

Organization Studies

<http://oss.sagepub.com>

Positioning Qualitative Research as Resistance to the Institutionalization of the Academic Labour Process

Gillian Symon, Anna Buehring, Phil Johnson and Catherine Cassell
Organization Studies 2008; 29; 1315
DOI: 10.1177/0170840607086552

The online version of this article can be found at:
<http://oss.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/29/10/1315>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:



[European Group for Organizational Studies](#)

Additional services and information for *Organization Studies* can be found at:

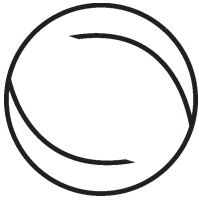
Email Alerts: <http://oss.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://oss.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav>

Citations <http://oss.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/29/10/1315>



Positioning Qualitative Research as Resistance to the Institutionalization of the Academic Labour Process

Gillian Symon, Anna Buehring, Phil Johnson and Catherine Cassell

Gillian Symon
Birkbeck, University
of London, UK

Anna Buehring
Manchester
Metropolitan
University Business
School, UK

Phil Johnson
Sheffield University
Management School,
UK

Catherine Cassell
Manchester Business
School, UK

Abstract

The focus of this paper is on the 'institutional work' (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006) of disrupting institutions, examining the rhetorical strategies employed to construct and justify meanings and interpretations. This work is explored in the context of the contemporary academic labour process; specifically, research approaches within the management discipline. A total of 45 individuals involved in funding, conducting, publishing and using qualitative management research were interviewed. From our analysis of their arguments, we focus specifically on the discursive positioning of quantitative research as *illegitimate institutionalization* of academic working practices and of qualitative research as *legitimate resistance* to this institutionalization. We identify a number of rhetorical strategies which construct and justify these discursive positions including: the undermining of success criteria; the legitimizing of interests (through claims of institutionalized discrimination) and actors (through identity claims); attributions of political action (including the construction of counter-institutions); claims to agency; and the invocation of alternative institutional logics. We argue that examining institutional work as rhetoric adds to our theoretical understanding of the discursive disruption of institutions, particularly with respect to the manipulation of contradictory meanings and the functions of agency–structure discourse; and contributes a political dimension to our understanding of the qualitative–quantitative 'divide' within management research.

Keywords: academic labour process, qualitative research, institutional work, resistance, rhetoric

In recent years, there has been a move away from a focus on homogeneity and stability in neo-institutional theory to a consideration of diversity (Schneiberg and Clemens 2006) and institutional change (Dacin et al. 2002). A recognition of the political interests involved in contesting institutions (DiMaggio 1988) has sparked a reconsideration of actor agency and, consequently, an orientation towards a more micro-analysis of the processes and practices of institutional life (Johnson et al. 2000) that can elucidate 'how actors accomplish the social construction of rules, scripts, schemas and cultural accounts' (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006: 218). In this paper, we continue this development through exploring 'institutional work' (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006) as practices that constitute particular interests, are contested and actively reconstructed. Here, we focus specifically on the rhetorical strategies employed in the *disruption* of institutions, particularly with respect to the construction of arguments concerning legitimacy

Organization
Studies
29(10): 1315–1336
ISSN 0170–8406
Copyright © 2008
SAGE Publications
(Los Angeles,
London, New Delhi
and Singapore)

and illegitimacy. We explore this institutional work through management researchers' discussions of their research practices.

Academia provides an important empirical site for exploring institutional work, given the many changes that the field has experienced in recent years. There are claims that there has been a move from a collegiate enactment of the labour process to a more managerialist one (Dearlove 1997; Farnham 1999). This has provoked much debate within the research literature (Parker and Jary 1995; Pritchard and Willmott 1997) and stimulated several investigations of academic resistance to such changes (e.g. Harley and Lee 1997; Trowler 2001; Ylijoki 2005). Here we explore management research as an institutional field within this changing academic context and focus on institutional actors' positioning of qualitative and quantitative research approaches within this field. The distinction between these two approaches is generally argued to be based on underlying epistemological beliefs about relevant and credible methods of knowledge production (Behling 1980; Morgan and Smircich 1980) and has been the subject of much debate — in particular, claims that quantitative research may dominate the management discipline (Bartunek and Seo 2002; Rynes 2005). This combination of institutional change and contested working practices provides a particularly fruitful and provocative opportunity to explore the political nature of institutional work.

We begin with an overview of research on institutional theory and the contemporary academic labour process which leads us to our research focus on the disruption of institutions through specific rhetorical strategies. We then describe the study from which the texts are taken and our particular approach to the analysis. Our analysis of the research material focuses on the claimed illegitimate institutionalization of quantitative research within the academic labour process and the positioning of qualitative research as legitimate resistance to this institutionalization, and we identify several rhetorical strategies that construct and justify these discursive positions. We then discuss these strategies in relation to existing concepts from institutional theory.

Our paper contributes to the existing literature in several ways. In general terms, we demonstrate how the contemporary academic labour process (and management research specifically) may be analysed and understood using concepts from institutional theory. More specifically, we identify the rhetorical institutional work that can be brought into play in disrupting institutions. We distinguish, for example: the undermining of success criteria; the legitimation of interests (through claims of institutionalized discrimination) and actors (through identity claims); attributions of political actions (including the construction of 'counter-institutions'); claims to agency; and the invocation of alternative institutional logics (solidifying the quantitative–qualitative distinction). In addition, our rhetorical analysis suggests new perspectives on the exploitation of contradictions in institutions (Lanzara and Patriotta 2007); the theoretical problem of 'embedded agency' (Seo and Creed 2002); and the qualitative–quantitative 'divide' (Dachler 1997) in management research practice.

Neo-institutional Theory, Institutional Work and the Contemporary Academic Labour Process

From the perspective of neo-institutional theory, institutions are socially constructed rules and shared meanings that have regulative effects (Scott 2001). Such institutions ‘act to shape our experience of the world and our ideas of “legitimate” patterns of organization’ (Phillips et al. 2000: 28). Organizations are thus under some pressure to conform to institutional norms. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) suggest three general types of institutional pressures that produce these isomorphic effects: coercive (brought about by dependency on valued resources); normative (brought about through the diffusion of ideas among professionals across organizations); and mimetic (brought about by uncertain conditions leading to mimicry of successful organizations). Not conforming to these institutional pressures can bring into question the legitimacy of an organization and have economic, cognitive and social costs for the organizations involved (Phillips et al. 2000).

As noted, the issue of legitimacy is central to establishing and maintaining institutions, making alternative structures and practices appear ‘less appropriate, desirable or viable’ (Dacin et al. 2002: 47). Scott argues that institutions rely on three pillars of legitimacy: regulative (drawing on ‘rule-setting, monitoring and sanctioning’, Scott 2001: 52); normative (which elucidate ‘legitimate means’ and ‘valued ends’, p. 55); and cultural-cognitive (constituted by meaning systems, common beliefs and cultural frames). These are similar to Suchman’s (1995) categorization of legitimacy types: pragmatic, moral and cognitive. While Suchman delineates some activities in which organizations may engage in order to gain and maintain their perceived legitimacy, he also argues that legitimacy is almost self-perpetuating as organizations viewed as legitimate then attract more resources, thus adding further to their credibility. Indeed, he argues that successful legitimation may lead to the problem of ‘the isomorphic rigidification of highly institutionalised orders’ (Suchman 1995: 601).

Lawrence and Suddaby claim that early neo-institutional theory tended to emphasize a ‘relatively passive construction of meaning’ (2006: 216), however, more recent work on de-institutionalization (Oliver 1992), institutional change (Dacin et al. 2002) and institutional entrepreneurship (Di Maggio 1988) captures a more strategic and political perspective that acts as a vehicle for a reconsideration of agency within institutional theory. Thus, organizations may not only acquiesce to institutional pressures but also seek to manipulate these (Oliver 1991); institutions may be actively rejected (Oliver 1992); actors may strive to influence institutional contexts to achieve their own interests (DiMaggio 1988); and interpretations of legitimacy may be manipulated by organizational actors (Elsbach and Sutton 1992; Kitchener 2002). Indeed, Zilber emphasizes that interpretations of meaning should be viewed within institution theory as ‘expressions of agency’ (Zilber 2002: 235).

This consideration of actor agency in institution theory has, for some, raised the problem of ‘embedded agency’ (Beckert 1999; Leca and Naccache 2006; Seo and Creed 2002); i.e., given the taken-for-granted nature of institutions, is it possible for actors to step outside their own assumptions to challenge and

change the status quo? In response, it is argued that institutions may be open to revision and revolution because of the (inevitable) existence of alternative 'institutional logics' (Friedland and Alford 1991; Reay and Hinings 2005) — or systems of meaning — which 'provide resources for competing interests' (Seo and Creed 2002: 228). These alternative logics arise from contradictions in institutional operation prompting reflexivity and political action on the part of actors (Lanzara and Patriotta 2007; Seo and Creed 2002), and through the actions of actors less embedded in that particular institution (e.g. newcomers; Zilber 2002).

Current work in institutional theory, then, takes both politics and agency seriously in exploring change as much as stability; and focuses on the actors who create, maintain and undermine institutions, as much as the institutions themselves. This reorientation suggests a focus on more micro-institutional processes than the strategic and organizational view usually adopted in institutional theory (Johnson et al. 2000; Schneiberg and Clemens 2006; Zilber 2002). Combining this reorientation with a focus on practice, Lawrence and Suddaby thus argue that current research should examine the 'institutional work' of organizational actors as they seek to manipulate 'the social and symbolic boundaries that constitute institutions' (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006: 238).

In line with this level of understanding, a recent and growing interest in the field of institutional theory has been the adoption of a discursive perspective (Phillips et al. 2004), examining how 'institutions are premised upon and supported by particular discourses' (Maguire and Hardy 2006: 9). Recent studies (e.g. Maguire and Hardy 2006; Munir and Phillips 2005) have specifically examined how institutional entrepreneurs 'draw on different discourses in their texts to try to fix understandings, shape interpretations, and justify practices in ways that are commensurate with their interests' (Maguire and Hardy 2006: 10). For example, in an examination of public documentation, Vaara et al. specifically identify the discursive legitimating strategies involved in rendering some phenomena as 'acceptable' while others are 'morally reprehensible' (Vaara et al. 2006: 793). In addition, institutional entrepreneurs have to work on increasing their own legitimacy 'in order to ensure their texts are acknowledged and consumed' (Phillips et al. 2004).

Lawrence and Suddaby (2006), through a review of existing empirical work, have begun the process of mapping out the (different) types of institutional work involved in creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions. The focus of this paper is on the latter of these practices, which, according to Lawrence and Suddaby, has yet to receive much empirical attention. Such work is pursued by institutional entrepreneurs 'whose interests are not served by existing institutional arrangements' (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006: 234–5) and involves 'attacking or undermining the mechanisms that lead members to comply with institutions' (p. 235). As above, we examine this particular institutional work as discursive practice that seeks to 'fix understandings' and 'shape interpretations' (Maguire and Hardy 2006). However, in line with an explicitly political orientation (the focus on interests), we take a specifically rhetorical perspective (Symon 2005), as advocated by Lawrence and Suddaby, to investigate 'how actors leverage their positions through the construction of persuasive arguments' (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006: 240). Suddaby and Greenwood suggest that it is through the skilful use of

rhetoric that legitimacy may be constructed or contested and that rhetorical strategies are the 'key tools' (Suddaby and Greenwood 2005: 61) of institutional entrepreneurs. Accordingly, we seek to examine the use of rhetoric — in particular constructions of illegitimacy and legitimacy — and how specific rhetorical strategies function to disrupt institutions.

The institutional field examined in this case is 'management research' which is constituted by a variety of stakeholders, organizations and practices, but nevertheless can be distinguished as a coherent and recognizable field of activity with particular 'legal, moral and cultural boundaries setting off legitimate from illegitimate activities' (Scott 2001: 50). Management research, however, is also made up of several sub-disciplines that identify it as a 'loosely coupled field' (Greenwood and Hinings 1996: 1030), and contributing disciplines may draw on different 'repertoire(s) of belief with which to contest concepts of legitimacy' (Townley, 1997: 261). Furthermore, recent changes to the academic labour process have produced new institutional pressures on the individuals and organizations that make up the institutional field of management research. This context, therefore, provides a rich setting for the exploration of the political institutional work of disrupting institutions.

Following Littler and Salaman (1982), by academic labour process we mean to suggest not just the 'specification of work activities' (e.g. conducting and publishing research, teaching, supervision and administration) but also 'the control implications of decisions taken elsewhere in the organization and indeed outside it' (1982: 266). Thus we are focusing not just on what academics do on a day-to-day basis but also on how that work is then managed. Such managerial control may be influenced by contextual factors such as governmental intervention (e.g. research audit in the UK; Parker and Jary 1995), market forces (e.g. in the competition for tenure in the US; Wicks 2004) and custom and practice (e.g. the influence of hierarchy and status in Germany; Muller-Camen and Salzgeber 2005). Our focus in this paper is on the management and control of academic *research practices* specifically.

Numerous commentators have suggested that higher education has been changing radically over the last few decades (Barry et al. 2003; Dearlove 1997). While recognizing that there are variations across countries, Farnham concludes that there is a general trend towards:

'educational instrumentalism, linked with globalization, massification, withdrawal of state support for higher education, marketization, the shift to a student and teaching centred curriculum, declining units of resource and internationalization.' (Farnham 1999: 12)

From Suchman's (1995) classification of types of legitimacy, one might argue that universities, while once enjoying a certain moral legitimacy (based on practising sound procedures, such as science, and promoting social welfare through education and knowledge), are now moving into a different sort of relationship with their constituents based on expected exchange value (pragmatic legitimacy).

One outcome of this new orientation for some countries (particularly the UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand; Barry et al. 2003) has been the introduction of New Public Management (NPM) practices into universities as a way of

potentially enabling the more 'efficient' operation of universities to accommodate greater numbers and a 'customer' orientation. Rather than the previous more collegiate form of self-governance, universities are to be managed more along the lines of corporate, capitalist organizations (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004). Some authors have argued that, in the UK specifically, the introduction of NPM practices into universities has seen a push to a greater commodification of academic work (Willmott 1995) and the 'McDonaldization' of higher education (Parker and Jary 1995). With respect to research practices specifically, more attention is paid to potential revenue generation through scientific innovation and to the regulation of academic endeavours through audit. Dearlove (1997) suggests that, under pressure to produce research efficiently, researchers may be orienting their research to the interests of funding bodies in order to secure grants and benefit from positive effects on promotional prospects. The management research arena specifically can provide some testament to this in the growth of research into publication outlets and their rankings in citation lists (e.g. Geary et al. 2004).

Numerous articles have examined academics' perceptions of the consequences of these new managerial practices for their own work. Such studies have been somewhat mixed in their conclusions. Empirical studies in the UK report work degradation (Bryson 2004), work intensification (Ogbonna and Harris 2004) and increased stress (Chandler et al. 2002) among academics. However, these same studies also emphasize that the general picture does not suggest 'a rapid decline in morale or levels of satisfaction' (Bryson 2004: 54). While academics recognize and may resent the pressures they are under, there is also evidence of mutual support (Barry et al. 2001) and the local amelioration of pressures for change (e.g. Pritchard and Willmott 1997; Trowler 2001). For example, Townley (1997) has examined the introduction of performance appraisal in universities. She concluded that although there was public compliance in introducing this new working practice (given the pressures of coercive isomorphism), the specific form of appraisal introduced was in many cases informed more by the institutional logic of 'the liberal academy' than that of 'market rationality' (which underpins NPM). Thus, in her study, a certain amount of resistance to these changes was enabled by drawing on alternative institutional logics, resulting in institutionalized practices that were something of a hybrid of collegialism and managerialism. Similarly, other studies have suggested reference to a 'golden age' discourse of academic autonomy as a source of resistance (Harley and Lee 1997; Ylijoki 2005). This discourse is seen to be the province of longer-serving academics and therefore open to erosion as such staff retire. Indeed Keenoy (2005) suggests that, over the last 15 years, UK academics have 'habituated' to the presence of academic audit such that 'there is nothing to "resist"' (Keenoy 2005: 311).

Such a context of contested institutional practices provides a fruitful opportunity to explore the rhetorical strategies involved in disrupting institutions. We are specifically interested in exploring these strategies in relation to the institutional field of management research. In particular, we ask: How is a process of institutionalization actively ascribed to management research practices? and How is this institutionalization undermined and resistance justified?

Table 1. Interest Groups and Rationales for Inclusion

General interest group	Rationale for inclusion	Specific selection strategy	Rationale for selection strategy
Journal editors	Influential in shaping what management research is published	General (peer-reviewed) management journals UK- or US-based (with one exception) but all have international appeal	Journals of general interest across management discipline English language journals with wide readership and accessibility
Funding body representatives	Influential in shaping what management research is pursued	UK-based charity and government sectors Likelihood of funding management research	Access Spread of different forms of funding (private and public) Relevance
Research practitioners	Influential in shaping what management research is pursued Have to apply management research to solving organizational problems	Predominantly UK-based but also international organizations Public and private sector Independent research institutes and organizational R&D departments	Access Diversity of different practice contexts Interest in research methods
Directors of PhD programmes	Influential in shaping education of future management researchers	All UK-based Pre- and post-1992 institutions	Access Diversity of different academic contexts
Qualitative management researchers	Influential in shaping nature of qualitative research Specific interest in the process	UK, US and mainland Europe Range of epistemological positions Regularly published in management journals	Diversity of different academic contexts Diversity of positions on qualitative research Familiarity with research processes

The Present Study

The present analysis comes from an ESRC-sponsored project set up to examine the current practice of qualitative research within the management discipline. A total of 45 individuals talked to us about their experiences and evaluations of qualitative management research. Roughly speaking, these individuals fell into five interest groups (see Table 1 for a summary). Such a categorization served as a useful heuristic in ensuring we covered relevant informants; however, we do not make inter-group comparisons in our analysis as membership of one category did not preclude membership of another (e.g. some of our journal editors and PhD programme directors were also qualitative researchers).

Interviews were conducted by all members of the research team, usually at the individual's workplace, although some were conducted at the US Academy of

Management conference held in Seattle, 2003, and some were telephone interviews. Interviews were guided by an interview schedule covering:

- definitions and purposes of qualitative research;
- perceived status and credibility of qualitative research;
- how the quality of qualitative research may be assessed; and
- identifying skills and any skill deficits within qualitative research.

Interview questions were oriented to the individual's specific background, e.g. journal editors were asked additional questions around the review process and PhD directors around the training of new researchers. In general, however, we were also open to discussing those topics which the individuals themselves brought up. All interviews were taped and transcribed. Interviewees were assured of the confidentiality of the transcripts. In the extracts reproduced below, individuals are identified by role only. The individuals interviewed knew of the focus and objectives of the research and knew that the interviewers were 'supporters' of qualitative research. Extracts should be viewed within this generative context.

Extracts from the transcripts were organized into broad themes by one of the research team, utilizing the software package N-Vivo. Some of these broad themes came from the project objectives; some were interpretations not previously envisaged (for an overview of all the themes see Cassell et al. 2005). Extracts which informed the analysis presented here were coded under the theme 'professional and institutional issues' (describing references to the broader academic labour process and organizational context). This was not a theme initially envisaged but a range of comments suggested this interpretation.

This particular theme was subjected to a rhetorical analysis (Billig 1996; Suddaby and Greenwood 2005; Symon 2005). Initially, two overarching 'issues of controversy' (Billig 1996) were distinguished within the theme, concerned with 'the institutionalization of quantitative approaches in management research' and 'resistance to the institutionalization of quantitative research in management research'. Extracts pertinent to these issues were analysed to identify the rhetorical strategies involved in rendering arguments and counter-arguments persuasive. This analysis utilized concepts elaborated by Billig (1996) and Potter (1996) as sensitizing devices, concentrating on deconstructing the particular realities created (e.g. through examining the drawing of particular boundaries or categories) and identifying how arguments are made persuasive in this context (e.g. through the use of emotive language, the use of metaphor, the invocation of existing cultural discourses and so on). The interviewees' talk was examined in detail and a pattern of rhetorical strategies across extracts then derived in an inductive fashion. This analysis (with respect to a subsample of the extracts) is reproduced below. In analysing specific extracts, the full transcript of the interview was re-read in conjunction with the extract to guard against fragmentation and to view the extract in the context of its generation. In other words, what had been said immediately before the specific extract was taken into account in interpreting the extract (i.e. to understand what prompted

this account and what issue was being addressed). In addition, the general arguments produced by the individual in their transcript were taken into account in the interpretation to contextualize the specific rhetoric examined at one particular juncture. This aspect of the analysis is also referenced in the analysis below. This kind of approach to rhetorical analysis is less structured than that adopted by some others (e.g. Suddaby and Greenwood 2005); however, as a consequence, it allows a more flexible perspective which focuses on the substantive content of the extracts rather than the application of *a priori* analytical parameters (Symon 2008).

While counter-arguments were (less often) produced in the transcripts, we are here focusing on *the disruption of* institutionalization specifically in pursuit of our research objective of more fully exploring this particular practice. The account presented here is therefore (deliberately) partial and concentrates specifically on the arguments that quantitative research *is* institutionalized (and that this is illegitimate) and *for* (legitimate) resistance to this process. The detailed analysis pursued means it is inevitable that only a manageable selection of extracts can be considered (Maguire and Hardy 2006) and those reproduced here were selected on pragmatic grounds as accessible and explicable in the available space. While our analysis concentrates on the arguments produced and not on who produced them, there was clearly little discussion of the contemporary academic labour process among those working in business organizations or charities.

It is important to be clear that this analysis is our interpretation of the texts, informed by an understanding of both rhetoric and institutional theory. The extracts are not intended either as reflections of what is 'really' happening in academia or as generalizations to all academic work. Although the analysis is grounded in a reading and re-reading of the transcripts (i.e. the interviewees' words), it is not intrinsic to the extracts but a construction of what is happening in them made by the authors. By reproducing those extracts and the interpretation made of them, the reader is encouraged to judge the efficacy of that interpretation themselves.

Results

Our focus here is on the rhetorical institutional work involved in persuading the audience for the discourse (specifically ourselves, but through us, the wider academic community) that: quantitative research has become institutionalized practice within the management studies discipline; that this institutionalization is illegitimate; and that resistance to this process is justified. In other words, we are examining the rhetorical strategies of our interviewees as they tried to shape our understanding of the situation, undermine (claimed) current institutional practices and legitimate alternatives.

The Illegitimate Institutionalization of Quantitative Research

In this first section, we provide an analysis of the ways in which our interviewees argued that quantitative research has become institutionalized within the

management discipline — particularly as it is presented as fulfilling external pressures. We identify a variety of rhetorical strategies that function to undermine this institutionalization through arguing for the illegitimacy of these external pressures and their resulting biasing effects — particularly with respect to discriminating against the pursuit of qualitative research.

‘...quantitative work, there’s a sense in which, you know, you get your material, you publish a couple of pieces out of it and that’s the end of the story. That’s all it will allow you to squeeze from it. With qualitative work I think, you know, it’s actually valuable to have an extended period for reflection, to go back to it and so on and so forth, although there are reasons to choose questions that move you on to go and get another grant and, you know, you just produce another pile of qualitative material that hasn’t really been squeezed, hardly touched, and then you’re onto the next darn thing.’ (qualitative researcher)

Having earlier in their argument constructed the current context of research work as being about ‘doing’ (overt productivity) rather than ‘thinking’ (scholarship), this individual then associates qualitative research with ‘thinking’ (‘an extended period for reflection’). The relentless pursuit of action symptomatic of the focus on productivity (‘to go and get another grant’), this individual argues, leaves qualitative researchers frustrated in their attempts to treat their data in the reflexive manner endemic to a qualitative approach (‘it’s actually valuable to have an extended period’). Quantitative research, by contrast, is presented as not requiring much extended analysis (‘that’s all it will allow you to squeeze from it’), thus fitting more easily the requirements of an academic labour process focused on data production. In this way, a particular distinction between the two approaches is constructed that supports the argument that quantitative research has become institutionalized.

‘These control systems, to my mind what they elicit is high quality mediocrity. They push towards standardization. They push towards low-risk work. They push towards particular formula. I mean it’s just the same as hamburgers, that’s what the effect of the RAE [UK Research Assessment Exercise] has on papers.’ (journal editor)

Within the transcript as a whole, this argument sits within a general debate about the difficulties of pursuing particular kinds of work-intensive and longitudinal ethnographic work. Here our interviewee directly blames current external pressures (the RAE) and reproduces the discourse of McDonaldization (Parker and Jary 1995) through the analogy of ‘hamburgers’. Such pressures are argued to be responsible for (‘eliciting’) research work that may be well executed (‘high quality’) but not innovative or exciting (‘mediocrity’). Quantitative (or pseudo-quantitative) research was positioned by this interviewee as the standardized, formulaic, low-risk work that will fulfil external assessment criteria.

Outside the particular pressures of academic research audit, arguments were advanced that quantitative research fulfils political academic needs:

‘If I go to the Academy of Management, to some of those junior faculty workshops, development workshops before the conference, I think some of them were quite scary because some of the things that they were telling the young researchers ... you know, “Don’t do qualitative! Don’t publish in the trade press because that seems a waste of time and it’ll hurt you. It’ll hurt your chances to get tenure! Get 7 articles in 10 years in, you know, ASQ, SMJ, the Academy journals, that’s it! Don’t bother about anything more specialized! Don’t worry about those European journals!”’ (research practitioner)

Here our interviewee constructs the situation among junior management academics in the US as an overt acknowledgement of career needs affecting research practices. The talk of the presenters is described here as forceful exhortation. The attribution of junior status ('the young researchers') to the audience produces the effect of the over-impressionability of this group, unable to critically evaluate these arguments. Such researchers are presented as being encouraged to view academic research not as the pursuit of knowledge ('don't bother about anything more specialized'), not even as the pursuit of useful organizational interventions ('don't publish in the trade press') — both of which might be acceptable academic goals — but as the pursuit of tenure. In this way, the individual invites the interviewer to disparage (as 'quite scary') the restrictive goals and overt game-playing constructed as being encouraged in the US (and, implicitly, not in Europe). This is argued here as producing biasing effects against both qualitative ('don't do qualitative') and 'European' research ('don't worry about those European journals').

This 'market' model of research, it was argued below, has taken on global qualities:

'But I think it's like a plague going over the world now that you have to comply with what American journal editors want and don't think for yourself. Just follow the statistical routine.' (qualitative researcher)

The situation is described by our interviewee in very negative terms, constructing an argument about US domination quite forcibly. This domination is thus a 'plague' with all its connotations of disease and contamination. American journal editors are depicted as having total control in this situation, able to dictate the nature of research practices ('you have to comply with'). Such practices are negatively constructed as mechanical, unimaginative and quantitative ('the statistical routine'). Conversely, academics are depicted as having lost agency as they are subjugated by the desires of these editors and discouraged from reflection ('don't think for yourself').

The format of journal articles is also argued to support the institutionalization of quantitative research:

'Qualitative pieces like [case studies] are very much more open to a "So what?" kind of question ... because if you have to condense it down to 25 sides, then you reduce the richness. ... I think it's the format of the journal article itself that restricts that richness and therefore people can say, not all the time, "So what's this telling me?". But then we're into a different game. Then we're into saying well, you know, should journal articles be the dissemination technique for work or be the dominant one? But then we live in a world where it's the dominant one because it's a thing you can count.' (journal editor)

Here it is argued that the institutional practice of journal article production can unfairly bias this process against qualitative researchers. (We note here, however, this individual's care not to over-claim this argument ('not all the time') — rhetoric that gets its force from generalization also exposes itself to potential undermining because of the possibility of pointing to exceptions; Potter 1996.) Qualitative research is represented here as unable to adequately justify itself, not because of inherent (epistemological) failings, but because of the limitations of the journal format ('restricts that richness'). It is therefore at

greater risk of undermining ('open to a "So what?" kind of question') simply through presentational constraints. While qualitative researchers might be able to challenge this norm at the level of the academic production process, here the individual suggests that the argument implies another (political?) consideration ('a different game'). This is a 'game', it is argued, that qualitative researchers will not be able to challenge because of the institutional practice ('we live in a world') of academic audit ('a thing you can count'). From this line of argument, then, such institutional practices contribute both to discrimination against qualitative research and the institutionalization of quantitative research.

Summary

The argument put forward by our interviewees is that quantitative research has become institutionalized because pursuing this type of research practice will deliver the kinds of outcomes (increased publications in quality journals and rapid turnover of research grants) that give legitimacy to the organization (university) and to the individual academic. However, this institutionalization is actively undermined in these accounts in a variety of ways: through the opposition of these practices with 'scholarship' (e.g. removing agency from individual academics in favour of a conformity to the external pressures of academic audit); through the 'exposure' of the political goals of research practices (to pursue tenure or fulfil audit requirements); through invoking a US domination discourse; and through the construction of biasing and unjust effects. Overall, such rhetoric paints a picture of the illegitimate institutionalization of quantitative research.

Qualitative Research as Legitimate Resistance

While the two overarching issues are overlapping and, indeed, mutually sustaining, in this second section, we concentrate on analysing rhetoric that argues for qualitative research as legitimate resistance to the illegitimate institutionalization of quantitative research. Such an argument is seen here to involve the solidification of a qualitative–quantitative distinction (in which qualitative research and qualitative researchers are more positively represented). Qualitative research is also legitimated here by being presented as informing a (counter-)institution. However, this latter argument is problematized by a recognition of the potentially contradictory nature of this rhetoric with respect to the arguments that institutionalization is itself illegitimate.

'That's in their career interest. It takes time to go and observe and understand reality and then to be able to present it in a sort of form that is much more literate in a sense. It takes more maturity so you will end up producing less items and therefore you will not pursue a fast track career. I see the pressure on our PhDs at the moment that is "get out publications fast". And if you want fast publications, you will not go and collect ethnographic data. You will take some kind of easy questionnaire, get some correlations out and then write it up as a technical report and get it published somewhere.' (journal editor)

In the transcript as a whole, this interviewee simultaneously argues against the current academic labour process and for the use of qualitative research. In pursuing this argument, and in this particular extract, this individual characterizes

quantitative and qualitative research in (opposing) ways, ways that suggest the value that should be laid on each. Thus quantitative research is ‘easy’, ‘technical’ and quick, guaranteeing ‘fast publications’. Qualitative research on the other hand is ‘more literate’, ‘takes time’ to ‘mature’ and allows an ‘understanding of reality’. This rhetoric suggests that we should find the latter of more value and, despite (or indeed because of?) the claims about the political advantages of quantitative research (‘their career interests’), legitimates the pursuit of qualitative research. In this extract, qualitative researchers are represented as pursuing the more scholarly, reflective, valued research — and pursuing it for the sake of knowledge (to ‘understand reality’) rather than career advancement.

Such an argument could also be predicated on moral grounds:

‘From a personal point of view, I just ... the kind of work I want to do, the kinds of things I want to engage with and find out more about aren’t open to those [quantitative] sorts of approaches and techniques and that mixture of methods doesn’t sit comfortably for me as an individual and therefore I don’t want to play that game, even if it would get me some quick publications. It would feel like a sort of personal betrayal.’ (qualitative researcher)

Within the context of a discussion about the kind of research published in US journals, this interviewee seeks to explain why they are not engaging with this community. Here it is implied that researchers may have an almost ‘natural’ affinity for particular kinds of research practices (‘doesn’t sit comfortably for me as an individual’) and thus are simply unable to pursue other (quantitative) kinds of research. Even when in their own interests (‘even if it would get me some quick publications’), it is argued this commitment cannot be denied. Indeed, here, pursuing career needs is undermined as a goal of the academic’s work — de-legitimized as being immoral (a ‘betrayal’) in favour of a commitment to one’s beliefs about appropriate research questions and methods (‘the kinds of work I want to do, the kinds of things I want to engage with’). Thus, through this rhetoric, the legitimacy of the pursuit of qualitative research is established, based on unavoidable individual differences emanating from epistemological beliefs (not just methodological choices).

The resistance proposed is also described in more active terms, in arguments for a sort of reverse process to the ‘norm’, a counter-institutionalization of qualitative research:

‘We’re slowly going to build up a supply of new lecturers or academics that are coming from a very different tradition and it becomes the norm. I mean in this group, in the OB group, it is the norm, nobody does surveys, nobody does quantitative research.’ (director of postgraduate training)

This individual argues that the ‘very different tradition’ of (qualitative, specifically postmodern) research will be institutionalized (‘become the norm’), and therefore legitimate, in the same way as quantitative research is currently the norm. They describe a new reality that will positively discriminate *for* qualitative research, and indeed (potentially) exclude other traditions (‘nobody does quantitative research’). Thus, here, unlike the previous extract, qualitative researchers are depicted as quite prepared to act politically in favour of qualitative research (‘we’re slowly going to build up a supply’). A sense of unity (‘we’), shared commitment and collective action is invoked that justifies alternative practices.

Similarly, the fragmented nature of the institutional field of management research is argued to enable this strategy:

‘What’s happened in my field is that leading journals in the area have been edited by people who are sympathetic to qualitative work ... and as a consequence people who do that kind of stuff have published in those journals, got decent CVs, climbed up the greasy pole and so the majority of people in my field are entirely comfortable with that stuff and it’s applauded and recognized And I would go even further and say perhaps that quantitative work is viewed with some suspicion.’ (qualitative researcher)

In a sense, this and the earlier argument appear to be counter-arguments to the initial claims of the institutionalization of quantitative research. The requirements of NPM *can* be achieved through qualitative research in particular ‘fields’, i.e. the publication of qualitative research is possible (in journals ‘edited by people who are sympathetic’), qualitative researchers can pursue careers (‘get decent CVs’) and qualitative research can be regarded as acceptable (‘applauded and recognized’). The presentation of these practices is something of a mirror image of the practices argued to constitute the institutionalization of quantitative research — for example, the role of journal editors (although here presented in more positive terms as facilitators rather than dictators). The construction of an institutionalization process here leads to the legitimation of *qualitative* research (being ‘entirely comfortable with that stuff’) and the concomitant undermining of quantitative research (‘viewed with some suspicion’).

However, concerns are also expressed with respect to the counter-institutionalization argument. In both the extracts produced below, there is some question raised concerning whether qualitative research should become ‘the norm’:

‘You know Simone de Beauvoir’s work on “the One and the Other”? It’s like objectivist, positivist stuff is The One and the qualitative, interpretive stuff is The Other and there’s always a kind of invidious comparison between The One and The Other. And in the qualitative camp we’re the Other and we always have to justify ourselves against the One and I would love to reach the situation where we can be seen, okay, still as the Other maybe but in our own right, not always in comparison to those other approaches that seem to have sort of captured the right to be the Right One! ... We have to make sure that qualitative research doesn’t become the next The One and make quantitative research the next The Other, but becomes “Both” “And”.’ (qualitative researcher)

The reference to de Beauvoir here draws parallels between the quantitative–qualitative divide and the male–female divide, and de Beauvoir’s distinction is worked up to explain the former in similar terms to the latter. Initially, then, the argument is mounted that this distinction leads to discrimination against qualitative research (‘we always have to justify ourselves’). However, this individual does not actively reject the label of The Other, perhaps because The One has negative connotations of domination, while the nonconformity of The Other has positive benefits. However, qualifications are placed on the acceptance of the role of The Other. The Other can only be positive if qualitative researchers are able to actively claim it (‘in our own right’), rather than have it thrust upon them by virtue of an assertive claim by quantitative researchers to be The One (‘sort of captured’). Later in the pursuance of this argument, the distinction itself (between The One and The Other) is undermined as the interviewee’s difficulty in positioning himself or herself on either pole to their advantage

becomes apparent. The argument then becomes that of undermining the dominance of either qualitative or quantitative research.

‘When you are fantastically successful it sort of immobilizes you. This is known as the success trap. ... So maybe there’s a chance of qualitative research not being that successful. It still should have, yeah, reflect over itself.’ (qualitative researcher)

Through a knowing kind of sarcasm (‘maybe there’s a chance’), it is suggested that qualitative research should not aim for the success of institutionalization: only institutional ‘rigidification’ (Suchman 1995) can result (‘it immobilizes you’). The goal of institutionalization itself is undermined in this account as unworthy of attainment and that qualitative research can only retain its potential for reflexivity (‘reflect over itself’) by not achieving this kind of success.

Summary

Resistance to the institutionalization of quantitative research is here legitimated through its association with the pursuit of more valued research. Qualitative researchers are depicted as requiring a deep commitment to their own beliefs to allow them to continue with qualitative research against the biases that would encourage otherwise, thus constructing something of a heroic and moral identity. While political game-playing is, in this sense, ‘exposed’ to undermine the institutionalization of quantitative research and legitimate resistance through qualitative research, qualitative researchers are also constructed as behaving politically themselves in a more action-oriented and agential process of resistance through counter-institutionalization (thus suggesting a more militant identity). This construction of institutionalization, however, utilizes more positive terms than the construction of the institutionalization of quantitative research. However, we also see the rhetorical problems raised by adopting this line of argument as it potentially reproduces the institutionalized effects already undermined.

Discussion

The analysis presented here highlights the rhetorical institutional work of disrupting institutions, focusing on the institutional field of management research. We claim that here this work involves arguing that quantitative research has become institutionalized within the management discipline; that this institutionalization is illegitimate; and that, therefore, resistance to this process is justified. As the discursive practices of undermining and justifying are complementary (Suddaby and Greenwood 2005), it is not surprising to find that the rhetorical strategies involved overlap (Vaara et al. 2006). Through our analysis, we identify: the undermining of success criteria; the legitimation of interests and actors; attributions of political action; claims to agency; and the invocation of alternative institutional logics. Below we discuss these strategies in more detail, relate them to relevant aspects of institutional theory and draw out some more general themes in relation to the manipulation of contradictory meanings and the political functions of both the agency–structure discourse and the qualitative–quantitative distinction.

From our analysis, we interpret our interviewees as actively ascribing a process of institutionalization to quantitative research, citing coercive pressures emanating from audit and promotion practices; normative pressures from professional research training and publication practices; and mimetic pressures from ranking journals (with US journals heading the rankings). From their accounts, the legitimacy of the institutionalization of quantitative research would thus appear to stem from its ability to fulfil current performance criteria. However, these performance criteria are then themselves undermined by our interviewees as representative of the 'marketization' of academia and therefore *not* legitimate (or *less* legitimate than other goals such as knowledge production). In this case, then, one rhetorical strategy in disrupting the institution is to challenge the success criteria that such institutions achieve so that current practices then appear undesirable. Indeed, the goal of achieving institutionalization (becoming the norm) is itself undermined as unworthy of attainment. Thus, more broadly, the accusation of institutionalization itself functions to undermine the dominance of quantitative research here (as institutional 'rigidification'; Suchman 1995). In this way, our analysis turns attention to the political function of *claims* to the institutionalization of particular practices.

In general, our analysis highlights ways in which institutions may be contested by those who claim that their interests are not served by current institutional practices. Here we see how those 'interests' are made legitimate. Thus, the process of institutionalization outlined above is argued to have unfairly advantaged quantitative research with respect to qualitative research in a form of institutionalized discrimination. Qualitative researchers are positioned as victims of discrimination, whose divergent practices result from different yet equally (or indeed more) valid (legitimate) beliefs about knowledge production. This provides a more solid rhetorical base than the 'golden age' discourse (Ylijoki 2005) because it potentially provokes more sympathy for resistance, and is also possibly not as susceptible to counter-arguments based on the passage of time (see Keenoy 2005). Our institutional entrepreneurs' rhetoric disrupts the institution by arguing that negative effects have resulted that unfairly disadvantage some members of the institution who are pursuing legitimate activities. The legitimacy of those qualitative researchers, and indeed those who are making the arguments, is achieved through particular identity claims. Positive identities are constructed for qualitative researchers as scholars, morally upright and heroic, which serve to increase their authority. Thus, as with Creed et al. (2002), institutional entrepreneurs, in disrupting current arrangements and as skilled rhetors, are 'builders of identity' (p. 494), constructing positive personal characteristics that legitimate their arguments and increase support for their interpretations (Phillips et al. 2004).

We have also seen, in the analysis, the imputation of politically motivated behaviour as rhetorical strategy. Political action in pursuit of the goal of individual promotion is presented as 'game-playing'. This rhetoric disrupts the institution even on the basis of its (taken-for-granted) cognitive legitimacy (Suchman 1995) by undermining assumptions that research is simply about the pursuit of knowledge. However, claims are also made to political activity on the part of qualitative researchers themselves. Again we see the active construction

of particular identities as rhetorical strategy. Thus, while the invocation of the discrimination discourse suggests something of a passive 'victim' identity, it is counteracted by claims to a more active, revolutionary identity in the construction of the 'counter-institution'. This counter-institution provides a collective identity which promotes qualitative researchers as powerful centre-stage actors, rather than individualized, minor characters in an institution dominated by quantitative research. Our identification of the construction of a *counter*-institution highlights a social movement (Hensmans 2003) argued to be explicitly a reaction to or provoked by the current, existing institution. It is positioned as a product of resistance rather than, necessarily, and more typically, an improved recipe for economic success. In contrast to the claims of institutionalization as stagnation seen earlier, we also then distinguish the construction of (counter-)institutions as (ironically) *anti-establishment* rhetoric.

Operational contradictions have been identified by researchers coming from a more organizational or strategic perspective as a possible impetus to reflexivity and thus institutional change (e.g. Beckert 1999; Seo and Creed 2002). Examining institutional work as rhetoric, we see how contradictions in presented arguments may also lead to some reflexivity. For example, 'the One and the Other' argument occasioned some rhetorical discomfort on the part of the interviewee, as he or she realized that claiming the position of 'The One' (institutionalized) might undermine claims to nonconformity from being 'The Other'. This realization then led to some redevelopment of the argument. However, we also see how contradictions in meaning may be manipulated and exploited in the rhetoric. For example, the contradictory meaning of institutionalization as both constraining and enabling is exploited, on the one hand, to undermine quantitative research (as stagnation or inappropriate domination) and, on the other hand, to legitimate qualitative research and researchers (through empowering their collective position as social movement). Similarly, the potential contradictory use of the 'political' discourse is avoided by imputing different goals to these political actions: to further individual ambition (illegitimate) or to rectify discrimination (legitimate). Examining institutional work as rhetoric thus reveals not just how contradictions may be an impetus to change but also how they can be actively exploited as a rhetorical resource for allocating legitimacy and illegitimacy.

When we examine institutional work as rhetoric, we also obtain a new perspective on the 'problem' of agency in institutional theory. While, from an 'embedded agency' perspective (Leca and Naccache 2006; Seo and Creed 2002), we could interpret claims to the institutionalization of quantitative research as evidence that quantitative research is *not* institutionalized (otherwise its 'taken-for-granted' nature could not be challenged), the point here is not whether or not such claims are 'true' but how they function as rhetoric. Here such a claim functioned to undermine quantitative research through positioning it as (inappropriately) dominant and a product of external (illegitimate) forces. Agency is here claimed to be held within the 'qualitative camp' and exercised by qualitative researchers to achieve their own valued ends in opposition to the determinist forces of institutions and institutional processes: quantitative researchers have not *earned* privilege through the legitimate means of effective

knowledge production (indeed, conversely, promoting 'mediocrity') but had privilege *bestowed* through the operations of external structures. Pursuing this line of investigation suggests something of a bracketing of the paradox of 'embedded agency' in favour of a detailed examination of *claims to agency* in any texts produced, and how these may function in the creation, maintenance and disruption of institutions.

In line with previous research (e.g. Kitchener 2002; Reay and Hinings 2005), alternative institutional logics are here invoked to justify and undermine certain practices. Here quantitative research is aligned with the institutional logic of market rationality (in the guise of 'McDonaldization') to strengthen claims of the illegitimacy of current institutional practices, while qualitative research is, conversely, aligned with the institutional logic of academic autonomy to legitimize resistance (see Townley 1997). Qualitative research is also aligned with a specifically European and even anti-US view, despite arguments from some commentators for the breaking down of the US–Europe divide (e.g. Koza and Thoenig 1995). Farashahi et al. (2005) have drawn attention to transnational institutions as contemporary sources of institutional pressure and here a globalization of the US research community is argued to be taking place such that the distinctive nature of a 'European' view is being overtaken by US research practices. The alignment of qualitative research with a European perspective strengthens the construction of an alternative community (counter-institution), which seeks to resist the more powerful group. Overall, we see how the rhetorical institutional work presented here required the continuing reproduction of a qualitative–quantitative divide, despite claims that such a distinction is problematic (e.g. Dachler 1997). Thus, when we examine the qualitative–quantitative divide *as rhetoric*, rather than an essential (methodological or epistemological) difference, we see that distinction in a new light. In both these cases, we see here the political function of *maintaining* a distinction: the undermining of the institution and the justification of resistance.

In conclusion, the analysis presented here demonstrates, through the example of the academic labour process, how rhetoric may function to disrupt institutions, and highlights the rhetorical ingenuity of institutional entrepreneurs. We identify and examine in detail a range of rhetorical strategies brought into play in this institutional work, particularly with respect to claims of legitimacy and illegitimacy. We do not propose that these strategies be regarded as exhaustive or that they necessarily generalize beyond the texts reproduced here. However, we do suggest that examining institutional work as rhetoric adds to our theoretical understanding of institution as discursive construction, particularly with respect to the manipulation of contradictions and the functions of agency–structure discourses, and contributes a political dimension to our understanding of the qualitative–quantitative 'debate' within management research.

Note

Our thanks go to Professor Cynthia Hardy and two anonymous reviewers for comments on earlier drafts of this paper. We are also grateful to our interviewees for sharing their ideas and opinions with us. This work was funded by ESRC Grant No. H333250006, 'Benchmarking Good Practice in Qualitative Management Research'.

References

- Barry, J., J. Chandler, and H. Clark
2001 'Between the ivory tower and the academic assembly line'. *Journal of Management Studies* 38: 87–101.
- Barry, J., E. Berg, and J. Chandler
2003 'Managing intellectual labour in Sweden and England'. *Cross Cultural Management* 10/3: 3–22.
- Bartunek, J., and M. Seo
2002 'Qualitative research can add new meanings to quantitative research'. *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 23: 237–242.
- Beckert, J.
1999 'Agency, entrepreneurs and institutional change'. *Organization Studies* 20/5: 777–799.
- Behling, O.
1980 'The case for the natural science model for research in organizational behaviour and organization theory'. *Academy of Management Review* 5: 483–490.
- Billig, M.
1996 *Arguing and thinking: A rhetorical approach to social psychology*. 2nd edn. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bryson, C.
2004 'What about the workers? The expansion of higher education and the transformation of academic work'. *Industrial Relations Journal* 35: 38–57.
- Cassell, C., A. Buehring, G. Symon, P. Johnson, and V. Bishop
2005 'Research Report: Benchmarking good practice in qualitative management research'. London: Economic and Social Research Council.
- Chandler, J., J. Barry, and H. Clark
2002 'Stressing academe: The wear and tear of the New Public Management'. *Human Relations* 55: 1051–1069.
- Creed, W., M. Scully, and J. Austin
2002 'Clothes make the person? The tailoring of legitimating accounts and the social construction of identity'. *Organization Science* 13/5: 475–496.
- Dachler, P.
1997 'Does the distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods make sense?'. *Organization Studies* 18: 709–724.
- Dacin, T., J. Goodstein, and W. R. Scott
2002 'Institutional theory and institutional change: Introduction to the special research forum'. *Academy of Management Journal* 45: 45–46.
- Dearlove, J.
1997 'The academic labour process: From collegiality and professionalism to managerialism and proletarianism'. *Higher Education Review* 30/1: 56–75.
- DiMaggio, P.
1988 'Interest and agency in institutional theory' in *Institutional patterns and organizations*. L. Zucker (ed.), 3–32. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.
- DiMaggio, P., and W. Powell
1983 'The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields'. *American Sociological Review* 48: 147–160.
- Elsbach, K., and R. Sutton
1992 'Acquiring organizational legitimacy through illegitimate actions: A marriage of institutional and impression management theories'. *Academy of Management Journal* 35/4: 699–738.
- Farashahi, M., T. Hafsi, and R. Molz
2005 'Institutionalized norms of conducting research and social realities: A research synthesis of empirical works from 1983–2002'. *International Journal of Management Reviews* 7: 1–26.
- Farnham, D., editor
1999 *Managing academic staff in changing university systems: International trends and comparisons*. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press.
- Friedland, R., and R. Alford
1991 'Bringing society back in: Symbols, practices and institutional contradictions' in *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*. W. Powell and P. DiMaggio (eds), 232–263. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Geary, J., L. Marriott, and M. Rowlinson
2004 'Journal rankings in business and management and the 2001 research assessment exercise in the UK'. *British Journal of Management* 15/2: 95–141.

- Greenwood, R., and C. Hinings
1996 'Understanding radical organizational change: Bringing together the old and the new institutionalism'. *Academy of Management Review* 21/4: 1022–1054.
- Harley, S., and F. Lee
1997 'Research selectivity, managerialism, and the academic labour process: The future of non-mainstream economics in UK universities'. *Human Relations* 50: 1427–1458.
- Hensmans, M.
2003 'Social movement organizations: A metaphor for strategic actors in institutional fields'. *Organization Studies* 24: 355–381.
- Johnson, G., S. Smith, and B. Codling
2000 'Microprocesses of institutional change in the context of privatization'. *Academy of Management Review* 25/3: 572–580.
- Keenoy, T.
2005 'Facing inwards and outwards at once: The liminal temporalities of academic performativity'. *Time and Society* 14: 303–321.
- Kitchener, M.
2002 'Mobilizing the logic of managerialism in professional fields'. *Organization Studies* 23/3: 391–420.
- Koza, M., and J. Thoenig
1995 'Organizational theory at the crossroads: Some reflections on European and United States approaches to organizational research'. *Organization Science* 6: 1–8.
- Lanzara, G., and G. Patriotta
2007 'The institutionalization of knowledge in an automotive factory'. *Organization Studies OnlineFirst*, 11 January 2007.
- Lawrence, T., and R. Suddaby
2006 'Institutions and institutional work' in *Sage handbook of organization studies*. C. Clegg, C. Hardy, T. Lawrence, and W. Nord (eds), 215–254. London: Sage.
- Leca, B., and P. Naccache
2006 'A critical realist approach to institutional entrepreneurship'. *Organization* 13/5: 627–651.
- Littler, C., and G. Salaman
1982 'Bravermania and beyond: Recent theories of the labour process'. *Sociology* 16: 25–269.
- Maguire, S., and C. Hardy
2006 'The emergence of new global institutions: A discursive perspective'. *Organization Studies* 27/1: 7–29.
- Morgan, G., and L. Smircich
1980 'The case for qualitative research'. *Academy of Management Review* 5: 491–500.
- Muller-Camen, M., and S. Salzgeber
2005 'Changes in academic work and the chair regime: The case of German business administration academics'. *Organization Studies* 26: 271–290.
- Munir, K., and N. Phillips
2005 'The birth of the "Kodak moment": Institutional entrepreneurship and the adoption of new technologies'. *Organization Studies* 26/11: 1665–1687.
- Ogbonna, E., and L. Harris
2004 'Work intensification and emotional labour among UK university lecturers: An exploratory study'. *Organization Studies* 25: 1185–1203.
- Oliver, C.
1991 'Strategic responses to institutional processes'. *Academy of Management Review* 16: 145–179.
- Oliver, C.
1992 'The antecedents of deinstitutionalization'. *Organization Studies* 13: 563–588.
- Parker, M., and D. Jary
1995 'The McUniversity: Organization, management and academic subjectivity'. *Organization* 2: 319–338.
- Phillips, N., T. Lawrence, and C. Hardy
2000 'Inter-organizational collaboration and the dynamics of institutional fields'. *Journal of Management Studies* 37: 23–43.
- Phillips, N., T. Lawrence and C. Hardy
2004 'Discourse and institutions'. *Academy of Management Review* 29: 635–652.
- Potter, J.
1996 *Representing reality*. London: Sage.
- Pritchard, C., and H. Willmott
1997 'Just how managed is the McUniversity?'. *Organization Studies* 18: 287–316.

- Reay, T., and C. R. Hinings
2005 'The recomposition of an organizational field'. *Organization Studies* 26/3: 351–384.
- Rynes, S.
2005 'Editorial: Taking stock and looking ahead'. *Academy of Management Journal* 48/1: 9–15.
- Schneiberg, M., and E. Clemens
2006 'The typical tools for the job: Research strategies in institutional analysis'. *Sociological Theory* 24/3: 195–227.
- Scott, W. R.
2001 *Institutions and organizations*. 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Seo, M., and W. Creed
2002 'Institutional contradictions, praxis, and institutional change: A dialectical perspective'. *Academy of Management Review* 27/2: 222–247.
- Slaughter, S., and G. Rhoades
2004 *Academic capitalism and the new economy: Markets, state and higher education*. Baltimore, MD; London: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Suchman, M.
1995 'Managing legitimacy: Strategic and institutional approaches'. *Academy of Management Review* 20: 571–611.
- Suddaby, R., and R. Greenwood
2005 'Rhetorical strategies of legitimacy'. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 50: 35–67.
- Symon, G.
2005 'Exploring resistance from a rhetorical perspective'. *Organization Studies* 26: 1641–1663.
- Symon, G.
2008 'Developing the political perspective on technological change through rhetorical analysis'. *Management Communication Quarterly*.
- Townley, B.
1997 'The institutional logic of performance appraisal'. *Organization Studies* 18/2: 261–285.
- Trowler, P.
2001 'Captured by the discourse? The socially constitutive power of new higher education discourse in the UK'. *Organization* 8: 183–201.
- Vaara, E., J. Tienari, and J. Laurila
2006 'Pulp and paper fiction: On the discursive legitimation of global industrial restructuring'. *Organization Studies* 27/6: 789–810.
- Wicks, D.
2004 'The institution of tenure: Freedom or discipline?' *Management Decision* 42/5: 619–627.
- Willmott, H.
1995 'Managing the academics: Commodification and control in the development of university education in the UK'. *Human Relations* 48: 993–1027.
- Ylijoki, O.
2005 'Academic nostalgia: A narrative approach to academic work'. *Human Relations* 58: 555–576.
- Zilber, T.
2002 'Institutionalization as an interplay between actions, meanings and actors: The case of a rape crisis center in Israel'. *Academy of Management Journal* 45/1: 234–254.

Gillian Symon

Gillian Symon is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Organizational Psychology, Birkbeck, University of London. She has undertaken and published research in the areas of qualitative research, rhetorical analysis and politics in the technological change process. She has edited three compendia of qualitative research methods with Catherine Cassell and they are joint founding editors of the journal *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*.
Address: Department of Organizational Psychology, Birkbeck, University of London, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX, UK.
Email: g.symon@bbk.ac.uk.

Anna Buehring

Anna Buehring is Principal Lecturer in the Department of Business Information Technology & Management Science, Manchester Metropolitan University Business School. Her research interests relate to the uptake and use of information technology within organizations, and to research methods. She has previously worked on research projects funded by the Department of Health, and on an ESRC-funded project investigating qualitative research in management.

Address: Business IT Group, Manchester Metropolitan University Business School, Aytoun Street, Manchester M1 3GH, UK.

Email: a.buehring@mmu.ac.uk

Phil Johnson

Phil Johnson is Professor of HRM at Sheffield University Management School. Until recently he was Reader in Management and Organization at Sheffield Hallam University. He has undertaken and published research in the areas of epistemology, methodology, business ethics, management control and organizational governance. He has recently undertaken research sponsored by the ESRC and the EPSRC.

Address: Sheffield University Management School, 9 Mappin Street, Sheffield S1 4DT, UK.

Email: phil.johnson@sheffield.ac.uk

Catherine Cassell

Catherine Cassell is Professor of Occupational Psychology at Manchester Business School. She has a long-term interest in the use of qualitative methods in organizational and management research and has published three edited texts with Gillian Symon in this field. She is also inaugural joint editor of the journal *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*. She has recently been involved in an ESRC project examining assessments of the quality of qualitative research in the business and management field.

Address: Manchester Business School, Booth Street West, Manchester M15 6PB, UK.

Email: Catherine.Cassell@mbs.ac.uk