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PROFESSIONAL
IDENTITY WORK TYPES
IN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

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Abstract This paper investigates identity work types by professionals in organizational change. Type refers to a particular way of identity work that derives from how the individual perceives the change in respect to the self and what implications this has to identity processes. The unique type has implications to the behaviour, values and attitude of the professional, and then, organizational performance. Both academia and practice have increasingly turned to identity work to understanding organizational change. Although the benefits of acknowledging differences between professionals' identity work have been established, current literature does not offer means to adequately explore identity work types. In order to contribute, an abductive and qualitative study situated in a particular case context was conducted. The investigation was conducted in a phenomenographic manner to understand professionals' mental landscape during the change, based on which the types could be distinguished. The data suggests three prevalent identity work types, which differ in how the individual had mentally positioned the self in respect to the change. This was found to have implications to the individual behaviour, attitude, and priorities during the change. In order to distinguish between the identity work types and to contribute to academia and practice, a framework is proposed.

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GLOSSARY

Identity	The answer to question “ <i>who am I?</i> ”, as in, the fact of being who and what a person is. A person has many identities that interact with the feelings, values and behaviour. Also referred to as “the self” or “the self-concept”.
Identity work	The personal act of creating, strengthening or adapting a particular identity to maintain alignment with social world in changing or ambiguous situations and contexts.
Organizational change	The movement of an organization from one state to another that can involve changes in structure, strategy, culture, processes, management or human capital. The aim is to develop and deal with new situations e.g. economic climate.
Professional	Well-educated workers who are engaged in creative and intellectually challenging work with high work autonomy such as architects, lawyers or medical doctors. They are subject to strict standards of practise maintained by professional associations.
Professional identity	The definition of oneself as a professional, consisting of the alignment between the roles, responsibilities, values and standards of the individual and work.
Professional service firm (PSF)	PSFs offer highly-customized services requiring special education and specific licenses. They are highly personalised, exist through the skills of their professionals and differ from other companies in terms of management, human capital and business model.
Self-efficacy	A subjective judgement of how well one can perform, cope and control the self in various situations. It influences both the power the self has to face situations as well as the choices and behaviour the person is most likely to conduct.

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1 INTRODUCTION

To introduce this research paper, background on research subject is presented (chapter 1), followed by the establishment of a research purpose (chapter 1.1) and research questions (chapter 1.2).

Professional service firms (PSFs) are increasing in importance at all societal levels from workplaces to political actors (Gorman, 2017) – however, they face many challenges. Constantly fluctuating market conditions require them to continuously change (van Dijk and van Dick, 2009; Girod and Karim, 2017). According to Schilling *et al.* (2012) PSF research has come to a common conclusion: change is a complex conduct due to attention that needs to be put on the professionals. Indeed, professionals, as the PSFs' key resource and as the controllers of knowledge and networks, enable and support the change's success (Alvesson, 2004, p.192; Schilling *et al.*, 2012).

How to manage professionals, especially during the constant reality of change, has become an increased point of focus for managers and practitioners alike (Gupta, 2003; van Dijk and van Dick, 2009; Von Nordenflycht, 2010; Kaiser *et al.*, 2015). Both have increasingly begun to realize how psychological aspects of work have real consequences to the PSFs (Thatcher and Zhu, 2006). That is why the importance of understanding the basic elements of organizational change, people, behaviour and outcomes (Dilts, 1996, p.121) is increasingly underlined.

Identity is a concept used in explaining and understanding these elements and thus, professionals. (Ashforth, Harrison and Corley, 2008). An increased understanding of identity and its processes are seen to lead to more successful PSF and change management because of their implications to the individuals and their performance (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Wasden, 2011; Brock, Powell and Hinings, 2015; Oliver, 2015). Indeed, identity is the core of the self affecting the priorities, motivations, thinking and behaviour of that individual (Alvesson, 2004, p.188) and it refers to the awareness of “who am I, and by implication, how should I act?” (Skorikov and Vondracek, 2011).

The innate need for a professional is to have an alignment between the self-concept and work. Professional identity is dynamic over time and space (Ylijoki and Ursin, 2013, p.1137) but an individual has agency over it (Brown, 1997; Phelan and Kinsella, 2009; Schwartz, Luyckx and Vignoles, 2011; Knights and Clarke, 2017). This means individuals can conduct identity work to adapt, tailor, maintain and change their professional identities with particular aims or reasons, such as to re-align identity and work (Ibarra and Petriglieri, 2010).

Academic research acknowledges that organizational change has an effect on the professional identity because it has implications for this work-identity alignment (Thatcher and Zhu, 2006; Ashcraft, Alvesson and Thomas, 2008; van Dijk and van Dick, 2009). Change has been found to stimulate professionals' identity work (McInnes *et al.*, 2006; Thatcher and Zhu, 2006; van Dijk and van Dick, 2009; Reissner, 2010). This, in turn, has implications to the PSF and change performance through the professionals' selves (Miscenko and Day, 2016). Indeed, identity work has been used to explain and understand organizational change (Beech and MacIntosh, 2012; Brown, 2015).

Identity work is not a standardized concept but a highly subjective and individual act. Individual professionals enact identity work with different strategies, reasons and ways (Ibarra, 1999). Thus, identity work types will be referred to as particular kinds of identity work enactments, antecedents, and consequences. Calling these dimensions that either differentiate or associate individuals' identity work together as types is a convenient way to make sense of different professionals' identity work in organizational change.

How identity and the work-identity alignment are affected by the change is “not only a personal, but also an organisational issue that ought to be taken seriously by researchers and practitioners alike” (Reissner, 2010, p.297). Current research does not offer enough resources to distinguish between different types of identity work prevalent during organizational change. More contribution to this field of research is called for in academia (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006; Reissner, 2010; Schilling *et al.*, 2012; Asplund, Bolander and Werr, 2017). Implications for practitioners are valuable: for example, by identifying different types of identity work, and thus, understanding their workforce, management can more successfully implement change activities (Beech, MacIntosh and McInnes, 2008; Gorman, 2017).

1.1 RESEARCH PURPOSE

The aim of this research is to contribute to both academic and practice by distinguishing between different identity work types during an organizational change. An abductive and qualitative research is in place to investigate professionals' understanding and perception of their organization's change, which has implications to identity work. This study's aim is twofold: first, this study will explore professionals during organizational change to distinguish different identity work types and second, this study will contribute to further understanding of these different types with a proposed framework.

The purpose for this research stems from many grounds. First, it contributes to further understanding of professionals through an empirical enquiry on a particular case context. Because professionals represent the contemporary workforce, hold an increasingly important status in the world (Mintzberg, 1998; Brock, Powell and Hinings, 2015) and “form an integral part of the EU economy” (*European Commission*, 2012), the aim to investigate how the individuals understand their lived experience contributes to further knowledge on PSF and change management.

Second, this research contributes to change management that has become a constant reality for PSFs (van Dijk and van Dick, 2009). Through a study on an empirical change situation, this research can increase the understanding of what happens during a PSF's change. By focusing on a change situation this study can contribute to the body of knowledge of one of the popular topics in academic research (Gupta, 2003) and to an essential part of business practices (Beech and MacIntosh, 2012).

Third, there is a gap in academic literature on the subject of identity and identity work. Academic research calls for more empirical takes on professional identity work in organizational change (Pratt,

Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006; Reissner, 2010; Schilling *et al.*, 2012; Asplund, Bolander and Werr, 2017). This context of identity work is said to be underexplored and overlooked, establishing a fruitful subject to study and to contribute to with a qualitative research (Ibarra and Petriglieri, 2010; Brown, 2017). Empirical studies lack ones that investigate identities and their relationships with individuals and professions (Brown, 2015), which this study also contributes to. The need for further research from an academic perspective is further explained in chapter 2.2.1.2.

Moreover, to a practical perspective, PSF management is not adequately supported to distinguish between the complex identity work occurring in their organizations (Beech, MacIntosh and McInnes, 2008). Indeed, understanding identities and identity work is seen to enable managing professionals (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Alvesson, 2004, p.217; Brown, Kirpal and Rauner, 2007). To conduct successful change and avoid problems with professionals, management should be able to consider the change's effect on the professionals' identity concepts (van Dijk and van Dick, 2009). By identifying differences between individuals' identity work, management can more successfully implement change activities (Beech, MacIntosh and McInnes, 2008; Gorman, 2017).

Finally, the purpose to explore types of identity work arises from the academic need for further research in how, why and with what implications identity work is engaged to by individuals in organizations: this notion refers to the identification of different types (Brown, 2015). Recently, Asplund, Bolander and Werr (2017) noted a lack of an understanding of how identity-related dynamics can be addressed in organizational change. An approach to study types with a qualitative research will entail an investigation of these possible dynamics.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

Given the call to further understand professional identity work in organizational change, the aim is to distinguish identity work types by different individuals who subjectively and mentally perceive an ongoing change. For this purpose, the research question is formulated as,

What different types of professional identity work can be distinguished during organizational change?

This research question is followed by a sub-question that contributes to the understanding of the different identity work types and is in place for the proposed framework at the end of this paper.

How can these different types of professional identity work be distinguished?

To answer the research questions, an abductive and qualitative study will be conducted to explore professionals in organization's change. The study will be situated in an empirical case context that enables the researcher to investigate the phenomenon of identity work during organizational change. The research approach is phenomenographic, meaning, the aim is to distinguish what the

professionals experience and understand during their organization's change. This represents what implications this perception has on identity work and what different types can be distinguished.

The remaining paper is structured as follows: in chapter two, the theoretical framework for identity work in organizational change is presented. This part ends in acknowledging the need to study and map the subject further. In chapter three, the methodology used to answer the research question is outlined. In following chapters four and five, the study findings are presented and further analysed, before building a framework used to understand and distinguish differences in identity work types. Chapter six concludes the paper.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This literature review is structured as follows: first, the concept of identity and professional identity will be presented, laying the grounds for this research. Then, the focus narrows to the act of professional identity work (chapter 2.2) before presenting the context of organizational change (chapter 2.2.1). Finally, the need for further research (chapter 2.2.1.2) is explained.

2.1 ON (PROFESSIONAL) IDENTITY

In order to qualitatively distinguish types of identity work during organizational change, the concept of identity and the act of identity work needs to be understood. Identity is about addressing yourself and answering the question, “who am I, and by implication, how should I act?” (Alvesson, 2004; Schwartz, Luyckx and Vignoles, 2011). It is the core of the self (Burkitt, 2011) interacting with the feelings, values, and behaviour of that human (Ashcraft, Alvesson and Thomas, 2008).

Identity is dynamic and “continuously reshaped and redefined through time and changing contexts” (Ylijoki and Ursin, 2013, p.1137). As Shakespeare¹ said, “there is nothing necessarily consistent about the roles we play in life and, thus, unity and continuity of identity is not to be expected” (Burkitt, 2011, p.275). Unity should neither be expected between individuals even within the same organization as aspects of identities varies between individuals (Ashforth, Harrison and Corley, 2008), which is why different types of identity work are assumed to exist.

Every person has multiple, shifting and different identities (Stryker and Burke, 2000; Ashcraft, Alvesson and Thomas, 2008; Van Maanen, 2010). A “person can describe herself in multiple ways” (Schwartz, Luyckx and Vignoles, 2011, p.6) - such as by their profession. Because humans spend so much of their time at work, it is called a natural locale for the study of identity (Van Maanen, 2010).

Professional identity refers to the awareness of being a professional (Skorikov and Vondracek, 2011) and is the “enduring constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role” (Schein, 1978 in Ibarra, 1999, p.765). According to Van Maanen (2010, p.3), it “reflects a person's sense of distinctiveness, agency, dignity, special skills, ethics and morality (or lack thereof)”. Although an individual has agency over this identity, it is embedded into a collective and social context (Ylijoki and Ursin, 2013) often bounded by the employing organization. Because professional identity is highly related to the organizational context (Alvesson, 2004), the organizations have an effect on professionals’ “who am I”.

¹ William Shakespeare, 1599–1603, As You Like It, Act II, Scene VII, lines 139–142

Identity theory itself was first presented at the 1966 meeting of the American Sociological Association (Burke and Stryker, 2000, p.284), after which it became a popular point of study: for example, it is used in organizational analyses (Thatcher and Zhu, 2006; Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas, 2008) to understand how organizations function (Alvesson, 2004). According to Brown (2015, p.22) research on self and identity has a long heritage yet they have increased in interest in academia (Winkler, 2013). Less common are empirical studies that investigate identities and their relationships with individuals and professions.

The concern about being and having a “self” is not natural for humans, but a cultural and historical formation (Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas, 2008). Foundations for this were laid in the Roman law, after which Descartes’ 17th-century formula “I think therefore I am” became the heart of Western identity (Burkitt, 2011). Thus, one has to understand the highly subjective concept and nature of identity. Although identity literature entails various subjects from sociology to economics (Van Maanen, 2010), establishing a link between identity and action is common to all of them (Ashcraft, Alvesson and Thomas, 2008): thus, identity drives motivation, motivation drives action and action drives results (Wasden, 2011, p.11).

Professionals have agency and control over their identities (Brown, 1997; Phelan and Kinsella, 2009; Schwartz, Luyckx and Vignoles, 2011; Knights and Clarke, 2017). This means individuals can create, maintain and adapt their own professional identity (Brown, 2017). It can be formed, repaired, maintained, strengthened or revised based on the professional’s situation, goals or needs: this act is called identity work (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006).

Identity does not exist in a vacuum: it requires validation and confirmation from external sources or the social world for it to exist (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006; Rounds, 2006). Following Van Maanen (2010), understandings of the self is situated in a particular, socially enacted context, for example, the organization. Interaction with various stakeholders is fundamental (Beech, MacIntosh and McInnes, 2008) but self-agency is required to conduct identity work (Brown, Kirpal and Rauner, 2007).

Although identity is the continuous engine behind a professional’s being, awareness of it can heighten in certain situations. Organizational change heightens awareness of the self-identity and identity work (Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas, 2008). Investigating this process is the purpose of this research. Identity work in organizational change is discussed further in chapter 2.2.1.

2.2 PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY WORK

The concept of identity work exists to explain the different processes of identity (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006). It is, to some extent, a conscious act where one creates or adapts the self by forming, strengthening or maintaining his or her self-concept (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Brown, 2017). Identity work does not exist in a vacuum: it is a process between the self and others. Selves are “connected to other persons, to beliefs, to ideas, to situations, to feelings, to objects in the world, to particular times, to specific places and so forth” (Van Maanen, 2010, p.10). Professional identity requires validation and confirmation from external sources or the social world for it to exist (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006; Rounds, 2006).

To give an example on how identity work functions, Ibarra and Petriglieri (2010) found that people can enact a part to be granted the claimed identity. Identities can be played around with to explore possible selves. If an individual gets confirmation from others as a “particular type of people”, a person can feel competence and have positive effects on self-esteem (Alvesson, 2004, p.204). In turn, the symbolic identity work study by Creed, DeJordy and Lok (2010, p.1349) showed how GLBT ministers’ identity work entailed the use of available cultural resources such as role models, biblical narratives and Protestant traditions to create stability. Then, Brown and Coupland (2015) found people to tell different stories about themselves. However, “both the verbal and non-verbal sort must rely on established cultural codes or else they would be unintelligible” (Van Maanen, 2010, p.11).

Representing identity work dynamics, the model of occupational identity formation by Brown (1997, p.3) puts the individual in the centre of agency and in control of his or her own professional identity. Externally this happens in a social dimension, where the individual learns, works and interacts with others. Internally, a person might not act upon the self to develop a particular occupational commitment, but a broader “for life” identity: thus, professional identity work has an effect on the self as a whole as it is one of the many identities a person holds. After the day, professional identity is not left by the desk; it is part of the self. This implies that researched identity work is highly subject to who the person is and not only to occupational demands, codes of conduct or externally provided scripts of self.

The reason of identity work is finding inner stability between the self and to keep the alignment between work and identity. Professionals, as any humans, have an innate need for this alignment since this increases solidity and motivation as well as has been found to enable professionals to work with better performance (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006, p.254). Kira, Balkin and San (2012, p.31) argue that individuals thrive when there is a “subjectively experienced alignment between one’s work identity and the nature, purpose and practices of one’s work”. Furthermore, this has even appeared to correlate with career success and psychological well-being (Skorikov and Vondracek, 2011).

In addition to stability, professionals crave self-determination (self-control), self-distinctiveness (individuality, distinctiveness), self-enhancement (esteem, positively valued), and self-continuity (coherence); supporting these principles can be a motivation to engage into identity work (Eilam and

Shamir, 2005; Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas, 2008). Professionals are seen to contribute notably to their identities (Skorikov and Vondracek, 2011) since they need to put the effort into achieving, maintaining and improving self-identity.

This is not as contingent about mastery of routines, success or confirmation as of those non-professionals' whose competence is more materially grounded; thus professionals identity work differs from other workers', making them sensitive and vulnerable to frustration and changing environment (Alvesson, 2004, p.195). Social context has been noted to act as a support function in these stressful situations (Scheck and Kinicki, 2018). While understanding how professional identities are situated in socially bounded entities, this research focuses on the personal, inner side of identity work.

Organizational change impacts the work-identity alignment (Kira, Balkin and San, 2012), heightens awareness of self in the company and leads to more concentrated identity work (Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas, 2008). Identity can be understood as "the site where structure and agency collide" (Bhavnani and Phoenix, 1994, p.6). *Agency*, awareness of self as an actor and *structure*, the physical, social and cultural forces, are like the "two blades of a pair of scissors that need to work together to do their job" (Rounds, 2006, p.137).

For professionals (agents), this structure is the organizational context and alignment comes from work-identity integrity. Any connections (attributed, claimed, denied or ignored) are building blocks of identity (Van Maanen, 2010). Because professionals are farther defined by what they do rather than in what organization they work in, they tend to correct any discrepancies between "doing" and "being" by customizing who one is to match what one does (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006) to re-align work and identity through the act of identity work.

2.2.1 PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

PSFs are continuously experiencing change and uncertainty (Brock, 2006). Following the previous scissors-analogy of identity, when the structure changes, agency requires increased awareness to find the inner stability and develop a new sense of self. Change come in all shapes and sizes, yet Corley and Gioia (2004, p.173) warn about the unknowns and ambiguities that always come with it: ambiguities create a tension to support a coherent sense of self, engaging individuals into identity work with individual ways and goals (Winkler, 2013).

Changes in social, physical, and psychological work dimensions have been noticed to have implications for professional identity (Thatcher and Zhu, 2006; van Dijk and van Dick, 2009). Robertson, Roberts and Porras (1993, p.621) show how changes in work setting influence the work-identity alignment of individuals. This, in turn, has an effect on both the level or organizational performance and the level of organization members' individual development.

Although differences in humans have been acknowledged throughout history, the individual differences of identity work require more attention. This way the understanding of how, why and with what implications work-identity alignment is perceived by different professionals is increased (Brown, 2015). Without this, identity-related dynamics cannot truly be understood among the professional workforce in organizational change. By identifying differences between individuals' identity work, management can more successfully implement change activities (Beech, MacIntosh and McInnes, 2008; Gorman, 2017).

How identity work is engaged to in times of change depends on individual aims for work-identity alignment (Dilts, 1996, p.21) that is affected by one's historical and present circumstances as well as future aspirations (Oliver, 2015). As Alvesson (2004, p.194) reminds, some stability around identity is necessary for the mental well-being and a sense of direction: hence, identity work is required to develop a sense of self that would cope in the new and prepare for the future (Tansley and Tietze, 2013). This stability doesn't mean a person would always strive to keep the identity consistent. Identity work is affected by the change in structure and the innate goals, missions, needs, motivations or threats it poses in a relation to the self - but the implications to different types of identity work have not been established in academia.

Identity work in change plays out based on the person's understanding, perception and sense-making of what is going on (Ylijoki and Ursin, 2013); this perception is not based on objective truths but understandings of it in respect to the self. Indeed, the change subject is contrasted to the person's own work-identity alignment (Kira, Balkin and San, 2012). This perception is the underlying base for identity work in organizational change and will be turned to in the next chapter.

2.2.1.1 Perception of change in relation to professional identity

Individuals continuously, consciously or unconsciously, perceive the ongoing change. This happens mentally throughout the change process and as a lived experience. The focus of this research is the relationship between the individual and the change as it is undergoing; thus, this perception happens during the organizational change.

The perception of change is grounded in how the individual understands and makes sense of it. Any change in structure sets a new framework for professionals to be perceived (Brown, Kirpal and Rauner, 2007, p.41) and indeed, research of professional identity work in conditions of change is often grounded in how the professional makes sense of it (McInnes *et al.*, 2006; Reissner, 2010). In other words, the perception has implications to individual identity work.

What the individuals are particularly making sense of is the change's relationship with the identity. This includes questioning possible identity outcomes and what resources, reasons or motivations the subject offers to conduct identity work (Beech, Macintosh and McInnes, 2008). The aim is to have a

work-identity alignment. The underlying echo is the professional self-concept; the constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, and experiences of that person. It includes possible motives for autonomy, freedom, dignity, and respect that professionals are known to value (Van Maanen, 2010).

While individuals perceive the change in unique ways, they are subject to external influences (Beech, 2011). Most importantly, this perception can mean very different things to different people (Beech, MacIntosh and McInnes, 2008) and due to this, the implications to identity work also varies even within the same organization. Indeed, “There is no reason to assume recipients and change agents share the same understandings.” (Bartunek et al., 2006, p.183). Thus, an organizational change does not have similar implications for everyone’s identity work and different types and implications are assumed to be distinguishable.

A professional might perceive the change as a possibility to benefit the self since alterations in work habits may introduce new elements to enrich, expand or alter the self (Thatcher and Zhu, 2006, p.1077). To bring in and profit on the opportunities new situations provide, professionals identity work to create, maintain and adapt the identity (Brown, 2017) and to create a sense of coherence and distinctiveness (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003, p.1165). However, change can also be viewed as a new or unexpected situation altering the sense of routine and normality (Van Maanen, 2010; Tansley and Tietze, 2013) stressing or confusing the individual. The situation can even be resisted due to the perceived threat to the self (van Dijk and van Dick, 2009; Schilling *et al.*, 2012).

Furthermore, if an individual perceives the change to be aligned with the self, Eilam and Shamir (2005) argue that the person can be expected to support and promote the change, whereas Kira, Balkin and San (2012) explain this situation to promote self-continuity or self-enhancement and so, authenticity in work. However, if an alignment between self and change is not perceived, individuals become stressed, lack motivation and resist the change initiatives (Eilam and Shamir, 2005), diminishing their professional identity (Kira, Balkin and San, 2012).

Work by Beech, Macintosh and Mcinnes (2008) was found to be inspiring for this research as the authors have similar motivations behind their built framework: to map and conceptualize individual differences of identity work. The authors looked into individual reason and ability to undertake identity work in times of organizational change by counter-posing the perception of risk/opportunity to the perceived identity recourses (things used to maintain an identity position such as status or acknowledged expertise).

For example, if an individual has perceived the change to be either high risk or high opportunity and has resources to make an effect, he or she has a compelling reason and ability to engage in identity work. Yet, if acknowledged risk/opportunity, as well as the perceived resources, are low, the individual has either little reason or ability to engage into identity work. This study lacks empirical argumentation but is a beneficial example of how mental processing of the change affects the individual’s identity work. Furthermore, this “boxing” of types help managers to understand the

identity processes in organizations and what to consider while leading change (Beech, MacIntosh and McInnes, 2008).

Furthermore, the perception of the situation depends on the individual's identification. Either, the professional feels more one-ness with the organization and is inclined to it; these are called "locals". Or, the professional is more inclined by the work and professionalism and thus more independent from organizational embeddedness; these are called "cosmopolitans" (Gouldner, 1957 in Schilling *et al.*, 2012). Schilling *et al.* (2012, p.4) propose that "the professional's locus of identification as either 'cosmopolitan' or 'local' mediates the relationship between the effects of the change on the professional identity and the professionals' reactions to this change". If an individual is more oriented towards being an organizational member, the alignment between work and identity is important: then, there is additional motivation to identity work in organizational change. In other words, it can be that change becomes personally more meaningful than without internal organizational alignment and identification.

A concept explaining the individual's perception of the ongoing change emerged from this study's empirical work. It has not been derived from literature analysis on identity work but will be reviewed here as it supports the further findings and discussion of this research paper. It became prevalent that while professionals perceive the change, they simultaneously perceive its relationship to the self. Furthermore, they perceive the power or control their self-concept has in respect to the change. This is called self-efficacy and is the "ease of difficulty of performing a behaviour" and the "extent to which performance is up to the actor" (Ajzen, 2002, p.679). Self-efficacy judgments influence identity work as it determines the effort put "to solve" a situation of work-identity alignment interferences (Bandura, 1982).

In conclusion, how a professional perceives the change, especially its alignment with the self, has implications to identity work. The subjective perception determines how professionals engage to work a preferred version of themselves (Brown and Coupland, 2015). This in turn has an effect on the values, feelings, behavior, motives, and attributes of that professional in the change (Ashcraft, Alvesson and Thomas, 2008). Through their status of being the key resource in PSFs, the identity work process affects organizational change efforts, performance and success (Reissner, 2010).

2.2.1.2 Need for further research

While there is research on identity work, it has been found that there is a lack of an understanding of different types of identity work or how can these be distinguished during organizational change. Types refer to a mental concept derived from how the individual perceives the change and what implications this has to the work-identity alignment and further, identity work. Thus, it entails particular kinds of identity work enactments, antecedents and consequences. Calling these

dimensions that either differentiate or associate individuals' identity work together as types is a convenient way to make sense of different professionals' identity work in organizational change.

Considering the uniqueness of individuals, management needs to acknowledge the differences of change perception among the workforce to be able to support and control the professionals (Alvesson, 2004, p.206). Indeed, Schilling *et al.*, (2012 p.14) notes how PSFs “need to be sensitive to the compatibility of proposed changes with prevailing professional identities”, yet this subject requires more attention through an investigative analysis on how professionals perceive an organizational change and what implications it has to identity work.

Beech, Macintosh and McInnes (2008) warn that without understanding differences between professionals, change activities may face problems and low success. Professionals perceive the change in respect to their self which affects the outcome of identity work. Indeed, to produce business value with or by professionals, considering the “interrelationships between organizational structures and individuals' work” is important for management activities (Gorman, 2017, p.234).

Van Dijk and van Dick (2009) suggest that to conduct successful organizational change, the starting point should be to think “how the change and change management impacts how we feel about who we are” (p.143). This line of thought can be linked to how individuals position their selves with respect to the change. Through an increased understanding of identity work types, PSFs can look for the compatibility of change to the professionals' selves, which requires attention and sensitivity (Schilling *et al.*, 2012). By identifying differences between individuals' identity work, management can more successfully implement change activities (Beech, MacIntosh and McInnes, 2008; Gorman, 2017). This contributes to business efficiency and better change performance that is a constant reality for modern PSFs (van Dijk and van Dick, 2009).

Indeed, this research on different types of identity work has many possibilities for contribution. The call by Schilling *et al.* (2012) for more fine-grained investigations of individual variations in reactions to change can be contributed by identifying types through empirical analysis. Reissner (2010, p.288) says that “little is currently known about the dynamics of identity development at the workplace under conditions of change” but the further proposed framework on types of identity work would contribute to this body of knowledge while explaining how identity-related dynamics can be addressed in organizational change (Asplund, Bolander and Werr, 2017). Overall, academic research calls for more empirical takes on professional identity work in organizational change (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006; Reissner, 2010; Schilling *et al.*, 2012; Asplund, Bolander and Werr, 2017).

Furthermore, the identity work type framework by Beech, Macintosh and McInnes (2008) focused only on certain aspects of perception - and lacks empirical support. Finally, Brown (2015) calls for further research into how, why and with what implications identity work is engaged to by individuals in organizations. According to him, there is still much to know about the different prepositions – and by distinguishing different types through empirical research, this study is able to contribute to both academia and practice.

3 METHODOLOGY

This section presents the research methodology. Methodological fit among the elements of the research has been enabled by choosing appropriate research design to support the research question on professional identity work (Mcmanus and Edmondson, 2007). First, research approach and process are explained (chapter 3.1). Then, the chosen company context is presented and argued (chapter 3.2). Next, everything around data is described in chapters 3.3 and 3.4, before considering the quality aspects of this qualitative study (chapter 3.5).

3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

This abductive research adopted a phenomenographic approach, which aims to study professionals in a changing organization. Promoting a micro-perspective, the goal is to contribute to academic and practice with qualitative data from empirical enquiry, a particular case context.

The qualitative research approach was chosen to study dynamic identities as it enables to view real-life phenomena (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.404) and to generate a rich and detailed set of data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.324) about identity work processes. Quantitative methods, such as statistical analysis or surveys with no face-to-face interactions were not sufficient to study identity, as the aim is to understand and explore the individual sense-making and subjective understanding.

The approach is phenomenographic since the research aim required to understand the professionals' lived experience and mental landscape during the change (Barnard, Mccosker and Gerber, 1999). Phenomenography attempts to form the data on how people make sense of a phenomenon into a limited number of groups based on the characteristics and differences (Webb, 1997), which supports this research's aims. Phenomenographic approach enables to "create a picture of the issue or phenomenon for people other than participants" (Bolderston, 2012, p.67). The approach has been used in education and health care (Anderberg, 2000) but the underlying purpose of subjective nature can be applied to identity research. Using this qualitative approach, the researcher is able to distinguish similarities and differences in the way professionals experience and understand the change and form the identity work types.

According to Alvesson (2010) identity is a difficult study theme due to its extensive and subjective nature and calls for "sensitive interpretations" (p.213). This notion has been considered in interview setting (office location, mother language) as well as the analysis of the data. From an ontological approach and in a phenomenographic manner, the researcher follows closely interview quotes and topics to follow the reality of study participants; terms, as defined by participants, are primary importance (Creswell, 2007, p.19), which is why mother tongue was used in interviews and transcription.

The research process is two-fold to respect the iterative and abductive nature of the study; both theoretical and empirical sides of the research process were conducted closely together. After outlining the research interest, this project begun with a pre-study at the case company (chapter 3.2.1) and an outline of a suitable theoretical framework, namely identity and organizational change. After this, the research design was formed to properly link the data to be analysed to the found question of the study. Finally, the phenomenographic findings were analysed together with secondary research, leading to this research' conclusions. The process of analysis leading to findings is described further in chapter 3.4.2.

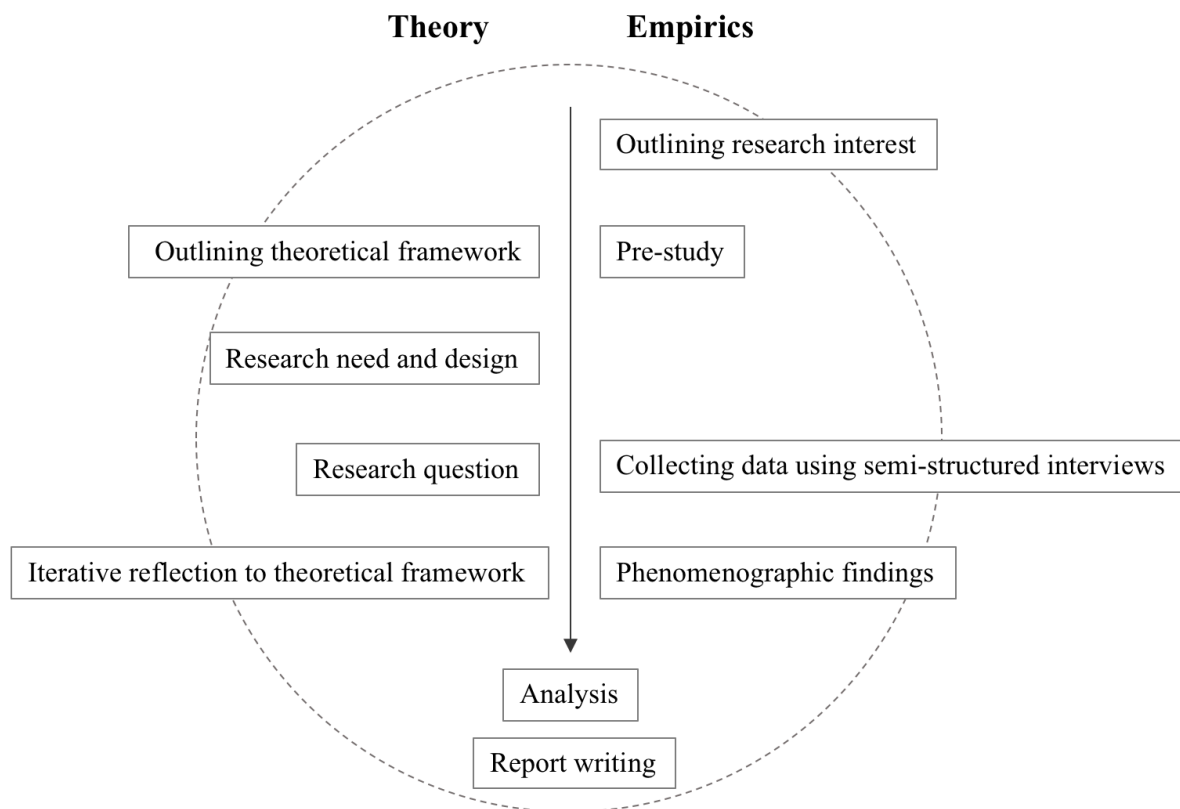


Figure 1 Research process

3.2 CASE COMPANY

This research is situated in a context of a particular case, a professional service firm Blueprint² undergoing organizational change. This enables to study identity work in a real-life context (Yin, 2003, p.13). Indeed, as Schwartz, Luyckx and Vignoles (2011, p.12) explain, “an individual has agency in constructing her identity, but this personal process occurs within particular contextual constraints that may be challenged but cannot simply be ignored”. Thus, in order to study how the professionals identity work during organizational change, an empirical situation needs to be investigated. This strategy is seen to be beneficial in creating an in-depth understanding of the units of analysis, the case company professionals (Creswell, 2007).

What Blueprint aims with the change (competitive advantage and new business) is a contemporary situation and development path for PSFs (Brown, Kirpal and Rauner, 2007). The studied professionals were relatively heterogeneous with different age-groups and occupations, while still representing a sample of professionals by classic interpretation (Von Nordenflycht, 2010), enabling the data to be generalizable (Eisenhardt, 1989, p.537; Yin, 2003, p.41).

Furthermore, the researcher had unlimited access and previous employment with the company: this provides an understanding of the company as a whole and enables higher quality and truthful interpretation of professional's world at the change, compared to someone with no previous knowledge. Indeed, an initial knowledge base on life at the case company made the researcher able to display a relaxed interaction, a genuine interest in the individuals and an accepting attitude, which all are required to conduct good phenomenographic research (Barnard, Mccosker and Gerber, 1999). Possible risks of bias are consciously taken into consideration in objective data analysis and project progress reporting (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.395).

3.2.1 BLUEPRINT'S CHANGE AND THE PROFESSIONALS

Since the 1960's Blueprint has offered services around architecture, design and management consulting. As a PSF (by Von Nordenflycht's (2010) taxonomy a classic, even neo-natured one), Blueprint is characterized by knowledge intensity, low capital intensity and professionalized workforce (Von Nordenflycht, 2010); it relies highly on its professionals and any organizational change is bound to affect these people. With decades of experience and a wide reference portfolio Blueprint has a strong reputation yet time has passed on their traditional business. Externally, the market is changing, thus, change was required for better business performance and for the ability to attract quality clients, projects and workforce. Internally, an update was required to the company's

² The organization's name is replaced with the pseudonym Blueprint and the geographical location is concealed to protect anonymity.

internal culture described as dusty and outdated³. The aim is to restructure towards a more modern organization.

The level of analysis in this research is the professionals at Blueprint who experience the ongoing organizational change. The 24 employees have a vast variety in the career length at Blueprint, spanning anywhere from recent graduates to experienced professionals with over 30 years at Blueprint. Changes are happening in physical, (office floor plan), social (atmosphere and culture) and virtual (technology and marketing) dimensions. The service lines (architecture, interior architecture and workplace development) are increasingly required to cooperate and support the business development. The transformation in the professionals' workplace is affecting their professional identity in different ways and the aim is to explore how the Blueprint employees make sense of their lived experience in order to contribute to identity work types research.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

The preoccupation of data collection followed the one of qualitative nature (depth, rather than breadth) to study how Blueprint professionals were perceiving and understanding their organization's ongoing change (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.571).

3.3.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Data was collected through one-to-one interviews for their strength of focusing directly on the research question (Yin, 2003, p.86) and for this study's purpose of understanding participant's explanations and meanings (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.333). Furthermore, interviews are the primary method in phenomenographic research approach (Bolderston, 2012) for their ability to understand the lived experience of the people being studied (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.402). Particularly, the interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner. A flexible order of open-ended questions supports the exploratory nature of this study (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, pp.33-34).

According to Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas (2008), asking questions is one of the most popular research approaches to identity. As the unit of study was busy professionals, an interview invitation was perceived more meaningful, appropriate and easier to conduct compared to a questionnaire (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.324). Semi-structured questions make it able to structure the discussion to stay focused on research agenda, while leaving room for pondering, reflections and development of conversation. Interviewees can be invited to explain further their answers to certain

³ Blueprint's internal documents, accessed January 2018.

questions to enable a more fruitful data outcome (Barnard, Mccosker and Gerber, 1999). The generated data can be used in various ways, both to learn about the individual sense-making and stimuli for identity work.

Prior to the interview start, a summary of the purpose of the research was provided to support research credibility (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.328). A summary of the interviews conducted in is given in Appendix 1. Due to the phenomenographic nature of this thesis and in order to explore to mental landscape of different professionals in organizational change, these interviews were used as the only source of data.

3.3.2 *PILOT INTERVIEW*

Four pilot interviews, lasting between 60 to 75 minutes, were conducted early in the research process (January 2018) to test the research approach and map a possible research question. This data contributed to understand the case context more profoundly as well as to design the research and the interview guide for the following semi-structured interviews among rest of the Blueprint employees.

3.3.3 *INTERVIEW GUIDE*

An interview guide was used to guide the conversation and develop a picture of the professionals' experience of the undergoing change. As supposed with the semi-structured interview method, the interview guide includes certain themes that were in place to investigate the research question. Thus, it was formed with the end-goal in mind, imagining appropriate data needed to study the research question: this included professionals' sense-making of the ongoing change (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.475). The guide was tested with the pilot interviews, after which it was formed to its current state (Appendix 2) to better guide the dialogues.

The change process was always asked to be described by the employee to ensure the right context of ponder and also to investigate how individuals reflect on the change. This way data for phenomenographic research was enabled (Webb, 1997; Barnard, Mccosker and Gerber, 1999). Interviews developed as a relaxed conversation of researcher's semi-structured questions, some follow-up questions and interviewee's responses or explanations.

As identity is about the qualities, beliefs or personality as well as about the effects on the motivation and behaviour of that individual, questions were formed around the being in the organization and as a professional. Indeed, the guide consists of many "*how*" and "*why*" questions in the name of investigation. With more focused, probing questions the intention was to encourage exploration of a particular point without effect on interviewees side (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.338-339).

Interview questions were grounded in real-life experiences of the participants (“*what personal goals do you have?*”) rather than being something too conceptual or abstract (“*how do you mentally position your identity in this change?*”) (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.332) to ensure comfortability and flow of discussion. The classic questions, “*who are you as a professional and how has this change affected it?*” were in place to study professionals’ reflection of alignment between self and the change.

3.3.4 PARTICIPANTS

Since the aim was to investigate professionals during organizational change, Blueprint employees were used as the unit of analysis (Yin, 2003, p.76). The empirical findings are based on 19 Blueprint employees; out of the total 24 employees, this coverage offers a weighty insight of the change context and professional identity work at Blueprint. List of participating interviewees to both pilot and main study can be found in Appendix 1, yet due to anonymity agreements, individuals listed here cannot be connected to research findings or quotes. To present quotes from different sources the professionals were given new last names based on popular Swedish ones.

3.3.5 INTERVIEW SETTING

All interviews, lasting between 40 to 75 minutes and conducted one-to-one, were carried out in person at the case company office to ensure a convenient and relaxed conversation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.329). They were held in the mother tongue of both interviewer and interviewees to avoid miscommunication and to ensure that interviewees were able to explain and depict themselves in their personalized, subjective way.

3.4 RESEARCH DATA

3.4.1 DOCUMENTATION

All interviews were recorded while the researcher led the discussion and made light notes for follow-up questions. This method enabled first the researcher to be present in the interview situation but then indulge in the session and interviewee's narrative afterwards through the record. All recordings were first transcribed to the mother language for a close analysis of the data. They were then transcribed into English as applicable for this research.

3.4.2 ANALYSIS PROCESS

This analysis was grounded on the assumption that organizational change heightens the awareness of professional work-identity alignment and identity work (McInnes *et al.*, 2006; Thatcher and Zhu, 2006; van Dijk and van Dick, 2009; Reissner, 2010).

This research analysis was a process in which the data was constantly revisited. The aim was to discover professional perception, experience and awareness of the ongoing change situation (Barnard, Mccosker and Gerber, 1999). As Caiata-Zufferey (2018, p.1) puts it, "Discovery in qualitative research requires the transformation of a significant amount of data from a limited number of cases into an abstract, intelligible account." Indeed, the data analysis consisted of organizing and categorizing the qualitative data to address the research question (Yin, 2003, p.99; Walker and Myrick, 2006).

After conducting and transcribing the interviews with Blueprint professionals, an iterative analysis process commenced. With the phenomenographic approach, the researcher looked for how the professional at the time understood change and him- or herself within it. As the aim was to investigate how individuals made sense of the ongoing change, each interview was handled as one data set and was not broken into coded pieces. Certain characteristics and dimensions in the data set, thus the content of responses (emotions, role in process or acknowledgment of self-expectations) to interview-guide questions created a way of dividing the professionals into three piles.

Phenomenography attempts to form the data on how people make sense of a phenomenon into a limited number of groups based on the characteristics and differences (Webb, 1997). This sorting meant that each data set was analysed in its entirety emphasizing the content of description or the persons' way of thinking, rather looking at narrative strategies or other particular points. With an inductive mind-set of exploring the data, the aim was "to describe the qualitatively different ways a group of people make sense of, experience, and understand" the ongoing change (Barnard, Mccosker and Gerber, 1999, p.224).

Piles, or further on groups, were formed where professionals matched or differentiated from each other (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.578). Of course, neat groups of professionals that perfectly include some and exclude others are difficult to find (Alvesson and Robertson, 2006). The nature of overlap was taken into consideration when forming the three groups that would, through an in-depth yet iterative analysis, form the types of professional identity work in organizational change

With the differentiated yet internally consistent groups of professionals, analysis of each began in two ways. First, the group of professionals was compared to other two piles to find differences. Second, the group in itself was compiled and discussed. The analysis focused on what (and why) the professionals were doing and with what consequences, indeed, a total explanation of the situation (McInnes *et al.*, 2006, p.1122).

After the groups of professionals were created and opened up, the researcher indulged back to the literature. The empirical analysis inspired the final framework as an iterative process suggests. This interplay is beneficial for an abductive study design (Bryman and Bell, 2011 p.576) and so, benefitted the analysis of identity work research as well as its internal consistency and credibility.

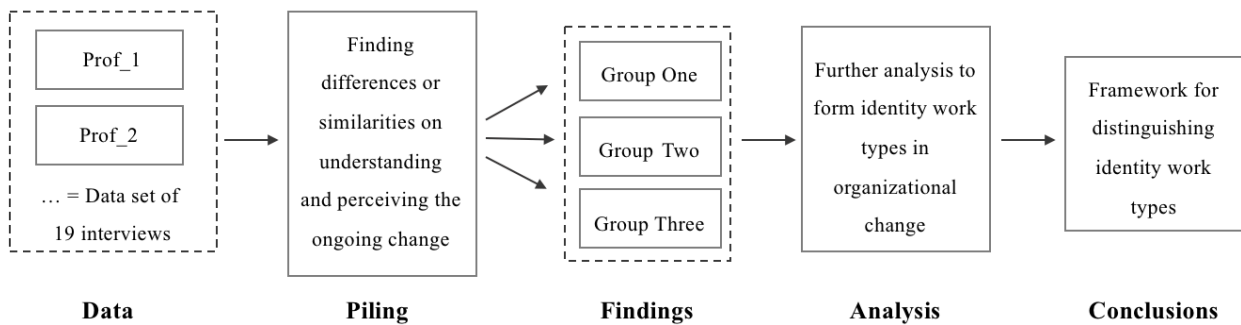


Figure 2 Analysis process

3.5 QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

In this part, the quality aspects of the conducted study will be considered. According to Bryman and Bell (2011, p.395) qualitative research that should be evaluated in certain criteria that differ from those of quantitative research's. These criteria used often to assess data quality in qualitative research are credibility, transferability and reliability,

3.5.1 CREDIBILITY

In order to be a credible research paper, this study follows the good practice of thesis conduct in terms of structure, process and supervising. A plan, although considering the abductive nature of the study, was formed at the beginning of the project (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.328). Taken that this study is conducted by one researcher, internal validity has been supported by two factors: first, a conscious objectivity of data analysis and second, a constant presentation of research progress to appropriate stakeholders such as a supervisor (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.395). A chain of evidence was done by diligent process documentation. Multiple sources of evidence, such as internal documents about the change context, were used for validity reasons (Yin, 2003, p.34).

As semi-structured interview technique was used, the researcher was able to ask follow-up questions as well as confirm or question what the interviewee had just said. Thus, interpretations of responses were submitted back to interviewees ad hoc and confirmation that the researcher had understood the sense-making of the professional was obtained in a constant manner (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.396).

3.5.2 TRANSFERABILITY

To support research transferability and generalizability, rich, detail accounts of professional identity work are produced: this way future research can utilize it as database for judgement of transferability (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.398).

As discussed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009, p.335), an empirical context can be a way to cover traditional concerns of generalizability: a qualitative study is likely to be useful in other context than more restricted research strategies such as surveys. Although a qualitative study lacks statistical generalizability, the findings in this research “can be used for ‘naturalistic generalization’, whereby one recognized similarities based on experiences with similar ‘cases’ without statistical inference” (Stake, 1995 in Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006). Blueprint’s organizational change is common for modern PSFs that need to re-adapt to changing market conditions (Girod and Karim, 2017). Thus, similarities in this case context can be recognized in other PSFs also and findings in this research can be transferred and utilized in both academia and practice.

3.5.3 *RELIABILITY*

The lack of standardisation in semi-structured interviews may lead to concerns about reliability and bias in terms of would an alternative research conclude similar findings, how the interview is conducted and how is the data analysed (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.326). To support the reliability of this research, records of all research phases were kept (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.398) and documents such as interviewee log and the interview guide can be found in the appendixes. It must be noted that this research reflects a reality at a certain point in time and this situation is not necessarily possible to be replicated.

When it comes to biases from both interviewees and interviewers sides, (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.326), prejudice or any subjective biases were consciously undermined during this research process. An abductive path between empirical and literature entities ensured that no personal values or inclinations have influenced the conduct of the research or its findings. However, identity is by nature an internal psychological process thus suffers from the reliability and validity limitation (Burke and Reitzes, 1981). Phenomenographic research analysis can be criticized of resting on the “historically and socially located researcher” that affects what types the researcher finds in the data set (Webb, 1997, p.201); however, complete objectivity is impossible in qualitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.398). Objectivity and thus reliability in this study has been ensured to the fullest consciousness.

4 FINDINGS

In this section, the empirical findings and analysis will be presented according to three different, mutually exclusive groups of professionals. Each group is named by an appropriate characteristic. Illustrative quotes from are used to describe the different phenomena. After presenting the findings, an analysis and framework on identity work types will follow in Chapter 5.

Groups were formed out of the Blueprint professionals whose mental landscape was interpreted as similar to one another. Their professional identity concept and relationship with the employer was found to have implications to the perception of the ongoing change and further, to identity work practices. Each group's findings would further contribute to distinguishing different identity work types.

4.1 GROUP ONE: DETACHERS

This group is named as “detachers” due to the clear mental positioning of the self in respect to the change these professionals enacted during Blueprint's change.

4.1.1 PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

These professionals are very inclined to their work: indeed, they seem to have a serious motivation for conducting the work by the book and with high-quality outcomes. Their professional self is about being the performer of architectural, interior architectural or other services for the client's needs. As a professional named *Andersson* says, “*Work is just work. I could be somewhere else, but I'm comfortable here [at Blueprint]*”.

Interpreting their mental landscape, this work is on their personal alley and not too much connected to the organization they work in. The professionals are more loyal to themselves. In other words, they work at Blueprint and by this location, follow organizational guidelines and citizenship as an employee should: however, these professionals imply the company they work in could possibly be whichever company, but now happens to be Blueprint. The “who am I as a professional, and by implication, how should I behave” -identity ponder does not include the particular firm. Indeed,

“I don't have Blueprint's business goals in mind. I try to do the work I have, but I don't know how these [individual work and Blueprint's goals] are connected, could they even be.” – Andersson

Thus, group one professionals are more autonomous and independent of their work and not so organizationally inclined. They are members of the Blueprint community, but their professional self does not seem to include the organization's identity to a far extent. Thus, alignment between self and

work exists literally between self and the projects the individual has. This self-work concept is as an island within the frames of Blueprint-employer.

4.1.2 RELATIONSHIP WITH BLUEPRINT

Because these individuals' professional identity does not seem to include Blueprint and so, is not about organizational identification, these people do not come across as active members of the community. However, they are not distant or undervalued employees or colleagues: their motivation and focus are about conducting their work, while distancing organizational life from the professional self. They contribute to the social world of company culture and community more by their professional knowledge, experience and workforce. From management's perspective, it could be assumed these professionals represent a diligent workforce that conducts the work they are assigned to with focus and passion. However, as will be represented in these research's findings, the difference compared to other professionals in the company becomes prevalent in how change was perceived and how identity work plays out within group one professionals.

When making sense of the understanding of their lived experience at Blueprint, these professionals were found to have a more instrumental relationship (that is, prioritizing monetary or practical rewards) with the employer. Indeed, group one professionals expect a reciprocal relationship: they have a job and it's benefits and in turn, they conduct the work as expected and carefully avoiding mistakes or challenges.

4.1.3 PERCEPTION OF THE CHANGE

When it comes to the overall perception of change, these professionals acknowledge the relevance of updating Blueprint's internal and external strategy. They approve it because they perceive it as supporting the natural development in the industry and market. However, because of the external relationship of Blueprint from the professional self-concept and furthermore, work-self alignment, Blueprint's change is perceived to happen somewhere outside the sphere of personal self.

This interpretation is drawn because professionals piled into this group do not regard the change to bring any new demands or expectations. If any of these were mentioned, they were downplayed as suggestions or purely naturally developed ways to work in the modern world. However, as the researcher did interview colleagues and the CEO, the organizational change has indeed introduced new organizational expectations that better support the aimed internal and external strategy and finally, the company's success. The fact that professionals do not acknowledge these indicates again the detachment of these individuals' professional identity from the Blueprint's change and their prioritized identification with the work they do over organizational membership.

Then, one could question, does not these professionals' change, as it is assigned through the changing Blueprint? The researcher assumes this to happen: however, the point is that these professionals do not regard this to be in connection to Blueprint's organizational change, because the company's actions are not equal to the work the professionals perform in these individuals' understanding.

4.1.3.1 Low inclination of self to the change

Indeed, group one professionals perceive the change situation as a neutral, almost insignificant event to themselves. Thus, the change is understood to happen outside the professional self and identity. Prior to building the personal perception of the ongoing organizational change at Blueprint, the individuals need to make sense of the situation. Different mental landscapes of how professionals made sense of the changing company led to similar conclusions.

For example, *Johansson*, *Bengtsson* and *Andersson* didn't regard the ongoing change as anything other than a natural development path of any company in the industry. Indeed,

"This [change] is not something we would have never seen before in this industry or Blueprint. It is mostly about new focus areas and getting a grip on something again" – Bengtsson

Because they did not perceive the change to be a "thing" they had low attachment or inclination to it and conducted their daily work with low acknowledgment of managerial updates or change bandwagon. It is interpreted that these professionals perceived Blueprint's goals and new expectations to have been uncomfortable or a nuisance for self-development. Since change in the work context may be seen as a nuisance, this notion is deliberately excluded from the self so that the maintenance of one's professional identity can continue undisturbed. Alterations or revisions to this identity are thought to happen outside the person's comfort zone.

When it comes to the noted relationship with Blueprint, some employees such as *Karlsson* and *Lindström*, in turn, did not perceive the change to offer any means to work upon the professional identity. Their work-self alignment was kept stable if the instrumental relationship was not reciprocated enough. For example, it was interpreted that some ways of working (such as co-working) were developed by these professionals with a positive attitude because the new CEO had introduced new work-life benefits (such as less required office face time).

However, excessive identity work to re-align self-concept to support the "new" Blueprint was not done and considerations of "what will I get out of this" became prevalent in these professionals' perception of the change. It seems professionals require motivation to organize themselves to the Blueprint change aims and this reward is not internally constituted but externally acclaimed. This could be either monetary (bonus) or a symbolic (internal competition win) reward of contributing to certain change aims such as bringing new clients in-house.

4.1.3.2 External change ques

Because the noted low identification with Blueprint, these professionals did not acknowledge the change to have an explicit effect on their professional identity. However, the ongoing of an organizational change was acknowledged, which means that other ques than internal organizational communication were found to be used to form the perception. Indeed, as said before, some professionals saw the change as “natural” because of the noticed development path on the industry and market. Thus, the work-identity alignment and then, identity work, searched for information mostly from external sources and not only management’s communication.

Some group one professionals explained that they knew Blueprint was going in the right direction with the change initiatives because they had discussed so with colleagues. They made sense of what was going on by sourcing other professionals and not specifically management personas. This hints about the professional inclination these individuals have and the priority of being “an independent professional” rather than “an employee in this company”.

Other professionals were interpreted to largely follow external ques accredited from outside the Blueprint company. One interviewee explained that to know that this change has a difference to Blueprint and the professionals, awards or new project portfolio should be granted. Thus, they use factors that support professionalism to perceive whether the ongoing change is any good. Again, this is more of a “keep calm and carry on” -type of strategy: as noted, these professionals do not consciously actively contribute to the change success. They do so, however, by conducting their work with good results. This means the positioning of the self in respect to the change is not so organizationally inclined than it is professionally stemmed.

4.1.4 IMPLICATIONS TO ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Because of this perception of the change, individuals mentally position the self to be external from the ongoing change. This has implications on how the individual exists in the organizational context, thus, what kind of a member the professional is in the company.

It was found that this mental detachment led to a physical enactment of a more observing role in the company. The professionals continued with their work as usual, observing colleagues or the management leading the change activities. Indeed, the professional self is not seen to be a “change enabler” or have a weighty role in the change process. However, it needs to be acknowledged that pure distancing from any change initiative is impossible in a medium-sized company where management might assign an individual to a particular change team.

Still, micro-level positioning can be found in people’s attitudes and priorities. As the following quote shows, a professional does not consciously consider the organization’s future or change aims: he

acknowledges others to be aware of the ongoing change but not himself. In addition, she uses the term “apparently” when describing the ongoing change, implying the distance of the change event from herself and lack of attendance to activities on it.

“I would think the change aims are clear to everyone. There are plans about it, but I don’t know them that well. Apparently, the change is still ongoing”
- Johansson

Because the ongoing change is acknowledged and not denied, and because it is not seen to have something to do with these professionals’ selves, it has been attached on the clearest management figure in Blueprint, the CEO. Although other management figures are also included, the relatively flat-structured company together with the CEO’s newness (although she had employment with Blueprint before this promotion), the change was largely personized with the CEO. This means the change was also seen as her business: responsibility and leadership were outsourced to this figure to further exemplify the detachment of the change from the professionals’ selves.

Interestingly, the change was not outsourced to colleagues: this indicates, again, about the more professional inclination rather than organizational one. Business and strategy activities are the management’s deal: professionals are there to conduct the professional services. The following quote illustrates this outsourcing. Indeed, the future of the professionals as a bunch is in the hands of the CEO. Note that the future of the professionals is not acknowledged to be their own concern but the employers’:

“Our future. . . . depends on the CEO’s willpower to work on it. If she can’t make changes happen she might lose the motivation and power” - Karlsson

4.1.5 IMPLICATIONS TO IDENTITY WORK

It was found that Blueprint as a company does not play a major part in these professionals’ identity and so, the individuals mentally position the change to be detached from the professional self. Identity work is then about maintaining the alignment between the professional self-concept and the work. This is to avoid letting the alignment to be disrupted by organizational changes happening around in the framework provided by employer Blueprint. For this detachment to happen, professionals need to be able to “lift” the self on top of the change situation and possible ambiguities that come with it. Indeed, high self-efficacy that is the power and control over the self in a particular situation was found in the data on group one professionals. This finding forms the type one identity work discussed further.

4.2 GROUP TWO: ORIENTEERS

This group is labelled by orienteering: this sport requires persons to navigate an unfamiliar terrain with the help of a map and a compass. In this study's context, the unfamiliar terrain is the organizational change. Professionals in this group perceive the change to be rather ambiguous and confusing in respect to the self-concept but wanting to attend to it, they try to move forward with the help of external guidance and concrete tasks, which help to make sense of the unfamiliar terrain.

4.2.1 PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Although these individuals acknowledged themselves to be professionals, they differed from those persons in the previous group one by a further inclination towards organizational membership. In other words, these professionals' identity included the notion of Blueprint: the "work" in work-identity alignment would then be about the work itself and also about the structure where it is done, that is, Blueprint.

Affecting the following perception of the organization's change, the professional identity in this group was characterized by a high leaning to the structure. This has two implications: first, the organization has an effect on the professional identity. As the following quote illustrates, Blueprint consciously or unconsciously alters the person to one way or another which indicates the "softness" of the person's self in front of a strong organizational identity of an old, established company such as Blueprint. This would resonate why further in this report the researcher presents how group two professionals had low self-efficacy, that is, control and power over the self in the change situation. Here, *Larsson* describes herself in the midst of the ongoing change:

"I have sometimes come to realize the effect the company has on me. Then I think I should not be like that and I move away from thoughts like 'this is how it is supposed to be, because it has always been this way'. [The company] has affected my communications and way of being." - Larsson

4.2.2 RELATIONSHIP WITH BLUEPRINT

They are highly motivated about their profession and seek to produce good results for the client and for Blueprint. In other words, the professional self is understood to exist with Blueprint and is naturally inclined to support the employer rather than being too autonomous or independent. Blueprint is not just a workplace, it is a place for the work these professionals live for. As one professional can be quoted,

“Blueprint is very personal. My workplace, wherever I am, becomes personal. . . . Not for all, it depends how you perceive your profession, for some maybe hobbies are more important” – Larsson

This quote indicates that the professional acknowledges having a closer relationship with Blueprint than other people, possibly than those piled into group one. By referring to the relationship as “personal”, it can be concluded that the professional identifies with the company and considers effects work has on the employer.

This internalization of Blueprint to the professional self-concept means that the professionals are innately more open to adjust the self by the changes happening at the organization. Thus, it was interpreted that supporting and revising the self as an employee to enable the change was taken for granted by these professionals – however, execution of this identity work has not been without challenges as described in the following chapter.

4.2.3 PERCEPTION OF THE CHANGE

It was found that perception of change in this group and the implications it had were similar across the heterogeneous group of employees in this group: in other words, the perception did not differ whether between the person’s particular profession or position at Blueprint. Indeed, the perception stemmed from how the professional self-concept was.

Orienteers were more active participants to let the self enable Blueprint’s change compared to group one individuals that detached themselves from it. They saw the change as an important part of their work and part of the current life at the company, which indicated that their daily focus is also on thinking about the change in addition to work as usual. However, when making sense of the ongoing change they came across an ambiguous situation of losing the alignment between work and identity– and not having the self-efficacy to stabilize the situation.

Professionals explained about information not moving, how clear guidelines about the “new” Blueprint were lacking and how the situation is more organic than structured. To these professionals, this created an uncertain situation: indeed, a professional named as *Nilsson* said not to be sure how Blueprint’s vision will show in the future or on what grounds they go forward.

Why the change was perceived this way is interpreted to be due to the professional identity concept of these individuals. It does not have the confidence, strength or possibly experience to cope with a “bigger object” than the self, an organizational change. In other words, these professionals seem to perceive the size and power of the Blueprint to outweigh their professional self and they are in this situation because they have included the company in their self-concept (compared to group one professionals, that detach that “object” from their professional self).

The reason for the lack of self-efficacy could be two-fold. On the one hand, the individual does not have control over stabilizing the altered work-identity alignment because he or she does not perceive to have the mental resources to align the self to the change. In other words, the person is “lost in translation” on how the situation should be handled and the current professional identity cannot answer the need. For example, *Larsson* called for management’s attention over his position in the company because otherwise she felt her status was not enough for him to perform in the changing company and to lead her team.

On the other hand, the self lacks efficacy because the new work, that is the structure for identity, was so dis-aligned with the previous professional identity concept that this created anxiousness for the person. Thinking another way around, if this new structure would be highly aligned with professional identity, it could have created a sense of confidence and thus, efficacy, in the change situation. This notion is indicated within group three professionals that perceived to have high self-efficacy in Blueprint’s ongoing change.

4.2.3.1 In need of external guidance

Olsson describes the feeling “*to still be in some waiting room*” and how “*the CEO has not lifted off with the process*”. Since the professionals did not perceive to have control over the self in the change they began to look after a “savior” to find cues to stabilize the self. Most often this was the CEO whom the change was generally personified to among the interviewees.

In other words, group two professionals wait for a clear guide on how to cope with the change situation. This guide can be found by observing and imitating possible role models, such as the CEO who is on top of the change situation and comes across as a knowledgeable and stable persona for these professionals. This differs from group one professionals that also look up to the CEO: they outsource all change-related activities to the management and detach themselves from them. Group two professionals however were inclined to position themselves in favor of the change, yet, required more guidance on how to do so.

4.2.3.2 Consciousness of self in the change

Because of the innate inclination to support the organization’s change, these professionals acknowledge the changes required in themselves. These were about one’s own attitude or ways of working, however, this reflection is flavored with unsureness and lack of self-esteem. These professionals see the company as a whole and so, include colleagues in change-process ponder. *Nilsson* includes “everyone” to support Blueprint’s change success but acknowledges the ambiguous situation around the company. To be able to understand this, it means that the change comes across as confusing to *Nilsson*.

“Everyone can support the change. What people want in their hearts, I don’t know. Maybe it isn’t even so clear, what is the aim and what people are expected of.” - Nilsson

4.2.4 IMPLICATIONS TO ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

The perceived ambiguity of the professional self in the midst of an organizational change has apparently led to frustration and stress among these professionals. These emotions were found to in turn affect work quality, effectiveness and self-esteem. As *Eriksson* here explains, the organizational change is not the optimal situation for these individuals to do their work:

“I would like my career to equal Blueprint but currently my work doesn’t correspond what I should be doing. Is it because of the change and how things take time here...? I don’t know how things play out on my sake. . . . and it affects my attitude and work performance” - Eriksson

In addition to following change role models that could be imitated about how to enact the change, the ambiguous situation is made sense of by focusing on as concrete tasks as possible. This was explained to be easier to take to the level of “doing” when “understanding” created confusion to the work-identity alignment. Strategies to “fix” any tension were found to be done in individual ways:

For example, *Nilsson* deliberately focused on concrete tasks (such as talking about the floorplan of office) as it made it easier to know how one should come across adjusting the self to the new Blueprint. In another example, *Mikkelsson* felt frustrated about others’ complaining and lack of activation to fix some issues at Blueprint. So, she took over an overly encouraging and cheering role in the social context aiming to keep up the high spirit and positive atmosphere but also, to mask the inner confusion and stress of the self in the changing company.

While these professionals were aiming to contribute to change (compared to previous group) it was through a more personal attitude. The researcher did not find implications towards collective good or altruistic thinking, because the individuals did not perceive to have self-efficacy in the situation to expand any contribution outwards from the self. In other words, they struggled with the personal work-identity alignment enough not to be able to consider colleagues in the process other than possibly masking personal confusion in social interactions.

4.2.5 IMPLICATIONS TO IDENTITY WORK

Identity work in group to is flavored by ambiguity and confusion over a disordered work-identity alignment. This group of professionals clearly position themselves “closer” to the change subject in how they understand the world they live in. However, they do not seem to be able to “lift” themselves

on top of the change: they currently anxiously swim the ocean of changing company, trying to find concrete land in order to make sense of it all and stabilize the work-identity alignment once more. This group forms the type two identity work discussed further.

4.3 GROUP THREE: OVERHAULERS

The third group of professionals are named after ones that overhaul, that is, restore and repair an object (in this case, the professional self or work-identity alignment) to an aimed condition. It can also mean to gain upon and overtake something⁴. Thus, overhauling implies an active contribution and attention in the particular situation. This word play is in place to describe how professionals in this group succeed to adjust the self in respect to the change and further, prosper in supporting both personal and Blueprint's aims in the change due to high self-efficacy in the situation.

4.3.1 PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

As all the Blueprint employees, these individuals acknowledge themselves as professionals. Compared to professionals in group one (detachers) and similar to those in group two (orienters), these professionals include Blueprint to be part of their professional self-concept. In addition to identifying as professionals, they identify with Blueprint. Thus the "work" in work-identity alignment includes work itself and Blueprint as an organization and as a structure for identity to exist.

Although the professional identity is not independent nor autonomous from Blueprint, the researcher perceives it to be a strong and confident concept. This implies to high self-efficacy the individuals were perceived to have when handling the ongoing change situation.

4.3.2 RELATIONSHIP WITH BLUEPRINT

By this sense-making, these professionals are loyal to both their profession but also to Blueprint. As *Pettersson* here illustrates, the motivation to work and support the employer goes beyond personal gains to include the Blueprint community:

"Why I'm here sometimes nights or Sundays is because I do the work for Blueprint and the people here, so we get it done. I take more work on my desk for the collective good." - Pettersson

⁴ "overhaul"; Online Etymology Dictionary, Dictionary.com, accessed 12.5.2018

However, it should be noted that professionals here, such as *Pettersson*, expand this responsibility outwards from the self because this pays back in organizational performance, increased resources and better client projects. They do it through attendance to Blueprint's business due to their innate alignment with and inclination to the company. Thus, the driver here to "take more work" on the desk "for the collective good" is both loyalty but also the perceived benefit to personal development that prospers with the organization's successful performance. Indeed, as *Pettersson* continues,

*"I want to succeed, and Blueprint's success is mine. I'm trying to add fuel to fire [change], that motivates me more. . . . Also new winds and an open situation where you can find yourself, something totally new [is motivating me]" -
Pettersson*

The equitation of Blueprint's success to personal success were visible in all of these professionals' interview data. Then, the change situation was expected to create a positive opportunity for the professionals' identity work to "overhaul" the self.

4.3.3 PERCEPTION OF THE CHANGE

The change Blueprint is undergoing was perceived as clear, understandable and intellectually rewarding by these professionals. The internalized relationship between the organization and the profession can be seen in the following quote by *Walhgren*. Indeed, Blueprint's change aims seemed to include aims or characteristics that the professionals felt personal to the self. A hint of confidence to acknowledge your ability in solving any challenges can be interpreted between the lines. Furthermore, the notion of collective good and meaningfulness outwards from the self is visible in this quote:

"Following this office's development is intellectually rewarding: the process is complex and challenging and very much what us architects are here to do: to analyze big problems while finding a solution. . . . It truly enhances your self-confidence but you also find it meaningful, to bring your knowledge to the help and guidance of others. This gives a sense of reason and that you can do something good in this world" - Walhgren

By perceiving the change, the professionals consciously revisited the work-identity alignment to work on the professional self-concept. Indeed, they understood the individual's responsibility for the change to succeed. This was put to the center of attention on both mental and physical levels. As quote by *Svensson* shows, professionals in group three took a serious role in being change enablers:

"Change cannot happen by the company only, everyone has to be on board and ready to change their own ways and look at their work with new eyes. Even if someone tells you to change something, that won't really happen unless you

yourself make it happen. . . . Of course, this change matters to me as I'm the one who is enabling it." - Svensson

Why this conscious inclination to support the change was conducted had different underlying motivations that stemmed from how change was perceived by the individual. For example, *Kjellberg* perceived that by making sure Blueprint's change aims were a market success, she would get better work projects to her portfolio. *Wahlgren* and *Pettersson* had more emotional aims to feel inspiration and enthusiasm by attending to the change activities. *Henriksson* acknowledged that better organizational performance would mean more monetary resources to benefit his daily work. To realize on these opportunities, professionals worked upon their self-concept to align with the new Blueprint.

4.3.3.1 Confidence over self in the change

What these individuals had in common was a high self-efficacy that they perceived to hold to conduct this re-alignment. This power and control stemmed from two sources: either, the self was seen as strong enough to "take" the re-alignment and adjusting or the new structure for identity, provided by Blueprint's change, was already so aligned with the professional self that engaging into ponder over "who am I, and by implication, how should I act" was comfortable and easygoing. Together, both of these possible perceptions were seen to lead to two outcomes:

First, with good self-esteem to find their path with the change, professionals in this group described themselves flexible and to be able to share and adjust viewpoints and attitudes, not needing to compulsively hold on to something. *Gustafsson* strongly highlighted that when individuals are able to choose their own path, best outcomes were to prevail because people could choose in what things to invest to get most out of it. *Henriksson* explained this flexibility to be the essence of being a professional.

Second, the role of self in enabling the change was perceived so natural that the consciousness from "me in this change" moved forward to "my work for this company". Thus, they could enact the work-identity alignment through their work-result and not only by their organizational membership. This mental landscape furthering on to identity work through work can be seen as an expanding consciousness because the organizational embeddedness was part of these professionals' identity: thus, they were not autonomous or independent workers whose only contribution to the company would be by their focus on work.

4.3.4 IMPLICATIONS TO ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Supporting the change through the professional self-concept was found to realize in different ways. They had the ability to do this due to the perceived control over the self, which led to feeling confident

and meaningful. The professionals could alter and develop their professionalism to match Blueprint's business goals. *Jonsson* refers to this responsibility of self-organizing:

“When you have all this information in the world it is up to every professional to select, update and maintain oneself. You can't do everything but build yourself based on your strengths” – Jonsson

Group three professionals were active partakers in change activities and some of them took more change leader roles to cheer others to jump on the change bandwagon. Professionals also took responsibility for Blueprint's change to succeed by engaging into work that would benefit the business' development. Then, *Hansson* took attention to alter his own behavior to be in line with the aimed company culture of community and cooperation:

“I have had to adjust my own behavior, to be more present and not stay at my own desk all the time. It was a conscious decision to attend more social coffee pauses, even though I would not have had the time.” - Hansson

4.3.5 IMPLICATIONS TO IDENTITY WORK

When combining the interpretations of these professionals internalizing the change subject and their confidence and inner guidance over the self in the situation, these professionals could profoundly engage to alter the self to match the new structure for work-identity alignment. This group forms the type three identity work discussed in the next part.

5 DISCUSSION

After presenting the findings, different groups of professionals are discussed and analyzed by respective identity work types. In addition to distinguishing differences between identity work types (chapters 5.1 to 5.3), a framework (chapter 5.4) will be proposed.

Each group of professionals formed in the empirical analysis implied a particular identity work type. Through an iterative process with the theoretical framework, the types could be further formed. These investigated identity work types refer to particular kinds of enactments, antecedents and manifestations of identity work, that is maintaining, strengthening or adapting the professional identity. This has implications to the professional self. Distinguishing the identified types in this research contributes in understanding why, how and with what implications identity work happens in change (Brown, 2015).

5.1 TYPE ONE IDENTITY WORK: DETACHING

In this study's change context, type one was found to be about detaching the self from the change in order to maintain work-identity alignment stable. Blueprint's change was not perceived as motivating nor important to these professionals' work because the individuals identified more with their work than the organization.

5.1.1 REASONS FOR THE PERCEPTION OF THE CHANGE

Professionals perceive the change to be something external from themselves. This is because the professionals do not regard the change and managerial activities to be part of their professional self-concept. They possibly even dis-identify with the organizational change and see the identity-work alignment to be external from the business practice. Rather, they intend to keep this alignment stable, continue work as usual and only observe the ongoing situation.

5.1.1.1 Externalization of self from organizational identification

Professionals were found to externalize the change away from the self due to the prioritization of professional over organizational identity; these two identities are not a hybrid concept for these professionals as the bounded professional identity acts inside - but not with - the organizational context. Indeed, Alvesson (2004, p.189) explains that if "one defines oneself as primarily a professional working in a specific company or as an organizational member doing a particular job, this means rather different identities even though the 'objective' work situation is the same". Because these people identify themselves more as "independent professionals", they are seen to lack innate alignment to consider managerial activities, and thus, they perceive organizational change to happen

outside of their selves. The implication can be that they are less inclined to follow change initiatives or do not actively contribute to them as their priority is the personal work.

If Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail (1994, p.255) tell that employees “who strongly identify with the organization are likely to focus on tasks that benefit the whole organization rather than on purely self-interested ones”, then it could be argued that these professionals dis-identify with the organization’s change because they do not conduct tasks that benefit the company as a whole, in other words, consciously contribute to the change. Elsbach and Bhattacharya (2001) found that dis-identification may lead to public criticism or supporting an opposing subject. The researcher did not find this behaviour in data sets; however, she did find a cognitive separation between these professionals’ identities and what the change was about.

5.1.1.2 Maintaining identity-work alignment

It was found that these professionals’ aimed to maintain identity-work alignment and a stable professional self-concept (Skorikov and Vondracek, 2011). The change at Blueprint had altered the sense of routine and normality (Asplund, Bolander and Werr, 2017) making individuals to deliberately exclude themselves from it to avoid stress or distractions. They have no intention to experiment or develop new behavioral routines because they see the possibility to sustain work-identity alignment despite the ongoing change (Thatcher and Zhu, 2006).

Another reason why identity work concentrated on separating the self from the change in maintaining the alignment was that the change, perceived as an organizational and not personal issue, did not offer motivating means to alter the self. Due to the detachment, type one professionals do not have an innate motivation to incline towards organizational aims (Alvesson, 2004, p.189); however, they contemplated whether they “get enough” in return for their efforts to adjust to the change (Kira, Balkin and San, 2012).

Schilling *et al.* (2012) found that if the interplay between the intent of a new strategy, its effects on peoples’ roles or practices and its fit with existing professional identities seemed threatening, professionals resisted the change in different ways. The researcher could not find traces of resistance in the data sets. However, detaching, or not jumping on the bandwagon, could be seen as one form of resistance at least considering that these professionals are not eagerly contributing to its success. This silent resistance is noted but not further discussed as professionals’ resistance to change represents a research topic on its own (e.g. Schilling *et al.*, 2012).

5.1.1.3 High efficacy over self in the change

To be able to consciously decide upon the position in respect to the change, these professionals perceived themselves to have high efficacy over their work-identity alignment in the changing organization. This is the mental perception of control to the “extent to which performance is up to the actor” (Ajzen, 2002, p.679) and thus, professionals perceived themselves to be on top of the situation. Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann (2006, p.252) found in their research that “feelings of competence occur when one's identity beliefs are relatively stable and are undergoing nuanced changes”.

Indeed, Blueprint professionals perceived whether they should concentrate on adjusting the self to new organizational aims. However, the situation has not offered resources, reasons or motivations to utilize this control to adjust or reform the professional self-concept (Beech, Macintosh and McInnes, 2008). Rather, the professionals valued autonomy, freedom and self-dignity (Van Maanen, 2010) and possibly perceived these to be disrupted in case the self becomes too entailed into the change. The implication was to detach the self from the change.

5.1.2 IMPLICATIONS TO THE PROFESSIONAL SELF

Found implications of change perception among type one professionals include contemplating between cost/benefit of opening up the self for change and outsourcing the responsibility and ownership of the change to the CEO as the change figure. Due to the externalized position of the self in respect to the change, type one professionals contemplate whether they “get enough” in return for their efforts to adjust to the change (Kira, Balkin and San, 2012). Alvesson (2004, p.406) acknowledges that one's identity influences the appreciation of various driving forces that fuel identity work.

Thus, reimbursements should benefit themselves or their work; organizational benefit, such as increased amount of client is of secondary importance. Whether there was no motivating means to go on about adjusting the self in to the new Blueprint, professionals took a more observing and commenting role and did not actively contribute to the enable the change aims. Because the change was not perceived to be the professional's business, they outsourced the ownership and responsibility of it to the clearest change figure in the company, the CEO. This mental outsourcing is conducted in social interactions between colleagues, seeking validation to these thoughts from like-minded people.

5.2 TYPE TWO IDENTITY WORK: ORIENTEERING

In this study's case context, change was perceived close to the professional self – however, the perceived power over the self in the change was low which made the situation ambiguous to the individuals. Identity work was about seeking to fix the feeling of stability and alignment of work and identity. The descriptive label “orienteering” given to this type represents the journey professionals were taking on an unfamiliar terrain, following and looking for guidance from external sources than the self.

5.2.1 REASONS FOR THE PERCEPTION OF THE CHANGE

These individuals identify their selves to be an organizational member, inclined to support the company (Alvesson, 2004, p.189). This means alignment between identity and work is a priority to these professionals and they are active to engage in shaping themselves and the organization to find a new balance between agency and structure (Kira, Balkin and San, 2012). The motivation is the self-esteem, self-distinctiveness and self-continuity that are enhanced when these professionals find oneness with the changing company and when others perceive them to be onboard (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail, 1994).

5.2.1.1 Low efficacy over self in the change

Although these professionals were innately focused on enabling and supporting Blueprint's change, they perceived low self-efficacy to translate the change to an alignment between the self-concept. The change had altered the congruence between work and identity and the individual did not perceive him- or herself to be on top of the situation. It was apparent that the professionals did not now make sense of what was going on from the point of view of self in the change. This led to confusion and frustration; Burke (1991, p.840) found that stress results from the “interruption of the continuously adjusting identity processes”.

Loosely following the framework by Beech, Macintosh and McInnes (2008), these professionals do see opportunities in engaging into identity work; however, the perceived resources, in this case, self-efficacy, are low. Even though the individual aims to adjust the self according to the organizational change, lack of perceived self-control has interrupted this process. Hay (2014) found that when struggling to come in terms with new expectations, professionals experience anxiety, guilt and worry; all these emotions could be found in the research findings.

5.2.2 *IMPLICATIONS TO THE PROFESSIONAL SELF*

This situation for the professionals wanting to contribute to change but experiencing ambiguity when perceiving the self in the change, has led to two consequences; desiring external support and having a more narrow-minded and concrete work focus.

5.2.2.1 External sourcing of guidance

Type two professionals looked for external guidance and possibility to imitate it. Kira, Balkin and San (2012) found that when experiencing uncertainty in change the employees looked for support from their supervisors. They go to a somewhat waiting-mode, observing how the situation plays out on their sake. According to Ibarra (1999), individuals adapt to things by observing role models and then match these identities. Some professionals, trying to solve the identity work tensions in a confusing situation, were found to take on a certain role (such as a positive organizational cheerleader) to mask the frustration and confusion (Ibarra and Petriglieri, 2010). This behaviour could have been copied from observed role models. Outcomes of successful “imitation” can be speed of adaptation and effectiveness in the new role when the work-identity alignment is found (Ibarra, 1999).

5.2.2.2 Focus on concrete work tasks to find stability

To some extent, these professionals tried to contribute to the ongoing change and acknowledged themselves to be enablers of it (Eilam and Shamir, 2005). However, due to insecurities over the lost feeling of control, they focus on concrete tasks compared to more innovative ideation. Smaller pieces of the big ambiguous puzzle were said to be easier to take to the level of “doing”. When the “doing” is understood, the “being” can be matched to it (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006). The concrete tasks are still to the benefit to the company change, as they still contribute to the “big picture thinking” or strategical aims even though the professionals themselves shy away from this size of ponder. Indeed, identity work processes affect organizational change efforts, performance and success – one way or another (Reissner, 2010).

5.3 TYPE THREE IDENTITY WORK: OVERHAULING

In this study's case context, type three identity work entails forming, revising and adjusting the self-concept to be in line with changes at the workplace. These professionals perceive themselves to be in control of their selves in the change situation that is personally meaningful for them; thus, they are able to identity work in developing, self-expanding ways.

5.3.1 REASONS FOR THE PERCEPTION OF THE CHANGE

These professionals perceive oneness with the company and the change. This mental positioning of internalizing change attributes to the self is due to strong identification with the employing company; thus, professionals take the company's best interest into account when perceiving the change (Alvesson, 2004, p.189) much like type two professionals yet unlike to type one professionals. When people strongly identify with their work organization their sense of survival is tied to the organization's survival (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail, 1994, p.254); it is an "it takes two to tango" – situation.

Because of this identification, ideas, values and norms associated with the change are internalized to the identity (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail, 1994, p.191) and the self is adjusted to it; indeed, the "being" is adjusted to "the new doing" (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006). By this process the individual becomes a contributor and an enabler of the change (Eilam and Shamir, 2005) and finds authenticity in work (Kira, Balkin and San, 2012).

5.3.1.1 High efficacy over self in the change

Because interviewed professionals seemed confident about this new self-concept, it can be argued that they had got confirmation (e.g. voiced perception) from others to be these "excited, change enabling professionals" which fuelled their competence, self-esteem (Alvesson, 2004, p.204) and finally, self-efficacy. This is the mental perception of control to the "extent to which performance is up to the actor" or "ease of difficulty of performing a behavior" (Ajzen, 2002, p.679).

When it comes to this mental power, type three professionals perceive self-power and self-esteem to in the changing context. Identity becomes a central dimension of control as it enables the professional to trust his or her personal gut-feeling about the "correct" path of being. While they have high opportunity to get something out of the change, these professionals also have high recourses in terms of strong self-efficacy and thus, they found compelling reason and ability to engage into identity work (Beech, Macintosh and McInnes, 2008).

This positive and confident outlook on the situation is because the change has introduced new elements to enrich, expand or alter the professional self (Thatcher and Zhu, 2006, p.1077) so

individuals are motivated to identity work for a preferred versions of themselves (Brown and Coupland, 2015). Identity work always has an aim (Dilts, 1996, p.21) that is affected by one's historical and present circumstances as well as future aspirations (Oliver, 2015). Thus, the change aims were seen to be rewarding in some sense (career possibilities, intellectual challenge, better work resources) and the professionals found the motivation to engage into adjusting the self to the new Blueprint.

5.3.2 IMPLICATIONS TO THE PROFESSIONAL SELF

These professionals are on the change bandwagon and even altering their behaviour to support the organizational change. In this research's case, these professionals supported the new initiatives of cooperation and social company culture by attending social events during the day and interacting with colleagues much more. Thus, they enacted the part of the change enabling professional through social interactions (Ibarra and Petriglieri, 2010).

It was found that these type three professionals express a “one for all and all for one” version of themselves (Brown and Coupland, 2015). Indeed, the mental confidence over the personally meaningful change means professionals can consider the social world around them while working on the self. The professional work towards the common good of the company, of course, taken that it benefits the individual him- or herself one day through new or increased work resources.

These professionals do not only consciously work upon “who am I” – but also, “what is my work”. Due to nature of their work, professionals need to adjust, revise and formulate also the core of their work value to align with the organizational change. Thus, in addition to being able to observe behavioural changes due to type three identity work, one can observe changes in the value of work done by the professionals. When it comes to professionals, actions speak louder than words.

Consequences of this type we found positive for the company and the individual: the company has change-engaged employees and the individuals are fuelled with emotional and mental benefits such as motivation, inspiration and work-identity alignment. This alignment is reached because the professionals were motivated to “formulate plans and achieve levels of performance or activity that reinforce, support, and confirm their identities” in the company (Burke and Reitzes, 1981, p.84).

5.4 PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR DISTINGUISHING IDENTITY WORK TYPES

Based on the literature on identity theory and organizational change as well as empirical findings on professionals, the need for further research of identity work can be contributed to. Especially the research need was for distinguishing the differences between individuals and their identity work during organizational change; for this aim, a framework will be proposed.

The axes emerged from an iterative process during the research project and describe a way to distinguish between identity work types that stem from how the professionals perceived and understand the ongoing change. This has implications to the mental positioning of the self in respect to the change and finally to identity work.

One way of distinguishing the different types of identity work is to counter-pose on a “2x2” map “*change is internal/external to the self*” and “*high/low self-efficacy in change*”. The framework is used as a tool to understand a person’s sense-making during an organizational change: either an individual can acknowledge him- or her positioning or PSFs can investigate the different mental positioning their employees have towards the change. These positions distinguish types of identity work that are based on the same proposition: to have work-identity alignment (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006).

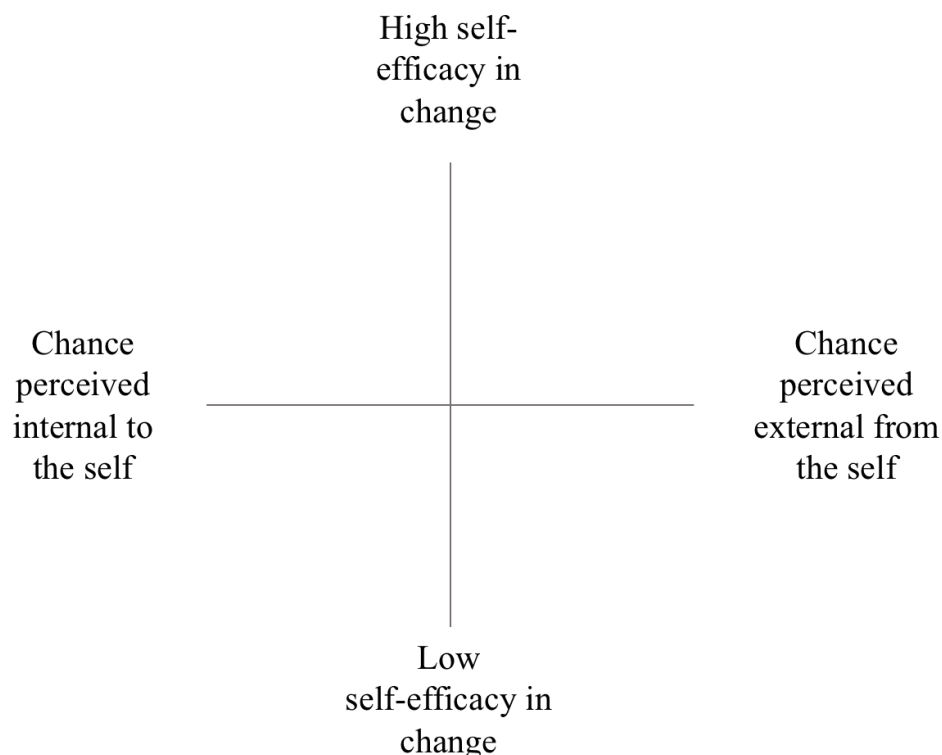


Figure 3 Framework for distinguishing identity work types

Due to the un-static nature of identity, this mental position is dynamic and continuously redefined in time. In addition, this perception is bounded in the social organizational context (Ylijoki and Ursin, 2013). The framework considers the link between identity and action because this mental positioning (antecedent for a type of identity work) leads to certain behaviour and performance of the individual (Ashcraft, Alvesson and Thomas, 2008). Explanation of different positions will follow.

The three found identity work types in this research can be distinguished based on these axes (chapter 5.4.4). However, as the quote by Burke (1935, p.70) goes, “any way of seeing is also a way of not seeing”. The aim is not to box individuals or objectify them but offer means by which differences in how professionals understand change can be argued (Beech, MacIntosh and McInnes, 2008).

5.4.1 HORIZONTAL AXIS: CHANGE AS INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL TO THE SELF

This dimension of perception was found through empirical inquiry and further studied by identity and identification theories. The axis is the degree of identification, internalization, closeness or any other subjective, mental extent between the professional self and the change. On the one hand, professionals can be more “locals” that feel one-ness with the employer-firm; on the other hand, professionals can perceive the situation as “cosmopolitans” that prioritize independence from the firm and incline more towards professionalism (Gouldner, 1957 in Schilling et al., 2012).

5.4.1.1 Change is internal to the self

When change is internalized, professionals perceive the change to happen in the ecosystem of their identity. This mental positioning of internalizing change to the self is due to strong identification with the employing company, which makes the individual to naturally incline towards any organizational initiative (Alvesson, 2004, p.189). Here, change has become part of the professional identity (Brown, 2017).

This internalization can be positive: success of company’s change is personal success and sense of survival is tied to the organization's survival (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail, 1994, p.254). Thus, the professional makes oneself an enabler of the change and contributes to it (Eilam and Shamir, 2005). The undergoing change becomes an importance and the professionals take the company’s best interest into account when perceiving the change (Alvesson, 2004, p.189). The individual either finds or seeks to find alignment between self and change and feels commitment to adjust the self to the ongoing change. However, internalizing change can also occur not only for beneficial gains. Although this dimension was not found in empirical findings, literature suggests that identification with the organization can also lead to active change resistance (van Dijk and van Dick, 2009; Schilling *et al.*, 2012) and not only to enabling change.

5.4.1.2 Change is external to the self

When it comes to more “cosmopolitans”, when change is perceived more external in respect to the self, professionals understand the change to happen outside of them thus they mentally or emotionally detach themselves from the change subject (Elsbach and Bhattacharya, 2001; Kira, Balkin and San, 2012). Because these people identify themselves more as “independent professionals”, they are seen to be less inclined to follow management initiatives. They can be seen to dis-identify with the change (Brown, 2017). This leads to lower motivation to participate since the change is not perceived to be important to the individual or who he or she is.

This detaching mental positioning does not necessarily mean the change is seen as a threat as many underlying motivations can explain the mental detachment. Yet from the point of identity work this strategy contributes to maintaining inner stability and alignment as the change context does not offer means or motivations to extensively alter the self. Kira, Balkin and San (2012) found that when distancing individuals actively think work to be “just work” or try to find new career opportunities. Furthermore, they might contemplate “whether they would get enough in return for their efforts to adjust to the change and carry out their part” in the change process (p.42).

5.4.2 VERTICAL AXIS: SELF-EFFICACY

This perception results to the mental positioning of the self in respect to the change. It derives from how much control or power the individual perceives over his or her functioning or events in life. Self-efficacy can be seen as the “ease of difficulty of performing a behavior” and control as the “extent to which performance is up to the actor” (Ajzen, 2002, p.679) According to Bandura (1982), “accurate appraisal of one's own capabilities has considerable functional value. Self-efficacy judgments, whether accurate or faulty, influence choice of activities and environmental settings”; this determines the effort put “to solve” a situation.

5.4.2.1 High self-efficacy

On the one end, self can be seen to be in control of the ongoing change with high self-efficacy. The professional feels to be on top of the ongoing event and so, feels control over the situation. He or she is confident about how the self can cope with the change regardless of how the situation is perceived. Indeed, this judgement of personal capability has influenced the thought pattern and emotional reaction, focusing the attention on the demands of the change (Bandura, 1982).

The professionals can perceive the change as a positive opportunity: they feel ownership of the process and perceives the change to have positive effects or opportunities for him or her (Beech, MacIntosh and McInnes, 2008). Change has introduced new elements to enrich, expand or alter the

self (Thatcher and Zhu, 2006, p.1077) so individuals can identity work for a preferred versions of themselves (Brown and Coupland, 2015). Possibly, the organizational change is aligned with the current professional self-concept and thus, the individual feels confidence over the possibilities to self-development.

If the change is perceived as neutral or un-important, the person can be on top of the situation, yet it doesn't offer means to extensively engage to it through identity work. The person feels stable as the alignment between self and work could be adjusted with effort that raises no stress or confusion. The situation has not offered resources, reasons or motivations to utilize this control to adjust or reform the professional self-concept (Beech, MacIntosh and McInnes, 2008). Rather, the professionals value autonomy, freedom and self-dignity (Van Maanen, 2010) and perceive these to be disrupted in case the self is embedded into the change.

5.4.2.2 Low self-efficacy

On the other end, the professional does not perceive control over the situation and has low self-efficacy. He or she is under the influence of an ambiguous change and does not perceive the self to be in control of the situation; thus, the misalignment or discrepancy is not coped with. This makes the individual feel confused, helpless and uncertain in the ongoing change. As Hay (2014, p.519) puts it, "identity work then is a felt process where our emotions cannot be separated from who we are or who we might become"; thus, dissonant events cause stress and frustration. Because identity secures "a base for control, image management, loyalty, and existential security" (Alvesson, 2004, p.191), an anxious one needs to be identified and stabilized.

In conclusion, the two axes provide a framework for distinguishing the mental positioning of the professional self in respect to the organizational change. This positioning has an effect on the identity work the professional conducts in the situation.

5.4.3 POSITION QUADRANTS: IDENTITY WORK TYPES

The four different position quadrants represent the mental positioning of the professional self in respect to the organizational change, and these different positionings imply identity work types. By situating type one, two and three identity works (chapters 5.1 to 5.3) on the developed framework, differences in mental positioning in respect to organizational change can be simulated (see Figure 4).

A particular position implies a certain form of subjectivity and "ties' a person's feelings, thinking, and valuing in a particular direction" (Alvesson, 2004, p.189). The framework distinguished four types but the various possibilities for different identity work types within this framework or by other axis dimensions are acknowledged.

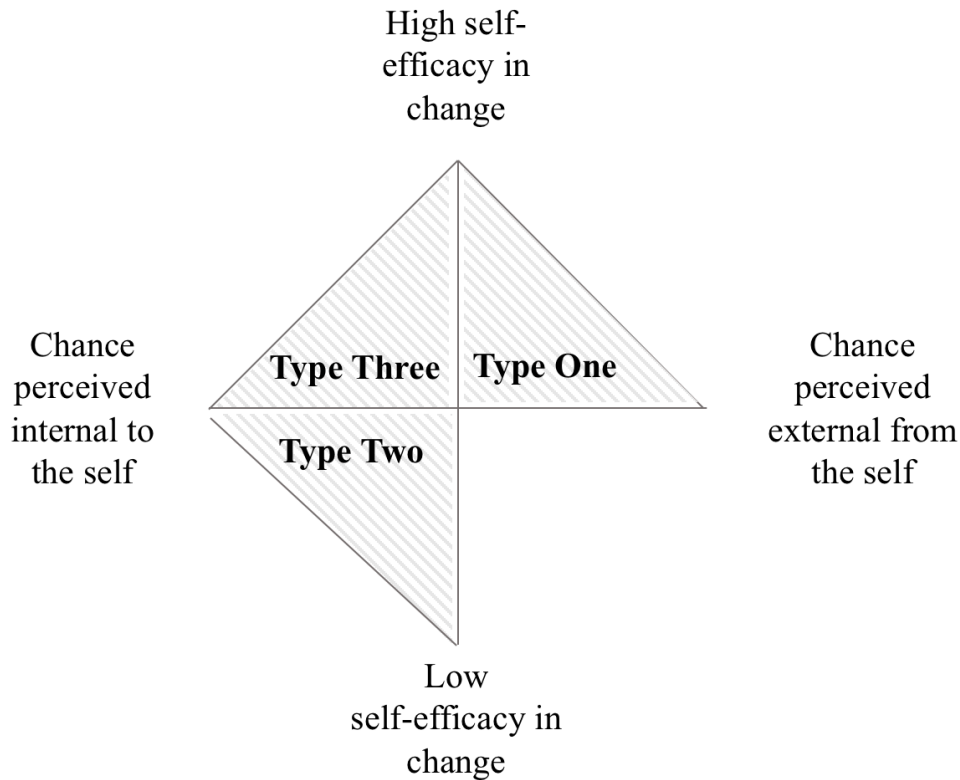


Figure 4 Application of three found identity work types

5.4.3.1 Change is internal to the self with high self-efficacy

Starting from *top-left* quadrant, due to internalizing organizational change to be part of the professional self-concept and perceiving high self-efficacy to control the situation, professional identity is innately inclined to support the change since that equals the support of the self. Because the individuals feel competence over the situation, they are able to change conceptualization of who they are as a professional to fit how to do the job (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006). This competence stems from the strong professional ethos that allows organizational membership to be part of the self-concept; indeed, these professionals are “locals”. Social validation about the identity work can happen through organizational interactions, but mainly through work results: it was found that professionals in this quadrant identity work through their work performance. This position represents the *type three identity work*.

5.4.3.2 Change is external to the self with high self-efficacy

The *top-right* -positioning implies that the professional feels competence over the situation through high self-efficacy, yet consciously detaches the change from the self. Alignment between identity and work is aimed to keep relatively stable and undergo only small changes (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006). The professional is more of a “cosmopolitan”, internalizing professional values of autonomy, freedom and self-dignity (Van Maanen, 2010) over organizational ones. This detachment means professional does not perform in favour of the change and rather observes the ongoing event. Attending to change and altering identity to match new aims or strategy should have some pragmatic value for it to occur (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006). This position represents the *type one identity work*.

5.4.3.3 Change is internal to the self with low self-efficacy

Then, in the *bottom-left* quadrant, professionals are more organizationally inclined and take the change into account to find new alignment between identity and work, similar to the *top-left* quadrant. However, self-efficacy in the organizational change is perceived as low, which makes them anxious in the ambiguous situation (Burke, 1991). To make sense of the ongoing event and offer concrete cues for identity work, professionals turn to observe or imitate role models, possibly enacting temporal identities (e.g. student or another profession) until the true professional identity has stabilized in the altering context (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006). Indeed, social validation happens through finding supervisor support (Kira, Balkin and San, 2012) and imitating colleagues (Ibarra, 1999; Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006). Otherwise, they focus on small and concrete work tasks, attending to change through “just doing the job” but not extending the meaning of change to the work ways.

5.4.3.4 Change is external to the self with low self-efficacy

Finally, the *bottom-right* quadrant exists but empirical findings do not support it. It implies that the professional does not perceive change to be of importance to the individual, thus, something external happening from the self. Simultaneously the individual has no control or power in the situation. Implications to identity work were not found in this research and thus investigating this quadrant is left for future research. However, Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann (2006) argue that all identity work processes lead to identity enrichment, deepening the understanding of one’s professional identity.

By the underlying purpose of this research, different identity work types were found, and a framework was proposed to map them based on mental positioning of the self. The found identity work types accommodate both stability (especially type one) and change (especially type three) in identities (Ibarra, 1999). The framework will be further reflected upon in the final chapter.

6 CONCLUSION

In this final part, the conducted research will be discussed and connected back to the research question (chapter 6.1). Then, contributions to both academia and management are presented (chapters 6.2 to 6.3). This study created both answers and questions, so possible limitations (chapter 6.4.) and further research avenues (chapter 6.5) will culminate this research paper.

6.1 ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The call was to further understand professional identity work in organizational change (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006; Reissner, 2010; Schilling et al., 2012; Asplund, Bolander and Werr, 2017). The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the research question (chapter 1.2):

What different types of professional identity work can be distinguished during organizational change?

Based on the conducted empirical study to understand professionals' perception of their ongoing organizational change as well as an abductive research design to link theoretical and empirical investigations together, three different professional identity work types were distinguished. Each of these types was discussed based on why, how and with what implications professionals conduct identity work to re-align the self to the changing work context (chapter 4.1-4.3).

This research question was followed by further sub-question that contribute to the understanding of the differences between identity work types:

How can these different types of professional identity work be distinguished?

Thus, a framework was proposed to represent professionals' mental positioning of the self in the organizational change (chapter 5.4). This position implies the identity work type the professional enacts. The proposed way of distinguishing the different types of identity work was explained. Furthermore, the found three identity work types were applied to this framework in chapter 5.4.3.

6.2 CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

This research contributed to academia by distinguishing types of identity work by professionals in organizational change and providing a framework for further investigation. In this research, differences between professionals' identity work are not only implied but also explained (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006). Three found identity work types were diligently explored, revealing antecedents (perception) and implications (consequences) for individual acts (Brown, 2015) by proposing a framework to understand, in what sense identity work types differ and how these types

can be distinguished. It is a practical tool to further the discussion on the implications of each position and attends to understanding of how, why and with implications identity work differs between professionals. It contributes to the body of knowledge on how professional identity work in conditions of change is often grounded in how the professional makes sense of it (McInnes *et al.*, 2006; Reissner, 2010).

Compared to the previously discussed (chapter 2.2.1.1) framework by Beech, MacIntosh and MacInnes (2008), this framework is supported by empirical data. Whereas one of their framework's axis is the perceived risk or opportunity for achieving identity outcomes (p.965); the framework in this research is based on the overall perception of the situation and bounded by the dynamics of internalization and self-efficacy. The framework supported previous research on how the locus of identification (with the profession or with the organization) affects the individual's perception of the change (e.g. Schilling *et al.*, 2012). This framework also introduced the concept of self-efficacy into identity research which was not found to be acknowledged in previous literature on identity work. This introduction emerged from empirical work in this study and contributes well the understanding of how individuals perceive their professional self in the organizational change.

6.3 CONTRIBUTION TO MANAGEMENT

This research furthers the understanding of differences between professionals, which is timely given the increasing importance of professionals in organizations (Brock, Powell and Hinings, 2015) and the centrality of identity to their self-agency and behaviour (Alvesson, 2004, p.188).

How professionals subjectively perceive the ongoing change has an effect on their identity work, which in turn affects their values, behaviour and priorities. With the findings and framework, those managing PSFs have possible identity work types "on their radar". Thus, they are able to focus their efforts and practices in most effective ways for the change to succeed and not run into problems of identity dynamics (Beech, MacIntosh and McInnes, 2008; van Dijk and van Dick, 2009; Gorman, 2017).

This study distinguished three different identity work types that each has certain implications for PSF management. If management identifies *type one identity work* in the organization, management could exclude the professionals from change activities and let them focus on their work that they prioritize to do. This lowers possibilities for negative interference to both sides: professionals irritating change management and managers bothering professionals' work life. In case professionals should be needed to be on-board change activities, they should be offered instrumental and motivating benefits to indulge in working on the work-identity alignment. According to Alvesson (2004, p.209), a company can support identity construction leading to "positive" behavior at the individual level by these material means.

When it comes to *type two identity work*, communication should focus on providing a clear picture of what is going on in the company. This way these professionals can make sense of the change and how to adjust the self. Management should focus on “increasing employ perceived control, confidence, and self-efficacy about handling the changes” associated with change (Scheck and Kinicki, 2018, p.645). Moreover, there should be positive role models and change leaders available in the company for guidance on how to enact the organizational change. Importantly, being the key resource of the company, “all you really have as the engine behind your offerings. . . . are people and their experience” (Santana, 2005, p.284); thus, stress and frustrated emotions are something to be corrected immediately.

If *type three identity work* is distinguished to exist among professionals, professionals can be influenced with the words of Gandhi, to “be the change you want to see”. Many researches suggest managers should present change to staff in terms of what it is able to provide to the individuals’ selves to get the best results (e.g. Eilam and Shamir, 2005; Schilling *et al.*, 2012). Also, because these professionals are internally inclined to support the change, they can be positioned as change leaders or role models which benefits more uncertain employees (see type two).

Indeed, different ways to influence professionals’ orientation towards beneficial courses of action need to be understood (Alvesson, 2004, p.217): to this aim the ability to distinguish between different identity work types is beneficial. Understanding and supporting professionals’ identities is also seen as beneficial for organizational well-being and existential security in today’s complex and ambiguous society, that on its own can create ambiguous and confusing situations (p.218). As the economies are becoming increasingly knowledge-based, human capital is professionalizing in many non-PSFs that search for new competitive advantage (Von Nordenflycht, 2010; Kaiser *et al.*, 2015); thus, these findings could be carefully applied in understanding professionals in other contexts than PSF as well.

6.4 LIMITATIONS

Possible limitations arise from the nature of identity that holds a range of conceptualization (Ashcraft, Alvesson and Thomas, 2008; Schwartz, Luyckx and Vignoles, 2011). As Alvesson (2010) puts it, “Issues around subjectivity – including identity – are very difficult to describe and interpret.” (p.195): however, this is the nature of any identity research. In an increasingly global world it can be seen as a limitation to approach identity solely from the more individualistic Western thinking. As the quote by Burke (1935, p.70) goes, “any way of seeing is also a way of not seeing”; thus, this limitation opens up possibilities to conduct future research from other prevalent identity interpretations.

The researcher acknowledges that other readings of the phenomenographic data are possible, which leads to different possibilities in building the proposed framework. Indeed, the findings are descriptive in their nature. However, the aim was not to objectify professionals but offer a tool to understand identity work types (Beech, MacIntosh and McInnes, 2008). The framework offers a

holistic mean to read the change situation from the perspective of the professionals, which supports the human and complex concept of identity (Alvesson, 2010).

Another limitation of this study is that the research subject professionals were only interviewed once thus potential variations in identity work modes over time could not be captured. Change was still handled as an ongoing process, although this research pointed to only one point in time: then, variations in people's sense-making of the ongoing event could be expected. However, considering the scope and resources to conduct this study, a longitudinal investigation would not have been possible. Furthermore, the research was situated within the change process compared to a more reflecting or expecting perception of the change, which contributed to the understanding of identity work during organizational change.

6.5 FUTURE RESEARCH

While contributing to current academic literature, this research offers several future research opportunities. First, although professionals were investigated during the change situation, the engagement happened only at one point in time and so, potential variations to identity work engagement can occur during a longer phase. A longitudinal study that catches identity work in the development of the change process would offer a valuable exploration into the topic. Furthermore, a follow-up study after the case company situation has normalized would provide insights on the effects of the noted types to the success and performance of the change project.

Second, since identity work is seen to be an interplay of social and personal identities (Van Maanen, 2010) the findings could differ between professional communities. Furthermore, workforce is professionalizing increasingly in other types of companies as well (Von Nordenflycht, 2010; Kaiser *et al.*, 2015). Thus, future research would contribute from investigating professional identity work in change in a non-PSF company.

Finally, this research handled professionals as one bunch; in other words, discussions of how identity work types would play out between different demographic factors were not considered. Because Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann (2006) found differences in identity work strategies between more or less developed professional identities, there is an opportunity to further research identity work types prevalent in different demographic, and not only more psychological categories.

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APPENDIX 1- INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

19 professionals were interviewed. All interviews were conducted face-to-face at the company office.

Number	Interviewee	Date of interview	Length of interview	Time at Blueprint*
1	Architect (<i>pilot interview</i>)	31.1.2018	75 min	Since 1979
2	Architect (<i>pilot interview</i>)	31.1.2018	60 min	Since 1982
3	Architect	12.3.2018	45 min	Since 2015
4	Architect	12.3.2018	45 min	Since 2017
5	Architect	13.3.2018	40 min	Since 2012
6	Architect	13.3.2018	45 min	Since 2006
7	Architect, Interior architect	16.3.2018	45 min	Since 2006
8	CEO (<i>pilot interview</i>)	10.1.2018	90 min	Since 2007
9	Designer	12.3.2018	45 min	Since 2015
10	Designer	13.3.2018	40 min	Since 1985
11	Designer	14.3.2018	40 min	Since 1985
12	Interior architect (<i>pilot interview</i>)	1.2.2018	45 min	Since 2016
13	Interior architect	9.3.2018	45 min	Since 2011
14	Interior architect	12.3.2018	45 min	Since 2017
15	Interior architect	14.3.2018	50 min	Since 2013
16	Interior architect	14.3.2018	50 min	Since 2018
17	Interior architect student	12.3.2018	60 min	Since 2017
18	Interior architect student	13.3.2018	50 min	Since 2017
19	Landscape architect	12.3.2018	45 min	Since 2008

* The year when person first became part of Blueprint although there might be years in between with no employment with the company

APPENDIX 2- INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Basic information

- a. Name
- b. Time at the company
- c. Professional background (service line and title)

2. Work in general

- a. Please tell me about your work and career here at Blueprint.
 - i. Is your work/profession equal to Blueprint or do you separate these two entities?
- b. What is your profession about and has that developed over the years?
- c. What personal goals you have?
- d. What would you answer to the question “who I am as a professional?”
- e. What are your motivation and priorities in your work?

3. Experience of the change

- a. What are the changes that have taken place here during the past few years?
 - i. What have been your reactions to these changes?
 - ii. How do you feel about the change?
- b. How is Blueprint developing and what impact does it have on your work?
 - i. What is your view of your job and role before, in and after the change?
 - ii. Is your behaviour changing and in which ways?
 - iii. What new responsibilities or expectations have you encountered?
- c. What is the success of this change project based on?
- d. What are your attitudes and thoughts about the new expectations or working ways?
- e. Has the answer to the question “who am I” changing as your company changes?
- f. How do you know the change has been successful?
- g. How do you make sense of uncertain or ambiguous situations?