

Viitamo, Esa

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Knowledge-intensive services and competitiveness of the forest cluster: Case Finland

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ELINKEINOELÄMÄN TUTKIMUSLAITOS

THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF THE FINNISH ECONOMY
Lönnrotinkatu 4 B 00120 Helsinki Finland Tel. 358-9-609 900
Telefax 358-9-601 753 World Wide Web: <http://www.etla.fi/>

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Esa Viitamo

**KNOWLEDGE-INTENSIVE SERVICES
AND COMPETITIVENESS OF
THE FOREST CLUSTER – CASE FINLAND**

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ABSTRACT: New technologies in the globalized business environment are shaping competitive strategies in unprecedented ways. As important as the race for developing more advanced ICT products is the ability to convert these advances into a higher productivity of the assets in other economic activities. This holds true also for the business services, which assume a major role in the ongoing industrial restructuring, and as a source of competitiveness.

Given these stylized facts this report examines the relations between services, manufacturing, technological progress and organizational factors, which generate competitiveness in industrial clusters. Among manufacturing sectors the forest industry is used here as a special case. Much of the existing literature concentrates on the competitiveness impacts of ICT investments made by the manufacturing sector. Our argument is that even a higher potential can be found in a specific indirect effect, that is, the ICT-based services used as production inputs. The realization of the potential depends on the governance of service transactions.

Any attempt to characterize the changing role of services should also recognize the changing contents of services – or the way they are produced and provided. Technological changes and new forms of competition are forging our understanding of the very nature of economic activities and the factors differentiating industries. While the progress towards service economy is taking place, there are various ways to interpret the change.

Key words: service activity, forest industry, competitiveness, ICT

1 Introduction

1.1 Towards the New Economy

The notion that advanced economies had entered a new era in which services have replaced manufacturing as an engine of economic growth became widespread by the late 1960s. The growing role of services reflects evolving division of labor driven by the search for better factor productivity. In the 1990s this development was further facilitated by knowledge-intensive information and communication technologies (ICTs). Consequently, increasingly service-intensive, globally integrated economic systems have developed¹.

Aside the debate on the different scenarios, empirical evidence confirms that the change described above is indeed taking place, in some small OECD countries in particular. Interestingly, countries with a substantial forest sector – Finland and Sweden – are showing the most rapid growth in the communication technologies, while Hungary and Ireland - with the most fundamental structural change and successful FDI policy – have experienced the fastest growth in the computer-related industries.

Associated with this development there is a growing interest on the impacts of the ICT on the economic growth in general and productivity growth in industrial sub-sectors. For instance, there is some indication that the more countries invest in the ICT the higher the share of the productivity increase that results from these investments is. However, there seems to be no clear positive correlation between the size of the ICT sector and the overall productivity level of the manufacturing sector across countries (Colecchia and Sheyrer, 2001).

In absolute terms ICT possesses a vast potential to improve the efficiency – or productivity - of production processes, governance structures and logistics in various ways. This enables enterprises to adopt multitude competitive strategies. The direct effects result from investments in new equipment, embedded software systems, and ICT services produced either internally or externally (Knowledge-Intensive-Service-Activities, KISAs). The main sources of indirect effects are externally purchased service inputs based on ICT applications (Viitamo, 2000). The point made here is that the indirect effects are central in assessing the actual productivity and competitiveness impacts of ICT.

Besides the permeable role of ICT on all industrial sectors also several other fundamental trends in technological change and in business development affect the industrial developments and dynamics of industrial innovation. In conceptual developments of businesses, the “product-to-service” concept is expected to become gradually dominant. According to this concept companies will produce for customers primarily intangible services via products rather than merely traditional tangible products.

¹ The recent financial crisis of the ICT sector has also provoked critical assessments whether the change is sustainable and if the new economy relying mostly on services is attainable in the first place. There are two main grounds for these suspicions. First, due to the high importance of intangibles and the future expectations, the technological core of the KIBS (knowledge-intensive business services) is constantly exposed to speculative shocks. Second, it is intuitively clear that no economic system can survive if based on transactions of services only.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study, conducted by Etlatieto Oy, is part of the international KISA research activity initiated by OECD. In Finland the activity is organized and funded by Tekes - the National Technology Agency. The purpose here is to explore the role of services in the forest cluster and how the new information technologies, utilized in the production and delivery of services, affect the competitiveness of the Finnish forest industries. In doing so the competitiveness impacts are analyzed in the industrial cluster framework.

More specifically, the objective of the study is to shed light on less explored facets of the service sector contributing to a focused industrial policy design and implementation. We will introduce a new operational taxonomy on the business services, which takes into account the alternative settings (internal and external production) and the growth channels and opportunities, accordingly. It will be pointed out that the growth is most effective when service-intensity of the production processes and the knowledge-intensity of services can be increased. These two intensity concepts have bearings on the industrial competitiveness, for which we will construct an analytical model. Finally, as an empirical application of the approach, the Finnish forest industry will be used as a special case.

The study is organized as follows. Section 2 gives an overview on the ongoing trends characterizing the global forest industry and the position and structural changes of the forest cluster in Finland. Based on descriptive statistics Section 3 investigates the role of services in the manufacturing of forest products and the changes in the service-intensity of the production processes. Employment effects of the forest industry on the service sector are also assessed. Within a constructed framework the competitiveness impacts of strategically most important services activities are analyzed in Section 4. Conclusions and policy implications are discussed thereafter in Section 5.

2 Industrial Dynamics

2.1 International Setting

From international perspective the forest-based industries are facing an increasingly dynamic operating environment, which will essentially alter business practices and organizational structures. Globalization of enterprises and markets is shading away the borders of national forest clusters intensifying competition between nations and governments on the future investments and location of production.

Globalized competition

Clusterization with its competitiveness impacts is most pervasive in wider economic and political blocs as the EU. For small nations in particular, the participation in multi-lateral arrangements has become imperative to maintain the sustainable competitiveness of the national forest cluster activities. Consequently, policy design and implementation in intergovernmental level will have a profound influence on the competitiveness of cross-border clusters. This will be manifested in regional specialization and restructuring of the cluster activities.

Globalization proceeds hand in hand with concentration of business activity driven by the maturity of markets in the industrialized countries and the search for new business

opportunities in the evolving market economies. While the forest industries are lagging far behind high concentration ratios can be found in several supporting industries of the forest cluster e.g. machinery building, process control and specific software.

Regarding the acquisitions in the forest industries the most active companies are North American and Nordic pulp and paper producers². Their experience demonstrates the interaction between the liberalized capital markets the uncertainties of the global business environment. Mistakes in acquisitions and investments programs are immediately reflected by lowered share values encouraging rivals to hostile takeovers. Today's winners may be tomorrow's losers.

Globalization and the growth of multinationals are boosted by the development of ICT and its application in business operations of the forest industry and supporting industries and services. On the market side e-commerce is changing marketing strategies and traditional distribution channels (Obersteiner and Nilsson, 2000) altering the demand patterns, too³. This is fostered by the ageing population in the Western world. ICT technologies used in the production processes and production of externally purchased services are changing optimal governance structures. This is reflected in gradual outsourcing of production and service activities in the national forest clusters.

Sustainable competitiveness

Evolving environmental consciousness and strive for a common regulation reshape the competitive positions of countries and trade blocs and the competitiveness of the forest-based products relative to substituting products. At the same time the interpretations of industrial competitiveness are increasingly encompassing also sustainability or eco-efficiency. This implies a reduced exploitation of natural resources, lower emissions and the ability to translate these actions into higher income through marketing and changed images of consumers.

There are vast challenges and opportunities in adapting to the demands for ecological products and processes. Commitments to the international agreements on greenhouse gases, like the Kyoto Protocol, will inevitably change the competitive positions on national forest-based industries. Binding agreements to increase investments in emission reduction may punish countries with eco-efficient energy and manufacturing infrastructures and favor less eco-efficient countries. However, if the neutrality of the closeness of the carbon cycle in the forest sector is included, the countries with extensive forest industries may gain by a better competitive position.

In spite of the low-tech characteristics of the forest-based industries they possess huge potential in creating sustainable competitiveness, not only between countries but also globally, in relation to other industrial sectors. Forest products are carbon storages and the evolving technologies in carbon scrubbing in combustion processes may even lead to negative emissions. A precondition for that is responsible forest management based on credible intergovernmental agreements. Whilst illegal logging is a major threat for the forest cluster worldwide, evolving ICT-based solutions like remote sensing and GIS provide control and verification device.

² For example, Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian companies own approximately 50 % of the European pulp and paper capacity and the trend is continuing.

³ For example, on the paper markets printing and writing papers are increasingly substituted for newsprint (Hetemäki, 2001).

2.2 The Forest Industries and the Forest Cluster in the Finnish Economy

While the forest-based industries have been the backbone of the Finnish industrial structure for more than one hundred years, their relative importance in generating export revenue is decreasing. The structural change accelerated towards the end of the 1990s. This resulted from a rapid growth in other manufacturing sectors, electrical engineering and the production of telecommunications equipment, in particular. A similar but less profound restructuring has taken place in Sweden, too, giving justification for the term Nordic transformation pattern. In Austria and Canada where the forest-based industries are also of high importance, structural change has been less dramatic or non-existent.

A common feature for the forest-based industries of these four countries is a high proportion of the primary sector, pulp and paper industry in particular. Intensive utilization of economies of scale and scope in the pulp and paper production and saw milling industry favoring geographically and technically integrated production units is characteristic of the Nordic countries. For instance, more than 50 % of the Finnish sawmill capacity is owned by the biggest pulp and paper producers the Big Three, Stora-Enso, UPM-Kymmene and M-Real, allied with a smaller company Myllykoski⁴. Compared to the Nordic countries Canadian and Austrian sawmill industries exhibit stronger economies of scope with the panel industry. Excluding the plywood industry in Finland, panel production is showing a shrinking tendency in the Nordic countries.

High export orientation and international competitiveness are the main characteristics of the Finnish primary forest product trade. In 2000 the shares of wood and paper industries in the total manufacturing output were 4.4 % and 18 %, while the corresponding export shares were 5.2 % and 20.8 % (See Table 1). For most paper grades the exports-production ratio exceeds 0,9. Regarding specialization in the forest products trade, Finland outperforms the rest of the world by all indicators e.g. revealed comparative advantage (RCA) indexes or exports per capita. Internationalization through exports is reaching its limits and the main strategy of growth has shifted to international acquisitions and mergers. Approximately only 40 % of the capacity of the Finnish pulp and paper companies is currently located in Finland (Finnish Forest Industries Federation, 2002).

The maturity of the industrial activity is also illustrated by the employment showing higher losses relative to other industrial sectors. Between 1990 and 1998 the manufacturing sector lost 13 % of the jobs while in the forest sector – including forestry – the decrease was as high as 24 %. At the same time the value and volumes of production have smoothly increased resulting in higher labor productivity. As a result of extensive investments at the end of the 1980s and lay-offs thereafter, the highest peak in the labor productivity growth was experienced in the years of recession at beginning of the 1990s. Towards the end of the 1990s labor productivity grew moderately still indicating high international competitiveness⁵.

⁴ The fifth biggest paper producer Ahlstrom Corporation has concentrated in specialty papers.

⁵ This is the case with the pulp and paper industry in particular; between 1995 and 2001 the highest average growth is shown by Austria with 7 % followed by Sweden 6.8 % and Finland 6.5% (Forest Industries Federation, 2002).

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Share of employment					
Mechanical forest industry %	2.2	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.4
Chemical forest industry %	2.3	2.1	1.9	1.9	1.7
Forest industry total %	4.5	3.8	3.4	3.4	3.1
Share of the manufacturing sector					
Mechanical forest industry %	8.5	5.0	6.2	5.3	4.4
Chemical forest industry %	14.9	13.8	12.8	19.7	18.0
Forest industry total %	23.4	18.8	19.0	25.0	22.4
Share of exports					
Mechanical forest industry %	13.4	7.1	7.1	5.9	5.2
Chemical forest industry %	29.0	29.1	30.5	25.9	20.8
Forest industry total %	42.4	36.2	37.6	33.7	26.1

Table 1. Forest industries in the Finnish economy (ETLA, 2003)

In 2000 the total employment of the Finnish forest sector was 95,000, which accounts for approximately 3 % of the total employment (including the service sector). If all forest related business and non-profit activities are taken into account – i.e. the forest cluster - the total employment amounts to double of that (ETLA estimates). This is equivalent to 10 % of the GDP and 40 % of the net export revenue. It should be noted that the forest cluster indicators measure only activities, which are directly linked to wood processing. Hence, all indirect and cumulative effects transmitted throughout the economy are excluded. The indirect effects are discussed in Section 2.3.

Stemming from a multitude of competitive factors the historical success of the Finnish forest cluster is impressive. As analyzed in more detail elsewhere (see e.g. Ojainmaa, 1994), the main driver is the dynamic interaction between competitive advantages and disadvantages, which encourages to innovative entrepreneurship. Along with abundant forest resources the most central advantages are the creation of favorable competitive and co-operative business climate supported by a successful choice of policy strategies. They have overcome the given disadvantages, harsh climate and long distances⁶. An essential but often underrated factor is the insight and foresight of individual managers.

In international comparison the Finnish forest cluster is well structured i.e. it embraces most of the supporting and related business and non-profit activities central for competitiveness. Several supporting activities are themselves competitive and in many case leaders in the world markets⁷. This is the case with pulp and paper machine technology, process automation, software, engineering and electrical equipment. Consequently, there are only few intermediary products in which the forest industries are reliant on imports. These include e.g. saw milling machinery and pigments used in production of coated papers.

Regarding the competitiveness of the forest industry it has often been stated that import dependence on certain inputs - e.g. for pigments (Seppälä, 2001) - is a sign of weakness indicating preference for self-sufficiency strategy. A counterargument made here is that

⁶ Long distances in Finland and to the markets.

⁷ The point here is that ownership does not matter. For example, pulping and steam boiler technology is currently under foreign ownership; Kvaerner (Norway), Andritz (Austria) and Foster Wheeler (USA).

reliance on imports reflects the natural specialization of countries and the ability to utilize the efficiency gains from international division of labor should instead be taken as strength enhancing the overall competitiveness. The argument is further justified by the fact that nations are losing the relevance as basic units of cluster analysis.

The potential for expansion of the Finnish forest cluster is shifting from the core activities – processing of wood - towards the supporting industries and the associated services. Related to the argument above, success of the supporting industries proliferates the Finnish know-how internationally strengthening the networking of national clusters. Associated with the globalization strategies of the supporting industries, the distinction between goods and services is becoming increasingly obscure. That is, the share of the intangible component – service - of the deliveries is growing. To a lesser extent this is the case with the wood processing industries as they offer logistical services to their customers.

Another way to illustrate the structural change of the forest cluster is to look into the use of wood-based inputs through the forest value chain. In Figure 1 the percentages indicate the share of output in the supplying industry that is needed as an input in the downstream industry. For instance, in 1970 as much as 59 % of all inputs in the pulp production came from the forestry, while in 1994 the share was only 42 %. Excluding the by-products flow from the sawmills to pulp industry⁸, the decrease in the wood fiber use is characteristic of the other production stages too. This means that the forest-based industries have become less wood-intensive and with respects to raw material flows the value chain is less reliant on the preceding production stages⁹.

An implicit question is what are the factors affecting this development. Interestingly, much of the explanation goes back to Porterian reasoning. While Finland has been endowed with an abundant raw material base of high quality, raw wood is a scarce resource due to the internationally high stumpage prices¹⁰. Consequently, there has been a push effect for substitution of other inputs for wood. Or as Porter puts it, competitiveness often results from disadvantage in the basic factors, which encourages to innovations and development of production processes based on more specialized and advanced factors of production (Porter, 1990). This reasoning is consistent also with the increased use of sawdust as a raw material in the pulp production.

A related explanation is the consequent strategy to increase the value added content of the forest products. In particular, this is characteristic of paper production, which focuses on printing and writing papers and coated grades. The production process of these paper grades needs more chemicals and fillings compared to the papers with lower value added content¹¹. In the mechanical forest industry higher value added content has also been the goal of the industry and an explicit objective of industrial policy. The importance of this policy becomes pronounced as the competitive pressure from the East European countries becomes stronger.

⁸ See the horizontal arrow in Figure 1.

⁹ This is hardly a Finnish sequence only, and with country-specific characteristics it reflects technological developments in general.

¹⁰ The reasons can be found in history; dispersed ownership of forests and the bilateral negotiation system on the raw wood markets.

¹¹ For example, in the 1980s and 1990s several newsprint machines were upgraded to produce SC and LWC papers.

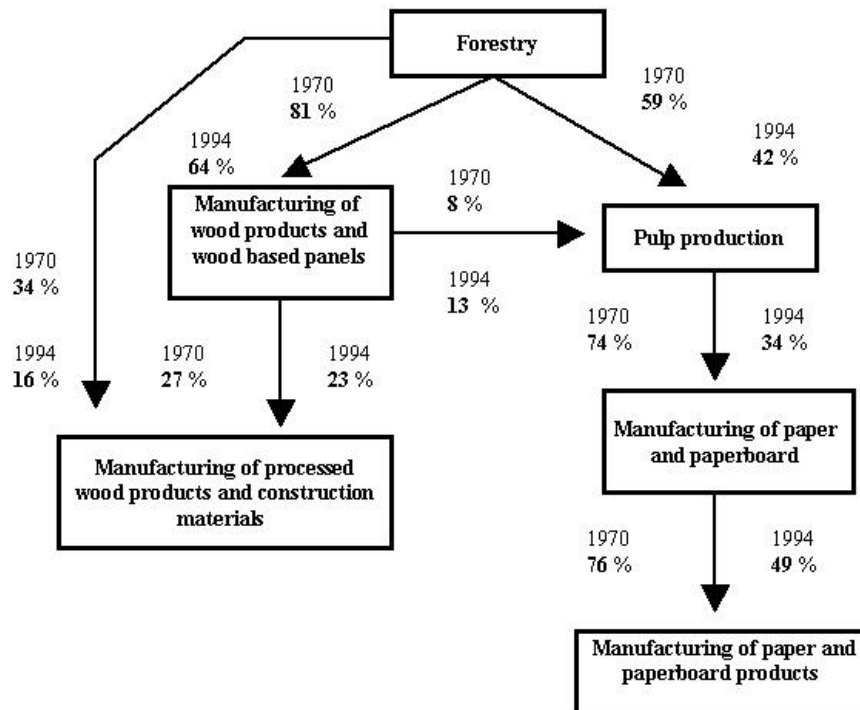


Figure 1. Change of wood fiber contents of the forest sector

Related to the substitution of production inputs there are two other tendencies, which will be discussed in more detail in the next subsections. First, in all inputs purchased by the forest industry the share of the intangible inputs has increased, i.e. the production processes have become increasingly *service-intensive*. Second, the growth of the share of services in the input procurement is affected by outsourcing of service activities. That is, in-house service activities are replaced by externally purchased services. In general, outsourcing is the primary mode of corporate strategy, which strengthens the service sector and innovative competitiveness of the forest cluster.

Associated with the structural and strategic change of the forest cluster activities the analytical approach and methodologies are also facing a revision. Clusters are not only seen as bundles of interdependent industries with mutual spillovers but the focus is shifting to the ability of business relationships to generate innovations for the maintenance of future competitiveness. In other words, it is not the transaction of tangible or intangible goods but information and innovation linkages, which are the basic determinants in defining clusters and the actual source of industrial competitiveness.

The interpretation of a cluster as an innovation network has its origins in the beginning of the 1980s, as national innovation systems (NISs) were evolving into a separate theoretical framework for the design of technology and science policy (Roelandt and den Hertog, 1999)¹². Innovation activity consists primarily of production and exchange of

¹² One definition of NISs is that of Metcalfe (1995): “NIS is a set of institutions which jointly and individually contribute to the development and diffusion of new technologies and which provide the framework within which governments form and implement policies to influence the innovation process. As such it is a system of interconnected institutions to create, store and transfer the knowledge, skills and artifacts which define new technologies.”

intangible inputs and outputs characteristic of the business activities in services industries. Consequently, the service sector, which already accounts for over two thirds of the gross domestic product in developed countries, has gained a prominent position in the new cluster approach and policy. According to the findings of innovation studies (OECD, 1999; Miles, 1998; see also, Leiponen, 2000), knowledge-intensive business services (KIBS) have a central role in producing and disseminating state-of-the-art information.

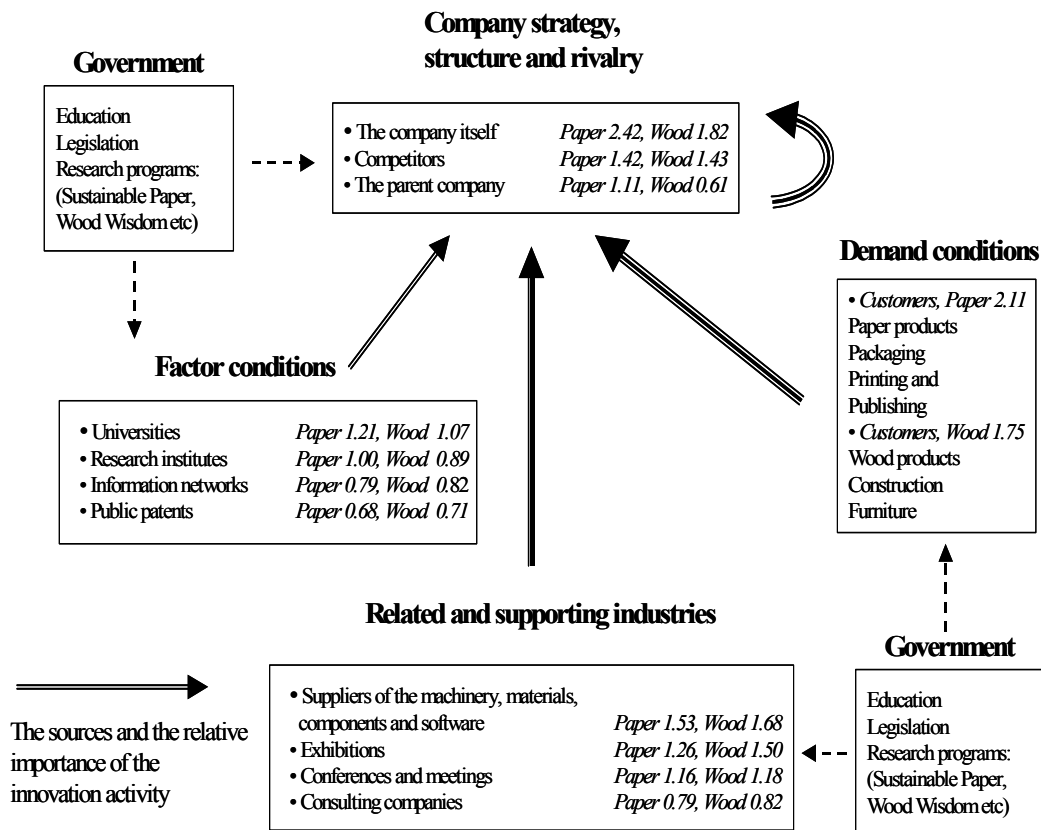


Figure 2. Innovation cluster of the Finnish forest industry (Statistics Finland, 1999)

What is the relative importance of the cluster linkages for the innovation activity? This is depicted in Figure 2, which highlights similarities and differences between the *transaction* cluster and the *innovation* cluster for the Finnish forest industries¹³. As pointed out in earlier innovation studies (OECD, 1999), large companies with more resources tend to rely more on internal innovation activity than do SMEs. Knowing the company size in the pulp and paper industry, the high score in internal innovation activity supports this kind of reasoning. In this respect the innovation and transaction clusters seem to be equivalent, since companies are vertically integrated with long internal value chains.

As seen in Figure 2 the greatest divergence between the clusters – in Porterian sense - is in the relative importance of demand conditions, with concentrated customer industries in export markets. While the associated transaction volumes are also high and the inno-

¹³ In 1997 Statistics Finland conducted an innovation survey of Finnish industries. Respondents from the companies in the sample were asked to rank alternative sources of innovation by importance (0 = no importance, to 3 = very important). Mean scores are shown in Figure 2. It is interesting to note that although the point of departure of this survey was not explicitly the cluster framework, the innovation sources are consistent with Porter's diamond model.

vation patterns vary by country, this divergence demonstrates that the NISs are highly interdependent and that the main determinants of competitiveness may lie outside national borders. Moreover, a look at supporting and related industries indicates that *informal* linkages between cluster companies are of considerable importance.

3 The Role of Services - Statistical Evidence

The growth of national economies and employment in the Western industrial countries is increasingly based on the service sector, which currently accounts for some 65 % of the GDP. Consequently, for the industrial policy design services are seen as a major vehicle in reaching the socio-economical objectives, job creation in particular.

3.1 A Conceptual Digression

Broadly understood services are immaterial outputs supplied by producers (individuals) to the users (individuals). Unlike physical commodities services cannot be traded on secondary markets i.e. production and consumption take place simultaneously. In spite of the extensive research and political debates on the importance of services there is no general agreement on definition per se. There are two interrelated conceptual and statistical problems.

Suppose a manufacturing company decides to outsource the cleaning activity of the mills. That is, instead of keeping hired cleaning workers the cleaning is purchased externally from a specialized supplier. If the workers are employed by the cleaning company to do the same job, nothing but the incentives and probably the costs of the cleaning has changed. Another interpretation is that the service sector has expanded while the manufacturing sector has shrunk. This implies that a necessary condition for a service is that it is somehow transacted between independent parties.

The other difficulty, also affecting the actual size of the service sector, is caused by the convergence and inseparability of intangible and tangible components of the services and goods. Take for example a software company producing and selling program applications to customers with specific needs. The solutions have to be tailored, personnel of the customers has to be trained, the software has to be updated etc. The marketing is more cost-effective if the software company offers the software and the services as standardized packages possessing characteristics of a commodity.

Manufacturing sector is experiencing a similar change. In the metal product industries and the machinery building in particular, the growing share of the turnover is generated outside the manufacturing activities. In the forest cluster the supporting machinery industries are facing a transformation to engineering houses hence entering the markets of specialized service companies. The change proceeds in two ways; first, as the business is becoming increasingly global it is profitable to outsource production of components to local workshops. What finally remains is the core competencies engineering and technical design. At the same time these companies integrate deeper into the maintenance and spare part services to generate more value added and smoothen the impacts of investment cycles.

The examples above are not problematic as such if the interpretations and structural changes are recognized and taken into account. In reality, however, this is not the case. For the classification of industries and the construction of official industrial databases the inseparability problem and outsourcing cause biases underestimating the size of the sector

producing business services. More importantly, focusing only on the external services only gives wrong signals for policy makers on the growth opportunities as a whole.

In this respect illustrative examples are the concepts of KISA introduced by OECD¹⁴ and KIBS¹⁵. While the former encompasses all service activities independent of the governance of the transaction, the latter includes only services based on market transactions. If KISA or more generally SA approach is used it is intuitively clear that business service sector producing *tangible outputs – functional services*¹⁶ - can grow only as the manufacturing sector expands or if the exports of services increases. That is, outsourcing is neutral and fundamentally new business service activities are difficult if not impossible to create. It is just a matter of pricing and the availability of different technologies to produce a specific service. In contrast, KIBS approach assumes that business service sector with tangible outputs can grow through outsourcing of in-house services.

The reasoning is of course sensitive to the type of services in question. In contrast to functional services there is substantial growth potential for services with intangible outputs – information. This holds true for KISAs and KIBS. In addition to domestic demand, exports and outsourcing in the case of KIBS, there is a high growth potential in the service-intensity in the manufacturing and service sector as well. This stems from extended opportunities in transforming the input expenses to a higher value of revenues, even when the physical properties of the products are unchanged¹⁷. In this case services are not substituting other inputs but they complement available set of inputs.

	Functional services (Tangible outputs)	Information services (Intangible outputs)
KIBS	<p>Increase in service intensity: <i>constrained</i></p> <p>Other growth opportunities: <i>outsourcing, Domestic industrial growth, exports</i></p> <p>Creation of new services: <i>constrained</i></p>	<p>Increase in service intensity: <i>unconstrained</i></p> <p>Growth opportunities: <i>outsourcing, Domestic industrial growth, exports</i></p> <p>Creation of new services: <i>unconstrained</i></p>
KISAs	<p>Increase in service intensity: <i>constrained</i></p> <p>Other growth opportunities: <i>Domestic industrial growth, exports</i></p> <p>Creation of new services: <i>constrained</i></p>	<p>Increase in service intensity: <i>unconstrained</i></p> <p>Other growth opportunities: <i>Domestic industrial growth, exports</i></p> <p>Creation of new services: <i>unconstrained</i></p>

Table 2. Typology and characteristics of knowledge-intensive services

¹⁴ Knowledge-Intensive Service Activity.

¹⁵ Knowledge-Intensive Business Service.

¹⁶ The term refers to services whose output is visible and tied to a specific business operation. In contrast services producing invisible or intangible outputs are called here as information-based services.

¹⁷ A concrete example is the purchase of information on the future development of markets.

Through innovation processes and increase in factor productivity, information enhances the dynamics of the production function and, compared to functional services the coefficient of information inputs are less fixed, enhancing the overall flexibility. Another characteristic of information is the possibility to create completely new services based on new information inaccessible in the past¹⁸. This assumes that the expenses of collecting data – internally or externally – is lower than the increase in the revenues, which is increasingly easier to meet with the advances in the ICT. The typology of knowledge-intensive services and their associated properties are depicted in Table 2. The arrows indicate that between the extremes the output contents of services encompasses usually both tangible and intangible components i.e. through the indirect effect of information functional services have the potential to become more innovative and productive.

3.2 Supply and Use of the Business Services

In the standard industry classification majority of the knowledge-intensive services belong to larger category called business services¹⁹. In general private services can be divided into three sub-sectors. First, there are services, which are knowledge-intensive by their very nature like R&D services, computer and related services and consulting services. The second group consists of services with lower inherent knowledge-intensity but high overall knowledge-intensity through the application of ICT. Examples are several traditional engineering services, logistics and marketing services. The third category may be called basic services with lowest overall knowledge requirement like retail trade or cleaning. For these services the possibilities to utilize ICT is also most limited.

Structure of the supply

The main characteristics of the business services are that they are mostly used as inputs for other business sectors and they are transacted on markets. This is also the case with traffic and postal and communication services. In this respect these services differ from other services, which are mostly directed to final consumption (private services) or based on non-profit production (healthcare, education etc.).

In contrast to the majority of the service industries a high proportion – 28 % in 1995 – of the total supply of business services is provided by other industries, manufacturing sector in particular (ETLA, 2003). With this regard the forest-based industries are in a dominating position. The highest service turnover is shown by printing and publishing²⁰ followed by the pulp and paper industry, which together account for more than one third of the total external supply²¹. Compared to publishing and printing, the business services provided by the pulp and paper companies consist mainly of internal corporate services and maintenance services with lower knowledge-intensity²².

Following the taxonomy presented in Table 2 those business services influenced by all factors of growth (upper right corner), have also shown the highest growth rates (See

¹⁸ As with functional KISAs one can argue that all information on past or prognosis on the future exists potentially, so no new services can be created. The difference here is, however, that transformation of information into services necessitates a systematic collection and processing of data so that information is available for a transaction.

¹⁹ By definition business services are equal to private services excluding trade, hospitality services, logistical and communication services and finance and insurance services.

²⁰ Publishing and printing is by its very nature closer to service activity

²¹ Nokia-driven manufacturing of communications equipment places third.

²² As may be expected services provided by the publishing and printing industry consists mainly of marketing and related services.

Table 3). This is strongly related to the economic recession at the beginning of the 1990s. For example, instead of hiring permanent work force and investing in new machinery and equipment companies started to lease them after the downturn, which led to a growing demand for the leasing services. Other forms of outsourcing followed e.g. in the computer and maintenance services. As with technical consulting and the marketing services, these services are more boosted by the domestic economic growth.

Code (TOL)	Service category	Change in turnover 1993 – 1997 %
73103	Technical research and development	741
74502	Lease of workforce	444
724	Databank services	404
7121	Lease of other road transport equipment	389
73102	Other R&D on natural sciences	283
7482	Packaging services	206
743	Technical testing and analysis	192
74409	Other advertising services	149

Table 3. Fastest growing business services in the 1990s (Statistics Finland, 2000)

As argued in the previous section, the highest growth potential is possessed by the information services due to their intangible character and non-specificity. This is supported by Table 3, where technical research and development and databank services are ranking high. Although computer and related services are not showing the highest growth rates they are exposed to similar growth factors than the *pure* information services. In contrast the expansion of the computer and related services is more induced by the exports demand. At the end of 1990s the computer services – including the software production – showed the highest surplus in the trade across all the services categories (Bank of Finland, 2000).

Demand in the forest sector

Regarding the long-term structural change of the forest sector the decrease of the relative importance of wood (See Figure 1) is associated with a growing proportion of service inputs, i.e. *higher service-intensity*. Looking at the forest sector as a whole the highest service-intensity is found in the forestry, which like the printing and publishing industry, is closer to service activity. A closer look reveals, however, that the change in the service-intensity is bigger for the downstream activities of the value chain i.e. there is a positive correlation between the value-added contents of the sub-industry and the growth of the service-intensity (See Table 4).

	Forestry	Primary wood	Secondary wood	Pulp	Paper	Paper products
1970	33.8	8.1	7.4	9.8	3.1	4.5
1994	48.3	20.2	18.2	15.5	13.5	21.8
Change %	43	149	145	55	335	384

Table 4. Change of the service-intensity in the forest sector (Statistics Finland, 1970; 1994)²³

²³ The Input-Output statistics of 1994 provides the latest comparable data to show the long-term development.

Apart from outsourcing and real increase of service-intensity the higher shares of services reflect also the change in relative prices of inputs. That is, companies have to pay more for the same amount of service than before and this increase has been higher for services than for physical inputs. A plausible explanation is that the value added contents – knowledge-intensity – of the purchased services have increased. This becomes evident by looking at the change in the composition of purchased inputs.

In Figure 3 and 4 displaying the development of the relative importance of service inputs, focus is on the services with highest shares on average in 1994. The forestry, showing a relatively stable pattern, is the most dependent on trade services while the secondary woodworking sector is more trade-intensive than the primary woodworking sector. The latter shows moderate dynamics with increased shares of the business services and the road transport. Regarding the knowledge-intensity these services balance each other. The biggest changes have occurred in the secondary woodworking sector with the highest growth of the business services. To conclude, *knowledge-intensity and its long-term growth correlate positively with the value-added contents through the value chain.*

Similar to the forestry the most stable development in the chemical forest industry is shown by the pulp industry with distribution of services equivalent to the primary woodworking industry. Following the pattern of the mechanical woodworking sector the share of business services grows towards the downstream processing²⁴. Furthermore, as with the woodworking industry and the forestry it is noticeable that the change in the knowledge-intensity correlates positively with the value-added contents through the value chain. In this respect the pulp and paper industry has shown a more dynamic development.

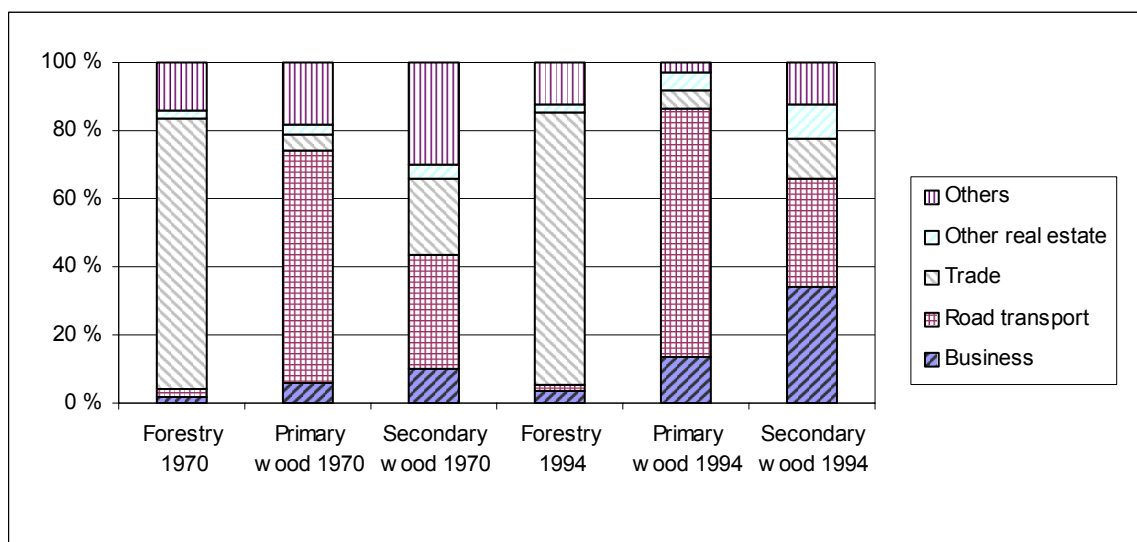


Figure 3. Distribution of service inputs in the forestry and the wood working industry (Statistics Finland, 1970; 1994)

²⁴ With the exception of the paper production in 1970.

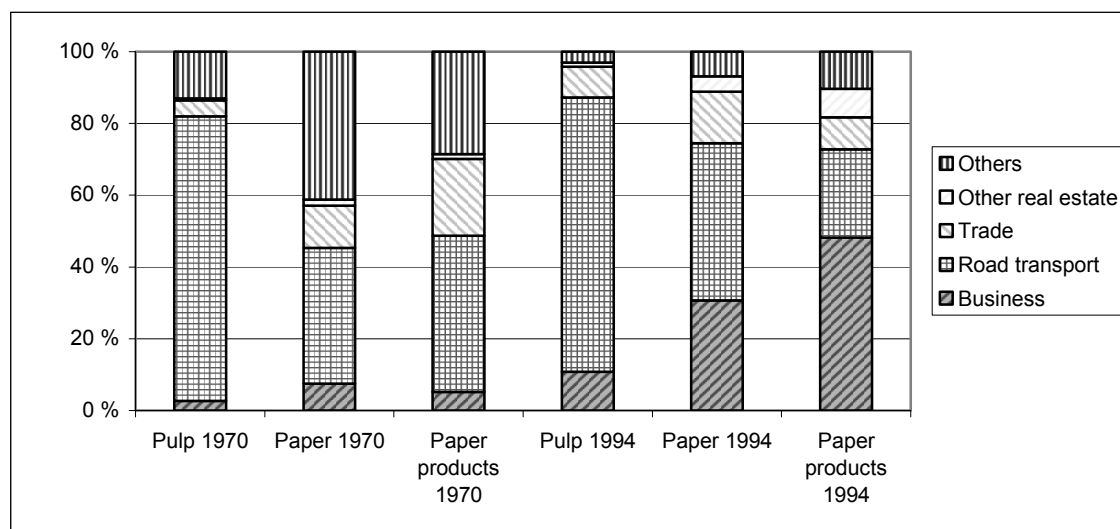


Figure 4. Distribution of service inputs in the pulp and paper industry (Statistics Finland, 1970; 1994)

There is also a clear concentration of the distribution towards the four service categories by 1994. For paper and to a lesser extent the pulp and paper products this is affected by the shutdowns of product group specific marketing association by the mid 1990s. External marketing services, included in other services, became gradually useless, as the companies were big enough to internalize the marketing activities.

Comparison across industries

Among the manufacturing industries the pulp and paper industry was the biggest single user of external services up to the end of the 1990s²⁵. The second was the machinery building followed by the publishing and printing industry. Illustrating the overall structural change of the Finnish economy the manufacturing of telecommunications equipment displaced the pulp and paper in 2000 while the machinery building held the third place. This is conveyed by the industrial statistics, which breaks down the expenses of the external services for the entire manufacturing sector²⁶.

While in absolute terms the forest-based industries together incur the highest service expenses they show intermediate service-intensity, somewhat higher than in the manufacturing sector on average²⁷. As indicated by Figure 5 the highest service-intensity is found in the printing and publishing industry for which the biggest cost category is the *out-contracted labor work*. In contrast the lowest intensity is exhibited by the manufacture of the wooden packages.

²⁵ The ranking is based on the nominal value of the service procurement.

²⁶ It must be noted that the classification of services in input-output tables is different from that used in the other industrial statistics. The advantage of the latter is the more updated data and more disaggregated industry classification.

²⁷ This is a ratio between the service expenses and the total expenses, Serviceint %.

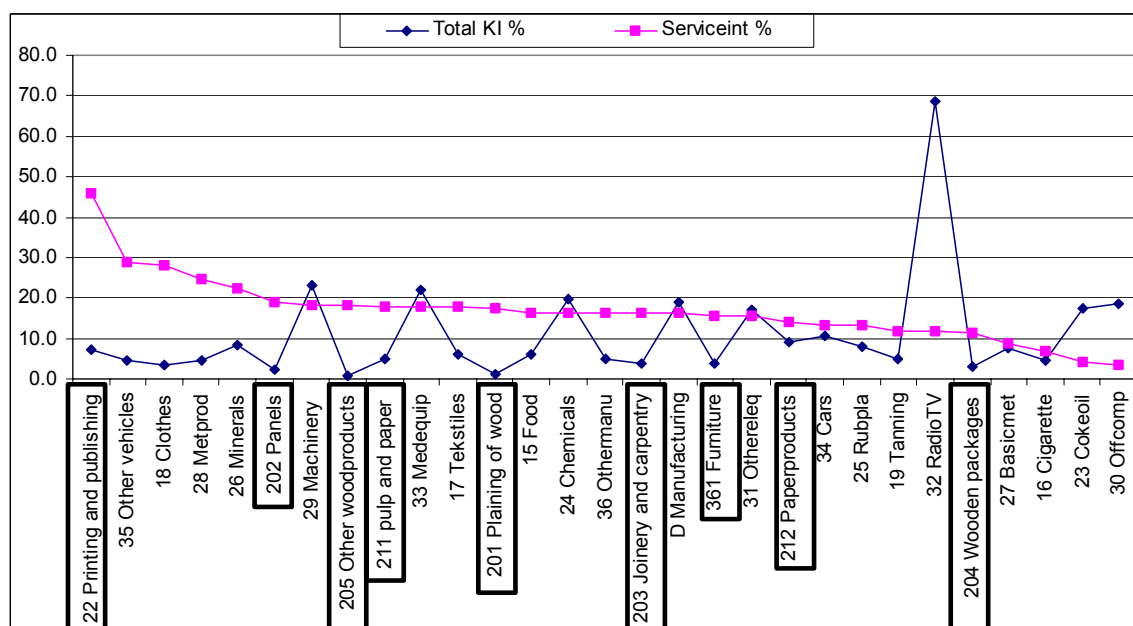


Figure 5. Service- and knowledge-intensity of the Finnish manufacturing sector (Statistics Finland, 2000)

In Figure 5 the service-intensity is compared to the knowledge-intensity - or degree of innovativeness (KI %) - measured by the ratio between the expenses of the most knowledge-intensive services and the total service expenses. The former consists of R&D services, computer and related services and the licenses for patents. Although the correlation between the two indicators is low ($-0,2$) there are some distinct patterns. The industries with the highest service-intensity rank typically low by the knowledge-intensity while the low service-intensity is associated with all levels of knowledge-intensity. In between the knowledge-intensity varies between low (the majority of the forest-based industries) to moderate (manufacture of paper products). A notable exception is manufacture of communications equipment, which, due to substantial R&D inputs, shows a knowledge-intensity of 70 %.

To conclude, by their external use of services the forest-based industries can be classified as a medium-service-intensive and low-knowledge-intensive sector reflecting limited innovation opportunities through the purchase of service inputs. This is, however, the direct effect only ignoring the cumulative impacts through innovative supporting industries. For example, machinery building, which is one of the most important sources of external innovations for the pulp and paper industry²⁸, shows knowledge-intensity of 18 %²⁹.

²⁸ See Figure 2.

²⁹ In this respect the indirect effect of R&D expenses is of special interest. For instance an IO-analysis across OECD industries (Hatzichronoglou, 1997) reveals that the overall R&D-intensity - consisting of direct and cumulated effects - correlates negatively with the level of the direct R&D-intensity of the industries. For the forest-based industries, all belonging to the low-tech category, the ratio between total effects to direct effects is 0,75.

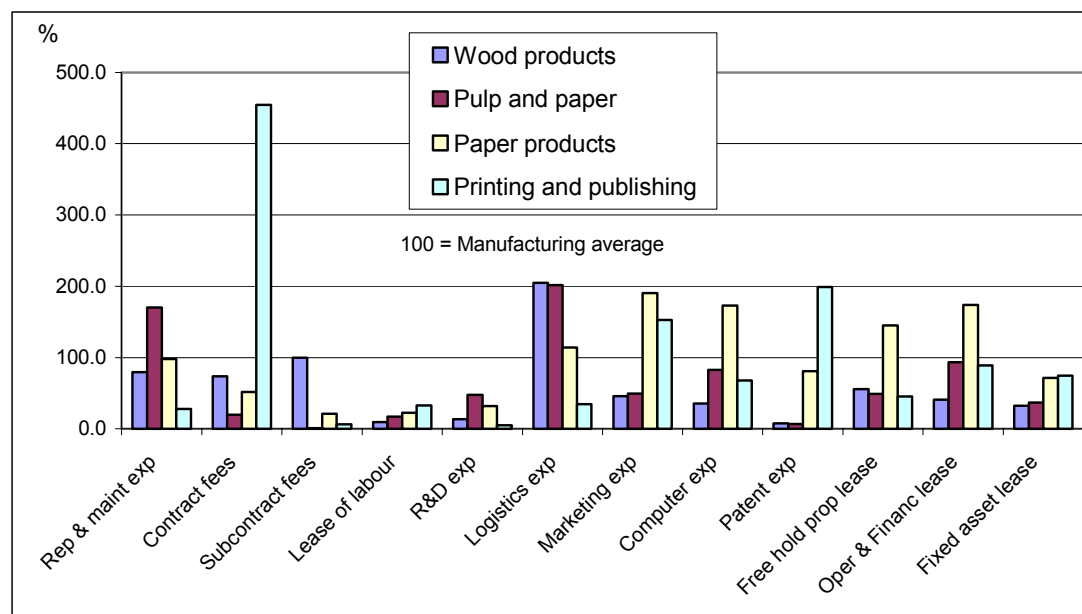


Figure 6. Specialization of the forest-based industries by the service expenditures (Statistics Finland, 2000)

Regarding the service-intensities more detailed information is provided by the degree of specialization in the use of single service inputs. In Figure 6 specialization is measured by dividing the share of the service in a sub-industry by the corresponding share in the total manufacturing. As such the specialization ratio also highlights the characteristics of the production functions.

Besides the high specialization in the contracting services by the printing and publishing industry there are other industry specific patterns, too. Equivalent to the other process industries the pulp and paper production is highly specialized in the reparation and maintenance services accounting for almost one third of the total expenses of the manufacturing sector. This holds true for the logistical services, too, which are of special importance to the woodworking and pulp and paper industries as well. Consistent with the IO-statistics in Figure 3 and 4 the relative importance of the logistics decreases the closer to the final consumption the production stage is. For the marketing services it is the opposite, as one may expect³⁰.

The characteristics of the forest-based industries can be demonstrated by a comparison with the high-tech manufacturing sector, manufacture of telecommunications equipment (TCE) in particular. The biggest difference is shown by R&D expenditure, for which TCE sector is almost ten times more specialized than the manufacturing sector. Patent expenditures with a specialization of seven times higher is followed by the computer and related services nearly three times higher than in the total manufacturing. Accordingly, the maintenance and the logistical services are far below the share in the forest-based industries, of which the manufacturing of paper products is the most similar to the TCE sector.

³⁰ This gains further support if the furniture industry is included and if the woodworking industries are broken down to the primary and the secondary production.

More generally, specialization pattern in the service expenditures can be taken as an indicator for the differences between the high-tech and the low-tech industries. While the former are distinctively specialized in innovative services – TCE, chemicals, medical equipment etc. – for the latter it is the opposite. To use Porter’s classification of factors of production the distinction is made between the specialized and advanced inputs and the basic and general-purpose inputs. According to Porter’s reasoning this is just what makes the high-tech sector more competitive and a real source of national prosperity in the long run.

3.3 Employment Effects

As noted earlier the service sector has gained a prominent role in enhancing economic growth and employment in the industrialized countries. From the perspective of labor policy the promotion of services is seen justifiable due to their higher labor-intensity compared to the manufacturing sector. In this Section the focus is on the impacts of the forest-based industries on the employment of the service sector. Keeping in mind the labor policy targets the core question here is how the demand for the service inputs in the forest sector is channelled to employment respectively.

Referring to the taxonomy on the knowledge-intensive services in Table 2 the employment of externally produced business services can be affected in the following ways: by outsourcing, demand induced growth of the economy, exports and a higher service-intensity of the production processes. The last option is workable especially for the information services. In this analysis the focus of interest is on the demand induced effects since they provide a simple illustration on the cluster mechanisms and hence the possibilities and limitations for the labor policy.

It is assumed here that the coefficients of the service inputs are fixed i.e. there are no changes in the service-intensity in the production technology in the short run, in this case 1990–1998. Hence, the change in the production volumes in the forest industries is reflected proportionally in the service demand and employment if the labor productivity of services remains constant³¹.

The analysis is based on the IO-tables of 1995 and the industrial statistics³², which enable the calculation of direct and indirect employment effects. The latter describing the total effects through the input-output linkages in the economy is given by Leontief inverse matrix³³. 1995 prices are used to get the real changes in the values of the production of the forest industry products. For simplicity forest sector is divided here in three sectors, the forestry, the mechanical wood industry and the chemical forest industry.

In spite of the high service-intensity of the *forestry* its absolute use of services is relatively low, which is also reflected in the employment figures. The small difference between the total (direct and indirect) and the direct effects follows from the fact, that the use of intermediate inputs is generally low and concentrated on trade³⁴. Regarding the ability to employ, forestry is, however, performing relatively well, since at the same

³¹ Labor productivity is measured here by the ratio between values of production and number of employees.

³² Statistics Finland (1995; 2000).

³³ See e.g. Hatzichronoglou, 1997.

³⁴ The share of the trade of all services for the direct use is as high as 65 % but only 33 % of the total use. This is because there exist direct effects only for half of the service categories.

time the labor productivity of trade has shown only a slight increase. Only 2.5 % decrease in the employment in the service sector can be contrasted with 40 % reduction in the forestry itself. At the same time the production grew by 20 %.

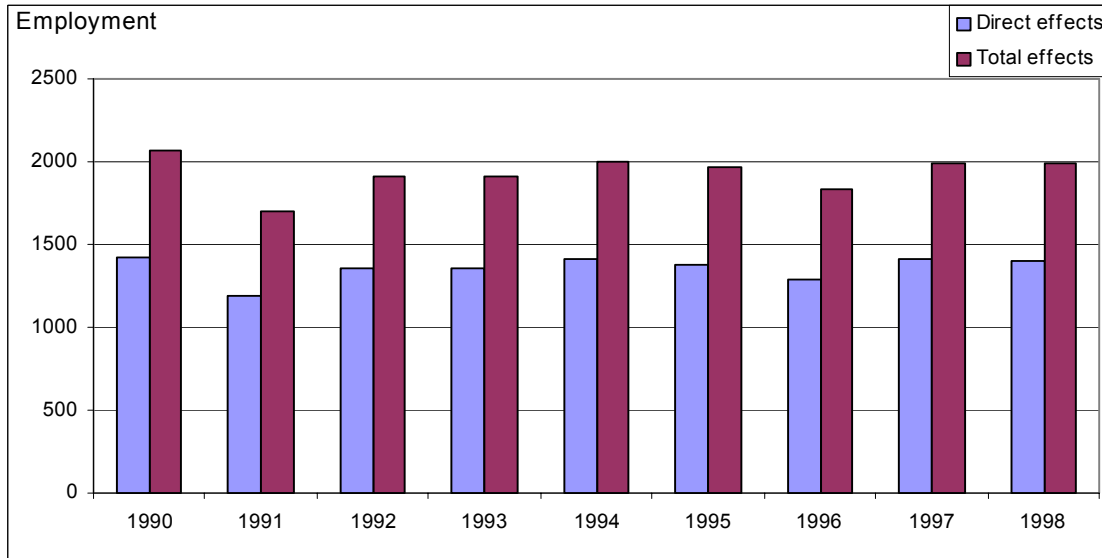


Figure 7. Employment effects of the forestry on the service sector

Compared to the forestry employment effects are much stronger for the wood working industries³⁵ and the total employment is approximately twice as high as the direct employment. This results from a higher volume of inputs in general and more diversified use of services. Of all service categories the road transport and the business services account for 60 % of the direct effects and 40 % of the indirect effects for which trade assumes the highest share of the employment.

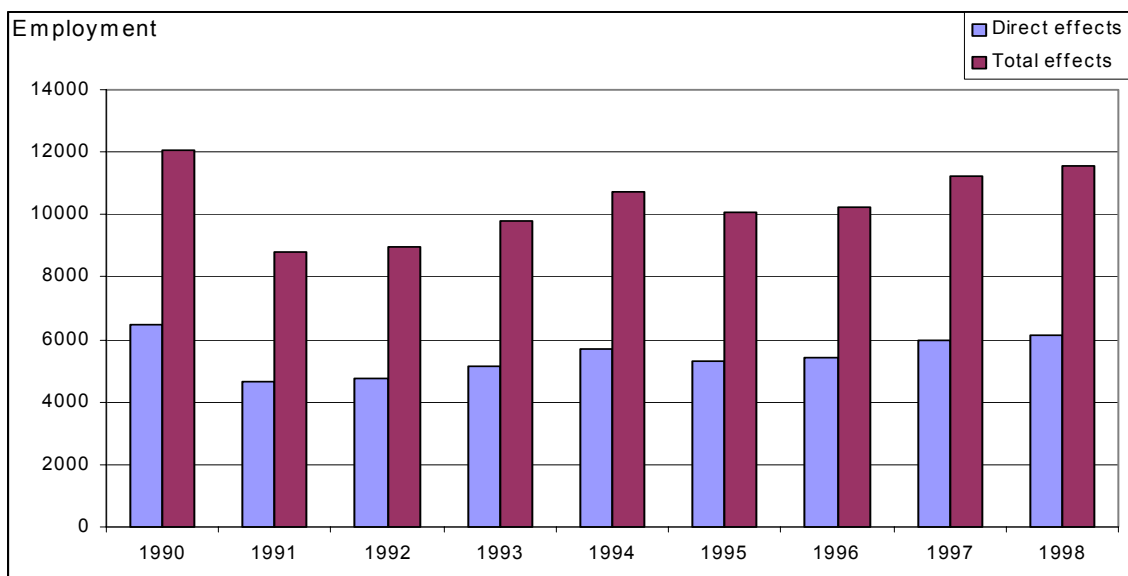


Figure 8. Employment effects of the wood working industries on the service sector

³⁵ Only timber and panels are included here. This is because the data on processed products is deficient.

A further comparison with the forestry shows that the ability to employ has decreased much more in the wood working industries. Whilst the value of production grew by 30 % in the 1990s, the employment decreased by 4.5 % resulting from the productivity growth of the business services and the transportation. By the end of the 1990s however, the employment showed an upward trend.

As expected the employment effects are strongest in the pulp and paper industry with extensive input linkages within the forest cluster and across the other industries. This can be seen in the high difference between the total and direct employment effects. The total employment in the service sector corresponds approximately to the current employment of the pulp and paper industry itself, showing a decreasing trend in the 1990s. The distribution of the effects is similar to the wood working industries but the share of business services is higher for the pulp and paper industry. In spite of the decreasing ability to employ in the 1990s the absolute change has been positive.

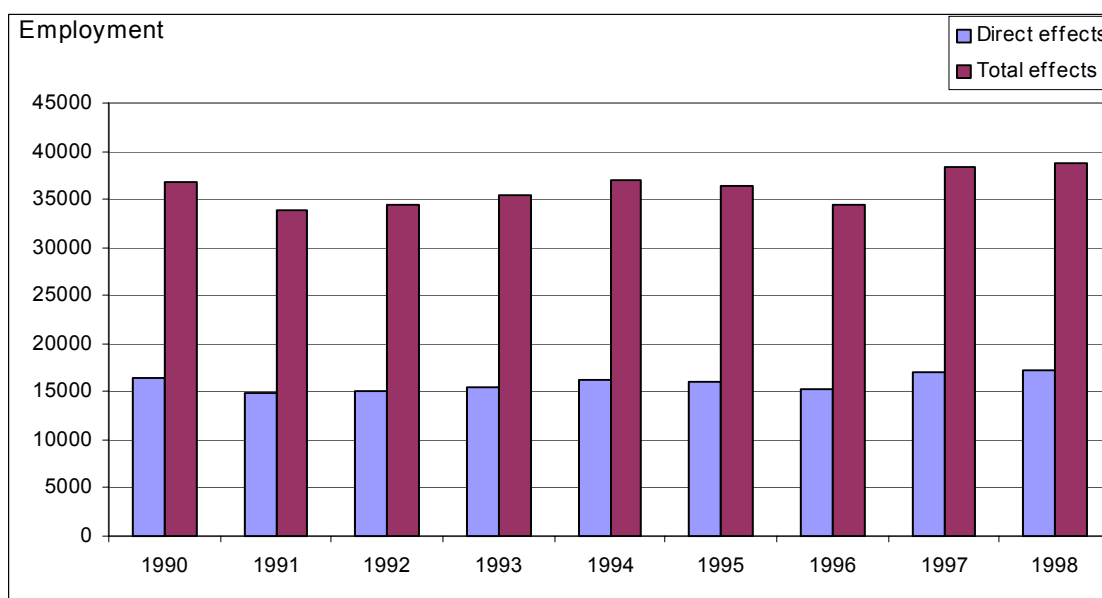


Figure 9. Employment effects of the pulp and paper industry on the service sector

To summarize, the growing labor productivity in the forest sector, associated with a rapid increase in production volumes is changing the employment structure of the forest cluster. As the development of process technology, automation and information technologies will constantly reduce the employment throughout the value chain, the supporting industries - especially services - are getting higher weight in sustaining the overall employment. A gradual outsourcing of the service activities is strengthening the tendency.

A counterforce for this tendency is, however, the growing labor productivity in the central supporting services industries, business services and to a lesser extent the logistics. An essential factor in explaining the productivity growth is the growing application of the new information and communication technologies, which increase the economies of scale and scope in the production of the services. As a consequence, the knowledge-intensity of functional services is increasing and the differences between service industries are shrinking accordingly.

It is assumed here that the production technologies of the forest-based industries are given without any changes in the factor proportions. If that assumption is relaxed to allow increase in service-intensity – consistent with the long-term development - the employment effects presented here may be underestimated. Similarly, IO-tables ignore the maintenance services, which, as shown above, are of high importance.

However, these deficiencies do not alter the main policy implications. Aside the downstream processing in the woodworking industries the forest sector itself is incapable of creating new employment. Because of the growth in productivity the opportunities are limited also in the service sector. With the taxonomy presented in Table 2, two complementary options remain. First, exports of the forest-based services should be facilitated. Second, industrial policy should be aimed to increase the information contents of the existing functional services and to facilitate the creation of new information-based services.

4 Competitiveness Analysis

The notion that the innovation approach is replacing the pragmatic transaction relations approach in the analysis of clusters, bears not only a change in the conceptual framework but also reflects a strive for identifying the real sources of industrial competitiveness. In doing so the new approach possesses two characteristics. First, it stresses the dynamics of competitiveness - the importance of co-operative and competitive interaction fueling innovative processes and competitive performance. Second, the innovation approach links the traditional macro perspective to the micro level analysis trying to explain how the evolving innovation practices in single cases shape innovation cultures of clusters and nations³⁶.

4.1 Analytical Framework

In combining the innovation approach and the cluster analysis it is essential to note that innovation activity cannot be isolated from its institutional context. The eventual competitive outcome is highly dependent on company strategies, business environment in general and the organizational flexibility. They interact with the innovation-induced technological change. With the focus on industrial clusters it is assumed here that the overall innovativeness and competitiveness is determined by three industry specific determinants; technology, characteristics of markets and corporate strategies and organization of the transactions (See Figure 10).

The model

Technological component of competitiveness refers to the available *tools* in producing the services and transferring them to the user. Basic technologies, which are often industry specific, are machines and equipment used for the physical production of the services. For services with lower knowledge-intensities, in particular basic technology is different from the *supporting technologies*, ICT and automation, which are used in designing, communications and delivering the services to the transacting parties. The most central sphere of technology is *knowledge and skills* i.e. the ability to utilize the avail-

³⁶ This may be called as a combined bottom-up and top-to-down approach.

able technologies. In maintaining the technological capabilities the role of education and R&D is central giving grounds for the supportive actions by Government.

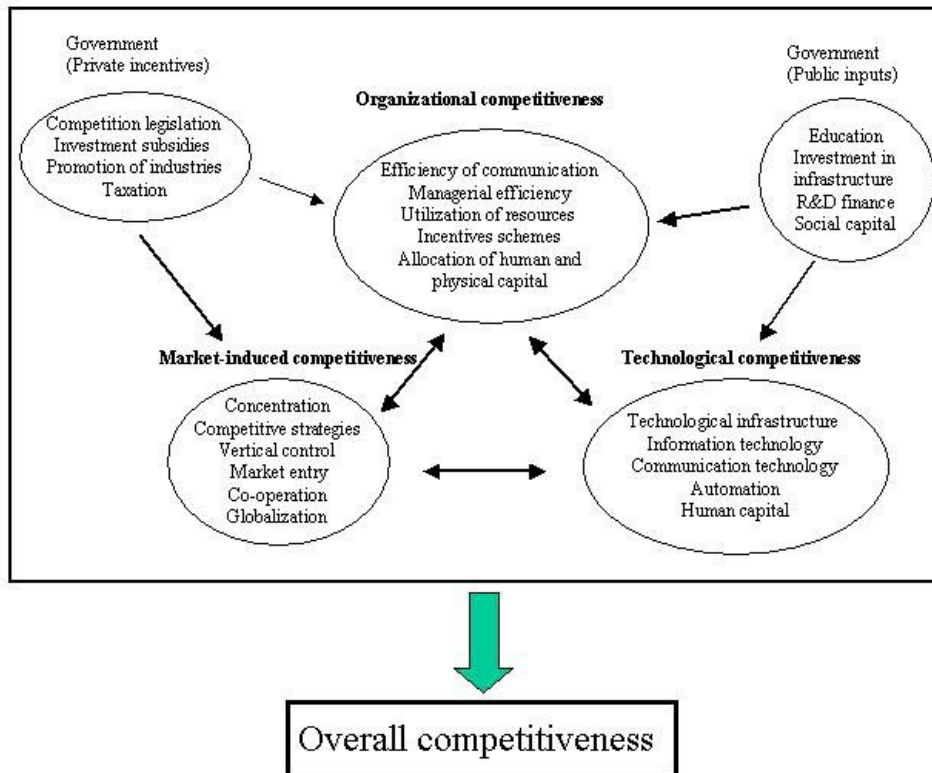


Figure 10. Determinants of competitiveness impacts of services

Market-induced competitiveness refers to the economic performance resulting from structural characteristics of the markets and strategies of enterprises accordingly - in this case service enterprises and forest industry enterprises. For instance, a concentrated market structure on either side may lead to inefficiencies through vertical control and horizontal collusion. On the other hand a fierce price competition may also be destructive even if there are otherwise favorable conditions for innovations. To quote Michael Porter (1990) a central factor is the sophistication of demand for services.

Related to the market-induced factors organizational competitiveness is determined by the ways service transactions are governed along the continuum between markets and hierarchies (Coase, 1937; Williamson, 1985). Brought onto operational level the problem reduces to the outsourcing strategies by the forest industry. Organizational competitiveness is manifested in the efficiency of communication, utilization of economies of scale and scope, incentives etc. As with the market-based competitiveness Government can influence on the creation of optimal governance structures.

The point is that while all the determinants influence each other, changes in technologies and to a lesser extent the competitive environment are more exogenous factors. Intensifying competition in the global forest product markets, boosted by the new information and communications technologies, forces the forest industry companies to adopt cost-reduction strategies, e.g. outsourcing of service activities. With the market-based push effects there is a pull effect in the form of changing supporting technologies. Technological progress and integration is shifting the comparative advantage in produc-

ing the services from the user industry to specialized service suppliers. In other words, there is a growing economic pressure to transform internal KISAs to KIBS³⁷.

Further accumulation of knowledge and upgrade of technological base strengthens the comparative advantage of specialized service suppliers also increasing their knowledge-intensity. This holds true not only for the explicitly defined KIBS but also services with lower knowledge contents. As a feedback effect, outsourcing and evolving economies of scale and scope in the production of services intensify competition within the service sector, which further encourages innovation.

The services

The model stresses the systemic nature of competitiveness pointing out the forces and mechanisms through which the determinants create competitive potential, with ideal responses. In the real world with imperfect markets there are impediments for these forces to be effective as indicated below. Since the frictions cannot be overcome by market forces only there is justification for selective policy measures by Government. In the empirical analysis below the focus is on specific service activities most critical for the competitiveness of the primary forest industries³⁸. Figure 11 illustrates the services and their linkages to the activities within the forest industry.

Transportation and warehousing – more generally *logistical services*³⁹ – and *maintenance services* are by the standard definition, low-knowledge-intensive services. As indicated by the statistical overview their importance is manifested in the high proportion of the total service expenses. In contrast, computer and related services (CRS) and technical consulting and engineering are characterized by higher knowledge-intensity but remarkably lower cost impacts.

There are other inherent differences, too. As the maintenance and transportation costs depend more on the volumes of production the associated strategy is cost minimization. For the CRS and engineering services a higher proportion of the costs is fixed investments, which are less sensitive to the level of production⁴⁰. Instead of the cost minimization strategy, quality and value added received from the services are more important objectives.

As conveyed by Figure 12 the CRS form an *umbrella* for the functional service entity, which is distinctively production-oriented. This is consistent with the technology-based strategies and frequently stated competitive advantages of the Finnish forest industries; remoteness from the markets has to be compensated by an efficient production and logistical infrastructure. While the logistical efficiency is of special concern for Finland the composition of the services reflects the characteristics of the Nordic forest clusters in general. Consequently, it is intuitively clear that the composition of the most competitive services may look completely different for example in the Central Europe or the USA. That is, there are lower requirements for technical and logistical services but higher demand for marketing and related consulting services.

³⁷ This is applicable to SAs to BSs too.

³⁸ The qualification of the services as most important is based on the statistical assessment and the survey study with interviews of industry experts (Viitamo, 2000).

³⁹ For the logistical services the focus on the transportation chain from forests to shipping ports.

⁴⁰ As a result of technological development and outsourcing there are specific areas of continuous service provisions.

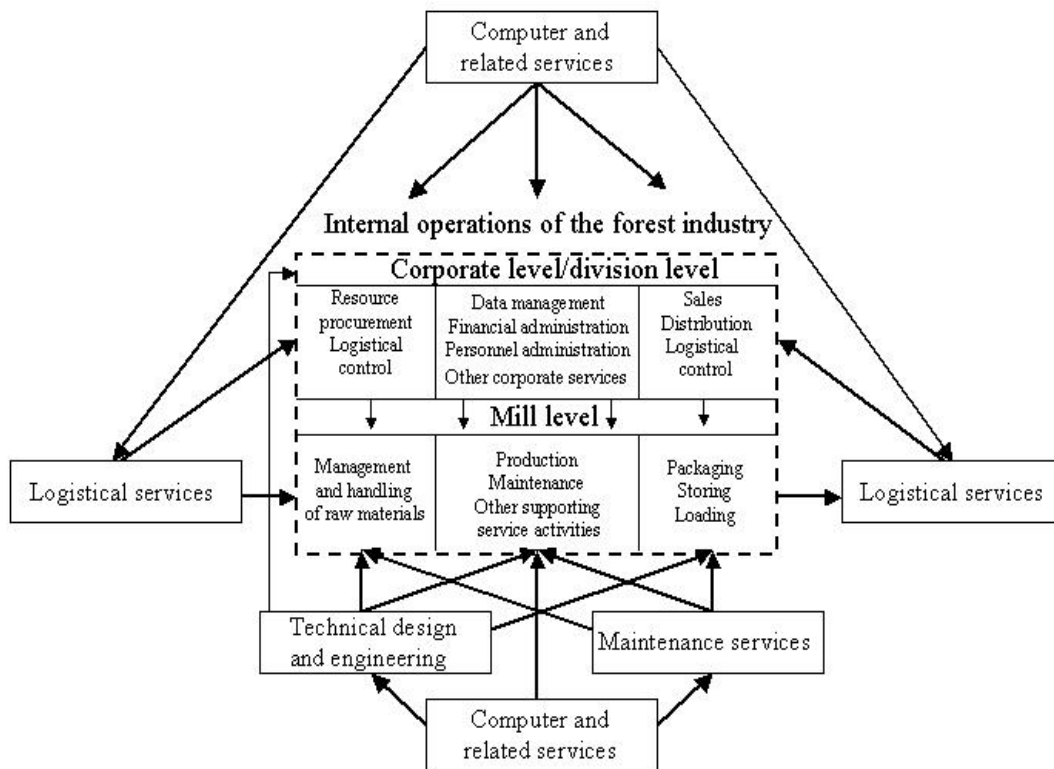


Figure 12. *The most important services for the primary woodworking industries and the pulp and paper industry (Viitamo, 2000)*

4.2 Technological Standard and Characteristics

In the international comparison the technological standards in service production are high in Finland. Historically this has resulted from an innovative combination of imported technologies with the development of domestic technologies suitable for the country specific conditions. Much of the progress is attributable to public investments in education and R&D as well. As with the development of process technologies the key drivers have been the disadvantages of the country and a consequent strive for substitution of the advanced factors for expensive basic factors.

As a result, more important than the basic technologies is the development of supporting technologies – ICT and automation – in production and supply of services. The supporting technologies are one example of a successful change from import dependence to emergence of domestic manufacture and accumulation of knowledge. Through the growing knowledge-intensity of services the expanding ICT cluster is also strengthening international competitiveness of the forest sector.

Logistical services

Logistical expenses account for the biggest share in the cost structure of the Finnish forest industry. Therefore, even marginal changes in the unit costs bear significant effects on the competitiveness on the export markets. The part of the logistical chain locating in Finland is the most critical and hence the potential for improvements through domestic actions is high.

With the globalization of the business activities the importance of logistics is increasingly recognized. In the revised supply chain strategy logistics is seen as an integrated process where the value added of the products grows as the spatial state of the products is changing to another. The objective is to minimize the logistical costs relative to the entire supply chain.

During the last forty years or so the productivity of the basic technology in logging and mill transportation has experienced a substantial increase; employment has dropped from 60,000 to below 10,000 while the number of trucks has fallen by one third. In contrast, the unit carrying capacity of the transportation equipment almost tripled during this time period⁴¹.

Finland is one of the leading producers of harvesters and wood handling equipment. Harvesters are equipped with the state-of-art ICT applications, which are increasingly used also in logging trucks. Digital maps, wireless communication and GPS-navigation systems are widely used to decrease the overall transaction costs between the logistics enterprises and the wood procurement units of the forest industry. This is enhancing the efficiency of the entire raw wood chains.

For the actual efficiency the decisive role is held by the logistical control systems of the forest industry companies, which built on specific software applications, optimize the wood procurement with the needs of several mill sites simultaneously. The state-owned railway company VR Cargo providing equivalent services, possesses a higher responsibility in controlling the wood deliveries⁴². VR Cargo is also up grading its data transmission connections with the biggest forest industry companies.

As with wood transportation the unit carrying capacity for the finished products is growing. The majority of the Finnish innovations is concentrated on handling of cargo and containers in particular. Through widespread utilization of robotics and telematics in loading and unloading activities labor productivity is increasing. VR Cargo is developing a fully automated loading system for paper rolls reflecting a more general tendency. By increasing the on-line information of the material flows and diminishing the overall transaction costs the new technologies are aimed to minimize manual work and hence incidence of human errors.

While new technologies, applied for e-commerce and company specific electronic customer networks, are bearing changes in market strategies, there are also more concrete and predictable developments in the operations of the logistics itself. An example is the scenario presented by the Finnish Association of Logistics (2000):

Information technology will define the logistical solutions, reserve the space for cargo, and combine transportation flows and search for return freights. Telematics will control the on-line routing for road transportation. The development of the material flow control will result in decreased warehousing and increased terminal-based arrangements, respectively. The concentration of material flows enables more large-scale application of robotics and automation. The use of storage and material handling automation will increase in all sites. A flexible small-scale service production will develop strongly and may replace large-scale production around 2010.

⁴¹ In general the whole logistical chain from forests to mills has experienced a transformation from labor-intensive manufacturing to mechanical service activity. This is not, however, taken into account in the industrial statistics. While road transportation is classified in services, harvesting is not, although they together form an integrated business chain sharing equivalent technological and business characteristics.

⁴² This is mainly because of the bigger size of the company and delivered quantities.

Maintenance services

The other cost-intensive service activity, maintenance and reparations, consists of heterogeneous group of tangible and intangible production inputs. According to the most general definition maintenance services encompass all activities aiming to maintain and improve of the functional properties of the manufacturing equipment and management as well. Within the service industry maintenance is divided into three categories. Mechanical maintenance of process equipment and buildings are the least knowledge-intensive and also the most labor-intensive service activities. In this respect an opposite is the maintenance of electrical and automation systems. Finally, outside the production activities maintenance services are also needed for administration and management.

When the direct costs of maintenance are substantial, so are the direct and indirect effects of maintenance on the operational costs and long-term profitability of the business, too. In this respect the effectiveness of maintenance is more on future operations. From the perspective of the forest industry the objective is to maximize the rate of functionality, which measures the extent of losses caused by *unanticipated* breaks and non-optimal assemblies and adjustments.

Besides the high cost-intensity the importance of maintenance activities is reflected by the growing need to improve the functionality as the competition is becoming more intense and global. This has brought about considerable revision in conceptual thinking and strategies accordingly (See Figure 13). The objective of evolving proactive maintenance is to maximize the overall productivity of the investments through their life cycles⁴³. According to the new approach *equipment and its maintenance form an integrated business entity, the profitability of which depends on the total management of available resources*.

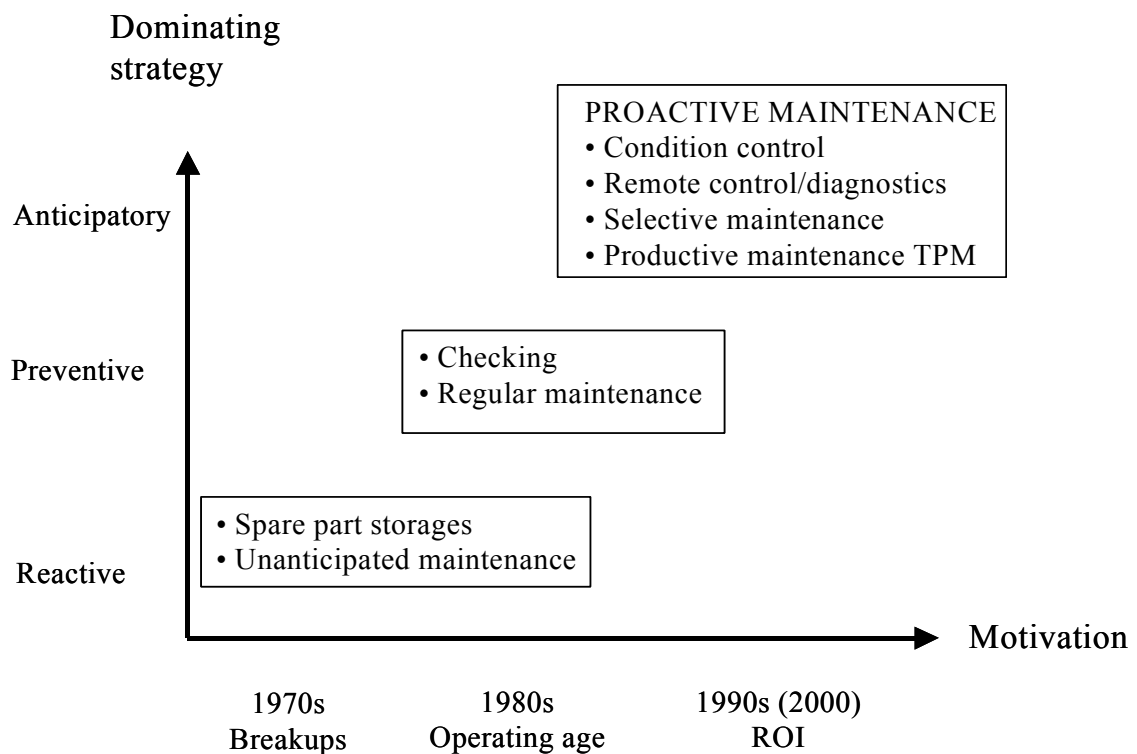


Figure 13. The dynamics of maintenance operations

⁴³ The share of proactive maintenance is approaching 50 % of all maintenance costs in the Finnish manufacturing sector.

Apart from the increased competitive pressure of the global markets the knowledge-intensity of maintenance services are fostered by the complexity and advances of the production technologies. This is the case with the pulp and paper industries, in particular⁴⁴. As the control of paper machines is increasingly based on embedded software the share of automation and electrical maintenance is growing respectively⁴⁵.

Computer-aided technologies are extensively used also in the design and documentations of maintenance blurring the distinction to other service industries, especially engineering and consulting. Data flows between maintenance and the forest industry companies are transmitted wirelessly, which enables lower spare part storages and transaction costs. Following the advances in measurement techniques there is a growing demand for information on the functional state of the machinery⁴⁶.

The essence of the proactive maintenance is remote control and diagnostics where the measurement information is available on-line in the data networks. This makes the service markets spatially independent. With the internet-based spare part deliveries the new communications technologies support a global business scope. An example is the Future Care concept of Metso Corporation, the leading paper technology producer in the world.

Parallel to the increasing knowledge-intensity the maintenance services are facing a strengthening business orientation; services are commoditized and marketed as branded packages. New technologies and technological convergence increase the economies of scale and scope in the service production favouring outsourcing and increased concentration on the supply side. According to expert assessments only 25 % of maintenance know-how is currently industry specific.

Technical design and consulting

Among the investigated services technical engineering and consulting – or more generally engineering services – have for decades belonged to the spearhead industries of the Finnish forest cluster. In general engineering services comprise all activities related to the design of investment projects and their execution and consulting services as well. According to the taxonomy presented in Section 2 consulting i.e. selling knowledge possesses the highest growth potential in the long run.

As with the majority of service industries technical engineering forms complex links between industrial clusters. This occurs in two ways. First, there are distinct economies of scope across industries i.e. the engineering companies are typically supplying several manufacturing sectors. Second, there are cumulative effects through the input-output relations, which are illustrated in Figure 14.

Though the historical success of the Finnish engineering know-how is indisputable, there is a growing pressure for reorientation driven by the globalization of the forest industries and the emergence of ICT-based tools in providing the engineering services. As the center of gravity is moving away from green field investments to replacement investments the requirements on design and project management increases accordingly.

⁴⁴ For new paper machines the share automation of the total investment costs has risen from 5 % to 30 % in the 1990s.

⁴⁵ In the 1990s the share has grown from 18 % to 29 %.

⁴⁶ This is a concrete example on the growth possibilities for information services discussed in Section 3.

At the same time environmental issues and energy efficiency are getting higher priority and setting the guidelines for the entire planning process.

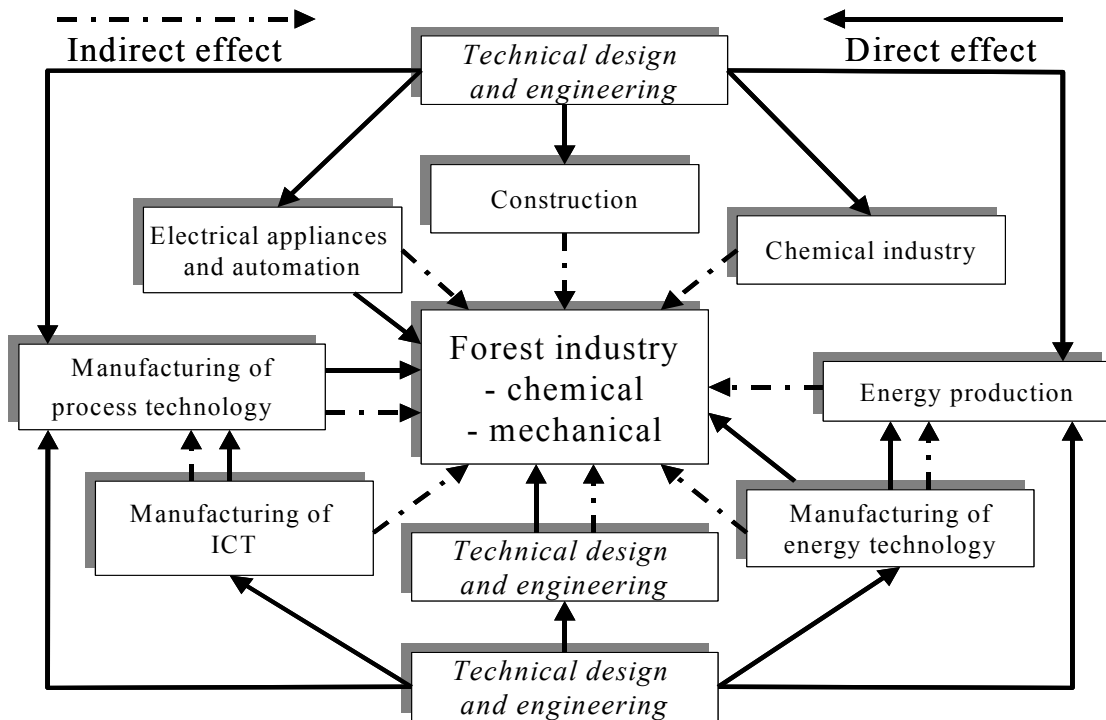


Figure 14. Cluster linkages of the engineering services

As with the maintenance services the growing rate of automation in the production processes is reflected in a higher knowledge-intensity of the engineering services. This is strengthened by the development of the supporting technologies. A switch over to the CAD-programs is speeding up the design process and thus diminishes the risks of human errors. Similarly, with improved accuracy, the application of three-dimensional (3D) modelling enhances the efficiency of producing drawings. Simulation of the processes is a central task in modelling, for which the engineering companies are developing or purchasing specific software.

In the forefront of the technological progress is *fotogrammetry*, where pictures on the production facilities are transmitted digitally to engineering companies for 3D modelling and documentation. ICT is integrating the information systems of the services companies and their customers diminishing the importance of geographic proximity. The growing processing capacity of computers enables the handling of still larger customer specific data flows favouring more extended outsourcing.

Computer and related services

Compared to other services computer and related services (CRS) are conceptually more obscure. This results from the diversity of services and the difficulty in separating the outputs of hardware from those of software and other intangibles like databank and consulting services. The inseparability is also characteristic of the converging computer and communications technologies.

While data management expenses are as low as 1 % of the turnover of the forest industry information technologies bear a substantial potential for the increased competitiveness throughout the value chain. With the rapid technological progress the opportunity set is ever expanding. From the competitiveness point of view more essential are, however, the indirect effects, i.e. the application of ICT in the production the other services raising the knowledge-intensity and innovation potential of the whole business service sector.

In the long run the main characteristics of the technological change have been the diminishing size and growing intelligence of the computer systems. A current trend for the data processing and the software services is a change over to the server-based data network systems, which improves the cost-efficiency of the information infrastructures. The transfer of software services to extranets improves the efficiency further; customers pay only for the effective use of software, which is by definition real service. Hence, technological change is implicitly associated with the outsourcing of services.

Other distinct trends are the *convergence* and *standardization* of technologies. While new opportunities in transferring data are merging information technology with communications technology, the proliferation of embedded software in communications and process automation is extending the technological integration to the mill level operations, too.

Standardization implies that tailor-made software design is replaced by industry specific or more general software, for which the service companies are developing modular applications for various corporate activities. Being constructed on the same platform modules are compatible and standardized. An example is the Enterprise Resource Planning systems (ERP), which may comprise all administrative and mill level activities. The markets of ERP systems are growing rapidly and the solutions are well suited especially for multinational enterprises.

While the domestic manufacturing of computers is a relatively small-scale activity the key areas technological standard, know-how, and communications technology make the Finnish ICT sector internationally highly competitive. Among the spearhead products are software packages for the process industries and service sector as well as the wireless communications equipment and systems. Together they form the technological platform for the competitiveness impacts of services.

Opportunities and obstacles

The advances in the supporting technologies with the growing competitive pressure from the globalized forest products and technology markets are the main drivers of the dynamics of the competitiveness. Besides the direct impacts on the productivity of the services, the application of ICT implies a higher potential for innovations, upgrading and a more diversified supply of services. In spite of the general advances there are some areas, where, by removing the bottlenecks, competitiveness impacts could be further enhanced. While this gives justification for some correcting policy measures certain threats for the future development still remain.

While the extended application of state-of-art technologies is raising the knowledge content of the cost-intensive services, logistics and maintenance services, there is much room for upgrading the skills and knowledge base of the workforce itself. This is mainly

attributable to the speed of the technological change and the ageing of the workforce, which is increasing the gap between technological possibilities and willingness and ability to utilize it.

The strategic importance of maintenance services is increasingly recognized by the Government, which has launched multidisciplinary R&D projects and education programs. The situation is more aggravated in the logistics necessitating more governmental support for education and promotion campaigns. Upgrading of skills is needed not only on the operational level but also the managerial skills are often deficient. This is especially the case with the SMEs in raw wood transportation. Deficiencies can be found even in the basic infrastructure i.e. road and railway networks, which need improved maintenance and extensions.

For technical engineering and consulting, governmental actions are in general sufficient. Nevertheless, there are signs of growing difficulties in recruiting new work force. This is because industries like manufacture of electronics and telecommunications equipment are competing on the same labor markets and capable to offer more attractive career opportunities. Hence, as with logistics ageing is becoming a severe problem needing more promotional measures by the industry and the Government

Another obstacle is related to finance. In order to participate in publicly funded research programs engineering companies are often, by funding rules, forced to cooperate with big equipment manufacturers, which are able to reap most of the economic benefits from the projects. This leads to incentive problems hindering the commercialization of otherwise competitive innovations by the engineering companies. An inherent problem is also the difficulty to patent knowledge.

Governmental support and collaboration with the manufacturing sector has played a major role in raising the technological standards of ICT and related services. This is augmented by the accumulation of the knowledge within the forest industry facilitating the development of industry specific technical solutions.

While the overall development has been impressive there are some factors bringing uncertainty on the future development. The most important obstacle in the near future is the availability of qualified workforce. In contrast to the engineering services this is not because of the unattractiveness of the industry but because the deficiency of the educational capacity to meet the growing demand for labor. As a result the recruitment from abroad is increasing.

A potential threat in the long is the structural developments of the ICT sector itself. In Finland as well as in Sweden the ICT sector is dominated by the development and manufacture of consumer appliances, where cost efficiency and mass production is increasingly the driving force for the competitiveness. With the growing vulnerability to market uncertainty the chosen strategy may weaken innovativeness and the progress of industrial applications in particular.

4.3 Organizational and Market Induced Competitiveness

Of the two other determinants of competitiveness, the mode of governance of the service transactions defines the level of organizational efficiency. In theory there is an ar-

ray of organizational forms with associated efficiency implications, but here the focus is on the general make-or-buy strategies. In particular the main issue raised here is whether governance structures are sensitive to changes in the market structures and technologies.

As noted in Section 4.1 extended application of new technologies in the service production is transferring the competitive advantage from internal to external service procurement. This happens in two ways. First, the raising knowledge-intensity and complexity of the services favour a specialized and independent production. With the revised incentives entrepreneurship adds to the innovativeness strengthening further the knowledge-intensity. Second, standardization and convergence of technologies increase the potential for economies of scale and scope in the supply of services, which makes outsourcing a cost effective strategy.

For the market-induced competitiveness, which refers to the impacts of industry structures and associated strategies in both sides of the transaction, there are two principal sources. Competition on the forest product markets determines the properties and level of induced demand for services and but also the extent forest industry possess the possibility exert monopoly power on the service enterprises. The latter is co-affected by the structure and strategies of the service industries.

For the past two decades or so the tendency in the manufacturing sector has been a gradual outsourcing of the services activities i.e. transformation of KISAs to KIBSs. The forest sector however, is lagging behind by pace and scope. The reasons for that can be reduced to two major factors, the conservatism of the corporate management and the defensive trade union policy. For the latter case outsourcing is opposed by the trade union because it is regarded as weakening its negotiation power in relation to the employer side⁴⁷.

Logistical services

For the raw wood and mill site transportation services the strategy of the forest industry has been entrepreneurial outsourcing, where the market-based incentives have led to a higher cost-efficiency. Transforming responsibilities further to entrepreneurs could further generate these efficiencies and utilization of scale economies.

The fact the market structure of the entrepreneurial logistics is close to perfect competition gives a full negotiations power to the big pulp and paper corporations, which are able to define the fees and technical standards of the transportation services. Such an absorption pricing strategy prohibits the development of business standards and hence, also indirectly the long-term competitiveness of the forest industry. The most effective counter strategy for the service companies would be the increase of company size by horizontal and vertical integration within the logistical chain.

In comparison with the raw wood logistics there are more organizational frictions in the transportation of the finished products. Many of upstream activities located at mill sites could be efficiently outsourced⁴⁸ and reorganized but this is hampered by trade unionism. Regarding the logistical chain as a whole there are inefficiencies attributable to conflicting interests of the parties and inconsistent communication practices. Organiza-

⁴⁷ This is the case mainly with the pulp and paper industry.

⁴⁸ For example there are number of railway terminal activities located within the mills sites.

tionally more efficient alternatives would be a hierarchical system where successive stages are set under a common ownership or a decentralized system based on a closer companionship.

Also the market structure of the transportation of finished products is competitive but the industry is more concentrated and there is more room for differentiation. Therefore, the price competition is less fierce and the distribution of the negotiation power between the forest industry and service companies is more balanced⁴⁹. This is facilitated by the fact that the companies are central actors in the logistical chain through which the forest industries provide service-containing products to their customers.

The ownership of the pulp and paper industry on port operators and the formation of company and mill specific *logistical tubes*⁵⁰ are blocking competition within harbor business activities and thereby the realization of the overall logistical gains. Restructuring of ownership towards more centralized and independent port operations would result in an improved market and organizational efficiency.

The realization of the needed changes is however, highly conditional on the market structure and strategies of the forest industry itself. First, the big companies with a global scope are utilizing internal scale economies in developing their specific logistical infrastructure. This is not optimal from the point of view of the forest industry located in Finland⁵¹. However, as the relative strategic importance of home country diminishes there are better conditions for collaboration between companies and mills. Some pooling of interests is indicated by the recent joint research projects⁵².

Maintenance services

Contrary to the pulp and paper industry outsourcing of the logistics and the maintenance services is more based on profitability assessments of the management and the owners. However, there is much underutilized potential in the joint procurement of the maintenance services and utilization of the associated economies of scale. For organizational innovations the panel industry is showing the way. In cases where the panel production is reorganized by MBOs⁵³, strengthened entrepreneurial incentives are manifested in the concentration on the core businesses and outsourcing of the maintenance and other supporting service activities

For the pulp and paper industry the major obstacle for the organizational adaptation is the trade union policy, which strives for keeping up the in-house maintenance activities. Depending e.g. on the age of the production units there are differences between companies and mills however. Given the institutional restrictions the current tendency can be characterized as an evolutionary process (See Figure 15), where organizational innovations move slowly to market based governance structures. Moreover, a viable future scenario is the extension of outsourcing further to production processes and operations of entire mills⁵⁴.

⁴⁹ Especially, this is the case with VR Cargo, which dominates the transportation of paper rolls to the harbors.

⁵⁰ This is a professional term for established logistical chains between mills and harbors.

⁵¹ More generally the advantage of Finland is no more equivalent to advantage of the forest industry as it used to be twenty years ago.

⁵² Examples are KETJU and VIPRO projects funded by the National Technology Agency.

⁵³ Management Buy Out (MBO) has been successfully applied in fiberboard and chipboard industries.

⁵⁴ This is e.g. a prediction and stated objective of Metso Corporation.

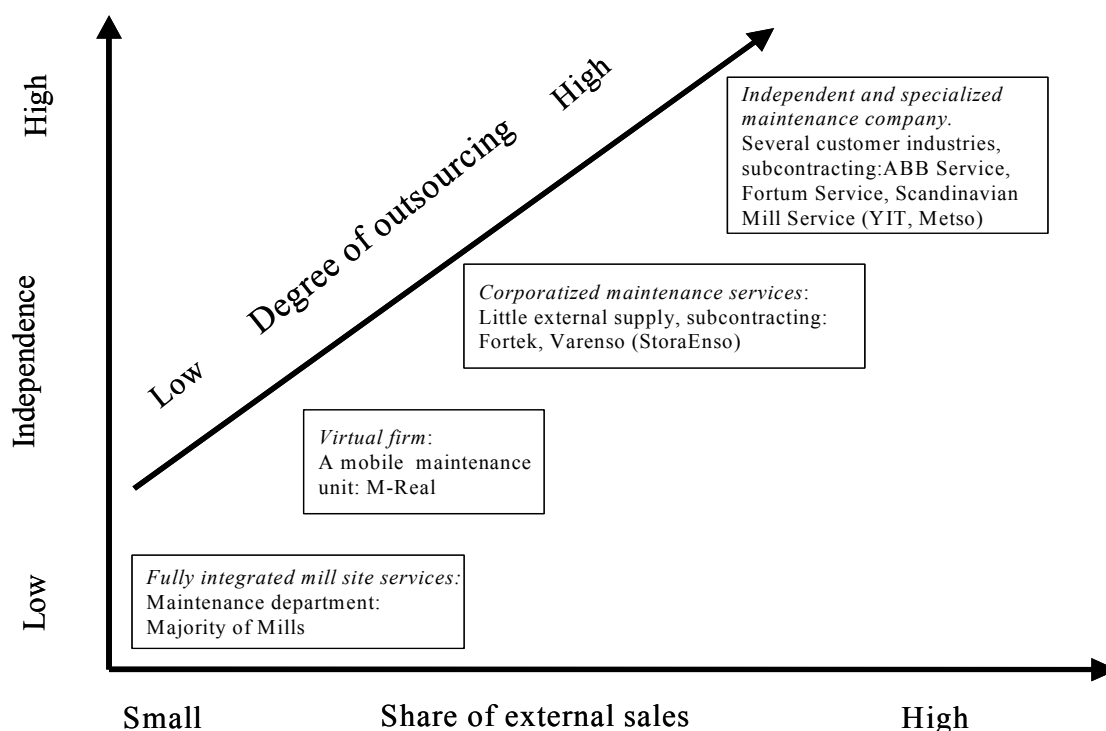


Figure 15. Organizational evolution of the maintenance services

Due to the organizational frictions the market potential for maintenance services is high⁵⁵. As a result, there exists an array of different business concepts and companies competing for the gradually opening service markets. The maintenance units and companies owned by the forest industry are competing with the full-service companies⁵⁶ focusing on the entire manufacturing sector. Additionally, the equipment manufacturers are increasingly entering their niche markets as they are compelled to search for new business opportunities. A fourth smaller group consists of local workshops acting typically as subcontractors for the leading companies.

Regardless of the concentration of the external service markets competition is fierce and innovative especially among the full-service companies. Innovativeness, which is partly fueled by the organizational frictions, is manifested in the commoditization of services with different levels of coverage. Business orientation and the better opportunities in exploiting the scale economies across the industries are shifting the competitive advantage from internally to externally procured services. The quality of the demand of the forest industry is however high attributable to the growing complexity of the processes, high technical skills of the internal service departments and high sensitivity of the profitability to technical disturbances.

As a result of the inflexible labor markets and high concentration of the pulp and paper industry the relative negotiation power of maintenance companies is weak. Another obstacle for the promotion of the full-service concept is the conservatism of the corporate management itself. Due to the lack of collaborative traditions it is difficult to see the

⁵⁵ In this respect Finland is no exception.

⁵⁶ Examples are ABB Service and Fortum Service.

benefits from the companionship, which typically materialize only in the long run. Also the idea that maintenance could be a business activity based on win-win relationship is still relatively strange within the pulp and paper industry.

Technical engineering and consulting

Similar to maintenance the development of engineering and consulting services to a separate industry has resulted from the gradual outsourcing of the internal service activities of the forest industries. In contrast to the latter however, the process for the former has been more evolutionary adaptation to the changing working environment. This is even though the occasional resistance of the middle management of the deepening integration of the engineering companies into the production processes.

Currently the strategy in the forest industry is to transfer ever-larger engineering assignments to suppliers forcing engineering companies to diversify into new, related service activities. This also is changing the subcontracting relations and intensifying competition between services companies and equipment manufacturers, which are outsourcing production and assembling activities.

What follows is a gradual convergence of these two supplying industries. Technological progress and changes in the competitive strategies reshape the division of labor across the core industries depicted in Figure 16. There exist two simultaneous processes. As companies are increasingly technically integrated through information networks and computer systems they seek new business opportunities by balancing between internal and external services.

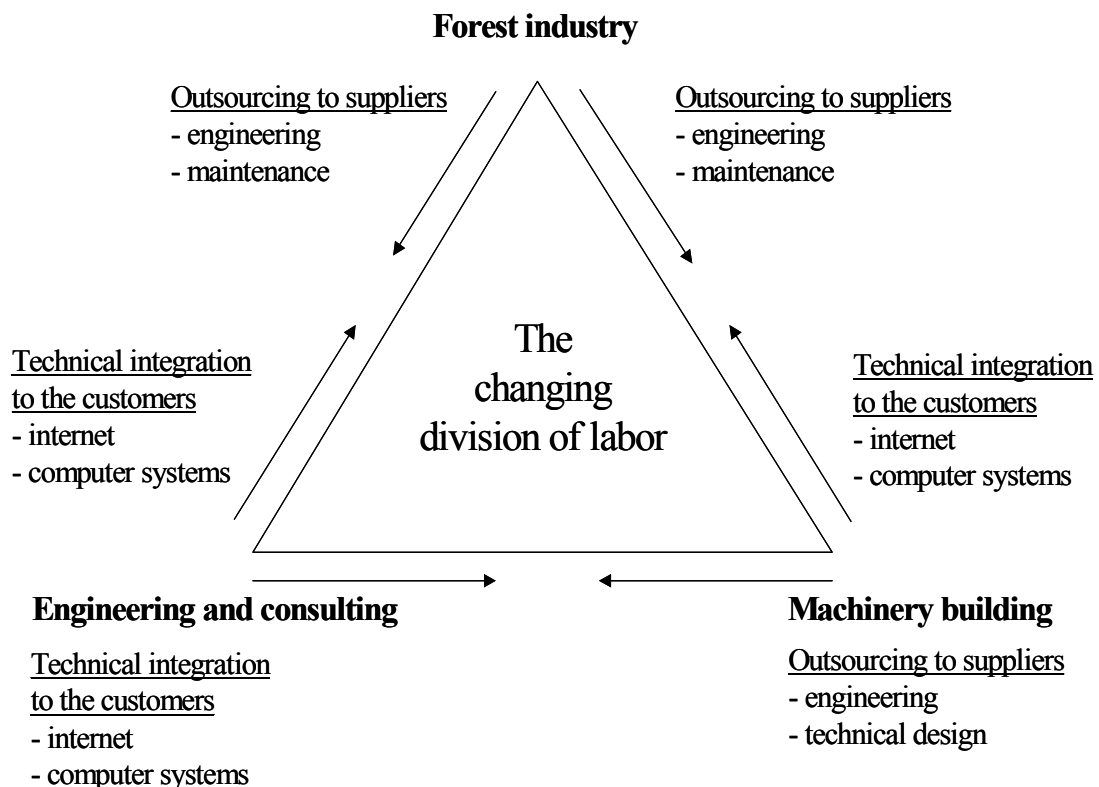


Figure 16. Restructuring of engineering and manufacturing activities

Technical engineering and consulting for pulp and paper industry in particular, has for decades been one of the spearhead business areas of the Finnish forest cluster. Although few companies dominate the market competition among them is intense and cooperation occasional only. While fierce price competition is sustaining operational efficiency opportunities for development of business practices is therefore limited⁵⁷.

The business relations between the forest industry and the engineering companies are well established and there is a long tradition of solving technical problems in a close collaboration. From the perspective of engineering companies the demand of the forest industry is exacting but lacking innovativeness. That is, functionality and references are the main criteria for selecting technical solutions. Due to its concentrated market structure the forest industry possesses negotiation power, which also impede a more innovative collaboration.

From the perspective of the forest industry the international competitiveness the engineering industry affects as a two-edged sword. That is, state-of-art knowledge is continuously available and it can be transferred to new mills purchased e.g. abroad but at the same time knowledge is leaking out to competitors shrinking the technological lead of the Finnish forest industry companies. Nevertheless, information leakages and spillovers are the main drivers of cross-border cluster formation for example in the EU⁵⁸.

Computer-based and related services

With the common technological characteristics the structural development of the CBR services has been similar to that the technical engineering and consulting. The impetus towards a wider outsourcing of the services took place in 1984 as Enso Gutzeit corporatized its computer department, forming currently the core of TietoEnator's forest industry business segment⁵⁹.

Of the competitive determinants in Figure 10 technological development has been the main driver for growing outsourcing. That is, the complexity of ICT and the need for upgrade knowledge, anticipation of future trends and the maintenance of high utilization rate of assets is shifting the competitive advantage from internally to externally provided services. This is further facilitated by a lower company specificity of the software, the emergence of large software packages (ERP) and higher frequency of transactions⁶⁰ creating scale economies in the production of services.

While the forest industry is no exception in this respects, the shift towards externally provided services has proceeded more slowly than in the manufacturing sector on average. A partial explanation is the outdated view that in-house computer service activities are one of the company specific assets creating competitive advantage and it should not be outsourced⁶¹. A more plausible explanation is the risks associated with an extensive outsourcing, which is also exposed to counter arguments. Namely, if the only change is,

⁵⁷ A good example of destructive price competition can be found in the Finnish steam boiler industry in the 1980s.

⁵⁸ According to expert assessments the technology gap is already closed. This is demonstrated by the fact the biggest and the most productive pulp and paper mills are located outside Finland.

⁵⁹ See below.

⁶⁰ A change from a discrete to continuous flow of transactions.

⁶¹ This view is typically adopted by the computer service personnel, which try to give justification for their positions.

say, a partial transfer of the in-house personnel to the staff of the service companies the risks are few but the potential for efficiency gains is high.

Nevertheless, by their outsourcing strategies the big forest companies differ substantially reflecting different corporate cultures and historical backgrounds. The most advanced outsourcing strategy - extended applications of ERP-concept and utilization of data network services - is adopted by M-Real. To a lesser extent an equivalent change is taking place in the sawmill and the panel industries too. According to a future scenario of the computer service industry there will be a widespread changeover from internal KISAs towards ASP-based KIBS⁶² in the whole forest industry.

Regardless of the fluctuating forest product markets the demand for computer-based and related services is constantly growing. In the conceptual framework presented in Table 2 the growth of external demand is boosted by industrial growth, substitution effect, outsourcing and complementary nature of information. Supplementary factors are the growing value added in the forest products and international mergers⁶³.

Though the service market in Finland is dominated by few multinational enterprises, typically diversified to all industrial segments, the competition among them is intense. Moreover, they face competition from smaller domestic and often more specialized software providers. As the computer services form an umbrella linking to all other services (See Figure 12) the distinction between service activities is diminishing enhancing competition further.

Technological convergence is reshaping competition also vertically. While the leading companies supplying process automation are expanding upwards to the mill systems increasing competition in bottom-up direction, the software companies are moving from corporate level ERP-systems deeper into production processes. That may be called top-to-down competitive strategy.

Among all industry segments the forest industry can be assigned as special a strength of the Finnish CBR service industry. The leading domestic company is TietoEnator Corporation, which is also well established in the international markets⁶⁴. In general the integration of process automation and ERP-systems facilitates the growth of a new knowledge-intensive service industry in the Finnish forest cluster. The competitive edge is demonstrated by the fact that the technology leaders in the forest industry have located their product development activities in Finland⁶⁵.

As with the other services the concentration of the Finnish forest industry has strengthened the negotiation power on the demand side of the markets. As a result of the technical progress, however, this is partly leveled off by a growing dependency on fewer suppliers. From their perspective the Finnish and also the Swedish forest industry is more innovative even though the forest industry in general is more conservative relative to other manufacturing and service sectors.

⁶² In the Application Service Provisioning (ASP) concept software is available in the servers connected to the data networks of the customer companies. Licenses are then replaced by the purchased time for using the services.

⁶³ In the latter case merging of the purchased production units to the existing capacity necessitates usually an upgrade of the data transmission infrastructures.

⁶⁴ A supporting factor is that the forest industry is a niche market, which is not attractive for the big multinationals.

⁶⁵ These companies are Metso, Honeywell, ABB, SAP Finland and TietoEnator.

In the forest industry there is a deep-rooted view that information technology is primarily a device for overall cost reduction. While the application of new technologies aims to substitute technology for labor the objective is also to minimize costs incurred by data processing and services. Much less attention is paid to the opportunities for increased productivity, the creation of value added and innovations as company specific assets. This would necessitate a closer collaboration with the service companies⁶⁶.

5 Conclusions and Discussion

Policy options

Growing interdependence of national economies and the evolving information societies in the industrialized countries are bringing about substantial changes in the business environment. While an array of new competitive strategies has emerged, governments are facing a common policy dilemma: how to balance between the promotion of high-tech industries offering superior growth prospects with high uncertainty and the traditional manufacturing sector associated with lower growth opportunities but more predictable economic outcome. As indicated by international statistics countries differ by pace and extent of restructuring, Finland showing a distinct ICT-oriented industrial strategy.

Independent of the chosen manufacturing policies there is a common strive for strengthening the service sector, which currently accounts for 60 % to 70 % of the GDP in industrialized countries. In the following the general pattern of Finland shows a structural anomaly, that is, a high proportion of non-marketed or public services in the total service production. This is characteristic of Sweden, too. Consequently, the share of marketed services (business services) in the GDP is predominantly lower than in the EU and the USA. Although the productivity growth of the marketed services in Finland has been high in international comparison (Mankinen & al. 2002), their lower share in the GDP indicates that there is a high potential for outsourcing and increased exports of services⁶⁷. This creates a major challenge for the restructuring policy.

Based on KISA and KIBS concepts the study provides a supplementary taxonomy on service activities. The purpose is to give more insight on the characteristics of services and their growth opportunities, which is to support industrial policy design, too. For the functional services with low knowledge-intensity the growth is constrained, since service-intensity of production processes tends to be fixed⁶⁸. For these services customer industries apply primarily cost minimization strategies. In contrast, through better substitutability and complementarities with other inputs information services possess higher growth potential. They bear the potential for increased value of the final products enabling differentiation strategy.

For the KISA or more generally SA approach, outsourcing is growth-neutral, since it does not differentiate between internal and external services. In reality outsourcing is motivated by improved quality and cost efficiency of services facilitating e.g. exports.

⁶⁶ Probably the best example is the collaboration between TietoEnator and Stora Enso.

⁶⁷ Regarding the long-term productivity growth of manufacturing Finland outperforms the leading industrialized countries. The major problem is low productivity of public services. Therefore increased privatization and outsourcing of supporting services is called for.

⁶⁸ In the long run there may be substitution towards services, which reflect the changes in the relative prices of inputs and a more efficient use of physical inputs.

In that case neutrality is relaxed. Moreover, on the user side the change over to external procurement may release resources for the growth in core businesses. For the KIBS or BS approach, which is the basis for most statistical analyses, outsourcing is seen as to increase the business service sector. Consequently, there are three policy implications stemming from the reasoning here.

First, any policy measure targeted on manufacturing sector influences also the services. If economic activity in manufacturing grows, so do proportionally the volume of internal KISAs and the induced demand for external services, KIBS. If the primary objective is to increase the relative size of the service sector, innovativeness and information contents of the services have to be enhanced. This is facilitated by application of ICT in design, producing and transacting the services, which also improves the competitiveness of manufacturing. Finally, the increased complexity of technologies associated with the growing knowledge-intensity encourages outsourcing further, which from the statistical point of view reduces the biases in assessing the actual size of the business service sector in the economy.

Potential of the forest sector

In spite of the fact that economic growth, employment and welfare are increasingly reliant on the production of services (private and public), the engine of sustainable growth is still the innovative and cost efficient manufacturing sector (See e.g. EU Commission, 2002)⁶⁹. For the business services in particular, domestic manufacturing industries offer an established home market, which, through the Porterian demand effect, facilitates the penetration further into export market (Porter, 1990). The restructuring of the manufacturing sector and simultaneous outsourcing of service activities reinforce the interdependency and positive externalities.

In this respect the forest sector is of special interest. With its considerable size in some countries – e.g. Austria, Finland and Sweden – the forest industries form a solid market segment for the service enterprises. The other side of the coin is the low-tech nature of wood processing leaving much potential in utilizing competitiveness effects through the innovativeness of services. Unutilized competitive potential exists also in outsourcing. As pointed out above the operating environment of the business enterprises⁷⁰ is altering as a result of globalized competition and technological advances in the process technologies and ICT. While these push-and-pull effects have encouraged to a growing external procurement of services, the forest industries, due to inherent rigidities of the industry, are lagging behind.

According to the security-based explanation of the forest industry, outsourcing is restricted because of the capital-intensity of the production, that is in-house activities are needed as insurance⁷¹ to secure the availability of services and to prevent and minimize the losses caused by abrupt brakes of production processes. More plausible explanations are the permanence of industrial cultures and inflexibilities of the labor markets⁷². Either way the forest sector, the primary processing in particular, possesses high potential for

⁶⁹ In the international division of labour some countries may specialize in services but for larger economic areas like the EU specialization is impossible.

⁷⁰ Manufacturing and services.

⁷¹ This includes the premium caused by the cost inefficiency in providing the services.

⁷² Still in the 1960s the Finnish forest industry companies tried to produce all services needed in the production processes and demanded by the employees. The latter included health care, education, day care, shops etc.

direct outsourcing, which releases resources for the strengthening of the core businesses⁷³. Figure 17, where the mill-site employment in the chemical forest industry is broken down to production and supporting service activities, illustrates the potential.

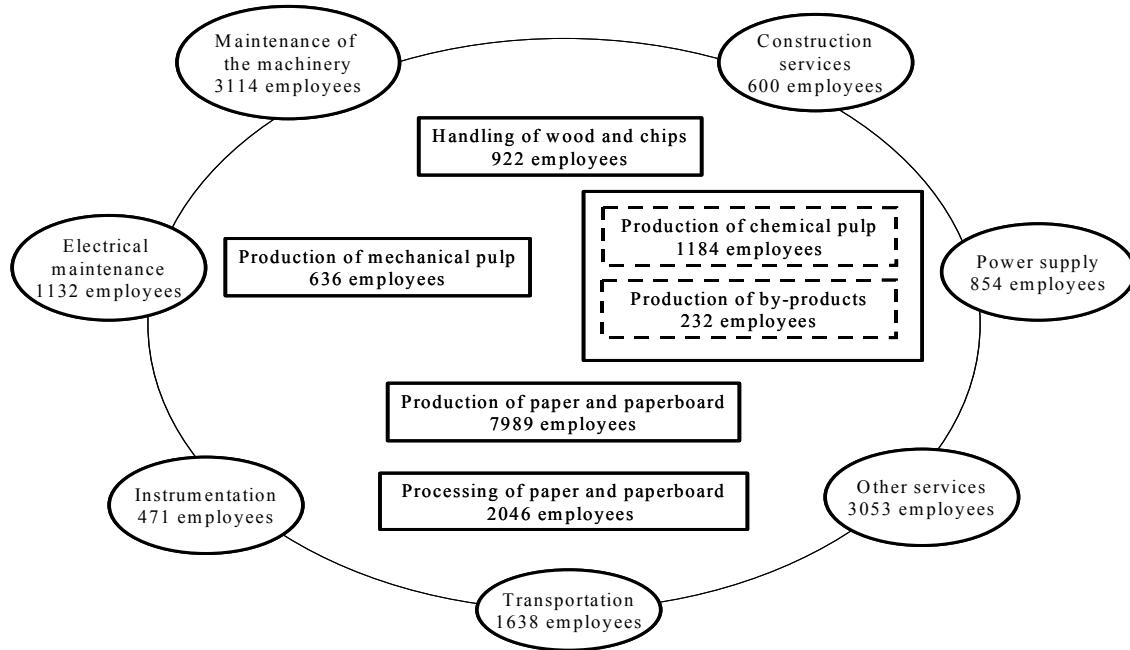


Figure 17. Production related employment of the Finnish pulp and paper mills in 1998 (Forest Industries Federation, 1998)

Regarding the forest cluster as a whole the dynamics of the transaction relations are not confined to manufacturing vis-à-vis services only. The integration of external and internal data transmission networks of the cluster enterprises enables a more efficient execution of make-or-buy strategies on services and fosters competition within and among the supporting industries. This makes the KISA approach more workable in assessing the growth of the service sector⁷⁴.

Besides the growth of KIBS sector the manufacturing suppliers are also entering service businesses in search for more secured income flows. To a lesser extent this is the case also with the forest industry as companies try to increase the value added of their supply and increase the switching costs of their clients. Most notably this concerns logistical services purchased from service companies, customer specific product design and information services on the properties of the products⁷⁵. As with the supporting services the forest industry is to a growing extent delivering their services through the data networks.

⁷³ Unexploited is also complementary use for innovative KIBS.

⁷⁴ In this respect the lower-right corner in Table 2 becomes most appropriate.

⁷⁵ The higher the value added of the products, the more viable design and information services are.

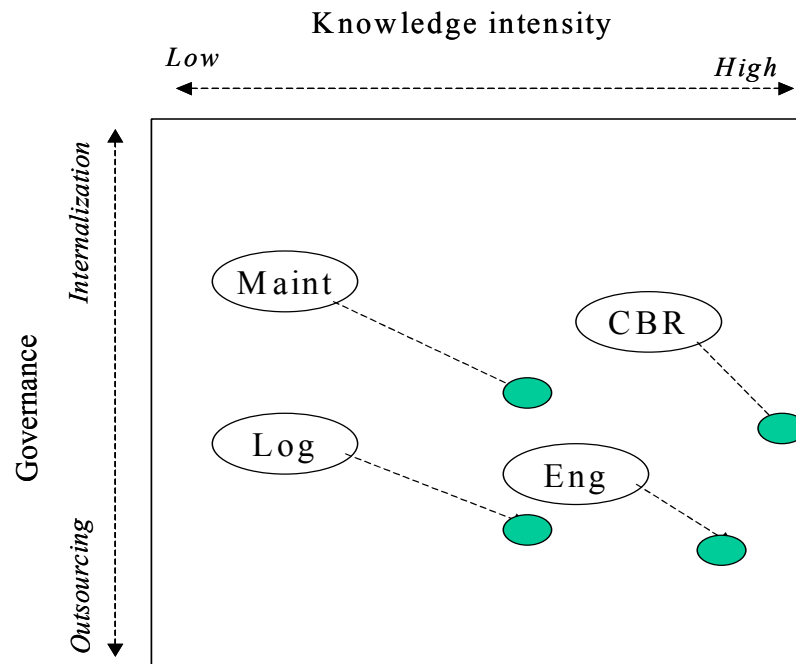


Figure 18. The dynamics of the investigated services⁷⁶

Based on Table 2 (See Section 2.1) the main dimensions of the investigated services are presented in Figure 18, where the y-axis measures the degree of outsourcing and x-axis the overall knowledge-intensity. The services are plotted on the box to illustrate their relative positions and the current development paths. The degree of outsourcing and knowledge-intensity is predicted to grow for all services. Because of the different starting points and potential, there are differences in pace and direction. Characterized by a higher inherent knowledge-intensity changes in CBR and engineering services are more towards external procurement while it is opposite for the cost-intensive services. This is based on an assumption that the organizational frictions, while still effective will gradually vanish as the competitive pressure from the forest product markets increases. As a result the differences between the services are shrinking too.

For the competitiveness analysis here the Finnish forest industry⁷⁷ is used as a special case. As the locational factors have shaped the core of the competitive edge and the relative importance of supporting services in Finland, this hold true for other countries and regions as well. Through the differing product and marketing strategies an equivalent pattern is supposedly found in the other Nordic countries, Sweden and Norway, and to a lesser extent also in Canada.

In contrast, for regions with shorter distances to markets the center of gravity is away from production related services to marketing services. The regional differences are reinforced by different product mix e.g. in the Central European countries, which are more specialized in higher value added products. Besides an increased importance of marketing services the growing value added contents of the product mix implies also a higher knowledge-intensity of the purchased services⁷⁸.

⁷⁶ Maint = maintenance services; Log = logistical services; CBR = computer-based and related services; Eng = engineering and consulting services.

⁷⁷ That is, the industry located in Finland.

⁷⁸ This is conveyed by Figure 6 in Section 2.2

Towards a comprehensive analysis

Discussions on industrial competitiveness have centered on the issue of measuring economic performance and the choice of appropriate indicators and their relations. To put it other way round the availability of statistical data has shaped our understanding of competitiveness and dictated dimension to be measured. While this is of major concern for any policy design, another a problem is finding out the correct causality between the indicators.

The first step out of the stalemate is to recognize that like productivity, competitiveness is a function describing the relation of available inputs to possible outputs. That is, equivalent to factor productivity measuring the technical efficiency of production function, competitiveness, though in a broader sense, measures the economic efficiency of the decision-making unit. This explains partly why factor productivity is commonly used as a direct indicator for competitiveness.

The second step is to characterize the structure for the competitiveness function, i.e. to find out the relevant input and output indicators, which is much more demanding task than for production function; there are many factors affecting each other implying that analysis has to be simplified depending on specific issues be investigated. In this report a heuristic model on the relations of key input variables is applied. Interestingly, the reasoning here is consistent with the recent Communication of the EU Commission on the future competitiveness of the European manufacturing sector;

ICT is a general-purpose technology... It has also facilitated new forms of organization such as outsourcing and the tight inter-linkage between industry and services underlined by the above analysis. To continue, it is the combination of ICT⁷⁹, managerial⁸⁰ and organizational techniques⁸¹ and a skilled labour force that gives rise to significant competitiveness improvements. Technological and organizational change must therefore be accompanied by constant upgrading of skills of labour force – including in positions that are traditionally regarded as low-skill – hence the importance of life-long learning⁸²(COM 2002,714 Final).

As the demand for services is influenced primarily by market-induced and organizational determinants all policy measures directed to them should enhance the volume and quality of service demand and hence the size and employment of the service sector⁸³. The supply conditions of the services are affected through the supporting technologies in producing the services giving grounds for effective technology policy respectively. For the Finnish policy agenda the major implications are as follows: regarding the market-driven technological progress⁸⁴ and profit-seeking strive to apply the state-of-art technologies Finnish business services show a high performance. For the improved realization of the competitive potential there are three areas to be changed.

⁷⁹ Technological competitiveness.

⁸⁰ Market-based competitiveness.

⁸¹ Organizational competitiveness.

⁸² This is related to the notion that application of the new technologies and the associated upgrade of skill base lead to higher knowledge-intensity throughout of the service sector.

⁸³ The business service sector in particular.

⁸⁴ That is the advance of technological standard resulting from private interests and profit maximization.

- Revision of governance structures and increase of the organizational flexibility is needed. This is not only removing the obstacles for external procurement of services but also reorganizing publicly produced services⁸⁵.
- Revision of corporate strategies of the forest industry is needed to create more innovative and creative transaction relations on the service markets.
- Regarding technological competitiveness the Government should be more active to secure the availability and development of the skill base in the long run.

Conceptualization of services and the competitiveness model introduced in this report is a first step towards a more operational approach. That is needed to understand better the product-service systems within industrial clusters. In doing so the report contributes to the subsequent Finnish KISA projects, which apply a micro-level approach to innovation processes of the Finnish forest industry⁸⁶. In combining case studies on the role of services in single innovations processes with the related models on strategic management these projects produce bottom-up information for the refinement of the analysis here. The ultimate goal of the Finnish KISA projects is to construct a comprehensive cluster model applicable to other OECD countries and other industrial clusters as well.

Industrial classification revisited

A fundamental issue raised here too, is the conceptual distinction between manufacturing and services, bearing major implications on industrial policy per se. Does such a distinction really exist and if not does sectoral policy design make any sense? Or what if the manufacturing and service activities are inseparable? According to the analyses based on current industrial classification the answer is clear: the distinction exists and therefore sectoral policies are needed.

The implication of the KISA approach is that the traditional cut-off approach is unsatisfactory if the objective is to find out real characteristics of the industrial structures. The grounds for the argument are not only on the output side i.e. that services are increasingly commoditized and manufacturing is integrating to services, but one could look into the other aspects of production processes, too. Either way, as technological progress enhances the heterogeneity of business activities, they should be seen more as a continuum based on specific variables.

For instance, an alternative is to look into the strategic *importance*⁸⁷ of capital and labor for the production processes, which is illustrated in Figure 19. The importance refers to the extent capital and labor influences the production process and the physical properties of outputs (commodity or service). The industries with the highest labor dominance are located in the categories A and E, which encompass most of the public services, too. The categories next to them may be called capital-dominated manufacturing and capital-dominated services. For the latter category, which has evolved from the labor-dominated services, the growing capital-intensity has contributed to superior factor productivity (Mankinen & al., 2001).

⁸⁵ Examples are various public monopolies, like harbors in the logistics chains.

⁸⁶ These projects are conducted by Finnish research institutes, VTT Technology Studies and SC-Research.

⁸⁷ Here importance of input is different from input-intensity, which is measured in values or volumes.

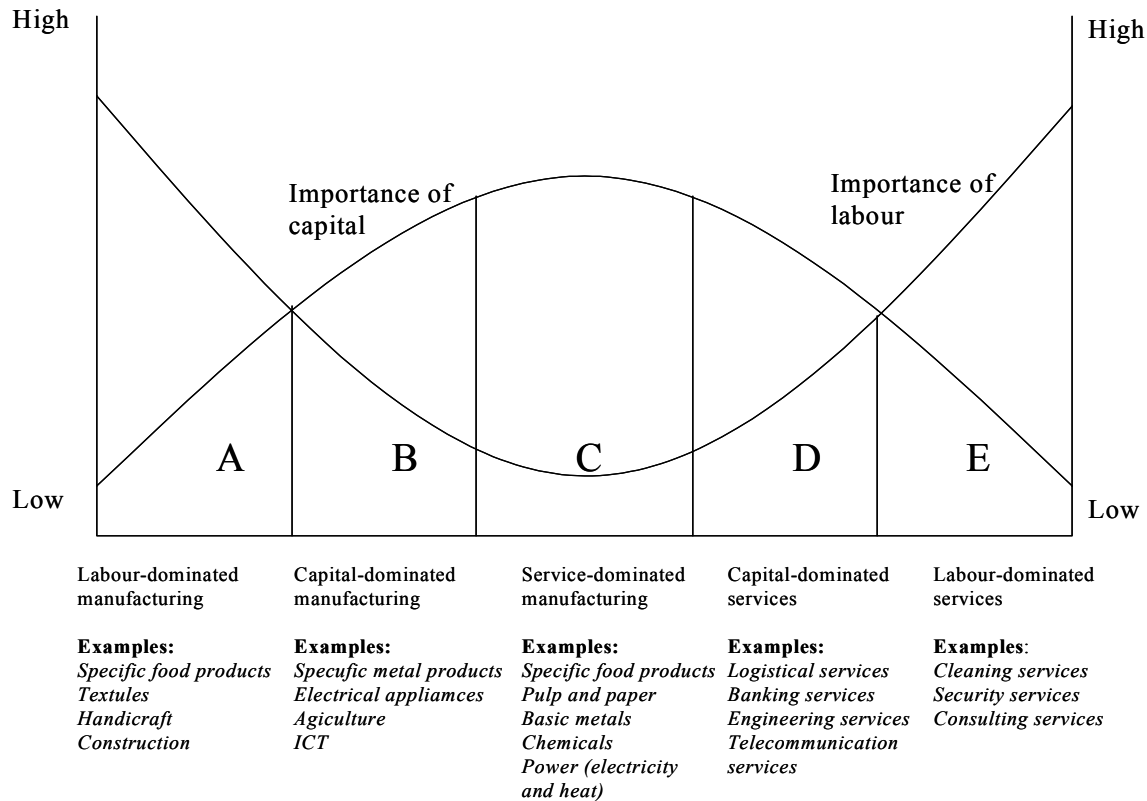


Figure 19. Continuum of business activities

The highest capital dominance and the lowest importance of labor is shown in the process industries in the category C, service-based manufacturing. Similar to the category D the actual production process is executed by basic and supporting technologies (ICT)⁸⁸ while labor is used mainly for control and supervision to provide operational services. As a result of increased capital-intensity and automation this category evolved from the category B. Being a form of KISAs supervisory services are produced mostly internally but as the services are increasingly standardized there is a growing interest in the possibilities to externalize them, too. Examples can be found in the energy production; as the manufacturing industries – e.g. the pulp and paper industry - are selling out power plants to the energy companies, another applied strategy within the power industry is to outsource only the operation of the plant creating markets for operational services.

⁸⁸

See the model in Section 3.

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THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF THE FINNISH ECONOMY

LÖNNROTINKATU 4 B, FIN-00120 HELSINKI

Puh./Tel. (09) 609 900

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