# Digital materialities and incompatible institutional logics

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The last decade has seen growing interest in conflicting institutional logics as enduring and persistent facets of institutional complexity (Greenwood et al., 2011). Multiple organizational settings seem to be defined by schisms where significant contrasts concern varying organizing principles (Reay & Hinings, 2009; Pache & Santos, 2015) and understanding what is legitimate, reasonable or effective (Fincham & Forbes, 2015; Guillen, 2001; Batista et al., 2015). Past research has explored organizational response to this complexity within two broad lines of enquiry. On the one hand, scholarship concerning hybrid organizing shows how the conflicting logics affect the organizational structures and practices (e.g., Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Fincham & Forbes, 2015; Greenwood & Hinings, 1996; Jarzabkowski et al., 2010; Pache & Santos, 2011, 2013). The other line of enquiry focuses on organizational coping with complexity and examines organizational work, strategies and approaches for dealing with complexity (Batista et al., 2015; Lawrence et al., 2011; Kraatz & Block, 2008; McPherson & Saunder, 2013; Ocasio et al., 2015; Pache & Santos, 2010).

Although the notion of incompatibility is implicit in the research on conflicting logics, few studies explicitly define and address incompatibility of logics. Frequently, incompatibility is implicitly assumed and simply conveyed with adjectives such as "contested", "conflicting" or "competing" (Greenwood et al. 2011). Theorizing relies

on descriptions of contrasts as reflected by tasks, practices or roles (Reay & Hinings, 2005; Thornton, 2002, 2004). Admittedly, some studies have attempted to add precision to the degree of incompatibility, for example, Pache and Santos (2010) distinguish between conflicting goals or means to suggest that conflicts between goals are particularly challenging. The specificity and sources of conflicting logics has also received some attention and past studies suggest that contrasts between logics may be tempered by ambiguity concerning the conflicting templates (Goodrick & Salancik, 1996; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008).

The lack of precision concerning incompatibity of logics, its source, severity and consequences for the organizations is problematic for several reasons. If logics are indeed incompatible then the presence and persistence of a growing number of hybrid organizations represents an inherent paradox (Greenwood et al., 2011). Conversely, if conflicting logics may be successfully combined and reconfigured, as research on hybrid forms suggest (Batista et al., 2015; Pache & Santos, 2015; Reay & Hinnings, 2009; Smets et al., 2012), then the whole notion of incompatibility of logics becomes questionable (Greenwood et al., 2011). To resolve these inconsistencies, further research into the incompatibility of logics, its sources and degrees as well as organizational response to these seems urgently needed.

The current study addresses this gap. Specifically, the project intends to explore in detail material sources of and organizational response to multiplicity of logics, some of which are highly incompatible. To address these aims, the study focuses on the introduction of MOOCs in the teaching portfolio of commercial European Business Schools. The setting offers an excellent opportunity for the study of conflicting logics. The organizational field of executive education in Europe is characterized by significant tensions between competing goals and means, including contrasting emphasis on teaching versus research (Thorpe & Rawlinson 2014, Thomas & Peters 2012); emphasis on applied versus theoretical knowledge (Chia & Holt 2014); broad educational goals versus commercialism and market orientation (Schoemaker 2008) to name a few. Unlike the North American model where BSs tend to be appended to Universities, European BSs tend to be stand-alone units thus are more exposed and

sensitive to changes in the institutional filed (Antunes & Thomas 2007). These organisational operate within a highly specific environment where detailed prescriptions define legitimacy, reputation and rules of behaviour. For example, organization's status is highly dependent on its compliance to existing standards (e.g. AACSB; EQUIS, AMBA) and there is limited latitude for discretion in conforming to these criteria (Quinn Trank & Washington, 2009).

The advent of MOOCs potentially significantly disrupts existing organisational templates. EBSs have traditionally embraced "exclusivity" logics where substantial premiums are being extracted from tightly controlling access to business education. The exclusivity logic relies on premium pricing, high quality offer (e.g. low staff-student rations, innovations in teaching, emphasis on premium faculty). By contrast, the emergence of MOOCs is underpinned by a set of radically contrasting principles involving open access to the teaching provision and unlimited participation (Anderson 2015; Finkle & Masters 2014; Klobas 2014; Tirthali & Ed 2014) . The ongoing failure to identify sustainable revenue streams from MOOCs presents a particular challenge to EBS whose business models rely on extracting premiums from students. The study of MOOCS in the context of EBSs thus offers an excellent opportunity to examine conflicting logics.

We argue that in highly complex organizational settings, the incompatibility and the subsequent organizational response is better understood by exploring the material sources of competing logics. Though studies examine sources of logics (Rao et al., 2003; Fincham & Forbes, 2015), the logic evolution has been rarely linked with materiality (Jones et al., 2013). Past research tended to almost exclusively focus on the work of human actors (Lawrence et al., 2013) and material objects, and more specifically technologies, have been largely been overlooked in institutional work (Orlikowski & Barley, 2001), somewhat in spite of their growing prevalence in multiple organizational arenas (Orkilowski, 2007; Zammuto et al., 2007).  By focusing on technologies of organizing, the paper offers potential contribution to the filed of organizational complexity and technology-in-practice (Orlikowski, 2007; Morgan-Thomas, 2016).