Internationalization in a business school: 
Co-existing and entwined professional and organizational narratives

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Track 10. Organizational Change

Keywords: Strategic change, Mobilising change, Implementing change, Change practice, Change narratives, Change stories

Brief Presenter Profile

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Abstract
This paper adopts a narrative approach to explain how a strategic goal of internationalization within a UK business school developed over a three year period and in particular how two conflicting institutional logics – a market logic and a professional logic – were given meaning and played out within a specific organizational context. The paper is in four parts. First, the theoretical framework explains the business school as a professional organization, with a professional academic workforce, ambiguous strategic goals and multiple competing but legitimate demands. We then frame our narrative approach as a means of understanding how professional actors are co-opted into enabling organizational goals, even where these are perceived as antithetical to professional interests. Second, the rich qualitative research design, which followed the internationalization goal within a UK business school over three years is explained, showing how we undertook narrative analysis. Third the results are presented as a series of co-existing and entwined narratives: organizational/managerial narratives, professional narratives of resistance, and professional narratives of engagement. Finally our findings show that narrative is a useful theoretical lens for explaining how multiple, ambiguous and conflicting strategic goals within professional organizations may coexist, enabling the organization to act both as a collective unit and also to fulfil the sometimes contradictory interests of its constituents. These findings contribute to understanding about strategy in professional organizations and also to narrative theory by showing how organizations may comprise multiple, entwined narratives, in which actors change roles according to their varying interests in the 'central' narrative.

Theoretical background and research problem
Over the past decade there has been increasing interest in studying professional and knowledge-intensive firms, because they share four broadly common characteristics, which pose problems for leadership, strategy and management (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006; Hinings and Leblebici, 2003; Lowendahl, 1997). First, they have multiple constituents with divergent interests and diffuse bases of power, which increases the distributed, fragmented nature of activity and generates problems for collective strategic action (Denis et al, 2001; Fenton and Pettigrew, 2006). Second, there are increasing external pressures upon top managers to coordinate a strategic response to the market. While this is particularly prevalent in public sector contexts where the importation of private sector models has increased emphasis on the managerial task (Ferlie et al, 1996; Oakes et al, 1998), it is also an issue for professional service firms, particularly in the context of globalization (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006; Lowendahl 1997). Third, they experience increasing tensions between external pressures for more formalized management and the internal problems of managing commitment from an autonomous professional workforce that has low tolerance for top down management and control (Alvesson and Svenningsson, 2003; Robertson et al, 2003). Finally, these contexts are characterized by goal ambiguity, divergent interests and multiple identities, which constitute contradictory and competing rationalities for their various constituents (e.g. Brown and Humphreys, 2006; Denis et al, 2007; Jarzabkowski and Fenton, 2006).

We propose that business schools are typical examples of professional organizations because they have a professional academic workforce, offer a knowledge-based service and are under increasing market pressures that increase emphasis upon centralized forms of management (Cohen and March, 1986; Pfeffer and Fong, 2002; Trank and Rynes, 2003). Such increases in market pressure impinge upon the autonomy of the professional workforce by raising goals that are perceived as antithetical to their interests, particularly their interests in pursuing research career aspirations (Armstrong, 1995; Muuka, 1998; Gaddis, 2000). As the prestige and rankings of business schools are still closely associated with the research standing of their faculty, the managerial challenge is to maintain professional commitment, whilst also responding to various market forces for accreditation, student service and practical relevance, which might not be of interest to these faculty (Bailey and Ford, 1996; Gaddis, 2000). We therefore ask the research question: How do business schools respond strategically to market pressures that are antithetical to professional practice, whilst maintaining the cooperation of their professional workforce? We propose that a narrative approach may help us to understand the complex nuances of this problem from the perspective of managerial and professional constituents of the business school.
Methodological lens: narrative

Typical characteristics of narrative include a planned and artificially reconstructed sequence, emphasis and pace; also recurrent archetypes of plot and character; and a trajectory with a beginning, a middle and an end (Toolan, 1997: 4-9) involving a change of state (Stewart, 1991: 131). A narrative text is a text in which an actor tells a story in a medium such as language, imagery or sound. The text contains a chronicle – a series of events – and a story where the events are arranged in a certain way. Some of the principles of narrative arrangement are as follows. The story may arrange events into a non-chronological sequence. Actors and locations are individualized and become characters and places. A choice is made of which point of view to adopt in telling the story and the resultant focalization, or the relation between perceiver and what is perceived, colours the story with subjectivity. The perceiver may be an implied author, narrator or a key character. The story also creates a relationship with the reader, often making assumptions about what the reader knows or believes, and in this way constructs an implied reader (Bal, 2002; Chatman, 1978).

The narrative approach to organizations is based within a broader perspective on organizations as discursively constructed (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000; Boje et al, 2005). The narrative approach assumes that actors within organizations are both tellers and interpreters of stories (Brown, 2006; Brown and Humphreys, 2006). A narrative is performative in so much as it constitutes a social reality, through which an organization and its goals are realised (Boje, 1991; Brown, 1986; Rhodes and Brown, 2005). Epic or heroic narratives involve contest, action and change as compared with lyric narratives of contemplation, experience and feelings (Bal, 2002: 88). Organizational narratives are often epic narratives (Beech, 2000; Brown and Humphries, 2003; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1994; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Jeffcutt, 1994) or legends of heroic organizational leaders (Boje, 1995). They foster an illusion of control over the social context, and create or sustain the legitimacy of the organization to maintain control over scarce resources (Demers et al., 2003).

From a structuralist perspective (Greimas, 1987) an organizational narrative includes an epic Quest, a romantic Hero, an Antagonist, Helpers, Evaluators and a Sender. The same narrative structure can be sought in personal narratives, in which some individuals use their personal narratives to insert themselves into the organizational narrative as hero or helper. Structuralists also argue that narrative combines the modalities of problem (an initial stage), demonstrating competence, achieving performance, and, in a final stage of the narrative, being evaluated and rewarded. From the perspective of those who argue that narrative constitutes the organization (e.g. Cooren & Taylor, 1997; Cooren, 2000; Taylor, 1993; Taylor and Van Every, 2000), these role/modality elements provide one theoretically-validated account of the organization's structure, a structure that both constitutes, constrains and enables the organization and its members as well as being continually modified by narrative retellings. The narrative can be judged, separately from the participants, in terms of its coherence and its plausibility in constituting the organization and its quest.

Post structuralists argue that the narrative form is less complete than is claimed in structuralist accounts where the narrative is relatively true to its genre, such as the epic, in following the tale through to its completion (Brown, 2006; Rhodes and Brown, 2005; Heracelous, 2006). These authors propose that we study the partial and fragmented nature of narratives (Boje, 1991; 1995). In particular they emphasize that organizations and their narratives are plurivocal, comprising multiple voices of groups that attribute different plot lines to the same key events within a story. Hence narrative theorists should look at the plurivocality of narrative and the purpose that such multiple authors and different plots serve in constructing organizations (Barry and Elmes, 1997; Brown, 2006; Rhodes and Brown, 2005). In this paper, we do not position ourselves within either the structuralist or post structuralist perspective on narrative, but are informed by both in attempting to remain open to the data. This enables us to acknowledge genres if these appear appropriate, whilst also exploring the possibility of multiple and partial narratives.

RESEARCH DESIGN

In accordance with our interest in the way that professional organizations accommodate tensions between professional interests and managerial interests over strategic goals, we used theoretical sampling to select a case that reflected the phenomena under investigation (Yin, 1994). Our study is conducted in a UK
business school, ‘BizEd’, where we were able to negotiate high quality access to follow the construction of a strategic goal over time from the perspective of professional and managerial actors. Our focus is upon the different narratives surrounding a specific strategic goal, internationalization, within BizEd over a three year period. As the following brief case history illustrates, the internationalization goal (IG) provided an excellent example of the tensions between professional and managerial interests in which to explore our research question.

For some time, in School meetings and awaydays, the importance of an internationalization strategy had been raised as part of the School’s ambitions to be a leading business school. In late 2001 BizEd developed a Strategic Internationalization Group (SIG), which was a committee that had representation from academic and managerial staff and was charged with developing a strategy for internationalization of the School. While the initial remit of the SIG was loose, in early 2002 BizEd also underwent accreditation by an international Business School Accrediting agency (BSA). BSA accreditation focused largely on the teaching programs of its member schools. BSA felt that BizEd showed promise but that full accreditation needed to be withheld partly because of a lack of evidence of internationalization in its teaching programs. This had been recognized in the School’s BSA Self Assessment Report which had stated that ‘the international dimension forms the cornerstone of BSA accreditation’ (December 2001). BSA stated that they would revisit in 2005 and award or withdraw full accreditation of BizEd, based on a range of indicators, some of which would involve internationalization.

For senior managers, the campaign for BSA accreditation quickly became central to the internationalization goal; The BSA panel wanted the business school ‘to have stronger international links with other universities overseas so that perhaps the development of exchange of academic staff, exchange of students, that students spend some time in other countries and vice versa. It is all about being seen to be, and being, an international business school rather than a business school that is very central to the UK’. Senior managers thus began to influence the SIG to see internationalization as a goal that would enable BizEd to attain BSA accreditation. For example, in late 2002 the Head of School attended an awayday to determine the SIG’s mandate and, strongly supported by the SIG chairperson, pushed for the BSA agenda to be incorporated in the internationalization goal; ‘The Head of School was there and I think it did constrain us in a sense that he was…it was given that it was a very important thing for his strategic objectives that the school had BSA, and so in a sense had that as an influencing factor that was getting in the way of anything which marked the long term strategy’. However, some academics at the awayday contradicted this view, querying ‘Why are we going for BSA? Is BSA important? It is a distraction.’ These academics questioned the validity of BSA as the key driver of internationalization, even as ‘You are again trying to change the BSA evaluation criteria, which we haven’t fully understood, or which are by definition not fully understandable since they are contradictory or ambiguous or whatever. It may be better that we would actually develop a clear internationalization strategy for its own purposes, and that we develop a vision of what an international business school needs and not just try to suit the understanding of BSA’. Despite these differences of opinion, BizEd did attain the BSA qualification, gaining academic cooperation during the re-accreditation visit, although throughout the three-year process, academics maintained their professional distance from many elements of the strategy.

Data collection and analysis
We began to collect data at the formation of the SIG in 2002, completing our data collection after the 2005 BSA visit, collecting interviews, emails, documents, and 10 meeting observations. In total 34 open-ended interviews were collected over three rounds, with all members of the SIG, one round at the start of the process in 2003 (11 interviews), one round during 2004 (11 interviews) and an exit interview round in 2005 before the BSA visit (4 interviews) and after the BSA visit (8 interviews). All interviews were transcribed verbatim, forming the primary data source, supported by being on-site on the days when we had interviews or when we attended meetings. We attended an initial awayday, 6 SIG meetings and three BSA preparation meetings, as well as being on-site in the organization at the three days of the BSA panel visit, at all of which detailed notes were taken about the way the IG was discussed by different constituents. Additionally, relevant documents and some emails pertaining specifically to internationalization and the BSA were collected, resulting in a data set in excess of 1,000 type-written A4 pages. We now explain how we analyzed these data.

1 Actual names of the School, accrediting agency and specific dates are changed, to preserve the anonymity of the case. However, the events are accurately represented.
Data were collected primarily by two of the authors, who cross-checked their impressions and tentative findings after the initial interviews and meeting observations, in order to inform the second round of interviews. A coding meeting was then held between the three authors, to discuss emergent findings from the existing data set, with one author acting as an ‘outsider’ in questioning the findings and themes of those who had collected the data (Evered and Louis, 1981). Following this, a coding schema was proposed, based around the emerging narratives, which we describe below. The third round of interviews was then conducted and all interviews, meeting notes and documents were coded. Each author individually coded the data, which were then examined by the other two authors, with any discrepancies comprising the basis for discussion and further refinement of the coding schema (Miles and Hubermann, 1994). By collecting triangulated data from multiple participants and multiple sources, using multiple investigators and querying and coding the schema throughout the analysis, we minimized the bias attendant upon a single data source or a single researcher’s interpretations of the field (Yin, 1994).

Coding and analysis was conducted over four phases, based upon our methodological lens of narrative analysis. First, we constructed a chronicle over the three years, developing a that took place from the announcement of the SIG, through the initial BSA visit, the subsequent actions that took place, to the achievement of BSA. Second, consistent with the view that narrative is the way that actors make sense of and give a coherent thread or plot to a set of events (Brannigan, 1992; Brown, 2006), we compared and contrasted how professionals and managers made sense of this chronicle of events. In order to do this we adopted the following criteria of narrative derived from narrative theory (Bal, 2002; Chatman, 1978). First, we used evidence of our informants imbuing meaning into the chronicle of events by means of commentary or rearrangement. For example, in one narrative account, senior managers imbued meaning into events when they maintained that their organization did not have the international recognition its excellence deserved. Second we sought evidence that informants used archetypes of plot or character. In this analysis, it became evident that the epic narrative form was appropriate to several distinct narratives about attaining BSA, as events in the story constituted Heroic Roles, a Quest, an Antagonist and various Helpers. For example, in another narrative account, professionals depicted academic groups in archetypal, Heroic terms. Third, we sought evidence of a turning point in people’s accounts involving contest, action and change. For example, moderate success of incentives supporting the internationalization goal was seen by senior managers as the turning point in its attempt to engage professionals after their initial resistance. Fourth we looked for a beginning, a middle and an end. For example, in another narrative account some engaged professionals did not initially accept that BizEd was the Hero, then they made common cause with senior managers against BSA as the Antagonist, and finally they shared with them the rewards of accreditation. While we did not take a completely structuralist view of the epic form, the basic characters and plot lines of this form were helpful in understanding how different groups made sense of the chronicle, the IG, and their own roles within it, including different definitions of the Quest, the Hero and the challenges to be overcome.

At this stage, we realized that ‘professional’ and ‘manager’ were not sufficient categories of authorship for the narratives we found, as there seemed to be a third, joint authorship, comprising both professionals and managers. The third phase of the analysis thus involved the construction of three distinct narratives; a central organizational narrative, which was authored by senior managers and their administrative staff and which we termed ‘central organizational’ because it was the ‘official’ narrative that dominated organizational documentation; a professional narrative of resistance, which was constructed as a resistant response to the central organizational narrative and was authored by academics; and a professional narrative of engagement, which was constructed as a cooperative response to the central organizational narrative, and was led by academics but jointly co-authored with senior managers. This phase of analysis was important not only in identifying differently authored narratives but also in understanding how narratives are entwined, evolving in response to each other over time (Boje, 1995; Brown, 2006).

In the final phase of analysis we examined the progression of these narratives in relation to each other, noting how plot developed over time in response to the other narratives. This enabled us to identify how the professional narrative of resistance emerged and then subsided, as it became irrelevant as a response to other narratives. In relation to this development, we also identified how the central organizational
narrative and the professional narrative of engagement were able to retrospectively rewrite the resistance tale following the attainment of BSA.

RESULTS

We now present these three narratives in the results. First we tell the central organizational narrative and then present the other narratives, showing how they evolved alongside and in response to the central narrative. Table 1 provides a summary of our results, showing the eight key events in the story line and explaining the development of the three narratives over time in making sense of those events. We anchor the presentation of results around this Table.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Central organizational narrative

In late 2001, in response to a growing organizational concern that BizEd, despite its excellence, was not getting the international recognition it deserved, a Strategic Internationalization Group (SIG) was developed. This group was representative of the School community, comprising senior managers (SM), academics (Ac) and administrators (Ad). Its remit was to develop a strategy that would help BizEd establish its proper place as an internationally-recognized School; “It’s clear the vision is to say World Class Business School in the heart of City X” (SM, 2002). The Quest of internationalization was thus established; to help the unsung Hero, BizEd, to achieve the recognition due to a hero. This quest had a heroic vision, albeit that that vision was not very clearly articulated. In the SIG, a close group of Helpers was established to support the hero in this quest.

Soon after this, senior managers’ conviction that BizEd was not properly recognized was confirmed. Following a visit for BSA accreditation, BizEd was given only partial accreditation on the basis that its teaching programmes were not sufficiently international. As helpers, senior managers were quick to defend their hero. BizEd was not lacking in internationalization but had not been properly understood by BSA, which quickly became the Antagonist to BizEd’s heroic quest; “It is a club and run by people who are untrained and bring baggage” (Ad, 2002). “What we don’t necessarily know is how much politics there is behind the decision because … within BSA there is probably a domination by certain countries that have their own particular view of what internationalization is, which doesn’t necessarily match what the UK universities view internationalization as” (SM, 2002). In the same vein of establishing BizEd as a wronged Hero, the Helpers took responsibility for not adequately supporting the Hero’s quest; “it was simply the way that we presented ourselves in some of the figures, and particularly if we had been a bit more careful about how we presented figures relating to the things like the language experience, the students, and so on” (SM, 2002). They resolved to do better next time, moving the Quest from simply internationalization to a more specific goal, BSA accreditation; “the simple goal has been to try and make sure that we achieve the requirements for the BizEd Internationalization” (SM, 2002).

Throughout the remainder of 2002 and into 2003, senior managers and administrators strengthened their core team of Helpers in the BizEd Quest, which they defined as achieving BSA; “We created a new post on the programme eighteen months ago for an International Co-ordinator” (Ad, 2003). These Helpers developed teaching exchange programmes with BSA-accredited partner institutions overseas, as this was seen as one of the key Challenges that BizEd would need to overcome. The wider academic faculty were thus co-opted as essential Helpers in the Quest; “We also have to rely on faculty participation. So since the faculty are members of the subject group, they are not members of the programme, then it is up to the subject group to engage with our partners and participate in exchange” (SM1).

However, it became apparent that, while they had been cast as central to the Quest, many academics were not committed Helpers; “In the end, the teaching and the research are done by the subject groups, so that if they don’t buy in to the internationalization then whatever the people who set up the strategy might wish to happen, it won’t actually happen” (SM, 2002). Senior managers approached this challenge to the Hero’s Quest by proposing a financial incentive in order to encourage academics to enlist as Helpers; “They wouldn’t be academics if they were totally obsessed with money. However, we are all human and even the most hard nosed academic, who loves his subject, wouldn’t mind a bit more money so I think it is absolutely quite a good motivator” (Ad, 2003). However, most academics rejected the financial incentive, refusing to cooperate in teaching exchanges.
Senior managers and administrators began to be fearful about the Hero’s Quest. Academics disparaged the teaching exchanges as unnecessary, suggesting that the BSA Quest was a mere box-ticking exercise. Senior managers and administrators, who took the Hero’s Quest seriously, were concerned that box-ticking would not be adequate; “we are struggling to make this work for BSA, because BSA doesn’t have a tick box mentality, and in one or two crucial areas we are not quite certain what they are” (SM 2004). Fearing that the Quest was in jeopardy, they began to develop alternative approaches to meeting it, which would not be so dependent upon recalcitrant academic Helpers. For example, they developed partner relationships with a number of BSA accredited Schools; “Oh, yes, the five are the strong partners that we are trying to do deeper things with, and I think we have got around thirty in total now” (SM 2004). At the same time, they developed student exchanges to increase the international nature of teaching programmes; “We have spent a lot of time encouraging students to take their placement overseas. We have offered scholarships. We have interviewed large numbers of students to go abroad. So it is making it happen within the programs so there is something tangible” (Ad, 2004)

Senior managers and administrators thus became the real Helpers, joining the embattled Hero in the lonely struggle; “People laugh at us, they say, ‘Oh, no, there’s [Senior Manager] getting on his hobby horse about international again’, while non-Helpers were disparaged as damaging the Hero’s Quest; ‘So you go out and write three more publications that doesn’t improve the international creditability of either you or the institution’ (Ad 2004). At the same time, the central organizational narrative buoyed up the Hero, as a candidate worthy of recognition; “I think it should be alright. [another business school] has just got this accreditation for the first time for five years, and I don’t think that they are any better than us” (SM 2004); “I think we are a well recognized school, a well known school” (SM 2004); “Many schools amazingly are not good on strategy. I think we have strategy; we’ve got visions from everywhere. We do have a clearly defined strategy” (SM 2004). This reassurance about the Hero reflected an underlying anxiety about the Antagonist; “There’s no training. The accreditors… These people are not trained” (SM 2004) and the potential jeopardy of the Quest; “I think we have lost confidence with BSA in the last 2/3 years. … I think [not getting BSA] could shake, for a while, the foundations of what we are” (Ad 2004).

As the BSA visit drew closer, central organizational narrative was increasingly about anxious preparation for the forthcoming Quest. Academics, having failed to prove themselves, were written out of the Quest as Helpers, being seen more as part of the problem; “Academics are very self centered” (SM 2005); “Sometimes it can be hostile and you feel you’re banging you head against a brick wall to get staff to go abroad” (Ad 2005). Administrators, as the true Helpers, were central characters; “the average academic is RAE driven. If we hadn’t had those full time administrators nothing would have happened” (Ad/2005). Administrators stopped trying to co-opt academics and began to put together the necessary documentation and evidence to support BizEd’s standing as a Hero. “it’s a joint MSc and it’s a joint Executive MBA [with international partners] where they spend weeks at various places. … It takes a long time to develop something like this and a lot of it entails changing Universities regulations and that’s what they have been chipping away at. What will be interesting to see is if BSA thinks that as enough development” (Ad 2005). The Helpers’ narrative vacillated between confidence that what they had done would be sufficient to support the Hero “I don’t think that [international job placements] will be too difficult because we are well set up in terms of placing undergraduate students” (SM 2005) and fear that despite all these efforts, the Quest would not be met; “It is really tough and really uncomfortable because despite all this and all this done in away that its all BizEd, we still feel that we won’t necessarily going to get it (BSA) … we aren’t as international as we could be” (Ad 2005).

In preparation for the actual visit, senior managers and administrators were aware that academics would need to appear as Helpers in front of the BSA panels. They carefully hand-picked academics with an international background or profile, developing a set of ‘Hymn Sheets’ to guide these academics in supporting the Hero’s Quest. ‘[Internationalization] is a very important aspect that is likely to be explored by the assessors in all the other panels and we must avoid any contradiction or confusion. Everyone must therefore be ‘singing from the same hymn sheet’. The hymn sheet is attached. Please read and digest this. It doesn’t matter if you cannot sing in tune but you need to get the words right’ (Dean’s email 2005). There was no room for opposition. All actors had to take part in the Quest, which was to everyone’s benefit. Mock panels and ‘coaching’ sessions were held to ensure academics could play their part on the day. For their part, the academics inserted themselves as Helpers during the visit, emphasizing the Hero’s epic journey and transformation since the last BSA accreditation; “I would say that BizEd has been transformed really, in terms of profile. I think last time it struggled to demonstrate international composition of staff, even publications and programs abroad and collaborative arrangements for
research and teaching. I think that now they are much, much stronger. This time activity is much more transparent, more international activity going on” (Ac, 2005 during BSA visit).

When BizEd learnt that it had achieved its Quest of BSA accreditation, a champagne reception was held for all members of the Business School, to reward them for their efforts; “now we can smile about it, it went very well. We got a very good report” (SM, 2005). At this reception, the achievement was celebrated as proving the Hero’s worth, and gaining the recognition that members knew BizEd and its staff deserved; “It’s all very well being an international school but if no one knows it’s a waste of time. So it’s getting the message across to all the other international schools that we are of international standing, we have [accreditations] and we have international faculty research” (SM 2005). The narrative was thus rewritten as a group narrative, in which all members shared in the Quest and celebrated its success; “There is an awareness that developed a lot stronger since the last BSA. I remember from the last BSA, as I was on the panel and I mentioned activities and PhD work launched and now two years later it’s there and they could see it. Everyone was also very positive” (Ac 2005). At the same time, BSA was rewritten as simply a challenge in the true Quest, to be internationally-recognized, rather than being the Quest itself; “I think it [getting BSA accreditation] has brought us back our confidence; it was knocked by the last visit. Although the visit did make us really do some things, I think a lot of things about actually promoting the goodness that is here didn’t happen because we were lacking confidence. Now with the confidence that we have got will be easier to stick to what we are doing and not just play a game” (Ad 2005).

Professional narrative of resistance

At the outset, when the SIG was developed, no professional resistance to the Quest of true recognition for BizEd was raised. However, as the Quest became BSA accreditation, academics began to query the central narrative, developing their own narrative of resistance to that definition of internationalization; “It may be better that we would actually develop a clear internationalization strategy for its own purposes, and that we develop a vision of what an international business school needs and not just try to suit the understanding of BSA” (Ac 2002). They began to assert a different, internationally-recognized research view of the Quest; “what do we mean by Internationalization … If you talk about research at international level it tends to mean a high quality of research” (Ac 2002). In the light of this Quest, they also agreed that BSA was an Antagonist for failing to recognize the internationally-recognized nature of BizEd academics’ research; “Why doesn’t BSA understand that we are already pretty international” (Ac 2002).

As the central narrative began to define academic teaching exchanges as key challenges in pursuing the Heroic Quest for BSA, the professional narrative of resistance also developed, belittling the BSA Quest and asserting their own definition; “I think internationalization and accreditation are two different things. Accreditation is about a bureaucratic procedure of getting a tick in the box. Internationalization is actually doing things in international community and being recognized internationally” (Ac 2002). In the academic narrative, academics were the core of BizEd, assuming part of its Hero status. BizEd, in their definition, was only a Hero because of the quality of the academic staff within it; “Without subject groups nothing would exist. Take away the subject groups and what is left of the business school? – nothing” (Ac 2002). From this perspective, academics were not Helpers in the central narrative. Indeed, helping with teaching exchanges would be counter to the true Quest of internationally-recognized research; “there is a real cost to spending a month or so overseas that probably makes it a bit difficult to continue your research programme” (Ac 2002).

Academics thus responded with resistance when the central narrative attempted to co-opt them as Helpers by offering financial incentives for teaching exchanges. They resented this diversion, which they saw as an Antagonist to their true academic Quest of research; “BizEd tends to take the view that if we pay people some extra money to do something that would be more motivating. … You know, throwing money at them when we are supposed to be doing research” (Ac 2003). They disparaged the teaching exchanges on the grounds that these belittled BizEd and its academics; “there are institutions that I know we collaborate with overseas who we would never collaborate within this country because they are not at our level. They are not at our standing. We would look down our nose at them in this country, but we don’t look down our nose at them because of BSA” (Ac 2004). In a meeting, an academic challenged the central narrative, querying the validity of BSA as an internationalization Quest; “the [academic] Chair of the board said to [Dean], ‘What would happen if you didn’t get BSA? How important is it?’ and the Dean found it really difficult to answer, because he knows that actually they are playing some games and it goes against some of the strategic direction we would like, that we are comfortable with, and that it is not very strategic. He sat there for a while and got chatting and he didn’t answer the question and I think a lot of people won’t answer the question” (Ad 2004).
As the central narrative evolved to marginalize academics, using administrators to develop student exchanges and partnerships with other BSA-accredited schools, the professional narrative of resistance further disparaged these activities; “We should spend less energy on all types of relationships with all these universities” (Ac 2004) and mocked the administrators’ Helper role; “it is just agreements for the sake of having agreements. As far as I can see it’s just a nice travel job we are talking about” (Ac 2004). Academics were resentful that they were being marginalized and that their research Quest, the challenges they faced and their Heroic status in that Quest was not recognized; “They are after continuing international teaching activities and big partners, you know. So it really seems bad that it is international research and it doesn’t really fully count. No, really I’m not kidding; No, it doesn’t really count towards that goal” (Ac, 2004).

Increasingly, however, their narrative of resistance dissipated, as they were less included in the central organizational narrative; “I do not feel, as I say, enough in the game to try and establish what I think they are really after” (Ac late 2004). They rationalized their lack of status in the central narrative by dismissing the whole BSA Quest as some administrative box-ticking exercise that was beneath their notice; “When you get things like an internationalization module outline you sort of get into the box mentality. You sort of fit it in somewhere and you’ve got to sort of force something into it” (Ac late 2004). “It is very much a criteria chasing exercise” (Ac late 2004).

**Professional narrative of engagement**

At the outset, professionals were prepared to engage with the internationalization goal, seeing it as commensurate with their professional interest to be part of an internationally-recognized school; “One of the reasons why I came here was because BizEd had a mostly international institution. It has to do with my career progression” (Ac 2002). Academics were also indignant about BSA’s failure to recognize their excellence and keen to ‘show them’ next time; “The next time BSA come to BizEd a lot of things that we were marked down on previously will have corrected itself” (Ac 2002). They thus joined with the central narrative in casting BSA as the Antagonist. However, their Quest did not evolve into BSA accreditation. Rather, they saw BSA as one component in their professional interpretation of the Quest as international recognition, primarily for research; “The goal is to be a truly international school. I think getting the BSA accreditation is an objective in achieving that goal…I think one of the goals will relate to the research opportunities that BSA provides and trying to refocus on some of the research activities and some of the other corporate activities, rather than specifically focusing on student exchanges and faculty exchange” (Ac 2002). Administrators and senior managers recognized professional interests by joining in this narrative, placing BSA accreditation as one part of a larger goal in their discussions with academics and even expressing some cynicism about BSA; “I think the mission is to be a leading international school. … And lower down we have a list of objectives and getting full BSA accreditation is one of them. Because of … the dubious nature of the accreditation, I wouldn’t put it any higher up” (Ad 2002).

This narrative allowed academics to position themselves as part of the Heroic Quest through their research activities, without requiring them to undertake any extra actions to meet the Hero’s challenges; “There is International collaboration of research, you know; facilitating in research for the Business School academics and from other schools at the Internationalization level. … So the role of Internationalization there is making sure that they are sensible partnerships and that we are going to get value out of them in terms of teaching and research” (Ac 2002). They were thus able to agree with the teaching exchanges without actually taking part in them. They legitimized this by emphasizing the professional interpretation of the Quest; “The main part of our mission is to do things excellently, and excellent research, and do excellent teaching. When you do excellent research you get good publications or good research grants, and if you get good publications and good research grants then you get a good ranking. And I think Internationalization is the same” (Ac 2002). Managers and administrators joined in this narrative by agreeing that achieving BSA on its own, was not an adequate Quest; BSA had to have more embedded benefits for the Hero; “There is no point of playing games if you don’t get some benefit and it’s not going in the way that you want to anyway. Otherwise it is a futile game; … you have got to believe that there is something that you are getting benefit from. You have got to live and breathe it every day not just when visitors come” (Ad 2002). Academics agreed that BSA was a valuable part of the Quest because it enhanced the Hero’s reputation, of which they, the academics were a core part; “what’s good for the business school is good for the group” (Ac 2003).

When the central narrative moved towards financial incentives for teaching exchanges, as a way to co-opt more substantive engagement from Helpers, the professional narrative of engagement, like the narrative of resistance, rejected financial rewards as a distraction from the professional Quest. However, the
professional narrative of engagement proposed that Helpers could be co-opted by deriving incentives to enhance the research internationalization Quest, such as research exchanges; “providing money for visiting scholars from abroad with this staff development fund, which has allowed people to bring in leaders in their field to the group in order for them to present papers and work with members of the group. .. So I think that is probably more important than financial incentives to the individual” (Ad 2003). At the same time, some academics did actually take up a teaching exchange, positioning themselves as exceptional Helpers because they went out of their way to help with this less important BSA aspect of the Quest; “I teach a course in France for example, during the Easter holidays, as that is the only time that I can go away and teach abroad, because the term times don’t match up and I am busy here so I don’t have time to go and spend a week abroad” (Ad 2003). This engagement encouraged joint authorship of the narrative, as senior managers were able to see their efforts to co-opt Helpers in a positive light, overlooking the relatively low substantive engagement by academics in the BSA aspect of the Quest; “I think the financial incentive thing certainly has been effective in that it has encouraged certainly one faculty member to go and do some teaching at one of our partner institutions. They went a lot more easily” (SM 2004).

At the same time, the joint definition of the Quest and its challenges was evolving, with both professionals and managers talking about embedding the internationalization goal in academic groups. This development in the narrative acknowledged the centrality of academics within the Heroic Quest, which was not simply BSA but a broader notion of international recognition; “I think there are a lot more voices saying, ‘We need to get it because it is embedded and because of the facts as they are, rather than a cosmetic presentation on the day’” (Ad 2004); “[If you are doing all the right things on internationalization you are satisfying B.S.A’]” (Ac 2004). Academics inserted themselves more strongly into the narrative by documenting their existing activities in ways that could support both the BSA Quest and their own professional research Quest; “Certainly in our group what I try to do is talk to junior people about what opportunities there are, and would they be interested in that” (Ac 2004); “I was already active and trying to promote the university and get collaborators from other universities to come here” (Ac 2004). These activities, while they did not involve much in the way of teaching exchanges, were not totally symbolic, as they also involved providing evidence of international activities that they thought might satisfy the BSA Quest; “So we have many visitors, about twenty a year or so from everywhere” (Ac 2004). Senior managers and administrators joined in inserting academics into the narrative, despite their lack of engagement in teaching exchanges, by working with them on developing this evidence. For example, they developed new ways of documenting module outlines, which emphasized the international components of those modules; “We have been doing analysis of how much the modules reflect the international dimension of the subject, and in the last BSA feedback report we are going to find a greater percentage now than a year ago” (SM 2004).

Thus, as the central narrative evolved to exclude academics from active engagement in many of the specific activities involved in BSA accreditation, through the professional narrative of engagement, academics were maintained within the supporting documentation being prepared for the final battle of the BSA visit. They were also kept engaged in preparation for the Hymn sheets, which they would have to sing from during that visit; “there is varying things that need to be discussed [with academics] like the Hymn sheet and so on” (SM 2005). For their part, during the final battle academics felt that they engaged substantively with the BSA Quest, overlooking the managerial and administrative effort that went into developing a context in which they could show their excellence; “I’ve done my bit. I’ve been instrumental in having lecturers from Sweden coming over, collaborative research with people internationally” (Ac, 2005, during time of visit); “A positive comment was made by B.S.A on that work that was done and they were very positive about work that was done” (Ac 2005, during time of visit).

Following the attainment of the BSA part of the Quest, academics wrote themselves into the central narrative, as a core part of attaining BSA; “at least in this group we talked a lot about it [internationalisation] in group meetings and group away days” (Ac 2005). They asserted that a big part of attaining BSA was because of the existence within BizEd of internationally-recognized research academics. That gave BizEd the right people to overcome the BSA challenge; “I would say a lot of these things have been achieved through selective recruitment and quality control at recruitment stage. For the best will in the world, you can have objectives to encourage international collaboration, international quality of research but you need people that can do it” (Ac 2005). However, they also acknowledged that the focus on internationalization over the three years had been advantageous for their Quest of international academic recognition; “I think that the internationalization of staff is an accomplishment. When we recruit we see this that people from all over the world apply” (Ac 2005). Academics felt justified in taking part in the champagne reception and the aftermath of rewards, with the professional and
central narratives converging into one in which BSA was a collective commitment for mutual benefit; “I think [academics and managers] converged because it [internationalisation strategy] appears to be more focused on getting things done with regard to Internationalization. We have more focus on international collaboration” (Ac 2005).

DISCUSSION
This paper has adopted a narrative methodological lens to explore the question; How do business schools respond strategically to market pressures that are antithetical to professional practice, whilst maintaining the cooperation of their professional workforce? We found three narratives that unfolded as different interpretations of the storyline of eight events in a business school’s pursuit of an internationalization strategy over a three-year period. These narratives primarily were authored by three different groups: a narrative authored by senior managers and administrators, which was termed the central organizational narrative because it was the official narrative dominating organizational documentation; a professional narrative of resistance authored by academics; and a professional narrative of engagement led by academics but co-authored with senior managers and administrators. Table 1 summarizes the key events in the story line and the different plots attributed to these events in each narrative. We now discuss these three narratives, comparing the purpose of each narrative in interpreting the story line to enable professionals to maintain their professional goals and interests, whilst also allowing a strategic goal of the organization to be pursued.

We propose that each narrative is important to the business school, as a professional organization which aspires to realize the different interests of its various communities. Tensions between external legitimacies and internal interests are a common problem for professional organizations (Hinings and Leblebici, 2003; Jarzabkowski and Fenton, 2006; Middleton-Stone and Brush, 1996; Oakes et al, 1998). These tensions often play out in conflicts between senior managers’ need to present a coherent organizational response to external strategic demands and their relatively low management fiat within the organization (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003; Denis et al, 1996; 2001; Fenton and Pettigrew, 2006; Jarzabkowski, 2005; Slaughter and Leslie, 1999). In pursuing the central organizational narrative, senior managers positioned externally-defined strategic criteria for success, such as BSA, as central to the organizational purpose. At the outset, they marshalled resources to support this goal by tapping into an existing perception that the School did not have the international recognition it deserved. This existing perception was relatively ambiguous, rather than specific to a particular internationalization strategy, and hence malleable for interpretation by all parties (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003; Eisenberg, 1984). By positioning BSA as central and worthwhile within the official organizational narrative of internationalization, they were able to justify the activities, such as teaching exchanges, that needed to be undertaken to achieve BSA.

Senior managers were not naive to the fact that these activities would conflict with professional interests, which were research career focused. However, incorporating BSA into the organizational Quest negotiated around their lack of power to enforce teaching exchanges, legitimating their attempts at persuasion; Senior managers argued that BSA was for the good of a higher purpose rather than something just for themselves as senior managers. The professional narrative of resistance developed as a response to this central narrative, asserting the professional right to remain independent of managerial influence by asserting a different interpretation of the Quest that legitimated their professional interests in developing their professional research competence. This gave them the grounds to resist attempts by senior managers to co-opt them into extra teaching activities, which would intrude upon their research time. Their narrative of resistance was nuanced, not actively refuting BSA as irrelevant but positioning it as less consequential than it appeared in the central organizational narrative; something that could be met by simply ticking boxes, which administrators could do without disrupting academics from their purpose. They thus discredited the central narrative sufficiently that they could legitimize their own reluctance to join in its activities.

The central narrative of engagement was a response to the other two narratives, constituting an acknowledgement by academics that BSA was in fact important to their professional reputation, albeit tangentially in terms of providing them with an appropriately prestigious organizational context in which to play out their professional careers. They could thus agree that BSA was important, not as THE Quest, but certainly as part of the Quest. The central organizational narrative was thus relevant, but should not require anything too substantive in terms of professional action. In this way, they sided with the
professional narrative of resistance to avoid concrete action, without sabotaging the BSA Quest, which would serve as an appropriate background to their professional interests.

Greater tension between the narratives arose when the central organizational narrative took a more substantive turn in co-opting professional action, offering financial rewards in senior managers’ attempts to surmount professional lack of engagement with the cause. In this action, senior managers acknowledged their lack of power in trying to increase engagement by professionals; they could not force professionals to act. This increased resistance in the professional narrative, which took offence at attempts to divert professionals from their true course and began to more actively disparage the BSA Quest. The professional narrative of engagement recognized that BSA continued to be important to professionals as well as to senior managers and attempted to find alternative ways that professionals could cooperate in attaining BSA goals through existing professional actions. Thus, the professional narrative of resistance protected the professional interest by refuting teaching activities that would take away research time, while the professional narrative of engagement kept open the dialogue with senior managers about BSA. This turn in the narratives was important in confirming low managerial power over professional action, the validity of professional interests and yet, the interdependence between managers and professionals in shaping their organization. This is a fundamental issue for professional organizations; how to align professional and managerial interests that appear to be in conflict but that are also relational in terms of attaining an organizational context in which multiple interests can be realized (Denis et al, 2007; Fenton and Pettigrew, 2006; Jarzabkowski and Fenton, 2006; Ring and Perry, 1985).

Following the turning point of offering incentives, the central organizational narrative accepted managerial impotence in effecting substantive action from professionals, writing them out of the narrative by pursuing those activities that senior managers could influence. This had an effect on the professional narrative of resistance, which initially celebrated this victory over the managerial narrative by belittling managerial actions before gradually dissipating as there was nothing to resist. This separation of managerial and administrative activities from professional activities has been seen as one of the structural ways in which professional bureaucracies manage their multiple interests (e.g. Hardy et al, 1983; Mintzberg, 1979; Weick, 1976) and compartmentalise their identities (Pratt and Foreman, 2000). However, as indicated in recent studies of the dynamics of professional organizations, structural separation is not a viable long-term solution given the interdependence between managerial and professional interests (e.g. Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003; Robertson and Swan, 2003). The professional narrative of engagement acknowledged this interdependence, with joint authorship enabling the persistence of a dialogue between managers and professionals that also involved some substantive action by professionals in contributing to the BSA goal.

However, this account still does not explain why the majority of professionals switched from resistance to engagement. There were two competing institutions that were referred to in the narratives we recorded. The central organizational narrative positioned BSA as the organizational quest and was largely told through the voice of senior managers, who identified as ‘we’ with BizEd as Hero. This narrative privileged the business school’s reputation and the institution of the market, situated within a field in which business schools competed for higher accreditation rankings. Against this, the professional narrative of resistance interpreted elements of the organizational narrative antagonistically in order to position academics as engaged in a higher order quest of achieving and maintaining an excellent international reputation for research, with subject groups of academic researchers as Hero. Academics therefore privileged the institution of the profession, defined in terms of research publication-related reputation.

These two institutions of the market and profession were different because whereas the market is an organization-level institution in a field where the competitors are organizations – other business schools and their reputations, profession is an individual-level institution in a field where the competitors are individuals - researchers and their reputations, who do not derive much of their reputation from which business school they belong to. They are also different because market reputation is much wider than professional reputation and includes the economic capital goods of reputation for teaching, resources, efficiency, size, and alumni. Professional reputation involves the social capital goods of a researcher’s identity, specialist interests and friends. They are also in conflict because professionals regarded BSA as a time consuming distraction from pursuing professional reputation. However, the two institutions of the
market and profession were also overlapping because each business school’s reputation partly depended on the combined professional reputations of its members.

We will now consider the relevance of this for the issue of professional resistance. On the one hand, academics resisted BizEd managers’ privileging of the BSA goal, referring to it as a distraction from their professional goal of doing research and as parochial compared with the broader international reputation vested in research excellence. At the same time, they liked the market logic because they didn’t want to belong to a business school with a poor reputation, and failure to secure BSA accreditation was seen as a potential signal of poor reputation. Therefore, while academics were preoccupied by their own professional concerns, they also recognized that BSA would be a good result so long as they did not have to invest time in getting it. Professionals were therefore ambivalent. On the other hand, senior managers and administrators felt strongly that BSA would be good for BizEd and that it would be good for them personally, improving senior managers’ status and extending administrators’ mandate.

This was a complex situation where two institutions, the market (championed primarily by managers) and the profession (championed primarily by professionals) were simultaneously different, in conflict yet overlapping. A profession is governed by professional autonomy over work and by allegiance to the status and recognition mechanisms of that profession, rather than by allegiance to a specific organization. This typically comes into conflict with the market logic where the organization’s responsiveness to the market requires professionals to sacrifice their autonomy or to divert attention from their professional activities.

This professional resistance to BizEd’s internationalization goal being exclusively defined in terms of BSA accreditation was never very loudly voiced, since preoccupation with research meant that professionals regarded political activity as a waste of time. Nevertheless the resistance was initially representative of the great majority of professionals, and it was necessary for managers to overcome that resistance if they were to get professionals to actively support steps to achieve BSA accreditation. There were two institutional logics operating that were different, conflicting and partly overlapping. Neither logic was dominant. Over the three years of our study we observed that the professional narrative of resistance died out. In order to understand why the market logic prevailed within this organization, we need to understand the medium in which the two logics of the market and research excellence were circulated and reflected on. That medium was narrative.

The institution of the market was circulated as a narrative in which the organization was the Hero and both managers and professionals were Helpers. On the other hand the professional institution was circulated as a narrative in which each group of researchers was a Hero, and where managers did not even play a Helper role. The managers’ narrative was therefore inclusive, whereas the professional narrative of resistance was exclusive.

There is a wide range of scholarship that argues that political effectiveness and power are based on the capability to enrol support. The power of senior managers comes largely from their ability to achieve ‘coordination of human activity [by identity construction and enrolment rather than by] power over others’ so that ‘A (a person or group) has power insofar as it recruits human agency in the service of its agenda’ (Simon and Oakes, 2006: 113). Similarly, Callon (1986) argued that power and influence depend on linking the identity of other actors to a problem that one can solve, and on imposing and stabilizing that identity on other actors. The depiction of a problem is the first stage in the four part plot sequence of Greimas’ (1987) narratological theory. Therefore the process of imposing and stabilizing of identity can be achieved by embedding of narratives in which one narrative is nested inside another (O’Connor, 1995). From a narrative point of view this involves the embedding of member narratives within an overall organizational narrative. Humphreys and Brown (2002) found that a lack of embedding of employee narratives within managerial narratives of Westview Institute was associated with low leader effectiveness. Sims (2005: 1636) has argued that ‘As people go about living their narratives, they write themselves into others’ stories’ and has offered this as an explanation for why poorly integrated members – those who do not allow others to carry out this process - become demonised, and why the strong negative emotions this generates are so obscure to those experiencing them. It is likely therefore that political effectiveness and ability to enrol others are associated with the ability to include others in one’s own version of the organizational narrative. This can vary from the kind of monological and oppressive narrative that subordinates everyone, such as is put forward in Eisner’s account in Boje
(1995) of the grand narrative of the Walt Disney organization, to a narrative in which managers orchestrate rather than dictate content (Barry and Elmes, 1998) or a narrative with multiple story interpretations (Boje, 1995). Cooren (2000) put forward a theory of an organization as constituted by a narrative, and suggested that hierarchical aspects of organizing such as delegation, accountability and authority are constituted by narratives that are ‘inserted’ into the organizational narrative as sub-plots or as scenes. For Boje (1995: 1028), organizations ‘can be theorized as simultaneous [premodernist, modernist, postmodernist] discourses’ and the most appropriate central adjectives of organizational discourses are ‘fragmented, competing’. Moreover, some narratives can be declared ‘out of bounds’ (Boje, 1995: 1030).

This suggests a research agenda in terms of asking what are the ways that narratives constitute organizations. Some hypotheses are that narratives are ways of keeping options open using parallel narratives; privileging risk-taking using prospective narratives; privileging cover-your-arse using retrospective blaming; keeping an open mind using detective stories (asking how did it happen); and controlling the agenda using scene switching (e.g. from problem scene to reward scene).

Putting Cooren’s and Boje’s arguments together suggests another hypothesis. If we assume that each narrator constructs a container narrative in which other narratives are inserted, or inserts their narratives into other container narratives, this suggests that the most powerful narrative is the one that most members use as a container narrative.

The professionals did not attempt to enrol others because professional reputation was conceived mainly as an achievement of each researcher as an individual. On the other hand the managers sought to enrol others – essentially the majority of professionals themselves who constructed a professional narrative of engagement – into an inclusive narrative in which all were members of the organization-as-Hero and in which professionals were praised as essential Helpers. The professional narrative of resistance depicted BSA as an Antagonist that diverted the Hero from its Quest. The central organizational narrative was able to subsume this: BSA was also identified by this narrative as the Antagonist. The central organizational narrative was also able to enrol the professional narrative of engagement by depicting BizEd’s Quest as one way to meet academics’ Heroic Quest of being excellent professionals. In stark contrast, the professional narrative of resistance had no means of enrolling Helper-Narrators. It saw academic research groups as the Hero and thus offered no chance for inclusion of managers. It is therefore no surprise that it faded away in comparison to the busy preparations for BSA that members enacted as professional narratives of engagement and that prompted repeated changes to the central organizational narrative.

After the attainment of BSA, it is interesting to note that both the central organizational narrative and the professional narrative of engagement reinterpreted the story line to include closer engagement and interdependence between groups. Senior managers and administrators celebrated the professional staff who had made their interests realisable, while academics positioned themselves as active collaborators in BSA. No mention of the professional narrative of resistance to BSA was made. This turn in the narrative recognizes the social and political dynamics of professional organizations in continuing to pursue multiple interests. A division between managerial and professional labour is undesirable for both parties once a goal has been achieved. Rather, it is important to establish a platform from which to continue to interact over future goals (Middleton-Stone and Brush, 1996; Strauss, 1987; Welsh and Metcalf, 2003). Convergence between narratives at the end of the study is one way in which this ongoing dynamic is realized.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

We suggest that our narrative approach to the problems of professional organization in aligning strategic demands upon the organization as a whole with professional interests and tendency towards autonomous work makes four contributions. First, it contributes to the professional organization literature by showing how plurivocal narratives, in which different groups attribute different plot lines to the same key events within a story, may illuminate the interaction between professionals and managers. These narratives are the social constructions through which an organization is realized (Boje, 1991; 1995; Brown, 2006; Cooren, 2000; Rhodes and Brown, 2005; Heracleous, 2006). The narratives thus serve an important purpose in enabling professional interests and managerial interests to be realized. The dilemma for professional organizations is that the nature of the organization is dependent upon the work of often
autonomous knowledge workers (Scott, 1965). Hence these workers can neither be alienated nor managed into submission (Podsakoff, 1986). More normative controls are necessary, in which professionals acknowledge their dependence on the organization, even as they assert their right to resist managerial influence over their work (Robertson and Swan, 2003). Narratives enable actors to manage this tension, a process that involves enrolment of potential opponents by their inclusion as valued characters in the actor’s own version of the organizational narrative. In our case, we saw that the central organizational narrative was able to enrol professionals as Helpers, but that the professional narrative of resistance was unable to enrol managers. Moreover, the central organizational narrative recognised that cessation of research was not in the organizational interests thus reassuring and enrolling professionals (Jarzabkowski, 2005; Jarzabkowski and Sillince, 2007) and subsuming the professional narrative of engagement. The three co-existing narratives were a way for professional and managerial actors to legitimize their different interests, helping us to rethink the nature of professional resistance to managerial interests. Resistance was important as one thread of our analysis but it was balanced with other narrative threads that sought to realize commonality (Piderit, 2000). Narratives are thus one way in which professional organizations may realize their multiple interests.

Second, our paper contributes to the literature on narrative. While narratives are acknowledged to be plurivocal, with some exceptions (e.g. Boje, 1995; Brown and Humphreys, 2006; Heracleous, 2006), few studies actively engage with this plurivocity (Brown, 2006). However, our study shows the importance of plurivocity in two ways. First, it highlights the presence of multiple narratives that coexist within an organization, each interpreting the same story line in different ways. Thus, we emphasize plurivocity through the distinct plots that interpret the same story. Second, our finding of a professional narrative of engagement illustrates that plurivocity might also involve joint authorship of a narrative in which two parties align their different interests through a common plot. These findings on the plurivocal nature of narrative help to extend the existing literature.

Third, we extend literature on narrative and discourse more broadly by placing narrative firmly within context, illustrating how narrative constructs context and is shaped by that context as it unfolds (Heracleous, 2004). Specifically, we show that the context is often provided by other narratives and that narratives develop in response to each other, constructing the different elements of an organizational story over time in ways that meet the needs of different actors. Narratives are thus social constructs that serve an important purpose in enabling organization. In particular, our finding on the temporary nature of the professional narrative of resistance, which dissipated as it became obsolete and failed to enrol Narrators, illustrates how a narrative may emerge to meet the needs and interests of a specific group, subsiding as it becomes irrelevant to the ongoing dynamic.

Fourth, this paper contributes to the emerging literature on ‘institutional work’ (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Leblebici et al., 1991) that seeks to show how human agents give meanings to institutions in specific contexts. This paper has shown how two conflicting institutional logics – a market logic and a professional logic, were given meaning and played out within a specific organizational context. The study has dealt with how actors within an organization with multiple, potentially competing institutions, drew upon these competing institutional logics to give meaning to their own actions.

One limitation of this study is that it has been conducted in a business school, a particular type of professional organization. However, we suggest that business schools are valuable contexts for studying the dynamics of professional organizations because of their multiple conflicting interests, uncertain resource dependencies, and dynamic competitive environments (Cohen and March, 1986; Pfeffer and Fong, 2002; Trank and Rynes, 2003). As such, business schools are in keeping with other professional organizations, such as hospitals, cultural and professional service organizations, which have similar problems to the business school (Alvesson and Svenningsson, 2003; Denis et al, 1996; 2001; Fenton and Pettigrew, 2006). Therefore, the findings are expected to be relevant to other professional organizations. Particularly, as organizations are becoming increasingly fluid, and as knowledge-based work is increasingly important in many industries (Lowendahl, 1997), the findings have increasing relevance to organizations that share these characteristics.


Pfeffer, J. and Fong, C. T. 2002. The End of Business Schools? Less Success Than Meets the Eye *Academy of Management Learning & Education* 1.1


<table>
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<tr>
<th>Chronicle</th>
<th>Central Organizational Narrative</th>
<th>Professional Narrative of Resistance</th>
<th>Professional Narrative of Engagement</th>
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<tr>
<td>2001: Internationalization goal is articulated and a SIG is formed to determine what this goal means</td>
<td>There is a Problem: BizEd, the Hero, does not have the international recognition its excellence deserves. The internationalization Quest is articulated but is unclear. Helpers from across the School are recruited to the SIG.</td>
<td>No resistance emerges at this stage</td>
<td>Professionals on the SIG accept the Problem and engage in defining the Quest, although it is not clear that they identify BizEd as the Hero.</td>
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<td>2002: BizEd fails to achieve full BSA accreditation because it is insufficiently international in its teaching programmes. In response, at the SIG Awayday, top managers make it clear that BSA is their definition of the IG</td>
<td>BSA is identified as an Antagonist, who exacerbates the Problem. BizEd is the unsung Hero, whose brilliance is not recognized. While the Quest is still international recognition, it seems to be synonymous with conquering BSA. Helpers are expected to join in the Quest.</td>
<td>Divergence over the Quest emerges. Professionals see the Quest as internationally-recognized research and academics as the Heros, who need support in pursuing the Quest. BSA is an Antagonist that diverts the Hero from the Quest.</td>
<td>Professionals are also indignant that the Antagonist has failed to recognize that BizEd is full of excellent, internationally-recognized academics. Overlap in different Quests, in which international research can be used to conquer BSA. While BizEd is not the Hero, it is central to the Hero’s Quest, as academic status is enhanced by being in an internationally-recognized school.</td>
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<td>2002/03: Administrators try to set up international teaching exchanges but have trouble getting academics to go on them.</td>
<td>The BizEd Hero must meet a number of challenges in pursuit of the Quest, which increasingly is conquering BSA. Helpers should support the Hero in meeting these challenges.</td>
<td>These challenges are not relevant to the academic Hero’s Quest of pursuing international research. They will not be Helpers in BizEd’s Quest</td>
<td>Joint authorship of the narrative emerges. Senior managers express cynicism about BSA, suggesting the BizEd Quest is just one way to help academics meet their own Heroic Quest of being internationally recognized. Academics join in this authorship, assuming a Helper role in the BizEd Quest, by embedding the teaching exchanges in their academic groups.</td>
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<td>2003/04: While academics have espoused helper status, very few are actually going on teaching exchanges, so top managers offer financial incentives.</td>
<td>The BizEd Hero enlists Helpers in the Quest to achieve international recognition by conquering BSA. Helpers will be rewarded for supporting the Hero.</td>
<td>Academics are angry. Senior managers are using false rewards to divert them from their true Quest of international research excellence. Teaching exchanges become part of the Problem – a challenge for academic Heroes to overcome in pursuing their own Quest.</td>
<td>Academics point out that this is not the right way to enlist Helpers. They suggest alternative rewards for enlisting Helpers, such as research exchanges. They also draw on the cynicism in the jointly-authored narrative to suggest that the two Quests can be met simultaneously, without really having to go to the trouble of teaching exchanges.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Academic Perspectives</td>
<td>Joint Narrative</td>
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<td>2004:</td>
<td>Little actual behaviour changes, although a few academics do a teaching exchange. Administrators set up international student exchanges as another means of increasing internationalization.</td>
<td>The Hero’s Quest is threatened. Helpers are not forthcoming. The Hero must take self-reliant steps to meet the challenges of establishing international teaching programmes. The Hero is worried about the Quest but bravely soldiers on without support.</td>
<td>Academics feel justified in their stance. They discredit the BizEd Hero’s Quest of internationalization through BSA, in order to advance their own internationalization Quest of research recognition.</td>
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<td>2004/05:</td>
<td>As BSA visit draws closer, administrators and senior managers make sure the paperwork is in order, constructing documents that ‘prove’ internationalization. Academics are asked to submit details of any internationalization activities.</td>
<td>The Hero prepares for the ultimate ‘succeed or fail’ challenge of the BSA re-accreditation visit. All resources must be draw upon in this anxious preparation. Academics are marginalized as actual Helpers, although their activities are co-opted, in order to appear as Helpers.</td>
<td>The narrative of resistance loses its thread, as the central narrative stops trying to actively address academic resistance to the BizEd Quest.</td>
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<td>2005:</td>
<td>BSA visit. Prior to the BSA visit ‘Hymn sheets’ are developed for academics on panels to learn. Academics ‘perform’ their parts during the visit.</td>
<td>Having prepared for the confrontation with BSA, the Hero assembles the full range of assistance and goes into the battle. The co-opted Helpers are able to provide support because they have been properly prepared by the Hero.</td>
<td>The narrative of resistance has subsided.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005:</td>
<td>BSA is achieved. Congratulatory emails sent around, thanking all staff for their effort and inviting them to a champagne reception.</td>
<td>The central narrative asserts that conquering BSA was not THE Quest but just one way of proving that the Quest, international recognition, has been achieved. Academics are reconstructed into the central narrative as essential Helpers in that Quest.</td>
<td>Conquering BSA is reconstructed into the professional narrative, to become part of their own Heroic Quest, to be internationally-recognized academics in an internationally-recognized business school.</td>
</tr>
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