and representations which are available for classification which, in consequence, implies a 'sense of one's place' but also a 'sense of the place of others' (Bourdieu, 1989b:19). The symbolic struggle over the perception of the social world may take two different forms:

On the objective side, one may act by actions of representation, individual or collective, meant to display and to throw into relief certain realities: I am thinking for instance of demonstrations whose goal is to exhibit a group, its size, its strength, its cohesiveness, to make it exist visibly (Champagne, 1984); and, on the individual level, of all the strategies of presentation of self, so well analyzed by Goffman (1959, 1967), that are designed to manipulate one's self-image and especially – something that Goffman overlooked – the image of one's position in social space. On subjective side, one may act by trying to transform categories of perception and appreciation of the social world, the cognitive and evaluative structures through which it is constructed. – Bourdieu (1989b:20).

It indicates that the legitimacy of a social class is established, objectively and subjectively, both at collective and individual levels and habitus serves to reconcile the co-existence of objective and subjective social conditions (Maclean, Harvey and Press, 2006:35). In this research, management consultants are a social class to represent their working organisations at collective level as well as themselves at individual level. To study the professional identities in management consulting, I argue that it necessitates study at both organisational and individual levels interactively.

Scott (2001:100-101) accentuates that the word 'professional' does not refer to the intrinsic features of particular occupations, but to a specific way in which some occupational roles have come to be organised. As he asserts:

The basis of a professional practice is a system of abstract knowledge that is sustained through academic work of classification, investigation, and instruction, and that is embodied in forms of diagnosis and treatment. The

experts themselves are the producers and transformers of this knowledge. –
(Scott, 2001:101)

In addition, expertise is a form of persuasive influence and rests on a substantive trust in the competence of the person issuing an order and a corresponding acceptance of one's own lack of competence (Scott, 2001:101). Experts are not self-appointed but are 'selected' by peers, by professional bodies, and by the marketplace itself (Teece, 2003:896; Sandberg and Pinnington, 2009:1163). Therefore, expertise involves power relations with co-workers and subordinate assistants, other professions as well as with clients (Scott, 2001:101).

Expert theorists (Bloomfield and Danieli, 1995; Kubr, 2002; Løwendahl, 1997; Mills and Moshavi, 1999; Schein, 1987) assume that management consultants hold autonomy and have power over clients because clients are dependent on the credibility their expertise provides. Yet, at the same time, Schein (2002:22) suggests that clients only offer power to management consultants and situate themselves in a dominated position temporarily when seeking help from them. Jackall (1988) critically argues that management consultants are in a dependent relation on corporate power in client firms and live off the relationship as a kind of benign parasite. As Scott (2001:107) proposes, 'diversification of knowledge leads to competing groups of experts, lay access to knowledge has been enhanced, and the willingness of a lay person to trust any particular group of experts has been weakened'. In this sense, it is doubtful that management consultants monopolise the power in the consultant-client relationship all of the time and their relationship with clients may not be 'indispensable and the dependent' (Bloomfield and Daniell, 1995:27) as the expert theorists claim. More importantly, the key attributes for a

good and trusting consultant-client relationship are still under-explored, from the management consultants' perspective.

Contemporary views on the professional identity of management consultants are indeed polarised. McKenna (2006) sees management consulting as 'the world's newest profession' but Leicht and Lyman (2006:40) classify it as a 'quasi-professional group'. From the perspective of classical professional concepts, there seems a broad consensus that 'consultants will never complete their professionalization process' (Gross and Kieser, 2006:95, McKenna, 2008). Kipping (2011:533) suggests that it is because management consulting firms do not heavily promote full professionalization to their members. Greenwood and his colleagues (Greenwood, Suddaby and McDougald, 2006a:2) argue that management consulting firms are sources and champions of ideas of management and have significant influences on how corporations are managed. In contrast, Alvesson (1993:1006-1007) characterises management consulting firms as 'ambiguity-intensive' organisations because management consulting is not just empirically very complicated, but also theoretically misleading.

Professionalism, as defined by Rose (1998:12), is 'a form of occupational control that exists because of a monopolisation of abstract knowledge and the practical techniques that are based on it'. Organisations and members in traditional professions depend on the 'formal' professionalism obtained from membership in a professional association to 'assure' clients of the quality of their service. Management consulting firms prefer to develop, 'image professionalism' (Kipping,

2011:535) as ‘a power resource’ to improve their image and brand for their claims for ‘authority, status and credibility’ from clients (Alvesson and Johansson, 2002:229) and to legitimize the professional identity of their management consultants and enhance their reputation (Greenwood, Li, Prakash and Deephouse, 2005; Robertson and Swan, 2003). However, strategy can succeed or fail and also can sustain or excavate. Kipping (2011:545) contends that the strategy of ‘image professionalism’ adopted by management consulting firms to establish their brands is hollowed out throughout different waves of evolution of management consulting.

Clegg, Coupsson and Phillips (2006:119) state that ‘legitimacy is not something given, it is an effect of some actors’ construction of the situation’. Scholars (Alvesson, 1993; Alvesson and Johansson, 2002; Clark, 1995; Clark and Salaman, 1998; Fincham, 1999; Jackson, 1996) in the critical management studies literature commonly hold that management consultants lack a formal and authoritative body of knowledge or accepted qualification as its basis and only adopt persuasive communication and rhetorical approaches to ‘establish the voracity and legitimacy’ (Clark and Greatbatch, 2002:161) of their ideas. It is in parallel with Sillince (2006:2) that rhetoric seeks to link resources to organisational identity recursively to sustain competitive advantage. In the management consulting field, management consultants are the main resource of management consulting firms. Most recent research also shows that in organisational elites’ ‘storytelling becomes a vehicle for claiming legitimacy, life-history narratives representing a powerful legitimizing device’ (Maclean, Harvey and Chia, 2012:36). Clark (1995:18) considers management consultants as possessing knowledge but challenges them for taking

advantage of the ‘information asymmetries’ faced by clients on the intangible nature of their knowledge to ‘construct a reality which persuades clients that they have purchased a high quality service’.

Symbolic power functions through means such as naming and categorisation (Oakes, Townley and Cooper, 1998:272). Naming can be in legitimate or institutionalised and legal forms. Yet Bourdieu (1992:241) emphasises that only institutionalised naming in the form of titles such as titles of nobility, educational qualifications or professional titles is ‘a sort of legal rule of social perception, a being-perceived that is guaranteed as a right’. However, Poulfelt (1998) argues that in the absence of the institutionalised naming, market reputation and success fulfil the same function. Categories of perception of the social world may take into account of the contribution of agents make towards constructing the view of the social world. Categorization is a central activity in Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic power:

The capacity to make entities in the explicit state, to publish, to make public that which had not previously attained.... Further, this work of categorization, i.e. of making explicit and of classification, is performed incessantly, at every moment of ordinary existence, in the struggles in which agents clash over the meaning of the social world and their position within it, the meaning of their social identity, through all the forms of benediction or malediction, eulogy, praise, congratulation, compliments, or insults, reproaches, criticisms, accusations, slanders, etc. - (Bourdieu, 1985a:729).

Hence, the transformative capacity of an agent or a group will determine how others perceive them in terms of their positions and identities, no matter whether it is positive or negative. Transformative capacity is ‘a power of a necessary component of the human condition’, as Giddens (1984:14) argues, ‘an agent ceases to be such if he or she loses the capacity to “make a difference”, that is to exercise some sort of

power'. It is still not clear though, under what circumstances, management consultants become legitimized or de-legitimized.

Everyday interactions between members of an organisation and external constituencies will influence its image (Hatch and Schultz, 1997:359). The image of management consultants in contemporary society, for different groups, are 'provocative as well as appealing', as described by Alvesson and Johansson (2002: 229). On the one hand, management consultants are considered as 'knowledge-workers' with expertise and knowledge (Drucker, 1993:5; Starbuck, 1992), 'helpers' (Schein, 1999b and 2002), 'value creators' (Poulsen, 1998), but, on the other hand, they are labelled as 'witch doctors' (Ashford, 1998; Clark and Salaman, 1996: 161-184), 'whores in pinstripes suits' (Jackall, 1988:152), and 'conman' by using tricks to gain and retain clients (O'Shea and Madigan, 1997). People make identity claims by conveying images that signal how they view themselves or hope to be viewed by others (Ibarra, 1999:765). Whether management consultants consider these polarised viewed images as fair and accurate has not been systematically studied. Based on the above discussion, researchers could find out more about what experiences are instrumental for the establishment of professional identities in management consulting.

Identity, capital formation and career

Management consultants do not only need to establish their professional identity externally but also internally and recognised by their peers. As Bourdieu (1987c:831) argues, actors, no matter whether institutions, organisations, groups or individuals, need to tacitly accept specific forms of competition within a field.

Social stratification in any field is determined by the volume of capital, the combination of capital and social trajectory of actors (Bourdieu, 1984:114-132; 1985a:723 - 724). However, individual trajectories are always derivative of the collective trajectory of a class. The ranks, orders, grades and all the other symbolic hierarchies as distinctions are used to express most social judgements – recognition of the most absolute legitimacy (Bourdieu, 1984:112). According to Bourdieu (1983:338, in Swartz, 1997:227), the struggle for individual distinction is particularly acute among intellectuals, since, in intellectual life, ‘to exist is to differ, i.e. to occupy a distinct, distinctive position’. Those in dominant positions are there because they have fully mastered the rules of the game through the sense of the position occupied in that structure (Bourdieu, 1992:235).

Bourdieu’s study of class focuses on intra-class differences as he considers actors from the dominant class are principal competitors in the field of power struggling for access to valued resources, positions of power and competing over definitions of cultural legitimacy in modern industrialised societies (Swartz, 1997:159). His dominant class is categorised in terms of occupations as liberal professions, university teachers, senior state officials, large-business owners and executives, and artists and writers (Bourdieu, 1984:128). Bourdieu (1983: 319-320; 1985b) further internally and fundamentally differentiates his dominant class into two fields of cultural production – the field of restricted symbolic production and the field of ‘mass-audience’ production. He (1988a:36) classifies actors in the former as ‘creator of culture’ and those in the latter as ‘curator of culture’. Again, intra-class fractions are delimited by the difference in the composition and volume of

capital possessed by actors. As Bourdieu has no dedicated study on the management consulting field, the positions and identities of management consultants in these two fields of cultural production has not been elaborated.

In social identity theory, some scholars (Hogg and Turner, 1987:139-182; Kelman, 1961; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986) view social identification as distinguishable from internalisation. An individual member of a group who is accepting of the category as a definition of self does not necessarily mean he or she should accept the values and attitudes associated with the group. Yet, Bourdieu (1992:72) maintains that the institution of an identity, no matter if it is a title of aristocracy or a disgrace, is the imposition of a name which is a social essence. The process of investiture imposes a quite real symbolic efficacy, a power that 'rites of institution' (Bourdieu, 1992:117) possess, to act on reality by acting on its representation, to transform the person consecrated. As Bourdieu reasons:

To institute is to consecrate, that is, to sanction and sanctify a particular state of things, an established order, in exactly the same way that a constitution does in the legal and political sense of term. An investiture (of a Knight, Deputy, President of the Republic, etc.) consists of sanctioning and sanctifying a difference (pre-existent or not) by making it known and recognized; it consists of making it exist as a social difference, known and recognized as such by the agent invested and everyone else. – (Bourdieu, 1992:119)

In other words, when an individual is invested, it transforms the representation others have of him and above all the behaviour they adopt toward him. Also, it simultaneously transforms the representation that the invested has of himself, and the behaviour he feels obliged to adopt in order to conform to that representation (Bourdieu, 1992:119). I agree with Bourdieu because if an individual does not accept the prevailing values and attitudes of the group with which he or she is a member, the

individual cannot associate with the group over the long term because there is no cultural fit and acceptance between the two parties.

Ibarra (1999:765) postulates that ‘despite consensus in the socialisation literature that identity changes accompany work role changes, the process by which identity evolves remains under explained’. Also, building upon the social identity theory, much of the literature in organisational identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994; Pratt, 1998) places most emphasis on the importance of organisational membership in employee’s self-concepts rather than the identity construction processes of individuals. Identity work theory (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2006; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2007; Ibarra, 1999; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003) examines identity construction processes more directly but it ‘still construes social groups’ influence on identity construction to be significant’ (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006:237). For example, Alvesson and Kärreman (2007:713 and 721) pay particular attention to how human resources management may influence individuals’ definitions of their selves in the light of their ongoing development and imagined future which they refer to as an ‘identity project’. Their findings show that the alignment of identity projects clearly involves the exercise of organisational control and disciplinary effects which are often strong when people connect their self-esteem and ambitions closely to the human resources management systems and the organisational hierarchy. However, the question in relation to the assimilation and ejection of individuals from collectives and capital accumulative and de-accumulative processes that take place in leading management consulting firms has yet to be answered.

Psychologists have long accepted that individuals have multiple identities as people live and work within many social networks (Mead, 1934; Stryker and Burke, 2000). Therefore, individuals organise their identities in a hierarchy (Stryker, 1968). Colbeck (2008:10) argues that when two identities with contrasting meanings and expectations are activated at the same time, an individual is likely to experience stress. Kreiner, Hollensbe and Sheep (2006c:1034 and 1050) suggests that individuals will experience 'identity tensions' resulting from working under strong 'identity demands'. Their findings indicate that individuals adopt different tactics to deal with identity over-identification and under-identification.

As, Kreiner, Hollensbe and Sheep (2006b:1332) postulate, when individuals experience identity intrusion or distance, a challenge to their existing identity boundaries, they will likely seek ways to alleviate the conflictual boundary dynamic. Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann (2006:257) also identify that physicians are highly physically encapsulated by medical organisations for controlling construction of their professional identities. It is an extreme integration of their personal identities (i.e. father/mother, wife/husband, son/daughter and alike) and social identities (i.e. medical resident/doctor). However, the strength of identity demands on the occupations (i.e. medicine and priesthood) in these studies is particularly powerful. Responses for less identity-challenging occupations or occupations in which individuals have more varied perceptions on the strength of identity demands, such as management consultants, are still under-examined.

Habitus is the means by which life chances are ‘internalised and converted into a disposition’ (Bourdieu, 1984:170) and is one of the mediations through which ‘social destiny is accomplished’ (Bourdieu, 1990:57). Dispositions are acquired through experience, thus vary across space and time (Bourdieu, 1990:53). Nevertheless, the fit between the disposition of habitus and the structures of situation is seldom perfect. Bourdieu (1977:77) argues that habitus adjusts aspirations (i.e. motivation and need) and expectations and adapts to external structure. Nevertheless, agents may possess different dispositions when choosing their respective social positions (Morhr, 2000:10-11). As Bohman (1999:133-134) articulates, ‘agents can become good at their social role, but not adopt some other role or identity’. In short, how management consultants reconcile tensions between their personal and professional identities is still under-explored.

2.5 Conclusion

In this literature review, I have drawn upon Bourdieu’s notion of field, capital and habitus as the master theory and align it with the neo-institutionalism of DiMaggio, structuration theory of Giddens’ and power relationship theory of Scott in order to analyse and discuss the culture and professional identity in the management consulting field. Firstly, I have identified the impacts of globalisation on Bourdieu’s thinking and his views on professionals as cultural producers. Secondly, building on Bourdieu’s ideas of field, habitus and capital, I have sought to elaborate the theoretical frameworks and perspectives at the field (macro), firms (meso) and individual (micro) levels relationally and apply them to the management consulting

field. Thirdly, I have critically reviewed the existing literature on globalisation, strategy, culture, identity, professions, professionals, professional service firms and management consulting.

The analysis and discussion in this chapter identifies a number of research gaps in existing literature which leads to four research questions to be addressed: 1) What are the strategic and structural implications of globalisation for the management consulting field, in particular, large scale management consulting firms? 2) How can we describe and typify organisational culture in management consulting? 3) What experiences are instrumental to the establishment of professional identities in management consulting? and 4) What are the assimilation and ejection of individuals from collectivities and capital accumulative and de-accumulative processes that take place in leading management consulting firms? In the next chapter, the methodological foundation, research design and research strategy of this research will be described and justified.

Chapter 3: Source and Method

‘Case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical proposition and not to populations or universes’.
– Yin (2003: 10)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes and justifies the methodological foundation of this study. It reviews the strategy and methods employed as well as the sources of data. Firstly, two main approaches to business and management research are considered and a justification provided for the qualitative case study approach taken in this thesis. The use of semi-structured interviews as the main sources of data collection is discussed. The interview selection process and interview procedures are explained, as are the positions of interviewees involved and the dates the interviewees were interviewed. Finally, the concept of triangulation is explored and the validity, reliability and generalisability of the results are assessed.

3.2 The research methodology and strategy

Positivist and Constructionist/Phenomenological Approach

There are two epistemological considerations both have an important part to play in business and management research: Positivism and Constructionism or Phenomenology (Easterly-Smith, Thorpe, and Lowe, 1991). The positivist approach centres on the beliefs that the world exists externally to the researcher and as such any properties occurring within it can and should be measured in an objective manner. To this end, positivist researchers employ quantitative methods to collect and analyse large amounts of data to prove or disprove a hypothesis. Phenomenology

or constructionism is a term given to a contrasting epistemology to positivism. Phenomenology proceeds from the starting point that reality is socially constructed rather than objectively determined. The phenomenological or constructionist researchers attempt to understand reality in the context of human perception and behaviour. In this approach to research the objective is to understand the causes and consequences of human behaviour within a socially dynamic context. Researchers who favour this approach are more likely to employ qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, although quantitative methods may also be employed. Despite some authors (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) arguing that these two paradigms are incommensurable, there is a strong and essential common ground between the two when one examines the actual research methods and techniques used by researchers (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991; Yin, 2003). The main differences between positivist and phenomenological paradigms are summarised in Table 3.1.

A good deal of quantitative research had been conducted in an attempt to capture 1) the economic data of inward and outward foreign direct investment (FDI) flows across the globe among developed, transitional and developing economies under economic globalisation; 2) and the empirical data for global tradability of four different professions – healthcare, law, accountancy and management consulting; and 3) Code of Ethics/Practice in the fields of healthcare, law, accountancy and management consulting for systematic comparison; and 4) data related to the six global management consulting firms selected for this research.

Table 3.1 Summary of main differences between the Positivist and the Phenomenological paradigms

	Positivism	Phenomenology
Basic beliefs:	The world is external and objective	The world is socially constructed and subjective
	Observer is independent	Observer is part of what is observed
	Science is value-free	Science is driven by human interests
Researcher should:	Focus on facts	Focus on meanings
	Look for causality and fundamental laws	Try to understand what is happening
	Reduce phenomena to simple elements	Look at the totality of each situation
	Formulate hypothesis then test them: theory testing	Develop ideas through induction from data: theory generation
Preferred methods include:	Operationalising concepts so that they can be measured	Using multiple methods to establish different views of phenomena
	Taking large samples and often cross-sectional	Small samples investigated in depth/over time

Sources: Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Lowe (1991:108-111).

Although such quantitative and hypothetico-deductive methods (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010:69) have been important to provide a foundation for future work, it can be argued that a constructionist approach is more appropriate for exploring culture and professional identity in the management consulting field, relationally and holistically. This is because the inter-relationship between the formation, reproduction and transformation of culture, and construction of professional identity is not rigid, predictable or controllable, it is a fluid and socio-dynamic social phenomenon.

The intangibility and complexity of the social dynamics of the interrelationship between culture and professional identity required rich data to be collected that helped to inform the researcher about the feelings, perceptions and personal

understandings of the interviewees' experience of major change in the management consulting field; the work and cultural practices of their working organisations; their experience and identities in the management consulting field; and individual interviewees' backgrounds and career histories. Quantitative data alone cannot provide such richness. A constructionist approach utilising qualitative methods is capable of generating the type of data needed and can provide valid empirical evidence within a social context. Strauss and Corbin (1998:28-34) argue that qualitative analysis is of particular importance when attempting to discover concepts and relationships between people, meanings and experiences. Their grounded theory approach, which focuses on the development of theory grounded in reality, is a methodological foundation.

It is important to note that Strauss and Corbin (1998:33) emphasise that the techniques proposed are not rigid but serve as an analytical framework within which the researcher inductively and deductively refines emerging concepts. Other methods, both qualitative and in some cases quantitative, might be employed, to add triangulation, once concepts have emerged and been validated against the data. Strauss and Corbin (1998:59) also acknowledge that having experience within the field of research and a breadth of knowledge drawn from the literature can be extremely valuable in increasing researcher's objectivity and sensitivity. In this case, the author is a Certified Public Accountant with both external and internal management consulting experience up to Project Leader level gained from reputable US, European and Asian multinational corporations in Europe and Asia. Such professional qualification and consulting experiences provide a background

experience and understanding of the field facilitating the researcher's ability to interpret concepts and properties in different ways and they can be powerful comparative methods. The author also draws upon extensive literature in globalisation, strategy, culture, identity, professional service organisations, professionals, and management consulting. Essentially, each can provide the author with ideas for future sampling and identify areas of requiring further data collection and analysis.

This research is based in the social context of management consulting and the causal relationship of culture and professional identity occurring within the field at field, firm and individual levels. Therefore, Strauss and Corbin's (1998:101-104) focus on process is particularly relevant. Their methodology offers a technique for coding data, which helps the researcher analyse and conceptualise responses and interaction within the context of changing conditions. The interrelationship between culture and professional identity from individual to field levels, how they evolve and change depending on conditions and responses/interactions, are fundamental to this research. People's individual or group assumptions, expectations and perceptions of events are crucial to the development of culture and professional identity in the management consulting field. Thus, Strauss and Corbin (1998) provide valuable guidance and techniques that allow such processes to be investigated.

The Use of Case Studies

This research is both descriptive and exploratory in nature. It is based upon the experience of the author, an in-depth literature review and the development of detailed reflective and longitudinal case studies. Initial case studies were more

reflective in nature and focused on past events or perceived critical events or issues that affected culture and professional identity in management consulting at the field and firm levels. Longitudinal studies were then conducted to help produce more focused and up-to-date narratives relating to the subject within the boundaries of a single project. These provided data that could be systematically compared to help to validate the emerging theory.

A number of researchers (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Stake, 1995; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Wilson and Vlosky, 1997; and Yin, 2003) view the use of case studies as providing a research vehicle from which theory can be generated and tested. Over the years, reputable scholars and winning authors have used case studies to develop theory about diverse topics such as group process (Edmondson, Bohmer and Pisano, 2001), internal organisation (Galunic and Eisenhardt, 2001; Gilbert, 2005), strategy (Chandler, 1962; Mintzberg and Waters, 1982), innovation in multi-professional organisations (Ferlie, Fitzgerald, Wood and Hawkins, 2005), as well as organisational image and identity (Dutton and Dukerick, 1991).

Central to building theory from case studies is replication logic (Eisenhardt, 1989:542; Yin, 2003:47). Like a series of related laboratory experiments, multiple cases are discrete experiments that serve as replications, contrasts and extensions to the emerging theory (Yin, 2003:47). Theory building from case studies is popular and relevant as it is one of the best ways of building bridges from rich qualitative evidence to mainstream deductive research (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007:25).

Strauss and Corbin (1998:88) advocate case study development as a methodological device to assist in opening up a range of possibilities with reference to meanings, properties and relationships seen within the data. In line with this position, case study was seen as the prime analytical method for this research with cases being developed and refined according to the data and associated concepts emerging from each in a non-linear fashion. Bozeman and Klein (1999), Stake (1995), and Wilson and Vlosky (1997) all agree that case studies are valuable for understanding phenomena and the behavioural relationships within a case context. For example, Bozeman and Klein (1999:93) observe that ‘case studies “tell a story” about the chronology and events contained within the boundaries of the project’.

This supports Van Maanen’s (1988) idea that theories relating to phenomena will and should be viewed in more narrative fashion as alternative ‘tales of the field’ (Wilson and Vlosky, 1997). In addition, Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) justify the use of case studies on a phenomenon-driven research question where the researcher has to frame the research in terms of importance of the phenomenon and the lack of plausible existing theory, as with this research. Eisenhardt (1989:534) strengthens this argument when she describes the case study as a ‘research strategy that focuses on understanding the dynamics present with single setting’. The value of such a strategy in the context of this study relates to the importance being placed on the use of qualitative research methods and the complex nature of the social process as well as the inter-relationship of culture and professional identity. To study this phenomenon qualitatively in more than just a few organisations would have been too problematic and difficult. By focusing on six global management consulting firms

which are dominant players and located in different fragments of the field, it is possible to offer a far more detailed and thorough understanding of culture and professional identity within dynamic settings.

Consistent with Eisenhardt's (1989) beliefs, the case studies in this research provided descriptions of the current practice of the six global management consulting firms, enabled for current theories relating to the formation, reproduction and transformation of culture and establishment of professional identities at field, firm and individual levels to be evaluated, and suggested new theories within this realm. The framework or 'road map (Table 3.2) offered by Eisenhardt (1989) showing how theory can be derived from the use of a case study research approach proved valuable in informing much of this work. However, this is not followed slavishly and adaptation did occur in line with phenomenological research practice. Firstly, the type and number of case studies used in this research are supported by Eisenhardt (1989), Wilson and Vlosky (1997) and Yin (2003). Both the population and sample cases were not chosen via random sampling but were based on their perceived potential usefulness with reference to generating valuable data. Secondly, the total number of cases (six) was in the optimum range highlighted by Eisenhardt (1989) of between four and ten.

Table 3.2 Process of building theory from case study research

Step	Activity	Reason
Getting Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of research question • Possibly a priori constructs • Neither theory nor hypotheses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses efforts • Provides better grounding of construct measure • Retains theories flexibility
Selecting Cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specified population • Theoretical, not random, sampling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constrains extraneous variation and sharpens external validity • Focuses efforts on theoretically useful cases that replicate or extend theory by filling conceptual categories
Crafting instruments and protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple data collection methods • Qualitative and quantitative data combined • Multiple investigators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens grounding of theory by triangulation of evidence • Synergistic view of evidence • Fosters divergent perspectives and strengthens grounding
Entering the Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overlap data collection and analysis including field notes • Flexible and opportunistic data collection methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeds analysis and reveals helpful adjustments to data collection • Allows investigators to take advantage of emergent themes and unique case features
Analysing data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within-case analysis • Cross-case pattern search using divergent techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gains familiarity with data and preliminary theory generation • Forces investigators to look beyond initial impressions and see evidence through multiple lenses
Shaping Hypothesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iterative tabulation of evidence for each construct • Replication, not sampling, logic across cases • Search evidence for “why” behind relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharpens construct definition • Confirms, extends, and sharpens theory • Builds internal validity
Enfolding Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparison with conflicting literature • Comparison with similar literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build internal validity, raises theoretical level, and sharpens construct definitions • Sharpens generalisability, improve construct definition and raises theoretical level
Reaching closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical saturation when possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ends process when marginal improvement becomes small

Source: Eisenhardt (1989:532-550).

3.3 Research design

Theory formulation, data collection, concept measurement, and analytical techniques are all intimately related (Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron, 1991:11). To meet research goals, the research design selected has to be conducive to the application of personal experience, methods and analysis, as well as ensuring their robustness and providing sufficient ‘substance’ to support their submission within this thesis. The starting point of this research was a review of the literature relating to globalisation, strategy, culture and identity, professional services organisation, professionals and management consulting, encompassing both theoretical and empirical sources. This broad brush approach helped to create a context or ‘big picture’ to identify the area of literature warranting the in-depth approach of the original research.

The research was divided into four related sub-projects. The first one was an empirical study of strategic and structural change within the management consulting field under globalisation. The second one was an in-depth study of the culture of the six global management consulting firms selected for this research. The third one was a comprehensive study of the establishment of professional identities in management consulting based on the experience and identity of twenty five consulting professionals. The fourth was an extensive study of identity assimilation, formation of capital and career trajectory of individuals in leading management consulting firms focusing on the individual personal background, educational background and career history of the consulting professionals in this research.

The backbone of the empirical research was six case studies and partitioning semi-structured interviews with members/ex-members of case and non/case firms. The case study approach involved for longitudinal data collection. This was of particular value within the context of culture and professional identity as it was possible to study relationships, perceptions, expectations and behaviour changes that took place during a period with significant change in the field and in the management consulting firms. Although time and resource constraints limited the accessibility to a larger volume of interviewees especially consulting professionals at senior levels, it was felt that these cases were sufficient sample size. It should also be noted that the small number of interviewees indeed covered informants from different levels from case and non-case firms and provided a very rich source of data and for theory development. The research design is shown in Figure 3.3.

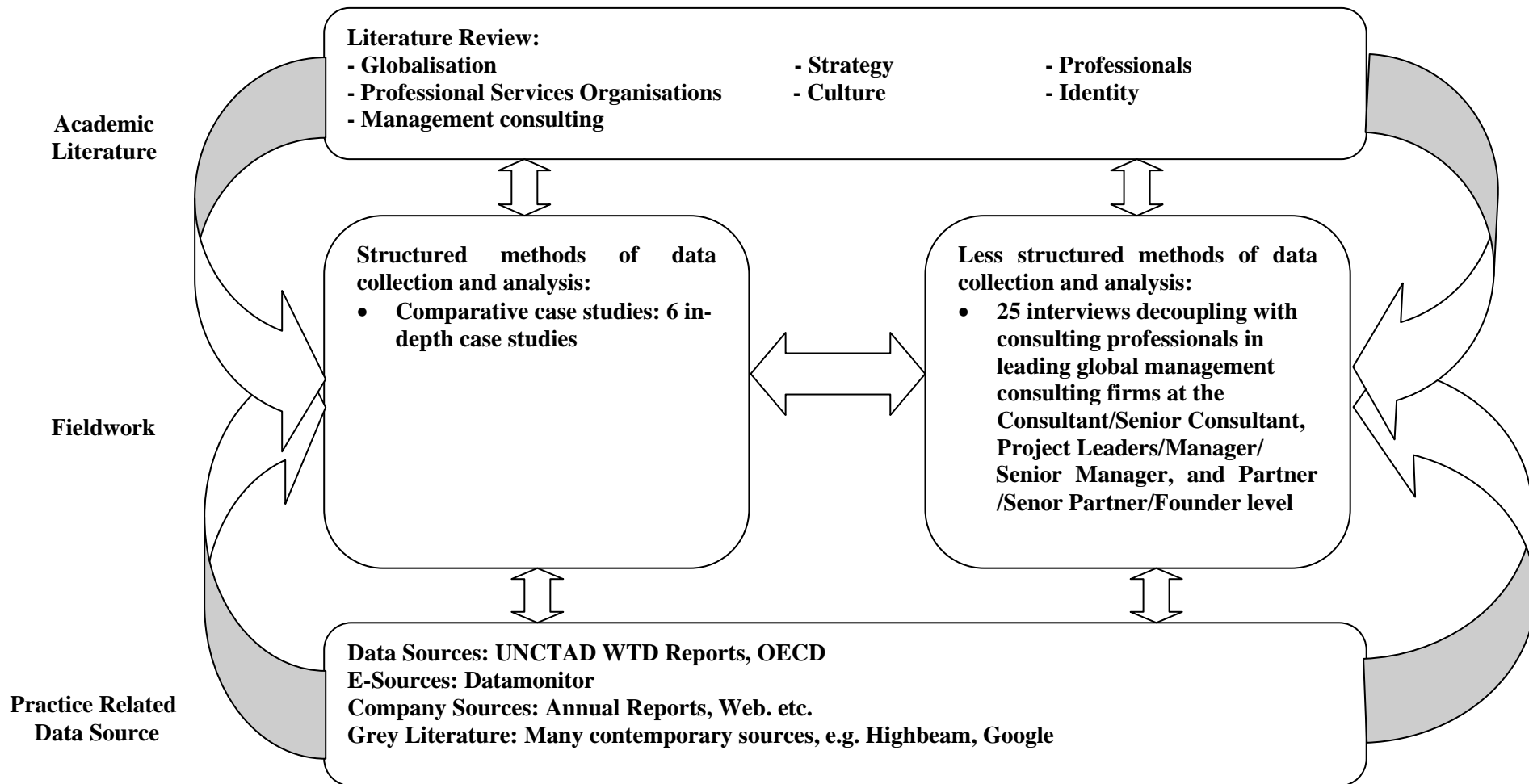


Figure 3.3 Research Design

Selection of Case Companies

Management consulting is a broad segmented industry and the boundary of activities within each segment is becoming more blurred. The first criterion that six global management consulting firms were selected for case study in this research was their prestige within the field. Multiple sources were used to select six global management consulting firms for case studies in this research. It included listings published in the *Vault Guide to the Top 50 Management and Strategy Consulting Firm* (2005 - 2009 Editions) based on surveys of more than 4,000 consultants on the firms' prominence in the management consulting field and their interest to consulting job seekers, *Fortune 100 Top MBA Employers - 2008* and *Top 75 UK Management Consultancy Firms* (2006 Edition). Their rankings were different in various surveys, as exhibited in Table. 3.3.

Table 3.3 Rankings of six selected global management consulting firms in different surveys

Name	Vault Overall Prestige Rankings 2009	The 75 Top UK Mgt. Consulting Firms 2006	Top MBA Employers 2008
C 1	1 - 5	5 - 10	1 - 5
C 2	1 - 5	15 - 20	1 - 5
C 3	16 - 20	1 - 5	N.A.
C 4	11 - 15	1 - 5	26 - 30
C 5	6 - 10	1 - 5	6 - 10
C 6	11 - 15	1 - 5	36 - 40

Source: 1) Vault Guide to the Top 50 Management and Strategy Consulting Firm (2009 Edition)

2) The Top 75 Consultancies 2006 (www.Managementconsultancy.co.uk)

3) FORTUNE 100 Top MBA Employers – 2008

In order to achieve the objectives of this research, another more important criterion for selecting these six consulting firms was that because they could be further categorised into different groups based on their archetypes for purpose of comparison and contrast. C1 and C2 are commonly recognised as privately held traditional

strategy houses in the field. C3 and C4 were publicly listed transnational corporations with a management consulting business unit. C5 was one of the Big Four professional service firms in a limited liability partnership. C6 was a publicly listed management consulting corporation.

The case studies and databases

Data on the six case firms are held relating to company history, ownership, major business activities, financial and operational information (see Appendix 1). A separate cluster of databases relating to interviewees and top members of the six case firms containing their age, education and professional qualification, career history and their geographical locations were established. The approach taken for data collection in relation to management consulting firms and top members was to collect publicly available data from multiple sources, as detailed in Table 3.4.

Semi-structured interviews and interviewing process

Although the database informed all aspects of the research, the data was not sufficient to support the intensive study of the six case firms as it required additional data to be gathered by other methods to fill numerous gaps. Bryman and Bell (2003:342) describe qualitative interviewing ‘tends to be flexible, responding to the direction in which interviewees take the interview and perhaps adjusting the emphasis in the research as a result of significant issues that emerge in the course of interviews’.

Table 3.4 Main publicly available sources of data for this research

Source Category	Method of Access	Value of Sources
Annual reports and accounts of the six case firms, 1998-2009 inclusive	Electronic copies sourced from companies' websites and the Internet	Financial, activity, employment, event, shareholder, governance and director data
Datamonitor company report	Datamonitor Business Information Centre electronic data service	Company history, activity, event and director data
Vault – Guide to the Top 50 Management & Strategy Consulting Firms	Published annual rankings of management consulting firms by prestige for 2005 – 2009 inclusive	Company data on history and business description, recent new stories and corporate culture
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Reports	Published Reports in 2000, 2002, 2004, 2010 and 2011	Data on the tradability of consulting services and its implications for developing countries as well as data on world investment in the shift towards services
Numerous academic and business publications	Business Source Premier search engine	Company and director data relating mainly but not exclusively to events
	ECCH	Case studies on some of the case-companies
Websites of case firms and other organisations	Google and Highbeam Research search engines	Company and director data relating mainly but not exclusively to events

Semi-structured interview (one-to-one and decoupling with case firms) was chosen as the main method of data collection in this research in order to understand the constructs that the interviewees used as a basis for their opinions and beliefs relating to culture and professional identity in management consulting. In addition, a key objective of the interviews was to develop an understanding of the interviewees' world from their perspectives. It was felt that interviewing was appropriate to the

overall methodology being followed as it allowed new concepts and areas of interest to be explored from one interview to another (Collis and Hussey 2003). This is in line with Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin's (1998) theory that the research focus emerges from the data and as such new concepts are continuously being developed, investigated and validated. Collis and Hussey (2003) also argue that semi-structured interviews allow for more complex questions to be asked and subjects to be revisited if necessary, thus facilitating the development of rich and in-depth case studies.

Primary data came from consulting professionals from leading management consulting firms providing business advisory services to reputable transnational corporations globally. Initially it was believed that interviews with interviewees employed with case firms to be the most appropriate method of gathering data. However, as the field studies progressed, limited accessibility and variability of interviewees coupling with the case firms existed. It was also found that including interviewees from non-case firms would enrich contextual constructs and enhance theory generation from broader perspectives. Therefore, it was decided that the interviewing strategy should be altered to include decoupling with the case firms. Interviewees from non-case firms were also invited to participate in the interviews but the proportion of the interviewees from non-case firms was only twenty percent (5 out of 25 interviewees). In fact, four of these five interviewees were still from the top 50 prestigious management consulting firms ranked in the *Vault Guide to the Top 50 Management and Strategy Consulting Firms (2009 Edition)*.

Two methods were employed to recruit participants. Some were approached directly by the author and some were referred by some participants or the author's personal friends and acquaintances. An explanatory letter was sent to each participant outlining the overall aims and objectives of the project and, in particular, stressing the importance of their input and the ethics of this research (Appendix II). After the participants accepted to participate in this research, the relevant interview schedule was sent to them prior to the interviews. The interviews normally lasted for one to one and half hours. At the beginning of each interview, the author emphasised to the interviewees the confidential nature of the forthcoming discussion while outlining the objectives of the project and areas of investigation. Also, interviewees were informed that the interviews would be recorded. All the twenty five interviewees wished to remain anonymous with both their names and companies.

There were 25 interviewees recruited for this study. 20 out of 25 interviewees were from the six selected global management consulting firms at Consultant to Partner levels. The remaining 5 interviewees included 4 ex-members of non-case global management consulting firms - one Consultant, one Manager and two Partners, and one knowledgeable individual who was the founder of his own consultancy in Malaysia. 7 out of the 20 interviewees from the six case firms had been working or had worked for more than one case or non-case top-tier global management consulting firms. Among them, three interviewees had been working/worked for more than one of the six case global management consulting firms. The grading and gender of interviewees are depicted in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Grading and gender of interviewees

Grading	Gender				Case Co.		Non-case Co.	
	M		F		No.	%	No.	%
Consultant	2	8%	1	4%	3	12%	0	0%
Senior Consultant	3	12%	6	24%	8	32%	1	4%
Manager/Project Leader	5	20%	2	8%	6	24%	1	4%
Senior Manager	2	8%	0	0%	2	8%	0	0%
Partner/Senior Partner	3	12%	0	0%	1	4%	2	8%
Acknowledgeable Individual	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%
Total	16	64%	9	36%	20	80%	5	20%

The objectives of the interviews were to gather and analyse rich and in-depth data to facilitate the development of initial concepts in association with interviewees' experience of the major strategic and structural changes in the field; the culture of their working organisations; the experience and identity of the interviewees; and the demographics/career history of the interviewees. At the time of interviews, the interviewees were based in Asia, North America and Europe as exhibited in Table 3.6. Therefore, the interviews were conducted by face-to-face (3 out of 25), telephone (18 out of 25), and/or emails (4 out of 25). To capture data from consulting professionals at different levels, four different sets of interview schedule were used to elicit in-depth insights from different groups of interviewee. The four different sets of interview schedule are presented in the Appendix III.

Table 3.6 Geographical location of interviewees

Country	North			Total
	Europe	America	Asia	
UK	4			4
Germany	2			2
The Netherlands	3			3
USA		5		5
Canada		2		2
Hong Kong			3	3
Singapore			2	2
Australia			1	1
Malaysia			3	3
Total	9	7	9	25
	36%	28%	36%	100%

The interviewing process in this study was flexible. The author comparatively contained and quiet while seeking through questions to extract rich and detailed information from the interviewees. During the interviews, the researcher asked new questions that followed up interviewees' replies and varied the order of questions and even the wording of questions. The emphasis was on how the interviewees framed and understood issues and events, that was, what the interviewees viewed as important in explaining and understanding events, patterns and forms of behaviour. Some interviewees were asked questions across different interview schedules due to their working experience and holding different roles in more than one global management consulting firms (case- and/or non-case firms) within the field. Follow-up interviews were conducted by emails with individual interviewees at the stage of writing up the thesis. The names (pseudonyms), positions and locations of interviewees and interview dates are provided in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7 The names, positions and locations of interviewees and dates of interviews

Interviewee	Position	Case or Non-case firms	Location	Date Interviewed (DD/MM/YYYY)
Alice	Consultant	Case	The Netherlands	21/01/2006
Barry	Consultant	Case	Hong Kong	20/02/2006
Charles	Consultant	Case	Singapore	05/07/ 2006
Daisy	Senior Consultants	Case	UK	14/02/2006& 18/04/2010
Ernst	Senior Consultant	Case	UK	20/01/2006 18/04/2010
Frank	Managing Consultant	Case	UK	14/04/2006
Gladys	Management Consultant	Case	UK	10/02/2006
Heather	Senior Associate Consultant	Non-case	USA	24/05/2006
Ivy	Senior Consultant	Case	Malaysia	15/06/2006
John	Executive Consultant & Corporate Strategist	Case	USA	14/06/2006
Kathy	Senior Consultant	Case	The Netherlands	20/08/2006
Lucia	Senior Consultant	Case	Australia	08/02/2006
Mary	Manager	Case	The Netherlands	27/01/2006& 25/03/2006 & 21/04/2010
Nick	Manager	Non-case	Germany	10/02/2006
Oliver	Project Manager	Case	Germany	16/03/2006
Peter	Manager	Case	USA	11/04/2006, 19/11/2006 & 22/11/2006
Queenie	Manager	Case	USA	24/05/2006
Rob	Manager	Case	USA	01/06/2006
Simon	Manager	Case	Hong Kong	20/08/2006
Terry	Senior Manager	Case	Canada	30/03/2006

Informant	Position	Case or Non-case Company	Location	Date of Interview (DD/MM/YYYY)
Sean	Senior Manager	Case	Singapore	15/09/2006
James	Partner	Non-case	Canada	01/05/2006
Andy	Practising Partner	Case	Malaysia	22/06/2006
William	Founder	Non-case	Malaysia	22/03/2006
Tom	Worldwide Senior Partner & Regional Chief Executive - Asia	Non-case	Hong Kong	12/04/2006 & 05/01/2007

Analysing qualitative data

Data analysis consists of examining, categorising, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining both quantitative and qualitative evidence to address the initial propositions of a study (Yin, 2003). The approach for analysing qualitative data in this study is based on the arguments put forward by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (1991), Eisenhardt (1989), Miles and Huberman (1994) and Strauss and Corbin (1998). The first thing to consider is to distinguish data collection and interpretation. In Table 3.7, it shows that data was gathered over a considerable period of time. Each interview supplied with another in terms of emergent themes and concept development. As both Eisenhardt (1989) and Strauss and Corbin (1998) infer, when data is simultaneously collected and analysed, it greatly assists in the process of concept development and validation. This was definitely the case for this study and it allowed questions and concepts to be refined from interview to interview, in particular, with respect to the context of a longitudinal study.

The analytical methods recommended by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (1991) provide the framework for this study's analysis. Their grounded theory model relies on coding techniques that encourage the researcher's exploration of feeling and intuition in developing themes and patterns from the data. As the phenomenological paradigm forms the foundation of this work, this method was considered to be more appropriate than content analysis. As Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lower (1991) argue, grounded theory techniques are valuable in offering a holistic approach that enables the researcher to stay close to the data collected and inductively develop themes and patterns as data correction and analysis progresses. They summarise the analysis process into seven main stages as follows:

- 1 *Familiarisation:* Occur post-transcription and involve re-reading of data to enable some first thoughts to emerge, note taking, the recognition of nuances and initial patterns, as well as doodling some first ideas.
- 2 *Reflection:* Try to make sense of so much rich data. The researcher should reflect on previous research, models and ideas. It is helpful for the researcher to test out an idea or emerging pattern by talking to other researchers or supervisors.
- 3 *Conceptualisation:* Identify the concepts and variables that appear to be important for explaining what has been happening. The researcher needs to revisit the transcribed data to seek and methodically highlight further evidence or gaps. The researcher may well come across more concepts which were previously missed.

- 4 *Cataloguing concepts*: Transfer identified concepts onto cards for reference. One problem of this approach is it tends to mechanise the intuitive process and the feel can become lost.
- 5 *Recoding*: Go back to the concepts and variables for checking the accurate meaning of the data appearing in different places and contexts. It may be necessary to refine and recode concepts.
- 6 *Linking*: A clearer hypothesis is developing with identified variables so the researcher is now beginning to link all the variables together to generate a more holistic theory. This involves revisiting the field data and literature. A first draft theory can often be produced.
- 7 *Re-evaluation*: Taking reflections and comments from others the researcher may need to re-think the analysis and re-write the draft. It may result from certain concepts that may have been omitted, underdeveloped or over-emphasised. It allows for the development of a strong valid theory.

Source : Esterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Lowe. (1991:108 -111).

The essential advantage of this approach is its open and holistic nature coupled with analytical procedures that assist supporting valid theory development. However, Eastery-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (1991) identify that over adherence to some of the more mechanistic procedures (steps 4 and 5 in particular) can reduce the intuitive nature of the research. Therefore, this study utilised the overall framework and spirit of grounded theory rather than following each step rigorously.

The conditional/consequential matrix developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998: 181-191) contributed particular value to this study. The objective of the model is to help

the researcher to understand phenomena contextually by taking into account a wide range of macro and micro conditions. The matrix has significant relevance for this research because the researcher is investigating the relationships between culture and professional identity in management consulting at field, firms and individual levels. To combine macro, meso and micro contexts for making up a dynamic system requires an analytical technique that assists in addressing the interrelationships and their potential impact. In tracing a path in relation to a concept, Strauss and Corbin (1998:183-186) emphasise that the researcher should begin with a specific event or incident that leads to an action or interaction. The researcher then attempted to discern the chain of related events that occur. The objective was to consider what the conditions were at the time, what sequence of action or interaction followed, what consequences resulted and what happened next. It had provided a valuable way of examination and understanding the complexity of social phenomena in the management consulting field at different levels.

Transcription of interview tapes was the first step in analysing the data that underpin this study. With the permission of interviewees, all the telephone and face-to-face interviews were recorded and transcribed as well as sent to interviewees for review. It is important to note that interviewees' names revealed in this thesis were changed in all cases to protect the confidentiality. To get familiarisation with the materials, the transcripts were read a number of times, notes taken and in some cases diagrams and spider networks sketched to help to rationalise the relationships. This technique is associated with Miles and Huberman (1994) who advocate the use of matrices, network diagrams or tabulation as an aid to map and articulate behavioural

relationships. In addition, the researcher decided to use the conceptually clustered matrices instead of employing index cards to catalogue emerging concepts in an attempt to reduce the mechanistic quality of indexing noted by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (1991).

In this research matrices were generated to reflect the situation of each case firm and interviewees' in-depth insights on related issues, this allowed information to be assembled and organised in a highly accessible and flexible form. Columns were arranged in such a way as to bring together related issues with the headings being chosen from both the field and literature review. Rows were allocated to case-firms and/or individual respondents. Once the matrices had been designed it was then possible to enter quotes and summaries into the appropriate cells enabling ready cross-referencing. The procedure proved particularly valuable in illustrating linkages and patterns in the data. The flexibility of this method allowed columns headings to be refined and developed as the longitudinal case studies developed and concepts/linkages became clearer. The use of such matrices proved to be an extremely useful method of data analysis.

Triangulation

Triangulation is the use of multiple sources of evidence to examine and explain different facets or meanings of a situation. It allows the researcher to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and behavioural issues. The most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry – a process of triangulation. Hence, any finding or conclusion in a case study is likely to prevent blinkered or biased views if it is based

on several different sources of information, following a corroboratory mode (Yin, 2003:98). There are four types of triangulation that can be used in doing evaluation: data, investigator, theoretical and methodological (Downward and Mearman, 2007:81) However, triangulation usually takes one of two forms – data or methodological. Data triangulation involves gathering data at different times and situations, from different subjects. Methodological triangulation may recommend use of both qualitative and quantitative methods or make use of different varieties of the same method. In this thesis data triangulation was employed by drawing on rich and different data produced from both reflective and longitudinal case studies. It helped to develop a greater understanding of what was occurring in the management consulting field, the antecedents and the impacts on the culture and professional identity at the field, firm and individual levels. This strengthened the theory development through the comparison of multiple perspectives.

3.4 Validity, Reliability and Generalisability

It is important to consider the quality of this study under external scrutiny with reference to its validity, generalisability and reliability. This study's holistic and relational nature and its reliance on qualitative data collection and analysis may attract some challenges from readers. As Strauss and Corbin (1998:11) argue that:

Qualitative methods can be used to explore substantive areas about which little is known about or about which much is known to gain novel understanding. Qualitative methods can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods.

Within the realm of qualitative research, this study has been reflexively evaluated for its degree of validity, reliability and generalisability. In terms of validity, the key factor is the extent to which the author was able to gain full access to the knowledge and understanding of interviewees. In this study, the case studies reveal emergent relationships between culture and professional identity enhancing confidence in the validity of the interpretation presented. In addition, interviews with highly knowledgeable consulting professionals who viewed the focal phenomena from diverse perspectives provided a further support for its validity. All interviews were relaxed, informal, fluid and open in nature with interviewees willing to discuss aspects and related issues without apparent fear of reprisal. The longitudinal studies also provided the researcher with the opportunity to revisit some influential interviewees and explore their accounts in-depth on more than one occasion. This research technique adopted echoes Hakim's (1987) argument on semi-structured interviews can increase validity due to informants being more open and willing to discuss issues as there is little reason to conceal information. The analytical procedures and models used in this study indeed strengthened its validity by providing mutually reinforcing insights into change in the management consulting field under globalisation and its impact on culture and professional identity.

In respect of generalisability, case studies emphasise the rich and real-world context in which the phenomena occur (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). Multiple cases are discrete experiments that serve as replications, contrasts, and extensions to the emerging theory (Yin, 2003). Furthermore, while single-case studies can richly describe the existence of a phenomenon (Siggelkow, 2007), multiple-case studies

typically provide a stronger base for theory building (Yin, 2003). Multiple cases also create more robust theory because the propositions are more deeply grounded in varied empirical evidence. Constructs and relationships are more precisely delineated because it is easier to determine accurate definitions and appropriate levels of construct abstraction from multiple cases (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). Multiple cases also enable broader exploration of research questions and the theoretic elaboration (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1998). Hence, theory building from multiple cases typically yields more robust, generalisable, and testable theory than single-case research.

There is lack of comparable reference points to this empirical research study. As yet, no other researcher has undertaken work of this kind. To achieve the objective of reliability, the procedures of this study were systemically and operationally documented. It allows other investigators to conduct the research by repeating the procedures and produce results based on a similar method and sample design. Yin (2003) notes that the goal of reliability is to minimise the errors and biases in a study. During the longitudinal studies, interviewees were able to review their transcripts, allowing them to confirm their content as fair and correct.

3.5 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter is to discuss and justify the research strategy and design for this thesis. The value of a phenomenological approach over a positivistic one was highlighted within the context of the subject area and the choice of research tools. The reasons for using case studies have been explained, drawing attention to the value they have for theory generation. One-to-one semi-structured interviews were used as the main form of primary data collection. As the work progressed, the interview strategy changed from coupling to decoupling. The reason was interviews with consulting professionals outside of the case firms could increase the richness and depth of information collected and enhance the theory development from broader perspectives. The data were analysed using some of the procedures and thinking provided by grounded theory in combination with the use of conceptually clustered matrices and network diagrams. All 25 interviewees were interviewed in the formation of the reflective case studies. 3 interviewees were interviewed more than once during the compilation of the longitudinal studies. Most of the interviewees were interviewed with questions across different interview schedules. It resulted in 28 taped sessions. This provided a very rich source of data gained from a wide range of perspectives and firms within the field. Such depth and breadth of data is crucial for achieving high degrees of validity, generalisability and reliability. Lastly, the use of data triangulation proved to be a valuable way of evaluating the data and strengthened the theory development process.

Chapter 4: Globalisation and Management Consulting

‘We shall never be able to become the masters of our own history, but we can and must find ways of bringing our runaway world to heel’ - Giddens (2002: 5)

‘In short, unification benefits the dominant’ - Bourdieu (2003: 93)

4.1 Introduction

The background of this study is the globalisation of management consulting and the strategic and restructuring responses of large scale management consulting firms. Change driven by globalisation has been taking place within the field since the mid-1980s. In this chapter, I first examine the debate on globalisation through comparative perspectives of ‘Sceptics’ and ‘Radicals’ and explore Bourdieu’s and Giddens’ views on globalisation. Secondly, an analysis of global tradability of professional services across national borders focusing on the fields of healthcare, law, accountancy and management consulting is presented. Thirdly, the historical development and evolution of management consulting including global restructuring and strategic change within the field are discussed. Fourthly, the challenges for the professional identity of management consultants are discussed.

4.2 Globalisation and Transnational Corporations

Globalisation and neo-liberalism

‘Globalisation’ – became the buzzword in the last two decades of the previous century. Today, it is still the most influential agenda for international summits or forums, such as the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, the G20 summit in London in April, 2009, the climate summits in Copenhagen in December 2009, and

alike, with focuses on different issues of globalisation – political, economic, culture and social. The terminology ‘globalisation’ is also ubiquitous in the press, in the discourse of managers and in the curriculum of business and management schools. Globalisation is considered as a product of multiple forces, including economic, political and technological and cultural imperatives (Giddens, 2002:10; Held and McGrew, 2003:7). Both sceptics and radicals see globalisation has pulled down the political, economic and social borders of nation states which are the pillars of state sovereignty (Beck, 1999b:25-27; Bourdieu, 1998a and Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2001; Hutton and Giddens, 2001; Ohmae, 1995).

In the last century, one of the momentous transformations was the end of the Cold War. The demise of the communist Soviet Union in 1989 led to significant global change especially the emergence of a new capitalism as having no worldwide rival. It left the US unchallenged as the world’s hegemonic power with a dominant economic, political and military power in the global order (Castells, 2001:52; Giddens, 2001:9-16). Bourdieu and Wacquant (2001) criticise that the perpetual media repetition on globalisation which has tacitly become constituted into the model and measure of all things:

The American society of the post-Fordist and post-Keynesian era, the world’s only superpower and symbolic Mecca, characterized by the deliberate dismantling of the social State and the corrective hypertrophy of the panel State, the crushing of trade unions and the dictatorship of the ‘shareholder-value’ conception of the firm, and their socio-logical effects: the generalization of precarious way labour and social insecurity, turned into the privileged engine of economic activity. – Bourdieu and Wacquant (2001:2)

Giddens (2002:46-47), however, argues that although the US and the West are seen as the dominant powers in globalisation, it is a complex of changes rather than a single one. No single country or group of countries controls any one of them.

Politically and militarily, the launch of the Iraqi War led by the US in 2003 was vetoed by France and Germany in the United Nation. No final resolution on the peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts has been agreed albeit the long-term American-led efforts to achieve it. The Chinese government is still suppressing human right activists in China although the US and the governments of some Western countries attempt to intervene in this regularly. Economically, even more than four years after the emergency of the financial crisis in 2008, the US and the EU state members particularly the UK, Germany, France, Italy, Greece and Spain are still struggling to stabilise their national economic systems. China has become the US government's biggest foreign creditor and been critical of America's 'addiction to debt' openly (BBC, 2011). It has also perpetually been refusing to appreciate the Renminbi at the speed requested by the US government. China has also overtaken Japan as the second largest economy in the world. As Perrow (1991:2) suggests, 'large organisations have absorbed society'. Arguably, globalisation enhances transnational corporations to absorb vast amounts of economic and social capital across the globe. For example, after the collapse of Lehman Brothers in the US in 2008, governments in the US and Europe sought to use taxpayers' money to rescue a number of big corporations and financial institutions in their countries as they were 'too big to fall'. It shows the heavy interconnectedness of the transnational corporations and the power of them under economic globalisation.

Both Bourdieu and Giddens agree that the deregulation of legal restrictions and the development of innovative technology in communications have led to lower communication costs and the world is moving towards a unified financial market (Bourdieu, 1998a:38; Giddens, 2002:14). Bourdieu, however, views it as a field in which the dominant players, especially those whose currency is used as an international reserve currency (i.e. the US Dollar, Euro, Pound Sterling, Japanese Yen, Canadian Dollar and Swiss Franc), occupy a position such that they can largely define the rules of the game and hold the dominant position to reduce the autonomy of national financial markets. As a matter of fact, the global regulatory standard on bank capital adequacy and liquidity - BASEL Accords (i.e. BASEL I, II and III), are agreed by the members of Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS) which consists of representatives from central banks and regulatory authorities of all the G-20 economies. BCBS provides a forum for regular cooperation on banking supervisory matters on the global financial market (www.bis.org). The implementation of the BASEL Accords relies on the national laws and regulations of each member as the BCBS has no authority to enforce the recommendations. Nation states indeed remain the primary focus of political loyalties and battles, as well as the dominant regulatory and policing agency, both in political and economic exchange (Hollingsworth, Schmitter, and Streeck, 1994; Whitley, 1998 and 2000).

Bourdieu also considers globalisation as an ideology of neo-liberalism, near the end of his life, Bourdieu expressed his political critique of neo-liberalism by writing:

As I was able to observe in Algeria, the unification of the economic field tends, especially through monetary unification and the generalization of monetary exchanges that follow, to hurl all social agents into an economic game for which they are not equally prepared and equipped, culturally and economically.

It tends by the same token to submit them to standards objectively imposed by competition from more efficient productive forces and modes of production, as can readily be seen with small rural producers who are more and more completely torn away from self-sufficiency. In short, unification benefits the dominant. - (Bourdieu, 2003:93)

Giddens (2002:44) argues that his understanding of the basic idea of neo-liberalism is the free-market mechanism. Free markets have a superior efficiency to government in almost all respects. There is no need for or lacks of policies of social justice imposed by government when given full and free play of the market as everything in it is bought and sold at its market value. Nevertheless, the emergency of the Asia financial crisis in 1997 and global financial crisis in 2008 have fiercely challenged the free market mechanism of neo-liberalism. For instance, the market values of the bankrupted Lehman Brothers' mini-bonds and some financial instruments in relation to the sub-prime mortgages in the US did not factually reflect their true values since they were highly over-credited by the privileged US credit agencies. In the end, different levels of intervention and additional regulations were imposed by the governments of the US and different nation states in Europe on their financial field. It suggests that the basic ideas of neo-liberalism and free-market mechanisms are not always superior to government.

To a certain extent, Bourdieu's political critique of neo-liberalism is applicable to the EU enlargement eastwards. To become a new EU state member, those eastern European economies have to adopt the 'rules of the game' – The Treaty on European Union, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, no matter what their national, political and economic power. Citizens in those new EU member states need to accept the dramatic price inflation that occurs upon

their joining the EU. It is similar to the populations in some of the old EU member states with weaker GDP having to adapt to the sharp surge in the cost of living due to the launch of the Euro in 2001 for monetary unification of the EU. However, in the meantime, the eastward expansion of the EU also provides new opportunities for the new EU states such as labour mobility permitting their people to study and work beyond national borders.

Hundreds of thousands of Polish people have flooded into the old EU states, such as UK and Ireland, to seek comparatively high-earning employment positions since Poland's joining of the EU in 2004. Many corporations in old EU member states have shifted their production plants to Eastern Europe. Following the cataclysm in the financial sector, and its knock-on effects on the rest of the economy in the UK since the end of 2008, hundred thousands of Polish in the UK have headed home in search of a better life as their banks were not in crisis and its economy is growing better. According to UNCTAD's World Investment Report 2010, the estimated annual average growth rate of Poland in 2010 was 3.82% (2009: 1.65%; 2008: 5.13%) whereas the UK was only 1.25% (2009: -2.63%; 2008: 0.22%). On the one hand, the East-West immigration has filled in the the gap of labour force in Western Europe in different industries such as agriculture, health care and hospitality. On the other hand, the flood of eastern European immigrants has caused heavy burdens on the social systems of old EU states and job loss for the locals. Globalisation therefore offers new risks and opportunities for both the dominants and dominated, not just benefits the dominants as Bourdieu (2003:93) suggests.

Transnational enterprises provision

Economic globalisation today is the medium of economic development (Giddens and Hutton, 2001:42). It enhances the flow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) across the globe which nurtures economic organisations to expand their businesses beyond their home countries' borders. Economic globalisation thus creates transnational corporations (TNCs). TNCs in all fields use cross-border mergers and acquisitions (M & A) as a speedy and practical mode for entry into host countries, or as a tool for global or regional restructuring (UNCTAD, 2004:111). Table 4.1 illustrates the FDI inflow and outflow of global, G7 and BRIC from 2000 to 2010.

Over the last decade, the decreasing total global FDI inflow in 2002 and 2003 as well as 2008 and 2009 both in the BRIC and G7 resulted from the world-wide IT bubble burst in 2001 and the global financial crisis in 2008 respectively. It confirms the increasing interconnectedness of economic exchange across the globe. The emergence of new economies such as Brazil, Russian, Indian and China (BRIC) during the last two decades has continuously attracted foreign direct investment from developed countries. The FDI inflow in the BRIC was at the peak of US\$331 billion in 2008 which was an increase of 30.7% from 2007. At the same year, the FDI inflow in the G7 was US\$437 billion with a decrease of 43.0% from 2007. The FDI inflow in the G7 and the BRIC both decreased in 2009 due to the global financial crisis starting from September 2008. The yearly FDI inflow of the G7 between 2000 and 2010 was still higher than that of the BRIC. Notwithstanding, the gap of FDI inflow between G7 and BRIC has been getting much narrower since 2008. For the first time, developing and transitional economies absorbed more than half of the global FDI inflow in 2010 (UNTCAD, 2011:xii).

The total global FDI outflow plunged 38.6% in 2001 compared with 2000 because of the IT bubble burst in 2001. FDI recovered since 2003 and reached its peak at an amount of US\$2,175 billion in 2007. However, it decreased 12.2% in 2008 and 38.7% in 2009 resulting from the global financial crisis that emerged in 2008. In 2010, it returned to an increase of 13.1% with the amount of US\$1,323 billion. In 2009, the outflow from the BRIC decreased 14.2% whereas the G7 decreased 27.9%. In 2010, the outflow from the BRIC increased 30.5% to an amount of US\$222 billion but funds flew from the G7 only increased 6.4% to an amount of \$645 billion. Many of the TNCs headquartered in BRIC have become true global players and a number of them are now publically ranked by foreign assets: CITIC (China), COSCO (China), Lukoil (Russian Federation), Gazprom (Russian Federation), Vale S.A. (Brazil), Tata (India) and ONGC Videsh (India) (UNTCAD, 2010:7). According to the World Investment Report 2011, developing and transitional economies accounted for 29% of global FDI outflow and half of the top-20 host economies for FDI in 2010 were developing or transitional economies (UNTCAD, 2011:xii). Hence, FDI is a common means used for organisation globalisation.

Beck (1990:51-69) fiercely criticises economic globalisation allowing TNCs to exploit infrastructural, financial and human capitals in those countries with lowest costs and obligations, but on the other hand, to play off their corporate responsibilities, particularly the financial ones such as corporate tax. However, more recent research (Archibugi and Lundvall, 2001; Rugman and Verbeke, 2001, UNCTAD, 2004:xxv) suggest that TNCs increasingly appreciate the tacit knowledge embedded in local industrial regions and are keen to acquire strategic assets in

different kinds of market economy. Since the beginning of 2008, international tax evasion has been reducing owing to implementing high standards of transparency and promoting information exchange have been high on the international policy agenda (OECD, 2010:1-5). In addition, the high number of double taxation treaties in 2009 reflected a desire to reduce FDI flows to tax haven economies such as Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and the British Virgin Islands (UNCTAD, 2010:5).

Foreign direct investment and services industry

The economic thrust of globalisation obliterates national barriers to the international flow of goods, services, capital, finance and information. FDI had shifted towards services from merchandise trade over the last two decades (UNCTAD, 2004:95-137). The trend will be sustained in developed countries since employment in foreign affiliates in the manufacturing sector has dropped sharply between 1999 and 2007, while in services it gained importance as a result of structural changes in these economies (OECD, 2010). Nonetheless, FDI inflows and outflows slumped in all three sectors (primary, manufacturing and services) in 2009 as one of the consequences of the global financial crisis in 2008. For business services, the cross-border merger and acquisition sales decreased from US\$102 billion in 2007 to US\$17 billion in 2009 (UNTCAD, 2010:10). In 2010, all the main service industries (business services, finance, transport and communication and utilities) fell, although at different speeds. The share of manufacturing rose to almost half of all FDI projects (UNTCAD, 2011:xii).

Table 4.1 FDI inward and outward flows of global, G7 and BRIC from 2000 – 2010 (Billions in US Dollars)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
FDI Inward											
<i>Developing economies (in total)</i>	258	216	175	184	293	332	429	573	658	511	574
Brazil	33	22	17	10	18	15	19	35	45	26	48
China	41	47	53	54	61	72	73	84	108	95	106
China, Hong Kong SAR	62	24	10	14	34	34	45	54	60	52	69
India	4	5	6	4	6	8	20	25	43	36	25
<i>Transitional economies (in total)</i>	7	10	11	20	30	31	55	91	121	72	68
Russian Federation	3	3	3	8	15	13	30	55	75	37	41
BRIC (in total)	142	101	88	90	134	142	187	253	331	245	289
	-28.5%	-13.1%	1.7%	49.7%	5.6%	31.8%	35.5%	30.7%	-25.7%	17.7%	
<i>Developed economies (in total)</i>	1,138	601	441	369	419	619	978	1,307	965	603	602
Canada	67	28	22	7	0	26	60	115	57	21	23
France	43	50	49	42	33	85	72	96	64	34	33
Germany	198	26	54	32	-10	47	56	80	4	38	46
Italy	13	15	15	16	17	20	39	40	-11	20	9
Japan	8	6	9	6	8	3	-7	23	24	12	-1
United Kingdom	119	53	24	17	56	176	156	196	91	71	46
U.S.A.	314	159	75	53	136	105	237	216	206	153	228
G7 (in total)	763	338	247	175	238	462	614	766	437	349	385
	-55.7%	-26.9%	29.2%	36.2%	93.7%	33.0%	24.8%	-43.0%	-20.1%	10.3%	
Total Global FDI Inward	1,403	826	627	573	742	983	1,462	1,971	1,744	1,185	1,244
	-41.13%	-24.12%	8.63%	29.61%	32.36%	48.78%	34.82%	-11.51%	-32.05%	4.95%	

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<u>FDI Outward</u>											
<i>Developing economies</i>	134	83	50	46	121	122	227	294	309	271	328
Brazil	2	-2	2	0	10	3	28	7	20	-10	12
China	1	7	3	3	5	12	21	22	52	57	68
China, Hong Kong SAR	59	11	17	6	46	27	45	61	51	64	76
India	1	1	2	2	2	3	14	17	19	16	15
<i>Transitional economies</i>	3	3	5	11	14	14	24	52	60	49	61
Russian Federation	3	3	4	10	14	13	23	46	56	44	52
Total BRIC	66	20	28	20	77	58	132	154	198	170	222
		-70.0%	39.1%	26.9%	280.7%	-25.0%	128.3%	16.7%	28.9%	-14.2%	30.5%
<i>Developed economies</i>	1,095	667	483	517	795	746	1,155	1,829	1,541	851	935
Canada	45	36	27	23	43	28	46	58	80	42	39
France	177	87	50	53	57	115	111	164	155	103	84
Germany	57	40	19	6	21	76	119	171	77	78	105
Italy	12	21	17	9	19	42	42	91	67	21	21
Japan	32	38	32	29	31	46	50	74	128	75	56
United Kingdom	233	59	50	62	91	81	86	272	161	4	11
U.S.A.	143	125	135	129	295	15	224	394	308	283	329
Total G7	699	406	331	311	557	402	678	1,223	976	606	645
		-41.9%	-18.5%	-5.9%	78.9%	-27.8%	68.7%	80.3%	-20.2%	-37.9%	6.4%
Total Global FDI Outward	1,232	753	537	574	930	882	1,405	2,175	1,911	1,171	1,323
	0.0%	-38.9%	-28.6%	6.8%	62.1%	-5.2%	59.3%	54.7%	-12.2%	-38.7%	13.1%

Source: Extracted from UNCTAD (www.unctad.org/fdi_statistics)

The increase in shifting of FDI from manufacturing to services before 2009 indicates that globalisation has influenced the competitive advantages of corporations and opportunity sets facing the managers of transnational corporations. Value adding activities have become increasing knowledge- or information-intensive, not just in high-technology sectors, but also in those that were previously regarded as natural resource or labour-intensive (Narula and Dunning, 2000:142). Given the complexities and uniqueness of different national business systems, transnational corporations require professional advice especially in the areas of strategy consulting, accounting, merchant and investment banking and lawyering when they globalise (Dunning, 1989:13).

In addition, 'Maximising shareholder value' has prominently become a principle of corporate governance especially in the Anglo-Saxon economies of the US and UK since the 1980s (Lazonick and O'Sullivan, 2000: 16). Shareholder value can be maximised through some major initiatives within an organisation in any sector. They are corporate strategic management, corporate financial management, supply chain management, customer relationship management, human resources management and marketing management. Top corporate managers usually downsize and restructure the corporations they control, in particular with an emphasis on cutting the labour force, to improve operational excellence (i.e. value creation). While there is a shortage of internal expertise to do the tasks, managers commonly turn to appoint external management consultants as management consulting has moved towards a profession with a strong reputation as value creator for clients (Poulsen, 1998). This supports Bourdieu's contention that neo-liberalism reasoning produces the two

supreme intellectual achievements – ‘expert’ and ‘communication consultant to the prince’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2001:5).

Large transnational services corporations, such as global management consulting firms, are able to mobilise human capital, financial assets and cultural assets among different parts of the same organisation to take advantage of the economies of specialisation of personnel and the economies of common governance. They can also benefit from differential factor costs and environmental flexibility (Dunning, 1989:13). As interviewee Andy put it:

In our case we are regional practices office. I am based in Kuala Lumpur (KL) but I only spend one day per week in KL. Our clients are outside KL such as in China, Singapore, Hong Kong, The Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia. We operate a regional model. Basically, our clients are global clients, as a result of this, our clients expect us in different geographies. In consulting, we rely on the team and the network at the knowledge set.....Consultants who are having strong network to be able to get appropriate help whenever and wherever he or she needs. Internal networking is necessary in consulting firms. – (Interviewee Andy, Practice Partner of C5 in Malaysia)

In short, both Bourdieu’s and Giddens’ views on globalisation are informative. Globalisation is a complex process of political, economic, technological and social change from different dimensions. It is not Americanisation or Westernisation as the sceptics claim as no single nation or group of countries can dominate it (Giddens, 2002:16). The free market mechanism is the basic idea of neo-liberalism but has been contested especially since the global financial crisis in 2008. Globalisation provides new opportunities and new risks for both dominants and dominated. It also facilitates the FDI flow which results in a rapid proliferation of transnational corporations (TNCs) and increasing requirements for professional services.

Consequently, the capitalist reasoning of ‘maximising shareholder value’ produces two new cultural producers - ‘expert’ and ‘communication consultant to the prince’ as Bourdieu and Wacquant (2001:5) argue. Organisation globalisation has also gradually shifted from seeking cheaper costs of production to appreciating local tacit knowledge and acquiring strategic assets in various kinds of market economy.

4.3 Global tradability of professional services

Following the rapid economic globalisation, professional services providers, such as doctors, lawyers, accountants and management consultants, need to respond to the demands of their clients to provide cross-border services (Dunning, 1989; Morgan and Quack, 2005; Powell, Brock and Hinings, 1999: 1 – 19; Rose and Hinings, 1999: 41 – 67). The international trade of professional services are legally bound by The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organisation that entered into force in January 1995. Nevertheless, the pace, character and extent of tradability of professional service vary across fields as they can be influenced by four factors: 1) technical; 2) economic; 3) regulatory and 4) markets and organisational. Technical factors represent informatisation of production and international standardisation. Economic factors refer to transportation and transaction costs and economies of scale and scope. Regulatory factors represent trade agreements and national regulations. Markets and organisational factors refer to internationalisation of markets and internationalisation of firms. In addition, international trade in service will only occur depending on the demand and supply

conditions related to the service, and the comparative advantages of different countries engaged in production and sale (UNCTAD, 2002: 1; Dunning, 2009: 46).

Healthcare services

The global healthcare industry was worth more than US\$3 trillion yearly in 2005 (Oxfam, 2005). The estimated value of healthcare products and services exported from the UK in 2005 was £14 billion (Donaldson and Banatvala, 2007). In 2013, the healthcare spending in UK is £159.9 billion which represents 8% of gross domestic product for the year (www.publicspending.co.uk). The national healthcare expenditure in the US was US\$2.5 trillion in 2009 which represented 17.5% of gross domestic product for the year (Freedonia, 2010). According to the World Health Report 2008 (World Health Organisation, 2008:103), per capital health expenditure in 2015 will grow by 60% in the fast-growing health economies of the Americas compared to the 2005 level. In the same period, health expenditure will double in Europe and the Middle-East and triple in East Asia. Globally, it is indeed an attractive field.

The driving forces for globalisation of healthcare include 1) cost differentiation between developed and developing countries; 2) technology differentiation between developed and developing countries; 3) age structure of developed countries; 4) availability and cost of air travel; and 4) global pandemics. The pace of healthcare services globalisation is relatively slower than many other professional services as there are barriers and constraints both in the national and international levels on its growth and development: 1) barriers to movement of professionals by means of visa, entry regulations and residence requirements with variations by skill category and

length of stay; 2) multilateral rules for practices; 3) lack of portability of health insurance; and 4) need for standardisation of accreditation (Bernal, 2007:89-93).

In the field of healthcare, education and training requirements are state- or country-specific (Biviano and Makarehchi, 2002). It restricts trans-border movement of physicians and delivery of medical services. Patients seeking lower costs in healthcare, up-to-date and sophisticated equipment as well as hospitals and healthcare facilities than are available in their home countries have to travel to the countries where service providers locate. In countries dominated by public health service system such as UK, the field is mainly run by the government. There are only a few private clinics and hospitals owned by health insurance groups, for example, Bupa. In countries such as Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia, where public and private healthcare systems co-exist, the field structure is fragmented. There are single proprietor surgeries, partnership practices, incorporated health centres, as well as sophisticated and well-equipped private hospitals in parallel with the public healthcare system. Within the profession, it is divided horizontally into fields by specialism, such as cardiology, orthopaedics, urology, oncology and so on, and vertically into three main social strata – doctors at the top, nurses in the middle, and support workers at the bottom with rigid boundaries that cannot be infringed (Maclean, Harvey and Press, 2006:27). In addition, the professional identity of doctors is legitimized by long-term education, professional and institutionalised training and examination.

Legal services

In less than 15 years the United States outward FDI stock in legal services has grown over 30 times from \$27 million in 1988 to \$918 million in 2002 (UNCTAD, 2004: 112). From 2005 to 2009, the global legal services market grew at a compound rate of 4.3% to reach a value of US\$560.3 billion. There were an estimated 2.7 million legal professionals in the field in 2009 with a reduction of 0.6%. Americas, Europe and Asia-Pacific accounted for 57.8%, 32.1% and 10.1% market share respectively (Datamonitor, 2010a:6-11). In 2004, the global legal market was dominated by US-based transnational legal firms. Of the 20 largest legal transnational corporations ranked by the number of lawyers employed in 2002, 12 were based in United States, 7 in the United Kingdom and 1 in Australia (UNCTAD, 2004:112). The large legal transnational corporations operate in a variety of legal areas, such as anti-trust and trade, banking and finance, intellectual property, real estate, corporate law and so forth, serving mostly large transnational corporations.

Legal business is skill-oriented and strongly host-country specific. Each country has its own legal code under which firms operate. Superimposed on these written legal codes are a country's values, culture and beliefs. To overcome the complexities of these features for globalisation, legal firms commonly form partnerships or engage in cross-border mergers & acquisitions rather than set up Greenfield affiliates (UNCTAD, 2004: 112). For example, following the deregulation in the legal field in the UK, the Courts and Services Act 1990 enables the establishment of multinational law practices in the UK which allows foreign firms to associate with, merge with British law firms or employ British lawyers (Flood, 1996:199). The field comprises legal firms of different sizes and with different expertise to deliver various kinds of

legal services that clients demand. The nature of services in the legal field is specific but standardised. The field structure is similar to the field of healthcare. Horizontally, it is divided into subfields such as civil law, criminal law, company law, family law and so forth. Vertically, it is divided into barristers, solicitors, legal executives and support staff. There are rigid horizontal and vertical boundaries within the profession (e.g. solicitors and barristers in the legal professional system in the UK, Hong Kong and Singapore). Members are legitimized by long-term education and a professional and institutional framework of qualifications and practice certificates/registrations.

Accountancy services

The accountancy field had a compound annual growth rate of 5.4% for the period spanning 2003-2007 and reached a value of US\$235.5 billion in 2007. The American market took up 55.9% of the global market share whereas Europe was 37% and Asia was 7.1% (Datamonitor, 2008a:7-10). The global accountancy market reached a value of US\$282.6 billion in 2009 albeit with a shrink of 1.6% where audit accounted for 51.0%, tax for 26.2% and advisory for 22.9%. The compound annual growth rate of the market in the period 2005-2009 was 4.2% (Datamonitor, 2010b:7-10). The accountancy field is today a large and highly regulated field dominated by four professional service firms known as the Big Four.

The Big Four are substantially larger than the other accountancy firms. They provide both accounting and management consulting services, although the trend was once towards the separation of these activities due to the increasing concern over conflict of interest by the Securities Exchange Committee (SEC) in the US and subsequently the launch of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act in 2002. The combined revenues of the Big

Four amounted to some 31% of the total global market for accountancy services in 2007. However, players are very similar to each other as accountancy remains as the core business in the field. The field is not only regulated by local legal, professional and institutional frameworks but also special articles in GATS. In May 1997, The Guidelines for Mutual Recognition Agreements or Arrangements in the Accountancy Sector were adopted, followed by the Disciplines on Domestic Regulation in the Accountancy Sector in December 1998 (UNCTAD, 2002:14). Due to the legal features and national constraints in each country, the mode of expansion of accountancy firms abroad relies largely on non-equity forms of investment by commonly adding members to a network and partnership with local accountancy firms under a brand name and through mergers. Accountancy firms are typically operated as partnerships (UNTCAD, 2004:110; UNTCAD, 2010).

Service offerings such as auditing, bookkeeping and tax advice usually have to fulfil specific requirements set by government regulations, such as International Accounting Standards (IAS) or International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), and thus tend to provide a range of standard products. Nonetheless, the accountancy firms also, with a degree of flexibility, provide related business advisory services to meet clients' requirements. The Sarbanes-Oxley Act 2002 prohibits accountancy firms from providing laundry lists of services to their corporate clients, if they are at the same time auditing them, but, in any case, auditors can seek approval from their corporate client's audit committee to provide both auditing and consulting services simultaneously if the need should arise (Pawlyna, 2002). In fact, the related business advisory services offered by the firms in the accountancy field overlap with some

services offered by management consulting firms. Entry to the global accountancy market may be achieved by an individual accountant to establish a single practice with relatively little capital outlay or proprietary knowledge involved (Datamonitor, 2008a:13 and 2010b:13). Hence, the field structure is fragmented in different sizes as well as scales and scopes of business. Professional legitimacy originates from long-term institutionalised and professional training and accreditation.

Management consulting services

Management consulting firms are currently becoming more international in their activities. The turnover for the largest firms can be expected to include a considerable share of revenue obtained from overseas delivery of services. There is lack of a strict definition of 'Management Consulting' and blurred boundaries exist in relation to other fields. Management consulting includes the provision of corporate strategy services, operations management services, information technology solutions, human resource management services and other services. It reached a value of US\$258.9 billion in 2007 with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.7% from 2003 to 2007 (Datamonitor, 2008b:8-10). In 2007, the corporate strategy segment was the most lucrative to contribute a total revenue of US\$183.90 billion, equating to 76.7% of the market's aggregate value. The operations management segment generated revenues of US\$86.2 billion, equivalent to 36% of the market's overall value.

In 2009, the global market shrank 2.7% and reached a value US\$272.3 billion. The compound annual growth rate was 5.9% for the period 2005-2009. However, the market was forecast to reach a value of US\$383.1 billion in 2014, an increase of

40.7% since 2009. The operations management consulting had overtaken corporate strategy segment as the most lucrative and accounted for 26.3% of the market's total value. The remainder was shared by information technology (22.6%), corporate strategy (18.7%), human resources management (10.3%) and other services (22.1%) segments. Other services include outsourcing consulting. The market segmentation was dominated by the Americas which accounted for 50.5% and Europe that accounted for 40.0% whereas Asia-Pacific accounted for 9.4% (Datamonitor, 2010c:2-11).

The field structure is fragmented with four main types of management consulting firms. The first type is the large and multidisciplinary companies such as Accenture, IBM Global Services, Capgemini and Deloitte, offering the whole spectrum of services including information and communication technology and strategy consultancy. The second type is medium size companies offering more confined services, often with specialisation in a particular area (e.g. Hay Group). The third type encompasses big international companies, such as McKinsey & Co., Boston Consulting Group, Bain & Co., offering strategy consultancy but are not specialised in any particular field. The last type usually specialises in some specific areas such as GE Healthcare (Datamonitor, 2008b:12). Similar to the accountancy field, new entrants can be a single practice with relatively little capital expenditure or proprietary knowledge.

Management consulting firms generally offer the least standardised and most flexible service products to fulfil clients' needs. However, there has been a tendency to base

the production of new services on standard procedures. Global management consulting firms have tried to standardise services across both countries and industries in order to exploit economies of scale and scope and to adapt standard products to local clients' needs so as to increase the value delivered to clients (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2001:943-945; UNCTAD, 2002:7 and 52). Cross-border trade is commonly performed in intra-trade with immediate products delivered through establishment of affiliates abroad. Licensing and accreditation are not legally obliged in most of the countries.

The characterisations of global tradability of the four categories of professional services discussed in this section are summarized and exhibited in Table 4.2. The focus of this research is on the field of management consulting. Unlike doctors, lawyers and accountants, the professional identity of management consultants has always been problematic and hard to determine (Fincham, 2002/03:67 and 2006:19-20). The general image of management consultants in contemporary society is, for different groups, 'provocative as well as appealing' (Alvesson and Johansson, 2002:299).

Table 4.2 Global tradability of four kinds of professional services: healthcare, law, accountancy and management consulting

Characterisation	Healthcare	Law	Accountancy	Management Consulting
Breadth of globalisation	Deterred due to the degree that medical education and training requirements are state- or country-specific	Tend to be more national due to different national legal systems	Fairly globalised	Fairly globalised
Strategy for globalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited international trade in healthcare services and trans-border activity Migration of healthcare professionals to countries with the highest salaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in cross-border association, mergers & acquisitions rather set up Greenfield affiliates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through FDI including partnerships Mergers or acquisitions is an importance process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through FDI including partnerships Mergers or acquisitions is an important process
Field structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flat : for countries only with public health system - a single organisation run by government Fragmented: for countries with co-existing public- and privately-run healthcare system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fragmented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fragmented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fragmented
Professional structure and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With legal, professional and institutional framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With legal, professional and institutional framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With legal, professional and institutional framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No legal, institutional or professional definition on management consultant and boundaries blur with other professions

Characterisation	Healthcare	Law	Accountancy	Management Consulting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly stratified and hierarchical with rigid boundaries within the profession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly stratified and hierarchical with rigid boundaries within the profession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hierarchical in large accountancy firms; flat in small accountancy firms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hierarchical in large management consulting/accountancy firm; flat in small firms
Professional legitimacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensing Through long-term and institutionalised and professional training and accreditation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensing Through long-term and institutionalised and professional training and accreditation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensing Through long-term and institutionalised and professional training and accreditation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only licensing in a few countries (e.g. Austria) No formal long-term and institutionalised and professional training and accreditation
Modes of globalised delivery of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the international exchange of healthcare services consists of purchase of services in developed countries by persons travelling to those countries for treatment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-border trade most common with intra-firm trade, less temporary movement of services producers (i.e. lawyers working on location) Delivery through the establishment of affiliates abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-border trade most common with intra-firm trade, less temporary movement of services producers (i.e. accountants working on location) Delivery through the establishment of affiliates abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-border trade most common with intra-firm trade, predominant in temporary movement of services producers (i.e. consultants working on location) Delivery through the establishment of facilities abroad
Modes of service products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific but standardised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardised with some degree of flexibility with the product to meet new customer's requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customised to suit the needs of a particular client or situation. Moving from customised services to standard or routine services due to competition.

Source:

1) UNCTAD (2002 and 2004); 2) Bernal (2007); 3) Biviano and Makarehchi (2002)

4.4 The historical development and evolution of management consulting

Historical development and growth of management consulting

To understand 'a category of people', no matter a social class, a professional or occupational group, a type of business or a work organisation, one needs to understand their background, which influences their present and future behaviour' (Hofstede, 1994:1). Management consulting has its origins in the Industrial Revolution, the advent of the modern factory and the related institutional and social transformations. However, it only emerged from the scientific management movement in the efficiency and time-and-motion studies pioneered by Charles Bedaux, Harrington Emerson, Frank and Lillian Gilbreth, and Frederick Taylor in the latter part of the nineteenth century (Henry, 2002:19-35; Kipping, 2002:28-49; McKenna, 1995; Wright, 2002). Over the twentieth century, when the size and structure of American industry had changed from one of small and family-owned enterprises to one dominated by large corporations, corporate organisations, such as General Motors and Du Pont, became more diversified, decentralised and internationalised (Chandler, 1962, 1977 and 1990; Fligstein, 1990). It is this high degree of structural complexity, organisational diversification and decentralisation as well as internalisation that creates opportunities for management consulting to grow remarkably as socio-economic context is important for the development of the field of management consulting (Engwall and Kipping, 2003:6).

Booz, Allen & Hamilton and McKinsey & Company, founded in the United States in the 1920s to undertake independent assessments of business organisations, are regarded as being two pioneers of the consulting profession and occupy a central position in the economy (Fincham and Clark, 2002:3; Fincham and Clark,

2002/2003:7). In response to the growing cross-border economic coordination and activities, the same as firms in other professional services sectors, management consulting firms also need to globalise their business to serve their transnational clients. As interviewee James stated:

The large consulting firms are more and more global than commit to home markets. They tend to move wherever the business is.....the years that I was consulting, we were operating at an international level. Basically the partners wouldn't have any commitment to a geographical market. Their commitment was, like more and more consulting firms, organised by or structured by industries. So, if your industry is pharmaceutical that means you go wherever there is a pharmaceutical opportunity. Be it in Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States or Canada, it doesn't matter. - (Interviewee James, ex-Partner of the consulting arm of a Big Four professional service firm).

The most common practice for management consulting firms to develop a global presence is to establish new offices overseas (i.e. greenfield) or merge with local management consulting firms (i.e. mergers and acquisitions). In the late 1950s, the US management consulting firms started going global. Both Arthur D. Little and Booz, Allen & Hamilton established their first foreign office in Zurich, Switzerland in 1957. Booz, Allen & Hamilton then opened its first South American office in São Paulo, Brazil in 1969. McKinsey & Company decided to open its first overseas office in London in 1959 after a long struggle among the partners and other new offices in different European countries followed afterwards. Then it established an office in Melbourne, Australia in 1962, in Toronto, Canada in 1968, in Mexico City, Mexico in 1970, and in Tokyo, Japan in 1971 (Geoffrey and Lefort, 2005:11). Other small US management consulting firms also started to follow their clients by expanding their business outside the United States from the 1960s but at a significantly smaller

scale. Since then, the global market for management consulting has been expanding continuously and so is the globalisation of the US management consulting firms.

Commonly, the organisational structure of global management consulting firms is strategically divided by regions but their business coordination and activities are not limited at a regional level. Interviewee Tom, an ex-Worldwide Senior Partner of a top-tier global human resources management consulting firm and the Chairman of his own consulting practice in Hong Kong with top reputable global clientele at the time of interview explained that:

For global management consulting firms, it is very common that they adopt a regional concept to acquire human capital. Each office has their own headcounts but it is impossible, even for a global consultancy, to have a team of specialists in every industry based in each of their offices. So, what they need to balance the clients' requirements and the economic effectiveness. The fees charged to clients in different countries are not standardised. For instance, the fees charged by McKinsey or Accenture for doing projects in Mainland China are cheaper than those in USA. Hence, the consulting firms cannot allocate all consultants from Hong Kong or international consultants to projects in Mainland China. They have to recruit and develop a local team of consultants who are paid on a local pay scale. At the same time, the consulting firms will select some consultants from Hong Kong or international with relevant and specialised knowledge and experience to work on the projects in Mainland China. In summary, each consulting firm need to maintain a mix of human capitals in terms of costs, market and industry knowledge as well as experience to develop a competent team. For consultants, the experienced ones need to frequently travel to work in international projects and relocate to overseas countries in short-term basis. – (Interviewee Tom, ex-Worldwide Senior Partner of a top-tier global HR management consulting firm and Chairman of his own consulting practice in HK)

The human resources strategy of international mobility that is usually adopted by global management consulting firms means that management consultants are wedded to several places at once. As Beck (2001:165 and 168) put it, 'in a new global age, individuals always spread their lives out across separate worlds which means one's

own life is no longer sedentary or tied to a particular place'. In this research, all interviewees were either frequent travellers across countries or heavily linked with colleagues inter-organisationally or clients across the continents. Therefore, they have to reinvent themselves and every social construct, permanently rewriting and rethinking their biographies. As Beck (2001:168) postulates, 'globalisation of biography means place polygamy'.

Three major generations of management consulting can be characterised during the twentieth century - scientific management, organisation and strategy, and IT-based networking (Kipping, 2002:37). The emergence of each wave is related to a change in organisation and management of client companies themselves. It is apparently difficult for leading service providers in one generation to preserve their pre-eminence during the next wave. Some leading players in one generation decline or even disappear in the next one. In 2003 and 2004, the leading players in the field were Bearing Point Inc., McKinsey & Company, Capgemini, Deloitte Consulting, Accenture and IBM Global Services (Datamonitor, 2004:13-14 and 2005:13-15). In 2009, Accenture, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, Ernst & Young, KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers took the leading positions (Datamonitor, 2010b:15-25). It indicates that the Big Four professional service firms have rebuilt their consulting practice areas and regained the market.

Kipping (2002:39) argues that, to preserve their pre-eminence in each wave, consulting firms need to have three features: the source of a consultancy's reputation, the skills of management consultants in relation to their tasks, and the internal

organisation necessary to conduct specific types of project profitably. In Bourdieu's theory, it is the symbolic assets, cultural assets and organisational assets of management consulting firms that critically define their trading strength, competitive capabilities and outward expression of their capacity to organise activities in order to retain a commanding position in the field (Maclean, Harvey and Press, 2006:30-31). They constitute the core of each management consulting firm's culture and business activities.

Changing face within the field

Since the 1980s, management consulting has undergone significant global restructuring and strategic change. The management consulting field had been dominated by a small number of firms that were not big in terms of number of staff and revenues until the 1980s. (Fincham and Clark, 2002/2003:3-18). Approximately eighty percent of firms operating in the field during the period were established after 1980 (Ernst and Kieser, 2002:47-73). The landmark event was the decision of the then Big Eight³ accountancy firms to enter the field and promoted vigorously the management consulting alongside the professional accounting and auditing services since the early 1960s (Kubr, 2002:34). In many cases, the revenue from their management consulting business exceeded those from the traditional audit and accounting business (Kipping, 2002:35). To diversify their services offerings, they became re-labelled as "global multidisciplinary partnerships" or 'professional service firms' (Fincham and Clark, 2002/2003:5).

³ Big Eight – Arthur Andersen, Ernst & Ernst, Haskins & Sells, Lybrand, Ross, Bros. & Montgomery, Peat Marwick, PriceWaterhouse, Touche, Ross and Arthur Young.

The merger of Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand in 1998 had created the world's fourth largest management consultancy (excluding their accounting and auditing business) and reduced the global professional service firms to Big Five (Kubr, 2002:36). The demise of Arthur Andersen in 2002 resulting from the Enron scandal further reduced the Big Five to the Big Four. Accenture, the spin-off consulting arm from Arthur Anderson, was successfully rebranded and publicly listed to become the largest independent management consulting firm in the world in 2001. The traditional strategy firm Arthur D. Little was brought into administration in 2002. A.T. Kearney was acquired by EDS in 1995 but the partners purchased the firm back and achieved independence in January, 2006 (www.atkearney.com). The mergers and acquisitions mania has continued but has slowed down since then.

In 2009, a wave of mergers and acquisitions within the field reappeared. In February 2009, BearingPoint, which used to be one of the major players in the field, filed under Chapter 11 a restructuring plan with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court. Its business in Australia had been taken over by Deloitte. In July 2009, the company entered into a definitive agreement with its European management team for the sale of its EMEA practice to become a legally independent entity owned by the EMEA management, operating under the BearingPoint brand. In May 2009, PricewaterhouseCoopers acquired all BearingPoint business in Japan. In June 2009, it completed acquisition of BearingPoint assets of the Commercial Services business in North America at an approximate price of US\$44 million (www.PwC.com and www.Bearingpoint.com). At the same time, Deloitte acquired the majority of the North American Public Services unit of Bearing Point for US\$350 million (www.Deloitte.com). Also,

Hewlett-Packard announced to acquire EDS at a price US\$13.9 million in May, 2008 in order to create a leading force in global IT services especially in IT outsourcing (www.hp.com). These restructurings have made the global management consulting become more diverse, fragmented but competitive.

Since the economic downturn starting in 2000, the global market value of management consulting had only grown at a slower single-digit rate from US\$110.9 billions to US\$158.7 billions from 2000 to 2004 (Datamonitor, 2005:9). From 2005 to 2008, the field was strongly growing again year-to-year. However, in 2009, its market value was at US\$272.70 billions, a shrink of 2.7% compared with 2008 (Datamonitor, 2010b: 8-9). After the clout of spin-offs and takeovers in early 2000's, the field became dominated by a few large major players with global reach – Bearingpoint, McKinsey & Company, Capgemini, Deloitte Consulting, Accenture and IBM Global Services (Datamonitor, 2005:13-15). Kipping (2002: 38 -39) suggests that market restructuring will jeopardize the high-status-strategy firms' market position as they became driven into a niche. In 2009, the leading players in the field were Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, Accenture, Ernst & Young International, KPMG International and PricewaterhouseCoopers. Operation management consulting (26.3%) and information technology (22.6%) accounted for 48.9% of the total market value whereas corporate strategy was 18.7% in 2009 (Datamonitor, 2010b:10). It reveals that the nature of management consulting services required by clients has changed. High-status-strategy firms are no longer in the leading revenue positions within the field.

Global strategic change in management consulting

In any field, firms, through competitive strategy, seek to define and establish an approach to competing that is both profitable and sustainable. As Porter (2004:3) suggests, 'The essence of formulating competitive strategy is relating a firm to its environment' and 'competition in an industry is rooted in its underlying economic structure'. Therefore, both the exogenous forces in the macro environment and endogenous forces in the micro-environment can affect all firms within an industry in terms of strategic decision and performance. There were some major forces driving strategic change in the field of management consulting over the last two decades.

The Sarbanes-Oxley Act

In the 1990s, the Big Five became major leading players in the management consulting industry after their rapid expansion in management consulting and the considerable consolidation in the accountancy field. It is a known fact that in the light of multi-million corporate accounting scandals in the US, especially the Enron/Andersen case, led to the passage of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act in 2002 and the collapse of Arthur Andersen which had approved Enron's account. The Sarbanes-Oxley Act had apparently played a statutory and regulatory force driving global restructuring in management consulting. Nonetheless, long before the passage of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) had raised concern about the evolving conflict of interest facing large professional service firms whenever they provide both accounting/auditing and management consulting services to the same client. In response to this, the Big Five commenced to divest

their consulting arms or were already in the process of doing so before any concrete law-making.

In 2000, Ernst & Young was the first of the major professional services firms to divest its management consulting business by selling it to the France-based Cap Gemini Group. The Group then changed its name to Capgemini in April 2004 (Capgemini Annual Report, 2003). Arthur Andersen spun off its consulting arm in August 2000 to become an independent publicly listed legal entity – Accenture in January 2001, with a successful branding campaign. PricewaterhouseCoopers announced to divest its consulting business – PwC Consulting and to name it as ‘Monday’, prior to IBM’s decision to acquire the consultancy at a purchased price of US\$3,888 million (IBM Annual Report, 2003), but it attracted somewhat unpleasant reaction in the market (PR Newswire, 2002). Deloitte also proposed to divest of its consulting arm – Deloitte Consulting before the end of 2002 and to name it as ‘Baxton’ but it withdrew this re-positioning and rebranding strategy later (Business Wire, 2002). Deloitte became the only Big Four that had not separated its consulting arm. However, the other three of Big Four have managed to rebuild their management consulting arms over in the last few years.

The field consolidation has forced each management consulting firm to differentiate themselves. A competitive reputation helps to persuade clients who can deliver projects that require specific external expertise. As interviewee Ivy, a Senior Consultant of C4 in Malaysia revealed, ‘We might customise everything for clients before but we do not now as we sell the specific differences’. The launch of the

Sarbanes-Oxley Act in 2002 had also benefited the Big Four. Interviewee Jacob, the Practising Partner of C5 in Malaysia confirmed that it had provided ‘extra income for audit and tax because corporations need to comply with the law’. Many multinational corporations desire to appoint the Big Four to create or review their internal control systems and procedures in order to comply with the requirements of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.

The merger mania of the business consulting arms of the Big Four with IT companies (e.g. IBM, Capgemini, EDS and Atos) or the public listings of management consulting firms (e.g. Accenture and Bearingpoint) led to archetype change of consulting business from partnership to corporation form. The individuals interviewed in this research had different opinions on the change. As interviewee Kathy stated:

In terms of the consolidation of management consulting firms and IT companies, the change is better for the IT companies. For my ex-management consulting firm, I think it might be worse as they sold their consulting arms years ago but now they are re-building its consulting team again. I don't know if my ex-management consulting firm won anything from the merger but I am sure the change for my existing company has been better. It did not really have the image of a consulting firm prior to the merger but it has now a stronger image as a firm with integrated solution, not just only about software and IT systems but also how to provide successful implementation and consulting as well. For consultant, at the end of the day, it has been a good change for me personally and for people who are still working for the company. Otherwise, all of us have left already. My existing company is a large company having more knowledge within the company, more possibilities and more opportunities for individual's career - (Interviewee Kathy, Senior Consultant of C3 in the Netherland).

Interviewee Sean, an ex-Senior Manager of C5 & C6 in Singapore, viewed the publicly listed management consulting firms had changed in direction from focusing

on employee development and involvement on people to more concern with making Wall Street happy. It meant that individual career development become narrow and very restrictive after their public listings. Interviewee Sean's view was supported by interviewee Peter:

When you have partnership based on intellectual capital and local thought-ware development and knowledge management of the people and the resources, that takes a more professional approach whereas a corporate structure may not have the freedom or the flexibility to invest for long term and may not place as much proprietary focus on knowledge management development and institutionalisation as in the corporate form where you are pressed to meet quarterly earnings targets. - (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

Hence, the IT corporations have been benefitting from the acquisition of the consulting arms from the Big Four. However, management firms in publicly listed corporate form were seen as a restriction on individual career and expertise development of management consultants.

Economic change

The global 'Bull' financial market during the 1990s created the 'Initial Price Offer lust' across the global business world. The economic boom had activated a wave of mergers and acquisitions in different fields globally. It provided new business opportunities for management consulting firms which possessed merger and acquisition expertise. At the same time, the increases in mergers and acquisitions triggered the growth and importance of investment banks to compete with the management consulting firms. However, the financial crisis emerged in Asia in 1997, which originated from Thailand, causing an overturn in the financial markets in Asia. On the one hand, the market value of many publicly listed corporations had drastically plunged. Many multi-domestic or multinational corporations in the region

had collapsed or been brought into bankruptcy. Multi-million dollar investments in the financial market evaporated in a very short time. On the other hand, to a certain extent, the financial crisis had benefits for the legal and professional service firms especially the Big Four. This is because they are the major sources of supplying qualified receivers or administrators for the corporations which are brought into bankruptcy or administration.

Following the economic downturn in 2001/2002 combined with the event of 11 September in 2001, adverse entanglement emerged in various global markets. They included the management consulting field although the overall management consulting market was continuously growing at a slower rate. A few years on, management consulting firms including the Big Four are now facing another more challenging time. The global financial crisis triggered by the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008 which originated from the sub-prime mortgage markets in US had much more adverse and severe impacts on the global economy than the Asian financial crisis in 1997. Jim Turley, Ernst & Young's global Chairman and Chief Executive Officer in 2001, admitted in an interview with A Plus, the official journal of Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants, in 2009 that:

This is the worst time I've seen in the last decade. Even in my 30-plus-year career, it is the most difficult time. When there's no merger and acquisition activity, when there's no IPO deal to speak of, when discretionary spending is being put off, pricing pressure, you name it, we are all impacted (Turley, 2009: 15).

The economic downturn in 2001/02 and the global financial crisis in 2008 had led to price competition within the field which meant that more and more potential client

organisations were able to afford buying consulting services. Theoretically one could argue that management consulting firms are adding value across the broader spectrum of companies under this circumstance. However, interviewee Tom inferred that:

If the global economic is stagnant or downturn, then there will be impact on the consulting industry....consultancies providing general consulting services without specialisation cannot have good business. If their service offering is very broad, it will end up in price competition. The ones who are not price competitive would be ousted. Also, if consultancies without combination of product, brand and positioning and stay in the middle of the spectrum will not be recognised as an expert in specific areas. - (Interviewee Tom, ex-Worldwide Senior Partner of a top-tier HR management consulting firm and Chairman of his own consulting practice in HK)

The price depression is therefore neither good for the owners of management consulting firms or for management consultants. Following a decrease in revenue, management consulting firms would reduce costs and cut the training budget, in terms of expertise development and career opportunities, for their members.

Demographic change

Years ago, management teams in corporations consisted of a lot lesser higher degree educated people than nowadays. Hence, it was much easier for smarter hot-shot consultants to bring out the latest business thinking, sell it and roll it out to clients in order to generate consulting business based on the results of bright academic work.

Nevertheless, as interviewee Peter informed:

In the past two to three decades, there had been much greater development of and appreciation for universities and academic institutions which had brought to the forefront in terms of management thinking. There were even many management consultants going back to graduate business school and then shifted to industry. It had raised the level of knowledge sophistication of the average clients drastically but also made management consultants getting harder and harder to add value to what the client is already doing. Also, business information is much more acceptable and markets are evolving much more rapidly today. Clients are probably just as in need for consulting services

as previous but the jobs have to be shifted to more niche industry expertise and more knowledgeable about what is happening with industry shifts and trends. – (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

This reveals that clients have become more knowledgeable due to the rise of their education levels and demand for more niche industry expertise from management consulting consultants.

The Internet boom period of the 1990s attracted many people to grasp the emerging employment opportunities to enter into the managing consulting field especially engaging in IT-related projects. Some were from other professions such as healthcare, law, accountancy, engineering and so on. For example, the current global, Africa and Asia leaders of the Health Care business line of PricewaterhouseCoopers are professional medical doctors (www.pwc.com). Cooper, Greenwood and Hinings (1997:30-31) question the move of these professionals into management consulting as they may be expanding into markets where their role and expertise are disputed and they are compromising their traditional professional identity. The management consulting firms ended up having recruited too many people before the economic downturn in the early 2000's. There was also high turnover in consultants within the field as people changed jobs moving around for higher remuneration.

When the downturn came, heavy redundancy followed. Interviewee Charles, an ex-Consultant of C5 in Singapore, revealed that 'lots of retrenchment, many people were asked to leave without prior notice' and 'the redundancy process was unfair to the consultants', claimed by another interviewee Barry, an ex-Consultant of C5 in Hong Kong. The scale of redundancy in the field after the global financial crisis in

2008 was even worse. More boutique consultancies had emerged in the market and some were established by ex-employees of the Big Four. However, 'the market is huge and there are not enough consultants in the market especially good consultants', as stated by interviewees Ivy and Tom. The waves of heavy redundancy drove many management consultants to leave external consulting. Numerous organisations have now built their own consultancy capacity and many employees at the senior levels have been ex-consultants of leading management consulting firms. They can perform in-house consulting tasks for their organisations which lead to less demand for external consulting. Interviewee Oliver, a Project Manager of C1 in Germany, confirmed that 'the projects nowadays tend to be much shorter to about 3 months instead of long-lasting (e.g. 3 - 9 months) as previous and the resources that management consulting firms allocate to projects are much less now than they used to be'.

Innovative development of information technology and outsourcing

Eisenhardt (2002) argues that globalisation, not the Internet, is the fundamental driver transforming the economic playing field. However, the rapid development in information technology particularly the innovation of the Internet in the mid-1990s changed the culture and infrastructure of doing business across the globe. Information and communication can be transmitted much faster via the Internet than before. It minimises the geographic barriers to do business among different countries and provides a speedy platform for globalisation. Doing business in other countries involves different business law, corporate tax, sales and services tax, personal tax and cultural norms in different industries. Transnational corporations thus require

specialised expertise to handle the complexity of different national business systems. Subsequently, it provides new business opportunities for large professional service firms particularly those with global reach. Over the last two decades, new emerging economies in Central and Eastern Europe such as Poland and Bulgaria, and in Asia such as Vietnam, Thailand, India and China have attracted vast FDI from foreign enterprises which expand into these economies. As interviewee Ernst, an ex-Senior Consultant of C5 postulated, ‘corporations in these new emerging countries have more or less caught up in the “fundamentals” in operations and start to seek advice in financial operation services and continuous improvement’. In other words, corporations often have to turn to employ external consultants due to their lack of internal resources and capabilities.

The emergence and spectacular growth of e-commerce and e-business in the mid-1990s reshaped the management consulting field. By 2000, all the leading management and IT consulting firms were actively involved in e-business consulting and offered system implementation together with business advisory services for doing and promoting business via the Internet. The ‘Y2K’ problem was another force that pushed up demand for management consulting services on business continuity from the mid-1990s. Huge demand for launching e-commerce and e-business as well as heavy corporate IT spending was injected by companies in all markets in order to avoid the millennium crisis which encouraged large parts of management consulting firms to increasingly concentrate on IT-related consulting (Armbrüster and Kipping, 2002:21-22). Management consulting firms therefore formed strategic alliances with

Enterprise Resources Planning (ERP) system vendors such as SAP, Oracle and the then Peoplesoft, BaaN and JD Edward to seize the new business opportunities.

In respect of all large management consulting firms moved into IT-related consulting, interviewee Terry held his opinions from a value creation perspective:

I am a process guy....it reduces the value that consultants provide to clients. Implementing IT systems like SAP or whatever is very low value for client whereas re-engineering the processes to become more competitive is very high value for clients. The IT model is we hire 100 kids and many of them just out of the colleges and then put them through 2 weeks training on SAP. After the training, we sent them to the clients. We would not be paying the kids much but we charged the client a lot of money. The fees for process consulting are also comparatively lower for consulting firms and more complicated as it requires more competent people to deliver a good solution. - (Interviewee Terry, ex-Senior Manager of C5 in Asia and the Founder & President of a management consulting practice in Canada)

From a career perspective, interviewee Frank concluded that:

In some ways, it is good as there are interesting new work, new opportunities and more work. Negatively, the big projects tend to devalue or make skills become commodity skills rather than special skills and drive individuals to look for new skills that they can develop or new capabilities that they need to have in order to be unique or to retain personal competitive advantages. - (Interviewee Frank, Managing Consultant of C3 and ex-member of C4 in the UK)

It indicates that strategic change in operations management consulting from a process-focus to IT-focus has commoditised management consultants' individual expertise. It can lead to less value creation for clients from management consulting projects.

The IT boom also attracted a proliferation of new entrants into the field naming themselves as 'e-consultancies'. Conversely, many 'e-consultancies' did not avert the pitfalls of overselling, over-pushing clients into hurriedly prepared and over-

ambitious projects, making unrealistic commitments to both clients and investors, conceiving and launching 'dot-com' businesses without a clear market future. However, when the burst of the dotcom bubble started in the US in 2001 it adversely affected the whole of global business. Global IT spending shrunk, global financial investment declined, market values of many reputable transnational corporations sharply plunged, and many internet companies were brought into administration and consolidation occurred in many IT-related industries. Consequently, it led to a slump in demand for e-consulting from clients at that period of time. There was a major shakeout of internet and dotcom consulting firms.

In the late 1990s, many companies were afraid of being left behind in terms of IT system and consulting services investment. Business processes automation became the fashion at that time, partly due to the special business problems of cost reduction and revenue generation. Following this was outsourcing which included application management, business process and infrastructure management. Outsourcing can be done by offshoring, either 'captive offshoring' or 'offshore outsourcing' (UNTCAD, 2004:xxvi). 'Captive offshoring' is to produce the service internally through establishment of foreign affiliates while 'offshore outsourcing' is to outsource a service to a third-party service provider. Offshoring represents the cutting edge of the global shift in production activity, giving rise to a new international division of labour in the production of services. The tendency of outsourcing 'has been growing substantially and will continue to grow', as articulated by interviewee Mary, a Manager of C6 in the Netherlands. It is because 'the idea of outsourcing can allow organisations to focus on their

resources on its core business and maintain the capacity of human resources expenses in long term', as interviewee Tom explained. It supports the basic insights of the transaction cost logic of economic organisation advanced and reiterated by Coase (1937 and 1988):

A firm.....[has] a role to play in the economic system if.....transactions [can] be organized within the firm at less cost than if the same transactions were carried out through the market. The limit to the size of the firm...[is reached] when the costs of organizing additional transactions within the firm [exceed] the costs of carrying out the same transactions through the market' (Coase, 1988: 19).

Outsourcing service providers normally hire staff on a contract basis for flexibility. Hence it is also a change in employment model in the labour market – from long-term and stable to short-term and flexible. On the one hand, there is an increase in labour mobility which is influential on any economy. On the other hand, it causes a decrease in job stability in the labour market. These conditions may be seen as exemplary of 'the generalisation of precarious way labour and social insecurity, turned into the privileged engine of economic activity' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2001:2). Strategic/business processes outsourcing, nonetheless, has attracted some fierce critiques from customers in terms of cost effectiveness and quality. Interviewee Tom viewed the problem 'does not come from the idea of outsourcing but from the vendor as, sometimes, due to the price competition, some vendors bid the project in a very low price but they are not well-organised and incapable to deliver'. In addition, 'outsourcing is capital investment intensive and clients may not see the outsourcing result in the first two years', as interviewee Mary concluded. In short, the growing management consulting services in outsourcing, temporary management and so forth which all resonate with a normalising discourse on

consulting in which the organisational boundary and traditional conceptions of the division of work between internal and external actors are revamped. (Bäcklund and Werr, 2008:768).

Emergence of rivals and substitute products

All firms selling a particular product are in competition with industries producing substitute products. Position vis-à-vis substitute products may well be a matter of collective industry actions (Porter, 2004:23). Those non-management consulting companies which entered into the field were from other industries such as information technology, airlines, banking, insurance, energy and manufacturing. They had in-depth specific knowledge and expertise in their respective fields. The characteristic of the global professional service firms was to provide customers with the full scope of accounting/auditing/IT and management consulting services or so called 'one-stop shopping' services. However, some clients prefer to deal with niche/small consultancies, which commonly offer specialised consulting services, rather than large firms such as C3, C4, C5 or C6 particularly when the clients only need specific services rather than the full range of services.

Another threat was 'the emergence of consulting firms in India doing integration or programming start to move up to do consulting with low cost' (interviewee Gladys, a Managing Consultant of C4 in UK and interviewee Sean, an ex-Senior Manager of C5 & C6 in Singapore). This caused very significant price pressure within the field. 'Pricing is pushed downward and clients demand more for less even at a cut-throat price', as advocated by interviewee John, an ex-Executive Consultant and Corporate

Strategist of C4 in US. It had also impacted on the ways the consultant's resourced projects from their local, regional and global offices. Interviewee Sean revealed that:

To be competitive, consulting firms would exploit the differences in terms of costs internally within the organisation by getting people from other country offices with lower remuneration in order to bring down the rates. This actually causes the major change because the consultants no longer can be very internally country focused. They have to be able to look beyond their own borders and compete for jobs to maintain their competitiveness. - (Interviewee Sean, ex-Senior Manager of C5 and C6 in Singapore)

To sum up, globalisation has driven management consulting firms to operate through a regional business model and mobilise management consultants internationally. Management consulting firms also need to engage with price competition, and adopt service specialisation, and combination of product, brand and positioning to sustain their competitive advantage and preserve their positions in the field. The launch of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act 2002 has changed the regulatory landscape of the field. Demographic changes lead to excessive hiring during economic boom times and heavy redundancy during periods of economic downturn. Client organisations have absorbed many management consultants from the leading management consultants firms which results in less demand for external consulting services. Innovative development of information technology and outsourcing has driven management consulting firms to increasingly concentrate on IT-related consulting and commoditise the skills of management consultants. Emergence of rivals and substitute products has caused price pressure within the field and change of the working boundaries of management consultants. Therefore, globalisation has indeed driven strategic and structural change in the management consulting field.

4.5 The challenge on professional identity

Legitimacy of professional identity

Management consulting is incorporated in the broader business services field that is a differentiated structure embracing a wide group of occupations. It is defined by a relationship to a market in knowledge, rather than a static skills set. The borders of the cluster of activities within the field are complex and overlapping. It is argued that management consultants spread managerial innovations worldwide, described in detail by Alfred Chandler in his book '*Strategy and Structure*' (1962), as they moved from assignment to assignment inside the large and bureaucratic multidomestic and multinational organisations, in particular, that increasingly dominated society (McKenna, 2001:677–678).

The dispositions of human capital in the field of management consulting are broad and diverse. Within it, specialists, such as information technology (IT) and finance, are based on specialised skills that are formalised and accredited by individual professional institutions. However, no special accreditation is required for those who specialise in strategy and change management which constitute what is often regarded as mainstream management consulting and closely aligned with general managerial rather than professional skills (Fincham and Clark, 2002/2003:4). Despite the highly evolved professional rhetoric and high prestige of management consulting, management consultants did not attempt to professionalize fully due to their historical emphasis on the reputation of the firm over the professional status of individual consultants (McKenna, 2001:678). Given a conventional view on professions, it is difficult to persuasively present management consulting as being or coming close to being a profession. This is the most challenging for management

consultants. Therefore, accounts of management consulting claim to stand inside the fight for recognition, legitimacy and the right to speak with authority (Bourdieu, 1977:170; Salaman, 2002:247-259).

Every field has its own legitimate professional procedures which are accepted and followed by its members (Bourdieu, 1987c:831). In the field of healthcare, the World Medical Association (WMA) is the recognised authority to speak for the doctors of the world in international affairs since it was found in 1947 and its members have grown to 90 national medical associations. The WMA International Code of Medical Ethics is adopted by physicians globally since its launch in 2005 (www.wma.net). The International Bar Association (IBA) was established in 1947 as a leading world's organisation of international legal practitioners, bar associations and law societies. The International Code of Ethics of the International Bar Association is adopted by more than 40,000 individual lawyers and 197 bar associations including The Law Society of England and Wales, The Law Society of Scotland, The American Bar Association and The Law Society of Hong Kong (www.iba.org). The International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) was founded in 1977 and is the global organisation representing the accountancy profession. It works with 164 members and associates that are primarily national professional accountancy bodies and represent 2.5 million accountants employed in public practice, industry and commerce, government and academia (www.ifac.org). In contrast, there is no such peak representative international professional organisation and a standardised Code of Ethics for the management consultants across the globe.

There are a number of professional organisations in management consulting claiming their representation for the field, for instance, the European Management Consultant Association (FEACO), The International Council of Management Consulting Institute (ICMCI) and The Management Consultancy Association (MCA) and others. However, none of them is collectively recognised by field members across the globe. They have similar Code of Ethics/Practice. Among them, I selected the Code of Practice of the MCA in the UK to compare with those in the field of healthcare, law and accountancy as its 60 member companies comprise around 70% of the UK consulting industry, estimated to be worth £8.1billion in 2010, employ more than 40,000 consultants and work with over 90% of the top FTSE 100 companies and almost all parts of the public sector (www.mca.org). MCA's member companies include 3 of the 6 selected global management consulting firms (C4, C5, and C6) in this study and the Big Four. All MCA's member firms are committed to comply with the Code of Practice. The Codes of Ethics of WMA, IBA, IFAC and the Code of Practice of MCA are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Code of Ethics/Practice in the field of healthcare, law, accountancy and management consulting

Categorisations of Code of Ethics/Practice in the four fields of profession	WMA International Code of Medical Ethics	International Code of Ethics of the International Bar Association ^[Note 1]	Code of Ethics for Professional Accountant of International Federation of Accountants	Code of Practice – Management Consultants Association
1) Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act in the patient’s best interest • Complete loyalty to patients and all the scientific resources available to patients • Deal honestly with patients and colleagues, and report to the appropriate authorities those physicians who practice unethically or incompetently or who engage in fraud or deception • Certify only that what he/she has personally verified • In situations when he/she is acting for a third party, ensure that the patient has full knowledge of that situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without fear defend the interests of their clients • Without regard to any unpleasant consequences to themselves or to any other person • Not put their right to compensation for their services, but the interests of their clients and the exigencies of the administration of justice • At all times give clients a candid opinion on any case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be straightforward and honest in all professional and business relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put the client’s interest first • Be clear and transparent with the client
2) Objectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always exercise his/her independent professional judgement and maintain the highest standards of professional conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never stir up litigation • Never represent conflicting interests in litigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not allow bias, conflict of interest or undue influence of others to override professional or business judgements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be independent and objective

Categorisations of Code of Ethics/Practice in the four fields of profession	WMA International Code of Medical Ethics	International Code of Ethics of the International Bar Association ^[Note 1]	Code of Ethics for Professional Accountant of International Federation of Accountants	Code of Practice – Management Consultants Association
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgement not be influenced by personal profit or unfair discrimination • Not receive any financial benefits or other incentives solely for referring patients or prescribing specific products • Respect the local and national codes of ethics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve independence in the discharge of their professional duty 		
3) Professional competence and due care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be dedicated to providing competent medical service in full professional and moral independence, with compassion and respect for human dignity • Seek appropriate care and attention if he/she suffers from mental or physical illness • Recognize his/her important role in educating the public but should use due caution in divulging discoveries or new techniques or treatment through non-professional channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Render assistance with scrupulous care and diligence • Be most punctual and diligent in pecuniary matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain professional knowledge and skills at the level required to ensure that a client or employer receives competent professional services based on current developments in practice, legislation and techniques and act diligently and in accordance with applicable technical and professional standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on delivering sustainable value to the client • Employ people with the right skills and experience to help their client, and continually develop their expertise

Categorisations of Code of Ethics/Practice in the four fields of profession	WMA International Code of Medical Ethics	International Code of Ethics of the International Bar Association ^[Note 1]	Code of Ethics for Professional Accountant of International Federation of Accountants	Code of Practice – Management Consultants Association
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strive to use health care resources in the best way to benefit patients and their community • Always bear in mind the obligation to respect human life • Give emergency care as humanitarian duty unless he/she is assured that others are willing and able to give such care 			
4) Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect a patient’s right to confidentiality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never disclose their communication with clients even after they have ceased to be the client’s counsel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To respect the confidentiality of information acquired as a result of professional and business relationships and, therefore, not disclose any such information to third parties without proper and specific authority, unless there is a legal or professional right or duty to disclose, nor use the information for the personal advantage of the professional accountant or third parties 	---

Categorisations of Code of Ethics/Practice in the four fields of profession	WMA International Code of Medical Ethics	International Code of Ethics of the International Bar Association ^[Note 1]	Code of Ethics for Professional Accountant of International Federation of Accountants	Code of Practice – Management Consultants Association
5) Professional behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect a competent patient’s right to accept or refuse treatment • Respect rights and preferences of patients, colleagues, and other health professionals • Not enter into a sexual relationship with his/her current patient or into any other abusive or exploitative relationship • Behave towards colleagues as he/she would have them behave towards him/her • Not undermine the patient-physician relationship of colleagues in order to attract patients • When medically necessary, communicate with colleagues who are involved in the care of the same patient. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat their professional colleagues with utmost courtesy and fairness • Always maintain due respect towards the court • At all times maintain the honour and dignity of their profession, in practice and in private life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To comply with relevant laws and regulations and avoid any action that discredits the profession. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be trustworthy • Be financially strong enough to deliver on their commitments

Source: 1) WMA International Code of Medical Ethics (www.wma.net)

2) The International Bar Association (www.int.bar.org)

3) The International Federation of Accountants (www.ifac.org)

4) Management Consultants Association (www.mca.org)

Note 1: Extract from the International Code of Ethics of the International Bar Association

The Code of Ethics/Practice of the four fields of profession can be categorised into 1) Integrity; 2) Objectivity; 3) Professional competence and due care; 4) Confidentiality; and 5) Professional behaviour. They are exactly the elements of the Code of Ethics of IFAC. Although the Code of Practice of MCA does not have the category 'Confidentially', in the field of management consulting, members are expected to act professionally as doctors, lawyers and accountants. However, professionals in the fields of healthcare, law and accountancy are always statutorily regulated in the countries they practise. For example, the three kinds of professionals in the UK are governed by the Medical Act 1983 for medical professionals, the Legal Services Act 2007 for solicitors, Finance Act 2004 and GAAP for accountants respectively. Any breach of the relevant law can lead to court action as well as being disciplined and/or being deregistered by their professional organisations. The fierce argument on the professional legitimacy of management consultants stems from the lack of an abstract knowledge base traditionally regarded as professional, an institutionalised professional organisation and a set of law/rules to collectively govern the behaviour of the members in the field. In other words, the professional governance of management consultants relies on their self-presentation and self-regulation rather than statutory regulation.

Nature of management consulting services

Management consulting has also widely been portrayed as a knowledge-intensive service field that employs highly educated and qualified individuals to deliver intangible and innovative solutions to clients. Management consulting is thus a human-intensive business largely dependent on 'knowledge workers' (Drucker, 1993:5). It means that transactions are associated with individuals involved in their

knowledge and skills realisation (Kipping, 1997:67). Service is characterised by Clark (1993) as intangible, perishable, non-standardised and inherently social. The quality of services provision is thus difficult to evaluate beforehand.

The decision to hire a consultant thus 'relies almost exclusively on the reputation of the service provider' (Kipping, 2002:39). Poulfelt (1998) pragmatically argues that in the absence of certification by prestigious institutions – universities and professional association – quality assurance systems and certification, market reputation and success fulfil the same function. Also, due to the information asymmetry between sellers and buyers of services, it is very important that management consultants are able to convince clients that they have something of value to offer in the first instance (Alvesson, 1993; Clark, 1993 and 1995; Starbuck, 1992). Interviewee Andy stressed that:

You have to show an overwhelming value proposition. You really need to show that. There are a lot of people out there who are very sceptical to consulting. They are not sure whether consulting really does add value. So for you to be a big market share, you really need to ship out value. You really have to show your benefits of the value that your can create - (Interviewee Andy, Practices Partner of C5 in Malaysia).

It is echoed by another interviewee Peter that:

In order to win market share you are willing to commit to overwhelming value delivery. That means that the value proposition that a given consulting firm has to offer has to be significantly different and better than what clients can buy elsewhere...The key to deliver overwhelming value for clients as a consulting firm is to do two things. One is to develop really valuable and creative insights, intellectual thought ware per se, in terms of either new business models or new ways at looking at problems that haven't been thought of or investigated before. Those are very difficult to do particularly over the long term. The second way is to structure their engagement and services in a way that drives impact at the client. - (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in US)

It represents that management consulting is closely linked with new forms of 'fashionable' management knowledge.

Fincham (2002/3:67) suggests that management consultants may be envisioned as the "agents' agent" – as 'agents' of management, in some sense resemble managers who are themselves 'agents' of the owners of capital. Moreover, management consultants are not only traders in new management ideas but also in ideas that have consequences and take shape as management practices. Interviewee Oliver, a Project Manager of C1 in Germany, stressed that their services to clients 'are tried to be impact oriented'. Management consultants are therefore considered as influencers and carriers of new strategies and organisational forms between organisations and nations (i.e. cultural producers). In reality, the level of impact is, however, highly dependent on how management consultants operate in client organisations and on their relations with the employees of client organisations, in particular, the top executives.

In summary, the management consulting field has grown remarkably based on the high level of structural complexity, organisational diversification and decentralisation, and internationalisation of the US corporations over the twentieth century. The field has evolved from scientific management to organisation and strategy and then to IT-based networking as it needs to follow the change in organisation and management of client organisations. From the late 1950s, management consulting firms in the US started to globalise at different scales and scopes to serve their multidomestic, multinational and then transnational clients.

Global management consulting firms widely adopt a regional business model to balance clients' requirements and economic effectiveness. The fees charged to clients are not standardised as it depends on the clients' location. International mobility of management consultants is common working practices in the field which makes their biographies become place polygamy.

The management consulting field has been undergoing significant structural and strategic change since the 1980s. Traditional high-status strategy houses had been at one stage the leading players but were pushed into a niche during the last few years. The market is now dominated by global professional service firms providing full-range consulting services. Forces driving strategic change in the field were the launch of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, economic change, demographic change, innovative development of information technology and outsourcing, and emergence of rivals and substitute products. Specialisation and combination of product, brand and positioning are the critical elements for management consulting firms to be recognised as an expert in specific areas and to preserve their positions in the field. It echoes Bourdieu's (1992:230) suggestion that different social fields create and value specific forms of capital. The greatest challenge that management consultants always encounter is the legitimacy of professional identity which originates from the lack of a peak representative international and institutionalised professional organisation as well as a Code of Ethics that is collectively accepted by the management consultants across the globe. Consequently, the professional identity of management consultants is always problematic.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined Bourdieu's and Giddens' opinions on globalisation and both of them are illuminative. Globalisation is not Americanisation as Bourdieu and Wacquant (2001:2) argue whether that is political, economic or cultural. Though international issues are always discussed and resolved by world organisations such as the United Nations, NATO, WTO and alike, nation states still hold their power on shaping and determining their own national, political and economic policies (Giddens, 2002:18, Hollingsworth, et.al., 1994; Whitley, 1998 and 2000). The disharmony created over different international political and economic issues between the US and other countries in the world further confirms this. The emergence of the global financial crisis in 2008 rejects Giddens' (Giddens and Hutton, 2001:44) argument on the superiority of the free market mechanisms of neo-liberalism. The EU's enlargement eastward, to a certain extent, mirrors Bourdieu's political critique on economic globalisation as about 'to hurl all social agents into an economic game for which they are not equally prepared and equipped, culturally and economically' (Bourdieu, 2003:93). However, it also provides opportunities of increased labour mobility for citizens of new EU states. Conclusively, globalisation can be constructive and destructive as it provides new opportunities and new risks to both the dominants and dominated in different dimensions. It contradicts and thus rejects Bourdieu's (2003: 93) assertion that 'unification benefits the dominant'.

Economic globalisation enhances FDI flow across the globe and thus as a platform of provision of transnational corporations (TNCs). The findings indicate that the flow of FDI enhances the interconnectedness of financial markets across the globe. The FDI

inflow and outflow of developed economies such as G7 are still higher than that of developing and transition economies, the BRIC, *per se*. However, the gap of FDI flow between them has been getting narrower after the global financial crisis in 2008. Many TNCs headquartered in BRIC have today become major global players. The increasing appreciation of the tacit knowledge embedded in local industrial regions, acquisition of strategic assets in different kinds of market economy, number of double tax treaties in 2009 mitigate the search for cheap costs of production and corporate tax evasion of transnational corporations as Beck (1990:51 -69) postulates.

FDI flow shifted from merchandise trade toward services before 2009. The demand and supply conditions relating to the services as well as the comparative advantages of different countries determine the international trade in services (Dunning, 1989:13). 'Maximising shareholder value' as a principle of corporate governance especially in Anglo-Saxon economies of the US and UK since the 1980s indeed produces the 'expert' and the 'communication consultant to the prince', as Bourdieu and Wacquant, (2001:5) suggest. When corporations globalise, they require different professional services to handle the complex different national business systems. Global tradability of four kinds of professional services – healthcare, law, accountancy and management consulting were systematically compared by their 1) breadth of globalization, 2) strategy for globalisation, 3) field structure, 4) professional structure and governance, 5) modes of globalised delivery of services, 6) professional legitimacy, and 7) modes of service products. The comparison reveals that healthcare services are the least globalised whereas accountancy and management consulting services are fairly globalised. In terms of professional

legitimacy, management consulting is only licensed in a few countries while the other three kinds of profession are all licensed in all countries.

The field of management consulting has evolved from scientific management, onto organisation and strategy, and then IT-based networking in the twentieth century. Each wave of evolution represents a change in organisation and management of client organisations themselves. The traditional high-status strategy houses that were once the leading players have been forced into a niche. Their leading positions are currently replaced by large management consulting firms and the Big Four. The findings also indicate that merger and acquisition is the most common practice for management consulting firms to develop a global presence. A regional business model is normally adopted by global management consulting firms to balance clients' requirement and economic effectiveness. Frequent international labour mobility facilitates management consultants to 'spread their lives out across separate worlds', as Beck (2001:165 and 168) commented.

The findings in the present research have indicated that the spate of mergers and acquisitions since 2000s have drastically reshaped the landscape of the field. In the early 2000s, global IT corporations acquired the consulting arms of the Big Four to expand their business into the field. Management consulting firms with broad service offerings ended up in price competition. Firms without a combination of product specification, brand and position would not be recognised as an expert in specific areas. The second wave of major merger and acquisition mania emerged after the emergence of the global financial crisis in 2008. It made the field become more

diverse and fragmented but competitive. The enforcement of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, economic change, demographic change, innovative development of information technology and outsourcing and emergence of rivals and substitute products were the major driving forces for the global strategic change in management consulting. The two major periods of mergers and acquisitions in the last decade forced many management consultants out of the field and many of them moved into industry. However, the findings have also indicated that the market is huge and there are not enough management consultants available, especially good ones.

Professions such as healthcare, law and accountancy all have a representing international and institutionalised professional organisation and a standardised Code of Ethics accepted and followed by their members globally. In addition, they are regulated by the relevant laws in the countries they practise. The lack of these factors and a defined body of scientific knowledge make management consultants always confront challenges to their professional identity. The Code of Practice of Management Consultants Association (MCA) in the UK was selected for this research to compare with the Code of Ethics of World Medical Association (WMA), International Bar Association (IBA), and International Federation of Accountants (IFAC). The four sets of Code of Ethics/Practice can be categorized into 1) Integrity; 2) Objectivity; 3) Professional competence and due care; 4) Confidentiality; and 5) Professional behaviour. The findings reveal that the Code of Practice of the MCA is analogous with the Code of Ethics of the other three professions except for the section on 'Confidentiality'. However, management consultants are expected to

behave professionally as doctors, lawyers and accountants while they present rhetorically themselves as professionals. As Bourdieu (1992) contends:

When an individual is invested, it transforms the representation others have of him and above all the behaviour they adopt towards him. Also, it simultaneously transforms the representation that the invested person has of himself, and the behaviour he feels obliged to adopt in order to conform to that representation. – (Bourdieu, 1992:119)

In conclusion, management consultants are self-presented and self-regulated rather than statutory regulated such as doctors, lawyers and accountants. The Code of Ethics/Practice of a profession is a set of written rules intended to convey explicitly its culture, values and beliefs. Culture and professional identity in global management consulting will be examined in the following chapters.

Chapter 5: Culture in Global Management Consulting

‘Every group or category of people carries a set of common mental programs that constitutes its culture’
- Hofstede and Hofstede (2005: 10)

5.1 Introduction

The aspiration of this chapter is to describe and typify organisational culture in the management consulting field. The original findings presented in this chapter are based upon comparative analysis of interview data, annual reports, case studies on the case global management consulting firms disseminated from academic field, publications emanating from the field of management consulting and their corporate websites. Firstly, the relationship between strategy and culture is examined. Secondly, the organisational culture of the six global management consulting firms are compared and contrasted based on four closely related cultural components: 1) structure and system; 2) work and cultural practices; 3) norm and values; 4) personal disposition and behaviour, in order to identify the cultural homogeneities, heterogeneities and distinctiveness within the field. Thirdly, the strengths and weaknesses of the organisational culture of each firm are discussed. Lastly, the alignment between espoused values and practically expressed values of each firm are explored.

5.2 Strategy and culture

The findings in chapter 4 have indicated that, after several spates of merger and acquisition as well as the 2008 financial crisis, the management consulting field

become more fragmented, diverse and competitive. As Bourdieu (2005: 195) argues, ‘the dominant firms exert their pressure on the dominated firms and on their strategies: they define the regularities and sometimes the rules of the game’. In this study, the six global management consulting firms were leading and representing players with a global presence but in different organisational forms, with different major service offerings as well as located in different segments within the field (see Table 5.1). As interviewee Mary, Manager of C6 in the Netherlands, articulates, ‘C1, C2 and other top-tier consulting firms in the same fragment are strategy consulting houses but lack of full-rounded service offerings while C3, C4 and C6 are focusing on IT consulting and outsourcing not strategic management consulting’.

The findings of the last chapter have also revealed that management consulting firms either need to enter into price competition or have a combination of product specialisation, branding and positioning as strategies to differentiate themselves from their competitors and maintain their positions in the field. The common denominator of strategy and structure is the application of the enterprise’s resources to market demand (Chandler, 1962: 383). The position of a firm in any field is objectively defined by its possession of the combination and volume of the four kinds of organisational assets – organisational, cultural, social and symbolic. In the management consulting field ‘it is all about people and you have nothing else. You have no product or machine, so you need good people’, as interviewee Terry, ex-Senior Manager of C5 in Asia and Founder & President of his own consulting practice in Canada, emphasised. Hence, the major resource that management consulting firms apply to serve market demand is their human capital. As discussed

in chapter 2, formation of the culture of an organisation is through organisational members' personal engagement with the four intimately related components of the organisation – structure and systems, work and cultural practices, norms and values, and personal dispositions and behaviour.

Table 5.1 Organisational form, major service offerings, size of workforce and number of country office of the six global management consulting firms.

Firm	Organisational Form	Major Service Offerings	Workforce	No. of Country Office
C1	Private corporation	Strategy Consulting	15,000 in 2009	More than 90 in 45 countries
C2	Private partnership	Strategy Consulting	4,400 in 2009	Over 69 in 40 countries
C3	Publicly listed corporation (a business unit of a MNC in the information technology industry)	Management consulting, Outsourcing services, system transformation and information systems management	Over 4,000 in 2009	A presence in more than 32 countries
C4	Publicly listed corporation (a business unit of a giant US MNC in the information technology industry)	Management consulting and system integration and application management	190,000 in 2008	More than 300 offices in over 170 countries
C5	Limited Liability Partnership (One of the global professional services firm)	Management and IT consulting	25,000 in consulting unit in 2007	Offices in 140 countries
C6	Publicly listed corporation	Management consulting, technology services and outsourcing	177,000 in 2009	A presence more than 120 countries

Sources: 1) Interview data; 2) www.Datamonitor.com; 3) official websites of case companies; and 4) annual reports of C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 and C6

For Bourdieu, class differences find expression in status distinctions that rank individuals and groups on a scale of social honorability rather than in terms of economic interest alone (Swartz, 1997:151). The social trajectory of the six global management consulting firms ranked by prestige from 2005-2009 is exhibited in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Rankings of the six global management consulting firms from 2005 – 2009

Case companies	Rankings					Prestige score 2009
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	
C1	1	1	1	1	1	8.430
C2	2	2	2	2	2	8.089
C3	21	30	27	22	19	4.752
C4	12	13	13	11	13	5.352
C5	8	15	10	8	7	5.844
C6	13	20	15	14	14	5.314

Source: Vault Guide to the Top 50 Management and Strategy Consulting Firms, 2005 – 2009 Editions.

The ‘Ranking by Prestige’ and ‘Prestige Score’ were ranked by more than 2100 to 4000 practicing consultants at top management consulting firms responding to the surveys conducted by a media organisation from 2005 to 2009. The rankings measured perceived prestige (as determined by consulting professionals) only but not revenue, size or lifestyle. The same comparison could not be made after 2009 because the variables used by the media organisation for rankings have been changed since 2010. The rankings showed that the scores of prestige of traditional strategy houses, C1 and C2, were much higher than the general or full-service management consulting firms, C3, C4, C5 and C6. Prestige is classified as symbolic capital in the forms of brands, reputation, and patronage and alike that is ‘perceived and recognised as legitimate’ (Bourdieu, 1987b:3-4). One can ‘intervene effectively in

current struggles for the conservation or augmentation of symbolic capital' (Bourdieu, 1999a:337) through the recognised capital acquired and accumulated from his or her previous life experience.

Prestige is, however, not everything. It is surprising that, in the same survey in 2008, C2 was the only management consulting firm in this research ranked as one of the top 20 management consulting firms best to work for. Bourdieu's (1984:114-132; 1985a:723-724) social-class structure is constructed by three dimensions – total volume of capital, composition of capital and social trajectory. Bourdieu (1984:112) asserts that the social mobility chances for a group are another important kind of objective structure that is internalised in habitus. Therefore, these survey results only ranked by measured perceived prestige and desirability of working of management consulting firms cannot provide deep and insightful information on deciphering the organisational culture of each firm.

The rapid strategic and structural change in the field since the mid-1980s has influenced the social trajectory of each management consulting firm - growth, decline or status quo which is reflected fairly and distinctly by habitus (Bourdieu, 1984:113; Swartz, 1997:162). Movement upward, downward, or even stagnation, will give a 'challenge to the legitimacy of constructs' within a firm's organisational culture (Johnson, 1992:33). Bourdieu (1984:112) asserts that social trajectory of a class decisively shapes the attitudes and practices of its members, but I argue that the attitudes and practices of its members, especially the elite members of a class who hold the power during struggles, also define its social trajectory. For examples, the

attitudes and practices of some of the Partners/Senior Partners of Arthur Andersen in 2002 and the Chief Executive Officer of Lehman Brothers in 2008 led to the demise of their firms, respectively. As Maclean, Harvey and Press (2006:245) put it, ‘the cultural production manifests itself at the boardroom as a common mindset and pattern of behaviours is required to formulate and execute strategy’.

Some authors argue that organisations with ‘strong’ culture have an aptitude to be more successful (Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Peter and Waterman, 1982). However, organisational culture is difficult to measure as it is intangible in nature. To understand organisational culture, researchers and scholars have typified organisational culture from different perspectives and in different dimensions over the years (Etzioni, 1975; Cameron and Quinn, 1999; Ouchi, 1980 and 1981; Ouchi and Johnson, 1978; Williamson, 1975). In this research, I follow Mclean, Harvey and Press’s (2006:41) culture and cultural reproduction framework to comparatively examine the organisational culture of the six global management consulting firms around four intimately related components of an organisation: 1) structure and system; 2) work and cultural practices; 3) norms and values; and 4) personal disposition and behaviour.

5.3 Culture in management consulting

In comparing the cultural components of each of the six global management consulting firms, homogeneities, heterogeneities and distinctiveness in different levels are invariably found. It is associated with Bourdieu’s suggestion on ‘the singular habitus of members of the same class are united in a relationship of

homology' but 'each individual system of dispositions is a structural variant of the others, expressing the singularity of its position within the class and its trajectory' (Bourdieu, 1990:60). Hence, the system of dispositions of each of the six global management consulting firms represents the specificity and eccentricity of its position in the field of management consulting.

Structure and system

Organisational structure and system are the most visible and tangible organisational assets. They are the main source of power and basis of stratification within fields. DiMaggio and Powell (1991b:63-82) contend that organisations change structurally towards isomorphism in any organisational field via three mechanisms: coercive, mimetic and normative. Table 5.3 illustrates the organisational structure and system among the six global management consulting firms. Beyond DiMaggio and Powell, while seeking for homogeneities, I am more attentive to heterogeneities as they characterise the distinctiveness, strengths and weaknesses of each firm which are critical for typifying the organisational cultures in the field.

For legal entity form, C1 and C2 were privately incorporated traditional business strategy consulting firms. C3 and C4 were a consulting business unit within a publicly listed corporation. C5 was one of the global multidisciplinary professional service firms organised in a 'network' of limited liabilities partnership form comprising a cluster of tens of thousands of dedicated professionals in independent firms throughout the world. They all operated collaboratively under a unified brand name managed by a Swiss 'Verein'(www.C5.com). C6 was a publicly listed corporation which was previously the consulting business arm of one of the global

multidisciplinary professional service firms, then separated from its parent company, rebranded and publicly listed.

The differences in power structure among the six global management consulting firms arose from their different archetypes. In C1, the firm's top executive manager was called Managing Director instead of Managing Partner and was elected for three years. Below the Board of Management was a Shareholder Committee with selected Partners for major policy issues categorised into people, clients, finance and knowledge. The ownership of all shares remained exclusively in the hands of persons who were active in the firm. No share was held by outsiders. The shareholders were restricted to sell to each other or to the firm and the ownership agreement required them to sell at book value as they approached retirement (www.C1.com). Interviewee Oliver, Project Manager of C1 in Germany, confirmed that 'when one becomes the Partner of the company he is always a piece of the company and they buy their shares but not subscribe'. Similar to C1, C2 was run by the President and Chief Executive Officer with the assistance of an Executive Committee to better manage the firm. The President and Chief Executive Officer were selected by Partners. In its early years, the firm's stock was sold to its employees through an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) as one of the first ESOPs in the US. All the firm's worldwide Vice Presidents became the owners of the firm through the second recapitalisation in the late 1980s (www.C2.com).

C3, C4 and C6, were typical publicly listed companies governed by a Board of Directors comprising the elected Chairman, President/Chief Executive Officer, and

members who were internal to the organisation and external executive directors from other institutions. In C3, there were four specialised committees to assist the Management Team in an advisory capacity in different business functional aspects: 1) Executive Committee; 2) Group Management Board; 3) Group Review Board; and 4) Mergers & Acquisitions Committee. Within the whole organisation, over 10,000 employees had subscribed to the first global employee shareholding plan of the company as mentioned in C3's annual report in 2009. In C4, under the Board was the Senior Leadership Team consisting of the Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, functional and operational Senior Vice Presidents and Vice Presidents to manage the operations of the organisation. In C6, The Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the company in addition to 28 senior management executives from different functional and operational units constituted the executive leadership of the company. In all these three firms, management consulting was one of its business segments subordinated to a larger 'heteronomous' (Scott and Davis, 2007:148) professional organisation.

In C5, its power structure was quite different from the other five global management consulting firms. The Swiss '*Verein*' (society) was responsible for coordinating the activities of the member firms but did not itself provide services to clients. The member firms uniformly provide five types of professional services including management consulting to selected clients. The *Verein* was governed by a Board of Directors and managed by an 18-member Global Corporate Responsibility Council led by the Chairman who was chartered in 2007. However, the relationship of the *Verein* and the member firms was one involving considerable autonomy:

The *Verein* and the member firms were separate and distinct legal entities, which cannot obligate the other entities. It and its member firms were only liable for their own acts or omissions, and not those of each other. Each member firm provided services in a particular geographic area and was subject to the laws and professional regulations of the particular country or countries in which it operated. Each of the member firms operated under different names related to the *Verein*. Each member firm was structured differently in accordance with national laws, regulations, customary practice, and other factors, and might secure the provision of professional services in their territories through subsidiaries, affiliates and/or other entities. – (Corporate website of C5)

In respect of organisational structure, C1 and C2 were organised by services/capabilities and industries. C3, C4, C5 and C6 were typical Chandlerian multi-divisional and multi-diversified models (Chandler, 1962). However, within their management consulting business unit, they were also further structured by services and industries as similar as C1 and C2. The consulting authority hierarchy in all the six global management consulting firms was analogous albeit with some difference in the titles. It was commonly organised into a pyramid as Business Analyst, Associate/Consultant, Project Leader/Manager, Senior Manager/Associate Principle/Principle Consultant, Associate Partner, and Managing Director/Practices Partner. 7 interviewees from C5 and C6 viewed this as flat hierarchy. Nonetheless, one interviewee from C6 and one interviewee from C4 viewed it as a layered hierarchy. The other 12 interviewees from all six case firms viewed this as a typical consulting hierarchy in management consulting. For control structure, except for C2's which was unknown, the all other 5 case firms had a formal and clearly defined Code of Professional Responsibility, Ethics, or Management principles and practices in place to regulate decision making and operational procedures of the business. The documents gave formal guidance on the standard of behaviour of employees and

even of a third party doing business with the company. For example, C6 had the so called 'Suppliers Standards of Conduct' for suppliers to maintain.

The structures and systems of the six global management consulting firms can conclusively be distinguished into two types. C1 and C2 were 'autonomous' professional organisations (Scott and Davis, 2007: 148). In autonomous professional organisations, the group of professionals holds considerable responsibility for defining and implementing the goals, for setting performance standards, and for ensuring that standards are maintained (Scott, 1995:66). C3 and C4 were organised in a 'heteronomous' structure (Scott and Davis, 2007:148). In heteronomous professional organisations, professional employees are clearly subordinated to an administrative framework and granted with a relatively small amount of autonomy. A set of rules and a system of routine supervision elaborately regulates professional employees on many aspects of their tasks (Scott, 1995: 67). In C3 and C4, the management consultants did not play the central role in the achievement of the primary organisational objectives but were subsumed under a larger bureaucratic manufacturing and services organisation. For C5 and C6, although management consulting is not the sole business of the companies, the organisation and control of the most of the professional activities within the organisation are delegated to the professionals. I argue that they should also be classified as autonomous professional organisations.

Table 5.3 Structure and systems of the six global management consulting firms

	C1	C2	C3
Structure and Systems (Power, organisational and control structure)	<p><i>Legal Entity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private incorporation <p><i>Power structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governed by a board of management • Led by the Managing Director elected for a 3-year term of tenure, corporate decision made by the Board collectively • A shareholder committee with selected partners below the board of management for major policy issues • Ownership of all shares exclusively in the hands of persons active in the firm <p><i>Organisational structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured by functional and industry practices • Consulting hierarchy: Business Analyst, Associate, Consultant, Project Manager, Associate Principle, Partner, Managing Director <p><i>Control structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Code of Professional Responsibility 	<p><i>Legal Entity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Partnership <p><i>Power structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run by an elected President and Chief Executive Officer with the help of an Executive Committee to better manage the firm • All the Vice Presidents were shareholders of the firm <p><i>Organisational structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured by capabilities and industry • Consulting hierarchy: Associate, Consultant, Project Leader, Manager, Partner • Administrative hierarchy: All consultants report to partners <p><i>Control structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (unknown) 	<p><i>Legal Entity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicly listed corporation <p><i>Power structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governed by a board of directors including an elected Chairman • Run by the Chief Executive Officer with assistance by 4 committees: Executive Committee, Group Management Board, Group Review Board and Mergers & Acquisitions Committee • Over 10000 employees were shareholders of the company through the first global employee shareholding plan <p><i>Organisational structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured by services and industry • Consulting hierarchy: Consultant, Senior Consultant, Managing Consultant, Executive/Principle Consultant • Two options for new recruits: management and expert <p><i>Control structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Code of Ethics

	C4	C5	C6
Structure and Systems (Power, organisational and control structure)	<p><i>Legal Entity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicly listed corporation <p><i>Power structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governed by a Board of Director. Managed by a Senior Leadership Team consisted of the Chairman, President and Chief Executive, functional and operational Senior Vice Presidents and Vice Presidents <p><i>Organisational structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured by services and industry Major operation divided into four business segments including consulting Layered hierarchy and heavily weighted on the top Follow divisions, two options for new recruits – professionals to consulting and management to back-office support <p><i>Control structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly defined management principles and practices An internal control structure consists an organisational arrangement with clearly defined lines of responsibility and delegation of authority, comprehensive systems and control procedures. 	<p><i>Legal Entity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited Liability Private Partnership <p><i>Power structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governed by a Board of Directors. Managed by a 18-member Global Corporate Responsibility Council led by the Chairman who was chartered in 2007 <p><i>Organisational structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured by services and industry Flattered hierarchy in project reporting channel Layered in organisational hierarchy: Business Analyst, Consultant, Senior Consultant, Manager, Senior Manager, Practice Partners Organisation is structured by industries and services lines and run by Practice Partners <p><i>Control structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethical Principles make explicit standard of behaviour Annual review on ethncial performance of member firms & their members 	<p><i>Legal Entity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicly listed corporation <p><i>Power structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governed by a Board of Directors with members including the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the company Managed by the executive leadership of the company comprising the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the company in addition to 28 senior management executive from different functional and operational units <p><i>Organisational structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured by services and industry Flat with three reporting channels: Consulting, Solution and Enterprise In Consulting, hierarchy is quite layered: Analyst, Consultant, Manager, Senior Manager, Senior Director/Associate Partner, and Partner. <p><i>Control structure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written Ethics & Compliance program Standards of Federal Business Ethics and Conduct to employees in every country

- Systems contains self-monitoring mechanisms, and actions are taken to correct identified deficiencies

- Supplier Standards of Conduct to suppliers to uphold

Source: 1) Interview Data

2) Corporate websites of C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 and C6

3) Public sources of information

The different forms of legal entity, power structures and organisational structures in the six global management consulting firms do not support the concept of coercive and mimetic institutional isomorphic change in organisational fields as proposed by DiMaggio and Powell (1991b:67-70). In the management consulting field, organisations do not resemble others that face the same set of environmental conditions. Instead, they attempt to differentiate from their competitors to highlight their specialities to their clients. However, the findings in this research show that the consulting hierarchy and the control system within the six global management consulting firms are similar, these areas are consistent with DiMaggio and Powell's (1991b:70-74) prediction on normative isomorphism.

To sum up, the cultural analysis of the six global management consulting firms in terms of structure and systems rejects the organisational coercive and mimetic isomorphism predicted by DiMaggio and Powell. However, normative isomorphism is found in the consulting hierarchy and the control system among the firms. As Alvesson and Sveningsson (2008:35) suggest, dimensions of cultural analysis focus on lived experiences, implying a focus on people, relations, meaning and emotions, while things like system and structure are seen as secondary. Hence, the analysis on work and cultural practices, norms and values as well as personal disposition and behaviour of the six global management consulting firms follows.

Work and Cultural Practices

Work and cultural practices are the assumptions about how to get things done which include 1) cultural practices that are all symbols and rituals, and large and small aspects of organisational life; and 2) work practices that involve such things as levels

of consultation and information sharing with peers and supervisors (MacLean, Harvey and Press, 2006:42). The work and cultural practices of the six global management consulting firms are depicted in Table 5.4.

In C1, the consultants held the assumptions: 1) adhere to the highest professional standards; 2) improve the performance of their clients significantly, very certainly either financially or performance impact oriented; and 3) create an unrivalled environment for the people who work for the firm. Interviewee Oliver explained these three assumptions:

First, adhering to highest professional standards which means basically clients come first. So everything we do, everything in our professional and personal lives, whatever we are expected, whatever we can help for the clients' projects we do. Everything go to family or go to our personal life comes in second. Second, improving the performance of our clients significantly means whenever we do projects, we need to have certain outcomes. If you put measure on it, it should be very certainly either financially or performance oriented. We want to leave a lasting impact. Third, creating an unrivalled environment for the people who work at the firm means it makes the company very unique as people are the biggest asset for the firm. – (Interviewee Oliver, Project Manager of C1 in Germany)

C2's 'a partnership of individual' cultural practice was similar to the 'collaborative' assumption in C3. Management consultants in C3 were collaborative both internally between teams and externally with clients. Interviewee Frank, Managing Consultant of C3 in the UK, articulated that, within projects, as the company was not the top one or two in the management consulting field, people wanted to do better, grow or achieve more. However, on the other hand, 'consultants needed to take the initiative themselves but it would be rewarded', as informed by interviewee Kathy, Senior Consultant of C3 in the Netherlands. Interviewee Frank added on that the working culture was very open as:

Table 5.4 Work and cultural practices of the six global management consulting firms

	C1	C2	C3
Work and Cultural Practices (Rituals and routines, stories and myths, and symbols)	<p><i>Rituals and routines:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to highest professional standards • Project outcomes – improve the performance of clients significantly, financially and performance oriented and measurable, leave a lasting impact on clients • Create an unrivalled environment for consultants to work in • Clients always come first • Professionally trained through formal teaching, on-the-job learning and mentoring from partners • Work in team settings with people of all tenure levels • Knowledge sharing through a global competence centre • ‘up or out’ policy for consultants’ career path • Performance evaluated quarterly and after each project • Compensation based on individual’s and firm’s performance <p><i>Stories & Myths:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blunt integrity of the founding leader • Not accept client not in a company’s 	<p><i>Rituals and routines:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very academic approach for general management and strategy consulting • Freedom to learn • Truth-telling in value among teams and to clients • ‘A partnership of individuals’ environment • Impact and trust • Think harder not work harder • Project outcomes should be impact oriented • Fairly collegial but subtly competitive working relationship among employees • Aggressive ‘up or out’ policy for consultant career path • Performance evaluated quarterly and annually • Not much communication from the top-down <p><i>Stories & myths:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Named as the best small company in the US and in the top 10 of ‘The 100 Best Companies to Work For’ • Work and people were regularly covered in publication around the world 	<p><i>Rituals and routines:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative both internally between teams and externally with clients • Aspiring to do better to grow or to achieve more • Individualistic with self-initiative and self-sufficient for employees • Demanding for higher standard • Open working culture • Hierarchy was not important as everybody was equal status and open <p><i>Stories & myths:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Not known) <p><i>Symbols:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Not known)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> interest for the firm to serve Not accept client if its top management is not be committed to change <p><i>Symbols:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'One Firm' approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The President and CEO was named as the industry's number one consultant by Consulting magazine <p><i>Symbols:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Not known) 	
	C4	C5	C6
Work and Cultural Practices (Rituals and Routines, stories and myths and symbols)	<p><i>Rituals and Routines:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients always come first 'up or out' policy for consultant's career path Strongly support people and their career Strongly focus on the health of business financially Individually independent and self-sufficient Knowledge sharing through 'knowledge field' in intranet Project based with flexibility to work with different people in different projects Strong emphasis on utilisation, billable hours and remote working <p><i>Stories and myths:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Cult-like' culture: all employees dress the same, think the same and partake in the same pride Been for long one of the most profitable companies in the world 	<p><i>Rituals and Routines:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doing the best for the clients, team work, and strive for excellence 'Collegiality' - a mixture of research lab obsession and rigour Respect and collaboration with clients Collegial among employees Strong sense of belonging to the company Collaborative culture to work with client hand in hand Everyone driven for results The 'up or out' policy was practised but was not clearly defined High personnel turnover People get along with each other quite quickly and well Have a knowledge network database to encourage people to input into it <p><i>Stories and myths:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voted as one of the top 10 most desired companies to work for 	<p><i>Rituals and Routines:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project team members were generally cooperative but less collegial Not an employee-friendly working environment Very competitive but fairly dynamics Very IT driven An 'up or out' policy set for consultant's career path Knowledge sharing is mainly informal in a project and through the firm's strong knowledge database Formal knowledge sharing more likely conducted in terms of training Communication channel is hierarchical, not an open door policy <p><i>Stories and myths:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ranked as America's third 'most admired' company in the industry in 2003 Among the winner of 2004 Global

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-stop provider of ‘solution’ <p><i>Symbols:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees named themselves as ‘C4ers’ to share the same goals, the same approach and the same language • Used to dress the same but now according to the circumstances of your day and recognise who you will be with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Named as a 2009 Global Most Admired Knowledge Enterprise winner <p><i>Symbols:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Titles and logos were standardised • No special language 	<p>MAKE (Most Admired Knowledge Enterprise) Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ranked No.45 on BusinessWeek’s Top 100 Best Global Brands in 2008 • Included in the Forbes Platinum 400: America’s Best Big Companies in 2007, 2008 and 2009 • Ranked No. 43 on Financial Time’s BrandZ Top 100 Most Powerful Brands <p><i>Symbols:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not known
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*Source: 1) Interview Data
2) Corporate websites of C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 and C6
3) Public sources of information*

There was no office for people and everyone was sitting together. It might end up one could be sitting with somebody who was very important and not know about it. The formal hierarchy was not important because everyone was in equal status and open. – (Interviewee Frank, Managing Consultant of C3 and ex-member of C4 in the UK).

C4's work and cultural practices is more typical of a well-established publicly listed corporation which was significantly different from C1 and C2. After C4 acquired the consulting arm from one of the Big Four, two different types of culture existed in the organisation. Interviewee John, ex-Executive Consultant and Corporate Strategist of C4 in the US, confirmed that there were clashes between the two sets of cultures. He described it as 'a consulting services group gobbled up by a big manufacturing company'. It was not a perfect marriage there. However, three years after the acquisition, the two cultures had started to combine. That was the 'up or out' policy on one side and the 'more structural support for the intellectuals and dealing with people' policy on the other side, as interviewee Gladys, Management Consultant of C4 in the UK, informed. She further added, 'in C4 clients always come first and it ingrains into each employee's mind'. The organisation had long been one of the most profitable companies in the world and one-stop provider of 'solution'. As a giant blue chip organisation, C4 strongly focused on the health of the business financially to respond to shareholders' wants and needs. In other words, it is so called 'maximizing shareholders' value' (Lazonick and O'Sullivan, 2000:16). For work practices, interviewee Ivy, Senior Consultant of C4 in Malaysia, stated that individuals were 'independent and self-sufficient'.

C5, to a certain extent was quite similar to C2, adopted a culture of ‘collegiality’ which was described by interviewee Ernst, ex-Senior Consultant of C5 in Malaysia, as ‘a mixture of research lab obsession and rigour, and to respect, coupled with a rose-tinted view of student life based on openness to ideas, intellectual flexibility and having fun’. The firm emphasised collaboration with clients which was when they came up with a solution, they worked hand in hand with the clients. Internally, employees were collegial towards each other and they had a strong sense of belonging to the firm. Employees got along with each other quite quickly and well. People were serious about results but, at the same time, had good spirit and kind of understanding and helping each other. Interviewee Charles, ex-Consultant of C5 in Singapore, emphasised that ‘C5’s working culture was to commit to do the best for the clients, team work, and strive for excellence’.

In contrast to C4, C6 separated from its parent company to become an independent entity to start as consultants and gradually working their way into other forms of business integration and outsourcing. Interviewee Alice, ex-Senior Consultant of C6 in the Netherlands, and interviewee Sean, ex-Senior Manager of C6 in Singapore, both informed that there were a lot of practices and processes in place to assure the quality of deliverables and time constraints in which the consultants needed to perform. Interviewee Lucia, ex-Senior Consultant of C6 in Australia described C6 was very IT driven. Interviewee Simon, ex-Manager of C6 in Singapore, articulated that project team members were generally cooperative but less collegial and it was very competitive but fairly dynamic. He further concluded that C6 could be seen as not an employee-friendly working environment.

The most common homogeneity in cultural practices in the six global management consulting firms was the 'up or out' policy for consultants' career path. 'Up or out' is a 'professional norm' as it is a traditional competitive way for professionals to select their peers (Morris and Pinnington, 1998:16). In C1 and C2 this policy was particularly strict and aggressive. Interviewee Oliver confirmed that:

It is very clear that, in 3 years of service, you should move to the next level or you leave the company. It is very strict rules and very terrible. You are evaluated at least every three months or after every project. - (Interviewee Oliver, Project Manager of C1 in Germany)

The 'up or out' policy was seen by the C1's top management as a great benefit to the individual and the firm. They insisted in hiring only exceptional people, and, if recruits did not work out in the firm, they should be working somewhere else where their exceptional talents could be better used. Interviewee Oliver confirmed that consistently poor performance evaluations resulted in management consultants being counselled out of the firm. The same as C1, C2's aggressive 'up or out' policy was seen by interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US to 'whittle out people not good fit for the firm in the long-term' and he also confirmed that performance was evaluated quarterly and annually. It demonstrates that 'the meritocratic principle of "up or out" resonates with a particular notion of professional development through hard work, dedication to the firm and cultural assimilation of its norms' (Morris and Pinnington, 1998:17).

This policy was not mentioned by the interviewees of C3. In 2005, C4 adopted the 'up or out' policy that was brought in from their acquired consulting arm from one of the Big Four, as interviewee Gladys of C4 informed. In C5, there was 'up or out' policy in place but it was not clearly defined. Yet the personnel turnover of the firm

was high. Interviewee Charles of C5 explained that individuals were evaluated by the human resources department and the ones in the bottom 10% would be advised to leave. The progression time for individuals in C6 under the 'up or out' policy was '2 years for Analyst, 3 years for Consultant depending on which level you join the company, 3 years plus performance for Manager and so on', as interviewee Mary of C6 informed. Conclusively, the 'up or out' policy is commonly used by leading management consulting firms for filtering management consultants.

Despite C3, C4, C5 and C6 being involved in IT consulting, all six global management consulting firms can be classified as 'organisational project-based firms' (Whitley, 2006:84-85) in which expertise, work roles and coordination mechanisms are much more changeable and fluid. Such organisational project-based firms also develop systematic procedures for managing workflows, allocating skills, and monitoring progress. The Project team is dissolved upon completion of a project. Management consultants will then be regrouped into another team for the next project. Interviewee Ivy of C4 considered the project-based nature provides consultants with the flexibility to work with different people on different projects. However, interviewee Simon of C6 viewed project teams as dynamic but difficult to bond and build up long-term relationships with group members.

The reporting channel in all six global management consulting firms was mainly through projects. Management consultants worked in team settings and the team consisted of people at all levels of tenure. They were professionally trained through formal teaching, on-the-job learning and mentoring from partners. They learned by

observing others and learned their consulting skills through an apprentice model. For example, interviewees Mary and Simon of C6 informed that every employee had a mentor and a career counsellor. Interviewee Peter of C2 enunciated that administratively all the Consultants reported to a Senior Partner or Junior Partner. He had an administrative manager internally but then on project team there was typically a Partner on the project who would come in once a week or once every other week to review progress. As a Project Leader, in some cases, interviewee Peter had responsibility to lead the team for the client but, in some other cases, he worked for another Team Leader who managed the team. There were many consultants and associates below him doing a lot of the day-to-day data analysis. He articulated that it tended to be more hierarchical on project teams than administratively in the office. Therefore, the project-based nature of organising nature means that ‘the knowledge, capabilities, and resources of the firm are built up through execution of major projects’ (Hobday, 2000:874 -875).

Cultural practices are voluntary yet obligatory, covering all the symbols and rituals, large and small, of organisational life (Maclean, Harvey and Press, 2006:42). They include the type of language and expressions commonly used and the organisational symbols such as logos, offices, cars and titles which become a short-handed representation of the nature of the organisation (Johnson, 1992:30). C1 adopted the ‘One Firm’ policy since its very early years. ‘All offices in the world were equivalent – same values, same guide principles, same documents, same structures and same support functions. The work practices, recruiting and training policies in each office were very similar’, as confirmed by interviewee Oliver of C1. For C2, C3,

the policy and practice was unknown. In C4, there was a 'cult-like' culture established by its founder. All employees named themselves 'C4ers' and dressed the same, thought the same and partook in the same pride. However, the dress code was changed by a CEO in the 1990s to dress according to circumstances and persons in meetings of the day. The titles and logos in C5 were standardised but there was no special language commonly used within the organisation. As Interviewee Ernst of C5 informed, 'No special language was really used. In New Zealand, we used to laugh at the consultant-speak that came out of the US, and consultants in Malaysia surprisingly were not really into it either'. C6 the company had operations in 52 countries with more than 250 offices and the company logo and name were globally standardised. The interior design of the office however varied due to the nature of work:

In consulting offices, we only have open space/hot desk, whilst as in the outsourcing offices, they are equipped with a dedicated desk and PC, likewise the technology solution office has a slightly different office setting due to the solution or software development business', The job titles were consistently used throughout the firm, however, different set of title for the different entities. Employee's job title is never printed in the business card and that even applied to Senior Executive as well. - (Interviewee Mary, Manager of C6 in The Netherlands)

In terms of the levels of consultation and information sharing with peers and supervisors, interviewees from each management consulting firm held different views. 'Collegial, unrivalled or collaborative' working culture was emphasised by interviewees of C1, C2, C3 and C5. In C3, interviewee Kathy expressed the view that the working culture was very open but it was not common to share knowledge actively. Employees needed to take the initiative to ask colleagues to share knowledge although they were very willing to help. In C4, as interviewee Ivy

informed, employees were very independent and self-sufficient using the 'knowledge field' in the Intranet as a communication channel to share their project experience by contributing the project documentation and communicating among themselves within the whole organisation no matter which geographical office. In C6, interviewee Mary had her own experience:

At the very beginning of my joining the company, there was no one caring about me. I had to initiate the contact with the career counsellor and my mentor. They only contacted me at the time of annual review and project review. – (Interviewee Mary, Manager of C6 in the Netherlands)

Interviewee Simon advocated that the communication channel within the organisation was hierarchical and employees could only meet with the Partners during gatherings but it was very hard to contact them in daily life. Also, his career counsellor wanted to meet him at least once per year at the time of annual performance appraisal but it sometimes depended on where interviewee Simon was located. Within project teams, knowledge sharing was primarily informal and not that much as everyone was very busy and focused on achieving deliverables. He further added that one of the strong aspects in C6 was its powerful knowledge database. There were also key subject experts who usually worked in Europe but consultants could contact them at any time for assistance. Formal knowledge sharing was more likely to be conducted in the form of training in C6. In summary, management consultants in C3, C4 and C6 relied heavily on the formal knowledge database for knowledge sharing rather than mentoring by supervisors or sharing by peers as in C1 and C2.

The findings reveal that some of analogous work and cultural practices, such as 'up or out' policy and closely guarded training, exist among the six global management

consulting firms but other rituals remain different. The ‘up or out’ practice and modes of training in management consulting prevalent are evidently imitated from the practices commonly used in the law and accountancy fields (e.g. C1, C4, C5 and C6). This is associated with the mechanism of normative isomorphism that stems primarily from processes of professionalization as proposed by DiMaggio and Powell (1991b:70-74). However, unlike in the field of law and accountancy, there are few legitimated professional associations or training institutions in the management consulting field as vehicles for the definition and promulgation of normative rules and ideas about organisational and professional behaviour of management consulting firms and management consultants.

Norms and Values

The norms and values prescribe how the organisation should work as they set boundaries and condition future actions (MacLean, Harvey and Press, 2006:42) This refers to the principles, objectives and codes that the organisation values as significant. In this research, significant differences emerged from norms and values though there were some analogies. In respect of espoused values, ‘Clients come first’, ‘Behave as professionals’ ‘Integrity’, ‘Honestly’, ‘Trust’, ‘Respect’, ‘Collegiality’ and ‘Collaboration’ were the buzz words mostly found in published espoused values of the six global management consulting firms. However, their beliefs and philosophies indicated their distinctiveness. The norms and values of the six global management consulting firms are depicted in Table. 5.5.

In its very early years, one of the founding leaders of C1 believed that what differentiated the firm from some of its competitors was professionalism. He

advocated the idea that consulting was not a business but a profession. Therefore, the Partners insisted that the growth of the firm should first be measured in terms of increased stature and reputation, and growth in size would automatically follow. The early founding leader was also a lawyer. He adamantly believed that management consulting should be held to the same high standards for professional conduct and performance as law and medicine. For him, consultants should, like doctors and lawyers, put the interests of their clients first, conduct themselves ethically, and insist on telling clients the truth, not what they wanted to hear.

The primary business of C1 is provision of strategic advice to corporate leaders. As Eden, Page and Ackermann (2011:3) argue, 'leading strategy making can be the distinctive and exciting activity that defines the leader-follower relationship'. The early founding leader held the belief that it was important that clients acted on C1's recommendations because only through adopting changes could clients get full value for C1's service and could C1 build its reputation (Lorsch, 2001:6). In other words, he insisted that, when assisting clients in strategy making, C1's management consultants should hold 'the most power to sway how the clients act and think'. He built C1 into a global consulting powerhouse by insisting that values mattered more than money. Other managing philosophies of C1 included aversion to politics, collegiality, collective ethos, operating by consensus, de-emphasis of hierarchy and leadership by consultants. The management had not emphasised position or titles either inside or outside the firm. The regard held for any individual was based not on title but one's competence, stature and leadership (Lorsch, 2001:9). As one of the ex-Managing Directors stated, 'We want to be a firm of leaders, not followers' (The

Economist, 1996:56). All non-consulting leadership positions were held by individuals who became partners because of their performance as consultants.

C1 was not the only top-tier management consulting firm that emphasised ‘clients always come first’, the importance of integrity and delivering distinctive, lasting and substantial impacts to clients. C2 also measured its success by its client’s success. Hence, when facing tradeoffs between the firm's and a client's interest, the client came first. The management was devoted to maintaining a distinctive identity to stake out a special area of expertise. This belief entailed their deliverables should have a positive and lasting impact as well as value creation for their clients. Thus, the firm eclipsed other top management consulting firms to recruit the best students from the nation’s best business schools by offering high salaries and the chance to make a difference in a cutting-edge firm.

C2 also stressed ‘objectivity is crucial’ where they endorsed an academic approach to serve clients as ‘telling the truth as we see it’ as did also C1, and create a collegial environment fostering continuous learning. The firm actively partnered with top global companies in other fields such as investing banking to conceive and create innovative startups that later became spinoffs. Whereas both C1 and C2 had similarities in their beliefs, interviewee Rob, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US, concluded, ‘C1 is more helping the client operationally and organisationally and it is more like a one-stop-shop type of place where C2 is more academically to provide long-term time horizon with a five-year plan’. Interviewee Peter added on:

Table 5.5 Norm and values of the six global management consulting firms

	C1	C2	C3
Norms and Values (Espoused value, beliefs, philosophies, strategies, goals)	<p><i>Espoused values:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put the client’s interest ahead of our own • Behave as professionals • Keep our client information confidential • Tell the truth as we see it • Deliver the best of our firm to every client as cost effectively as we can <p><i>Beliefs & philosophies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth - first be measured in terms of increased stature and reputation • A ‘professional’ firm, not a business – no growth plan or quotas • Fact-based and fair personnel decisions • Obligation to dissent • Spirit of partnership • Consideration for others • De-emphasis of hierarchy • Leadership by consultants • ‘A firm of leaders’ • The power of ‘One firm’ <p><i>Strategies & goals</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to give services to top management of the Fortune 500 companies 	<p><i>Espoused values:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity • Delivering value • Making an impact on society • Respect for the individual • Clients come first <p><i>Beliefs & philosophies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have a distinctive identity to stake out a special area of expertise • Objectivity is crucial • Measuring our success by our clients’ success • A collegial environment fosters continuous learning • Breakthrough ideas often result from the work of teams seeking to creatively solve client’s real challenge • Can make the world a better place both directly through our client work and through our pro bono effect <p><i>Strategies & goals</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be agents of change, transforming 	<p><i>Espoused values:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty, boldness, trust, freedom, team spirit, modesty and fun <p><i>Beliefs & Philosophies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • Mutual respect and cooperation <p><i>Strategies and goals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on collaboration with clients • Understand clients’ needs and work with clients as a team • Tailored approach to clients from strategy development through to implementation • Channel the expertise of the company’s leading technology partners to put the right tools in the hands of client’s teams • Target value, mitigate risk, optimize capabilities and align the organisation to achieve the objective

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help leaders make distinctive, lasting and substantial improvements in performance • Constantly build a great firm that attracts, develops, excites, and retains exceptional people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • both business and society • Create competitive advantage through unique solution • Build capabilities and mobilizing organisations • Drive sustainable impact • Provide unparalleled opportunities for personal growth • Partnered with high-profile organisations in other fields for innovative businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use the company's expertise to the benefit of clients and partners through an open and collaborative approach • To ensure sustainable and profitable long-term growth • To provide a return on investment to shareholders • To promote employee development
	C4	C5	C6
Norms and Values (Espoused value, beliefs, philosophies, strategies, goals)	<p><i>Espoused value:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedication to every client's success • Innovation that matters to our company and to the world • Trust and personal responsibility in all relationships • Leadership, honesty, excellence in your work and team work <p><i>Beliefs & philosophies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for the individual • The best customer service • Superior accomplishment of all tasks <p><i>Strategies and goals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transforming into a globally integrated enterprise • Helping clients succeed in delivering business value by becoming more innovative, efficient and competitive through the use of business insight 	<p><i>Espoused value:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity • Outstanding value to markets and clients • Commitment to each other • Strength from cultural diversity <p><i>Beliefs & philosophies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success depending on a solid reputation for objectivity, professionalism and integrity <p><i>Strategies and goals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering high-quality client services • Conceiving and promoting solutions to large-scale problems • Turning out ideas to help executives and managers be more successful as leaders • Becoming the standard of excellence 	<p><i>Espoused value:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client value creation • One global network • Integrity • Stewardship • Best people • Respect for the individual • Being a good corporate citizen is a hallmark of a high-performance business. <p><i>Beliefs & philosophies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract, develop and retain the best talent for the business • Fulfil obligation of building a better, stronger and more durable company for future generations • Enable clients to become high-performance businesses and consistently delivering value

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and IT solution • Providing long-term value to shareholders 	<p>in all the business and services the member firms provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a reputable organisation helps member firms to attract, aspire and retain talented people • Strive to make social good a co-product of member firms' work, along revenues and earnings • Strive to contribute to local communities as responsible corporate citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage the power of global insight, relationships, collaboration and learning to deliver exceptional services • Value diversity and unique contributions, fostering a trusting, open and inclusive environment • Being ethically unyielding and honest and inspiring trust by saying what we mean <p><i>Strategies and goals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on growing market share and expanding business in key geographic markets • Enhancing and expanding the company's capabilities around several defining areas that show potential for growth and profits • Investing in assets and innovations that differentiate the company in the market • Becoming part of the fabric of the industries the company serves
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Source: 1) Interview Data

2) Corporate websites of C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 and C6

3) Public sources of information

We are very focus on academic nature of solving a problem and relatively poor at managing client relationship and the firm is more academically to provide long-term time horizon planning to clients, other consulting firms tended to provide quick operational and financial impact instead. C2's culture is common among premier strategy firm but different from the big multidisciplinary professional services firms – (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

Both C3 and C4 were one of the business units within a multi-diversified and multi-divisional information technology organisation. Hence, they were bound by the organisational norms and values of their organization as a whole. In C3, four group objectives and broad principles of organisation and management had been set forth by its founder. He had built up the group on the basis of values deeply rooted in the identity of the group. During an interview with a high-profile journalist and TV presenter in March 2009, the Chairman of C3 reminded them that:

Profitability (the only measurable proof of the utility and efficiency of a business organisation), growth (necessary if you wish to become and remain a leader), independence (the base for freedom and objectivity), and finally, the sustainability of the company, then come the broad principles of organisation and management: decentralisation, systematic application of the principle of subsidiarity, periodic rationalisation of the structures, and variable remuneration according to the degree of success in attaining measurable objectives, and so on. As to the values, they are rules of behaviour. But today, when you hear some people putting together a list of values in a hurry, you get the impression that all they are really concerned about is the value of their stock. – (Chairman of C3, Annual Report 2009 of C3)

There were seven shared values in C3 - honesty, boldness, trust, freedom, team spirit, modesty and fun. As the Chairman emphasised, 'the wealth of a company like [C3] resides in its employees and its clients' (Annual Report 2007 of C3:3). Also, in C3's corporate website it cited, 'in the service business, success is powered as much by shared values as by employee skills...it is our firm belief

that these objectives can only be achieved through mutual respect and cooperation'. Interviewee Frank accentuated that C3's culture is distinctive as:

It allows C3 for a cooperative and people-focused organisation. I also think C4 and C6 are less orientated like that. I think the collaboration which [make people] desired to work collaboratively with team members and with clients. I think it is different way of working. I think it is the competitive advantages. – (Interviewee Frank, Managing Consultant of C3 and ex-member of C4 in the UK)

In C4, since its inception in the early twentieth century, organisational members had long held three basic principles in the conduct of the business - respect for the individual, the best customer service and superior accomplishment of all tasks. As emphasised in its formal 'Management Principles and Practices', the three basic beliefs – in the individual, in services, and in excellence – retained a special place and a special significance in its culture. It guided every employee, whatever his job, his daily work and his relationship with other employees and customers. The beliefs that guided the C4 activities were expressed as C4 Principles. Combined with the management practices, these beliefs expressed the goals, strategies and obligations of the organisation:

'Respect for the individual' was respect for individual's right and dignity. From this, [we] 1) helped each employee to develop his potential and make use the best of his abilities; 2) paid and promoted employees on merit and 3) maintained two way communications between manager and employee, with opportunity for a fair hearing and equitable settlement for disagreements. 'Service to the customer' was dedication to giving customers the best possible services. The products and services brought profits to the degree that they served the customer and satisfy his needs. 'Excellence must be a way of life' was every task, in every part of the business, should be performed in a superior manner and to the best of our ability. Nothing should be left to the chance in pursuit of excellence. 'Manager must lead effectively' was the management believed [our] success depended on intelligent and aggressive management which was sensitive to the need for making an enthusiastic partner of every individual in the organisation. 'Obligation to stockholders' was [we] had obligations to its stockholders whose capital had created the jobs. 'Fair deal for the supplier' was to deal fairly and impartially with suppliers of goods and

services. '[C4] should be a good corporate citizen' was to accept its responsibilities as a corporate citizen in community, national and world affairs. The organisation served its interests best when it served the public interest. The management believed that the immediate and long-term public interest was best served by a system of competing enterprises. Therefore, they believed that they should vigorously, but in a spirit of fair play, with respect to their competitors, and with respect to the law. – (Management Principles & Practices of C4)

In practices, these beliefs and principles had made C4 'have a long reputation as sitting around and made sure things are right for customers, even it might cost the company money to do that' and 'have a culture of work/life balance', as interviewee Gladys informed. In addition, interviewee Ivy confirmed that the C4's culture built 'a special breed of people – C4ers' and made employees 'proud of to be part of C4'. Nevertheless, comparing to C3, interviewee Frank of C3, who was also an ex-member of C4, stated that C4's people tended to remain in the same project team to support the objectives of specific team leaders rather than moved people around based on project need. Interviewee John concluded C4's operation as:

A large consulting team embedded inside a large technology company, it operated like an assembly line mentality trying to have perfect keystones where there are always things in the pipeline. Not like C1, C2 and other top tier strategy consulting firms where all of them are privately held. People look for things towards year-end when they have got money to spend. – (Interviewee John, ex-Executive Consultant and Corporate Strategist of C4 in the US)

Besides management consulting, as one of the Big Four professional service firms, C5 also provided audit, financial advisory and risk management services to clients. C5's espoused values were built on the belief that success depends on a solid reputation for objectivity, professionalism and integrity. This reputation was recognised as one of their vital assets. Accordingly, in 2004, the Ethical

Principle including the espoused values was written to make explicit the standard of behaviour that the firm's leader and people had upheld for many years. In his first public speech delivered at the C5 Global Forum in 2007, the newly appointed CEO accentuated that 'C5's goal is – in essence – a simple one – to be the first choice of the world's best talent and the most sought-after client'.

'Collegiality', 'Respect' and 'Collaboration' were the words frequently mentioned by the interviewees from C5 during interviews. Interviewee Terry explained that:

Their big preach words were *respect* and *collaboration*. Their tag line was *we do it with you not to you*. They preached to the client that the changes that they made or the consultant suggested would last after the consultancy left because the knowledge transferred in a collegial manner to the clients. C5's culture was very much a 'Farmer' culture. They tried to plant seeds and grow them– (Interviewee Terry, ex-Senior Manager of C5 in Asia and Founder & President of his own consulting practice in Canada)

Interviewee Daisy, ex-Senior Consultant of C5 in Hong Kong, summed up that colleagues were 'less pretentious, organisation was less hierarchical and many of the senior management were more down to earth'. As interviewee Barry, ex-Consultant of C5 in Hong Kong, added, ' I learn from friends of mine who are working for C1 that their culture is more brutal, people are fighting to each other and need to work long hours constantly. In C5, the culture is more relaxed, more flexible working hours as long as the results delivered within the target and schedule'.

In C6, the company had been governed by seven core values since its inception. The chairman and CEO of C6 stated in its corporate website, 'Through the years these simple, yet powerful values have continually guided our decision making

as well as our interactions with our clients and each other'. The top management held the philosophy that being a good corporate citizen was a hallmark of a high-performance business. According to the 2009 letter from the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, steps had been taken to position the company in important ways for the future. The company aspired to become part of the fabric of the industries the company served. To achieve this goal, top management strategized to focus on growing market share and expand business in key geographic markets. The company would also enhance and expand its capabilities around several defining areas that show potential for growth and profits.

C6 was a consulting concern breaking free from a then global audit and accounting firm in 2000 under arbitration in the US. It was rebranded successfully and then listed publicly. Interviewee Queenie, ex-Manager of C6 in the US, informed that C6 changed from an organisational form of partnership to corporation and it was difficult during the transitional period. It was unknown if its core values were derived from the core values of its ex-parent group. However, the then global audit and accounting firm had been from the beginning of its existence a somewhat more homogeneous culture than others, and has also been a more US-centric culture. Interviewee Sean, ex-Senior Manager of C5 and C6 in Singapore, contrasted the two organisations and confirmed, 'C6 is more integrated than C5. There is no such thing as South East Asia for C6. When I talk about C6, it covers Asia. As looking at C6 Asia, Europe and US, they are quite integrated. So, Asia sites are quite representative'.

In finding its existing name, one of the challenges for C6 was to alleviate the negatives about its old name. Industry people said the old name was associated with high-quality work, but also with arrogance, something endemic to management consultants in general. Interviewee Sean concluded that:

In C6, the way consultants grow in the company are they focus more on details and take a lot more pride in delivery of quality work. It is more forward looking, in this sense, it will look at the market and try to anticipate where are the new areas that the company can grow in terms of new offerings. It is more planning. C5 is more like in terms of get our job done and then get out of there. It is not so opportunistic comparing with C6. Whatever comes along, they just chase after those opportunities. It is less forward thinking. The way that C5 SE Asia approaches the market is whatever the client has demanded for just in the region, if there is no skill available locally, then C5 will see if it is possible to look for contractors. Contractors usually have a lot of issues on quality of work. In C6, they use more internal people. - (Interviewee Sean, ex-Senior Manager of C5 & C6 in Singapore)

Each organisation had its own history. Therefore, each had its own stories and myths. Stories and myths can be important in that they can convey values, ideas and beliefs and can give clues about how to think and act in various circumstances (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2008:38). Culture of an organisation is the shared assumptions of its members, but it is the leader who initiates the culture creation and/or cultural change process by imposing his or her beliefs, values, and assumptions at the outset (Schein, 2004:225). Hence, the leaders are always an influential part of the organisational stories or myths. The founding leader of C1 mentioned earlier was the soul of the firm and was widely credited as being the founder of professional management consulting. The founder's dedication on shaping C1 to become an enduring, value-based and preeminent institution and the stories of his blunt integrity towards clients had been praised and carried down to generations within the firm. Similarly, the success of C4's

founder to build such a giant organisation being long one of the most profitable companies in the world, how he created the 'Cult-like' culture and his management philosophies 'THINK' embedded in the present and from C4's history. For the other four global management consulting firms, the focus of their stories and myths was more on recognised awards that the firm or its leaders had received within and outside the field.

As Thompson (1991:13) suggest, habitus gives people 'the feel of the game', a sense of what is appropriate in the circumstances and what is not, a 'practical sense', The practical sense is less a state of mind than a state of body because the body has become a repository of ingrained dispositions that certain actions and ways of behaving and responding seem altogether natural. The body is the site of incorporated history. The comparative analysis on norms and values of the six global management consulting firms informs that the beliefs of the founder or the top management can be a cornerstone of core values to shape the culture and define the character of the firm. The successful stories and myths of the organisation and its members embed the present in organisational history. As Thompson (1991:13) argues, 'the continuing process of production and reproduction, of history incorporated and incorporation actualised, is a process that can take place without ever becoming, the object of a specific institutional practice, explicitly articulated in language'. In short, the norms and values effectively guide behaviour that can over time become taken for granted and an aspect of the less visible governing assumptions (Alvesson and Svingsson, 2008:37).

Personal disposition and behaviour

Personal disposition and behaviour represents the formative experience of interpersonal exchange with colleagues within an organisation which include the style of communication, the conduct of meetings, and human interaction and support, in general (Maclean, Harvey and Press, 2006:42). As Sandberg and Pinnington (2009:1145) assert, 'what we do and are as professionals are for the most part defined by those who we are engaged with in particular human ways of being'. The personal disposition and behaviour of the six global management consulting firms are depicted in Table 5.6. Due to the project-based job nature of management consulting, management consultants always need to group, de-group and re-group into a team with different members for services delivery in each project.

In C1, training really mattered to the founders of the firm. There had been a consistent strategic approach to consulting instilled in the firm and insisted upon from colleagues – the 'Outline' on training, established by the firm's founding leaders. The Outline was a checklist for making a strategic general survey of a business and guided the members' thinking and problem solving approach. Anyone who knew the Outline thoroughly had a ready-made approach to any business discussion and that the concepts reflected in the Outline had application even in non-profit organisations and social situations. One of its ex-Managing Directors spoke confidently of the members being highly motivated, extremely capable, and very well intentioned, thus, the management did not need to control or watch them (Lorsch, 2001:18). For peer working relationships, in C1's corporate website, it stated that its members believed in helping each other. They

gave each other tireless support and were fiercely dedicated to developing and coaching one another.

The findings revealed that C2, C3 and C5 had collegial, cooperative or ‘big family’ working environments. However, each firm still had its ‘personal manner’. In C2, ‘it is very collegial, people are very forthcoming with knowledge and thoughts and it is easy to engage with colleagues to exchange views and ideas’, as interviewee Rob concluded. ‘It is collegial but very subtly competitive among employees’, as interviewee Peter appended and further shared his experience as a lateral hire:

The challenge of joining as a lateral hire is that you join the firm with some consulting experience under your belt with another organisation but without the relationship internally at C2 that I needed to have to be successful. So, I found myself making lots of mistakes because I was new and did not understand the cultural norms with C2 or the expected norms of the way things were done because I did not have any peers at my level. Nobody pointed these things out to me. – (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in US)

In contrast to C2, employees in C3 were cooperative and demanding for high standards, as interviewee Frank highlighted. However, interviewee Kathy stressed that individuals needed to seek the right person for help by themselves. Employees in C5 carried a very strong team spirit and morale to ‘work as a big family and everyone helps each other out and there is a mandatory monthly “Come Home Friday” meeting to catch up with various teams’, as interviewee Daisy summarised. In addition, as interviewee Barry stated, ‘We went for drinks and meals with our managers after working hours. We argued with our managers on jobs and then we worked together as usual after argument’. This kind of

collegial interpersonal exchange was not mentioned by interviewees from C4 and C6.

In C4, as interviewee Joy informed, ‘whatever information you require, you have to go to the Intranet to look for it for yourself’. The working relationship among employees varied between projects and rankings. Another interviewee John emphasised some of the shortcomings of rarely being together in the office:

Interpersonal exchange is very much depending on the project and the relationship of the people at different levels...not having people in offices that are going to be vacant four days a week then they have people show up on Friday. It doesn’t make sense. Having people work from home on Friday if they are not working at a client’s site do save a lot of money from a brief relative expense but don’t have the teams and the benefits of the relationships’. – (Interviewee John, ex-Executive Consultant and Corporate Strategist of C4 in US)

A similar situation was found in C6. Interviewee Simon considered that ‘it was not easy to communicate with management and colleagues and it was difficult to have deep relationship with colleagues, only know people working in the same project. Also, in a project, people were normally focusing on deliverable rather than interpersonal exchange.’ In summary, the collegial working culture in C2 and C5 is most appreciated by its employees for its developmental and fulfilling experiences of interpersonal exchange.

Table 5.6 Personal disposition and behaviour of the six global management consulting firms

Case Company	C1	C2	C3
Personal Disposition and Behaviour (Formative experience of interpersonal exchange with colleagues)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly motivated, extremely capable, and very well intentioned • No need to control or watch people • Teamwork and collaboration to help each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collegial but very subtly competitive among employees • People are very forthcoming with knowledge and thoughts • Easy to engage with colleagues to exchange views and ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperative and demanding for high standard • Open in working culture • Not common for knowledge sharing but employees are willing to help each other if needed • Need to seek the right person to help
Case Company	C4	C5	C6
Personal Disposition and Behaviour (Formative experience of interpersonal exchange with colleagues)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rely heavily on knowledge database for knowledge exchange • Very much dependent on the project and the relationship of the people at different levels • Not have teams and benefit of relationships • Tight interpersonal exchange with a cohort of colleagues joining the company at the same day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very strong on team spirit and morale • Get focused on getting the results, quick team formation, quick involvement and performance achievement • Work as a big family and everyone helps each other out • Mandatory monthly ‘Come Home Friday’ meeting to catch up with various teams • Informal socialisation among employees after working hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to initiate contact with the career counsellor and the mentor • Not easy to communicate with management and colleagues • Difficult to have deep relationship with colleagues, only know people working on the same project • Focus on deliverables rather than interpersonal exchange in a project

Source: 1) Interview Data

2) Corporate websites of C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 and C6

3) Public sources of information

5.4 Cultural strengths and weaknesses

During the interview, interviewees were also asked about the strengths and weaknesses of the organisational culture of their work organisation(s). The findings are presented in Table 5.7. Comparison of the strengths and weaknesses gives us greater depth on the factors underpinning the social trajectory of each case firm. To preserve their domination and power within any fields, each particular agent, no matter which institution, organisation, group or individual, needs to derive distinctive capitals from his or her relationships with all other agents. The strengths are distinctive capitals derived by an actor in the prior struggles of power.

C1 had long been widely recognised as one of the most prestigious strategy consulting firms. Their targeted customers were the senior executives of the Fortune 500 companies. Over the years, the firm's professional approach in serving and cultivating clients had attracted many high-profile and prestigious organisations to hire their services. Even in the economic downturn in 2002, the firm retained its highly prestigious standing in top-level consulting, with the most formidable intellectual human capital, the classiest clientele, and the greatest global reach of any adviser to management in the world. In 2002, it served 147 of the world's 200 largest corporations (Business Week, 2002:66). In addition, C1 had built up a powerful pool of alumni of more than 18,000 people comprising those who had left the firm to take up top executive management roles at C1's client organisations. Hence, its reputation had linked it into a self-reinforcing relationship with the world's top managers (Economist, 1996:56). Nevertheless, interviewee Oliver described the 'up or out' policy as 'very strict and terrible' and the espoused value

‘adhere to highest professional standards’ equated to ‘clients come first’ which means consultants have to sacrifice their family and personal lives to career.

Despite C2’s history being shorter than C1, its prestigious standing in high-end consulting always followed C1. It had an intense collection of very talented people who could produce great solutions:

As a by-product of that collection of bright people there was a lot of interesting work got developed and studied, some really leading-edge thinking in some areas...The strengths of the culture were that enabled people to spend interesting times thinking great thoughts and wondering about how different business models might come together in the future. People got to work with some very talented people at all levels. – (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

Interviewee Rob advocated interviewee Peter’s remarks:

The teams at C2 were built to address the fundamentals of the market. With their academic background, because of the way they thought deeply about industries, they were able to do that and that was something that most other consulting companies could not do or did not have the capability to do. – (Interviewee Rob, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

Although C2 possessed a collection of bright and talented human capital with leading-ledge thinking, it sometimes could be a weakness for the firm. Interview Rob thought that the weakness at C2 was the difficulty in proving that they could have short-term financial impact for a company. That was something that C2 had to deal with. Especially as the economy started to slow down in 2001/2002, a lot of companies really looked for their consulting partners to help drive short-term cost reduction. Interviewee Rob viewed it as something C2 could do but he thought it was not something C2 was explicitly built around doing. On this, interviewee Peter also pointed out that several weaknesses existed in different areas:

Table 5.7 Strengths and Weaknesses of organisational culture of the six management consulting firms

Case company	Strengths	Weaknesses
C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive client relationship management • The brand name • A pool of alumni at the top management roles of its client organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strict and terrible rules of the ‘up or out’ policy
C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive collection of very talented people • Development of interesting work and study with leading-edge thinking • Encouragement on spending interesting times thinking great thoughts on future different business models • Diversified capabilities to address the fundamentals of the market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in proving solution with short-term financial impact to clients • Pyramid structure constrains career promotion • An overt focus on counselling people out and sometimes decision were made on cultural fit not on the basis of merit • Management does not spend enough time on people management • No sales targets for promotion from manager to partner
C3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team orientation • Strive to success • Pull different resources together • The firm’s determination for excellence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much relationship focus, less driving achievement of targets within team members
C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size of the company • Aspiration for excellence to clients • Support employees and their careers • Flexible workplace and working hours for work-life balance • Employees can voice their opinions via communication channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying manufacturing firm mentality into the service business • Not recognise the potential value that some people could bring to the company • Highly layered authority hierarchy • Lengthy authorisation procedures • Occasional misalignment of strategy between consulting business unit and overall business of the company • Too competitive and employees need constant unlearning and re-learning

C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrictive on employees in terms of what they do • Flat hierarchy • Strong team spirit and morale • Constant pressure focusing the mind on what is important for companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More a set of national institutions • Not separate from its accounting side • Retaining individuals no matter with competence or not • Symbolic violence exercised by dominating staff • Creating cliques • Casual working culture sometimes leading to unclear definition of responsibilities of each team member • Sometimes prone to collective thinking • Inclined to use 'spare-time' to do additional research for projects/practice • Not sustainable with the 'up or out' ethos and the principle of endless growth without reinvestment
C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight integration across geographies • Good learning environment • Working with smart people • Mentality of moving forward as an organisation • Making employees feel good and proud to be part of the organisation • Individual is trained to be assertive and responsible for own growth • Constant exposure to new ideas related development • Very challenging and interesting in terms of intellectual thinking and knowledge • Constantly trying to do your best in a competitive environment • Very strong knowledge management from exposure to different industries • Having better and bigger clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifting focus from employee development and involvement to financial results after public listing • Not very much talent remaining with the firm • Much less career progression than previously • Worse employment compensation over time • Very narrow and restrictive personal career development • Lack of flexibility towards employees • Need to strictly follow instructions of top members • Thin bonding between teams and projects • Occasionally too focused on the project value and revenue rather than learning and knowledge

Source: Interview Data

The firm had to maintain a pyramid structure. It was not everybody could become a Manager or a Partner. There was an overt focus on weeding people out and sometimes decisions were not made on the base of merit but on cultural fit, or political fit or some locally respected norms that someone didn't abide by...the firm didn't spend enough time learning how to manage people successfully...the firm focused so much on the academic portion of solving the case but not really spend much formal time or effort thinking about building up client relationship management details...there was no sales requirement to go from a Manager to be a Junior Partner. The individual just had to prove that he or she was smart and that academically he or she could crack the case often enough and quickly enough, and that the individual could manage teams to do so as well. What that resulted in was a fairly immature Junior Partner caught that was not very good at managing client relationships and was not very good at selling follow-on work. – (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

Interviewee Peter considered C2's culture was common among premier strategy firms. He was consistent with interviewee Rob that the distinctiveness of C2's culture was its focus on the academic nature of solving a problem but being relatively poor at managing client relationships.

C3 had a strong team orientation and always strived for success as it was relatively young in the field of management consulting. The company had the capability to pull different resources together for its projects and the determination to do the best possible. In response to a question from a high-profile writer and TV presenter in 2009 about C3 seemed to be ruled according to a tradition organised around dogmatic precepts, and unyielding in its values and it might be described as a sectarian world luckily bereft of arrogance, the Chairman explained:

[The CEO] described us the other day as an 'affective community'. You may think that certain sections of the Group are organized into clans, but if clans do exist, they are open to others. The people here respect each other, and each other's customs and history. This is not a religion, it is a necessity. If we had been sectarian or imperialist, as some have claimed, we would no longer be around. There would be no Group. We would have been long gone. Our greatest success might well quite simply be to have been able to incorporate and motivate people of widely differing cultures, respecting them and rallying

them to our values, our projects and our ambitions. – (Chairman of C3, Annual Report 2009 of C3:10).

However, one drawback of C3's collaborative working culture was 'too much relationship focus, not enough on driving an achievement of target within team members', as interviewee Frank inferred.

As part of a long-established giant blue-chip manufacturing corporation with a workforce of some hundred thousands, C4 were unquestionably able to take the advantage of economies of scale in tangible and intangible assets. As the General Manager, UK and Ireland, introduced its services in the company publication:

As we implement change, we use our unrivalled knowledge of industries, processes and technology to deliver a holistic solution. Our mission is to deliver economic value to our clients through this unique combination of business insight and technology. This goes beyond the traditional view of consultancy; our approach is about delivering tangible business outcomes through partnership and collaboration, focusing on our clients' short-term and long-term goals. [We] work as part of your team, providing support where needed, whether through expert human resource or an innovative financial strategy. [Our] extensive business assets – R&D, analytics, benchmarks, delivery methodologies, tools and, above all, the experience and commitment of our people – are available to produce results for our clients, fast and with minimised risk. [We] can offer all of this because it has a track record of success – not only with clients, but also within our own organisation. [We] became more and [are] offering the same opportunity to our clients. This publication was created to show you how. – (General Manager of C4, UK and Ireland)

Interviewee Gladys thought the best strength of C4 was supporting people and their careers, ensuring clients come first and it was quite distinctive that C4 had a long reputation for sitting around and making sure things were right for customers even if it might cost C4 to do that. Interviewee John inferred that C4 was a big company that aspired to do well but he thought 'sweep down and flood the clients with lots of people to help with vision' was not the right way to do consultancy. Interviewee Ivy

was in the same vein as interviewee Gladys seeing C4's strength as providing a flexible workplace and flexible working hours which in turn encouraged work-life balance.

Interviewee Ivy also emphasised that C4 offered communication to allow employees to voice their opinions and gave back to their society. However, interviewee Gladys revealed that there was occasionally a misalignment of business strategy between the consulting business and the overall business of the organisation. This assessment was supported by interviewee John:

You have this manufacturing firm mentality that owns the service business and applies them into the service business. As a result, you have a very, very large company that can't be as nimble as a smaller consulting firm...When we acquired the [consulting arm of one of the global accounting firms] we brought in quite a few very talented partners who were pharmaceutical consultants that did things very well. But rather than recognise the value that these people could bring to the table, we force to fit them into this sort of matrix box – this is what your reward is, this is your bonus potential and all that stuff...because the ultimate decisions are not made in the consulting organisation. It all has to roll-back and you have many, many, many layers of complexity of people making decision before a final decision is made. - (Interviewee John, ex-Executive Consultant and Corporate Strategist of C4 in the US)

Interviewee Ivy had been a Senior Consultant of the consulting arm acquired by C4 and moved to C4 due to the acquisition. She agreed that there were lengthy procedures of authorisation in C4. There were a lot of questions and legal approvals before consultants could submit a proposal to clients. Yet in the consulting unit before they were acquired by C4, consultants only needed to have the Partner agree on the proposal before its submission to clients. Interviewee Ivy also viewed the competitive working climate that people needed constant unlearning and re-learning as one of C4's weaknesses.

Compared to C6, C5 did not restrict people's aspiration. The firm allowed employees to be involved in different kinds of projects. Interviewee Sean considered that C5 provided an environment for people to be able to expand their horizons in terms of the nature of work that they did. Interviewee Ernst viewed C5 as a good place for one's first job as it was possible to learn and see a lot in a very short space of time as well as learning to work with the constant pressure to focus one's mind on what was important for the company. In particular, its organisational culture highly motivated employees as 'people worked harder as they were happy to work together', interviewee Barry articulated. Interviewee Charles echoed that, therefore, 'there is no area that needs a long time to warm up the relationship or to break down the ice before people are able to achieve as a team. It is good culture to have'. Interviewee Barry also appreciated the flat hierarchy that allowed any issues to be communicated to the top management quicker without passing through many layers of reporting channels.

However, the more national institutionalised structure and policy meant C5 did not have a streamlined integration enabling consultants in the firm to work closely together. Strategically, its accounting and management consulting businesses were not separated. It restricted the service offering to audited clients. The 'Farmer' culture in C5 as described by interviewee Terry was supposed to keep the best people.

Nevertheless, the reality was:

From my experience what actually happened is they keep everyone no matter they are good or not. Of course, it ends up the company is with a lot of bad people. Another thing happened is it becomes people are incompetent and insecure, and then they tend to use their position and title to make thing work like 'I am a partner so you have to shut up and listen to me'. I think the 'Farmer' culture also creates cliques when a group of people who hang out

together then have political plots against other people or other group – (Interviewee Terry, ex-Senior Manager of C5 in Asia and Founder & President of his own consulting practice in Canada)

This reveals that symbolic violence explicitly exists in C5. It is consistent with Bourdieu (1990: 126) that the most refined symbolic violence and the visible physical or economic violence co-exist in all institutions and are characteristic of any economy and at the centre of each social relation. Interviewee Barry also highlighted that C5's casual working culture might sometimes lead to responsibilities of each team member not being clearly specified. Interviewee Andy, as a Practices Partner in Asia, summarised that he thought C5's culture 'not a great deal but we are probably more consistent across the book comparing with other management consulting firm like C4'.

C6 had a tighter integration across geographies. It also had a better and bigger client base than C5 due to its high threshold for project revenue. Interviewee Simon thought it was interesting to be in as:

[We] can always expose to the new ideas related development. Also, there are opportunities to interact with people from different market units and industries. [We] actually can do a lot of learning from different types. I think in terms of intellectual thinking and knowledge, it is very challenging and interesting. As it is a competitive environment, so you constantly try to do your best. I think it brings the best out of everybody although if [we] cannot cope then the turnover is very high. If [we] can survive, actually it is type of interesting and different kinds of mean that [we] can get much more in a shorter time of period comparing in the other industries. – (Interviewee Simon, ex-Manager of C6 in Singapore)

Interviewee Lucia stressed that there were opportunities to work with smart people in a good learning environment with a mentality of moving forwards as an organisation in C6. It made employees 'feel good and proud to be part of the organisation', as interviewee Mary advocated.

Although working in the same culture, interviewees Queenie and Alice both criticised the firm for placing the business interest before the interests of employees.

Interviewee Queenie who had worked for C6 for four years viewed the culture as:

It was not an employee-friendly working environment. It was highly management driven. It was not easy for communication with management and among employees. There was lots of travelling, no knowledge sharing, and no personal development for people's success. I could not enjoy working with C6. Hence, I do not think of any strength of this culture. – (Interviewee Queenie, ex-Manager of C6 in the US)

Interviewee Alice was in the similar vein with interviewee Queenie:

I think the weakness was that they pushed the people hard. I was not the only person to leave for that reason. There were other people at consultant level were pushed to move up in the company. They had lack of flexibility towards the employees. The company didn't recognise the way it assigned people to projects. They did not really care for you as a person or as an individual. They did not care about your personal situation, e.g. family situations. – (Interviewee Alice, ex-Consultant of C6 in the Netherlands).

They thought the firm was losing out in the long run as it needlessly forfeited qualified personnel in whose training the firm had previously invested considerable time and money. In respect of personal development, interviewee Sean, as an ex-member of C6, informed that C6 focused on getting employees to do what they had been doing for an entire career rather than in providing opportunities for growth beyond what the person did. It was very narrow and restrictive. His view was supported by interviewee Mary, 'as the ultimate goal for C6 was one had to be an entrepreneur, thus this culture will prevent individual who wishes to specialise on a special field'.

Based on the homogeneities, heterogeneities, distinctiveness, strength and weakness found in the above comparative analysis of the organisational culture of the six global management consulting firms, the culture in management consulting can be

described and typified into ‘*Prestigious*’, ‘*Collegial*’, ‘*Bureaucratic*’ and ‘*Chaotic*’ based on two dimensions: 1) Professionalism; and 2) Client Relationship Management as depicted in Figure 5.1. In this research, ‘Professionalism’ is the degree of alignment between the espoused values (i.e. norms and values) and the practically expressed values (i.e. work and cultural practices) of an organisation. Organisational culture shapes attitudes and regulates actions of members of an organisation. It should be used as a framework within which employees make decisions. ‘Client-relationship management’ is how management consultants at all levels maintain their clients. In other words, it is the power that management consultants exert over the employees of client organisations.

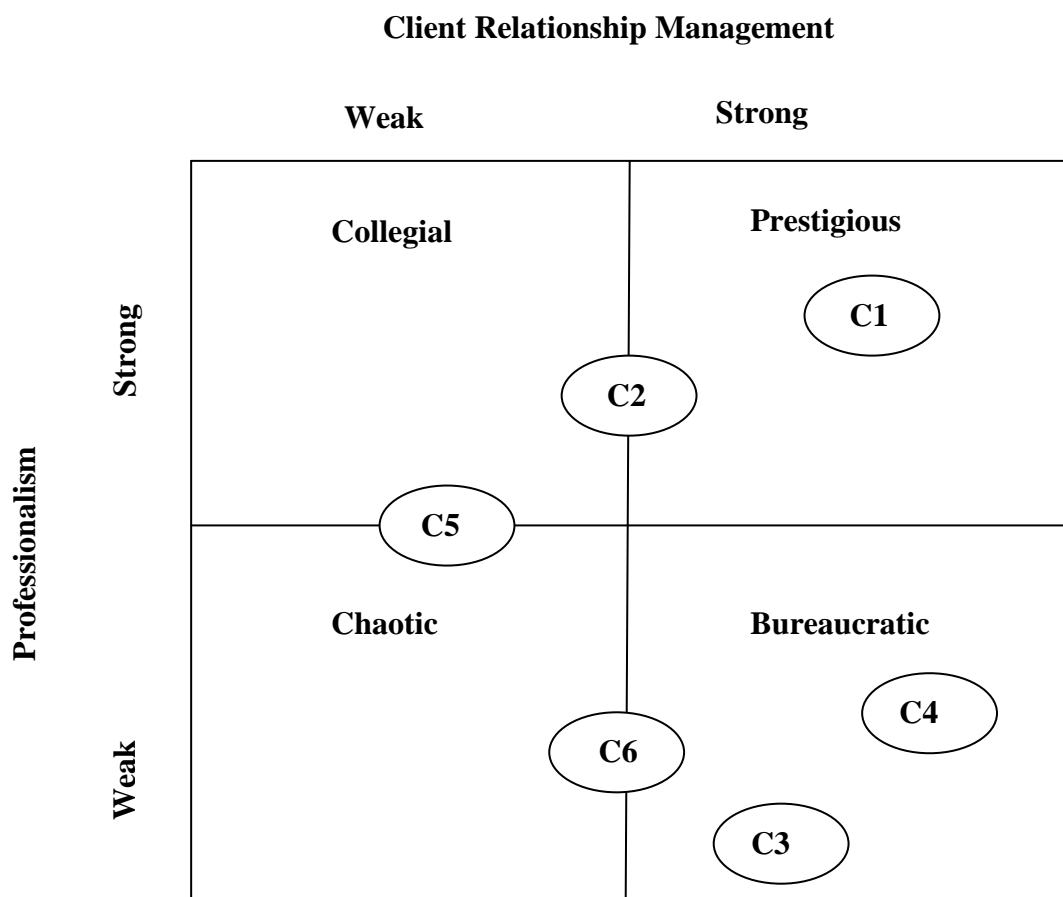


Figure 5.1 Typology of organisational culture in management consulting

The first type of organisational culture is '*Prestigious*' where management consulting firms have high professionalism and strong client relationship management. The second type is '*Collegial*' where management consulting firms have high professionalism and are weak on client-relationship management. The third type is '*Bureaucratic*', management consulting firms with strong client relationship management but weak professionalism fall into this category. Management consulting firms with low professionalism and weak client relationship management are classified as the last type '*Chaotic*'. The findings of this research also suggest that management consulting firms, such as C2, C5 and C6, possess mixed characteristics of more than one particular type of organisational culture as demonstrated in this study.

5.5 Professionalism and client relationship management

Habitus is defined as the ingrained and socially constituted dispositions of social classes (Bourdieu, 1984:170). As Leibniz (1966:474) suggests, 'one has a habitus for a thing when the thing is normally done because of a disposition found in the agent'. Organisations, through espoused values, explicitly communicate their values and guiding principles to stakeholders and society. The concern over failure to establish or to adhere to standards of proper conduct has been heightened by corporate scandals, and their impact on the capital markets and investors. Many organisations realise that good conduct and integrity contribute to marketplace success. Questionable business practices and even individual incidents of improper conduct

reflect to some degrees the values, attributes, beliefs and systems of the organisation in which they occur.

The organisational culture analysis in earlier section reveals that the espoused values of each of the six global management consulting firms are clear and honourable. However, only some of the interviewees agreed that the espoused values were always in parallel with the practically expressed values in their working organisations. For C1, interviewee Oliver did not see any difference between the two sets of values:

What values we share we know them. What we internally communicate and how we internally live our values we bring outside as well. There won't be any mismatch. Theoretically, when you are talking to different guys from C1 they should give you the same answers. – (Interviewee Oliver, Project Manager of C1 in Germany)

C1's impact, reach, power and influence were directly traceable to one of its early founding leaders. The founding leader preached the values and principles because he really believed in and practiced them. His farewell hopes to his people in 1967 were:

First, that down the years our directors and principals will provide formal training and on-the-job coaching in the professional approach. Two, that down the years our directors and principals will shout out whenever they feel we're doing anything that impair the enduring values of the professional approach or just letting those values erode through inattention. And third, that down the years our directors and principals will speak up whenever these principles that make up our philosophy are not being followed. – (The founding leader of C1, cited in C1's corporate website)

C1 only accepted a company as a client providing it was in the company's interest for C1 to serve it or the top management was committed to change according to C1's recommendations. C1's partners learnt early on to protect and cultivate their client relationships. Even in the turbulent times of the 2000s, it had served more than half of the Fortune 500 companies including more than 400 active clients for 15 years or

longer. Its longstanding clients claimed that C1 provided top services (Business Week, 2002: 66).

Insight and impact were both practically expressed and espoused values in that the goal of any C2 casework was to try to discern the truly unique insight that was developed about a particular problem or a particular case. Interviewee Peter thought that C2's practically expressed values matched their espoused values, or at least they tried to act accordingly. One of C2's foci was having impact intelligently, intellectually and persuasively with senior executive clients. However, the firm did not have as much as impact as they would like to have because they were too expensive to actually help clients to implement their business solutions. As interviewee Peter explained:

I had been on a number of projects where we designed an elegant solution that was not easy to implement or not risk-free for implementation. So the client did not actually implement our recommendation and we ended up just walking away. – (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in US)

He also added on to compare C2 with C1:

Somebody once told me that if you were the CEO of a publicly held company and there is fog on the horizon and you don't know which way to go, then you would probably hire C2 over C1 since C2 tends to take a more blue sky, white sheet of paper kind of fresh clean approach towards answering strategy question. Every project is started from scratch, everything is built from the ground up, there is a lot of research goes on to build a logical argument on which way you should take your company...if there is no fog and you want to go from point A to point B, and you want to go there as rapidly and quickly and efficiently as you possibly can, you would probably hire C1 instead of C2 because although C1 may not be as full of creative thinker as C2, they have a lot more practical approach and a lot more practical experience in growing revenue, reducing cost and adding new organisations and so on. - (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

C3 expressed the fact that it was a large company having lots of knowledge and experience could share and really be able to help the clients in many areas and the management consultants 'indeed practised the collaborative experience,' as interviewee Kathy confirmed. However, interviewee Frank asserted that there were some values they communicated internally but did not use them externally. They were about helping consultants to know how they should work and how the organisation thought that they ought to behave. Management consultants would not communicate those verbally with the customers. Interviewee Frank thought there was mismatch between the practically expressed values of the company and its espoused values as 'sometimes individuals do not necessarily behave in the way that reinforces those values; they are easy to say but difficult to do'.

For C4, both interviewees Gladys and Ivy articulated that the practically expressed values were well aligned with the espoused values. Interviewee Gladys further explained:

Dedication to every client's success is ingrained into every single consultant and in the management change and even outside of consulting. That's what should be the aspect of culture. The trust and personal responsibility in all relationships again aligns to C4. We work with you as our client. We will make sure that you are taken care of. We will make sure your project turning out right even if it costs us money. Again, that is ingrained into everyone. – (Interviewee Gladys, Management Consultant of C4 in the UK)

The one thing that interviewee Gladys stated she might challenge was the approach to innovation. In the wider C4, there is a lot of innovation but, within the consulting organisation, management consultants were rewarded for selling and for delivery as well as their utilisation. There was not that much of funding internally for learning on

the consultant side. Interviewee John also expressed that the practically expressed value of C4 was:

I would say billable hours. In all practicalities the same values were expressed because you were utilisation driver and your performance and bonus was tied to your utilisation...at the end of the day and because it is such as big organisation, there needs to be some standard ways of measuring people...someone would ask, 'Well, John what was your utilisation'. I would say, 'My actual billable utilisation was really low because I helped with these 14 critical situations with different clients that were not billable but we saved the relationship'. 'Well that's great but you didn't have billable hours so you're not getting the bonuses'. That was in all practicalities how it worked. Certainly, teamwork, integrity, helping the client, all those different things all got caught up in the context of making sure you got your utilisation. – (Interviewee John, ex-Executive Consultant and Corporate Strategist of C4 in US)

For C5, when the interviewees were asked about any mismatch on the practically expressed values of the firm and its espoused values, 4 out of 7 interviewees held a negative view. Interviewee Sean informed that 'in C5, their stated values are clear and noble but the ways people behave in the market are very different from what have been stated in the company's values'. As a Senior Manager on the way to promotion to a Partner, interviewee Terry accentuated:

I believe that in the operating consultant level, the people working with clients took those values to heart and work pretty much in a collegial manner. I think lower down in the echelons people believe what they are told. It may be very natural for younger professionals to be collegial. I believe that higher up in the organisation that the partners do not practise what they were preaching. That's part of what led certainly to my cynicism and my leaving the company because I thought that was really rather back-stabbing and political scheming rather than collegial. – (Interviewee Terry, ex-Senior Manager of C5 in Asia and Founder & President of his own consulting practice in Canada)

Interviewee Ernst articulated that utilisation, charge out rates, project profitability and the race to partnership were the practically expressed values of C5. Interviewee

Charles held that the firm tried very hard practically to meet the espoused values. In a way, the firm was doing their best for their clients. Clients were always the most important. In this sense, interviewee Charles thought that the two sets of values were quite consistent. Only sometimes it might be the consultants in a team were inexperienced, under stress or something resulted in the consultants not being able to do their best for the clients. From a practice partner's perspective, Interviewee Andy explained the mismatch of two sets of values:

The practically expressed values are again the espoused values which shape the company's culture. Integrity is very important. Employees, of course, should always act on the espoused values of the company. However, in the end it depends on individuals. Different individuals have different personalities. As a company, we try to encourage our espoused values. We revisit our performance treaty which should produce to the partners containing those values. – (Interviewee Andy, Practice Partner of C5 in Asia)

These quotations demonstrate that inconsistency between the two sets of values exists at senior level rather than junior level in C5 as well as it can be anticipated that the 'habitus of individuals in the same class will not be identical' (Bourdieu, 1990:60) as 'every member of an organisation brings to it a habitus of their own, some of which will be shared with members and some of which will differ from them substantially' (Embairbayer and Johnson, 2008:4).

The interviewees' responses on the match of practically expressed values of C6 and its espoused values were also mixed. Interviewees Sean and Mary asserted that there was no significant mismatch between two sets of values. Interviewee Alice stated that out of the espoused values, 'One Global Network' and 'Best People' were those she appreciated most. The value that she found least practiced was the 'Respect for

the individual'. Interviewee Simon informed how the company communicated the espoused values to employees:

When I saw the Analysts came in, they went for analyst school. So, they were taught how to behave and think. When you are experienced hired from industry as consultant or manager, they don't really have such kind of methodologies to ensure that they behave and portray the value of the company. So may be it is easier, when you hire the fresh graduate, to see how all of them behave as they were taught how to behave, how to ask and answer questions. When we joined in, it was more like to bring in knowledge in terms of creating the value. I didn't feel they emphasise the practically expressed value at all and I didn't get too strong message through it. - (Interviewee Simon, ex-Manager of C6 in Singapore)

Interviewee Simon's view was supported by interviewee Lucia as she also emphasised that the practically expressed values of the company were restricted to delivering value to clients. During the interview, when he was asked if all employees of C6, in general, behaved towards the values of 'Value Creation' and 'Integrity', interviewee Simon responded:

Actually, the company always emphasised on getting the projects. So that they always do business related biddings to get projects. It didn't happen to me but I saw few cases that were when putting together the proposals, they sometimes actually changed people's resumes. I found that in consulting firms they just want to get the business. They just put the names together for the proposals. When the project started, those people might not be available for the project. In terms of skill sets, sometimes I found it was so difficult to ask as I don't know how they had sourced the clients. It is because normally the client had a good relationship with the partner, or they got the project due to the personal relationship. So, it is good and bad in consulting industry. Sometimes, you will grow as you have to think of your bid as you have to react to the changing environment. On the other hand, sometimes the integrity part is sacrificed. - (Interviewee Simon, ex-Manager of C6 in Singapore).

In summary, C1 and C2 have a high degree of alignment between their espoused values and practically expressed values where C1 has a stronger emphasis on client relationship management of their clients than does C2. For C3, C4, C5 and C6,

different degrees of mismatch between their espoused values and practically expressed values are confirmed. The level of client relationship management of these four firms also varies. These findings underpin that if the espoused values are reasonably congruent with the underlying assumptions, then the articulation of those values into a philosophy of operating can be helpful in bringing a group together, serving as a source of identity and core mission. At the same time, the findings also reveal that some of the espoused values of the six global management consulting firms are either 'rationalisation or only aspirations for the future' (Schein, 2004:30).

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the organisational culture analysis of the six global management consulting firms from a comparative perspective for the objective of describing and typifying the culture in the management consulting field. The interplay between strategy and culture has been discussed. Organisational culture is the 'deep-level of basic assumptions and beliefs' shared by organisational members (Johnson, 1992:29; Schein, 1985:6 and 2004:17). The fundamental cultural homogeneities and heterogeneities have been measured and compared among the six global management consulting firms based on four closely related components of an organisation - structure and system, work and cultural practices, norm and values, and personal disposition and behaviour. The homogeneities and heterogeneities on these four related components of the six global management consulting firms are deeply enduring and emphasise their institutional and cultural distinctiveness among each other. The cultural distinctiveness characterised the strengths and weaknesses of

the organisational culture of each firm which defines their social trajectory in the field of management consulting.

The findings from this research have revealed that different legal entity forms exist in the management consulting field. This rejects neo-institutionalist DiMaggio and Powell's (1991b:63-82) predictions on structural coercive and mimetic isomorphism of organisations in any organisational field. However, the power structure, consulting hierarchy and control system in the structure and systems, the 'up or out' policy and modes of training in work and cultural practices have much in common and function in analogous ways. These support the proposition that 'normative isomorphism' (DiMaggio and Powell 1991b:63-82) exists in the field. The cultural homogeneities can be explained as:

The 'objective orchestration' established among dispositions that are objectively co-ordinated because they are ordered by more or less identical objective necessities. The agents can consciously carry out corrections and adjustments themselves to presuppose mastery of a common code (Bourdieu, 1990:59).

However, heterogeneities exist because 'the practices of the members of the same group or the same class in a differentiated society always follow only his/her own laws, nonetheless each agrees with the other' (Leibniz, 1966:548).

More importantly, the findings exhibit pronounced differences remain on each of the cultural components that are prevalent in differentiating the organisational culture of a group of organisations. The cultural heterogeneities, I argue, result from historical evolution of a combination and volume of the four types of organisational assets across time and space. Each organisation is unique and it is impossible to have

identical organisational assets with other actors in the same field. Therefore, the cultural heterogeneities reflect that ‘fields of struggle favouring strategies aim at distinction means that the products of their functioning are predisposed to function differentially, first between the class fractions and then between the classes’ (Bourdieu, 1980:277). Management consulting firms attempt to differentiate from rather than replicate each other to attract talented members and clients from different fields.

Once again, the accumulation of human capital of a knowledge-intensive organisation, such as management consulting firm, determines its social trajectory in the field. Individuals joining an organisation bring in their own habitus and apply them in their day-to-day working life in the course of becoming an ‘insider’ of their working organisation. It contributes to the reproduction of organisational culture with revisions and transformations. Despite the unique habitus of members of the same class are united in a relationship of homology, the diversity within this homogeneity reflects the diversity of their social conditions of production. As Bourdieu (1990) put it,

The common style of a class is made not only by its conformity but also by the difference that make the ‘manner’. The principles of the differences between individual habitus lies in the singularity of their social trajectories, to which they correspond series of chronological ordered determinations that are mutually irreducible to one another (Bourdieu, 1990:60).

In conclusion, the cultural homogeneities, heterogeneities and distinctiveness found in this research extend Bourdieu’s suggestion on ‘resemblance within a difference’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:105-106) exists in the relations among relatively

autonomous fields and within the relatively autonomous field of management consulting.

Building upon the comparative analysis of organisational culture of the six global management consulting firms, a typology of culture in the management consulting field is generated – ‘Prestigious’, ‘Collegial’, ‘Bureaucratic’ and ‘Chaotic’, by two dimensions - professionalism and client relationship management. I have portrayed professionalism and client relationship management as closely intertwined to define each firm’s social trajectory within the field. The findings also show that the consistency of the espoused values and the practically expressed values of an organisation determines its professionalism. Management consultants represent the management consulting firms for which they work to the world. Therefore, their attitude and behaviour have profound influences on the professionalism and reputation of their working organisations and themselves. Client relationship management relates to the level of interpersonal power exercised by management consultants over the employees of client organisations which affects their images viewed by clients’ employees. In conclusion, both professionalism and client relationship management have pronounced influences on the professional identity of management consulting firms and management consultants. In the next chapter, the culture and formation of professional identity are to be explored.

Chapter 6: Culture and the Formation of Professional Identities

‘In the social jungle of human existence there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity’.
- Erikson (1971:130)

‘No identity can be an essence, and no identity has, *per se*, progressive or regressive value outside its historical context’.
- Castells (1997: 8)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses what experiences are instrumental to the establishment of professional identities in the management consulting field. Firstly, it discusses the consulting culture from firm to field level and self-presentation as a profession in the management consulting field. Secondly, it examines the consultant-client relationships for self and identity presentation including power relation in consultant-client relationships as well as the legitimization and de-legitimization of management consultants. Thirdly, it explores the viewed images of management consultants, their fairness and accuracy, and the establishment of professional identities and reputation in management consulting.

6.2 Culture as the source of identities

Consulting culture from firm to field level

In chapter 5, it has empirically been evident that organisational culture is a habitus that is produced and reproduced relationally among four constitutive elements – 1) structure and system, 2) work and cultural practices, 3) norms and values, and 4) personal disposition and behaviour (Maclean, Harvey and Press, 2006:41), which are ingrained in all levels of an organisation. The cultural constitutive elements of each

management consulting firm were the cornerstone of their strategy and structure which determined their profound distinctiveness from each other. The findings in chapter 5 have also rejected the neo-institutional predictions on organisational coercive and mimetic isomorphism. However, there was normative isomorphism found in the areas of positions of dominance and subordination (i.e. consulting hierarchy), strategies of exclusion and appropriation (i.e. 'up or out' policy) and mechanisms of reproduction and change (i.e. staff training) within management consulting which were similar to that in the legal and accountancy fields. It further supports Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:105-106) that there is a 'resemblance within a difference', to a certain extent, on 'structural and functional homologies', not only among relatively autonomous fields also among the sub-fields within an autonomous field like management consulting.

Organisational culture of each firm expands to field level via social interaction with its internal and external stakeholders. I argue that aggregate homogeneous cultural elements of the dominant firms within any field constitute the field culture because 'the dominant firms exert their pressure on the dominated firms on their strategies through the weight that they possess within a structure' (Bourdieu, 2005:195). It is similar to the juridical field that 'the subversive efforts of those in inferior position have less chance of overturning the power relations within the field than they do of contributing to the adaptation of the juridical corpus and, thereby, to the perpetuation of the structure of the field itself' (Bourdieu, 1987c:850). In other words, the dominant management consulting firms can define the regularities or the rules of the game which reproduce the structure of the management consulting field.

Cultural heterogeneities of each firm, in the meantime, define its distinctiveness, relative position and identities (i.e. corporate and professional) within the arena which leads to field fragmentation. Despite evidence for normative isomorphism has been found in the field of management consulting, as revealed in Chapter 5, to a great extent, each of the six global management consulting firms should be seen as distinctive particularly in terms of professionalism and reputation. These two dimensions stem from the cultural heterogeneities of each firm. As Hoffman (1999:351) perceives, institutional logics and structures are never frozen, even in highly mature fields, stability is transitory as ‘new forms of debate emerge in the wake of triggering events that cause a reconfiguration of field membership and/or interaction patterns’. It is in parallel to Bourdieu’s (1990:60) assertion that members in any field are united in a relationship of homology, that is, ‘of diversity with homogeneity reflecting the diversity within homogeneity characteristic of their social conditions of production. However, the common style is not only by its conformity but also by the difference that makes the *manner*’.

Culture defines the social trajectory of an organisation within any given field as habitus is also a tacit knowledge of how to ‘go on’ as a competent social agent (Haugaard, 2002:225). Culture in the management consulting field has been typified into 1) Prestigious; 2) Collegial; 3) Bureaucratic; and 4) Chaotic, based on two dimensions: professionalism and client relationship management, as demonstrated in chapter 5. Habitus does not only ‘regulate the actions of actors who socialise into a habitus but also defines their identities’ (Bourdieu, 1977:72 and 1990:53). Each management consulting firm in this research emphasised that their espoused values

define the behaviour of their members and they were clearly written in the firm's Code of Ethics. It indicates that among the four relational cultural constitutive elements, 'Norms and values' have the strongest influence on the formation of professional identities of a management consulting firms and its members.

Self-presentation and self-investiture

Self-presentation is constructed through the shared cultural meanings available to people and so tend to be more or less conventionalised within a society (Goffman, 1959). To present themselves as professionals, there should be some cultural meanings collectively shared by management consultants within the field. There is no single or representative professional body that is internationally recognised in the field of management consulting. However, as revealed in Chapter 4, the Management Consultants Association (MCA) in UK has sixty member companies comprising around 70% of the UK field's total annual revenue of £9 billion. Its member companies include C4, C5, C6, the Big Four multidisciplinary professional service firms and other management consulting firms in different field fragments. Its Code of Practice was therefore used as a benchmark in this research for comparison with the espoused values of the six global management consulting firms. Table 6.1 presents the results of comparison which gives us an overview on the extent of compliance with the MCA's Code of Practice by C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 and C6 at firm level.

Table 6.1 Comparison between Code of Practice of MCA and espoused values of the six global management consulting firms

Code of Practice – MCA	Espoused Values of C1	Espoused Values of C2	Espoused Values of C3	Espoused Values of C4	Espoused Values of C5	Espoused Values of C6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put the client’s interest first. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put the client’s interest ahead of our own 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients come first 	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedication to every client’s success 	X	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on delivering sustainable value to the client 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overwhelming value creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value Delivered • Expanding the art of possible 	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding value to markets & clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client value creation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ people with the right skills and experience to help their client, and continually develop their expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated to developing and coaching each other and the clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity • Respect for individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation that matters, for our company and the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to each other • Strength from cultural diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stewardship • Best people • Respect for individual • One global network
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear and transparent with the client 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty 	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty 	X

Code of Practice – MCA	Espoused Values of C1	Espoused Values of C2	Espoused Values of C3	Espoused Values of C4	Espoused Values of C5	Espoused Values of C6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be trustworthy, independent and objective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behave as professional • Keep our client information confidential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity • The strategic perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust • Boldness • Modesty • Fun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust and personal responsibility in all relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for individuals • Integrity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be financially strong enough to deliver on their commitments 	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obligation to stakeholders 	X	X
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team spirit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership (internally & with clients) • Respect for individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team spirit (with clients, employers and partners) 	X	X	X
	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making an impact on society 	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a good corporate citizen 	X	X

Source: 1) Management Consultancies Association (www.mca.org.uk);
2) Corporate websites of C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 and C6

There are six principles in the Code of Practice of MCA to self-present management consulting as a profession. As we can see in Table 6.1, none of the six global consulting firms was fully in compliant with the Code of Practice of MCA. C1 and C2 were associated with 5 out of 6 principles. C4 and C6 complied with 4 out of the 6 principles; and C3 and C6 were each with 3 out of the 6 principles. However, the six global management consulting firms commonly held the principles of ‘Employ people with the right skills and experience to help their client, and continually develop their expertise’ and ‘Be trustworthy, independent and objective’. It adds to the organisational normative isomorphism that neo-institutionalists predict (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991b: 63 -82). Therefore, these two principles should be treated as the shared cultural meanings for management consultants’ identities and presentation of self.

For the remaining four principles of MCA, each was adopted by some of the six global management consulting firms in this research. C1, C2 and C4 had an analogous belief to ‘Put the client’s interest first’. C1, C2, C5 and C6 were committed to ‘Focus on delivering sustainable value to the client’. C1, C2, C3 and C5 were dedicated to ‘Be clear and transparent with the client’. For ‘Be financially strong enough to deliver on their commitments’, C4 was the only firm to pledge itself to the Code. Beyond the MCA’s Code of Practice, C1, C2 and C3 obligated themselves to ‘Team spirit internally and with clients’. C2 aligned itself to ‘Making an impact on society’ whereas C4 claimed to ‘Be a good corporate citizen’. It confirms that all the six global management consulting firms are more or less, but not entirely, follow the Code of Practice of MCA. This partial compliance is because

MCA is not an institutionalised professional body collectively accepted in the field of management consulting. Cultural and professional distinctiveness characterises each firm serving to differentiate them from each other.

In some organisations, at the time a new comer joins it, he or she is spontaneously invested with a symbolic identity to represent his/her working organisation to interpret '*what the organisation is*' (i.e. corporate identity). In this research, for example, the members of C4 interpret themselves as and are recognised as 'C4ers' in the management consulting field. This symbolic identity is a political capital propounded by management consulting firms to their members to elucidate the value and beliefs of the firms through social interactions with the world. Political capital is one kind of symbolic capital as 'the product of subjective acts of recognition, and, in so far as it is credit and credibility, exists only in and through representation, in and through trust, belief, and obedience' (Bourdieu, 1992:192).

As identified in Chapter 5, how management consultants behave towards external stakeholders via social interaction constitutes the 'practically expressed values' of a management consulting firm. They are often interpreted and evaluated by external stakeholders to compare them with consultancies' espoused values to evaluate the professionalism and reputation of a management consulting firm and its members. At the same time, management consultants also formally and tacitly gain political capital (i.e. trust, belief and obedience) from their clients through projects and social interaction in the course of provision of business advisory services. All social interaction involves the use of power, as a necessary implication of the logical

connection between human action and transformative capacity (Giddens, 1981:28-29). Interpersonal power is thus rooted in the face-to-face contexts of interaction between management consultants and clients.

In sum, aggregate cultural homogeneities of the dominant management consulting firms constitute the field culture. Cultural heterogeneities within the field make each firm distinctive from each other and lead to field fragmentation. Owing to the lack of an institutionalised and internationally recognised professional body to represent the field, management consulting firms attempt to self-present as professional through the shared cultural meanings within the field but each consulting firm still endeavours to remain distinctive from the others. Degree of congruence between espoused values and practically expressed values of a management consulting firm, as has been mentioned, is commonly used by external stakeholders to assess its professionalism and reputation at firm and individual levels. Management consulting firms empower their members with political capital to act as a medium to convey the firm's values, beliefs and philosophies in order to convey common interpretation of its corporate identity to external stakeholders via social interactions. Management consultants also gain political capital from clients through projects to socially interact with employees of client organisations for provision of business advisory services. Interpersonal power relations thus exist in consultant-client relationships through which management consultants present their self and identity.

6.3 Consultant-client relationship for self and identity presentation

Power relations in consultant-client relationships

In the management consulting field, a consultant-client relationship exists following the initial contact between management consultants and the project sponsor from client organisations. The project sponsors are normally the top management executives, such as CEO, COO, CTO or departmental managers. Interviewee Tom, who had been in the field for 23 years, highlighted the common issues in a consultant-client relationship:

In each project, there is a major project sponsor from client organisation such as the CEO who hires consulting services providers. In our case, it is normally the head of human resources department. Firstly, there is always internal competition with the human resources department. It is very crucial whether people in the HR department co-operate and work together with the external consultants. Secondly, sometimes, the HR department disengages with the external consultants. They support but not work with the consultants in a partnership relationship. Thirdly, the HR department does not want any external consultant at all. The working relationship with functional stakeholders within client organisation is therefore very important. Another common issue is, although the external consultants might be hired by the top management, they always need to study the whole organisation in-depth. How to establish the trust and relationship with internal parties within client organisation is very crucial. Without a trusting and good relationship with internal parties, external consultants cannot have a good class of picture. Therefore, the most common issue is around the working relationship with the major project sponsor and trust and communication with various internal stakeholders. – (Interviewee Tom, ex-Worldwide Senior Partner of a top tier global HR management consulting firm and Chairman of his own consultancy in Hong Kong)

This reveals that management consultants always confront resistance, disengagement and rejection from employees of client organisations. Therefore, management consultants need to be a power holder and act to remove uncertainties from their clients. As Clegg, Courpasson and Philips (2006:201) argue, ‘power functions as an alternative medium of communication to trust through which dominant and subordinate groups can coordinate and control their social interaction’.

Under conditions of institutional and transactional uncertainty such as information asymmetries in management consulting, clients' personal experience-based trust with management consultants and 'network reputation' (Glückler and Armbrüster, 2003:269) become the most important factors for clients to choose their consulting partners (Clark, 1993 and 1995). Interviewee Peter also asserted that it would be a challenge of building relationships and credibility with a client team:

We are outsiders. The senior executive has placed a certain amount of faith in the partner who has sold the project. We need to show up brand new ideas or solutions to the industry, [it should be] brand new to the client, and [we] have to learn quickly and finally but instantly establish credibility with the client as good person to be able to work with to get something productively done. – (interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

It confirms that when a project sponsor commits to hire management consultants it involves a practical acceptance of expert knowledge claims on the part of the senior executive who often has few rational grounds for appraising them (Scott, 2001:104-105). It also concurs with Scott (2001) that:

Interpersonal power operates through the personal resources of physique and personality that individuals bring to their encounters and through the various resources on which some depend and to which others can give access. It is in this way that one person can make another bend to her or his will and so become a principal in an interpersonal power relationship. – (Scott, 2001:28-29).

Based on interviewees Tom's and Peter's responses, what key attributes for making a good relationship with clients and under what circumstances management consultants are legitimized and de-legitimized become critical for the establishment of professional identities in management consulting. 21 out of 25 interviewees put forward their insightful responses on these questions in Table 6.2. These 21 interviewees were on the front-line from Consultant to Senior Manager Levels and

had heavy social interactions with clients in their day-to-day working life. The remaining 4 interviewees who were at Partner level or knowledgeable individual consultant also provided in-depth relevant and additional ideas and views into these areas during the interviews. For building a good relationship with clients, there were 14 key attributes put forward by the 21 interviewees. They are categorised according to the Code of Practice of MCA and depicted in Table 6.3.

Management consultants are normally appointed when their clients are in desperate need of some assistance. Clients submit their trust to management consultants in a belief that they are knowledgeable professionals possessing a body of knowledge and skills that have not been appropriated by others inside the client organisation or available through other channels (Freidson, 1993:40; French and Raven, 2001:73). In this sense, symbolic manifestations of power relations exist in consultant-client relationships. The dominant symbolic order in any arena generates ‘a system of highly visible distinctions and discriminations which stratify those populations subject to them’ (Clegg, Courpasson and Phillips, 2006:252).

Table 6.2 Key attributes for a good relationship with clients and circumstances for legitimization and de-legitimization of management consultants

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/Management Consulting Firm	Key attribute for a good relationship with clients ^[a]	Circumstances for legitimization of management consultants ^[b]	Circumstances for de-legitimization of management consultants ^[c]
Alice - Consultant of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants' competence^[a2] • Demonstrating financial value creation to clients^[a5] • Consultants' appreciation on client team members' input on the project as they have acquired a mix of expertise in their area^[a14] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a realistic project plan from the beginning^[b6] • Having an accurate and realistic first gap analysis of the strategy of the company with practical implementable component^[b12] • Allowing amendments to be made during the projects^[b7] • Completing the project within the financial and time initial estimates^[b7] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad initial project plan^[c5] • Bad project management / time management / resource management (i.e. competent people, necessary equipment, etc.)^[c1] • Lack of back-up plan for unforeseen deviations from the project plan / bottle neck^[c5]
Barry - Consultant of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the clients' needs and expectation on the deliverables^[a1] • Update clients constantly for any issues emergence^[a3] • Good inter-personal and communication skills between consultants and clients for true trust building up between two parties^[a2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client's satisfaction –able to understand clients' needs, deliver clients' expectation and offer clients insightful solutions^[b1] • Good communication with client^[b3] • Be able to manage clients' expectation along the way to confirm what they will and will not do^[b1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-commitment to clients in the proposal stage and resulting in not able to deliver committed results^[c11] • Wrong interpretation on client's need and expectation^[c4] • The working way and personality of consultants not compatible with the clients^[c12] • Lack of resources allocated to the project especially improper skill sets of some consultants in a project^[c1]
Charles - Consultant of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty on what can do^[a3] and what is best for the clients^[a6] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty to clients^[b8] • Having the client full committed to the project^[b4] • Having collaboration from the client^[b5] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Honest to clients^[c13] • Lack of data^[c6] • Lack of cooperation from client team^[c6]

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/Management Consulting Firm	Key attribute for a good relationship with clients ^[a]	Circumstances for legitimization of management consultants ^[b]	Circumstances for de-legitimization of management consultants ^[c]
Daisy -Senior Consultant of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing industry and company of clients and what challenges clients are facing^[a1] • Not assume knowing clients' culture especially their ethical culture^[a4] • My willingness to go one extra mile for each of the key stakeholder^[a8] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation management – both client and senior management in consulting firm^[b1] • Client readiness – top level management drive^[b9] and early buy-in and resources dedication^[b4] • Consultant team's ability to identify mid management level champion who can drive the client's team for consultant and will design the successful outcome with the consulting team^[b5] • Good project management – time, budget, and resources^[b7] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of buy-in from key stakeholders^[c3] • Lack of consulting resources or too many new consultants on project with tight timeline^[c1] • Having language barrier with local employees of client organisation^[c15]
Ernst - Senior Consultant of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a personal and professional rapport^[a7] • My competence to add value that their employees cannot^[a5] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A well-defined and carefully thought-out project scope^[b6] • Clients having clear knowledge on their expectations from consultants^[b1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not have a well-defined and carefully thought out project scope^[c5] • Clients not very clear about their expectation to achieve^[c16]
Frank - Managing Consultant of C3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening and understanding their environment^[a1] • Not assume on knowing the answer before listening^[a9] • Not try to work in the way but support the way clients are working for building working relationship^[a4] • To be a real adding value to what clients not have at the moment^[a5] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being very clear on the required outcomes and agreed them with clients^[b1] • Communicating regularly with clients about the status and about problems or issues^[b3] • Working with clients jointly through the project team rather than doing something in isolation^[b5] • Using the client's language^[b13] • Having a good team of people to build a good set of team^[b2] • Being clear of nature of jobs and the logic^[b1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not have a clear scope of the role of consultants in the Terms of Reference of the project or its continual changing^[c10] • Not have any help or support from top management of working consulting firms^[c17]

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/Management Consulting Firm	Key attribute for a good relationship with clients^[a]	Circumstances for legitimization of management consultants^[b]	Circumstances for de-legitimization of management consultants^[c]
Gladys - Management Consultant of C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sense and understanding what client's requirements are^[a1] • Having competence to fulfill the job requirements^[a2] • Integrity^[a3] • Having a properly written contract outlining the agreed deliverables^[a11] • Giving clients a bit more than their expectation^[a8] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility with the change on requirements^[b10] • Providing something extra than clients' expectation^[b11] • Communication with client^[b3] • Doing the things that have committed to clients, being on time and below budget^[b7] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No correctly written contract at the beginning of a project^[c10] • Poor management on both client and consultant sides^[c1] • Not have the right people working on the project in both sides^{[c1] & [c14]} • Lack of communication between consultants and clients^[c2]
Heather - Senor Associate Consultant of non-case management consulting firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proving to clients and gaining client's trust by asking the right questions^[a2] and being interested^[a1] • Maintaining a professional standard of conduct, honesty and impeccable integrity^[a3] • Being interested in their lives and sharing a few things about ours^[a4] • Being the type of person they like to work with and be comfortable and wanting to help clients^[a4] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having buy-in from the client all the way from the top to the bottom^[b4] • Having access to the right data helps^[b2] • Having the manager in the client team understanding the value of consultants' time and efforts^[b14] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not having clients' co-operation^[c6] • Having a too short project timeframe^[c1] • Not have right data to do the job^[c6] • Not have a manager that consultants like^[c3] • Not have enough people on the team^[c1]
Ivy - Senior Consultant of C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated to client's success^[a6] • Client's satisfaction^[a6] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality deliverables^[b15] • Professional services^[b8] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not well-defined scope of deliverables^[c5] • Poor project management^[c1]

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/Management Consulting Firm	Key attribute for a good relationship with clients ^[a]	Circumstances for legitimization of management consultants ^[b]	Circumstances for de-legitimization of management consultants ^[c]
John -Executive Consultant & Corporate Strategist of C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty^[a3] • Regular communication with clients to get clients to see me as a trusted advisor^[a12] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a good communication with the client early and often on the expectation^[b3] • Having a good plan with setting up expectation in every early stage of project^[b6] • No misunderstanding, miscommunication with clients, or assumption on their needs and problems^[b1] • constantly revisiting the expectations and the desired outcome making sure everyone is on the same page^[b1] • Be always there to show clients that we are always working^[b16] • theoretically nothing should be brand new on our final presentation to at least the project sponsor^[b17] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not have a good plan with the client^[c5] • Not good communication to clients about what their needs and problems are^[c2] • Not be always in clients' office^[c18] • Not communicate early and often^[c2] • Come out brand new thing in the final presentation that clients do not expect^[c7] • Not get right people for the project^[c1] • Not understand the working culture and expectation of the critical personnel (e.g. project manager) in client team^[c12]
Kathy - Senior Consultant of C3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust • Ability to listen and see what the problems are^[a1] • Ask the right questions^[a2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having right people with right knowledge and experience^[b2] • Good communication with clients on the responsibilities and results of the consulting project^[b3] • A good project plan which is agreed and accepted by clients^[b6] • Honesty to clients when problems emerge^[b8] • Not trying to do too much beyond written agreement^[b11] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not have good communication with clients^[c2] • clients' expectation might become different or be wrongly interpreted by both parties^[c4]

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/Management Consulting Firm	Key attribute for a good relationship with clients ^[a]	Circumstances for legitimization of management consultants ^[b]	Circumstances for de-legitimization of management consultants ^[c]
Lucia - Senior Consultant of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skill^[a2] • Project management skill^[a2] • Understand big picture skill^[a2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be flexible for emerging problems and changing situations^[b10]. • Working with stakeholders^[b5] • Having clients' support on our strategy and approach to their organisation^[b4] • People importance – human performance is the core of business performance^[b2] • Understanding business requirement and objectives we need to achieve for clients^[b1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • surprising the client with new decisions^[c7] • 'hiding' risks when things going wrong^[c13] • difficulties in managing timeline and budget^[c1] • incapable resources^[c1]
Mary - Manager of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the client's work ethic and culture^[a4] • Professionalism^[a3] • Personal integrity^[a3] • Building and sustaining trust with clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change management - able to change the behaviour of employees of client organisation^[b9] • Stakeholder management – know how to manage the management of client organisation^[b18] • Knowledge of the specific discipline – need to know something about content to deliver services^[b2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making assumption and miscommunication with clients on the scope deliverables^[c2]
Nick - Manager of a non-case management consulting firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the client happy and felt understood^[a1] • Making the client look good in front of his boss^[a13] • Having non-working relationship with clients^[a7] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having happy client^[b18] • Developing a good non-working relationship with the clients – to become their friends and know their dogs and families^[b19] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not have happy client^[c3] • Not become friends of clients^[c3]

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/Management Consulting Firm	Key attribute for a good relationship with clients ^[a]	Circumstances for legitimization of management consultants ^[b]	Circumstances for de-legitimization of management consultants ^[c]
Oliver - Project Manager of C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having good human resources^[a9] • Be able to listen and solve problems^[a1] • Creating a partner relationship and able to find out the real problems. • Having very good analytical skill to specifically solve the problems with new solutions and very clear methods^[a2] • Be able to complete the project in short period of time • Be creative in many ways to adopt solutions that resolve problems on the client's situation^[a6]. • Very excellent communication both orally and written^[a2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a team player and never work alone^[b3] • Having ability to sacrifice a good thing of your own work to an outcome which is the group outcome to derive a solution together^[b20] • Never work at consultant's team alone^[b5] • Regularly inform the project progress to both consultant and client teams together^[b3] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mismatch between the expectation and the deliverable between consultants and clients^[c4] • Wrong estimate of resources that the project requires^[c1] • Coming up with a perfect solution but not implement it because of political reasons within the client organisation^[c9]
Peter - Project Leader of C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having empathy for the client's situation^[a1] • A combination of honesty and integrity^[a3] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping clients to get comfortable with actually executing our future recommendations and changing their way they manage their business^[b9] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not build a relationship with the senior executive sponsor early on^[c3] • Designing an elegant solution that is not at all implementable because the client not have human resources with the required skill sets^[c9]
Queenie - Manager of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client's interest come first^[a6] • Developing trust with employees of client organisation • Honesty to clients^[a3] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sure to have regular meetings with clients^[b3] • Maintaining the timeframe and good structure of project plan^[b7] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of communication^[c2] • Frequent change of organisation and people involved^[c8] • consulting firms put their own interest ahead of client's interest^[c19]

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/Management Consulting Firm	Key attribute for a good relationship with clients ^[a]	Circumstances for legitimization of management consultants ^[b]	Circumstances for de-legitimization of management consultants ^[c]
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having good consulting team both from consulting firm and client organisation^[b2] • Honest dialogue between two parties^[b8] 	
Rob - Project Leader of C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening and understanding what clients know to show my importance to them^[a1] and competence^[a2] • Being able to support conclusions with facts pulled from external data sources to gain respect from clients^[a2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a good relationship between the partner who sold the project and the client^[b21] • Having a clear agreement with clients' expectation on deliverables^[b1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving clients something different from their expectation^[c7]. • The client project manager gets removed normally causes a project to end^[c8] • Not communicating to clients when things happen and things go wrong^[c2] • Sometimes project manager in consultant side didn't have very good interpersonal skills on working with clients^[c3] • Over-commitment or over-delivery to clients^[c11]
Simon - Manager of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant's capabilities – knowledge, management of and communication with clients^[a2] • Having a non-working relationship with clients^[a7] • The position of the partner is used to the clients and how consultants can match with his perception is material^[a10] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a clear upfront of clients' expectation on deliverables^[b1] • Keeping the timeline which is usually the key restraint^[b7] • Commitment from clients^[b4] • Availability of resources from clients when needed^[b2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first thing is the expectation from clients^[c4] • No time buffer for things happen beyond our control especially in the system implementation^[c1] • High personnel turnover rate in a project^[c8]
Terry - Senior Manager of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • True trust from clients to believe in me • Real understanding on clients' concerns^[a1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having competent consultants^[b2] • Having smart and competent clients confident of implementing the changes^[b2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having incompetent consultants^[c1] • Having incompetent clients^[c14] • Bad communication^[c2] or relationship^[c3] between consultants and clients

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/Management Consulting Firm	Key attribute for a good relationship with clients ^[a]	Circumstances for legitimization of management consultants ^[b]	Circumstances for de-legitimization of management consultants ^[c]
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competence on providing thought leadership by sharing with clients ideas and methodology they do not know and delivering results^[a2] 		
Sean -Senior Manager of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the client's business^[a1] Understanding how to add value to clients' business^[a5] Understanding the client's unique environment (i.e. organisational culture)^[a4] Having good resources in a project by allocating the best talents to the best clients^[a9] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well defined & plenty understanding on the scope of expectation^[b1] Proper planning especially for consultant side^[b6] Commitment from client in terms of the resources they put in^[b2] Buy-in from the organisation and leadership shown by the key executives from the client organisation Appropriate skills of consulting competence in consultant side^[b2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients do not have sufficient resources^[c6] Not manage the client relationship^[c3] Not understand clients' expectation^[c4] Misunderstanding on scope of deliverables between consultants and clients^[c4] No change management^[c20]

Source: Interview Data

Table 6.3 Categorisation of key attributes for making a good relationship between management consultants and clients into Code of Practice of MCA

Code of Practice – MCA	Key attributes
Put the client’s interest first	[a6] : Clients’ interest should come first. – (4 interviewees) [a13] : Making the client look good in front of his boss. – (1 interviewee) [a14] : Appreciating the input that client team members were able to give. – (1 interviewee)
Focus on delivering sustainable values to the client	[a5] : Adding overwhelming value that clients do not have. – (4 interviewees) [a8] : Consultants should be willing to go an extra-mile’ for each of the key stakeholders. – (2 interviewees)
Employ people with the right skills and experience to help their client, and continually develop their expertise	[a2] : Knowledge and experience coupling with good listening, enquiring and communication skills. (10 interviewees) [a4] : Understanding and working with clients’ unique environment including work ethics and culture. – (5 interviewees) [a7] : Having non-working relationship with clients. – (3 interviewees) [a9] : Having good human resources in a project.- (2 interviewees) [a11]: Having a properly written contract outlining the agreed deliverables.- (1 interviewee)
Be clear and transparent with the client	[a3] : Professionalism, honesty and personal integrity. – (8 interviewees) [a10]: The position of the partner is used to the client and if management consultants can match with his perception is material. – (1 interviewee) [a12]: Regular communication with client. – (1 interviewee)
Be trustworthy, independent and objective	[a1] : Management consultants’ willingness to listen and understand clients’ business, concerns and requirement. – (12 interviewees)
Be financially strong enough to deliver on their commitments	-----

Source: 1) Interview Data
2) Code of Practice of MCA

According to expert theory, management consultants hold the autonomy and power (Kubr, 1996; Lowendahl, 1997; Mills and Moshavi, 1999; Schein, 1987) to seek characterising their relationship with clients as the ‘indispensable and the dependent’ (Bloomfield and Daniell, 1995:27) because clients are dependent on the credibility their expertise provides. 4 out of 21 interviewees emphasised that management

consultants should ‘Add overwhelming value that clients do not have’^[a5], as interviewee Peter stressed:

Management consultants should have empathy for their clients as the clients have to hire consultants because they have to and not because they want to, as they are in dire need to have some help. Generally, consultants are viewed as being very high priced hired gun. Clients thus do not go into a consulting relationship lightly. They realize they are going to have to pay a lot of money. So they are hoping to get specific value out of the money that they spend. – (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

As Scott (2001: 101) perceives, the basis of a professional practice is embodied in forms of diagnosis and treatment. Management consultants hence need to be ‘Willing to listen and understand clients’ business, concerns and requirements’^[a1] (12 out of 21 interviewees) in ‘Attempting to understand what the clients know in order to show clients that you are competent and important’ (interviewee Rob of C2) to ‘Provide thought leadership to share with them the ideas and methodology that they do not know about’ (interviewee Terry of C5). To be capable of doing this, management consultants should possess the appropriate ‘Knowledge and experience coupling with good listening, enquiring and communication skills’^[a2] (10 out of 21 informants). As interviewees Oliver of C1 and Sean of C5 considered, ‘Having good human resources in a project’^[a9] was critical because:

If [consultants] do not get good resources for their project, then [their] reasons for being unable to deliver are a lot higher. Of course, for consulting firms, there are always limited talents within the company. That’s important for the company to identify who are the good clients, so they can allocate the best talents to the best clients. – (Interviewee Sean, ex-Senior Manager of C5 & C6 in Singapore)

To be clear and transparent with client, ‘Having a properly written contract outlining the agreed deliverables’^[a11] (interviewee Gladys of C4) would provide a formal

structure to bind management consultants to what they should do for what they have agreed to deliver and clients to what they should expect to receive. Interviewee Gladys expressed that in one of her projects there was lack of such a contract which resulted in significant re-negotiation between the two parties mid-way in the project. In addition, ‘Regular communication with clients’^[a12] (interviewee John of C4) reinforces ‘client project in the process of advice and client involvement on a multidimensional level which would secure enthusiastic commitment from clients’ (Davenport and Early, 2010:73). Interviewee Simon of C6 stated that, in one of his projects, the Partner told him what he had told the client, and at this interviewee Simon therefore knew what the client expected. Hence, he highlighted that sometimes ‘The position of the Partner is used to deal with the client and if management consultants can match with his perception is material’^[a10] for a good consultant-client relationship. This would prevent management consultants from delivering inconsistent information to clients during their communication.

For Bourdieu, human action is not fundamentally a matter of cultural conformity. It is adaptive, to be sure, but also strategic, constitutive of cultural standards as well as adaptive to them (Swartz, 2002:62S). On the one hand, management consultants are cultural producers required to bring in best practices to client organisations. On the other hand, they are just like new comers who have to socialise into the habitus of client organisations and need to be in tune with the work and cultural practices of client organisations in order to have the right dispositions and behaviours to be accepted by the client team. 5 out of 21 interviewees believed that ‘Understanding and working with clients’ unique environment including work ethics and culture’^[a4]

was important as management consultants should behave as ‘Being the type of person that clients liked and be comfortable to work with and wanted to help clients’^[a4] (interviewee Heather, ex-Senior Consultant of a non-case global management consulting firm in the US). This indicates that management consultants do not have absolute autonomy and power as expert theory asserts.

A trusting relationship can only be built on a certain level of mutual acceptance between management consultants and clients (Schein, 2002:26-27). ‘Having non-working relationship with clients’^[a7] (3 out of 21 interviewees) represents that the clients become more accepting of management consultants they appoint. They then would ‘reveal more of his/her private thoughts and escalate the conversation to a deeper level’ (Schein, 2002:26-27). At the same time, interviewee Alice of C6 insisted that management consultants had to ‘Appreciate the input that client team members were able to give’^[a14] as they had acquired a mix of expertise in their areas. In sum, management consultants should only offer clients objective and independent advice to help on problem-solving and decision-making rather than substitute or repress clients. The ownership of a project should always rest on the clients (Bäcklund and Werr, 2008:766; Hagenmeyer, 2007:109).

Key attributes such as ‘Professionalism, honesty and personal integrity’^[a3] and ‘Clients’ interest should come first’^[a6] proposed by 8 and 4 interviewees respectively accord with the Code of Practice of MCA. ‘Consultants should be willing to go an extra-mile for each of the key stakeholders’^[a8] (interviewees Gladys of C4 and Daisy of C5) would help to build a trusting consultant-client relationship

as it demonstrates that management consultants are dedicated to spend extra time and effort for their clients' interest. Managers, especially in bureaucratic organisations, encounter potential identity pressures on the use of management consultants as external advisors as it becomes an extraordinary action in need of explanation, justification, and careful management (Bäcklund and Werr, 2008:767). Hence, 'Making the client look good in front of his boss'^[a13] (interviewee Nick, ex-Manager of a non-case global management consulting firm in Germany) can be seen as the way that management consultants legitimize the buyer of management consulting services.

The findings informed that a good and trusting consultant-client relationship is created by 14 key attributes which were in compliance with 5 of the 6 principles: 1) Put the client's interest first; 2) Focus on delivering sustainable values to the client; 3) Employ people with the right skills and experience to help their client, and continually develop their expertise; 4) Be clear and transparent with the client; and 5) Be trustworthy, independent and objective. Among them, management consultants' willingness to listen and understand clients' business, concerns and requirement; their knowledge and experience coupling with good listening, enquiring and communication skills; and professionalism, honesty and personal integrity were the top three key attributes. These attributes support the basis of a professional practice is 'diagnosis and treatment' (Scott, 2001:101).

Legitimization and de-legitimization of management consultants

Given the high level of uncertainties and fluidity of the consultancy work particularly with client involvement, it is inevitable that management consultants must

occasionally encounter professional and personal challenges on maintaining their positive and professional identity. In spite of knowing what key attributes are for a good relationship with clients, sometimes management consultants and clients cannot build up a successful relationship which results in serious problematic project outcomes and de-legitimization of management consultants arises. Circumstances under which management consultants are legitimized or de-legitimized are depicted in Table 6.4. There were 21 circumstances and 20 circumstances under which management consultants were legitimized and de-legitimized respectively. Circumstances on the consultant's side are categorised into the Code of Practice of MCA whereas those on the client side are classified into 1) Commitment and buy-in for change; 2) Collaboration and Co-operation; and 3) Operations in client organisation. To a certain extent, these circumstances are in relation to some of the proposed key attributes for making a good relationship with clients in the earlier section.

Bourdieu (1990: 59) emphasises the habitual characteristics of regularity, unity and systematicity to practices without conscious coordination. Each project is an act of team-work, each management consultant should 'Have ability to sacrifice a good thing of their own work to the group outcomes to derive a solution together'^[b20] (interviewee Oliver of C1). In practice, the duration of a project can span over a long period of time (e.g. one year or longer). To foster or cope with the rapid changing business environment, clients' business requirements might need to change continually. Management consultants should 'Have flexibility with the change on

clients' requirements'^[b10] (interviewees Gladys of C4, Kathy of C3 and Alice of C6) for clients' best interests.

For management consultants to claim to be value creators, the utmost objective of each project should be delivering sustainable values to clients. Thus, management consultants should present 'Quality deliverables'^[b15] to clients, as interviewee Ivy of C4 stated. Sturdy (1997:397) suggests that 'consultancy is fuelled by the provision of a sense of reassurance to management and at the same time reinforcing or creating insecurities'. 9 out of 21 interviewees stated that there should 'Have good expectation management in both consultant and client sides'^[b1]. Therefore, 'theoretically nothing should be brand new on our final presentation to, at least, the project sponsor'^[b17] (interviewee John of C4). As interviewee John explained:

Have a good communication and plan with the client for setting up expectations very early when you first engage with them. Talking to them about what their needs are, understanding what their problem is and then relay back to them what you understand them to mean by what they are saying. So there is no miscommunication, no assumptions like and then you go and do your initial task...and constantly revisit those expectation and the desired outcome to make sure everyone is on the same page. At the end of the day, or the 12-week project or whatever, there is not a surprise. You can never have surprises on one of these things because it will only fail in the end. The clients do not like it. It's a bad thing for the team. – (Interviewee John, ex-Executive Consultant and Corporate Strategist of C4 in the US)

To do this, management consultants should 'Have regular and good communication with client team'^[b3] (7 out of 21 interviewees) to ensure plenty of understanding on the scope of expectation and 'Be always in presence in clients' office'^[b16] (interviewee John of C4). However, interviewees Gladys of C4 and Kathy of C3 argued that management consultants should 'Provide something extra but not too much than clients' expectation'^[b11] to show clients the extra values they had created

for them. In reality, it should depend on the objectives of the clients for appointing external consultants.

To emphasise their expertise to their clients, management consultants often use their socio-political skills (Alvesson and Johansson, 2002:235). Management consultants should ‘Have stakeholder management skills’^[b18] (interviewees Mary of C6 and Nick of a non-case global management consulting firm) including ‘Being able to help clients with comfortable readiness for change’^[b9] (3 out of 21 interviewees) and ‘Having the manager in the client team understanding the value of consultants’ time and effort’^[b14] (interviewee Heather of a top-tier global non-case management consulting firm). It is also essential to ‘Have a good relationship between the Partner who sold the project and the project sponsor’^[b21] (interviewee Rob of C2) and ‘Develop a good non-working relationship with the clients’^[b19], as interviewee Nick of a non-case global management consulting firm suggested, ‘become the client’s friends and know his dog/family’ to gain their private thoughts at a deeper level.

Table 6.4 Categorisation of circumstances for legitimization and de-legitimization of management consultants into the Code of Practice of MCA.

	Circumstances for legitimization of management consultants	Circumstances for de-legitimization of management consultants
<i>In consultant side (Code of Practice –MCA)</i>		
Put the client’s interest first	[b20]: Have ability to sacrifice a good thing of your own work to the group outcome to derive a solution together - (1 interviewee) [b10]: Have flexibility with the change on clients’ requirements - (3 interviewees)	[c18]: Consulting firms put their own interest ahead of clients’ interest - (1 interviewee)
Focus on delivering sustainable values to the client	[b11]: Provide something extra but not too much than clients’ expectation - (2 interviewees) [b15]: Quality deliverables - (1 interviewee)	[c11]: Over-commitment/over-delivery to clients – (1 interviewee)
Employ people with the right skills and experience to help their client, and continually develop their expertise	[b1] : Have good expectation management - (9 interviewees) [b2] : Have good human resources in a project both from consultants and client team - (9 interviewees) [b6] : Have a realistic and thought-out project plan and scope – (5 interviewees) [b7] : Have good project management – (6 interviewees) [b9] : Able to help clients with comfortable readiness for change – (3 interviewees) [b12]: Have an accurate and realistic first gap analysis with implementable component - (1 interviewee) [b14]: Have the manager in the client team understanding the value of consultant’s time and effort - (1 interviewee) [b18]: Have stakeholder management skill– (2 interviewees)	[c1] : Have poor project management/time management/consulting resources management - (11 interviewees) [c4] : Wrong interpretation of clients’ requirements and deliverable expectation - (6 interviewees) [c5] : Poor initial project plan not well define the scope of deliverables - (4 interviewees) [c10]: Lack of a clear or having continuous change in scope of the role of consultants in Term of Reference of the project - (2 interviewees) [c12]: Not understand or be incompatible with the working culture, in particular the critical personnel in the client team - (2 interviewees) [c15]: Have language barrier with local employees of client organisations – (1 interviewee) [c17]: Not have any help or support from top management of working consulting firm- (1 interviewee) [c19]: No change management - (1 interviewee)

	Circumstances for legitimization of management consultants	Circumstances for de-legitimation of management consultants
Be clear and transparent with the client	[b3] : Have regular and good communication with client team - (7 interviewees) [b17]: No brand new on final presentation to at least the project sponsor - (1 interviewee) [b13]: Use client's language - (1 interviewee) [b16]: Be always in presence in clients' office - (1 interviewee) [b19]: Develop a good non-working relationship with the clients - (1 interviewee) [b21]: Have a good relationship between the partner who sold the project and the project sponsor - (1 interviewee)	[c2] : Lack of good communication between management consultants and clients on clients' needs, problems and the scope of deliverables - (7 interviewees) [c7] : Context of final presentation beyond clients' expectation - (3 interviewees) [c19]: Not always in clients' office - (1 interviewee)
Be trustworthy, independent and objective	[b8] : Professional/honesty with clients- (4 interviewees)	[c13]: Not honest with client - (2 interviewees)
<i>In client side</i>		
Commitment and buy-in for change	[b4] : Have full commitment and buy-in from clients – (5 interviewees)	[c3] : Lack of buy-in from key stakeholders and with clients' dissatisfaction - (7 interviewees)
Collaboration and Co-operation	[b5] : Have collaboration with and from clients – (4 interviewees)	[c6] : Lack of co-operation or sufficient resources from client team - (3 interviewees)
Operations in client organisations		[c8] : High personnel turnover rate on critical organisations or people involved in a project - (3 interviewees) [c9] : Propose perfect solutions but not implemented due to political reasons in client organisations - (1 interviewee) [c14]: Having incompetent clients - (2 interviewees) [c16]: Clients do not very clear about their expectation to achieve – (1 interviewee)

Source: Interview Data

If management consultants cannot demonstrate to clients that they have superior knowledge or expertise in specialised areas, their political capital such as credit and credibility as well as the trust conferred from clients will diminish. French and Bertram (2001:71) argue that management consultants exert power outside the range of their expertise can cause an undermining of confidence. Consequently, it will reduce management consultants' expertise power. Interviewee Simon of C6 shared his experience:

There was one case where things went wrong from the very beginning. The person who was an expert in Change Management left the company but the projects must be on-going. So they needed someone to replace him and I was available at that time. The Partner sold me as a Change Management expert. The client was an American lady from [a global oil company] and she was quite demanding, not easy to handle with. When I asked too many questions that she thought I should know, she became very irritating. She complained to my manager about me like 'who is this person? Why you send this person keep on asking silly questions?' That's the only bad experience I had. Most of the time, the projects were handled well as you should not put someone who does not have the good knowledge to the client if you know the client is demanding. At the end, I told the Partner that I couldn't deliver and it was better for me to be out of the project in order to keep the project going and keep the client happy. It's quite open and then let someone to come in. – (Interviewee Simon, ex-Manager of C6 in Singapore)

Interviewee Alice of C6 also expressed that she felt more comfortable when she came to the project with actual knowledge and not just used as a resource. Unfortunately, at times if a project needed sufficient headcount, and she was available then she would be assigned despite her lack of skills needed on the particular project. In this situation, she believed that it was very hard for management consultants to have a professional and competent identity and image for which clients rightfully expect.

Besides possessing superior knowledge in specialised areas, management consultants often need to have right resources to successfully deliver their work. ‘Having good human resources in a project both from consultants and client team’^[b2] (9 out of 21 interviewees) was important because ‘If there did not have enough skills in the consultant team, it was very hard to deliver’, as interviewee Sean of C5 stressed. In the meantime, interviewee Terry of C5 emphasised that ‘In client side, you needed a smart and competent client being confident of going ahead and implemented the changes, otherwise, you could tell him anything and he was not going to make it happen anyway which made your job not go anywhere’. Hence, ‘Having collaboration with and from clients’^[b5] (4 out of 21 interviewees) critically attributes to the success of a project. ‘Having a realistic and thought-out plan and scope’^[b6] (5 out of 21 interviewees) and ‘Having good project management’^[b7] (6 out of 21 interviewees) would allow things to be planned upfront, otherwise management consultants would get a lot of issues such as schedules with costs and so on.

Clegg, Courpasson and Phillips (2006:119) suggest that ‘legitimacy is not something given but is an effect of some actor’s construction of the situation’. However, in the intellectual field, only ‘rhetoric of autonomy, neutrality and universality may be the basis of a real autonomy of thought and practice’ (Bourdieu, 1987c:820). Interviewee Peter of C2 explained how management consultants constructed a situation to emphasise their expression of the factual value creation:

Different types of consulting lend themselves to different types of value proposition and discussion run by proposition. At [C2] there were times when we were delivering hardly any value and there was a sole focus on keeping the client relationship going. So that we could bill them for another month, regardless of what we produced. Whereas at [one of the then Big 6 accounting firm] which was the competitive firm I would favour the most, we would say to

the client, 'Let us put two people on the ground in your company for two weeks to do an assessment on where the improvement opportunity is and all you owe us is one hour of your time at the end of two weeks for a final presentation'. We would do two weeks of work on our nickel, we would fund it, get interviews, clock data etc. to build the presentation and said to client, 'Here are the six things we think you should do to improve your company and we think you can do 3 of them by yourself but we think we can help you on these 3'. Then we would say, 'We should be able to find you \$10 in savings for every dollar in fees that we ask for or you shouldn't hire us'. When you put that kind of value proposition on the table in front of the CFO or CEO and they would say, 'Jesus, there is a potential 10 to 1 pay-off here and how can I not hire you guys?'. So it's a very forthright, upstanding, value driven way to drive the market. We drove the client to have impact and they thought you were constantly delivering value. – (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

It was advocated by interviewee Alice of C6 who prescribed that, management consultants should 'Have an accurate and realistic first gap analysis of the strategy of client organisation with a practical implementable component'^[b12]. 5 out of 21 interviewees considered 'Having clients' buy-in and full commitment'^[b4] as critical because there was a value consensus between management consultants and clients in which authority existed. It empowers management consultants to give orders on the client team through projects or social interactions to achieve project goals.

The development of the politically oriented view on professionals suggests that an ethical code is better seen as a symbolic vehicle that supports the political interests of the profession, rather than a set of norms that safeguards the behaviour of professionals (Brante, 1988). 4 out of 21 interviewees insisted that management consultants should be 'Professional/honest with clients'^[b8]. As interviewee John of C4 emphasised:

You have got to be honest with the client because if you are not, you do not add on value and that honesty and the communication that comes with it. Communicating regularly and often with your client are things that get the client to seek you out as a trusted advisor and when you become known as a

trusted advisor, and someone who knows what they are talking about, there is no end to the opportunities that you will have with that client as they will always come back to you. – (Interviewee John, ex-Executive Consultant and Corporate Strategist of C4 in the US)

Interviewee Charles of C5 echoed that if management consultants over-committed to clients, they might get away with it in a short term as just getting the project done or paid but, in a long run, clients were smart enough and they might not come back. Hence, being professional and honest with clients are practically very instrumental for management consultants to establish their professional identities. It should not merely be viewed as a symbolic vehicle to conceptualise professionals as Brante (1988) suggests.

The 20 circumstances under which management consultants were de-legitimized proposed by the 21 interviewees are also exhibited (see Table 6.4) and categorised into the consultant's side to compare with the Code of Practice of MCA and also into client's side respectively. Any of these circumstances can practically jeopardise the professionalism and reputation of management consultants. 'Consulting firms put their own interest ahead of clients' interest'^[c18] (interviewee Queenie of C6); management consultants were 'Not honest with clients'^[c13] (interviewees Charles of C5 and Lucia of C6) and 'Over-commitment/over-delivery to clients' (interviewees Rob of C2 and Barry of C5) were contradictory to key attributes [a3] and [a5] for making a good relationship with clients as well as [b8], [b11], [b15] and [b17] for legitimization of management consultants. It accords with Hagemeyer (2007:111) that consulting firms just like their clients, compete directly with other players in their field on seeking to optimise their shareholders' value, in particular, the publicly

listed management consulting firms. Hence, they are permanently in danger of providing advice that runs counter to their clients' best interest.

In addition to academic education, management consultants' own experience together with methods and tools and documentation of completed cases represent the basis of the professional expert (Werr, Stjernberg and Docherty, 1997). 'Having poor project management/consulting resources management'^[c1] (11 out of 21 interviewees); 'Wrong interpretation of clients' requirement and deliverable expectation'^[c4] (6 out of 21 interviewees); 'Poor initial project plan not well define the scope of deliverables'^[c5] (4 out of 21 interviewees); 'Context of final presentation beyond clients' expectation'^[c7] (3 out of 21 interviewees); 'Lack of a clear scope or having continuous change in scope of the role of consultants in the Term of Reference of the project'^[c10] (interviewees Gladys of C4 and Frank of C3); and 'No Change Management'^[c20] (interviewee Sean of C5) were seen by the interviewees as reasons that could compromise the consultant-client relationship and the professionalism of management consultants.

In each project, it is expected that management consultants and employees of client organisations have to tacitly be bound together as a 'community of practice' (Wenger and Snyder, 2000:139) to work for an agreed agenda. As a matter of fact, there is always competition about knowledge and experience rather than sharing between the two parties especially if members in the client team also possess previous external consulting experience. However, given the heavy social interaction between the two parties, 'Lack of good communication between management consultants and clients

on clients' needs, problems, and the scope of deliverables'^[c2] (7 out of 21 interviewees); 'Not understand or incompatible with the working culture particularly the critical personnel in the client team'^[c12] (interviewees John of C4 and Barry of C5); 'Having language barrier with local employees of client organisations'^[c15] (interviewee Daisy of C 5); ' Not have any help or support from top management of working consulting firm'^[c17] (interviewee Frank of C3); and ' Not always in clients' office'^[c19] (interviewee John of C4) could reduce management consultants' capacity to build up their professional identity.

Although managers seem to remain addicted to management consultants with a special role as 'influencers and opinion formers' (Fincham, 1999:336), clients are not always passive consumers of advice. They will contest, resist and disengage with management consultants as it is clients who hold the ownership of the project. From this perspective, management consultants are in a dominated position. If there was 'Lack of buy-in from key stakeholders and with clients' dissatisfaction'^[c3] (7 out of 21 interviewees); 'Lack of co-operation or sufficient resources from client team' (3 out of 21 interviewees); 'Having incompetent clients' (interviewees Gladys of C4 and Terry of C5); and 'Clients are not very clear about their expectation to achieve'^[c16] (interviewee Ernst of C5), management consultants could become disempowered and less capable in carrying out their role as influencers and opinion formers. Interviewee Gladys of C4 illustrated the power struggle between management consultants and clients:

There was a project which was a large integration project sold by one of our business Partner at a fixed price. It was grossly underestimated. When it came down to delivery, we found out that the costs were twice as much to deliver than we had sold for. So, in the middle of the project, we had to go back to

renegotiate the entire contract. There were also some personnel issues, in which the skill required by the client was in very short-demand. So, it was hard to start the project, and when it did start some of the individuals were not the right people. There was not a good plan and the management of the project was not very good. On the client side, the people that they gave us to work with were not the best ones that they had. They gave us people who they did not know what they were doing. It was difficult for them to work with us. The ways that they did make us feel sick was they were rather going mad in the middle of the project. So, they lost people and, on our side, our replacements were very strong. They were very strong with people and they were very strong project manager. And we had to renegotiate the contract from the very beginning even though it was already signed. The client was willing to be flexible and my company was also flexible. And now that project is seen as the most successful project at that time but still not very profitable. In this case, the wrong contract is the main issue. – (Interviewee Gladys, Management Consultant of C4 in the UK)

Hence, a problematic project can stem from both sides with multiple reasons such as improper pricing, inadequately specified contract, poor project and resources management as well as incompetent clients. In building a good and trusting relationship with client teams, management consultants need to calibrate how responsive the clients are to their prompts, to their questions, to their suggestions and to their whole demeanour as a helper (Schein, 2002:26).

Moreover, ‘High personnel turnover rate on critical organisation or people involved in a project’^[c8] (3 out of 21 interviewees) and ‘Political reasons in client organisations’ could make projects go wrong or lead to the proposed perfect solutions not being implemented. Interviewee Peter informed that:

I had been in situations where the consulting team came up a brilliant elegant solution that was incredibly complicated or complex or high risk and the clients said, ‘How am I going to implement that?’ I had also been a situation where we wanted to create a product focused team that required a general business manager kind of person to run the team because they were going to be responsible for the product, manufacturing, pricing, marketing and sales. The client came back and said, ‘I do not have any people who work like that. Nobody is possible to have that breadth of production skill sets that I can put them in charge of the production line’. So in order to execute that we had to go

out to the market and hire in a bunch of new people to the company who had the breadth and depth of skill sets that were required for the job we had designed. I think that is what makes projects go wrong occasionally. – (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

In this situation, management consultants may feel shocked and dismayed when the clients turn on them implying that the solutions are trivial or clearly unworkable (Schein, 2002: 25).

In summary, the findings in this research reveal that a good and trusting consultant-client relationship is critical for project success. Management consultants hold autonomy and power over clients through the cultural and political capital they possess but, at the same time, clients demand in return specific value creation from management consultants. Therefore, power relations exist in a consultant-client relationship. The findings also show that, to claim as professionals, management consultants ought to possess different superior knowledge and experience and demonstrate that they can ‘diagnose and treat’ complex business issues for clients. Knowledge and experience, professional behaviour and working attitude of management consultants are attributes likewise intended to professionalize and legitimize management consultants. It also informs that, management consultants are legitimized when they are in a dominant position whereas they are de-legitimized when they are in a relatively dominated position with clients. Since the clients are always the owners of a project, management consultants do not hold absolute autonomy and power in a consultant-client relationship as expert theorists claim. A project can end up with problematic outcomes due to incompetence of the consultants or/and client teams, incompatible working culture and practices between the two parties, lack of buy-in or full commitment as well political reasons on the

client side. Problematic project outcomes always jeopardise the professionalism and reputation of management consultants.

6.4 Professional identity and reputation

Viewed images of management consultants

People make identity claims by conveying images that signal how they view themselves or hope to be viewed by others (Ibarra, 1999:766). Corporate image is a 'holistic and vivid impression held by an individual or a particular group towards an organisation (Alvesson, 1990:376). Everyday interactions between members of an organisation and external constituencies will influence an image (Hatch and Schultz, 1997:359). In other words, management consultants mirror and model themselves in the comments and perceptions of their clients. It is thus arguable that the viewed images of management consultants are significantly in determining the professional identities and reputation of a management consulting firm and its members.

In his study on the juridical field, Bourdieu (1987c:841) postulates that 'there is constant tension between the available juridical norms, which appear universal, at least in their form, and the necessarily diverse, even conflicting and contradictory, social demand'. The same also exists in the field of management consulting. In practice, each organisation is unique and to fit into their corporate, business and functional strategies, some management advice demanded by clients will vary from, or even be conflicting and contradictory to the available and universal managerial norms (i.e. best practices of management). This can lead to constant tension between

management consultants and their clients in the course of a project. Fincham (1999)

also argues that:

While management consultants may exploit organisational and client uncertainty, inherent conflicts and dilemmas between management consultants and their clients are reinforced in a repeated circular process. At the heart of the process are the images of each other that both sides hold and which generate a complex of perceived threats. - (Fincham, 1999:342)

As a result, the tension and perceived threats can influence the image of management consultants as viewed by their clients.

The images of the same 21 interviewees viewed by their clients, the fairness and accuracy of their viewed images, as well as reasons for their good and bad images are depicted in Table 6.5. The findings show that the viewed images of management consultants viewed by employees of client organisations are ‘highly dependent on individual client’^[e1] (11 out of 21 informants). Sometimes their viewed images could be very extreme, for example, ‘guru/nuisance’ (interviewee Terry of C5), ‘excellent/hopeless’ (interviewee Ernst of C5) and ‘respectable and knowledgeable/unknowledgeable’ (interviewee Lucia of C6). 7 out of 21 interviewees however claimed that they always received good and positive comments on their images as ‘Teacher’^[e2], ‘Subject matter expert’^[e3], ‘Loyal, hardworking and intelligent’^[e4], or ‘Knowledgeable or trustable adviser’^[e5]. 3 out of 21 interviewees either received a viewed image of ‘Young and unknowledgeable’^[e6] or a ‘Sceptical/rebellious viewed image at first sight’^[e7].

Among those interviewees who received situational and extreme viewed images, interviewee Terry, as an ex-Senior Manager of C5 on his route to the position of Partner, indeed shared his experience:

Some clients look at me as a guru and insist to my boss that they will only give our firm the job only if I am there. There are also clients who have me thrown out of their companies. It means they don't want me to be there again. So, I guess it varies by clients. I have one specific example in mind with a factory making disc drives in the Philippines. There was an American expat boss but he was very soft. So, there was no discipline in the factory and there were a lot of problems. I went in with the team and we identified a whole bunch of problems. Then we start to help them to implement the changes. As the boss was very soft, he wasn't making things happen. I had a meeting with the Plant Manager, and his Vice President who was just visiting from the US with his boss anyway. I just told the guy: 'Look, you are failing and you are not making it happen because you are too much such a nice guy. You have to make him try a different management style even it is not his natural management style but to get a result or to survive here, may be you have to try something'. I thought I was having a coaching conversation. After the meeting, the Vice President from the US phoned my boss and asked my boss to kick me out and didn't want to see me again. So, I had a surprise because I thought the Vice President agreed with me that the local guy really wasn't doing a good job. Instead, they kicked me out. After few weeks, they tried to kick my replacement out as well. Then the Partner told them they already kicked one guy out and they couldn't kick the second guy. Actually, the guy I tried to coach was fired along with the whole management team of that factory to replace other people. So, in the records, I guess I had done the right thing but it was not appreciated at that time. Somebody perceived there were conflicts or not the right thing to do. I don't know but anyway everybody got fired after I left. – (Interviewee Terry, ex-Senior Manager of C5 in Asia and Founder & President of his own consulting practice in Canada)

Interviewee Terry's case shows that the work and culture practices of his client organisation varied from the objectivity and rationality of managerial norms. It is significant that 'people who perceive the same things interpret them differently' and the strategic management in the client organisation has not changed the key people's 'way of construing their occupation world' (Eden, Page and Ackermann, 2011:2). The client's counteraction and exercise of the power of protest can have the purpose of seeking to restructure a pattern of domination and enhance their own power

position (Scott, 2001:25 -26). Although management consultants are assumed to be in a '*superior position*' to clients in a consultant-client relationship, in reality, the power exists as a relationship of circularity of influence between the two parties depending on who bear its effects, on dominant and dominated, with such structuring oppositions, in equal measures (Bourdieu, 1999a:336). Interviewee Terry concluded that, management consultants needed to 'Build up good relationship with client'^[g1] as 'Without chemistry with clients'^[h11] and 'Having coaching conversation with clients'^[h11] would result in not having a good viewed image from clients.

Another 4 of these 11 interviewees believed that their good viewed images came from 'Being diplomatic but never pretend knowing something that not know'^[g8] as 'Clients appreciate that honesty'^[g8] (interviewee Alice of C6); 'Clients with lots of experience with consulting firms and know the processes'^[g9] (interviewee Charles of C5), 'To achieve things for clients in a sensitive way and act as a professional bringing in different skills, getting done and achieving something rather than a teacher or nuisance'^[g10] (interviewee Frank of C3), 'My experience and understanding on their business'^[g11], 'The level of trust and relationship with clients'^[g11] and 'Providing clients right human resources from consultant side'^[g11] (interviewee Queenie of C6). Therefore, a good consultant-client relationship enables the formation of good images of management consultants based on professionalism, trust and competences.

Table 6.5 Viewed images of interviewees by clients, their fairness and accuracy, and reasons for good/bad viewed images of interviewees

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Image of management consultant viewed by clients	Fairness & accuracy	Reasons for good image	Reasons for bad image
Alice - Consultant of C6	Different views in different projects ^[e1]	Yes ^[f1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be diplomatic but never pretend knowing something that not know^[g8] • Clients appreciate that honesty^[g8] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not meet customers' high expectation^[h3]
Barry - Consultant of C5	Depends on individual client, most of the case was as a value but not very smart ^[e1]	Not fair ^[f5]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some clients thought there was no new thing from us and we just beautified their proposal solutions^[h10] • Viewed as mismatch between high fees paid and not high return of value from deliverables^[h10]
Charles - Consultant of C5	Highly paid; knowledgeable or unknowledgeable ^[e1]	Overall quite fair ^[f1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients with lots of experience with consulting firms and know the processes^[g9] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solutions proposed were very difficult to implement or unrealistic^[h4] • Text-book solution proposed for very complex problems^[h4]
Daisy - Senior Consultant of C5	Most of them viewed me as a teacher ^[e2]	Yes ^[f1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brought in new concepts, new ways of working^[g2] • Capable to show clients how new ideas could work^[g2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned
Ernst - Senior Consultant of C5	Excellent or hopeless ^[e1]	More than likely ^[f1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned
Frank - Managing Consultant of C3	Positive/negative ^[e1]	Yes ^[f1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tried to achieve things for clients in a sensitive way^[g10] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viewed as someone less driven by result but more driven by social activities at client organisations^[h5]

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Image of management consultant viewed by clients	Fairness & accuracy	Reasons for good image	Reasons for bad image
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acted as a professional bringing in different skills, getting something done and achieving something rather than a teacher or nuisance^[g10] 	
Gladys - Management Consultant of C4	People with skills or too highly paid ^[e1]	Yes and no depending on individual client ^[f2]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Viewed as someone having skills and coming into client organisations to do a specific job and leave again^[g12] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Without trust from clients and not be treated with respect by clients^[h8]
Heather - Senor Associate Consultant of non-case management consulting firm	A young girl recently out of college and unknowledgeable ^[e6]	Sometimes yes ^[f2]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients with a very similar background knowing where I came from and understanding and with respect to my educational background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients with older ages and a lot longer working experience in the business than me^[h1]
Ivy - Senior Consultant of C4	Knowledgeable & trustable ^[e5]	Yes ^[f1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For system implementation things could not run very far^[g5] For system implementation nature, consultants and clients could see the end-results when the system is set up for long running^[g5] Fixing any problem for clients even not having any sale project^[g5] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mentioned
John - Executive Consultant & Corporate Strategist of C4	Trustable adviser ^[e5]	Yes, I would say 100% ^[f1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having good relationships with clients always^[g6] People of different levels coming to me for advice regardless of my level^[g6] Very appreciative of my information^[g6] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mentioned

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Image of management consultant viewed by clients	Fairness & accuracy	Reasons for good image	Reasons for bad image
Kathy - Senior Consultant of C3	A very loyal consultant working very hard and quite intelligent ^[e4]	Most of the time yes ^[f3]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching with clients' expectation on me and deliverables^[g4] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mismatch of clients' expectation and project deliverables in general
Lucia - Senior Consultant of C6	Various - respectable / unknowledgeable ^[e1]	Most of the time yes ^[f3]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned
Mary - Manager of C6	As subject matter expert ^[e3]	Yes ^[f1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My contribution with value-added on clients' business^[g3] • Change of attitudes of employees of client organisation from unfriendly at the beginning of some projects to friendly later.^[g3] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned
Nick - Manager of a non-case management consulting firm	Initially rebellious eventually as a friend ^[e7]	Does not matter as client's perception is the absolute measure in consulting ^[f4]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not answered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not answered
Oliver - Project Manager of C1	Very skeptical at first sight then as part of the team ^[e7]	In most cases yes ^[f3]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After clients gained trust from me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients had previous bad experience with consultants mostly would keep this memory^[h2]
Peter - Project Leader of C2	In some cases very well but in some cases not well at all ^[e1]	Hard to say depending on the situation, probably 85% fair & accurate ^[f2]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting along well with clients and with mutual understanding to each other^[g13] • Finding a way to work together in a healthy and constructive relationship with clients^[g13] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with clients having a sense of insecurity on their jobs/positions in the client organisation and not appreciate our work^[h9] •

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Image of management consultant viewed by clients	Fairness & accuracy	Reasons for good image	Reasons for bad image
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to build a healthy working relationship with clients around pretty dire economic conditions or desperate business circumstances^[h9]
Queenie - Manager of C6	Various ^[e1]	I think so ^[f1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My experience and understanding on their business^[g11] • The level of trust and relationship with clients^[g11] • Providing clients right human resources from consultant side^[g11] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No opportunity for clients to get to know me^[h6]
Rob - Project Leader of C2	A hired gun; very smart; very motivated; work hard	Pretty accurate ^[f1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With more qualification in academic background and past experience than the clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hired by top management to go in with kind of beat-up a little bit and work with clients not with the same or similar background as us.
Simon -Manager of C6	Not very sure as not ask the clients directly, sometimes get it from project review ^[e1]	Depend on the clients ^[f2]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting quite good rating when it was based on performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sold as an expert but without relevant expertise to deal with a demanding and knowledgeable client
Terry -Senior Manager of C5	Guru or nuisance depending on the clients ^[e1]	Yes and No ^[f2]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building up good relationship with clients^[g1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No chemistry with some clients^[h11] • Having coaching conversation with clients but unacceptable by clients^[h11]

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Image of management consultant viewed by clients	Fairness & accuracy	Reasons for good image	Reasons for bad image
Sean -Senior Manager of C5	A trustful adviser ^[e5]	I think so ^[f1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My experience^[g7] • Capability of giving clients a lot of confidence to adopt my advice on the best practices which were with practical and innovative proof and value creation^[g7] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going into a new client environment and meeting people without intimate knowledge of the project and having not seen my work

Source: Interview Data

In respect of their bad viewed images, the interviewees perceived that it was because of ‘Not meet clients’ high expectation’^[h3] (interviewee Alice of C6), ‘Solution proposed were very difficult to implement or unrealistic’^[h4] and ‘Text-book solution proposed for very complex problems’^[h4](interviewee Charles of C5), ‘Viewed as someone less driven by result but more driven by social activities at client organisations’^[h5] (interviewee Frank of C3), and ‘No opportunity for clients to get to know me’^[h6] (interviewee Queenie of C6). Thus, impractical and non-implementable solutions, management consultants’ unprofessional behaviour and working attitudes in client organisations as well as lack of interactions with clients will de-legitimize management consultants.

For the 7 interviewees who claimed that they always received good and positive images, interviewee Daisy of C5 informed that most of her clients viewed her as ‘A teacher’^[e2] because she always ‘Brought in new concepts and new ways of working as well as be capable to show clients how the new ideas could work’^[g2]. Interviewee Mary of C6 confirmed that her clients always considered her as ‘A subject matter expert’^[e3] due to ‘My contribution with value-added on clients’ business’^[g3] and ‘Change of attitudes of employees of client organisations from unfriendly at the beginning of some projects to friendly later’^[g3]. Interviewee Kathy of C3 accentuated her positive self-image that her clients usually viewed her as ‘A very loyal consultant working very hard and quite intelligent’^[e4]. She attributed this to the ‘Matching with client’s expectation on me and deliverables’^[g4]. It demonstrates that management consultants will secure a good view of their projected images if they possess and manifest distinct knowledge and expertise in relevant subject matter as well as

perform consistently according to expectations and deliverables to gain trust and respect from clients. These relationships and project outcomes enhance the legitimization and professional identities of management consultants.

Interviewees Ivy and John of C4 as well as Sean of C5 were usually considered as ‘A knowledgeable/trustable adviser’^[e5] by clients. Interviewee Ivy attributed it to the nature of her consultancy work and C4’s espoused values on dedication to client’s success. She concluded that ‘For the system implementation nature, things could not run very far as consultants and clients could see the end-results when the system was set up for long running operation and C4 would fix any problem for clients even not having any sale project’^[g5]. Also from C4, interviewee John believed that his good image stemmed from his ‘Perpetual good relationships with clients which made people of different levels coming to me for advice regardless of my level and the clients were very appreciative of my information’^[g6]. Interviewee Sean of C5 considered his good images resulted from ‘My experience and capability of giving clients a lot of confidence to adopt my advice on the best practices which were with practical and innovative proof and value creation’^[g7]. In short, the culture of a management consulting firm, the nature of consultancy work, management consultants’ perpetual attention to maintaining good relationship with clients and competences are critical for establishment of the professional identities of management consultants.

Under circumstances that ‘Clients with older ages and a lot longer working experience in the business’^[h1], interviewee Heather of a top-tier non-case global

management consulting firm would always receive a viewed image as ‘A young girl recently out of college and unknowledgeable’^[e6]. Interviewees Nick of another non-case global management consulting firm and Oliver of C1 always had ‘A very sceptical image at the first sight then as part of the team’^[e7]. Interviewee Oliver saw the clients’ initial view of his sceptical image as a result from ‘Clients had previous bad experience with consultants would keep this memory’^[h2]. However, after he gained trust from clients, they then viewed him as part of the team. It reveals that clients’ perception of management consultants can also be affected by the cultural capital of management consultants, clients’ competence in the subject matters related to the project together with clients’ experience in their industries and management consultants.

The good viewed images of management consultants can be summarised as ‘Guru’, ‘Excellent’, ‘Respectable’, ‘Teacher’, ‘Subject matter expert’, ‘Loyal and hardworking’, and ‘Knowledgeable/trustable adviser’. Their good viewed images mainly result from 1) building up good and trusting relationship with clients; 2) possession and manifestation of distinct knowledge and expertise in subject matters as well as consistent performance on expectation and deliverables; and 3) the nature of consultancy work; and 4) professionalism and integrity of management consultants. However, their viewed images by clients are sometimes situational or extreme such as ‘Gurus/nuisance’, ‘Knowledgeable and respectable/unknowledgeable’, ‘Excellent/hopeless’, ‘Young and unknowledgeable’ or ‘Sceptical’. The bad viewed images of management consultants can attribute to: 1) incompatibility with the work and culture practices of client organisations; 2)

proposal on impractical and un-implementable solutions; 3) behaving unprofessionally in client organisation; 4) lack of interaction with clients; and 5) lack of rich cultural capital.

Fairness and accuracy of viewed images of management consultants

Regarding to the fairness and accuracy of their images, 11 out of 21 interviewees concluded that ‘Yes, they were fair and accurate’^[f1]. It included those interviewees who got extreme positive and negative viewed images. 5 out of 21 interviewees stressed that it was ‘Yes and No, it really depended on individual clients and situations’^[f2]. Interviewee Gladys of C4 emphasised that when she was ‘Viewed as people having skills and coming into client organisation to do a specific job and leave again’^[g12], she would get a good image. However, if she was ‘Without trust from clients and not be treated with respect by clients’^[h7], then she would get a bad image. It further informs the interpretation that if management consultants gain political capital from clients, they can be perceived as professionals, otherwise, they are more likely to receive an unfair and inaccurate bad viewed image.

Interviewee Peter of C2 attributed having a good image to ‘Getting along well with clients and with mutual understanding to each other’^[g13] and ‘Finding a way to work together in a healthy and constructive relationship with clients’^[g13]. He also thought it was likely consultants will get a bad image when ‘Working with clients having a sense of insecurity on their jobs/positions in client organisation and not appreciate our work’^[h8] and it was ‘Difficult to build a healthy working relationship with clients around pretty dire economic conditions or desperate business circumstances’^[h9]. It

can be understood, for instance, under turbulent economic conditions such as in the midst of the IT bubble burst in 2001 and the global credit crunch in 2008, clients would be more desperate to keep their jobs than in good economic periods, and therefore they would be more resistant to engage openly with management consultants. Furthermore, clients always see redundancy as a potential part of the objectives for any project. It demonstrates that, in a project, both management consultants and clients face uncertainty and insecurity. The fairness and accuracy of viewed images of management consultants can be affected by clients' attitudes to management consultants, clients' sense of security in their jobs/positions and exogenous environmental factors.

3 out of 21 interviewees agreed that 'Most of the time their viewed images were fair and accurate'^[f3]. Interviewee Nick of a non-case global management consulting firm claimed that whatever image he got from the employees of client organisations it 'Does not matter'^[f4] as 'Client's perception is the absolute measure in consulting'. Interviewee Barry of C5 was the only one who complained that his viewed images varied in different projects and that it was always 'Not fair'^[f5]. He informed that:

My clients saw me had delivered them value but the value did not justify the fees they paid to my management consulting firm. They might think they were talking with a kid with not much experience. It happened especially in monopolies, such as the projects with an electricity company providing electricity to 80% of the households in HK and another utility company in Macau that I worked in, as people working for this kind of companies are normally more mature and traditional. They judged me from a seniority perspective. In summary, I would like to say most of their images of me were unfair. - (Interviewee Barry, ex-Consultant of C5 in Hong Kong)

Interviewee Barry's situation was similar to interviewee Heather's. They joined the field of management consulting right after they graduated from university at the age

of twenty two. They were in the Consultant and Senior Associate Consultant level respectively when they left the external management consulting. In short, management consultants without a rich volume of cultural capital are more susceptible to receiving an unfair and inaccurate image from clients.

The findings of this research reveal that the images of management consultants viewed by employees of client organisations are mostly subjective and vary from project to project. However, overall, clients' perceptions of the images of management consultants, no matter whether positive or negative, are considered to some extent fair and accurate. The fairness and accuracy of their viewed images emanate from: 1) trust that management consultants gain from clients; and 2) having healthy and constructive relationship with clients. On the other hand, their unfair and inaccurate viewed images derive from 1) clients' insecurity on their jobs/positions in their organisations; 2) clients' ingratitude to management consultants; 3) adverse exogenous environmental factors; and 4) insufficient cultural capital of management consultants.

Establishment of professional identities and reputation

Possession of symbolic capital signifies the legitimacy and the acceptance of domination by the subordinated, in all fields (Bourdieu, 1987b:3-4). Both professional identity and reputation are symbolic capital. An organisation's reputation derives from its identity and also develops as an organisation tries to build up a favourable image of itself (Fombrun, 2008:11). An organisation can only be said to have a good reputation if the parts of the identity it develops and highlights can foster a better image than its rivals in the mind of key stakeholders (Dowling,

2004:21). For example, C1 identifies itself as ‘A global management consulting firm’, ‘The trusted advisor to the world’s leading business, governments and institution’. It claims to ‘Exemplify the highest standards of professional conduct’ (www.C1.com). Over the years, it has long been viewed as professional and always ranks at the top in the management consulting field over its rivals. I argue that, in any field of professions, an organisation needs to communicate its corporate identity and projected image to its key stakeholders to foster a desired viewed image in order to establish its professional identity and reputation.

Professional identity is an individual’s self-definition as a member of a profession (Ibarra, 1999; Pratt & Dutton, 2000). However, a classification can only be established through the struggle for the power of knowledge, for power through knowledge, for the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence and the position occupied by an agent or group of agents (Bourdieu, 1992:241-242). The struggle that Bourdieu puts forward exists in the management consulting field when, in particular, there are conflicts or contradictions between the self-identity of the consulting service providers at firm and individual levels and clients’ demands for advisory services. On this, interviewee William articulated that:

As a professional, I will not go beyond the conflicts of law. We don’t tell the client what to do. We give a balanced opinion involving both pros and cons and point out the potential gaps, if any. The final decision belongs to the client. – (interviewee William – Founder of a management consultancy in Malaysia)

Another two interviewees Tom and Andy, who were at the Partner level, also stressed professionalism and integrity. However, interviewee Tom held a different view from interviewee William on the role and the position of management

consultants as well as how to handle conflicts between management consultants and clients:

I will not provide any advisory service that is illegal to my clients. It is not just for consulting, it should be for any career. Consultant is a very value-added to the client. The client is an expectancy of the consultant. Firstly, when the clients hire consultancies or management consultants for business advisory service, the service provider needs to be an expert. Secondly, the consultants need to be neutral. Management consultants should not get involved too much in the internal conflicts and politics. This is so called 'superior' position and status which are very important. Clients expect the management consultant be an expert to advise them the problems and solutions that exist in their organisations. If the 'expert' has many personal biases, it will lose the effectiveness of the project. Hence, as a management consultant, professionalism and zero-bias from the clients are very important. If the consultant can stick with these principles, there will be no conflicts with the clients. If the client's purpose is to hire management consultants to pursue or support some internal agenda, this happens quite often to work with CEO or Chairman, they will dictate how and what you should write your reports. You should be very careful on it and try to avoid from doing these things if you realise that the client only wants to hire you as an expert to support their ideas. Under this scenario, I would not say it is real consultancy. As a management consultant, you need to properly advise the client and provide innovative solutions to their problems. However, it should be based on your professional knowledge and experience. You cannot cross the line just to follow the CEO's instructions all the time. I believe that a proper client or a good CEO will not be pleased by the management consultant just following his instructions. - (Interviewee Tom, ex-Worldwide Senior Partner of a top-tier HR management consulting firm and Chairman of his own consultancy in HK)

Interviewee Tom's response further reinforces that superior knowledge and experience in couple with professionalism, integrity and neutrality are instrumental for establishment of professional identities in management consulting. These cultural and symbolic capitals empower management consultants to preserve a 'superior' position and status as an *expert*. It is consistent with the two identified principles in the Code of Practice of MCA that in this research were found to be commonly shared by the six global management consulting firms.

The reputation of an organisation in the eyes of its stakeholders will influence their willingness to either provide or withhold support. Corporate reputation evolves over time as a result of consistent performance to indicate a value judgement about a company's attributes (Clark, 1995: 74; Gray and Balmer, 1998: 697). In management consulting, consistent performance of a management consulting firm is not only assessed by its financial performance but also by its project outcomes in terms of viewed images of management consultants, quality of deliverables and delivery time and budgets. To a broader view, it is the evaluation on consistency on espoused values and practically expressed values of a management consulting firm which represents its professionalism at firm and individual levels.

Good reputation is critical because of its potential for value creation, but also due to its intangible character makes replication by competing firms considerably more difficult, at least over the short-term (Roberts and Dowling, 2002:1077). During the last decade, a number of high-profile problematic projects and failure of projects has hampered the professional identities and reputation of management consultants, consulting firms and the field. For the six global management consulting firms in this research, for instance, C1 was in association with several troubled high-profile companies in the energy and insurance fields in the US, in the airline field in Switzerland and in the railway transportation field in the UK. Its reputation was at one stage under scrutiny. For C5, some of its disputable projects in the public sector in the UK, Ireland and the US from 2003 to 2010 had been alleged by clients to have been over-charging on consultancy fees, delays in project delivery and poor professionalism. C6's high-profile project with one of the NHS in the UK had turned

into a costly embarrassment to it and was lambasted by one of the members of Parliament as possessing all the classic signs of a huge information technology failure (Crain's Chicago Business, 2006). In addition, C6's poor performance on a project with the Inland Revenue Department in the UK resulted in its loss of a 10-year outsourcing renewal contract of the amount of US\$5 billion to C3.

For C2, C3 and C4, no relevant information could be found in public sources of information. Nonetheless, interviewee Peter of C2 mentioned that he had been in situations that the consultant team proposed brilliant and elegant solutions that were incredibly complicated, complex or with high risk that the clients finally did not implement them. From the same logic, it can be assumed that C3 and C4 might also have experienced problematic project outcomes as C5 and C6 and also have faced the similar situations to C2. In sum, major project outcomes define the professional identities and reputation of management consulting firms and its members. Professional identities cannot be established by self-definition, but must be legitimized by peers, clients, marketplace and other professionals (Scott, 2001:102; Sandberg and Pinnington, 2011:1163 and Teece, 2003:896). The reputation of a management consulting firm and its members depends on the trust and confidence that stakeholders place in them. For management consulting its lack of institutionalisation of the profession means that market reputation and success become especially persuasive on the perceptions of stakeholders (Poufelt, 1998).

Building on the findings, the inter-relationship among culture, corporate identity, professional identity and reputation can be depicted in Figure 6.1. The four relational

cultural elements constitute the culture of a management consulting firm which is the cornerstone of its strategy, structures and identity. Corporate identity presents '*what the organisation is*' to its key stakeholders. As Balmer (1995:32–37, 1998) asserts, 'A corporate identity is not merely a projected image in the form of visual design and communication, but is fundamentally concerned with "what the organisation is" – encompassing the strategies and culture specific to the organisation in particular'. Through power relations in the consultant-client relationship, management consultants present their self and identity as '*professionals*' and '*experts*' by drawing upon cultural and symbolic capitals they possess or can ascribe to - their superior knowledge and experience coupled with images of professionalism, integrity and objectivity. However, the viewed images of management consultants by their clients can also legitimize or de-legitimize their professional identities which will influence the reputation of management consultants and their management consulting firms. Reputation of a management consulting firm and its members represents their credit and credibility which can only be attained in and through representation of their professional identities, trust, belief and obedience by their clients (Bourdieu, 1992: 192). Hence, reputation is a symbolic capital but it can also be seen as 'a competence outcome that cannot be managed directly' (Eden and Ackermann, 2010:10). From a strategic perspective, to use corporate reputation as a competitive weapon, an organisation's identity and behaviour will need to be periodically validated (Dowling, 2004:23). Hence reputation both precedes and advances the culture of a management consulting firm which defines the identity and behaviour of the firm and its members.

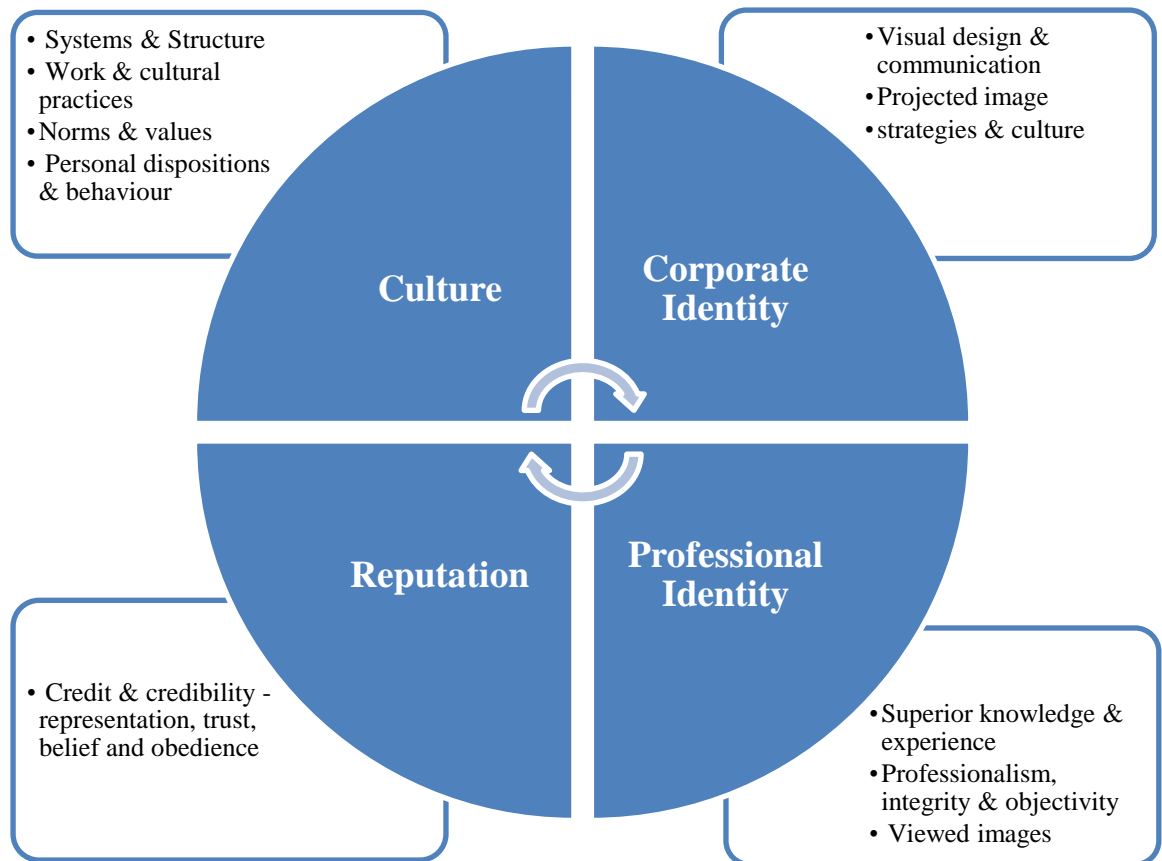


Figure 6.1 Inter-relationship between culture, corporate identity, and professional identity and reputation.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored what experiences are instrumental for the establishment of professional identities in management consulting. As Bourdieu (1977:72 and 1990:53) argues, habitus does not only ‘regulate’ the actions of actors who socialise into a habitus but also defines their identities. Each global management consulting firm in this research make attempts to self-present and identify themselves as professionals that originates from their organisational culture but more specifically the cultural constitutive element of ‘Norms and values’. The Code of Practice of MCA in the UK is used as a benchmark to compare with the espoused values of the

six global management consulting firms. The comparison has confirmed that two of the six principles of MCA are commonly adopted by all the six firms whereas, to a greater or lesser extent, each of the remaining four principles is supported by some of them. It is understood that the shared cultural meanings in the field of management consulting are 1) 'Employ people with the right skills and experience to help their client, and continually develop their expertise'; and 2) 'Be trustworthy, independent and objective'. These two cultural shared cultural meanings constitute the field culture, at least.

The findings show that the field culture is formed by aggregate cultural homogeneities among the firms within the field. More importantly, cultural heterogeneities among the firms constitute institutional differences rather than isomorphism in the management consulting field. While the field culture forges the identity of management consultants as a class, the cultural heterogeneities at firm level make each firm distinctive from each other to define their own corporate identity (i.e. what the organisation is). These findings further support Bourdieu's (1990:60) suggestion on 'the singular habitus of members of the same class are united in a relationship of homology. Each individual system of dispositions is a structural variant of the others, expressing the singularity of its position within the class and its trajectory'. The cultural heterogeneities in the management consulting field also reflect the institutional dynamics of the field that some institutionalists (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991b, Hirsch and Lounsbury, 1997) have previously failed to adequately address. 'Change can emerge suddenly and unpredictably, thrusting institutional players into periods of revolution', as Hoffman (1999:366) argues.

Hence, any organisational isomorphism predicted by neo-institutionalism should be seen as ephemeral.

Power relations exist in consultant-client relationships and having a good and trusting relationship with clients is critical for project success. The key attributes for making a good relationship with clients and circumstances for legitimization and de-legitimization of management consultants have been investigated in this chapter. The findings in this research have inter-relationally concluded that, to legitimize themselves as '*professionals*' and '*experts*', management consultants have to possess cultural and symbolic capitals - superior knowledge and experience in specialised areas as well as to manifest their professionalism, integrity and disinterestedness. De-legitimization of management consultants results from incompetence of consultant and/or client teams, incompatible work and cultural practices between the two parties, lack of buy-in or full commitment from clients as well as political reasons in client organisations. It agrees with Bourdieu (1992:241-242) that 'a classification can only be established through the struggle for the power of knowledge, for power through knowledge, for the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence and the position occupied by an agent or group of agents'.

Despite clients always being seen as the dominated party in dire need of some help from management consultants, they indeed hold ownership of each project. Therefore, power in consultant-client relationships exist in a circular way between the management consultants and clients depending on who bear its effects, on dominant and dominated, in equal measures (Bourdieu, 1999:336). Management

consultants do not have absolute power and autonomy as proposed by expert theory (Kubr, 1996; Lowendahl, 1997; Mills and Moshavi, 1999; Schein, 1987). In sum, the struggle over establishing professional identity of management consultants advocates that:

Struggles over identity are a particular case of the different struggles over classifications and the monopoly of the power to make people see and believe, to get them to know and recognize, to impose the legitimate definition of the divisions of the social world and, thereby, to make and unmake group.- (Bourdieu, 1992: 247).

As management consulting is human capital based, the images of management consultants viewed by clients not only define the professional identity of individual management consultant but also the management consulting firm he or she works for. Their viewed images vary from project-to-project and some appear in the extreme. It is in the same vein as Giddens' (1984: 86) argument on all social interaction is 'situated' interaction – situated in space and time. An individual's self-identity may change remarkably along with the situations they are in. Therefore, management consultants receive good viewed images as 'Guru', 'Teacher', 'Subject matter expert', 'Knowledgeable and trustable adviser' but also bad ones as 'Nuisance', 'Hopeless' or 'Unknowledgeable'. However, no matter their viewed images are positive or negative, they are considered by the interviewees as to an extent highly fair and accurate.

Management consultants' good viewed images come from their good and trusting relationship with clients; possession and manifestation of distinct knowledge and expertise in subject matters as well as consistent performance on expectation and deliverables. Their bad viewed images develop from the incompatibility with the

work and cultural practices of client organisations; proposals for impractical and unimplementable solutions, unprofessional behaviour in client organisations and lack of interaction with clients and rich cultural capital. The fairness and accuracy of viewed images of management consultants can be influenced by the trust that management consultants gain from clients, management consultants' healthy and constructive relationship with clients, clients' insecurity in their jobs/positions in their organisations, clients' ingratitude to management consultants, adverse exogenous environmental factors and insufficient cultural capital of management consultants. Viewed images of management consultants can legitimize and de-legitimize the professional identity of management consultants.

Both professional identity and reputation are symbolic capital which signifies the legitimacy in any field. To establish their professional identities, management consultants need to possess and demonstrate their cultural and symbolic capitals – their superior knowledge and expertise, professionalism, integrity and objectivity. Through these capitals, management consultants can preserve a '*superior*' position and status as '*professionals*' and '*experts*' in a consultant-client relationship. Individual professional identity and reputation expand to firm level and then to field level collectively. 'Network-reputation' (Glückler and Armbrüster, 2003:269) is one of the most important factors for clients to choose their consulting partners (Clark, 1993 and 1995), and corporate reputation is a competitive advantage of a management consulting firm. To sustain it, a management consulting firm will need to periodically validate its identity and behaviour that originate from its culture.

Based on the findings and analysis in this chapter, a model has been portrayed to illustrate the inter-relationship and tension among culture, corporate identity, professional identity and reputation. Corporate identity is defined by the culture of a management consulting firm and communicated to external stakeholders by its members through social interactions. Drawing upon the cultural and symbolic capitals they possess or given to access by clients, management consultants establish their professional identities through the interpersonal power relation in consultant-client relationship. Clients' perception of management consultants can legitimize or de-legitimize their professional identities. Reputation follows professional identity. According to Bourdieu (1992:247), all forms of recognised identity are the product of a long and slow collective development. Representative bodies existing as part of the institutional fabric of society are invariably socially constructed and can be traced back to their historical origins. Professional identity and reputation then contribute to and constitute the culture of a management consulting firm. These explain the culture and the professional identities in management consulting evolve in a circular process both at firm and individual levels interactively.

In conclusion, without an institutionalised professional qualification as in the field of healthcare, law and accountancy, market reputation and success of management consultants and management consulting firms become a persuasive perception to stakeholders. However, Bourdieu emphasises the importance of 'official naming' as:

The professional or academic title is a sort of legal rule of social perception, a being-perceived that is guaranteed as a right. It is a symbolic capital in an institutionalized and legal (and no longer merely legitimate) form. – (Bourdieu 1992: 241)

The field of management consulting indeed accommodates a wide array of management consultants with different backgrounds. Some are with institutionalised professional qualifications from their professions outside the management consulting field. In practice, only a few management consultants can reach the pinnacle of the field. Their civic, honorary and industry rewards are more likely accrued in association with their reputation and success rather than their institutionalised professional qualifications. Hence, the identification of identity, formation of capitals and career trajectory of management consultants will be examined in the coming chapter.

Chapter 7: Identity, Capital Formation and Careers

‘All intellectuals are defined, primarily, by the fact that they occupy determinant positions in the intellectual field’
- Bourdieu (1972: 33)

7.1 Introduction

The chapter aims to investigate under what conditions an individual might be “absorbed and accumulated” as opposed to being ‘desiccated’ by leading management consulting firms. Firstly, it explores the cultural practices for career stratification and identity assimilation in global management consulting firms. Secondly, it examines the processes of personal capital accumulation and de-accumulation in leading management consulting firms. Thirdly, it inquires about career success in the management consulting field and the most satisfaction and downsides of a consulting career. Lastly, it investigates the sources of reconciliation of tension between personal and professional identities of management consultants.

7.2 Career stratification and identity assimilation

Entry into the field

In a contemporary world, the existence of economic and social class division can continually be identified. Class relations still exist and exert an effect on life chance and conditions of living (Scott, 2001:23). Cultural practices are essentially reflective of deep-rooted class distinctions (Harvey and Maclean, 2008:110). Institutions, organisations, groups or individuals tacitly accept specific forms of competition that stratify a field (Bourdieu, 1987c:831). As concluded in chapter 6, the legitimacy of a management consulting firm and its members stems from its market reputation and

success. Its reputation is circularly related to its culture, corporate identity and professional identity. Management consulting firms have to sustain their existential state of corporate identities and management consultants have to maintain their existential state or professional identities about 'who we are' by sources of value (Sillince, 2006:195). The different kinds of capital that actors struggle for in a given field are, in fact, the sources of value.

Horizontally, the field of management consulting is divided into specialisation such as human resources management, client relationship management, supply chain management, strategy, marketing management, financial management and so on. Vertically, the field mainly divides into a four-layered consulting hierarchy – Business Analyst, Consultant/Senior Consultant, Manager/Senior Manager, and Partner/CEO/Managing Director, as identified in chapter 5. Interviewee Peter articulated that there are four phases of consulting:

I quote an analogy that a Partner gave to me years ago. There are four phases of consulting. The first phase is who is [x]. We have hired you. You are a bright new consultant that we have taken a chance on you as we do not know a lot about you other than you interviewed well and we think you are going to be a promising addition to our staff. You show up on day one completely untested and the staffing person says who [x] is and what he can do for us. Let's try him out on a project. – (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

This reveals that, to enter into the field, all incumbents, no matter fresh graduates or experienced ones should demonstrate their personal capital and dispositions as promising in order to be selected by their potential employers.

For Bourdieu, cultural capital especially educational credentials, selection mechanisms, and cognitive classifications can be used by individuals and groups to

perpetuate their positions of privilege and power (Swartz, 1997:190). As Bourdieu argues:

The generalization of educational titles as prerequisite for ascent to the apex of private corporations and public bureaucracies signals the consolidation of a new mode of domination and a corresponding transformation in the system of strategies whereby the ruling class maintains and masks itself, at the cost of swift and continual self-metamorphosis. – (Bourdieu, 1996c:x – xi)

It implies that top members of modern organisations should be well-educated. The educational credentials of the 25 interviewees and the top members of the six global management consulting firms in this research are exhibited in Table 7.1.

15 out of the 25 interviewees graduated from one of the top 200 universities in the ‘The Top 400 World Universities Rankings for 2011-2012’ by the Time Higher Education^[b1] (www.Timeshighereducation.co.uk). At Consultant to Senior Manager levels, 13 out of 21 interviewees also held a MBA degree which for 5 of them were awarded by one of the top 50 universities and another 3 of them were conferred by one of the top 10 universities from the same ranking. 2 out of these 13 interviewees also held one more Master degree in their subject area. Interviewee Charles of C5 at Consultant level did not possess a MBA degree but a PhD degree in Manufacturing Management from Cambridge University (2nd at the same ranking). Interviewee Oliver of C1 at Manager level did not hold an MBA degree but two Master degrees in different specialised domains from non-top 200 universities.

Table 7.1 Educational credentials and educational underpinning to subsequent career

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Academic Qualification ^[a]	University ^[b]	Educational Underpinning to Subsequent Career ^[c]
Alice - Consultant of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master of Business Administration (major in Macroeconomics & English)^[a1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Paderborn, Germany 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is mainly important for my first job with C6^[c1]. • During the hire process, the focus was actually on the international experience, as well as the timing, and obviously the actual results of my study rather than the primary subjects that I was doing in my university.
Barry - Consultant of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor degree in Business • Master degree in Finance (ongoing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Victoria, Canada^[b1] • University of Michigan^{[b1][b2]} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't think it has. Most of the subjects I had learnt in university are common sense. • What made me enter into management consulting was purely the right timing.
Charles - Consultant of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor degree of Electrical Engineering • Master degree in Manufacturing Change Management • PhD in Manufacturing Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Technology Malaysia, Malaysia • University of South Australia, Australia • Cambridge University, UK^{[b1][b2]} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at PhD research as part of management, my PhD study is precisely on normative and rigour aiming to have some impact which is very much like a consulting project^[c1]. • In consulting, it is project-oriented and the priority is real impact normally requiring a lot of intellectual thinking which is not much different from academic research^[c1].
Daisy -Senior Consultant of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BEng in Industrial Engineering and Engineering Management -1st honour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong^{[b1][b2]} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degrees provided me with subject knowledge in operational process re-engineering^[c1].

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Academic Qualification ^[a]	University ^[b]	Educational Underpinning Subsequent Career ^[c]
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master of Eng. in Operations Research and Industrial Engineering • Master of Business and Administration in IT Management^[a1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornell University, NY, USA^{[b1][b2]} • The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong^{[b1][b2]} • 	
Ernst - Senior Consultant of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor (Honour) degree in Computing & Mathematical Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Waikato, New Zealand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It provided me with the foundations of IT^[c1].
Frank - Managing Consultant of C3 & C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor degree in Business Studies • Master degree in Contemporary Japanese • Master degree in Leadership (ongoing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manchester Metropolitan University, UK • University of Essex, UK • University of the West of England, UK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My first degree was more project-focused which provided me business acumen and skill set^[c2]. • It also trained me in team-working environment that fitted in with consulting^[c2]. • The Japanese degree gained me an unusual thing that people will remember.
Gladys - Management Consultant of C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor degree in Accounting and Economic • Master of Business and Administration^[a1] • Postgraduate Diploma in Management and Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia National University, Australia^[b2] • Ohio States University, USA^[b1] • University of the West of England, UK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I got my undergraduate degree, I became a Certified Public Accountant and spent the first 7 years of my career doing accounting. • When I did my MBA, I started to work for McDonald as an internal consultant two years. • After I finished my MBA, I decide to move into consulting industry and join C4^[c1].

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Academic Qualification ^[a]	University ^[b]	Educational Underpinning Subsequent Career ^[c]
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be eight years for me doing consulting in C4 and recently I have actually moved away from consulting into a leadership role level in Europe mainly to focus in transformation and change.
Heather - Senior Associate Consultant of a top-tier global management consulting firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor degree in Politics and Economics Master of Business and Administration (Finance, Strategy and Organisational Behaviour) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Princeton University, USA^[b1] Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, USA^[b1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The consulting companies that I worked for had recruited from certain business schools and I had to go there in order to have the recruiters come to me and actually recruited me. So, it's like a foot in the door and a way to get in^[c1].
Ivy - Senior Consultant of C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor (Honour) degree in Business Administration (major in Human Resources Management) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern University of Malaysia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a passport for me to obtain a career in consulting^[c1].
John - Executive Consultant & Corporate Strategist of C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor degree in Psychology Master of Business and Administration^[a1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Princeton University, USA^[b1] Tuck School of Management, Dartmouth University^[b1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It opened up a lot of doors for me as both of those schools are quite exceptional business schools with exceptional programs^[c1]. The psychology degree is always relevant in how you deal with people and how you can affect the change, how the change can affect people working for you and with you, how to address that team dynamics, team management and all that stuff^[c2].

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Academic Qualification ^[a]	University ^[b]	Educational Underpinning Subsequent Career ^[c]
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MBA was instrumental in helping me switch from an operations management position into a strategy consulting position because one cannot generally do that without having made the leap through one MBA^[c1].
Kathy - Senior Consultant of C3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor degree in Public Administration Master of Business and Administration^[a1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Twente, The Netherlands^[b1] University of Nyenrode, The Netherlands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My educational background enhances me to analyse an organisation quickly and identify what the problems are^[c2]. It was really a logical study towards what I am working now^[c2].
Lucia - Senior Consultant of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor degree in Commerce (major in International Business and European Economy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Swinburne University, Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was my personal goal to work for an international organisation. The degree helped me understand what the big picture should be^[c2].
Mary - Manager of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor (Honour) of Science degree in Information System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffordshire University, UK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I graduated at the point where IT was an emerging industry and my educational background happened to enable me to move with the wave where IT became a trend^[c1].
Nick - Manager of a non-case global management consulting firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor of Science degree in Management and Environmental Engineering Master degree in Production Management Master of Business and Administration^[a1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cottus Technical University, Germany University Gothenburg, Sweden INSEAD, France^[b2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I started working in management consulting for Global Supply Chain Management after obtained my degree in Sweden. Degree was a prerequisite to get the job^[c1]. After my MBA, I started my own company.

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Academic Qualification^[a]	University^[b]	Educational Underpinning Subsequent Career^[c]
Oliver - Project Manager of C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master degree in Civil Engineering • Master degree in Management of Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dresden Technical University, Germany • Chalmers Technical University, Gothenburg, Sweden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not underpin my subsequent career as I have not used any of them. • The only thing is useful from my education is the logical base, structuring problem, organising yourself and to have an executive plan how to tackle problem and to derive a solution ^[c2].
Peter - Project Leader of C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering • Master of Business and Administration^[a1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tufts University, USA^[b1] • Fuqua School of Business, Duke University, USA^{[b1][b2]} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In most management consultancies in the United States, MBA is a minimum entry requirement to take you into the profession. Without having attained my MBA I wouldn't be where I am today professionally^[c1]. • More premier consulting firms especially only recruit the prestigious academic institutions.
Queenie - Manager of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor degree in International Business and Marketing • Master of Business and Administration^[a1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Georgetown, USA^{[b1][b2]} • Fuqua School of Business, Duke University, USA^{[b1][b2]} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My study always focused on business. After my MBA, I was not sure my interest in a particular industry and thought to try different businesses and industries, so consulting provided that opportunity ^[c1].
Rob - Project Leader of C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor degree in Engineering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornell University, USA^{[b1][b2]} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The business degree gives me a proper formal education in general management as a good foundation into operation, sales & marketing, finance, HR policies and so on ^[c1].

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Academic Qualification ^[a]	University ^[b]	Educational Underpinning Subsequent Career ^[c]
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master degree in Business (major in General Management)^[a1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA^{[b1][b2]} 	
Simon - Manager of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor degree in Industrial Engineering • Master of Business and Administration (major in Finance)^[a1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Melbourne, Australia^{[b1][b2]} • University of Melbourne, Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After my MBA graduation, I would like to have a career change from garment manufacturing to finance industry as my MBA was major in Finance. After several interviews with some banks, I was not sure if that career was the one I wanted. • I thought management consulting would give a more general starting point as they also expose to different industries. I did not get the offer from strategy houses like C1 and C2, so I joined C6 although it was not my first choice^[c1].
Terry - Senior Manager of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering • Accelerated Development Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, US • London Business School, UK^[b2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an engineer, I think it is the analytical rigour is one thing^[c2]. • The second thing is the ability to interact with other engineers without being intimidated by their technical knowledge^[c2]. • I did a lot of technical work with big companies and often the clients are engineers.
Sean -Senior Manager of C5 & C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor degree in Chemical Engineering • Master degree in Computer Control Automation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National University of Singapore, Singapore^[b1] • National University of Singapore, Singapore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My undergraduate degree led me up into petroleum industry. From petroleum industry, I moved into management consulting industry where I focused in petroleum and practical chemical industry^[c1]. In terms of industry perspective, it was relevant but not from the professional content of the university degrees.

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Academic Qualification^[a]	University^[b]	Educational Underpinning Subsequent Career^[c]
James - Partner of a Big Four Professional Service Firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor degree in Electrical Engineering • Master of Business and Administration^[a1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • École Polytechnique, Montreal, Canada • Concordia University, Montreal, Canada 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think the MBA would help purely on operational issues and strategy, and I can understand the financial issues of organisations. I think that is probably how it is related to all the consulting work I did in relation to strategy and financial impacts and consequences^[c1].
Andy - Practising Partner of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor degree of Science in Computer Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monash University, Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very much so as after my education most of my career is in the IT related field^[c1].
William - Acknowledgeable Individual (Founder of his own consultancy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma in Business Administration • Master of Business and Administration^[a1] • PhD in Business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auckland Institute of Technology, New Zealand • University of Surrey, UK • International Management Centre, UK and Southern Cross University, Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The doctorate degree provided me a platform specialising in strategic brand management^[c1]. • I was working in finance before. I became interested in branding after I reviewed some cases and articles about it in my MBA course. Although I provide the usual management consultancy, I am focused on branding.

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Academic Qualification^[a]	University^[b]	Educational Underpinning Subsequent Career^[c]
Tom - Worldwide Senior Partner & Regional Chief Executive-Asia of a top-tier global HR management consulting firm and Chairman of his own consultancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Business Administration • PhD in Business Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA^{[b1][b2]} • University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My PhD study focused on organisational theory and behaviour. It is helpful for a management consulting career at that time^[c1].
Top member of C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergraduate degree • MPhil in economics (Rhodes scholar) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of British Columbia, USA^[b1] • Oxford University, UK^{[b1][b2]} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown
Top member of C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma • Master of Arts • Doctoral of Philosophy (Rhode scholar) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Bochum, USA • Yale University, USA^{[b1][b2]} • Oxford University, UK^{[b1][b2]} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Academic Qualification^[a]	University^[b]	Educational Underpinning Subsequent Career^[c]
Top member of C3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master of Science • Master of Business and Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Institute of Applied Science, France • HEC School of Management, France^[b2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown
Top member of C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Electrical Engineering (Honour) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northwestern University, USA^{[b1][b2]} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown
Top member of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor degree in Business Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Miami, USA^[b1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown
Top member of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Economics • Master of Business and Administration • Doctorate of Law (Honorary) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Babson College, USA^[b2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown

Source: 1) Interview data; and 2) Data from corporate websites of the six global management consulting firms

Notes:

^[b1] Top 400 World Universities in The Times Higher Education 2011-2012 (www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-ranking/2011-2012/top-400.html)

^[b2] Top 100 Business School in Financial Times Global MBA Ranking 2011 (www.rankings.ft.com/business-school-rankings/global-mba-rankings-2011)

At Partner level, 2 out of 4 interviewees (interviewees James and William) possessed a MBA degree from non-top 200 universities. Interviewee William, Founder of his own small management consulting firm in Malaysia, also held a PhD degree from a non-top 200 university. Interviewee Jacob, Practicing Partner of C5 in Asia, only possessed a Bachelor degree of Science. Interviewee Tom did not possess a MBA but a PhD in Business and Administration from University of Illinois – Urbana (31st at the same ranking).

Information on educational credentials of the top members of the six global management consulting firms was extracted from their corporate websites and other public sources of information. Both the top members of C1 and C2 were Rhodes Scholars with a Master degree and a Doctorate degree from Oxford University (4th at the same ranking) respectively. The top member of C3 held a MBA from HEC School of Management, ranked 12th in the Global MBA Rankings 2012 by Financial Times (www.rankings.ft.com). The top member of C4 possessed a Bachelor degree from Northwestern University (26th at top 400 World Universities Rankings 2011-2012). The top member of C5 held a Bachelor degree from University of Miami (172nd of Top 400 World Universities Rankings 2011-2012). The top member of C6 possessed a MBA from Babson College, ranked 100th in the Global MBA Ranking 2012 but 1st Worldwide among MBA Program in Entrepreneurship in the US for 19 years (www.babson.edu), as well as an honorary Doctorate of Law. The educational credentials of the interviewees and top members of the six global management consulting firms are evidence that global management consulting firms tend to hire incumbents who have graduated from prestigious and reputable universities or

business schools in the world. It proves that ‘the bestowal of a diploma is the climactic moment in a long cycle of production of collective faith in the legitimacy of a new form of class rule’ (Bourdieu, 1996c:x).

In the modern world, the type and prestige of educational institutions attended and curriculum studied are influential for career outcome (Bourdieu, 1989a:185-264). The university degrees held by the 25 interviewees in this research are classified in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2 Classification of university degrees studied by interviewees

Diploma/Degree	Consultant or Senior Consultant	Manager to Senior Manager	Partner/ CEO/Managing Director	Total
<i>Diploma</i>				
Business Administration	0	0	1	1
<i>Undergraduate Degree</i>				
Business/Finance/ Accounting/Economic	7	1	2	10
Electrical/Civil/Industrial/ Manufacturing/Chemical Engineering	2	7	1	10
Information System/ Computing Science	1	1	1	3
Psychology	1	0	0	1
Public Administration	1	0	0	1
<i>Postgraduate Degree</i>				
MBA	6	5	2	13
Other Master degrees	3	3	2	8
PhD (Business-related)	1	0	2	3

Source: Interview Data

As we can see in Table 7.2, 16 out of 25 interviewees were with a business-related postgraduate degree as ‘in most management consultancies in United States, MBA is a minimum entry requirement to take an individual into the profession’ (interviewee Peter of C2). 15 out of these 16 interviewees were from US-based case or non-case

global management consulting firms. 19 out of 25 interviewees admitted that their university studies provided them ‘Subject-matter knowledge that was a passport for them to obtain a career in consulting’^[c1]. 6 out of 25 interviewees claimed that their education ‘Provided professional skills’^[c2] to them that were required in management consulting. Their professional skills included ‘team-working skills’ (interviewee Frank of C3), ‘strong analytical, problem identification and problem-solving skills’ (interviewees Oliver of C1, Kathy of C3 & Terry of C5), ‘the ability to interact with clients without being intimidated by their technical knowledge’ (interviewee Terry of C5), ‘understanding the big picture’ (interviewee Lucia of C6), and ‘affecting team dynamics and management’ (interviewee John of C4). It confirms that management consultants’ higher education and curriculum underpins their subsequent careers by providing them the required subject matter knowledge and professional skills to pursue a consulting career.

Becoming an insider

If the first phase is an initial test for new recruits in management consulting to demonstrate their excellence by deploying their personal capital, then the second phase is their right dispositions and behaviour assimilation as representatives of their management consulting firms as well as the initial recognition of their accomplishments and abilities:

After you have had a project or two and you have demonstrated your worth, your capabilities and your ability to deliver in a couple of different client situations, there begins to be a positive buzz about you in the office and your reputation begins to precede you. Then when staffing decisions get made, I want you because I know you are a talented resource, you can do good work and I want you on my team. That is the second phase of consulting. – (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

In this research, no interviewee was at the phase of *'Entry into the field'* at the time of interviews. 12 out of 25 interviewees were at the phase of *'Becoming an insider'* and 6 of these 12 interviewees progressed from Analyst to Consultant, Senior Consultant or Management Consultant within their management consulting firms. The others were experienced and laterally hired from industry or other management consulting firms to Consultant or Senior Consultant level. To progress to this phase, management consultants engage in processes of organisation-specific personal capital accumulation and personal reputation building.

This process is sometimes challenging for the experienced consultants hired from industry or other management consulting firms, in particular. It is because *'habitus call us to think of action as engendered and regulated by fundamental dispositions that are internalized primarily through early socialization'* (Swartz, 1997:194). As interviewee Simon, an experienced hire from industry by C6, postulated:

The Analysts go for analyst school. So, they are taught how to behave and think. When you are an experienced hired from industry as Consultant or Manager, they do not really have such kind of methodologies to ensure that they behave and portray the value of the company...when I joined in, it was more like to bring in knowledge in terms of creating the value'- (Interviewee Simon, ex-Manager of C6 in Singapore)

Interviewee Peter of C2, who joined C2 from a Big Four professional service firm, echoed this, *'I found myself making lots of mistakes because I was new and did not understand the cultural norms within C2 or the expected norms of the ways things were done because I did not have any peers at my level and nobody pointed these things out to me'*. Beside personal capital deployment and accumulation as well as reputation building, it is also critical for management consultants to learn through

cultural assimilation in order to be seen as a capable corporate insider in this career phase.

Becoming a strong team player

For management consultants, transitioning from the second phase to the third phase is a further process for them to 'learn about work that is intimately associated with learning about identity' (Pratt, Rockman and Kaufmann, 2006:255). Management consultants should become a strong team player in this phase:

After another year or two when you have done really good work managing multiple projects, multiple clients, you've delivered multiple successes. You become in demand in a way that far greatly exceeds your capacity. So you are wanted in more projects than you are able to handle physically yourself. So your reputation then precedes you to the point where you are in it anonymously as a term that means a strong team player, someone I want on my team. The staffing conversation then goes something like: 'I would really like somebody like [x]...I know I cannot get [x] as he is on 3 projects now. He is back-logged and there are 4 or 5 more requests for his time so I know there is no hope or prayer of getting him on my team but I want somebody like him. Who do we have like [x] that is that good?' That is the third phase of consulting. – (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

9 out of 25 interviewees in this research were in this phase. Two of them progressed from Analyst to Manager. Five of them from Consultant to Manager and the remaining two from Senior Consultant promoted to Senior Manager. Hence, up to this phase, management consultants have incrementally been accumulating more and different types of personal capital inside and outside the organisation through their successful delivery of multiple projects and management of multiple clients. Their accumulated capital includes cultural capital (subject-matter knowledge, professional skills, industry and consulting experience, project and team management, adaptability skills, communication and client relationship management), social capital (external networks including membership of

professional organisations), political capital (credit and credibility from peers and clients) and symbolic capital (reputation with peers and clients, professional titles of professional organisation).

Reach the apex

Management consultants who can survive the competitive ‘up or out’ policy in management consulting to reach this phase should have mastered the rules of the game and accumulated a rich volume and combination of personal capital during their careers. As interviewee Peter expressed:

The final phase is to circle back to the beginning which is who is [x] that’s when you go from being a Senior Manager to a Partner in the firm and you begin to blossom professionally and you begin to sell your own work, generate your own clients and develop your own book of business. So you begin to establish yourself professionally at the executive level as a knowledgeable industry expert. You are writing and publishing, and a thought leading speaker in your industry or in your functional area of expertise. You get invited to speak at conferences and clients or prospects will take your calls or even seek you out for a particular piece of industry expertise. – (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

Hence, management consultants in this phase further prosper their personal capital to a very promising stage to professionally legitimize themselves at executive level inside and outside the organisation.

In any field, only a small number of members can rise to the apex of the field. Not all the management consultants at Senior Manager level can succeed in the selection processes to become a Partner. As a Senior Manager on the deck to be a Partner, interviewee Terry was frustrated with the politics of the selection processes:

Just in the C5, when I was in Asia, I was on deck to be a Partner. There were all kinds of political cloak and dagger things going on. I was very busy and I had a very high utilisation rate because I did a lot of work for the clients. The

head of the HR team come to see me and told me that I should play golf with the Partners because it was what I needed to do to become a Partner. I thought that was really ridiculous because I did not think I needed to play golf with the Partners as it wasn't going to generate the income for the firm. It is only going to make me flatter the egos of the Partners. Anyway I am terrible at golf. – (Interviewee Terry, ex-Senior Manager of C5 in Asia and Founder & President of his own consulting practice in Canada)

For those on the route to be a Partner, their career advancement is determined by their 'connections and connectability' (Laird, 2006:1-2) with the Partners as distinction between membership and non-membership, inclusion and exclusion, is critical (Bourdieu, 1984:476).

Management consultants who are at Partner level are normally long-serving employees of their management consulting firms. According to the information on the firms' corporate websites, the length of service period for the top members of C1 and C3 were 24 years and the top members of C2, C4, C5 and C6 were over 30 years. The long-serving employment within a single company enhances them to accumulate more organisation-specific personal capital to become a corporate representative. Their career progress can be viewed as a reward for organisational loyalty. However, the lifestyle of a Partner can be very draining on a family. As interview John explained:

Many people think if I become a consultant then I will become a Partner. Once I become a Partner then I will be rich and all that stuff. As a Partner, because of much of the business is to maintain the relationships and stay in close contact with the client, you are sweeping in at the last minute for the big final presentations with all your clients. So you are coming in, you need to maintain good and close relationship with their senior executives. You are managing that relationship to make sure they are happy and then you are going off to somewhere else. Also if you have that considerable expertise you are flying from client to client because the clients want to meet with you to discuss something. It might not be an actual project that you sold but it is those sorts of advance sales strategies that you need to be involved with them...Since your employees are scattered all over on different projects, you then are forced to

get scattered all over and handle those projects as well. - (Interviewee John, ex-Executive Consultant and Corporate Strategist of C4 in the US)

This quotation informs that management consultants who can rise to the very top of leading management consulting firms are very strong players and elite members possessing rich volume and combination of different types of capital inside and outside the organisation. Also, they always need to put the client first before their personal life.

In short, the management consulting field is divided by specialisation horizontally and by four layers vertically. The findings have informed that there are four phases of consulting within the field. They are 'Entry into the field', 'Becoming an insider', 'Becoming a strong team player' and 'Reach the apex'. Management consulting firms tend to recruit incumbents have graduated from elite universities, in particular, with higher degrees such as MBA or PhD as their higher education provides the subject matter knowledge and professional skills required in management consulting. The four phases of consulting are continual processes of identity assimilation, capital accumulation and career trajectory of management consultants. When management consultants progress to Partner level, accumulation of personal social capital outside the organisation becomes critically important because it would bring in new business. Management consultants at Partner level are normally long-serving employees. Keeping clients happy and maintaining good and trusting relationships with clients are the major objectives of a Partner's working life.

7.3 Capital accumulation and de-accumulation

Capital accumulation

Attendance at an elite institution is only the initial selective criteria for entry into management consulting, surviving the ‘up or out’ policy is indeed the determining factor for management consultants to stay in the field. The four phases of consulting mentioned in the earlier section indicate that careers within leading management consulting firms depend both on what a management consultant does and how he or she is perceived. To be perceived as a ‘corporate insider’ (Maclean, Harvey and Press, 2006:40) such as a talented resource or a strong team player, management consultants must consciously acquire personal capital (i.e. qualification, experience, skills and connections) and unconsciously assimilate knowledge and dispositions (i.e. accents, gestures, expressions and habits) through habitus (Harvey and Maclean, 2008: 110). The breakdown of the variety of capitals possessed by the 25 interviewees and the top members of the six global management consulting firms is depicted in Table 7.3.

For Bourdieu (1996c:5), among the four types of capital, economic capital and cultural capital are the two fundamental principles of differentiation to shape and inform the struggle for power, giving access to positions of power, and determining the destinies of individuals and groups. No economic capital was mentioned by any of the 21 interviewees at Consultant to Senior Manager level. The capital possessed by these 21 interviewees can be summarised as ‘Subject matter knowledge and expertise as well as industry experience’^[d1] (13 out of 21 interviewees), ‘Good logical, analytical and problem-solving skills’^[d2] (9 out of 21 interviewees), ‘Project Management skills’^[d3] (9 out of 21 interviewees), ‘Knowledge on methodology’^[d4] (3

out of 21 interviewees), ‘Reliable and professional approach’^[d5] (3 out of 21 interviewees), ‘Good adaptability to different cultural environments’^[d6] (4 out of 21 interviewees), ‘Good communication and relationship management skills’^[d7] (9 out of 21 interviewees), and ‘Objectivity’^[d8](2 out of 21 interviewees). These are all cultural capital in the form of knowledge and professional skills.

For the remaining 4 interviewees at Partner level, no economic capital was mentioned by all the 4 interviewees or about the top members of the six global management consulting firms on their firms’ corporate websites. Interviewee Tom asserted that ‘at individual level, I do not think economic capital is important as you cannot buy your career in management consulting but cultural capital especially knowledge is very important’. However, economic capital may be disguised but not reduced as, to a certain extent, it can be transformed into other types of capital, such as cultural capital in the form of educational credentials (Bourdieu, 1986: 248-249). All the four interviewees at Partner level only put forward the ‘Subject matter knowledge and expertise as well as industry experience’^[d1] as their expertise and professional skills. Interviewee Andy of C5 also mentioned ‘Client relationship management’^[d7], and ‘Program management’^[d9]. Nevertheless, for management consultants at Partner level, these skills should be a pre-requisite as most of their time they need to socialise with their corporate-level clients and be in charge of consulting engagements. This reveals that economic capital is not seen as an important capital to enhance management consultants’ career advancement at all levels but personal cultural capital, especially knowledge, is seen as very important even at Partner level.

In addition to in-depth ‘Subject matter knowledge and expertise as well as industry experience’^[d1] in their different functional areas of expertise, all the 4 interviewees at Partner level and the 6 top members also possessed extensive corporate management experience inside their management consulting firms. The top members of C1 and C2 also disseminated their innovative ideas and concepts through publication (www.C1.com and www.C2.com). It shows that management consultants at Consultant to Senior Manager levels are ‘curators of culture’ as they only reproduce and transmit legitimate bodies of knowledge. Members at Partner level are both ‘curators of culture’ and ‘creators of culture’ (Bourdieu, 1988a:36) as they also invent new concepts, theories and methods that ‘appear as simple contributions to the progress of science are also always “political” manoeuvres that attempt to establish, restore, reinforce, protect, or reverse a determined structure of relations of symbolic domination’ (Bourdieu, 1971:121).

Social capital is ‘the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition to membership in a group’ (Bourdieu, 1986:248). Through social interaction, it provides their members with ‘the collectivity-owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various sense of the word’ (Bourdieu, 1986:248). There was no social capital put forward by interviewees from Consultant to Senior Manager levels except professional memberships of interviewees Gladys of C4, Terry of C5 and Simon of C6 with the professional organisations to which they belonged. Interviewee Gladys of C4 was a Certified Public Accountant. Interviewee Simon of C6 was a member of The

Association for Operations Management (APICS) and a supply chain professional society in Singapore. Interviewee Terry of C5 was a Certified Management Consultant in Canada. No professional qualification was claimed by the 4 interviewees at Partner level nor mentioned for the 6 top members. This underpins that professional memberships are not significant in management consulting as in other fields of profession.

Finkelstein, Harvey and Lawton (2007:112-120) suggest that social capital is the determining factor for an individual to advance in business. Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) argue that social capital nurtures inside organisations to enhance intellectual capital for organisational advantage. However, given the project-based nature of management consulting, management consultants always work inter- and outside organisations as well as need to be thought leaders to their clients in different fields. To acquire job-related, new and different information, it is the 'the short and weak chains of connection that were of greatest significance' because 'except under unlikely conditions, no strong tie is a bridge', as Granovetter (1973:1364 and 1368) concisely affirms. Scott (2000:35) explains that strong-ties such as family, close friends or workmates and alike have many overlapping contacts and intensive interactions with each other which make them less likely to possess new and different information than the weak ties of distant parts of the network. Interviewee Peter pointed out the need for management consultants to build up their social networks:

When you get more senior the social capital becomes important because in all the consulting firms, as you become more senior, a Manager or a Partner, you should participate on some local charitable organisations. You should participate potentially in political campaigns. You should participate on non-

profit Boards of Directors, for example. You begin to build a professional social network in your home region and also in your industry...it's not about family relationships per se. It is about building social professional networks in the industry of your expertise where you hope to sell a lot of work. As an American consultant in the US market these are the most important things. – (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

The social capital possessed by the top members of C1, C2, C4, C5 and C6, who were situated in the US, were accumulated from being members of different political councils, academic institutions, professional and charitable organisations. For example, the top members of C1, C2, C4 and C6 were active participants in many reputable international economic and business forums and conferences such as World Economic Forum. The top members of C4 and C5 actively engaged in the Council on Foreign Relations and Capitol Hill as part of the Federal practice growth strategy respectively. Among the four interviewees at Partner level, only information of interviewee Tom's social and symbolic capital could be obtained from public sources of information. Interviewee Tom was based in Hong Kong and his social capital was accumulated from his appointments to the Hong Kong Government as a member of different specialised committees, the Chairman of a higher education institute and the Councillor of different universities in Hong Kong. He was also a member of the Board of Directors of a publicly listed company. It demonstrates that the more senior a management consultant the more social capital they are able to accumulate from different fields – economic, political and cultural, outside their organisations. Compared the social capital possessed by the top members of the six global management consulting firms and interview Tom, it provides evidence that social capital possessed by elite members of global management consulting firms is spatially and temporally similar.

Symbolic capital is a form of ‘legitimate accumulation, through which the dominant group secure a capital of ‘credit’ which seems to owe nothing to the logic of exploitation’ (Bourdieu, 1977:197). It is a form of power that is not perceived as power but as legitimate demands for recognition, deference, obedience, or the services of others. Also, the symbolic power works primarily through a mechanism of naming and categorisation (Oakes, Townley and Cooper, 1998:261). Bourdieu (1992:241) therefore emphasises the importance of ‘official naming’ such as titles of nobility, educational and professional titles. Institutionalised professional qualification acts as ‘the statutorily recognised capacity of an authorised, authoritative language, speech that is accredited, worthy of being believed, or in a word performative, claiming to be effective’ (Bourdieu, 1992:70) as the entry standards required for a qualification granted by widely recognised professional bodies constitute the basis for judgment of professionalism (MacDonald, 1995:161). Interviewee Terry was the sole Certified Management Consultant in this research and insisted that having a relevant professional qualification in management consulting would definitely help on paper:

I get an internationally recognised management consulting organisation (Administrateurs professionnelles du Québec, Canada) offers this professional certification. As management consultants for a long time have been fighting the fact that they are kind of considered as used-car salesman. Even today, I think there are huge numbers of independent consultants who are actually executives who lost their jobs. It touches less the major firms. If you show up somewhere you have like [the Big Four’s] badge stamped on your forehead, then people will think you are professional. If you are an independent consultant, you show up in somebody’s door, I think you should have some kinds of professional designation to improve your credibility. Otherwise, everybody can claim to be a consultant- (Interviewee Terry, Senior Manager of C5 in Asia and Founder & President of his own consulting practice in Canada).

On this, for those management consultants without ‘big blue name’ behind them, possession of a relevant professional qualification in management consulting can thus represent a legitimate competence.

While management consultants in the consulting segment of Supply Chain Management, Information Technology Management and Financial Management and alike are usually with institutionalised professional accreditation, those in general management and strategy consulting are not. Interviewee Oliver of C1, Rob of C2, Kathy of C3 and Heather of a top-tier non-case management consulting firm argued that the professional identity of management consultants was constructed by having relevant skills and years of practical experience. As interviewee Heather inferred:

People would make fun of you if you try to tell them you are a CPA and that is important. If the CFO of a company has a business problem he is going to hire a consultant with MBA or PhD degree to help him...Having a professional identity is a good but does not affect a consultant's value. If you are a CPA or Chartered Engineer then people just going to think that is what you did before you become a consultant. - (Interviewee Heather, ex-Senior Associate Consultant of a top-tier non-case management consulting firm in the US)

This indicates that institutionalised professional titles outside management consulting are not seen by some management consultants as an important capital in management consulting.

Table 7.3 Variety of personal capital possessed by interviewees and top members of the six global management consulting firms

Name /Ranking/Company	Cultural Capital (Knowledge, experience and cultural dispositions)	Social Capital (Family, networks and relationships)	Symbolic Capital (Title, honour and reputation)
Ranking : Consultant to Senior/Management Consultant			
Alice - Consultant of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language skills^[d3] • Reliability and professional approach^[d5] • Adaptability to different cultural environments (company culture, ethnic cultures)^[d6] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned
Barry - Consultant of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board industry experiences and subject matter expertise in strategy^[d1] • Ability on capturing the key drivers, logical industry analysis, problem identification and solving in a very short period of time^[d2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned
Charles - Consultant of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intellectual and logical thinking^[d2] • communication skill^[d7] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned
Daisy -Senior Consultant of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject matter knowledge^[d1] • defending firm's interest such as defending project methodology or team structure^[d4] • Client facing skills –good skills in getting information out of difficult clients, communicating issues and results^[d7] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned

Name /Ranking/Company	Cultural Capital (Knowledge, experience and cultural dispositions)	Social Capital (Family, networks and relationships)	Symbolic Capital (Title, honour and reputation)
Ernst - Senior Consultant of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligence^[d2] • Decision-making ability^[d3] • Adaptability^[d6] • Willingness to take responsibility^[d5] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned
Frank - Managing Consultant of C3 & C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management - knowing what can go wrong in a project and can manage the project properly^[d3] • Methodology knowledge on how to do certain things, conduct certain consulting and get deliverables by using different approaches^[d4] • Professional skill on getting things done^[d5] • Objectivity - be able to not get tied up in some cultural or organisation problems^[d8] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned
Gladys - Management Consultant of C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management^[d3] • Change management^[d1] • Business transformation – combination of processes design, implementation and change^[d1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of an institute of CPA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional title of Certificated Public Accountant
Heather - Senor Associate Consultant of a top-tier global management consulting firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally having academic and industry training^[d1] • Ability on picking up any industry quickly^[d2] • Becoming an expert quickly^[d2] • Relationship building, getting people to like and want to work with me^[d7] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned

Name /Ranking/Company	Cultural Capital (Knowledge, experience and cultural dispositions)	Social Capital (Family, networks and relationships)	Symbolic Capital (Title, honour and reputation)
Ivy - Senior Consultant of C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAP Technical Skills^[d1] • Project Management^[d3] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned
John - Executive Consultant & Corporate Strategist of C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a well- rounded education with fundamental and business analysis^[d1] • My ability to identify the things that have to be done and not allow a team to get bogged down in the weeds and not really lose track of what the end goal was^[d2] • Very quickly to contribute and add value to addressing whatever the issues are^[d2] • Excellent skill on dealing with relationship management ^[d7] • Adaptability into any situation ^[d6] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned
Kathy - Senior Consultant of C3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My subject matter expertise on e-government, public sector innovation^[d1] • Project management^[d3] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned
Lucia - Senior Consultant of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • change management^[d1] • project management^[d3] • process re-engineering^[d1] • system implementation, deployment and rollout^[d1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned
Ranking: Manager/Project Manager/Project Leader/Senior Manager			
Mary - Manager of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human capital management, HR transformation and outsourcing^[d1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned

Name /Ranking/Company	Cultural Capital (Knowledge, experience and cultural dispositions)	Social Capital (Family, networks and relationships)	Symbolic Capital (Title, honour and reputation)
Nick - Manager of a leading management consulting firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client relationship management^[d7] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mentioned
Oliver - Project Manager of C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analytics^[d2]- being 50% a psychologist and listen to what people say and compare it with what people do Good communication skill^[d7] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mentioned
Queenie - Manager of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic thinking and skills^[d1] Problem solving^[d2] and financial analysis^[d1] Good in communication^[d7] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mentioned
Simon - Manager of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply chain management^[d1] Consulting and project management skills^[d3] Change management^[d1] Acting as a neutral person who can drive the change.^[d8] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership with The Association for Operations Management and a supply chain professional society in Singapore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional title of APICS
Peter - Project Leader of C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A combination of inquisitive, scientific and analytical abilities^[d2] As a good listener to position myself as a senior executive and trust advisor to my clients^[d7] Partly a teacher or professor - teach clients how to think differently and teach organisations how to act differently^[d7] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mentioned

Name /Ranking/Company	Cultural Capital (Knowledge, experience and cultural dispositions)	Social Capital (Family, networks and relationships)	Symbolic Capital (Title, honour and reputation)
Rob - Project Leader of C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having ability to come to a new industry and to learn it very quickly^[d2] and strong strategic and analytical thinking^[d2] • Having ability to take a lot of research and boil it down to the 3 or 4 most important points^[d2] • Good adaptability to a new industry^[d6] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned
Terry - Senior Manager of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical methodology, lean manufacturing, supply chain optimisation, simultaneous engineering^[d1] • Having very defined and specific skills that are backed up with methodologies^[d4] • Project management^[d3] • Client relationship management – all about persuading the clients^[d7] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of Administrateurs Professionnelles du Québec, Canada 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified Management Consultant
Sean - Senior Manager of C5 & C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value creation in kinds of areas of supply chain, pricing, sales and, marketing effectiveness^[d1] • Change management^[d1] • Powerful in management and technology consulting^[d1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned
Ranking: Partner/CEO/Managing Director			
James - Partner of a Big Four Professional Service Firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations, strategy, financial management^[d1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned

Name /Ranking/Company	Cultural Capital (Knowledge, experience and cultural dispositions)	Social Capital (Family, networks and relationships)	Symbolic Capital (Title, honour and reputation)
Andy - Practicing Partner of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information technology experience, process improvement/ERP related implementation, expertise in manufacturing industry^[d1] Client relationship management^[d7], program management^[d9] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mentioned
William - Acknowledgeable individual (Founder of a his own consultancy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject matter knowledge & expertise in project feasibility studies, finance and administration, banking operations and international trade, strategic management, brand management^[d1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mentioned
Tom - Worldwide Senior Partner & Regional Chief Executive- Asia of a top-tier global HR management consulting firm and Chairman of his own consultancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic organisation model and organisation change^[d1] Leadership assessment & development^[d1] Human resources systems design and implementation^[d1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of HKSAR Barristers Disciplinary Tribunal Panel; HKSAR Independent Commission Remuneration for District Councillors; HKSAR Independent Commission on Remuneration for Executive Council, Legislative Council and political officials and other two committees Chairman of one institute of higher education and councillor of two universities funded by the HK government. Independent non-executive Director of a HK publicly listed corporation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarded The Order of Bauhinia Star (BBS) by the Hong Kong Government. Statutorily appointed as Justices of the Peace by the Hong Kong Government.

Name /Ranking/Company	Cultural Capital (Knowledge, experience and cultural dispositions)	Social Capital (Family, networks and relationships)	Symbolic Capital (Title, honour and reputation)
Global Managing Director of C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising clients in a range of industries including banking, consumer goods, high tech, and industrial^[d1] • Core area of work is in financial-sector development and reform.^[d1] • Authoring more than 80 articles on financial services, Asia, history, and the issues and opportunities facing global and Asian markets. • Co-authoring books relating to financial crisis and authoring book on China. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An active participant in many international forums including Davos, Le Cercle des Économistes: Les Rencontres Économiques d'Aix-en-Provence, the Asia Business Council, and the Aspen Strategy Group. Made a Rhodes Trustee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarded the Magnolia Gold Prize by Chinese Government^[d14] • Named in the National Association of Corporate Directors' list of 100 most influential people in corporate governance and the Boardroom and Financial Centres International's list of Top 500. An honorary fellow at Brasenose College, Oxford.
President & Chief Executive of C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialism on financial services^[d1] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active conference speakers in international forum including World Business Forum, Singapore Human Capital Summit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown
CEO, Global C3 and Chairman of the C3 Group in the UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading corporate strategy, change and transformation in C3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown

Name /Ranking/Company	Cultural Capital (Knowledge, experience and cultural dispositions)	Social Capital (Family, networks and relationships)	Symbolic Capital (Title, honour and reputation)
President & CEO of C4 Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic leadership, operations and client relationships^[d1] • Leading the industry's largest cadre of business consultants and services experts specialising in helping clients leverage world-class technology to improve business performance • Directing the strategic development of C4 e-business on demand services, an innovative portfolio of business process transformation, applications , etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council member on Foreign Relations. • Member of the Board of Trustees of the Northwest University. • Member of the Board of Overseers and Board of Managers of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Centre. • A frequent speaker at industry and business conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Named to Fortune magazine's "50 Most Powerful Women in Business" for seven consecutive years
Chief Executive Officer of C5	Not known	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively engaged on Capitol Hill as part of the Federal practice growth strategy • Member of the Orange Bowl Committee • A corporate advisory board • member of the Association of Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting • School of Business Administration Board of Overseers and currently an Executive in Residence of the University of Miami 	Named 'Executive of the Year' by the Association of Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting

Name /Ranking/Company	Cultural Capital (Knowledge, experience and cultural dispositions)	Social Capital (Family, networks and relationships)	Symbolic Capital (Title, honour and reputation)
Executive Chairman of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C6's Chief Executive Officer • Chief Operating Officer-Client Services • Group Chief Executive of the Communications & High Tech operating group • Group Chief Executive of the Resources operating group • Led the Manufacturing industry group • Managing Director for C6's business in the United States 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively representing C6 to participate in the Initiative for Global Development, the Business Council, the International Business Council of the World Economic Forum and the G100 • Co-chairman of the Business Coalition for Student Achievement • A board member of Change the Equation • An advisory board member of Skills for America's Future • A member of the Business Higher Education Forum • A frequent speaker at business, technology and academic forums around the world • Member of the Board of Trustees of Dean College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honorary Doctorate of Law

Source: 1) Interview Data; 2) Corporate websites; and 3) Public sources of information

Interviewee Sean of C5 held a different view and postulated that the value of an institutionalised professional qualification should be dependent on the nature of consulting work a management consultant is providing:

If a management consultant is doing mainly the technology part such as implementing ERP or supply chain system, the professional qualification does not matter much. If you have a title like certified IT Project Manager, sometimes you carry weight. If you are from the so called 'True Blue' management consulting firms, I think it carries weight. If you are advising company how to improve their supply chain, not from the system side but from the operation and strategy sides, if you carry a certification from APICS or you are certified Pricer from a Professional Pricing Society, for example, that can carry weight.- (Interviewee Sean, ex-Senior Manager of C5 and C6 in Singapore)

It is supported by interviewee Peter of C2 who contended that the professional identity of a management consultant could holistically be a combination of certification, title earned and experiences developed from just working in the field.

He explained his view and experience:

The importance of having professional titles is probably directly related to the level of specialisation of the industry or market you are trying to be a consultant in and also your relevant age and experience level. So if a person is younger and trying to break into a specialist area that requires a special language, special knowledge of terminology and industry norms, then having a professional designation can be very comfortable to break into the industry. I don't know if it is all that necessary to stay in the industry or to be successful in it. When I worked for one of the then Big Six years ago, there was a Partner who did a lot of work on restructuring semi-conductor fabrication facilities. He was one of the few people on the planet who had been in maybe 100 semi-conductor manufacturing facilities in Scotland, USA, Hong Kong, Singapore, South East Asia and China, etc. So he could walk into a client's office and talked fluently and eloquently about having been in Motorola semi-conductor manufacturing facility in Northern Scotland and Dell's facility in Malaysia, and Western Digital's facility in Singapore. He had no certification as I am aware of. But he had instant credibility that was part of his professional identity. He also had the firm he was working for, as a Partner he was a representative of a certain firm that would have an identity as well. There is probably a combination of certification and titles behind your name, focusing in industry experience over time and the firm you work for, whether it is a one-man bank doing garage consulting or whether it is [C1] or [C2] or [same tier of consulting firms] or [C6]. It's a combination of those 3 that leads to having

strength in your professional identity and the value that bring to the client in your discussion. – (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

These quotations assert that, in the management consulting field, the importance of institutionalised professional titles, relevant or irrelevant to management consulting, highly depends on the level of specialisation of the industry, the technical and professional relevance of consulting work provided to clients, as well as the age and industry experience of the individual management consultant. This indicates that the professional identity of management consultants is ‘a sense of identity that is understood to connect different experiences’ (Alvesson and Willmont, 2002:625) rather than heavily relies on the occupational shelter of professional qualifications giving right to practise and titles as in other fields of profession. This challenges Bourdieu’s (1992:119) argument on ‘the effect of all social titles of credentials increase in durable way the value of their bearer by increasing the extent and the intensity of the belief in their value’.

As presented in Table 7.3, for interviewees Gladys of C4, Simon of C6 and Terry of C5, their symbolic capital was clearly animated by the professional titles they possessed. In contrast, interviewee Tom stressed that ‘for symbolic capital, the reputation represents professional reputation which is much more important than titles and honours’. However, he was awarded the Bronze Bauhinia Star of The Order of Bauhinia Star, a replacement of the British honour system of Order of British Empire in Hong Kong after 1997, to recognise his outstanding services to the society for a period of time. He was also appointed as the ‘Justices of the Peace’ by the Hong Kong Government. The top member of C1 held various honours gained

from the business field and an honorary Fellow from a prestigious university. He was also awarded a Gold honourable Prize by the Government of the most affluent city in China for his outstanding contribution to the city's development as C1 was the consulting services provider of the project. The top members of C4 and C5 too were awarded different honours by reputable business magazines and associations. The top member of C6 possessed an honorary Doctorate of Law. These special titles and honours reflects that the top members of leading management consulting firms are sought after and recognised for their cultural and social capital. Their symbolic capital is a transformation of economic, cultural and social capital into symbolic differences and classifications that make possible symbolic recognition and distinction (Bourdieu, 1985a:203 and 1985b:731).

Capital de-accumulation

Actors need to 'bring all their properties into the most circumstantial interactions, and their relative positions in the social structure (or in a specialised field) govern their positions in the interaction' (Bourdieu, 1984:578-579). Given the breadth of services provision in management consulting, management consulting firms commonly embrace a diverse group of professionals with a variety of professional qualifications. Interviewee Queenie of C6 emphasised that no matter what professional identities management consultants possess, they always needed to follow Partners' instruction and the management consulting firm's objectives. Interviewee Terry of C5 also informed that, 'some Partners would allow me to go beyond the corporate rules to do anything that are for the clients' benefit but some not'. This could suppress the initiatives of management consultants. Hence, Partners can 'seduce subordinates into calibrating their sense of self with a restricted

catalogue of corporate approved identities bearing strong imprints of managerial power' which forms an 'invisible identity cage' (Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas, 2008:16-17) for management consultants at lower hierarchy of power. This ensures management consultants' behaviour should be in compliant with the organisational norms and values but, at the same time, it can de-accumulate the personal capital of management consultants. In short, as I have argued, symbolic violence is highly visible in the management consulting field as in other professional fields such as medicine, law and accountancy.

All organisations are 'structuring structures' (Bourdieu, 1984:170) imposing itself on the dispositions and perceptions of their members. Under the authoritative power of top management and other normative controls, such as human resource management systems, management consultants particularly those at the lower level of consulting hierarchy are 'an effect of power rather than a site of power' (Sillince and Mueller, 2004:14) albeit being the sources of organisational capital of management consulting firms. Interviewee Peter informed how he was categorised and typified by the human resource management system used by one of the Big Four that he had previously worked for:

They re-organised [the then Big Six firm that I was working for] into three massive regions across the country and I was in the eastern region. Far from the state of Maine in the north eastern part of the country to the state of Florida and the south eastern part of the country with 3500 consultants in it, none of whom I knew...the following year I got my performance review and my pay rise in an anonymous letter from an anonymous HR person in New York who I had never met before. [This Big Four firm] pursued what I will call a plug and play approach to management consulting. They put all the consultants on a six by six grid. There were 6 different competencies, 6 levels of capabilities of each competency. You could be an A1, A2, A3 or B1, B2, B3 etc. They then outlined each of us to document our strengths and levels of capabilities along this matrix. You can imagine you are an A3, B2, C4, D4, E5 type of person.

They kept track of it through a database and whenever a Partner was trying to staff a new project it was up to this database to see which consultant had the right talent profile that matched to a project they needed. Regardless of where the person lived, whether the Partner actually knew the person or not, it was a very awkward kind of unusual way to staff and organise a consultancy. – (Interviewee Peter, ex-Project Leader of C2 in the US)

This reflects that the personal capital of management consultants can be narrowly and rationally defined so it is made to fit into the organisational habitus – ‘systems and structure’ and ‘work and cultural practices’. It can lead to some extent to personal capital de-accumulation. However, organisations are also ‘structured structures’ (Bourdieu, 1984:170) shaped by the ways in which its members learn and adapt their dispositions. In this sense, the personal capital of management consultants and organisational capital of management consulting firms co-evolve over time.

Social networks provide management consulting firms and its members with access to new knowledge, resources and markets. In professional service firms, the most valuable knowledge is likely to be the tacit knowledge of individuals within the firm as well as close and long-standing personal relationship between individual clients and individual management consultants (Alvesson, 1995; Morris and Empson, 1998). As discussed in chapter 2, organisational capital and personal capital are transmutable and co-evolve with each other. The organisational social capital of a management consulting firm is thus accumulated through its members’ personal social capital. The close and long-standing consultant-client relationship should be:

With each of those consulting engagements you have got business cards and if you call any of them on any given day that they would take your call and/or they would return your call and are more than willing to speak with you about an issue. They are happy that you call because they have got another challenging issue that they are hoping you can help them with.- (Interviewee John, ex-Executive Consultant and Corporate Strategist of C4 in the US)

However, this close and long-standing consultant-client relationship derives from organisational social capital – the consulting engagements between management consulting firms and clients.

Management consultants draw on the organisational social capital to establish their personal social networks and status. While management consultants are assigned to different projects to work with different peers and clients, it allows them to acquire personal, cultural and social capital intra-corporately and inter-organisationally. ‘You can learn from participating parties from different industries which is the thing I find that you cannot get it outside consulting’, as contended by interviewee Simon of C6. The very nature of how consulting is performed also empowers management consultants to ‘get paid by spending 4-6 months on a project to learn very rapidly to become an expert and then you can immediately reflect back to the client organisations what you know about their industry and how you can help them solve their problems’ (interviewee Peter of C2). Working with employees of client organisations as a community of practice makes them possible to become insiders of client organisations with access to resources limited to outsiders. It is the transformation of social capital to political capital in the forms of trust and trustworthiness.

Social capital creates individual and organisational capitals. Professional membership with professional bodies, personal membership with charitable organisations, economic organisations or political parties, or being alumni with universities and alike are management consultants’ personal social networks through

which management consultants acquire new and different knowledge and resources as well as personal status with independent of their management consulting firms. The professional memberships of interviewees Gladys of C4, Terry of C5 and Simon of C6 with professional bodies in their specialisation are good examples. When management consultants provide consulting services to clients, they can 'enrich an existing identity, patch together their multiple identities, or use another identity as a temporary splint' (Pratt, et. al., 2006:236) rather than discard their prior or other identities such as CPA or CPP.

To sum up, all interviewees in this research did not mention their possession of economic capital. For cultural capital, management consultants at Consultant to Senior Manager levels are more likely 'curators of culture' whereas those at Partner level are also more often recognised as 'creators of culture' as they have greater authority and often power to disseminate new concept, theories and methods to struggle for symbolic domination in the intellectual field. Social capital arising from memberships of professional bodies is generally not seen as so important in management consulting. Members at the pinnacle of management consulting firms accumulate external social capital from different institutions or organisations in political, economic and cultural fields. These senior members have greater opportunity other than management consultants transform their cultural and social capital into symbolic capital in the form of honours, titles and reputation to give them possible symbolic legitimacy and distinction. These findings indicate that the more senior the management consultants, the more volume and different combinations of capital they can accumulate from inside and outside the management consulting field

and their management consulting firms. Management consulting firms are 'structuring structures' as personal capital accumulation and de-accumulation exists when authoritative power of top management and other normative organisational controls are imposed on management consultants. In the meantime, management consulting firms are 'structured structures' shaped by members' adaptation of learning, ways and dispositions. These symbolic processes result in the co-evolution of personal and organisational capital. Management consultants acquire new and different information through organisational and personal networks. Cultural, social and symbolic capitals of a management consulting firm are forged by aggregate cultural, social and symbolic capitals of its members. At the same time, management consultants also exploit the cultural, social and symbolic capitals of their management consulting firm to accumulate their personal cultural, social and political capital.

7.4 Career success, satisfaction and downsides

Successful career

Bourdieu (1984:123) considers all actors are strategists and all actions are interest-oriented, no matter how the actors conform to norms or follow prescribed rituals. In any field, there are three possibilities of career trajectory: upward mobility, downward mobility or stagnation (Bourdieu, 1984:123). Upward mobility within a field or a company is commonly regarded as a career success. Bourdieu maintains that new entrants generally pursue strategies of succession to attempt to gain access to dominant positions in a field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:98-99). There were

16 criteria put forward by 22 out of 25 interviewees as a successful consulting career, as exhibited in Table 7.4.

6 out of 22 interviewees asserted that a successful career in management consulting was to follow the career hierarchy ‘Promote along the way up to Partner, then Managing Partner running a sector and then a region’^[e1]. Interestingly, all these 6 interviewees either realised that it was not their aspiration to be a Partner or were not sure if it was their career target. As interviewee Barry of C5 at Consultant level admitted, ‘I am not sure if I am a good salesman and socialised person as well as enjoy building up relationships with people’. Interviewee Alice of C6 at Senior Consultant level believed that someone who was successful in consulting should be career oriented and ambitious because it will only be achieved by sacrificing personal life to climb up the corporate ladder. Interviewee Rob of C2 at Project Leader level also accentuated that working up the corporate ladder to Partner level was not something that he wanted to do as he did not particularly want to work 80 hours a week at his job and to live out of a suitcase for 5 or 10 years. These show that not all management consultants aspire to pursue strategies of succession to gain access to dominant positions in their consulting career as Bourdieu claims. One’s personal habitus and dispositions, to some extent, define his or her position in a field.

Some interviewees in this research rather pursued strategies of subversion by focusing on personal capital accumulation because they deemed it as a form of career success. 4 out of 22 interviewees gave accounts similar to the career aim of ‘Having a reputation within the field of management consulting’^[e2]. Management consultants

need to have a professional reputation both inside and outside organisation as it is ‘a good benchmark used by people, not only within organisation but also in the field, to assess whether you are a good consultant’, as interviewee Tom asserted. Inside the organisation, the reputation of management consultants is legitimated by 1) ‘Having a loyal group of people within the organisation who are willing to work on projects with you’^[e3] (interviewees Gladys of C4); 2) ‘Be able to deliver projects under pressure and make the senior impressed’^[e4] (interviewee Lucia of C6); and 3) ‘Making money for the management consulting firm you work for, bring in the sales, revenue and profit’^[e5] (2 out of 22 interviewees). Interviewee Simon informed that:

At Analyst to Manager levels, a successful career would be more in getting the knowledge, being good in projects and a little bit of client management. At Manager to Partner levels, the successful career would base on how can you generate projects and get new clients for the organisation. – (Interviewee Simon, ex-Manager of C6 in Singapore)

It is a transformation of economic, cultural and social capital from self-interest into disinterested forms - symbolic capital (i.e. reputation) which give management consultants legitimacy.

The professional reputation of management consultants outside their organisations is rooted in ‘Within your clients who see the success of what you do’^[e6] (3 out of 22 interviewees), ‘Having a wide range clients contacts’^[e7] (6 out of 22 interviewees), ‘How much money you have saved or generated for clients collectively’^[e8] (interviewee Daisy of C5), ‘Making a real impact by developing or helping to implement novel, rigorous and standing-the-test-of-time solutions to problem faced by the clients’^[e9] (interviewee Charles of C5), ‘Having continuous innovation on the methodology, methods of analysis and ways of advising clients’^[e10] (interviewee

Tom). In other words, management consultants are ‘symbolic labour producing symbolic power by transforming relations of interest into disinterested meanings’ (Swartz, 1997:44). Their activities and capital are misrecognised as disinterested forms which become separated from underlying material interests.

Interviewees at different levels also put forward their criteria of career success from a self-interest perspective such as ‘Having opportunities to do more interesting and challenging project’^[e11] (interviewees Frank of C3 and Nick of a non-case global management consulting firm), ‘Learning knowledge/skills in the areas related to your professional and client management’^[e12] (interviewees Ivy of C4, Lucia and Simon of C6), and ‘Having the opportunities to learn about many industries, about many people, about many different aspects of work in a very short time’^[e13] (interviewee Oliver of C1). These could enhance management consultants to ‘Successfully shift organisations or industries within or outside consulting’^[e14] (interviewee Peter of C2), ‘Moving from consulting to an industry to take up a top management role’^[e15] (3 out of 22 interviewees), or ‘Having a good financial rewarding’^[e16] (interviewee Frank of C3). These quotations show that management consultants at different levels can pursue the ‘strategies of subversion’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 98-99). They do not expect to gain much from the dominant group but opportunities of different capital accumulation in the course of their consulting career in order to shape their relative positions inside and outside the management consulting field for their future. Hence, a management consulting firm acts as a site or ‘organisational habitus’ through which social destinies of management consultants are accomplished.

In summary, management consultants pursue different strategies for their future career. Many new entrants do not routinely pursue the strategies of succession as Bourdieu claims. Even those who viewed becoming a Partner as a career success realised it was not their career aspiration due to individual personality characteristics or unwillingness to sacrifice personal life for the consulting lifestyle. Hence, management consultants' personal habitus and dispositions define their positions in the field. Rather, many management consultants pursue the strategies of subversion and view different types of personal capital accumulation, in particular reputation inside and outside their organisations, as a career success. Inside the organisation, management consultants are legitimized by their transformation of economic, cultural and social capital from self-interest into disinterested forms. Outside the organisation, management consultants act as 'symbolic labour' (Bourdieu, 1977:171) to transform relations of interest into disinterested meanings to obtain symbolic capital for legitimacy.

Most satisfaction and downsides

All fields and organisations are institutions. An institution 'can only become enacted and active if it like a garment or house, find some who finds an interest in it, feels sufficiently at home in it to take it on' (Bourdieu, 1981:309). In other words, individuals will enter into or stay longer in a field or an organisation providing they are satisfied with it. Findings of previous research (Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985; Judge, Thoresen, Bono, and Patton, 2001; Organ, 1988) on the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance are contradictory. Iaffaldano & Muchinsky (1985:269-270) contend that the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance is an 'illusionary correlation' that represents a 'management fad'. Judge,

Thoresen, Bono and Patton (2001:389) argue that job satisfaction is indeed predictive of performance and the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance is even stronger for professional jobs. Previous studies (Fried and Ferris, 1987; Saari and Judge, 2000) also suggest that satisfaction with the nature of the work itself, including job challenge, autonomy, variety and scope, best predicts overall job satisfaction and other important outcomes such as employee retention. Given the high employee turnover in management consulting, it is important to identify what factors are likely to motivate management consultants to feel most satisfied and to stay in the field (also see Table 7.4).

There were 11 most satisfaction factors highlighted by 22 out of 25 interviewees. 9 of 22 interviewees emphasised that ‘Client’s satisfaction’^[f1] gave them a sense of achievement and success particularly ‘When a client team member proudly present the findings or project results in front of his/her top management, claim all the credits and get all the praises’ (interviewee Daisy of C5). 4 out of 22 interviewees were most satisfied with ‘Having impact on clients’^[f2] by ‘coming up with a good, creative and novel solution and this solution works for the clients’ (interviewee Charles of C5) or ‘delivering a very, very strong piece of work that really delights the client, makes them very impressed and more importantly makes them take action for change’ (interviewee Rob of C2). To make clients take action, 5 out of 22 interviewees enjoyed ‘Helping clients to make change and cope with transition’^[f3]. 3 out of 22 interviewees appreciated a lot for ‘The long-term partnership relationship with client’^[f4] as ‘it is the good customer relationship by realising trust between the consultant team and the client team’ (interviewee Alice of C6).

Table 7.4 Assessment of a successful career in management consulting, most satisfaction as a professional management consultant and most downsides of a consulting career

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Assessment of a successful career in management consulting	Most satisfaction as a professional management consultant	Most downsides of a consulting career
Alice - Consultant of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work up step by step to Partner level ^[e1]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the client is happy with the result ^[f1]. It is the good customer relationships by realising trust between the consultant team and the client team is appreciated a lot ^[f4]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is hard to balance the career with my personal life ^[g3].
Barry - Consultant of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving from consulting to an industry to take up a top management role ^[e15]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning a lot during the project and learn how to convince clients ^[f8]. Good appraisal from clients, but, based on my experience, it doesn't happen very often ^[f1]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you have been in the consulting industry for a certain period of time and in senior position, it is quite difficult for you to move into the industry. Constantly travelling especially for those are married and with family ^[g1].
Charles - Consultant of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a real impact by developing (and may be helping to implement) solutions to problems faced by the clients. These solutions are novel, rigorous and stand the test of time ^[e9]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting something achieved ^[f2]. Coming up with a good, creative and novel solution and get this solution to work for the clients ^[f2]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time – you have to spend time to do something but it is not so intellectually challenging ^[g7]. Something you need to do but may not be so interesting ^[g7].

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Assessment of a successful career in management consulting	Most satisfaction as a professional management consultant	Most downsides of a consulting career
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travelling is okay sometimes but not so much^[g1].
Daisy - Senior Consultant of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much money you have saved or generated for clients collectively^[e8]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When a client team member proudly present the findings or project results in front of his/her top management, claiming all the credits and getting all the praises^[f1]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People around you think that you are 'all talk and no action'^[g12]. The consultants have no interest in the real financial and market position of the clients^[g13].
Ernst - Senior Consultant of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A happy consultant with happy clients^[e7]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solving problems for others, then seeing them solve the same problems themselves^[f3]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Never being on one thing long enough to be truly expert^[g6].
Frank - Managing Consultant of C3 & C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressing up the organisation^[e1]. Taking on more difficult projects and being having opportunities to be interested and stimulated by all the work that you are doing^[e11]. The financial reward plays a part^[e16]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting deliverable signed-off or accepted. The consequence of that is helping the client to change^[f3]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being away from the family due to frequent travelling. I quite enjoy travel but not if it requires driving everywhere^[g1]. Lack of certainty^[g5].

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Assessment of a successful career in management consulting	Most satisfaction as a professional management consultant	Most downsides of a consulting career
Gladys - Management Consultant of C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For people who want to be a consultant as their career forever: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ having a wide range clients contacts ^[e7]. ○ having a reputation within the industry of consulting ^[e2]. ○ within your clients who see the success of what you do ^[e6]. ○ having a loyal group of people within the organisation who are willing to work on projects with you ^[e3]. ○ making money for the consulting company you work for, bring in the sales, revenue and profits ^[e5]. ○ promoting along the way to up to Partner, then Managing Partner running a sector and then a region ^[e1]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think it is about be able to help my clients. Making the changes for their organisations that they may not able to do by themselves ^[f5]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been so much travelling involved ^[g1]. It is really difficult for a woman. That is something that I individually don't want to have in the rest of my life. I finally reach a point of my career where I have to stop travelling even if it causes my career to slow down or stop.

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Assessment of a successful career in management consulting	Most satisfaction as a professional management consultant	Most downsides of a consulting career
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For myself: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I would not think myself more as a life-long consultant. I consider myself more as a life-long C4 employee. My goal would be to become an executive within C4. It is not necessary to become a Partner. • I have been promoted three times, I classify it is a successful career. Last year, I got the top performance rating^[e2], that should be treated as successful as I don't want to be a consultant forever because I can't deal with the travel. 		
Heather - Senor Associate Consultant of a top-tier global management consulting firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling that we have learned all that we can learn and then perhaps going out to take a job at one of our clients at a very senior level^[e15]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having the clients take your advice internally and externally^[f1]. • Moving up in the organisation which is huge^[f6]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The working hours^[g2], the travelling^[g1] and the 'up or out' culture^[g4].

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Assessment of a successful career in management consulting	Most satisfaction as a professional management consultant	Most downsides of a consulting career
Ivy - Senior Consultant of C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning knowledge/skills in the areas related to your profession and client management ^[e12]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client satisfaction^[f1]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consulting is a very demanding career^[g4]. Once you have a family, especially like me just have a new baby, I cannot give all of my time to my career anymore especially you need to keep learning, keep yourself updated with the latest offering in the market. Travelling is not healthy at all if you have family, especially have a new family and as a mother like me^[g1].
John - Executive Consultant & Corporate Strategist of C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With each of those engagements you have got business cards and if you call any of them on any given day that they would take your call and/or they would return your call and are more than willing to speak with you about an issue ^[e7]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The handshake and the thank you from the client. That's when you know you have added value^[f1]. Seeing people that I work with evolving and maturing through the work especially seeing a more junior person who through the course of a project has developed more as a person^[f10]. I learned more about myself as a team^[f8] and the hard working is rewarding^[f6]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travelling. For me, the biggest drawback of a long-term consulting career is you need always on the road^[g1].

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Assessment of a successful career in management consulting	Most satisfaction as a professional management consultant	Most downsides of a consulting career
Kathy - Senior Consultant of C3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have networking skills and managerial skills especially with client-relationship management skills if you want to be a top level within my company^[e7]. • If you only have skills in certain topics in certain industry sectors then you won't really reach the top level within the company or become a top manager. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To do projects that I can add my experience and knowledge about the issues of the project but also have general responsibilities to talk to the clients to make sure that everything goes well^[f8]. • To do new things, to do bigger projects with my responsibilities for my colleagues^[f9]. • To do things that I am confident of^[f5]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of time for myself^[g3]. • High pressure - as I am working for clients, I think I always have to give the best and try to satisfy the clients. Also, I have more projects and have more clients to satisfy. At the moment, they are also high-level clients, so having pressure from that aspect with expectation as it is difficult and complex projects with higher-level clients^[g4].
Lucia - Senior Consultant of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good at what you do^[e2]. • Keep learning^[e12]. • Be able to deliver under pressure^[e4]. • Make your senior impressed^[e4]. • Build good contacts^[e7] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved the project objectives^[f5]. • Helped client cope with the transition^[f3]. • Work is appreciated and recognised^[f1]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy change^[g10]. • Business needs^[g10]. • Shortage of projects^[g10].

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Assessment of a successful career in management consulting	Most satisfaction as a professional management consultant	Most downsides of a consulting career
Mary - Manager of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate answer is working to partner level^[e1], to become someone recognised by the industry as a thought leader and has good references in the market^[e2]. For myself, I am not sure at this stage. I have just been promoted from Consultant to Manager. I realise that I need to get involve into politics more now. Sometimes, I think about whether I should move back as a Consultant or focus as an industry specialist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When a job is completed and meets the performance indicators, goals/objectives on time and within budget successfully^[f5]. The clients are satisfied^[f1]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer provides less training and development^[g9].
Nick - Manager of a leading management consulting firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being given opportunities that are slightly above your head and make you thrive but this depends on personality^[e11]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The intellectual challenge to create change^[f3]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working as a modern slave, selling our time, private life and soul for a limited period of time in exchange for high payment, social status and fast-track learning^[g2].
Oliver - Project Manager of C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the opportunities to learn about many industries, about many people, about many different aspects of work in a very short time^[e13]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The feedback that I receive from my clients for the jobs I have done. One is the impact^[f2] and another one is client's satisfaction^[f1]. Learn as much as I can in a time that is also learn about myself as much as I can^[f8]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longer working hours than normal career (at least 55-65 hours per week)^[g2]. Frequent travelling - away from your family and your home and quite travel logistic effort^[g1].

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Assessment of a successful career in management consulting	Most satisfaction as a professional management consultant	Most downsides of a consulting career
Peter - Project Leader of C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It might be going from Consultant to Project Team Leader to Manager to Partner ^[e1] or switching organisations or industries ^[e9]. Be able to balance career success with personal and family success ^[e14]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A tussle between consulting and a combination of constantly learning and growing ^[f8], constantly being challenged intellectually and emotionally to succeed in new and different topics all the time ^[f9] and to be able to raise the calibre of my work and work at higher levels successfully over time ^[f9]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To balance career success with personal and family success. A lot of people I know have stayed in consulting and have got married and got divorced ^[g3].
Queenie - Manager of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding a role with my existing company where I can use my consulting skills ^[e15]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can work in multiple projects, able to working in something new and challenging ^[f9]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not focus on any one functional area for development and then you are a jack of all trades ^[g4]. In terms of finding role often that is a challenge.
Rob - Project Leader of C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working up to the corporate ladder as a partner in a consulting firm ^[e1] – it shows a certain level of drive, certain level of intelligence and monetary compensation is certainly there. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering very, very strong piece of work that really delights the client, makes them very impressed and more importantly makes them take action ^[f2]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To leave engineering consulting although you might be very smart but you are not qualified to do anything operational. It is because 99% of jobs with clients have to do operational. So, you are not qualified to run a sales organisation, or a marketing organisation or the operations team, etc. ^[g8]. Travelling ^[g1] and hours ^[g2] on the job are the main concerns for me.

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Assessment of a successful career in management consulting	Most satisfaction as a professional management consultant	Most downsides of a consulting career
Simon - Manager of C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At Analyst to Manager level, a successful career would be more in getting the knowledge, being good in project and a little bit of client management ^[e12]. At Manager to Partner level, the successful career would base on how can you generate projects and get new clients for the organisation ^[e5]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most satisfaction comes with the results, you promise something then you can deliver ^[f5]. Developing good relationship with clients ^[f4]. Learning from participating parties from industries which are the thing I find that can't get it outside consulting ^[f8]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Juggling between the work and family if you have a family ^[g3]. Difficult for personal aspects such as friendship building due to our mobility. There is lack of sense of belonging ^[g1]. Pressure on keeping up full utilisation rate ^[g4].
Terry - Senior Manager of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making the clients to call you first and regularly anytime they have a problem ^[e7]. Being thought leaders for clients ^[e6]. Delivering value to clients and the value was recognised by clients ^[e2]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To see recommendations implemented to be able to show measurable results ^[f3]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a consultant you cannot actually do anything. You see what needs to be done but you cannot do it and can try to persuade people to do it ^[g11].
Sean - Senior Manager of C5 & C6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When I can be able to deliver good business results to my clients ^[e6]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having the passion for the kind of work we do ^[f11]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lifestyle – the long working hours especially for the juniors ^[g2]. Tremendous pressure for the seniors. For example, partners have to deliver numbers and revenue increases every year whether it is worth or not ^[g4].
James - Partner of a Big Four Professional Service Firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown

Name of Interviewees/Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Assessment of a Successful career in management consulting	Most satisfaction as a professional management consultant	Most downsides of a consulting career
Andy - Practicing Partner of C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown
William - Acknowledgeable Individual (Founder of his own consultancy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown
Tom - Worldwide Senior Partner & Regional Chief Executive- Asia of a top-tier global HR management consulting firm and Chairman of his own consultancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building up a professional reputation in management consulting which is a good benchmark used by people^[e2], not only within organisation but also in the industry, to assess whether you are a good consultant. When you are in junior level, you will look at the excellence of your deliverables. However, when you are in senior level, you need to have a wide client network which should be close with you ^[e7]. Continuous innovation – no matter how long you have been working in the industry, you need to continuously develop your methodology, methods of analysis and ways of advising clients ^[e10]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having impacts on client^[f2]. First is the long-term partnership relationship with clients^[f4]. Second is the nature of job with variety in organisation. Every job is different in nature^[f7]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown

Source: Interview Data

As noted in chapter 5, performance of a management consultant was evaluated periodically and annually or by every project. 4 out of 22 interviewees were thrilled by ‘Completing a job and meeting the performance indicators, goals and objectives on time and within budget successfully’^[f5]. 2 out of 22 interviewees stressed on ‘The hard working is rewarding’^[f6] (interviewee John of C4 and Heather of a non-case top-tier global management consulting firm). It was not limited to financial rewards but also ‘moving up in the organisational which is huge’ (interviewee Heather) as ‘good performance would lead to rewards, which in turn lead to satisfaction’ (Lawler & Porter, 1967:23). Hence, good job performance resulting in client’s recognition and appreciation as well as trusting consultant-client relationship which indeed attribute to management consultants most satisfaction. Therefore, job satisfaction in management consulting is highly linked with job performance.

As a senior consulting professional with 23-year experience in the field, interviewee Tom, was gratified by ‘The job nature of project with variety in organisation as every project is different in nature’^[f7]. Another 11 out of 22 interviewees were also satisfied with the variety of project nature as it provided them opportunities for ‘Constantly learn new knowledge/skills from different projects’^[f8] (5 out of 22 interviewees), ‘Doing challenging and interesting projects and with more responsibilities’^[f9] (3 out of 22 interviewees), ‘Learning more about myself and see people working with me evolve and mature’^[f10] (interviewees Oliver of C1 and John of C4), and ‘Having the passion for the kind of work we do’^[f11] (interviewee Sean of C5). Through delivering projects with different nature of the job, management

consultants could accumulate their personal capital which makes them have a sense of career success and efficacy.

Career satisfaction and downsides are intertwined. Career downsides can be due to exogenous or endogenous factors and results in work stress on workers. Work stress is seen as an important factor in high rate of resignation, poor performance, low efficiency and low job satisfaction contributes to professional commitment (Schabracq and Cooper, 2000). As presented in Table 7.4, there were 13 distinct downsides of a consulting career proposed by the 21 interviewees from Consultant to Senior Manager levels. 10 out of 21 interviewees emphasised 'Frequent travelling'^[g1].

As interviewee Oliver explained:

It is quite travel logistic effort...you catch flight early in the mornings and evenings in the weekends. You work on projects with the clients in the airport, train stations...and you are always working away from home, it is a situation you have to cope with especially when you have family or have kids at home. – (Interviewee Oliver, Project Manager of C1 in Germany)

It is advocated by interviewee Gladys of C4 that 'I don't want to be a consultant forever because I can't deal with the travelling. I finally reach a point of my career where I have to stop travelling even if it causes my career to slow down or stop'. It is more difficult for married female management consultants to cope with frequent travelling, as interviewee Ivy of C4 admitted, 'travelling is not healthy at all if you have family, especially have a new family and as a mother as me'. Even interviewee Simon of C6, as a single male management consultant, complained that 'it is difficult for personal aspects such as friendship building due to our mobility and there is lack of sense of belongings'. It reflects that frequent travelling generates work-family (or

personal life) conflicts for single and married, male and female management consultants.

In their study on professional identity construction among medical residents, Pratt, Rockmann, and Kaufmann (2006:257) contend that organisations that encapsulate members having a high degree of control over members' sense-making and limit the potential identity set for its members. Similar to medical residents, it is a normative condition for management consultants to have 'Long working hours'^[g2] (4 out of 21 interviewees). It could be 'between 55-65 hours per week at least' (interviewee Oliver of C1) as 'the working hours depends on project but 60 hours per week is the average' (interviewee Simon of C6) or 'some of the juniors could need to work long hours including weekends' (interviewee Sean of C5). 5 out of 21 interviewees postulated that the long working hours made them 'Hard to balance the career with my personal life'^[g3]. It shows that management consulting firms also use long working hours as a means of social encapsulation to customise the professional identity of management consultants as most of the time they mainly interact socially with their peers. Yet it undermines the work-life balance of management consultants.

Management consulting is a 'Very pressurised and demanding career'^[g4] (4 out of 21 interviewees). The 'up or out' policy commonly adopted by management consulting firms induces stronger performers to stay longer while encouraging weaker performers to leave at earlier levels of seniority. To preserve themselves as stronger performers, management consultants need to 'keep on learning and updating yourself with the latest offerings in the market' (interviewee Ivy of C4) and 'keep up full

utilisation rate' (interviewee Simon of C6). It is not only applicable to management consultants at lower level, there is also 'tremendous pressure for the seniors, for example, Partners have to deliver numbers and increase revenue every year whether it is worth or not', as interviewee Sean of C5 informed. It reflects that management consultants need to struggle with tremendous pressure and different demands from different performance rankings throughout their consulting career.

In respect of the project-based nature of management consulting, not all the management consultants appreciate its characteristic of fluidity. Interviewee Frank of C3 maintained that it was 'Lack of certainty'^[g5] as 'you finish a project and you don't know what the next project is' and it could also result in management consultants 'Never being on one thing long enough to be truly an expert'^[g6] (interviewees Ernst of C5 and Queenie of C6). Sometimes, the ever-changing project nature also makes management consultants 'Have to spend time to do something but is not so intellectually challenging or may not be so interesting'^[g7] (interviewee Charles of C5) or 'Shift away from your specialised areas into an area that is not your expertise'^[g8] (interviewee Rob of C2). The 'Change in economy, business needs or shortage of projects'^[g10] (interviewee Lucia of C6) and 'Employer provides less training and development'^[g9] (interviewee Mary of C6) were also the downsides of a consulting life. So, the fluid characteristic of project-based nature, change in economy, business demands and shortage of projects can generate a sense of uncertainty and personal capital de-accumulation to management consultants.

Management consultants are outsiders of their client organisations and act as ‘advisors’ to *help* clients to solve complex business problems (Schein, 2002:21). However, the clients always hold ownership of the project, as reflected in chapter 6. It makes management consultants sometimes ‘Lack of power to make but only try to persuade people to do what needs to be done’^[g11] (interviewee Terry of C6) which could lead to ‘People around you think that you are “all talk and no action”’^[g12] or ‘The consultants have no interest in the real financial and market position of the clients’^[g13] (interviewee Daisy of C5). The social identity of ‘advisors’ thus can lead to management consultants having a sense of disempowering and de-accumulation of their personal cultural, political and symbolic capital (i.e. knowledge, trust and reputation).

In essence, management consultants are most satisfied with client’s recognition and appreciation, and a trusting consultant-client relationship. Good job performance leads to tangible and intangible rewards which contribute to their commitment. The tangible and intangible rewards include personal economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital accumulation through delivering different projects. Career satisfaction and downsides co-exist in management consulting. Frequent travelling brings work-family (or personal life) conflicts to management consultants, whether for male or female, single or married. Management consulting firms socially encapsulate management consultants with long working hours in order to customise their professional identity which affects their work-life balance. Management consultants at senior level have to juggle with formidable job pressure and demands especially on new revenue and business generation. The fluidity of the project-based

nature in management consulting creates some uncertainty. Also, management consultants' social identity as an advisor to clients occasionally is disempowering and leads to de-accumulation of personal cultural, social, political and symbolic capital. Macro economic environmental change, shortage of projects and change in business demands can cause capital de-accumulation of management consultants as well. These downsides of a consulting career generate tension between personal and professional identities of management consultants.

7.5 Reconciliation on tension between personal and professional identities

Exit from the field

Giddens (1991b:82) argues that work strongly conditions life chances and life chance in turn is a concept which has to be understood in terms of availability of potential lifestyles. As identified in the earlier sections, the lifestyle of management consulting is highly stressful and demanding both psychologically and physically, in particular working in leading management consulting firms. At the time of interviews, 8 out of 12 interviewees at Consultant to Senior/Executive Consultant levels, 7 out of 9 interviewees at Manager or Senior Manager levels, and 2 out of 4 interviewees at Partner level had exited the leading management consulting firms they had worked for. There were 14 reasons that triggered these 17 interviewees for leaving the leading management consulting firms, as depicted in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5 Career trajectory of interviewees, their reasons for leaving management consulting and returning to management consulting

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Age Range	Year of experience in management consulting (external)	Number of Roles	Reasons for leaving management consulting	Circumstance(s) for returning to management consulting
Alice - Consultant of C6	31-35	5 yrs	<i>In C6:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Analyst • Consultant <i>In a software vendor:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not interested in pursuing a career but more interest in having work/life balance. • C6's system is 'up or out', I am not interested to be a Manager who needs to be involved in sales. I am not a sales person at all. I see myself as managing a team or a team lead^[h6]. • A consultant is a very time consuming job. All I did during the week was working eating and sleeping and only had the weekend for myself. I appreciate what I learnt at C6 but I just didn't want that existed to continue further^[h1]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't think I would. I would only go back if I could stay on a Consultant level without pushing me to the management role or allow me in the management role without the sales and do regular hours or even a four-day job then I may consider^[12].
Barry - Consultant of C5	26-30	4 yrs	<i>In C5:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Analyst • Consultant in different industry <i>In a Chinese bank:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My leaving was triggered by the disagreement on the relocation packages with C5^[h13]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think if any consulting firm would offer me high pay, fast track to partner or I am capable of making good revenue for the company. However, I think the overall opportunity is thin^[11].

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Age Range	Year of experience in management consulting (external)	Number of Roles	Reasons for leaving management consulting	Circumstance(s) for returning to management consulting
Charles - Consultant of C5	36-40	4 yrs	<i>In a US multinational corporation:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Engineer <i>In C5:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant mainly in production management or product engineering focusing on knowledge management, production scheduling and new products development. <i>In a top university in Singapore.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Professor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consulting was not challenging enough. At least it was not intellectually challenging working in C5. It might be demanding physically in time wise and so on. To me, those problems are very straight-forward, intellectually is straight forward^[h9]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When they pay me a lot more money than I am getting now^[11] and can get on some projects that are a way intellectually challenging^[12].
Daisy - Senior Consultant of C5	31-35	2.5 yrs	<i>In a software vendor:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant <i>In a Big Four professional service firms:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant <i>In C5:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Consultant <i>In a US healthcare company in UK:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean Leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For full time MBA as felt lack of finance and accounting knowledge. Job flying around too much makes me difficult to focus on study thus decided to do full time instead of part-time^[h11]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right level and right salary^[11]. I left as Senior Consultant knowing I would have a high chance to be promoted to Manager. I will not consider starting at the consultant level again.

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Age Range	Year of experience in management consulting (external)	Number of Roles	Reasons for leaving management consulting	Circumstance(s) for returning to management consulting
Ernst - Senior Consultant of C5	31-35	6 yrs	<i>In C5:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant • Systems Integrator <i>In a US Healthcare company in UK:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System Integration Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of interesting projects^[b9]. • Tired of selling the lie that an independent outside view is necessarily better^[b4]. • Cynical regarding the value of consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there are no interesting projects in my current company • Tired of its hard sell and cynical regarding the value of its products
Frank - Managing Consultant of C3 & C4	35 - 40	10 yrs	<i>In C4:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate Trainee • Business Analyst • Consultant • Senior Consultant • Managing Consultant <i>In C3:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Still in management consulting</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Not Applicable</i>
Gladys - Management Consultant of C4	31 - 35	8 yrs	<i>In industry:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a CPA working in accounting industry for 7 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Still in management consulting</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Not Applicable</i>

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Age Range	Year of experience in management consulting (external)	Number of Roles	Reasons for leaving management consulting	Circumstance(s) for returning to management consulting
			<p><i>In an US multinational corporation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Consultant <p><i>In C4:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant • A sales role • Management Leadership role for developing the Change and Transformation agenda 		
<p>Heather - Senor Associate Consultant of a top-tier global management consulting firm</p>	<p>26 - 30</p>	<p>3 yrs</p>	<p><i>In one of the top US investment bank:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Internship <p><i>In a top-tier global management consulting firm:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate Consultant • Senior Associate Consultant <p><i>In one of the top US investment bank:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Internship <p><i>In a global financial company:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I went to business school^[h11]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only go back if I moved to a new location and had trouble finding a good role, then external consulting companies are good places to work

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Age Range	Year of experience in management consulting (external)	Number of Roles	Reasons for leaving management consulting	Circumstance(s) for returning to management consulting
Ivy - Senior Consultant of C4	31-35	9 yrs	<i>In a local management consulting firm:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship Consultant • Consultant <i>In a Big Four Professional Service Firm:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant • Senior Consultant <i>In C4:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still in management consulting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Applicable
John - Executive Consultant & Corporate Strategist of C4	31-35	2 yrs	<i>In a financial institution:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Management Trainee • Role in Client Relationship Management <i>In a top-tier global traditional strategy houses:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate (summer internship) <i>In C4:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Consultant • Executive Consultant • Corporate Strategist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of continuity in relationship with clients and workmates^[h5]. • Sort of transient nature of an external consultant^[h5]. • Heavy travelling^[h2]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have zero intent. There would have to be a huge change in the way of businesses work and how external consulting happens to me to even consider^[I2]. It is unlikely.

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Age Range	Year of experience in management consulting (external)	Number of Roles	Reasons for leaving management consulting	Circumstance(s) for returning to management consulting
			<i>In a global financial company:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Consultant 		
Kathy - Senior Consultant of C3	26 -30	6 yrs	<i>In C3:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant • Senior Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still in management consulting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Applicable
Lucia - Senior Consultant of C6	31- 35	7 yrs	<i>In C6:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyst • Consultant • Manager <i>In existing company:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New opportunity/challenges occur^[h10]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interesting and challenging environment occurs (e.g. new region to work in, new culture to work with, people have the drive to make things happen for this region)
Mary - Manager of C6	31- 35	12 yrs	<i>In two software vendors:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant <i>In C6:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant • Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still in management consulting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Applicable
Nick - Manager of a leading management consulting firm	36 – 40	4yrs	<i>In the non-case management consulting firm</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager <i>In own consultancy:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was time after 4 yrs^[h11]. • Set up my own consulting firm after completing my MBA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under no circumstance.

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Age Range	Year of experience in management consulting (external)	Number of Roles	Reasons for leaving management consulting	Circumstance(s) for returning to management consulting
Oliver - Project Manager of C1	36 -40	7 yrs	<i>In C1:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Analyst • Associate • Senior Associate • Project Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Still in management consulting</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Not Applicable</i>
Peter - Project Leader of C2	36 -40	11 yrs	<i>In a then Big Six Professional service Firm:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown <i>In a Big Four Professional Service Firms:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown <i>In C2:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management consultant • Team Leader • Project Leader <i>In a global financial company:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Vice President 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tried to achieve more balance in lifestyle particularly having a young family of young children, didn't want to be on the road all the time^[h2]. • Wanted to be able to develop more industry expertise and wanted to be able to look back to see the results of my work^[h2]. • Got tired of always being a hired gun and not being able to participate in an adequate way in upside the value you help to create^[h2]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't think I will go back to management consulting under most normal circumstance as a hired gun unless there was some explicit equity participation opportunity either in a management consulting firm or in the client that the firm does consulting to^[11].
Queenie - Manager of C6	31 -35	4 yrs	<i>In a global financial investment institution:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precious Metals Trader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tired of the heavy travelling^[h2]. • I could not see to develop a long-term career with C6 as a partner/consultant^[h6]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would not go back unless there is an offer of significant amount of money^[11].

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Age Range	Year of experience in management consulting (external)	Number of Roles	Reasons for leaving management consulting	Circumstance(s) for returning to management consulting
			<i>In C6:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager – Strategy & Operation focusing on telecommunication and high-tech industry <i>In a global financial company:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management consultant Director 		
Rob - Project Leader of C2	31 -35	3 yrs	<i>In C6:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyst • Consultant <i>In C2:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant • Project Manager <i>In a global financial investment company:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant • Director • Vice President 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C2 is a generalist company and I do want to work for financial services specifically^[h12]. • Travelling is another reason for me to leave the management consulting^[h2]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I do not need to travel and can work in financial services only. Another if I could insist in the working hours, that the management consulting firms are usually quite a lot, to be a little bit less^[12].
Simon - Manager of C6	31 - 35	3 yrs	<i>In an US multinational corporation in Indonesia:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial Engineer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life-style- too much travelling, not develop long-term relationship and rooting in a place^[h2]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is something interesting and with the condition that I would know which projects I would be in for one-year time^[12].

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Age Range	Year of experience in managem ent consulting (external)	Number of Roles	Reasons for leaving management consulting	Circumstance(s) for going back to management consulting
			<p><i>In a local garment manufactory in Indonesia:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production Engineer <p><i>In C6:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant • Senior Consultant • Manager <p><i>In a global chemical company:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stressful life-style – working environment^[h3] and long-working hours^[h1] leads to health problem. 	
Terry - Senior Manager of C5	41 - 45	About 13 yrs	<p><i>In an US multinational corporation in Canada:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Engineer <p><i>In a then Big Six Professional Services Firm:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Consultant • Manager • Principle <p><i>In a Big Four Professional Services Firm:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle <p><i>In C5:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was lack of integrity on some of the partners and my boss specifically at that time^[h7]. • My frustration with the politics of the Partner selection processes^[h8]. • Heavy travelling – wear and tear^[h2]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think at this point in time, I am ready to go back to the management consulting because of the money^[11] and I have grown more cynical. • I believe the problems between integrity and politics are found everywhere, so it doesn't matter.

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Age Range	Year of experience in management consulting (external)	Number of Roles	Reasons for leaving management consulting	Circumstance(s) for returning to management consulting
			<i>In an US high-tech multinational corporation:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Manager <i>In own management consultancy:</i> Founder and President		
Sean -Senior Manager of C5 & C6	35 - 40	About 12 yrs	<i>In a major oil company:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Engineer <i>In C6:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Consultant up to Senior Manager <i>In C5:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The whole management consulting is moving to a direction which is not aligned with what I expect. • In the past, management consulting used to be one place to be in but now is very focused in numbers. • In the end, bottom line matters than the balance between employee's aspiration, client's satisfaction and company's objectives. ^[h14] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't think I would do that. • As I don't feel the major consulting firms' environment would satisfy my aspiration. • In addition, I am now having my own consulting firm
James - Partner of a Big Four Professional Services Firm	46 - 50	About 15 yrs	<i>In industry (15 years):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • last position as the Vice President of Operations of North American for a top telecom company <i>In a then Big Six and a Big Four Professional Service Firms:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the time as Partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basically because I was offered an executive position but I did not really enjoy the work I was doing^[h10]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Age Range	Year of experience in management consulting (external)	Number of Roles	Reasons for leaving management consulting	Circumstance(s) for returning to management consulting
			<i>In a TNC:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An executive position <i>In management consulting:</i> As an independent consultant		
Andy - Practicing Partner of C5	46 - 50	8 yrs	<i>In industry:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown <i>In C5:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicing Partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Still in management consulting</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Not Applicable</i>
William - Acknowledgeable Individual (Founder of his own consultancy)	51 - 55	2 yrs	<i>In a local CPA Firm in Malaysia:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant <i>In banking industry:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned <i>In a reputable Malaysian multinational corporation:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Finance & Administration <i>In own management consultancy:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Still in management consulting</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Not Applicable</i>

Name of Interviewees/ Ranking/ Management Consulting Firm	Age Range	Year of experience in management consulting (external)	Number of Roles	Reasons for leaving management consulting	Circumstance(s) for returning to management consulting
Tom - Worldwide Senior Partner & Regional Chief Executive- Asia of at top-tier global HR management consulting firm and Chairman of his own consultancy	56 - 60	23 yrs	<i>In a financial investment institute</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director <i>In the top-tier global human resources management consulting</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to Worldwide Senior Partner & Regional Chief Executive-Asia <i>In own management consultancy</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up my own consulting business^[h10]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable.

Source: Interview Data

Individuals always carry multiple social identities but it is seldom that all their social identities are compatible with each other. When organisational or occupational identity intrudes on personal identity, an ‘identity intrusion’ emerges (Kreiner, Hollensbe and Sheep, 2006c:1039). The findings in this research indicate that management consultants who sought work-life balance found the lifestyle of management consulting such as ‘Long working hours’^[h1] (2 out of 17 interviewees), ‘Frequent Travelling’^[h2] (6 out of 17 interviewees) and ‘Working environment’^[h3] (interviewee Simon of C6) wearing and jeopardising their well-being and personal identities. Interviewee Simon shared his experience:

I found the life-style is quite bad as I could not plan my time. I was based in Singapore but I was hardly in Singapore. In fact, I was posted to anywhere depending on where the projects to be. Towards the end, it was more a health reason because I was based in China for four months to work in a chemical plant for four months. You know the air pollution in China, I was quite sick like getting the back pain. So, at that time, I thought it might be time to leave consulting. I did want to stay in consulting but might be not in an external consulting role, rather in internal consulting. Since I left the external consulting, my health problems disappeared. I think it might also be because of the stress level of the job as there was a lot of overtime working in evenings and weekends, depending on the projects. – (Interviewee Simon, Manager of C6 in Singapore)

Interviewee Alice of C6 advocated this as ‘all I did during the week was working, eating and sleeping and only had the weekend for myself’. Interviewee Peter of C2, as a father, also found the frequent travelling difficult to cope with as he ‘tried to achieve more balance in lifestyle particularly having a family of three young children, I didn’t want to be on the road all the time’. All of them finally left their leading management consulting firms. Thus, management consultants at different levels would leave their positions due to long working hours, frequent travelling and working environment so as not to sacrifice their personal life or family for their career.

Each individual has his or her unique personality characteristics. When identity demands of organisational or occupational identity collide with personality characteristics of individuals, it can cause preservation of personal identity and a differentiation tactic (setting limits) would be taken (Kreiner, Hollendse and Sheep, 2006c: 1043). Interviewee Ernst of C5 asserted that he was ‘Tired of selling the lie and cynical regarding the value of consultants’^[h4]. The ‘Sort of transient nature of an external consultant’^[h5] (4 out of 25 interviewees) could make management consultants feel ‘lack of continuity in the relationship with clients and workmates’ (interviewee John of C4). The ‘Up or Out policy’^[h6] drove interviewee Alice of C6 out of the field, as she confirmed, ‘I am not interested to be a Manager who needs to be involved in sales as I am not a sales person at all and I see myself as managing a team or a team lead’. Interviewee Queenie of C6 also concluded that she had ‘no sense of belongings or long-term career advancement’ with C6. All of these interviewees left management consulting and moved to different fields. Most of them became internal consultants. Interviewee Terry of C5 saw the ‘Lack of integrity on some of the Partners’^[h7] and also was ‘Frustrated with the politics of Partner selection processes’^[h8]. So, he left C5 and established his own consulting practice. It shows that when collision between personal and professional identities exists, personal identity will frequently take the priority to set limits.

Management consultants need to constantly acquire new knowledge and experience to stay ahead of their clients. They chose to move to other fields when there is ‘Lack of interesting and challenging projects’^[h9] (interviewees Charles and Ernst of C5) or ‘New opportunity or challenges occur’^[h10] (3 out of 17 interviewees) such as ‘setting

up my own consultancy'(interviewee Tom) or 'I was offered an executive position in industry'(interviewee James of a non-case Big Four). 3 out of 22 interviewees left their leading management consulting firms because of 'Going to business school'^[h11] (interviewees Daisy of C5, Nick and Heather of a top-tier global management consulting firm) to undertake a MBA degree course. Management consultants are always assigned to different projects in different industries, however, interviewee Peter and Rob of C2 desired to 'Developing more industry expertise rather than being a generalist'^[h12]. In short, management consultants would leave the field when there is a lack of interesting or challenging projects for further personal cultural capital accumulation, new opportunities and challenges inside or outside the field emerge, or there is a need for undertaking a higher degree for further personal capital accumulation.

Rewards are one of the strongest sources of satisfaction for a professional management consultant, as discussed in the earlier sections. Interviewee Barry of C5 left the management consulting as he had 'Disagreement at the remuneration package for relocation'^[h13] offered by the firm. Strategic change in the management consulting field in the last decade had resulted in the loss of some normative organisational practices. As interviewee Sean affirmed:

The whole management consulting is moving to a direction which is not aligned with what I expect. Now the environment is not what it used to be. In the past, the management consulting field used to be one place to be in but now it is very focused in numbers. In the end, bottom line matters than the balance among employee's aspiration, client's satisfaction and company's objectives. I think the balance is not there anymore. – (Interviewee Sean, ex-Senior Manager of C5 and C6 in Singapore)

It was this ‘Misalignment between personal aspiration and objectives of the management consulting firms’^[h14] led him to leave C5 and set up his own management consulting firm in Singapore. In total, there were 5 interviewees (interviewees Tom, James, Sean, Terry and Nick) had left their leading management consulting firms and established their own boutique consulting firms. The other 12 interviewees had moved into industry.

Building on the findings, the processes of professional identity assimilation, capital formation and career trajectory in management consulting are demonstrated in Figure 7.1. Since the moment management consultants join their management consulting firms, they continually accumulate their personal capital by drawing upon the resources that they are allowed access to inside (i.e. organisational capital) and outside (i.e. resources of client organisations and external networks) the organisation to establish and maintain their professional identity and legitimacy. At the same time, they reciprocate their personal cultural, social and symbolic capital to their management consulting firms through ‘work and cultural practices’ (i.e. consultation and information sharing and interpersonal exchange with peers and supervisors as well as in-house training), ‘personal disposition and behaviour’ (i.e. the formative experience of interpersonal exchange with colleagues, of their personal disposition and behaviour), and ‘structure and system’ (i.e. in-house knowledge repository and project deliverables documentation). Therefore, their personal capital and organisational capital in management consulting firms co-evolve over time. Management consultants also contribute their personal cultural and social capital to their clients and external professional networks.

Management consultants pursue different strategies for their future career destinies inside and outside the management consulting field. They accumulate different kinds of personal capital through the four phases of consulting to establish their professional identity. However, some could leave their management consulting firms or even the field of management consulting at any phase due to the irreconcilability of the tension between personal and professional identities. It corresponds to the Bourdieu's notion of habitus as:

The fit between the disposition of habitus and the structure of situations is seldom perfect. 'Practical' rather than conscious ongoing adaptation occurs when habitus experiences new situations. This gives continuity in the middle of apparent change. However, when a considerable gap between field and opportunities and habitus expectation exists, this sets the stage for retreat (or exit) as the habitus self-selects out of those fields, or crisis as the habitus stays and protests.- (Swartz, 2002: 66S).

Given the mechanism of 'up or out' policy in leading management consulting firms, those who stay longer with the firms are considered as stronger performers. The more senior the management consultants, the richer volume and combination of capital they accumulate inside and outside their organisations to legitimize themselves as a professional management consultant.

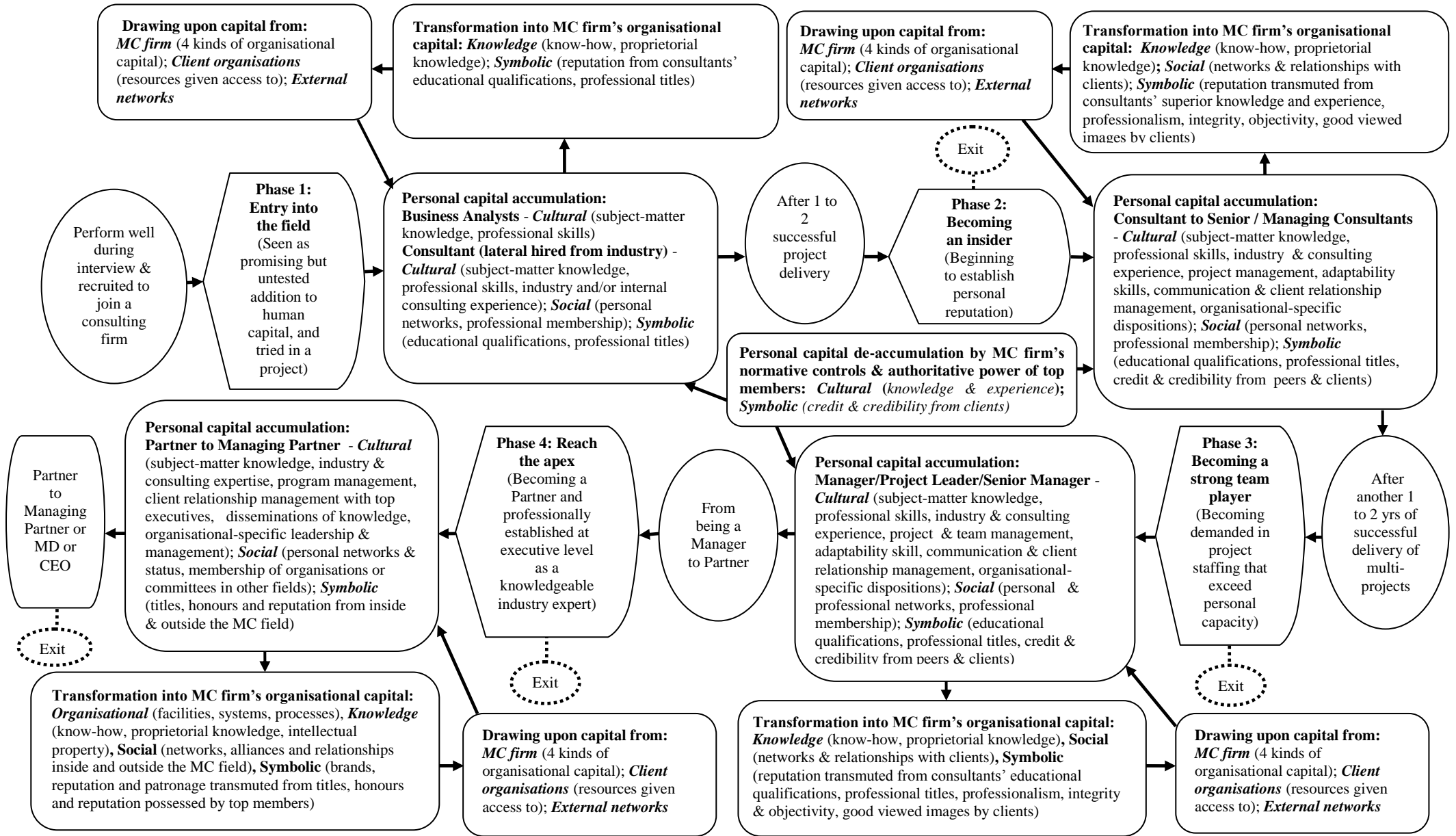


Figure 7.1 Processes of professional identity assimilation and ejection, capital formation and career trajectory in leading management consulting firms

Re-entry into the field

Management consultants would sometimes return to the management consulting field at a later stage of their lives. 6 out of the 17 interviewees who had left leading management consulting firms emphasised that they would go back if they would be offered 'With a significant high pay and a high position'^[11]. Even interviewee Terry of C5, who quit his position of Senior Manager when he was on the route to Partner level, articulated that 'at this point of time, I am ready to go back to leading management consulting firms because of the money and I have grown more cynical'.

However, interviewee Sean held a different view:

When there was downward pressure on billing rate, there was definitely impact on the compensation we could get that made consulting jobs become less attractive from the perspective of remuneration... Over the time, even the Partner's remuneration has come down dramatically especially in the last 3 or 4 years. So, if you end up being a Partner does not mean that you are actually earning a lot...Like for myself, I actually start my own company. I would say to certain extent my remuneration is better than some of the partners. – (Interviewee Sean, ex-Senior Manager of C5 and C6 in Singapore)

It was advocated by interviewees Nick, Tom and James, who had their own consultancy, that they had no intention to return to leading management consulting firms. It indicates that the remuneration and career prospects of management consultants are highly dependent on the market signals and conditions.

Kreiner, Ashforth and Sluss (2006a: 630) suggest that the more central the occupation is to a given organisation, the more likely that the occupational culture will shape the organisation's culture. 6 out of 17 interviewees considered going back to leading management consulting firms if they 'Have power on their consulting lifestyle or culture of their working management consulting firms'^[12]. It included 'staying on a consultant level with pushing me to the management' (interviewee

Alice of C6), 'there is something interesting and with the condition that I would know which projects I would be in for one-year time' (interviewee Simon of C6), and 'there would have to be a huge change in the way of business world and how external consulting happens to me' (interviewee John of C4). These preconditions of returning to management consulting are unrealistic as the downsides of a consulting career are the normative work and cultural practices in the field. However, interviewee Lucia of C6 had moved back from industry to join C4 after the interview for this research but left the field again a few years later and moved to a global investment bank.

In summary, the reasons for management consultants to re-enter the field varied. The high pay and high position in management consulting are the main reasons. However, to a great extent, the remuneration and career prospects of management consultants are defined by market signals and conditions. For those who want to have power over their consulting lifestyle or influence on the culture of leading management consulting firms, it is unlikely to be able to achieve it. Since management consulting is the core business of any given management consulting firm, its organisational culture is shaped by the occupational culture. It echoes to Bourdieu's suggestion on practices as the product of a contest between a habitus and field but they are, to some extent, compatible or congruent with one another (Thompson, 1991:47).

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined under what conditions an individual might be ‘absorbed and accumulated’ as opposed to being ‘desiccated’ by leading management consulting firms. Its focus lies in the process of assimilation and ejection of individuals from collectivities as well as the capital accumulative and de-accumulative processes that take place therein. Four phases of consulting are identified as continual processes of professional identity assimilation and capital accumulation, and career trajectory of management consultants. Management consultants accumulate different kinds of personal capital through the four phases of consulting. The variety of capital possessed by 25 interviewees of this research and 6 top members of the six selected global management consulting firms has been analysed.

One of the major findings is prestigious and leading management consulting firms tend to recruit individuals who graduated, in particular those with post-graduate degrees, from elite higher educational institutions in the world. Commonly, members in the apex of leading management consulting firms have post-graduate degrees (e.g. MBA and/or PhD). It supports that within fields there are specific forms of competition that are tacitly accepted by agents, no matter whether institutions, organisations, groups or individuals (Bourdieu, 1987c:831). Management consultants at Partner level are normally long-serving employees with rich accumulated organisational-specific personal capital. These cultural selection mechanisms can be seen as 1) a structural correspondence to other fields of profession such as healthcare, law and accountancy which have universal professional legitimacy (Bourdieu,

1987c:822); and 2) cultural reproduction to preserve privilege and power of the dominating class (Bourdieu, 1996c:x).

It also informs that management consultants at Consultant to Senior Manager levels only possess cultural capital in the forms of subject matter knowledge, experience and professional skills to reproduce and transmit legitimate bodies of knowledge. Hence, they are more likely to be ‘curators of culture’ (Bourdieu, 1988a:36). Management consultants at Director or Partner levels are both ‘curators of culture’ and ‘creators of culture’ (Bourdieu, 1988a:36) as they possess recognised authority to disseminate new concepts, theories and methods to attempt to establish, restore, reinforce, protect, or reverse a determined structure of relations of symbolic domination in the intellectual field (Bourdieu, 1971:121). For social capital, memberships of institutionalised professional associations gained inside and outside the management consulting field are not considered as so important as in other fields of profession where they cover rights to practise. It rejects Bourdieu (1992:119) assertion on ‘the effect of all social titles of credentials increase in durable way the value of their bearer by increasing the extent and the intensity of the belief in their value’. Members at Partner level hold much richer social capital than their juniors. Their social capital is mainly obtained from outside their organisations and from different organisations in political, economic and cultural fields. For symbolic capital, management consultants at the lower levels are more sensitive to the professional qualifications and titles they possess. Rather, management consultants at Partner level possess honours, titles and reputation invested by the management consulting field or other fields to bestow them symbolic legitimacy and distinction.

Another finding reveals that management consultants are ‘an effect of power’ (Sillince and Mueller, 2004:14) under the authoritative power of top management and other normative controls inside their working organisations which sometimes de-accumulate management consultants’ personal capital. However, management consulting firms are also shaped by members’ ways of learning and adapting. Consequently, personal and organisational capital co-evolve over time as organisations are ‘structuring structures’ and also ‘structured structures’ (Bourdieu, 1984:170). Management consultants derive personal capital both dependently and independently of organisational capital to establish their power, status and networks.

The self-assessment of career success, the sources of most satisfaction as a professional consultant and the downsides in management consulting has also been investigated in this chapter. The findings show that management consultants pursue different strategies for their future career destinies but not all new management consultants pursue the strategies of succession as Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:88-99) asserts. Management consultants, who view being able to accumulate different types of personal capital as a career success, normally pursue strategies of subversion. They obtain symbolic capital for legitimacy by transforming their personal capital from self-interest into disinterested forms inside the organisation and relations of interest into disinterested meanings outside the organisation, respectively.

Client’s recognition and appreciation, trusting consultant-client relationship, rewarding on good performance, and personal capital accumulation give management consultants most satisfaction. The findings are in line with Judge, Bono

and Patton (2001:38) that job satisfaction is, in fact, predictive of performance and the relationship is even stronger for professional jobs. However, the lifestyle of consulting brings tremendous job pressure and different identity demands, the social identity of 'advisor' to clients, and economic downturn periods can be the drawbacks and cause tension between personal and professional identities of management consultants. Eventually, management consultants reconcile this tension by either exiting the field or staying in by adapting their aspirations and expectations. It echoes with Swartz's (2002:66S) conclusion on Bourdieu's notion of habitus that 'when a considerable gap between field opportunities and habitus expectation exists, this sets the stage for retreat (or exit) as the habitus self-selects out of those fields, or crisis as the habitus stays and protests'.

Building on the findings and analysis in this chapter, a framework is drawn up to demonstrate the processes of professional identity assimilation, capital accumulation and career trajectory in the management consulting field. Management consultants accumulate and reciprocate different kinds of capital inside and outside their organisations through the four phases of consulting to establish their professional identity for legitimacy. Through 'structure and system', 'work and cultural practices', and 'personal disposition and behaviour', the personal capital and organisational capital in management consulting firms co-evolve over time. Management consultants can leave their management consulting firms or even the field of management consulting at any phase following experience of the irreconcilable tension between their personal and professional identities. Management consultants who survive and stay for a long time with the 'up or out' policy in leading

management consulting firms are considered as stronger performers. It concludes that the more senior the management consultants, the richer volume and combination of capital they can accumulate inside and outside their organisations to maintain their dominant position as they 'have mastered the rules of the game through the sense of the position occupied in that structure' (Bourdieu, 1989a:375; 1992:235).

The last finding of the chapter informs that some management consultants have a desire to return to the management consulting field under the circumstances that they would be offered a high pay and high position or have power to change the lifestyle and culture of consulting. These conditions, I argue, are impractical following the assumption of Bourdieu's conception of practices as the product of an encounter between a habitus and a field, which are, to varying degrees, 'compatible' or 'congruent' with one another. Much of human behaviour is, according to Bourdieusian theory, the product not of conscious and independent action, but of 'habitus' (Thompson, 1991:17). In conclusion, it is difficult for individual management consultant to alienate from the 'organisational habitus' of his or her management consulting firm and the management consulting practice of the field.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusion

‘Among the specific products of the fields of cultural production are all the means of knowledge and objectification...’
– Bourdieu (1991:669)

8.1 Introduction

This thesis has addressed four research questions in relation to culture and professional identity in global management consulting. In this chapter I revisit the research questions and then review and discuss the main findings and arguments presented in earlier chapters. This includes reflecting on the strategic and structural implications of globalisation on changes within the field; recapitulating the typology of culture in management consulting; reconsidering what experiences are instrumental for the establishment of professional identities in management consulting; and reflecting on, under what conditions, an individual might be ‘absorbed and accumulated’ as opposed to being ‘desiccated’ by leading management consulting firms. An estimation of the theoretical and empirical contribution of the research then follows. Lastly, I discuss the limitations of this study and give suggestions for future work as well as reach a final conclusion.

8.2 Research questions revisited: a summation

In this research I began with a primary concern: ‘How do leading management consulting firms with global reach organise their professional work and train their members to become a professional consultant?’ My debate on management

consulting in chapter one had identified a number of research gaps in the existing literature from different domains that were in association with the global strategic and structural change within management consulting, culture in the management consulting field, and formation of professional identities of management consultants. It led to four research questions which were set for the purpose of addressing the identified research gaps.

The four research questions were: 1) What are the strategic and structural implications of globalisation for the management consulting field, in particular, large scale management consulting firms? 2) How can we describe and typify organisational culture in management consulting? 3) What experiences are instrumental to the establishment of professional identities in management consulting? and 4) What are the assimilation and ejection processes of individuals from collectivities and capital accumulative and de-accumulative processes that take place in leading management consulting firms? To address the four research questions, I adopted Bourdieu's notion of field, habitus and capital as the core theory and aligned with Giddens' structuration theory, DiMaggio's neo-institutional theory and Scott's concept of power relationships to study the culture and professional identity in global management consulting holistically and relationally by linking the field (macro), firm (meso) and individual (micro) levels. My study contributes to the uncompleted systematic analysis of the intellectual field left by Bourdieu. It also adds to the work of organisation studies, in particular, the literature on management consulting, and relational approaches that is still limited (Dobbin, 2008; Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008; Scott, 2004:13; Vaughan, 2008:79).

I have further compared the global tradability of four professional services - healthcare, legal, accountancy and management consulting (chapter 4) and their Code of Ethics/Practice to identify the homogeneities and heterogeneities of the cultural practices inter-professions; generated the typology of the culture in management consulting by two dimensions – professionalism and clients relationship management (see chapter 5); built a model to illustrate the inter-relationship and tensions among culture, corporate identity, professional identity and reputation in management consulting settings (see chapter 6); and drew up a framework to demonstrate the processes of professional identity assimilation, capital accumulation and career trajectory in management consulting (see chapter 7).

In doing so, my study enriches our deepening understanding on the management consulting field relating to its major strategic and structural change under globalisation; the cultural homogeneities, heterogeneities and distinctiveness of global management consulting firms within the field; the inter-relationship among culture, corporate identity, professional identity and reputation in global management consulting settings as well as the tensions among these four concepts; and how management consultants carry out their corporate and professional identities as well as work in line with the organisational mission. Therefore, this research has both theoretical and empirical implications for the literature on globalisation, professional service organisations, professions, strategy, culture, professional identity and management consulting.

8.3 Research contribution

Theoretical contribution

I have first identified the strategic and structural implications of globalisation for the management consulting field which provide a contribution to the literature on globalisation and professional services. Bourdieu (1998a:38-41; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:2) has sceptically asserted that globalisation is Americanisation. His sceptical view on globalisation is contradictory to divergent capitalisms identified and characterised by other academics (Best, 1990; Chandler, 1977 and 1990; Lazonick, 1990 and 1991; Whitley, 1999) and the assertion of ‘no single country or group of countries can dominate in political or economic spheres’ by Giddens (2002:46-47). The first important finding of this research, counters Bourdieu’s (2003:93) argument on ‘unification benefits the dominant’, is that the increasing interconnectedness of economic exchange across the globe via foreign direct investment (FDI), as presented in Table 4.1, and greater freedom of labour mobility, such as the eastward enlargement of the European Union, across national borders empirically underpins globalisation providing new risks and opportunities for both dominant and dominated.

Although previous research (Cooper and Robson, 2006; Suddaby, Cooper, Greenwood, 2007) on professional governance has identified that global professional service firms are critical sites on structuration of an organisational field, they mainly focus on the accountancy field and the power and influence of global professional service firms on the process is still under-studied. The analysis of the pace of global tradability of the four professions – healthcare, law, accountancy and management consulting, as presented in Table 4.2, has addressed the problem of previous research

and reveals that, the power of professional governance in highly-institutionalised fields such as healthcare, law and accountancy still lie in independent professional organisations of the fields and nation states despite the global tradability of professional services being legally regulated by the World Trade Organisation. Management consulting is a weakly-institutionalised field without a universally recognised professional organisation representing it, and much of the power of professional governance lies in management consulting firms. The inter-professions comparison also informs that the low control of the jurisdiction at both national and field levels together with highly customised products to suit the needs of a particular client and situation allow management consulting to constitute the transnational spaces through globalisation more easily and quicker than the other three professions. Owing to this, management consultants act as a new cultural producer – ‘expert’ under globalisation, as Bourdieu and Wacquant, (2001:5) have asserted, to ‘facilitate economic and commercial exchange by providing advice to business’ (Greenwood, Suddaby and McDougald, 2006b:1).

Beck (2001:168) has suggested that, in a global new age, ‘one’s own life is no longer sedentary or tied to a particular place’. As Dunning (1989:32) has postulated, professional service providers follow their clients to globalise as ‘the intangibility and perishability of pure services mean that they require face-to-face contact for an exchange’. The findings of this research, in line with the suggestions of Beck (2001) and Dunning (1989), confirms that large management consulting firms generally adopt a regional concept of service provision to acquire human capital to balance the clients’ requirements and economic effectiveness but the experienced consultants

including the Partners need to frequently travel to work in international projects and relocate to overseas countries on a short-term basis. It is so called the ‘globalisation of biography’ (Beck, 2001:168) at an individual level.

The other major strategic and structural implications of globalisation on the management consulting fields identified in this research are the enforcement of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act in 2002, economic change, demographic change, innovative development of information technology, and emergence of rivals and substitute products. These changes force management consulting firms into price competition. Management consulting firms without a combination of product specialisation, brand and position are more likely to be ousted. It is consistent with Bourdieu (1990:64) that ‘the relation to what is possible is a relation to power’ because:

A given agent’s practical relation to the future, which governs his present practice, is defined in the relationship between, on the one hand, his habitus with its temporal structures and dispositions towards the future, constituted in the course of a particular relationship to a particular universe of probabilities, and on the other hand, a certain state of the chances objectively offered to him by the social world. – (Bourdieu, 1990:64)

DiMaggio and Powell (1991b:67) has suggested that in any organisational field, coercive isomorphic change occurs as ‘in some circumstances, organisational change is a direct response to government mandate’. However, Bourdieu has argued that ‘professional fields grow in autonomy from political and economic power, that is, in their capacity to legitimate existing social arrangements (Bourdieu and Passerson, 1977:12). The change of the landscape in management consulting before and after the launch of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act in 2002 illustrates, supporting the proposition of Bourdieu and Passerson (1977:12), that management consultants are ‘specialists’

as they are 'progressively able to develop, transmit and control their own particular organisational and professional status and culture which may significantly deviate from external interest'.

Giddens and Hutton (2001:42) have argued that economic globalisation is the medium of economic development. In addition, both Bourdieu (1998a:38) and Giddens (2002:14) have agreed that the world is moving towards a unified financial market. Volcker (2001:76) has also suggested that 'financial crisis, national and international, have, of course, been a recurrent part of capitalism. But somehow they seem to be coming more frequently and with greater force these days'. As management consultants are 'experts' to 'facilitate economic and commercial exchange by providing advice to business' (Greenwood, Hollendse and Sheep, 2006b:1), it helps to explain why global economic boom and downturn can heavily affect the management consulting field. This research reveals that heavy redundancies have taken place in large management consulting firms with global reach in the midst of each global financial crisis. It is because they recruit too many management consultants during the periods of economic boom. In the end, many management consultants are asked to leave without prior notice and the redundancy process is considered by some as unfair to them.

This research also contributes to the management consulting literature as it may be the first in the literature to compare the Code of Ethics of the traditional professional fields of healthcare, law and accountancy with management consulting to investigate the extent that their cultural practices are homogenous. The Code of Practice of the

Management Consultancy Association (MCA) was chosen to represent the management consulting field. Bourdieu (1987c:831) has proposed that each professional field has its special legitimate professional procedures which are accepted and followed by its members and there are 'structural and functional homologies' on the relations among relatively autonomous fields (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:105-6). However, McKenna (2001:678) has concluded that management consultants do not attempt to professionalize fully because of their historical emphasis on the reputation of the firm over the professional status of individual consultants. Interestingly, a novel finding, in parallel with the assertion of Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), is that MCA's Code of Practice can be categorised into the Code of Ethics of the internationally representing professional organisations of the other three professions – namely 'Integrity', 'Objectivity', 'Professional competence and due care', 'Confidentiality', and 'Professional behaviour. It shows that although the professional governance of management consultants relies on their self-presentation and self-regulation rather than statutory regulation as in traditional professions, management consultants are expected to behave to the same standard as doctors, lawyers and accountants.

Secondly, I have described and typified the culture in management consulting. It contributes to the sociology of professions literature as it extends the study on heterogeneities at the organisational level from inter-profession (Covaleski, Dirsmirth and Rittenberg, 2003; Morris and Empson, 1998; Reed, 1996; Malhotra and Morris, 2009; Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005) to intra-profession that is still under-explored. Malhotra and Morris (2009:917) have demonstrated that, by

reference to three business professions – law, audit and engineering consulting, the dimensions of the nature of knowledge, jurisdictional control and the nature of relationships with clients have implications on the organisation of professional service firms through the conduct of professional work. Nonetheless, the three dimensions are not suitable for studying the cultural heterogeneities within management consulting as these three dimensions are similar for firms within the field. To address this problem, in this study, the analysis of the organisational culture of the six global management consulting firms is based on four related cultural elements – structure and system; work and cultural practice; norm and values; and personal disposition and behaviour

The analysis also has implications for neo-institutionalism as it has gone beyond the neo-institutionalist approach to seek both the cultural homogeneities and heterogeneities in management consulting but I pay more attention to the latter. Neo-institutionalism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991b:67-70) has emphasised that coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphic changes exist in any organisational field. It is problematic as they neglect the existence of structural heterogeneities of organisations that are parts of the cultural production and reproduction of an organisation resulting from the personal interaction between the four related cultural elements and basic assumptions commonly held by its members (Maclean, Harvey and Press, 2006:41). Due to this, they have overlooked the institutional dynamics of the field which is rooted in the cultural heterogeneities of each organisation as they are the source of ‘expressing the singularity of its position within the class and its trajectory’ (Bourdieu, 1990:60).

Building upon the cultural homogeneities, heterogeneities and distinctiveness identified during the course of the analysis, the culture in management consulting is typified into ‘Prestigious’, ‘Collegial’, ‘Bureaucratic’ and ‘Chaotic’ by two dimensions - professionalism and client relationship management, as presented in Figure 5.1. Another novel finding of this research, in contradiction to coercive and mimetic isomorphism in organisational structure as proposed by DiMaggio and Powell (1991b:67-70), is that the six global management consulting firms exist in different legal and organisational forms – namely private incorporation, publicly listed corporation and partnership with different core management consulting services provision. Such differences in legal form can affect the organisation of professional services of each firm. However, the identification of their analogous positions of dominance and subordination, strategies of exclusion and appropriation, and mechanism of reproduction and change indeed supports the normative isomorphism predicted by DiMaggio and Powell (1991b:67-70).

The finding of normative isomorphism within the management consulting field extends Bourdieu’s suggestion on ‘a resemblance within difference’ exists among relatively autonomous fields to within a relative autonomous field. The cultural homogeneities identified among the six global management consulting firms in this research are highly consistent with Bourdieu’s explanation that:

The ‘objective orchestration’ established among dispositions that are objectively coordinated because they are ordered by more or less identical objective necessities. The agents can consciously carry out corrections and adjustments themselves to presuppose mastery of a common code. – Bourdieu (1990:59)

The occurrence of cultural heterogeneities of each firm in this research reaffirms the properties of field proposed by Bourdieu (1980:277) that ‘fields of struggle favouring strategies aim at distinction means that the products of their functioning are predisposed to function differentially, first between the class fractions and then between the classes’.

The typology of organisational culture in management consulting further reveals another innovative finding that contributes to extant critical management consulting and professionalism literature (Alvesson and Johansson, 2002; Kipping, 2011; Watson, 2002). The critical management consulting and the professionalism literature have an emphasis on management consulting firms using ‘image professionalism’ and ‘branding professionalism’ (Kipping, 2011:545) as a ‘powerful resource’ (Alvesson and Johansson, 2002:228 and 243) or ‘discursive resource’ (Watson, 2002:102) to improve their ‘authority, status and credibility’ (Alvesson and Johansson, 2002:228). Yet the literature has ignored the role of client relationship management and its relationship with professionalism on the legitimization process of management consulting firms and their members. In parallel with Bourdieu’s (1990:57) assertion on ‘habitus enacts the structural and social transformation as it regulates actions and defines identities of actors within the fields’, this study shows that the higher professionalism and the stronger client relationship management a management consulting firm possesses, the more prestige it has. This novel finding informs that, in the lack of an internationally recognised and representing professional association for the field, management consulting firms need to

intertwine professionalism with client relationship management to gain external legitimacy, in particular, from their clients.

Bourdieu (1990:59) has always stressed that habitus offers the image of ‘conductorless orchestration’ to emphasise the ‘regularity, unity and systematicity to practices’ without conscious coordination despite he (Bourdieu, 1990:108) also acknowledges that habitus ‘may be superseded under certain circumstances...such as rational and conscious computation’. Swartz (1997) and Bohman (1999) have criticised Bourdieu ‘does not really consider other organizing modes of conduct in an extensive way’ (Swartz, 1997:113) and underestimates the power of individual habitus which, I have argued, is the root of alienated behaviour from the collective habitus. In this research, it finds that, counter to Bourdieu’s (1990) stress on the role of habitus in shaping action but coherent with Swartz’s (1997) and Bohman (1999: 133-134) critique, a mismatch between espoused values and practically expressed values exists in C3, C5 and C6 which is mainly stemmed from the strategies of each firm, individual personality and experience of members, as well as unforeseeable and uncontrollable reasons of projects, for instance, incompatible working culture between management consultants and clients. In this sense, the mismatch highly reflects that ‘the common style of a class is made not only by its conformity but also by the difference that make the “manner”’ (Bourdieu, 1990:60).

Thirdly, I have identified the experiences that are instrumental to the establishment of professional identities in management consulting that provides insights on expert and management consulting discourse. Expert theorists (Kubr, 2002; Lowendahl,

1997; Mills and Moshavi, 1999; Schein, 1987) have suggested that management consultants hold the autonomy and power over clients because clients are dependent on the credibility their expertise provides. However, Scott (2001:107) has proposed that ‘diversification of knowledge leads to competing groups of experts, lay access to knowledge has been enhanced, and the willingness of a lay person to trust any particular group of experts has been weakened’. One of the critical findings of this research, adding to the work of Scott’s (2001:107), is that management consultants always confront resistance, disengagement and rejection from employees of client organisations and a good and trusting consultant-client relationship is critical for a project’s success. Also, while management consultants hold relative autonomy and power over clients through the cultural and political capital they possess, at the same time, clients demand specific value creation from management consultants in return. This finding reiterates Scott’s (2001:28-29) proposition on management consultants need to ‘draw upon various resources, their personal resources of physique and personality as well as the various resources on which they depend and to which the client can give access, to operate interpersonal power to their clients to present their self and identity in everyday encounters’.

In the critical management consulting literature, some scholars have criticised management consultants lack of a formal and authoritative body of knowledge (Alvesson, 1993; Clark, 1995; Clark and Salaman, 1998; Fincham, 1999; Jackson, 1996) and they merely adopt persuasive communication and rhetorical approaches such as story-telling to ‘establish the voracity and legitimacy’ (Clark and Greatbatch, 2002:161) of their ideas. I have argued that they underestimate the value of

knowledge and experience possessed by management consultants since management consulting has pragmatically moved towards becoming a profession with a strong reputation as a value creator for clients (Poulfelt, 1998). In addition, Bourdieu has articulated that ‘in modern societies, it is ‘cultural capital shape the stratification structure and the role of cultural producers in the advanced societies’ (Bourdieu and Boltanski, 1977:33). Throughout this research, interviewees reassert that possession of ‘Superior knowledge and experiences’ and ‘Professionalism, integrity and objectivity’ are the most instrumental for the establishment of professional identities in the management consulting field. This finding is favourably coherent with Bourdieu’s articulation of cultural capital!

In the power and organisation literature, Clegg, Courpasson and Phillips (2006:119) have postulated that ‘legitimacy is not something given but is an effect of some actors’ construction of the situation’. Another prominent finding of this study, building upon the work of Clegg, Courpasson and Phillips (2006), confirms that management consultants indeed use rhetoric consulting but with the support of an accurate and realistic first gap analysis of client organisations to construct a situation for themselves. In addition, it also finds that management consultants should not get involved in internal politics of client organisations as above all it is the ‘neutrality’ of management consultants that give them a ‘superior’ position and status in the consultant-client relationship. It fulfils one of the two dimensions of Bourdieu’s (1991a:656) definition of an intellectual: ‘on the one hand, he must belong to an autonomous intellectual world (a field), that is, independent from religious, political, and economic powers (and so on), and must respect its specific laws’.

Alvesson and Johansson (2002:229) have also argued that ‘the image of management consultants in contemporary society is, for different groups, provocative as well as appealing’. They have attempted to attribute this to the variations in management consulting which results in different consulting approaches. However, Alvesson and Johansson have not taken into account the power relations in social interaction between management consultants and other parties. In contrast, Bourdieu (1987c:828) draws attention to the power relations between professionals and lay persons, for example, in the institution of a ‘juridical space’ where:

The establishment of properly professional competence, the technical mastery of a sophisticated body of knowledge that often runs contrary to the simple counsels of common sense, entails the disqualification of non-specialist’ sense of fairness, and the revocation of their naïve understanding of the facts, of their ‘view of the case’. The difference between the vulgar vision of the person who is about to come under the jurisdiction of the court, that is to say, the client, and the professional vision of the expert witness, the judge, the lawyer, and other juridical actors, is far from accidental. Rather, it is essential to a power relation upon which two systems of presuppositions, two systems of expressive intention – two world-views – are grounded. – (Bourdieu, 1987c:828-829)

Scott (2001:101) has also suggested expertise involves power relations with other professions and with subordinate assistants, as well as with clients. Sometimes, clients counteract to exercise the power of protest for the purpose of seeking to restructure a pattern of domination and to enhance their own position (Scott, 2001:25-26). Bourdieu (1992:224) has also argued that in the struggle over identity, ‘the most magical power of words come from the fact that the objectification and *de facto* officialization brought about by the public act of naming, in front of everyone, has the effect of freeing the particularity (which lies at the source of all sense of identity) from the unthought, and even unthinkable’.

A novel finding presented here, building upon the work of Scott (2001) and Bourdieu (1987c and 1992), is that the situational and extreme viewed images of management consultants - namely 'Guru/Nuisance', 'Respectable and knowledgeable/unknowledgeable', and 'Excellent and hopeless' that are considered by interviewees who received them as highly fair and accurate. The viewed images of management consultants, therefore, should be considered as *de facto* officialization brought about by the public act of naming, as Bourdieu (1992:224) has asserted. The attributing factors for extreme viewed images as presented in Table 6.5 indicates that the 'Good viewed images' of management consultants is the product of 'Superior knowledge and experience' as well as 'Professionalism, integrity and objectivity'.

This research also contributes to the theoretical conceptualisation of the inter-relationship and tension among culture, corporate identity, professional identity and reputation that is still under-examined in extant organisation studies literature. For example, Hatch and Schultz (1997) has merely focused on the relation between organisational culture, identity and image. Building upon the findings of this study, the bridging of the four variables demonstrates that the corporate identity of any management consulting firm is socially constructed and can be traced back to its culture. Through social interaction, by means of visual design and communication, projected image, and strategies, management consultants convey the values and beliefs of their firms to present the corporate identity to the world. Professional identities of management consulting firms and management consultants are established from management consultants' superior knowledge and experience

coupling with their professionalism, integrity and objectivity which results in having good viewed images from external stakeholders, in particular, their clients. The professional identities are transmuted into symbolic capital in the form of reputation – their credit and credibility, both at firm and individual levels. The trading strength of all management consulting firms is determined by their reputation. The identities of management consulting firms and behaviour of their members then need to be periodically validated if reputation is strategically used as a ‘competitive weapon’ (Dowling, 2004:23). The model has an implication for Bourdieu’s (1992) concept of identity and representation as it reiterates that:

All forms of recognized collective identity are the product of a long and slow collective development. Without being completely artificial (if it were, the attempted establishment of these forms would not have succeeded), each of these representative bodies, which give existence to represented bodies endow with a known and recognized social identity, exists through an entire set of institutions which are just so many historical invention. – Bourdieu (1992:247).

Fourthly, I have identified four phases in management consulting which are continual processes of identity assimilation, capital accumulation and career trajectory in management consulting, particularly in leading management consulting firms. It sheds light on our deepening understanding on assimilation and ejection of individuals from management consulting firms as well as the capital accumulative and de-accumulative processes that take place therein which is still limited in existing profession and management consulting literature. It also has implications for Bourdieu’s analysis of intellectual field and DiMaggio’s neo-institutionalism. DiMaggio and Powell (1991b:71) have proposed that filtering of personnel is one important mechanism for encouraging normative isomorphism. Kipping (2011:540) has accentuated that, from a client point of view, management consultants’ education

acts as ‘a proxy of quality’. Bourdieu (1996c:x-xi) has suggested that ‘the generalisation of educational titles as prerequisite for ascent to the apex of private corporations and public bureaucracies signals the consolidation of a new mode of domination’. A finding of this research, resonant with the propositions of DiMaggio (1991b), Kipping (2011) and Bourdieu (1996c), reveals that prestigious and leading management consulting firms tend to recruit individuals who have graduated from elite higher educational institutions in the world and it is common that management consultants at senior levels possess higher degrees (e.g. Masters/PhD).

The four phases in management consulting are ‘Entry into the field’, ‘Becoming an insider’, ‘Becoming a strong team player’ and ‘Reach the apex’, as illustrated in Figure 7.1. Each phase identified in this research represents the ‘symbolic hierarchies as distinction’ (Bourdieu, 1984:112) which legitimizes and rewards management consultants’ excellence, accomplishment and ability inside and outside organisation. More importantly, it signifies their ‘practical mastery of the social structure as a whole’ (Bourdieu, 1992:235). In addition to possession of rich cultural capital (e.g. higher academic degree and richer consulting experience), it is informed that management consultants who are at the ‘Reach the apex’ phase are normally long-serving members with rich accumulated organisational-specific personal capital which is similar to the professional fields of law and accountancy. This fresh finding corresponds with the explanation offered by Bourdieu – namely the ‘structural homologies or relations of transformation objectively established between fields’ (Bourdieu, 1977:83-84; 1987c:822) as well as ‘cultural reproduction to preserve their privilege and power’ (Bourdieu, 1996c:x).

Some of the findings in this study also contribute or challenge Bourdieu's theoretical conceptualisation of intellectual field. In Bourdieu's view, intellectuals contest positions that are constituted oppositionally and reflect the unequal distribution of specific types of capital which governs success in the field or the winning of external or specific profits which are at stake in the field (Bourdieu, 1983:312; Swartz, 1997:226). However, his empirical work has primarily focused on humanistic intelligentsia rather than law, medicine or the technical intelligentsia (Swartz, 1997:222). Bourdieu has posited academics, such as professors, as 'creator of culture' and independent intellectuals, such as artists and writers, as 'curators of culture' (Bourdieu, 1988a:36). Another innovative finding of this study, adding on Bourdieu's uncompleted systematic study of the intellectual field, informs that management consultants at Consultant to Senior Manager levels are 'curators of culture' while those at Partner level are both 'curators of culture' and 'creator of culture'. It is because management consultants in the lower levels of the consulting hierarchy mainly possess cultural capital to reproduce existing management knowledge. Yet management consultants at Director or Partner level hold rich economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital are in a more advantageous position to 'disseminate new concepts, theories and methods to attempt to establish, restore, reinforce, protect, or reverse a determined structure of relations of symbolic domination in the intellectual field'(Bourdieu, 1998a:36) similar to academics.

Bourdieu (1992:119) has maintained that 'the effect of all social titles of credentials increase in a durable way the value of their bearer by increasing the extent and the intensity of the belief in their value'. Pratt, Rickmann and Kaufmann (2006:257)

have also argued that ‘an individual can enrich an existing identity, patch together two (or more) identities, or use another identity as a temporary splint’. However, another finding of this research, incoherent with Bourdieu’s (1992) argument but partly consistent with Pratt, Rockman and Kaufmann (2006), confirms that, in management consulting, social capital and symbolic capital such as institutionalised professional memberships and identities are considered as relevant and valued capital only when they are directly related to the nature of consulting work that management consultants are engaged in. Moreover, it empirically shows that management consultants at the most senior level acquire social and symbolic capital not only invested by organisations in the management consulting field but also in other political, economic and cultural fields which signify their possible symbolic legitimacy and distinction across space and time. It can be argued that management consultants also fulfil the second dimension of Bourdieu’s (1991a:656) definition of an intellectual: ‘on the other hand, [an intellectual] must invest the competence and authority he has acquired in the intellectual field in a political action, which is in any case carried out outside the intellectual field proper’.

This study is telling that management consultants are ‘an effect of power’ (Sillince and Mueller, 2004:14) and also a ‘cultural transformer’ of their working organisations which echoes Bourdieu’s (1984:170) concept of the workings of the habitus as ‘structuring structures’ and ‘structured structures’. They derive personal capital dependently and independently of their management consulting firms to establish and increase their power, status and networks. The authoritative power of top management and other normative control systems, such as human resource

management, inside a management consulting firm impose an 'invisible identity cage' (Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas, 2008:16-17), 'create the sense-making' and 'limit the identity sets' of its members at the low hierarchy of power (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006:257) through identity assimilation, and capital accumulation and de-accumulation. Conversely, at the same time, personal habitus and capital brought into the firm by management consultants, such as the way of learning and adapting, can shape the organisational habitus and capital.

The self-assessment of career success in management consulting, the sources of most satisfaction as a professional management consultant and the downsides of a consulting career (see Table 7.4) identified in this research has implications for the work of management consulting which has somewhat overlooked the career trajectories of management consultants. In this research, it is clear that management consultants who, no matter at different levels, view the accumulation of personal capital inside and outside organisation as a career success distinctly pursue strategies of subversion rather than the strategies of succession. This novel finding is inconsistent with Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:98-99) who have stressed that new entrants generally pursue the strategies of succession in anticipation of their future career destinies. It also shows that the most satisfaction as a professional management consultant is greatly linked with good job performance, by internal and external appraisal, as well as continual personal capital accumulation which is in line with the concept of 'work-identity integrity' as proposed by Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann (2006:245).

Giddens (1991b:82) has suggested that ‘work strongly conditions life chances and life chance in turn is a concept which has to be understood in terms of availability of potential lifestyles’. Swartz (2002:62S) has also argued that, in practice, ‘the fit between the disposition of habitus and the structures of situations is seldom perfect...when a considerable gap between field opportunities and habitus expectation exists, this sets the stage for retreat (or exit) as the habitus self-selects out of those fields, or crisis as the habitus stays and protests’. Kreiner, Hollendse and Sheep (2006c:1043) have contended that when identity demands of organisational or occupational identity collide with personality characteristics of individuals, it can encourage individuals to seek preservation of their personal identity using a differentiation tactic (setting limits). An important finding of this research, agrees with the propositions of Giddens (1991b), Swartz (2002), and Kreiner, Hollendse and Sheep (2006c), is that the downsides of a consulting life such as ‘Long working hours’, ‘Frequent travelling’, ‘Tired of selling the lie and cynical regarding the value of consultant’, ‘Sort of transient nature of an external consultant’ led 12 out of 25 (48%) interviewees to exit the leading management consulting firms. The last interesting finding of this research is management consultants would consider to re-enter the field if they were offered high pay and high position or had the power to change the lifestyle and culture of management consulting. However, I argue that these aspirations are incompatible and incongruent with consulting practices. According to Bourdieu’s theory, ‘practices is the product of an encounter between a habitus and a field, which are, to varying degrees, “compatible” or “congruent” with one another. Much of human behaviour is the product, not of conscious and independent action, but of “habitus”’(Thompson, 1991:17).

Empirical contribution

I believe that this study has practical implication for occupational legitimacy as well as work and cultural practices of management consulting. At the field level, this research demonstrates that management consulting holds similar ethical principles as the professional fields of healthcare, law and accountancy. The questionable legitimacy of management consulting in past originates from its lack of a universal and internationally recognised professional association to represent the field. I agree with the idea that management consultants can gain legitimacy through their market success and reputation (Glückler and Armbrüster, 2003:269; Poulfelt, 1998). However, it is more applicable for those at senior level such as Partner or Director as they have established their reputation by rich capital accumulation throughout their consulting life. For management consultants at lower levels and with less experience, I argue that an institutionalised and recognised professional qualification in management consulting which is obtained through long-term training and institutionalised accreditation will help to increase their credit and credibility and contribute to enhancing the occupational legitimacy of management consultants.

At the firm level, this research sheds light on how organisational culture can influence the social identity and trajectory of management consulting firms within the field. It demonstrates that the social identity and trajectory of a management consulting firm is defined by its professionalism and client relationship management. I suggest that the top management of management consulting firms should focus on these two dimensions if they would like to improve the prestige of their firms within the field. To strengthen professionalism is to ensure the congruency of espoused values and practically expressed values of the firm. This research also tells us that

management consultants do not hold absolute power over their clients. Clients can counteract to exert power over and de-legitimize management consultants (Scott, 2001:24 -26). It is a continual challenge for management consulting firms to figure out how to cultivate their clients. The illustration of tension among culture, corporate identity, professional identity and reputation in this research may illuminate for corporate strategists working in professional fields how the four aspects are transmuted to become a source of competitive advantage for professional service firms.

Similar to their blue-chip client organisations, publicly listed management consulting firms also need to maintain their share price and investors by 'maximising shareholder value' (Fligstein and Shin, 2007:403; Lazonick and O'Sullivan, 2000:16) as the principle of corporate governance. In this research, publicly listed management consulting firms are seen as narrow and very restrictive organisations for management consultants' individual career and expertise development. This is because in the corporate form management consultants are pressed to meet quarterly earnings targets. If power and knowledge are inextricably intertwined as Foucault (1977:27-28) asserts, how can publicly listed management consulting firms offer sustainable career and expertise development to maintain the power of their members, and, at the same time, maximise the shareholder value simultaneously?

At the individual level, the four phases of consulting identified in this research helps management consultants to understand symbolic dynamics of the career trajectory in management consulting including recruiting selection, personal capital accumulation

and de-accumulation, organisational capital contribution as well as continual excellence evaluation and recognition. My study may spark new ideas in answer to the question of talent retention in management consulting which is a hot issue in many fields today. This is not to suggest that management consulting firms should keep all their members but should retain the good and talented ones. The downsides of a consulting life cause tensions between professional and personal identities which can result in management consultants leaving the field. For management consulting firms, it can mean a loss of valuable human capital. Since management consultants are the main source of value of a management consulting firm, what measures should be taken to alleviate the tension between professional and personal identities of management consultants for talent retention is worth further research investigation.

8.4 Conclusion

Limitations and future work

There are two main limitations of this research. Firstly, the in-depth semi-structured interviews with twenty five consulting professionals at different levels across countries and cross-case studies on the six global management consulting firms have indeed provided this study the richness on the interviewees' 'lived experience' in the management consulting field. In particular, the interviewees who were ex-members of the leading management consulting firms indeed provided in-depth and insightful information for this research. It has also encouraged me to explore and explain the social phenomena in the field of management consulting at the field, firm and individual levels, relationally and holistically. However, management consulting is a very broad field and embraces all kinds of consulting, it is difficult to generalise the

field as a whole with a relatively small sample size. Expansion of the sample size would strengthen the generalisability of the research results presented here. To do this, researchers can recruit more interviewees at the same four different levels as in this research but from more diverse backgrounds. The number of interviewees from each case firm should be similar, if possible. The ratio of current members to ex-members should be similar if not higher. Secondly, management consulting firms exist in different legal forms. As a private incorporation/partnership, some financial and operational information of C1 and C2 with relevance to this research and the information in relation to problematic project outcomes of C2, C3 and C4 cannot be obtained from public sources of information. It has undermined the completeness of comparative analysis of the related areas. Increasing the number of current members in each case firm can help to resolve this problem.

Conclusion

The objective of this research is to address the existing gaps in the management consulting literature in relation to the strategy, culture and professional identity by four research questions. Drawing upon Bourdieu's relational notion of field, habitus and capital as the core theory complemented by Giddens' structuration theory, DiMaggio's neo-institutionalism and Scott's concept of power relationships, I have achieved the objective. This research demonstrates the power of Bourdieu's triad master notion of field, habitus and capital on organisation studies by linking the structure (macro-level) and agency (micro-level) in a dialectical relation through habitus (meso-level). Bourdieu conceptualises a field as a configuration of power relations and actors within it deploy their different species of capital to construct and reconstruct, enacted by habitus, their own and other's identities to create the

meanings of the field. The concept of habitus sheds light on the ‘structuration’ of an organisational field from the micro processes of individual behaviour that neo-institutionalism is missing. Giddens’ structuration theory is not a research program but is used in a selective way in thinking about research questions or interpreting findings. Scott’s concept of power relationship strengthens our understanding on the process of power relationships in social interaction.

Based on all the findings in this research, I have 1) identified influential strategic and structural change within the field under globalisation; 2) described and typified the culture in management consulting; 3) identified the experiences that are instrumental for the establishment of professional identities in management consulting and illustrated the inter-relationship and tension among culture, corporate identity, professional identity and reputation in management consulting settings; and 4) demonstrated the assimilation and ejection processes of individuals from collectivities and the capital accumulative and de-accumulative processes that take place in leading management consulting firms. In conclusion, this research deepens our understanding of strategy, culture and professional identities in management consulting relationally and holistically. It also contributes to Bourdieu’s uncompleted systematic study on the field of intellectuals and enriches organisation studies using relational approach and encourages further research of the same kind.

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Appendix I: Case Studies on six selected global management consulting firms

(C1)

C1 is a US-based and privately held global management consulting founded in early 1900s. The company has long been classified as a top-tier and prestigious strategy consulting house. In response to the marked change in strategy consulting field in the 1990s, in particular, the growth of IT-related advisory service, and the entrance of new competitors into strategy advisory service who emerged as new market determinants, C1 expanded their consulting service provision to full spectrum (management, finance, technology and strategy). In late 1950s, the firm expanded outside US and opened its first overseas office in London.

C1 adopts a 'One Firm' approach to create a strong corporate identity by insisting the physical office space, dress code, and appearance and format of reports and other documents be uniform from office to office. In C1, at its core is an apprenticeship model. Employees learn from the people around them. They learn from the Partners. C1's work and culture practices emphasise 1) putting the client's interest ahead of their own; 2) behaving as professionals; 3) keeping their client information confidential; 4) telling the truth as they see it to deliver the best of their firm to every client as cost effectively as they can. In its early years, C1's recruiting policy had traditionally been to merely hire individuals of professional trained with years of experience. However, in 1953, the firm began recruiting newly minted MBAs directly from business school of top-tier business school. In 1980s, the firm adapted to the needs of business leaders on value creation and cross-border competitiveness. They expanded the scope of their recruiting to increase their breadth and depth of experience as well as the diversity of their consulting staff. Individuals at the apex of the management of the firm were educated in prestigious universities such as Oxford University in UK, IMD in Switzerland, and Harvard Business School in US. In addition to possessing elite educational qualifications, some of them also hold nominated positions in international organizations such as United Nations and also the top committee members in world-class elite and reputable education institutions.

C1 generated revenues of around US\$5.33 billion, 6.6billion and 7 billion for the fiscal year ended December 2007, 2009 and 2011 respectively. The firm is a global network of offices that operates more than 90 offices in over 45 countries with a total workforce 17,000 in 2009.

(C2)

C2 is a US-based and privately held global management consulting firm founded in early 1960s. It has 66 offices in 38 countries with a total workforce 3900 in 2007 and 4,300 in 2008. C2 provides consulting services in branding and marketing, corporate development, e-Commerce, corporate finance and operation & strategy. The firm started and continued its global expansion since mid 1960s and has a strong presence in Asia with offices in major cities in Asia.

C2's holds the shared values of 1) insight; 2) impact and 3) trust. The firm recruits professionals from a wide variety of exceptional backgrounds as the top management believes that their solution is to collect ideas from leading business people and from academics and professionals in various fields, as they break the boundaries of their disciplines. Its broad industry expertise enables the company to effectively serve its client base of Fortune 500 corporations in majority and spread its business risk. The firm also provides advisory services to mid-sized businesses, non-profit organisations and government agencies. Similar to C1, 9 of 13 members at the apex of management of C2 were educated in world-class elite university such as Stanford University, Cornell University, Yale University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University and IMD in Switzerland, etc. Some of them possess doctoral degree of law, engineering, economics.

The company recorded revenues of US\$2.4 billion to 3.05 billion from 2008 to 2010 (+27%) with a global workforce increased from 4,300 to 4,800 from 2008 to 2012. Its presence was over 74 offices in 42 countries in 2010.

(C3)

Case 3 is French-based company with headquarter in Paris. It was founded in late 1960s and today has its presence in more than 32 countries. It is one of the world's largest management and IT consulting firms to provide services in the management consulting, outsourcing services, and system transformation and information systems management areas worldwide. Its total workforce was 83,508 where number of employees in consulting services was 4,966 as at 31 December 2007. In 2000, it acquired the consulting arm of one of the Big Four accounting firms which made the company have a strong position in the US and broaden its geographic focus further towards being a global organization. The company's operations span North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific. Consulting is one of its four core business areas.

The company has a unique way of working with its clients, which it calls the Collaborative Business Experience. Through commitment to mutual success and the achievement of tangible value, the company helps businesses implement growth strategies, leverage technology, and thrive through the power of collaboration. The top management view, in the field of services, attitude matters as much as aptitude and behaviour is just as important as knowledge. The company holds the shared values of 1) Honesty; 2) Boldness; 3) Trust; 4) Freedom; 5) Team spirit; 6) Modesty; 7) Fun. The company values its highly-qualified people as the main production resource to provide intellectual service to their clients. Hence, employee motivation and intellectual resource management are important to the company's success. The educational qualification of key members in the board of directors and top management are unknown. However, many of these members also hold executive or non-executive directorship in the board of directors in the other reputable multinational organisations.

The company recorded revenues of €8.7 billion in 2007 and the consulting services division contributed revenues of €757 million. The company's revenue increased to €8.71 billion in 2008, but decreased to €8.371 billion in 2009. In 2010, the company's revenue was €8.697billion.

(C4)

C4 is a division of a giant US multinational corporation, a provider of computer and Internet related information technology, professional, product support and network services. The company was founded in early 1900s. It has a global workforce of nearly 400,000 in 2008 including 190,000 of C4's workforce. C4 acquired the consulting business of one of the Big Four professional service firms in 2002 for the aim of boosting its revenue, which declined from US\$85,089 million in fiscal year 2000 to US\$83,067million in 2001.

The company was known for its 'cult-like' culture that led the employees to dress the same, to act the same, to think the same and to partake in the same pride. Employees call themselves as the 'C4ers'. The company's strong culture had once been praised by academics and top-tier management consultants alike. However, the company's culture has tremendous strength but at the same time much of what was wrong with the company lay in its culture as well. The company's culture was changed by one of its chairmen in 1990s and it took 10 years for the change to customer centric. The academic qualifications of key members of the board of director and top management are unknown. However, all of them also hold executive or non-executive directorship of other reputable multinational corporations and/or top advisory membership of elite universities.

For the fiscal year ending December 2008 total revenues of the company totalled US\$104 billion where C4 generated revenues of US\$19.7 billion. C4 accounted for US\$20 billion out of US\$107 billion overall revenue of the company in 2011.

(C5)

C5 is one of the Big Four professional service firms and its consulting business unit focuses on US-based IT and management consulting. The firm was formed in late 1980s. The group had a total workforce of 120,000 and C5 constituted 17.5% (21,000) of the workforce in 2004. In 2007, the workforce of C5 increased to 25,000. C5 specialises in e-Business consulting and also offers services to business in healthcare, manufacturing, financial services, energy, consumer business, the public sector, and communications. The company aims to help clients solve business issues with a combination of packaged software and industry knowledge. Its human capital professionals specialise in integrating people issues with business strategy.

The power of C5 worldwide lies in the cultural and intellectual diversity of its independently owned and controlled member firms operating in almost 150 countries throughout the world, as well as in their shared values and commitment to professional excellence. Its global shared values are 1) integrity; 2) outstanding value

to markets and clients; 3) commitment to each other; 4) strength from cultural diversity. The top management emphasise that these values join them together across different cultures, customs, and languages and are the foundation for collective successes. The success of their member firms as leaders among professional services firms depends on the integrity and quality of their people. What sets them apart is their ability to provide high-quality services, to make judgments based on sound knowledge and experience, to act with objectivity, and to uphold high ethical standards. C5, for the tenth year, has been named by FORTUNE as one of the '100 Best Companies to Work For'.

For the fiscal year ended May 2010, the aggregate member firms revenues reported \$26.6 billion and the consulting business unit contributed US\$6.5 billion (24%) of the total revenue.

(C6)

C6 is one of the world's leading management consulting, technology services and outsourcing organizations. The company is headquartered in Ireland and operates in approximately 48 countries in over 120 offices. C6 employs about 186,000 people by end of its fiscal year 2008. The organisational is structured into five groups: communications and high tech; financial services; products; resources and government. These five groups include 18 industry groups which serve clients in every major industry. The company serves 94 of the Fortune Global 100, more than two-thirds of the Fortune Global 500 and major government agencies around the world.

Besides the five operating groups, the company has two capability groups, business consulting; and technology and outsourcing, which develop and deliver solutions that address business opportunities and challenges common across industries. The subject experts within the company's capability groups support the industry experts working within the operating groups. The technology and outsourcing capability group also manages the company's alliances with other technology companies and oversee the company's intellectual property program.

Since its inception, the company has been governed by its core values. They are 1) stewardship; 2) best people; 3) client value creation; 4) one global network; 5) respect for the individual; 6) integrity. They shape the culture and define the character of the company. The core values guide how employees behave and make decisions. Key members of the board of directors and top management are holders of undergraduate and/or master degrees but not from top-class prestigious universities as key members of C1 and C2. Executive and non-executive directors also hold directorship or top committee advisory role in other reputable multinational corporations.

The company recorded revenues of US\$25.31 billion in 2008, US\$23.17 billion in 2009, US\$23.09 billion in 2010, US\$27.35 billion in 2011 and US\$29.78 billion in 2012. The growth rate from 2008 to 2012 was 18%.

Appendix II: Invitation letter to participants

Date:

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sir/Madam,

Invitation to participate in PhD research interviews

I am a PhD student of the Graduate School of Business, University of Strathclyde in the United Kingdom. I am engaging on a comparative study of strategic change and its inter-relationship with professional identity and culture in global management consulting. My research supervisor is Professor Charles Harvey, Dean of Strathclyde Business School, University of Strathclyde.

I am interested in the major forces driving change in the industry, strategic responses to the change by the leading players and the implications of their strategic responses on the professional identity and culture in the field. The project is organised around in-depth study of 6 leading global management consulting firms and includes the information from more than 25 consulting professionals at different levels. Interviews with members/ex-members of leading global management consulting firms and other knowledgeable individuals are intended to add in-depth insight to the project as a whole.

It would be appreciated if it is possible that you can grant me an "expert" interview. The interview format is conventional semi-structured and the interviews will be conducted face to face or by telephone in English or Chinese (Cantonese), whichever is applicable.

All interviews will be anonymous, in which case the contributor's words or opinions will not be attributed to individuals. All references to them or their companies will be anonymised. You will be informed of the results of the research.

If you are interested in participating in the interviews, please contact me at vicky_mcconnellogue@yahoo.com or vicky.mcconnellogue@strath.ac.uk.

I wish to express my gratitude for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Vicky McConnellogue

Appendix III: Interview Schedules

Culture and Professional Identity in Global Management Consulting

Interview Schedule 1: For Senior Members of Case/Non-case global management consulting firms and knowledgeable individuals in the field

The interview format is conventional semi-structured. The interview may be varied at the discretion of the interviewer in order to elicit relevant and interesting information from the informant.

1. Aims and purposes of the interview

- We are engaging on a *comparative* study of strategy, culture and professional identity in global management consulting.
- The research team is interested in the major forces driving change in the management consulting field under globalisation, strategic responses to the change by leading field players and the implications of their strategic responses on the culture and professional identity in the field.
- The project is organised around in-depth study of 6 leading global management consulting firms and the information from at least 25 consulting professionals at different levels.
- Interviews with members/ex-members of case and non-case leading global management consulting firms and other knowledgeable individuals are intended to add in-depth insights to the project as a whole.

2. Ethics of the interview

All interviews will be anonymous, in which case the contributor's words or opinions will not be attributed to interviewees. All references to them or their companies will be anonymised.

3. Key Questions

TOPIC	QUESTIONS
Demographics/Career	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Could you briefly outline your formal educational background including educational level, subjects and the name and location of your school/university? 2. In what ways has your education underpinned your subsequent career? 3. Could you briefly outline your career? 4. How long have you been in management consulting field? <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>
Field - Strategy & Structure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. What do you think is the most important way to win the battle for market share? 6. Do you think the archetype change in management firms (i.e. professional partnership to corporate form) would affect management consulting firm's corporate strategy formulation processes, especially in terms of authority and autonomy? 7. Do you agree that most professionals continue commitment to their home labour markets and home – based career and prestige hierarchies rather than global? 8. What do you predict on the competitive situation in management consulting to be if the 'Big Four' accounting firms re-enter the market? 9. What are the principle challenges of the next decade or so in management consulting? 10. Strategic/business processes outsourcing have attracted some fierce critique from customers on cost effectiveness and quality, what is your view on it? <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>

<p>Work & Culture Practices</p>	<p>11. How could you describe the culture of your last organisation?</p> <p>12. How distinctive do you think this culture is?</p> <p>13. How does it differ from other consulting organisations with which you are familiar?</p> <p>14. What are the espoused values of the organisation?</p> <p>15. What are the practically expressed values of the organisation?</p> <p>16. How do you handle the conflicts between the organisation's values and clients' demands on advisory services?</p> <p>17. Do the staffs at mid-level and lower-level of the firm contribute to long-term organisational problem solving and develop international capabilities across country offices?</p> <p>18. Is there any mechanism inside the firm that encourages employees willingly to make their best contribution to achieve customer satisfaction and maximise profit opportunity?</p> <p>19. How does the company capture the knowledge of individuals in the organisation for the benefit of the organisation as a whole?</p> <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>
<p>Reflection</p>	<p>20. Do you mind to compare briefly the strengths and weakness of the cultures of different consulting firms that you have been working for?</p> <p>21. Which one do you think have the most competitive advantages?</p>

<p>The Experience of Major Change</p>	<p>22. Can you describe the major change within the field since you have been in it?</p> <p>23. Are the changes you describe for the better or the worse?</p> <p>24. What have been the main outcomes of the change?</p> <p>25. What are your hopes and fears for the future in management consulting?</p> <p>26. What has been your role in the change process?</p> <p>27. How have you handled the change process?</p> <p>28. How did the actions of senior management make the employees feel about the company?</p> <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>
<p>Others</p>	<p>29. Could you indicate the importance of the following four types of capital that would contribute to an individual's successful management consulting career?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic capital (financial and tangible assets); • Cultural capital (Knowledge, tastes & cultural dispositions); • Symbolic capital (Titles, honours and reputation) • Social capital (Family, networks and relationships) <p>30. If I transform the above-mentioned four types of personal capital into organisational capital:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation assets (Facilities, system and processes); • Knowledge assets (Know-how, proprietorial knowledge and intellectual property); • Symbolic assets (Brands, reputation and patronage); • Social assets (Networks, alliances and relationships) <p>could you indicate the importance of each type of asset that would lead a management consultancy to outperform their rivals?</p> <p>31. Do you think knowledge embeds within employees and relationship in management consulting organisations?</p>

	32. What is your view on the importance of trust and informal networks for knowledge creation and sharing within management consulting organisations?
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Conclusion	33. Do you have any final thoughts that you think might help with this research? <i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i>
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATING. WE WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED OF THE RESULTS OF OUR RESEARCH.

Culture and Professional Identity in Global Management Consulting

Interview Schedule 2: For Mid-level Members of Case/Non-case global management consulting firms

The interview format is conventional semi-structured. The interview may be varied at the discretion of the interviewer in order to elicit relevant and interesting information from the informant.

1. Aims and purposes of the interview

- We are engaging on a *comparative* study of culture and professional identity in global management consulting.
- The research team is interested in the major forces driving change in the management consulting field under globalisation, strategic responses to the change by leading field players and the implications of their strategic responses on the culture and professional identity in the field.
- The project is organised around in-depth study of 6 leading global management consulting firms and the information from at least 25 consulting professionals at different levels.
- Interviews with members/ex-members of case and non-case leading global management consulting firms and other knowledgeable individuals are intended to add in-depth insights to the project as a whole.

2. Ethics of the interview

The interviews can be anonymous, in which case the contributor's words or opinions will not be attributed to interviewees. All references to them or their companies will be anonymised.

3. Key Questions

TOPIC	QUESTIONS
Demographics/Career	<p>34. Could you briefly outline your formal educational background including educational level, subjects, the name and location of your school/university and year of graduate?</p> <p>35. In what ways has your education underpinned your subsequent career?</p> <p>36. Could you briefly outline your career?</p> <p>37. How long have you been in the field?</p> <p>38. How many management consulting firms have you been working for?</p> <p>39. How many distinct roles/jobs have you been?</p> <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>

<p>Work & Culture Practices</p>	<p>40. How could you describe the culture of your management consulting organisation?</p> <p>41. How distinctive do you think this culture is?</p> <p>42. How does it differ from other consulting organizations with which you are familiar?</p> <p>43. What are the espoused values of the organisation?</p> <p>44. What are the practically expressed values of the organisation?</p> <p>45. What is the most common issue you have encountered in the consultant-client relationship?</p> <p>46. How have you handled the issue from project management perspective?</p> <p>47. Were your team consultants satisfied by your actions taken for solving the most common issue?</p> <p>48. How do you monitor the quality and quantity of project deliverables?</p> <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>
<p>Reflection</p>	<p>49. Do you mind to compare briefly the strengths and weakness of the cultures of different consulting firms that you have been working for?</p> <p>50. Which one do you think have the most competitive advantages?</p>

<p>Experience and Identity</p>	<p>51. What factors do you think are important for making good relationship with a client?</p> <p>52. What are the elements, in your experience, which make for a successful outcome?</p> <p>53. What are the causes that make things go wrong?</p> <p>54. How would you assess a successful career in consulting?</p> <p>55. What gives you most satisfaction as a professional consultant?</p> <p>56. What are the most important downsides of a consulting career?</p> <p>57. Do you think having a professional identity (e.g. CPA, Chartered Engineer, etc.) is more convincing on building up a professional image of a management consultant?</p> <p>58. Do you think individual professional identity can affect a consultant's value on their jobs (e.g. integrity and sense of responsibility)?</p> <p>59. How do the employees of client organization view you as a consultant?</p> <p>60. Is their image of you fair and accurate?</p> <p>61. What do you consider to be your main professional skills?</p> <p>62. What do your team consultants expect from you as their team leader?</p> <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>
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<p>The Experience of Major Change</p>	<p>63. Can you describe the major change within the field since you have been in it?</p> <p>64. Are the changes you describe for the better or the worse?</p> <p>65. What have been the main outcomes?</p> <p>66. What are your hopes and fears for the future in management consulting?</p> <p>67. What has been your role in the change process?</p> <p>68. Was the change process handled well by senior management?</p> <p>69. How did the actions of senior management make you feel about the company?</p> <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>
<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>70. Do you have any final thoughts that you think might help with this research?</p> <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>

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Culture and Professional Identity in Global Management Consulting

Interview Schedule 3: For Consultants/Senior Consultants of Case/Non-case global management consulting firms

1. Aims and purposes of the interview

- We are engaging on a *comparative* study of culture and professional identity in global management consulting.
- The research team is interested in the major forces driving change in the management consulting field under globalisation, strategic responses to the change by leading field players and the implications of their strategic responses on the culture and professional identity in the field.
- The project is organised around in-depth study of 6 leading global management consulting firms and the information from at least 25 consulting professionals at different levels.
- Interviews with members/ex-members of case and non-case leading global management consulting firms and other knowledgeable individuals are intended to add in-depth insights to the project as a whole.

2. Ethics of the interview

The interviews can be anonymous, in which case the contributor's words or opinions will not be attributed to interviewees. All references to them or their companies will be anonymised.

3. Key Questions

TOPIC	QUESTIONS
Demographics/Career	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Could you briefly outline your formal educational background including educational level, subjects and the name, location of your school/university and year of graduation? 2. In what ways has your education underpinned your subsequent career? 3. Could you briefly outline your career? 4. How long have you been in the industry? 5. How many management consulting firms have you been working for? 6. How many distinct roles/jobs have you been? <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>
Work & Culture Practices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. How could you describe the culture of your existing organisation? 8. What strengths do you think of this culture? 9. What weakness do you think of this culture? 10. How distinctive do you think this culture is? 11. How does it differ from other consulting organisations with which you are familiar? 12. What are the espoused values of the organisation? 13. What are the practically expressed values of the organisation? <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>

Reflection	<p>14. Do you mind to compare briefly the strengths and weakness of the cultures of different consulting firms that you have been working for?</p> <p>15. Which one do you think have the most competitive advantages?</p>
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Experience and Identity	<p>16. What factors do you think are important for making good relationship with a client?</p> <p>17. What are the elements, in your experience, which make for a successful outcome?</p> <p>18. What are the causes that make things go wrong?</p> <p>19. What do you consider to be your main professional skills?</p> <p>20. What does give you most satisfaction as a professional consultant?</p> <p>21. How would you assess a successful career in consulting?</p> <p>22. What are the most important downsides of a consulting career?</p> <p>23. How do the employees of client organization view you as a consultant?</p> <p>24. Is their image of you fair and accurate?</p> <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>
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<p>The Experience of Major Change</p>	<p>25. Could you describe the major change within the field since you have been in it?</p> <p>26. Are the changes you describe for the better or the worse?</p> <p>27. What have been the main outcomes?</p> <p>28. What are your hopes and fears for the future in management consulting?</p> <p>29. What has been your role in the change process?</p> <p>30. Was the change process handled well by senior management?</p> <p>31. How did the actions of senior management make you feel about the company?</p> <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>
<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>32. Do you have any final thoughts that you think might help with this research?</p> <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>

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Culture and Professional Identity in Global Management Consulting

Interview Schedule 4: For Ex-Members of Case/Non-Case global management consulting firms

1. Aims and purposes of the interview

- We are engaging on a *comparative* study of culture and professional identity in global management consulting.
- The research team is interested in the major forces driving change in the management consulting field under globalisation, strategic responses to the change by leading field players and the implications of their strategic responses on the culture and professional identity in the field.
- The project is organised around in-depth study of 6 leading global management consulting firms and the information from at least 25 consulting professionals at different levels.
- Interviews with members/ex-members of case and non-case leading global management consulting firms and other knowledgeable individuals are intended to add in-depth insights to the project as a whole.

2. Ethics of the interview

The interviews can be anonymous, in which case the contributor's words or opinions will not be attributed to interviewees. All references to them or their companies will be anonymised.

3. Key Questions

TOPIC	QUESTIONS
Demographics/Career	<p>71. Could you briefly outline your formal educational background including educational level, subjects and the name and location of your school/university?</p> <p>72. In what ways has your education underpinned your subsequent career?</p> <p>73. Could you briefly outline your career?</p> <p>74. How long had you been in the field?</p> <p>75. How many management consulting firms had you been working for?</p> <p>76. How many distinct roles/jobs had you been?</p> <p>77. How long had you been out of management consulting?</p> <p>78. Why did you leave the management consulting?</p> <p>79. Under what circumstance, do you think you will go back to the management consulting?</p> <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>

<p>Work & Culture Practices</p>	<p>80. How could you describe the culture of your last management consulting organisation?</p> <p>81. What strengths do you think of this culture?</p> <p>82. What weakness do you think of this culture?</p> <p>83. How distinctive do you think this culture is?</p> <p>84. How does it differ from other consulting organisations with which you are familiar?</p> <p>85. What were the espoused values of the organisation?</p> <p>86. What were the practically expressed values of the organisation?</p> <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>
<p>Reflection</p>	<p>87. Do you mind to compare briefly the strengths and weaknesses of the cultures of different consulting firms that you have been working for?</p> <p>88. Which one do you think have the most competitive advantages?</p>
<p>Experience and Identity</p>	<p>89. What factors do you think are important for making good relationship with a client?</p> <p>90. What are the elements, in your experience, which make for a successful outcome?</p> <p>91. What are the causes that make things go wrong?</p> <p>92. What do you consider to be your main professional skills?</p> <p>93. What does give you most satisfaction as a professional consultant?</p> <p>94. How would you assess a successful career in consulting?</p> <p>95. What are the most important downsides of a consulting career?</p>

	<p>96. Do you think having a professional identity (e.g. CPA, Chartered Engineer, etc.) is more convincing on building up a professional image of management consultant?</p> <p>97. Do you think individual professional identity can affect a consultant's value on their jobs? (e.g. integrity and sense of responsibility)</p> <p>98. How did the employees of client organisation view you as a consultant?</p> <p>99. Was their image of you fair and accurate?</p> <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>
<p>The Experience of Major Change</p>	<p>100. Can you describe the major change within the field since you had been in it?</p> <p>101. Were the changes you describe for the better or the worse?</p> <p>102. What had been the main outcomes?</p> <p>103. What are your hopes and fears for the future in management consulting?</p> <p>104. What had been your role in the change process?</p> <p>105. Was the change process handled well by senior management?</p> <p>106. How did the actions of senior management make you feel about the company?</p> <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>
<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>107. Do you have any final thoughts that your think might help with this research?</p> <p><i>(Remember to ask for illustrations, anecdotes and personal experience)</i></p>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATING. WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED OF THE RESULTS OF OUR RESEARCH.