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**FROM NATIONAL SERVICE TO GLOBAL PLAYER: TRANSFORMING THE
ORGANIZATIONAL LOGIC OF A PUBLIC BROADCASTER**

André Spicer
Warwick Business School
University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 7AL
United Kingdom
andre.spicer@wbs.ac.uk
+44 2476 524513

Graham Sewell
Department of Management & Marketing
University of Melbourne
Parkville 3010
Australia
gsewell@unimelb.edu.au
+61 3 83447028

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FROM NATIONAL SERVICE TO GLOBAL PLAYER: TRANSFORMING THE ORGANIZATIONAL LOGIC OF A PUBLIC BROADCASTER

We present organizational logics as a meso-level construct that lies between institutional theory's field-level logics and the sense-making activities of individual agents in organizations. We argue that an institutional logic can be operationalized empirically using the concept of a discourse—that is, a coherent symbolic system articulating what constitutes legitimate, reasonable, and effective conduct in, around, and by organizations. An organization may, moreover, be simultaneously exposed to several institutional logics that make up its broader ideational environment. Taking these three observations together enables us to consider an organizational logic as a spatially and temporally localized configuration of diverse discourses. We go on to show how organizational logics were transformed in the Australian Broadcasting Corporation between 1953 and 1999 by examining the changing discourses that appeared in the Corporation's annual reports. We argue that these discourses were modified through three main forms of discursive agency: (1) undertaking acts of ironic accommodation between competing discourses; (2) building chains of equivalence between the potentially contradictory discourses; and, (3) reconciling new and old discourses through pragmatic acts of 'bricolage'. We found that, using these forms of discursive agency, a powerful coalition of actors was able to transform the dominant organizational logic of the ABC from one where the Corporation's initial mission was to serve national interests through public service to one that was ultimately focused on participating in a globalized media market. Finally, we note that discursive resources could be used as the basis for resistance by less powerful agents, although further research is necessary to determine exactly how more powerful and less powerful agents interact around the establishment of an organizational logic.

Key Words: Organizational Logics; Discourse; Institutional Logics; Practice; Public Service Broadcasting.

INTRODUCTION

Lurking within most organizations are deeply rooted assumptions about what is considered to be ‘... legitimate, reasonable and effective for an organization to do in a given context’ (Guillén, 2001, p.14). These assumptions are what some scholars call organizational logics (Biggart, 1991; Guillén, 2001). To a large extent these assumptions are organizationally specific manifestations of socially embedded ideologies, myths, and beliefs (Zilber, 2006). We shall argue that, when considered in this way, an organizational logic is related to but is also conceptually and empirically distinct from a higher-order *institutional* logic. Although there are several definitions of institutional logic in the literature we consider Friedland and Alford’s (1991) version as the most appropriate for our discussion. They state that:

Each of the most important institutional orders of contemporary Western societies has a central logic—a set of material practices and symbolic constructions—which constitutes its organizing principles and which is available to organizations and individuals to elaborate. (Friedland and Alford, 1991, p.248)

Thinking of the relationship between institutional and organizational logics as they are defined above sets up an interesting research challenge that is part conceptual and part empirical and can best be conveyed in the question: Exactly how do organizations elaborate on the prevailing institutional logics to create their distinct organizational logics? Reflecting on this question reveals another layer of conceptual and empirical complexity for, if we accept that institutional logics are changing (however gradually), then it can be reasonably assumed that organizational logics will also change. Change at the organizational level is, moreover, likely to be a difficult, highly contentious, and drawn-out affair as it would literally involve the remaking of the ideational world that the members of that organization inhabit (Zilber, 2006).

That institutional logics change is not, of course, a contentious claim and numerous studies of their operation at the level of the field acknowledge the profound effects that such changes are likely to have on organizations and their members (e.g., Townley, 1997; Oakes et al., 1998; Glynn, 2000, 2002; Zilber, 2002). For example, we know that actors may be prompted into moving an organization’s internal ideational climate in one direction or another when they are confronted by contradictions between competing institutional logics (Seo and Creed, 2002; Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). We also know of specific instances where organizational actors take advantage of these contradictions through ‘projective agency’ (Perkmann and Spicer, 2007), and that such agency often involves the articulation of politically efficacious discourses that serve particular interests (Friedland and Alford, 1991; Oakes et al., 1998). We know less, however, about

exactly how the transformation of an organizational logic takes place over the kind of time span that would also allow a consideration of the influence of changing institutional logics. In particular, over the longer term we are uncertain about when and why contradictions in organizational logics appear, what kinds of projective agency are deployed in response to these contradictions, and what sorts of discursive resources organizational actors use when they are engaged in such projective agency.

In this manuscript we address these concerns by investigating transformations in the organizational logic of Australia's largest public broadcaster—the Australian Broadcasting Corporation or ABC. Building on existing conceptual material we argue that the ABC was subject to a multiplicity of gradually changing institutional logics and that these changes are evident in each logics' respective symbolic systems of legitimation. We consider these symbolic systems to be discourses that are amenable to the methods of critical discourse analysis (Phillips et al., 2004). Thus, a particular organizational logic can be said to be in operation when a characteristic configuration of discourses is observable at the level of the organization. Given the multiplicity of discourses involved, however, it would be unusual for them all to be perfectly harmonized. Indeed, we shall argue that the emergence of contradictions and tensions between the discourses making up an organizational logic create the opportunity for actors to undertake projective agency. This agency, in turn, paves the way for organizational logics to change. In this way we show that, although any number of organizational logics could have potentially emerged in the ABC throughout the study period, the ones that did reflected the discursive efforts of a politically effective coalition of actors whose main internal and external public face was the ABC's Board of Governors (from hereon, the Board). As part of its attempts to influence the Corporation's strategic direction, this coalition was involved in authorizing the ABC's main official text: its annual reports. We contend that these annual reports thus serve as a reliable and valid data source that can be used to track the changes in the ABC's organizational logic over time. We also contend that, by interpreting the content of the annual reports in combination with other data sources, we are able to make claims about the discursive agency undertaken by members of the coalition in this process of authorization.¹ Thus, we were able to identify three kinds of discursive agency at work here: Undertaking acts of ironic accommodation between competing discourses, building chains of equivalence between the potentially contradictory discourses, and reconciling new and old discourses through pragmatic acts of 'bricolage'. By engaging in these three forms of discursive agency the coalition initiated changes in the prevailing organizational logic that articulated its preferred strategic vision for the ABC.

Our initial interest in organizational logic as a localized configuration of discourses reflecting the broader ideational influence of institutional logics was pricked by Douglas's (1986) view that, in order to appreciate an institution's hold on our processes of recognising and classifying the conduct of ourselves and of others, we must consider how it is effectively doing our thinking for us. This is where examining the multiple discourses that make up an organizational logic plays well with the institutional theory's interests in the dynamics of institutionalization, deinstitutionalization, and institutional entrepreneurship—in effect we are able to appreciate the way in which organizational actors simultaneously work with and on a complex array of potentially contradictory ways of making sense of the social arrangements around them. This is consonant with Friedland and Alford's (1991) observation that people live 'across' several institutions at the same time; a position that compels us to recognise that any 'elaboration' of institutional logics (to use Friedland and Alford's term) at the organizational level will involve a complex interaction of symbolic constructions and material practices that are ultimately played out at the level of individual action (Battilana, 2006). Thus, we contend that our principal contribution to the institutional literature is to provide a historical account of elaboration through one type of material practice—that is, discursive agency—as it mediates between an organization's internal ideational climate and its external ideational environment.

In order to make this contribution we shall proceed as follows. First, we shall clarify what we mean by an organizational logic. Then we will examine the existing literature that deals directly and indirectly with how organizational logics change before highlighting some unresolved conceptual matters. We then outline the site and method we used to explore these matters. This is followed by the presentation of a history of shifting organizational logics in the ABC. In the next stage of the discussion we elaborate on the discursive efforts of the dominant coalition of powerful actors that shaped the strategic direction of the ABC. We conclude with a recapitulation of the main theoretical and empirical features of the manuscript before outlining some future research directions.

ORGANIZATIONAL LOGICS

From Institutional Logics to Organizational Logics

The concept of an organizational logic is less developed than the related concept of an institutional logic but it has still been used in a variety of ways in management studies. We contend that, like institutional logics, an organizational logic can also be seen a recursive interaction between a symbolic system that informs cognition about an organization and the material manifestation of that cognition in the form of the specific

practices that are enacted in that organization (cf. Friedland and Alford, 1991; Thornton and Ocasio, 2008). From the diverse but limited literature on organizational logics we can identify three main operational definitions: (1) they are a narrow mode of cognition associated with strategy formulation and implementation (i.e., a focus on a highly restricted symbolic system); (2) they are a bundle of operational and management techniques (i.e., a focus on material practices); and, (3) they are a broader mode of cognition associated with the legitimization of action (i.e., a focus on broader symbolic systems *and* material practices). In this section we will briefly consider each of these definitions before arguing that third one is the most tractable for our current purposes.

In early work we find a narrowly cognitive approach to organizational logics. By this we mean that the term itself is taken to refer to a cluster of axioms that impinge on the cognitive activities of organizational members as they relate to a specific problem-solving task. Thus, characterizations of the organization (say ‘we are innovative’ or ‘we are a total quality organization’) can be thought of as the aggregation of individual cognitive acts that are informed by the logic. For instance, Boschken (1976) identifies Thompson’s (1967) discussion of an organization buffering its technical core from environmental uncertainty as an expression of ‘a logic of an organizational system’ that is ultimately expressed in a characteristic way of thinking about concrete problems that arose during its day to day operations. Similarly, in the strategic management literature organizational logics are seen as ‘... a mindset or a world view or conceptualization of the business’ (Prahalad and Bettis, 1986, p.490). Under these complementary definitions an organizational logic effectively prescribes how people ought to think and also proscribes alternative ways of thinking (cf. Hardy, 2004). Prescription and proscription operate, however, in very narrowly directed ways: in effect an organizational logic becomes a way of articulating a systematic strategy that factors in internal and external determinants of competitiveness without paying attention to wider societal constraints on individual cognition and conduct in the organization.

A more empirically-based approach was developed during the 1990s that took organizational logics to be integrated bundles of operational and management techniques within firms (MacDuffie, 1995). It largely came out of studies investigating the perceived relative decline of US (and, by extension, European) corporations vis-à-vis Asian competitors. This led to a wider interest in alternatives to the ‘Fordist’ accommodation between capital, labor, and the State (see Cusumano, 1985; Clegg, 1990; Boyer and Durand, 1993). Primarily descriptive in its focus, this approach was taken up by subsequent empirical studies that

attempted to capture the characteristic configurations of activities such as buyer-supplier relations, subcontracting arrangements, human resource management, and production organization that can confer competitive advantage on a firm. Major research projects—notably the MIT International Motor Vehicle Program—were set up to identify the determinants of Japanese auto assemblers’ success, culminating in the publication of best-selling books advocating the adoption of distinctive sets of systematic, consistent, and mutually re-enforcing practices that were labeled ‘Lean Production’ (Womack, Jones, and Roos, 1990) or ‘High Performance Work Systems’ (Buchanan and McCalman, 1989; Rayner, 1993).

Our third conception of an organizational logic has been inspired by neo-institutional theory and its focus on the legitimacy of rules, norms, and knowledge systems that inform individual and organizational conduct (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Thornton and Ocasio, 1999). At the level of society numerous institutional logics compete in a field and settle into characteristic patterns of influence (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008). Thus, institutional logics are ‘... both supraorganizational patterns of activity by which individuals and organizations produce and reproduce their material subsistence and organize time and space. They are also symbolic systems—that is, ways of ordering reality, thereby rendering the experience of time and space meaningful’ (Friedland and Alford, 1991, p.243). At the level of the institutional field these institutional logics constitute the ‘... broad cultural beliefs and rules that structure cognition and fundamentally shape decision making and action’ (Marquis and Lounsbury, 2007, p.799)—for example, the impact of the shift from an editorial logic to a business logic on the publishing industry (Thornton, 2002, 2004) or the impact of the shift from a logic of professional dominance to a logic of managed care on the health-care sector (Scott et al., 2000). Such historical studies have repeatedly demonstrated the various effects of changes in field level logics on executive succession (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999), organizational forms (Haverman and Rao, 1997), governance structures (Fiss and Zajac, 2004), the value and power of certain actors in a field (Scott et al., 2000), and organizational identities and strategies (Thornton, 2002). According to Thornton and Ocasio (2008), institutional logics shape individual action in organizations through: (1) providing collective identities that establish the normative basis for group membership; (2) creating the ‘rules of the game’ that govern contests for status and power; (3) providing agents with systems of classification and categorization; and, (4) by directing our attention toward ‘what matters’ (and, as a corollary, diverting our attention away from ‘what doesn’t matter’). Creating identities, establishing the rules of the game, developing classification systems, and identifying what matters

are processes whereby coherent symbolic systems are constructed but the resultant behavioural outcomes are material practices (Friedland and Alford, 1991). Bringing these mutually reinforcing symbolic systems and material practices together at the level of the organization we can identify characteristic sets of features that are more than just strategies of action (cf. Prahalad and Bettis, 1986) or a bundle of techniques (cf. MacDuffie, 1995): they are also a source of legitimacy that provide a sense of procedural order and ‘ontological security’ for people in and around that organization (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008). For example, this has been demonstrated by research at the level of the organization which explored the impact of the broader ideational environment on the conduct of a symphony orchestra and its members (Glynn, 2000, 2002; Glynn and Lounsbury, 2005). Importantly, this research provides a dynamic account of the localized impact of the shift from an aesthetic institutional logic to a business-oriented institutional logic that led to changes in orchestra repertoire, organizational identity, and even critics’ reviews. Adopting a similar position, we propose that an organizational logic is a composite expression of a range of institutional logics localized in time and space and, considered as such, it serves as a meso-level construct that bridges the methodological holism of field level analyses of institutions and the methodological individualism of psychological approaches to human agency and cognition (Fligstein, 1987; Friedland and Alford, 1991; Sewell, 1992; Thornton and Ocasio, 1999). Our preference for this third approach rests on the ability of neo-institutional theory to move beyond accounts of organizational logics as a limited set of decision-making rules that guide rational-instrumental action to engage with broader socially embedded questions of legitimacy. In other words, it is not simply concerned with *how* a particular organizational logic operates but also with *why* it is seen as desirable in terms that include but also extend beyond narrow definitions of economic efficiency or organizational effectiveness. By focusing on the broader notions of legitimacy that have their origins outside those associated with strategic or production management, we can also begin to deal with one of the established criticisms of neo-institutional theory—that it has difficulty in accounting for changes in logics at the levels of the field *and* the organization (see Greenwood and Hinings, 1996). Nevertheless, a key challenge remains in that we must be able to operationalize such a potentially nebulous concept as an organizational logic in a way that does justice to its complex dual status as both a symbolic system and as the basis for specific practices. Our response to this challenge is to draw on recent developments in discourse analysis. Through its focus on texts as a central (if incomplete) part of the construction of organizational reality (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000), it establishes a methodological link

between the micro scale of everyday language use and the macro scale of social context in a manner that is particularly congruent with the preoccupations of neo-institutional theory (Phillips et al., 2008). Importantly, a discourse evident at the organizational level reflects the ideational content of broader institutional logics as they are taken up and elaborated by individual actors. In short, a discourse frames the possibilities for being and acting in the organization by articulating the criteria by which appropriate or ‘right’ conduct is determined but in a way that can be modified by individual and collective acts of acceptance, appropriation, and resistance (Phillips et al., 2008). Thus, the effect of discourse is not simply a matter of ‘bearing down’ (that is, shaping what people believe in a unidirectional way that determines their conduct—Hardy, 2004) but also of ‘scaling up’ (that is, when localized agency can alter an organization’s ideational and practical trajectory—Hardy, 2004). In effect, by studying changes in discourse at the level of the organization we can develop an appreciation of the impact of its broader ideational environment in combination with a consideration of the way in which actors individually and collectively use discursive resources to influence the internal ideational and practical climate of an organization in an attempt to establish the legitimacy of a particular configuration of authority relations. This allows us to address the question of how organizational logics change from a perspective that, through a consideration of changing discourses, is compatible with the theoretical and empirical priorities of neo-institutional theory.

Changing Organizational Logics

To reiterate, while institutional accounts broadly agree that changes in the ideational status of the field will lead to changes in the ideational systems that are manifested at the level of the organization—what we have styled changing organizational logics—there is less consensus around exactly how this ‘scaling down’ comes about. Recent literature has, however, identified three considerations that can help to explore the relationship between institutional logics and organizational logics. These are the existence of contradictions, processes of projective agency, and the articulation of discourses.

Contradictions. The contradictory consequences of ‘living across institutions’ (Friedland and Alford, 1992) were anticipated by Douglas (1986) who demonstrated that they could even play a role in ‘life and death decisions’. Drawing on the work of Fox and Swarez (1974) she showed how medical authorities, when faced with allocating limited therapeutic resources such as access to kidney dialysis, made moral judgments that reflected contested notions of fairness and justice in order to determine whether a patient was a worthy recipient of treatment. She highlighted the tension between institutions that supported waiting one’s turn in

the queue versus institutions that supported the allocation of treatment based on one's relative contribution to society (however that was determined). Allocation on the basis of a queue or on the basis of merit could both be construed as fair in different circumstances, leading Douglas (1986, p.125) to comment that when,

... individuals disagree on elementary justice, their most insoluble conflict is between institutions based on incompatible principles. The more severe the conflict, the more useful to understand the institutions that are doing most of the thinking.

This challenge has been taken up by scholars who have recognized that understanding the contradictions in an organization's ideational environment provides insights into institutional change. For example, ideational changes at the level of the field can be initiated when the contradictions between the multiple institutional logics in play at any one time become evident in a single organization (Seo and Creed, 2002). At the organizational level this can lead to a situation of tension when actors may draw on two or more institutional logics simultaneously in order to legitimate their actions and, as consequence, also legitimate particular authority relations. Often this involves an ironical playing off a series of deeply rooted systems of meaning against each other (Sewell and Barker, 2006). For instance, during recent years there has been an ongoing clash between the institutional logics of corporatism and share-holder value that has been played out in German corporations (Fiss and Zajac, 2004), giving rise to major changes in systems of organizational governance. Similarly, (Zilber, 2002) identified a tension between the institutional logics of feminism and therapy that were played out in the practices of an Israeli Rape Crisis. Others have argued that a clash between geographically specific institutional logics has been a motor for change. For instance, attempts by the New York mutual fund industry to foist aggressive growth-oriented strategies onto Boston-based firms produced significant changes in practice within the firms making up Massachusetts arm of the industry (Lounsbury, 2007).

While such studies support the view that contradictions between different institutional logics certainly open up a space for change, we are less certain about the temporal dynamics associated with these contradictions. Some suggest that contradictions between institutional logics only become a consideration in organizations during moments of crisis (Seo and Creed, 2002; Greenwood and Hinings, 2006). In contrast, Zilber (2002) argues that contradictions between institutional logics can be a constant feature of an organization that act as the focus of ongoing and ritualized political struggles (Zilber, 2002).

Projective Agency. While contradictions between institutional logics create an opportunity for changes in an organizational logic they by no means guarantee that this change will take place. Indeed, at the level of

the organization actors may respond in different ways, including acquiescence to the institutional logics promoted by dominant groups (Scott et al., 2000), attempts to combine potentially conflicting institutional logics creatively (Reay and Hinings, 2005), or resistance to the dominant institutional logic (Marquis and Lounsbury, 2007). The more proactive of these reactions involves the deployment of ‘projective agency’ (Colomy, 1998; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Dorado, 2005; Perkmann and Spicer, 2007) where individual or collective action can articulate a viable conceptual project to orient the future activity of other actors (Hardy, 2004), and seek to justify that project through reference to broader discourses (McInnery, 2008). By articulating a project, an agent identifies a particular collective problem and possible solutions to that problem (Colomy, 1998). This provides the ‘content’ for an envisaged future state of affairs. While current research suggests that projective agency is likely to play an important role in the process of establishing new organizational logics in an organization, we are not certain how that agency will play out when actors draw on institutional logics that are themselves contradictory. We will consider whether, when faced with such contradictions, subordinate actors will acquiesce to the institutional logic which is promoted by the most powerful actors (Scott et al., 2000) or whether it prompts resistance on the part of those attached to an existing arrangement of institutional logic (Marquis and Lounsbury, 2007).

Mobilizing Discourse. In order to generate attractive ‘future trajectories’, projective agency needs to deploy ideational resources through the mobilization of a coherent discourse. Our operational definition of discourse involves ‘... the structured collection of texts embodied in the practices of talking and writing (as well as a wide variety of visual representation and cultural artifacts) that bring organizationally related objects into being as these texts are produced, disseminated, and consumed’ (Grant et al., 2004, p.3). The articulation of efficacious discourses is a vital aspect of developing and defending legitimacy (Phillips et al., 2004)—that is, effective discourses must have a suasive force that provides the rhetorical resources and linguistic-cognitive schemas associated with institutional logics. For instance, various languages of professionalism were found to legitimate the shift from accounting practices to ‘multi-disciplinary practices’ in the North American professional services industry (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). Beyond this level of mere legitimation, institutional logics can be thought of as actually being constructed through such discourses. Thus, the use of a new institutional language to speak about the purpose of organizations is also likely to play an important role in creating an organizational logic as a social object. This is at least suggested by one study of museums in Canadian cities that showed how the articulation of business planning

and measurement discourses led to the emergence of a business institutional logic that displaced the existing cultural institutional logic (Oakes et al., 1998). Nevertheless, the question which this Canadian study leaves unanswered is: What specific discursive resources do actors mobilize when they are seeking to transform a logic at the level of the organization? To respond to this challenge we extend two main approaches that deal with discourses at the level of the field. The first of these takes on Douglas's (1986) observation that the legitimacy of an institution depends on its association with a cognitive device such as a powerful metaphor by which it is 'naturalized'. That is:

The cognitive device grounds the institution at once in nature and in reason by discovering the institution's formal structure corresponds to formal structures in non-human realms.
(Douglas, 1986, p.55)

This suggests that forms of discursive agency deploying metaphor and analogy are implicated in the legitimation of institutions (Phillips et al., 2004; Garud et al., 2007). The alternative (although related) approach has been to focus on more formal expressions of reasoning in discourse such the presence of logical statements (Heracleous and Barrett, 2001), broadly accepted forms of justification (McInnery, 2008) or classical rhetorical strategies (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005; Green, 2004; Green et al., 2009; Goodrick and Reay, forthcoming) used by agents to establish the legitimacy of their preferred institutional arrangements. Importantly, taking on board both approaches suggests that understanding the way in which actors elaborate on institutional logics to create organizational logics also requires us to consider discursive agency as a combination of analogical and rhetorical moves, as will become evident when we discuss ironic accommodation between competing discourses (a mainly analogical move), building chains of equivalence between the potentially contradictory discourses (an analogical and rhetorical move), and reconciling new and old discourses through pragmatic acts of 'bricolage' (a mainly rhetorical move).

Contradiction, Agency, Discourse. In the rest of this manuscript we will examine the discursive process involved in transforming organizational logics. In particular, we are interested in further exploring when and how the contradictions between discourses become evident, what kinds of projective agency are involved in responding to these contradictions, and what happens to organizational logics when projective agency is exercised. In order to explore these questions, we will examine the transformation of organizational logic in Australia's largest public broadcaster.

CASE AND METHOD

Case Selection

In order to track how changes in an organizational logic took place we have decided to focus on the public broadcasting sector. This sector is particular amenable to such a study because there is strong prima facie evidence that the changing ideational environment in which it has operated has had an impact on its re-organization in recent years across many countries. This re-organization has reflected broader changes in the public sector associated with the spread of what has been called the ‘New Public Management’. This involves the application in the public sector of practices which have been largely borrowed from the private sector (Hood, 1991; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992; Pollitt, 1993; Ferlie et al., 1996). In the case of public broadcasting this has involved the introduction of more market-oriented policies (Etzioni-Halvey, 1987) and the development of a more ‘business-like’ culture through the contracting-out of services, the involvement of management consultancies, restructuring exercises, and the introduction of extensive performance measurement systems (Tracey, 1998; Küng-Shankelman, 2000; Born, 2004). While public broadcasters have been pushed to make such changes they have also sought to cling to the original ethos of public service and public broadcasting (Spicer, 2005; Spicer and Fleming, 2007). This creates an interesting potential contradiction at the organizational level between institutional logics that align with the ethos of public service and institutional logics that align with the ethos of commercial competition. As a result, public broadcasting proves to be a suitable field in which to examine the processes through which the tensions between competing institutional logics are negotiated within a single organization.

The ABC was established in 1933 by Act of Parliament, taking as its inspiration the British Broadcasting Corporation’s (BBC) model of public broadcasting. Thus, it was charged with creating a liberal public sphere through the ‘Reithian’ goals of educating, informing, and entertaining (Reith, 1924; ABC Annual Report [from hereon ABC AR], 1933). Following the BBC model, the ABC was established as a *national* public broadcaster that was meant to be free from government interference and commercial pressures. In order to ensure independence from the government the ABC was established by a parliamentary charter specifying that its operation should be at ‘arm’s length’ from the state. To ensure its independence from commercial pressures the government guaranteed the ABC would not have to fund itself by competing with other broadcasters for advertising revenues. The ABC was, therefore, banned from carrying advertising. Instead it was funded by a public subscription model where all households with a radio (and later a

television) would have to purchase an annual broadcasting license. This was not, however, hypothecated; it was a tax that went into consolidated revenues and only part of the license fee would go to funding the ABC. Later this model was replaced by a direct grant from the government.

During its history the ABC has grown from a single national radio network to comprise, at the time our research was conducted, four national radio networks, a national television network with associated production facilities, an international radio service, an online service, 17 local radio stations broadcasting in 59 localities, and a chain of retail outlets throughout Australia selling merchandizing associated with its television and radio programs.

Data Collection

To explore changing organizational logics in the ABC we began by collecting some background information about the company. We did this by consulting the published histories and chronologies of the ABC between 1950 and 2000 (Allen and Spencer 1983; Inglis, 1983, 2006; Jackal et al., 1997; Media Information Australia, 1981-86; Media Information Australia incorporating culture and policy, 1997-1999). Having collected this background material we decided our major source of data would be the annual reports of the ABC. These provide a reliable means of tracking of changes in the Corporation's internal ideational climate over an extended period for a number of reasons. Annual reports proved an advantageous data source for a number of reasons. First, annuals reports have frequently been used to track changes in discourses within organizations over time (eg. Fiss and Zajac, 2004; Vaara et al., 2005). Second, documents such as annual reports are a particularly useful data sources because they are a record of the internal ideational climate of the organization couched in the language of its external ideational environment (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). Finally, we focused on annual reports because they were the most consistent documents produced by the ABC across the time period and covered the broadest strategic scope of its operations. Thus, we would be able to subject its annual reports published between 1953 and 1999 to a close reading in order to discern shifts in the configuration of discourses and, therefore, organizational logics over time. This time-frame was selected as the 1953 annual report was the first to provide the richness of data required for our analysis.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Recent studies have developed a set of robust methods for the systematic coding and analysis of textual data to reveal the discourses they articulate. These methods are based on the long tradition of interpretive social science which seeks to establish how actors make sense of the social world (Burrell and

Morgan, 1979). Building on theories of social construction (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), interpretive approaches focus on tracing how actors use discourses to construct and negotiate the symbolic universes in which they exist. This involves the careful and recursive process of uncovering meaning structures which actors use to negotiate and engage the world (Phillips et al., 2008). Thus, an interpretive approaches to discourse analysis ‘... aims to identify discursive structures and patterns across these texts such as enthymemes, central themes or root metaphors, and to explore how these structures influence and shape agents’ interpretations, actions and social practices’ (Heracleous, 2004, p.176). For example, through an analysis of the texts and utterances surrounding the introduction of electronic trading system in the London Insurance Market, Heracleous and Barrett (2001) identified actors’ rhetorical strategies by classifying patterns of usage of characteristics enthymemes. Adopting a slightly different approach, Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) drew on a combination of witness statements to a Securities and Exchange Commission hearing and other documentation to expose contradictory institutional logics embedded in historical understandings of professionalism in accounting. Theirs was a two-stage analysis, first undertaking a content analysis of the material to identify the ‘institutional vocabularies’ used to articulate a particular institutional logic before attempting to capture deep structures of meaning contained therein using classical rhetorical categories. Maguire and Hardy (2006, 2009) also used a combination of historical sources and transcripts of representations to the United Nations Environment Programme’s investigation into the effects of the herbicide DDT to reveal the discursive roles played by actors and texts they authored during an institution-building process. They used a four-stage data analysis process but it was their first stage that is of particular interests to us. This involved building a ‘discursive event history data base’ (Van der Ven and Poole, 1990; Maguire, 2004) of ‘who said what, and when’ (Eisenhardt and Bourgeois, 1988) using the wide range of data sources available to them. This was then refined using theory-derived themes to identify coherent discourses of the purpose and effects of DDT.

From Heracleous and Barrett (2001) we took the idea that it is possible to identify coherent discursive strategies that reside in the texts produced by organizations and their members. From Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) we took the idea that these discursive strategies are likely to be couched in institutional vocabularies that are external to the organization. From Macguire and Hardy (2006—see also Macguire and Hardy, 2009) we took that it is possible to use third-party historical sources as well as organizational sources to develop a historical perspective on changes in discourse over an extended time period. Taking these

considerations on board we developed a two-stage data analysis process that first involved analyzing secondary historical data referenced by the reports themselves. In order to do this we systematically read through all the secondary sources and identified the key events and the actors involved in each of them to produce our ‘discursive event history database’. A key event was identified when it was either mentioned in a historical chronology or when a significant emphasis was placed on it in narrative histories (see, for example, Inglis, 1983). These key events were tabulated into a continuous chronological narrative that was then cross-referenced against the annual reports using methods of interpretive discourse analysis (Heracleous and Hendry, 2000; Heracleous and Barrett, 2001; Heracleous, 2006; Maguire and Hardy, 2006). This allowed us to operationalize the institutional logics that made up the ABC’s ideational environment by identifying and coding recurrent themes in the annual reports (see Appendix 1). Codes were gradually adjusted and, using an iterative approach (Miles and Huberman, 1984), we were able to identify seven synchronic discursive themes that were nominally stable across the forty seven year study period: *Diversity*, *Civil Society*, *Communities*, *Australian Culture*, the *Media Market*, *Government*, and *Internationalism*.² We took these inductively generated categories (Musson and Duberley, 2006) to stand for the discourses associated with the main institutional logics that made up the ABC’s external ideational climate. We noticed, however, that the language used in annual reports first to establish the significance of these themes and then discuss them subtly changed over time. That is, in Suddaby and Greenwood’s (2005) term, we were able to discern changes in the institutional vocabularies adopted by the ABC as it gradually repositioned itself with respect to these discursive themes. This is the basis for our claims about the ABC’s changing organizational logics: from one year to the next the discourse related to each of these themes in individual reports appeared to be relatively stable but, over longer periods, it shifted in important ways.³ Adopting a diachronic perspective we were able to identify four characteristic configurations of our synchronic themes that mapped onto eras where an overarching symbolic system operated at the ABC. Following Phillips et al. (2008) we have taken these overarching symbolic systems to be an operationalization of the prevailing organizational logic and we have labeled them *Nationalism*, *Multiculturalism*, *Neo-Liberalism* and *Globalization* respectively. Given that we are interested in changes in the discursive treatment of our seven constituent themes and, hence, transformations in the prevailing organizational logic, we have chosen to present our data via a discussion of the shifts in discourse associated with three main transitions: from *Nationalism* to

Multiculturalism, from Multiculturalism to Neo-Liberalism, and from Neo-Liberalism to Globalization.

These transitions are also summarized in Figure 1.⁴

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

TRANSFORMING THE ORGANIZATIONAL LOGIC OF A PUBLIC BROADCASTING

From Nationalism to Multiculturalism (1953 to the mid-1970s)

Composition of the Dominant Coalition. The foundational organizational logic at the ABC was Nationalism. It was promoted by a coalition inside and outside the organization that included a conservative government (from 1949 until 1972 Australia was ruled by a partnership of the urban-based Liberal Party and the rurally-based Country Party), the ABC's Board, and senior managers, all of whom were drawn from Australia's patrician elite (Inglis, 1983). Central to government policy was the development of infrastructure—including broadcasting—that would encourage a unitary national culture largely based on the sense of an 'inherited' Britishness. This coalition sought to extend their own agenda by shaping the broadcaster into a service that reflected these nationalist aspirations. This reflected a paternalistic '... duty to support what it believes to be best in our society and to endeavour to elevate, according to its own judgement, the taste of that society' (AR, 1963, p.10). During the early part of the 1970s, however, there were significant changes in the dominant coalition who controlled the ABC (Inglis, 1983). Probably the most significant event that precipitated this change was the election of a centre-left Federal government formed by the Labor Party in 1972. At the heart of its broader policies were an expansion of public services and a recognition of the multicultural profile of the Australian population. Although the Labor party was only in power for three years these political aspirations were quickly pursued via the government's engagement with the ABC. Through its power of appointment it was able to promote a more technocratic and professional approach to the management of the organization.

Diversity. Initially the indigenous population and non-English speaking immigrants were represented as targets for assimilation into the national culture through edifying instructional programming on 'typical' Australian (i.e., white Anglo-Celtic) mores. With the gradual recognition of the growing diversity of population, however, it became clear that various groups within Australian society did not automatically identify with the idea of a homogenous British culture. This created a dilemma under an emerging organizational logic of Multiculturalism: Should the notion of Australian identity be changed or should

efforts at assimilation be redoubled? Under the previous organizational logic of Nationalism the latter was the most obvious course of action but, with changes in the dominant coalition, the meaning of the word 'nation' was modified to reflect the pluralistic character of the population. Thus, the ABC was required to provide a '... service to meet the needs of a population which has varying standards of education, and a wide diversity of interests, hopes, and aspirations' (AR, 1972, p.5) in order to reflect '... a wider range of opinions and attitudes within Australian society than existed a few years ago' (ABC AR 1976, p.9).

Communities. Under the organizational logic of Nationalism, the needs of differentiated communities (e.g., aborigines, rural inhabitants, and, in urban areas, people of southern European origin) were barely recognised. Instead they were considered only insofar as these communities were constituent parts of a unified nation. By being incorporated into the nation, each community would become a participant in the national civil society and national culture. For example, the status of remote communities was characterised as incomplete or culturally lacking. This deficit could be made up through local programming that '... compensated those of our people who are very conscious that the coming of television has given further emphasis to their sense of isolation from urban advantages' (AR, 1959, p.4). This sentiment changed with the rise of Multiculturalism: now communities were represented as unique entities with needs of their own. Furthermore, rural outposts were no longer considered to be in need of schooling in the mores of the urban Anglo-Celtic elite. Thus, differentiated communities came to be associated with unique identities and the ABC's role became '... cater(ing) for all community interests' (AR, 1977, p.15). The main organizational response was to develop local radio stations to serve these '... community interests, thereby allowing the ABC to develop a significant community involvement' (AR, 1975, p.9).

Australian Culture. Initially the ABC's explicit role was to support Australian culture by broadcasting 'serious' music, drama, and educational programming. More generally the ABC contributed to the Australian cultural landscape through the commissioning of musical and literary works that reflected the traditions of the country's colonial founders. This also necessitated the production of a discriminating audience well-schooled in European art because '... high standards of performance must go along with high standards in appreciation' (AR, 1953, p.11). The rise of Multiculturalism, however, led to the recognition that the ABC's audience did not have such homogenous and conservative tastes. This shift was retrospectively acknowledged in the 1980s when it was noted that the late 1960s were a watershed for the ABC as it started to become a '... voice for the affairs of the whole nation in all its diversity' (AR 1985,

p.28). That is, it came to be recognised that the ABC needed to represent the interests of specific groups as well as a single nation. The broadcaster's goal thus became the provision of '... programs that contribute to a sense of national identity, inform and entertain, and reflect the cultural diversity of the Australian community' (AR, 1982, p.1). (Please note, the discourses of Media Market, Government, and Internationalism could be detected in embryonic form but were not prominent during the transition from Nationalism to Multiculturalism).

From Multiculturalism to Neo-Liberalism (the mid-1970s to the early 1990s)

Composition of the Dominant Coalition. By the middle of the 1970s Australia experienced a set of political and economic circumstances that prefigured the rise of what has widely become known as neo-liberal ideology (also known as 'Economic Rationalism' in Australia). These reached a climax in 1975 when the conservative opposition parties provoked a constitutional crisis by blocking the progress of the finance bill in the upper house of the Federal Parliament, leading to the dismissal of the Labor government. In the ensuing election a conservative government was again returned to power and it proceeded to make significant funding cuts across all public services. These cuts were coupled with a push to transform all government services into efficient and business-like enterprises. People with strong links to the Liberal and National parties were appointed to the broadcaster's Board when vacancies arose (Inglis, 1983). These new appointees had a mandate to introduce a more entrepreneurial and market-based ethos at the ABC, initially through the appointment of managers with business experience. This mandate was later strengthened after the publication of two government-sponsored reviews of the Australian public services, meaning that the dominant coalition—an alliance of a neo-liberal government, a business-oriented Board, and an entrepreneurial senior management team—were able to justify an organizational logic that, for the first time, placed the goals of market orientation, efficiency and competition right at the heart of the broadcaster's operations (Inglis, 1983). As we set out below, this transformation was accompanied by changes in some of the existing discourses observed in the ABC's annual reports as well as the emergence of new ones.

Media Market. This was the most significant new discourse to emerge as a result of the drive to make the ABC more business-like. Although the media market had been referred to before it was usually to warn against its malign influence on public broadcasting. Take, for example, the following: 'If audience ratings were the basis of the Commission's programme policy, the new and the unusual would rarely be

heard or seen' (AR, 1974, p.7).⁵ During the early 1980s, however, the Media Market discourse was rapidly embraced and we find that references to efficiency became common as the ABC, 'recognize[d] the necessity to be entrepreneurial and energetic in pursuing revenue-raising opportunities' (AR, 1984, p.6). There was also recognition that the ABC should operate using the employment practices of the commercial sector as it became '... difficult to apply a somewhat inflexible public sector recruitment and employment policy in a concentrated and highly competitive industry' (AR, 1987, p.3). This move away from the institutional vocabulary associated with public sector employment accompanied the introduction of external competitive pressures directed at making sure '... programs are produced efficiently and are of value to ABC audiences' (1987, p.12).

Government. Under previous organizational logics there was rarely any discussion of role of the Government in the operation of ABC, even as a primary source of funds. With the rise of Neo-Liberalism, however, a focus on the Government as the primary source of funding became an issue that consistently appeared. For example, it was noted that government funding '... continued to decline ... conversely, the profitability of Australian commercial radio and television stations—a profitability that largely depends upon public expenditure through advertising—has been at a high level' (AR, 1977, p.6). The perception that the ABC was being eclipsed by the commercial sector due to real-term decreases in income led to protests that it was no longer able to fulfil its mission to provide '... adequate and comprehensive radio and television programmes for the Australian community' (AR, 1979, p.5). The realization that its funding was at the discretion of a government that could easily divert resources to other areas of public expenditure drove the ABC to embrace further the discourse of entrepreneurship as it sought to demonstrate '... the Australian public receives the best return on investment in national broadcasting' (AR, 1982, p.2).

Internationalism. Under the organizational logics of Nationalism and Multiculturalism the ABC's efforts were directed at achieving national goals. If its activities did extend beyond national boundaries these were still justified with reference to the nation's self-interest, such as presenting a favourable image of Australia to the rest of the world. With the emergence of Neo-Liberalism, however, the discourse of the Media Market gave rise to discussions of the ABC's commercial relationships with media organizations outside Australia. With the push for the ABC to become 'enterprising' and sell its programming and technology, other national broadcasters emerged as potential buyers and agents were appointed, '... to sell programs in North and South America, and the Pacific and Asian area' (AR, 1978, p.14). These augmented

the activities of agents already established in the United Kingdom, Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.

Civil Society. Under Neo-Liberalism this discourse re-emerged after falling into relative decline, although the goal of promoting civil society was now justified using the language of the market. For example, the ‘four cents a day’ campaign (AR, 1980, p.4) was an attempt to demonstrate the value-for-money that all citizens received for such a small notional per capita tax levy. Central to this message was the ABC’s organizational efficiency in maintaining the essential fabric of a civilized life although, in extending the basic premise of Media Market discourse in this way, Civil Society was no longer represented as a gathering of citizens engaged in rational debate about issues of the day. Rather, it was now represented as a group of taxpayers who entered into an implied contractual relationship with the ABC.

Australian Culture. The institutional vocabulary associated with the Media Market discourse also permeated discussions surrounding the production of Australian culture. For example, the economic goals of efficiency and entrepreneurialism were now coupled with the desire to be culturally distinctive so that the ABC could continue ‘... to be central to the life of the nation and one of the world’s greatest broadcasters’ (AR, 1985, p.3). More generally the success of a commercialized ABC became seen as way of guaranteeing its ability to promote the production of a distinctively Australian culture. (Please note, the discourses of Diversity and Communities did not change discernibly during the transition from Multiculturalism to Neo-Liberalism).

From Neo-Liberalism to Globalization (since the early 1990s)

Composition of the Dominant Coalition. A nominally centre-left Labor party government was reelected in 1983 and over the next thirteen years in power it broadly maintained (and, in some cases, even accelerated) the neo-liberal policies that had previously had such a profound influence of the direction of the ABC (Ingilis, 2006). As result the character of the dominant coalition remained relatively stable although, as we shall see below, the organizational logic of Neo-Liberalism was reconfigured in the context of a globalized media economy. In this way, the discourse of Internationalism ceased to exist as an independent theme as the need to compete with other providers in a global market penetrated all other discourses.

Media Market. The operational context of the ABC changed significantly with the passage of the Broadcasting Services Act in 1992 which opened up the broadcast media to wider

competition from commercial sources. This effectively internationalized the Australian media and, in response to changing market and technological conditions, the ABC embarked on a significant organizational restructuring, including major changes in employment practices. At the same time, new technologies were seen as providing the means to sell ABC productions overseas with a view to becoming ‘... a leader in the broadcasting and marketing of authoritative, quality, educational programs, including English language teaching program, within and outside Australia’ (AR, 1993, frontispiece).

Government. While the neo-liberal belief that federal funding should be represented as an investment made by the taxpayer was maintained, the organizational logic of Globalization was also used to challenge the government’s decreasing financial commitment to the ABC. For example, the broadcaster insisted that it should also be able to benefit from the liberalization of the media sector in Australia even though deregulation laws were devised exclusively for the benefit of commercial operators. Thus, it was given access to the ‘... new multi-channelled environment ... so that the agendas from other nations and purely commercial imperatives do not dominate’ (AR, 1993, p.18). The institutional vocabulary of globalization was also deployed to claim additional government funding using the rationale that more money was required to ensure the broadcaster’s effective participation in the media market. For example, the 1999 report asserted that the ‘... public’s investment in the ABC should be increased because of the coming digital era’ (AR, 1999, p.50).

Community. The organizational logic of Globalization was presented as an opportunity to strengthen the ABC’s commitment to the community through the rise of ‘narrowcasting’ where material could be channelled directly to diverse communities using satellite and cable technologies. Through this form of localism the ABC would become part of communities ‘... not just by providing services to these communities but also being part of community life’ (AR, 1997, p.18). The broadcaster’s local and regional stations embodied ‘... the ABC’s commitment to localism and to providing services which respond to the needs of the diverse state, regional and rural audiences throughout Australia’ (AR, 1997, p.18).

Civil Society and Australian Culture. Concern about the competitive pressure brought about by globalization—especially the relaxation of foreign ownership laws and emergence of niche providers—led to fears that the voice of the ABC would be drowned out by the proliferation of media sources. As such, the ABC’s role as the ‘glue’ holding together Australian civil society appeared to be threatened by

‘revolutionary changes’ in the media environment. It countered by highlighting the need ‘... for a national organisation which gives the whole community an outlet to share its concerns and to think ahead ... the ABC is our most accessible, universal forum to meet these needs’ (AR, 1993, p.12). Thus, the organizational logic of Globalization led to a blurring of two discourses and it was used as a justification for maintaining the ABC’s pre-eminent position as the custodian of Australian culture (where ‘culture’ was cast as a key component of its mission to preserve a normative vision of civil society). Eventually this blurring led the two discourses to decline as independent entities, eventually becoming subsumed under the discourse of Communities.

Diversity. Only minor changes occurred in the discourse of Diversity under the organizational logic of Globalization. The ABC was represented as an institution that preserved ‘media diversity’ in the face of a ‘fast changing media environment’ that was in danger of becoming dominated by large multinational companies (AR, 1997). Importantly, the term itself became decoupled from Multiculturalism. Capitalizing on its positive connotations, Diversity became associated with program content rather than the audience, allowing the ABC to justify its continued existence through the claim that it helped counter the perceived homogenization of television and radio programming around North American (and, to a lesser extent, British) formats.

DISCUSSION

Overcoming Contradictions through Ironic Appropriation

It is our argument that, although a single organizational logic might have predominated at any one time during our study, it is not simply a case that each one was completely silenced by its replacement. Our data suggest, for example, that when the organizational logic of Neo-Liberalism took hold in the corporation it was still interpreted with reference to the foundational organizational logic of Nationalism—i.e., reform of the ABC along neo-liberal lines would ensure that it continued to serve the nation state and promote Australian culture. Likewise when Globalization emerged it was interpreted with reference to Multiculturalism—i.e., somewhat counter-intuitively, a logic of Globalization legitimated a localism that ensured diverse groups could voice their views through the broadcaster. Prima facie, this suggests an overt contradiction in each instance but they can both be seen as a form of ironic appropriation where advocates of a new organizational logic adopt or modify the discourses associated with an old logic in a way that is critical of existing dominant discourses.⁶ It involves appropriation insofar a ‘repeated use of a justification so

that it becomes identified with a particular claim' (Sillince, 1999: 810). This appropriation is ironic insofar as actors mobilizing these justifications that have been repeatedly used in a way that challenges or questions the currently dominant discourses (Phillips et al., 2008: 781). To be sure, this is not a case of 'saying one thing and doing another' (cf. Meyer and Rowan, 1977). That is, neo-liberal ideologues did not disingenuously spout the rhetoric of Nationalism to deceive advocates of a previous approach. Nor did advocates of Globalization seek to deceive advocates of Multiculturalism. Rather, our argument is that during each transition there was a moment where advocates of previous organizational logics were able to exert an influence over advocates of new ones by deploying discourses that encouraged the latter to engage with an alternative view of what was legitimate, reasonable, and effective for an organization and its members to do in a given context. This suggests a subtle form of projective agency sitting between outright acquiescence and outright refusal; a kind of ironically negotiated collusion between advocates of competing worldviews (Sewell, 2008) that creates an opportunity—perhaps only briefly—for a dialogue about the collective identity of an organization to occur before it becomes entrenched (Coupland and Brown, 2004).

This finding is consistent with recent work that attests to the existence of multiple contradictory logics at the level of the field or organization (Zilber, 2002, 2006; see also Coupland and Brown, 2004). Furthermore, our results also appear to be consistent with the finding that the existence of contradictory logics provides the impetus for organizational or institutional change (Seo and Creed, 2002; Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005; Greenwood and Hinings, 2006; Lounsbury, 2007). We noticed, however, that these contradictions between organizational logics in the ABC did not simply act as instantaneous triggers of institutional change through their emergence at a moment of crisis (cf. Seo and Creed, 2002). Rather, such contradictions were an established feature of each era, even though they became less obvious as advocates used discursive agency to play down the tensions between logics (cf. Sillince, 1999). This observation points us toward another form of projective agency that can be theorized using a recent interpretation of the established concept of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971—see also, Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Deetz, 1992; Lewis, 1992; Levy and Egan, 2003; Spicer and Böhm, 2007)—that is, a situation where an apparent ideological unity emerges over time as it is forged in an inherently unstable and contradictory social formation. Given their interest in how actors deploy systems of meaning it should come as no surprise that Gramsci's comments about how powerful actors obscure their self-interests by presenting existing social relations as being somehow natural or normal have become a central focus for today's discourse analysts. For example,

in order to demonstrate that discursive practice is part of larger social practice involving power relations, Fairclough (1992) draws on Gramsci's argument that 'common sense' is the result of a negotiated meaning-making process undertaken by competing social groups who are drawing on diverse ideological resources (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). Given their interest in how systems of meaning become taken for granted and are implicated in establishing the social order it is then perhaps more surprising that institutional theorists have only engaged tangentially with Gramsci. Indeed, according to Levy and Scully (2007, p.976) '... Gramsci has received barely a mention in institutional theory' and they argue for the use of Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) refined concept of hegemony as way of extending our understanding of institutions as discursive constructions.

According to Laclau and Mouffe (2001, p.x, emphasis in original) something approximating hegemony is achieved only when 'a *particular* social force assumes the representation of a *totality* that is radically incommensurable with it'. Crafting hegemony allows a combination of discourses to represent at least some of the interests of all groups involved in the process. In the present case, an organizational logic becomes hegemonic when it is taken to represent and encode a series of other discourses which are at work within an organizational field to legitimate certain authority relations. Thus, a hegemonic logic acts as a kind of common reference point around which previous discourses can circulate. It is, however, a feature of hegemony that it rarely (if ever) goes unchallenged (Burawoy, 1979). Given that the kind of hegemony discussed by Laclau and Mouffe is inherently unstable, once established it requires discursive work to maintain it. This leads us to consider the way in which organizational logics at the ABC were sustained in the face of challenges that were distinct from an ironical appropriation of the pre-existing discourses. This involved building 'chains of equivalence' between distinct discourses.

Building Hegemony by Forging Chains of Equivalence

Some have suggested that obvious contradictions between organizational logics lead to a situation where weaker actors will tend to acquiesce to the most dominant logic (Scott et al., 2000). There is some evidence of this in the current case—for example, some members of the dominant coalition did very quickly fall into line in accepting a new logic—but it is not, however, the full story. Other discourses such as Australian Culture and Civil Society that were championed by subordinate actors were not simply done away with but remained latent, to be used as potential resources of resistance as and when the opportunity arose (Dick and Casell, 2002). These 'resistant logics' (Lounsbury, 2007; Marquis and Lounsbury, 2007) remained part of

the organization but instead of them being deployed in a simple oppositional process where one group sought to defend their favored organizational logic from the onslaught of a more powerful, there appeared to be a process of ‘hybridization’ whereby resistant discourses were able to influence the emergent organizational logic in subtle ways. As a form of projective agency this goes beyond ironic appropriation to involve a mutually modifying form of discursive exchange.

In order to understand how these emerging logics come to be modified by stubbornly resistant discourses we advocate using the concept of ‘chains of equivalence’ (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 130). This is a set of linguistic associations that establish similarities between different interests or groups. A chain of equivalence provides a source of solidarity between diverse groups who may be in support of (or opposed to) the same thing for different reasons (Smith, 1998). Thus, ostensibly contradictory discourses can be combined such that their established meanings are transformed through their overlapping identification with partially shared sets of beliefs (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985—see also, Smith, 1998; Hensmans, 2003; Bridgeman and Willmott, 2005; Spicer and Böhm, 2007). Here a chain of equivalence forges links between apparently independent discourses which makes them appear to be systematically and credibly related but in such a flexible manner that the more obvious contradictions can be avoided. Smith (1998) provides a vivid example of this. On its own socialism is not necessarily democratic and we can think of innumerable nominally ‘socialist’ regimes that are strangers to any form of democracy. Indeed, if a socialist project is initiated by revolution rather than through the ballot box then it may be explicitly anti-democratic (one may think here of the contradictory notion of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ associated with Soviet Communism). But a socialist project—even one initiated by revolution—*can* become democratic if it is transformed through its combination with democratic discourse.

Figure 2 sets out how an important chain of equivalence was established during each of the eras. Thus, discourse like ‘Australian Culture’ which was established during the era of Nationalism maintained their currency even when the organizational logic of Nationalism itself went into decline. Thus, when the organizational logic of Neo-Liberalism (and its associated discourse of the market) was at its height, the message of preserving civil society and promoting Australian culture was still able to get a hearing. This was because a chain of equivalence was forged over time between the discourse of the Media Market and the discourses of Civil Society and Australian Culture so that it led each to be transformed through a combination of discursive elements to provide a shared legitimating scheme that unites ostensibly opposed

interests (Smith, 1998; Laclau, 2005). Importantly, the emergence of the organizational logic of Neo-Liberalism enabled the revival of the discourse of Civil Society—one that had gone into relative decline during the era of Multiculturalism—in order to reconnect with the foundational principles of the ABC. Here the existence of such a chain allowed people to make descriptive and normative statements about Civil Society and Australian Culture in such a way that they were meaningful to hard-line free-market ideologues.

INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

The chain of equivalence illustrated in Figure 2 shows how, in each era under consideration, the discourses associated with a new organizational logic were not necessarily completely silenced by pre-existing discourses, suggesting that rearguard acts of discursive resistance can have some effect on how a new logic is taken up. Here, the ironic appropriation mentioned above can be seen as a necessary (although, not in itself, a sufficient) precondition for the hybridization of dominant and resistant discourses that are connected through a chain of equivalence. This is because such a chain can only be forged if there is some recognition by advocates of one discourse that an ostensibly opposed discourse has at least some degree of legitimacy (Sewell and Barker, 2006). If this condition is satisfied then a dialogue can be entered into that moves beyond rhetorical argumentation to mutually transform oppositional discourses.

Reconciling New and Old Discourses through Discursive Bricolage

This last point provides a means of accounting for the persistence of certain discourses at the ABC between 1953 and 1999. Indeed, it is central to our argument that the discourses of Australian Culture, Civil Society, Government, Diversity, Community, and Internationalism were ever-present in some form during the period studied. This is consistent with other studies (e.g., Heracleous and Barrett, 2001; Coupland and Brown, 2004; Leitch and Davenport, 2005; Heracleous, 2006; Buchanan and Dawson, 2007) showing that there is rarely a monological situation where one coherent set of discourses completely dominates an organizational change process. Rather, change processes are dialogical insofar as multiple actors struggle to advance their favoured discourse (Dick and Cassell, 2002; Buchanan and Dawson, 2007). Our study supports this finding—changes in organizational logic at the ABC were indeed the result of a complex dialogue between different discourses. As a way of conducting this dialogue, ironic appropriation and building chains of equivalence are intentional and systematic examples of projective agency (Oakes et al., 1998) but introducing radically new descriptive and normative terms—even in a mediated form—runs the risk that a characteristic form of

institutional vocabulary becomes closely associated people who were seen as ‘outsiders’ (Coupland and Brown, 2004) intent on transforming the ABC. Consequently this can strike a discordant note with ‘insiders’—i.e., those well-versed in the existing discourses. In order to overcome some of these problems we found that the dominant coalition sought to augment ironic appropriation and the building of chains of equivalence with more opportunistic and piecemeal engagements with existing discourses (cf. Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). We style this as a form of discursive bricolage; a ‘counter-insurgency tactic’ that can be adopted when more programmatic acts of projective agency fail to persuade others that a change in discourse is actually a preservation of the status quo.⁷ This can be seen as a reactive response to contradictions that can no longer be suppressed and involves developing a temporary accommodation between old and new discourses that ‘papers over the cracks’. For example, we have shown that a significant amount of work went into attempting to reposition existing discourses such as the Media Market and Community in order to make them compatible with the emerging legitimacy of the organizational logic of Globalization. When it became evident, however, that diverting some of the ABC’s resources to serving overseas markets meant a reduction in funding for local broadcasting it quickly precipitated the response that, by taking up opportunities for the broadcaster to extend its activities internationally, it would raise additional funds that could be reinvested in pursuing its local mission. (It should be noted that Television Australia—the ABC’s main foray into the international market—was an abject commercial failure that was quickly off-loaded to a commercial broadcaster and subsequently closed.) We see this as an attempt by the dominant coalition to ensure that, once it became obvious that the practical implications of a new logic did not square with their previous attempts at maintaining continuity, the contradiction was contained. An advantage of this strategy was that the coalition did not have to go to the trouble of introducing a whole new discourse should ironic appropriation or building a chain of equivalence temporarily break down. Instead, they were faced with the less onerous task of pragmatically seeking to reformulate the existing body of language in order to achieve a political accommodation. In effect, it was a short-term fix that disarmed potentially dissident voices whilst appearing to be consistent with the objectives of the dominant coalition.

CONCLUSIONS

In this manuscript we have sought to explore how apparently entrenched organizational logics can be transformed. In this sense our enterprise can be seen as an attempt to come to terms with a common criticism of institutional theory: that it is well-equipped to describe the ideational features of a shared understanding of

what is legitimate, reasonable and effective for an organization to do in a given context but it is also hard-pressed to explain how such a shared understanding changes. Building on recent work in institutional theory and discourse analysis we have asked how actors can take advantage of contradictions between things like institutional logics or organizational logics in order to engage in projective agency that promotes, transforms, and hybridizes discourse. Importantly, it is our use of the meso-level concept of an organizational logic which enables us to link ideational developments in the institutional field (an emphasis on the macro) with spatially and temporally localized activities (an emphasis on the micro).

Methodologically, a key advantage of our extended longitudinal study of Australia's largest public broadcaster is that we have been able to observe the shifts in the ideational terrain of an organization that might not otherwise be visible if we had used other methods. The three processes we identified at work—ironic appropriation, building chains of equivalence, and engaging in discursive bricolage—each played an important role in enabling the dominant coalition at the ABC to reconcile a whole range of often highly contradictory discourses around a single organizational logic. This observation, however, brings us to an important caveat. Like history, annual reports tend to be written by the 'winners' and, as such, our data will only indirectly reflect the discursive agency of less powerful groups in the ABC. Nevertheless, our findings make three distinct contributions to un-answered questions in the study of organizational logics. First, we have sought to address the question of whether contradictions in organizational logics are an ever-present feature of organizations (Zilber, 2002) or whether they only emerge during times of crisis (Seo and Creed, 2002). Our response is that both points of view are valid in that programmatic forms of projective agency can be seen as an attempt to 'keep the lid' on ever-present contradictions but, when this fails, the dominant coalition reacted by trying to reconcile contradictory organizational logics temporarily through creative but pragmatic bricolage. Second, we have revisited the question of whether contradictions lead to acquiescence to organizational logics promoted by a dominant group (Scott et al., 2000) or whether they provoke resistance (Marquis and Lounsbury, 2007). Again, our response is that both points of view are valid. Thus, while managing contradictions through programmatic projective agency may achieve something approaching a hegemonic organizational logic, this is not before resistive discursive resources have done their work and reshaped the raw ideology of Multiculturalism, Neo-Liberalism, or Globalization. In this way, transforming organizational logics is not a one-way street. Indeed, an important feature of ironic appropriation and building chains of equivalence is that both are, in Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) terms, specific examples of

the ‘relational’ character of discourses—i.e., one discourse only becomes meaningful to agents in any practical sense when it is constituted in relation to other discourses (Smith, 1998). Finally, we have considered whether groups attempting to promote a new organizational logic will rely on radically new discourses (Oakes et al., 1998) or whether they will seek to reposition existing discourses (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). As a corollary of our previous conclusion, we found that, through the processes of ironic appropriation, building chains of equivalence, and discursive bricolage, the dominant coalition sought to make new and preceding discourses fit together. That is, they usually tried to make the new logics appear as an expression of the status quo.

While this study has made some headway in resolving some problems in institutional theory through its use of discourse analysis, it has also opened up a series of questions for further investigation. First, we have only considered changes in organizational logics within a single public sector organization. Given that existing literature considering the impact of institutional logics on other public sector organizations suggests a similar movement toward market-driven orientation (e.g. Scott et al., 2000; Thornton, 2002; Glynn, 2002) it would be interesting to examine other cases using discourse analysis. In particular, the lingering of past organizational logics in a modified form at the ABC suggests that we could examine this aspect of transformation in other organizations. Thus, rather than thinking of the continuity and discontinuity of discourses in a discrete manner (i.e., a particular discourse is either present or absent—Smith, 1998) we can focus on the contradictions, paradoxes, and tensions that exist within and between discourses as they ebb and flow at the level of the field. This would involve building on the established literature (e.g., Haverman and Rao, 1997; Thornton, 2002; Fiss and Zajac, 2004; Lounsbury, 2007) to take into account how changes in institutional logics at the level of the field are linked to changes at the level of the organization. Considering that we have highlighted the importance of external factors such as political and other constitutional arrangements, it would also be interesting to compare transformation processes across nations with different legal and governmental institutions. For instance, this might involve comparing our findings at the ABC with other organizations in the field of public broadcasters such as the BBC, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, or the Public Broadcasting Service in the US. Importantly, our approach could also be extended to consider other government agencies that have had to confront the demands of the ‘New Public Management’ and the organizational imperatives associated with globalization.

Bearing in mind the caveat that our data only indirectly provide information on the discursive activities of less powerful actors, a second line of further research would involve a much more intensive consideration of how transformation processes are contested and resisted (cf. Marquis and Lounsbury, 2007). The present research has largely focused on those discourses that were articulated by dominant actors (although our argument is that these end up implicitly reflecting the influence of resistive discourses). Our data are able to tell us little, however, about the actual resistant activities that shaped the changing logics at the ABC. To be sure, at the point when new logics emerged, resistant groups appeared to play a significant role in contesting and challenging managerially initiated discourses. Indeed, the appearance of a new dominant organizational logic was met with significant animosity and resistance by a range of unions and social movements, as well as by the broader public. What emerges from our study, however, is that such resistant activity has the potential to lead to significant changes in how particular projects and technologies are actually taken forward by the organization, making it an interesting focus of further research for this branch of neo-institutional study.

NOTES

1. Although members of the coalition did not literally author the reports themselves (except for limited aspects such as the Chairman's introduction), the term 'authorization' captures the broad scope of discursive agency involved as managers, Board members, and others exercised their collective responsibility for the contents of the document.
2. Not all themes were afforded equal prominence during the study period and some were not present at in 1953, although they did emerge relatively early on. Despite this caveat we still believe it is reasonable to consider the themes as being persistent discourses.
3. This is a manifestation of the common methodological problem in the social sciences known as the Sorites problem. This relates to our inability to determine the exact point when a collective entity made up of an aggregation of smaller entities changes from one state to another. For example, we use the collective noun of an 'organization' to stand for an entity whose aggregate characteristics remain stable even as some of its constituent members come and go. If, however, every member (or a smaller number of key members) is replaced at the same time then the aggregate characteristics of the organization may well change—i.e., it becomes a 'different sort' of organization from what it was before. The empirical problem becomes evident when we have to determine exactly how many members (or which key members) have to leave the organization before we can say that it is a discernibly different entity to the one that preceded these changes.

Sorites comes from the Greek term *soros* [σωρός] or 'heap' and refers to the original statement of the problem. If we remove sand from a large heap one grain at a time we can never ascertain the exact moment when it stops being a single entity—i.e., a heap—and becomes a scattered collection of individual grains. Working in the other direction, if we start with a single grain of sand and keep adding individual grains we can never tell the exact moment when adding just one more grain makes it a heap.

An analysis of discourses such as ours provides its own manifestation of the Sorites problem in that we can never establish the exact quantitative or qualitative threshold criteria that would allow us to

determine whether, say, the increase or decrease in the use of a single word or phrase actually constitutes the moment when a nominally stable discourse changes from one state to another—for example, when the ABC’s obligations under the ever-present discourse of *Civil Society* changed from paternalistically educating the tastes of the Australian public to providing it with a value-for-money service. This problem is compounded when an organizational logic is made up of a number of such discourses, making it even more difficult to determine the exact moment where the transition from one to another actually occurs. Thus, we have refrained from providing anything other than a broad timeframe for each transition—it would be impossible to identify the exact time and place that an organizational logic changed.

4. Ostensibly there are some parallels between our data analysis and Grounded Theory’s approach of moving through codes, concepts, and categories in order to generate theories (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). We would make the distinction, however, that our discursive themes are, in an orthodox deductive sense, *operationalized* concepts that are derived from theory, rather than part of an inductive attempt to create theory de novo from observation.
5. The fact that the ABC changed its name from a ‘Commission’ to a ‘Corporation’ in 1983 is indicative of the commercialization that occurred during this period.
6. An advocate of an old organizational logic adopting the language of a new one would also be a form of ironic appropriation but it was difficult to determine whether this happened from our data.
7. de Certeau (1984, p.39) sees bricolage as tactic available to the ‘weak’ who are engaged in a form of ‘linguistic combat’ where the objective is to ‘... seduce, captivate or invert the linguistic position of the addressee’. In this sense, ours is an inverted form of bricolage in that the ABC’s annual reports show the creative use of language by a more powerful group to seduce, captivate, or invert the position of weaker actors.

FIGURES

Organizational Logic	Dominant Coalition	Discourses (plus associated legitimate role of ABC)
Nationalism	Conservative Senior Management Conservative Government Conservative Board Members	Diversity (incorporating diverse groups into a monolithic national culture) Civil Society (creating a space where citizens can debate issues of national importance) Communities (incorporating communities into nation) Australian Culture (building a shared cultural heritage & propagating a positive image of the nation) Media Market <i>present but not yet prominent</i> Government <i>present but not yet prominent</i> International <i>present but not yet prominent</i>
Multiculturalism	Technocratic Senior Management Progressive Government Mixed Board Members	Diversity (providing a space for diverse audiences to express themselves) Civil Society <i>declining in usage</i> Communities (representing interests and views of diverse audiences) Australian Culture (expressing diversity) Media Market <i>present but not yet prominent</i> Government <i>present but not yet prominent</i> International <i>present but not yet prominent</i>
Neo-Liberalism	Entrepreneurial Senior Management Neo-Liberal Government Business-Oriented Board	Media Market <i>emerging</i> (efficiently providing established services) Government <i>emerging</i> (repaying taxpayers' investment) International <i>emerging</i> (taking advantage of international links to create market opportunities) Civil Society <i>re-emerging</i> (maintaining civil society at a low cost) Australian Culture (promoting diverse Australian culture) Diversity <i>stable</i> Communities <i>stable</i>
Globalization	Entrepreneurial Senior Management <i>stable</i> Neo-Liberal Government <i>stable</i> Business-Oriented Board <i>stable</i>	International (competing in a global market to provide programming & services—ceases to exist as an independent theme but penetrates all other discourses) Media Market (catering to an international market) Communities (helping to build localism) Australian Culture <i>subsumed under Communities</i> Civil Society <i>subsumed under Communities</i> Government (lobbying for increased government funding to compete in the international market) Diversity (ensuring diverse media content in face of globalization)

Figure 1: Transition of Organizational Logic at the ABC

	Linked Discourses	Linking terms	Pursued by
Nationalism	Civil Society Australian Culture	Unity Incorporation	Build shared cultural heritage
Multiculturalism	Australian Culture Diversity	Unity through diversity	Allow minority groups to be heard
Neo-Liberalism	Media Market Civil Society Australian Culture	Efficiency Value for Money	Become more market oriented
Globalization	International Civil Society Australian Culture Communities	Efficiency Value for Money Unity and Incorporation of local issues	Become oriented to global market

Figure 2: Building a Chain of Equivalence Between Logics

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