



## Article

# Performative Narrative and Actor- Network Theory – A Study of a Hotel in Administration

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Organizational Analysis

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**Performative Narrative and Actor-Network Theory –  
A Study of a Hotel in Administration**

**Abstract 197**

**Paper 5952**

## Introduction

The hegemonic (dominant) narrative of most organizational settings is described in a top-down, static and stable way with the organisation portrayed as a macro-actors. We address calls for more NA studies to consider how a conflicting narrative comes to be mobilised (Holstein et al, 2018: 66) and how a network of internal and external stakeholders reshape the trajectory of the organisation (Vaara et al, 2016: 549). Several authors (Hitchin, 2014; Gond et al, 2016) have also called for performative studies that draw upon ANT. We weave together NA and ANT to demonstrate socio-material networks, power relations, and the representation of other voices in accounts. Combining ANT and narrative is supported by others (Czarniawska 2004) and consistent with their views our study highlights the problematization, bottom-up and dynamic relations of a localised organisational performance. 'Greymare House', is a small UK hotel placed into administration by 'International Bank' deciding to call in the overdraft facilities due to a change to its own business model. Greymare House, went through administration and came back from the brink to re-establish itself as a going concern. This paper draws upon employee interviews, documentation and observations to explore unfolding events. By combining NA with ANT it allows us to reject dualisms (human/nonhuman, macro/micro) and follow actors and relationality. This enables the development of a deeper understanding of organisational behaviour beyond the hegemonic simplification and sanitization of many accounts.

## Hegemonic Narrative

Hegemonic narrative dominates an organisation's practices and narrative and tends to deny other voices. Organizations tend to be portrayed as objective, rational, and pursuing progress. There is nothing wrong with this but the presumption is these goals are the sole preserve of those 'determining' strategy and there is an assumption hegemonic narrative speaks for all other stakeholders (e.g. employees, customers, investors) and represents their interests. However, by examining other voices we are able to open up alternative views and perspectives.

## Performance, Narrative and ANT

Gond et al (2016, p. 448) identified a range of approaches to performativity and called for future studies to combine approaches. ANT was particularly singled out as a way of

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3 developing performative narrative. Similarly, Hitchin (2014, p.70) suggests that ANT adds to  
4 NA with its interpretation of sociomateriality, relationality, hybridity [possibilities for  
5 problematization and counter-enrolment] and translation. She calls for further use of the  
6 NA-ANT combination and one area we focus on is the power relations issues of stories  
7 “empowering, marginalizing, and dominating tales”. We heed both these calls by combining  
8 NA and ANT in studying a performance. NA and ANT work sympathetically together  
9 (Kaplan et al, 2004, p. 437). In performativity an NA-ANT combination shows “how  
10 macropictures are drawn, [and] micro studies problematize the taken for granted”  
11 (Czarniawska 1998, p.49).

12  
13 Traditionally performance is portrayed as humans performing surrounded by material  
14 (nonhuman) props. However, ANT’s approach to performativity attempts to encompass  
15 *everything* in a performance, human or nonhuman (Law and Singleton, 2000). Callon (2007,  
16 p. 330) prefers the term *performance* emphasizing performance as an outcome from  
17 nonhumans and humans relations. Performance is “the process whereby sociotechnical  
18 arrangements are enacted [performed]...”

19  
20 ANT explores relationality between actors, and the rejection of the micro-macro distinction.  
21 NA does so through understanding how networks of interests are produced. An example of  
22 this “narrative network analysis” hybrid is suggested by Holstein and Gubrium (2012,  
23 p.219) who map actions connecting various human and nonhuman actors. We see  
24 considerable benefit from ANT’s rejection of the micro-macro dualism which allows us to  
25 follow actors of all sizes wherever they may take us.

26  
27 In our performance we adopt ANT’s rejection of dualisms (micro-macro, human-nonhuman)  
28 and account for human and nonhuman actors, some present some absent, some macro some  
29 micro. Macro actors (e.g. multinationals) are merely micro-actors seated on a series of  
30 stabilised (black-boxed), unproblematic arrangements and capable of enrolling other actors to  
31 act like a single entity (Callon and Latour, 1981). In ANT there is no difference between  
32 macro and micro actors as relational logics apply at any scale. ANT calls these human-  
33 nonhuman network configurations “generalized symmetry” (Callon, 1986) and it is the  
34 relations between these actors that are important rather than actors themselves.

35  
36 Broadly speaking ANT is material-semiotics where it maps material (between things) and  
37 semiotics (concepts) and assumes that many relations are sociomaterial ‘entanglements’  
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(Orlikowski, 2007: 1439). Fuller accounts of ANT can be found elsewhere (e.g. Michael, 1996).

ANT has already influenced our performative narrative through rejection of dualisms but it also provides an analytical lens through its approach to power relations and examining events from “the bottom upwards and outwards” (Fox, 2000, p.858). Here we are interested in the ANT tenets of *problematization*, *interressement*, *enrolment* and *translation*. In our case the tenets are important because they are fundamental in network analysis *Problematization* (Callon, 1986) occurs when a stable situation is destabilized and is the first stage in a series of actions by which an actor makes itself indispensable to others. *Interressement* is described (Callon, 1986, p. 207-8) as the “actions by which an entity attempts to impose and stabilize the identity of other actors it defines through its problematization”. This is “achieved by interposing oneself between the target entity and its pre-existing associations” (Michael, 1996, p. 53). In ANT, power is not a possession, but involves *enrolment*, a mutual process of “capturing” as well as “yielding” (Latour, 1986, p. 173) to form an “arrangement of assent” (Michael, 1996, p. 53). Finally, *translation* is the means whereby one actor gives roles and voice to others and sets itself up as spokesperson for the newly enrolled network.

Macro actors are often portrayed as stable but they are always open to problematization, reversible and uncertain. Stability is maintained by processes and manoeuvres designed to uphold the status quo. Humans and nonhumans are the effects of this performance, regardless of its stability (Gherardi and Nicolini 2005). It takes considerable work to maintain a network over time in a way actors see their aspirations continuing to be met and choose to remain enrolled in the network (Callon and Latour, 1981, p.297). Stable networks can be problematized so this “web of relations only hold[s] if they are enacted [or performed], enacted again, and enacted yet again.” (Law, 2008, p. 635). From an ANT perspective this means a network is problematized because actors see their interests are better served by enrolling into an alternative network configuration. This approach to power relations is also consistent with NA where it might be seen as placing a “bet” (Boje and Saylor, 2014, p.202) on an antenarrative fragment that may in future supplant hegemonic narrative. This view of power relations as a dynamic process is recognized in studies of performativity beyond ANT (Harding et al, 2017).

Our study is interested in how a conflicting narrative comes to be mobilised and how a network of stakeholders reshapes the trajectory of the organisation. From an ANT perspective narrative is not an innocent description, instead it might allow for the introduction of change

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3 through problematization or stabilizing existing performances (Law and Singleton, 2000).  
4 Similarly in NA, by considering other versions of events and “antenarratives” (Boje, 2001)  
5 we get behind hegemonic narrative to allow for new strategies, future directions, resistance to  
6 existing ones, and mobilization (Vaara and Tiernari, 2011). As such antenarratives “could  
7 change grand narratives” Boje et al (2016, p. 392).  
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### 11 12 13 **Methodology**

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15 We use a single case study involving interviews, observation, customer feedback and  
16 documentation collected over 5 years with an NA-ANT overlay offering deeper meanings  
17 from experiences. We conducted three in-depth interviews with ‘Bertie’ at different stages of  
18 the research project. In total he was interviewed for 7 hours by two different researchers. The  
19 third author, with no prior knowledge of events or the organisation culture conducted 6 in  
20 depth interviews with employees from different parts of the business. This allowed for  
21 different impressions to be coordinated and to test original thoughts. Observations were  
22 carried out over the period by each of the research team and ranged from first impressions of  
23 the hotel and employees to mystery shopping style visits to reception, the restaurant and bar.  
24 We captured more than 450 customer comments from hotel review websites as well as the  
25 responses and a range of press cuttings and internet stories.  
26  
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28 There are issues with NA as Gabriel (2000, p. 151) suggests. The most likely are selective  
29 use of narratives to promote preconceived ideas, seeing stories as facts, and insisting second  
30 hand observations can be viewed objectively. However, the fragments of our narrative here  
31 were identified and pulled together after the research process was concluded and distance  
32 was created by engaging the third author later for the employee interviews. We do not  
33 believe narratives should chronicle events as facts but instead we see them as emplotments.  
34 As such we have adopted Czarniawska’s (2000: 9) approach to NA which focuses on the  
35 three stages of emplotment – (i) *identification of the characters*, (ii) *identification of specific*  
36 *events* and (iii) *an interpretive theme or sensemaking stage that subsumes events and links*  
37 *them into a meaningful sequence*. In this way NA is not a factual pseudo-scientific chronicle  
38 or reconstruction of events (ibid.) but more a rendition of how events were perceived  
39 (Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.3). We see our role as researchers as taking fragmented  
40 antenarrative events, putting them together and capturing the full array of characters (Vaara,  
41 2016). The fragment itself first emerged in an article we noticed in the Press that the Hotel  
42 was going into administration and rumours we heard locally that Bertie had gone bankrupt.  
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3 We were two years into our study at that stage and worried about whether we would be able  
4 to complete it. After a respectful gap we interviewed Bertie again and unprompted he started  
5 to recount events. From our data at the conclusion of the 5 year research period we were able  
6 to use Czarniawska's emplotment approach as we could identify characters and key events.  
7 Sensemaking, themes and meaningful sequencing and our ANT analysis came much later.  
8

9  
10 We employ ANT's approach to dualisms in the characters we identify, in the telling of the  
11 narrative and as a thematic lens to give a deeper level of analysis to the narrative by  
12 exploring power relations, problematization and reconfiguration of networks. By weaving  
13 together NA and ANT into a Narrative Network Analysis approach we are concerned with  
14 following the actor to unlock the significance of a phenomenon and the power relations issues  
15 that surround it (Hansen, 2011, Olesen and Eskelinen, 2011). At this point ANT and  
16 antenarrative are woven together by exploring performativity and power relations.  
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### 24 **Greymare House – Narrative Network Analysis**

25 We adopt Czarniawska's (2000) three stage emplotment approach: (i) identification of the  
26 characters, (ii) identification of specific events and (iii) an interpretive theme and meaningful  
27 sequencing.  
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#### 31 **i. Identification of Characters (in Order of appearance):**

32  
33 *Greymare House*: an old UK hotel in a small rural market town.  
34

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36 *Bertie*: the Hotel owner.  
37

38  
39 *Customers*: a varied group of people, some are 'regulars' who know Bertie and the  
40 Employees. Around 60% of Customers are motorcyclists (see Bikers below). Two Customers  
41 ultimately become investors. In this short fragment Customers have a largely peripheral role  
42 although their custom is critical.  
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46 *Employees*: are not one individual but they are enrolled into Bertie's network because it can  
47 deliver continued employment and excellent development.  
48

49  
50 *International Bank*: has its headquarters outside the UK. Once Greymare House is in  
51 administration its main concern is to sell the hotel to recover money lent to Bertie.  
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53  
54 *Administrator*: engaged by the Bank to manage the business and to affect its sale.  
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3 *Hotel Expert:* a former hotelier now working as a consultant. Engaged by the Administrator to  
4 run the hotel along with Bertie and get it prepared for sale.  
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6 *Sales Agent:* Engaged by the Administrator to advise on and affect the sale of the business  
7 and show buyers around the property.  
8  
9

10 *Buyers:* interested in purchasing the Hotel. A varied group but with the key goal of  
11 purchasing the hotel and returning a profit.  
12

13 *Bikers:* 60% of the Hotel's Customers and in this narrative they are a spectre, casting a  
14 shadow but not physically present and still key actors in the plot.  
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17 *Derelict House:* situated in the shared rear car park at Greymare House and owned by Bertie.  
18

19 *Brewery:* a key actor with a major influence but only has a part at the end of the narrative  
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## 24 **ii. Identification of specific events:**

### 25 *Greymare House – Setting the Scene*

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27  
28 Greymare House, is a coaching inn built in the 1700's on what was a major UK horse drawn  
29 coach route. The Hotel was in poor repair when acquired by Bertie and his family, needing a  
30 new roof and refurbishment. Bertie bought the Hotel with a 100% mortgage and the new roof  
31 effectively added an additional 20% on top of the mortgage The Hotel is 'listed' (historically  
32 important) so refurbishments must meet specific building regulations which is prohibitively  
33 expensive. The initial outlay used all the family's available funds and refurbishment has been  
34 an ongoing process when funds allow.  
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40 Most online Customer comments refer to the state of the Hotel. This ranges from suggesting it  
41 has an 'old world charm' and is 'loveably quirky' to it being 'run down' and 'in need of major  
42 refurbishments and refits'.  
43  
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45 The pre-exiting relationships between Bertie and his Employees were strong. In employee  
46 interviews we identified employees generally had long service in a sector which generally has  
47 high turnover. The key drivers for this appeared to be: a strong training and development  
48 ethos (e.g. all employees trained and encouraged to get qualifications), employees included in  
49 changes (e.g. all employee tasting events for new menus, beers, wines), empowering  
50 employees to be responsible and use their initiative (e.g. decisions made on shift, front of  
51 house and reviewed afterwards, trusted to get things right) and a performance culture based  
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3 on praise and development for the future (e.g. learn from to improve for next time). All  
4 employees, unprompted, mentioned Bertie's open door policy and said they were encouraged  
5 to raise issues promptly to resolve them and that Bertie spent much of the time listening to  
6 them. The overarching atmosphere was described as "one big family", "one team" and "more  
7 friends than bosses". The pre-existing relationships between Customers and Bertie/the  
8 Employees were also strong with much repeat business. Bikers were well catered for with  
9 motorbikes garages and Bertie's innovative route planning service. Online reviews repeatedly  
10 mention "friendly", "helpful", "knowledgeable", employees for whom "nothing is too much  
11 trouble". All this created a shared narrative between the three actors (Bertie, Employees,  
12 Customers).

### 21 *Administration*

22  
23 The business is seasonal making money in the summer, relying on the bank overdraft in the  
24 winter and then making profit and paying off what is owed in the summer again. However,  
25 Greymare House was placed into administration by the Bank deciding in January to call in the  
26 overdraft facilities as the Bank changed its own business model.

27  
28 Bertie was asked to see the Manager at the Bank and was told "despite being the best hotel on  
29 their books he [the Bank Manager] had been told from headquarters that in 3 months' time the  
30 overdraft facility would be cut for Greymare House along with 53 other hotels and restaurants  
31 in the region." Bertie had no means to repay the overdraft so the business was placed in  
32 administration.

33  
34 However, Bertie "took a chance that day". As the Bank had told him he had a good business  
35 and kept apologising to him he said "alright if I am [your] best hotel then let me run the show  
36 for you. Presumably you know I run it as a good operation. So I will run it for you for nothing  
37 and then I will understand what this is all about and if it gets sorted out then fine. Any other  
38 guy would run it into the ground because...lock the door, staff go, take the money out,  
39 everything else goes down rapidly." The Bank Manager made a telephone call and then  
40 agreed as long as Bertie was prepared to work under the supervision of a Hotel Expert  
41 appointed by the Administrators. So Bertie agreed.

42  
43 At this stage Bertie was unclear if he could recover ownership of the Hotel, how he might do  
44 so and what administration really involved.

### *The Hotel Expert*

The next day Bertie met with the Administrators. They told him they were happy for him to stay. The Hotel Expert, appointed by the Administrators duly arrived at Greymare House. The Employees, as well as Bertie, were not impressed with the 'demeanour' and 'attitude' of the Hotel Expert. The Expert told the management team that he had 'lots of experience of the hotel business' and that he had 'been in administration seventeen times and declared bankrupt on three separate occasions'. Bertie was incensed and in what he described as "the lowest point in [his] life" he "physically man handled the [Hotel Expert] and threw him down the steps [out of the hotel] and [he] told him to bugger off." The Administrator telephoned immediately to say that the Hotel Expert wanted to call the Police but instead, the Administrator summoned Bertie to a meeting.

At the meeting Bertie said the Administrator could telephone the Police if they wanted as he should not have behaved like that. But Bertie told the Administrator what the Hotel Expert had said about administrations and bankruptcies. Bertie said "[He was] running the show there, [He would] run it for [the Administrator] and be [their] hotel expert". So the Administrator employed Bertie for a token salary. It was agreed that the Administrators could visit weekly but in a fortnight this became an update by telephone. So Bertie was running the Hotel and most Customers were unaware the business was in administration. At this stage the power relationship is still very much in the favour of the Administrator as Bertie is effectively an employee working towards the sale of the Hotel.

### *Employees*

Bertie called a meeting with the Employees. He explained that he had no idea what was going to happen but that he had "been able to force them [the Administrators] to [allow him to] run the hotel for the foreseeable future on their behalf. But for them to understand [he] was not the current owner." Bertie reassured them that they could choose to leave and he would try to support them to find jobs elsewhere but that things were insecure. However, if staff wanted to stay they needed to know he would "be doing [his] best to help [them] and the business". Bertie ran the Hotel for the Administrator for just over 12 months and in that time none of his staff chose to leave.

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3 In order to maintain motivation levels Bertie told them he would fight to get the Hotel back  
4 and he did not want the Administrators to pull the plug on him and the Hotel because they  
5 thought Employees were not committed or might be sabotaging the business by  
6 underperforming.  
7

8  
9 Bertie had always advocated training for his Employees and had a strong reputation for  
10 development in the wider community in the 3 years before administration. Bertie also  
11 recruited employees who struggled to get work elsewhere and, along with his Employees, he  
12 would nurture these new employees. Interestingly most Customer feedback comments (apart  
13 from those about the Hotel building) relate to the attentiveness of Employees who are ‘all  
14 extramilers’ which is testament to Bertie’s approach to training and management and a sign of  
15 the pride Employees have in their work.  
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18 Bertie’s regret during this period was not being able to spend money on training. However,  
19 through a government agency he managed to negotiate funds to train two young staff and he  
20 continued to do in-house training himself.  
21

22 Bertie has a track record of being open with his Employees and wanting to treat them fairly.  
23 For example, training them with future proof skills and a genuine open door policy. Whilst  
24 this meeting undoubtedly acted to keep employees enrolled in Bertie’s network the key driver  
25 appears to be about openness with the Employees as still Bertie had no idea if he could  
26 recover his Hotel ownership.  
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### 29 *Buyers, Bikers and the Derelict House*

30 The Sales Agent had told the Administrators that the best sale price could be achieved by  
31 keeping the Hotel running. This point in the narrative is a pivotal moment in the ANT power  
32 relations mapping as Bertie is already responsible for the day-to-day operations and by giving  
33 this advice the Sales Agent had effectively recommended to the Administrator that enrolment  
34 in Bertie’s new network configuration was the best way for them to achieve their target entity  
35 of a profitable sale of the Hotel.  
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38 The Hotel was on the market for £900,000 and with monies owed to the Bank and  
39 Administration fees Bertie would have been left with around £100,000 depending on the sale  
40 price. But he wanted ‘his’ Hotel back. The seasonal nature of the Hotel meant Buyers were  
41 unlikely to buy in mid-summer as they would not make money over the winter months to  
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3 survive. Bertie surmised there was a chance he could re-acquire the business if he could find  
4 investors. There were some interested Buyers at various stages during the year.

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6 Bertie identified four reasons why the business did not sell: (i) the price was too high for a  
7 business in administration as Buyers would assume something was wrong with the Hotel; (ii)  
8 Buyers were told how loyal Employees were to Bertie and how much he spent on training;  
9  
10 (iii) Around 60% of Customers were Bikers and Buyer's perceptions of Hell's Angels and  
11 violence were not dispelled; (iv) the Derelict House in the rear car park (owned by Bertie not  
12 the Administrators) shared its access road with the Hotel and various potential purposes were  
13 outlined to Buyers (e.g. a blacksmith's workshop, or a building plot for a Biker's bunk  
14 house).

15  
16 Buyers were welcomed, given a guided tour but subtly discouraged by a series of perceived  
17 problems. As Bertie himself recounts "buyers asked [him] if Bikers had fights in the hotel and  
18 [he] told them yeah one or two but it is to be expected". Motorcycles can cost up to £50,000  
19 and thus Bikers who could afford them were usually well paid professionals who were  
20 interested in touring the area rather than fighting.

21  
22 The Sales Agent was wise to some of these attempts by Bertie and contacted the  
23 Administrator to insist that Bertie was told to leave the Hotel when a Buyer was due to come  
24 round. So Bertie left the Buyers in the capable hands of his loyal Employees. So Employees  
25 would tell the Buyers about the various plans for the Derelict House and as Buyers were  
26 leaving the Hotel the Employees would say Bertie could be telephoned later, so most Buyer  
27 did. In ANT terms the power relations are contested and re-contested at various points in this  
28 event. Bertie is effectively enrolling and re-enrolling the Administrator by rallying the  
29 services of other network actors such as the Employees, the Hotel and the Bikers. But full  
30 translation is not completed at this stage and it is a precarious or unstable antenarrative  
31 network configuration

### 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 *Bertie is Back*

48  
49 After a year Bertie was able to pull together a coalition of two Customers and the Brewery to  
50 back him as investors and shareholders who did not want or expect a quick return on  
51 investment. These two Customers liked staying at the Hotel and had done so on several  
52 occasions and had heard rumours that the Hotel was on the brink of closure. By enrolling the  
53 two Customers and the Brewery into the new network Bertie was in a position to stabilise the  
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3 new antenarrative network configuration and to end the narrative he was able to buy the Hotel  
4 back at a reduced rate from the Administrators.  
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9 **iii. Interpretative theme and meaningful sequencing:**

10 Bourdieu (2010) argues there are pre-existing elements of a network and actors have life  
11 trajectories and bring social capital/learning with them. When Bertie came to the UK and  
12 bought the hotel he left his pre-existing networks behind and only two actors pre-date Bertie's  
13 arrival (Hotel and a few employees). Bertie did not leave behind his learning and experience.  
14 So where does this network begin? We prefer Gulati and Srivastarva's (2014) idea, influenced  
15 by Bourdieu, which leaves space for *acquiring* - creating a new tie where there was nothing  
16 pre-existing - alongside *activating*, *altering* and *adjusting* pre-existing ties.  
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19 ANT focuses on how the network came into being and became problematized so a new  
20 configuration emerges. Therefore we believe the network begins as Bertie, with International  
21 Bank's financial assistance, buys Greymare House. At this stage there were no pre-existing  
22 ties. When the Bank called in its overdraft the network was problematized (destabilized) and  
23 a new network configuration begins to emerge with a series of new ties (*acquiring*) alongside  
24 various adaptations of pre-existing ties.  
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27 The initial problematization caused by the Bank's change in overdraft policy involved a  
28 hegemonic narrative which: silences the UK Bank Manager who tried to challenge; it ignores  
29 alternative stories; and the potential job losses of the Employees. However, by highlighting  
30 localised events we unearth Bertie (a micro actor) formulating a new network by placing an  
31 antenarrative "bet" with the promise in future to meet the interests of other actors. Bertie took  
32 "a chance" when first told the Hotel was to be placed into administration and was allowed by  
33 the Administrators to run the Hotel. In addition, the Sales Agent's advice to the Administrator  
34 that the Hotel could be sold for more if it remained operational, meant Bertie was able to  
35 achieve interressement. He interposed himself between the target entity (successful operation  
36 and sale of the Hotel) and pre-existing associations. This can be clearly seen in figure 1. Our  
37 use of thicker lines to denote new ties enables us to show how pre-existing network  
38 configurations are influenced by a number of new indirect relationships (*acquiring ties*) and  
39 actors combined with adapted relations from the original network which are used, in Actor-  
40 Network terms, for the purposes of enrolment or re-enrolment into the new network  
41 configuration.  
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**Figure 1 About Here**

This enrolment was strengthened by Bertie's insistence the Hotel Expert be removed. This event meant the Administrator identified Bertie as the best bet to achieve their interests of a profitable sale. So the Administrator yielded and Bertie captured the network to re-arrange the order of assents.

Employees remained loyal to Bertie as he explained his goal was to keep the Hotel and they could see their longer term interests were better served being enrolled in Bertie's network. The enrolment of the Employees also allowed the Sales Agent to be partially side-lined as Employees were prepared to assist in preventing the sale to interested Buyers. Translation was not fully achieved at this stage but by discouraging the Buyers, a sale could not be affected.

Translation was complete when Bertie persuaded new investors (Customers and Brewery) to enrol into the network. The investors could see the long term potential of the Hotel and their interests were met. The Administrators and International Bank were persuaded to sell at a reduced price to Bertie's network. All actors appear to have benefited from the sale with the exception of some potential Buyers and the Hotel Expert. But as ANT suggests, new network configurations are not an "innocent" process.

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**Discussion**

By identifying a "fragment" (Boje, 2001, Vaara et al, 2016) we were able to provide a localised account of how an antenarrative created a new network configuration, initially involving resistance (Harding et al, 2017) and ultimately resulted in change to the grand narrative (Boje et al, 2016). Such localised accounts themselves are hard to generalize from but their generalizability is perhaps better served by a collection of similar accounts, by theoretical generalizations and through the use of such case studies in teaching managers and scholars of organization studies.

Theoretically our contribution highlights the inherent messiness and dynamism of organizations and the complex web of power relations (Law, 2008). Hegemonic accounts and mainstream research tends to chronicle narrative in a relatively static, stabilized and pseudo-scientific process. Whilst our emplotment highlights relations between actors the real benefit of this Narrative Network Analysis combination is in analyzing power relations and being able to tell our story upwards and outwards (Fox, 2000). In the three hundred year history of Greymare House this fragment is a mere pin prick, as it is to macro actors such as

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3 International Bank. However, there is undoubtedly room for further studies using this  
4 approach if we are to uncover how conflicting narrative accounts come to change the  
5 trajectory of hegemonic narratives.  
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8 In our narrative placing a “bet” (Boje and Saylor, 2014) on a prospective antenarrative Bertie  
9 wrote the first page of a new narrative. Ultimately this bet paid out but it was arrived at by  
10 forming a new network configuration. The network was initially unstable and this involved  
11 interressement and enrolment whereby actors were assured and reassured their interests could  
12 still be met by the new network configuration to maintain enrolment until the translation  
13 finally stabilized this new configuration.  
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18 Through the application of a performative narrative we ensure the focus is on actors (Hansen,  
19 2011) and through ANT we have rejected the dualisms of human/nonhuman and  
20 micro/macro. This use of ANT allowed seamlessly movement between macro and micro  
21 actors to explore relationality. The Hotel with its leaky roof is instrumental in Bertie’s high  
22 borrowing at the outset. The Derelict House (along with the (absent) spectre of the Bikers)  
23 assisted in maintaining enrolment into the counter network and antenarrative. Along with the  
24 micro-macro interplay between actors such as Bertie and International Bank.  
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30 Our account attempted to heed the call to combine different strands of thinking on  
31 performativity (Gond et al, 2016) and use ANT in doing so (Hitchin, 2014). Rejecting  
32 dualisms enables a different rendition of the narrative. By exploring relationality and how a  
33 network is performed we were able to consider how a conflicting narrative came to be  
34 mobilised (Holstein et al, 2018: 66) and how a network of internal and external stakeholders  
35 reshaped the trajectory of Greymare House (Vaara et al, 2016: 549).  
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## 42 **Conclusion**

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44 Employing Narrative Network Analysis (NNA) created a performance from a fragment of  
45 longitudinal research data. By intertwining the emplotment approach to NA and ANT’s  
46 rejection of dualisms allowed us to explore a localised performance. This NNA enabled a  
47 deeper, dynamic, reading of organisational behaviour and we have given presence to an  
48 antenarrative that would otherwise go untold or be absent from accounts.  
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53 We addressed the calls for more NA studies to consider how conflicting narrative comes to be  
54 mobilised (Holstein et al, 2018: 66) and networks of internal and external stakeholders might  
55 reshape the organisation’s trajectory (Vaara et al, 2016: 549). Our research attempts to  
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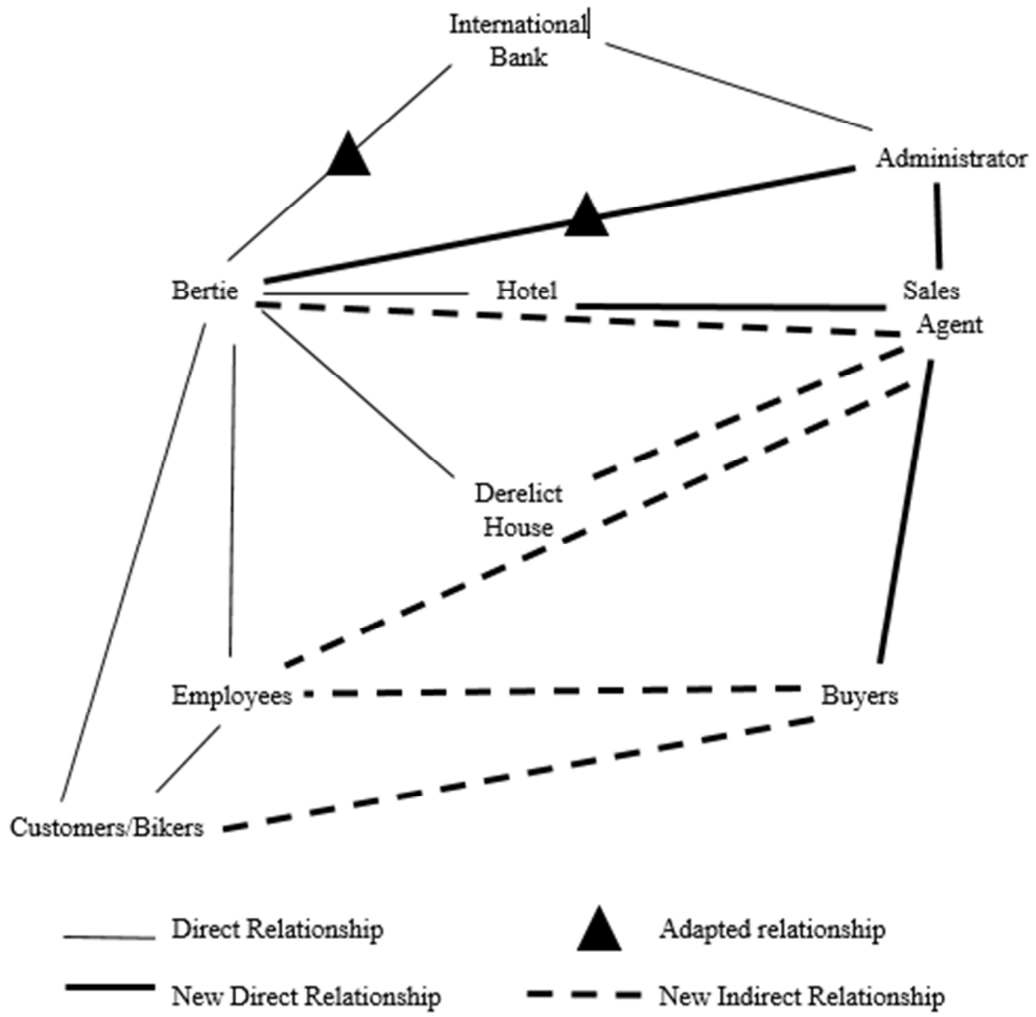


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3 provide a nuanced understanding of how a conflicting narrative came to reshape the  
4 hegemonic narrative. We evidence how an owner manager engages a new network of humans  
5 and nonhuman actors. Our study provides a contribution to our understanding of how an  
6 antenarrative bet is developed across a network of stakeholders and evolves into a new  
7 direction for an organisation. Such accounts are still rare and considered to be at the margins  
8 of the mainstream hegemonic narrative which seems more intent on producing simplistic  
9 models that are said to be universally applicable. We call for more such studies that  
10 problematize taken for granted macro pictures and hegemonic narrative by surfacing  
11 conflicting narratives. In this way we will enhance teaching and organisational understanding.  
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