Identity work during Strategic Change: Coping strategies, Dynamics and Complexities. Case Aalto Univeristy School of Business

"So who am I in all this?"

Identity work during Strategic Change: Coping strategies, Dynamics and Complexities

case Aalto University School of Business

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Abstract

Objectives

The purpose of the study was to contribute to a better understanding of the intra-organizational identity work during strategic change. Based on earlier research strategic change is known to cause disruption to the members ongoing identity work in an organization. The aim of this study was to find out how the new strategy and organizational identity were interpreted among the members of the organization, and what kind of disruptions did the new identity-challenging strategy and the new managerially imposed self-identities induce in the ongoing identity work of the members of the organization. Also the aim was to find out, in what kind of coping strategies and identity-work projects did the employees engaged themselves in order to make sense of the changes in identity of the organization, the new imposed self-identities and the new values of the organization presented to them through strategic communication and experienced in day-today practices and policies.

Data and Methods

The source of the data in the qualitative single case study carried out consisted of 7 semi-structured interviews conducted among Aalto University School of Business faculty. The theoretical framework of the study was combined from the theories of identity work, and by adopting a practitioner perspective on the strategy-as-practice and sensemaking theory. The method of the analysis was drawn from the theories of strategy-as-practice as a narrative process.

Findings and Conclusions

Intensified identity work was found in the Case organization enhanced by the strategic change. Based on the analysis, four different coping strategies or identity projects could be identified. The types were resistance, cynicism, sarcasm and positive coping strategy or the "strategy champion". Each type saw the new strategy of the University and the imposed self-identity in a unique way. Identity work and strategy work seemed to be closely intertwined. Identity work is not only caused by the official strategy texts, but more by the "real" day-to-day practices and policies that reveal the core values of the strategy that are being implemented.

Keywords organizational identity, sensemaking, strategy-as-practise, strategic change, identity work, identity projects

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Tiivistelmä

Tavoitteet
Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli lisätä ymmärrystä intra-organisatoorisesta identiteettityöstä strategisen muutoksen aikana. Aiempien strategisen muutoksen tutkimusten valossa tiedetään, että muutos aiheuttaa hajaannusta ja häiriöitä organisaation jatkuvassa identiteettityössä. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli selvittää miten uusi strategia ja uusi organisaatio-identiteetti tulkittiin tapausorganisaation jäsenten keskuudessa, ja millaista häiriötä uusi identiteettiä haastava strategia ja uudet johdon antamat itse-identiteetit aiheuttivat organisaation jäsenten jatkuvassa identiteettityössä. Lisäksi tavoitteena oli selvittää millaisia selvitytymisstrategioita ja identiteettiprojekteja työntekijät käyttivät merkityksellistääkseen organisaation identiteetin muutosta ja organisaation uusia arvoja, jotka heille tuotiin esille strategisen viestinnän kautta ja, jotka ilmaistiin heille päivittäisten käytänteiden ja menettelytapojen kautta.

Tutkimusaineisto ja –menetelmät
Tutkimusaineistona tässä laadullisessa tutkimuksessa toimi 7 väljästi strukturoitua haastattelua, jotka tehtiin Aalto yliopiston kauppakorkeakoulun työntekijöiden keskuudessa. Teoreettinen viitekehys muodostui identiteettityö- teorioista soveltaen strategia käytäntönä ja narratiivisena prosessina teoriaa.

Tulokset ja johtopäätökset
Tapausorganisaatiosta löytyi strategisen muutoksen vahvistamaa identiteettityötä. Analyysiin perustuen neljä erilaista selviytymisstrategiaa tai identiteettiprojektia pystyttiin määrittelemään. Ne olivat vastarinta, kyynisyys, sarkasmi ja positiivinen selviytymisstrategia tai "strategian mestari". Jokainen selviytymysstrategia näki yliopiston strategian ja siitä heijastuvan työntekijän identiteetin omalla tavallaan. Identiteettityö ja strategiatyö näyttivät olevan tiivisti kietoutuneet toisiinsa. Identiteettityön voimistuminen ei tapahdu ainoastaan strategiatekstien välityksellä, vaan siihen vaikuttavat myös päivittäiset käytänteet ja ne politiikat, jotka tuovat esiin strategian keskeiset ja merkityksellisimmät arvot, joita käytännössä sovelletaan.

Avainsanat organisaatioidentiteetti, merkityksellistäminen, strategia käytäntönä, strateginen muutos, identiteettiprojektit

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To start my acknowledgements I would like to say a few words on the role of my tutor my professor and the Department head of Communications, Professor Johanna Moisander, on this thesis work. I am sure that tutoring me through this process has aroused many of her own emotions and feelings about the changes at Aalto Business School. Despite of this fact she did not influence me in any way to any direction more that academically was needed. I thank her for this liberty and trusting in me do my own research. Her sharp comments and her importunity to make this thesis even better, was not always easy, but in the end it got me further and deeper in my understandings. I hope that putting so much time to this thesis paid off in the end.

A great asset to the process of getting started and enlightened to what could be the focus of my study I owe to Professor Janne Tienari, and Executive in Residence Rita Järventie-Thessleff, both working for Aalto University School of Business. Rita's doctoral dissertation was a great inspiration and a wonderful source of information.

I also want to thank all of you who kindly took time to be interview by me. I do understand the busy schedules you have, and what it means to share that time, yet with another student.

I want to dedicate this thesis to the memory of my dad Lauri, Professor of Physics, who always encouraged me to continue with my studies, and whose passing away made it possible for me to do so. I also want to thank my brother Heikki, Professor at the University of Helsinki. Your constant encouragement gave me strength to finish my task. Finally I want to thank my wonderful family, my husband and two boys, for supporting me during this process. The sharing of the deep valleys and dark moments has been invaluable to me.

Vantaa 26th of February, 2013

Eeva Jakobsson

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1 Introduction

The first chapter discusses the phenomena in the interest of the study and the communication research it is a part of, the research problem, and the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Identity in today's organizations

The study of organizational identity is now a flourishing domain among organizational theorists and researchers. Since Albert and Whetten's (1985) foundational piece, researchers have embraced the idea of organization identity and explored it implications in a variety of settings. According to Gioia et el. (2010) identity has been found to serve as an important but usually subliminal guide for many consequential organizational activities, including strategic decision making and issue interpretation (Gioia and Thomas, 1996, Maitlis and Lawrence, 2003) and organizational change (Reger et al, 1994, Chreim, 2005, Martins, 2005, Nag, Corley and Gioia, 2007).

One dominant explanation for the rise of identity research according to Blader et al. (2007) is that it provides a useful framework for conceptualizing the relationship and between individual and organizations, in terms that go far beyond the basic contractual understanding suggested by traditional economic theories. In the sense of providing understanding about the deep bond between the employees and their organization, identity joins a number of other theoretical domains in the organizational sciences that have enriched our understanding of peoples relationship with their work organization, including research on psychology and organizational commitment.(Blader et al. 2007)

Another explanation according to Blader et al. (2007) for this is the increasingly heterogeneous world that people are exposed to and expected to accept, that makes the issues of identity more salient. Also the past quarter century has changed in how, when, where and with whom individuals carry out their work. The increasingly competitive nature of the global economy has forced organizations to change their identities at unprecedented speed.

The dynamic nature of many industries has made the development of corporate and business-level strategies that differentiate the organization, which in turn makes the development and maintenance of identities that support those strategies particularly important and complex. Further, continual activity in mergers and acquisitions not only brings to light the importance of identity development and maintenance, but also raises the complex issues of identity change and integration. (Blader et al. 2007)

Alvesson et al (2008) argues that identity matters as it is encountered by individuals, understood as social beings embedded in organizational context. Caroll and Levy (2008) put it well when they state that identity work is pivotal in understanding how actors insert themselves into organizational life. Alvesson et al (2008) argue that identity loosely refers to subjective meanings and experience, to address the twin questions, "Who am I" and by implication "how should I act?"

In this thesis I concentrate on the identity work done by the faculty at Aalto University School of Business in a merger of Helsinki Business School becoming a part of Aalto University. The topic of Aalto University's identity came to my attention as I started my master's studies at Aalto's School of Business in the Fall of 2011, one year and a half after the merger of the University. Almost from the first lecture I attended the merger and the new identity of the School of Business, now a part of Aalto, was mentioned by the lecturers. It seemed to me that the professors were doing identity work and talking about it with the students seemed to be therapeutic, since we probably were more a neutral group to review issues that bothered the teachers. Simultaneously they ended up co-creating the new identity of the School and their identity as members of it together with us. Especially one remark has stayed in my mind: "so who am I now in all this?"

The aim of this study is to find out what kind of identity work was going on at Aalto University and in particular at Aalto School of Business during the publishing of the new Aalto University Strategy, at the time of its first publication in the late spring of 2012. My presumption starting this research was that the new goals, mission, vision i.e. strategy could potentially be identity-challenging to some of the professors and leader, for example due to the new emphasis on being the top university by 2020 and also due to the loss of autonomy and independence that the former Helsinki School of Economics had.

Before the merger each School of the Aalto University's 6 Schools had a strong culture, brand, and reputation. Aalto University's leaders and communications were now struggling to create a unified strategy, identity, brand, culture and reputation to the University. The start of the process was described to us often as vulgar and strong. Still most of the professors came most often to the conclusion during the class discussion that there could be "some good things" that might come from this merger. Most often I felt that they were still not realized and even some disappointment was expressed to the slowness of seeing any real benefits see daylight.

This setting was interesting to me and made me eager to consider how the fact that Aalto is an academic unit, i.e. the faculty being trained to be critical thinkers doing top research also on topics such as leading change and strategy work, might affect their identity work of the members of this new Aalto University.

One concern of my study was the outside pressures on the changes seen in academia Across Europe, as an integral part of wider public sector reforms promoted, for example, under the label of new public management (Aula& Tienari, 2011). Within the European Union, university education has been harmonized through the Bologna process. In effect, universities are being subjected to processes of marketization (Wedlin, 2008, Aula& Tienari, 2011). This has led to similarities in the branding of the universities and to new kind of leadership and management that is also presented to Aalto faculty by the New Strategy.

Seeing the pressures from the outside and having pressure to change from the inside creates multiple challenges to the professors of Aalto School of Business.

1.2 Research Problem

The study focuses on the big talk of making the new Aalto University, brought forth in a merge of 6 former separate Universities, a new kind of innovative and world class University by 2020. This goal was the basis of the new strategy, introduced on Spring 2012 to the faculty. This new altered vision of the organization brought in concrete changes for example to the focus and emphasis of academic research and employment and other major areas of scientific work. The President and the top-leaders of the University were trying at this point to influence the faculty and other stakeholders to accept the new vision in this negotiation (Gioia, 1991).

The launching of a strategic change effort represents a critical time for the organization as an altered vision of the organization is being negotiated in social construction activities. The communication done in the strategizing process i.e. strategic communication is seen in this study as management control, trying to control the sensemaking processes and forming of the new self- identities of the faculty through sensegiving and strategizing work. The employee is seen in this study as an identity worker who is enjoining to incorporate the new managerial discourses or imposed self-identities into narratives of self-identity. The

new strategies and policies of the University that deviate from the expectations associated with an organization's identity are labeled in this study as *identity-challenging strategies*.

The aim of this study, in particular, is to elaborate upon the intra-organizational dynamics, complexities and practices that govern the praxis of making sense of the new organizational identity and member's new self-identities.

> *The purpose of this study is to contribute to a better understanding of the intra-organizational identity work during strategic change.*

I do this by adopting a practitioner perspective on the strategy-as-practice and sensemaking theory and by drawing on the theory of identity work amongst the members of an organization.

By means of empirical study, I seek to answer the following research questions:

1. How was the new strategy and organizational identity interpreted among the members of the organization?
2. What kind of disruptions did the new identity challenging strategy and the new managerially imposed self-identities induce in the ongoing identity work of the members of the organization?
3. What kind of coping strategies and identity- work projects could be identified during this identity-challenging strategic change?

1.3   The Structure of the Thesis

The first chapter of my thesis discusses the phenomena in the interest of the study and the communication research it is a part of, the research problem and the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 introduces the central theories and concepts used in this research. I explain also how the research questions and themes for the interviews were formed from these central theories and how the research results together with these central theories formulated the final frame of reference of this research.

In chapter 3 I first consider a case study research, then interviews as a method, introduce the case study organization, and finally look into constructivism in identity studies and strategy as practice approach, and narrative approach, that forms the basis of my analysis.

Chapter 4 is the analysis part of my thesis. In my analysis I define 4 different coping strategies that interpret the new strategy and organizational identity in a particular manner. They are the resistance type, cynical type, irony or sarcasm type and finally the positive type or the strategy champion. I also describe what kind of a challenge each type sees the new identity and the strategy to be like. Also in this chapter I consider the dynamics and complexities of identity work under topics such as subjecitivity as a form of resistance, manager's role in the succeeding of the identity shift, transitional identity, identity disruptions, and identities as a source and site for resistance.

In chapter 5 I discuss in light of the findings of the results. This includes the topics such as the levels of identity work, the culture of "organized anarchies", multiple identities as a challenge and finally some general thoughts on the findings.

In chapter 6 I present practical recommendations for Aalto University, evaluate the conducting of the research, ponder on the meanings and effects of the results and provide suggestions for future research.

2 Identity work during Strategic change

Chapter 2 introduces the central theories and concepts used in this research. I explain also how the research questions and themes for the interviews were formed from these central theories and how the research results together with these central theories formulated the final frame of reference of this research.

2.1 Organizational and individual Identities

The first concept of the thesis is Identity, seen from the angles of organization and the individuals working in the organization. According to Thomas (2008, 99) interest in identity has underpinned many ideas in sociological and psychological studies on individuals and organizations such as : Identity, identity work, identification, subjectivity, and the subject.

The roots of *organizational identity* are in sociology and social psychology in research done by Cooley (1902), Mead (1934), Goffman (1969) and Tajfel & Turner (1979). The early development of organizational identity theory was done by Stuarts and Whettens (1985) landmark article "Organizational Identity" discussing the definitions of the concepts of identity and discussion of the dual-identity of organizations by Ashforth and Mael (1987).

Recent development in organizational identity theory according to Hatch and Schultz (2004) is divided in the research of multiple identities (Pratt&Rafaeli, 1997), Golden Biddle and Rao, 1997), stability and change in organizational identity (Gioia, Schultz, Corley, 2000, Hatch&Schultz, 2002) and identity as Narrative and Discourse (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1997, Alvesson&Willmot, 2002) and the research of the audiences of Identity (Elsbach, Kramer, 1996, Cheney, Christensen, 2001).

A primary meaning of the term identity in most formulations is that identity is a classification of the self that identifies the individual as recognizably different from others. In this sense of *individual identity* the concept identity is linked with the term identification (1985, 92). An organization can be seen as a group conceptualized as a collection of individuals who perceive to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of them, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of the group and of the membership of it (Tajfel, Turner 1979).

Focusing on the degree to which individuals define themselves in relation to the organization Social identity theory (SIT) has according to Asforth and Mael (1989) inspired many of the functionalist studies into organizational identity, with the assumption that greater congruence between the two leads to enhanced commitment, loyalty and motivation (Asforth and Mael 1989).

Organizational Identity is defined by what has been essential to most theoretical and empirical treatments of organizational identity (Gioia et al 2000) that is a view specified by Albert and Whetten (1985), defining identity as that which is central, enduring, and distinctive about an organization's character. Albert and Whetten (1985) also defined identity as something someone may ask when discussions of goals and values becomes heated, when there is deep and enduring disagreement or confusion with a question "Who are we?, What kind of business are we in?" or "What do we want to be?".

According to Albert and Whetten (1985) the answer depends on the context of the question, meaning that an organization may focus on different essential characteristics depending on the perceived nature and purpose of the inquiry.

In this study about organizational identity change in a merger or major strategic change, I study from the organizational aspect and the individual aspect the identity work individuals face during a strategic change as members of a particular organization. The questions of "who am I as a part of the new organization", and "who are we as an organization" arise during this time. As the "who we are" is at least partially managerially imposed on the workers strategic change also leads to possible new kinds of self-identities, understandings or interpretations of "who am I" or "who I should be" as a member of this organization.

I look at the Organizational Identity as something that the top management and leadership are formulating through strategic communication, thus creating an organizational image to external groups as well as the image of the ideal organization to the internal groups of the organization. The organizational identity still involves member's negotiation of shared meanings of "who we are" as an organization (Gioia et al. 2010), thus producing an identity of the organization inside the culture of the organization through the day-to-day practices, employees' experience and ongoing individual and member's negotiated identity work.

The socially available discourses and self-identities might be a disruption to the self-identities of the employees arousing intensified identity work. Some ambiguity is evident

in this process. Watson (2008) argues that there can be made a clear analytical distinction between internal personal 'self-identities' and external discursive 'social-identities' with social identities being seen as a link or bridge between socially available discourses and self-identities.

In this study I seek to answer the question: *"How was the new strategy and organizational identity interpreted among the members of the organization?"*

2.2 Deeply rooted organizational identity

Hatch and Scultz (2000, pg19) took a view of identity that encompasses the interest of all stakeholders including managers (strategy), customers (marketing), organization members (organization studies), and all other stakeholder groups (communication).

Hatch and Schultz applied Saussurian logic that words are defined, not in relation to what they are believed to represent in the world, by how they affect each other in optment, in that what Hatch and Schultz discriminated the key concepts of identity, image and culture by focusing on their theoretical interdependence, or relational differences.

Because of these relational differences the key concepts of identity, image and culture (Picture 2) help to define one another, and have been used to advance theorizing about image (for example in relation to identity and reputation) and culture (for example, in relation to organizational identity and structure (Hatch, Schultz, 2000, 20-29)
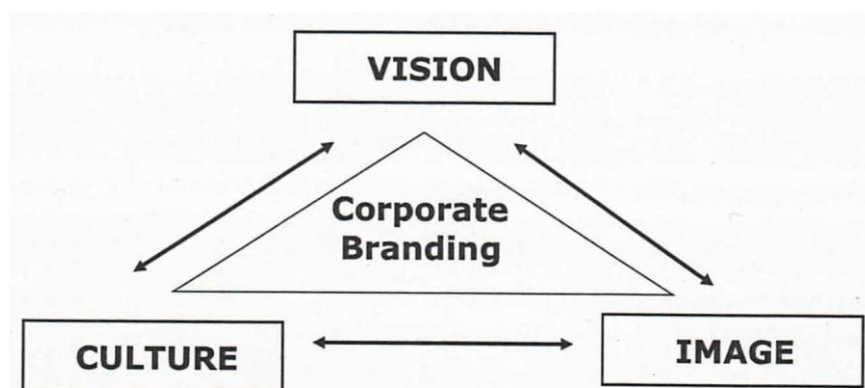
Figure 1. Corporate Branding as interplay between strategic vision, organizational culture and corporate image (Hatch&Schultz, 2003 as quoted in Järventie-Thesleff, 2011)

Following their theorization (1997,2000) Hatch and Schultz argue (2002) that organizational identity needs to be theorized in relation to both culture and image in order to under-

stand how internal and external definitions of organizational identity interact. Hatch and Schultz model (Picture 3), found four processes that link identity culture and image – *mirroring* (the processes by which identity is mirrored in the images of others**)**, *reflecting* (the process by which identity is embedded in cultural understandings), *expressing* (the process by which culture makes itself known through identity claims), and *impressing* (the process by which expressions of identity leave impressions on others).

Hatch and Schultz (2002) contribution is articulating the interplay of all four processes that together construct organizational identity as an ongoing conversation or dance between organizational culture and organizational images.
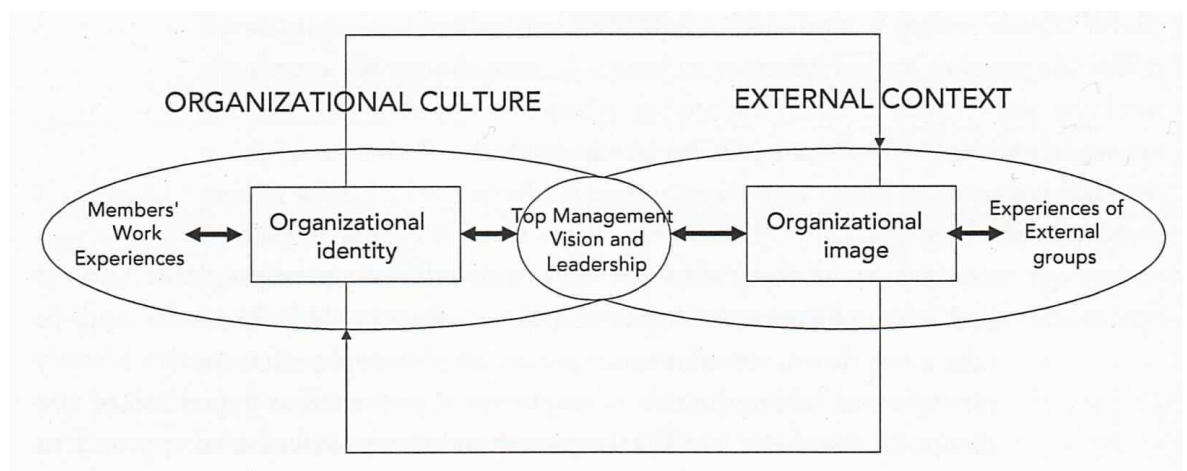
Figure 2. The Hatch and Schultz (1997) model of relationship between organizational identity and image

Hatch and Schultz (1997) argue that the relationship between organizational culture, identity and external context forms a circular process of mutual interdependence (picture 4). In this model they consider culture as context within which interpretations of organizational identity are formulated (Hatch and Schultz 1997, 357)

According to Schultz et al. (2000) it is not enough to insist on employee behavior that fits whatever management deems a desirable image or the vision. The behavior that supports a corporate reputation or brand needs to be more deeply rooted; it needs to rest in the organization's identity. Employees must feel the message they are sending with their behavior, not just to go through the motion. Thus organizations compete based on their ability to express who they are and what they stand for they argue. (Schultz, Hatch, Larsen 2000, pg 1)

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Basing my thoughts on the theories of Hatch and Schultz (1997, 2000, 2003), Schultz, Hatch and Larsen (2000) and Ravasi and Schultz (2006) I argue that in order for the organization to engage in behavior that supports the corporate reputation the behavior needs not only to be rooted in the organizations identity, but at least in some measure also in the self-identities of the employees and culturally shared understandings of who the organization is.

2.3 Identity work as a sense-making activity

The concept of *identity work* was adopted by Alvesson et al (2008, 15). According to Alvesson et al identity work describes the ongoing mental activity that an individual undertakes in constructing an understanding of self that is coherent, distinct and positively valued. Identity work is prompted by social interaction that raises questions of "who am I?" and "who are we"?

Thus, Identity work is the interpretive activity, sense-making activity, involved in reproducing and transforming self-identity and understanding of who a person is as a part of the organization. (Knights and Willmot, 1989; Svenigsson and Alvesson 2003). In attempting to answer the questions of "who am I" or "who we are", an individual crafts a self-narrative by drawing on cultural resources as well as memories and desires to reproduce or transform their sense of self.

Alvesson (2002) claims, that identity work may be prompted or intensified by crisis or through radical transitions i.e. strategic change as referred to in this study. The launching of a strategic change effort represents a critical time when several important processes that guide the entire change venture begin to coalesce. The CEO *gives sense* of an altered vision of the organization and engages in cycles of negotiated social construction activities to influence the faculty and other stakeholders to accept that vision. (Gioia, 1991).

According to Alvesson et al (2002) managing continuity, including typical or familiar levels of emotional arousal, against a shifting discursive framework provided by socially established truths about what is normal, rational and sound, is the basis for identity work .

According to Beech (2008) Identity work is not only how people categorize themselves and are categorized by others. It is also concerned with how the images and representations (physical, symbolic, verbal, textual and behavioral) become imbued with meaning and are

taken as being part of one's identity. Identity work can or may be a mélange of different identity projects, co-present within the self but distinct and potentially conflicting (Beech, 2008, Beech and Huxham, 2003)

Watson (2008) redefined identity work by making a clear distinction between 'internal personal self-identities' and 'external discursive social-identities' with social identities being seen as a link or bridge between socially available discourses and self-identities. Studying managerial identities he defined two kinds of identity work 'inward facing' and 'outward facing' identity work.

Ravasi and Schultz (2006) argue that the interplay of constructed images and organizational culture shapes changes in institutional claims and shared understandings about the identity of the organization. Their findings highlight the role of organizational culture as a source of cues supporting "sensemaking" action carried out by leaders as they re-evaluate their conceptualization of their organization, and as a platform for "sensegiving" actions aimed at affecting internal perceptions or self-identities.

Sensemaking is a generic phrase that refers to processes of interpretation and meaning production whereby individuals and groups interpret and reflect on phenomena (Brown 2008, 1038, Weick 2005). Through processes of sensemaking people enact (create) the social world, constituting it through verbal descriptions which are communicated to and negotiated with others. Brown argues that sensemaking has been revealed as a kind of creative authoring on the part of individuals and groups who construct meaning from initially puzzling and sometimes troubling data. Sensemaking embodies past experience and expectations, and maintains the self while resonating with others. (Brown et al 2008: 1038)

I see organizational sense-making as fundamentally social process meaning that organization members interpret their environments in and through interactions with others, constructing accounts that allow them to comprehend the world and act collectively (Moisander, 2011).

Brown et al (2008, 1037) argue that although sensemaking is inherently social, it is fundamentally tied to processes of individual identity generation and maintenance. Due to the idiosyncratic aspects of individual's sensemaking (Weick 1995, Brown 2008) people seek

to structure their experiences in order to make sense of occurrences while maintaining a consistent, positive self-conception.

According to Moisander (2011) sense-making has to do with the way managers understand, interpret, and create sense for themselves, based on the information surrounding strategic change. Sense-giving is concerned with their attempts to influence the outcome, to communicate their thoughts about the change to others, and to gain their support.

Conscious identity work is grounded according to Alvesson et al (2008) in at least a minimal amount of self-doubt and self-openness, typically contingent upon a mix of psychological existential angst in complex situations. The disruptions imposing the employee to identity work may be due to a mismatch between self-understandings and the social ideals prompted through discourse (strategic communication).

2.4   Strategic change and many interpretations

Organizations can be understood as a complex set of multiple, often conflicting, interpretations and social constructions. Such an understanding would suggest that an organizational change will have many different interpretations. Regardless of whether it is believed that there is a single objective reality to the organizational change or whether we believe the change is socially constructed, Taylor reminds that we should expect there to be differences in how people interpret the change. That is to say, the way in which people make sense of the change will vary from person to person. (Taylor, 1999, 524)

It has been argued that organizational identity building is essentially about strategic organizational change. Organizational change has been seen as a change that is episodic, discontinuous and intermittent, or as continuous, evolving, and incremental. (Weick and Quinn, 1999, as quoted in Järventie-Thessleff 2011, 53).

In this study the concept of *Strategic change* is seen as something that involves either a redefinition of organizational mission or a substantial shift in overall priorities and goals to reflect new emphasis or direction (Gioia, Thomas, Clark&Chittipeddi, 1994). This kind of substantial change or strategic change, as seen for example in a merger, forces the organization to restate their organizational identity in a form of a new strategy. The new organizational identity imposed to the workers during the change is seen in this study as some

sort of disruption in the day-to-day activities and practices through which the employees make sense of the identity of the organizations and themselves as members of it.

Gioia (1986) claims that, any substantive change leads to the alteration of existing value and meaning systems. Given that (new) strategies often are seen to reflect the values of top managers (Gioia, 1991), organization members, need to understand any intended change in a way that "makes sense" or fits into some revised interpretive scheme or system of meaning.

2.5   Self-identity, identity work and the regulation of identity

The attraction for critical (CMS) management scholars such as Thomas to the concept of identity is its ability to offer powerful ways to interrogate the exclusionary practices by which subjects are constituted in organizations. More recently, a distinct strand of research in CMS of identities can be seen in studies concerned with identities as a source of, and a site for, resistance.

Identity regulation encompasses the more or less intentional effects of social practices upon processes of identity construction and reconstruction (Alvesson et al 2002). Alvesson and Willmot (2002) developed an analysis of identity work that circles around the interplay of self-identity, identity work and the regulation of identity. (figure 3)
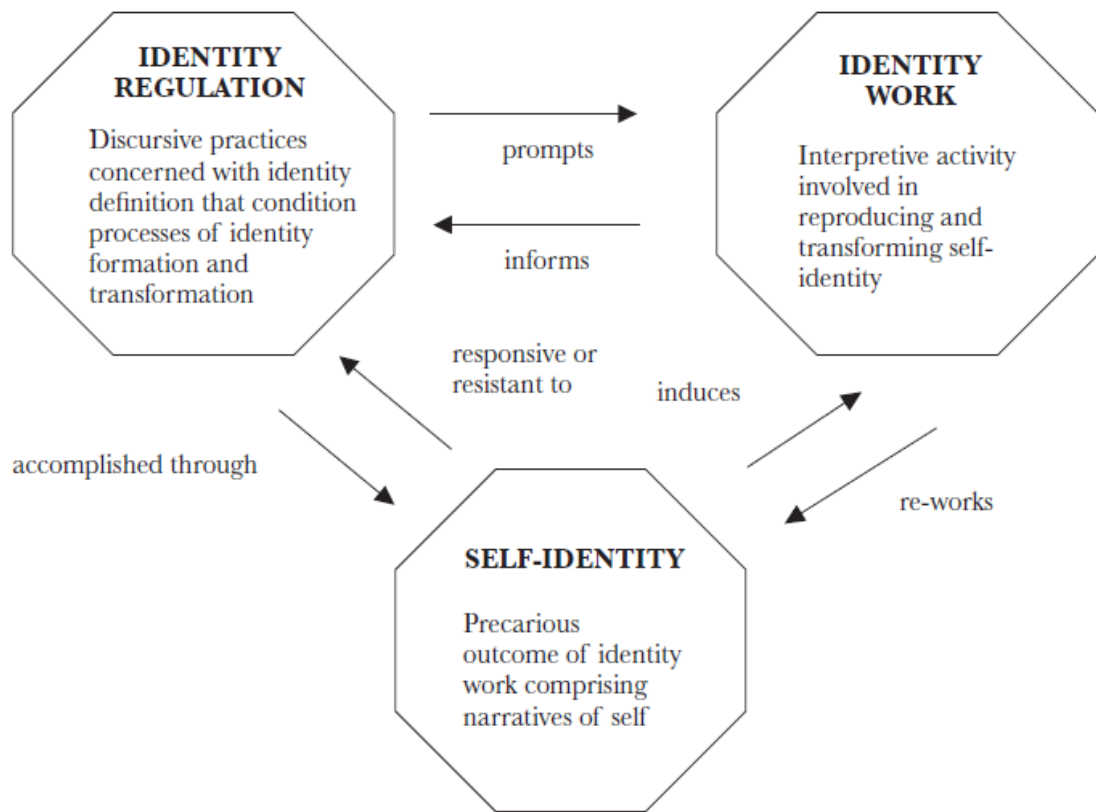
Figure 3. Identity regulation, identity work and self-identity (Alvesson et al 2002)

Alvesson and Willmot (2002) argued that organizational control is accomplished through the self-positioning of employees within managerially inspired discourses about work and organization with which they may become more or less identified and committed.

Identity work is the interpretive activity involved in reproducing and transforming self-identity. Self-identity is seen by them as precarious outcome of identity work comprising narratives of self. Identity regulation is *the discursive practices* concerned with identity definition that condition processes if identity formation and transformation. Identity may be a more or less direct target for control as organizing practices address the actor, the other, motives, values, expertise, group membership, hierarchical location, rules of the game etc. (Alvesson et al 2002)

In this study I seek to answer the question:

How does members of the organization see the identity regulation going and are they resistant or responsive to the identity regulation taking place at the University? and *"What kind of coping strategies and identity-work projects could be defined during this identity-challenging strategic change?"*

2.6   Identity regulation and resistance

Identity regulation could be seen, and in this case study is seen as such, as a corporate activity managed by top-management. Employees are seen to be enjoined to develop self-images and work orientations that are deemed congruent with managerially defined objectives. Managerial intervention operates, more or less intentionally and in/effectively, to influence employees' self-constructions in terms of coherence, distinctiveness and commitment. (Alvesson et al 2002)

Organizational control is accomplished through the self-positioning of employees within managerially inspired discourses about work and organization with which they may become more or less identified and committed. In their article Alvesson et al (2002) draw attention to identity as an important dimension of organizational control. Alvesson et al (2002) also argue that the organizational regulation of identity is a precarious and often contested process involving active identity work.

According to Alvesson (2002) an appreciation of the developments of the interest in regulating employees "insides"- their self-image, their feelings and identifications, prompts the coining of a corresponding metaphor: the employee as identity worker who is enjoining to incorporate the new managerial discourses into narratives of self-identity. A commonplace example of this process arises in the repeated invitation – through processes of induction, training and corporate education through strategic communication (magazine, posters and in this case strategy texts) – to embrace the notion of "we" (Alvesson et al. 2008).

However, organizational members are not reducible to passive consumers of managerially designed and designated identities, the organizational control can never be fully accomplished, because such attempts are balanced by individuals with other elements of life history forged by a capacity to accomplish life projects out of various sources influence and inspiration (Alvesson 2002:628).

The disruptions between old and new organizational and internal personal identities may lead to resistance to oppose the socially available self-identities (Watson, 2008). This can according to Thomas (2008) come out in inconspicuous forms – in action, that might be expressed in their day-to-day practices after the strategic change has taken place.

Studies of identity resistance have according to Thomas (2008) contributed to an appreciation of the role of subjectivity in resistance, extending the focus and definition of resistance to include more routinized, informal, and often inconspicuous forms in everyday practice (Ezzamel, Willmot 1998) .

Thomas and Davies (2005, Thomas 2008) illustrates how individuals draw on understanding of self as professional, manager, older worker and so on as resources from which to resist attempts to redefine their understanding of the social work practice and identity. These moments of micro-political resistance are both contingent and processual occurring as individuals confront and reflect on their own identity. Micro-political resistance is aimed precisely where power resides- in action.

2.7 Ambiguity and distancing from old self-identities

Tripsas (2009) created a model of Identity Change in Response to Technological opportunities. Her definition of identity is that identity comprises insider and outsider perceptions of what is core about an organization. An identity has associated with it a set of norms that represent shared beliefs about legitimate behavior for an organization with that identity. She defined in her research the technologies that deviated from the expectations associated with an organization's identity of a company, as identity-challenging identities.

In her findings identity served as a filter, such that organizational members notice and interpret external stimuli in a manner consistent with the identity. Secondly, she argues that because identity becomes intertwined in the routines, procedures, and beliefs of both organizational and external constituents, explicit efforts to shift identity in order to accommodate identity-challenging technology is difficult. Given the disruptive nature of identity shifts, it is critical according to Tripsas (2009) for managers to understand whether a technology, or in application strategy, is identity challenging.

In Tripsas study (2009) the point was how difficult the breaking of identity is. Triggered by a decision to take advantage of an identity-challenging technological change, management communication and strategic actions distance the organization from the previous identity. However according to Tripsas without a clear alternative identity articulated, the organization enters a period of identity ambiguity, where both internal and external constituents are unclear as to what the organization is. The ambiguous identity provides unclear signals to

the members of the organization and new heuristics are slow to develop, resulting in a broader set of strategic moves.

The new strategies and policies of Aalto University that deviate from the expectations associated with an organization's identity are labeled in this study as *identity-challenging strategies.* Strategic communication is distancing the organization and its members from the old identities. A new clear organizational identity is stated.

In this study I seek to answer: *"What kind of disruption the new identity challenging strategy and the new managerially imposed self-identities induce in the ongoing identity work of the members of the organization?"*

2.8 Interpretive framework and research questions

We can conclude that the launching of a strategic change effort represents a critical time for the organization as an altered vision of the organization is being negotiated in social construction activities.

The communication done in the strategizing process i.e. strategic communication is seen in this study as management control is trying to control the sensemaking processes and forming of the new self- identities of the faculty through sensegiving and strategizing work. The employee is an identity worker who is enjoining to incorporate the new managerial discourses or imposed self-identities into narratives of self-identity.

The new Aalto strategy published in a brochure and at the Aalto website, and the strategy work process led by Aalto managemen including meetings and workshops, have all served as a sense-giving function of the new identity of Aalto School of Business. Affected by the old and new arousing Aalto organizational culture and organizational members shared meaning of "who we are", during discursive actions have been forming and affecting the social ideals "of who we should be". (figure 4)
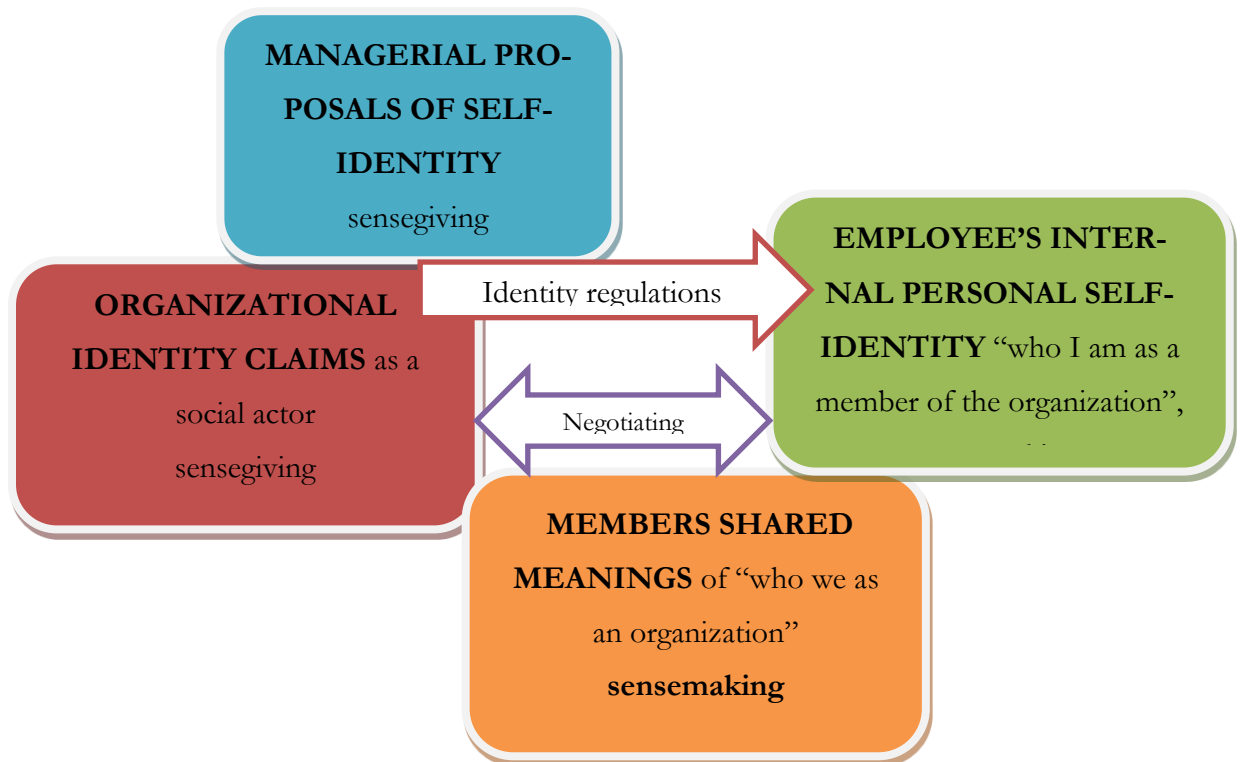
Figure 4 The main elements of identity work in an organization (based on Gioa et al 2010, Whetten 2010)

There are possible amibiguity and resentment or selfdoupts arising from these identity-challenging strategies caused by the major strategic change. Depending on the organizational culture they have either been suppressed or negotiated or in the best case they have been just stepping stones to "who the organization consideres it to be".

This study is an investigation of the Aalto Business School faculty attempt to instigate this major change effort. As already stated in ch. 1 the aim of this study, in particular, is to elaborate upon the intra-organizational dynamics, complexities and practices that govern the praxis of making sense of the new organizational identity and member's new self-identities.

> *The purpose of this study is to contribute to a better understanding of the intra-organizational identity work during strategic change.*

I do this by adopting a practitioner perspective on the strategy-as-practice and sensemaking theory and by drawing on the theory of identity work amongst the members of an organization. The management of strategic change is seen as a strategic praxis. Strategic communication during the strategic change is seen as practice. Strategic change is seen as a narrative

process (Fenton et al., 2007) in which members of the organization are trying to make sense of the new organizational identity and their self-identities in the new situation.

Ambiguity and threats

The external discursive social-identities are producing disruptions to former organizational and self-identities through strategic communication i.e. managerial proposals of self-identity, change of work culture and everyday practices about what is normal, rational and sound, leading to inward facing and outward facing identity work in a stream of day-to-day practices. The major identity shift causes identity threats that make the faculty of Aalto University feel challenged in their former beliefs and routines and their self- identities.

In this research I use the findings of Tripsas (2009, more in dept about the research earlier in this chapter) study in light of the understanding of the importance of the disruptive nature of the new identity-challenging strategies. The new Strategy of Aalto being in analogy as the new technology, making an identity shift leading to identity challenges, challenging the former insider and outsider perception of what is core about the University and what is legitimate behavior for this organization.

Many researchers have come to the conclusion (Tripsas 2009, Clark et al 2010, Alvesson et al 2002) that some ambiguity is good and needed in order to make a major shift in the organizational identity. There is interpretative activity involved in reproducing and transforming self-identity as a member of this new organization prompted by discursive practices concerned with identity definition i.e. identity regulation. The precarious outcome of identity work comprising narratives of self are either responsive or resistant to this identity regulation. (Alvesson 2002)

What I wish to find out is how the faculty is coping with the difficult situation and what kind of identity work (responsive/resistant) is going amongst the faculty members of Aalto University Business School? Is it ambiguous enough or is it too ambiguous the make the organization depart too much from the goals and strategies of the University?

Many of the informant's in this research were also middle managers of the organization thus having a twin role in coping with these changes. On the one hand they are doing their own identity work and on the other hand as representatives of the top management to their employees they are in the role of sensegivers of the new Strategy in their organization.

There are studies made about the special elements of the identity work of managers. According to Watson (2008) in organizations people are required to take on various corporate personas, which people are required to adapt and change as global, societal and organizational circumstances change. Simultaneously the managers have to act as the voice or the face of the corporation and be seen as authoritative and "in control" and as credible human beings.

The questions of the interviews

After defining the central theories and the main concepts of my study, I started to formulate the themes of the interviews. Since I aimed at doing an analysis based research I was ready to alter the questions or discussion themes after each interview, as I had gained more understanding on the subject. During the process of writing this thesis I also have made my focus and points of interest more clear. In all practicalities this has meant that I have also rewritten this chapter 2 many times during this process. Since I did the interviews before the final outlining of the theory part of the thesis the following part of the text is slightly different to what I have said earlier in this chapter.

However, the main focus during the interviews was on the text of the Strategy Brochure of Aalto University published only a few weeks before the interviews. The main themes for discussions during the interviews I divided into three interconnected areas that were not mentioned to the interviewees. The first focus was on what kind of **Identity work** is being done during the strategic change (a merger) as the new organizational identity is imposed to the employees. What sort of disruption is it in the day-to-day activities and practices through which the staff makes sense of the identity of the organization and the socially available self-identities as members of the organization?

Second focus was on **the New Strategy** of Aalto University in the light of aiming at finding out what kinds of sensemaking is being done related to the new strategy of Aalto University and how it is being consumed by the faculty of Aalto Business School. The strategy also serving as a sensegiving function as a part of the strategy work going on at the University.

The third topic of **Organizational Culture**, I took in as I considered it in the light of the importance of the change of culture to form a new common identity, and in the light of

considering the specialties of the cultures of Universities, and also considering the multi-cultural background of the merger of the 6 Aalto University Schools, and their former (and future) individual brands and organizational cultures.

Figure 5. The topic areas of the interviews

As the picture above shows, I looked at the culture of Aalto through a different lens at this point of my study. At first I was interested in finding out what kind of cultural change the New Strategy and the merger of multicultural Aalto University organization as a part of the European (if not global) University transformation and marketization is demanding. It seemed to me that the kind of leadership and management this change at Universities imposes leads to a new interpretation of an ideal academic and researcher, leading to a more competitive academic working culture. More discussion on the change of the cultural aspect of this study is in the next chapter.

The themes and questions of the interviews are found in appendix 1.

As the writing process went on I focused my research on the **Identity work** going on amongst the employees in the Case organization. The empirical questions that I sought to find answers to were:

1. How was the new strategy and organizational identity interpreted among the members of the organization?

2. What kind of disruptions did the new identity challenging strategy and the new managerially imposed self-identities induce in the ongoing identity work of the members of the organization?

3. What kind of coping strategies and identity- work projects could be identified during this identity-challenging strategic change?

3   The research methodology

In this chapter I consider first a case study research, interviews as a method, introduce the case study organization, look into constructivism in identity studies and strategy as practice approach, and narrative approach, that will form the basis of my analysis.

3.1   A Case study research

In a *case study research* the aim is to research, describe and explain cases mainly through asking questions "in what way or how" and "why".(Yin 1994, 5-13.)

Single cases are studied in their natural environment with the aim of describing them in detail. Descriptive methods might not necessarily be capable of explaining the connections between different phenomena, or test hypothesis, make prognosis, but the aim is rather a clear, systematic and truthful description of the research target. (Anttila 1996, 250; Hirsjärvi ym. 2004, 125-126.)

By studying a case we try to increase our understanding of a phenomenon without having a goal to reach knowledge that can be generalized. Usually a case study is selected as method, when one wants to understand the target in a more in-depth manner and taking into consideration the context of the case organization as well (circumstances, background and so on). Studying on case in a careful manner can offer knowledge that passes the case study organization, even though generalizations can't be made, on the basis of the study. The significance of the results can be strengthened by presenting a thorough description of the data and its analysis. (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006).

3.2   Introduction to the Case Study organization

The Aalto University was created from the merger of three Finnish universities: The Helsinki School of Economics, Helsinki University of Technology and The University of Art and Design Helsinki. The Finnish Government decided on the merger in April 2007 and the new Aalto University started to operate as a legal entity on January 1, 2010. The new name is a reference to the Finnish architect and designer Alvar Aalto (1898-1976). Aalto also has a metaphorical connotation as it means "wave" in Finnish, thus signifying movement and progress.

The Aalto University is advertised to be at their website (aalto.fi) strongly future-oriented while, at the same time, building on the combined 300-year-history of three highly regard-

ed universities. The combination of six schools is claimed to open up new possibilities for strong multi-disciplinary education and research. The new university's ambitious goal is to be one of the leading institutions in the world in terms of research and education in its own specialized disciplines. The official strategy work and corporate identity work has been being led by the president of the Aalto University and the communications department in collaboration with the board, stakeholders, consultants and the deans of the schools i.e. top-down.

The website also states that only the best students and researchers are admitted to study and conduct research at the Aalto University. The aims of the new university are told to be providing high-quality research and education and creating an internationally attractive environment for learning and research. The Aalto University is also mentioned to focus its research on major global issues.

Aalto University is a foundation-based university. Its funding is made up of state foundation principal, 500 million €, as well as donations from private persons, companies and other foundations, in total 200 million, as compared to each School being fully stated owned before . Almost 20 000 students, 4.700 faculty members and 350 professors makes Aalto one the biggest Universities in Finland.

Aalto University has three main campuses all located in the Helsinki Metropolitan area: the School of Economics located in the heart of the city (Töölö), the School of Arts, Design and Architecture is a short distance north of the city center (Arabia), and the School of Science and Technology is about a fifteen minute drive west of the city in Otaniemi, Espoo. In addition to the three major campuses, Aalto University also has units operating in different cities around Finland: in Mikkeli, Lahti, Vaasa and Pori.

In the merger a new name and visual identity designed by Rasmus Snabb, was given to the School, and a new head office was assigned to lead the School placed in Otaniemi, Espoo. The development of one main campus will begin by gradually concentrating all bachelor-level education to Otaniemi from 2013 onwards.

3.3 The mission, vision and the strategy of the University

The mission of the University is to "work towards a better world through top-quality research, interdisciplinary collaboration, pioneering education, surpassing traditional bound-

aries, and enabling renewal. The national mission of the University is to support Finland's success and contribute to Finnish society, its internationalization and competitiveness and to promote the welfare of its people" (aalto.fi)

The vision of Aalto University is to be "The best connect and succeed at Aalto University, an institution internationally recognized for the impact of its science, art, and learning". And even in the corporate materials it is said that the vision is to be among the best Universities of the world in 2020. (aalto.fi, 2012)

Aalto University Strategy

Vision
The best connect and succeed at Aalto University,
an institution internationally recognized for the impact of its science, art and learning.

Goal: A world-class university by year 2020.

Universal mission	National mission
Contributions to a better world.	Competitiveness and welfare of Finland.

Core strategies and KPIs

Research excellence	*Pioneering education*	*Trendsetting art*	*Societal impact*
Original, impactful, interdisciplinary.	Students in focus, a new learning culture and approaches.	Art, architecture and design as key drivers for improving living environments.	Adding value through entrepreneurship, business liaison and societal interactions.
• Publication quality • Excellence grants • Competitive funding • Awards & recognition • Interdisciplinary projects • Quality of applicants	• Teaching quality • Student performance • Alumni & employer satisfaction • Multidisciplinary graduates	• International visibility • Q+Q of artistic productions • Grants & awards	• Partners' perception of Aalto • Empoyees in spin-offs • Funding from partners • Commissions of trust

Strategic enablers: Leadership; Internationalization; Services; Infrastructure

Culture built on common values
Passion; Courage; Freedom; Responsibility; Ethics

Figure 6. Aalto University strategy (aalto.fi, 2012)

"The University, formally inaugurated in January 2010, will build on Finnish values and the strengths and accomplishments of its founding universities to become an international university of world class stature. It was established to strengthen the Finnish innovation system by way of integrating expertise in science and technology, business and economics as well as art and design. As a new, foundation-based university with a high degree of financial independence and a new leadership model, Aalto University will create conditions and opportunities for radical renewal and autonomous strategic investments." (Aalto strategy, 2012)

The School of Business aims to be a world-class full-fledged business school by 2020. The main action items that represent our high priority improvement efforts will be:

- Strengthening and supporting high-quality research, among others through the recruitment of highly competent researchers and through the strengthening of the incentives for high quality and impact research publications
- Strengthening and developing globally competitive business programmes surpassing traditional boundaries, among others by focusing on the opportunities for synergies within Aalto University and by focusing on the pedagogical development of faculty
- Internationalization of our faculty and student body, among others through investments in strengthening the brand and international recruitment efforts
- Improving the faculty/student ratio (the aim being 1:10 in 2020), among others by increasing the number of faculty and reducing the number of B.Sc. students.

The case: Multiple levels of identity work

I have arranged the levels of change at Aalto Business School as follows:

1. The change in the Universities in general becoming more mangerialized, having a new competitive angle and strategies that they did not have before.

2. The Second level of change for Aalto Business School faculty has been the merger to become an Aalto University School instead of being an independent autonomous Helsinki School of Economis (Helsingin kauppakorkeakoulu).

3. The third level is the change in the management and leadership of the School, having a whole organization above the School and having a Dean chosen by others. Also the leadership practices and position have undergone dramatic changes.

4. Fourthly the individual researcher's work emphasis and focus has changed to emphasizing international publications and workforce.

5. Fifthly there will also be physical changes coming up as students and teachers will move to a common Aalto campus.

All these levels of change are possibly producing identity challenges and demand identity work. The levels are intertwined and could all be said to be caused by the changes in academia, that have been an integral part of wider public sector reforms promoted, for example, under the label of new public management (NBM) (Aula, Tienari 2011)

In the case study I see that the New Strategy (29 pages) describes the new vision of the University and the differences of the tasks of the University from before and serves as a sensegiviving function of the strategy process. This study considers the Strategy to include

the main things that the President and the managers consider as topics that should be changed or explanations (sense-giving) of the changes that have already been done (such as topics of autonomy, internationalization, leadership and quality).

3.4   The method of collecting data

The main source of information was interviews. They are more guided conversations rather than structured queries (Yin, 2009). In this case-study the interviews were more focused interviews than in-depth interviews, as I met with each interviewed only once for a short period of time. I had specific themes that I had taken before hand from the strategy texts that I brought up to the interviewees (see appendix 1). After each interview I made changes in the topics as I learned more on the issues that were most interesting and challenging I developed the themes of the interviews accordingly.

Interviews can be analyzed through the lenses of positivism (to find facts), emotivisms (goal to find out about individual experiences, attitudes and values) or constructionism (goal to produce cultural speech) (Silverman 2006, 117-147). In this study they are ana-lyzed with a constructivist approach.

The empiric data was gathered by conducting semi-structured interviews. I interviewed 5 professors and 1 senior lecturer, and 1 foreign PhD student at the Aalto School of Busi-ness. 3 of the professors were currently leaders of a department, and 2 had been head or vice-head of the department at some point of their career. Each interviewer had been ex-posed to the same materials made available by the communications department i.e. strategy brochures and had a chance to attend the earlier strategy work done in the School in some form or another. The reason for choosing only academics to be interviewed was the goals mentioned in the strategy about reaching the goal of being a top University by 2020 and the academic changes needed to be done to achieve it. Surely there could be many interest-ing identity challenges also on other levels of the organization produced by the new organ-ization and its strategy, but they are not included in this study.

Themes for discussion during the interviews were from different topics mentioned in the the Strategy (brochures) such as autonomy, internationalization, basic research, leadership, mission, vision and values and then more narrative questions such as "what is the story of Aalto" or "what kind of academic you see yourself to be like" A list of the topics is in the appendix one of this report. Each interview was unique as the topics served only as a

guideline, not as fixed questions. As I learned more about the subject during the interviews I made sure to continue on interesting themes with the next interviewers.

The first interviewees were selected by me. I chose the ones that I had had some encounter with before, by lecture or reading their work or just because they were department heads. During each interview most of the informants suggested other people that could be interviewed. Most of them I did not have a change to interview, but two names that came up like this I ended up interviewing also, mainly because they represented a department that I had not an informant from before. Since the Business School has numerous departments and I saw no need to interview one from them all. As I felt that the saturation point was being reached I made no more interviews.

Table 1. List of the interviewers.

Interviewer	Time of the interview	Duration	Lenght of Trans-cripted data
1. Professor and head of department, male, worked in the School over 30 yrs	8th of May, 2012	49:10 min	9 pages
2. Professor, male, former head of department, worked over 25 yrs	14th of May, 2012	66:09 min	11 pages
3. Senior lecturer, female, doing administration, member of school board, over 20 yrs at the School	16th of June, 2012	60:02 min	9 pages
4. Foreign PhD student, female, second year student	22nd of May, 2012	56:48 min	7 pages
5. Professor, female, head of department, worked in the School for over 10 yrs	23rd of May, 2012	54:55 min	9 pages
6. Professor, female, studied and worked in Business School for 25 yrs	5th of June, 2012	40:20 min	7 pages
7. Professor, male, international career, worked in Aalto for app. 10 yrs.	6th of June, 2012	36:28 min	8 pages

Each informant had received Aalto's new Strategy brochure on their desk a couple of weeks earlier. Only informants 3 and 4 had noticed it and read it, informant 4 had used it in their own research and informant 3 was asked to read it before meeting the Dean for a per-

sonal discussion. These 2 had received the shorter more condensed version of the Strategy aimed for the whole personnel, as the others a department heads had also received the longer more expand version of it, but none had read either one of them. Many of the department heads were questioning the publishing of the strategy at all.

During the interviews each informant was shown the mission, vision and values of Aalto for comments. All the informants even the one that had not read the strategy brochure were very acknowledged on all the major subjects of the Strategy or better say changes that were going on.

All interviews, besides the one of a foreign PhD student, were conducted in Finnish. Thus the direct citations used in this study from the Finnish interviews have been translated from Finnish to English by the author. Thus, all possible translation errors or cases were the original meaning of the citation might have altered are responsibility of the author and the author only.

3.5   Social constructivism in identity studies

According to social constructionist, the sense of the real and knowledge about the world is socially constructed in everyday interaction and practices. Language plays a key role in this construction process through categories and discourses: it is the basis of our thinking as it forms the objects that we speak of, rather than being a neutral vessel for conveying pre-existing, objective reality. Moreover, knowledge is also seen to be culturally and historically situated and therefore, understandings of the world change across spatial and temporal contexts. La Pointe argues that this applies to knowledge of oneself as well: instead of residing in the individual minds, the origin of experiences and understandings of oneself as a particular person is socially and culturally situated. (La Pointe, 2011, pg. 22) In constructing particular versions of the world, language is also a form of action with practical consequences to our lives (Burr, 2003; Cunliffe, 2008). As a research approach, constructionism is focused on critically examining how the objects of our knowledge are given an objectified reality through shared language and meanings.

In the mainstream study of identity according to Gioia et al (2010 the organization is seen as a social actor that has an organizational identity. The identity is seen as the property of the organization itself as an entity, or social actor and that is discernible mainly by the patterns of an organization's entity-level commitments called also identity claims or referents, that signify the organization's self-determined and self-defining position in social space (Gioia et al 2010, Whetten, 2010).

This perspective treats organizational identity essentially as a set of institutional claims that explicitly articulates who the organization is and what it represents articulated often through strategic communication. According to Gioia et al (2010) this view does not reside mainly in the interpretations of the members, but tends to emphasize the **sensegiving** function of identity, linking identity construction to the need to provide a coherent guide for the members of how an organization should behave and how other organizations should relate to them. (Whetten, 2006)

Gioia et al.(2010, 5) sees that social constructionist view of identity involves member's negotiation of shared meanings about "who we are as an organization" and places the focus of attention on the shared interpretive schemes that members collectively construct to provide meaning to their organizational experience (Gioia, Schultz, and Corley, 2000, Whetten, 2006). This view of identity as members shared understanding of "who we are"

implies an emphasis on the **sensemaking** processes associated with the social construction of identity as meanings and meaning structures that are intersubjectively negotiated among organizational members themselves. (Ravasi and Scultz 2006, Gioia et al, 2010)

Brown et al argue that the performance of stories is the key part of organization member's sensemaking (Brown, 2008, Boje, 1995: 1000) the analysis of which permits us to identify and to analyze what people agree on and where understandings differ.

In the context of this study, it means that I do not take identities as stable (La Pointe, 2011), but examine how identities become constructed in identity work via available narratives during the strategic change of the organization.

3.5.1 Strategy-as-practice approach

In this research I will extend the strategy-as-practice approach to the domain of management of strategic change in order to study and theoretically elaborate on the intra-organizational dynamics of *management of strategic change as strategic praxis.* I argue that he s-a-p approach is particularly well suited for the study of management of strategic change in order to understand what happens in an organization when it engages in strategic change that imposes the employees to identity work. In this study the corporate identity claims that are expressed through *strategic communication in the strategic change, is seen as practice*.

According to Ezzamel and Willmot the "mainstream" literature on strategy are underpinned by an assumption that strategy exists "out there" in the meanings of organizational members and others (e.g.) consultants who formulate and implement it (Mintzberg et al. 1995). During the last ten years, a completely new way to approach strategy research has gained ground; it is interested in finding out what strategists actually do when they strategize (Ezzamel and Willmot 2004). This approach carries out the label "strategy-as-practice". According to strategy-as-practice strategy is not only viewed as a property of an organization, but also is something that the organization does.

In the strategy-as-practice approach, strategy is defined as situated, socially accomplished flow of activity that is consequential for the strategic outcomes, directions, survival and competitive advantage of the organization (as quoted in Järventie-Thesssleff, 2011, 51, Jarzabkowski, et al 2007). The framework consists of three concepts: strategy praxis, strat-

egy practices, and strategy practitioners. According to Jarzabkowski et al (2007 as quoted in Järventie-Thessleff, 2011, 47)) praxis could be defined as situated, socially accomplished flows of activity that strategically are consequential for the direction and survival of the organization. Practices are cognitive, behavioral, discursive, motivational and physical practices that are adapted to construct practice. Practitioners are actors who shape the construction of practice through who they are, how they act and what resources they draw upon.

Whittington (2006) shows how the strategy process is a phenomenon in a constant flux connected to each other intertwined. As organizations are always a part of societal change, so are the practices of organizations as well. The systems in the society surrounding the organizations define many of the organizational practices. The societal frames include also strategy practices such as budgeting, planning, meetings, using out of organization experts, and the strategic discursive practices such as "must-win-battles" and other related war metaphors.

Most of the strategy practices are extra-organizational in their origins. Whittington points out that despite of this fact it doesn't seem that the *practitioners* are hapless puppets of such practices. Suominen and Mantere (2011) point out that this has led to many modifications and "strategy shopping" and personal use of the strategy.

Whittington argues that effective strategy *praxis* relies heavily on practitioner's capacity to access and deploy prevailing strategy practices. According to Whittington practitioners are crucial mediators between practices and praxis, as disconnection can profoundly disable strategies.

I connect this to the sense-making theory, (Thessleff-Järventie 2011, Maitlis, 2005), as I investigate organizational identity building in a strategic change that evolves in and through a stream of sense-making and sense-giving activities producing discursive and narrative constructions and collective accounts about the way the informants understand and implement the organizational identity in strategic change.

3.5.2   Narrative approach

I argue that strategic change is a narrative process in which members of the organization are trying to make sense of the new organizational identity and the new discursive social-identities.

Fenton et al. (2011) consider how the narrative turn in organization studies might contribute to a better understanding of strategy as practice i.e. Whittington's praxis, practice, practitioners and texts (4th new element added by the authors). Fenton et al. considers the different research looking at strategy as means of "textually mediated coordination and control" or organizational communication theory compared (or better combined) to the strategy-as-practice view of strategy as the "property of the organization" and being something that people do. This "doing" takes place in the form of talk, text ad conversation, linking the idea to interaction through discourses, including storytelling and narrative.

This view that Fenton et al. (2011) have links the micro everyday activities of strategy practitioners and the metaconverstation (big-D) as components of an integrated narrative perspective on strategy as practice. Narrative is seen as a way of **sharing meanings** during strategizing activity, constituting and overall sense of direction and purpose, **constructing identities**. However these metaconversations that constitute organizational strategy and identity implicitly express construct and reproduce legitimate power structures, organizational roles and ideologies.

If human beings make meaning, construct experience, knowledge and identity thru a narrative, even though there would be only one written meta-narrative of the company strategy there naturally could be many micro-narratives (small- d) of it.

Fenton et Al. (2011) points out that the precise manifestation of the narrative may vary depending on whether the focus is on praxis, practice, practitioners, or text, these narratives contributing to constructing the world they describe, and not being objectives existing independently of the discourses contributing to their constructions.

As a research method narratives represented a rich source of empirical data for understanding actor's shared views of the identities they had literally constructed together, as well as narratives representing their innermost view.

According to Fenton et al (2011) while looking at narratives we could see also some metaphors used by the informants representing actor's shared views of the identities they had literally constructed each first individually and then putting them together as a shared identity. The intangible and collective dimensions of organizational identity become tangible using this method. (Fenton et al. 2011). More on the method of my research in cp.3.

I base my analysis on Fenton and Langley (2011) argument that organizational communication research, and in particular a perspective that focuses on narrative, can contribute in important ways to understanding the practices of strategy. Narrative is believed to be critical in sensemaking in organizations, and multiple levels and forms of narrative are inherent to strategic practices. According to Fenton et al. narrative can be found in the micro-stories told by managers and others as they interact and go about their daily work, in the accounts people give of their work as strategy practitioners, and in the artifacts produced by strategizing activity. Narrative is seen as a way of giving meaning to the practice that emerges from sensemaking activities, of constituting an overall sense of direction or purpose, of refocusing organizational identity, and of enabling and constraining the ongoing activities of actors.

Fenton et al. follow Fisher (1984) in their view of seeing narrative as a paradigm or a lens for examining how strategy is practiced and produced, accepting that narrativity is a matter of degree, and that narrative elements may be detected in multiple forms: thus its precise manifestation may vary depending on whether the focus is on praxis, practice, practitioners or text. For Fenton et al, the narrative mode of analysis nevertheless implies a strong commitment to a social constructivist ontology and a particular focus on how narrative elements such as sequence, character and plot expressed in talk and text simultaneously reflect and structure people's understandings of what they are doing, of who they are, of what roles they do or can play, and what the organization is or should become (strategy). When shared, abstracted and reified, these narrative understandings may in turn contribute to the constructing the world they describe. This contrasts sharply with traditional functionalist perspectives in which notions such as strategy are treated as objective entities independently of the discourses contributing to their construction (Fenton et al. 2011)

Vaara outlines a multifaceted view on strategy discourse that allows us to examine interdiscursivity at three levels of analysis. At the metalevel one of the fundamental issues is the complexity of strategy as a body of knowledge. In particular, he argues that it is im-

portant to focus attention on struggles over different conceptions of strategy. At the mesolevel, it is useful to extend our understanding of the narratives of the organizational strategy. In particular, by focusing on various alternative narratives, one can better understand the polyphony and dialogicality in organizational strategizing. At the microlevel, Vaara reflects on the rhetorical skills and tactic that are used in strategy conversations to promote or resist specific views. (Vaara, 2010).

Interpretivist studies on identities in organizations which, building on the concept of narrative identities have sought to produce meaning-centered and descriptive account of the processes that individuals undergo in constructing a coherent story of self, and to document the organizational sources that influence the crafting of a self-narrative (Czarniawaska-Joerges 1997).

Fenton et al. (2011) suggest several approaches to doing research on narrative-based perspective on strategy as practice. Agenda items could be as follows:

- **praxis**; examining how in vivo storytelling contributes to the construction of shared understanding about strategy, while taking into account the fragmented, partial, multi-level and continually "becoming" nature of such storytelling, (for ex. Boje 1991, Jameson 2001)

- **practices;** examine how, why and with what effects different macro-level narratives are translated or drawn on in particular context (Jackson 1996, Jackson 2000)

- **practitioners**; examine how macro-level strategy narratives, micro-level storytelling and individual practice narratives constitute the subject positions and identities of strategy practitioners, influencing their modes of engagement in strategy praxis (Clark&Salaman 1998, Whittle et al. 2009, Vaara 2002)

- **texts**; examine the content of strategy texts to appreciate how narrative elements contribute to their persuasiveness and legitimacy, and how and why narratives within strategy texts are consumed by organization members, influencing the organizations' trajectory. (Martens et al 2007, Anderson 2004, Spee&Jarzabkowski 2009)

- **narrative infrastructure**; examine how a narrative infrastructure may emerge from the interaction and lamination of stories at multiple levels forming an overall thrust and direction for the organizations and channeling the activities of members (Deuten&Rip 2000, Llwellyn 2001)

- **metaconversations**; examine how fragmented local identities are drawn together to construct collective organizational identities through continuing metaconversations (Robichaud et al 2004) and
- **narrative diversity**; examine the diversity of individual narratives underlying collective ones. (Boje 1995, Brown et al 2008).

In this study the main focus of the narrative analysis is on practitioners, i.e. what **kind of subject positions and identities** can be found through macro-level strategy narratives, micro-level storytelling and individual practice narratives. I also look in to the practices; looking into why and with what effects different macro-level narratives are translated or drawn on at the context of the case organization.

Fenton et al. (2011) links these micro everyday activities of strategy practitioners and the metaconverstation (big-D) as components of an integrated narrative perspective on strategy as practice. Narrative is seen as a way of **sharing meanings** during strategizing activity, constituting and overall sense of direction and purpose, **constructing identities**. These metaconversations that constitute organizational strategy and identity implicitly express construct and reproduce legitimate power structures, organizational roles and ideologies.

3.6   The phases of analysis

After conducting all the interviews I transliterated them carefully. Then I started to gather topics that came up frequently. I underlined and highlighted issues from each printed copy of the interviews. Then I started to write text, make charts and tables to get the main points of each topic. At this point on my analysis the results seemed not to have much interrelation, but still already were very interesting to me. With the help of my mentor I proceeded to make further analysis on the results, on the basis of what kind of strategies I found the interviews were using to cope with these changes. After long hours of writing and thinking I was able to find 4 major strategies to cope with the changes. Each of these had different kind of subject positions and identities produced by the way each particular coping strategy saw the macro-level strategy narratives and individual practice narratives. I found that intensified identitywork was going on and new identities were being formed.

In other words I could sum up that in my analysis I found 4 different kinds of coping strategies that saw the identity-challenging strategic change in a particular way.

There were also many surprises to me as I concluded this analysis. The strong emphasis in the answers on the top-leadership of the School, that I never mentioned or directly asked about during the interviews. Second more pleasant surprise was the creative positive coping-strategies almost each informant had found for their use, even in the midst of more gloomy and pessimistic thoughts. In the end I felt that I had been forming a puzzle as I was writing and gathering the analysis. The end result was surprising and the fact that there was actually a clear big picture behind this all or at least many clear narratives that served as helpers to go through these changes. After many long hours spent on little details; it was almost mind-blowing to see it for myself. There was a lot of identity work going on strengthened due to the merger, new strategy and many practices that were now taking place at the School.

The original major focuses of the study; Identity work, New Strategy and Organizational culture (the themes of the interviews) got a new "definition" or new way to see them as I proceeded with my analysis, and in the process of rewriting the theory part of the thesis.

The biggest change from my original view was in the way I saw organizational culture (as my third major focus, more in depth in ch. 2.8). I had thought originally that in order to reach the changes the informants would tell their ideas on what needs to be changed in the organizational culture (that has not been changed yet) in order for the identity shift to take place successfully, and also that the Business Schools old culture would come out more in the answers of the interviewers.

Instead the way the new strategy was "consumed" had a lot to do with how the informants saw the merger and the University's leadership. So the culture of the organization turned out to mean more the practices and leadership culture and how much they effected on how the informants saw the strategy and the whole strategy process. I saw that the former culture of the Business School compared to the new Aalto, was not the main problem for successful identity shift. It more seemed that Aalto's goal of being a top University by 2020 and the strategies used to accomplish this goal were more seen as the major problem.

As I wrote and re-wrote my analysis I also re-wrote and focused my frame of reference accordingly (ch. 2.9).

As I was gathering the analysis on each different strategy I also saw the "greater" pattern behind them all. Finally I gathered thoughts to my discussion part by reading more articles and re-reading the ones I had already used in the light of my findings.

3.7   The evaluation of the reliability of the research

To only interview 7 people, could be the first weakness of my study. In defense to that I can say that after the sixth interview I started to realize that the saturation point was reached. I did one more interview which more strengthened this feeling that I had already gotten covered the major points. Still there is that thought that I did not cover all the different major departments of the Business School. Luckily many of the interviews themselves brought up relevant issues about the other departments. On top of this issue the view, or the cause for many problems i.e. that people are being laid off was strengthened in this study could be due to the choice of departments. I can still conclude that all the interviewed knew about the lay off's whether it concerned their department directly or not, and as a matter in fact had opinions about it to share.

Seven interviews still is a vast amount of material. I feel that there was still many interesting issues that could have been brought up, that were not brought up in this study. Aalto has also 5 other Schools that are not covered in this study, and I can't say that the results are applicable, as they are, to the other Aalto Schools, but surely some issues brought up here should at least raise the interest of the top leaders of the University as well as the Dean and board. If there are such worries about the strategy practices, strategic communication and strategy work at the School of Business I could suggest that similar issues could be found from other Schools as well. At least the things I found that worked with academics can surely be applicable to all academics besides Business. Or even better to say, that things that work at the Business School could work elsewhere as well.

In a narrative analysis we also have to remember that single narratives are always connected to certain discursive situations. At the same time they are a part of social, cultural in institutional discussion. (Vaara, Tienari 2011, 370)This is to understand how discourses may change and be used by actors in different contexts. Different discourses, narratives and forms of arguments may coexist, but can also lead to more salient struggles, between competing discourses (Vaara, Eero 2010, Fairclough, 1989) and ideologies (van Dijk, 1998).

Brown et al (2008, 1037) argue that although sensemaking is inherently social, it is fundamentally tied to processes of individual identity generation and maintenance. Due to the idiosyncratic aspects of individual's sensemaking (Weick 1995, Brown 2008) people seek to structure their experiences in order to make sense of occurrences while maintaining a consistent, positive self-conception. Brown et al argue that the performance of stories is the key part of organization member's sensemaking (Brown, 2008, Boje, 1995: 1000) the analysis of which permits us to identify and to analyze what people agree on and where understandings differ.

4 Making sense of strategic change at Aalto University

In my analysis I define 4 different coping strategies that interpret the new strategy and organizational identity in a particular manner. They are the resistance type, cynical type, irony or sarcasm type and finally the positive type or the strategy champion. I also describe what kind of a challenge each type sees the new identity and the strategy to be like. Also in this chapter I consider the dynamics and complexities of identity work under topics such as subjecitivity as a form of resistance, manager's role in the succeeding of the identity shift, transitional identity, identity disruptions, and identities as a source and site for resistance. Discussion over the results of the analysis is in chapter 5.

The strategic change leading to new organizational identity, is imposed on the employees through strategic communication. This challenging situation is seen in this study as some sort of a disruption in the day-to-day activities and practices through which the staff makes sense of the new identity of the organizational and them as members of the organization.

The aim of this study, in particular, is to elaborate upon the intra-organizational dynamics, complexities and practices that govern the praxis of making sense of the new organizational identity and member's new self-identities.

> *The purpose of this study is to contribute to a better understanding of the intra-organizational identity work during strategic change.*

By means of empirical study, I seek to answer the following research questions:

1. How was the new strategy and organizational identity interpreted among the members of the organization
2. What kind of disruptions did the new identity challenging strategy and the new managerially imposed self-identities induce in the ongoing identity work of the members of the organization?
3. What kind of coping strategies and identity- work projects could be identified during this identity-challenging strategic change?

The different topics brought up in the interviews such as "Tenure Track" are seen as empirical examples of how the strategic decisions made in the organization raise fear and how and why they are considered identity-challenging and how the interviewers interpret them.

The quotes from the strategy brochure (2012) at the beginning of each topic, serves as sensegiving function in the strategy-as-practice process. The strategy texts are also seen as identity regulation or management control, aiming to lead the organizational and individual identities of the members of the organization to desired direction. The disruption between perceived old organizational identity, and the self-identity of the informant and new organizational identity and the imposed self-identity perceived by the employees in this study is found through the way the informants interpret the New Strategy and the strategic practices and policies taking place at the School.

All interviews, besides the one of a foreign PhD student, were conducted in Finnish. Thus the direct citations used in this study from the Finnish interviews have been translated from Finnish to English by the author. Thus, all possible translation errors or cases were the original meaning of the citation might have altered are responsibility of the author and the author only.

4.1   Four coping strategies or identity projects

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the analysis part of my research is divided in four different coping strategies that I found. First I describe what the identity project is like, how it sees the strategy and the identity imposed on the employees. Finally I consider what kind of (identity) threat this kind of coping strategy sees the new strategy of the School to be like. Lastly I consider the multiple usage of these four identity projects or coping strategies.

4.1.1   Resisting where power resides – in action

The first type of how the informants were coping with the new strategy and the imposed identity of the School that I found was opposing or resisting.

> Resist: to strive against, oppose; to withstand: to hinder action of, to be little affected by, to make opposition, n. a protective coating. Resistance – act or power of resisting: opposition. (Concise English Dictionary, 1994)

Fleming and Spicer (2006, 40-45) see that worker resistance does not really exist 'out there' in a position of positive facticity, but is an abstraction that we have invented in order to make sense of certain organizational practices and behaviors. Common in definitions of

resistance they argue, is the idea that resistance represents a particular relationship with power, one that does not simply repeat or reiterate its discursive logic but blocks it, challenges it, re-configures it or subverts it in a way not intended by that power and which has favorable effects for subordinates. (Fleming et al 2006, 40-45)

Alvesson argues (2002:628) that, organizational members are not reducible to passive consumers of managerially designed and designated identities. In that way Alvesson continues (2002) the organizational control can never be fully accomplished, because such attempts are balanced by individuals with other elements of life history forged by a capacity to accomplish life projects out of various sources influence and inspiration. The balancing factors at the Case organization is the fact that it is over a hundred years old and many of the interviewed had been working there for decades, and especially the fact that the informants were academic researchers doing research often on respective topics.

The disruptions between old and new organizational and internal personal identities may lead and has lead in the Case organization to resistance to oppose the socially available self-identities and the available organizational identity (Watson, 2008). This can according to Thomas (2008) come out in inconspicuous forms – in action, that might be expressed in their day-to-day practices after the strategic change has taken place.

How resistance-type interprets the strategy
"It has been widely recognized in recent years that universities require increased autonomy to define their own strategies and to position themselves in the international field, thereby addressing the future challenges…" (Aalto strategy brochure, ch. 2, pg 4)

I found that what I call 'the resistance type' interprets the strategy and the identity of the new Aalto University to be mangerialistic, acting as a witness of the new strategizing of Universities. Besides the outsides forces and globalization and new competition amongst Universities, the merger of Aalto was seen as technology driven (Technical University) which had made the former top Business School just a "helper" and a subordinate to it. There is rebellion and resistance and critical voices to this change described by the informants. The feeling that the School of Business had not much say in the new strategy of Aalto University was also shared.

> "The whole idea of making Aalto was because there was a need to strengthen The Technical University, just had to find a way to pump in a great amount of money to this kind of University serving technological purposes and someone came up with the idea of innovation University. I have a feeling that emphasizing basic research has caused some rebellion and

critical voices about it already and will be more and more even voices from Otaniemi wanting the old Technical University back." (I7)

"This strategy (brochure), yes it is technology driven, feels like business and design are made subordinates to technology, they are like helpers here, that we can market the great technological innovations, this is the picture I get, and of course it is also based the biggest ruling, technology being the biggest" (I3)

The resistance type also sees that the strategizing and privatizing of Universities has led to competition amongst the workers. Besides this the strategy and following practices seems to over emphasize hiring foreign workers and basic research.

One way the academias bring up their resistance is academic research, books and articles. Also the members of the Aalto Business School had used this method. There is a lot a academic discussion for ex.about the Universities as entrepreneurs. From the Business School at least the following researchers have partaken in the academic discussion over this matter. Janne Tienari and Hanna Aula has published on the topic of Aalto's reputation, and Keijo Räsänen has discussed the problems of University as a capitalistic enterprise. Also at least two of the informants had participated in such research or was currently working with it, in other words using critical thinking and academic freedom as a form of resistance. This kind of rebellion considers the issues for example of "is change really inevitable?, and "managerialism does not work in Universities", and "it has lead to similarities of Universities" .

Aula &Tienari: "The study illustrates dynamics of reputation-building in a university merger. It shows how the need to become an innovative "world-class" university acts as an imaginary incentive, and predictions of an inevitable future are used to legitimize radical actions. Such pressures are evident in academia where global rankings and accreditations have acquired a prominent position and reputation has emerged as a key concern for decision-makers (Wedlin, 2006; Ressler and Abratt, 2009). Universities are forced to compete globally for the attention of financiers, academics, students, and employers." 2011

In the interviews similar topics were brought up such as: " The privatization of Universities does not work in Finland, since we don't have enough capital here (I2)", "The government still is under the control of the Universities in Finland anyway, and also Aalto University (I1, 2, 5, 7)", "politicians and business leaders don't know enough of science to be in charge of the University and that will cause problems" to mention a few. The basic thought behind these problems being that there is something inherently wrong about the development of the Universities and Aalto in particular. The question was whether the School is really having the right goal or not, which made them puzzled. Many informants shared a feeling about if there is realistic means to reach this goal anyway, at least in the given time

span. Many of these dilemmas are seen in the way the informant saw how Aalto came about and in what kind of University this kind of development produces.

Besides partaking in academic discussion, been actively partaking of the strategy work at the University (and some being disappointed in it), the informants have used often other more creative, and saddle ways to resist the imposed strategy. This I call *micro-political resistance*, that is seen where power resides – in action.

One form of resistance that came out during the interviews was seen when there were contradictions with the new and old values. In these dilemmas some informants chose rather the old way, even though it caused even harsh "self-talk" and frustration. The reason for doing so they articulated was that obeying the new "rules" would be difficult and even harmful to Aalto.

> "the new strategy causes practical dilemmas, I am in this Aalto University's and Helsinki city's co-operation forum, and sometimes when I come from those meetings, I say that I must be totally stupid, this is not valued for real anymore, but anyhow it needs to be done so that Aalto's reputation would be held up, since the School is still financed nationally" (2)

Resistance to hiring policies

"With regard to internationalization, competitiveness of universities relies to a great extent on their ability to attract the best students and researchers. .. to attract the international academic elite, universities harmonize their degree systems, for example, in accordance with the European Bologna Process… and create competitive career and incentive systems for their research staff" (Aalto strategy brochure, ch. 2, pg. 5)

Resistance was seen also seen in practice about the internationalization of the School, and especially the emphasis on hiring foreigners. This topic caused much discussion during the interviews and was also seen in micro-political resistance, in other words in action - of not hiring foreigners, even though it was seen as the only "right hiring policy" of the school.

The new emphasis the hiring of foreigners seemed to be the core of the top-University narrative, but informants thought that doing the strategy and implementing the policy had gone too far, leaving the question if a foreigner is always better than a Finn without a doubt and also raised questions and contradictions to the University's role of the taking care of the Finnish society. The message of the top-managers is seen as two-folded and therefore confusing.

> "If you mention that in some program there are foreigners it is a good thing, or if you have recruited a foreigner it is a good thing. This is a strategy that is being implemented, and it is connected with the publishing internationally, it is in the core of the top-University narrative this internationalization. The contradiction is the policy of taking care of the Finnish society and its well-being. The message is two folded to the faculty and students" (2)

"I think one thing that has gone overboard is this hiring foreigners policy, I am definitely for internationalization, both in and out wise, but the setting that a bad foreigner is better than a good Finn, that the main goal is to get foreigners here goes overboard. I do understand that this could be equivalent to female quotas, but still I think it has been too much. To have it as an end itself is a working of fools" (6)

Sharing the feeling that the strategic practices in this area have gone "overboard", the informants went against the policy in practical everyday life, using 'common sense' in their hiring policy.

"We had 250 foreigners applying for a position but we did not hire any one of them, since the best six we offered the position did not take it. We don't want to play this internationalization game and hire someone here if they are under our Finnish candidate levels just to hire foreigners." (I7)

Another reason to go against the School policy was that it felt like pointless to hire foreigners for the sake of hiring a foreigner, if they are not committed to really work the School, no matter how great the contestant is.

"..just counting how many foreigners you have on your list of employees is to be a fool, I have been talking about this with the Dean, we got recently one top top application but I had no interest in hiring him if he does not want to work with us, why would I hire someone like that for 2 years and then they leave to go to some top University and take their work with them. That does not give us anything, only if we would get top researcher here that would like to work with us it would benefit us, to develop our products and even teach here that would be a great contribution. But those who just emphasize hiring foreigners don't get the reality of a department head." (I5)

The policy has caused fear amongst the Finnish workers and even students, "Those that are for example teaching right now, are told that better people are hired instead of them, makes them horrified." (2) Even though the informants understood that the policy was to open up the way for foreigners it was still seen as over practiced.
Raising the quality of the University the informants have learned, does not mean hiring more people but instead raising the quality of the staff serving the University. New quality standards, Tenure Track- career system, increased demand in publishing more in international top publications and earlier discussed emphasis on hiring foreigner have been the new emphasis of the University. At the same time as trying to hire new people many have been told to leave. This major shift in hiring policies has left many feeling that the very work they have put in the past decades is no longer valued, leaving some puzzled, fearful and anxious and as stumbling blocks to 'development'. This has led to rebellion, worry, distress and has become a high concern to many of the Department heads.

Not being able to rationalize this to the employees and the new problems caused by this policy like who will be doing all the teaching has been a great challenge to Department heads. This has caused anger and resistance to the policies and practices. As one of them put it: "it is not fun when the employees complain and react (I5).

> "The change process has been dreadfully exhausting, because its basic tool is the Tenure Track. That starts from the fact that the ones that are here presently don't meet with the demands of today, and now we need the specialist with the right competence to come from somewhere else. Now all the ones working here are extremely worried and distressed. And they are just increasing the pressure to get people out. There has been a lot of socialization done to the new working environment that is according to this new thinking, but then there is the worry that who is going to teach all our courses. The dean interviewed a hundred doctors, and that was an extremely hard process to many, he gave them tough feedback about if they will be a part of this new Aalto or not. We have not been able to rationalize the reason for all this to our people. I have it hard as the leader of the department just to hold people up." (I1)

According to informant 2 the emphasis on doing top-research has also made people "to act strategically", meaning that many are not interested in management or leadership tasks at the University anymore, since it is no longer valued. Acting strategically can be also seen as a form of micro-political resistance to the changing values.

A foreigner's view

One of my informants was a European PhD student (2 year) who would be a perfect example of the students wanted for Aalto. Still during the interview many problematic issues were raised about working at Aalto (School of Business). One of the biggest frustrations she had faced was the research seminars that were held in Finnish, making her feel excluded from the community. Her problems have lead her to some of her own micro-political resistance of not wanting to attend research seminars and not reading her e-mails that have invitations only in Finnish.

> "One person of our department she is in charge of a research seminar, this seminar as so many others was only in Finnish and this been one of my biggest frustrations, that I can't take part in the research community in that way and I feel isolated… I can understand why people don't want to do it in English… fair enough if there are no foreigners attending there is then no reason to do it in English, I know no one means bad, but this creates systematic exclusion.
> The Dean got a hold of this issue and wrote an e-mail about it. Then there was this long discussion about it, one guy saying that it would be normal courtesy for a foreigner at least to learn the language…"

The conclusion was: "this comes to a paradox, wanting foreigners but not in a way having an organization that seems ready for it. " Then comes also the issues about coping in the Finnish society outside of work, "Many things are easier for me since I have a Finnish boyfriend, but the people who come here with no contacts at all, they have it really difficult"

When asked how attractive Aalto is to a top researcher at the moment, the reply was:

> "Looking at Aalto as it is now, I would not have probably selected Aalto. I only came because of my ties my boyfriend being here, I would have not probably even known about it without him, and Finland is very remote, it is far away from everything."

To sum up this discussion of hiring foreigner it was clear that there are some problems that Aalto's hiring policies still have to face; difficulties in attracting foreigners, coalition of

cultures and resistance to change, and resistance to strategic policies that are "over implemented". An important part of this policy is the language question: Finnish or English. Aalto is more and more using English as the first language and having discussion over the teaching language. One informant captured the thought:, there is still a lot of resistance about changing the language behind the scenes.

> "I will keep on fighting that I would be able to do all my teachings in Finish, I greeted with great joy the decision to teach the first year candidate students in Finnish only, since thinking with your own mother tongue you think of the problem in a deeper level and because the university law says that we should serve firstly the Finish society (3)

Tenure Track

Tenure track is the core academic career system of Aalto University. "It is the foundation of Aalto University's objective to be a world-class university with a distinct profile, in which science and art meet business and technology." Aalto's webpage (2012)

"Aalto tenure track offers well-supported career path aimed at the Professorial level for successful academics. Tenure track is based on the principle of commitment from university and individual to academic career; it has clearly defined expectations, incentives, and assistance in personal development". (aalto.fi)

Figure 7. A banner about Tenure Track career systems at aalto.fi 2012

Since the Tenure Track is the basis for the new hiring policies of the School the topic came out in the interviews frequently. The thoughts on Tenure Track mentioned by the informants are collected in chart 2 for quick overview. Even though the new hiring system had brought in good things such as equal measures to all, it has also felt to be too slow, and stiff. The main issue causing resistance was the fact that the decisions about 'the slots' are made too high in the organization i.e. all the way up in the president's office. This has lead to disappointment and making people feel like they are treated like "babies". Besides this it was considered to be a heavy process.

Table 2 Tenure Track, good, bad, confusing and challenging

Informants thoughts about the Tenure Track	
Good	"There is less holes in the new system, it ensures better continuity" (2) "Aalto made the Tenure Track system to come faster and better that we would have otherwise gotten. My experience have been that there has been more flexibility about choosing people to it from above than I first expected" (7) "it slowly creates systems that has no differences in the demands for professors for our School and the Technical School, so I don't take it as only a bad thing". (6) "The new system is more equal to all, the professor's cants anymore just create professorships for their friends, everyone has equal standards and is on the same line." (5)
Bad	"The system opens too slowly, it is slow and stiff, and the decisions about them goes too high, we would need a faster system at the side at least during the time of transition" (2) "The loss of school autonomy has slowed down some processes, like Tenure Track comes to mind"(6) "Tenure Track has been a really heavy process here, since it starts from the fact that the people we have here don't meet the demands expected now, and that makes everyone worried and scared" (1)
Confusing	"Post-doc's that are not good enough for Tenure Track are asked to leave, I understand that the aim is to ensure quality but since they actually bring in money to the department and are also useful here as researchers and teachers I haven't seen the point of it, I am sure that it will be yet reveled that these people are still needed here" (2) "Many feel provoked about this kind of lip service all the time that you are choosing the people yourself, but yet in reality they don't, you feel like you are treated like a baby" (4) "This is made for attracting certain types of people. It is quite interesting that so far the ones they have chosen are mostly men, because young women at that age have kids and haven't produced as much articles." (4) "people have thought that what was agreed on in the School of Economic time holds forever, now that we go to Tenure Track slots, and they are not just available, it causes tension" (6)
Challenging	"There has to be a change of rhythm here" (5) The PhD's from here don't want so much to go anywhere else." (1) "Many want to stay in their comfort zone"(5)

Resistance to imposed self-identity

The resistance type sees an ideal Aalto University member according to their view of the strategy. Table 1 shows that the new values and image of an ideal Aalto and its Academian and the "reality" does not mach. As a matter in fact the imposed self-identity is seen as a threat and a cause of personal trouble, anxiety, worry and even despair when seen as something that can't be reached like for example the "blond, fit guy with glasses, publishing thousands of publications and working 24/7".

Table 3. Aalto's imposed self-identities on the employees and the threat they cause

Interviewee	Interpreted desired image/identity of Aalto member	The threat and resistance factors
1 professor, head of department	To have a University that has as strong suction as Silicon Valley something that no one can steer and where things just happen	It is not easy to create these kind of paradises in the Finnish climate where all flowers can bloom and there would be diversity There is a real crisis atmosphere here after so many having been told that they would be better off leaving.
2 professor	The emphasis on basic research, hiring foreigners and international publications seems to be the only hard core values on evaluating people	The goal is far from applied science that develops the Finnish society, contradiction. The loss of the thought of raising and training new generations is Finland is hard.
3 senior lecturer	An ideal Aalto member seems to be a Technical researcher doing basic research preferably Nano-research or similar	I am "only"doing societal studies in Business School - what is that anymore?
4 foreign PhD student	The ideal Aalto member is an Image of a blond guy with glasses flying with a helicopter to the main building with a red carpet waiting. With him he has all his thousands of research publications as he is coming straight from Harvard or Stanford, working 24/7	So where am I in all this? Or the young women who have children? Those accepted in Tenure Track seems to only be young men working 24/7

5 professor, head of department	To be like Harvard or Stanford or a top European University	First the goal was to be like Harvard or Stanford but it just raised a laugh here, but now I think the standard has been lowered to top European University.
	The new standard is to be a A-player, publishing in top-publications and doing top-research	You can't publish interdisciplinary stuff in any top-publication, so diversity is a problem
		The problem is that there is too many B-players and middleclass ok people here to make A-level University.
		The people need to understand that there has been a change of phase here, there is no secure bird nest here anymore, the small projects and reports will not do anymore, and that is the "cold turkey" to many
6 professor in a department and a leader of a unit	The ideal Aalto member has a deep understanding of his respective science but is also open minded, ready to listen to others, interdisciplinary, valuing others, and not just evaluating them	In reality there is too much competition and criticism
		Committees and such just kill us, we need resources arranged so that it would be possible to teach, do research and have time to interdisciplinary discussion

Many things seem to hinder the informants to feel like a "good" Aalto members, such as practices, policies and simply impossibilities to meet the demands. Confusion is also caused by the changing demands (to be like Harvard or Stanford) which now seem to be changing, maybe due to the resistance it caused, to be the top European University. The realities of the Finnish culture, government control not being really changed, and the new loss of autonomy revealed in the President's control, and not really having time to do this kind of interdisciplinary research now demanded seemed as threats.

Instead the fact that there is a crisis atmosphere at the School does not make it easy for people to focus on their work. Also not a small notion is the fact that some feel like they

simply are not working enough (24/7) or doing enough top-research and publication, are not the right sex and have the right looks to meet the demands of the new strategy.

The interpretation of the ideal Aalto member the resistance type has is hard to reach, demanding and acts as a "cold turkey" to many. It has lead to competition and criticism amongst workers. Also a new categorization of A and B (and middle) class workers has been produced.

From this discussion over the ideal Aalto member I gathered the alternative dialogic constructions stated by the informants in figure 8. These issues are seen as opposites, creating a new value system at the University. Each informant seems to try to find where they belong in this new value system. Valuing basic research has made those doing applied research feel less valued and puzzled. Emphasize on hiring foreigners has lead Finns feeling like they are no longer as valued, or foreigners and those that hire foreigners more valued. International top-research strategy talk has lead to the feeling that applied science supporting Finnish society is no longer valued. The strategy has created new categorization of the employees to A-, B- and middle-players. Finding out that you are now categorized to a B-player has been hard to many. Interdisciplinary and doing top-research didn't seem to match, making it hard to meet the demands of the strategy, and finally the emphasis on the technology has made business and design as under categories and subordinates to the technology talk. The talk about doing basic research seems to be far from applied development of the Finnish society or just applied science in general.

> ".. that basic research is the thing you are supposed to do, and this is quite far from applied development of the Finnish society, so is using time for example doing co-operation with the city of Helsinki in line with this basic research talk? The relation between the two is not always clear in this strategy" (2)

Figure 8. Alternative dialogic constructions

The dilemma between research and teaching

"The objective of the Finnish government in the Finnish University reform is to develop and educational and research agenda that can respond to the challenges of globalization and internationalization, the demographic development and changes in the industrial structure and working life in Finland. The goal is to advance the welfare and competitiveness of the Finnish nation as well as to support and nourish culture, creativity and education. … "The creation on Aalto University is one action that provides an opportunity to restate and embed these core academic values." Aalto Strategy Brochure ch 2 page 6.

The research and teaching dilemma came out in several ways during the interviews. As a paradox between the two, some wondered "if it is realistic to find such researchers that publish internationally and can do 5-6 courses a year". The research seems to valued more, shown for example by the fact that no real evaluation measure were created for teaching.

"they say they want to value both but then they don't create evaluations standards for teaching, and that would mean that it will always be the publication activities that are valued more" (I4)

Emphasis on research was seen also as a problem that will cause lack of teachers or willingness to teach or be in a leadership position. However the interviewed still saw those teacher's best who also do research in the respective discipline.

On the contrary to the others Informant (7) saw that research is emphasized just as much everywhere else, and saw that the problem of teaching is more in the bad teaching culture that the School has had.

> "there has been this lazy balance here, teachers don't demand too much from the students and vice versa, the level of activity is not what it should be in a leading Business School, there is a real lack of commitment here, from both parties. (7)

Going against other practices

Other micro-political resistance that was mentioned by the informants I gathered in a small list as follows:

- Informant 5 brought up the dilemma of using the work time follow-up tool. It only allows the professors to fill in 37,5 hours of work to it. She has not found any other way out but to use the mandatory tool, but to lie how much she actually works. As she said "the real working time starts after the official work hours"
- Informant 2 was still going to the meetings where he is not sure he should go from now on (co-operation meetings with the city of Helsinki). Besides this he also plans to do look for financing for research projects as he has done before, even though applied science is no longer valued.
- Informant 3 is pondering how to keep the identity of the Business Students with Business even though they are moving to a common Aalto Campus.
- Informant 5 attends the required leadership training even though the only thing she thinks is useful there is to make new friends and gather a peer support group.
- Informant 5 tried to do co-operation with other Aalto Schools, in the pursuit of doing something interdisciplinary, but gave it up since nothing came out of ("they didn't even answer my e-mails")
- **Note:** Not one of the superiors had gone through the strategy brochure with their employees, as a matter a fact only two of the informants had read or looked through the brochures before the interviews and neither of these two was a superior**.**

Review:

To sum up 'the resistance type' I gathered the main threats the informants felt their interpretation of the new strategy and the identity of the organization and the imposed self-identities is causing**:** The new strategy is seen being led with managerialism, imposed by globalization and the new competition between Universities. The merger has made the School of Business subordinate to the talk of Technology and basic research. The President and the top-management are making all major decisions, but doing it with inconsistency. The new strategy is seen as something that has changed the values of academic research. New alternative dialogic constructions have been established between all major areas of academic life such as the valuing of basic research versus applied research, and doing international top-research versus supporting the Finnish society.

Identity challenges causing:

Fear, worry, distress - are we not good enough anymore, am I able to produce what is required of me/us, the only way to define a good worker is by the amount of publications

Confusion, crisis – why only foreigners and basic research?, "do they understand what they are doing?", "this has been a hard process to many (1)"

Personal disappointments – 20-yrs of work is no longer valued as people are being laid off

4.1.2 Escaping in Cynicism

The second type of coping with the new strategy I call the "cynicism"-type. As a form of resistance it also serves as an effective way to blog the new identity-challenging strategy of the University. Fleming et al (2006) defined this form of resistance 'the escape'. Escape they define as the distancing of one's' self from the realities of power via cynicism, irony and humor.

I see cynicism in this study similarly as Mikkonen Moisander (2011) conceptualized consumer cynicism as a countervailing discursive strategy and practice that produces and sustains doubt, frustration, and disillusionment toward markets and the marketing institution. In their study cynicism is not used in the sense of unfounded negativity or sneering pessimism, but it is viewed as a political practice that is used to question and critique "social injustices and unethical practices" as well as the political authority of leaders (Kennedy 1999). Rather than offering alternative solutions it merely seeks to attack the ills. It is based on the use of cynic rhetoric to create the space to speak out and to generate transformative effects.

How cynicism-type interprets the strategy

"Aalto University's ambitious goal is to achieve world-class status by 2020. (Aalto strategy brochure, page 5)

"Aalto University works towards a better world through top-quality research, interdisciplinary collaboration, pioneering education, surpassing traditional boundaries, en enabling renewal. The national mission of the University is to support Finland's success and contribute to Finnish society, its internationalization and competitiveness, and to promote the welfare of its people through research and by educating responsible, broad-minded experts to act as society's visionaries and change agents." Aalto Mission (Aalto Strategy brochure, page 7)

Reaching world class-status statement raises cynicism about the shortness of the time span, the unrealistics of really becoming world-class. Problems also cause the fact all the other Universities in the World have the same goal. Also the strategy is seen as something full of only beautiful sentences, acting as 'mere phrases'.

> "Becoming world class, it is a damn short time till 2020, it is a good goal, but it is good to remember that 90% of the world's top-universities have set the same goal. We are on our way there ok, but we have a lot to of things that we still need to be better in, of course it is good to not be too realistic, otherwise we just live the old, and in that sense it is good to set the goals high" (6)

> "The goals are ok, but we still need more balance with in this internationalization and co-operation with companies, the strategy is full of beautiful sentences like passion for inspiration, courage to influence, hmmm, kind of just phares" (6)

Informant 4 thought that behind the story of Aalto was to make Finland more competitive, and brings witness of managerilization of Universities, that is seen for example in how Aalto looks like a fashion shop, instead of a University.

> "For example, I have never seen a University like this, in Otaniemi it looks like some sort of a fashion shop or something, it is so different from any other University I have ever seen, it was a total shock for me to visit there. Many of the images that they produce are of young, fitting looking people, and it is obvious they are trying to attract particular types of people." (4)

Cynicism about the top-leaders of the University

Out of 7 informants 5 mentioned the name of the President of the University spontaneously during the interviews. She was mentioned without exception in a negative light and in a cynical way. Her name included the connotation of manageriasim, strategizing and bad policies. Major problem seemed to be the tight centralization of decisions to the headquarters causing loss of autonomy, slowness on decisions and increased amount of bureaucracy.

Taylor noticed a clear pattern of (1999: 532) a pattern of organizational members understanding various changes as happening as the results of individuals, usually senior manager's actions in their sensemaking of revolutionary change. If the change was understood as being caused by the actions of and individual then the change was seen discontinuous, meaning that radical discontinuous change was seen to be brought about by one or two people's action. If individual agency is seen to cause discontinuous change, the culture was seen in his study as wild and irrational. On the other hand Taylor found (1999) that without the sense of change being caused by a specific individual the change blurs into an incremental and continuous process.

To ponder on Taylor's argument and the fact of the President was mentioned so many times during the interviews I made a table of comparison to see how the possible view of what was the management's role in making of the revolutionary change of the School is contrasted with the role of the management to the present problems with each informant. It seems like in the Case study the merger and the revolutionary change of the University was not seen as caused by any specific individual, but bad policies, bad sensemaking with enough listening to the lower management, tight control and in general bad leadership practices were making the change discontinuous, wild and irrational.

Table 4. Comparison on how Aalto came about versus view of the top-leaders

Informant	View of how Aalto came about	View of the President's and the managements role and influence to the changes or present problems
Informant 1 Outside forces behind the change, but President seen as the instrument behind many badly prepared decisions and policies going back and forth	Transition of the Finnish economy and society, Arts school wanted to stop the union of art schools, pressures form technology industry, Nokia was going down and forest industry, need for new innovations, national vision how to make it in the globalization	In the strategy process we prepared many policies to the President's and her management use, some were thrown away and instead a very strong Tenure Track emphasis came there, which was difficult to many. There have been many issues and too many crisis evolving factors here that have caused worry and distress; there has been, totally badly prepared decisions and discussions that has caused distrust towards the leaders of the University. Policies and decision have gone back and forth and too many decisions have been centralized to the President, she wanted to have it all. Finally she has realized that she can't lead like this.
Informant 2 Outside forces the reason to change, the problem is current managerism and uncommitting leadership, and the President wanting to make decisions herself	First official story is an interdisciplinary story (engineers plan, designers colors and Business school sells), second story on the side of it is a ranking story, the level of demand for students and teachers is raised in order to compete internationally i.e. general Finnish policy that Universities are being internationalized, third story is the entrepreneurship talk (design factory)	The leadership needs to be well managed but simultaneously it should be committing and shared, in this new system you have to create the commitment since the leaders are not chosen by us like it was before. " Matti Alahuhta can decide what kind of elevators they produce at Kone, but the President can't decide what kind of research the professor is doing, so evidently the decisions about the contents about the work is done at a very low level"." To me there is no evidence that any new kind of leadership has been produced here". The decisions goes way too high all the way to the President, the system is too slow, and the decisions made too high (about tenure Track for example). The amount of byrochracy has increased and all the decision making has been taken on a very high level, I just hope that the is given more back down to us from Lämpömiehenkuja soon.(2)
Informant 3 The President behind the emphasis on basic research and technology causing identity threats, challenges and worry	The story of being courageous to try out new combinations of science and innovations and applications	Since 2010 I have been paying attention to the President's speeches and strategy talk. It has been governed by technology and basic research, which has made me feel like an outsider, us being submitted to technology now. Many are worrying about the braking of the culture of the Business School because of this.
Informant 4	The story of making Finland more competitive, reforming the Finnish	People are provoked because of this lip service here, they say that

The story of Aalto is manage-rialism. It is seen also in how the university is lead. Problem is being treated like babys and constant "lip service" from the upper management	education, the story of managerialization, running University like a business, to make it fit looking and attractive	you are choosing the people for yourself but in reality you don't and you feel like treated a baby, many find this strange combined with the rhetoric they use. They go too far in trying to cover the fact that they are making a lot of top decisions, for example this research evaluation book says: this report is not made with the wish to compare" it just makes me laugh and cry "what is it then made for? It is all this top down but they don't want to admit it, and it creates that people don't respect it, better say it as it is.
Informant 5 The president had little to do with the merger but the problem is that the President's headquarters seems to be mostly ranting on things, bureaucracy is overwhelming and "she does not seem to know what we others really do"	Some people were bored with the bureaucratic government lead University and wanted a foundation based University instead to gain more liberty. Also the government wanted to create a university that would support international business.	Aalto's strategic leader's dialogue is what the President has had quarterly, we are doing group works and so called strategy work, but in reality it is just the President and her staff ranting on something. Bureaucracy has been overwhelmingly horrible; She has now realized that this can't be so. We should be interdisciplinary like it says in the strategy, but that can't be any basic science then. She is such a "pipettist" herself and just now lately she has began to understand what we others do.
Informant 6 The President was not mentioned by name, but problems were seen both on the middle managers and upper managers dealings	One motive was to look for synergy and cost savings, the other that we would make it lists like Shanghai, but I like to think that the idea was also to be able to create something new, new combination of technology, art and business	I have noticed that Aalto leaders have tried to break the bureaucracy and bring this thinking that using your own reason is allowed, but then there are some middle-managers that read the rules like the devil the Bible, a few times about financial decisions I have even called the Director of Finance to ask if it really is so.
Informant 7 The only real mission was to strengthen the Technical University. Does not mention the President or leaders directly	They started to ponder if The Technical University was what the Finnish industry (Nokia) needed, and they saw a need to reinforce and renew it somehow. They got this idea to make a innovation university to make it a university to serve industry in a new concept by putting technology, art and business together, with the only one real mission to strengthen the technical University	

It seems obvious that the President does not seem to know how her actions are seen at the Aalto School of Business. Either she represents all the things that is incrementally wrong with the managerialization of universities, which makes her seem as the representative of all the evil connected to the change, or the way the change has been done or implement i.e.

sensegiving has possibly failed. The President herself also represents the Technological basic research, and does not understand "what the others really do".

Rethinking academic leadership

"Aalto University's success is in the hands of its skilled and motivated faculty and staff and outstanding students, all committed to building extensive collaboration networks and societal interactions." (Aalto Strategy, chapter 1,pg. 3)

"Managing new challenges, controlling growth, upgrading central operations, developing multidisciplinary modes of operation, and promoting internationalization demands that universities rethink their leadership practices. The traditional organization of universities as a loose association of teachers and scientist is gradually being replaced by new models of academic leadership to be able to set clear goals but to do so without jeopardizing academic freedom." (Aalto strategy, ch. 2, pg. 5)

The informants saw that the new Aalto University had brought changes in the leadership of the School of Business at many levels. On the one hand they have lost power and autonomy since the President and the upper management is more involved in for ex. hiring a new people. That has caused difficulties in for instance in a loss of flexibility, when employees have been on longer leaves of work.

They have had to also be able to cope with the change of their own position, to be the implementers of the new strategy, and in trying to make their department to produce more top publications and at the same time keeping the people motivated to go through the changes, and to be able to hire the right people while dismissing others. Besides all this, the new strategy demands more 'A-class people'. But, how can you publish more in top-publications with the people you have, if the employees can't get it done? Also the new leadership training is seen with cynicism.

> "Before the department head position was something people fought which professors turn it is to take it, now these are really leadership positions, before there was no strategic planning, it was more a position that had a right to write signature on travelling bills. Since I am a new leader, I have had to learn everything from the scratch, but in one way it has been easy since I didn't have any preconceptions of what it is like. But the hard part to all department heads have been that the faculty that is reacting to all the changes and are complaining, to some of us it is not easy to say that publish in international top publications, when with the people you have, it just doesn't happen. The leadership training was good for nothing though, the only benefit was to get new friends" (5)

Cynicism was also found when the informants where referring to 'the strategic talk' versus real actions. This kind of dilemmas came up in for example in the issues of hiring policies. " It has been clear that nothing else matter s in hiring policies that the amount of publica-

tions, even though elsewhere it is said otherwise" (2). The new strategy has also led people starting to act 'strategically', as one informant put it. In other words people don't want 'to waste' their time on the management anymore because of the new emphasis on publishing. Even considering all the efforts the top-management of the School has put in to creating new leadership to the School, the verdict is that that "no new leadership has been created in the School" (I5).

> "The biggest problem is that people start acting strategically "If we look at hiring policies nothing else matters than the amount of publications, nothing else matters all the other things are just speech, that is the only thing that matters, I have been in enough many processes in Aalto so it is absolutely clear that it is so, but then people start acting strategically, ok if it so I won't waste my time on the management or leadership, and then people just withdraw to do their own things, and I am not sure if this will work out. And I don't see any signs that any kind of new leadership has been created here either". (I2)

How the Cynism- type interprets the imposed identity

The emphasis is only on publishing, even though it is said otherwise. Teaching comes second. People are acting strategically meaning that they start avoiding management tasks.

> "The only measure to measure people is by the amount of publications, that seems to be the only core value of the strategy, no matter what is said elsewhere" (2).

The cynical type also sees that the real truth about the new competition amongst workers is not said openly, which makes people react, feeling like they are treated like "babies".

Working interdisciplinary causes also the cynical type to react. There are former and current identity images of "others" that hinder this process.

> "Interdisciplinary – has Aalto succeeded in that? Partly maybe yes, though this is changing slowly. There is a still a lot of presumptions about the Business School people (and others in general)".

The Identity of the School is also a problem to the cynic.

> "The Aalto Brand is catastrophical at the moment, when we had the last applications come the most of them came from Pakistan, China and Nigeria" (2)

Review: Cynicism helps one to distance oneself from the 'strategy talk' and to see a way of an escape. The cynicism type interprets the strategic goals as unrealistic and strategy texts as merely as "phrases". The top-leaders of the University were seen with cynicism and as change agents to many present problems due to decisions being made to high up, to the lack of listening and lack of really understanding what it is that "we do here". The cynical- type sees no new "leadership" being produced to the School, despite all the efforts done.

The threat is causing:

Distrust – toward the leaders of the University, issues causing crisis atmosphere have been to many (1), decisions are badly prepared (1)

Lack of commitment- the decisions are made too far, it does not make me feel committed to them."In the old system the good part was that it has made people committed, because it has been from down to up and to the new system the committing needs to be like created… (2)

Defense- The President can't touch my everyday work, I can use some self-determination still, or I will soon retire "does not concern me"

> "Matti Alahuhta can decide what kind of elevators they produce at Kone, but the President can't decide what kind of research the professor is doing, so evidently the decisions about the contents about the work is done at a very low level" (2)

> "Some significant thing can be produced through polyphony, but inside each science, in there you don't come to managerialize, but only the borderline limits, but the freedom of research exists in some way, even though there is that who gets to be chosen to that academic freedom, but after they have been chosen they have pretty much a change to do things their own way, even though of course through Tenure Track the control to follow up on them is 9 years"(1)

Irritation – decisions go back and forth, they make no sense, and also the role of the communications department was seen in a very cynical way.

> "The Communications department has changed to be even more bureaucratical than it was before, it has become totally ridiculous (6)

4.1.3   Distancing oneself through irony and sarcasm

The third identity project I found was using sarcasm and irony to scorn or contempt the hard and contradictive issues of the strategy. The hard to be reached goal of the University, mission of building a better world and the topic of increased bureaucracy were the major causes for sarcasm.

Definition of sarcasm:
> Ridicule or mockery is used harshly, often crudely and contemptuously, for destructive purposes. It may be used in an indirect manner, and have the form of irony. Hostile, critical comments may be expressed in an ironic way, such as saying "don't work too hard" to a lazy worker. The use of irony introduces an element of humor which may make the criticism seem more polite and less aggressive. (Wikipedia)

> A bitter sneer: a satirical remark in scorn or contempt, often but not necessarily ironical. Gr. Sarkasmos to tear flesh like dogs, to speak bitterly- sarx, sarkos, flesh. (Wordsworth Reference Dictionary, 1994)

How sarcasm-type interprets the strategy

"The goal of the strategy is to reinforce the role of the University as a change agent in society, and to make the University a more valuable co-operation partner, for the commercial sector as well society as a whole". (Aalto Strategy brochure, ch. 2, pg 6)

With sarcasm the strategy text was seen to be more or less just communication aimed for the stakeholders. The use of irony and sarcasm is used to distance oneself from the goals of the University and to state that the real practices and strategies are still made at each department. (I5, 7)

> "it raises tears in my eyes, if we could reach even anywhere close to those goals, it would be great, it just moves me, how beautiful and great, this is like reading an old primary school regulation. This is however more or less communications that is more focused for stakeholders, the real strategy comes from the real practices at the workplaces." (7)

> "We don't actually have any strategy that kind of a plan plan, but we only have the goal that we are on the top by 2020 and that we publish in good publications, but we need to here (at the Departments) think how to get there and in that way the strategy rises from practices." (5)

> "The strategy can be really good, and this has really good stuff, and I am really sure this is a good strategy, and really professional people have been doing this, but the real issues that goes into practice, the hard issues, that seems to be implemented… and somehow the success in basic research has narrowed down the thinking, and the only criteria now in choosing people is that they can publish well, but then there are the 3 tasks of the University" (2)

The sarcastic type also sees the 'Mission of building a better world' starting with technology in front. That has lead to a worry of having the former accomplished status and the Strengths of the School of Economics thrown in the "trash".

> "Our strengths as a School that were valued before are now throne in the trash, there has been a big worry about this here (in the discussions here)." (3)

Reaching world-class, or MIT or Harvard goal has "just raised a laugh" in its impossibility. Or at least it can't be reached by "just setting up a few strategic goals".

> "It will not be possible to reach the goal to be top by 2020 it is an unrealistically short time span, but I am in this understanding that if we hold tightly what we are aiming for 2030 it might look different already, the whole University, but surely we are not going to catch MIT, but if we would reach to a level of a top European Technical University, that has as smaller partner design and Business School, that would not be too bad either as an outcome. (7)

> "At first when we were told that we should get to the level of Standford and Harward it just raised a laugh, but personally and many others have thought that now the standard has been lowered, and I think that now we talk about,, this discourse of getting to become a good European, people have realized that it hard to take out of nothing, but in the truths name there are a lot of it that people want to do what they have always been doing and keep to their comfort zones, this is a larger problem everywhere, it is always so when a new guy comes straight from school and has lived this change, they get it that you have to change all the time, and do new things, and some kind of change of rhythm is needed here also. (5)

> "well I am not saying that it is impossible to reach the goal of being a top-University, but it is very difficult and I think you can't just become world class by setting a couple of strategic goals, there are so many things that have to work for it and the whole culture has to work" (4)

The goal of being the top-University by 2020 and reaching higher rankings for the University have made people feel like they are "lazy and bad people" since they can't get it done,

but now they have learned to take comfort in knowing that not reaching the goal could be also because the goal simply is impossible to reach in 8 years of time.

> " People are starting to realize that the reason why we were not so high in rankings was not because we were lazy or bad people, it just is really hard to get up there just deciding it yourself, the competition is fierce and 8 years to 2020 is a really short time to have anything change. " (7)

There seems to be lots of fear since people don't really know what possibilities they have in all this new University, and about how one could meet the demands to build this kind of a University i.e. teach and publish according to the demands.

> "this constantly flagging that we want to be a top University by 2020 and that you need to do this and this thing, many people don't see it as a very realistic possibility for them to do both the top level teaching and to do 5-6 courses a year and publish in a-level journals and all the sort of things, fear and insecurity is something I hear a lot. (4)

With sarcasm also the whole goal of the School is seen to be only to strengthen the position of basic research.

> "Honestly the main goal was to strengthen the position of basic research in the University."(7)

Co-operation with industry and supporting the Finnish society

" The RAE (Research Assessment Exercise) panels praised Aalto University for its tight collaboration with industry: however, the relatively strong focus on applied and contract research was also considered a threat to the goal of becoming a world-class research university. The University was urged to commit a considerable share of its resources to long-term, high-quality basic research which forms basis of pioneering education and ultimately stimulates the innovation system." (Aalto Strategy Brochure, ch. 2 pg. 6)

Contrasting collaboration with industry with a strong focus on applied and contract research raised discussion during interviews and served as a typical issue that also was dealt with irony and sarcasm.

Informant 2 has even carefully that the words 'applied research' was first mentioned in the strategy brochure (the smaller edition, in the quote the larger edition to leaders) in the page 17 (!), and even then found under the School of Engineering. Sarcastically she points out how that brings evidence to the fact that basic research is the only thing valued in the School anymore. She had also had paid attention to President's speeches, counting from year 2010, the President has always mentioned and emphasized the basic research as the main focus of the University.

Besides the emphasis on basic research, the talk of publishing internationally and supporting the Finnish society seemed to be in contradiction. The message to the faculty seems to

be "two-folded", the top-research and basic science seems to be what you should primarily do, but it is far from developing the Finnish society. This has made co-operation and using time with industry or other partners "unclear". Also contradictions between this new emphasis and the actual budget of the department emerged. (2)

> "is using ones time to Helsinki operation in harmony with this basic…in this sense the story is unclear to me, the relation between the two is not clear in the strategy" (2)
> "..so I have gotten this feeling that supporting the Finnish society is not so important, but then they don't understand that these Tekes projects are also a good source for data and that the finances of our department is not in such a good state that we wouldn't need the money…. So there is also the contradiction between the talk and the budget" (2)

There was also a major contrast with the strategic values versus the budget of the department:

> "How about all the projects we have had that have brought in money to the department, it seems like there is no real understanding of what the strategy means for real in terms of losing the money and the teaching capacity" (2)

One of the informants had pondered on the subject and detested the whole talk about there being any difference in basic and applied science in the context of Business research. The research is at the best the informant (5) noted "it is theories in practice, that is simultaneously applied and basic research". Also this talk brings evidence that the President doesn't know what "we really do" since "she has only worked with pipettes".

> "On the other hand being interdisciplinary can't be basic science" "The President has herself being doing research only with pipettes, only just now she has started to understand what we others do here"

Finding a balance between the interests of the companies and purely scientific interest was also causing contradictions. Businesses don't seem to understand the cycle academic research is being done with and how well the results can be applied into business world. (6)

Informant 7 thought more in lines of the strategy quote above, that doing co-operation with companies is "just selling oneself cheap", or working with businesses would be "going back" to something done before. Only excellence draws excellence, he thought.

> "In generally the whole questions is about if this is the right goal, I believe that people would think that, taking research forward as close as possible to the top of the world would be the right goal, is they would see that there would be realistic means to get there, but it comes to mind if in some schools there is a lack of faith and block fobia, it feels like we can hit our heads on the wall no matter how many times, and nothing happens, so why don't we instead go back to emphasizing the co-operation with companies and such things. Which of course is important, but it is clear that through doing good research you get to talk with the best researchers and companies, that is clear. Excellence draws excellence always, it makes sense to measure universities by what measure of innovations is born there. We can never replace that by doing stuff for companies that they wouldn't use their own money doing, that is just selling oneself cheap." (7)

The topic of bureaucracy

"... independent researchers were organized under the state administration. As a result of this, universities inherited administrative routines that do not support the creative, progressive and constantly changing development of research and teaching. (Aalto str., ch 2. Pg. 4)

All of the informants brought up the fact that the amount of bureaucracy has more increased than decreased after the merger. Many were hoping that the increase of bureaucracy would soon come to an end, due to the completing of the merger. The 'strongest' comment on the issue came from informant 2 that thought the whole strategy text about the amount of bureaucracy being reduced, is just pure 'rubbish'. The University is still government financed and lead and the increased control of the University's headquarters has just served as a new increaser of the amount of bureaucracy.

> " I think this is pure rubbish" of course the amount of bureaucracy have not reduced. Bureaucracy has just increased, partly because of the merger, partly because of taking the decision too high. Also the money still comes from the ministry of education and they are therefore they are doing performance control, and just having one box more above us. They have promised to me from Lämpömiehenkuja (headquarters) that the decisions making is brought back down here in the near future" (2)

Also the building of the new University has consumed time that has been away from the core academic work.

> "Building the new system has been a terrible burden, and it is just the beginning. No particular benefits have come to us from it, more it has taken a lot of work time from people and time have been consumed on building the new regime, not to the core academic work". (1)

The culture of Aalto
The culture of Aalto was mentioned spontaneously during the interviews a few times. Both the old culture and the new culture were seen with sarcasm. In the old culture the problems have been "good brother thinking" and bad teaching culture. Also too many have been not really doing much academic research, but on the other hand this kind of people might be still useful to accomplish other tasks at the departments. The new culture of Aalto seems to be ruled by the 'Technology' talk that leaves others "out".

> "because I really get the feeling that Technology talk is ruling here, and we are submitted to it, and I know I am not alone with this feeling, that this is an issue that they really need to look at in building the culture. (3)

The key to the successful change is in the ability to build a culture of a common 'community' to the University.

> "Then here at page 13 (shorter version of the brochure) there is a real key thing in the success of the whole process, that is what kind of a culture they are able to build in a community, the culture of the community is the key thing. Of course we always know, that this is the issue that is being turned up and out in a change, but this concern that we are submitted and under the technical so people here really worry about the shattering of the culture of The Business School, that how can we socialize the students to the business thinking when we are all in one campus and Aalto is the thing" (3)

Many of the other informants mentioned the increasing of competition and criticism due to the new values of the School seen for example in the publishing of the "research evaluation criteria's". As the leaders are not being open about this new emphasis on competing, it causes people to lose their respect towards them.

> "for example this book, it makes me cry and laugh or I don't know what it makes me feel like, about research evaluation, it says in the book 'this report or evaluation is not made with the wish to compare' but what is it then made for? Do they think that we are stupid or something, of course it is made to compare. It is made to say which department is doing best and about allocating funding, it is about strategic management, it is about all these this, it is this top down but they don't want to admit it, and the it creates this that people don't respect that, better say it as it is." (4)

The new strategy also raises the issue of equality. It seems the informant 4 that the leaders think that all the merits are mutually objective, but are they really? She wonders. She also has a point that culture can't be created by the headquarters, and that the only thing going on at the moment for real is competition.

> "Can we ensure equality if we don't reflect on this? And of course that this is one problem that they are trying to create this culture but culture is something that can't artificially be created and this is my problem, you can t just sit down and create it, if I was to say what is Aalto culture like I wouldn't point out the values but hat would be the strategy, the strategic values, if I would say what the culture is at the moment I would say right now it is competition… competition is the main thing going on right now" (4)

Informant 4 saw "very dangerous development" at the moment, with the new measurement values. Just looking at the amount of quotations can't be the means to measure departments with one another. "

> "Of course quality is good, but going overboard with this causes only grief and evil" (I4)

The strategy process and the outcome of it

"The Aalto University strategy is the result of workshops and reports of the Aalto University preparation organization during 2008-2009, finalized and developed by the Aalto University leadership in constant dialogue with the Aalto University community, and supported by the international evaluation panels and other external stakeholders and partners. (Aalto Strategy Brochure)

Many of the informants thought that the strategy process was more or less just symbolic, meaning that what was said did not affect much of anything since everything was decided on beforehand by the president and her management at the headquarters. Informants 3 and 5 had been very active in the strategy process, for example taking part in a feedback-group, the president's strategy seminars and at the internet based strategy discussion site, and felt frustrations about the outcome, not being convinced that people and the Business Schools

voice had an effect in the process, making it feel like 'pseudo involving'. Where are the discussion and our feedback seen in all this? She asks. (3) Also the question "Where is the Business Schools viewpoint seen?" is raised.

> "..sometimes it feels and I know that I am not the only one feeling like this, I have felt frustrated about where is this discussion seen, I took part in the strategy discussion and at the same time as I was answering I checked what the others had said, and afterwards I was not so convinced that peoples word had any affect. I mean the viewpoint of the Business School had not as much affect, when you look at these different definitions that they came up with, everything is so technology emphasized and it feels like the business and art are just helpers in marketing these great technical innovations" (3)

> "The net based questioners have been really frustrating, I answered some also, but still the same strategy came out that was already thought, and everybody just felt it was pseudo involving. As department head I have answered to all kinds things and prepared explanations to others, and taken part in leaders dialogues, that in practice that has been just the President's management just ranting on something" (5)

Informant 1 was very pleased to receive a personal letter from the Dean with the strategy brochure, even though she felt it was much like a marketing campaign, still she felt it was "kind of personal". She also had opinions about the strategy itself, first of all she felt it makes people set their own goals and secondly research seems to be mostly valued.

> "there is not much in this letter, expect that it also shows in a way that the strategy is very much people strategy, it is very much people setting their own goals, and that each person should pay a particular role in reaching goals of Aalto. Research is on top and it signals that it is really important, teaching is sort of second, then comes all the other things. " (1)

How the sarcasm type interprets the identity imposed on them

It seems to the sarcastic identity project- type, that new strategic actors, heroes and helpers have been set in the University. The identity of the Business School is a new role of a "helper" , and not a strategic player. Who gets to decide the agenda, Business School now being more a helper, not a strategic player? The new hero seems to be Technology and Basic research.

> "The value of Business School to Aalto, what is it?, the one that sells the good ideas of others? (3) What is the Business School in Aalto Context? We hope that there would be still a strong identity for the Business School (3) in the future as well."
> "We are now submitted to technology, I am not the only one with this feeling" (3)

There is also a new problem of the identity of the Students, not identifying themselves anymore to be business students but Aalto students.

> "our students are identifying with Aalto, especially after the move to Otaniemi, I worry how are we able to socialize them to our (Business) culture (3)

Also the identity of a business School strategy worker is more a role of a helper now.

The sarcastic coping strategy also sees himself as an instrument of increased bureaucracy. The increased governmental tasks have made it harder to concentrate of their core academic work. The imposed desired image of an Aalto member raises problems of competition and lack equality due to the measurement values. People have felt that they are just "lazy and bad" people since they can't accomplish the desired Aalto workers status and the strategic goals. Sarcasm helps to understand that maybe the problem is more "in the goal being impossible".

 "The University and its workers should only see the University as something that is enables functions, but only to a few it should be seen as the means in itself", informant 2 points out. To a professor whose task is to do research and teaching, and develop in research, it makes no difference on "what airport he is working at". He also counts that only 1% of the ones going through the University stay there. Thus the airport metaphor he uses. Firstly I interpret it to mean that the whole view of the strategy and the development of the School is the interest of a small group, secondly he is implying that a real scientist will do his core work despite of the 'airport' he is working at. Aalto is not the end means but interesting scientific work is. The main task of the School should be to help the scientist to accomplish this, not just to be instruments of bureaucracy. As the motivation of work comes only from being able to do the core academic work better that before, resting in the hope that the new system would support it better than before.

> "For me reaching the top of the world does not motivate me (I am sure that there are some that find it motivating, but I am retiring in a few years so it does not motivate me anymore" (2)

Review of Sarcastic-type coping strategies

The sarcasm- type interprets the strategy with "tears in their eyes" in its impossibility and marketing talk to the stakeholders. The strategy can't be accomplished by just setting a few strategic goals, the sarcasm type concludes. The mission with building the top University starts with technology in the front. Co-operation with industry or other partners and supporting the Finnish society, seemed to be in contradiction with the demand of doing basic research and publishing in top-publications. The bureaucracy has increased even though the strategy text clearly claims that the vast amount of bureaucracy was produced because of being under state administration. These routines are claimed to not support creative, progressive and the developing of research and teaching (strategy text quote at page 61). On the contrary the informants saw that the University is still under government control

and now the Business School is also under the control of the head quarters of the University. Also due to the administrative processes the bureaucracy has increased vastly during the merger. The culture of Aalto was seen as competitive and lacking a sense of community. Also the new strategy was raising the issue of equality and some dangerous development was seen in the new measurement values of the School. The strategy process was not seen as it was stated to be like in the strategy brochure (quote pg. 63), a constant dialogue with the Aalto community. Instead the sarcasm type saw it merely symbolic, and 'pseudo involving'. The Business School views and the discussion and feedback were not seen in the end results, or better said the end result was seen as something decided by the headquarters, even before the "hearing process". Finally the creative academic work needs to get more support from the University, not needing to necessarily be interested in the School itself, since for an academic the University is just like an airport, that serves as a place of work platform.

The threat is causing:

Dilemmas about how one should be using their work time. Is working with industry and other partners and doing applied science projects against the strategy?

Confusion. How could people become like the strategy demands, publishing and teaching well simultaneously? Or are we just lazy and bad people not being able to meet the demands? (7)

Frustration over the increased amount of bureaucracy and strategy process that was not a real dialogue, but was more beforehand decided on by the headquarter.

4.1.4   The Strategy Champion

Besides the cynical, sarcasm and resistance approach or coping strategies to the radical change of the Aalto organization, many had also found some positive things about the changes that helped them find their motivation to go along with it and even find new excitement and opportunities in the merger and the new strategy of the Aalto University. The type I called "The strategy Champion", they see positive things in the changes that helps to cope with other disappointments or threats.

How does the positive type interpret the strategy

The ones doing co-operation with other Aalto Schools, involved in interdisciplinary programs or research, or participants in some committees with other Aalto members found it helpful for them to cope with the changes and see them in a more positive light. Three no-

tions, that I found from this. Firstly the key is that the academics are looking for benefits for their academic life. Seeing a possibility to learn or to do something new is exciting seems to be important and motivating to them. In general I could say that the co-operation was taken "in ones own use", as a resource and not something as imposed or forced on the informants. The co-operation was even making them able to take distance to the "old academic doing only work in your own science"- identity. Only thing needed was to have time to participate in this interdisciplinary discussion, on top of doing one's own research.

> *"what would motivate people to the change that the resources are arranged so that it would be possible to be interested and listen to others so that we are not killed with these committees and such, that we would have time to do research and on the other hand have time to participate in this interdisciplinary discussion. That there would be a possibility to learn something new and it would be exciting and fun"* (6)

> "the question is what kind of coping strategies people choose. I have had this research group I have participated where we have been working with other Aalto schools and have been very active about Aalto, we have done different courses and initiations, and masters programs. Now lately I have seen it even as a resource, interdisciplinary effectiveness on the society, Aalto's common actions have been easily this kind of interdisciplinary leading to affecting the society, when the narrow academic qualification is that you work within your own science. I have seen with my colleague that Aalto co-operation fits us well, and that I relate to it positively and that there are even possibilities here all ok." (2)

> "we have learned new types of meeting culture, this kind of game type meetings, from the School of Arts people, and to me it has been enriching (6)

Secondly commitment to the changes is connected with the securing of one's own future at the University. An important basis for positive coping strategies and readiness for working for Aalto's merger was the secured future at Aalto. Even though informant 2 was frustrated for example about the strategy process, the Business School not being taken for consideration in the discussions and saw the School being under technology as a bad thing, she has found excitement and positive energy to work fully for building Aalto after being told that she can stay and get even more demanding work tasks. She saw also the meetings The Dean of the School had arranged with her and 100 other researcher about their future in Aalto as a very positive thing, even though other informants brought it up as a very harsh process to many.

Informant 2 was also actively building an self-image of a Aalto school member by focusing how she introduced herself always from Aalto School of Business. She was very pleased also with the Schools values and mission, and the new way to recruit people thru Tenure Track. She was also positive about moving to Otaniemi head quarters, thinking that meeting people in real life is the key to the change. She realized herself that after the shock about the radical change come fears and frustrations and defense reactions, and after that some go with it with excitement while others don't, but as people get to where they stand

in this new organization and what my options are in this new picture things look bright again. "As I got the securing of my positions and title (remembers even the date she received the letter) I have had a very trusting feeling about the change now, and I want to go with full speed with it" The Change started to seem more positive since the securing of her own future at the School. As she well put it herself : "It really is so also according to many researches that even though you talk at general level, people always tend to think at how things are going work out for me in this…(3)

> "always when a change come first there is this hype about it, but then when people wake up to its reality or everyday life, the get a shock that what is going on here and then things go downhill, then comes fears and frustrations and defense mechanism, … but when decisions are made and when we come to the level that people get to know where they stand in all this and what are my options, is it the 'door' or am I able to start even changing my work in this new big picture… I also got the securing of my job and title and the it started to go uphill" (3)

Thirdly I found that the "younger" generation informants were in general more open to the changes, especially those that had studied or done research abroad.

And fourthly I found that has helped to see the changes in a more positive light is when the informant saw that Aalto has brought advances to their department or to their personal career:

> "as a department we have gotten better changes to hire people through Tenure Track development, but probably we would have gotten them here anyway eventually, but this view or some kind of a promise of the path a head of us by 2020, that is more clearly for our department/School a way of enlarging that would not have been possible in the old School of Economics." (7)

> "When we get to the same campus then we can really say what comes out of this, because then you really meet people, not just look from some organizational map that they are also a part of us" (3)

How does the positive-type see the identity imposed on them

The positive type sees Aalto's identity and the imposed identities in a more positive light. An ideal Aalto member has abilities and desires to participate in interdisciplinary discussion, but is still very focused on the academic career:

> "An ideal Aalto member is a person that is good in its own field of science, deep understanding of it, but understands to value also others and be open to discussion. Interdisciplinary is not the goal in itself but that one is ready to discuss with others and gain new ideas from it and thoughts that can be interesting, not that everybody has to do interdisciplinary cooperation but a culture that values others includes all of us, also so in side of the Business School, not being critical of others but valuing others." (6)

> "An ideal Aalto member is curious, energetic and respectful of others, 100% academic people that don't have arms and antennas to every direction." (7)

One informant told how she is proud to introduce herself nowadays being from Aalto University, a new bigger context.

> " I so proudly present myself that so and so from Aalto University, because it is much shorter, but also because I am in a way proud that I am from this bigger context.." (3)

Also the School is seen in a positive light, as a top expert organization, valued top-researchers and experts.

> "This is like a top expert organization, I would say. We are seen a lot in the media, the Business School especially we just got the statistics, we are really being valued to be experts and top-researchers." (3)

Having a far reaching goal was also seen as a motivating thing by many. Informant 7 thought the new goal motivating and even possible to reach at least a more realistic time span; "if we just keep tightly hold on the goal, the whole University will look different by 2030, at least to a level where we would have a top European technical university, that would not be a bad outcome either" and also ""the new path will be a much greater path of expansion to the Business School than we would ever have had in the old School" (7). Most importantly the goal needs to be high enough, since emphasis on the "realities" will make people just go back to the old again.

> "I think it is good to set the goal high. We are in a good way but there is a lot that needs to be developed. But if we start emphasizing realities and braking we will just live to old again" (6)

Some informants also found Metaphors useful in their sensemaking and coping strategies. The new identity of the Aalto member was seen by informant 2 as an airport to make sense of the new emphasis on laying off people.

> "In some measure the thing is that University is to some extent a passing through organization. 99% of the students study and then leave, 1 % stays and from that 10% stays in an academic career. It was not meant for people to stay, many have been here long and for many of them it would be reasonable for them to leave to go somewhere else, this causes now a lot of pain when they are told to be better off leaving"(2)

Review of the strategy champion- type coping strategy:

Interdisciplinary programs or research, doing co-operation with other Aalto Schools, and seeing benefits to one's own academic work and career were the basis of the strategy champion identity projects. Doing new kind of co-operation and interdisciplinary projects or research gave new motivation and a new identity of someone "not only doing research in their own respective science". After the securing of one's own future at the University the changes were also easier to see in a positive light. The goals of the University seemed

motivating and the new bigger context (Aalto University) even raised pride. Using metaphors like the University being "an airport" helped in forming a new narrative and identity of the worker of Aalto University as "only passing through". The School was seen as a top-expert organization. The high goal of the School was seen motivating and as a thriving force to make changes. The Business School was seen to be on a "a path of much greater expansion" than it would have been during the time of the Old School.

4.1.5   Co-present identity-projects

Beech (Beech, 2008, Beech and Huxham, 2003) saw that identity work can or may be a mélange of different identity projects, co-present within the self but distinct and potentially conflicting. Based on the 4 different identity projects or coping strategies I found at Aalto Business School, we can see that they could be potentially conflicting. While resisting the informants also were building on "the future", and seeing some positive new identities being formed in the midst of the otherwise ambiguous and identity-challenging strategies. Even though they were cynical and sarcastic over some matters, still simultaneously many of them also saw positive opportunities and identities being formed.

The informants were using these different identity projects in different manners and combining them in unique ways. Each informant had found their own unique identity position that helped them to cope with the changes that made working at the University still meaningful in way that suite them best. With resistance and sarcasm or irony they could detach themselves from too ambiguous identity-challenges, but still at the same time see opportunities for them and their own identity projects in the changes.

4.2   Dynamics and complexities of identity work

4.2.1   The manager's role in the "succeeding" of the identity shift

Managerial theory has according to Alvesson (2002, 636) supplied discourse through which self-identity is constructed and maintained. For example "leadership" is seen 'effective' when it coalesces and regulates identity, de-activating alternative constructions. Managerial and corporate regulation may in fact reduce anxiety for employees when it assists them in coping with ambiguity or when undertaking focused, productive work. On the oth-

er hand, managers are the 'recipients' and 'bearers' of powerful regulative efforts that may be counter-productive when transmitted to the 'shop floor'. (Alvessoon et al 2002)

Several studies have had the focus on how individual and organizational identity issues can affect mergers and the merger process. Vaara (2001 as quoted in Clark, Gioia, Ketchen Thomas 2010) adopted a sociopolitical perspective in tracking the merger of two Finnish firms, which broke down after five years. Role identity issues at the individual level among executives gave rise to counterproductive sociopolitical forces, high levels of tension, and severe conflicts.

Maguire and Phillips' (2008 as quoted in Clark et al 2010) found that institutional trust was initially damaged by the ambiguity of the new organization's identity. Once the identity of the new organization became less ambiguous, *institutional trust* was undermined by the absence of employees' identification with the new organization, especially among those who identified closely with their original organizations.

Clark et al (2010) suggest that how identity—and by implication, identity change—*is managed* can affect the merger process. In the light of the results of my study the managing of the identity process has been causing problems in the sifting of the identity. On top of the managing problems, it seems that the new identity is also at least in some part too ambiguous making sift of identity hard. Also having a twin role as leader (sensegiving, sensemaking) and strong identification with the former organization (long careers) could be a cause for problems in the identity shift, if one does not consider that the goals and visions of the University were just too ambiguous for the employees.

4.2.2 Sensemaking and sensegiving by the leaders

Brown et al argue that the performance of stories is the key part of organization member's sensemaking (Brown, 2008, Boje, 1995: 1000) the analysis of which permits us to identify and to analyze what people agree on and where understandings differ.

Ravasi and Schultz (2006) studied organizational responses to environmental changes that induce members to question aspects of their organization's identity. Their findings highlighted the role *of organizational culture* as a source of cues supporting "sensemaking" action carried out by leaders as they reevaluate their conceptualization of their organization, and as a platform for "sensegiving" actions aimed at affecting internal perceptions or

self-identities. They argued that the interplay of constructed images and organizational culture shapes changes in institutional claims and shared understandings about the identity of the organization.

I connected this to the sense-making theory, (Thessleff-Järventie 2011, Maitlis, 2005), as I investigate organizational identity building in a strategic change that evolves in and through a stream of sense-making and sense-giving activities producing discursive and narrative constructions and collective accounts about the way the informants understand and implement the organizational identity in strategic change. Sense-giving refers to processes that top manager's use to influence others' constructions of meaning in attempting to create some preferred (re)definition of organizational reality (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991; Pratt, 2000; Maitlis, 2005; Maitlis and Lawrence, 2007). Via sensegiving, managers attempt to shape stakeholders' interpretations and elicit acceptance—by providing information, appealing to them.

There are also studies made about the special elements of the identity work of managers. Watson (2008) redefined identity work by making a clear distinction between 'internal personal self-identities' and 'external discursive social-identities' with social identities being seen as a link or bridge between socially available discourses and self-identities. Studying managerial identities he defined two kinds of identity work 'inward facing' and 'outward facing' identity work.

According to Watson (2008) in organizations people are required to take on various corporate personas, which people are required to adapt and change as global, societal and organizational circumstances change. Simultaneously the managers have to act as the voice or the face of the corporation and be seen as authoritative and "in control" and as credible human beings. Three of the interviewees were also presently (+3 either had been one or a vice-department head) the middle managers of the organization thus having a twin role in coping with these changes. On the one hand they are doing their own identity work and on the other hand they serve as representatives of the top management to their employees.

Thomas and Davies (2005, Thomas 2008) illustrates how individuals draw on understanding of self as professional, manager, older worker and so on as resources from which to resist attempts to redefine their understanding of the social work practice and identity. These moments of micro-political resistance are both contingent and processual occurring

as individuals confront and reflect on their own identity. Micro-political resistance is aimed precisely where power resides- in action.

4.2.3   Identity shift, transitional identity and identity disruptions

Identity challenging technology/strategy may necessitate a shift in the firm's identity, which is a potentially traumatic and disruptive process. Identity serves as guidepost, directing the development of some routines and capabilities over others and reinforcing some beliefs over others (Kogut and Zander 1996 as quoted in Tripsas 2009:442)

According to Tripsas (2009) research has focused on how organizations respond to identity threats- inconsistencies between internal identity and internal perceptions of external identity. When organization members discern such threat, they engage in variety of strategies to restore consistency. As mentioned before the coping strategies of this research were strategies to restore consistency.

Reframing the threat, cognitive tactics, and persuasive communication has been what the management has used for resolving the issue. Or change is needed in identity. Management recognition of the need to change identity and not just alter strategy or operational tactics is crucial if firms are to avoid an *"identity trap"* (Bouchikiksi and Kimberly 2003 as quoted in Tripsas 2009:444). But not surprisingly, internal identity is difficult to change. By what know of the University of Aalto I can't say if they have trying to reframe the threat. I more got the feeling that almost everything that was going on was more increasing the threat, though lots of persuasive communication was done by the management. The more interesting question is whether we could see an "identity trap" at Aalto Business School. My conclusion is that in some part yes, but in some parts as said about the positive coping strategies we could see some of the new Aalto identity being formed. Was it exactly like the top-management thought that is another question.

According to Clark et al (2010) each top management team is trying to make sense of, and give sense to the new organizational identity. From this perspective, making a merger work depends to a significant extent on the ability of the top management teams of each organization to reorient current modes of thinking and acting by initiating and managing major cognitive shifts on the part of members of both organizations. In the face of potentially paralyzing fears, the construction of a "transitional identity" as Clark et al (2010 calls it, provides a necessary sense of stability in a precarious and ambiguous context. It allows

people in merging organizations to accept that an identity change is indeed under way and that it is important to let go of their former organizational identities to enable the construction of a new one.

Clark et al (2010) talk about a transitional identity – an inherim sense held by members about what their organizations were becoming – was critical to moving the identity change process forward. The transitional identity allowed executives in their study to suspend their preexisting organizational identities and work toward creating a shared, new identity. If the transitional identity was ambiguous enough to allow multiple interpretation into of what the merged organization would become to eventually coalesce into a common understanding, but not so ambiguous as to be threateningly unfamiliar.

In one sense I could also conclude that the four coping strategies could be also seen as a transitional identity, at least they served as multiple interpretations into what the merged organization would become. Some common understanding of the future of Aalto could be seen in the strategy champion- identity project. What puzzles me is that the issues of the strategy process, how the workings of the top-management is seen and how little in common the imposed self-identities and the "reality" seem to have. Is using resistance – in action, cynisms and sarcasm as an escape enough to cope with the change so much so that the ambiguities are put aside and new identities can be formulated? I come back to this thought in the next chapter 6.

4.2.4   The micro-stories as narratives

Narrative can be found in the micro-stories told by managers and others as they interact and go about their daily work, in the formalized techniques for strategy-making whether or not the techniques are explicitly story-based, in the accounts people give of their work as strategy practitioners, and in the artefacts produced by strategizing activity. Narrative is seen as a way of giving meaning to the practice that emerges from sensemaking activities, of constituting an overall sense of direction or purpose, of refocusing organizational identity, and of enabling and constraining the ongoing activities of actors.(Fenton 2011)

Brown et al (2008) take seriously the idea that although sensemaking is inherently social, it is fundamentally tied to processes of individual identity generation and maintenance. People seek to structure their experiences by placing stimuli into cognitive frameworks of occurrences while maintaining a consistent, positive self-conception (Weick, 1995, 23 as

sited in Brown 2008, 1037). The performance of stories, Brow et al argue (2008, 1037), is a key part of organization members sensemaking, the analysis of which permits us to identify and to analyze what people agree on and where understandings differ. We pay particular regard to the argument that language is a representational technology that actively organizes, constructs and sustains social realities (Chia&King, 2001, 312) and that 'realities' are fluid discursive constructions being constantly made and re-made in the conversations between insiders and between insiders and outsiders.

Brown (2006) argues that a narrative approach (used in this study) is central to an understanding of organizations in general, and their identity constructs in particular, as locales symptomized by relations of domination and resistance, hegemony and control. Narratology leads to an understanding of collective identities as multi-voiced, quasi-fictional, pivocal and reflexive constructions, that unfold over time and are embedded in broader discursive (cultural) practices. These aspects are pivotal to an appreciation of narrative identities as complexes of in-progress storied and story-fragments, which are in a perpetual state of *becoming*, and suffused with power.

(Fiol 2002) found that rhetoric was a critical tool for resolving an organizations' paradoxical need to lessen the individual identification with an organization to facilitate change while at the same time strengthening individual identification with a new internal identity. The importance of passing through an intermediate period of identity ambiguity, which creates a sense-giving imperative for management, has also been recognized (Corley and Gioig 2004, Gioia and Chittipeddi 1991) along with the importance of articulating as desired future identity (Gioia and Thomas 1996). Ambiguity as mentioned several times before was seen in the Case Organization. The strategic communication is aimed at lessening the identification of individuals with the former organization. The question is it just too ambiguous leaving the people with no sense of what the organization is becoming or is the becoming too much against the values and beliefs of the employees (some common academic values for example)?

Tripsas (2009:444-452) found that a protracted period of identity ambiguity ensued because efforts to communicate the shift were more focused on what the Case-company was not, and an alternative desired identity was not initially outlined. In some sense an anti-identity was emerging with no revised identity claims. In the Case Organization a clear new identity was being communicated. So that was not the problem.

4.2.5 Subjectivity as forms of resistance

I used in this study the studies of identity resistance that according to Thomas (2008) contribute to an appreciation of the role of subjectivity in resistance, extending the focus and definition of resistance to include more routinized, informal, and often inconspicuous forms in everyday practice (Ezzamel, Willmot 1998). These everyday practices of resistance can be seen well for example in the practices of (not) hiring foreigners (more in depth in ch 4.1.1)

Fleming et al (2009) also points out that resistance can take various forms in the context of complex workplaces, some of which may not be obvious (Fleming et al 2006). For example when asked to work overtime the employee can either agree or refuse, or even quit at the workplace. But if the employee continues to work but is secretly cynical, is this cynicism to be considered a form of resistance? Does resistance need to be behavioral in order to be effective? Can workers both resist and comply at the same time? (Fleming et al 2009). In the light of this study I can say yes. They comply to the changes maybe in order to keep their job, or because of seeing other benefits to them that keeps them going, despite of all the frustration and even confusion of the essence of the identity and strategy of Aalto.

As I earlier referred escape is the distancing of one's' self from the realities of power via cynicism, irony and humor. Creation is the confounding of subjugation by creating an alternative identity. These four categories Flemings et Spicers (2006) argue may be present in the same sequence of resistant activities, or may be articulated individually. They also argue that the identity-based forms of opposition may be present at both the individual and collective level simultaneously (Fleming and Spicer, 2006).

Mikkonen &Moisander (2011) argue that in the contemporary marketplace (in my case workplace) effective social criticism and subversive agency would seem to call for resistance not only in its direct forms but also resistance against the forms of consumer identity that the market creates, mobilizes, and offers for consumers, or in my case the worker identity the top-leaders and the strategy creates and offers for them (Moisander and Eriksson 2006). In other words, subversive agency in the market would seem to call for resistance against the government of individualization at the level of individual, as Foucault(1983 as quoted in Mikkonen, Moisander 2011) has argued. Such resistance requires

that consumers refuse what they are and try to invent, not discover, who they are by creating, developing, and promoting new forms of subjectivity that can be sources of effective resistance to disciplinary power (Foucault 1983). Consumer or workplace resistance, in this specific form, thus involves an active politics of self.

Foucault (1988) has discussed this type of resistance in terms of practices of self formation and *techniques of self*. In this line of thinking, resistance is based on a set of everyday practices through which the consuming subject constitutes herself or himself in some determined form, for example, through engaging in games of truth about the workplace and through exercising power on one's self as a workplace actor. (Mikkonen et Moisander 2011)

This leads us to the topic of subjectification, which has been notably identified in discourses of corporate strategy. Strategy has been shown to involve a set of power/knowledge relations that appeared at a particular historical juncture, providing employees with a secure sense of self as strategizing agents (Knights and Morgan, 1991 as quoted in Fleming et al 2006, pg 34). When they take on this mantel of "strategizing self" employees begin to think of themselves as calculative and future oriented agents. This calculativeness can be seen in my study in the informants detaching themselves from the imposed image of an ideal Aalto member using resentment, irony or cynicism. Calculation is also seen in how the informants saw and used the shift of identity as something that opens up a new identity and narrations of academics to them. Thus I see the new forms of subjectivity as forms of resistance. The identity projects I found were not discovered but more invented.

4.2.6 Identities as a source and site for resistance

The attraction for critical (CMS)l management scholars such as Thomas to the concept of identity is its ability to offer powerful ways to interrogate the exclusionary practices by which subjects are constituted in organizations. More recently, a distinct strand of research in CMS of identities can be seen in studies concerned with identities as a source of, and a site for, resistance.

Beech raises the question of how the process of managing the 'inside' occurs (Beech 2008:52) He ponders if resistance is achievable, it must be possible for that which flows inward into the person to be reformed and potentially flow outward to counter the external

position that is seeking to regulate the persons self-identity. In other words Beech is concerned on how do people's identities become meaningful to themselves and others.

Alvesson emphasizes a set of processes through which people develop narratives of self within a context in which external influences seek to impact on or regulate the nature of self-meaning. Sims (2005 a sited in Beech 2008:54) argues that identity is a process of interactive storytelling. The process of identity work is a combination of writing one's own story, being written by others and of seeking to write oneself in to the stories of others…..how can they potentially resist identity regulation?

Beech (2008) made a study on how do people's identities become meaningful to themselves and others. The proposed model of dialogic process offers one route to answering this question. Meaning can be derived from contextual discourses and the utterances of others. Possible responses range from the centripetal to the centrifugal and on-going dialogue can serve to reinforce or change the meaning of the identity construction. And what factors impact on the processes of reformation and re-transmission of meaning from self-identities (i.e. processes that would enable resistance)?

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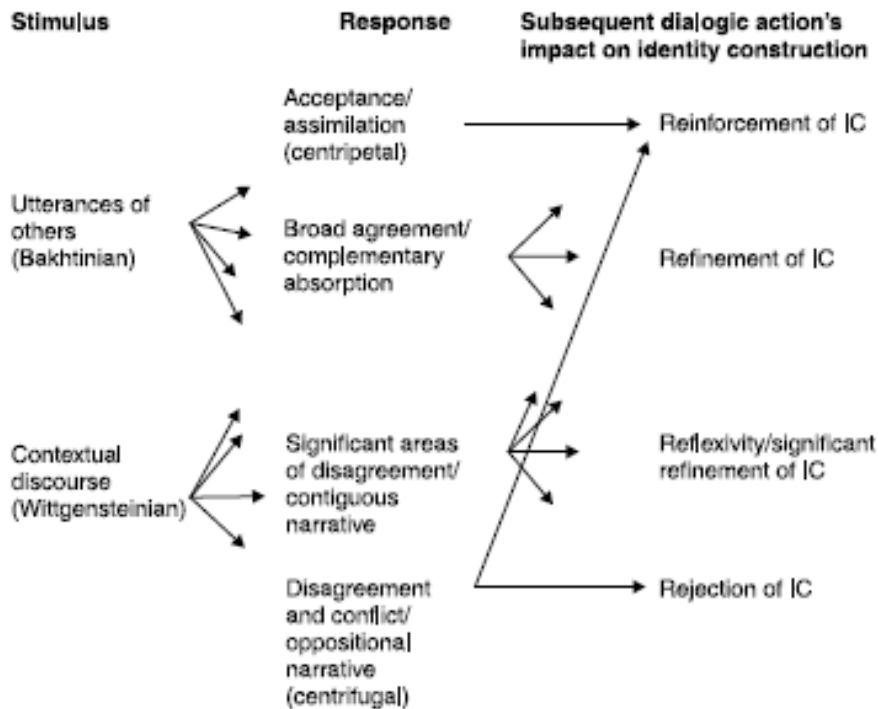Figure 1. Dialogic routes to meaning consturction of the self

| Stimulus | Response | Subsequent dialogic action's impact on identity construction |

Acceptance/ assimilation (centripetal) → Reinforcement of IC

Utterances of others (Bakhtinian)

Broad agreement/ complementary absorption → Refinement of IC

Contextual discourse (Wittgensteinian)

Significant areas of disagreement/ contiguous narrative → Reflexivity/significant refinement of IC

Disagreement and conflict/ oppositional narrative (centrifugal) → Rejection of IC

Figure 9. Dialog routes to meaning construction of the self.

The overall research question Beech (2008) asked was how people's identities become meaningful to themselves and others. To answer this question he made an initial model of dialogic process was developed. This model shows how identity work can proceed through stimuli which are responded to in relatively centripetal or centrifugal ways, and subsequent dialogue which acts to reinforce refine or reject an identity construction.

In Thomas and Linstead's (2002, as quoted in Beech 2008) study of managers, identity claims such as 'being an expert' and 'being different' were ways of 'anchoring the self' in a changeful world. The dialogic model demonstrates the process by which such claims can be initiated and propounded. The initial model provides a framework for explaining how dialogue can provide a route from the outside to the inside, but there is a further question of what happens on the inside to constitute change (how can the inside be managed?

The answer proposed by Beech is that change in the meaning of an identity can be conceived as alterations in a set of meaning-giving tensions. The tensions allow for both revolutionary shifts in self-meaning as well as gradual shifts forwards and backwards. Lastly, it was acknowledged that changing self-identities is a variable process. In some cases it

might be reasonably easy, but attempts to regulate or change identities might be met with resistance. (Beech, 2008, 71)

5   Discussion

In this chapter I discuss in light of the findings of the results the issues of the levels of identity work, the culture of "organized anarchies", multiple identities as a challenge and finally some general thoughts on the findings.

The launching of a strategic change effort represents a critical time for the organization as an altered vision of the organization is being negotiated in social construction activities. The CEO or the leadership of the organization is trying at this point to influence the faculty and other stakeholders to accept the new vision in this negotiation (Gioia, 1991). Gioia (1986) claims that, any substantive change leads to the alteration of existing value and meaning systems. Given that (new) strategies often are seen to reflect the values of top managers (Gioia, 1991), organization members still need to understand any intended change in a way that "makes sense" or fits into some revised interpretive scheme or system of meaning..

According to Alvesson (2002) an appreciation of the developments of the interest in regulating employees "insides"- their self-image, their feelings and identifications, prompts the coining of a corresponding metaphor: the employee as identity worker who is enjoining to incorporate the new managerial discourses into narratives of self-identity. A commonplace example of this process arises in the repeated invitation – through processes of induction, training and corporate education through strategic communication (magazine, posters and in this case strategy texts) – to embrace the notion of "we" (Alvesson et al. 2008). Even though altering an identity is a negotiation, strategic communication is seen in this study as management control, the top-management trying to control the sensemaking processes and identity work of the employee as they are trying to regulate their insides.

Sensegiving has been done in the Case organization through the whole strategy process which included for example workshops, web-disucssion forums, video speeches from the President and seminars arranged by the Dean. Even though the emphasis of this research was on the strategy text, I perceive that the thought of the informants also reflected their thoughts on the whole strategy work process or sensegiving done by the top-leaders.

To cope with the changes brought in by the merger, the new strategy and identity of the School as a part of Aalto University, the employees at Aalto Business School used different strategies. They are the resisting or opposing strategy, being cynical, ironical or sarcas-

tic and using a positive coping strategy that I called "the strategy champion". I found that each different coping strategy (resistant, cynical, sarcastic and positive) saw the imposed identity of an ideal Aalto member in a different way as well that each coping strategy formed a unique understanding on the of the Aalto's strategy.

These different coping strategies were used by the informants in different manners as they were combining them in unique ways. The negotiation about the new identity of the School and new self-identities of the employees has led to ambiguity when altered identity is being presented. Resentment and escaping in cynicism and sarcasm were used, but also some glimpses of acceptance or some sense of an altered identity and formulating of a new identity that could be called a "Aalto member's identity" instead the former Helsinki School of Economics member- identity was in process. This alteration of self- identity is seen mostly in the positive coping "strategy or strategy champion"- identity project.

However reflecting on the results of this study I conclude that neither the new "we" or the coherent and positively valued understanding of self was not easy to formulate in the Case Organization. How the informants or different coping strategies saw the identity and the new strategy of the School seemed to be too ambiguous and too contradictive to the former values and meanings of the organization. In general we can conclude that the altered value system of the University as seen in the alternative dialogic constructions (figure 8) is causing fear, worry, confusion and even personal disappointments. The making sense of this altered value system was not easy to the informants. The issue of the role of the top-management in succeeding in their sensegiving and management of strategic change will be discussed further in this chapter.

Identity work as research focus

Identity work was defined in this study as the ongoing mental activity that an individual undertakes in constructing an understanding of self that is coherent, distinct and positively valued. Identity work was seen being prompted by social interaction that raises questions of "who am I?" and "who are we"? In this case study I found clearly intensified identity work that has been prompted or intensified by crisis or through radical transitions i.e. strategic change and a merger (Alvesson et al, 2002).

In attempting to answer the questions of "who am I" or "who we are", an individual crafts a self-narrative by drawing on cultural resources as well as memories and desires to repro-

duce or transform their sense of self. Identity work is the interpretive activity involved in reproducing and transforming self-identity and understanding of who they are as a part of the organization. (Knights and Willmot, 1989; Svenigsson and Alvesson 2003).

Managing continuity, including typical or familiar levels of emotional arousal against a shifting discursive framework provided by socially established truths about what is normal, rational and sound is the basis for identity work. Identity work is comparatively unselfconscious, albeit contingent upon life history and the unchallenged position of the hegemonic discourse(s) through which identity is reproduced (Alvesson et al 2002, 626)

Discourses may be comparatively familiar and readily interpreted within an ongoing identity narrative and associated emotional condition, or they may be experienced as disruptive of it. Kunda (1992) gives the example of the corporate propaganda or "bullshit" that continuously promotes the values and virtues of the organization. The influence of propaganda as a regulator if identity may increase, diminish or may even backfire. People may distance themselves from the company as a key source of identification and draw upon the occupation, subunit or non-work sources of self-identification. When there is discontinuity the identity narrative is actively explored, defended or modified – either temporarily or with longer lasting consequences. Of course discourses are rarely experienced unequivocally as confirmation/continuation or disruption/discontinuation. Different discursive elements may point in different directions as ambiguity persists. (Alvesson et al, 2002, 632)

The aim of this study, in particular, is to elaborate upon the intra-organizational dynamics, complexities and practices that govern the praxis of making sense of the new organizational identity and member's new self-identities.

> *The purpose of this study is to contribute to a better understanding of the intra-organizational identity work during strategic change.*

Conscious identity work is thus grounded in at least a minimal amount of self-doubt and self-openness, typically contingent upon a mix of psychological-existential worry and the skepticism or inconsistencies faced in encounters with others or with our images of them. Such tensions are stopped, or at least suspended, when receptiveness to identity-securing positions and routines is matched by corporate and managerial opportunities for investing self in organizing practice. (Alvesson et Willmot 2002, 625).

At the same time, such suspension is itself subject to disruption .When a familiar feeling tone, associated with the sensation of 'being myself ', becomes unsettled, feelings of tension, anxiety, shame or guilt arise. Occasionally a sense of contradiction, disruption and confusion may become pervasive and sustained. Intensive remedial 'identity work' is then called for, perhaps even of a therapeutic kind. When such identity work fails, tensions and the possibility of breakdown follow. (Alvesson and Willmot 2002, 626)

This tendency for seeking for identity-securing positions I could see in the "positive coping strategy", when the employee's future was secured at Aalto and a clear understanding of the job description was established the employee adapted much more positive attitude about the University as a result. In other words when it was clearer "where I stand in all this" the identity work process went forward.

In my study I could detect all the feelings named above, anxiety, shame and even guilt when "going against the rules" appeared. At this time of the interviews I could see that some contradictions, confusions and disruptions seemed pervasive and even sustained.

5.1   The levels of identity work

The levels of identity work have been according to Alvesson et al (2008) the increasing concerns of organizational scholars. He mentions the following levels of identity work; the organizational level, managerial level, professional level, occupational level and the subjective meanings and experience. Particular identity is defended and strengthened against experienced attack (Alvesson et al 2002, 633). In the case study I did not see a lot of identity work that could be arranged as Alvesson mentions.
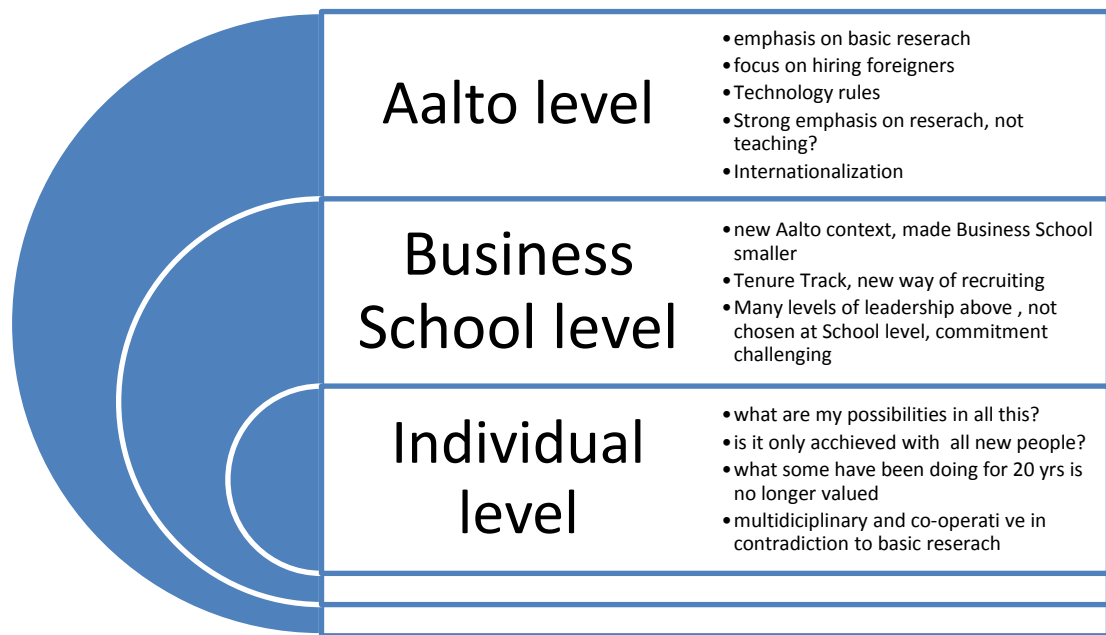
Aalto level
- emphasis on basic reserach
- focus on hiring foreigners
- Technology rules
- Strong emphasis on reserach, not teaching?
- Internationalization

Business School level
- new Aalto context, made Business School smaller
- Tenure Track, new way of recruiting
- Many levels of leadership above , not chosen at School level, commitment challenging

Individual level
- what are my possibilities in all this?
- is it only acchieved with all new people?
- what some have been doing for 20 yrs is no longer valued
- multidiciplinary and co-operati ve in contradiction to basic reserach

Figure 10. Different levels of identity work at Aalto Business School

Instead in the beginning of my analysis I thought I will look at the levels of identity work at the individual, Business School and then at the Aalto level. This setting I arranged in figure 9. At each of these levels I saw different kinds of identity challenges caused by the new Strategy and practices or organizational culture. As I proceeded with the analysis I concluded that these levels have a deeper level behind them, that is the different coping strategies to handle the identity challenging strategies. Although the individual, the School and Aalto level identity work well describes the "problems" it does not still explain how the employees cope with them. The level of my analysis goes beyond this to gain deeper understanding on how the strategy and identity is interpreted, and how the employees cope with the strategy challenging issues. Still the levels of identity work in figure 9, illustrates interestingly the complications of identity work. Not only the current position in the organization, the individual work history, but also the other levels of the identity work is important. The more levels the identity challenges hits, the more intense and complicated the identity work seems to be.

5.2   How the identity projects saw the imposed identity and strategy

The resistance type sees an ideal Aalto University member according to his view of the strategy. The new strategy is seen being led with managerialism, imposed by globalization and the new competition between Universities. The merger has made the School of Busi-

ness subordinate to the talk of Technology and basic research. The President and the top-management are making all major decisions, but doing it with inconsistency. The new strategy is seen as something that has changed the values of academic research. New alternative dialogic constructions have been established between all major areas of academic life such as the valuing of basic research versus applied research, and doing international top-research versus supporting the Finnish society. The fact that there is a crisis atmosphere at the School due to layoffs does not make it easy for people to focus on their work. There was resistance found about the hiring policies of the University (interestingly seen also problematic by a foreign PhD student), the Tenure Track career system as well as the imposed self-identity or ideal Aalto member.

The imposed self-identity is seen as a threat and a cause of personal trouble, anxiety, worry and even despair when seen as something that can't be reached like for example the "blond, fit guy with glasses, publishing thousands of publications and working 24/7". The new values and image of an ideal Aalto and its Academian and the "reality" does not seem to mach. The new strategy and the new values have lead to competition and criticism amongst workers. Also a new categorization of A and B (and middle) class workers has been produced.

To sum up 'the resistance type' I gathered the main threats the informants felt their interpretation of the new strategy and the identity of the organization and the imposed self-identities is causing**.**

The threat is causing:

Fear, worry, distress – "are we not good enough anymore?", "am I able to produce what is required of me/us", the only way to define a good worker is now by the amount of publications

Confusion, crisis – "why only foreigners and basic research?", "do they understand what they are doing?", "this has been a hard process to many (1)"

Personal disappointments – 20-yrs of work is no longer valued as people are being laid off

Cynicism identity- project uses cynicism as a helper to distance oneself from the 'strategy talk' and to see a way of an escape. The cynicism type interprets the strategic goals as unrealistic and strategy texts as merely as "phrases". It seems like in the Case study the merger and the revolutionary change of the University was not seen as caused by any specific individual, but bad policies, bad sensemaking with enough listening to the lower manage-

ment, tight control and in general bad leadership practices were making the change discontinuous, wild and irrational. The top-leaders of the University were seen with cynicism and as change agents to many present problems due to decisions being made to high up, to the lack of listening and lack of really understanding what it is that "we do here".   The cynical- type sees no new "leadership" being produced to the School, despite all the efforts done.

The threat is causing:

Distrust – toward the leaders of the University

Lack of commitment- the decisions are made too far, it does not make me feel committed to them, the former system created commitment not this one

Defense- "The President can't touch my everyday work", I can use some self-determination still on what research I will do, or I will soon retire "does not concern me"

Irritation – decisions go back and forth, they make no sense

The sarcasm- type interprets the strategy with "tears in their eyes" because of seeing its impossibility. It is interpreted as mere marketing talk to the stakeholders. The strategy can't be accomplished by just setting a few strategic goals, the sarcasm type concludes. The mission with building the top University starts with technology in the front. Co-operation with industry or other partners and supporting the Finnish society, seemed to be in contradiction with the demand of doing basic research and publishing in top-publications. Bureaucracy has increased even though the strategy text clearly claims that the vast amount of bureaucracy the University was under earlier was produced because of being under state administration. These routines are claimed to not support creative, progressive and the developing of research and teaching (strategy text quote at page 61). On the contrary the informants saw that the University is still under government control and now on top of that as the Business School is also under the control of the head quarters of the University, the bureaucracy has increased vastly after the merger. The culture of Aalto was seen as competitive and lacking a sense of community. Also the new strategy was raising the issue of equality and some dangerous development was seen in the new measurement values of the School.

The strategy process was not seen as it was stated to be like in the strategy brochure (quote pg. 63), a constant dialogue with the Aalto community. Instead the sarcasm type saw it

merely symbolic, and 'pseudo involving'. The Business School views and the discussion and feedback were not seen in the end results, or better said the end result was seen as something decided by the headquarters, even before the "hearing process". Finally the creative academic work seems to need more support from the University. But simultaneously it is important for the leaders to understand that the academics see no need to necessarily be interested in the School itself, since for an academic the University is just like an airport, that serves as a place of work platform.

The threat is causing**:**

Dilemmas about how one should be using their work time**: "**Is working with industry and other partners and doing applied science projects against the strategy?"

Confusion: "How could people become like the strategy demands, publishing and teaching well simultaneously?" "Or are we just lazy and bad people not being able to meet the demands? (7)"

Frustration: over the increased amount of bureaucracy and strategy process that was not a real dialogue, but was more beforehand decided by the headquarter.

Besides the cynical, sarcasm and resistance approach or coping strategies to the radical change of the Aalto organization, many had also found some positive things about the changes that helped them find their motivation to go along with it and even find new excitement and opportunities in the merger and the new strategy of the Aalto University. The type I called *The strategy Champion",* they see positive things in the changes that helps to cope with other disappointments or threats.

Interdisciplinary programs or research, doing co-operation with other Aalto Schools, and seeing benefits to one's own academic work and career were the basis of the strategy champion identity projects. Doing new kind of co-operation and interdisciplinary projects or research gave new motivation and a new identity of someone "not only doing research in their own respective science". After the securing of one's own future at the University the changes were also easier to see in a positive light. The goals of the University seemed motivating and the new bigger context (Aalto University) even raised pride. Using metaphors like the University being "an airport" helped in forming a new narrative and identity of the worker of Aalto University as "only passing through". The School was seen as a top-expert organization. The high goal of the School was seen motivating and as a thriving

force to make changes. The Business School was seen to be on a "a path of much greater expansion" than it would have been during the time of the Old School.

5.3 Culture of "the University people" and identity change

The definition of what culture is and how cultures change depends on how one perceives and enacts culture. Because I see organizations as cultures, my approach to organizational change emphasizes changes in patterns of behavior, values and meanings. Culture is defined of the as that which is shared by and unique to a given organization or group, the social or normative glue that holds together a potentially diverse group of organization members.

Considering the specific of a culture in a University I refer to the study of Meyerson and Martin (1987) where they distinguish 3 different paradigms in the research of cultural change. According to paradigm 1 culture is monolith. Paradigm 1 is integrating aspects of consistency, consensus and usually leader-centeredness. Ambiguity is denied. According to many paradigm 1 researches culture offers the key to managerial control, worker commitment, and organizational effectiveness.

Paradigm 2 approach to culture is characterized by differentiation and diversity, researches paying attention to inconsistencies, lack of consensus, and non-leader centered sources of cultural content. This approach emphasizes the importance of various subunits, including groups and individuals. By this paradigm culture is composed of collection of values and manifestations, some of which may be contradictory. (Meyerson et al, 1987)

Paradigm 3 differs from the other two paradigms primarily in its treatment of ambiguity, seeing it as an inevitable part of organizational life. Referring to March (pg 638) he sees educational institutions as "organized anarchies" and academic research often having an unusual comfort in ambiguity, and may thrive on it. Paradigm 3 offers an approach to psychological safety that is radically different from that of the other 2 paradigms. It gives individuals a heightened sense of autonomy, and that autonomy brings safety. (Meyerson et al. 1987)

Interestingly we could draw conclusions on this study of the culture of the "organized anarchies" i.e. Universities. The Case organization as representatives of academics reveal this mind set of having "comfort in ambiguity". Thinking of this one can't be sure if in one way

ambiguity is considered as a good thing or is it just something one has learned to live with? However I think this consideration is easy to connect with the findings of my study that the academics are mainly looking for "academic freedom" and autonomy in this sense of freedom. The desired university would be such that allows this freedom and supports it and in my interpretation something that even allows one to question the basic values of the University.

5.4 Multiple identities as a challenge

One of the main incentives for identity work is identity ambiguities produced by multiple identities, as often seen that mergers and acquisitions, are likely to increase the number of identities that characterize the combined organization. In this circumstance by influencing different understandings of "who we are as an organization" individuals are likely to interpret differently the events that happen within their organization (Pratt and Corley 2007). In the Case study it was also seen that they each identity project interpreted some what differently the events or practices of the organization in unique combinations with other identity projects.

Pratt and Corley (2007) argue also that identity ambiguities, about multiple identities can have detrimental effects on both the organization and its members if allowed to go unchecked. Uncertainty arising from multiple identities may negatively affect key processes such as employee commitment to change and the implementation of the strategic plan (Corley &Gioia 2004). In the Case study, multiple identities are formulated by the old and new values and strategies of the School of Business, as well as the new identity and strategy of the Aalto University, in other words 3 different identities in coalition with each other. Aalto also is trying to balance with this issue by "letting" the Schools write their own (sub) strategies and identities.

Dutton and Duckerich (1991 as quoted in) showed that changes in organizational identity perceptions not only influence collective-level action, but can also contribute to member confusion and frustration, as well as member pride. Different types of tactic for managing many organizational identities may have also impacts on organizational members. Specifically increasing or decreasing the number of identities within the organization is likely to have its own effect. Lowering the amount of identities can allow the organization to more focused and have a stronger sense of mission, but at the individual level Albert noted that such strategies can be devastating, especially for individual members who have strong

symbol and emotional ties to the subtracted organizational identity. Thus decreases in plurality may lead to grief and mourning similar to what happens when organization downsize (Cunningham, Sutton, 1987)

5.5 Thoughts and conclusions

As I pondered on the results of this study I made some conclusions outside of the "direct" results of the informants. It seems to me that the current research is in part moving away from mangerialism as the optimal leadership "method", at least in terms of for example critical management and identity studies (that have been also forming the base of my research). So at least the professors and lectures at the School of Business that I have been a privileged to get acquainted with are teaching students about life "after managerialism". But simultaneously they are made to submit to managerialism, as they put it themselves, through the new way the School is led. This causes confusion and resistance that is also reflected in the results of my study.

Behind managerialims seems to be the great force of global competition that has now entered the world of Universities. As Aula and Tienari (2011) conclude that the radical actions at Aalto are explained by this new inevitable competition over the attention of financiers, academics, students and employers. This competition has led in competition amongst workers and the new classification of A- and B-players as discussed earlier.

> Aula &Tienari: "The study illustrates dynamics of reputation-building in a university merger. It shows how the need to become an innovative "world-class" university acts as an imaginary incentive, and predictions of an inevitable future are used to legitimize radical actions. Such pressures are evident in academia where global rankings and accreditations have acquired a prominent position and reputation has emerged as a key concern for decision-makers (Wedlin, 2006; Ressler and Abratt, 2009). Universities are forced to compete globally for the attention of financiers, academics, students, and employers." 2011

Even though not everything was well before, some were hoping that separating from government control would bring new freedom to their academic life, but instead they have faced a new kind of competition, and lack of liberty due to the "intrusion" of the new strategy and the top-management of the School. The whole foundation based University feels a little ridiculous, since government guidance and submission still exist almost as before. What has really changed? Only new forced goals and measures on "productivity" and definitions of A-players are being introduced? Will it be easy to submit to such when you see the "inevitable forces" behind them?

To whom the University is being made for? To the international audience or to the Finnish society? Can Universities be led like businesses? One thing we can conclude, leading the University with managerialism does not work very well.

Secondly academics want academic profit from the merger, not just forced on co-operation, but genuinely interesting academic discussion that profits them in their research and fulfilling to goals of the amount of assigned research to them.

The findings of my study brought out several issues that were seen as problematic about the top-leaders and the practices at the University. Can we say that on the basis of the study that the strategy work has been successful and helped the employees and lower managers to cope with the anxiety and worry and distress of the new organizational identity? Most probably not. At least we can conclude that probably some issues that this study has brought up will come as a surprise to the top-management in their intensity.

The most problematic issue to me is that if the lower managers are not "with the corporate story", as seems to be in light of this study. The re-evaluation of the conceptualization of organization has, at least in part, come to other conclusions than probably was not the meaning of the top-managers.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

In this chapter I present practical recommendations for Aalto University, evaluate the conducting of the research, ponder on the meanings and effects of the results and provide suggestions for future research.

6.1 Expected and unexpected results

As an expected result to my research I found intensified identity work in the Case organization caused by the radical change. At the time of conducting the interviews Aalto University was 2,5 years old (the Helsinki School of Economics founded in 1911).

However the strategy brochure and strategy process was just out from the printing press in May-June 2012 at the time of the interviews, and had been recently sent to the informants by mail. There were many things to make sense of, now that many issues were finally put on paper (and electrical form) and made public. As I mentioned earlier only two of the informants had read the brochure sent to them, even though they all were very familiar with the topics of the strategy.

Many issues that were causing resistance such as the ruling of technology and basic science, hiring policies and Tenure Track or the top-leadership had been experienced through practices and policies and not only expressed thru the recently published strategy brochure. These practices and policies had been going on at the University even before its beginning 1.1.2010 and during the 2,5 years of its existence. To me we could conclude that they were no hasty conclusions made by the informants. It seemed that the strategy text just confirmed their thoughts and "understandings" of the practices they had seen at the University. These practices that the informants had experienced and seen at the University were more the reason to say "the strategy text is bullshit" and "it is just lipservice". The core strategies were reveled in everyday practices and policies and what was written could not overcome that impression.

Then a word about the more unexpected results, before the interviews I thought that the former culture of the School of Economics would be brought up frequently in the interviews, in some kind of comparison to the new. Either due to the rather long time after the merger or due to the fact that I mainly focused on the strategy text of the new organization, the old School and its values and culture were not brought up much during the interviews.

I also thought that the informants would tell me what they feel that needs to be done for the organization to reach the new Aalto culture. Instead the informants brought up the disruptive issues and confusions of the (top) management culture, competitive work culture, hiring culture and evaluation culture. In other words they brought up the new values and practices of the University. Examples: "Technology and basic research are ruling (making others inferior), and that the only way to measure people is through how much they publish".

This made me feel that the informants were not "hanging" on the old working culture and identity. Rather I could conclude that they were more "hanging in the air". Many issues of the strategic goals and imposed identity and especially the policies and ways they were implemented were just "too hard to swallow". Creatively the informants were using their own identity projects to cope with these problems.

6.2   Evaluating the conducting of the research

Pondering on how much the choice of my informants and guidance that I received from my tutor affected on the results and conducting of this study, I dear say some but not fundamentally. I base this on the fact that the findings were surprisingly similar regardless on the department or position of the informant. I believe that similar results would have come from having another 7 informants form the School. Maybe I could find different nuances of the identity projects and maybe (hopefully) even stronger emphasis on the positive coping strategy, but otherwise these results show well the meaning making process going on at the School.

As I started this research I first received it as a working project from Aalto University's department of Communication. I met with them twice and attended twice as a listener a meeting conducted by the department of communication on the identity definition of one of the other Schools of Aalto. Due to my own sanity I narrowed down the research only to focus on the School of Business (where I study) instead of taking into focus all of the 6 Aalto Schools. At this same time I also decided that it is easier for me to work if I have only one tutor guiding me through. I hope that despite of this departing from the official project signed by the Aalto University they find it useful.

6.3   The contribution of the study

The relationship with strategy and identity has not been researched in depth (Tripsas, 2009). In a conference paper that aimed to explore the interrelationships between these two concepts participants defined identity as "the theory members of an organization have about who they are" and strategy as "a theory of actions that the firm should take or can take" (Reger 1998). In some sense a firm's identity is expressed through elements of strategy Tripsas argues (2009), but wonders if a change in strategy implies a change in identity or vice versa, and concludes that a better understanding of this relationship is needed. This study is done in the aim of gaining more understanding on this interrelation.

Also there is relatively little research according to Clark et al (2010) on the cognitive dynamics involved in mergers, in general, and the role of identity change during mergers, in particular, despite evidence that cognition constitutes a central element of the strategy process (e.g., Schwenk, 1988; Huff, 1990; Gioia and Thomas, 1996).

This study shows how intertwined strategy work and identity work are. In the case study the identity work was done not only through the strategy text (brochure or whatever form) but more through the day-to-day practices and policies that the informants based their identity work on. It is one thing what is officially said, and another thing what is "really" being implemented. Strategy text can just be "mere" text or dare say it ever not only the text. Thus is might not be wrong at all to say as one informant said that strategy brochures are for stakeholders merely. Also an important point was made by one informant. The strategy text is mere "guidelines" but the real strategy is "done" at the level of the department

The topic of the research is very timely for a few reasons. Firstly Aalto University is a new organization that has multiple under cultures, as is the case after most mergers and acquisitions. Secondly the organization has just come up with its first New Strategy that has not yet been the focus of any research so far. Thirdly the interesting question "what is strategic change and how it can be accomplished?" is in the lips of almost every organization in today's world due to rapid changes in the societies and the global economy that force organizations to constant change.

It will give answers to the management of Aalto University and the communications department to what kind of identity challenges the New Strategy might arouse and how the faculty is coping with these identity challenges.

The research might also be useful to the other students or professors and researchers of Aalto University doing research in respective topic (s).

6.4   Pondering on the meanings and effects of the results

As I mentioned the conclusion drawn are mine, but naturally what the informants said revealed the thoughts, narratives and sensemakings of the strategic change that they have seen and experienced. Since I have not been an Aalto member, more than just a student, I had no previous knowledge on the policies and practices taking place at Aalto, that would have made me have sides on this project.

Will the managerialization of Aalto University see a change due to my "little" study or rather due to the resistance it is causing? Maybe not, but I dare challenge the leaders of the University to get acquainted with my study and the results of it. One of the most alarming issues to me is the feeling that the strategy text is just "words of marketing to stakeholders and of the strategy process being just a "pseudo involving process". Also I would consider why the feeling of technology and basic research ruling? And of course ponder on carefully why so many problems were seen in the top-leadership of the University?

At some places the quotations from the strategy text and what the informants said about them must in some places be rather stunning. I hope that considering them and having open discussion over the issues could be possible, with an understanding of the viewpoints of the Business School employees. All disturbing practices can't be just put under the need to change and compete in the world of Universities.

As other wiser than me have put it: "Managerial sensemaking involves selective information processing, interpretation, and action taking aimed at reducing ambiguity and developing plausible schemes for further interpretation and action" (Weick, 1979, 1995 as quoted in Clark et al 2010). The top-mangers actions have maybe not reduced the ambiguity caused by the strategic change enough in the Case organization. That raises a question that how can the lower managers interviewed be sensegivers to their employees if they have not been able to make sense of the message themselves?

I argued earlier (basing my thoughts on the theories of Hatch and Schultz 1997, 2000, 2003, Schultz, Hatch and Larsen 2000 and Ravasi and Schultz 2006) that in order for the

organization to engage in behavior that supports the corporate reputation the behavior needs not only to be rooted in the organizations identity, but at least in some measure also in the self-identities of the employees and culturally shared understandings of who "we" are as an organization. This "we" would probably need some enhancing at Aalto Business School.

The identity work seen in this study was working in many cases therapeutically. Many of the informants also thanked me for having the opportunity to talk about these issues with me, helping them clarify their thought and in that way do their "identity work".

As seen in this study identity ambiguities emerge when familiar ways of knowing who we are as an organization lose their meaning or have no meaning in changed circumstances (Corley &Gioia, 2004 as quoted Pratt &Corley 2007 pg 99), leading to multiple possible interpretations about which core features should define the organization. Is it ambiguous enough or is it too ambiguous the make the organization depart too much from the goals and strategies of the University?

As referred earlier I used the study of Tripsas (2009) as one of the guidelines to my study. In her findings identity served as a filter, such that organizational members notice and interpret external stimuli in a manner consistent with the identity. She argued that because identity becomes intertwined in the routines, procedures, and beliefs of both organizational and external constituents, explicit efforts to shift identity in order to accommodate identity-challenging technology are difficult. Given the disruptive nature of identity shifts, it is critical according to Tripsas for managers to understand whether a technology, or in application strategy, is identity challenging. This I hope I have accomplished in this study, showing the top-managers of the school what about the new strategy and practices is identity-challenging to the employees of the School of Business.

Even though there are many rather pessimistic results and conclusion drawn in this study I hope that I have been clear to point out to the positive and more motivating issues that the informants brought up. New opportunities and visions of the future are in the process of being formed. Some ambiguity is needed, maybe even more by the academics than other groups of people as discussed earlier. The main focus should be in that the ambiguity is not too hard to cope with, leaving people no options but to resist – in action.

The constant battle of the official values and strategies that are felt more or less given, between the goals and even desires of the departments and Schools in the larger scale, leads to different understandings and meanings of what is important, valued and the "core" of in this case academic work. However strategy text can be seen as a metatext 'linking one conversational domain to another" (Robichaud et al., 2004, p.624 as quoted in Fenton et al, 2008 pg 1187). As Fenton (2008). puts it "to the extent that strategy is concerned with the definition of organizational identity, it can be seen as strongly related to the idea of a metaconversation".

6.5   Future recommendations

As future recommendations it might be interesting to do similar studies at other Aalto Schools and see what kind of identity work is going on there, to get a full picture of the identity-challenging strategies that causes threats. This would give good feedback for the top-leaders of the University on the strategy process and their sensegiving efforts, and on the metatext giving the organization an overall sense of direction. (Fenton et al 2008). The particular strength of the notion of metaconveration for an integrative narrative understanding of strategy as practice is thus to show how individual identities can come to be discursively incorporated into the expression of collective identities. (Fenton et al 2008). The results of this study show both coherence and diversity in organizational narratives, how Aalto came about and what it stands for were shared in a similar basic narrative, yet there were subtle variations in the individual narrative accounts of the informants revealed in their creative identity projects and the overlapping use of them based on their need to protect their self-esteem (as academics). Fenton points out that in many research the fragility of shared understandings of strategy have been pointed out (Fenton et al 2008, 1188), thus he concludes that an integrative narrative account of strategy as practice needs to examine the diversity of individual narratives underlying collective ones.

Thomas Robyn (2008) ponders upon the fact that there still remains, in many critical management studies on identities, a struggle in conceptualizing a reflexive subject with the will and capacity to reflect upon and challenge the hegemonic ways of being. The identity projects and seeing subjectivity as a form of resistance were seen in this study to take various forms, with the ability to challenge the hegemonic ways of being, many time seen were power resides- in action.

The weakness of this study is that it does not show the process of identity (re)formation. Doing a similar study to pay greater attention to the processes of identity (re)formation in organizational control, methodologically as Alvesson et al suggest (2002) with an in-depth and longitudinal studies based upon participant observation, or semi-structured interviews for investigating the process of identity regulation, rather than close ended interviews. This would make it possible to examine their contextual product in some detail and over time.

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APPENDIX 1

Example of an interview. This was the interview outline for informant 5. The topics (bold) were not mentioned to the informants. Besides this outline, I read abstacts from the strategy text and showed each informant the mission and vision of the University from the printed Strategy Brochure.

Millainen on Aallontarina/kauppiksen tarina?

Miten kuvailsisit itseäsi akateemikkona? Millainen on sinun tarinasi, unelmasi?

The New Aalto Strategy- Describe central goals and areas of development.
- How familiar with the new strategy, what do you think of it, who is it for and why has it been made, what have been talked about it,?
- What kind of Aalto is portrayed thru it? Millainen visio/Missio (works towards a better world), millainen image, millainen kulttuuri?
- What is central, what are the expectations of Aalto management?
- What kind of image/reputation/brand Aalto has?
- internationalization in reality, demands of the global university markets
- how people are coping with the new Org and strategy?
- Pressures from outside to be a different kind of a university – new identity,
- Good and bad, hard issues?
- What kind of a researcher or academian, teacher is expected portrayed thru the strategy of Aalto University?
- Topics mentioned in the Strategy:
  - Internationalization (to attract international academic elite and can respond to the challenges of globalization), at the same time advance the welfare of the Finnish nation to support culture, creativity and education and the role of a change agent of the society
  - new model of academic leadership, rethink leadership practices instead of loose associations of teachers and scientist
  - restate and embed core academic values
  - autonomy (millainen prosessi autonomiasta luopuminen on ollut)
  - main challenges and threats: career systems, research infrastructure and academic leadership (RAE panels) and strong focus on applied and contract research instead of long-term and high quality research
  - bureaucracy , planning and reporting systems
  - innovation system
  - quality, performance indicators for research and education
  - developing societal impact
  - strategic enablers (employee satisfaction, attractiveness, diversity)
  - key performance indicators (share of academic work within total work time)
  - creative and interactive learning culture needed, a culture that fosters a passion for pushing boundaries, environment that enables desired types of interaction and activity
  - staff committed to build collaboration and motivated, become a more valuable co-operation partner

- Millainen prosessi on ollut tää muutos Aalloksi?
- Miten on saavutettavissa, gap nykyiseen millainen Aalto on nyt millainen sen pitäisi olla ja miksi, onko jotain, miksi on miksi ei? what kind of changes is needed to accomplish the goals (top 20 universities)? Millainen organisaatio tarvitaan? Mitä muutoksia tarvitaan? Millaista johtajuutta? miten strategia toteutetaan? Miten ihmiset muutetaan tällaisiksi?
- How does the new strategy change people, the worklife in Aalto? How is it portrayed?

What kind of Identity work is going on/ Identity in an organization
- What does being a member of Aalto University mean?
- Tensions between professional/Aalto identities/Business Schools old brand
- Original thought of Aalto- something new and exciting, has it been realized? Does it create confusion or is it a valid goal? What has changed?
- Professional benefits of being in Aalto University?
- What is the workplace like, what has changed since the Aalto merger?
- Good things/bad things in the merger?
- What kind of strategic Change is needed to get to top 20 Universities

What is changing in the Organizational culture?
- Millainen on ideaalinen Aaltolainen?
- Multicultural Aalto University (Finnish/something else, 6 schools/ academic changing)
- What is the work culture like in Aalto and your respective School?
- What motivates to change (vision)?