

**STORYTELLING THE INTERNATIONALIZATION
OF THE MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISE¹**

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ABSTRACT

Internationalization deals with expansion across space and time. Multinational enterprises (MNEs) create self-justificatory narratives of internationalization managed through interpreting local and global data from multiple stakeholders. These narratives mitigate such concerns in internationalization as liabilities of foreignness and requirements for ethical accountings across borders. Directed observations of McDonald's Corporation show how MNEs create strategic narratives for relevance and strategic fit within and across international markets. We categorize stories using socio-linguist Mikhail Bakhtin's typology of nine, space-time conceptions. Competing space-time conceptions in consumers', authors' and societies' stories of internationalization interact with managerial narratives to affect international product and task environments.

INTRODUCTION

Internationalization deals with expansion in space (across countries) and over time, with theories identifying location economies as drivers for optimal value creation. Dunning (2009) noted that stakeholders' collaborations spanning home and host countries shape internationalization. We present these collaborations as combinations of strategic¹ and mundane "(ac)countings²" (Barad, 2011: 149), narrative explanations of "spacetime enfoldings" (Barad, 2010: 240) by multinational enterprises (MNEs); not simple counting, (ac)counting becomes an accounting for what materializes in MNEs' internationalization, and also of what gets excluded from materializing. We explore how narratives help MNEs to garner legitimacy as well as to differentiate products and to lower costs. MNEs' narratives of internationalization ensue not from single interlocutors, but through dialogic processes as stakeholders at home and abroad interact in space and time to challenge, and sometimes to replace, shared narrative. Indeed, MNEs constitute storytelling systems whose language incorporates text and sensemaking activities to introduce change (Boje, 1991). We emphasize inter-textuality or ways in which stories change and move across space and time in resistance to opposing narratives (Boje, 2001).

International Business (IB) research has started exploring internationalization within broader social and power relationships through narrative (Gertsen & Söderberg, 2011; Vaara & Teinari, 2011), discourse (Balogun, Jarzabkowski & Vaara, 2011), sensemaking (Geppert, 2003), semiotics (Brannen, 2004), ethnography (Yagi & Kleinberg, 2011) and framing (Fiss & Hirsch, 2005) and we add to this stream. We accept that local stories link simultaneously to broader narratives about globalization and localization, legitimation and resistance (Haley, 1991). Storytelling thereby captures some richness in internationalization's small steps, deepening our understanding of sensemaking and mutual learning by giving voice to actors beyond managers. Our research connects to enduring issues in MNE theory on gaining and exploiting experiential knowledge from internationalization (Aharoni, 1966; Johanson & Vahlne, 1977), locating for value creation (Dunning, 2009), coding social information and coordinating action (Kogut & Zander, 1993), and combining local responsiveness with global integration (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989). We advance empirical knowledge on internationalization through our exploratory case of McDonald's Corporation and contribute to theory building with propositions on when and why narratives change.

As our *first contribution*, we argue that managers and other stakeholders strategically weave narratives incorporating conflicting stories, to meet concerns within and across international markets. Successful storytelling eases transfer of intangible assets (e.g., brand names), while challenging the status quo of reified histories (Berger & Luckman, 1967). We propose that managers forge incremental, self-justificatory narratives through interpreting local and global data from multiple stakeholders to mitigate such concerns in internationalization as liabilities of foreignness, market-based constraints and

requirements for ethical accounting of themselves across borders. Narratives also persuade some stakeholders to stay with the past, while convincing others to break away and to imagine strategic futures (Brown, 2006) – consumers’ tastes can evolve, hostile labor can become supportive, etc. We argue that these multi-actor narratives provide a fuller picture of incremental internationalization (Doz, 2011).

As our *second contribution*, we include multiple sensemakings of time in the storytelling of internationalization. Researchers have mostly disregarded narratives that imagine the future and concentrated on those that make sense of the past. Yet, the linear metaphor and logic that these narratives emphasize create mechanistic, closed systems that discount innovation or divergent visions in MNEs. Indeed, MNEs’ internal and external stakeholders may strive to sketch conflicting future visions from contradictory past understandings (Floris, Grant & Cucher, 2013). We argue that the dialogic process of storytelling involves nonlinear time where the past and future can collide in the present.

First, we show how contradictory stories spanning space and time may exist in internationalization (ac)counts. Next, we present the methodology underlying our case analysis of McDonald’s. In the ensuing section, we organize our observations of McDonald’s storytelling by nine space-time conceptions. We then propose how conflicting stories of internationalization may affect strategic continuity and change. Finally, we present our conclusions, connections to conversations on MNEs and implications for theory and practice.

STORYTELLING IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONALIZATION

We define *storytelling* as the intra-play of dominant narratives (epistemic or empiric) with ontological webs of lower-level living stories that provide sensemaking currency for stakeholders. *Narrative* focuses on the past and abstract patterns of place. We define *dominant managerial narrative* as an overarching, past-oriented, monological, linear plot presented by managers; when managers use it to shape the future, it may tend towards linear goals and petrification (Czarniawska, 2004)³. More narrowly, *story* deals with content, with the living, emergent and unfolding present. As a domain of contending discourse, storytelling reveals tensions between narrative and story (Gabriel, 2000), and contests over emphasizing local and/or global, unchanging or changing, and the past, present or future. From the nineteenth century, language formed the base of epistemic and historical-materialism storytelling, with Saussurean Linguistics (Harris, 1988), into Russian Formalist semiotic and verse analyses, Structuralist Anthropology of Levi-Strauss’s mythic language codes, and Pragmatist symbols, indices and iconic languages (Peirce, 1931-58)⁴. More recently, Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) contrasted surface language with deep, ontological structures in space and time, and we apply his dialogic approach to international storytelling. We argue that strategic storytelling includes managing conflicting stories of

internationalization to provide relevance and strategic fit for MNEs within and across international markets.

Theorists have studied MNEs' costs when expanding internationally from poor coordination and control (Zaheer, 1995), cultural and institutional distance (Prahalad & Doz, 1987) and lack of fit when transferring systems, cultures and technologies from home to host countries (Hymer, 1976). Some showed that incremental expansion reduces failure but may not increase profits (Delios & Beamish, 2001). Others observed "flexible replication" where MNEs alter lower-level market-based indicators but maintain higher-level values and vision (Jonsson & Foss, 2011). Generally, internationalization experience reduces costs (Luo & Peng, 1999). Yet, paradoxes exist (Brannen, 2004): international and host-country experience, as well as cultural distance, failed to explain Walt Disney's internationalization. Brannen (2004) concluded that after initial market entry, MNEs gain legitimacy through soft, strategic, people-embodied assets.

Fewer IB researchers have explicitly studied time in internationalization, focusing instead on behavior in time (Jones & Coviello, 2005). The dominant eclectic and internalization paradigms ignored time or focused on comparative, static analysis to predict changed environments' effects on MNEs' strategies and performance (Eden, 2009). However, reasons for initial entry may fail to explain MNEs' subsequent strategies or performance (Haley, 2001). Many researchers viewed time as universalist, immutable, cultural construction, e.g. Hofstede's (1980) long-term orientation, or history (Jones & Khanna, 2006). Yet, Middleton, Liesch and Steen (2011) concluded that in their narratives on internationalization, managers perceive and construct time subjectively, rather than as clock time, to understand and to communicate events and processes; the managers in their study identified a "co-operation" time dimension for building stakeholder relationships. Indeed, the "melody" of MNE's value-creation activities in space corresponds to a "rhythm" in time (Lefebvre, 2004) where the past and future can ram into the present. We next elaborate on how "spacetime" folds into (ac)countings of internationalization.

Space-time Conceptions

Space and time interconnect in internationalization: diverse understandings of past events and future glories emerge and influence MNEs' stories, actions and resources. Previous researchers (Boje, Oswick & Ford, 2004; Robichaud, Giroux, & Taylor, 2004) argued that Russian socio-linguist Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981, 1984, 1986) space-time conceptions provide useful ways to capture heterogeneous storytelling beyond executive suites. Bakhtin's conceptions include less powerful stakeholders' perspectives to explore how the marginalized influence, interact with, interpret and respond to the powerful's narratives justifying internationalization and its aftermath. Through Bakhtin's conceptions,

we focus on cultural tensions, refrain from assuming harmony in MNEs' storytelling and explicitly seek alternate sources to managerial accounts as Westney and Van Maanen (2011) advised.

Bakhtin contended that what we call storytelling implicitly manifests heterogeneous conceptions (*chronotopes*) of space and time: each conception comprises a lens to view a slice of fused space and time or "space-time". Spanning nine different space-time levels in social, historical and biographical relations, stories exist in response to what was said before and in anticipation of what will be said in response. Conceptions range from simple, future-perfect linear adventures, to nonlinear, interactive, temporal cycles and assemblages. Table 1 presents Bakhtin's nine space-time conceptions that incorporate local, global or mixed audiences and are oriented towards the past, present or future⁵. Some organizations, such as Disney, look primarily to the past for stories of their future, as local becomes global (Boje, 1995; Brannen, 2004). Others, such as Enron, story their future while ignoring their past, as global crashes into local.

Insert Table 1 about here

Many internationalization theories rely on simple, linear conceptions of time not tied to specific space. For example, MNEs' planning models (Hennart & Larimo, 1998) comprise generic, linear, Romance Adventure narratives of overcoming existing weaknesses, including foreignness, with intangible assets and opportunities filtered through managers' past experiences. Yet, managers solely relying on past experiences and resources to inform narratives miss current developments. Similarly narratives solely reacting to unforeseen events, such as in Everyday Adventure, fail to motivate or to inspire for future resources, while ignoring learning. Culler (1981: 178) observed that narratives operate with double logic including narratives of selected past events and unfolding stories about the future. We propose that *space-time matrices* (collections of conceptions) catalogue complex sensemaking, resource allocation, strategic positioning and learning (Bowman & Hurry, 1993) in MNEs' internationalization, displaying changes over time to dominant managerial narratives and stakeholders' stories. Kaleidoscopes of space-time matrices emerge in MNEs' narratives, indicating how stories and counter-stories of internationalization contribute to strategic and semantic fit.

Some researchers addressed how storytelling strategy relates to networks of relationships. Meyer and Rowan (1977) highlighted how organizations attain legitimacy and resources by articulating myths of rationality and isomorphic standards with institutional environments. Smircich and Stubbart (1985) linked strategy to narratives of historical context and culture. Pentland and Feldman (2007) developed narrative networks to spotlight potential, realized and fluid interconnections between people and actions. Yet, IB research has largely portrayed MNEs as hierarchical, focusing on top-driven, not emergent

activities (Gersten & Söderberg, 2011). Some researchers proposed that MNEs form networks comprising nodes where home-country managers create knowledge to replicate internationally (Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1988; Kogut & Zander, 1993). As Brannen and Doz (2010) concluded, through slogans such as “Think Global, Act Local”, managers and academics justify and promote minimal adaptation to local differences and minimal contextual appreciation.

Morson (1994) argued that Bakhtin’s dialogic of narrative time may portray experiences as arising from chance, and diverse futures as illusory options. However, post-experience narratives may reduce or expand present or future options through interpretations of what else could have happened. We incorporate Morson’s (1994) extensions of Bakhtin’s time in local and global stories’ past, present and future: In *emergent-present stories*, besides actualities or impossibilities, a middle realm of real options can happen; *prospective-future stories* operate in closed time, with limited options that stem from events to come, not prior events; *retrospective-past stories* reduce options through backward causation of the future as already existing and sending backward signs. We next present our methods and case study of McDonald’s.

METHODOLOGY & DATA

Case studies constitute the dominant IB qualitative research method (Welch, Piekkari, Plakoyiannaki & Paavilainen-Mantymaki, 2011). We used McDonald’s Corporation as an exploratory case study to develop theory (Yin, 2003). Our approach approximates what Welch et al. (2011) described as contextualized explanations: we subjectively generated explanations that preserved context while recognizing cause-and-effect contingencies which we saw as dynamic, holistic interactions between storytellers.

With headquarters in Oak Brook, Illinois, and over 34,480 fast-food restaurants in over 119 countries in early 2014, McDonald’s is the world’s largest food-service retailing chain. Almost all its restaurants (India, a notable exception) offer standard menus, including hamburgers, french fries, and milk shakes. McDonald’s demonstrated the successful transfer of intangible assets across countries and engaged in controlled variation: it sustained high growth, brand recognition and profitability. In 2008, McDonald’s profits rose 10 percent, global sales 4.3 percent, and shares 7 percent (Wiggans & Birchall, 2009). In 2009, defying the global downturn, McDonald’s created 12,000 more jobs and opened 240 new restaurants across Europe. In its 2013 annual survey, Millward Brown ranked McDonald’s fourth among 100 global brands with brand equity of \$90,256 million, 46 percent more than in 2008. In 2013, the average US McDonald’s restaurant generated \$2.6 million in sales, double the industry’s average, up 13 percent from 2008, though flat from 2011. With an annual advertising budget exceeding \$2 billion, roughly the size of Aruba’s GDP, the MNE spent more on this storytelling form than any competitor.

Chief Marketing Office (CMO) Neil Golden classified advertising's role as changing the way people think about McDonald's (O'Brien, 2012).

We assumed historical and social coordinates existed for internationalization stories. Our interpretive research emphasized the ontological, Being in space-time, in lived experiences, in on-going social interactions, rather than the epistemological, social construction of reality through language categories (Boje, 2001; Lamb, Sandberg & Liesch, 2011). Contextual understandings emerged in stakeholders' internationalization living stories through spatialized interactions, timing and pace patterns. This tradition also corresponds with use of case studies.

We captured inter-textuality in MNEs' stories through identifying stakeholders' voices in dynamic networks of production, distribution and consumption including managers, farmers, consumers, media, governments, labor, local and global competitors, authors, advertising agencies, and marketing departments. As with other narrative inquiry (Gertsen & Söderberg, 2011), voices did not speak for themselves: we chose stories and quotes according to our criteria of importance which included strategic changes in managerial narratives and visible internationalization processes, as well as public justifications of existing narratives. Through our choices of storytellers and stories, we emphasized certain structures and meanings in stories. Our multimodal data distinguished internal and external actors but not the processes through which competing internal narratives became dominant (Floris et al., 2013).

For each story, we asked:

- Whose social identities get constituted?
- Who gets included?
- Who is quoted?
- Who speaks for whom?
- Who commissioned this?
- How are other stories incorporated?
- What is the time and place?
- What are the author's footprints?
- Whose conventions (genres, styles, types) are incorporated?
- To whom is the text distributed?
- Who is the audience?
- What are the common-sense terms?
- What are the parodies, ironies and metaphorization?
- What interpretative matrix do the storytellers construct?

For our analysis, we used purposive sampling, selecting units of investigation relevant to show how MNEs manage narratives for strategic fit within and across international markets⁶. To authenticate constructs and theoretical relationships, we collected stories using multiple methods and sources (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2003), comparing common story threads from different storytellers.

Triangulation provided authentication, incorporated different storytellers' perspectives, experiences and meanings and allowed multiple voices to speak (Balogun et al., 2011).

In coding, we employed a "directed" approach (Ryan & Bernard, 2000) that can provide fresh conceptual understanding (Welch et al. 2011). Both authors first independently categorized all stories. We resolved contradictions by re-examining the stories together for holistic interpretations of text and performance beyond literal meaning. Disagreements and subsequent discussion led to refining coding categories through successive iterations between theory and data. Nevertheless, we accept the double-hermeneutic problem (Giddens, 1987) as our categories interpret already interpreted narratives and stories, without additional knowledge of the storytellers' motives or alterations. Consequently, we do not claim to present the only possible classification of McDonald's stories.

Data

For our data, first, we made trips to 45 McDonald's international restaurants (in the USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand, France, Denmark, Netherlands, Spain, Finland, Holland, Thailand, Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Russia, Hungary and India) to understand the local/global aspects of McDonald's storytelling. Our onsite observations included site visits, field-note analysis, employee interviews, observing exterior construction and interior decorations, and photographing international and US restaurants. We also used archival sources, including company reports, to research McDonald's implementation and communication of internationalization in each country.

Second, we analyzed six, animated, 40-minute long, McDonaldland videos, *The Wacky Adventures of Ronald McDonald*, produced by Klasky-Csupo studios, and sold at McDonald's restaurants from 1998-2003: they included *Scared Silly* (1998); *The Legend of Grimace Island* (1999); *Visitors from Outer Space* (1999); *Birthday World* (2000); *Have Time Will Travel* (2001); and, *The Legend of McDonaldland Loch* (2002). We chose these videos because a strategic shift occurred during this time as McDonald's abruptly embarked on leaner and more-nutritious food branding.

Third, we reviewed transcripts of four important legal disputes involving McDonald's. These included: Sid and Marty Krofft Television Productions. vs. McDonald's Corp.(1977); McDonald's Corp. vs. Helen Steel and David Morris (1990); The state (Millau, France) vs. José Bové and nine other member of Confederation Paysanne (1999); and, Block, Sharma, Steel et al. vs. McDonald's Corp. (2001). We chose these disputes because they resulted in changes of McDonald's brand positioning and symbols.

Fourth, we analyzed 23 native-language, television commercials from Japan (in Japanese), China (in Mandarin), Hong Kong (in Cantonese), Turkey (in Turkish) and South Korea (in Korean). These commercials played in the countries from 2007-2008. McDonald's micro-targeted these commercials to specific groups, including women and children under 10 years old (York, 2009).

Finally, we incorporated other major forms of constitutive communication displayed in McDonald's storytelling such as a game, media-generated theories of McDonald's, and official and unofficial biographies of McDonald's managers. Table 2 outlines the stories and sources.

Insert Table 2 about here

Our analysis revealed that numerous conversations underpinned McDonald's internationalization. However, the dominant managerial narrative historically emphasized how global economic efficiencies in logistics, products, and services provided legitimacy and resources (Hennart, 1982). In 1960, McDonald's operated 228 restaurants, mostly in the USA. In 1987, Jim Cantalupo became president of McDonald's International and spearheaded its global expansion of about 35 percent annually (Love, 1995). In 1988, McDonald's 2600 foreign restaurants generated one-fourth of net revenues; by 1994, 4700 foreign restaurants generated half of net revenues. McDonald's labeled the managerial narrative underpinning internationalization as *Cantalupo's Theorem* – an equation he developed in 1994. The Theorem answered: how many restaurants (penetration potential or PP) can McDonald's build in any country? Cantalupo calculated:

$$PP = (P/25,000)(I/US\$23,120)$$

Where, P = Country's population; I = Country's per-capita income; 25,000 = Number of people for every McDonald's restaurant in the USA in 1994; and, US\$23,120 = US per-capita income in 1994

By *Cantalupo's Theorem*, the USA had the highest PP followed by Japan, Germany, France, Canada, China, Russia, Australia, India, South Africa, Colombia, and Pakistan. In this narrative, internationalization involved replicating restaurants across space for efficient control and co-ordination of operations.

For Cantalupo, internationalization involved two stages. First, his staff demarcated internal stakeholders for FDI, trade and logistics concerning locations, real estate, construction, personnel, business law, and host-government relations. In culturally familiar Canada, Britain, Australia, and Europe, McDonald's operated and expanded via wholly-owned subsidiaries. In culturally distant Asia and the Middle East, it established joint ventures or licensed its name. Second, Cantalupo deployed the McDonald's brand to legitimize the managerial narrative to external stakeholders. In an interview he elaborated, "The McDonald's name and what we stand for opens a tremendous number of doors" (Love, 1995).

McDonald's managerial narrative displayed small variations in menus (e.g. beef-less hamburgers in India) and routines (closing for Islamic prayer in Jordan) as it internationalized. Cantalupo assured Fortune magazine, "People are more the same than they are different. I don't think our food is seen as

American; it's seen as McDonald's" (October 17, 1994). We next categorize space-time in McDonald's internationalization stories.

SPACE-TIME IN MCDONALD'S NARRATIVES OF INTERNATIONALIZATION

A kaleidoscope of space-time matrices emerged from McDonald's communicated strategies. Drawing on managerial statements, we labelled one space-time matrix as "Eat Smart, Go Active strategy: To be the leading restaurant promoting healthy, happy, active lifestyles everywhere we do business". The Eat Smart, Go Active matrix illustrates McDonald's storied identity from fatty-food to nutritious choices including: a Romance Adventure where homogeneity tactically adapted to local food-ways; an Everyday Adventure that reacted to legal trials and the movie on obesity, after which managers eliminated supersize options worldwide; Ronald replaced with a slimmer Clown who led customers and employees in fitness workouts; and, a return to Idyllic relationships with nature bolstered by Chivalric codes of quality and value. Individual slices of space-time that follow show how McDonald's managerial narrative of economic efficiency and market entry interplayed with, and changed in response to global stakeholders' conflicting stories.

1. Romance Adventure

Here, Bakhtin (1981: 100) saw space and time reduced to linear, abstract progression or monologic narrative. Internationalization becomes a triumphant adventure where the MNE and managers do not transform. For example, *Cantalupo's Theorem* used past events to plan the future: McDonald's and managers traveled across geographic terrains, encountered diverse stakeholders, yet retained their identities. McDonald's projected homogeneity across the world with interchangeable systems and small variations for local preferences: e.g., Japanese prefer rice with Happy Meals.

Klasky-Csupo's McDonaldland videos anthropomorphized McDonald's adventurous internationalization. Every video sent the characters to Bakhtin's "alien world" through travel in space and time. For instance, the hero characters traveled to *Far Flung Forrest*, *Grimace Island*, *Outer Space*, and *Birthday World* theme park where through the reversible laws of time, they entered the *Jurassic* period and finally *McDonaldland Loch*. Each time, the heroes triumphed over the unknown and unforeseen through innate characteristics.

The media reinforced this narrative for global analysts. In 1986, saluting McDonald's homogenous global system, the Economist proposed *Burgernomics*, based on purchasing-power parity (PPP) or the notion that a dollar should buy similar amounts in all countries. As benchmark, the Economist used McDonald's Big Mac and over two decades later, the Big Mac Index continues. Similarly, New York Times' columnist, Thomas Friedman (2000) developed his *Golden Arches Theory of Conflict Prevention* on McDonald's internationalization. Friedman concluded that no two countries with

McDonald's restaurants waged war against each other because of economic interdependence.

2. Everyday Adventure

Here, through searing trials, stakeholders become witnesses, telling emergent stories in the local public square. This conception overlaps with Romance Adventure, but the MNE and managers change. Bakhtin (1981) segmented this time from natural cycles, emphasizing alienation of everyday workings from natural order. In stories of unforeseen events, McDonald's experienced local trial and revelation; its metamorphoses became mythological cycles of crisis that abruptly changed everyday workings.

Responding to managerial narratives, counter stories portrayed McDonald's as ill-treating labor and animals, unfettered globalization, fraudulent promoter, and obesity sponsor. Managerial narratives transformed for profitability. Thus, transformation by fire, led to reform and renewal of McDonald's petrified narrative.

José Bové trial. In Millau, France on Aug 12, 1999, protesting unchecked globalization, José Bové and 300 farmers dismantled a McDonald's restaurant, created \$65,000 of damage, and deposited the remains on a public official's lawn. A public prosecutor charged Bové and nine farmers with "willful destruction". In September 2000, Judge François Mallet sentenced Bové to three months in prison, but 16 witnesses from five continents, testified on his behalf. International media covered the trial and demonstrators displayed T-shirts and banners with McDomination in Millau's town square. To counter these stories, on January 22, 2002, McDonald's France launched a nationwide advertising campaign promoting McDonald's as "Born in the USA, but made in France". The corporation replaced mascot Ronald McDonald with comic-character Asterix the Gaul. Managers then positioned McDonald's as a casual French diner, with lampshades, wooden tables, upholstered leather banquettes, Internet and iPod/iPhone stations and a localized menu including Croque McDo's, McCamembert and lemon tartlets. Managers also ran an Open Doors program for customers to tour kitchens and to meet suppliers. In 2007, with daily sales exceeding one million dollars, McDonald's France became the MNE's most profitable European subsidiary, and in 2014 was its most profitable foreign subsidiary.

Beef-laced fries. In May 2001, in Seattle, Harish Bharti's class-action lawsuit alleged that for over a decade McDonald's "fraudulently concealed" the existence of beef in french fries (Skolnik, 2001). Previous media stories had detailed how McDonald's falsely promoted fries as vegetarian despite beef flavoring. Spokesman Walt Riker responded that McDonald's had always indicated use of natural flavoring, which as a synonym for beef extract fell within federal Food and Drug Administration's guidelines. To discover that natural flavoring came from beef, customers had to contact a McDonald's customer-satisfaction representative (Sanders, 2001). In countries such as India, with large numbers of vegetarians, McDonald's did not use beef extract. Yet, mobs in India ransacked a McDonald's restaurant, broke glass panes and smeared Ronald's statue with cow dung, resulting in arrests of 30 protestors.

McDonald's estimated the loss at two million Rupees. Despite quick and repeated reassurances on vegetarian content, anti-McDonald's demonstrations continued in India. In March 2002, McDonald's issued a formal apology: "mistakes were made in communicating to the public and customers...those mistakes included instances when french fries and hash browns sold at US restaurants were improperly identified as 'vegetarian'", and donated 10 million dollars to Hindu and vegetarian charities.

Supersize me. On January 25, 2005, Martin Spurlock's movie on childhood obesity from McDonald's food and advertising was nominated for an Oscar. Simultaneously, the Second US Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that a lower-court judge wrongfully dismissed the obesity lawsuit on behalf of two New York children against McDonald's. Spurlock undertook a 30-day road trip to corroborate the children's claims of health problems from McDonald's food, traveling to 20 US cities, eating only McDonald's food and gaining 29.5 pounds. The movie received 27 awards at global film festivals. McDonald's countered by eliminating Supersize options and sending nutritionists and fitness experts on road trips with Ronald and Oprah Winfrey's fitness guru. Managers recast the narrative as "Eat Smart. Go Active strategy: To be the leading restaurant promoting healthy, happy, active lifestyles everywhere we do business" (Kapica, 2004), simultaneously launching the Adult Happy Meal internationally, with nutrition tips, and pedometers.

3. Biography

Here, stakeholders seek knowledge and destinies in broader managerial narratives. Senior managers and external stakeholders discover hidden, latent traits by illuminating their stories in the public square.

We concluded that McDonald's official chronologies became more inter-textual, multi-disciplinary and pluralistic as managerial narratives disintegrated. The heroization of official and unofficial McDonald's texts decreased; simultaneously, conflicting stories moved from abstract to everyday, globally projecting local understanding. McDonald's published biographies replied and anticipated responses to one another, thereby rewriting and retelling the managerial narrative. Official biographies (e.g. Westman & Molina, 1980), as well as autobiographies (e.g. Kroc & Anderson, 1976), heroized senior managers. Other unauthorized biographies supplanted glorification with investigative journalism (e.g. Love, 1995). Still other unauthorized biographies accused early autobiographies and biographies of opacity (e.g. Schlosser, 2001). Ritzer's (1993/2002) sociological study of McDonald's equated it with cultural imperialism and McDonaldization. In response, Watson (1997), through ethnographies in East Asia, argued that locals appropriated McDonald's for their needs: e.g., in China, lingering customers subverted fast food and turned McDonald's into Beijing social clubs.

Simultaneously, advertising agencies broadcasted inclusive stories to children and women, social segments that may experience powerlessness. In television commercials, eating at McDonald's signified

self-actualization through relaxation, fun, or empowerment. A Chinese commercial showed tired young children learning English numbers; in an inspiring flash they realize that the time, 3, turned counter-clockwise forms an M, an outlet for fun and relaxation. They escape tedium as the teacher understands the universal symbol for McDonald's. In a Japanese commercial, a demure woman sits under a tree, reading a book, and drinking a McDonald's shake, while men play soccer. The ball veers near her and a player orders its return. A sip of the shake instantly empowers her. Bursting out of demurity, she kicks the ball the length of a field, while the man watches incredulously.

4. Historical Inversion

To reinvigorate managerial narratives, historical inversion occurs: purpose, ideals, justice, perfection, harmony and myths about a Golden Age shift to the past, and past myths and ideals transpose to the present. Stakeholders actively dive into adventure and through heroic deeds glorify themselves and others. Heroes are individualized, yet symbolic. In this environment outside time, true meanings surface of "that which was, and which is and which shall be" (Bakhtin, 1981). In stories of alternative worlds, McDonald's transformed through stories of mythic pasts, making concrete in the present an otherwise ephemeral and fragmented future.

In the McDonaldland video, *Have Time Will Travel*, the characters travel to a past alternate world to learn about themselves through mirrored, folkloric characters, including Ronald and Mayor McCheese in their disco period. Though they enjoy time away, the characters long to return to the present. Through Historical Inversion, the characters' present becomes concrete and less fragmented through trips into the past to reclaim values and legacy.

Similarly, in the alternative reality game (ARG) (March–August, 2008), McDonald's successfully used branded narrative of heroic deeds. Beijing's Summer Olympic Games, saturated with advertising, provided the finale for this global story that used a Golden Age, and bloggers' co-operation, to shape an emergent present. The free game involved six characters, who along with 2.9 million players in over 100 countries, unraveled the truth to save the world. The AvantGame creators' initial package to bloggers made no mention of McDonald's, and symbols, such as the Golden Arches, only appeared at the end. The game generated 10 million blog and 400 million media and public-relations impressions, bringing ARG into mainstream advertising. The managers took risks by avoiding product placements and overt pitches. "McDonald's believed that if we could tell an amazing story about saving the world and give young people around the world the chance to be the heroes of that story, they would passionately embrace it and tell others", the AvantGame's designer said (Brunelli, 2008).

5. Chivalric Adventure

Bakhtin's (1981: 1512) technically and systemically organized space-time appeared in stories of technocratic chivalric codes that informed McDonald's planning efforts. Internal and external

stakeholders' conflicting stories tested fidelity to the codes. Technocratic stories, based on sensemaking of the past, aligned and re-aligned managerial narratives in response to changing environments. Barry and Elmes (1997) also saw recovering from divergence with a founder's vision as a chivalric story.

In McDonald's official chronology, Richard and Maurice McDonald designed the organizational system, and resisted Ray Kroc's efforts to change it. Kroc replicated the brothers' system around the world, further standardizing and systematizing the design. In 1957, Kroc crafted the chivalric-type operational code of McDonald's Quality, Service, Cleanliness and Value (QSCV). By 1990, McDonald's stopped narrating heroic founder, Ray Kroc's QSCV code, and focused instead on internationalization stories. However, by decade's end, stock values and same-store sales plummeted. Jim Cantalupo reinstated the QSCV code for more health-conscious customers. In short, Kroc narrated the chivalric code, succeeding CEOs lost it, and Cantalupo reinstated a tweaked version for new and international customers. Each CEO as chivalric hero was tested against the past chivalric code.

6. Rogue, Clown & Fool

"The rogue, the clown and the fool were first present in the very cradle of the modern European novel, and there left behind their fools' cap and bells among swaddling clothes" (Bakhtin, 1981: 406). As hyperbolic metaphors of the past, the Rogue, Clown and Fool represent common people's literature in public rather than private spheres. In stories of human and institutional failings, the three medieval masks saw situations' falseness, made public the private, and unmasked feudal and institutional hypocrisy in theatrical, public spaces.

In Klasky-Csupo's McDonaldland videos, Ronald McDonald (the clown created in 1963), Hamburglar (the rogue), and Grimace (the fool) illustrate this conception. "The clown is one of the most ancient of literature's images, and the clown's speech, determined by his specific social orientation (by his privileges as a clown) is one of the most ancient artistic forms of human discourse" (Bakhtin, 198:405). The clown's privileges include speaking back to corporate power, which Ronald has done. The rogue's privileges include acting outside social norms, and Hamburglar has lied, stolen, and played cruel pranks on friends. The fool's privileges include miscomprehending high languages and the modern world, and Grimace's pre-modern, folk-island culture had discarded technology.

Ronald occupies a unique place in McDonald's stories. The *Wacky Adventures of Ronald McDonald*'s credits identified characters' real voices; yet, Ronald played himself. In each Klasky-Csupo story, Ronald began as a real clown who magically transformed into a cartoon clown as he entered McDonaldland, from which he brought lessons back to the real, public world as a costumed human. In *Visitors from Outer Space*, the characters discovered that Hamburglar lied and stole. Yet, Ronald reset narrative expectations by acknowledging that Hamburglar had a "right to be "other" in this world" by stating "Which I know you can't help, being the H, and all". Hamburglar received no punishment and

thanked Ronald for his understanding, which came from the clown's world with different rules. Since 2003, managers styled Ronald as "Chief Happiness Officer" and presented him as someone who sees the "underside of every situation" (Bakhtin, 1981: 159), that which should not be anywhere in the world.

7. Rabelaisian Purge

Here, humor and satire expose problems as new matrices between words, objects and phenomena destroy and replace old ones. Space emerges "from the human event that occurred there and that gave to the place its name and its physiognomy" (Bakhtin, 1981: 189). The Rabelaisian purges inauthentic and renews managerial narratives as in mocking, self-deprecating stories involving the body.

Invited changes to managerial narratives come through emergent stories of a sardonic world structured around the human body. Grotesque characters, banquets, and, lofty spiritual themes elicit Rabelaisian laughter in McDonald's commercials and videos. At McDonald's, as Bakhtin (1981: 178) indicated, the "most varied objects and phenomena of the world are brought into direct contact with food and drink--including the most lofty and spiritual things". For example, the McDonaldland videos included religious parodies of Jonah and the Whale (*Have Time will Travel*) and hell (*Birthday World* and *Scared Silly*); and, literary parodies of Plato's Cave (*Time Travel*) and, the Trojan War (*McDonaldland Loch*). Grotesqueness emerged as hybrid human, food and animal parts in McDonaldland characters: Hamburglar, Mayor McCheese, and Sheriff Big Mac have human bodies and burger heads.

As Figure 1 shows, discourse with international stakeholders has occurred through carnivalesque images and metaphors. To encourage Indian mothers to bring babies to McDonald's, Leo Burnett India started the Baby Ronald campaign. In the Rabelaisian tradition, Baby Ronald wore a white-face comic mask. In Holland, Rabelaisian clowns' lips served as urinals in a restaurant. In a Japanese print advertisement, Ronald appeared as a cross-dresser.

Insert Figure 1 about here

8. Folkloric

Through "a taking-apart and putting together of social every day time", time becomes collective and mystical. "To retain their significance in narrative [human life and nature] must undergo one or another form of sublimation, a metaphorical broadening of their significance" (Bakhtin, 1981: 215). Stories of constructed, mythical times take apart existing individual and social time cycles, to reassemble them as collective time, as with managers' branded narratives on collective, food-eating times.

Historically, food has temporal characteristics grounded in crop and seasonal cycles as well as culturally-influenced dining times and preferences. McDonald's Time however, reconstructs individual and social cycles. In 1973, managers introduced the Egg McMuffin and later instituted Breakfast Time

across the world, distinct from geography, culture and personal time. The mystical reconstruction of Breakfast Time proved profitable. In 2007, McDonald's breakfast sales accounted for approximately \$6.6 billion, about 30 percent of sales. "We invented the category", said McDonald's spokeswoman Danya Proud, "and we are extremely bullish as it continues to be a priority" (Holaday, 2009). McDonald's competitors, like Denny's, reacted to the reconstruction of time cycles. Acknowledging McDonald's influential stories, a Denny's corporate manager said "Our challenge was to create craveable breakfast items that consumers would want to eat all day long".

9. Idyllic

Here, a future trajectory of family, nature, agricultural labor, and craft-work combine. The Idyllic space provides glimpses of a future for "an organic fastening-down, a grafting of life and its events to a place, to a familiar territory with all its nooks and crannies, its familiar mountains, valleys, fields, rivers and forests, and one's own home" (Bakhtin, 1981: 225). In Idyllic, marketers and advertisers melded local and global stories of agricultural life, handcrafted products and family to stakeholders' familiar territory, distinct from technocratic stories.

McDonald's videos, including *Legend of Grimace Island*, memorialized extended families of children, aunts, uncles and parents in an Idyllic pre-class, agrarian society that grew and consumed its food. For McDonald's, this family bond also became billboard story: the Adult Happy Meal - "For kids, moms and everyone in-between". Stories emphasized concepts of groundedness. One side of its packaging described the Big Mac's height while another highlighted the vegetables, cheese, and cooking utensils that go into making the hamburger. McDonald's global CMO, Mary Dillon said the goal was to "create unique personalities for our menu items by telling a story about each one" (Vella, 2008). Color photographs of ingredients reminded customers that real food goes into a Quarter Pounder. The french-fry package featured a partially-peeled potato. From 2008-10, managers introduced this Idyllic story to 118 countries, including translations into 21 languages with adjustments for local stakeholders. In Australia, for example, packaging highlighted beef sourced in neighboring New Zealand.

Control of Idyllic space through global sourcing and production has encountered counter stories. Opponents of managerial narratives included the organic-food movement opposing genetically-modified beef and chicken; environmental groups objecting to packaging waste; non-governmental groups such as People for Ethical Treatment of Animals; and, unions. In response, managers altered narratives with green stories on food science, homogenous systems, fresh vegetables and eco-friendly business practices. Yet, Starkey and Crane (2003: 222) noted McDonald's strained alliance with the Environmental Defense Fund "located in the space where the natural environment is made meaningful to human identity, experience, and relationships through story". They (2003: 231) argued: "McDonald's cannot turn its

golden arches green”. In 2009, as stories extended branded green space, managers changed the Golden Arches’ color in some European and US restaurants from yellow to green ([Associated Press, 2009](#)).

Space-Time Matrices

Interplaying stakeholders’ stories emerged as space-time matrices in McDonald’s internationalization. Activists alerted customers to McDonald’s effects on environment and labor. Yet, Historical Inversion, Idyllic and Folkloric stories allowed managers to make mythical links around fast food, and to negotiate criticisms. Romance and Chivalric Adventure stories highlighted how McDonald’s successfully replicated to internationalize. Yet, Everyday Adventure stories revealed that managerial narratives changed through unanticipated circumstances. Through Rabelaisian laughter, Biography and the Rogue, Clown and Fool, McDonald’s invited pluralistic views, including mockery of managerial narratives, for incremental change as it internationalized. We next propose avenues for theory building.

DEVELOPING THEORY

Small-N studies, such as the McDonald’s case, contribute to developing theory. McDonald’s represents an MNE that has successfully managed its internationalization through enfolding contradictory forces for change and continuity in narrative. As IB lacks a theory of international storytelling, discussing what we can learn and propose from the case assumes importance. In this section, we present some propositions derived from the McDonald’s case to aid in developing theory.

As in Historical Inversion, Folkloric and Idyllic, managers’ internationalization narratives for efficiency and markets aimed to attain legitimacy and resources for McDonald’s through shaping economic orders and creating discursive spaces by localizing global, expanding consumption space, and institutionalizing time norms (Foucault, 1977). Yet, as global cultural scripts interacted with local beliefs, norms and values, managers appeared to re-align narratives in response to conflicting stories (Delmestri & Wezel, 2011). Consequently, McDonald’s marketing and advertising departments strove to make global brands into global stories, presenting alternative mythical worlds that co-operating stakeholders could enjoy. Thereby, the dominant managerial narrative explicated order and constrained change (Näslund & Perner, 2012): managers affixed meanings to central concepts that constructed stories about food items, so that specific associative connotations occurred in the MNE’s local linguistic context to contain change. Successful managerial narratives could therefore become the source of inertia (Geiger & Antonacopoulou, 2009), enacting the “resilience of dominant stories” (Näslund & Perner, 2012: 91). We propose,

P1: The more stabilized and branded the dominant managerial narrative, the more it legitimizes, displaces and otherwise controls space and time.

As in Chivalric Adventure, successful technocratic stories brought legitimacy, resources and increased opportunity for McDonald's (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). However, successive CEOs' stories communicated interfering and conflicting logics that managers needed to address with existing storytelling repertoires (Gertsen & Söderberg, 2011). Technocratic tweaking of quality, modernity and progress enabled integration of managerial narratives and conflicting logics, contributing to the narratives' evolution (Delmestri & Wezel, 2011). Effective management of centripetal and centrifugal forces depends on managerial narratives' responsiveness and also its saturation (Koschmann, Kuhn & Pfarrer, 2012). Managerial narratives' receptivity (or resistance) may also vary over time and circumstance. However, narratives more receptive to textual influences should show more responsiveness to environmental changes, membership turnover, resource constraints, or new definitions of relevant issues, and therefore more willingness to manage conflict. We propose,

P2: The greater the dominant managerial narrative's ability to respond to interference, the greater the MNE's strategic success.

As in Biography, Rogue, Clown and Fool, and Rabelaisian Purge, raconteurs', advertising agencies' and consumers' conversational competition to insert texts may shape managerial narratives through mutual learning and collaboration (Gertsen & Söderberg, 2011). Compilations of texts can also become "distanced" and expand influence beyond situated conversational circumstances (Taylor, Cooren, Giroux, & Robichaud, 1996), as with the mascot Ronald McDonald. Multi-layered food stories from managers, consumers, investors and other stakeholders fashioned McDonald's narratives of personal, group and organizational identity (Hardy, Lawrence & Grant, 2005). Management narratives can absorb, caricature, ignore or complement organizational detractors' conflicting stories (Gardiner, 1992). Consequently, managerial narratives may appear to deviate from legitimizing, economic rules of standardization including efficiency, calculability, predictability and control. For example, McDonald's managers recomposed narratives on work, cooking, and rituals of fast-food eating through grotesque depictions to remake presentations of consumption. We propose,

P3: The greater the number of emergent stories, the more the MNE invites changes to the dominant managerial narrative.

As in Romance Adventure, the capacity of *Cantalupo's Theorem* to attract economic, social, and cultural resources, and to marshal some stakeholders' consent, reinforced the managerial narrative's trajectory (Koschmann et al., 2012). Therefore managing, not resolving, conflicting narratives increased the resources that McDonald's managers could attract (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001). Czarniawska (2004) argued that more petrified narratives characterize strong, long-lived and successful corporate cultures; long-lived narratives incorporate reinforced sediments of norms and practices. Consequently, strategic success may contribute to increased petrification of managerial narratives. As McDonald's managers

aligned strategies and systems to extract maximal benefits, they may also have reinforced managerial narratives (Sabherwal, Hirschheim & Goles, 2001). We propose,

P4: The more the environment offers legitimacy and resources, the more petrified the dominant managerial narrative.

As in Everyday Adventure, managerial narratives' receptivity does not necessarily produce change; openness to new textual influences confirmed trajectories offensive to consumers, such as McDonald's beef-laced fries, as information deemed irrelevant got blocked. However, the narratives lost value through rigidity and unresponsiveness to other stories, indicating the practice of normalization (Weick, 2012). Tactical storytelling encourages storytellers to meander when erosion of space and time makes stories less useful. Yet, successful managers can become unresponsive to conflicting stories. For McDonald's, environmental changes such as obesity consciousness may also have made managerial narratives obsolete; however, the managers continued to operate as if old narratives explained changed circumstances (Starbuck & Milliken, 1988). Consequently, managerial narratives that appealed to stakeholders in earlier spaces and times, no longer meaningfully engaged them. As legitimacy and resources evaporate, even the most petrified managerial narrative must be restoried for continued success. We propose,

P5: The more petrified the dominant managerial narrative, the more it misses conflicting narratives, leading to its replacement for continued success.

Figure 2 categorizes space-time conceptions for and against changes in the MNE's stories. Some conceptions may have bolstered McDonald's narratives through sensemaking, while others may have threatened with conflict or crisis. Managerial narratives sometimes conflicted with other stories emanating from diverse cultural, social and ecological environments. Official McDonald's chronologies reveal struggles between competing stories (Floris et al., 2013) and a kaleidoscope of stakeholders' stories, not just managers', explained internationalization and presence abroad. Bakhtin's nine conceptions map onto these stories, sometimes aligning them to an imagined past (Chivalric Adventure, Romance Adventure, Rogue Clown and Fool); simultaneously mocking present tradition (Rabelaisian Purge), as well as providing alternative worldviews (Historical Inversion, Biography); and, offering prospective senses of future possibilities (Folkloric and Idyllic). When narratives no longer ensured strategic success, managers changed them (Everyday Adventure). The final section outlines this research's contribution to IB theory and practice.

Insert Figure 2 about here

CONCLUSIONS

Lefebvre (2004) identified how interplaying space and nonlinear time affect comprehensions of everyday life, and we extended that to (ac)countings of internationalization. We presented internationalization through the lens of McDonald’s international storytelling. We showed how dominant narratives may fall into crisis, disrupting rhythms of space-time. Rather than a simple search for locational advantages, internationalization then becomes a nonlinear combination of mundane and strategic repetitions of storytelling events. Shadows of past, present, and future offer alternatives that could have been, or in the future still might emerge as options for stakeholders, all in dialogic relationships to one another, and as alternative temporalities. This view challenges the dominant IB paradigm of MNEs as hierarchies with omniscient managers narrating for other stakeholders; instead, the saturated space around the process of internationalization becomes pluralistic, polyphonic, local/global environments that include multiple points of view that emerge in successful narratives. Our storytellers use metaphor and logic as they use words and internationalization gets represented through storytelling, in television commercials, billboards, news and print advertisements. Table 3 identifies how the conceptions capture the rhythm of storytelling time in local and global space.

Insert Table 3 about here

Implications for Theory

McCloskey (1990) argued metaphors (models, equations) and stories (history) offer complementary answers – the former explain, the latter aid understanding. IB researchers have relied primarily on efficiency and rationality metaphors to explain internationalization (Haley & Haley, 2013). Some presented internationalization as logical, external activity to implement plans and data analysis; others, as replicating MNEs’ intangible assets through homogenous subsidiaries. Yet, metaphors unravel when faced with paradox: storytelling answers some of the paradoxical “why” in IB internationalization models. Sidestepping Cartesian subject-object cuts and internationalization theories, storytelling offers internationalization as local resolution within MNEs of exteriority-within-phenomena (Barad, 2010).

Emphasizing inter-textuality, we showed how McDonald’s learned to understand internationalization as part of and activated by waves of relational stakeholders’ collaborations and meanings and in active encounters with planning and analysis. We proposed internationalization not as trajectories of narrative continuity as in planning, but as disruptions of continuity with pasts or futures (Barad, 2011), and as complex materiality. In internationalization, MNEs reconfigure and thread some living stories with overarching narratives, and discard others, to highlight collaborations across space-time. This “dis/continuity” refracted through local, global, past, present, and future represents not

absolute separation between spaces and times, subsidiaries and headquarters, but “a cutting together/apart—a holding together of the disparate...without effacing heterogeneity” (Barad, 2010:265) or reducing differences to sameness. Distinctions between temporal and contextual variables became local and emergent: in specific collaborations, conceptions of space-time emerged for McDonald’s – but did not necessarily pre-exist. How managers understood and appropriated these conceptions changed external environments: e.g., reacting to US litigation and a movie, McDonald’s adopted healthy-menu items worldwide, thereby materially changing the global food-service industry. Space-time conceptions can also identify simultaneous causality from multiple origins, and internationalization’s ripples within relationships. To aid our analysis, we asked questions to position stories in texts that precede/anticipate other texts and in local/global contexts. Similar questions could situate other MNEs’ internationalization in dynamic storytelling networks of production, distribution, and consumption, and as socio-cultural but also hegemonic activities. Thus, we propose storytelling could add nuance and depth to both discursive and metaphoric approaches to understanding internationalization.

Our exploratory case study connects to previous theoretical findings. McDonald’s stories spanned national space-time boundaries to support or to topple dominant narratives, indicating that as a complex organizational process, internationalization includes cultural-identity negotiation across countries as Yagi and Kleinberg (2011) proposed. In these varied cultural environments, as Barkema and Drogendijk (2007) suggested, McDonald’s engaged in past knowledge “exploitation” through injected dominant narrative as well as future “exploration” through living-story collaborations. Santangelo and Meyer (2011) concluded that firms internationalize through iterative cycles of learning and changes in commitment; though rarely studied, subsidiaries’ commitments to prior actions may decrease as well as increase. Our case shows how and why managers justified changes in commitment and divergence with founders’ principles as well as how narratives changed in response to stakeholders’ stories. Similar to Jonsson and Foss’s (2011) observations on Ikea’s internationalization, stories allowed for lower-level market changes in McDonald’s products, occasionally leading to changes in higher-level dominant narratives. Burgelman (2011) pointed to “strategic recognition” as key for adaptive organizational capabilities. Through recognizing the confluence of internal and external stories that affect successful internationalization, McDonald’s managers showed how needs for adaptation arise and how managers justify them through references to the past and future in the present.

Implications for Practice

Combined with more-traditional IB analyses (Cuervo-Cazurra, Caligiuri, Andersson & Brannen, 2013), storytelling offers guidance for managers to choose from a wider web of stakeholders for inclusion in global narratives. Multiple MNEs across nations attempt to coordinate conceptions of abstract and concrete everyday-life moments for added value. Managers rely heavily on projections from financial and

economic models, and competitors' strategies, to identify stakeholders' stories for inclusion in strategic planning, with mixed results. Our research suggests that successful internationalization may also entail incorporating conflicting stories that bubble up from mundane, local collaborations.

Avenues for effective storytelling exist in the same food-service industry. Since the 1990's, competitor Burger King (BK) has experienced angry stakeholders and growing competition, followed by steeply falling international profits and sales. BK responded by openly imitating McDonald's food stories worldwide: e.g., the Big King burger looked and sounded exactly like McDonald's Big Mac (Jargon, 2013). BK parodied its imitation of McDonald's food stories in television commercials (Wei, 2010): in one, its King mascot breaks into McDonald's headquarters late at night and steals the recipe for McDonald's breakfast sandwich. "It's not that original, but it's super affordable," the commercial intones. In 2012, BK's managers announced aggressive international expansion for new markets with younger demographics, as well as imitation of McDonald's international storytelling: With similar food stories, Chief Financial Officer Daniel Schwartz hoped for similar success with price-sensitive consumers (Brown, 2012). Yet, despite some success, BK's stories also spawned additional conflicts with Hindus (goddess Mahalakshmi on a ham sandwich), UK women (bikini-clad showering women indicating Breakfast Time), Singaporean women (Super 7-incher), anthropologists (Whopper Virgin advertisements), children's advocates (Sponge Bob Square Butt commercial) and the Mexican government (stereotyped Mexicans). Allowing selective lower-level changes in subsidiaries' mundane stories may enhance effectiveness of BK's higher-level narratives. In addition to headquarters' stories on low prices, BK's narrative may incorporate local, conflicting stakeholders' stories, thereby developing unique, collaborative (ac)counts of internationalization for added value.

Non-commonsensical avenues to understand effective stakeholder collaborations in internationalization may usefully begin from the five propositions we presented. Rather than focusing on narratives that reinforce historical and planning trajectories, our theory of international storytelling could sensitize researchers and managers to how MNEs may shape futures through re-imagining the past, and noticing differently in the present, while incorporating some contradictory cultures and interests, and discarding others. Thus, MNEs' multi-actor, learned narratives in space-time can complement theoretical and managerial analyses for greater understanding into the core IB concept of internationalization.

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Table 1

Snapshot of Bakhtin's Space-Time Conceptions

	Past	Present	Future
Global	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Chivalric Adventure		<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Folkloric
Mixed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Romance Adventure● Rogue, Clown & Fool	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Historical Inversion● Biography● Rabelaisian Purge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Idyllic
Local		<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Everyday Adventure	

Table 2

Storytelling & Storytellers

Storytelling Types	Storytellers	Conceptions
Big Mac Index (1986-); Cantalupo's Theorem (1994); McDonaldland Videos (1998-2003); Golden Arches Theory of Conflict Prevention (2000)	<u>Economist</u> ; Jim Cantalupo; Klasky-Csupo; <u>NYT</u> Columnist Thomas Friedman	Romance Adventure
2 legal disputes involving McDonald's (1999, 2001); <u>Supersize Me</u> movie (2004)	José Bové & farmers; Harish Bharti & vegetarians; McDonald's Corporation; filmmaker Martin Spurlock	Everyday Adventure
Biographies & Autobiographies of McDonald's senior managers (1976-2002); television commercials from Japan, China, Hong Kong, Turkey & Korea (2007-2008)	McDonald brothers; Ray Kroc; anthropologists & sociologists; commissioned writers; local advertising agencies	Biography
McDonaldland (1998-2003); <u>The Lost Ring</u> Alternative Reality Game (2008)	Klasky-Csupo's McDonaldland videos; advertising agency AKQA; AvantGame; bloggers	Historical Inversion
QSCV (1957)	McDonald Brothers; Ray Kroc; Jim Cantalupo	Chivalric Adventure
Hamburglar, Ronald McDonald & Grimace (1963-)	Willard Scott; Klasky-Csupo; managers	Rogue, Clown & Fool

Birdie, Hamburglar, Mayor McCheese, McDonaldland (1998-2003); print advertisements/logos from India, Holland & Japan (2002-2008)	Klasky-Csupo's McDonaldland videos; local advertising agencies	Rabelaisian Purge
McDonald's Breakfast Time (1973-)	McDonald's Marketing department; Fast-food competitors	Folkloric
McDonaldland videos (1998-2003); McDonald's real-food stories (2008-); McDonald's green story (1989-)	Klasky-Csupo; McDonald's Advertising & Marketing departments	Idyllic

Table 3

Language in Storytelling Space-Time

Conception	Text & Performance	Space	Time
1. Romance Adventure	In planning stories; managers & agents use past events to plan future, travel diverse geographic terrains, encounter diverse stakeholders, yet retain identity.	Local becomes more Global	Retrospective past evolves into Prospective future
2. Everyday Adventure	In stories of reactions to external, unforeseen events through public trial and revelation; MNEs' metamorphoses become mythological cycles of crisis changing everyday workings.	Global sensitized & responsive to Local accident	Emergent present
3. Biography	In personal stories; internal/external, local/global stakeholders discover hidden, latent traits by publicly illuminating lives.	Many Locals within Global	Emergent present refashioned into Retrospective attachment with past
4. Historical Inversion	In alternative, mythical-world stories; MNEs transform through stories of mythic pasts to make ephemeral, fragmented future concrete in present.	Many Locals within Global	Emergent present transformed by Retrospective trips into past
5. Chivalric Adventure	In technocratic stories; technocratic chivalric codes inform planning, test fidelity to codes.	Global values subordinate Local	Retrospective fidelity to past informing Emergent present
6. Rogue, Clown & Fool	In human and institutional-failing stories; three medieval masks see falseness, publicly unmasking feudal & institutional hypocrisy.	Local plays on Global stage	Retrospectively imagined past shows falseness of Emergent present
7. Rabelaisian Purge	In mocking, self-deprecating stories; laughter makes managerial narrative & chivalric code less pompous and pretentious.	Global contested by Local	Emergent present mockingly purged of counter-realism

8. Folkloric	In mythical-time stories; managers & agents take apart and reassemble individual & social time cycles for collective significance.	Global imagined time sublimates Local compartmentalized time	Prospective future attains new significance through new collective cycles
9. Idyllic	In grounded-space stories; managers & agents unify and graft stories of agricultural life, handcrafted products & family to stakeholders' familiar territory.	Local strategically storied spaces makeup Global idyllic space	Prospective future restoried through Retrospective grounded past

Figure 1

Rabelaisian Purge in McDonald's Stories

Baby clown in India



Clown as woman in Japan



Caricatured clown lips at urinal in Holland

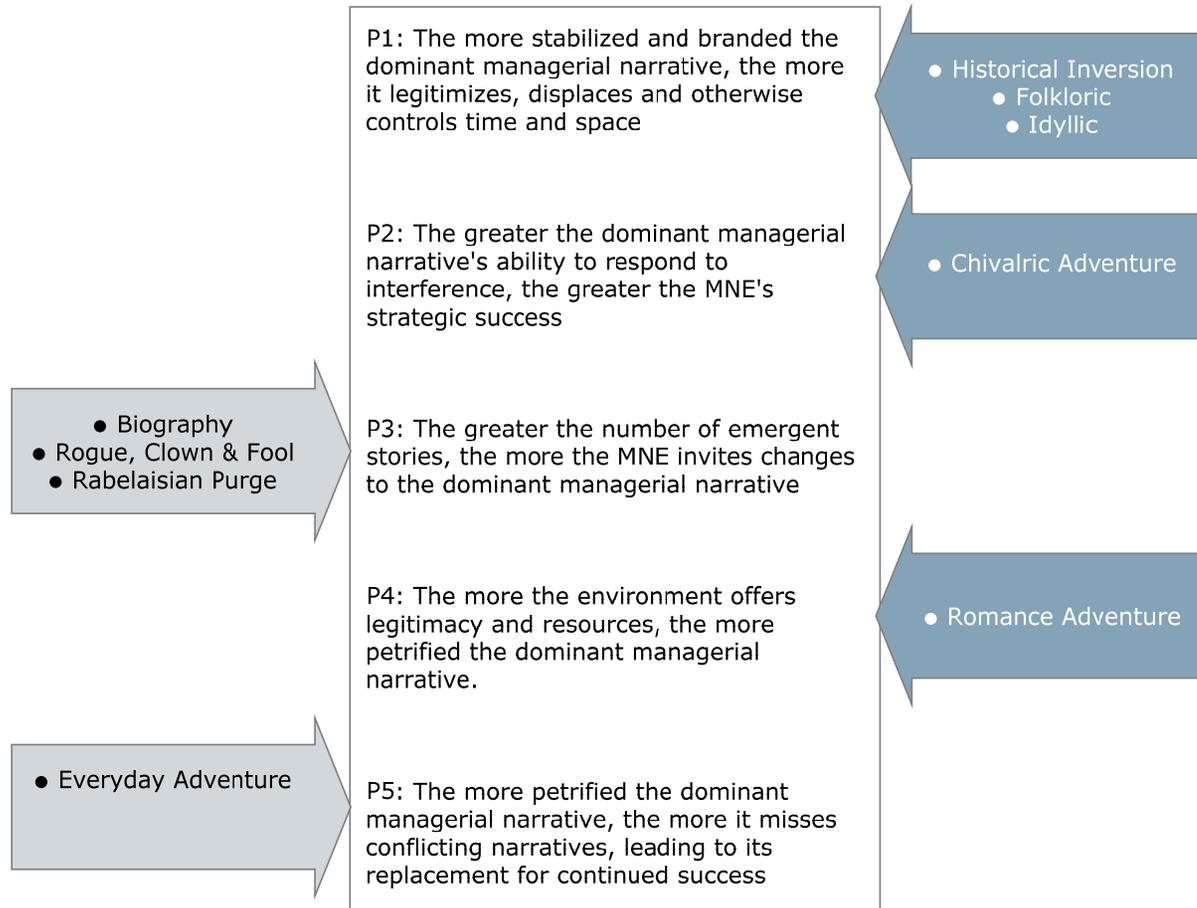


Figure 2

Force Fields around Dominant Managerial Narratives

Forces FOR Change

Forces AGAINST Change



¹ We define strategy as realized or emergent patterns in a company's decisions or actions (Mintzberg, 1994).

² Karen Barad proposed (ac)counting as both counting and accounting for holding together the disparate. Barad (2011:146) elaborated that (ac)counting "cannot be a straight forward calculation, since it cannot be based on the assumed existence of individual entities that can be added to, subtracted from, or equated with one another...." In MNEs' storytelling, (ac)counting occurs between the mundane and strategic, between past-oriented narrative and living story.

³ We accept that petrification may sometimes be comprehended *post hoc*; petrified dominant narratives stamp strong organizational cultures and may provide needed continuity for organizations under certain circumstances.

⁴ Ferdinand de Saussure depicted language as a collective product of social interaction, and essential instrument to constitute and articulate the world, influencing developments in the social sciences, with relevance for storytelling.

⁵ Mikhail Bakhtin did not explicitly define local and global. We interpret his use of local as referring to individuals and small social groups, and global to collectives (including nations) and (global) society. We interpret present time to include maintaining activities that contribute to value creation.

⁶ We selected stakeholders' stories that interviews and analysis revealed provided justification or opposition for McDonald's internationalization efforts and presence abroad.